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**An examination into the potential impacts organisation acquisition has on an
employee's motivation and organisational commitment.**

An industry comparison between veterinary and hospitality.

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**An Examination Into The Potential Impacts Organisation Acquisition
Has On An Employee's Motivation And Organisational Commitment.
An Industry Comparison Between Veterinary and Hospitality.**

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MA Human Resource Management (HRM)

School of Business

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ABSTRACT

The use of acquisition as a business expansion tool proves to be one of the most used and widely adopted methods given its effectiveness and relative speed in comparison to other expansion methods.

Given its vastly documented advantages, there is a lot more that can and should be explored within existing literature on the topic, in particular the impact on an employee's motivation and organisational commitment.

This research has been designed to explore the impact organisation acquisition has on the employees of an acquired organisation and whether their motivation and commitment to their organisation is impacted. This research also compares the results of two industries to explore if the hypothesised impacts are individual to a particular industry. This research aims to highlight the impact and bridge the gap of perceptions of an employees diminished motivation during times of change, in particular, acquisition and provide a platform for future research and exploration to understand the employee's journey during an acquisition and provide constructive tools to assist employers during this time of change and expansion.

DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP

I, Aaron Kenny, declare that this dissertation is the end result of my own work and that due acknowledgement has been given in the bibliography and references made to all sources, be they printed, electronic or personal.

Signed.....|.....

Aaron Kenny

Student Number: X18101682

Date:

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INTRODUCTION

Organisations are continually evaluating methods for growth and expansion. Mergers and acquisitions (M&A) are a valuable and strategic mechanism used to strengthen and enlarge for continuing to strengthen and enlarge the strategic presence of an organisation (Bhagwan, Grobbelaar and Bam, 2018). According to the *Irish times*, (Taylor, 2019), M&A rose by roughly 370% in 2018, with an estimated net worth to the exchequer of 76 billion euros and an astonishing 163 transactions taking place. Schuler and Jackson (2001) explain how M&A is used as a fast paced model for expansion, justifying their popularity across every economic sector. By using this model for expansion, one must ask themselves if the organisations face any challenges and if it is a case of square peg, round hole for certain areas of the business.

Haleblian *et al.*, (2009) allowed us to gain a greater understanding of not only why organisations acquire, but more so an insight into the challenges that they may face. Haleblian *et al.*, (2009) discussed triggers and factors which can ensure a successful acquisition, such as the environmental factors, firm size and acquirer experience. This proves to be as a fundamental piece of research which sets the groundwork for exploring the effectiveness and successfulness of how and why organisations opt for acquisitions.

When we look at the ever changing business landscape and the varied brands or and options available to the consumer, it is hard to imagine how such a landscape has changed and evolved over the years. Often, as consumers, when we see our local convenience store being rebranded to a larger national or international brand, we automatically think of the good, the positives, such as more choice, better deals or a lower cost on produce, products or services. Whilst there are many advantages in acquisitions, for both the organisation and the consumer, little thought often goes to the internal struggles that the particular business or organisation may be experiencing by such change, with failed attempts of acquisition often resulting in empty business units, only to be replaced by the next big thing.

Galpin and Herndon, (2008) conducted key pieces of research which highlighted the effects and clean-up which is involved when such mergers or acquisitions do not succeed. Often this is down to poor

management of the process, lack of integration or poor execution of the deal, which could be as minute as not recognizing that the acquirer is not the correct fit for the acquiring organisation.

This research seeks to expand on the existing literature on human resources during organisational acquisition and change.

Acquisitions often challenge a number of functions within target or “acquired” firms. Normally due to them joining what is often a larger and more dominant organisation. In particular, functions such as marketing, finance and procurement are often the most visible changes and challenges. However, we find a limited focus on the human factors, the changes and challenges which occur within this function in any organisation is something which proves of great interest. Given both the value and power which employees pose to individual organisations and also the responsibilities which organisations must fulfill to its employees, ensure the successful integration of the human function is of paramount importance.

By conducting this research it is hoped that the factors leading to acquisition success, within human resources will be further explored, along with the impact acquisition has on the employee. Whilst financial, marketing and procurement changes may prove of utmost importance in acquisitions, exploration of the human resource function and its potential impact of acquisition is arguably of equal, if not higher importance to the success of any organisation, with or without the added pressures of acquisition. In particular, by experiencing change, are employees' motivational needs implicated during acquisition. This further leads research to explore how organisational commitment may also be inhibited.

In summary, business expansion through acquisition proves to be a valuable and strategic option for organisations. This research seeks to investigate the impact on an employee's motivation and organisational commitment during organisation acquisition and to determine if this potential impact is industry specific. To accomplish this, the research will broadly focus on two separate industries, Veterinary and Hospitality.

By completing this research, it is hoped that the findings will aid in the further education of the business landscape and give evidence that acquisitions can have a negative impact on an employee's motivation and commitment to their organisation. To conduct this research, a thorough review of existing literature is conducted, this will also allow the researcher to understand pre-existing information in similar areas, identify any gaps and determine a rationale for this research topic.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Extensive research has been carried out into M&A, in particular, reasons why organisations use this expansion method, reasoning's for most successful methods which ensure fluidity in migrating existing finance and procurement functions. The research also identifies the success factors which are associated with it and how to best match up organisations and their cultures with potential organisations to acquire. However, lacking in research is the psychological aspect of the process and the perceived lack of fairness and in-justice towards employees and how this strategic expansion method can negatively influence the workforce's behaviour, attitudes and overall performance (Baldwin, 2006).

Without doubting the economic and strategic value in M&A, these methods of expansion and organisational growth, often, have a greater cost to human functions than that of other functions such as the previously mentioned marketing or finance counterparts. Agboola and Salawu (2010) critically discuss how throughout organisational change, employees and stakeholders within the organisation face a number of challenges which can inherently cause deviant behaviour and impact their welfare and performance. This is further clarified with research highlighting implications such as increased anxiety levels present (Wang et al., 2012). Unfortunately, this cost can sometimes go unacknowledged by both the acquiree and the acquirer. A dip in productivity can sometimes be justified as a cost of change, meaning organisations do not acknowledge the reasoning behind such "dips" and the potential greater cost to the organisation and the prolonged impact on employee's behaviour fall through the cracks. Such reasoning's for these "dips" may be employees' motivation falling and their resistance to change amongst other things.

There are a number of highly respected theorists which have published many concepts with regards to motivation and subsequent theories which have been adopted in today's workforce. Motivational theories fundamentally aim to help managers improve workforce output and work satisfaction, thus reducing turnover and potential conflict. With this, enabling the organisation to achieve greater strategic success within its individual sector.

Maslow, (1943) was one of the foundations of motivational theories and has remained at the forefront of motivational theorists since. He believed that motivation is based on a hierarchy of needs, and that an employee or individual is motivated or driven to achieve the next level on the hierarchy scale once the previous has been satisfied, (as can be seen in Figure 1.). The hierarchy begins with fundamentals in daily life, with basic physiological needs such as food, water and shelter being the initial motivators. Through five levels, each individual is driven to achieve the next, with self-actualization or self-fulfillment being the final need on the hierarchy.



Figure 1: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Source; (Hierarchy of Needs Model, 2020)

By being based on an individual's innate needs, this makes Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory universal to all individuals. Whilst Maslow's theory has been widely adopted, it has also been widely criticized throughout the academic community as lacking in empirical support (Wahba and Bridwell, 1976). When assessing employee motivation, the theory is reliant on the fact that organisations develop and support management practices which foster employee autonomy and freedom to prosper. By doing so, this allows each employee to progress through the Maslow's hierarchy (Wilson, 1999).

Following Maslow's publication of his hierarchy of needs theory, Herzberg et al. (1959) further developed a motivational theory in which he believed motivation was driven by two factors, leading to his "Two-Factor Theory". Herzberg believed that there are factors which motivate employees (Motivating Factors) and simultaneous factors which cause dissatisfaction (Hygiene Factors) both of which run independently of each other. Herzberg's theory suggested that employees should be enhanced by their jobs, where their positions should allow for achievement, recognition, responsibility, advancement and growth (Wilson, 1999).

The addition of the de-motivation "hygiene factors" by Herzberg, builds on Maslow's hierarchical theory. Critically, it can be seen that Maslow's theory focused on travelling up through the hierarchy but failed to account for de-motivational factors, however this has been accounted for in Herzberg's theory. Both Maslow's and Herzberg's theories of motivation are categorised as content theories (Wilson, 1999).

Vroom (1964) published his expectancy theory of work motivation, a process theory of motivation. Vroom believed that unlike both Maslow and Herzberg's theories, motivation can be calculated and formulated as the reasonable desire and expectation that certain or desired outcomes will result from their behaviour. The Expectancy Theory provides insight into understanding job behaviour and work motivation, how employees expect a certain outcome, when a certain amount of effort and work is put into a task (Wanous, Keon and Latack, 1983).

By drawing on theorists such as the above, management sees motivation as the driving force to get the most out of our employees. But various intrinsic factors may also be brought to the forefront during organisation acquisition, such as anxiety, as discussed by Wang *et al.* (2012)

Organisational commitment is a topic which has been brought to the forefront of organisational communication in recent years. With more and more industries realising that recruitment and turnover is costing them greatly, concluding that action needs to be taken. Organisations are now more aware of the psychological needs of its workforce and the push and pull factors which determine if an employee stays or resigns. With the previous information on motivation and the theoretical factors, we can use this to greater understand how there is a direct correlation to the employee's organisational commitment and their level of motivation within their organisation. By understanding and adopting the principles associated with motivation and leadership, organisations are aiming to tackle lacking organisational commitment in the hopes of retaining their skilled employees.

