AN INVESTIGATION INTO TALENT MANAGEMENT IN THE IRISH RETAIL SECTOR.

MANDY DEMPSEY

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF A MASTERS OF ARTS IN HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

NATIONAL COLLEGE of IRELAND

SUBMITTED TO THE NATIONAL COLLEGE OF IRELAND AUGUST 2017

<u>Abstract</u>

The aim of this study was to look look at Talent Management in the context of the Irish retail sector and investigate through the use of surveys an employee's perceptions of talent management in their workplace. The primary objective of the study was to look at talent management in relation to employee engagement and employee turnover within the Irish retail sector. In order to investigate this the researcher firstly looked at the literature around talent management and how it can relate to employee engagement and employee turnover. The various perspectives and studies carried out on Talent management were then outlined for a practical perspective as well as a theoretical perspective.

After reviewing the literature, a study was then carried out using a deductive approach to answer the research questions. The study adopted a quantitative method with a survey strategy. Surveys were distributed to sales assistants in the retail sector online, with 103 participants taking part. The data from these surveys was used to measure the participant's perceptions on talent management and its affects on their level of engagement and their turnover intent.

These results were then compared and contrasted to reveal any correlations. The study revealed significant and positive relationships between variables, showing a positive relationship with talent management and engagement as well as talent management and turnover intent,
The findings also clearly showed a presence of talent management in the retail sector but highlighted the need for more research to be done on this in practice.

Based on these findings recommendations were then suggested for further research to be done on this topic in order to further progress in the area of talent management in the retail sector within Ireland.

Submission of Thesis and Dissertation

National College of Ireland Research Students Declaration Form (Thesis/Author Declaration Form)

Name: **Mandy Dempsey**

Student Number: **x15000079**

Degree for which thesis is submitted: **Masters of Arts in Human Resource Management**

Material submitted for award

(a) I declare that the work has been composed by myself.

(b) I declare that all verbatim extracts contained in the thesis have been distinguished by quotation marks and the sources of information specifically acknowledged.

(c) My thesis will be included in electronic format in the College Institutional Repository TRAP (thesis reports and projects)

(d) Either *I declare that no material contained in the thesis has been used in any other submission   for   an   academic   award.
Or *I declare that the following material contained in the thesis formed part of a submission for the award of   **Masters of Arts in Human Resource Management.**

(State the award and the awarding body and list the material below)

Signature of research student: Mandy Dempsey

Date: 26/8/17

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my supervisor, Rachel Doherty for her assistance and guidance in writing this thesis. I truly appreciate the support.

I would also like to thank all the participants who volunteered and generously took time out to take part in the survey. Without their help this would not have been possible.

Finally, I would like to thank my family, my boyfriend and all my friends for their support and encouragement along the way. Without them I would not have been able to complete my studies.

Abbreviations

TM	**Talent Management.**
TD	**Talent Development.**
HR	**Human Resources.**
HRM	**Human Resource Management.**
CIPD	**Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development.**
GTM	**Global Talent Management.**
CSO	**Central Statistics Office.**
SPSS	**Statistical Package for the Social Sciences.**

Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

Chapter 4: Findings & Analyses

Chapter 5: Discussion

List of Figures

List of Tables

Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

The working world of today is soaked in ambiguity and challenges. According to Cole (2015) globalisation and advances in technology are not the only issues contributing to the increasingly competitive environment for businesses today but also the demographic shifts taking place across the world. It has been said that a company's competitive advantage comes from its human resources which is why there is currently a 'war on talent' (Beechler and Woodward, 2009). According to Armstrong (2009) gaining a competitive advantage is achieved by having talented people at all levels throughout an organisation. Cole (2015) argues that the value of talent is indisputable but with the ageing workforce and a shortage of young workers available to fill the voids left, retaining talent is set to become an even bigger challenge for the future. This is why talent management (TM) should be an essential focus within an organisation in order to develop employees and allow them to work toward a career goal.

An organisation that focuses on TM by training and developing employees has a greater chance of filling all levels of their organisation with talented people and thus gaining a competitive advantage over others.

In retail it seems that there is not a lot of emphasis put on the sector as a long term career. A lot of people tend to join the sector during school or college and use it as a stop gap whilst making plans to enter a different industry after they graduate. Also from experience when discussing retail in general people tend to dismiss it as a short term solution in order to move on to their career within a different area. However, according to Ibec (2017) retail is one of the highest employment sectors in Ireland with retail accounting for anywhere between 12-15.5% of employment across the regions of Ireland.

The retail sector is one of the highest employment sectors in Ireland yet its importance for employment is not generally acknowledged by society. Staff turnover is a huge issue for the industry. Some businesses in this sector do see the importance of engaging employees to retain good talent and drive success as can be seen with Marks and Spencer (M&S) introducing a well-being programme aiming to build a healthy and committed workforce. This is evident

within the retail brand M&S with a lot of their staff remaining with them over a long period of time, some staff staying over 10 -15 years. According to Cartwright (2013) M&S have over 53,000 employees worldwide, to increase participation in their well-being programme they introduced components to this programme suggested by employees. By adopting these suggestions within their wellbeing programme their turnover rates improved, reducing to a low of .5% in February 2013 (Cartwright, 2013).

Therefore, the objectives of this proposed study when researching the area of TM is to investigate through the use of surveys if the staff turnover within the retail sector is linked to a lack of talent development (TD). With the use of surveys, this study also looks at an employee's perceptions of TM in relation to employee engagement within the Irish retail sector. For example, from an employees point of view; is TM present or not in this sector and if it is would it lead employees to be more engaged in their job.

This study aims at looking at retail as a whole to get an overview of the sector. One wonders that if more of an emphasis was put on developing and challenging people in the sector would this change societal perspectives, increase staff engagement and decrease the amount of turnover? The aim of this research is to explore talent management from an employee's perception and its impact on employee engagement and turnover intent.

The following will outline the objectives and purpose of this study. The literature review discusses in detail the area of TM from a theoretical as well as a practical perspective, the methodology chapter then lays out the steps taken to gather the empirical evidence for this and discusses why this type of research method was used, which leads to the results chapter laying out the findings and finally the discussion chapter which analyzes the data collected and puts in context what this means for the retail sector.

1.2 Research Title and Objectives

This study: 'An investigation into Talent Management in the Irish Retail Sector' aims to specifically investigate TM in relation to the two areas of staff turnover and employee engagement from an employees point of view. This would therefore break the study down into sub-objectives to ask the following three specific questions:

1. Is there a strong presence of TM in the retail sector?

2. Is there a link between talent management and employee engagement from an employees perspective?

3. Is there a correlation between TM in this sector and the turnover rates in retail?

1.3 Purpose of the research

The purpose of the research is to gain an insight into employee's perceptions and to understand TM from a retail perspective in Irish Society today. The aim is to look at the affects TM can have on employees within a retail organisation. One would hope that a study such as this could help boost the interest of the topic of TM within this sector and encourage more study and discussion within this area.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

A lot of literature has been discussed in the areas of TM and with the competitive global business environment of today the particular area of TM is sparking great interest. For the purpose of this study TM will be discussed in relation to retention and employee engagement as these are areas many past studies have shown organisations can gain competitive advantage and work to make their businesses better performance wise, in turn making it more profitable.

2.2 The retail Sector

According to Retail Ireland Ibec (2017) retail is one of Irelands largest industries and private sector employers. It has a presence countrywide, employing almost 285,000 people. This figure is similar to the total number of people employed in IT, Agriculture, forestry, fishing, the financial and insurance sectors combined together. Retail Ireland Ibec (2017) state that there is 37,400 retail and wholesale businesses operating in Ireland, with 83% of these retail businesses being Irish owned and operated. In 2012 the combined Irish retail and wholesale sector paid out roughly €8.3billion in wages and generating €5.7 billion in taxes for the exchequer (Retail Ireland Ibec, 2017).

The below literature review will outline and discuss previous studies under the topics of TM, TD, the war on talent, employee retention, employee engagement, employee turnover and motivation.

2.3 Talent Management (TM) in Research

When discussing TM Lewis (2006) argues that the sheer number of consulting firms engaging in TM and the growing number of articles and books on this topic would lead one to believe it is a well-defined area of practice supported by research and principles, but in fact this is not the case. Collings and Mellahi (2009) also agree that TM despite the significant degree of academic interest still remains underdeveloped due to the fact TM lacks consistent and

theoretical boundaries within the literature surrounding it. According to Lewis (2006) a search on the phrase 'talent management HR' in 2004 using an internet search engine yielded over 2,700,000 hits but a year later searching the same phrase yielded over 8 million hits.

Uren and Jackson (2007) argue against this, saying that the logic of TM is straightforward enough. According to Uren et al. (2007) although process, technology and capital are extremely important when running a business, these businesses are run by people so it is in this area that it is most important to invest. Gallardo-Gallardo, Dries and Gonzalez- Cruz (2013) when discussing TM say that there is a fundamental lack of consensus as to the meaning of talent in the world of work and the literature although diverse in terms of underlying concepts is rather normative where TM is concerned.

Thunnissen, Boselie and Fruytier (2013) argue though that when discussing possible limitations of the current points of view on TM it is too narrow and one dimensional. According to Thunnissen et al. (2013) TM could be characterised as a managerialist and unitarist approach with a limited view of the practices of HR. Thunnissen et al. (2013) believe very little empirical research has been done in this area with a lot of current academic literature being conceptual. Thunnissen et al. (2013) describe the field of TM as at least partially in its infancy and argue more work needs to be done on this topic in order to broaden this view to become more pluralistic and create a more rounded theoretical framework. Dries (2013) also argues this stating that there needs to be a push to make the transition from a growing field of study to a more mature field of study in this area.

2.4 Defining TM

Ariss, Cascio and Paauwe (2014) argue that TM has been trailing behind businesses in offering ideas and leadership. Lewis and Robert (2006) also address this issue in their study by reviewing problems with the definitions of TM and claiming there is a lack of data supporting what many practitioners claim to be true. According to Lewis (2006) it is difficult to identify the precise meaning of 'talent management' because of confusion regarding definitions, terms and assumptions made by many authors who write about TM. For example, the terms 'Talent Management', 'Talent Strategy', 'Succession Management' and 'Human Resource Planning' are often used interchangeably. King (2015) also discusses the continued absence of clarity on

the activity of TM and proposes a framework for global talent management (GTM) arguing that implementing TM effectively requires consideration of the full breath and range of activities within the TM system. Lewis (2006) argues that the TM debate which centers on the effective management of employee talent is not clear and confuses outcomes or processes with decision alternatives. According to Pascal (2004 as cited in Lewis, 2006) TM is defined as an organisation managing the supply, demand, and flow of talent through their human resources.

As can be seen there are conflicting views with some literature saying TM is present in all aspects of an organisation as it centers around people which can bring the most competitive advantage to an organisation. However, they don't necessarily go into precisely what having TM in an organisation requires and the aspects of the organisations procedures this would involve.

According to Lewis (2006) a review of the literature around the topic of TM reveals a disturbing lack of clarity in terms of its definition, scope and overall goals. Instead it will cover a wide range of Human Resource (HR) areas which Lewis (2006) argues that authors do by effectively replacing the traditional term of 'HR' with 'TM' when discussing it. According to Lewis (2006) when discussing TM authors seem to have two different perspectives, the first being that TM is a compilation of typical HR department practices such as recruitment, selection, development and succession development. The second perspective according to Lewis (2006) focuses mainly on talent pools and describe this as a set of processes designed to ensure an adequate flow of employees throughout the company which involves projecting staffing needs and managing the progression of employees throughout positions in the company. In this case the focus is more so internal than external which would be the focus of the first perspective. This second perspective of TM could also be seen as 'workforce planning' which has long been a topic of interest even before the term TM existed. Also according to Lewis (2006) the progression of people through positions due to growth and other factors is used in the work of strategic HR management.

2.5 What is TM and TD

According to CIPD (2006) their research has confirmed that talent is defined as organisationally specific, it is dynamic and highly influenced by the type of industry and the

nature of its work, it is also likely to change over time according to an organisations needs. Lewis (2006) identifies that several articles in the practitioner-oriented literature describe TM as an approach, a key element to effective succession planning and an attempt to ensure "everyone at all levels work to the top of their potential".

From reviewing a huge amount of the literature around this topic one can only come to the conclusion that TM is involved in all aspects of the HR area but for this particular research one would like to zone in particularly on the area of internal TD under the umbrella of TM. According to Dawn et al. (2013) when designing TM strategies there are key aspects which need to be considered in order for it to be successful. According to Bersin (as cited in Dawn et al. 2013) an integrated TM strategy needs to take the following into consideration; Sourcing and recruiting, communication, teamwork, succession and career planning, training, learning and development, performance management and leadership development as well as compensation, good reward systems and management.

Therefore, for the purpose of this research TM will be discussed in terms of the following HR practices combined; training and development, performance management, succession and career planning, teamwork, work autonomy and leadership development.

