

PROJECT TITLE

**AN EXPLORATION OF EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCES OF TEAM WORKING AND
THEIR PERCEPTION OF THE POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE ASPECTS**

BY

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Declaration

I hereby certify that the Information in this my (submission) is information pertaining to research I conducted for this project All information other my own contribution will be fully referenced and listed in the relevant bibliography section at the rear of the project

Signature ----- Heube

Date ----- 31/08/2012

Dedication

**A DEDICATION TO MY MOTHER AND MY THREE CHILDREN LEROY,
PRINCESS AND PRINCE**

Abstract

This study explored employee experiences of team working and their perception of the positive and negative aspects. There has been a shift by organisations from traditional methods of conducting business in recent years that is from individual to group methods, (team working) which calls for effective leaders who are innovative and flexible, whose major focus is to increase production and employ cost effective measures whilst meeting the organisational strategic goals (Manz, 1992). This can only be achieved by introducing practices in workplace that will help the organisation achieve its objectives.

Egan (2011) argues that, many organisations nowadays have shifted to 'team working' as a work practice identified with 'high performance' potential, with almost three-quarters of workplaces deploying some core employees in formally designated teams. Since the shift to team-working is now the norm in most organisations and is associated with high performance, this motivated the researcher to explore more about worker's experiences and perceptions of team working in manufacturing companies. The research explored the topic under study by seeking to establish what the workers' experiences of team working are, the positive and negative aspects of team working and their view as to the impact which team working has on the organisation.

The major findings were that team work is being used in the organisations where the study was conducted and team members like working in teams as team work benefits outweigh the negatives. However, the research found that teams lack autonomy and such benefits of team working may not be fully realised by the organisations. It appears that management in these organisations are reluctant to fully embrace team working, there is fear of letting go of the 'control' which would allow the teams to be fully autonomous. This reluctance by management to release control to the teams is limiting the full benefits which

could be derived from team working such as increased productivity, increased job satisfaction and increased motivation

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CHAPTER ONE - INTRODUCTION

Teams have been in existence for hundreds of years, they are the subjects of many books and have been celebrated throughout many countries and cultures (Katzebach and Smith, 1993). Over the past 20 years there has been a significant change in how organisations structure themselves to do business, whether they are corporations, governmental entities, private owned, non-governmental, educational owned institutes and non-profit agents. More and more organisations are moving away from traditional hierarchical work structures towards team based approaches to work. Egan (2011) argues that, previously roles were often well defined in the traditional office or factory. Responsibilities were divided according to job titles with duties exactly the people would undertake. Advances in education and technology have influenced changes in workplaces, there has been an increased interest by employers in team working at all levels gradually replacing the traditional hierarchical forms with flatter organisational structures. Some advocates of team working such as Appelbaum et al (2000), Katzebach and Smith (1993) and Levine (1995) argue that there are many potential rewards for employees from the adoption of these work practices, such as intrinsic rewards as greater sense of autonomy, satisfaction and identification. Also the overall argument is that employees involved in team working and similar arrangements will experience a more skilled job than those who do not.

As team work has become an important part of the working culture, many organisations are looking for candidates who possess team skills at interviews. Companies realise how important team work is, either the product is too complex and requires a team with multiple skills to produce, or better still a quality product would result when team approach is taken. In schools team approach is the most common method of learning as children learn to function in a team environment in preparation for the workforce. It is better if these skills are

developed at a tender age as these team skills acquired will help them through their social interaction and in their understanding of concepts, as research reveal that students learn better by doing than by just mere listening (Hauser, 2012)

This research was carried out on a sample of employees who work in team oriented environments. The research initially proposed examining employees' experiences and perceptions in one organisation however, due to access problems the research methodology was revised and it was decided to broaden the research to include any employees involved in team working in their respective companies. What are the stories behind these successful organisations in these hard economic times? It is these success stories that also motivated the researcher's interest to find out more about worker experiences of team-working in these types of organisations, how they perceive its positive and negative aspects in their organisations. The research adopted a survey approach on these employees to explore their perceptions of team working. Many previous studies of different nature have been carried out on this subject to establish more facts about teams and team- working, in this study the researcher looked at worker experiences of team working, their perceptions of positive and negative aspects.

Aim of the Study

The study explored employee experiences of team working and their perception of positive and negative aspects of team working.

Research Questions

The study sought to answer the following research questions

- What are employee's experiences of team working?
- What are their perceptions of the positive aspects of team working?
- What are their perceptions of the negative aspects of team working?
- In their view how does team working impact in their organisations?

Research Objectives

- To explore perception of the employees' experience of team working
- To find out what the workers view as the positive and the negative aspects of team working
- To find out the workers' view of team working in a production company

Population and Sample

The population of the study consisted of employees from organisation X and Y in Galway

Non random sampling known as Snow-Balling was used to choose the respondents for Research

Data Collection Methods

The researcher chose the quantitative method with the use of a questionnaire as the data collection instrument for this study

Limitations of the Study

Problems were encountered during the study. The researcher is not employed cost problems was a limiting factor to carry out the study as planned. The researcher also faced the problem of access into the organisation and this resulted in a small sample being studied. The researcher also changed the methodology from what was initially proposed for the study, no interviews were done because the researcher could not find anyone to interview so using the questionnaire only was a limitation for this research. The fact that the study was conducted on employees only and not on employers is another limitation, only the perception of the workers were captured.

Significance of the Study

The study will assist Human Resources (HR) practitioners or anyone involved in team working to have a better understanding of the employee's experiences and perceptions of team- working in a manufacturing sector.

Process of the Research

The study used the quantitative approach and the instrument used to solicit data was the questionnaire with open ended questions

Delimitations

The study merely sought to find out how operational employees feel about working in teams and what they see as positive aspects and negative aspects and in the manufacturing companies. The study only focused on the employees from the two companies X and Y

Summary

This chapter provided some background information to the study. It revealed the research topic, research questions and objectives. Also revealed in this chapter were the significance of the study, limitations and delimitations of the study. The next chapter reviewed the literature about teams and team working

CHAPTER TWO - LITERATURE REVIEW

This Chapter reviews literature on the topic under study so as to know what other researchers have found out about teams and team working. Information sourced from various documents by some authorities is reviewed and attempts are made to relate such data to the research questions and objectives. The literature review will be discussed under the following themes, Teams, Belbin's team theory, High performance Work Place, Positive team influence, Higher Commitment Training and Development, Team Work and Autonomy, Job Satisfaction, Leadership and Team Performance, Organisational Climate/Culture and Negative Team Influence all related to team working.

What is a Team?

Katzebach and Smith (1993: 45) define "a team as a small number of people with complementary skills who are committed to a common purpose, performance goals and approach for which they hold themselves mutually accountable." In other words a team is made up of a few individuals who are organised to work together inter dependently with a focus of achieving a purpose or goals. Team and team working is a way of getting the work done in almost every organisation (Hackman, 2002). Team working may also be defined as work practice based on the use of teams, or groups of limited numbers of people, who have shared objectives at work and who co-operate on a permanent or temporary basis, to achieve those objectives in a way that allows each individual to make a distinctive contribution (CIPD, March 2012). Oglethorpe (2000) argues that a secret to a great team is to think small in numbers, an ideal team should have 7 to 9 people. If a team has 15 to 20 people it is a dead team as connections between members will be too hard to make, size is the key, and have the smallest number possible on each team.

There are all kinds of teams in society and they are classified into one or two primary groups, permanent and temporary teams. Lawler (1996) describes five important types of teams in organisations: problem solving teams, work teams, project teams, overlay teams (co-ordinating and aligning the work of other groups, for example customer service across different business units to present one face to the customer) and management teams; they differ in purpose, duration and membership and each type is suited to a particular set of organisational circumstances and goals' (1996: 131).

Tavistock Institute classifies teams into categories as follows. According to McGreevy (2006):

Operational Teams these are permanent groups of workers with a range of skills organised to produce a product either for internal or external customers; they may convert raw materials into a finished product; this team could also be referred to as the shop floor team, autonomous workgroups, cells or cellular team.

Service teams are there to service a particular client or group of clients or to provide a product to a range of customers.

Cross-functional Teams are made up of representatives from various functions and disciplines. They are usually set up to look into a particular problem on a part-time basis or permanent basis. They often look into issues of quality improvement or product services (McGreevy, 2006).

Virtual Teams These type of teams can use computer-mediated communication technologies to work interdependently across space, time and organisational boundaries. Bell and Kozlowski (2002), Lipnack and Stamps (2000) virtual team members may be located across the office, across the country, across and across the world or may rarely or perhaps never meet face to face. The study looked at operational teams in a manufacturing environment.

It is important for teams to do the work they have been chosen for and teams work when they are created for the right purpose (Rogers, 2000). So team members need to have the skills, knowledge and ability to complete a given task. But it is common to find some teams working very well and while others fail. Dr Meredith Belbin came up with a theory that classifies people into different categories, showing the strengths and weaknesses in relation to their abilities to work in teams. According to Casey, (1995) understanding the team roles helps the co-ordinator to capitalise on the strengths of each member allowing them to contribute their part in the team.

Belbin's Team Role Theory



Belbin's (1993) theory argues that every team member is unique and possesses unique behaviour which might affect the performance of the project as a whole. Belbin used self-perception inventory questionnaires in her research in order to identify team roles. She found nine different roles with its unique characteristics that are shown below in Table 1. Belbin also categorised those roles into three groups, Action oriented roles-Shaper (SH),

Implementer (IMP), Complete Finisher (CF) People Oriented roles-Co-ordinator(CO) ,Team Worker (TW), Resource Investigator (RI) and Thought Oriented Roles-Plant (PL), Monitor Evaluator (ME),Specialist (SP)

S/NO	Team Roles	Strengths	Weaknesses
1	Shaper(SH)	Demanding, dynamic and outgoing Highly productive under stress conditions Stimulates Actions and progress and strong influence on decisions	Exerts pressure on others Always pushing and provocative
2	Implementer (IMP)	Conservative dutiful and organised Carries out agreed plans systematically and effectively, makes clear and realistic plans	Lacks flexibility, unresponsive to new to new ideas that remains unproven
3	Complete Finisher (CF)	Forces perceptions and 100% execution of tasks Protects team from mistakes, focus on guidelines, standards, and schedules	Hinders progress because of over anxiety and intolerance
4	Co-ordinator (CO)	Knows the team and enables agreement in the team	Runs the risks to decide hastily and no marked power
5	Team Worker(TW)	Socially oriented supports team members and communication forces team spirits and fairness	Lack of decisiveness, Avoids friction and competitiveness
6	Resource Investigator (RI)	Extroverted, creating external contacts that may be useful to the team Exploring on ideas and resources developing team objective outside the group	Over enthusiastic, easily involved in discussions
7	Plant (PL)	Highly imaginative with intelligence, inspires the environment ,individualistic unorthodox and serious minded	Sometimes lacking relevance for reality or practise orientation
8	Monitor-Evaluator (ME)	Accurately judging, strategic oriented, researches all options	Sometimes forgets to include all details
9	Specialist (SP)	Critically thinking ability, objective mind, analyses problems and evaluates ideas	Hypercritical, Likes disputes, serious

Figure 1 1 Source: Inferred from Belbin (1993)

The test is administered as a self- assessment test. Each team member can score on several of the dimensions and as such is able to perform several roles. It is normal that one person has one dominant dimension. The theory behind this test is that one needs a mix of different psychological profiles in a successful team (McGreevy, 2006). So it is important for organisations to consider the make-up of their teams in order to be successful.