Organisational commitment is described as the psychological bond which ties the employee to their organisation (Allen and Meyer, 1990). Meyer, Becker and Vandenberghe, (2004) also researched how organisation commitment has direct correlation to employee motivation. When an employee is given the autonomy to fulfill Maslow's hierarchy for example, this motivates the employee, but by allowing this, it generates a greater sense of commitment to the organisation for the employee.

Organisational commitment can be measured in two concepts. Normative commitment is the basis of an employee's loyalty or sense of obligation to be loyal. This is built on, and further concretises, the sense of "family" and tight teams who often extend their working relationships into their personal lives. Continuance commitment refers to the believed cost in leaving an organisation. There are a number of different measures which employees use to assess their continuance commitment, such as loss of benefits, should they decide to move to another employer, or their potential alternative job's commute is more of an inconvenience to that of what they currently have (Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch and Topolnytsky, 2002). Continuance commitment can also be seen to act as golden handcuffs, tying employees to the organisation. By weighing

up options against alternatives, continuance commitment is often the factor which holds the employee in the organisation despite there being push factors which are still leading them to consider changing employers in the first place.

Motivation and organisational commitment are built upon a psychological contract between the employer and employee. The psychological contract is a topic which has garnered plenty of coverage in recent years. Employers are now recognising that the commitments it has to its workforce can have a drastic impact on productivity and organisational success. Turnley and Feldman, (1998) discussed concisely in their article how the psychological contract is an unwritten commitment of reciprocal agreements between two parties, for clarity, in the case of this article it is the employer and employee. By taking this highly important and documented aspect of human resources, blended with Schuler and Jackson, (2001) theory of pre-combination, combination and post-combination in merging organisations, it poses a number of topics on which further research can be conducted.

Agboola and Salawu, (2010) conducted research into how acquisitions can impact stakeholder's performance and mental state. They concluded that change is inevitable, however, it is how the change is handled that determines the resistance to the proposed change and the speed in which the change occurs. Their research discusses that measures such as education and communication, open communication, participation and involvement, facilitation and support may be useful when employees are resisting to accept the change because of adjustment problems.

By understanding that resistance to change is a natural occurrence, we can link it back to the psychological contract. When certain elements of these unwritten commitments are broken, the employer or employee can be left feeling betrayed (Reina and Reina, 2006). This is supported in research carried out by Rousseau (1989) who categorised the psychological contract as reciprocal promises between two or more parties. Turnley and Feldman, (1998) go on to examine and understand that job security, a fundamental factor of the psychological contract, is impacted during organisational restructuring and change. Pate, Martin and McGoldrick, (2003) describe this as an interactional breach of the psychological contract. Their research

concluded that an employee's loyalty and happiness within an organisation is reliant on perceived fair procedure and tangible outcomes of their relationship. This is similar to findings from the study conducted by Agboola and Salawu, (2010). Their recommendation was the introduction of communication methods, and employee buy-in amongst other procedures to assist in minimising the perceived in-justice of change. This research was composed by using a large sample base spread across three sample groups, each experiencing unique organisational growth, restructuring and or downsizing. Their research allows the reader to understand a holistic view of the particular organisations in this article. The exploratory research based across a number of departments and organisations is something which acts as a backbone for any future research into violations in the psychological contract during organisation growth, restructure or downsizing.

By understanding the outcomes of these research pieces, we can begin to create an understanding of an environment which is needed to support change and how, when an environment is non-supportive, employees exhibit behaviour which aims to delay, inhibit or prevent change, such as a merger or acquisition (Agboola and Salawu, 2010). The research allows the reader to understand the subconscious reasoning for our behaviours and attitudes towards change. The study carried out by Agboola and Salawu, (2010), primarily focuses on the behaviour which is displayed by employees due to organisational change and how resistance to change naturally arises within the workforce. This is done through the researcher's use of various case studies including a range of scenarios and industries.

Comparing the research conducted by Turnley and Feldman, (1998) and Agboola and Salawu, (2010) allows the reader to gain further understanding of the order and reasoning for such behaviour. It can be construed that the breaches in the psychological contract as discussed by Turnley and Feldman, (1998) has a reflection on the deviant behaviour and hostility which is investigated by Agboola and Salawu, (2010).

As afore mentioned, the psychological contract links the employer and employee together. The commitment that an employee has to their organisation often withstands the test of time due to the factors pertaining within the psychological contract.

As discussed by Turnley and Feldman, (1998) and Agboola and Salawu, (2010), resistance to change is a natural occurrence of which careful management and handling is paramount. Coch and French, (1948) characterised resistance to change as an individual interaction of frustration to a particular scenario but is often exacerbated in a group setting. Throughout Agboola and Salawu, (2010), case studies detail different situations in which employees demonstrate hostility, lack of motivation and the uncertainty of their future. This research has highlighted different processes and practices that assist organisations.

A strong correlation between M&A and the effect these expansion methods have on the human function can clearly be understood through analysing Yan and Zhu, (2013). Throughout this research, they examine a number of hypotheses relating to the breach of relational and, or, transactional trust of employers and employees during acquisition. This is a comprehensive investigation into the correlation between relationships and how M&A can affect these relationships. The article offers a good grounding for understanding the causes and effects in breaches of trust, particularly in knowledge based industries in which they focused. The article discusses how, when workers feel their trust within an organisation has been violated, their acquiring organisation and any employees that may be associated with it. The findings from this research allows us to further understand findings from Pate, Martin and McGoldrick, (2003) and how such attitudes and behaviours are an employee's reaction to the perceived psychological contract violations.

Critically however, the segregation of knowledge workers in the research carried out by Yan and Zhu, (2013) poses a question whether employees who are working outside the classification of knowledge workers are affected in the same way. Is there a comparison to be made within different industries or employee classification?

Similar understandings can be taken from Wang et al., (2012) in their investigation into the potential and risks of exposure to mental disorders during mergers and acquisitions. The article construes, using a large population of participants, that forms of anxiety and other similar mental disorders become prevalent when employees are part of an organisation merger or acquisition. This research was largely focused on a specific social demographic. Nonetheless, Wang et al., (2012) captures the psychological and mental effects which employees face during organisational change, they conclude that employees who were subject to an organisation acquisition, had a higher percentage of generalised anxiety disorder (GAD), a 6.7% scoring vs a 2.4% scoring of employees who had not gone through an acquisition.

This research proves valuable to those reading and allows a greater understanding of measurement and causes of mental disorders during mergers and acquisitions. By utilising this research carried out by Wang et al., (2012) we can reflect on said risk and exposure to mental disorders such as anxiety during mergers and acquisitions. The segregation of particular industries or groups, such as what was done in this research, highlighted a gap in which prompted further exploration. Are the relationships impacted the same way across a number of industries or is this limited to “knowledge based” as they have explained in their research.

Throughout this research, we explore the causes and effects which mergers and acquisitions have on an individual's mental state, the reasoning for resistance to change and how change can be assisted. It can be clearly linked that human resources plays a significant role throughout mergers and acquisitions. A role which must assess the greater picture and impact on the workforce, often it is the duty of human resources to maintain structure throughout organisation change.

The existing research is engaging however lacks in vigor of particular topics and areas relating to the impacts of M&A. By understanding the existing literature, this allows the reader to gain an understanding of the different results and outcomes which mergers and acquisitions have on employees. Such outcomes include increased anxiety levels, deviant behaviour and hostility. Throughout the existing research, gaps and questions become more evident, such gaps offer an allowance for further research and development.

A gap which the researcher believes, after comprehending the above literature, needs further exploration and research, is centered on motivation. There is a lot of research around motivation, many of which have been credited and adopted in education and business practice. There is also a substantial amount of literature on acquisition and managing acquisitions effectively as previously discussed. Lacking in research however, is investigations into the impact of acquisition on motivation. Whilst we can understand motivation, what it is and its value from the literature, we do not understand what happens to an employee's motivation when they are exposed to an acquisition.

RESEARCH QUESTION

From the research, we understand that employees are naturally resistant to change, which is often the cause of their deviant behaviour in previous research. We understand from literature above, that motivation refers to the desire to improve output and work satisfaction. This is an innate drive within individual employees which must be carefully managed by their employers to get the most productivity out of the workforce.

However, as previously discussed, the question of what happens to their motivation and organisation commitment during this period of change comes to the forefront.

Can we assume that employees are driven in their position naturally? More interestingly, is this innate drive impacted when their organisation goes through an acquisition?

Whilst these questions provide for an interesting research question, this particular research also seeks to explore, whether there is a comparison to be made between an employee's motivation prior to acquisition and post-acquisition and is this the same for all industries?

By building on existing research, the proposed research aims to investigate how breaches within the psychological contract during mergers and acquisitions, a factor within early stages of organisation change, can have an effect on the motivation and organisational commitment of its employees. In particular, this research will be exploratory and seeks to form a comparative of two specific industries.

This research will be focused on two particular industries, veterinary and hospitality.