According to Gallardo-Gallardo et al. (2013) there are two approaches to TM the objective approach and the subjective approach. The first objective approach looks at talent as characteristics of people so essentially the procuring and purchasing of talent and the second subjective approach looks at talent as people already within the organisation, so effectively the building up and encouraging of people already in the organisation (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2013)

2.6 Is TM important

A study done by Uren et al. (2007) looked at TM practices in businesses and wanted to understand how to transform TM from a method of compliance to a commitment within the organisation. Uren et al. (2007) argue that research shows TM is not yet perceived by employees to be well embedded in their businesses today with 58% of participants agreeing to this. Uren et al. (2007) argued that this is despite the bottom line benefits. According to Uren

et al. (2007) over a five-year period it was found that the organisations where TM was perceived to be more strongly embedded into the organisation outperformed those where TM was perceived to be less embedded by 67%. According to Mehdiabadi and Li (2014) when researching the literature on TM and TD four main themes were clear; career development issues, the influence of contextual factors, issues of diversity when discussing TM and the relationship between TM and the enticing, engaging and retaining of talents.

2.7 The war on Talent

According to Michaels, Handfield-Jones and Axelrod (2001) after carrying out a study around the area of TM which looked at over 6,000 completed questionnaires and 18 case studies on well respected companies, McKinsey and Company coined the term 'the war on talent'. The war on talent is a phenomenon which had been building for many years but had not been previously articulated. There are many perspectives on TM, in the 'war for talent' it is seen as a scarce resource, it is a collective characteristic of an organisation, the sum of its people, processes and practices (Stewart and Rigg, 2010). Sheehan and Anderson (2015) argue that since the declarations of a 'war on talent' in the late 1900's, TM has become one of the most widespread terms in the area of HRM, the impact can be seen with the American Society for Training and Development (ASTD) renaming itself the Association for Talent Development (ATD). Michaels et al. (2001) state that their study set out to look at how the best companies build a strong managerial talent pool and whether having better talent drives the company's performance.

The working world of today is ever evolving and ambiguous, this is why companies, in order to keep their competitive advantage, need to ensure their employees are consistently developing their skills to become leaders and risk takers in the ever changing and challenging environment. In a follow up survey Michaels et al. (2001) state that 99% of companies recognize their managerial talent pool needs to be stronger in the next three years for these reasons. According to Carter (2011) talent is the most important resource in organisations today as an organisations strategic plans are only as good as the people in place to implement them. However, Carter (2011) argues that this resource is in short supply nowadays and it is not as easy to tap into the talent pool as it used to be due to the high demand for today's workforce. According to Rog (2008) a survey carried out by Deloitte in 2005 found that the ability to

attract and retain talent were the most critical people management issues facing businesses at the time. Tarique and Schuler (2010) also argue that a major challenge for organisations in the years ahead is globalization, to overcome this organisations need to be systematic in managing their human resources if they want to have any hope of gaining and sustaining a competitive advantage.

According to Meyers and Van Woerkom (2014) there are four philosophies that underpin TM perceptions, it needs to be rare and exclusive, stable, developmental and inclusive. Meyers et al. (2014) argue that in order to explain how and why TM can contribute to a firms sustained competitive advantage we need to gain insight into these philosophies and an employees perception of these.

2.8 Theoretical perspectives vs practitioners in the working field

According to Dries (2013) after researching the literature and exploring the psychology of TM a number of discrepancies can be identified between practitioners in the working field and academic interest to theoretical perspectives. Gallardo- Gallardo et al. (2013) argues that TM approaches are often sold as objective facts even though little empirical evidence by practitioners or academics has ever proven their accuracy. Sheehan et al. (2015) also argue this point, calling for research to be done on the 'shadow side' of TM. According to Sheehan et al. (2015) there is a reason why some scholars are skeptical in relation to TM as it could cause the marginalisation and neglect of other key organisational procedures. Sheehan et al. (2015) points out organisational diversity in particular when discussing this and claims that heavy emphasis on TM could undermine and undo the good work previously done on diversity in the workplace. It is argued however that through inclusive procedures and alignment of all procedures throughout the organisation this can be combatted.   CIPD (2006) argue against Sheehan and say that an effective approach to TM has many tangible benefits and actually contributes to other strategic HR objectives such as diversity management, employer branding and can be a means of enhancing employee engagement to improve retention.

According to Stewart et al. (2010) if TM is not inclusive there is always a question of what happens to those who are seen as not talented? According to Stewart et al. (2010) that can be anywhere from 80-93% of the workforce in some case. Is this therefore a useful way to

prioritize investment in development or a dismissive waste of potential and how then is diversity managed fairly while defining people as talented or not? Swailes (2013) also discusses considering the ethics of TM within your organisation when looking at how it is rolled out and how it is delivered to employees. According to Swailes (2013) it is important for this reason to ensure it is inclusive and fair.

Some practitioners even argue that TM replaces succession planning as it looks at the issues of recruitment and engagement as well as more broadly (Garavan, Hogan, and Cahir-O'Donnell, 2009). A study carried out by Egerova, Lancaric, Eger and Savov (2015) showed that despite the growing interest in TM in literature little empirical research has been conducted on applying TM in practice in an organisation.

2.9 Factors influencing TM

According to Eger et al. (2015) their study indicated that TM is not a primary concern for most organisations in the Czech Republic and Slovakia and the size of an organisation is a determining factor of approaches to TM and its practices. Eger et al. (2015) argue that small and medium sized organisations would adopt a more exclusive ad hoc approach to TM versus a larger enterprise where a more inclusive and strategic approach dominates. Stewart et al. (2010) also talks about how organisations vary in how they deliver TM depending on an organisations size and capabilities, for example SMEs place strong emphasis on informal learning for developing their employees. Swailes (2013) argues that there is opportunity to delve deeper into how things such as collectivism and performance orientation can affect talent perception and research into the different approaches to TM across organisations in different business sectors. According to King (2015) TM can be facilitated through the structure of an organisation and by embedding it throughout the organisation and collaborating with its people it is highly influenced by the stakeholders.

According to Collings (2014) although managers appreciate the importance of TM they often fail to manage it effectively and the links between TM and organisational performance remain unclear which can be traced to a narrow conceptualization of performance in much thinking on TM. Collings (2014) argues that a more pluralistic view needs to be adopted when putting TM in practice and a more compelling case for the alignment of employee interests as well as the

organisations needs within the framework of TM created. This will provide a more balanced understanding of the contribution of TM and the sustainability of organisational performance.

According to Collings (2014) organisations defined by a sense of purpose whom prioritize employees as stakeholders generally have a higher alignment between organisational and employee goals leading to more motivated employees and ultimately a more sustainable performance. Past studies have suggested that TM, employee retention and motivation are connected, for example, Guthrie (2001) argues that a study carried out in New Zealand linked a positive association between the use of high involvement work practices, employee retention and organisation productivity. Therefore, one would think that procedures such as these would be very beneficial in the retail sector which is so competitive and constantly changing. However, it has been argued that there is little focus on talent in the retail sector even though as stated above this is Irelands largest employer and employment sector. Peter Burgess (as cited by Jahshan, 2016) argues employers need to see the value in nurturing their talent pools particularly when times in retail look so uncertain.

Oladapo (2014) carried out a study to understand the challenges and success of TM programmes in organisations as well as the reasons why some companies chose not to have these programs. According to Oladapo (2014) 69% of organisations studied had a TM strategy in place with an overwhelming amount of participants recognizing the value of a TM strategy despite the challenges faced when implementing this. Oladapo (2014) also found that for organisations sampled without a TM strategy programme, which came to 31% of the remaining organisations studied gave the primary reason for not having a TM strategy in place due to a lack of executive management support. Also according to Dawn and Biswas (2013) TM practices can only optimally contribute to business performance if both management and employees are aligned on objectives and implementation of the TM strategy. Dawn et al. (2013) argue that organisations are driven to invest in talent activities within their business to secure a sustainable pipeline of leadership for the future. Dawn et al. (2013) also argues that effective relationships with line managers is extremely important too. According to Dawn et al. (2013) the major challenge in retaining high potential employees in the organisation is by assisting them to grow within the organisation.

2.10 TM in retail

According to a study carried out by Ton and Huckman (2008) looking at 48 months of turnover data statistics from U.S stores in a retail chain it was found that on average employee turnover is associated with decreased performance as measured by profit margin and customer service. Ton et al. (2008) argue that the effect of employee turnover on performance is lessened by the nature of management at store level, stating management can reduce employee turnovers effect on performance through strict discipline with imposing standard operating procedures. Dawn et al. (2013) argue talent retention is essential to high levels of quality customer service and operational efficiency in retail. A study carried out by Rather and Lee (2015) found that enabling organisational behaviours that lead to more participation in the workplace can reduce turnover in retail settings. Booth and Hamer (2007) carried out a case study on a major retailer and found that there are environmental factors which can have an influence on turnover but company culture and values are a significant influence as well as management behaviours and TM also.

2.11 High employee turnover in the retail sector

According to Ibec (2017) the retail sector has one of the highest turnover rates when it comes to staffing and recruitment. Tian-Foreman (2009) investigated the impact of employee job satisfaction on turnover in a particular retail setting in China and found that this did in fact influence it. Tian-Foreman (2009) did however argue that as the study was only based on one setting in China to generalize these findings for all retail settings could be dangerous. It is a starting point though and one which can be looked at more in depth within the Irish market. According to Harrison and Gordon (2014) employee turnover rates are higher in the retail grocery industry in comparison to others, this is because a lack of evidence based information has left management within this industry formulating retention strategies based on speculation and assumptions. Harrison et al. (2014) argues that this leads to turnover misconceptions which in turn fail to reduce employee turnover. Harrison et al. (2014) carried out a study to fill this knowledge gap by providing evidence based information on this topic and providing a better understanding of the factors that support and engage the employees. This study was carried out on one grocery chain in New York using 151 frontline retail employees and gathered perceptions of their work environment, burnout and turnover intentions. According to Harrison

et al. (2014) the main findings from this research was employee values appeared to have a close correlation with cynicism, which in turn is an incubator for employee turnover. In other words, value conflicts between employees and organisations have a strong significant relationship with cynicism, corrupting the employee against the organisation and causing them to want to leave.

According to Jahshan (2016) over 25% of employees in the retail sector were considering a job change or had already done so in the last year as a result of a poor work environment, a further 18% of people in the study changed jobs due to a lack of promotion opportunities.
Jahshan (2016) argues a recent study conducted by research firm RHR in the UK shows the struggle retailers are facing retaining talent on the shop floor as it has one of the highest turnover rates of all industries.

The results from research done in the UK on the 2014 labour turnover rates can be seen in table 2.1. This study was carried out across a variety of different sectors and show the retail sector has the second highest turnover rate across all of the industries listed, with the hospitality sector coming first (Murphy, 2015). According to Murphy (2015) this was a small study including 441 participants but gives an idea of the turnover rates for the retail sector. One hopes this could give an insight into what the Irish retail sector is faced with also.

Fig. 2.1. Labour turnover rates for 2014 across a variety of industries in U.K.
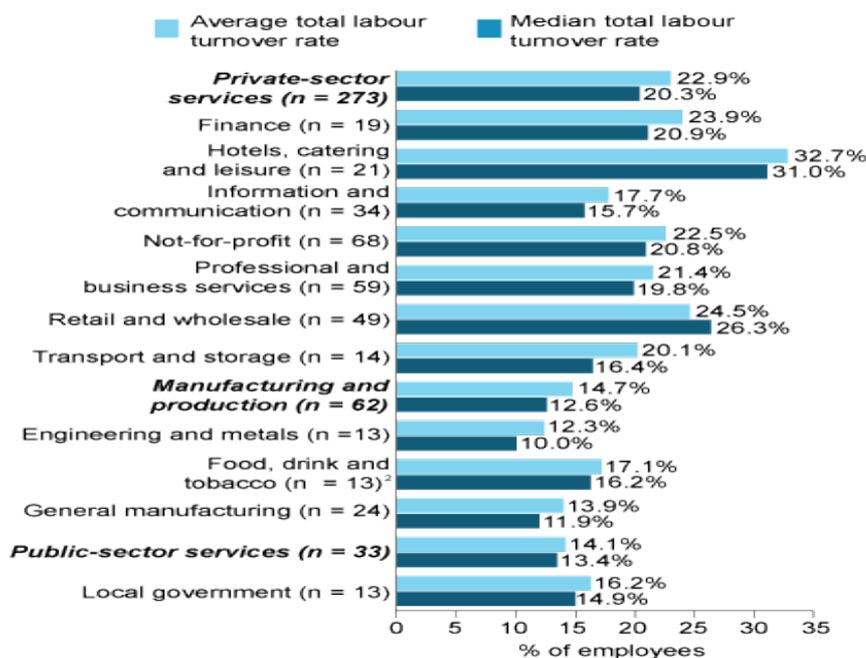
(Murphy, 2015).

2. 12 Turnover and TM

According to Rog (2008) the advantages of an effectively implemented TM strategy in the workplace can improve employee recruitment and retention rates. According to Dawn et al. (2013) failure to invest in talent can have negative consequences relating to immediate HR issues such as retention and in turn having an affect in business outcomes such as customer service. According to a quantitative study carried out by Raithi et al. (2015) in the retail sector in India turnover can be reduced by adopting various employee engagement strategies such as involving employees in the decision making process and providing opportunities for growth and development. It was also found that adopting non conventional HR strategies and enhancing the prestige of an organisation can reduce turnover intentions and enhance organisation engagement for employees.