Team leaders and team practitioners often use the Belbin theory to help create more balanced teams. Belbin (1993) argues that teams can become unbalanced if all team members have similar styles or team roles. If team members have a similar weakness the team as a whole may tend to have the same weakness. If team members have similar team-work strengths, they may tend to compete rather than co-operate for team tasks and responsibilities that suit their natural styles. Knowing this may help the leader ensure that necessary team roles are covered and that potential behavioural tensions or weaknesses among the team members are addressed. Also by understanding one's rôle in a particular team can help one develop one's strengths and manage one's weakness as a team member (Belbin, 1993). In this research it will be interesting to find out how these teams are created and developed. This research seeks to understand/explore employee perceptions of how much consideration is given to the make-up of their own team whether they can decide their own teams or there is a criteria used to put them in teams.

High Performance Work Place Organisations and their link to team working

Team work is regarded as one element of the new forms of work organisation and an important component of a high performance organisation. US Department of Labour (1998) defines high performance as 'a comprehensive customer driven system that aligns all of the activities in an organisation with the common focus of customer satisfaction through

continuous improvements in the quality of goods and services' High performance advocates for 'Total Quality Management' This term was publicised by Nadler et al (1992) within his 'organisational architecture' approach focusing on 'autonomous work teams' and 'high performance work systems' Lawler III (1991) used the term 'high performance involvement' as an alternative to empowerment, advocating the use of small teams of highly committed employees

Guest (2007) argues that high performance can involve two ideal types of approaches

1) A move from external control through management systems, technology and supervision to self-control by workers or teams of workers, who because of their commitment to the organisation, would exercise responsible autonomy and control in the interests of the organisation'

2) The performance management model in which management retains much of the control- the focus is on the adoption of practices designed to maximise high performance by ensuring high levels of competence and motivation The emphasis is on external control and intrinsic motivation

As Guest (2007) suggests, reconciling these has been attempted through high performance work systems These achieve high performance by ensuring that HR practices are adopted that lead to workers having high ability/competence, high motivation, and an opportunity to contribute through jobs that provide discretion, autonomy and control required to use their knowledge and skills and to exercise motivation Appelbaum et al (2000) concurs when he stated that high performance organisations or systems (HPWO/S) facilitate employee involvement, skill enhancement and motivation and is generally associated with workshop practices that raise the levels of trust within workplaces and increase workers intrinsic reward from work, and thereby enhance organisational commitment

Research conducted by Armitage and Keble-Allen (2007) indicated that people management formed the foundation of high performance working, and identified three themes underpinning the concept

- An open and creative culture that is people centred and inclusive, where decision taking is communicated and shared through the organisation
- Investment in people through education and training, loyalty, inclusiveness and flexible working
- Measurable performance outcomes such as bench marking and setting targets, as well as innovation through processes and best practice

High performance work systems provide the means for creating a performance culture. They embody ways of thinking about performance in organisation and how it can be improved. They are concerned with developing and implementing bundles of complementary practices which as an integrated whole, will make a much more powerful impact on performance than if they were dealt with as separate entities (Armstrong, 2009)

Research from different parts of the world has consistently shown two main benefits of HPWO, both of which reinforce each other. Firstly, HPWO may create sustained performance improvements in organisations. Secondly HPWO may create a better work place in terms of employee satisfaction and a sense of personal achievement. When these two benefits work together this translates into higher levels of financial performance, strong employee commitment, sustained competitiveness and innovation (Ashton and Sung, 2002)

Positive Team Influence

Teams can impact either positively or negatively on a company's performance and productivity. Armstrong (2001) asserts that teams are the basic unit of performance for most organisations. They meld together the skills, experiences and insights of several people, and

hence teams are created for both long term and short term interaction. Some researchers claim that the use of teams in organisations increases capability, responsiveness and flexibility partly because of positive synergy through co-ordinated effort of member's expertise, experience or knowledge (Griffiths, Sawyer and Neale 2003)

Cunneen (2008) argues that work teams are used as a central building block of organisation design. The concept of autonomous work groups which was created by London Tavistock Institute, Scandinavian car manufacturers, Saab, and Volvo dramatically changed from mass production assembly lines to small work cells, where teams completed whole stages of car assembly in specially designed factory layout. The experience of these changes in auto assembly is well chronicled and includes improved productivity and product quality, cost reduction, considerably reduced turnover and improved Industrial Relations. The success of this experience proved that an organisation's technical or operating systems needs to be balanced and integrated with the needs of the organisations' social systems. Because of the success of the approach of using work teams many organisations moved away from the Frederick Taylors' scientific management approach and adopted the work teams approach.

Team work applies to the whole organisation as well to the specific teams (Armstrong, 2001). It represents a set of values that encourage behaviours such as listening and responding co-operatively to points of view expressed by others, giving others the benefit of the doubt, provoking support to those who need it and recognising the interests and achievements of others. As well, teams out perform individuals acting alone or in large organisational groupings, especially when performance requires multiple skills, judgements and experiences.

Teams are flexible and responsive to changing events and demands. They can adjust their approach to new information and challenges with greater speed, accuracy and effectiveness.

than can individuals caught in the web of larger organisational conventions High performance teams invest much time and effort exploring, shaping and agreeing on a purpose that belongs to them, both collectively and individually They are characterized by a deep sense of commitment to their growth and success (Armstrong, 2001) Teams also facilitate employee participation in goal setting, thereby enhancing intrinsic motivation for team members (Goodman, Devadas & Griffith, 1998)

Higher Commitment and the link to productivity

‘People are our most valuable asset’ is one of the oldest cliches in business today (Kimball and Nink, 2005) ‘Until one is committed there is hesitancy, the chance to draw back, always ineffectiveness ----- The moment one definitely commits oneself, then providence moves too’ (Murray, 1997)

Commitment is critically important to team success, but it is often overlooked (Eikenberry, 2011) Hughes (2010) argues that commitment by a team to one another, their work product, and their organisation is a potent asset which brings benefits of clarity, prompt decision making and comfort in making needed changes When commitment is low in a team there is a tendency to strive for unnecessary consensus and seeking too high a degree of certainty Downsides when commitment is missing from team members include ambiguity, delay, risk aversion and paralysis by analysis (Lencioni, 2002)

Teams need three types of commitment to be more successful (Eikenberry, 2011, Hughes, 2010)

- **Commitment to each other and each other’s success** Teams that are comprised of individuals that actively support believe in and care about the success of each other will be successful because this type of commitment promotes the comfortable shifting

of duties and responsibilities among team members as necessary and allows team members to have less stress and higher productivity

- **Commitment to their team and team success** Team pride and commitment is important to ultimate success. The commitment that arises from a team that understands their role and relishes achieving is hard to undervalue. Teams with this type of commitment will overcome long odds due to their strength and unity and willingness to band together to get through a tough situation, why because they see the effort as worth it for the good of the team.
- **Commitment to the organisation and organisational goals** When teams see their work as supporting valuable and important organisational pursuits, this type of commitment is strengthened. This can't be built without a clear understanding of company direction and goals but with those in place this commitment can grow. Like the internal team commitment, this manifests in organisational pride and a clear sense of obligation to the greater good.

The stronger and more balanced these commitments are, the more successful and productive any team will be (Eikenberry, 2011)

Team Work and Autonomy

Today's economy is affected by global markets and high rates of technological progress. This requires the workforce to be innovative and flexible as well as responsive to change. The work place is moving towards flatter structures, direct communication, partnership, teamwork and collaboration, there is an emphasis on employee engagement and ownership as opposed to hierarchical structures with top down control and adversarial relations (Martin, 2012)

Team Autonomy refers to the degree to which teams are involved in managing their own work activities (Leach, Wall, Rogelberg & Jackson, 2005). Members with autonomy are responsible for their day to day management of some natural unit of work, involving decision

making such as task allocation and execution, problem solving and other general duties (Cordery, 1996)

Leach et al, (2005) argues that team performance outcomes are assumed to accrue from the motivational benefits of enriched jobs, from the opportunity for team members to respond rapidly and flexible to work demands. As teams take on the responsibility for day to day duties and task this should help the management cut down on costs that are a reduction in technical and managerial support costs.

The advantages of self managing or autonomous work teams as part of initiatives to humanise work are well established (Cohen, Ledford & Spreitzer, 1996). The importance of self-management in particular recurs in most recent studies, with Bacon and Blyton (2000a) linking management delayering in teams to job improvements. Deldridge and Whitfield (2001) found that work teams did not provide meaningful increases in job influence except in rare occasions where team members selected their own team leader.

