National College of Ireland

How Employee Voice affects Employee Engagement?

A research across Spanish nationals working in multinational companies in Dublin (Ireland) during Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)

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Abstract

This research aims to contribute to the area of Employee Voice and its relevance and impact on Employee Engagement during COVID-19 global pandemic taking an employee-centric approach for expatriates, specifically Spanish nationals, working remotely for multinationals companies based in Dublin (Ireland).

The epistemology orientation taken is mainly a constructive interpretivism focused on the thinking and feeling that underpins people's behaviour and the subjective ways in which they experience their world. This approach considers an online questionnaire with a mixture of closed-ended and open-ended questions following a mixed method research methodology. The questionnaire is broken down into three sections. The first part is to understand the current employee engagement level. The second part is defined to measure the six key management functions that are impacting the employee engagement and the third part is created to understand directly how the employee voice is impacting Spanish employees' engagement during the COVID-19 period.

In conclusion, Employee Voice impacted negatively Employee Engagement for Spanish nationals working in multinational companies in Dublin (Ireland) during COVID-19 period. On the other hand, they were satisfied with their working environment in their project, the management style of their direct manager, their co-worker relationship, their current side policies and procedures and the wellbeing measures implemented in their side but not with their current training and career development plan and their current side compensation plan.

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Es el camino, no el destino.

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1. Introduction

The China Health Authority alerted the World Health Organisation (WHO) to several cases of pneumonia of unknown aetiology in Wuhan City in Hubei Province in central China on December 31, 2019. The cases reported were from patients living or working around the local Huanan Seafood Wholesale Market since December 8, 2019, although other early cases had no exposure to this market. This pathogen was renamed as severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) by Coronavirus Study Group and the disease was named coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) by the WHO. WHO declared it a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) (Harapan et al., 2020). In Ireland, The Taoiseach, Leo Varadkar TD (2020) announced their measures and restrictions to combat the spread of COVID-19 to be applied from midnight on 27 March 2020.

COVID-19 outbreak and lockdown has brought to all of us social distancing in our day to day life including our professional landscape. Government authorities have asked to cut the presence of any employee in their offices for non-essential work and to develop a home-based work measure to avoid face-to-face interactions that represent a high risk of transmission for the virus (Avdiu and Nayyar, 2020).

The United States has measured the ability to work from home (Dingel amd Neiman, 2020) considering a set of European countries (Barrot *et al.*, 2020; Boeri *et al.*, 2020) and they have found that 40% of jobs could happen from home. This possibility is lower in poor countries where low-income is impacting harder their economies once the social distancing and work from home measure has been implemented. Only around 15% of the labour force can work from home if we consider agricultural employment in rural areas of poor countries out of this possibility and this is significantly lower compared with the 35% in rich countries.

Companies are investing away from their home countries to establish their headquarters and this trend grows consistently over the last 17 years. 912 headquarters were established abroad in 2019 resulting in $16bn of spending and around 40% went to Europe. Dublin is the leading destination city for foreign investment in headquarters attracted by its tax incentives and highly skilled, English-speaking workforce (Shehadi, 2020).

On March 2nd 2020, Google Ireland, where the company has their European headquarters in Dublin, asked the majority of their 8000 employees to work from home after a team member reported flu-like symptoms in the middle of growing concerns about spread of COVID-19. Google used this day to measure their operational readiness in case their employees should have to work from home for an extended period. The first case of COVID-19 in the Republic of Ireland was confirmed by then and schools began their closing period also (Ryan, 2020).

Ahearne *et al.* (2020) have conducted a national online survey of remote working in Ireland during COVID-19 across a wide range of industries and sectors. 51% never worked remotely before COVID-19 and this can be an issue for them.

Employee voice is an established topic in human management literature that recognises the importance of having a clear system of employee involvement and participation (Marchington, 2015).

However, this research aims to contribute in the research gap identified by Gruman and Saks (2014) who concluded that "relatively little attention has been given to the relationship between voice and engagement" and by Menara, Rucka and Welchb (2017) confirming that "paying attention to both sides of the employee voice coin is necessary to realise the potential of organisational employee engagement".

Employee voice was originally compared with trade union membership and collective bargaining but it is more seen now as a way where employees can express themselves individually and also in terms of their company direction (Rees, Alfes and Gatenby, 2013).

Employee engagement is one of the most powerful tools that a company can have. It is related with their employees and this is the most important resource in a company because people cannot be duplicated or imitated by the competitors (Baumruk, 2004). Even with this importance, employee engagement is still an area to be developed to keep providing good performance and effectiveness, always innovating with a co-operative work environment (Katz and Kahn, 1966).

The "Non-Irish Nationalities Living in Ireland" report shows the top ten non-Irish nationalities by population size based on Census 2016. 535,475 non-Irish nationals

were reported in April 2016. The ten nationalities profiled are Polish, UK, Lithuanian, Romanian, Latvian, Brazilian, Spanish, Italian, French and German were Polish nationals (122,515 people) made up the largest group while German nationals (11,531 people) were the smallest of the ten groups (Central Statistics Office, 2018).

The Central Statistics Office (2018) also reports that one of the largest increases was in the Spanish population by 78% from 6,794 to 12,112 people between 2011 and 2016. This was the biggest percentage increase of the nationalities profiled. 68% of Spanish nationals were more likely to be single, reflecting the relatively young age of these populations. 85% of them aged 25 to 34 years old in April 2016. 18% of the Spanish working population were employed in the information and communication industry.

The present research focuses on the Employee Voice to measure Employee Engagement and the available mechanisms to determine how relevant is the voice and its impact on Spanish nationals' engagement in multinational companies in Dublin (Ireland) during the COVID-19 global pandemic.

2. Literature review

2.1. Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)

The China Health Authority alerted the World Health Organisation (WHO) to several cases of pneumonia of unknown aetiology in Wuhan City in Hubei Province in central China on December 31, 2019. The cases reported were from patients living or working around the local Huanan Seafood Wholesale Market since December 8, 2019, although other early cases had no exposure to this market. A novel coronavirus was detected from a throat swab sample of a patient on January 7, 2020. This pathogen was renamed as severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) by Coronavirus Study Group and the disease was named coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) by the WHO. 7736 cases were confirmed and 12.167 suspected in China. Other 82 confirmed cases were reported in 18 other countries on January 30, 2020. WHO declared it a Public Health

Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) on the same day. COVID-19 is moderately infectious with a relatively high mortality rate (Harapan *et al.*, 2020).

It is not clear the role of the Huanan Seafood Wholesale Market for the COVID-19 disease propagation. Many initial cases were linked to this market suggesting that SARS-CoV-2 was transmitted from animals to humans but there is evidence that the virus was introduced from another into the market from an unknown location yet. However, the presence of the virus in the market contributed to its spreading, boosting it more rapidly, although human-to-human transmission might have occurred earlier. Less than 10% of patients had market exposure and more than 70% patients had no exposure to the market. In any case, it was confirmed the person-to-person way of transmission and it can happen through close contacts when an infected person coughs or sneezes. Moreover, COVID-19 can persist from 96h to 9 days on surfaces and case definition rely on a 14-day window for its incubation (Harapan *et al.*, 2020).

Common symptoms of COVID-19 that patients are suffering are severe pneumonia, with fever and dry cough. These symptoms might evolve to Acute Respiratory Distress Syndrome (ARDS), septic shock and to multiple organ failure like human lungs. Around 10% of patients have also died. Clinical manifestations showed that most common symptoms include fever, dry cough, dyspnoea, chest pain, fatigue and myalgia. Less common are headache, dizziness, abdominal pain, diarrhea, nausea, and vomiting and 75% of patients had bilateral pneumonia based on the report of the first 425 confirmed cases in Wuhan (Harapan *et al.*, 2020).

There is still no specific treatment for COVID-19 apart from isolation and supportive care including oxygen therapy, fluid management, and antibiotics for secondary bacterial infections. Isolation and infection control measures have to be applied to the early recognition of COVID-19 with the intention to contain the spread. At the moment, vaccine is not available, but it might be suboptimal considering the low intention to vaccinate during the H1N1 pandemic in EEUU, that was around 50% when the pandemic started in May 2009 but 16% by January 2019. WHO provides some guidelines to be supportive referring to the disease severity because neither a treatment is available. There is a clinical trial evaluating the safety and efficacy against SARS-CoV-2 of lopinavir-ritonavir and interferon-α 2b in patients with

COVID-19. Remdesivir has been used to treat imported COVID-19 cases to the U.S. and other potential drugs from existing antiviral agents have also been proposed (Harapan *et al.*, 2020).

COVID-19 is clearly a serious disease having a global impact. Different approaches should be executed in health care settings locally and globally because health care settings can be an important source of viral transmission. It is considered the key to stop the transmission to disrupt the chain to avoid the spread of the disease. For example, Chinese health authorities isolated the infected patients and quarantining of suspected ones and their close contacts. Another important action is to educate the citizens to recognise unusual symptoms to seek medical care for early stages of the virus. Also mitigate social gatherings, close the schools, home isolation, personal hand hygiene and wearing a facemask. Main action that was taken by Chinese authorities to reduce the global spread of COVID-19 was locking down Wuhan city (Harapan *et al.*, 2020).

Particularly in Ireland, The Taoiseach, Varadkar (2020) announced their measures and restrictions to combat the spread of COVID-19 to be applied from midnight on 27 March 2020:

- Everyone to stay at home in all circumstances, except if you work in essential services, for shopping, to get medicines, to care for relatives and brief exercise
- All public and private gatherings of any number of people banned
- All non-essential shops closed
- All community centres closed
- Shielding or cocooning introduced for all over-70s
- All visits to offshore islands banned
- No travel outside of 2 km of your own home for any reason (except those set out above)

2.2. Working from home (WFH)

COVID-19 outbreak and lockdown has brought to all of us social distancing in our day to day life including our professional landscape. Government authorities have asked to cut the presence of any employee in their offices for non-essential work and to develop a home-based work measure to avoid face-to-face interactions that represent a high risk of transmission for the virus (Avdiu and Nayyar, 2020).

The United States has measured the ability to work from home (Dingel amd Neiman, 2020) considering a set of European countries (Barrot *et al.*, 2020; Boeri *et al.*, 2020) and they have found that 40% of jobs could happen from home. This possibility is lower in poor countries where low-income is impacting harder their economies once the social distancing and work from home measure has been implemented. Only around 15% of the labour force can work from home if we consider agricultural employment in rural areas of poor countries out of this possibility and this is significantly lower compared with the 35% in rich countries.

Dingel and Neiman (2020) have created a classification (table 1) to measure the occupations that can be done from home taking into consideration the characteristics of each occupation. This classification differs a lot across broad occupation groups because of its natural ability to work from home. On top, managerial (76.8%) and professional occupations (70.6%) can be executed from home. At the bottom, elementary occupations (9.6%) or occupations involving plant or machine operation (7.4%) and craft and trade occupations (3.9%) that are tied to the location.

Table 1: Percent of detailed occupations that can be done from home by main occupation category

	Occupation, ISCO 1 digit	WFH (in %)
1	Managers	76.8
2	Professionals	70.6
3	Technicians and Associate Professionals	39.6
4	Clerical Support Workers	49.6
5	Services and Sales Workers	20.7
6	Skilled Agricultural, Forestry and Fishery Workers	8.3
7	Craft and Related Trades Workers	3.9
8	Plant and Machine Operators and Assemblers	7.4
9	Elementary Occupations	9.6

Economy and its development in each country is a key variable to organise employment across occupations. 57 countries have been considered by Dingel and Neiman (2020) to build the dataset covering 612 country years combining household and labour force surveys and a total sample size of 18 million observations. Country coverage ranges from the poorest countries, like Ethiopia and Uganda, via middle-income countries to high-income countries including the United States and many European countries (appendix 1).