These two industries have been chosen as their differences allow the research to explore whether contrasting industries, and the employees within these industries, bear the same psychological burden and impacts when their organisation goes through an acquisition.

The hospitality industry and hotel market has seen dramatic change in recent years with many foreign investors joining the Irish market through acquisition of well-established portfolios. In 2019 we saw a number of high profile hotels sold to investors totaling a value of €134 million (O'Connor, 2019).

We have chosen the hospitality industry for this research as it has a longstanding struggle with employee turnover and retention (Bonn and Forbringer, 1992). With such struggles, this fast paced and diverse industry must continue to operate on the daily short term basis whilst also striving to maintain and achieve long-term strategic goals. This strikes the question that if organisations within the hospitality industry are so short term driven due to retention and turnover, how would an acquisition affect the workforce in comparison to the veterinary industry.

Similar to the hospitality industry, the veterinary industry also faces a lot of change. In the veterinary industry, we see a large movement towards corporatisation, with major companies acquiring smaller independently run practices to add to their cohort. These super-corporations in the veterinary industry own on average 500 practices and employ thousands of staff. (Vet Times, 2018).

Throughout the veterinary industry, we see a large sample of highly qualified professionals who seek to create value for their clients through exceptional care for their animals. This industry in particular has been chosen as the researcher found from personal experience that the focus is often on delivering exceptional veterinary care, with a lesser focus on its key success drivers, the employees. Andrus, Gwinner and Prince, (2006) investigated how a high stress working environment continues to negatively impact the veterinary industry both from recruitment and graduate application and also retention of more experienced veterinary professionals. Zimlich, (2008) believes that the employee labour turnover in the veterinary industry is that of almost double the national average at 29.7%.

This poses a question, is the corporatisation of smaller independent veterinary practices having an impact on employee motivation and organisation commitment? With smaller practices joining larger corporate businesses, is commitment inhibited by this change?

RESEARCH TITLE

Do mergers and acquisitions affect organisational commitment and motivation?

An investigation to explore the comparisons and highlight the differences between the veterinary industry and the hospitality industry when going through organisational change.

METHODOLOGY

As we construct our research question and highlight the aims and hypothesis of the research topic, the methodology of how such research will be conducted becomes paramount. Throughout this section, tools and data collection methods were chosen in respect of methods which best suit this particular research. Beginning with the sample population, this section sets the framework for how this research will be completed.

(i) Participants

As mentioned, the research was focused on two industries, Veterinary and Hospitality. By analysing the findings from these industries, the research aimed to investigate what impact acquisitions can have on the organisation, this research aims to explore the impact on an employee's motivation and organisation commitment. To facilitate the research, we sought access to a number of employees within our chosen industries. From past working relationships, access to the hospitality industry was granted to conduct the research through past HR colleagues. These organisations within the hospitality sector recently (2018) went through an acquisition. A large population of the employees who had gone through the acquisition were still employed within these organisations. This research was focused on employees who had worked through an acquisition so any employees that joined the organisation post acquisition were discounted from the participation of the research.

For comparison to the hospitality industry, we also garnered access to a Mergers and Acquisitions manager of a corporate veterinary organisation. Through this, we were granted access to request surveys with veterinary practitioners and their employees who were currently undergoing acquisition and who had recently completed an acquisition. Access to these key personnel within our chosen comparative industries proved fundamental to the facilitation of the research. Participants were emailed asking for their participation in the survey. In the email, it was explained the process and reasoning for the research. When the research was conducted, participants varied in management level superiority rather than age demographic. Participants, 22 in hospitality and 18 in veterinary, were broken down into Senior Management (10 in total), Line Management (13 in total) and employee (17 in total) categories.

(ii) Data Collection

The data necessary to complete this research was collected by conducting a thorough survey capturing both our chosen industries. The survey was constructed by the researcher, however many of the questions used were garnered from past academia and research pieces. The survey was qualitatively designed as the research is focused on experiences of an individual and understanding those experiences.

A pre-validated survey composed by Allen and Meyer, (1990) was chosen to investigate the organisational commitment section of the research. Whilst this is a relatively dated source, questions and points from Allen and Meyer have been utilised in many different articles and journals since its release in 1990. It was believed that this pre-validated source will be invaluable to constructing the relative questions to understand the organisational commitment aspect to the research question. The following questions were taken from Allen and Meyer, (1990) and used to the purposes of this research;

1. I was willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected in order to help this organisation be successful
2. I was committed to staying at the organisation for the next 12 months.
3. I thought that I could easily become as attracted to another organisation as I was to this one.
4. I had no intention of leaving this organisation
5. I enjoyed discussing my organisation with people outside it.

The second aspect of the research question is centered upon whether employee motivation is impacted by acquisition. For this question, a separate set of investigative questions were required in the survey. For this section, it was decided to go back to the fundamentals of motivational theory. Dating as far back as the early 1940's and 50's, Maslow's theory is founded upon the belief that an employee or individual could not pursue the next hierarchy of need until the previous has been satisfied (Maslow, 1943). By using Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, questions for the research survey were formed based on each foundation of Maslow's theory, allowing us to explore at what stage, if any, Maslow's hierarchy of needs is impacted by acquisition, which would impact on an employee's motivational factors.

The following questions were constructed by the researcher using Maslow's hierarchy of needs;

1. I trusted my employer
2. I felt secure in my position
3. Members of my team pulled together to complete a task.
4. I was satisfied with the opportunities for growth within the organisation
5. I felt a strong sense of belonging to my organisation.
6. I felt a strong sense of achievement in my job
7. My Opinion Mattered

The survey was conducted using a non-random purposeful sample of employees for data collection. This was achieved with the assistance from our industry contacts as discussed in the "participants" section above. By using a non-random purposeful sample, the research can target particular employees who will contribute to the research through their experiences. This was achieved by targeting employees who had experienced an organisation acquisition. By using a non-random purposeful sample, it was expected that the data would be collected through a participant population of approx. 40-60 candidates from both industries.

The participants were contacted through their industry representative (HR Director within the hospitality industry and M&A Manager within the veterinary industry) and asked to participate in the research by completing the survey. The survey was constructed using Google Forms, an online platform which allows individuals complete surveys / forms. By using a platform such as google forms, this allowed access to the participants in a quick and practical manner. The survey was anonymous with no personal identifiable criteria present.

The survey was designed to group employee types into; Senior Manager, Line Manager and Employee. This was done to enable better analysis of the surveys and also to review if answers vary depending on employee type.

The survey will be designed in the following manner;

Section 1; Pre Acquisition

Sub-section 1; Motivation

A number of questions based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs will be used to construct this subsection.

(These questions have been included above)

Sub-section 2; Organisational Commitment

This section will be made up with questions from the researcher and questions from Allen & Meyers research as previously discussed above.

Section 2; Post Acquisition

Sub-section 1; Motivation

This section will be given the same questions as pre-acquisition

Sub-section 2; Organisational Commitment

This section will be given the same questions as pre-acquisition

The answer structure will be the same for each question. As this research is strongly factored on human attributes and attitudes, the Likert scale has been adopted to allow for this. By using this answer method, this allows us to transfer the said attitudes, beliefs and qualities into quantitative data for analytics (*Boone and Boone, 2012*).

The answer for each question will be as follows;

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

By giving the same set of questions for pre and post-acquisition, it is hoped that when analysing the data, it will allow the researcher to accept or reject the null hypothesis that both industries are impacted the same by acquisition. During the initial stages of developing the survey and how the sample would complete the survey, a number of question methods were considered. One of which was an alternative to the chosen Likert scale, by adapting it in a phrase completion method. (Hodge and Gillespie, 2003) explored how the Likert scale offers answer choices between positive and negative, whilst the phrase completion scale invites the participant to engage with their response in a greater manner. Rather than giving the participant a question in response for an answer, the participant is given a phrase, with completion suggestions, which they choose the most applicable to them.

The Likert scale was chosen for this research as it was felt that this method allowed for greater accuracy and definite answers from our sample. With our research and the chosen methods, we aim to correlate information regarding how the employees felt before and after the acquisition. This will include the overall process and how or if this impacted the particular employees.

(v) Pilot

Prior to releasing the survey to our sample, a pilot was conducted. This was because not all questions on the survey were taken from previous academics. Whilst most were, it was felt most applicable and best practice to pilot the survey initially. A pilot study of 3 people was chosen; a colleague, a college classmate and a family member. By incorporating feedback from all 3 pilot participants, it facilitated the researcher to ensure correct presentation of questions and in a logical manner which made sense to all.

A number of points were raised by the pilot participants on grammar, presentation and flow of the survey, all of which were taken into consideration. The survey was then reviewed, re-checked with the pilot group before being released to our chosen sample population.

(iv) Data analysis

The data gathered from the survey was used to formulate statistical findings. There were a number of areas which were used for comparative purposes, allowing the researcher to highlight any contrasts and draw similarities between both industries. By segregating the employee category into Senior Manager, Line Manager and Employee, we were also able to investigate if answers differ due to said categories. The analysis of the data collected was conducted through two sections. Descriptive and inferential statistics were both used to enable a greater understanding and to assist in the formation of our findings. Descriptive statistics focused on organising and summarising the data collected with demographics analysis and review of results from the survey. The secondary analysis section was conducted through inferential statistics in which the two industries were compared and the findings inferred using statistical significance testing. For this research, significance testing will be done using a range of T-Tests.