A survey conducted in several European Economic countries (EU) by the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (2007) on the negative consequences of team work revealed that the demands on work performance and corresponding extended responsibilities need workers with autonomy in their work place. If demands are increased but teams are not given the necessary scope for control and decision making on how to meet these demands it is likely that employees will experience higher levels of stress and work pressure. Obviously if people are stressed at work this will impact negatively on production. This suggests that team autonomy is an important factor in high performance of an organisation. An argument by some authors is that as a result of heightened peer pressure workers are more active in their own work intensification,

developing normative rules to monitor their own behaviour in teams (Baker, 1999, Sewell, 1998)

Job satisfaction and the link with Team Work

Effective team implementation can enhance the motivational properties of work and can increase job satisfaction Griffin, Patterson & West (2001) assert that there are many factors that determine job satisfaction among team members such as the team composition, group processes within the team and the nature of work itself These factors usually work interdependently, hence there is no simple process through which team work influences job satisfaction Hackman (1987) argues that sometimes despite the potential advantages that teamwork has the introduction of teams fail to result in expected outcomes

Support and encouragement by supervisors can bring job satisfaction Supervisor behaviour has an effective impact on the affective reactions of team members (Durham, Knight & Locke, 1997) According to Ryan, Schimit & Johnson (1996) company performance is likely to influence job satisfaction of employees, as he argues that companies with higher levels of productivity and performance are likely to have more resources greater security and provide more opportunities for employees

In their study Bacon and Blyton (2003) argue that team working is associated with higher job satisfaction according to job characteristics and participative management theories A team that uses a variety of tasks encourages its workers to learn and use different skills and rotate between jobs to reduce the boredom of repetitive work (Hackman and Oldham 1976, Trist and Bamforth, 1951) This enables team members to share a sense of collective responsibility for work in their area Hackman and Oldham (1976) and to develop a mix of skills necessary for effective work teams who share identification with a common task and mutual beliefs (Cohen et al, 1996)

Leadership and team performance

Leadership within a team is the process of leading, directing and inspiring people to do their best to achieve a desired result which can be achieved by being able to persuade others willingly to behave differently (Armstrong, 2009) The leader's roles are to achieve a task and to maintain effective relationships between themselves and the group and the individuals in it In fulfilling their roles leaders have to satisfy such needs as

- Seeing that the group task is accomplished in order not to lose the confidence of the group and to avoid criticism and disintegration of the group
- Maintaining the group by keeping the group together, boosting its morale and meeting the needs of the group
- Meeting group member's individual needs and harmonise them with the needs of the task and the team

Team members want to see a leader who is committed to the people that he leads and to the task, who has a desire to support and serve the team Members always look up to their leader, hence the leader should show some expertise in the job, be enthusiastic about his work and be an inspiration to his team Some willingness to shoulder team responsibilities rather than passing the buck makes a good team leader It is important for a leader to inspire and motivate his team members and be able to face challenges as most leaders' abilities are tested when they are facing challenges and are under pressure (Armstrong, 2009)

The objectives of a manager have an important impact on the effectiveness of employee participation schemes in general and also appear important for understanding team working (Bacon and Blyton, 2003) Although categories of management motives are not discreet they do help to distinguish between team working introduced for narrowly defined economic reasons and teams created as part of a more concerted effort to elicit a change in attitudes

and develop employee commitment (Drago,1996 and Heller et al, 1998) In a study of 53 different sites, Bacon and Blyton (2000a) discovered a positive association between broader management rationales and a beneficial impact of teams on employees In particular broader management objectives were linked to ‘high road’ forms of team working that involved a more significant change from traditional work practices

In their research Oluseyi &Ayo (2009) argue that effective leadership has a positive influence on the performance of the organisation The findings of their study suggested that leadership effectiveness had the strongest correlation with employees’ performance and was the most influential variable on employee’s performance compared to work motivation and time management The study concluded that leadership effectiveness was the most important contributor to employees’ performance, therefore in order to increase production leaders should always try and adopt an effective strategy

Training and Development and its link to teamwork

The development of people’s performance in the workplace is critical to the success of the organisation The Training and Development process (T&D) has the potential to make a strong positive impact on the performance of individuals, teams and the business as a whole (Garavan, Costine & Heraty, 1995)

Harris (2009) states that, ‘the primary purpose of learning and development as an organisational process is to aid collective progress through the collaborative, expert and stimulation and facilitation of learning and knowledge that support business goals, develop individual potential and respect and build on diversity’ The learning process should benefit both individuals and the business Knowledge creation enables the organisation to continuously improve and from time to time radically innovate in its products Learning should reflect the culture and ethics and the values of the organisation at the same time improve the performance of the organisation When learning occurs there has to be a change,

something new should happen which was not there before Reid and Harrington (2000) concurs that learning is a relatively permanent change in behaviour that occurs as a result of practice or experience. It is assumed that each organisation has its own training programme for every employee who comes in, as the needs of organisations differ from organisation to organisation. It is envisaged that employees who are exposed to training and development in their jobs are perceived to be more skilled than those who do not and have a broader set of work responsibilities (McDuffie and Kochan, 1995, Osterman, 1995).

Libby (2011) in her study stated the benefits of employee training has increased motivation, increased job satisfaction, employee development, better morale amongst employees, increased efficiencies, better productivity results from employees and the ability to adapt to new work practices and technologies with ease. A well designed training programme increases the productivity and the effectiveness of the organisation (Benabou, 1996 and Clarke, 2004).

The study by the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (2007) argue that team workers are more likely to learn new things in their work than those not working in teams. There is a positive tendency that the employees take part in trainings paid for by the employer. Working in a team is closely associated with an environment that has the possibility of learning new things and performing complex tasks.

The Bulgarian study in (2005) managers believed that after implementation of team work, the team workers become more motivated to learn new things and they actually learn from each other. The Finish quality of life survey also by the EU Foundation (2007) reported a positive correlation between team work and employee training, that employees who are involved in team work have generally better possibilities for receiving training and developing their skills than those employees who do not work in teams.

Organisation Climate/ culture and team working

Invancevitch et al (2008) defines organisational climate as “a set of properties of the work environment, perceived directly or indirectly by employees, that is assumed to be a major force in influencing employee behaviour” Invancevitch (2008) argues that the organisational climate is sometimes confused with the term ‘Organisational Culture’ yet the two are different Denison (1996) refers to Organisational Culture as the deep structure of organisations which is rooted in the values, beliefs and assumptions held by organisational members On the other hand climate refers to those aspects of the environment that are consciously perceived by organisational members It is how people perceive the existing culture in their organisation in terms of the characteristics and the quality (French, Kast, & Rosenzweig, 1985)

Litwin and Stringer (1968) argue that there are measures in the organisation that describe perceptions about the organisational climate such as the structure-feelings about constraints and freedom to act and the degree of formality or informality in the working atmosphere such as

- **Responsibility** The feelings of being trusted to carry out important work
- **Risk**-the sense of riskiness and challenge in the job
- **Warmth**-the existence of friendly and informal group
- **Support**-the perceived helpfulness of managers and co-workers, the emphasis (or lack of emphasis) on mutual support
- **Standards**-the perceived importance of implicit and explicit goals and performance standards, the emphasis of doing a good job the challenge represented in personal and team goals

- **Conflict**- the feeling that other managers and workers want to hear different opinions, the emphasis of getting problems out in the open rather than smoothing them over or ignoring them
- **Identity**-the feeling that one belongs to a company and that one is a valuable member of the working team

Rogers (2000) posits that one quality that most good teams share is the culture of the company in which the team exist. Is the culture, one that rewards groups? Is it one that rewards individuals? Or is it a culture that no-one gets rewarded? If one looks around and watch how people act and interact regardless of whether they are on a team. Do people do things for one another? Do they pick up coffee for others when they are going out? If the culture is full of give and take-----if it is supportive and trusting there is a good chance to see successful teams at work

Negative Team Influence

Whilst there have been an increased reliance on work teams in the past years not all observers agree that using work teams is a guarantee of organisational effectiveness. Trent (2003) posits that a social psychologist Renesis Likert once said that 'groups can accomplish much that is good or do great harm' he noted that there is nothing implicit good or bad about groups regardless of where an organisation uses them' (Likert,1961). Hackman (1987) a leading authority on teams also argues that while teams can yield the benefits envisioned by their use they often have a less than desirable side. They can waste the time and energy of members, enforce lower performance norms, and create destructive conflict within and between teams and make notoriously bad decisions. Teams can also frustrate, exploit and frustrate members sometimes all at the same time. Adding to the debate between teams and effectiveness is the fact that few studies have established a clear connection between teams and higher performance and even fewer studies have quantitatively assessed the impact of teaming on

corporate performance (Wisner and Feist, 2001) Teams can also be a challenge to the supervisor' role it can either be eliminated by the introduction of a team in the workplace or redefined to that of a facilitator This can impact negatively to the workers

Hall (2007) concurs with Hackman (1987) when he views team work as a waste of time “they make companies slow and expensive to run” Hall (2007) argues that teams have become more difficult to organise more complex and expensive to run, yet there is still the thought that team work is the solution to many business needs In actual fact it is not, too much of team work leads to wasted time and resources, in a typical meeting scenario of eight people, a ten minute update per person can waste six person/hours per week Yet the manager can get same result by having seven short focused one to one calls with the individuals (Hall, 2007)

Studies by Garrahan and steward (1992), Parker and Slaughter (1998), Rinehart et al, (1997) of lean production, argue that team working leads to deterioration of the quality of working life Instead of enhancing skills the researchers view it as a mechanism of increased control with workers unable to resist the implementation of teams when faced with multinational companies constantly comparing the future viability of work places

The results of the survey by European Union (E U) Quality of life in the Work Place (2009) revealed that 59% of the Finish employees working in teams described their working environment as being driven by pressure and tight time schedule compared to 51% not working in teams Increased stress among Spanish team workers was also apparent from the Spanish representative survey Quality of life in the Work Place (2004) the data showed that 32, 2% of those who work in a team were always or frequently stressed out at work compared to 23, 4% who do not work in teams or groups

The possibility of an increased pace of work and the resulting higher work load is associated with greater risk of health problems hence the need for job rotation

Poorly designed teams can create serious organisational stress. If we believe that using work teams does not guarantee greater effectiveness then the challenge becomes one of creating an environment that increases the likelihood that teams will be successful. Egan (2011) Much of the success or failure of the teams rests upon an organisation's ability to plan, structure and support their use. Not all organisational tasks warrant the use of work teams. Trent (2003) in fact teams are often a cost prohibitive or impractical response to organisational needs. CIPD's (2011) view point regarding teams is that teams come in many forms and exist for many purposes, but not all teams succeed. Inadequate terms of references, resources or training, poor selection of team members, the wrong mix of personality types or skills and poor leadership are among the reasons why teams may fail. It is important for the operation of team working to be effectively managed to address such potential short comings. Team working is desirable in many circumstances and if properly managed can contribute to improved organisational performance while helping to empower individuals and improve job satisfaction and engagement.