Dawn et al (2013) argues tight labour markets put pressure on organisations to identify and accelerate the development of future leaders from within the business. According to Dawn et al. (2013) careful career development and planning is a powerful retention tool. Findings from a study carried out by Dawn et al. (2013) show HRM practices in training, compensation and reward sharing reduce turnover and absenteeism and increase better work quality. Similarly, according to a study Oladapo (2014) carried out participants cited opportunity for job advancement as the most significant factor affecting turnover rates. Oladapo (2014) also argues that findings further revealed that job security and compensation were second and third in that order as the main reasons for leaving an organisation. However, Jones and Skarlicki (2006) have argued that the few studies that have assessed actual turnover have reported inconsistent results.

Dierendonck, Lankester, Zmyslona and Rothweiler (2016) carried out a study which looked at the relationship between HRM practices and employee turnover. In this study they sampled 830 organisations from 12 countries and bundled HR into four areas- remunerative, communication, developmental and well-being practices. According to Dierendonck et al. (2016) the results showed that remunerative HR practices enhance turnover in some cases while HR well-being practices taking the employee into consideration and is most beneficial in terms of reducing employee turnover.

2.13 Employee Motivation

According to Lindner (1998) after the Hawthorne Studies a strong focus was put on motivation in businesses to enhance performance. Lindner (1998) defines motivation as that inner force that drives an individual to accomplish personal and organisational goals and objectives. According to Cadwallader, Burke Jarvis, Bitner and Ostrom (2010) organisations in the service sector face the challenge not only of designing innovative customer focused service strategies to compete and grow but also to ensure these strategies are successfully executed. Lindner (1998) argues it is important to know what motivates employees in order for it to be an effective factor in their work and requires a two-way communication system between employers and employees.

According to Cadmallader et al. (2010) motivation then plays a complex role in engaging employee participation in the service sector in innovation and new practice implementation. Lindner (1998) also argues that we need motivated employees in order to help organisations survive as they are more productive and engaged. According to Lindner (1998) research shows that interesting work and good pay are key to higher employee motivation with job enlargement, job enrichment and promotions also being important factors to be considered. This reflects in a study carried out by Milicevic, Cvetkovski and Tomasevic (2014) which findings showed if employees have access to training, promotion, job security and the ability to influence decisions they are far more likely to be motivated. Milicevic et al. (2014) argues their study carried out over five different countries using surveys shows employees value involvement within the business over compensation. Milicevic et al. (2014\ found that by creating a challenge for the capabilities of individuals as well as giving more autonomy their motivation inevitably increased.

2.14 Employee Engagement

'Talent management is integral to engaging employees in an organisation' (Morton, as cited in Rog, 2008, p. 39). According to Shuck et al. (2014) employee engagement is defined as the cognitive, emotional and behavioural energy an employee directs toward positive organisational outcomes.

Towers Perrin completed one of the largest single surveys of full-time workers worldwide to understand from an employee's perspective what matters and why (O'Neal and Gebauer, 2006). According to O'Neal et al. (2006) the results from this study indicated a change in the way employees want to be managed and what employees expect from their employer. O' Neal et al. (2006) argue that these results show learning and development in an organisation have never been more important.

Also since the recession employees themselves have come to realize they are responsible for their own employability, as a result of this they want their employer to help them up skill and consistently develop in their work to remain employable and productive in their jobs (O'Neal et al., 2006). According to Shuck, Twyford, Reio, and Shuck (2014) the relationship between how an employee is supported and included to participate in an organisation through HR practices and how this affects their engagement and turnover intent is underrepresented in the literature. From their research Shuck et al. (2014) provided evidence that in supporting employee inclusion and participation in HR practices which can be linked to TM employee engagement can improve and turnover intent can reduce. Shuck et al. (20014) argues their results illustrate that an employee's perception of support for his participation and development, whom had access to learning opportunities and was encouraged in their career goals, were less likely to leave the organisation.

2.15 Employee engagement and TM

According to Chandani, Mehta and Khokhar (2016) many factors contribute to implementing an affective employee engagement strategy in the workplace including effective TM and talent recognition. Chandani et al. (2016) argue that organisations with highly engaged employees provide opportunities for employees to learn new skills, develop their abilities and reach their highest potential. According to Chandani et al. (2016) career development practices that help grow employees such as this help organisations retain their talent. Chandani et al. (2016) argue that employees invest in companies that invest in them by planning for their career development.

Chandani, et al. (2016) agree that a TM strategy comprising of career planning, organisational support and incentives can reduce attrition levels and result in high engagement. However,

Chandani et al. (2016) also argue that findings reveal there is no one fixed model showing the relevance and significance of the influence of all variables because each employee lays different emphasis on the variables impacting engagement. These variations can be anything from the job characteristics to gender diversity. According to Chandani et al. (2016) it was also found that other variances such as leadership, communication and empowerment among others can also have an effect on an employee's engagement. For example, Chandani et al. (2016) argue that employees show more engagement towards the organisation when they are praised by their immediate managers. According to Chandani et al. (2016) it was found that rewards and recognition are correlated positively with organisational engagement. This implies management need to design jobs allowing employees to take pride in their job, giving them autonomy, constructive feedback and matching the current skill sets of employees to their job roles.

2.16 Employee engagement and turnover possible links with TM

Alias, Nor and Hassan (2014) carried out a study on TM in relation to employee engagement and employee retention in the IT sector, this was a quantitative study with convenience sampling using questionnaires much like this study. The findings show a Pearson correlation analysis indicating TM practices have a positive correlation with employee engagement and in turn employee engagement has positive correlation with employee retention.

According to Hassan (2016) employees who are engaged in their organisation are said to be more committed and thus build an emotional link with the employer which in turn leads to retention. Hassan (2016) argues that competitive reward, good work environment, and recognition help in enhancing employee's engagement whilst continuous training, development and fair performance appraisals considerably added to employee retention. According to Memon, Salleh and Baharom (2016) training satisfaction plays an important role in employee behaviours. A study carried out by Memon et al. (2016) shows training is significantly and positively related to an employee's level of work engagement and is negatively related to turnover intentions. Memon et al. (2016) also argue that results from this research which was carried out in an oil company using questionnaires with 408 responses also shows that work engagement mediates the relationship between training satisfaction and turnover intention. According to Babakus, Yavas and Karatepe (2017) empowerment fosters

work engagement but turnover intentions are heightened when there are challenge and hindrance stressors. From their study Babakus et al. (2017) presented findings which show customer orientation acts as a mediator of the affects of challenge and hindrance stressors as well as training and empowerment on work engagement and employee turnover. This is an interesting topic for retail services as customer service is a major part of the sector. Therefore, one would think this is an important issue to consider when looking at TM in retail.

Newman, Thanacoody and Hui (2011) carried out a study on 437 Chinese employees of five multinational organisations operating in the Chinese service sector the results highlight the importance of training as a tool to enhance employee commitment and reduce turnover. According to Hassan (2016) managing employees through TM is vital for an organisation, there are many ways this can be applied and used. Hassan (2016) argues that the organisation needs to understand this and try to link it in with the organisations operations in order to ensure talented employees are engaged and stay in the organisation ensuring the retention of top talent.

2.17 Conclusion

To conclude the literature shows that there are many different definitions of TM which can cause confusion when putting this into practice in organisations, effectively it can sometimes get lost in translation among other HR practices. Overall however it is quite clear that theoretically TM is currently deemed as an important practice and will continue to have an influence on improving organisations and their resources in the future. According to Stewart et al. (2010) every organisation has its own strategy consisting of a core purpose, direction, objectives and identified resource need that TM, if strategically planned will be able to support. According to Collings (2014) further TM research should refocus an organisation as a whole, drawing on theoretical lenses to fully understand the differences and complexities of any organisation and its behaviour. It is also argued that the impact TM has on an organisation can be affected on how it is delivered throughout the organisation and also in how management views it and supports it. Collings (2014) argues that in response to the growing complexity of the organisations of today many have narrowed their focus and neglected other parts of the organisation. This has been discussed in past literature as can be seen above but others argue that once TM is aligned with the strategies of the organisation, it is inclusive and is valued by management it can be successful. According to Collings (2014) TM can ensure that employees

are competent enough to implement an organisation's current strategies successfully in turn playing a strategic role and contributing to the competitive advantage and success of the organisation.

The research above also shows a link between how TM can affect an employee's perceptions of their job stating that when an employee feels valued and invested in they feel happier, more motivated and are less likely to leave. Findings in past research shows TM when put into practice inclusively and fairly can directly effect employee's engagement in their work, bringing about better performance which in turn will help the organisations competitive advantage and overall performance. It can also be seen that there is some conflicting research on turnover in relation to TM with many studies suggesting TM has an effect on turnover intentions through employee engagement but turnover is not always a direct cause due to a lack of TM. It can also be seen from the above literature that there are many gaps in what the literature says versus how TM is delivered in the field. One may conclude that this could be due to the lack of empirical research which has been carried out to back up what many authors claim to be true. As Thunnissen et al. (2013) says TM is very much in the infancy stages of research and there is still a lot more to learn on this. The lack of research in this area is also a reason to investigate further. TM as well as the Irish retail sector seems to be be taken at face value and is often underappreciated leading to little research being done on it. Even though both are clearly very important topics in organisations today.

Chapter Three: Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

According to Sekaran and Bougie (2010) research in a business context is an organised, objective, data-based, critical and scientific inquiry into a specific problem undertaken with the purpose of finding answers. The following will discuss the various research methods used in a study such as this as well as outline the approach taken and tools used for this study. The limitations and ethical considerations will also be deliberated and examined.

3.2 Research strategy

Research philosophy is a set of assumptions about the development of knowledge, there are three main research areas: Ontology, Epistemology and Axiology (Saunders et al. 2009). Saunders et al. (2009) describes ontology as the assumption a researcher has about how the world operates, epistemology focuses more on the relationship between the knowledge and the researcher and axiology focuses more on values.

Byrman (2016) argues that ontology looks at what exists, it looks at the relationship between social entities and whether they should be considered objective entities that have a reality external to social actors or whether they can or should be considered social constructions built up from the perceptions and actions of social actors. According to Byrman (2016) these two positions are referred to respectively as objectivism and constructivism. Bryman (2016) discusses the term empiricism and says it is used to describe the general approach to the study of reality that suggests only knowledge acquired through experience and the senses is acceptable. With this in mind this research was conducted using the deductive approach.

Bryman (2016) argues that deductive theory represents the most shared view of the nature of the relationship between theory and social research. This involves the researcher drawing on what is known about a particular phenomena and looking at relevant theoretical ideas around this phenomenon in order to deduce a hypothesis that is then subjected to empirical scrutiny.

According to Bryman (2016) in doing this the researcher must skillfully deduce a hypothesis and then translate it into operational terms, being specific with how data will be collected in relation to the concepts that will make up the hypothesis. From this the researcher then needs to discuss their findings and either confirm or reject their hypothesis which leads to a revision of the original theory as a result, depending on the findings. In this case, the research is looking at the effect TM has on an employee's perceptions of their job in terms of engagement and turnover intent through the use of surveys.

3.3 Research Design

This research will use deductive reasoning and be exploratory in nature as the aim is to gain a further insight and understanding on TM in the Irish retail sector.

There are two different research designs in terms of time horizons; cross-sectional and longitudinal. According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009) cross- sectional research is described as a 'snapshot' where as longitudinal is seen as a 'diary perspective' over a much longer period. Both types of studies have their strengths and weaknesses; longitudinal allows for the study of change and development where as cross-sectional is often used due to time constraints (Saunders et al., 2009). The research to be carried out will be of a cross sectional design this was not only picked due to time constraints but it is often used to explain how factors are related in different organisations. This seemed to be the best option in relation to this study when looking at the topic of TM in Irish retail today in relation to both; (I) employee engagement and (ii) turnover.

3.4 Research Approach

For data collection methods there are two different approaches to use when carrying out research, quantitative and qualitative research methods. According to Sekran and Bougie (2010) qualitative research concentrates on subjective data, looking at the perceptions of people involved whilst quantitative research looks at what can be measured through collecting and analyzing data. When discussing the two approaches Saunders et al. (2009) describe quantitative research as analyses which can use a range of statistical techniques to examine relationships between variables, asks clear and unambiguous questions and allows the

researcher to be independent from those being researched. Saunders et al. (2009) then described qualitative approaches to research as using a variety of data collection techniques with an emerging process as questions and procedures can alter due to the research process. Qualitative research studies the participant's views and meanings, it looks at the relationship with them, this approach may require the researcher to build a rapport with the participants due to the nature in which the research is collated (Saunders et al., 2009).

There are strengths and weaknesses to both approaches but when looking at the proposed research and its objectives as well as how past research has been carried out in this area quantitative research was selected as the approach for this particular investigation. The reasons for this is that quantitative research allows more people to be reached and the same questions answered which can be clearly analyzed and compared in order to get an overall view of the topic. Also in order to get as close as possible to a representative view of the perceptions of a variety of employees in the Irish retail sector the researcher will need to look at a high volume of different views in order to see a common trend. If the research were to take a more qualitative approach the sample size may be much smaller and would be more of an objective insight based on a group of five to ten people versus an explorative view of perceptions which would make it harder to get an overall view on this topic.

For this reason, when looking at the methods using the quantitative approach questionnaires were chosen. The use of questionnaires/surveys will allow numerous questions to be asked giving extensive flexibility in data analysis. It also allows a high number of participants to take part so a high amount of concise information can be pulled from these in the limited amount of time available to carry out this study. Saunders et al. (2009) states that cross-sectional studies often employ the survey strategy due to time constraints.