(vi) Ethical considerations

It was important to be cognisant that during this research we may have been exposed to employees who have found organisational change difficult. We saw that from the study conducted by Wang et al., (2012), that some employees who have been exposed to acquisitions have increased levels of anxiety and mental disorders. This was taken into consideration when designing questions that were used in the construction of the survey and was facilitated by using pre-validated questions. The use of a pilot also facilitated this research to ensure the questions and the manner that they were presented to the participants was done so in the most efficient, ethical and practical manner.

This research aimed to explore the experiences of employees who have been through or impacted by acquisition and if there are correlations or differences between two industries. It is reliant on employees being honest, if their experiences were negative, it is hoped that by creating a confidential anonymous survey, that participants would be honest answering the questions.

Participants were asked to voluntarily participate in this research and were given the opportunity to opt out of their survey or from answering any particular questions. When the survey was completed, participants were offered to be provided with the research findings. The participants were also offered any assistance and professional contact details should they wish to avail of the services. These professional services included registered charity providers but also pointed the participants back to the services which are offered within their organisation such as protected disclosure policy, open door policy. This ensured that the participants were aware of the support networks available to them should they be required.

GDPR was also an ethical consideration which had to be taken into consideration. An EU regulation on the holding of personal data was a legal matter as well as an ethical one. The General Data Protection Regulation limits the amount of identifiable data which one may hold on an individual. It also dictates that should one hold any data on an individual this must be justifiable and have an expiration date. The survey was adapted to ensure that we held no personal information on our participants. Whilst as previously mentioned this was due to the facilitation of anonymity, this also ensured that the survey and our research remained in compliance with GDPR regulations.

ANALYSIS & FINDINGS

Descriptive Analysis

By utilizing the beginning of the survey to categorise employees into particular cohorts, this facilitated the researcher to further segregate responses from the participants. In total, the survey generated a response of 40 participants. Given that this research was conducted using non-random purposeful sampling, there were stringent criteria in which participants needed to have experienced in order to be considered relevant for this research. In essence, the research was aimed at employees within two particular industries, who had also been exposed to an acquisition, a very specific experience which not all employees within the workforce would have experienced. By specifying the research, this greatly reduced the volume of traffic that could be driven to complete the survey as it needed to be completed by employees who had such experience. Because of our specific research participant population, it is believed that 40 is a sufficient number of participants to justify and infer the results and findings of the research topic, this sample base can be justified as in similar research conducted by Halldorsdottir, Einarsdottir and Edvardsson, (2017) they investigated the effects of cutbacks on motivational factors within the primary care sector by using a sample participant base of 10.

The total responses were initially split into industry for comparison, In line with projections, employees made up the majority of participants, representing a total of 42.5% of participants (*Table 1*). Line managers represent 32.5% and the remaining 25% being senior managers. This cohort of participants reflects the reality of the industries surveyed with the majority of the workforce being employees, followed by their line managers and often the smallest staffing in organisations, the senior management team. We believe this set of participants to be accurately representative of both industries.

Table 1: Survey Response Demographic

Demographics Table					
		<i>Organisation was acquired:</i>			
	<i>Total</i>	<i>12 months</i>	<i>2 years</i>	<i>2 years +</i>	<i>Acquisition Ongoing</i>
Hospitality Industry Total Responses	22				
Senior Manager	5	1	2	2	0
Line Manager	6	4	1	1	0
Employee	11	1	5	5	0
Veterinary Industry Total Responses	18				
Senior Manager	5	2	2	1	0
Line Manager	7	5		1	1
Employee	6	3	3	0	0
Total	40	16	13	10	1

The final segregation question which participants were asked was to date when their organisation had been through an acquisition. This allows us to create an understanding of at what time in the acquisition, the research was being gathered. Were the experiential responses from a recent acquisition experience or are they trying to recall their emotions from a number of years ago, this will assist in ensuring the survey derives accurate concise results from the participant population. 40% of participants have been through an acquisition in the last 12 months. These demographics act as a baseline for the research, the majority of participants have been through an acquisition recently, meaning that emotions and attitudes towards their employer are more memorable.

The data collected during the research has been collated and summarised into individual tables which can be seen below.

Table 2: Hospitality Industry Survey Results - Pre Acquisition

Hospitality Industry Survey Results - Pre Acquisition						
Question	Total Responses	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Section 1: Motivation						
I trusted my employer	22	18%	45%	14%	23%	0%
I felt secure in my position	22	36%	41%	9%	14%	0%
Members of my team pulled together to complete a task.	22	36%	41%	14%	9%	0%
I was satisfied with the opportunities for growth within the organisation	22	14%	36%	36%	9%	5%
I felt a strong sense of belonging to my organisation.	22	27%	45%	18%	9%	0%
I felt a strong sense of achievement in my job	22	23%	55%	9%	9%	5%
My Opinion Mattered	22	9%	59%	14%	9%	9%
Average scoring		23%	46%	16%	12%	3%
Section 2: Organisational Commitment						
I was willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected in order to help this organisation be successful	22	41%	41%	5%	9%	5%
I was committed to staying at the organisation for the next 12 months.	22	45%	32%	5%	14%	5%
I thought that I could easily become as attracted to another organisation as I was to this one.	22	9%	45%	14%	32%	0%
I had no intention of leaving this organisation	22	14%	27%	36%	9%	14%
I enjoyed discussing my organisation with people outside it.	22	18%	55%	18%	0%	9%
Average scoring		25%	40%	15%	13%	6%

Table 3: Veterinary Industry Survey Results - Pre Acquisition

Veterinary Industry Survey Results - Pre Acquisition						
Question	Total	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Section 1: Motivation						
I trusted my employer	18	67%	33%	0%	0%	0%
I felt secure in my position	18	56%	44%	0%	0%	0%
Members of my team pulled together to complete a task.	18	67%	28%	6%	0%	0%
I was satisfied with the opportunities for growth within the organisation	18	39%	44%	6%	11%	0%
I felt a strong sense of belonging to my organisation.	18	72%	22%	6%	0%	0%
I felt a strong sense of achievement in my job	18	78%	22%	0%	0%	0%
My Opinion Mattered	18	56%	39%	0%	6%	0%
Average Score		62%	33%	2%	2%	0%
Section 2: Organisational Commitment						
I was willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected in order to help this organisation be successful	18	50%	50%	0%	0%	0%
I was committed to staying at the organisation for the next 12 months.	18	44%	56%	0%	0%	0%
I thought that I could easily become as attracted to another organisation as I was to this one.	18	22%	17%	17%	44%	0%
I had no intention of leaving this organisation	18	44%	56%	0%	0%	0%
I enjoyed discussing my organisation with people outside it.	18	72%	28%	0%	0%	0%
Average Score		47%	41%	3%	9%	0%

Table 4: Hospitality Industry Survey Results - Post Acquisition

Hospitality Industry Survey Results - Post Acquisition						
Question	Total	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Section 1: Motivation						
I trust my employer	22	0%	27%	32%	36%	5%
I feel secure in my position	22	0%	18%	45%	36%	0%
Members of my team pull together to complete a task.	22	0%	50%	23%	27%	0%
I am satisfied with the opportunities for growth within the organisation	22	0%	32%	41%	18%	9%
I feel a strong sense of belonging to my organisation.	22	5%	27%	27%	36%	5%
I feel a strong sense of achievement in my job	22	0%	50%	36%	9%	5%
My opinion matters in my organisation	22	9%	27%	32%	27%	5%
Average Score		2%	33%	34%	27%	4%
Section 2: Organisational Commitment						
I am committed to staying at the organisation for the next 12 months.	22	9%	36%	18%	27%	9%
I am willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected in order to help this organisation be successful	22	5%	36%	36%	23%	0%
I think that I could easily become as attracted to another organisation as I was to this one.	22	9%	50%	27%	14%	0%
I have no intention of leaving this organisation	22	0%	18%	50%	27%	5%
I enjoy discussing my organisation with people outside it.	22	14%	36%	27%	23%	0%
Average Score		7%	35%	32%	23%	3%

Table 5: Veterinary Industry Survey Results - Post Acquisition

Veterinary Industry Survey Results - Post Acquisition						
Question	Total	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Section 1: Motivation						
I trust my employer	18	17%	0%	22%	56%	6%
I feel secure in my position	18	11%	11%	11%	67%	0%
Members of my team pull together to complete a task.	18	17%	50%	22%	11%	0%
I am satisfied with the opportunities for growth within the organisation	18	11%	22%	39%	28%	0%
I feel a strong sense of belonging to my organisation.	18	17%	11%	6%	67%	0%
I feel a strong sense of achievement in my job	18	11%	50%	33%	6%	0%
My opinion matters in my organisation	18	17%	6%	22%	39%	17%
Average Score		14%	21%	22%	39%	3%
Section 2: Organisational Commitment						
I am committed to staying at the organisation for the next 12 months.	18	11%	28%	39%	22%	0%
I am willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected in order to help this organisation be successful	18	17%	39%	28%	17%	0%
I think that I could easily become as attracted to another organisation as I was to this one.	18	11%	67%	6%	11%	6%
I have no intention of leaving this organisation	18	11%	11%	33%	44%	0%
I enjoy discussing my organisation with people outside it.	18	17%	56%	11%	17%	0%
Average Score		13%	40%	23%	22%	1%

Motivation

The first section of the survey was centered on motivation, the survey sought to question participants on how they felt prior to the acquisition and post-acquisition. We see that a fundamental to the psychological contract and that of the relationship between the employer and employee, trust, is strongly impacted by acquisition. Table 2 and Table 3 show the results for both industries pre acquisition. The results and findings from these tables were compared to post acquisition findings for both industries in Table 4 and Table 5.