If we rank these countries taking the highest GDP per capita (PPP), Ireland is the second country after Luxemburg (table 2).

Table 2: Individual level dataset. Information on ten highest GDP per capita (PPP)

Name	Years	Sample size (in thds)	GDP per capita (PPP)	Source
Austria	1999–2017	1'034	34'938–51'524	LFS
Denmark	1999–2017	511	33'525–49'607	LFS
Iceland	1999–2017	54	37'732–51'316	LFS
Ireland	1999–2017	1'071	33'680–73'297	LFS
Luxembourg	1999–2017	168	64'436–99'477	LFS
Netherlands	1999–2017	834	37'786–50'024	LFS
Norway	2005–2017	111	49'908–63'768	LFS
Sweden	1999–2017	1'441	34'468–47'892	LFS
Switzerland	2010–2017	232	54'028–62'927	LFS
United States	1998–2004	220	43'625–49'138	CEPR

2.3. Multinational companies in Ireland

Companies are investing away from their home countries to establish their headquarters and this trend grows consistently over the last 17 years. 912 headquarters were established abroad in 2019 resulting in $16bn of spending and

around 40% went to Europe. Dublin is the leading destination city (table 3) for foreign investment in headquarters attracted by its tax incentives and highly skilled, English-speaking workforce (Shehadi, 2020).

Software and IT, business and financial services are the industries where most of this investment has gone. Tech companies such as Google, Facebook, Airbnb, PayPal, Microsoft, eBay or LinkedIn for example have set up their European headquarters in Ireland (Shehadi, 2020).

On March 2nd 2020, Google Ireland, where the company has their European headquarters in Dublin, asked the majority of their 8000 employees to work from home after a team member reported flu-like symptoms in the middle of growing concerns about spread of COVID-19. Google used this day to measure their operational readiness in case their employees should have to work from home for an extended period. At the same time, the first case of COVID-19 in the Republic of Ireland was confirmed by then and schools began their closing period also (Ryan, 2020).

Table 3: Top 30 European headquarter locations per capita

RANK	CITY	COUNTRY
1	Dublin	Ireland
2	Amsterdam	Netherlands
3	Reading	UK
4	Warwick	UK
5	Galway	Ireland
6	Vantaa	Finland
7	Cork	Ireland
8	Basel	Switzerland
9	London	UK
10	Luxembourg	Luxembourg
11	Coventry	UK
12	The Hague	Netherlands
13	Cambridge	UK
14	Vilnius	Lithuania
15	Barcelona	Spain
16	Belfast	UK
17	Munich	Germany
18	Utrecht	Netherlands
19	Geneva	Switzerland
20	Düsseldorf	Germany
21	Edinburgh	UK
22	Copenhagen	Denmark
23	Madrid	Spain
24	Bucharest	Romania
25	Malaga	Spain
26	Rotterdam	Netherlands
27	Bristol	UK
28	Helsinki	Finland
29	Frankfurt	Germany
30	Glasgow	UK

Source: fDi Markets

On March 6th, Pichai (2020) made public Google's measures and how they were supporting communities, the World Health Organisation (WHO), business clients, consumers, and their own employees:

- Helping people to find useful information: search interest in coronavirus increased +260% globally since the first week of February
- Protecting people from misinformation: their Trust and Safety team has been working to protect their users from phishing, conspiracy theories, malware and misinformation, or new threats
- Enabling productivity for remote workers and students: they have provided free access to their advanced Hangouts Meet video-conferencing capabilities to all G Suite and G Suite for Education customers globally until July 1, 2020
- Supporting relief efforts and governmental organizations: they have offered $25 million in donated ad credit to the WHO and government agencies
- Advancing health research and science: they have contributed to the scientific community's understanding of how the virus functions and experimental work in developing future treatments

Google also has considered their vendor workers in their extended workforce compensating them for the time they would have worked, who have been affected by reduced work schedules. Pichai stated that "this is an unprecedented moment. It's important that we approach it with a sense of calm and responsibility because we have many people counting on us." (Pichai, 2020)

In July 2020, Google confirmed they will keep their employees working from home until at least next July 2021 supporting their roughly 200,000 full-time employees and contract employees across Google and Alphabet Inc (Copeland and Grant, 2020).

Other companies took the lead on this path. Twitter started suspending their non-critical business travel and events, and encouraged their 5000 global staff to work from home if they are able and being mandatory for employees based in their Hong Kong, Japan, and South Korea offices with the intention to reduce the possibility of spread of the COVID-19 around the world. Few days later, this measure was a must for all Twitter employees globally and they announced that they were "one of the first companies to go to a work from home model in the face of COVID-19, but we don't

anticipate being one of the first to return to offices. So, if our employees are in a role and situation that enables them to work from home and they want to continue to do so forever, we will make that happen." (Christie, 2020)

Coinbase, the cryptocurrency exchange platform, made a similar movement. They suggested working from home for all their employees globally since March 2nd 2020 restricting business travels to essential travel only, to minimize personal travel and completely restricted to China, Hong Kong, Japan, Italy, and South Korea (Coinbase, 2020). Brian Armstrong, their CEO, tweeted "we're asking some employees to start working home this week. Working from home is not a complete solution but it may help slow the growth of infections." (Carrol, 2020)

Facebook also had a plan. They stated in May 2020 that their offices will start to reopen in July 2020 and cancelled all large in-person events until the end of next year but most probably the majority of their employees will be able to work from home until the end of the year as well. They gave full-time employees $1000 bonuses to cover any unexpected expenses caused by COVID-19 (Earley, 2020). Mark Zuckerberg, Facebook CEO, said "it's clear that Covid has changed a lot about our lives, and that certainly includes the way that most of us work. Coming out of this period, I expect that remote work is going to be a growing trend as well." (Conger, 2020).

2.4. Remote working in Ireland during COVID-19

Ahearne *et al.* (2020) have conducted a national online survey of remote working in Ireland during COVID-19 across a wide range of industries and sectors. A total of 7241 responses were received and the main findings that they have found are:

- 51% never worked remotely before COVID-19
- The top three challenges are:
  - Not being able to switch off from work
  - Collaboration and communication with colleagues and co-workers is harder
  - Poor physical workspace

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- The top three advantages are:
  - No traffic and no commute
  - Reduced costs of going to work and commuting
  - Greater flexibility as to how to manage the working day
- 83% indicated that they would like to work remotely after the crisis is over
- For those who want to work remotely post-COVID-19, the following are the key challenges reported in order of most cited:
  - Their organisation will not support it
  - Inadequate equipment and/or resources
  - Their manager will not support it

2.5. Employee Voice

Employee voice is a subject gaining importance year over year in small and big companies and in the human resource management field. Formal and informal programs have been developed to ensure that managers understand employee concerns and managers provide employees the space to express their concerns being listened to (Hirschman, 2008).

Wilkinson and Fay (2011) also say that "the term "voice" refers to how employees are able to have a say regarding work activities and decision-making issues within the organization in which they work". Employees' voice tools can give advantages to employers because it can secure general improvements. The relationship between employee voice and job satisfaction and the importance of trust in senior management for the organizational commitment can be affected by the employee voice.

We can understand the employee voice from four different points of views (table 4). First one is related to Human Resource Management and it is focused on performance. This view is considering that if we give information to have more understanding to the employees allowing them to give their ideas regarding the next steps in terms of business decisions, they will be more committed and this is linked with a high performance and engagement (Boxall and Purcell, 2003).

Wilkinson, Dundon, Marchington, and Ackers (2004) suggested that employee voice can generate positive impact from three different perspectives as well. First is valuing the employee contributions that may lead to improved behaviour and attitude, loyalty, and more cooperative relations. Second, it could lead to a better performance by increasing productivity in general and reducing absenteeism and better teamwork. Third could improve managerial systems helping employee's ideas, knowledge, and experience and opening the information to everyone.

Second point of view from political science is relating voice with the rights and the industrial citizenship or democratic humanism. First, the concept of industrial democracy leads to the participation of workers as a fundamental democratic right to influence managerial decision making. This brings free speech and human dignity (Budd, 2004). Workplace democracy should lead to develop skills and values that are useful for the broader society (Foley and Polyani, 2006).

Third point of view is coming from the industrial relations (IR) and sees voice as representative being positive for both the company and the workforce to have a voice mechanism (Freeman and Medoff, 1984). On one hand, employee voice could provide a positive impact on quality and productivity and on the other hand it could help to identify and deal with problems (Gollan and Wilkinson, 2007). Also, it is important to be aware that voice shapes employees' psychological and economic well-being. Further, it extends to the health of families and the quality of a country's democratic process (Budd and Zagelmeyer, 2010).

Fourth view is growing from the organizational behaviour (OB) and it is related with the autonomy of the work groups' giving some degree of control. Workers can have a sense of responsibility when they are semi-autonomous to allocate their own tasks workflow and production, for example, considering to improve their targets (Wall and Martin, 1987).

Table 4 is representing the summary of theoretical paradigms

Literature Strand	Schemes	Focus	Form of Vehicle	Philosophy
HRM	Briefing, open door policy; suggestion schemes	Performance	Individual	Efficiency
Industrial relations	Collective bargaining; works council; social partnership; non-union employee representation	Power, Control	Representative	Countervailing power
Industrial democracy	Workers on boards	Decision making	Representative	Rights
Organizational behavior	Teams; groups	Job redesign	Individuals and groups	Autonomy and human needs

2.6. Employee Engagement

Employee engagement is one of the most powerful tools that a company can have. It is related with their employees and this is the most important resource in a company because people cannot be duplicated or imitated by the competitors (Baumruk, 2004). Even with this importance, employee engagement is still an area to be developed to keep providing good performance and effectiveness, always innovating with a co-operative work environment (Katz and Kahn, 1966).

In 1990, Kahn (1990, p. 694) already described the concept of the employee engagement like "the harnessing of organization members' selves to their work roles; in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances". Kahn added three psychological engagement conditions to have an employee properly engaged: meaningfulness (work elements), safety (social elements, including management style, process, and organisational norms) and availability (individual distractions).

Another important study is commented by the Gallup organisation through Buckingham and Coffman (1999) who express that engagement is "the right people in the right roles with the right managers drive employee engagement" and they are adding a very interesting part saying that "a fully engaged employee is one who could answer yes to all 12 questions on Gallup's workplace questionnaire". Gallup (2002) describes three types of engagement for the employees:

- Engaged employees: they are the top performers always seeking to provide excellence.
- Not engaged employees: the ones only focused on the daily tasks but not in the company goals.
- Actively disengaged employees: They not perform well individually nor for the teammates and the organisation.

More recently, Gallup researchers Fleming and Asplund (2007) introduced the spiritual side into the cognitive and emotional aspects presenting employee engagement as: "the ability to capture the heads, hearts, and souls of your employees to instil an intrinsic desire and passion for excellence".