Successful teaming requires a careful examination of the planning issues related to the teams. In today's competitive environment it is important for managers to understand how to use work teams to maximise performance in their organisations. If managers ignore these issues, more often than not they will wonder why the reality of using teams does not match the expectations surrounding their use (CIPD, 2011). This research seeks to explore employee experiences of team working and their views of its impact in their organisation.

Summary

This chapter outlined the related literature review on teams and team working. Such themes as Autonomy in teams, Job satisfaction, Higher Commitment, Training and Development & Organisational Culture were discussed as well as the positive and negative aspects were highlighted. The next chapter discusses the methodology chosen for the study and the reason why it was chosen. Data collecting procedures and Data analysis are also discussed in the chapter.

CHAPTER THREE - RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The purpose of any research carried out by the researcher “is to develop knowledge in a particular field” The research philosophy adopted contains important assumptions about how we view the world and whatever research strategy used in the research is influenced by these assumptions (Saunders et al, 2009) In order for a research to be meaningful it is important for the researcher to understand the Ontology, Epistemology and Axiology in relation to the study carried out The three words form relationships to each other in that the epistemology and ontology positions should have some bearing on the research methods selected

Ontology is a term used to describe theories on how society operates, the term simply refers to concepts of reality Questions of social ontology are concerned with how society operates and the nature of social entities (Geraghty, 2008)

Epistemology refers to theories on how society should be studied, within social science

Epistemology is concerned with what is acceptable knowledge concerning how the nature of social knowledge should be studied (Geraghty, 2008)

Saunders et al, (2009) further argues that the research philosophy a researcher chooses contains important assumptions about the way one views the world and thus these assumptions influence the choice of strategy used in the research Blumberg et al, (2008) posits that any research methods chosen must fit the subject matter, giving meaning to the situation at hand According to Saunders et al, (2009) there is no one research philosophy that is better than the other, they are all better at doing different things The choice of the research method depends on questions the research seeks to answer (ibid)

RESEARCH PHILOSOPHIES

The research literature outlines three types of research philosophies which are Positivism, Interpretivism and Realism

Positivism

Positivists emphasize more on quantifiable observations which are measurable and observable and can lend themselves to statistical analysis (Gill and Johnson, 2002) The researcher can choose to present data in the form of a table or statistics It is a research philosophy adopted from the natural sciences which allows for the research to be undertaken as far as possible in a value freeway (Saunders et al, 2009)

Interpretivism

Interpretivism on the other hand is a philosophy that develops theory through ideas inducted from the observed and interpreted social constructions Interpretivist believe that if social entities are subject to continual accomplishment and revision by social actors they should therefore be studied with a view to understanding the thinking of the actors involved in a particular setting Researchers need to understand how a phenomenon is influenced by the environment Interpretivist focuses more on words, observations and meaning as opposed to facts and numbers (Geraghty, 2008)

Realism

Realism shares the principles of both positivist and interpretivist that accept individual human beliefs and behaviours and acknowledges human subjectivity

Quantitative research is more aligned with objectivist and positivist orientations on the other hand qualitative research is most closely aligned with constructionist and interpretivist orientations

Quantitative Approach

Quantitative approach is also known as the 'scientific research paradigm' this paradigm involves explanation and observations (Ochieng, 2009) Anderson (2009) links this research method to the scientific method of collecting facts and testing for relationships between them and from those conclusions can be drawn Quantitative research method attempts to obtain actual knowledge based facts on the issue Creswell and Clark (2007) argue that this method consists of statistically analysing scores collected to answer research questions or to test hypothesis This type of research tests how people feel, think or act in a certain way This approach uses structured questionnaires to solicit data The information collected is turned into numerical data which can be easily compared to other similar data (Libby, 2011) However, (Cormack, 1992) argues that not all quantitative research involves hypothesis testing which is true for the research under study Data from the widely used large scale statistically survey only describes opinions, feelings and aspects of peoples' lives

Quantitative Vs Qualitative

Both quantitative and qualitative are concerned with the development of knowledge in any discipline The key difference between quantitative and qualitative methods is their flexibility Generally, quantitative methods are fairly inflexible With quantitative methods such as surveys and questionnaires, for example, researchers ask all participants identical questions in the same order (Bernard, 1995) The response categories from which participants may choose are "closed-ended" or fixed The advantage of this inflexibility is that it allows for meaningful comparison of responses across participants and study sites However, it requires a thorough understanding of the important questions to ask, the best way to ask them, and the range of possible responses

On the other hand qualitative research method is a more exploratory design gaining insight into such things as people's attitudes, behaviours, motivations and concerns and is usually

based on a small sample size (Malhotra & Birks 2003) Focus groups and in-depth interview are two of the approaches used when carrying out qualitative research This method can be time consuming (Malhotra & Birks 2003)

Bernard, (1995) states that quantitative and qualitative research methods differ primarily in

- Their analytical objectives
- The types of questions they pose
- The types of data collection instruments they use
- The forms of data they produce
- The degree of flexibility built into study design

Understanding the different research approaches assist the researcher in making an informed decision on the most appropriate methodology for the study

The researcher had initially proposed to use the mixed approach research method in the project proposal It is an approach that uses both qualitative and quantitative methods The researcher later found out that the appropriate method for an exploratory research was the qualitative approach as Robson (2002 59) argues that “exploratory research is a valuable means of finding out what is happening, to seek new insights to ask questions and to assess phenomena in a new light” Qualitative method was appropriate for this research because it is also an approach that seeks to explore a phenomenon rather than seek to confirm a hypothesis about the phenomena It is a method that seeks answers to a question, uses a systematically predefined set of procedures, to answer the question and collects evidence, produces findings that were not determined in advance and produces findings that are applicable beyond immediate boundaries of study (Bernard, 1995) Qualitative research is used to gain insight into people’s attitudes, behaviours, value systems, concerns, motivations, aspirations, culture or lifestyles It is used to inform business decisions, policy information and communication

and research. This research design involves the analysis of any unstructured material, including customer feedback, participant observation in depth interviews, open ended surveys and focus groups. The advantage of qualitative research design is its ability to provide complex textual descriptions of how people experience a given research issue. It provides information about the human side of an issue that is, the often contradicting behaviours, beliefs, opinions, emotions and relationships of individuals. This research intended to find out employees' experiences and perception about teams and team working and the research also involved the study of attitudinal variables, the researcher was convinced that the use of qualitative approach measured attitudes adequately.

However, due to access limitation that the researcher encountered it was not possible to conduct interviews as planned hence the researcher had no alternative but to limit her study to the quantitative approach and administer questionnaires only. The researcher distributed questionnaires to two employees from each company whom the researcher knew who in turn distributed the other questionnaires to their colleagues'. This enabled the researcher to get a reasonable sample size for this research.

Employees who participated in this study are from two successful organisations that produce high quality medical devices in Galway. For the sake of confidentiality the names of the companies will not be revealed in this research but names will be supplied by the researcher if required by the examiner. The companies will be referred to as company X and Y. When company X was first established in 1980 it was providing a range of engineering solutions to the electronics industry. Over the years the company diversified and began to explore other industries including the fast growing medical device industry. It is an innovative organisation that has experienced steady growth since 2000. The organisation has established strong relationships with their customer base and employs over 800 hundred workers. Apart from Ireland (Galway) the company has other operations in the US, California, Minnesota,

Massachusetts and Singapore In 2010 the company acquired another Medical company Z to expand its operations

Another organisation whose employees participated in the study was company Y in Galway too This is a world-wide developer, manufacturer and marketer of medical devices with approximately 25 000 employees' world- wide and revenue of \$8, 2 Billion in 2009 For more than 30 years company Y has advanced the practice of less invasive medicines by providing a broad and deep portfolio of innovative products, technologies and services across a wide range of medical specialities The company's less invasive products are used for enlarging narrowed blood vessels to prevent heart attack and stroke clearing passages by plaque to alleviate pain, opening obstructions and bringing relief to patients suffering from various forms of cancer, performing biopsies and ultra sounds, mapping electrical problems in the heart, placing filters to prevent blood clots from reaching the lungs, heart or brains, treating urological, renal, pulmonary, cerebrovascular and gastrointestinal diseases The company's products help physicians and other medical professionals improve their patients' quality of life by providing alternatives to surgery

Company Y's first international manufacturing facility was established in Ireland in 1994 There are currently 3 Irish locations, Galway, Cork and Clonmel with approximately 4,500 employees The company's product portfolio is spread across each location Company Y Ireland is a dynamic organisation, constantly growing, changing and evolving to better meet the needs of customers and their patients The company believes that the key to the unique success of this company in Ireland has been its people The company's manufacturing philosophy is built around the co-tenants of world class manufacturing, namely, Quality, Empowerment, and Team work and incorporates the principles and Lean and Six Sigma

Population and Sampling

Sampling is a process that is used to select people to participate in a research. Non-probability sampling technique known as snowballing- sampling was used in this study. The participants were hand-picked, not randomly selected. The method was used because of the access problems the researcher encountered. The researcher made contact first with a few employees and used them to contact others. It was the only realistic option available to the researcher at this time, the sample consisted of who-ever was available to the researcher but employees from the two organisations who work in a team. The disadvantage of this method is that one can never be totally sure that it is an accurate representation of the population. As such the researcher can never easily generalise to the entire population on the basis of this sample procedure. The researcher gave out a total of 35 questionnaires to the employees of the two organisations.

DATA COLLECTION METHOD

Questionnaire

To solicit information, from the respondents the researcher conducted a survey using questionnaires with closed and open ended questions around the themes informed by the literature review. The use of questionnaires enabled the researcher to achieve a wide coverage of attitudinal variables under study within the given limitations. The questionnaire was preferred because

- It ensured that respondents remain anonymous and therefore respond objectively without fear of victimization
- Secondly the questionnaire allows the researcher to achieve a wide coverage of respondents at affordable costs and time
- Thirdly, the questionnaire is easy to distribute and administer and is able to dig deep within the minds, attitudes and feelings of people

Questionnaire Validation

The questionnaire was pilot tested to ensure that all questions and instructions were clear and to enable the researcher to leave out any items that did not yield usable data. Pilot testing also improved the value and reliability of questionnaires. A sample of employees was selected and draft questionnaires administered to them. During pilot-testing, a number of questions were seen not to yield the desired information and as a result the questions on the questionnaires were modified.