Trust

The first statement participants were presented with was “I trusted my employer” and in the post-acquisition section the same question as “I trust my employer”.

Pre-Acquisition, in the hospitality industry (Table 2), we see 63% of participants either strongly agree or agree with the statement of trusting their employer. Post-acquisition, we see the same agree and strongly agree percentages drop to 27%. The drop in agreeance or strongly agreeing with the statement correlates with and increase to 41% of participants strongly disagreeing or agreeing with the same statement post acquisition.

Pre-Acquisition in the veterinary industry (Table 3), participant's reflected 100% strongly agreeing or agreeing with the same statement. Post-acquisition the percentage whom agree or strongly agree with the same statement fell to 17%. This percentage then shifts to 62% strongly disagreeing or disagreeing with the same statement post acquisition (Table 5). Whilst it can be seen that a larger sample base in the veterinary industry trusted their employer more than the hospitality industry pre-acquisition (Table 2), the veterinary industry also shows that more employees lost trust post acquisition (Table 4).

Security

This feeling of trust or lack thereof post-acquisition is also reflective in the following question of security. Again, with security being a primary motivational factor within Maslow's hierarchy, and again, an unwritten term within the psychological contract, this question proves crucial in understanding the employee's attitude towards their organisation but also their motivation. Participants were then given the statement. "I felt secure in my position" and post-acquisition, given the statement "I feel secure in my position". Pre-Acquisition, 77% of the hospitality participants reflected that they either strongly agreed or agreed with this statement. In contrast, 81% were neutral towards or disagreed with this statement post-acquisition. With our veterinary participants, 100% strongly agreed or agreed with the statement that they felt secure in their positions. This then shifts to a total of 67% disagreeing with the same statement post acquisition.

Across the motivation based questions, hospitality participants averaged a strongly agreed percentage of 23% and a 46% agreement towards the statements. This is a strong average towards agreement with the statements that shows they were relatively motivated in the timeline prior to their organisation acquired. Post-acquisition, the average becomes a lot sparser across the Likert scale. With 33% agreeing, 34% neutral and 27% disagreeing with the same statements post acquisition. Across the participants in the hospitality sample, we see a transition towards the disagreeing answers post acquisition.

In the veterinary participant sample, pre-acquisition, 95% averaged strongly agreed or agreed to the statements on motivation, substantially more than the hospitality's responses, averaging 63%. In post-acquisition, an average of 63% of veterinary participants were neutral or disagreed to the motivational sample. We can see that across the veterinary participants, whilst there was a strong agreement in pre-acquisition, suggesting the sample were highly consistent with Maslow's theory, there was a more definitive shift in motivation based answers in the survey, in comparison to the hospitality industry. Particularly, as previously discussed, fundamental principles surrounding trust, security were initially impacted. As these are impacted, the correlation reflects further on other hierarchical principles which Maslow suggested such as belonging, self-esteem and self actualisation. All of which can be seen in the survey results both in pre and post-acquisition across both participant groups.

Organisational Commitment:

As previously discussed, employee motivation is correlated with organisational commitment. Due to this, it was important to build on the motivation survey questions with questions directly relating to organisational commitment. From the survey results, in hospitality, pre-acquisition we see a 65% average of strongly agree and agree towards the organisational commitment questions.

In particular, pre-acquisition, 77% of participants in the hospitality industry strongly agreed or agreed with the statement that they were committed to staying at their organisation for the next 12 months. Building on the previous results showing employees within this industry were motivated pre acquisition, the results also show that they were committed to their organisation.

In comparison, the Veterinary industry pre acquisition averaged 88% with strongly agree or agree towards the same organisational commitment questions that were answered by the hospitality industry participants.

In particular, 100% strongly agreed or agreed with the statement in which they were committed to staying with their organisation for the next 12 months. This, combined with the total average of 88%, shows that similar to the hospitality industry, employees within the veterinary industry can be categorised as being committed to their organisation.

Post-Acquisition, we see the average percentage of strongly agree and agree, within the hospitality industry, drop to 42%. A significant drop, this informs the researcher that employees' commitment towards their employer within the hospitality industry has been impacted by acquisition. In particular, the employees who strongly agreed or agreed with the statement of committing to stay with their organisation for the next 12 months dropped to 45%.

Post-acquisition in the veterinary industry, participants averaged a strongly agree and agree result of 53% in the organisational commitment survey questions. A drop of 35% on average shows a dramatic change in the overall attitudes of employees towards their employers within the veterinary industry post-acquisition. Commitment to staying with their employer for the next 12 months dropped to an average of 39%. A substantial drop of 61% in this survey question.

Inferential Statistics:

The distribution of results varied between pre-acquisition and post-acquisition across both industries. Using Microsoft Excel, each industry results were tabled allowing the standard deviation and mean to be formulated. Once this was complete, the standard deviation was tabled in increments of 0.1 from -3 to 3. We chose to do increments of 0.1 as the more increments, the smoother the bell curve / distribution curve would be. The first point of our data was then tabled using the mean which we previously formulated, minus the standard deviation multiplied by 3. For the following data points, the standard deviation was added and then divided by 10 (we divided by 10 due to the increments of 0.1). The data was then normalized using the "norm.dist" function on Microsoft Excel, this function incorporates the Data Point, Mean, Standard Deviation figures from the research. The final step was to create a scatter graph using the data and normalized data. This was completed for both the hospitality industry and the veterinary which can be seen in Figure 2 and Figure 3 below.

Figure 2: Hospitality Industry Pre & Post Acquisition Distribution

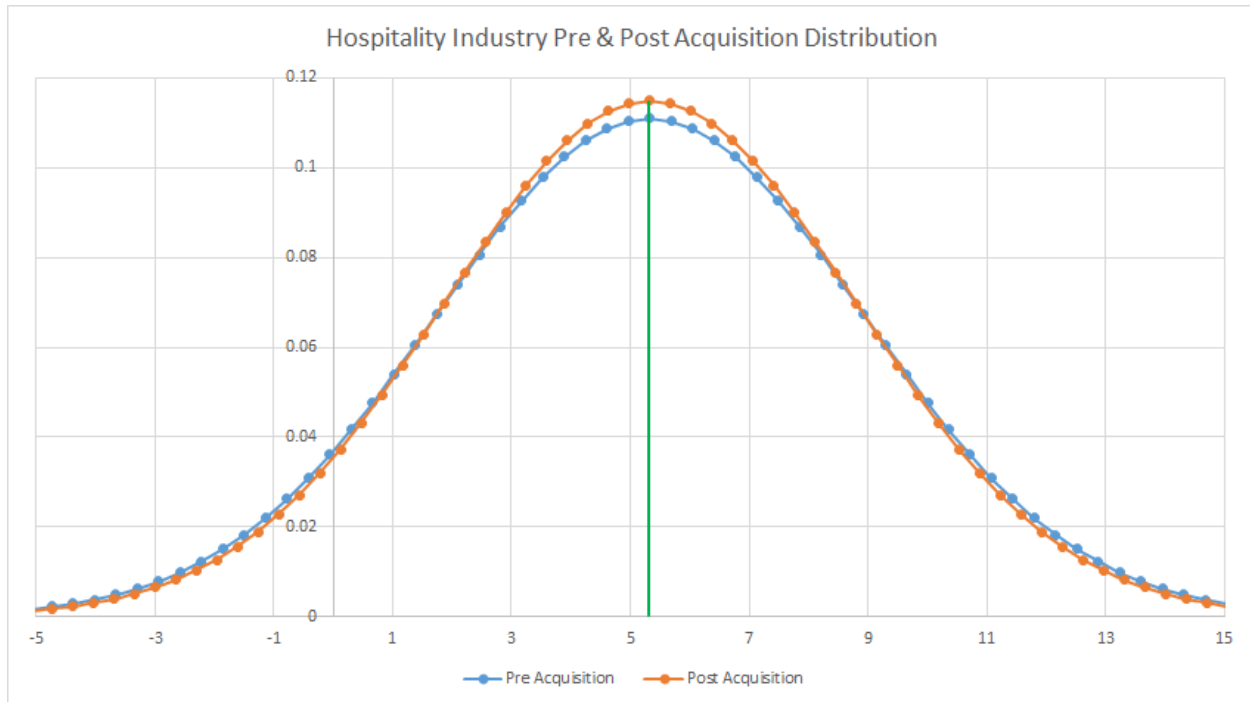


Table showing the distribution of data found during the research. The distribution of the bell curve shows the data is normally distributed.