Joshi and Sodhi (2011) identified six management functions as critical determinants of executive's engagement:

- Job content (autonomy, challenging opportunities for learning)
- Compensation/monetary benefits (attractive salary vis-à -vis qualifications and responsibility, adequate compensation for the work and intra-organisation parity)
- Work-life balance (appreciative of personal needs, able to spend time with family)
- Top-management employee relations (approachability of top management, their values and ethical conduct, equality in treatment, respecting the views of subordinates, providing an environment of working together)
- Scope for advancement and career growth (well-designed policy, adequate opportunities for career growth and advancement, clearly laid down career growth paths; implementation of the promotion policy in a fair and transparent manner, help to the employees in achieving growth)
- Team orientation/team work (importance, cooperation in inter and intra-department teams).

2.7. Spanish expatriates in Ireland

The "Non-Irish Nationalities Living in Ireland" report shows the top ten non-Irish nationalities by population size based on Census 2016 (table 5). 535,475 non-Irish nationals were reported in April 2016. The ten nationalities profiled are Polish, UK, Lithuanian, Romanian, Latvian, Brazilian, Spanish, Italian, French and German were Polish nationals (122,515 people) made up the largest group while German nationals (11,531 people) were the smallest of the ten groups (Central Statistics Office, 2018).

The Central Statistics Office (2018) also reports that one of the largest increases was in the Spanish population. The Spanish population increased by 78% from 6,794 to 12,112 people between 2011 and 2016. This was the biggest percentage increase of the nationalities profiled. 52% of Spanish nationals were in Dublin city and suburbs like one of the highest concentrations. 68% of Spanish nationals were more likely to be single, reflecting the relatively young age of these populations. 85% of them aged 25 to 34 years old in April 2016. 18% of the Spanish working population were employed in the information and communication industry.

Table 5: Census 2016 -Non-Irish Nationalities Living in Ireland
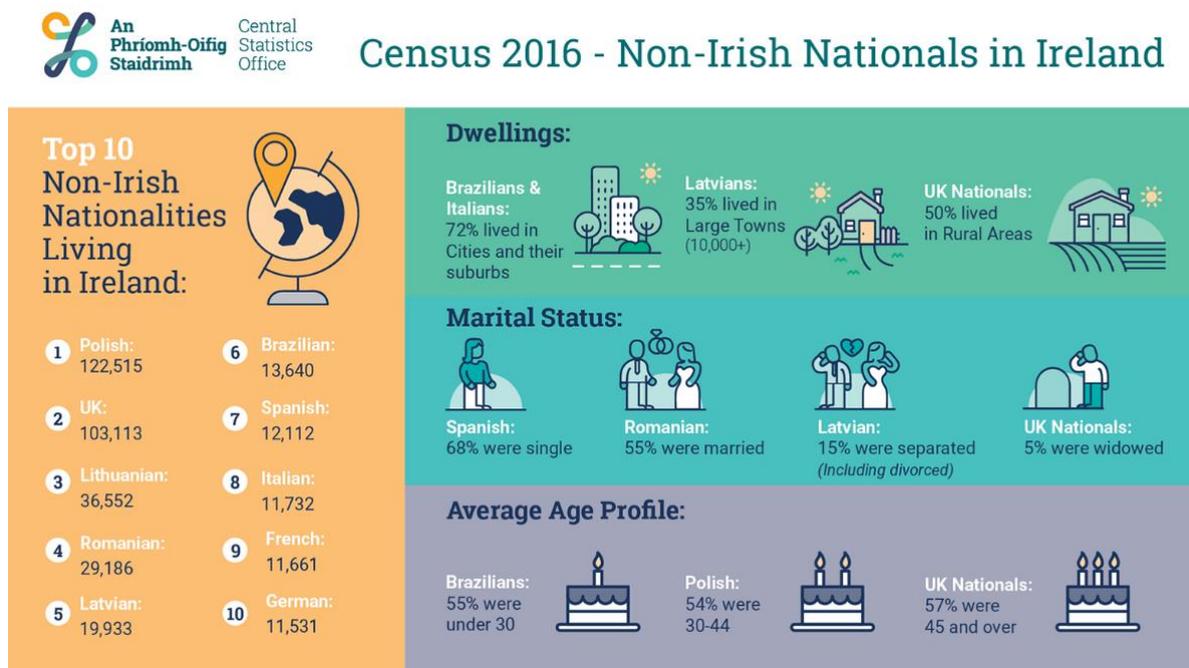
2.8. Conclusions

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) was an unexpected situation that impacted everyone globally. Multinationals companies in Dublin (Ireland) took measures and their employees started to work remotely considering their safety and health. Remote working in Ireland was not a default practice, therefore, there is a risk on its impact in their employees' performance. A potential vulnerable group were the Spanish nationals working in multinational companies in Dublin (Ireland) considering its expansion.

There are many studies regarding the employee voice related with human resources management recognising the benefits for companies, teams and organisations in general. An established internal communication system reinforces employee involvement and participation increasing their satisfaction but, at the same time, there is a gap between the relationship of voice and engagement (Gruman and Saks, 2014). Menara, Rucka and Welchb (2017) recent findings are also suggesting that "paying attention to both sides of the employee voice coin is necessary to realise the potential of organisational employee engagement".

The present research focuses on the internal communication, the voice, as a very important area to consider in a company to measure employee engagement and the available mechanisms to determine how relevant is the voice for the Spanish nationals' engagement in multinational companies in Dublin (Ireland) during the COVID-19 global pandemic.

There is a lack of view regarding the employee voice compared with Joshi and Sodhi (2011) six management functions to measure employee engagement and to identify the importance of the employee voice.

We conclude that there is space to investigate in the field on how employee voice affects employee engagement in general and more concretely during Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).

This investigation pretends to add value and knowledge to this gap and field identified during the literature review considering the little studies, investigations and previous suggestions from other authors related to that topic and direction.

3. Research questions

3.1 Research title

How Employee Voice affects Employee Engagement? A research across Spanish nationals working in multinational companies in Dublin (Ireland) during Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).

3.2. Central question

There are different factors affecting the employee engagement but there is a lack of study regarding the voice and how it is impacting the involvement, motivation and engagement of employees. This conclusion creates the central question of this dissertation:

- How Employee Voice affects Employee Engagement?

3.3. Associated sub-questions

The associated sub-questions are related to understand a bit further the current status of employee engagement comparing employee voice with Joshi and Sodhi (2011) six management functions to identify the importance and real impact of employee voice among Spanish nationals working in multinational companies in Dublin (Ireland) during COVID-19 period:

1. Are Spanish nationals working in multinational companies in Dublin engaged during COVID-19 period?
2. How are job content, compensation, work-life balance, management relations, career path and team environment affecting Spanish nationals working in multinational companies in Dublin during COVID-19 period?
3. How does employee voice impact employee engagement compared with the six key management functions to Spanish nationals working in multinational companies in Dublin during COVID-19 period?

4. Methodology

4.1. Research ethics

Quinlan *et al.* (2019) state that "ethics can be defined very simply as a process of reasoning in terms of the right thing to do. In business, as in any other endeavour, ethics is about doing the right thing. In research, it is about doing your work honestly, with integrity, doing it safely and ensuring no harm results to anyone or anything". Do no harm, integrity, plagiarism, validity, power, transparency, reflective practitioner, anonymity and confidentiality and informed consent are ethical principles to consider when conducting an investigation.

Bryman and Bell (2007) developed ten points to represent the most important principles related to ethical considerations in dissertations:

1. Research participants should not be subjected to harm in any ways whatsoever.
2. Respect for the dignity of research participants should be prioritised.
3. Full consent should be obtained from the participants prior to the study.
4. The protection of the privacy of research participants has to be ensured.
5. Adequate level of confidentiality of the research data should be ensured.
6. Anonymity of individuals and organisations participating in the research has to be ensured.
7. Any deception or exaggeration about the aims and objectives of the research must be avoided.
8. Affiliations in any forms, sources of funding, as well as any possible conflicts of interests have to be declared.
9. Any type of communication in relation to the research should be done with honesty and transparency.
10. Any type of misleading information, as well as representation of primary data findings in a biased way must be avoided.

The questionnaire participation consent form is added in the appendix 2.

4.2. Research philosophy

The philosophical framework provides the view from where the research is situated considering the world. Questions related to the nature of reality are questions of ontology and this is related to the study of being. Questions related to the methodology and methods that validate new knowledge are questions related to epistemology and this is related to knowledge and processes through which knowledge is created. Quinlan *et al.* (2019) mention also three epistemological positions: positivism, social constructionism and interpretivism and some philosophical frameworks to consider: positivism, constructivism, interpretivism, hermeneutics, symbolic interactionism, functionalism, structuralism, critical theory, feminism, post-structuralism and post-modernism.

This research underpins a positivism approach that "holds that there is one objective reality; reality is singular and separate from consciousness" to answer the first sub-question and a constructive interpretivism approach that "holds that social phenomena develop in social contexts and that individuals and groups create in part their own realities" and also that "all knowledge is matter of interpretation" to answer the second and third sub-questions (Quinlan *et al.,* 2019).

4.3. Mixed methods research

Research approaches are constantly changing and evolving in response to the complex, interconnected global communities and their needs in our world. If we think in terms of trends and measurement orientation, quantitative research provides this gathering data from many individuals across large samples. On the other hand. If we think in terms of voices considering a contextualized background, participants' experiences and its meanings, we are talking about qualitative research (Creswell, 2008). It can be assumed that the combination of both approaches leads to a stronger and a better understanding of research problems than either approach alone (Creswell and Garrett, 2008). This "third movement" in the evolution of research methodology has been called "mixed methods research" (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003).

Mixed methods research demands a mixed methods research question or objective integrating and interconnecting both quantitative and qualitative methods. A mixed methods study does not consider either qualitative or qualitative research alone because some combination of both provides the best information for the research questions or hypotheses narrowing and focus the purpose statement. Conclusions of the study will also include both approaches. This new form of question in research methods is called "hybrid" or "integrated" question by Tashakkori and Creswell (2007).

Tashakkori and Creswell (2007) also observed three models and practices related with mixed research methods:

1. Quantitative and qualitative questions or hypotheses should be written separately at the beginning of the study or when they appear in the research if stages or phases are not being followed during the investigation.
2. Write separately quantitative questions or hypothesis and qualitative questions first and then a mixed methods question. This way is highlighting the importance of both methods as well as their combined strength.
3. Last model approaches first a mixed method (hybrid, integrated) question only without including separate quantitative and qualitative questions with the idea to reflect the procedures or the content. This model breaks the mixed method question later into separate quantitative and qualitative sub-questions to answer in each strand or phase of the study. This approach aims to integrate and connect the quantitative and qualitative phases of the investigation considering that the sum of both parts is greater than each part.

4.4. Mixed methods research instrument

Different procedures of collecting data are being followed for researchers to obtain information during their investigations. Usually, quantitative studies use tests with closed-ended questionnaires to get, analyse and interpret the data. On the other side, qualitative methods elaborate interviews, diaries, journals or classroom observations with open-ended questionnaires to obtain, analyse and conclude their findings. In addition to this, mixed method approaches usually use closed-ended and

open-ended questionnaires, interviews and classroom observation to collect information. This combined way of gathering data, where the items of the questionnaires are mainly developed based on the research objectives and research questions, can supplement each other and boost the validity of the information obtained (Zohrabi, 2013).