3.5 Designing a Questionnaire/Survey

Saunders et al. (2009) explains a questionnaire is a research strategy involving the structured collection of data to a sizeable population. Saunders et al. (2009) also argue that a survey is often a term used to describe the collection of data using questionnaires but can also include other techniques such as structured observations or structured interviews. Within this study a survey is used in a questionnaire format which was how all of the data was collected. The

questionnaire used for this research is a multiple choice questionnaire where the participant rates on a scale how much they agree with the statements given, this will be discussed further below.

According to Horn (2009) there are two types of questions to focus on within a survey; biographical related to the characteristics of the participants and investigative questions which focus on answering the research questions. Horn (2009) argues that biographical questions help explain any outcomes of the study in relation to demographics and other characteristics in relation to the study. However, investigative questions must relate to the synthesized theory and the research question (Horn, 2009). In line with the guidelines laid out by Horn (2009) the questionnaire for this study has a short introduction stating what is being researched and why the participants help is required, with a short thank you note and the researchers contact details included at the end.

When deciding on what questions to ask the researcher first looked at what other studies relating to TM, employee engagement and employee turnover had done. According to Saunders et al. (2009) a well designed survey captures the entire extent of any hypothesis. In using a standardized survey which has already been tested it will eliminate any uncertainty around the questions and cancels out the risks of a customized survey as well as having to carry out a pilot study. For these reasons, in order to have the strongest data possible and eliminate as many weaknesses as possible from this study the researcher originally aimed to use as many established scales as possible. Also after reviewing all of these issues it was decided that the Likert scale would be the best form of data collection within the survey in order to compare and contrast the data collected.

3.6 Likert Scales

According to Fisher (2010) Likert scales are most commonly used to ask people about their opinions. Their basic structure is to provide a series of statements some negative and some positive and to ask the respondent to choose a position in relation to how they feel about a statement on a five-point scale (Fisher, 2010). Renis Likert invented this scale. According to Fisher (2010) this scale is a straight forward way to analyze the questions individually and as long as the statements relate to the same subject it is possible to allow them to be used to

measure the overall opinion of an individual. Saunders (2009) also argues that this type of rating on a questionnaire is done by the respondent rating the statements from one to five, once all statements have been scored then the respondents overall score can be calculated as a mean and analyzed accordingly. Fisher (2010) argues that the use of a Likert scale to measure attitudes is only valid as long as the statements relate to the subject of the research.

The below will outline the planning process according to each section of the survey.

3.7 Biographical questions – Section One

The biographical questions for this survey were chosen carefully. Firstly, it was important for the research to categorize the gender and ages of the respondents to see if this had an affect or showed any trends. Also it was important to establish the educational background of the respondents and how long they worked in their current company as well as how they define their contract hours for the previous reasons stated as well as to further compare and contrast the different variables with the results. Further more the researcher felt it was important to establish how long the respondents worked in retail as well as how long they currently worked in their current company in order to establish if they had been in retail long term or were new to the role, which in turn could be another variable when comparing results.

According to Saunders et al. (2009) the wording of each of the questions need to be carefully considered. This is to ensure the participants understand what is being asked, so the responses are valid and to help limit the risk of a participant misinterpreting what the question means.

3.8 HR Practices - Section Two

In order to measure and assess TM in the workplace the researcher knew the importance of finding an established scale, however after searching, nothing could be found in the literature. The researcher then had to build the TM section of the survey separately. In order to do this recent studies and other established scales were used. Gupta (2013) states that there are six underlying factors of TM strategies; recruitment, work autonomy, training and development, communication and performance management, succession planning and career development and teamwork within their respective organisations. Five of these principle components were

considered when designing the TM scale section of the survey. Recruitment was not considered as this study focuses on talent pools already within the organisation and not attracting talent. Also when considering the questions to ask in this section a number of scales around these six HR components were looked into in order to see what questions were asked. Boon, Hartog, Boselie and Paauwe's (2011) established scale for perceived human resources practices measure used to assess employee perceptions of the opportunities offered by human resource management was one of the main scales which influenced this section. Questions for this scale were taken and used in this survey along with some questions taken from a training scale established by Bui and Baruch (2012). The questions taken from these scales were changed as little as possible so as not compromise the meaning, however some did need to be adapted slightly to fit it into the retail environment. The follow outlines the topics and importance for each question asked:

1. Work autonomy:

'I am given freedom within my job to use my own initiative.'

2. Training and development:

'My job and tasks offer opportunities to learn new things.'
'The training given is practical.'
'The training given is relevant to my daily tasks.'
'Initially there was sufficient training provided to enable me to carry out my role.'
'Coaching is provided'
'There are opportunities to develop new skills and knowledge for my current job.'
'There are opportunities to train in order to progress further in my workplace.'
'I am supported in planning my future development.'

3. Communication and performance management system:

'*My role profile and job design is clear.'*
'I know how the managers rate my performance on my work tasks.'
'Annual appraisals are given in my workplace.'
'Performance improvement plans are used to clearly communicate any further development needed within my position.'
'Constructive criticism is an aspect of performance management in my workplace.'

'My strengths in my current role are acknowledged.'
'My manager knows my weaknesses and support is given to help improve these.'

4. Succession planning and career development:

'*Promotion systems exist within my workplace.'*
'*There are good career prospects in my workplace.'*
'*There is an opportunity for an increase in job responsibilities if I perform well at my current tasks.'*

5. Long term bonding socially

'Teamwork is encouraged.'

3.9 Services- Section Three

It was deemed important to include this section in order to get a further insight on the participant's perceptions of TM in store. This was important for a further look into whether the employee perceived TM was present in their organisation as in order for TM to be present the employees needed to identify if the service delivered in store was of value. It was to understand further if the employee perceived the service delivered was of good quality.

'Employees in the store have knowledge of the job and the skills to deliver superior quality work and service.'

It was also important for the researcher to get more insight and to delve further into the area of TM by ensuring the basic instruments are present for this within the stores services.

'*Employees receive recognition for the delivery of superior work and service.'*
'Employees are provided with tools, technology, and other resources to support the delivery of quality work and service to customers.

3.10 Employee Engagement Scale – Section Four

After researching the area of employee engagement the researcher decided in order to measure this within the retail environment the best tool to use would be the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale. This instrument is a tested scale by Schaufeli, Salanova, González-Romá and Bakker (2002) and is published with the American Psychological Association. Schaufeli et al. (2002) established this engagement scale used in many studies so far to date. According to Schaufeli et al. (2002) the 17 statements used are about how a respondent feels at their job, the statements are then rated using the Likert rating scale. According to Schaufeli et al. (2002) these statements test one's vigor, dedication and absorption. After looking through the statements and reviewing the objectives for this study it was decided that some of these statements were irrelevant in relation to some of the points on vigor and absorption.

For example, the statement '*At my job, I feel strong and vigorous'* has little to do with engagement in terms of TM. There was also a concern that the survey would be too long and in turn be unengaging for participants so on re-evaluation of the questions six of the seventeen were taken out, these are highlighted in the Appendix 1.

3.11 Turnover Intention Scale – Section Five

After much research and seeing this scale appear in many articles the Turnover Intention scale was chosen to evaluate the participant's thoughts on leaving their current position (Cohen, 1999). This scale gives three statements the participant needs to answer in relation to thinking about leaving their job or actively looking for other options. This three question scale can be seen in section five of the survey. Within this section the researcher also thought it was important to include the following question:

'I see a career in the retail sector in the long run for myself.'

This is an important question in order to determine if the participant wants to remain in the retail sector but leave their current organisation or if they are considering leaving retail altogether.

3.12 Pilot study

Saunders et al. (2009) state that a pilot test assesses the validity and reliability of the data to be collected from respondents as well as allowing questions to be refined in a way that the respondents understand. The questionnaire was piloted among a group of eight family and friends from different retail business backgrounds. This pilot study was carried out in order to establish if any changes needed to be made in order to make the survey as understandable as possible. According to Saunders et al. (2009) the questions need to be checked within the context for which they are written rather than in abstract to ensure they are not misread. During the pilot study the researcher sat with the eight people individually and got their feedback. All questions were gone through to determine what parts of the questionnaire they found difficult and why. The main feedback was regarding section three, question seven, this was rephrased from:

'*I am given autonomy within my job*'

to:

'*I am given freedom within my job to use my own initiative*'.

The reason for this was because of the eight people only two of these understood what autonomy meant, therefore it was deemed important to change it to something of the same meaning but made more clear.

3.13 Sampling and sample size

According to Horn (2009) there are two possible sampling methods; firstly, probability meaning some form of random selection of cases from a sampling frame are picked and secondly non-probability sampling which does not involve random selection of cases. For the purpose of this research and with the distribution of the questionnaire a non probability sampling method was used, this was the convenience sampling method. Saunders et al. (2009) state that convenience sampling involves selecting participants which are most accessible in order to easily obtain suitable data. Saunders et al. (2009) argues that although this sample selection process is widely used it can be prone to bias and influences.

According to Fisher (2010) the purpose of taking a sample in research is to obtain a result

which will represent the whole population being sampled without having to ask everyone. Fisher (2010) argues that the problem is no sample can be guaranteed to be representative as some would over estimate and others would under estimate the true figure which is why a margin of error needs to be established. According to Fisher (2010) sample size depends in part on the size of the margin of error the researcher is prepared to accept and the size of the population to take the sample. After reviewing this and looking at the extremely high numbers of people employed in retail along with the time constraints involved with this particular study the aim was to try and get a return of 100 responses. After many attempts to share the survey with people and with the time constraints involved the sample size needed to be an attainable size. At first it was hard to get responses but after resending this out through social media outlets the study received 103 responses.

The participants are of all ages, areas and backgrounds in order to get a wider view of insights into the perceptions of TM in this sector. After much consideration it was firstly decided that within the retail sector there are a lot of different variables and in order to have a measure of TM within this sector it would be most beneficial to zone in on sales assistants for this particular study. The reason being it was felt that to ask personnel within management positions and supervisor roles within a company may skew the results as they may be biased. This was decided as past studies as seen in the literature review have shown management can have an affect on TM and some of the questions to determine TM in this study involve asking about management.

3.14 Survey distribution

The surveys were put together using google forms and administered online via email to sales assistant in the retail industry, these contacts were known by the researcher which can mean the sample was slightly skewed as a result, this is addressed in the studies limitations section. After time past the surveys were then administered again through the social media outlets of Facebook and Linked In to try reach a further audience and get participants from all demographics as well as get a higher response rate.

Through administering online, participants were able to remain anonymous and partake on a voluntary basis. This can help avoid any ethical issue if the participant knows the researcher

and will allow the participant not to feel pressured to answer in a particular way, allowing them to share their true perceptions. An online survey as well as being a convenience sampling technique to gain easy access to a range of people, can also allow a larger sample size to be reached across a bigger geographical zone. Through this form of administration however without approaching people directly it was found to be harder to get as many respondents as was originally hoped.

3.15 Data analyses and illustration

The analysis from the surveys once collected up were then put onto a statistical package programme called SPSS by IBM for analysis and to illustrate the results accumulated. The data was analyzed and compared using the biographical and investigative questions. The data found will be discussed in the findings chapter and examined in detail in order to establish a pattern and explore the results in depth. According to Saunders et al. (2009) a correlation coefficient enables you to quantify the strength of the linear relationship between two ranked variables. This will be shown in the next chapter as the Likert scale will allow the research to rate each participant's perception of the presence of TM in their current position, their engagement and thoughts on leaving separately. The research will then compare each section to one another using the Pearson product moment correlation test to see if there is a pattern and possibly establish a relationship / trend between these.

3.16 Limitations

As with any study along with strengths come limitations. In this particular study one limitation is that cross sectional studies need a very large sample size. Unfortunately, within the amount of time allocated it was not possible to reach out to as high a percentage of Irish retail employees as one would like. The convenience sampling method was used which has its own limitations as it is not a true representation of the retail sector but shows only a small portion of this sector. This in turn can have an effect on the results as it can cause the data to be skewed. If the data is skewed this can have an effect on the result as it will not give a true result of the perception of the overall population as it only focuses in on certain demographics or groups, meaning it may possibly only give a one sided perspective rather than being fully rounded and

entirely unprejudiced. The researcher tried to eliminate these limitations as much as possible by establishing the survey through social media and retail group pages on Linked In to reach a wider demographic.

Another limitation for this study could also be that although surveys have their strengths in gathering high amounts of reliable and valid data, they also have their weaknesses too. According to Sekran and Bougie (2010) the reliability of a survey can depend on many factors including participants not feeling comfortable providing certain answers or as surveys have closed questions, answers can sometimes be wrongly interpreted or cannot be explained. This can cause frustration on the participant's side as they do not feel as though they can answer accurately and also on the side of the researcher as they can not delve further to get the cause. According to Saunders et al. (2009) quantitative research such as surveys can be limiting as they do not establish causation. However, Saunders et al. (2009) also argue that one advantage of using a survey is it can help explain the link between variables.

Finally regarding the different variables these could be broken down further by looking into the different sections within the retail industry, for example; fashion, grocery, stationary, hardware etc. This may also have an effect on the results and could be a way to dig deeper and get an even clearer result.

3.17 Ethical considerations

In a study such as this it is extremely important to consider the ethical implications this can have on participants taking part. When carrying out this research it was extremely important at all times to ensure confidentiality, privacy and anonymity were consistently maintained throughout. As can be seen above this was put in place by distributing the survey online which people could voluntarily and anonymously partake in.