Figure 3: Veterinary Industry Pre & Post Acquisition Distribution

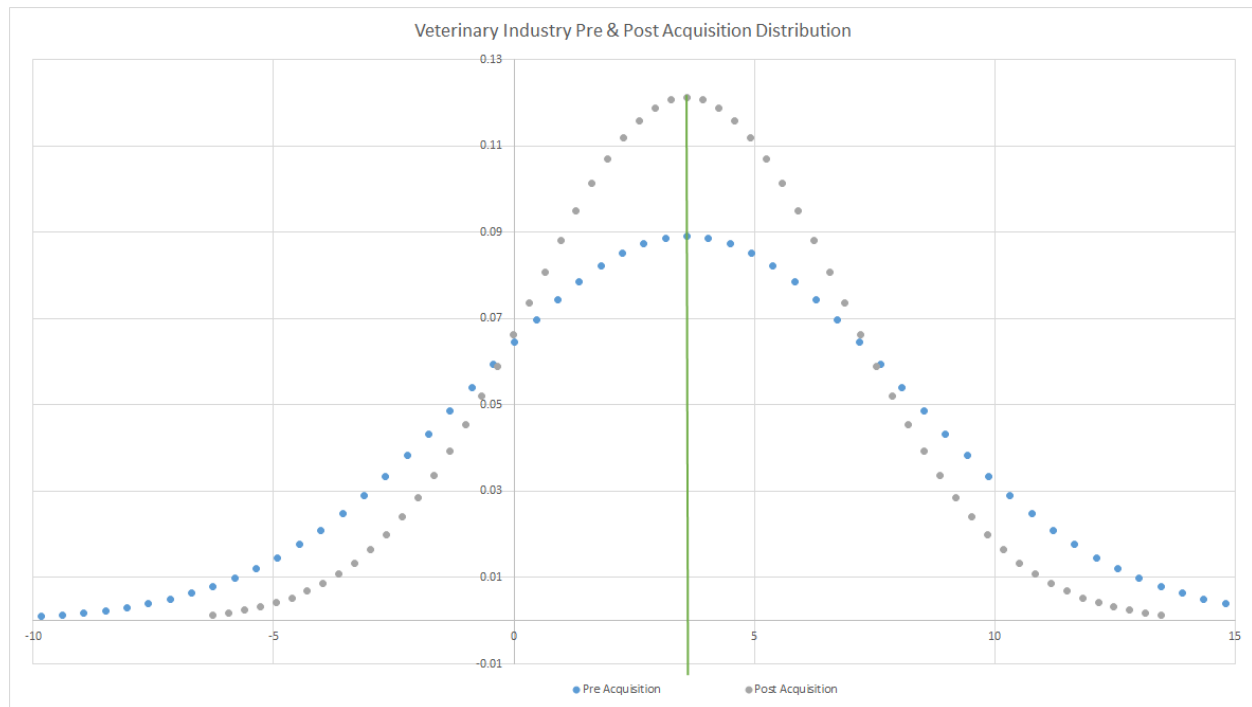


Table showing the distribution of data found during the research. The distribution of the bell curve shows the data is normally distributed.

From this we can see that the results are evenly and normally distributed. To validate the research conducted and the results derived, a number of statistical significance tests were conducted. These were done using one tailed T-Tests.

From the results noted in Table 2,3,4, and 5 above, we see that the hospitality motivational average dropped from 69% pre acquisition to 35% post acquisition which can see in Figure 4 ($P= 0.000181097$). This is a drop of 34% in agreeance towards the motivational questions on the survey between pre and post-acquisition.

Figure 4: Hospitality Motivation Survey Results Graph

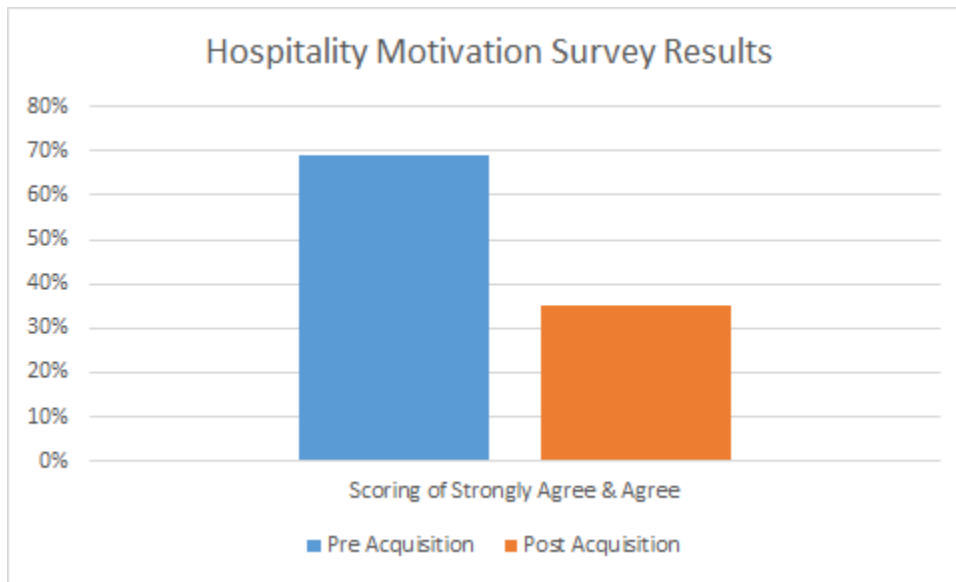
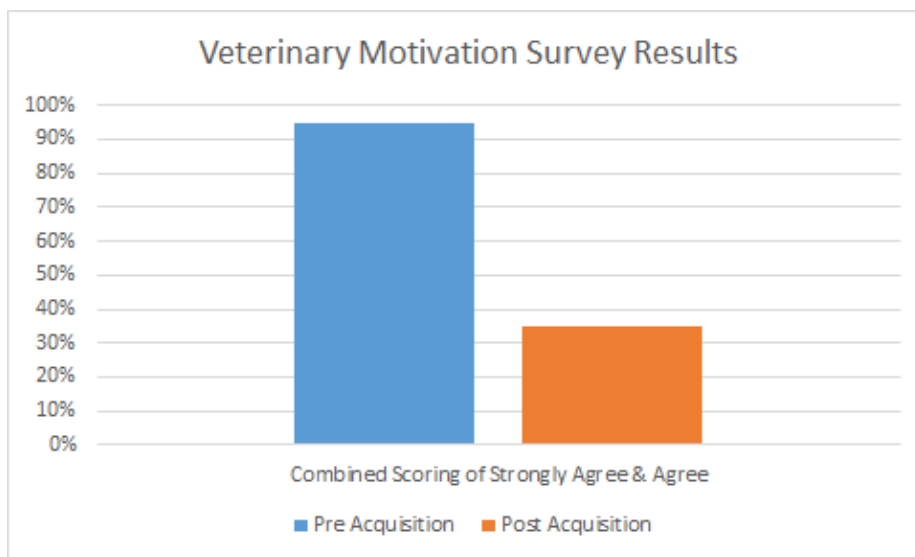
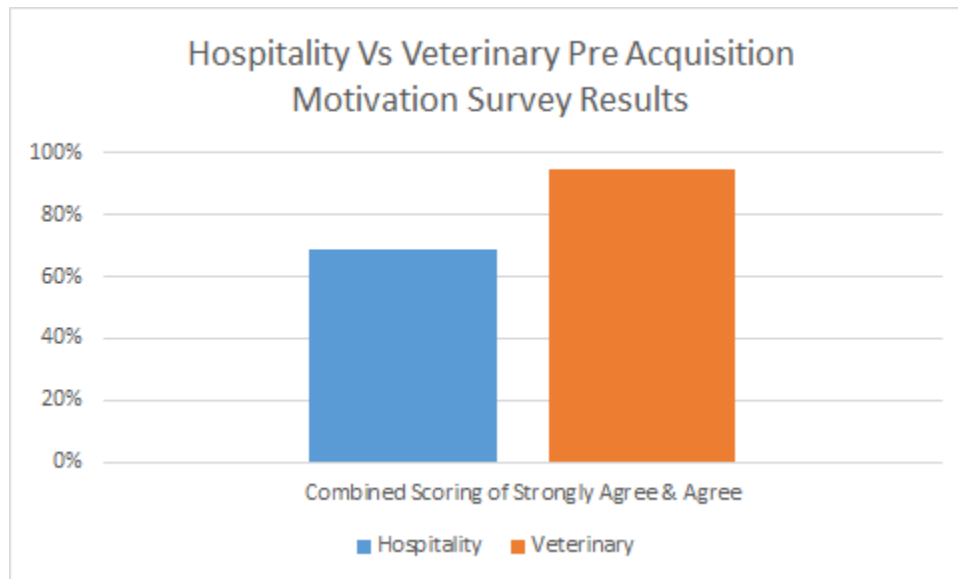