Zohrabi (2013) exposed that questionnaires are one of the primary sources of data collection and they can appear in three types: closed-ended (or structured) questionnaires, open-ended (or unstructured) questionnaires or a mixture of closed-ended and open-ended questionnaires. Some advantages of questionnaires are that they can collect data on a large-scale basis, they can be sent to a great number of people and they are cost-efficient. Richards and Schmidt (2002) considered also that the researcher should ensure that it is "valid, reliable and unambiguous" like a critical point of this instrument.

This research applies a questionnaire with a mixture of closed-ended and open-ended questions following Zohrabi (2013) study and considering the central question and associated sub-questions of this investigation.

The questionnaire is broken down into three sections. The first part of the survey applies closed-ended questions to understand the current employee engagement level. The second part is defined by open-ended questions to measure the six key management functions that are impacting the employee engagement. Lastly, the third part is created with open-ended questions as well to understand directly how the employee voice is impacting Spanish employees' engagement during the COVID-19 period.

First part of the questionnaire followed the Gallup Q12 Index to identify the current sample employee engagement rate. Gallup's employee engagement survey has a relevant historical development and cross-cultural testing (Gallup, 2011).

Second part of the survey considered is Joshi and Sodhi (2011) six management functions with the intention to measure how the working environment, leadership, team and co-worker relationship, training and career development, compensation programme, policies and procedures and workplace wellbeing impacts the employee engagement.

Lastly, the third section of the questionnaire is directly narrowed to employee voice following the literature review authors findings and where the focus of this investigation is.

In addition to these three sections, the questionnaire also includes some demographic and geographic initial questions to have more accurate results and relevant future investigations direction.

The questionnaire developed for this investigation can be found in appendix 3.

4.5. Mixed methods sampling technique

Teddlie and Yu (2007) exposed four broad categories for sampling procedures: probability, purposive, convenience and mixed methods sampling. Probability sampling techniques are focused on quantitative oriented studies with a large number of units from a population. Purposive sampling techniques are used in qualitative studies and might define a reduced group of individuals linked with the research questions. Convenience sampling is focused on the accessibility and willingness of the sample to participate in the study. And mixed methods sampling strategies select cases using both probability sampling to increase validity and purposive sampling to increase transferability for the research investigation.

One basic mixed methods sampling strategy defined by Teddlie and Yu (2007) is stratified purposive sampling (quota sampling): "The stratified nature of this sampling procedure is characteristic of probability sampling, whereas the small number of cases typically generated through it is characteristic of purposive sampling". In this technique, the group of interest is divided first and then a small number of cases is selected to study.

This investigation approach to identify the sample to study is targeting first all the expatriate employees working in multinational companies in Dublin (Ireland) and then dividing this whole sample into nationalities taking finally the Spanish one considering that it is one of the largest increases from 2011 to 2016 (Central Statistics Office, 2018).

A virtual sampling method was followed on this study and LinkedIn network was considered to study the "hard-to-reach" population. This method facilitates the identification of individuals with barriers to access that in this investigation were Spanish nationals working in multinational companies in Dublin (Ireland). Therefore, this non-probabilistic sample method can increase the sample size and is representativeness (Baltar and Brunet, 2012). LinkedIn is a relevant and well-established social network dedicated to professional networking with more than 200 million members in more than 200 countries (Mirabeau *et al.*, 2013).

The first search produced 76 candidates using the following filters: 1st degree connections, Dublin Ireland location and Spanish profile language. Finally, 57 participants were considered to develop the investigation excluding from the first search the ones that not reached the expectations. The strategy of direct messaging of 1st degree connections with the link to the survey was followed but it was limited by the few first-degree connections that fit the search criteria that the researcher had. 25 respondents answered the online questionnaire and it resulted in 44% response rate. In addition to the "hard-to-reach" population and the limited first-degree connections of the researcher, one of the main problems using Internet in social research is the selection bias and low response rate (Baltar and Brunet, 2012).

4.6. Data collection method

The first quantitative part of this study followed numerical research. It was conducted assigning numbers in a reliable and valid way to generate measurable numerical data. The scale applied is 1 for strongly "no", 2 for slightly "no", 3 for a neutral position, 4 for slightly "yes" and 5 for strongly "yes" (Quinlan *et al.*, 2019).

The second and third qualitative parts of this study applied the grounded theory method using the open coding procedure (Lawrence and Tar, 2013).

Strauss (1987) defined the grounded theory like "a general style of doing analysis that does not depend on any particular disciplinary perspectives and, therefore,

would seem to lend itself to information systems research, which can be described as a hybrid discipline".

Grounded theory has its attention on theory development and Strauss and Corbin (1998) explained that "theory is grounded when it emerges from and generates explanations of relationships and events that reflect the life experiences of those people and processes that the researcher is attempting to understand. It also differs from other qualitative approaches, because traditional qualitative approaches collect data first before commencing the analysis and long after they have left the research site. In contrast, grounded theory uses the emerging theoretical categories to shape the data collection while doing the fieldwork (data collection and analysis proceed simultaneously). By analysing data from the lived experience of the research participants, the researcher can, from the beginning, attend to how they construct their world".

Regarding the open coding procedure, Corbin and Strauss (1990) described it like "the analytic process through which concepts are identified and their properties and dimensions are discovered in data". This part of analysis is naming and categorising the data through a close examination breaking it down into different parts and compared for similarities and differences.

A pilot study was conducted and shared to improve the quality of the research instrument reducing assumptions from the researcher, to identify resistances among the respondents and to verify and validate the reliability of the questionnaire before the real study took place (Quinlan *et al.*, 2019).

Two participants cooperated answering the pilot questionnaire. This was crucial to generate a solid data collection instrument. Feedback obtained was related to the lack of focus of the questions. They had to be more narrowed especially on the last part when asking about employee voice to be able to get exactly the correct direction to the central question of this study with the expected participants' answers.

4.7. Scope and limitations

Price and Murnan (2004) explained that "a limitation of a study design or instrument is the systematic bias that the researcher did not or could not control and which could inappropriately affect the results". On the other hand, "a delimitation is a systematic bias intentionally introduced into the study design or instrument by the researcher. In other words, the researcher has control over a delimitation" but not over a limitation.

Limitations to consider for this investigation were as follows:

1. Global pandemic: Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) was a completely new situation for all the population globally. First cases reported in China were in December 2019 and in March 2020 for Ireland. Hence, there was non-existent literature for this investigation to review at the very beginning of the year and a very little after. In contrast, this situation encouraged the researcher to consider this limitation anyway and contribute with additional value to the community of researchers and knowledge for future researchers' investigations.

2. Limited literature: In addition to the little COVID-19 studies, previous investigations regarding the relation between Employee Voice and Employee Engagement were not widely present either. At the same time, this limitation also inspired the researcher to proceed with the central question exposed with the idea to add further information to this relatively new field.

3. Restricted access to multinational companies to get the data: Initially, this investigation aimed to study if Employee Voice is affecting Employee Engagement across multilingual employees working in a multinational company in the Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) service industry in Dublin (Ireland) but the request to share a survey in the company selected among their employees was not approved. This unexpected situation forced the researcher to reformulate the investigation.

4. Participants availability: It was assumed that participants would be open to participate and with plenty of time to complete the questionnaire during COVID-19 period but it was found during the data collection process that in general they were busier than expected while working from home and their availability was limited.

Delimitations to consider for this investigation were as follows:

1. Spanish nationals: This investigation considered only employees of Spanish nationality working for multinational companies for its study. Therefore, it is unclear that the findings and conclusions can be extrapolated to all expatriate nationals.

2. Limited sample size: Spanish nationals were relatively close (1st degree connection in LinkedIn) to the researcher during the data collection process and the final sample was small. It is important to consider the potential personal bias on this point and the final sample size.

3. Limited multinationals: The limited sample size might create a limited number of multinationals companies reached during the study. It is unclear the final total number of multinationals involved in the investigation considering the confidentiality of the questionnaire.

4. Multinational companies in Dublin (Ireland): It is unclear that the results of this investigation can be extrapolated to the whole country and to all multinational companies in Ireland considering that the scope was delimited to Dublin.

5. Analysis and Findings

The main goal of this study is to identify how employee voice affects employee engagement. This chapter exposes the analysis and findings of the questionnaire answers after the data collection process. 25 respondents answered the online questionnaire and it resulted in 44% response rate.

5.1 Demographic and geographic

The demographic and geographic results revealed that the overall profile of the responders is female or male, between 25 and 44 years old but mainly from 30 to 34 with a master's degree. They are under a permanent full-time contract working in multinational companies with more than 10000 employees in the tech industry for more than 24 months. They are working from home during the coronavirus disease period in the same country where their company office is based from 9am to 5pm or similar.

The answers of the participants for the first initial part were as follows:

- Gender:
  - 52% - Female
  - 48% - Males

- What is your age?
  - 23% - 25-29 years old
  - 31% - 30-34 years old
  - 23% - 35-39 years old
  - 23% - 40-44 years old

- What is the highest level of education you have completed?
  - 54% - Master's degree
  - 31% - Bachelor's degree
  - 15% - High school graduate, diploma or equivalent.

- Which label best describes the nature of your employment?
  - 96% - Permanent full-time
  - 4% - Fixed-term or specific-purpose contract

- What is the size of the side you are working for?
  - 12% - 500-1000 employees
  - 12% - 1000-3000 employees
  - 4% - 3000-5000 employees
  - 12% - 5000-10000 employees
  - 48% - 10000+ employees

- What sector do you work in?
  - 100% - Private sector

- What sector/industry do you work for?
  - 71% - Tech (Google, Facebook, HubSpot, Microsoft, LinkedIn...) industry
  - 4% - Financial Services, Banking and Business Consultancy (Deloitte, Accenture, KPMG, PWC, EY, Circle, Bank of America, Citibank, BNP Paribas, HSBC, JPMorgan...) industry
  - 4% - Logistics and Storage (UPS, FedEx, Ryanair, Dublin Airport Authority (DAA), Irish Rail, Ballyvesey Holdings, Bus Éireann...) industry
  - 4% - IT and Software Development (HST Solutions, Mawla, EireSoft Limited, eDuce Software, Sonalake...) industry
  - 4% - Professional Services (Law, Accounting, Research and Development...) industry
  - 4% - Arts and Recreation (The Arts Council, Creative Ireland, Culture Ireland, Business to Arts, Sport Ireland, Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport, Dublin City Council Cultural Company, Dublin City Arts Office...) industry

- Where is your work primarily based during the COVID-19 period?
  - 32% - Home, Different country where my company office is based

- - 64% - Home, Same country where my company office is based
  - 4% - Office, Same country where my company office is based

- What hours are you expected to work on a typical working day?
  - 96% - 9am-5pm or similar
  - 4% - Flexitime

- Since when are you working for your current company?
  - 8% - 1-6 months
  - 20% - 6-12 months
  - 28% - 18-24 months
  - 40% - 24+ months

5.2. Employee Engagement

The first part of the questionnaire applies closed-ended questions to understand the current employee engagement level with the intention to answer the first sub-question of this study:

- Are Spanish nationals working in multinational companies in Dublin engaged during COVID-19 period?

Gallup organisation through Buckingham and Coffman (1999) expressed that "the right people in the right roles with the right managers drive employee engagement" and they are adding that "a fully engaged employee is one who could answer yes to all 12 questions on Gallup's workplace questionnaire". Gallup (2002) describes three types of engagement for the employees:

- Engaged employees: they are the top performers always seeking to provide excellence.
- Not engaged employees: the ones only focused on the daily tasks but not in the company goals.
- Actively disengaged employees: They not perform well individually nor for the teammates and the organisation.