All the information collected was first-hand information collected from respondents. Cover letters (Appendix 1) seeking permission to conduct the study were sent to employees selected for the study. The purpose of the study was highlighted in the cover letters. Also highlighted in the cover letters were ethical concerns like emphasizing that respondents were to remain anonymous by not indicating their names or any form of identity in the questionnaire.

The researcher took a week away from Dublin to Galway to deliver the questionnaires. The questionnaires were given to two employees from the two companies to give to others who agreed to take part in the study. Company X was given 25 questionnaires and company Y was given 10 making up a total of 35. The same procedure was used to collect the questionnaires back. Out of 35 questionnaires distributed the return rate was 83%.

Data Analysis

Since this was a small sample under study the researcher analysed the data collected manually with the use of an electric calculator. Responses on personal information were the first to be analysed and represented in the form of a graph or table. All the other responses were recorded and analysed in the same way under the themes of the literature. Data collected was expressed as a percentage to facilitate discussions. It is from this data presentation that the experiences of employees on team work were determined.

Ethical Considerations

The researcher tried to adhere to all ethical guidelines by strictly following what was emphasized by the participants and the college. The researcher considered all the issues that could be encountered in the study. The researcher committed to ensuring the autonomy of research participants that the participants were not forced to take part in the study, it was on free will. The dignity of all research participants was respected concerning anonymity and confidentiality of all respondents. Adherence to this principle also ensured that participants were not used simply as a means to achieve research objectives but also to gain from this study. The researcher tried and minimised risks associated with the research including psychological and social risks and maximised the benefits to research participants. The researcher also ensured a fair distribution of risks and benefits resulting from the research. Those who took on the burden of research participation should share in the benefits of the knowledge gained or rather the people who are expected to benefit from knowledge will be the participants. The results of the study will be made known to the participants if they so wish.

Summary

This chapter outlines the method the researcher used for the study and the reason why the chosen method was used. Questionnaires were the major source of the primary data that was sought. Data collection and Data analysis procedures were also discussed. The next chapter four analyses and presents data in the form tables, charts and graphs.

CHAPTER FOUR - DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

The main purpose of this chapter is to present, analyse and discuss the data that was collected on the employees' experiences and perception of team working. Various forms of data presentation that include tables, graphs and statements are used in this chapter. The responses to structured questions are presented either in table or graphic form, while the responses to unstructured questions are presented in statement form. The responses to questions on personal details of respondents are presented in either tables or graphs.

Data was collected through questionnaires; there were 35 questionnaires distributed and 10 interviews carried out from both companies. Of the 35 questionnaires distributed, 29 were returned and 6 were not returned.

Personal Details about Employees

Table 4.1 Distribution of workers by gender (N= 29)

Sex	No of respondents	Percentage of respondents
Female	16	55%
Male	13	45%
Total	29	100%

Q1 There were 35 questionnaires distributed; 29 were returned (83%) returned and six were not returned (17%). Of all the returned questionnaires, sixteen were females (55%) and thirteen males (45%). The survey highlighted that more females participated in the study than males.

Although the sex did not have a direct bearing to the research study, its inclusion was necessary in order to get views from both sexes where possible. From the data in table 4 1, female respondents were more than male respondents. The explanation for this could be the fact that this was a small scale research the researcher was not able to access a larger population due to access problems so the results of the study cannot be generalised. The other reason could be that in the past few years there has been changes in the employment trend, statistics reveal that there are more women in employment than men (CSO, 2011)

Table 4 2 Distribution of employees by age (N= 29)

Age	Number of respondents	Percentage of respondents
18-25	1	3%
26-30	8	28%
31-40	16	55%
41-50	4	14%
50+	0	0%
Total	29	100%

Q2 The research results shows that the highest age group employed was the 31-40 with Sixteen (55%) employed and the least 18-25 with One (3%) In the middle is 26-30 with Eight (28%) and 41-50 with (14%) and nothing from 50 and above. The reason for fewer employees in the age 18-25 and 26-30 could be attributed to the fact that most of the young people of that age are still in college or still deciding on their careers or have migrated to other countries in the world in search for greener pastures. Taylor, (2008) also argues that attitudes of future generations towards, work, careers and employment will evolve and be

different from those of past and future generations. Generation Y or the 'nexters' that is people born after 1980 have their own views that are relevant to the workplace and differ to an extent from those of other generations. Some mostly frequently made points are, just to mention a few

- A wish to achieve a greater work life balance than their parents managed
- A global perspective migration (that is not Europe)
- A resistance to tight systems of control and bureaucratically imposed rules
- Greater ease with insecurity than previous generations

Taylor, (2008) further argues that if these findings are right and attitudes do not change as this generation ages and takes on domestic responsibilities, there are important messages for organisations seeking to recruit and retain its members. Also there was none in the age range 50+ this could be because most people in this age range are retiring and that team work in operations has a lot of pressure as respondents indicated in the questionnaires and this age group is getting tired to work under pressure. The majority in the ages 31-40 have made a choice of their career and are settling down with their families.

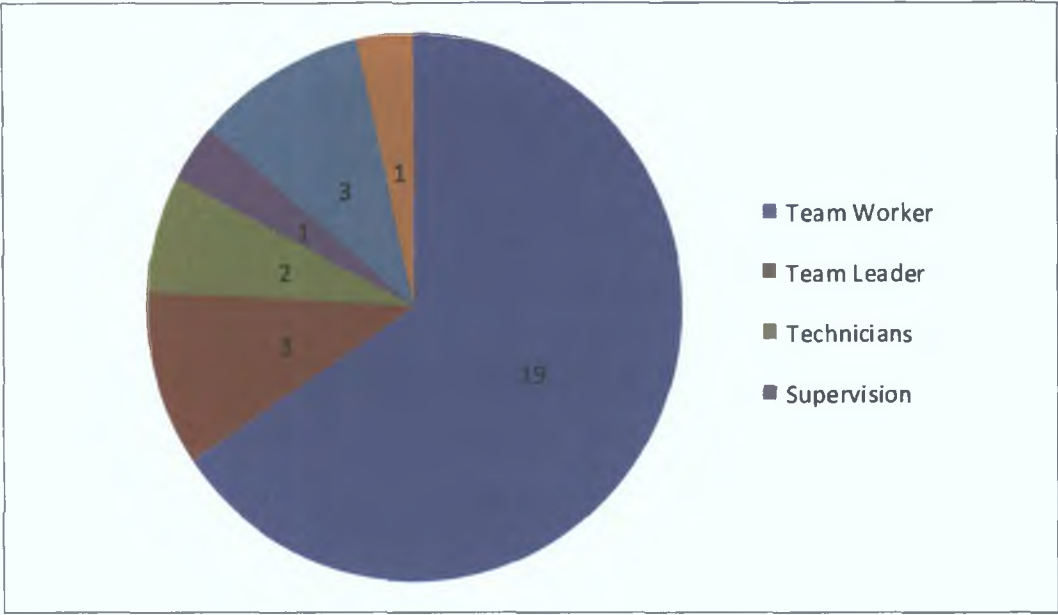


Figure 4.1 Distribution of employees by position (N=29)

Q3. On the position held the survey showed nineteen participants (66%) were involved in team work, Three Team leaders (10%) 2 Technicians (7%) and One Supervisor (3%) One product builder (3%) and Three team trainers (10%). Most participants who took part in the survey are team workers who are involved in team work on a daily basis and the views expressed in the questionnaire are from the workers directly. Also it is interesting to note that some views expressed in the study are from the team leaders and supervisor. Even though the sample was small all key players in team work were represented that is team workers, team leaders, supervisor, team trainers and technicians.

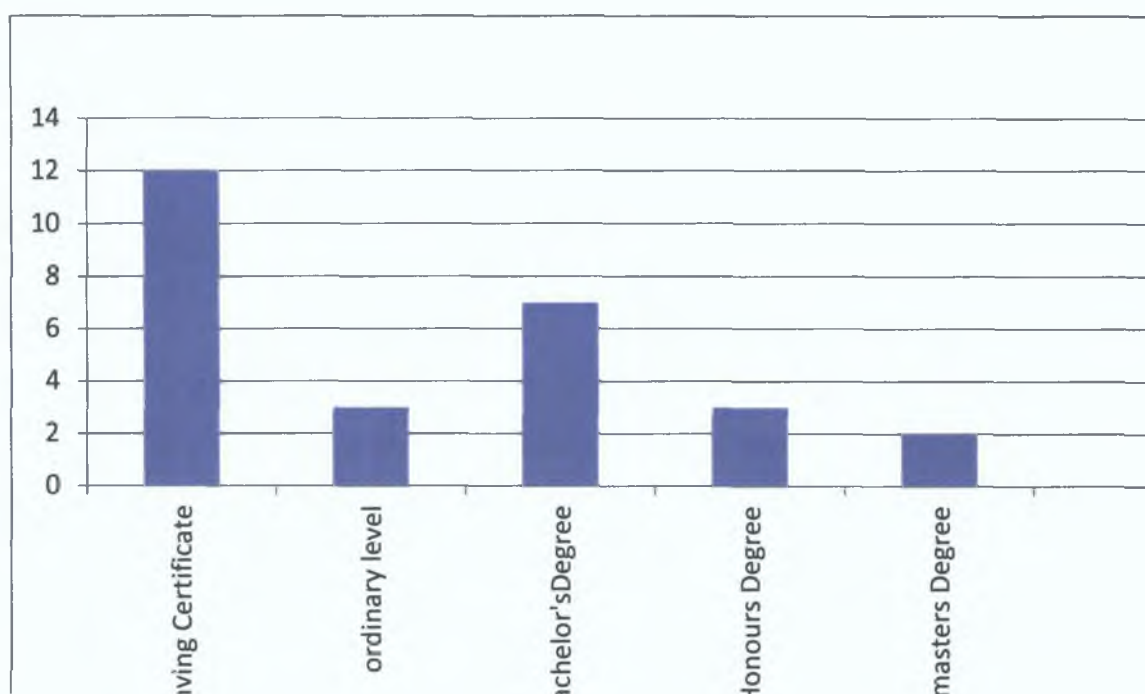


Figure 4.2 Distribution of employees by academic qualification (N=29)

Q4. Three respondents (10%) indicated that their highest academic qualification was Ordinary level, seven (24%) indicated that they had Bachelor's degree, three respondents (10%) indicated that they had Honours degrees, twelve (41%) indicated that they had Leaving Certificates and two indicated they had Masters' degrees (7%). The interpretation of the respondents' qualifications could mean that those with Ordinary level are not originally from Ireland or had their education outside Ireland as there is no Ordinary level in Ireland. Most respondents indicated they had a leaving cert which is the basic level of education in Ireland and another bit with honours degrees. Generally this could mean that both organisations employ people with a good level of literacy.