Figure 5: Veterinary Motivation Survey Results Graph



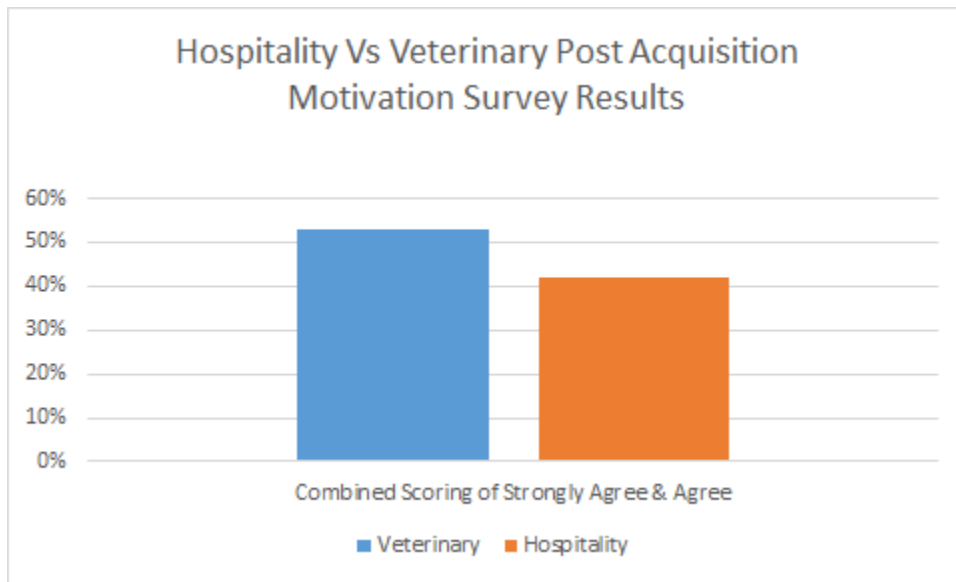
The same statistical significance test was conducted on the veterinary industry to substantiate the survey results. As seen in Figure 5 ($p = 0.000630402$), pre-acquisition in the veterinary industry saw an average of 95% strongly agreeing or agreeing with the motivational section. Post-acquisition, this average percentage drops to 35%.

Figure 6: Hospitality Vs Veterinary Pre Acquisition Motivation Graph



As can be seen in Figure 6, both industries had high levels of motivation (hospitality 69% and veterinary 95%) pre acquisition ($p=0.064994827$). A T-Test was then used to validate the same comparison of both industries post acquisition. In this result, we see both industries with reduced motivational results (Hospitality 42% and Veterinary 53%). These can be seen in Figure 7 ($p = 0.467338186$).

Figure 7: Hospitality Vs Veterinary Post Acquisition Motivation Graph



Whilst the veterinary industry average pre acquisition is 26% higher than the hospitality industry, we see the veterinary industry motivational results drop to 35% post acquisition, which is the same percentage in which the hospitality industry percentage fell to. In comparison however, the hospitality industry witnesses a drop of 34% from pre-acquisition to post acquisition, whilst in the veterinary industry, the difference between pre and post-acquisition equates to a drop of 60%.

Organisational Commitment

Pre-Acquisition, as seen in Figure 8, employees within both industries scored highly in strongly agree and agree towards the organisational commitment questions with 88% in veterinary and 65% in hospitality. ($P = 0.100160862$). This differs in Post-Acquisition across both industries as we can see in Figure 9, with a drop in agreement scores throughout the organisational commitment section with veterinary scoring 53% and hospitality 42%. ($P = 0.05284237$).

Figure 8: Hospitality Vs Veterinary Pre Acquisition Organisational Commitment Survey Results

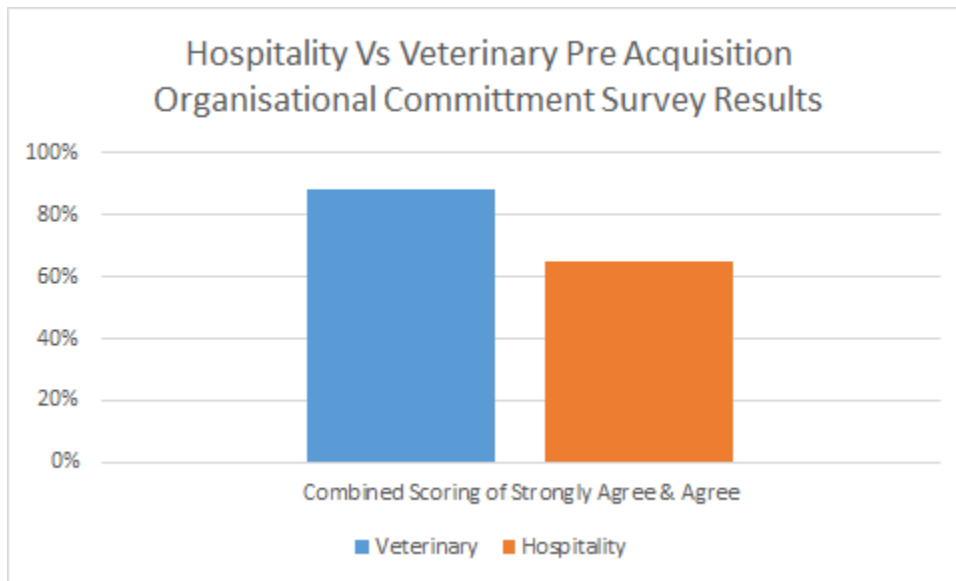
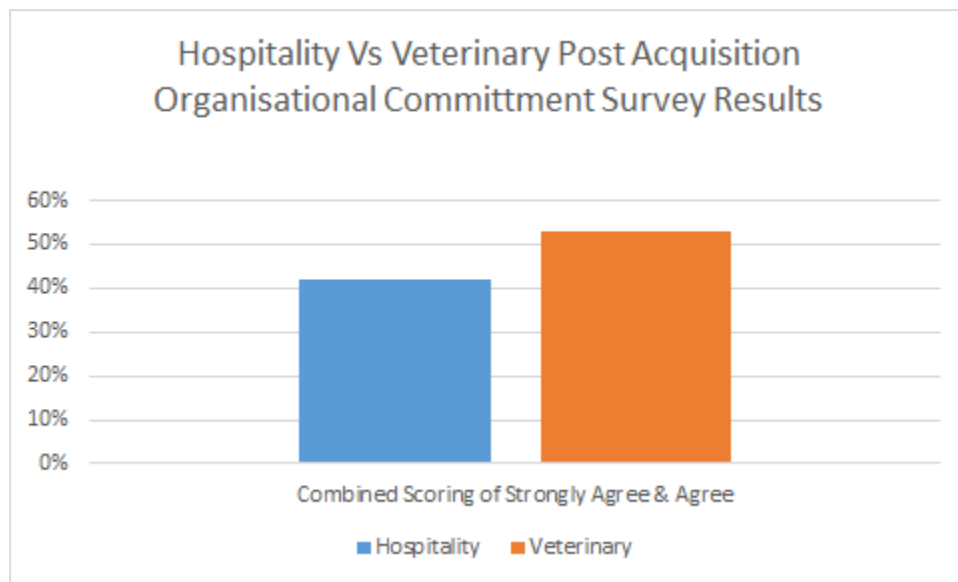


Figure 9: Hospitality Vs Veterinary Post Acquisition Organisational Commitment Survey Results



The veterinary industry sees a drop of 35% in its employee's attitude towards organisational commitment between pre-acquisition and post-acquisition. ($P = 0.05284237$). This is similarly reflected in the hospitality industry which saw a change of 23% ($P = 0.021099165$).

Based on the above findings, with relevant statistical significance testing complete also, we can therefore accept the null hypothesis that when an organisation goes through an acquisition, it has a negative impact on an employee's motivation and organisational commitment. This has been shown through the findings section as we explored the pre and post-acquisition results from the research in a comparative manner. Secondly the research sought out to explore if there were any correlations or differences in the impact of motivation and organisational commitment between two chosen industries. From the research, we can accept the null hypothesis that both industries are impacted differently. We see evidence of this throughout the research and findings, in which each industry portrayed different levels of motivation and commitment both pre and post-acquisition. The research also found from the data that acquisition, a form of change within an organisation, negatively impacts the commitment employees have towards their employers and the organisation. The research also discovered that each industry's percentage was unique and so was the level of difference or change between pre and post-acquisition.

DISCUSSION

This study was established to examine the impact of organisation acquisition on an employee's motivation and organisational commitment, comparing two separate industries. As discovered in this study, acquisition proves to be a popular method of business expansion. The importance and validity of this study cannot be underestimated given the importance and strategic value employees play in any organisations success. Throughout this study, a number of key findings were discovered.

Trust - From the findings of this study, we can understand that employees felt a strong level of trust towards their employer pre-acquisition. Pre-acquisition, employees would have felt that their employers would always look out for them, this is down to the reciprocal exchanges during the psychological contract which build trust over time. Elements of betrayal and breach of the psychological contract as discussed by *Pate, Martin and McGoldrick*, (2003) can directly traced back to the demise of trust between both the employer and employee in the post-acquisition phase as we saw in our findings.

These findings are consistent with *Reina and Reina*, (2006) research who found that breaches of unwritten commitments within the psychological contract lead to the demise of trust between the employee and their employer. From this, we understand that when organisations show transparency and accountability to their actions in the face of their employees, employees can build trust back with that organisation as they see them as being open, honest and reliable. The challenge for many organisations is that their culture towards communication in general and communication towards employees, may not facilitate this. Strategic decision making often is kept confidential at senior management or board of director level, thus inhibiting the ability to include employees in change management.

Security - Both industries witnessed a substantial drop in perceived job security post acquisition. This can be linked with the previous result of employees losing trust in their employer. Critically, the employees do not feel the sense of security in their positions due to the breaches in their psychological contract with their employer. This also impacts their motivational needs in terms of Maslow's Hierarchy as seen below with security and stability in the lower section of the hierarchy. Based on Maslow's hierarchy, employees cannot progress through the hierarchy of motivation when the fundamentals such as job security are not being met by their employers.