The analysis of the results revealed that the Spanish nationals working in multinational companies in Dublin (Ireland) during COVID-19 period know what is expected from them at work, they have the materials and equipment to do their job right and they have the opportunity to do what they do best every day. They also received a recognition or praise for doing good work in the last seven days, that it seems that their supervisor or someone at work cares about them and that someone at work encouraged their development. They confirmed that their opinions seem to count and the mission/purpose of their company makes them feel their job is important. They expressed that their associates (fellow employees) are committed to do quality work and they have a best friend at work. In the last month, someone at work talked to them about their progress and they had opportunities to learn and grow in the last three months as well.

Overall, the findings concluded that 73% of the Spanish nationals working in multinational companies in Dublin (Ireland) during COVID-19 period are engaged employees, top performers seeking to provide excellence.

27% are not engaged employees or disengaged employees because they do not have the opportunity to do what they do best every day (37%), their opinion does not seem to count (29%), the mission/purpose of their company does not make they feel their job is important (37%) or no one talk to them about their progress in the last month (46%).

This 29% that their opinions do not seem to count and the 46% that no one talked to them about their progress in the last month are results directly related to the central question of this investigation, where employee voice, internal communication in a company, confirms that is impacting the employee engagement.

The answers of the participants following Gallup's workplace questionnaire were as follows:

Do you know what is expected of you at work?

- 33% - Slightly yes
- 67% - Strongly yes

Do you have the materials and equipment to do your work right?

- 4% - Slightly no
- 12% - Neutral
- 33% - Slightly yes
- 50% - Strongly yes

Do you have the opportunity to do what you do best every day?

- 12% - Slightly no
- 25% - Neutral
- 29% - Slightly yes
- 33% - Strongly yes

In the last seven days, have you received recognition or praise for doing good work?

- 4% - Strongly no
- 12% - Slightly no
- 33% - Slightly yes
- 50% - Strongly yes

Does your supervisor, or someone at work, seem to care about you as a person?

- 4% - Slightly no
- 8% - Neutral
- 29% - Slightly yes
- 58% - Strongly yes

Is there someone at work who encourages your development?

- 4% - Strongly no
- 8% - Slightly no
- 12% - Neutral
- 33% - Slightly yes
- 42% - Strongly yes

Do your opinions seem to count?

- 4% - Slightly no
- 25% - Neutral
- 17% - Slightly yes
- 54% - Strongly yes

Does the mission/purpose of your company make you feel your job is important?

- 4% - Strongly no
- 8% - Slightly no
- 25% - Neutral
- 29% - Slightly yes
- 33% - Strongly yes

Are your associates (fellow employees) committed to doing quality work?

- 4% - Strongly no
- 4% - Slightly no
- 21% Neutral
- 38% - Slightly yes
- 33% - Strongly yes

Do you have a best friend at work?

- 12% - Strongly no
- 8% - Slightly no
- 12% - Neutral
- 33% - Slightly yes
- 33% - Strongly yes

In the last month, has someone at work talked to you about your progress?

- 12% - Strongly no
- 17% - Slightly no
- 17% - Neutral

- 21% - Slightly yes
- 33% - Strongly yes

In the last 3 months, have you had opportunities to learn and grow?

- 4% - Strongly no
- 12% - Slightly no
- 17% - Neutral
- 29% - Slightly yes
- 38% - Strongly yes

5.3. Key Management Functions

The second part of the questionnaire is defined by open-ended questions to measure the six key management functions that are impacting the employee engagement and to answer the second sub-question of the investigation:

- How are job content, compensation, work-life balance, management relations, career path and team environment affecting Spanish nationals working in multinational companies in Dublin during COVID-19 period?

Joshi and Sodhi (2011) identified the six management functions as critical determinants of executive's engagement:

- Job content (autonomy, challenging opportunities for learning)
- Compensation/monetary benefits (attractive salary vis-à -vis qualifications and responsibility, adequate compensation for the work and intra-organisation parity)
- Work-life balance (appreciative of personal needs, able to spend time with family)
- Top-management employee relations (approachability of top management, their values and ethical conduct, equality in treatment, respecting the views of subordinates, providing an environment of working together)
- Scope for advancement and career growth (well-designed policy, adequate opportunities for career growth and advancement, clearly laid down career

growth paths; implementation of the promotion policy in a fair and transparent manner, help to the employees in achieving growth)

- Team orientation/team work (importance, cooperation in inter and intra-department teams).

The analysis of the results revealed that the Spanish nationals working in multinational companies in Dublin (Ireland) during COVID-19 period appreciated their working environment in their project, the management style of their direct manager, their co-worker relationship, their current side policies and procedures and the wellbeing measures implemented in their side. On the other hand, they dislike their current training and career development plan and their current side compensation plan.

5.3.1. Working environment

Overall, Spanish nationals working in multinational companies in Dublin (Ireland) during COVID-19 period appreciated their working environment expressing that they like the fact that they have good support from their direct managers and because the team is respectul, helpful and friendly:

"I could not ask more from my manager. From a personal perspective unbeatable. From a professional perspective (understood as learning professionally) improvable. Overall, very happy"

"I like that my TL listens, he is approachable and tries to keep a good spirit within the team. That makes me feel supported. I think that sometimes he did not have a prompt response to our queries. However, during covid times this has improved a lot. Although I feel heard by my TL, there are certain things that are not heard by the top managers. What I mean is my TL listens to our complaints, but some things are not up to him."

"Nice work environment. Team is respectful, helpful and friendly. I really enjoy working in my team."

In opposition, frustration is present for them based on their lack of leadership and direction. Also, because they have a number-driven orientation but understanding that they all had a difficult period:

"My manager at this point is not leading the team, she is just navigating these unprecedented times with us and trying to support us in the biggest problems we might face on the way with clients. I understand it is a difficult situation for everyone but sometimes I feel this lack of ability to provide direction to the team is stalling our growth as individuals. I think we could get more learnings from a situation like the one we are living in."

"My manager is super focused on numbers and we clashed sometimes. We have really long 1:1 conversation regarding priorities and task ownership. About who should focus on the client and the people in the team. Over time we have established a better relationship and I appreciate that he takes my feedback on board. Working from home has improved our working relationship."

They feel isolated and stressed as well due to redundancies and worried about their jobs due to business cancelations and bad financial situation:

"Isolated and stressed. We discovered suddenly we were going to be made redundant after long layoff"

"I am demotivated since I work in the events industry which has been terribly affected by the pandemic. All our events have been cancelled and some of them postponed to 2021, but the financials look bad, and therefore our jobs are at risk."

5.3.2. Management style

Overall, Spanish nationals working in multinational companies in Dublin (Ireland) during COVID-19 period appreciated their direct manager management style. They concluded that is adequate, without micromanaging them and making them feel integrated:

"Management style is very adequate so I feel like I can do my job freely."

"Great management - non micromanaging at all"

"The management style is fine; they make me feel one more of the crew"

On the other hand, few respondents expressed that their direct managers do not want to interfere a lot and there was a lack of transparency, communication and willingness to motivate the team:

"His management style is very laid back. He doesn't want to interfere a lot with our job and doesn't like micromanaging. However, I think there should be a balance between letting us loose and being there to motivate, coach and help improve our performance. During these times, development has been a great concern due to disrupted cycles and the lack of transparency about the future. Talking about how this situation affected our plans (or not), would have been reassuring and would have helped solve the issue of feeling a lack of purpose."

"There is not enough communication, and there is a lack of willingness from management to motivate the team."

"My direct manager doesn't have the experience to do that. I think is not good enough, but I don't really care about it"

5.3.3. Team and co-worker relationship

Spanish nationals working in multinational companies in Dublin (Ireland) during COVID-19 period are satisfied with their team and co-workers' relationship because they have a good relationship and good communication while caring and supporting each other:

"We have a really good relationship and good communication (both work and non-work related) and we support each other to deliver high quality work"

"The relationship with my co-workers is excellent. Everybody helps each other and makes themselves available to solve problems. I am the most senior member of my team, which gives me a more general perspective and the responsibility to communicate issues (which have never occurred)"

"I have the best colleagues ever. All of them care for all in the team and always help you with everything you need"

On the other hand, they feel disconnected because the easy interactions were cut, it was hard to maintain a close relationship and their roles became more individualistic:

"Even though we often see each other on video calls, I feel disconnected. People in my team are making the effort to engage others creating online events but I personally think it is hard handling that many hours spent online to also add up social events in this digital context."

"I think there is a good relationship but the job is becoming a bit more individualistic due to people working from home."

"I like my team; we are very supportive and helping each other. However, the covid situation has affected the easy interactions, as of now mainly it should be by chat or email and these difficulties sometimes to convey the right message. Especially when requesting some help. Sometimes that made me feel uneasy, especially at the beginning of the pandemic, when I felt the difficulties of working remotely."

"I feel like it has been hard to maintain a close relationship with my team and my co-workers during this period. Some of them have been really disconnected due to the situation and since we can't see each other every day, we just haven't spoken for weeks. Relationships have become a little bit more distant and colder, having sometimes the feeling of being a one-man army and not as part of a team."

5.3.4. Training and career development plan

Spanish nationals working in multinational companies in Dublin (Ireland) during COVID-19 period are not satisfied with their training and career development plan. They expressed that everything stopped or they simply did not have it:

"During COVID everything has stopped, even my promotion so it is not something I am happy with. However, I understand the situation and it was just postponed."

"I don't think the company provides a good career development. In fact, the lack of career development is the reason to consider looking for other job opportunities."

"It's frozen at the moment at the corporate level. Therefore, the career development plan is something to be improved drastically in my organization. Directors are aware of it and are trying to implement measures."

On the other hand, few respondents answered that their companies relaunched their training programs:

"During COVID 19 the training delivery opportunities have stopped for the first few months. Now the training team for operations is starting to relaunch training programs for internal and external studies."

"To be honest the training plans have improved at the last part of the lock down, as the company has improved its strategy by offering us more options of courses than before. I like that as before I tried to use the company's development program, but somehow it was not easy to do. With the pandemic they came up with a better plan, which I am thankful for. I feel that I have more interesting options and that makes me happy."

5.3.5. Compensation plan

The current compensation plan is also another factor that the Spanish nationals working in multinational companies in Dublin (Ireland) during COVID-19 period are not satisfied. They expressed that they lost them while working from home, that it could be much better or that it is not fair because is based on language-based compensation:

"Hourly compensation + bonuses and extra perks like food, gym, help in paying studies (none of these present while working from home)"

"Salary and bonus remain there but the rest of the perks that I was used to like: food, gym access, medical insurance, etc whilst working from home faded out. I feel it is

not fair and that I might be given some perks even if the situation has changed but I don't feel entitled to ask for it."

"I think it could be much better, and this is one of the reasons why I would consider a move to another company."

"The company does not have fair employee compensation, because it is not based on knowledge or experience, it is language-based compensation. And there is no salary increase whatsoever, which makes it difficult to consider a long career path in the company."

On the other hand, some of the respondents feel appreciated and with good compensations:

"I feel like they really care about employees and their wellbeing. Before COVID the compensation plan was great, but after COVID happened they added a working from home allowance of 500€ to help you create a good working environment at home, they covered 50% of one family meal a week to support local businesses, Meditation app memberships, gym and yoga online classes, HR weekly check-ins…"

"Very happy as the compensations are great"

"Really happy with my compensation"

"Very adequate. I feel valued."