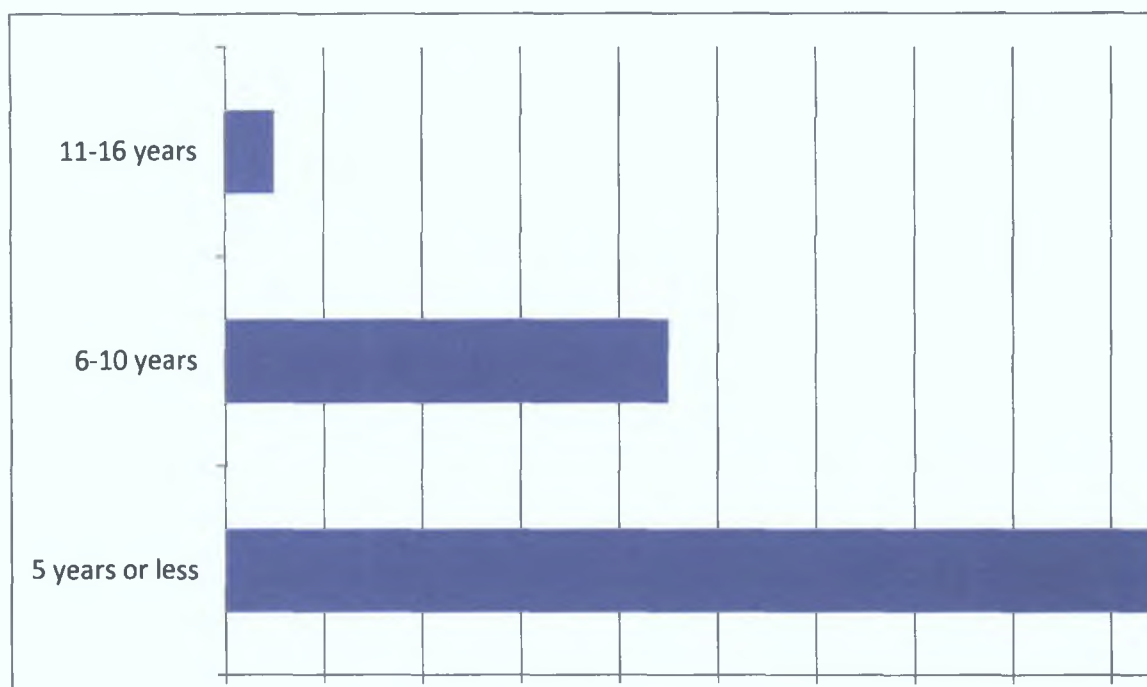


Figure 4.3 Length of service in the company (N=29)

Q5. When asked about the length of service in the company nineteen (66%) respondents are 5 years or less in the company, nine (31%) respondents are 6yrs-10yrs and one (3%) respondent has been in the company for 11yrs-16yrs. The statistics show that many respondents are 5 years or less in the company this might be due to high staff turnover during the Celtic Tiger because of the loose labour market. Now workers are forced to keep their jobs because of recession, it is not easy to leave a job and get another one tomorrow.

About the Company

Q6. Twenty four (89%) respondents indicated that their company was a multinational, (14%) four respondents did not know and one respondent (3%) indicated his was a transactional. Most respondents showed their company was a multinational and the other four might have not understood what a Multinational and an SME (Small Medium Enterprise) meant. A follow up interview would have served a good purpose in clarifying the question. However, being a multinational company means teams are busy all the time to meet targets.

About Teams

Q7. All respondents 100% who participated in the study were involved in team work in their place of work. This means that all participants have some kind of experience working in a team.

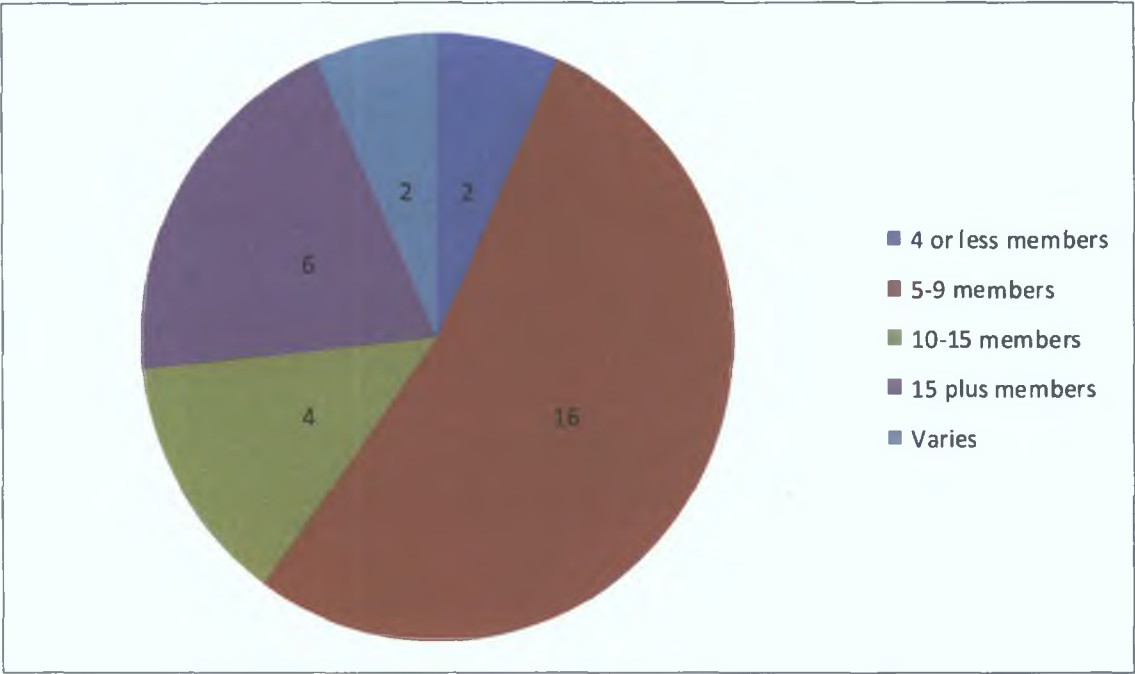


Figure 4.4 Team Size

Q8. When asked about the number of persons in a team Two (7%) indicated they work in a team of 4 or less, Two (7%) indicated it varies according to the type of job, Four (14%) indicated that they work in teams of 10-15, fifteen (52%), indicated they work in teams of 5-9 and six (20%) indicated they work in a team of 15+.Regarding the team size most respondents indicated they work in a team size of 5-9.The statistics suggest that both organisations have the ideal numbers in their teams according to the literature. Oglethorpe (2000) that for a team to be great the ideal number should be 7-9 team members, any team with 15 to 20 team members is not ideal as large numbers make connections between members hard. Team sizes vary according to the task they are doing as some respondents

indicated so this could be another reason why the respondents indicated varying numbers of team members in a team

About Team Autonomy

Team Allocation

Q9 When asked if the respondents had autonomy to work in a team of their choice Twenty-three (79%) indicated that they were allocated to a team, Five respondents (17%) were not allocated to a team and one (3%) respondent did not indicate her response Some employees indicated that it is the management or supervisors who allocate teams in their open ended answers In other words team members have no autonomy to choose who they want to work with If they are not happy working with a certain colleague they have to put up with that On the other hand Belbin's team theory suggests that a successful team needs a mix of different psychological profiles such as people who are

- Highly productive under stress conditions (Shaper SH)
- Organised to carry out agreed plans systematically (Implementer IMP)
- Protect team from mistakes focus on guidelines and standards Complete (Finisher CF)
- Know the team and enable agreement in the team (Co-ordinator CO)
- Provide support and ensure members are working effectively (Team Worker TW)
- Explore ideas and resources to develop team objectives outside the group (Resource allocators RI)
- Creative and Innovative who come up with new ideas(Plant PL)
- Analyse and Evaluate Ideas that people bring(Monitor Evaluators ME)
- Specialist who have specialised knowledge to get the job done (Specialists SP)

This mix according Belbin (1993) enables the team to flow with the objectives of the team. It would appear in these organisations nothing of Belbin's team roles is put into consideration when placing people in a team.

Q10 Twenty three respondents (79%) do not organise their own work and do not plan their working day. Six (21%) indicated they have the autonomy to organise their own work in teams. Most employees do not organise nor plan their working day everything is done for them. Only six of the employees indicated they have the autonomy to organise their work these could be the team leaders, supervisor, team trainers and technicians but the rest do not have the autonomy to organise their work.

Q11 Most respondents' Twenty three (79%) respondents said working in teams promotes best practice. This could be because of the fact that teams are made of individuals who work towards achieving the same purpose and theirs is to produce a product for both internal and external customers since their companies are multinational. According to literature team work has the advantages of encouraging a set of behaviours such as listening and responding co-operatively to other people's points of view, giving support to team members who need it, recognising the interest and achievement of other members in a group. As well, teams outperform individuals acting alone or in large organisational groupings especially when performance requires multi- skills (Armstrong, 2001).

Q12 The majority of respondents indicated that they have very little autonomy if none in making decisions about their work and deciding on their daily tasks, on how they do their work, what task to do, when to do it and on the distribution of work to be done. Most work is planned by the supervisor or management. When they come to work on a daily basis they find everything planned and arranged. In some cases they check from the board about their task of the day.