According to Saunders et al. (2009) it is important to ensure participants are informed about the research and give their consent. For this reason, at the start of each survey there was a section which outlined briefly what this study entailed and what it will be used for. The participant was then asked to tick a box to express their consent that they were voluntarily taking part in the survey and they understood what this was about before being able to continue

any further with the survey itself (please see Appendix 1 for sample of survey). The results from these surveys were then interpreted honestly and shown fully.

Also when discussing ethical issues, it is important to keep in mind the issue of data protection, the surveys are all confidential and were summited via a link on google forms, this is solely accessible by the researcher alone, it will not be accessed by anyone else and will be held for one year until it is destroyed and deleted August 2018

Chapter Four: Findings & Analysis

4.1 Introduction

This section presents the results associated with the research carried out for this study. Firstly, the descriptive characterisations will be presented, then the findings with respect to the validity and reliability of all scales administered will be shown as well as the mean breakdown for the talent management scale. Finally, the results for the Pearson product moment correlation test will be presented showing the level of association between talent management and employee engagement and the effect of talent management on their turnover intent will be shown also.

Initially the researcher hoped to get over 100 respondents for the research, after three weeks and re circling the survey, 103 were received back as fully completed Surveys.

4.2 An overall insight into the descriptive characteristics of research participants

The pie charts below in show the gender and age breakdown of the participants in the study
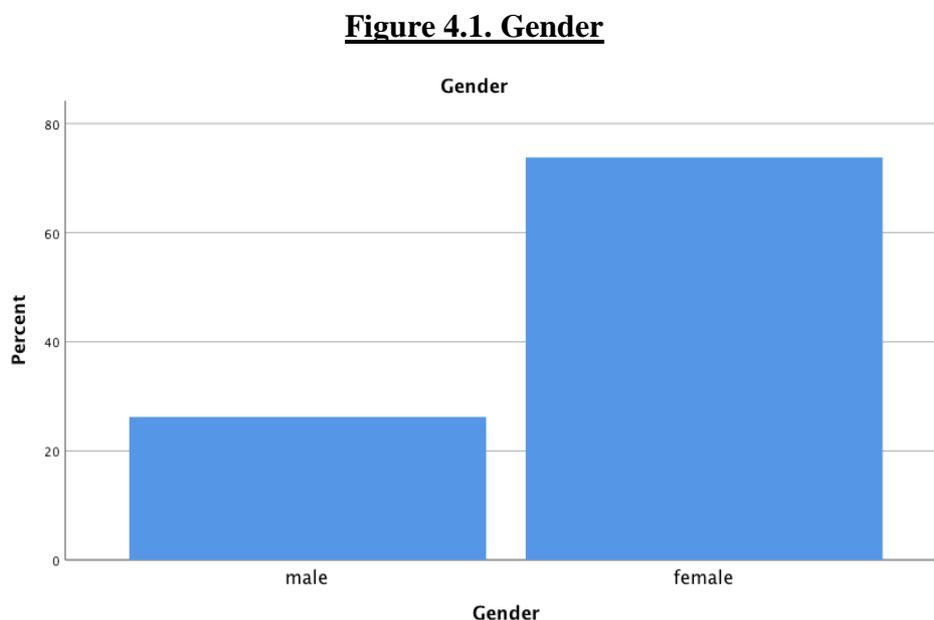
Figure 4.1. Gender

As can be seen in the figure 4.1. 75% of the sample participants were female versus 25% males. This shows an uneven representation of each gender with two thirds more females taking part

than males. This is in line with the statistics from the Central Statistics Office (CSO) (2013) which showed roughly the same breakdown of males to females working in the sales and customer service sector. The results of this study can be seen in table 4.1 below with two thirds the amount of females than males working in the sector in 2013.

Table 4.1. CSO employment sector breakdown of gender 2013

Broad occupational group	2013		
	Men	Women	Total
Managers, directors and senior officials	105.2	46.7	151.9
Professionals	148.2	207.7	355.9
Associate professional and technical	130.1	86.6	216.8
Administrative and secretarial	42.8	166.5	209.4
Skilled trades	252.1	24.2	276.3
Caring, leisure and other services	23.7	120.7	144.4
Sales and customer service	53.4	106.7	160.1
Process, plant and machine operatives	119.6	22.5	142.1
Elementary	127.9	79.9	207.8
Other	2.6	2.8	5.4
Total	**1,005.7**	**864.3**	**1,869.9**

Source: CSO QNHS

(CSO, 2013)

Figure 4.2. Age
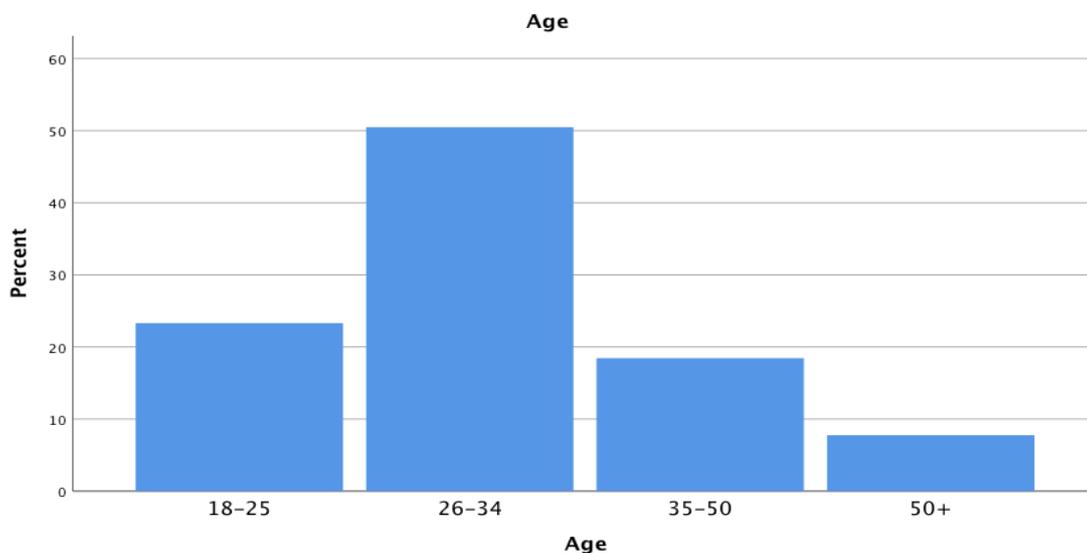
The age percentage breakdown can be seen in table 4.2 with the 26-34 age group being the highest age profile for participants with 50% of the overall sample making up this group, 18-25 is the second largest group with 23% of the sample and the 35-50 age group making up 19% of the sample. Finally, the smallest age group represented in this sample is the over 50's.

The below pie charts show the education and position breakdown of the participants in the study

Figure 4.3. Education
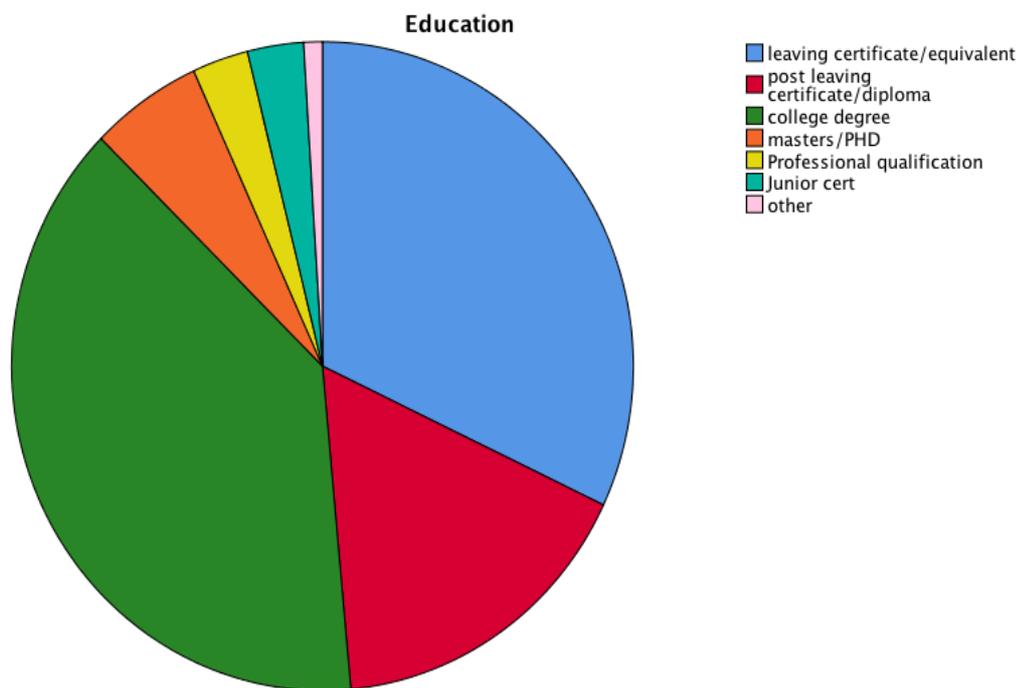
The pie chart in figure 4.3 shows a representation of each of the participants educational backgrounds, this was important to get an insight into the participant's academic talents and stage of life. The two largest groupings were college graduates with 38% and leaving certificate graduates with 31%, post leaving certificate qualification/diploma made up 16%, masters degree made up 6% and professional qualification and a junior certificate qualification made up 4% each of the sample with other making up 1%. This is interesting as it could have an indication that the results as slightly skewed due to convenience sampling.

For example, one of the highest groupings is college graduate this is the researchers educational background also. As this was circulated using convenience sampling by the research to their contacts there is a strong possibility that this is why this grouping is so high leading to an indication of a slightly skewed sample.

The below pie charts provide a breakdown of the work history of participants in this study.

<u>Figure 4.4. Years in retail</u>

Been in retail

Legend:
- 6-12mths
- 2-4 yrs
- +4yrs
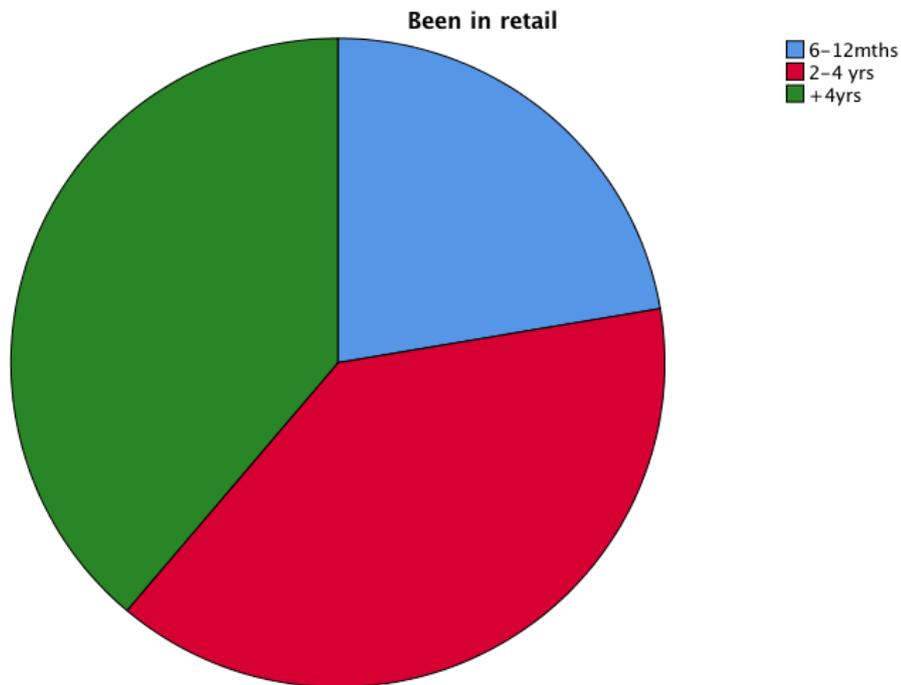
Figure 4.4 displays the three groupings to determine the length of time each participant has spent in retail. This was deemed important to get an understanding of how long each participant was in retail as this could affect their perceptions and feelings toward their position. It was interesting to see that the two equally largest groupings were the longest in retail with 38% of participants working in the sector over 4 years and another 38% of participants working in the sector 2-4years. The final 24% of the sample was made up of participants in retail over 6-12 months.