5.3.6. Policies and procedures

Overall, Spanish nationals working in multinational companies in Dublin (Ireland) during COVID-19 period are satisfied with their current policies and procedures. They understand them considering the situation and because their companies prioritize their health and safety first:

"I think they are ok, and totally reasonable for the current situation."

"I think that considering the unplanned situation, the team has worked around the clock to push to create awareness of policies that were in place."

"The new situation is a challenge for all employees and companies. We are learning to do everything again in a different way."

"I used to work from home 2 days a week so the changes to work fully from home did not have an impact in my life."

"The company has proved to have a lot of prudence and quick adaptability"

"I love to prioritize our health and safety first. They adapted so easily to make our work possible from home."

"Most of the policies and procedures we've adopted during covid-19 have been great. I really liked the idea of making WFH optional until the end of year, allowing people to get closer to their families and so on. During a time when covid-19 has taken us apart from our loved ones, coming back to them helped improve wellbeing. The company has also been taking care of any mental problems or insecurities that could have arisen from the situation. Allowing employees to expense furniture, equipment, some bills etc... also helped create a balanced workplace where the workers can feel comfortable."

"We are taking it seriously. We have been working remotely since March and until further notice. If we return to the office, we will consider building glass partitions or similar to protect each other. Also, the entire team has completed a course on prevention of infections in tourism to guarantee the safety of our clients."

In contrast, they also expressed that they lost their flexibility to manage their working hours, that is a complete mess and they became stricter:

"The work process has been similar to office work, but I feel I spend more time in front of the computer than before. Mixing lunch hours with work hours. Also we used to have the flexibility to manage our working hours, and we don't have that anymore."

"A complete mess. I'm not agree at all."

I understand that policies were necessary when changing our work place at home, especially data protection. Also, the login and logout times became really strict, so we lost our flexible time. All was done with a purpose to maintain a work structure

which I understand. At the beginning it made me feel uneasy, as I was very concerned to follow the rules strictly and I worried that something may happen. Now it is ok."

5.3.7. Wellbeing

Overall, Spanish nationals working in multinational companies in Dublin (Ireland) during COVID-19 period are satisfied with their current wellbeing measures implemented. They expressed that they have lots of new resources and measures in place:

"We have lots of new resources like free subscription to platforms, for example Headspace. I am happy the company is thinking about my wellbeing during this time. Nevertheless, some policies have changed too and we are limited in some areas."

"There have been a lot of measures in place to improve the wellbeing of the people during these uncertain times. From virtual yoga/pilates classes subscriptions to mindfulness training. Subscriptions to meditation apps. 2 weeks daily sessions about resilience."

"A lot of wellbeing measures were implemented, it was okay. It is good for people who live on their own."

On the other hand, they feel that the company became more demanding despite the wellbeing measures.

"It is true that the company provides us with information about how to deal with this tough situation and take care of our wellbeing. In addition, due to the circumstances it is very challenging to work at full capacity, as when we were in the office. But I feel that in that sense the company has become more demanding of its workers. That resulted in many people working overtime. Which makes me feel that in that sense the company did not do a great job. Some days I feel exhausted."

5.4. Employee Voice

The third part of the questionnaire is created to understand directly how the employee voice is impacting Spanish employees' engagement during the COVID-19 period and to answer the third sub-question of this study:

- How does employee voice impact employee engagement compared with the six key management functions to Spanish employees working in multinational companies in Dublin during COVID-19 period?

Wilkinson and Fay (2011) said that "the term "voice" refers to how employees are able to have a say regarding work activities and decision-making issues within the organization in which they work". Employees' voice tools can give advantages to employers because it can secure general improvements. The relationship between employee voice and job satisfaction and the importance of trust in senior management for the organizational commitment can be affected by the employee voice.

The analysis of the results revealed that Spanish employees working in multinational companies in Dublin during COVID-19 period have a wide number of internal communication channels available to provide their feedback (issues, concerns, new ideas) like "email", "team meetings", "surveys", "internal chats", "video calls", "one to one" or their "direct managers" and that this high amount of channels "overwhelmed" them.

They are not satisfied with the management of the company because they "do not implement any actions" considering the feedback given or it is not possible "because the client did not approve them". They would like to have "a more tailored approach to be able to provide the right support".

On the other hand, they did not have available "internal surveys" or "face-to-face meetings" during COVID-19 period and this is generating frustration because they "feel helpless" or losing part of the non-verbal communication.

The most effective communication channels are the internal "chats" and "video calls" because they are "quickly actionable and replace the lack of human touch". They

consider positive their "Team Leader conversations to identify issues and difficulties" together and "address them during the same call".

The less effective communication channels are the "email" because they experienced "long delays" for the answers and the "surveys or questionnaires" because they "lost visibility after their feedback was sent" and "they were not informed of the actions taken" if any.

Overall, we can conclude that employee voice is affecting negatively Spanish nationals engagement working in multinational companies in Dublin during COVID-19 period and more than their working environment in their project, the management style of their direct manager, their co-worker relationship, their current side policies and procedures and the wellbeing measures implemented in their side but not more than their current training and career development plan and their current side compensation plan.

In conclusion, Employee Voice is not impacting positively Employee Engagement for Spanish nationals working in multinational companies in Dublin during COVID-19 period.

5.4.1. Internal communications channels

Spanish nationals working in multinational companies in Dublin (Ireland) mention a wide number of internal communications channels that they have available to provide their feedback (issues, concerns, new ideas…) during COVID-19 period. They had available tools like email, team meetings, surveys, internal chats, video calls, one to one, or their direct managers.

They thought that there is "overcommunication in some topics and lack of transparency in others" and that "it's great having such an amount of channels to provide us with content" but there is "some repeated between them" and "this makes me feel a bit overwhelmed because I have the feeling that I can't follow everything". They "don't know which is the best channel" to use for their communications and

they suggested having "a tool where all could be submitted since we spend too much time communicating and recording each part of the process".

They also expressed that "the management of the company usually doesn't do any improvements based on any feedback" and based on this affirmation they "don't mind not having several communication channels" because they "think they are not going to take any actions" or "that the feedback is not always actionable as there are things that don't depend on us but the client".

They expressed that they would like to have a "more personalised approach" and "this makes me feel uneasy when I don't get the right support". They feel that "there is not enough support and not totally listened" in terms of "general feedback and concerns about workflows and processes".

The internal communication channels that Spanish nationals working in multinational companies in Dublin (Ireland) did not have available during COVID-19 period are "internal surveys" and "face-to-face meetings". On one hand, they think that they "have all that I could possibly have" and they "understand that it is not safe to do it at the moment, so we changed to digital channels". On the other side, they feel "angry" and "it would be good to be able to provide feedback on time processes or in terms of support. This situation sometimes makes me feel helpless, as I don't feel I am getting enough support". Regarding face-to-face meetings, they thought that they "are very important, as you can read the gestures of the other person".

The most effective internal communication channels that Spanish nationals working in multinational companies in Dublin (Ireland) have available during COVID-19 period are "internal chat" because "it is fast and actionable" or "video calls" because "are keeping the human touch alive despite the distance. The challenge is that I spent most of my day on calls, so I feel exhausted sometimes". They appreciated a lot their "monthly review", "1:1 meetings" with their "Team Leader" because they "can basically highlight and point out all the issues and difficulties I'm experiencing in a direct way and everything in the same call", they "are very personal" and they are "able to express how I was feeling, my concerns and ideas directly to management" and this "was definitely positive". In addition to this, they felt that "sometimes I could not be completely open about my situation. Talking about how covid-19 was affecting

me with my direct manager made me feel like I could be seen as weak or not so fit for the role at some points. This made me be a bit more reserved when commenting on how I was going through the process".

In contrast, the less effective internal communication channels that Spanish nationals working in multinational companies in Dublin (Ireland) have available to provide their feedback (issues, concerns, new ideas…) during COVID-19 period are "emails" because "sometimes you have to wait for a response for days" or "people don't even read it" and "surveys or questionnaires" to "let employees share how they have been managing the covid-19 situation" and because "they lack visibility of the discussion that happens after you send your response and the actions taken".

5.4.2. Internal responses

In general, Spanish nationals working in multinational companies in Dublin (Ireland) thought that their "feedback has been heard" and "it is amended" because "everybody was very attentive and it made me feel comfortable" when talking about the internal responses that they received during COVID-19 period. They "usually express my concerns in team meetings with leadership and I can see that they follow up with me by email or in the next meeting to give us an update or address the resolution of the situation". This situation made them "feel good" because they "are able to provide feedback to improve the company and our colleagues to work better."

They also considered that the "overall level of the responses was really high and sometimes surpassed expectations". They thought that "it was good to see how quickly the company reacted to the most pressing concerns and built resources around them". This made them "feel happy about being in a company that not only gives us security when most companies are not, but also increases the resources given to us during tough times" considering then "that they are putting the needs and wellbeing of employees first".

On the other hand, they also expressed that they received "no answer" or "got the impression that sometimes they are sent and only matters to one person but an entire department receives it". This situation made them "felt very stressed because

they were vague and ambiguous while I needed information so you have to keep following up on the same subject". The respondents "didn't understand them" either because they "think that the internal policy of my company didn't have the employees in the first place".

At the same time, they felt that "it is frustrating as we want to help to improve the processes", "angry" because "they were deliberately non responding information that i needed and they were very slow" or "demotivated and unconnected to my company" when they did not receive any internal responses during COVID-19 period after they provided their feedback.

5.4.3. Senior/executive/upper management

Spanish nationals working in multinational companies in Dublin (Ireland) thought that their senior/executive/upper management were "nearly absent", that "that we could be asked for some topics that have a direct influence on us before applying some type of changes" because "since Covid there is no communication with upper management." or that they are "helpless" because "they were not changing anything and when they knew about the layoff they disappeared. Silence." so they "would like to have a clear overview." during COVID-19 period.

On the other hand, some respondents said that they were "really committed to the situation and our clients making sure they took good care and have everything possible to help them" and they took "the time to schedule more regular meetings with the leadership team to keep us up to date". In addition, they understand that "they are trying their best to manage the situation" but sometimes "it becomes too controlling". This made them feel "too supervised and I feel they need to trust us more based on our previous performance". In general, they made them feel "very comfortable" also because they acknowledge that "everyone's working from home environment is different and that it was ok to not be at 100% all the time".

In conclusion, they expressed that "they have their ups and downs, sometimes they make you feel they care, but other times they don't communicate what is going on with the company and the other departments".

5.4.4. Engagement

Overall, the current engagement level during COVID-19 for Spanish nationals working in multinational companies in Dublin (Ireland) is quite neutral. They felt "somehow engaged" and "they prefer working from home" because they are "more productive" considering that they could be "more focused and you extend the time you work and you may have even more commitment than usual" and this "made me feel like a bit less detached from the office life".

On the other hand, they expressed that "it is not easy to separate your personal life from work" and "sometimes it is hard to maintain the motivation working from home with not many options to enjoy the time off and rest" so "low engagement can come from a lack of motivation". Some situations made them "feel frustrated" and "uncomfortable" because they "are all navigating this moment instead of planning a strategy to cope with it". They are also "very unengaged after how things developed and the reaction from high level management and Human Resources" or "the uncertainty in the events industry make you think about making career changes". They expressed that they are "a little bit tired and disappointed about my company" as well.