We see from previous research, during periods of change, employee's exhibit behaviour which aims to resist this change Agboola and Salawu, (2010). Turnley and Feldman, (1998) conclude that this is due to breaches in the psychological contract. We can see from our research that such behaviours and attitudes when resisting change are directly related to an employee's motivation. From the research, we conclude a drop of 38% and 22% in trust and security in our chosen industries. This is categorised by Pate, Martin and McGoldrick, (2003) as an interactional breach of the psychological contract. Given acquisition has such impacts as these breaches in the psychological contract, organisation acquisitions will go on to have further impacts on an employee's motivational tendencies, as we can see from the results of the differences between pre and post-acquisition across both industries. The overall drop of 42% in hospitality and 53% in veterinary reiterates this finding.

Overall, in this research, the exploration of the contrasts and comparisons between the veterinary and hospitality industry has proved interesting. The results develop on the previous research in that it compares two contrasting industries in which have gone through the same change. The research further builds on Yan and Zhu, (2013) who explored the impacts of acquisitions on knowledge based organisations. Similarly, the research has been conducted on a clinically certified veterinary industry in comparison to the skilled hospitality industry. Concluding that differences in drops and decreases in both motivation and organisational commitment can be measured across these two industries. Whilst both witnessed decreases, we can see from the results analysis that the veterinary industry witnessed a greater drop. This result reflects the initial aim of the research in exploring the potential comparisons and contrasts.

A result of change in motivational factors, we also learnt from the above research that across both industries, organisational commitment has been impacted. When employees develop a lack of trust towards their employer and the perceived diminishment of job security, they become less committed to staying at that particular organisation, as we saw in our research results finding a drop of 35% and 23% respectively. By using a pre-tested question model, this greatly increased the validity and targeting of participants to answer our research. The research concludes that due to employee's motivation being impacted due to organisation acquisition, this has had a direct correlation on their overall commitment to their organisation. This fact is further clarified in the research which shows a drop of 32% and 61% in participants agreeing that they were willing to stay with their organisation for the following 12 months.

The research has allowed us to explore the impacts of organisation acquisition on employee's motivation and organisation acquisition. Throughout the research there were a number of limitations, of which, not all were overcome and some of which allow for further development of the research.

The use of non-random participant selection left the research with a limited number of participants. It was expected to receive survey completions from 40-60 participants across both our industries. Upon closing the survey, the research garnered 40 participants from both industries. This was somewhat impacted by the current Covid-19 pandemic which left many of the hospitality industry out of work, thus uncontactable to complete the research survey. Although statistically significant as per the t-tests conducted, a larger sample population would allow a greater inference of results in relation to particular industries. This would strengthen the research results further and would allow for further development of the research.

Further to the sample size, the overall research model could be improved with greater investment of time and academic experience. A larger cross sectional longitudinal study of multiple industries who have gone through acquisition during a similar timeframe would strengthen and build on this research. Allowing the study to further infer that whilst both industries face the same motivational and organisational commitment declines, a further study would allow us to assess the differences across multiple industries.

The theorists used as reference in this research also proved a limitation for the researcher. Whilst still adopted in business and academia today, Maslow is no doubt a dated motivational theorist. Applying a model from 1945 can limit the accuracy of overall questioning and research as many of the foundations of such theories have been replaced or deemed redundant in the generation Z workforce. However, Maslow was the best choice for this particular research to measure the motivational tendencies and impact of acquisition. By acknowledging this, it leaves further scope for research into whether theories such as Maslow and Herzberg are still influential in a modern technological generation.

Whilst the findings from this study support the hypothesis that organisation acquisition impacts and employees motivation, the findings from this study could be strengthened with the addition of financial research in the chosen industries. Management often only recognises an issue when it has a financial impact to the business. A further study should focus on linking the downturn of employee's motivation to the decrease in revenue and or productivity of its employees in comparison to employees not impacted and their revenue generation and or productivity.

CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS:

This study set out to develop on past research topics such as motivation and the psychological contract including breaches of said psychological contract. This research has explored how, when employees are exposed to organisation acquisitions, they face a number of key challenges and factors of change. This research, and of course past research, should act as a pre-warning to management and organisations who, in the future, will seek to expand their organisation through acquisition. If mismanaged, such change can have a detrimental effect on employee morale and motivation as this research has explored. This research does not construe that the organisations used in this study have mismanaged their acquisition, the findings merely point the research in the direction that if and when acquisitions are mishandled, the impacts witnessed in this study could be greatly increased.

Likewise, organisations may handle their acquisitions in a different manner which reduces the impact on an employee's motivation and their organisational commitment.

Through conducting this research and witnessing the impacts acquisitions have had on the sample organisations, recommendations in which organisations should utilise when going through such change have been produced. With reference to the chosen organisations in this study, the below recommendations have been listed in order of priority for these particular organisations.

Communication:

Communication is always a highly important tool in running a successful business. The art of exchanging information, effective communication will ensure to keep employees informed of business performance, future projects and any challenges the business may face or be currently facing.

Understanding that negotiations and initial stages of acquisition are highly confidential, employees should be brought into the communication network surrounding this topic at the earliest possible opportunity. This is unlikely to incur an additional financial cost for the organisation, apart from working time which may be lost whilst employees are engaged in such communication. This should be factored into predicted business levels and output. Effective communication methods for organisations with larger workforces are to host town hall meetings, allowing a Q&A section also.

By involving the employees at an early stage, their commitment to the organisation is unlikely to be impacted by the acquisition as they are invested in the process and feel a sense of involvement.

When communicating, it is very important that information is clear, concise and honest.

As well as regular town hall meetings for the entire workforce, departmental meetings should also be encouraged to ensure employees have the facility to digest information and ask questions where necessary and express concerns.

Retention Bonus:

We have seen from the research that an employee's motivation and organisational commitment diminishes post acquisition. This is of major concern for any organisation. Losing skilled employees at such a time of change can have drastic impacts on organisation performance and the success of the acquisition. Should effective communication be implemented as above, this should reduce the likelihood of employees leaving the organisation, however, often, further retention methods are required.

A retention bonus, where possible, should be introduced for employees. A retention bonus is additional financial remuneration for employees, which is dependent on them remaining with the organisation for a specific timeframe.

Retention bonuses can be a valuable bargaining tool to encourage employees to stay with an organisation during times of change, such as acquisition. Such bonuses would be dependent on the revenue streams available to organisations. Where revenue streams are limited, organisations may wish to implement a growth repayment criteria in which the retention bonus is dependent. For example, if the employee remains with the organisation for 1 year post acquisition, and the business sales are increased by a certain percentage (the percentage should be fair and achievable) then the employee will receive their bonus. Such bonuses and arrangements are often instigated for key personnel such as management however, whilst maintaining management may be a priority, line level turnover can be equally, if not more, costly to an organisation. A similar scheme should also be implemented for line level employees to encourage motivation throughout the organisation.

By implementing such resources and incentives, it allows the organisation to navigate through the change, stabilize the anxiety and motivation within the workforce and adapt to the change.

Throughout this research, we have seen that employees, human beings, are change averse. It can be difficult to maintain order and productivity during times of uncertainty. The knock-on effect change has on employees can be far-reaching and can fester into greater issues if not effectively managed. Managing change is no easy task and by managing change, this is not simply about keeping the peace and burying the hatchet amongst working teams and the organisation holistically. It is about openly engaging with

employees on the proposed change and journeying it with them, rather than dragging them with the organisation.

We can take from all the previous literature and research, that employers are constantly exploring methods and philosophies of reducing turnover and keeping employees motivated. From the research, we can conclude that an employee's motivation is not static, rather is constantly changing depending on the extrinsic factors surrounding the employee. Acknowledging that an employee's motivation and organisational commitment is impacted by acquisition, will allow organisations to rethink their method for conducting change and implement measures and tools which assist its workforce to adapt during times of uncertainty and navigate it successfully.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

This research has proven to be both thought provoking and challenging. Motivation is a topic which most managers and HR professionals seek to explore and understand. Unfortunately, there are few “secrets” which will be the one stop answer to all questions and issues within the workforce. Rather, motivation and motivating individuals is a complex process involving many moving parts and environmental factors.

The topic chosen excited me, with professional experience in HR and also dealing with change in organisations, it was interesting to explore the unwritten emotions and attitudes of employees as they navigate this change.

This research has further encouraged me to always shout louder for the employees. Especially during times and uncertainty and change, organisation leaders can often regress to focusing on the financial impact and repercussions of certain actions. Realising factors, such as the results from this research and the literature explored, employees should be and continue to be, the centre-point of all organisation decisions. Employees unknowingly, have the power to make an organisation a worldwide, industry leading success, if given the correct tools, environment, culture and motivation.

On the other hand, employees also have the power to reduce an organisation to its (virtual) knees. Concerning aspects such as labour turnover and brain drain can be detrimental to organisations if not corrected as soon as possible.

As this research was carried out, it has re-ignited both my passion for human resource management and my appreciation for the power in which employees possess collectively. Reflecting, this research acts as a tool for self-encouragement to continue to be the best HR professional I can, to continue to explore new motivational techniques for employees, to organisational commitment. As if both of these are maximised and maintained, organisational financial success will follow.

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