Figure 4.5. Length of time with current employer

Current employer

- 6–12mths
- 1–3yrs
- +4yrs
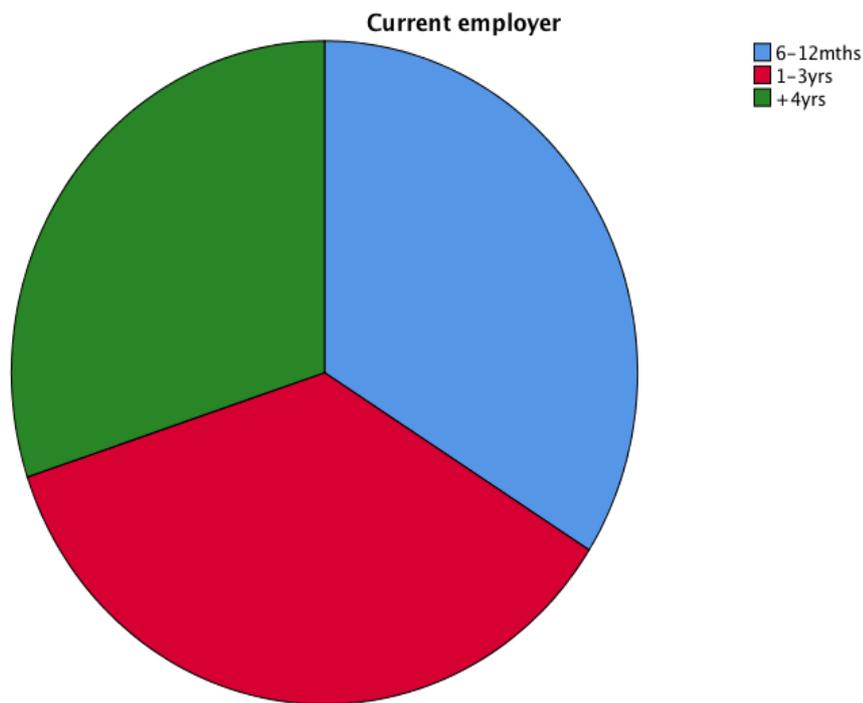
Figure 4.5 represents the amount of time each participant has spent with their current employer. The largest group for this sample is of participants that have been with their current employer 1-3 years with 37% of the sample size choosing this option. There was just a 2% variation between the other two groupings, the second largest grouping was 32.5% whom have been working with their current employer for just 6-12 months and the smallest grouping was made up of participants that have been with their current employer for over 4 years which made up 30.5% of the overall sample. This was important as what an employee values upon entering an organisation can change the longer they are with that organisation. Which can in turn affect their engagement and turnover.

Figure 4.6. Current position type
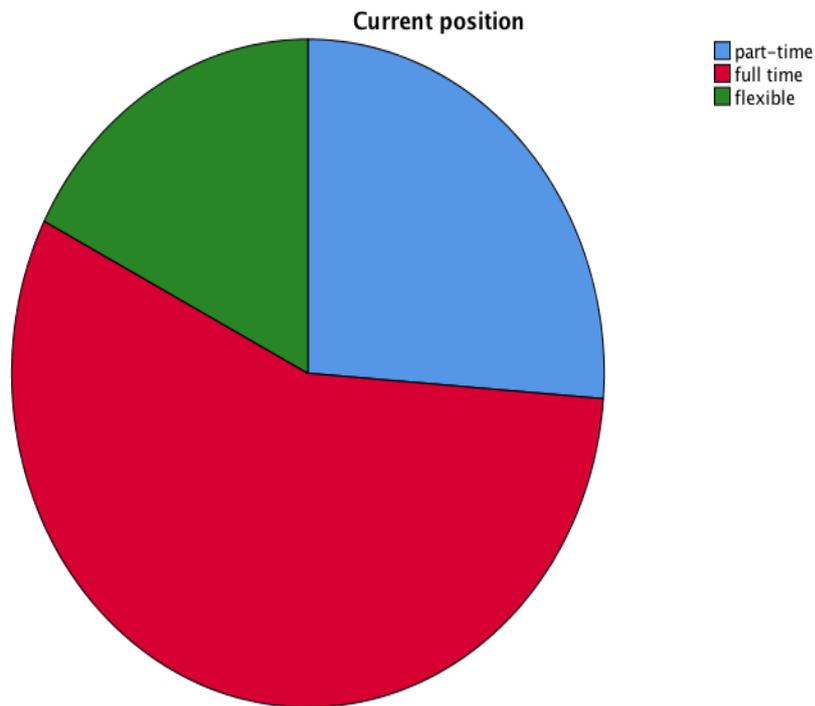
The pie chart in figure 4.6 shows the breakdown of the different contract types participants are currently working in; full time, part-time or flexi-time positions. The largest grouping shown in this sample with 55% of participants is full time, 26% of the participants from this sample are then working on a part-time basis and finally 19% are flexible. This is important as it can also effect peoples answers with the amount of time they spend in their job and can be an indicator as to whether the participants are focused on a career in retail or have other priorities too.

4.3 Validity and reliability of each scale used in the survey

The validity and reliability of each Scale was assessed through the Cronbach Alpha statistic test. These results can be below. According to Pallant (2013) this test is used to measure the reliability or internal consistency within a scale or set of test items. Therefore, if the Cronbach alpha scale shows a score of a > .7 it shows an acceptable consistency, a > .8 is deemed good and a > .9 is excellent showing it is a strong assessment of the concept measured.

Table 4.2 shows the results of the Cronbach reliability test for the HR scale. This part of the survey consisted of 20 questions based around the main themes consistent with a strategic talent management plan. These include the following; communication, teamwork, performance management and communication support as well as training and development, succession planning and career development in store. As can be seen in table 4.2, the HR survey showed a result of a = .929. Anything over .9 is deemed excellent and shows the reliability is high. Therefore, the scale is internally consistent and is shown to be valid.

Table 4.2. HR – Talent management scale

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.929	.929	20

Table 4.3 depicts the results for the Cronbach alpha reliability test for the engagement scale. This scale is broken down to 10 questions instead of the original 17 but still shows a strong reliability statistic with a score of a = .933. This shows the scale is highly reliable also.

Table 4.3. Engagement scale

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.933	.932	10

48

The Cronbach alpha statistics test in table 4.4 shows a reliability scale of a = .893. This isn't as strong as the two previous scales but it also a very good result with a reliable score showing a strong consistency within the scale and proving it is valid.

Table 4.4. Turnover intent scale

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.893	.893	3

4.4 Talent Management scale and results overall

Table 4.5. Overall mean score of talent management scale for all participants

Report

addedTM

Mean	N	Std. Deviation
61.8020	103	16.09784

Table 4.5 shows the average score for the 103 participants. The highest score a participant can get it 100. Participants would score this if they perceived an extremely high level of talent management. The lowest score a participant could achieve is 20

Table 4.6 gives an outline of the mean score of each question answered in the talent management scale for all 103 participants. This shows the overall strengths and weaknesses measured of talent management perceived by employees to be present through the scale.

Table 4.6. Mean per question in talent management scale

Questions (paraphrased)	**Sum**	**Mean**
Job and tasks- learn new things.	338	**3.2816**
Know how managers rate performance.	320	**3.1068**
Promotion systems exist.	313	**3.0388**
Annual appraisals.	311	**3.0194**
Constructive criticism in performance management.	307	**2.9806**
Teamwork encouraged.	402	**3.9029**
Autonomy- Given freedom to use initiative.	355	**3.4466**
Role profile and job design clear.	377	**3.6602**
Training is practical.	368	**3.5728**
Training is relevant to tasks.	377	**3.6602**
Initially sufficient training for role.	336	**3.2621**
Good career prospects.	267	**2.5922**
Strengths acknowledged.	317	**3.0777**
Opportunities to develop new skills.	288	**2.7961**
Coaching provided.	270	**2.6214**
Opportunities to train to progress.	287	**2.7864**
Supported in planning future development.	254	**2.4660**
Opportunity for increase in responsibility if perform well.	331	**3.2136**
Weaknesses known and support given to help improve	254	**2.4660**
Performance improvement used communicate development needed.	256	**2.4854**

4.5 Talent Management scale construct breakdown

The talent management scale with each question broken down in table 4.6 can be seen in table 4.7 grouped into five constructs which are the five relative HR practice used to compose the talent management scale. Each of the 20 questions are grouped in under the different HR sections they are aimed at asking about to show a mean score of each section. This is done to compare which sections score highest on average like teamwork and autonomy and which score the lowest for example succession and career planning and communication and performance management.

Table 4.7. Five talent management strategies of scale

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
TrainingandDevelopment	103	1.13	5.00	3.0558	.84158
SuccessionPlanningCareerDevelopment	103	1.00	5.00	2.8058	1.08417
Communicationandperformancemanagement	103	1.29	5.00	2.9709	.90845
Autonomy	103	1.00	5.00	3.4466	1.30405
Teamwork	103	1.00	5.00	3.9029	1.08929
Valid N (listwise)	103				

4.6 Scatterplots & Pearson Correlation for each scale

Figure 4.7 shows the scatterplot used to distinguish if there is a pattern between two variables. A linear line gives a guide to show the pattern we should be looking for to have the perfect correlation. From the scatterplot in figure 4.7, you can see that as the perception of talent management increases so does employee engagement. They both seem to be mainly going in the same direction with a few veering off course and outside of the pattern. Overall though there is a strong pattern visible between the two, showing a linear relationship does exist.

Figure 4.7. Talent Management and employee engagement
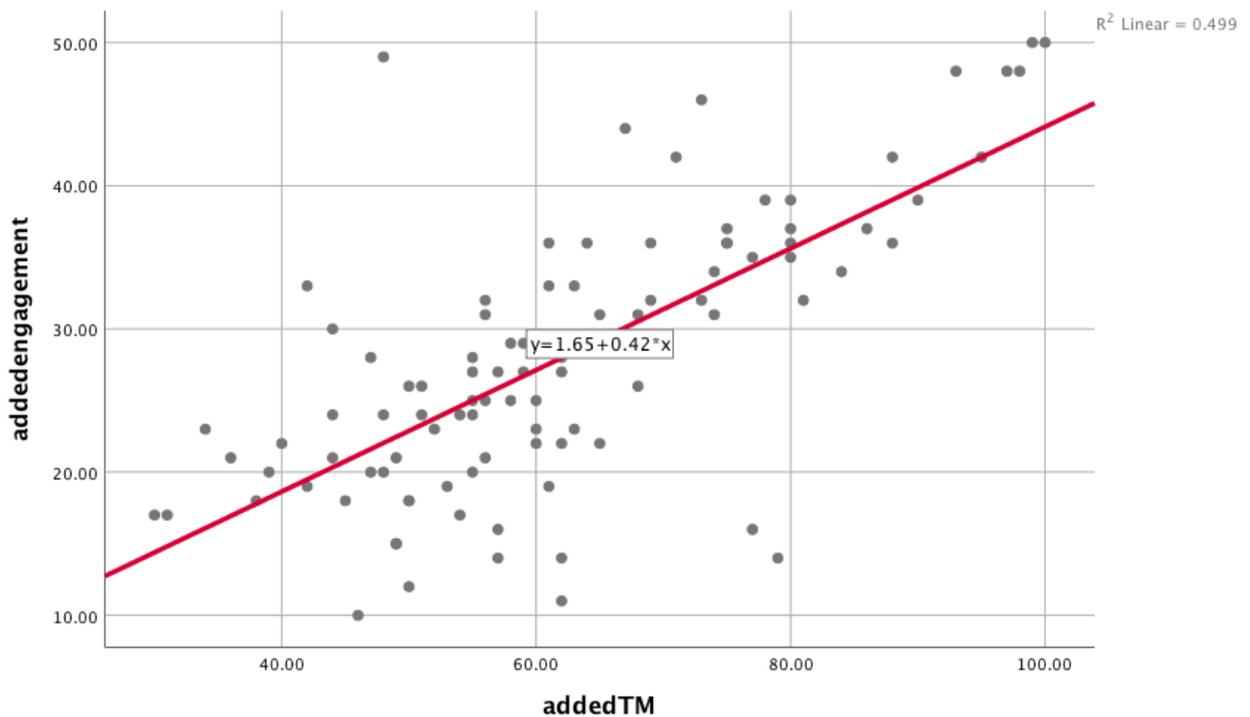
A Pearson product moment correlation analysis was also undertaken to ascertain the strength of association between an employee's perception of the levels of talent management and employee engagement. The results are presented in Table 4.8. This result indicates that there is a statistically significant direct correlation between the two variables of an employee's perception of talent management and their engagement ($r = .707$, $p < 0.001$) (H1).

Table 4.8. Talent management and employee engagement Pearson correlation result

Correlations

		addedTM	addedengagement
addedTM	Pearson Correlation	1	.707[**]
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	103	103
addedengagement	Pearson Correlation	.707[**]	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	103	103

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

From the scatterplot in figure 4.8, you can see that there appears to be a moderate pattern relating both TM and engagement. The data appears in a pattern which shows a moderate linear relationship suggesting that there is a link there. As the perception of TM increases employee turnover intent decreases. When looking at the results overall it can be seen from r2= .330. This ascertains that from the data 33% of the overall turnover intent seen to be decreasing can be associated with the increase in talent management. This is a good result determining a third of the data showing a true association with talent management.