Q13 Also with regards to the influence of the content of their task, the order in which they do the job the pace of work, the working methods, the division of tasks between employees, the choice of working partner, schedules of projects goods deliveries and services, working hours most respondents indicated they do not have influence if none at all, everything is done by the supervisor and management

It would appear that employees working in operational teams have no autonomy with regards to their jobs, this is confirmed by a study carried out by Leach et al (2005) which concluded that the degree of employee autonomy is influenced by the nature of the job employees are involved in Team workers would be more autonomous in professions like legislators, senior officials, management, technicians and associate professionals In the studies carried out data analysis indeed shows, greater autonomy compared with other employee categories in all aspects studied

Q14 Employees indicated that it is their responsibility to meet deadlines, perform to the best quality standard By so doing they constantly work under pressure If there is a mistake by any of the group member at a work station and result in a reject the whole group is affected so it is therefore important to perform to the best quality standard and give attention to detail

About Job Satisfaction

Organisational practices (N=29)

Q15 Twenty(69%) of respondents indicated that Job enlargement is practised in their organisation, also another (69%) indicated that job rotation is practised, (69%) said there is continual training and (69%) indicated target setting is practised, Fourteen (48%) of respondents fourteen indicated that structured forms of discussions are used and Eleven (38%) eleven indicated wider autonomy is being used Good organisational practices lead to job satisfaction, a team that uses a variety of tasks encourages its workers to learn and use

different skills and rotate between jobs to reduce boredom (Hackman &Oldham, 1979; Trist &Bamforth)

Q16. (75%) respondents indicated that they are generally satisfied with their team based way of working (65%) indicated they are satisfied with the way they can take part in the decision of their group and (86%) indicated that all decisions are made by the team leader. Although respondents indicated most decisions are made by the team leader they are satisfied with their team based way of working. Workers have accepted what they cannot change they are satisfied with their work even though most decisions are made by the team leader.



Figure 4.5 Work Pressure

Q17. When asked if they work under time pressure (38%) indicated they always work under time pressure, (21%) respondents often work under pressure and (41%) indicated that sometimes they do work under pressure. The majority of workers seem to work under time pressure. This could be due to the fact that they are working to meet set targets and deadlines.

The other reason is that they have to match the pace of the machines they are using. The responses of the employees in the two organisations confirm the results of a survey by the European Union (EU) Quality of life in the work place (2009) which revealed that workers working in teams are constantly working under pressure and tight time schedule. As a result they are always stressed out compared to those not working in teams.

COMMITMENT

Organisational and job commitment

Q18. (76%) of the respondents indicated that they feel uncomfortable when something goes wrong in the organisation even if it is not their fault, (79 %) said they have their organisation at heart,(90%) said their job means a lot to them and (76%) indicated that they feel very much at home in the organisation. The responses show that the majority of employees are committed to their jobs and to the organisation which is a good sign for an organisation as Hughes (2010) concurs that commitment by a team to one another, to their work and to their organisation brings benefits such as clarity, prompt decision making and comfort in making needed changes and if these commitments are strong enough the team becomes more successful and productive.

Training and Development

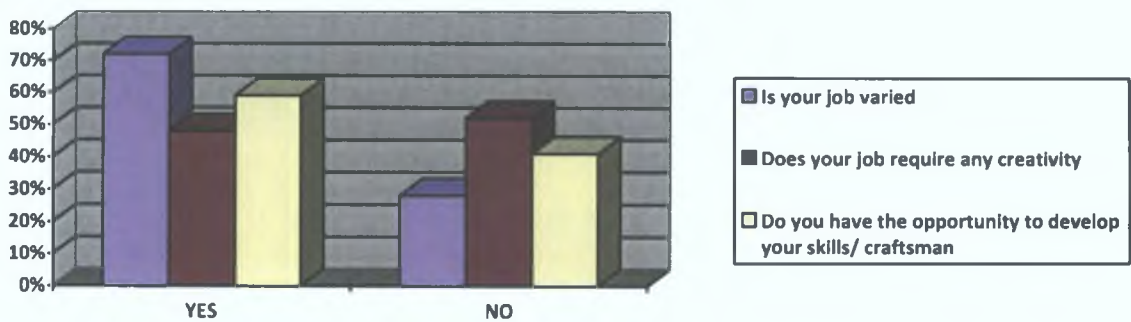


Figure 4.6 Job Skills/Craftsman

Q19 About job variation (72%) of the respondents said their job was varied and (28%) indicated that their job was not varied (48%) indicated their job require creativity and (52%) indicated their job does not require any creativity When asked if employees had the opportunity to develop their skills or craftsmen (59%) indicated they had the opportunity to develop their skills/craftsmen and (41%) said they do not have the opportunity Most employees indicated they have the opportunity to develop their skills and craftsman which is a good practice for the organisation A learning organisation is a healthy organisation Harris (2009) argues that the learning process should benefit both individuals and the business as knowledge creation enables the organisation to continuously improve and from time to time innovate in its products There are more benefits in training and developing employees such as increased motivation, job satisfaction, increased morale among workers, increased efficiencies and better productivity (Libby, 2011)

Table 4 3 Level of employee involvement in events (N=29)

	Yes	No
Information Events	52%	48%
Capacity Building	38%	62%
Networking	41%	59%

Q20 When asked if they had participated in information events in their organisation (52%) said yes and (48%) said no About participating in capacity building activities (38%) indicated yes and (62%) indicated no When asked if they had been involved m networking (41%) said yes and (59%) said no The responses show that very few employees have been involved in capacity building and networking, whilst more than half 52% have been involved in information events

Table 4 4 Ratings of Employees in event participation (N=29)

Activity	Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good	Excellent
Information Events	17%	38%	28%	7%	10%
Decision Making	14%	35%	48%	0%	3%
Capacity Building	24%	14%	48%	10	3%
Networking	14%	35%	41%	3%	7%

Q21 From the information in the table above about 45% rated the information events as good, very good and excellent This is still below average on information events 48% rated decision making as good, 48% indicated capacity building was good and very good and 41% rated networking as good However, for the two companies all activities rated below average, management should consider improving these activities in their teams if these teams are going to be effective

Q22 When asked if respondents had attended training through their employer in the last 12 months Nine (31%) indicated yes and twenty (69%) indicated no Most responses showed that there are few employees who attended training in the last 12 months The Supervisor team leaders, technicians and team trainers are the people who could have undergone training in the last 12 months

Organisational Culture

Q23 About the relations that exist with their colleagues Fifteen (52%) indicated they had very good relations with their colleagues, Eleven (38%) said their relations were good and

Three (10%) said they had a fair relationship with their colleagues. Generally the relations seem to be good among colleagues who reflect a good culture among employees themselves. Team advocates such as Eikenbury (2011) & Hughes (2010) assert that one of the commitments a team needs is commitment to each other and each other's success. If team members believe, care and support each other they are likely to be successful as this promotes the shifting and responsibilities among team members as necessary and allows team members to have less stress and higher productivity.

Q24 Nineteen (66%) respondents were motivated to work effectively within a team, six (21%) indicated they were not motivated to work in a team and Four (14%) don't know.

The response rates of 66% of employees who are motivated to work in a team suggest that there is harmony amongst employees and they find team work enjoyable.

Q25 Nineteen (66%) employees indicated that their organisation was a friendly place to work in and Nine (31%) said it was not and One (3%) didn't know. The reasons given by respondents who said it is a friendly place, in an open ended question were as follows:

- Colleagues are kind as long as you adhere to procedures and you are organised and flexible
- All product builders are nice and flexible
- It is the team members that make the place enjoyable
- People are friendly and always willing to help each other
- Team members are approachable

Reasons given by respondents who said no were:

- Because the management makes all decisions and has the final say in everything that goes

- Company policies are not as friendly
- Because of the recent takeover the values of the previous owners have been put aside
- There is no trust between management and team members
- I feel comfortable on my own so that I can be judged on my own mistakes
- It is annoyingly divided between upper echelons and lower ranked employees and the divisions are strong
- There is discrimination some cultures are looked down upon

The responses from the employees above suggest there is lack of trust between employees and management. Whilst employees are happy with each other they are not happy with management. If there was an interview it would have been interesting to find out what employees exactly meant in their responses.

Q26 Employees when asked if there is anything they would like to see being done or improved in team work in their organisations. Their responses to the open ended question were

- More communication with management and rotation of roles within groups
- We need good work practices
- There should be incentives for job enlargement

The responses from the respondents suggest that there is lack of communication between employees and management and good work practices such as more job rotation, work & life balance.

Summary

This chapter presented, analysed and discussed the findings of the study. Various forms of data presentation were used mainly tables, graphs, pie charts and statements. From the data presented and analysed in this chapter some pertinent issues related to the findings of the study emerged. The next chapter five summarises and concludes the study.

CHAPTER FIVE - SUMMARIES AND CONCLUSIONS

This chapter concludes and summarises the findings of the study. The study set out to explore the experiences of the workers who work in teams and how they perceive team work with regards to the positive and negative aspects. The questionnaire was the instrument used to collect data. Personal information of the employees such as their gender, academic status, and number of years in the company was collected and analysed. The questionnaire also solicited information on the composition of the teams, type of company whether a multinational or a small medium enterprise. Information under such themes as, Teams, Job satisfaction, Autonomy, training and development, Commitment and Organisational culture was collected, presented and analysed. The following were some of the major findings established in the study.

Team working is being successfully adopted in the two organisations, team members like working in teams as evidenced by their responses to question eleven. However, workers have no autonomy in these two organisations, team work may not be fully realised by the organisation. It appears management in these two organisations are reluctant to embrace team working fully, there appears to be fear of letting go of the control which would allow the teams to be fully autonomous. It may be that management's reluctance to release control or give control over team's structure (that is who is in the team, how the team works, task control) is limiting the full benefits which could be derived from team working such as increased productivity, increased job satisfaction and increased motivation. Team theorists also believe that if teams work well, have a common goal, are autonomous in their decision making and have responsibility and support, team work becomes a valuable experience to the

workers involved, as working in a team empowers people and helps them develop autonomy which is a source of profound job satisfaction and reduces stress (Hayes, 2005)

Whilst the study confirms the use of small teams of 5-9 and 10-15 employees by these two organisations as recommended by team theorists that small teams are manageable and effective compared to larger teams there is no evidence of their effectiveness on productivity as the study did not seek to measure the teams impact on productivity, the study makes an assumption that these teams work effectively to impact well on productivity since it is well chronicled that team working benefits outweigh the negatives

In these organisations there are no criteria used when allocating team workers to teams There is lack of analysis in considering putting different types of people in teams Employers take no cognisance of team dynamics Employees are just implementers, there is no flexibility, which may lead to ineffectiveness of a team On the other hand putting employees according to Belbin's team roles helps the co-ordinator to capitalise on the respective strengths of each member and allow them to contribute their part effectively to the team A wrong mix of personality types or skills among other reasons is why teams fail (Casey, 1995)

Also, the organisation's age profile is another cause for concern, there are few young people in the ages 18-30 Most employees are in the age range 31-40 this might have a negative future implication for the companies as the employees' age there will be a shortage of young people to replace them Again young people are very good with technology, they catch up easily so will be needed to use the new machines It would be good to see a mix of different age profiles in teams

Employees work under so much pressure to meet targets before deadlines this has a possibility of health problems associated with increased pace of work

The organisations use a variety of job practises such as job enlargement, job rotation, wider autonomy of groups, continual training related to organisational needs and Target setting. A team that uses a variety of tasks encourages its workers to learn and use different skills and rotate between jobs to reduce boredom of repetitive work (Hackman& Oldham, 1976)

Job enlargement is practised in the two companies but there are no incentives or rewards for extra job done. Casey (1995) argues that if demands are increased but teams are not given the necessary scope for control and decision making on how to meet these demands it is likely that employees will experience higher levels of stress and work pressure.