5.4.5. Satisfaction

To conclude the employee voice evaluation, the participants described their current satisfaction level during COVID-19 period as very neutral as well. On one hand, they were "good", "satisfied" or "happy" with "no complaints" considering that they "can clearly see the impact of my performance in the team results" and this made them feel "encouraging and fulfilling" and "more confident about my job". They "like the fact that I can work remotely as that is something I have pursued for a while".

On the other hand, they expressed that "loneliness of working from home on your own", that "the first months the entire situation had a big impact on my performance, my motivation and I was struggling to find the purpose of my actions" or that "the company could manage the situation a lot better" and this is "related to the lack of direction we are facing sometimes". They also said that they "would prefer that the

management trust more on their employees" because there was a "lack of communication, no motivation/encouragement received from" their side.

6. Discussion

6.1. Practical implications

The main goal of this study was to identify how Employee Voice affects Employee Engagement and to reach the conclusion this study followed three sub-questions that determined the results.

In general, Spanish nationals working in multinational companies in Dublin (Ireland) during COVID-19 period are engaged employees. It is well known that multinational companies in Dublin (Ireland) invest a lot of time and resources in developing a strong internal corporate culture to make their employees feel great and comfortable. They probably understand that employee engagement is one of the most powerful tools that a company can have and that this is the most important resource in a company because people cannot be duplicated or imitated by the competitors (Baumruk, 2004). The consequences of this might be that the Spanish nationals working in multinational companies in Dublin (Ireland) during COVID-19 period appreciated their working environment in their project, the management style of their direct manager, their co-worker relationship, their current side policies and procedures and the wellbeing measures implemented in their side.

On the other hand, Employee Voice is negatively affecting Spanish nationals working in multinational companies in Dublin during COVID-19 period and the lack of voice is affecting them more than their main benefits and perks but not more than their current training and career development and current side compensation plans. This situation probably happened because of the working from home and COVID-19 situation. Multinational companies were not ready and they did not have an emergency plan in place to deal with this kind of unexpected situation. Now, they have the responsibility and the challenge to create new training and career development and compensation plans for their employees considering the new situation and the additional benefits and perks agreed by contract with their

employees. If not, they have the risk to increase their attrition and turnover and lose traction inside their markets also if their competitors react faster and better.

Leadership should be trained on soft skills as well considering the new COVID-19 situation with the social distance and lack of human touch to keep the employee engagement up. Active-listening, emotional intelligence, resilience or assertiveness are skills that should be active and present more than ever before. Isolation is one of the new characteristics of this new situation where employees are working from home. Katz and Kahn (1966) already said that employee engagement requires innovation with a co-operative work environment, so new tools and techniques should be implemented to reinforce this situation.

6.2. Future research direction

For further research, it is important to consider the data collection instrument and collection process with diligence. It is recommended to use a survey with closed-ended questions and a bigger sample to be able to collect more data and solid results.

It is suggested also to continue this line of study including more or all expatriate nationals to be able to extrapolate the results to all the expatriates living and working in Dublin (Ireland) with the intention to improve their current engagement and performance. Following this suggestion, the same study can be applied to any kind of group or nationality.

Another recommendation is to focus the investigation as much as possible in only one topic without mixing different areas even if they are connected. A research process involves a lot of reflection and sometimes less is more.

Further lines of study are pointing the direction of how an established working from home system can impact the employee voice and their engagement if this situation becomes normal and accepted by companies and industries or what kind of perks and benefits employees should have, what kind of training and career development

plans should be in place and how they should be delivered to ensure engagement and efficiency.

Another important point to consider is what kind of tools and techniques Millennials and Generation Z requires to improve their voice and consequently their engagement especially while working from home.

7. Conclusions

The central question of this investigation aimed to understand how Employee Voice affects Employee Engagement.

In conclusion, Employee Voice is not impacting positively Employee Engagement for Spanish nationals working in multinational companies in Dublin during COVID-19 period. On the other hand, they are satisfied with their working environment in their project, the management style of their direct manager, their co-worker relationship, their current side policies and procedures and the wellbeing measures implemented in their side but not with their current training and career development plan and their current side compensation plan.

Regarding Employee Voice, they had many internal communication channels available to express their issues, concerns or new ideas but at the same time they felt overwhelmed about this high amount of options. They also felt dissatisfaction because their management did not consider their feedback and they would like to have more tailored support for better guidance.

They did not have available their internal surveys and face-to-face meetings and this generated a lack of satisfaction as well because they felt lost without proper guidance.

The most effective internal communication resources that they had were the internal chats, video calls and meetings with their Team Leads because they received quick answers to their issues and concerns.

The less effective communication resources were the email because there was a long delay between their submission and the response and surveys and questionnaires because they did not have visibility regarding the next steps and actions taken after its submission.

Overall, they thought that their opinion does not seem to count and no one talked to them about their progress in the last month either.

8. Recommendations and Financial implications

8.1. Internal communication channels

Multinational companies should delimitate their number of internal communications channels to reduce the frustration of their employees. They can create more order and structure regarding their workflow in terms of internal communications. They can define the use and workflow for each channel available considering the present issue to communicate from their employees and they can implement some sessions to clarify to their management and leadership board the internal use. This knowledge should be transferred to their team members as well. For example, emails can be used for general or not urgent communications considering the frustration that the employee experienced when they do not receive an answer quickly to their concerns. At the same time, it can be a deadline internally defined to take action with internal email communications that require an answer. Surveys and questionnaires should have a follow up communication and next steps defined after a feedback is submitted. This way the employee will have visibility and they will be informed regarding the next steps and action taken if any. The researcher recommends to the organisation to provide an internal training to their employees starting with their management about their internal communication channels available in the company and the efficient use to mitigate their frustration and improve their engagement and productivity.

8.2. Emotional Intelligence

Spanish nationals appreciated the quick connections and answers to their concerns during COVID-19 period. It is important that their direct managers are open and available to support them and answer their questions and to listen to them with the intention to provide guidance and support. Team Leaders can schedule regular meetings with their team members to be sure that they offer attention and dedicated and tailored support to their team members. The researcher suggests an Emotional Intelligence coaching and mentoring sessions for leadership to be able to understand and deal better with their employees' concerns.

8.3. Compensation and Career development plan

Participants expressed that their engagement was impacted negatively also for their lack of current training and career development plan and their current side compensation plan. The researcher recommends to create a new plan adapted to the COVID-19 circumstances to be able to compensate their employees and keep their engagement up.

8.4. Recommendations and Financial implications plan

Recommendations	Audience	Action	Duration and Cost*	Timeline	Stakeholder to get the budget
Internal communication channels	Leaders Team members	e-Learning	30 min to complete €50pp**	1. Jan to Feb: Supplier and content creation 2. March: Content review and pilot 3. April: Execution	Director Project Manager

Emotional Intelligence	Leaders	Coaching and mentoring	1 week €150pp**	1. Jan to Feb: Supplier and content creation 2. March: Content review and training plan 3. April: Execution	Director Project Manager
Compensation and Career development plan	Employees	e-Learning	30 min to complete €50pp**	1. July to Oct: HR to create the content 2. Nov to Dec: Content review and pilot 3. Jan: Execution	Human Resources Director Project Manager
Total Cost			**€2.5M**		

*Sample considered for calculations: 10000 employees

**Benchmark average cost

9. Reflection on personal learning

This investigation was a challenge but at the same time, it was great learning. Studying abroad in a language that is not my native one and specially doing a master was a big goal for me. At the same time, I knew that this is how we grow, how we learn and how we gain awareness, through knowledge, experience and out of our comfort zone.

I have realised that voice, the art of expressing yourself verbally, and having active-listening and the ability to provide support to our team members in our professional environment and to our families, friends and in general to everyone in our personal life is very important to maintain a good balance within yourself and with the world. Giving and receiving is a very powerful process that connects each other and creates social consistency.

I have closed 15 years of study, knowledge and experience executing this dissertation. I am very satisfied having this thesis, postgraduate diploma and master in Human Resource Management done and I would like to encourage everyone to take the step, to go across the line and challenge yourself to be yourself. As a HR professional, I would like to apply this new knowledge in my future roles and conversations with my workmates and potential talent and candidates to be hired.

In terms of business, markets and companies, I have seen that there is a huge gap to cover, an opportunity to learn a lot from COVID-19 period, realising how irrelevant our way of life can be for nature and that we have to coexist in harmony to ensure the proper development and also about how we should adapt to the new circumstances as soon as we can.

Leaders have a big responsibility to lead this change because we are giving direction and opening the way. Explorers of the world, of ourselves and of the system to understand the whole much better and be able to make better decisions thinking and feeling that we are all connected and together here and that every individual decision is impacting all of us. The butterfly effect.

On the other hand, it is our resilience, our capacity to adapt to unexpected circumstances, what makes us unique again, and again, and again, and thanks to this capacity we are able to grow, evolve and create.

Let´s be sure that our creation, our contribution, has a positive and valuable impact on our inner world and consequently in our outside world, personally and professionally.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 - Individual level dataset. Information on data sources, sample size and country years covered

Name	Years	Sample size (in thds)	GDP per capita (PPP)	Source
Albania	2002–2012	23	4'845–9'918	LSMS
Argentina	2004–2006	127	12'074–13'770	LFS
Armenia	2013–2013	1	8'979–8'979	STEP
Austria	1999–2017	1'034	34'938–51'524	LFS
Belgium	1999–2017	474	32'357–46'522	LFS
Bolivia	2012–2012	2	5'860–5'860	STEP
Brazil	2002–2006	723	8'358–9'515	LFS
Bulgaria	1995–2017	177	6'390–20'027	LSMS, LFS
China	2012–2012	1	10'596–10'596	STEP
Colombia	2012–2012	2	11'934–11'934	STEP
Cote d'Ivoire	1985–1988	13	2'429–2'734	LSMS
Croatia	2002–2017	155	13'750–24'368	LFS
Cyprus	1999–2017	207	25'255–36'137	LFS
Czech Republic	2002–2017	663	21'374–36'061	LFS
Denmark	1999–2017	511	33'525–49'607	LFS
Estonia	1999–2017	118	10'772–31'013	LFS
Ethiopia	2013–2014	46	1'248–1'357	LFS, UES
Finland	1999–2017	207	31'433–42'902	LFS
France	2003–2017	812	31'567–40'975	LFS
Georgia	2013–2013	1	9'254–9'254	STEP
Ghana	2013–2015	6	4'875–4'910	STEP, LFS
Greece	1999–2017	1'143	22'683–31'340	LFS
Hungary	2001–2017	1'179	16'448–27'531	LFS
Iceland	1999–2017	54	37'732–51'316	LFS
Iraq	2006–2006	27	5'223–5'223	LSMS
Ireland	1999–2017	1'071	33'680–73'297	LFS
Kenya	2013–2013	2	2'652–2'652	STEP
Laos	2012–2012	2	4'693–4'693	STEP
Latvia	2001–2017	154	10'921–26'643	LFS
Lithuania	1999–2017	277	10'373–30'936	LFS
Luxembourg	1999–2017	168	64'436–99'477	LFS
Macedonia	2013–2013	2	11'910–11'910	STEP
Malta	2009–2017	76	26'792–41'847	LFS
Mexico	2005–2005	163	13'691–13'691	LFS
Netherlands	1999–2017	834	37'786–50'024	LFS
Nicaragua	2005–2005	12	3'548–3'548	LSMS
Nigeria	2010–2018	18	4'971–5'641	LSMS
Norway	2005–2017	111	49'908–63'768	LFS
Peru	2009–2014	115	8'515–11'086	LFS
Philippines	2015–2015	1	6'896–6'896	STEP
Poland	2006–2017	1'155	16'416–28'420	LFS
Portugal	1999–2017	771	22'413–28'567	LFS
Romania	2009–2017	694	16'752–25'262	LFS
Russian Federation	2004–2015	77	12'554–25'777	RLMS-HSE
Rwanda	2013–2016	49	1'551–1'872	LFS
Slovakia	2007–2017	354	22'724–30'433	LFS
Slovenia	2005–2017	297	26'506–33'947	LFS
South Africa	2012–2019	243	11'965–12'201	QLFS
Spain	1999–2017	920	25'102–37'233	LFS
Sri Lanka	2012–2012	1	9'653–9'653	STEP
Sweden	1999–2017	1'441	34'468–47'892	LFS
Switzerland	2010–2017	232	54'028–62'927	LFS
Uganda	2009–2013	21	1'571–1'759	LSMS
Ukraine	2012–2012	1	9'956–9'956	STEP
United Kingdom	1999–2017	702	31'110–42'138	LFS
United States	1998–2004	220	43'625–49'138	CEPR
Viet Nam	2012–2012	2	4'917–4'917	STEP
		17'892	1'248–99'477	

Appendix 2 – Questionnaire Participation Consent Form

Employee Voice vs Employee Engagement during COVID-19

IS EMPLOYEE VOICE AFFECTING EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT?