Figure 4.8. Talent management and employee turnover intent
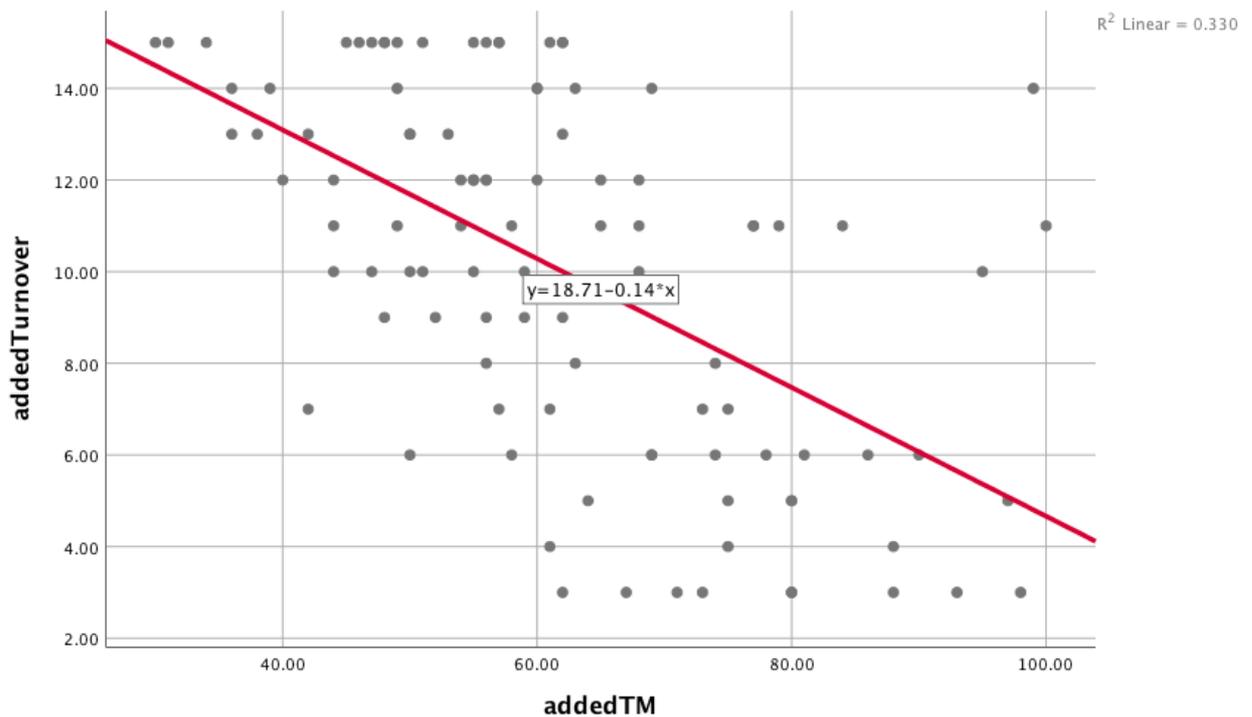
Table 4.9 1 shows the Pearson product moment correlation analysis results for the association between an employees perceived levels of talent management and its relationship with an employee's turnover intent. This result indicates that there is a good correlation between an employee's perception of talent management and their turnover intent with the presence of talent management driving turnover intent down (r = -.574, p < 0.001 (H1)).

Table 4.9. Talent management and turnover intent Pearson correlation result

Correlations

		addedTurnover	addedTM
addedTurnover	Pearson Correlation	1	-.574**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	103	103
addedTM	Pearson Correlation	-.574**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	103	103

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

4.7 Correlation for employee engagement and turnover intent

The researcher also thought it would be important to do an analysis on the relationship between employee engagement and turnover intent. The reason for this was that the relationship between these two may directly effect each other which was discussed in the literature review. Therefore, it is important to measure these to see if a correlation can be see between them directly.

From the scatterplot in figure 4.9 below there appears to be some pattern of relationship between turnover intent and engagement among the participants although more spread out in distribution than previous plots shown there can be see to be a moderate linear relationship steadily between them. With high engagement scores driving turnover down.

**Figure 4.9. Employee turnover intent and employee engagement**
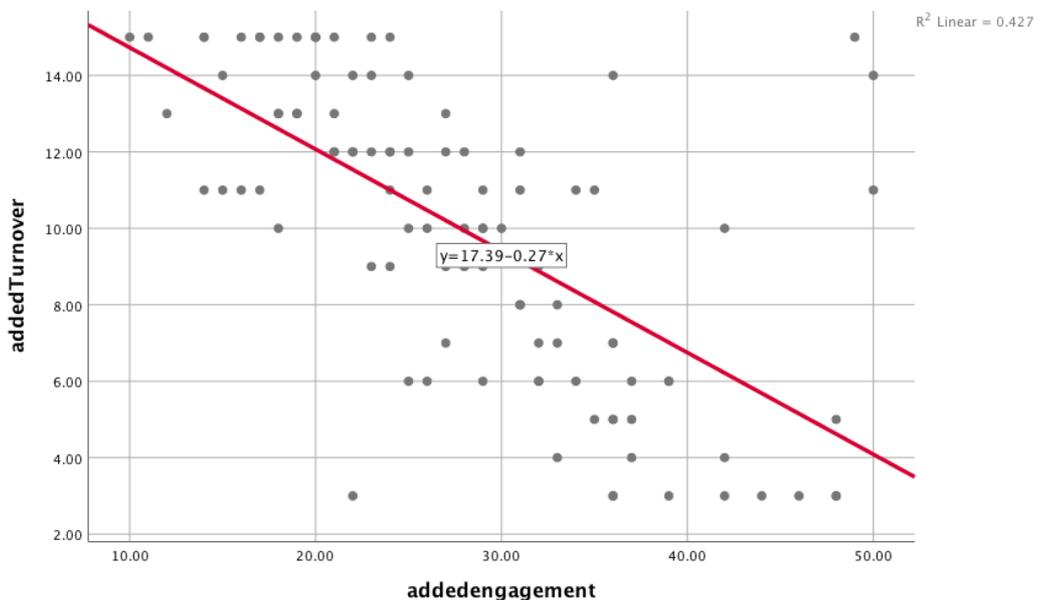
Table 4.10 shows the Pearson product moment correlation analysis results for ascertained for the association between an employees perceived level of engagement and its relationship with an employee's turnover intent. The results would indicate that there is a significantly strong correlation between an employee's engagement and their turnover intent. This result is stronger than that of the correlation between talent management and turnover but not as strong as the result for the association of talent management and its correlation with employee engagement ($r = .653$ and $p < 0.05$ (H1)).

Table 4.10. Employee turnover intent and employee engagement Pearson correlation result

Correlations

		addedengagement	addedTurnover
addedengagement	Pearson Correlation	1	-.653[**]
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	103	103
addedTurnover	Pearson Correlation	-.653[**]	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	103	103

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Chapter Five: Discussion

This chapter will discuss the findings in more detail under the three sub-objectives of the study.

5.1 Does TM have a strong presence in the retail sector?

From Table 4.5 the overall mean score per question in the TM scale can be seen. There are 20 questions for this scale. The mean score overall for all participants is 61.80. The highest score a participant could have gotten is 100 this would indicate the participants felt a high presence of TM in their retail setting. The lowest score a participant could have achieved is 20, indicating that there was a weak presence if any of TM in their work place. The halfway point on the scale would be a mark of 60.

Table 4.5. Overall mean score of TM scale for all participants

addedTM

Mean	N	Std. Deviation
61.8020	103	16.09784

Therefore, for this scale out of 103 participants the average score per person works out roughly as 61.80 on their survey. This would indicate that there is a perception of a presence of TM in the retail sector as the results lean slightly to the more positive side. It can also be seen from Table 4.8 that for most questions the average score was a neutral 3 with some getting slightly higher for example question 7 in the HR section:

 'I am given freedom within my job to use my own initiative.'

This scored the highest on average at 3.9. This is interesting as the literature states that high involvement for employees is important in terms of TM. Collings (2014) argues that a good TM strategy needs to align with an employee's interests as well as an organisation's needs within a TM strategy. Employees also need to feel as though their opinion matters and they feel valued so this score is important for the presence of TM.

The lowest scoring questions with an average score being 2.4 was for two of the HR questions based around support from management. This is also very intriguing as it is in line with what

previous research has stated about management support failing to manage TM effectively (Collings, 2014). Also Oladapo (2014) further backs these findings up with 31% of the organisations in their study giving the main reason for not having a TM strategy due to management support and understanding. This is significant for Irish retail as it indicates this too could be a weakness for us in terms of TM in retail. By focusing on this in particular it could affect the overall view of TM in this sector. It also shows an area which could be of interest to delve deeper and study further to understand why this is the case with management, if there is an issue there and how this could be rectified.

Table 4.7 shows the breakdown of the five main HR constructs used to build the TM scale. This shows an overview of how each construct scored. The lowest area was succession planning overall. According to Leis (2006) the progression of employees through positions from development and learning is an important HR strategy and one which is an integral part of TM. This is interesting as it shows a lack of presence of succession planning may be an issue for TM and through focusing on this in organisation's TM strategies could be a lot stronger. The overall highest score was around teamwork, bringing a sense of belonging and purpose to the employee. It is interesting to see that this scored one of the highest especially as inclusion is so important in any HR strategy (Meyers, 2014 & Shuck et al., 2014). Also staff can learn a lot from each other so this can feed into the training and development section too.

Table 4.7. Talent management Construct breakdown of scale

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
TrainingandDevelopment	103	1.13	5.00	3.0558	.84158
SuccessionPlanningCareerDevelopment	103	1.00	5.00	2.8058	1.08417
Communicationandperformancemanagement	103	1.29	5.00	2.9709	.90845
Autonomy	103	1.00	5.00	3.4466	1.30405
Teamwork	103	1.00	5.00	3.9029	1.08929
Valid N (listwise)	103				

From the results overall it can be seen that based on this sample size there is a presence of TM in retail. However, other research shows TM is not yet perceived by employees to be well embedded in their businesses. For example, Uren et al. (2007) as stated in the earlier literature review found 58% of their participants across the international markets of 57 different companies agreed to not perceiving TM in their organisation. The mean number achieved was over the halfway point showing that over half of the participants felt TM was to some extent present, this is the opposite to the results by Uren et al (2007). The result from this study showing a presence of TM argues against this evidence indicating the Irish retail sector may be in a stronger position than that of other international markets.

More research will need to be done on this topic in order to establish a more significant result with a bigger sample size for Ireland looking closer at the five constructs also. It is important to delve further into researching this topic after this result also. It is not seen to be too strong as it scores just over two points above the minimum score for TM to be seen to be present.

5.2 Is there a link between TM and employee engagement from an employee's perspective?

Figure 4.7. Talent Management and employee engagement

Scatter plot with regression line. Y-axis labelled "addedengagement" ranging from 10.00 to 50.00; X-axis labelled "addedTM" ranging from 40.00 to 100.00. Regression equation shown: $y = 1.65 + 0.42*x$. R^2 Linear = 0.499.
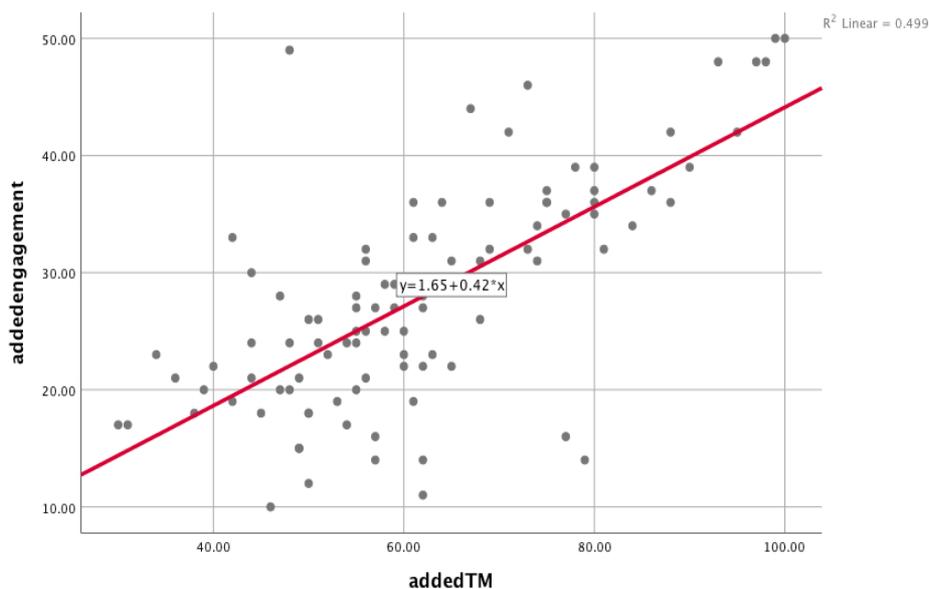
There does appear to be a link between TM and employee engagement. This is indicated from the results of the scatterplot in figure 4.7 showing a clear linear line indicating the increase of TM contributing to the increase of employee engagement. The distribution is not perfect with some points scattered but it can be seen to be associated. The linear progression shows that as participants scored higher in the TM scale they also scored higher in the engagement scale. To investigate further a Pearson product moment correlation was conducted.

Table 4.8. Talent management and employee engagement Pearson correlation result

		addedTM	addedengagement
addedTM	Pearson Correlation	1	.707[**]
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	103	103
addedengagement	Pearson Correlation	.707[**]	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	103	103

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 4.8 shows a very strong correlation between TM and employee engagement. For the purpose of this research this would then answer the question that yes TM is linked to employee engagement in a positive way when it is present. These results are in line with what other research states about TM playing an integral part in engaging employees. This would show that overall amongst all participants, when TM was perceived to have a strong presence then employees are more engaged

For example, CIPD (2006) state TM can contribute to employee engagement. Also a study by Milicevic et al. (2014) showed that employees who receive good training and have the ability to influence decisions in their workplace are far more likely to be motivated. However, Shuck et al. (2014) argue that how employees are included and supported and how this impacts their engagement is underrepresented in the literature today and more research needs to be done on this topic. As seen in the literature review Sheehan et al. (2013) argue against this saying it can

work against diversity policies in organisations and isolate staff members. Shuck et al. (2014) argue against these and through their evidence illustrate that in supporting employee inclusion in HR practices like TM employee engagement improves. This is a good result for Irish retail as results show that the presence of TM and past research which has linked this to engagement has also gone further to say it leads to better and faster performance rates among employees (Guthrie, 2007).