Continual training related to organisational needs is done; workers are trained to produce the products of the company but it is done on a very low scale. Workers may also need to further their qualifications in other areas that are not job related as the employees' need to further his/her qualifications and career by extension to develop his or her personality may lead to job satisfaction.

There is lack of trust between employees and management, as management do not want to let go of control, employees feel they need more communication with the management.

Recommendations

Whilst team working is a major step for these organisations, it is for the management to ensure that team working is effectively contributing to their business strategy and that teams are given enough autonomy so that the benefits of team work may be fully realised. By giving control to the workers trust may develop between management and workers.

Management should consider individual abilities when designing and grouping teams. The use of Belbin's team roles could greatly assist organisations who are seeking to develop well balanced and effective teams as these will help strengthen the use of teams in these organisations and lead to increased motivation among team members.

In recruiting and selection organisations would be wise to consider ways that will attract and retain young people to the company, things like a good employer brand. Maybe also consider good academic qualifications and remunerate according to the level of qualifications one has.

The two organisations studied as part of this research project should consider using a variety of job practices, to reduce the time between job rotations as this will help reduce the health risks associated with the job, give wider autonomy to workers, also management to consider work life balance to avoid pressure at work that may result in stress. Management should also consider giving rewards/incentives (Performance Management) for job enlargement.

Should organisations wish to adopt and expand their use of team working they should consider a similar extension and analysis of the training needs beyond the needs of the company for self-development.

Finally organisations should try and adopt flatter structures for direct communication, partnership and collaboration and to ensure that HR practices are adopted that lead to workers having high ability competence, high motivation, autonomy and control required to use their knowledge and skills to exercise motivation.

Limitations of the research

The study was conducted on a small sample size it would have been more interesting and the findings more robust had there been a larger random sample chosen. Only Irish companies were considered in the research sample which is a limitation of the study and again a more international, multicultural sample of team workers may have added insight to the study. The research relied on the perceptions of workers only, without similar regard to the perceptions of management.

Implications for future research direction

In light of the limitations of the study it seems sensible that future studies would seek to address these. It would be worthwhile for this research to be carried out on a larger random sample and also to extend the semi-structured in-depth interviews undertaken in order to contribute further to the findings. Issues raised in the questionnaire would benefit from further analysis through the expansion of the interviews.

Another possible research direction would be to undertake an analysis of team working taking into consideration other sectors thereby expanding the research beyond that of the manufacturing industry. In addition this study has focused on traditional team working however future studies might consider other forms of team working such as virtual teams, multidisciplinary team working etc to see if the findings are replicated.

It would be interesting to look at international experiences of team workers to see if they had similar experiences. The organisations selected for this study were Irish albeit with American parent companies. Future studies might wish to consider the inclusion of companies from different countries in order to expand our understanding of the phenomenon of team working.

Finally it would be exciting to include a research element which sought to capture both employee and employer/manager perspectives of team working. Gathering the two perspectives in this way through a matched sample approach would likely add greatly to the body of knowledge on this topic.

Conclusion

The research concludes that workers are positive about team working because of the benefits they enjoy in team work such as good relationships, increased productivity, Job satisfaction, increased motivation and many more. If these teams are to be effective there is need for commitment on the part of the management, let go of control and let the teams become autonomous in their work.

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Appendix I

41 Hamilton Way

Castlelands

Balbriggan

12 June 2012

Dear respondent,

I am a Masters Student at the National College of Ireland in Dublin, who is asking for your assistance I am exploring the experiences of workers on team working and their perceptions on its positive and negative impact in an organisation

I have enclosed a questionnaire in the envelope, please fill in the short questionnaire which will not take much of your time as candid and as honest as possible You need not write your name or the organisation you are from

As soon as you are through, please return the questionnaire to the undersigned using the self-addressed envelope All information collected will be treated with confidentiality

Thank you in advance for your help

Yours Faithfully

Sisah Ncube

Appendix II

"Confidential"

Questionnaire for respondents

Questionnaire on the worker experiences of team working and their perceptions of its positive and negative aspects

Please try to answer all questions listed in this questionnaire, as none of the answers will be regarded as right or wrong. All responses given will be treated in strict confidentiality.

Answer by putting a tick in the box [] provided. In other cases write in the spaces provided.

Part A

Questions 1-5 are about the Biography (Personal information about the respondents)

Q1 Gender

☐ Male

☐ Female

Q2 What age are you?

☐ 18-25

☐ 26-30

☐ 31-40

☐ 41-50

☐ 50+

Q3 Position Held

☐ Supervisor

☐ Team leader

☐ Team Worker

☐ Other(Please specify)-----

Q4 Highest Academic Qualifications

- ☐ Primary Level
- ☐ Junior Certificate
- ☐ Ordinary Level
- ☐ Leaving Certificate
- ☐ Bachelor’s Degree
- ☐ Honours’ Degree
- ☐ Masters
- ☐ Other(Please specify)-----

Q5 For how long have you been in this company?

- ☐ 5 years or less
- ☐ 6-10 years
- ☐ 11-15 years
- ☐ 16-20 years
- ☐ 20+

About the company

Q6 Is your company a

- ☐ A multinational

- ☐ An SME
- ☐ Don't Know
- ☐ Other please specify-----

Q7 Do you work in a team at your place of work?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Other (please specify and say what you do in your team)-----

Q8 How many are you in your team?

- ☐ 4 or less
- ☐ 5-9
- ☐ 10-15
- ☐ 15+
- ☐ Other (please specify)-----

Q9 Were you allocated to a team you work in or did you have a say in deciding which team you worked in?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Other (please specify)-----

Q10 Do you work in a team or group that organises work by its self does your team have full autonomy to decide its working day?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Other(Specify) -----

Q11 Does working in teams promote best practice and contribute to the continuous quality improvement of the organisation?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Other (please explain how do you see your own team work)-----

Q12 To what extent do the following statements apply to your team?							
		Certainly not	Hardly	A little	Certainly	Most certainly	Don't know/ not applicable
a	As a team, we can decide how we do our tasks	1	2	3	4	5	6
b	As a team, we can decide what will be our end products or services	1	2	3	4	5	6
c	As a team, we can decide which tasks we do when	1	2	3	4	5	6
d	As a team, we can distribute the work ourselves (who do what)	1	2	3	4	5	6

Q13 To what extent are you able to influence each of the following?							
		Certainly not	Hardly	A little	Certainly	Most certainly	Don't know/ not applicable
a	The content of your tasks	1	2	3	4	5	6
b	The order in which you do your tasks	1	2	3	4	5	6
c	The pace of your work	1	2	3	4	5	6
d	Your working methods	1	2	3	4	5	6
e	The division of tasks between employees	1	2	3	4	5	6
f	The choice of your working partner	1	2	3	4	5	6
g	Schedules of projects, goods deliveries and services	1	2	3	4	5	6
h	Your working hours	1	2	3	4	5	6

Q14 To what extent are employees responsible for the following

	Certainly not	Hardly	A little	Certainly	Most certainly	Don't know/ not applicable
a Meeting targets before deadlines	1	2	3	4	5	6
b Perform to the best quality standard	1	2	3	4	5	6
c Plan and develop awareness of how their performance impacts on practice	1	2	3	4	5	6
d Work planning and distribution of tasks	1	2	3	4	5	6

Q15 Which of the following organisational practices are used in your work place? (Please tick the ones that apply to your team/group)

- ☐ Job enlargement-(are you required to do any additional task)
- ☐ Job rotation-(changing roles/different tasks in your group)
- ☐ Wider autonomy of groups or/individual employees in problem solving
- ☐ Structured forms of discussions-(Formal discussions)
- ☐ Continual training related to organisational needs
- ☐ Target setting for team working or individual employees

Q16 How well do the following statements describe your group work?							
		Strongly agree	Agree	True to some extent	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know/
a	I am generally satisfied with team based way of working	1	2	3	4	5	6
b	I am satisfied with the way I can take part in the decision way of the group	1	2	3	4	5	6
c	All decisions are made by the team leader	1	2	3	4	5	6

Q17 Do you work under time pressure? (Please tick)

- ☐ Never
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Often
- ☐ Always
- ☐ Don't know

Q18 To what extent do the following statements apply to your team?							
		Strongly agree	Agree	Slightly disagree	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Don't know/ not applicable
a	I feel very uncomfortable when something goes wrong in work even when it is not my fault	1	2	3	4	5	6
b	I have this organization very much at heart	1	2	3	4	5	6
c	My job means a lot to me	1	2	3	4	5	6
d	I feel very much at home in this organisation	1	2	3	4	5	6

Q19 Does your job demand skills/ craftsmanship?

	YES	NO
Is your job varied	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does your job require creativity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you have the opportunity to develop your skill/craftmanship	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q20 Have you participated in any of the following activities in your team?

	Yes	No
Information Events	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Capacity building	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Networking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q21 How would you rate the quality of each activity in your team?

	Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good	Excellent
Information events	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Decision making	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Capacity building	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Networking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

22 In the last 12 months did you through your employer pursue learning?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes, specify what type of training-----

23 How well do you and your colleagues work as a team?

- ☐ Good
- ☐ Very good
- ☐ Bad
- ☐ Very bad
- ☐ Fair
- ☐ Not applicable
- ☐ Don't know

24 Do you think teamwork motivates you to work effectively within a team rather than your own initiative?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Other(specify)-----

25 Is this a friendly place to work in? please explain-----

26 Is there anything you would like to see being done/improved in team work in your organisation?-

Thank you for your participation!!

Appendix III

Consent form

Interview in relation to Dissertation An Exploration of Employee Experiences of Team Working and their perception of the positive and negative aspects

I-----hereby give consent to Sisah Ncube a student at the National College of Ireland (Masters in Human Resources Management) to interview me in relation to the above topic

Signed