A research across Spanish employees working in multinational companies in Dublin (Ireland) during the COVID-19 global pandemic

Hello! I hope you are keeping well. I would like to invite you to take part in a research study. Before you decide you need to understand why the research is being done and what it would involve for you. Please take time to read the following information carefully. Ask questions if anything you read is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not to take part.

WHO I AM AND WHAT THIS STUDY IS ABOUT

I am Marc Artacho, a student at the National College of Ireland pursuing a Master of Arts degree in Human Resource Management. This study will be used as part of my dissertation research which aims to explore the effects of employee voice, the internal communication, over the employee engagement during the COVID-19 period.

WHAT WILL TAKING PART INVOLVE?

The structured online survey is broken down into three sections. The first part of the survey applies closed-ended questions to understand the current employee engagement level. The second part is defined by open-ended questions to measure the key management functions that are impacting the employee engagement. Lastly, the third part is created with open-ended questions as well to understand directly how the employee voice is impacting the employee engagement during the COVID-19 period.

WHY HAVE YOU BEEN INVITED TO TAKE PART?

You have been invited to take part in the survey as I seek to gather a varied set of data through convenience sampling to use in my research.

DO YOU HAVE TO TAKE PART?

Participation in this survey is completely voluntary and you have the right to refuse participation or any question without any consequence whatsoever. You may stop participating in the survey at any time. You may amend previous responses at any point during the completion of this survey prior to submission. Due to the anonymous nature of the survey, once the survey results are submitted, they can no longer be withdrawn.

WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE RISKS AND BENEFITS OF TAKING PART?

There are no direct foreseen risks or benefits as a result of taking part in this study. Because some survey questions are psychologically based, some participants may seek to learn more about their company's programmes, their internal ways of communication to express themselves and give their feedback, or their own level of engagement as a result of this survey.

WILL TAKING PART BE CONFIDENTIAL?

The survey is completely anonymous and there are no personal identifying questions within the survey. If any personal and identifiable details are indirectly submitted, they will be deleted immediately and not published in the research.

HOW WILL INFORMATION YOU PROVIDE BE RECORDED, STORED AND PROTECTED?

Information provided by the participant will be automatically and anonymously stored on surveymaker online platform. The files will be extracted from the online survey platform and stored securely in the researcher's personal Google Drive. The files will be encrypted and secured through Google's environment. The researcher will be the only person with access to these files.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE RESULTS OF THE STUDY?

Results from this study will be used as part of a dissertation to fulfil the requirements of the Master of Arts in Human Resource Management from National College of Ireland. The dissertation will be stored in the NCI library and online repository.

WHO SHOULD YOU CONTACT FOR FURTHER INFORMATION?

For further information, please contact me, the researcher, directly at martachosm@gmail.com or my supervisor at the National College of Ireland, Silvija Delekovcan, at silvija.delekovcan@ncirl.ie.

Thank you for considering taking part in this survey. I really appreciate it.

CONSENT TO TAKE PART IN RESEARCH

I voluntarily agree to participate in this anonymous research survey. (Yes/No)

I agree that I have read the information above relating to the study. (Yes/No)

I understand that I can amend answers, refuse to answer any question, or stop taking the survey at any time prior to submission without any consequences. (Yes/No)

I understand that due to the anonymous nature of the survey, once the survey results are submitted, they can no longer be withdrawn. (Yes/No)

Appendix 3 – Questionnaire Questions

Employee Voice vs Employee Engagement during COVID-19

Gender

- Female
- Male
- Other

What is your age?

- 18-24 years old
- 25-29 years old
- 30-34 years old
- 35-39 years old

- 40-44 years old
- 45-49 years old
- 50-54 years old
- 55-59 years old
- 60-65 years old

Place of birth (City and Country)

Current Location (City and Country)

What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- Doctorate degree
- Master's degree
- Postgraduate degree
- Bachelor's degree
- Professional degree
- High school graduate, diploma or the equivalent

Which label best describes the nature of your employment?

- Permanent full-time
- Permanent part-time
- Temporary
- Fixed-term or specified-purpose contract
- Self-employed
- Unemployed

What is the size of the side you are working for?

- 500-1000 employees
- 1000-3000 employees
- 3000-5000 employees
- 5000-10000 employees
- 10000+ employees

What sector do you work in?

- Private sector
- Public sector
- Non-Profit
- Self-employed

What sector/industry do you work for?

- Tech (Google, Facebook, HubSpot, Microsoft, LinkedIn...)
- Financial Services, Banking and Business Consultancy (Deloitte, Accenture, KPMG, PWC, EY, Circle, Bank of America, Citibank, BNP Paribas, HSBC, JPMorgan...)
- Game Development (Keywords Studio, WarDucks, DIGIT Game Studios, Pewter Games Studios, Vela Games...)
- Logistics and Storage (UPS, FedEx, Ryanair, Dublin Airport Authority (DAA), Irish Rail, Ballyvesey Holdings, Bus Éireann...)
- IT and Software Development (HST Solutions, Mawla, EireSoft Limited, eDuce Software, Sonalake...)
- Biotech and Pharmaceuticals (B Braun, Novartis, Bayer, Abbvie, Sanofi, GSK, Johnson & Johnson, Abbott, AstraZeneca...)
- Professional Services (Law, Accounting, Research and Development...)
- Arts and Recreation (The Arts Council, Creative Ireland, Culture Ireland, Business to Arts, Sport Ireland, Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport, Dublin City Council Cultural Company, Dublin City Arts Office...)
- Human Resources (Peninsula Ireland, Sigmar Recruitment, Approach People Recruitment, Grafton Recruitment, Prosperity...)

Where is your work primarily based during the COVID-19 period?

- Home - Different country where my company office is based
- Home - Same country where my company office is based
- Office - Different country where my company office is based
- Office - Same country where my company office is based

What hours are you expected to work on a typical working day?

- 9am - 5pm or similar

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- Afternoon (12pm to 7pm)
- Evening (5pm to midnight)
- Night (midnight to 7am)

What's your current role?

Since when are you working for your current company?

- 1 - 6 months
- 6 - 12 months
- 12 - 18 months
- 18 - 24 months
- 24+ months

Employee Voice vs Employee Engagement during COVID-19

Questionnaire Part 1: Employee Engagement

You do not need to know about your employee engagement programme to complete the survey.

Please answer the questions thinking about your current COVID-19 circumstances and not before, only about you during this specific period. Thanks

Do you know what is expected of you at work?

- No 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 Yes

Do you have the materials and equipment to do your work right?

- No 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 Yes

Do you have the opportunity to do what you do best every day?

- No 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 Yes

In the last seven days, have you received recognition or praise for doing good work?

- No 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 Yes

Does your supervisor, or someone at work, seem to care about you as a person?

- No 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 Yes

Is there someone at work who encourages your development?

- No 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 Yes

Do your opinions seem to count?

- No 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 Yes

Does the mission/purpose of your company make you feel your job is important?

- No 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 Yes

Are your associates (fellow employees) committed to doing quality work?

- No 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 Yes

Do you have a best friend at work?

- No 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 Yes

In the last month, has someone at work talked to you about your progress?

- No 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 Yes

In the last 3 months, have you had opportunities to learn and grow?

- No 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 Yes

Reminder: Please answer the questions thinking about your current COVID-19 circumstances and not before, only about you during this specific period. Thanks

Employee Voice vs Employee Engagement during COVID-19

Questionnaire Part 2: Key Management Functions

Please answer the questions thinking about your current COVID-19 circumstances and not before, only about you during this specific period. Thanks

What do you think about the working environment in your project, how is making you feel and why?

What do you think about the management style of your direct manager, how is making you feel and why?

What do you think about your team and co-worker relationship, how is making you feel and why?

What do you think about the current training and career development plan in your site, how is making me feel and why?

What do you think about the current compensation plan in your site, how is making you feel and why?

What do you think about the current policies and procedures in your site adapted during covid-19, how are they making you feel and why?

What do you think about the wellbeing measures implemented in your site during covid-19, how are they making you feel and why?

Reminder: Please answer the questions thinking about your current COVID-19 circumstances and not before, only about you during this specific period. Thanks

Employee Voice vs Employee Engagement during COVID-19

Questionnaire Part 3: Employee Voice

You do not need to know about the employee engagement programme to complete the survey.

Please answer the questions thinking about your current COVID-19 circumstances and not before, only about you during this specific period. Thanks

Can you mention all the internal communication channels that you have available to provide your feedback (issues, concerns, new ideas...) during covid-19 period?

What do you think about the internal communication channels that you have available to provide your feedback (issues, concerns, new ideas...) during covid-19 period, how are they making you feel and why?

Can you mention all the internal communication channels that you do not have available to provide your feedback (issues, concerns, new ideas...) during covid-19 period?

What do you think about the internal communication channels that you do not have available during covid-19 period to provide your feedback (issues, concerns, new ideas...), how are they making you feel and why?

In your opinion, what are the most effective internal communication channels that you have available during covid-19 period to provide your feedback (issues, concerns, new ideas...), how are they making you feel and why?

In your opinion, what are the less effective internal communication channels that you have available during covid-19 period to provide your feedback (issues, concerns, new ideas...), how are they making you feel and why?

What do you think about the internal responses that you receive during covid-19 period after you provide your feedback (issues, concerns, new ideas...), how are they making you feel and why?

What do you think about the internal responses that you do not receive during covid-19 period after you provide your feedback (issues, concerns, new ideas...), how are they making you feel and why?

What do you think about your senior/executive/upper management during the covid-19, how are they making you feel and why?

Can you describe your current engagement level during covid-19 period, how it makes you feel and why?

Can you describe your current satisfaction level during covid-19 period, how it makes you feel and why?

Reminder: Please answer the questions thinking about your current COVID-19 circumstances and not before, only about you during this specific period. Thanks