This is significant for the Irish retail sector today as over the coming years with globalization and the current economy organisations need to keep their competitive advantage. TM is a way to not only attract talented employees in 'the war on talent' but keep talent in the organisation. As Carter (2011) stated earlier talent is the most vital resource, an organisation is only as good as its people.

5.3 Is there a correlation between TM in this sector and the turnover rates in retail?

As can also be seen in the results of the Pearson correlation statistics score in Table 4.9 when correlating the TM scale and the turnover intent score the results show that as the TM increases, turnover intent decreases. The score can be see to be r = -.572, p < 0.001 (H1). This result indicates that there is a significant correlation between an employee's perception of TM and their turnover intent.

Table 4.9. Talent management and turnover intent Pearson correlation result

		addedTurnover	addedTM
addedTurnover	Pearson Correlation	1	-.574[**]
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	103	103
addedTM	Pearson Correlation	-.574[**]	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	103	103

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

This result can also be linked back to what other researchers have previously stated. For example, previous research from Rog (2008) has shown that TM strategies can improve retention rates. Dawn et al. (2013) have also stated that development is a powerful retention tool too. This is significant for retail as turnover rates are high and research shows it is essential to retain talented employees in order to maintain high levels of quality customer service and operational efficiency in stores (Dawn et al., 2013).

5.4 Employee engagement and turnover intent

For the purpose of this research it was also important to show the direct correlation between employee engagement and turnover intent. It was interesting to see that this scored higher than that of the direct correlation of TM and turnover intent. As can be seen in figure 4.9 the scatterplot shows a clearer positive linear line in association with both engagement and turnover intent compared to that of figure 4.8.

Figure 4.8. TM and employee turnover intent   **Figure 4.9. Engagement and Turnover intent**
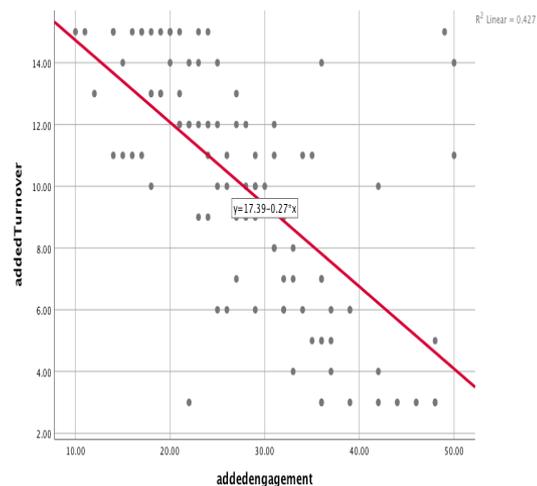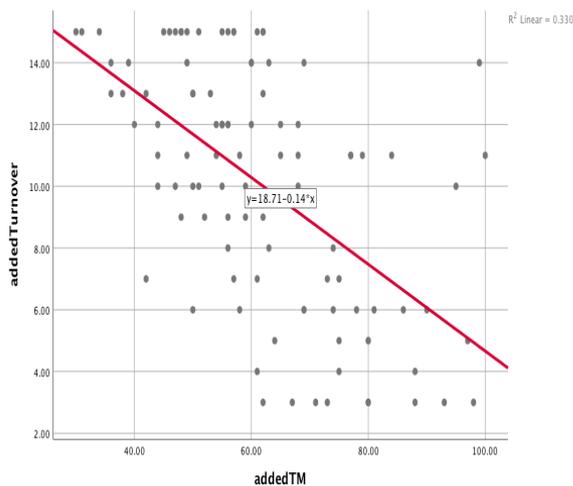
This is in line with the literature previously discussed in the literature review in Chapter 2 which states that employee engagement can directly impact turnover intent (Tian-foreman, 2009). However, the fact that TM and turnover intent still shows a good linear progression and scores well on the Pearson correlation statistics test with a score of -.572 this would suggest the TM does have an affect on the turnover rates in the retail sector. This could be partially due to helping engage employees but it is also important to note that there could be other factors also.

5.5 Factors influencing turnover

Jones et al. (2006) previously stated studies report inconsistent results when looking at turnover. This is due to employees considering different variables as important (Harrison et al., 2014). For example, Oladapo (2014) found job advancement was the biggest indicator, Dawn et al. (2013) found that training, rewards and compensation were the main factors. Although different aspects of TM influence turnover intent the work environment also has an influence with Booth et al. (2007) stating that organisational culture, values and management behaviours also affect turnover. Harrison et al. (2014) found that employee turnover rates are higher in grocery retail because of a lack of information leaving management making assumptions and formulating plans based on speculation which then fail to reduce turnover.

This shows that these could also be combined factors along with TM and engagement. This is significant for the Irish retail sector as any one of these factors could influence employee retention and more research should be done to delve deeper and try point out the main factors so retailers can hold on to their talent.

Chapter Six: Conclusion and Recommendations

6.1 Conclusion

The aim of this study was to conduct an investigation to analyze TM more closely in the retail sector in Ireland. The study had three main objectives; (i) see if TM had a presence in the retail sector, (ii) if this presence had an effect on an employee's engagement and lastly (iii) to see if TM had an effect on an employee's turnover intent. To investigate this topic in the best way possible with the time constraints in place it was decided that the best approach would be that of a quantitative method as it would allow for a bigger sample size to give a better overview on the topic. Within this study surveys were the instrument of choice to conduct the research. However, although this was deemed the best option it is not without its limitations. As discussed in chapter three the use of surveys can limit the researcher as it does not explain why certain answers are given and instead is just a brief overview of people's perceptions. Different variables and factors that can have an effect on the questions asked are not taken into account. This was clear from the start and so established scales were used when possible. This was to combat and ensure questions were asked as simply and clearly as possible as these scales had already been tried and tested numerous times before.

Another limitation within this study was the sampling method used and the sample size of 103 participants, as it was convenience sampling and only got a small number of people in comparison to the over 285,000 people working in the retail sector. In order to reduce this weakness, the researcher used social media outlets and distributed the surveys online so as to capture a wider geographical zone. However, from the sample and convenience method it can be seen that convenience sampling may have skewed the results slightly with most participants being college graduates, much like the researcher. Therefore, more data is needed across a wider scale to get a wider distribution and a clearer read on a retail employees perception. The data was then analyzed using SPSS and the results correlated any connections between TM, engagement and turnover intent.

It can be seen from the results that TM does have a presence in the Irish retail sector and there is a very strong association between TM and employee's engagement. It can also be seen that TM is also correlated with turnover intent. Upon analyzing the data and looking at all the results

all objectives were covered and the questions were adequately answered. The results were reflective with other research findings carried out by researchers like Alias et al. (2014). These also found TM had an influence on employee engagement and retention and so the results from this study further backed up what was said in the literature. However, research also shows inconsistencies in the results from employee turnover research. This shows this area needs to be explored more, especially looking at the results from this study with the correlation between engagement and turnover intent and the slightly more skewed results in relation to the TM and turnover intent results. Therefore, it is important to explore this area further and really delve deeper into what exactly effects employee retention, taking all factors into account.

The research shows that from looking at the existing literature surrounding the area of TM there are some gaps in what is written versus what happens practically in organisations. A lot of research has been done on TM, its importance and the benefits of this when correctly used but research in organisational settings show that in spite of this it is still not given enough attention by organisations and the managers in these organisations. Some of the questions asked in the TM scale of this study from the result can be seen to still score quite low, for example around succession planning and management.

The results from this research show that these areas could be stronger especially with management and succession planning as previous research has stated. For example, Harrison et al. (2014) argue that turnover rates can be higher in sectors due to a lack of evidence based information leading to managers forming retention plans based on assumptions. Also as Jahshan (2016) reveals 18% of employees in their study left jobs due to a lack of promotion opportunities for employees. Oladapo (2014) further backed this up with their studies findings. This shows the importance of ensuring succession planning and career development are part of all TM strategies. In terms of practical implications as a direct result of this study it is recommended that more focus be put on TM in retail organisations around the areas of succession planning and management/leadership in organisations. This is because the results show this is where TM mostly seems weak and research states that this is where TM can have the most effect on talented people, their engagement and their turnover intent.

From the questionnaire the area of training and development was neither high nor low but its importance is evident in the question breakdown and what previous studies have stated about it in the past. Memon et al. (2016) found from their study that training significantly increased

an employee's engagement and also reduced an employee's turnover intent, this also backed up research from a previous study carried out by Newman et al. (2011). Also the importance of the areas of autonomy and teamwork can be seen by studies such as Babakus et al. (2017) showing empowerment and belonging fosters work engagement and also reduces turnover intent in employees.

To conclude this research shows there is a correlation between TM and employee engagement as the presence of TM can be seen to be associated with an increase in employee engagement. The research also clearly shows the associated link between TM and turnover intent. However, the evidence also alludes to other factors too. These results also show that there are other factors which may have an impact on employee turnover intent and employee engagement which needs to be looked at in more detail in further research.

Also in conclusion the research clearly shows the presence of TM in the Irish retail sector, with a positive result for most participants when rating TM in their organisation. This is a good result to see come out of the retail sector but doesn't necessarily address the issue of high turnover in the retail sector which needs to be looked at also. From zoning in on TM in the retail sector and using the five different HR areas to measure TM it can be seen that some score high whilst others need more work. In working on the areas which scored lower in the TM scale like succession planning and performance management the retail sector can develop TM a step further, creating a stronger presence of TM in its organisations.

6.2 Recommendations

The findings from this study create a basis on which to examine further the retail sector in Ireland. It would be very beneficial and would be recommended that in order to get a clearer result a wider sample size would be beneficial. It would also be recommended to used more in depth biographical questions to narrow down the retail sector types. For example, look separately at the grocery, fashion, home ware and electrical sectors within retail to see if they have similarities and also look at the differences between all of them.

More questions around the area of turnover and comparing more variables to an employee's turnover intent would be beneficial to ensure all factors of influence in this area are covered. As from this study it can be seen to some extent, that something else could be effecting an

employee's thoughts and feelings about leaving their current position.

This can be seen from the engagement scale which had a bigger association than TM on turnover intention but the reasons for this were not investigated. It would therefore be recommended to carry out a bigger study over a longer period of time across the whole nation of Ireland to get a more random sample with greater numbers to compare and collect data on.

It is recommended more research be done on this topic as gaps can be seen in what is said to be best practice versus what is actually done in organisations when it comes to TM. Also from this particular piece of research the benefits of TM can be clearly seen to be beneficial to all organisations but some literature has suggested that management can have a big impact on TM. Therefore, one would recommend that future research look at the topic of management support and behaviours in a retail setting also.

Finally, the main recommendation from this study would be to look again at the topic of TM and turnover across a bigger sample size with more in-depth variables and scales across the period of a year to discover more of the facts and gain more knowledge around these subjects in the Irish retail sector of today. This is particularly important especially due to the fact that there seems to be a lack of statistics on the retail sector around this topic in Ireland. This can be seen in the literature review as statistics for sector turnover had to be pulled for the UK for discussion. This was because an Irish version which included the service sector for retail could not be found. For these reasons and the benefits of TM which are discussed in chapter two, further research can clearly be seen to be of benefit to this sector.

6.3 Costings and time frames

If further research is done and given a longer period of time it would cost very little as it can all be done online but would require more time spent from the researcher and require them to research the retail area as a whole. Travelling nationally to contact various organisations in order to reach a bigger geographical zone nationwide. Therefore, as it would take up more time one would suggest hiring a TM researcher to work on this for six months starting them on a basic salary of around €19,000 - €20,000 per annum. This would cost little to what would be saved if stronger TM strategies were in place to combat turnover and retain talent in the organisation. The time period would be most beneficial over six months to give the researcher

space and time to thoroughly conduct the research. With the researcher solely focusing on the aim and getting a good sample to give a true representation of data from the Irish retail sector.

To go a step further this experiment could run over one year with the TM researcher assessing a control also which has strong proven TM strategies in place and measure the data from this with other organisations to assess the evidence further.

Looking at organisations separately this option may not be affordable for smaller companies to carry out themselves but this research has shown the importance of TM in organisations. Therefore, it would be beneficial to conduct an internal survey within their business assessing the presence of TM. This could be a project taken on by an intern as an experience building project within their role in the company. This could be achieved by putting four hours a week aside for the intern to assess this over a six-month basis for the organisations employees specifically.

Personal reflection

From carrying out this research I have learned a lot around the topic of not just TM but HRM in the retail sector particularly. Although this study has been one of the biggest challenges of my academic career it has also been one of the most satisfying.

As I am currently working in the retail sector so this particularly sparked my interest and allowed me to look at my current sector of work from a different perspective. Taking on a research project like this allowed me to see the value of research in a business setting and was eye opening for me as I can use this kind of research in my work.

This research showed me the importance of management values and support which has helped me in my position as an operations retail manager. It has allowed me to see not only the full value of TM but employee engagement in terms of performance and the negative affect turnover can have on a company and its team.

Conducting this piece of research has been particularly challenging whilst working full time but it has taught me to persevere and rise to the challenge. As well as this, this research project has allowed me to develop my analytical skills.

I learned a lot academically, professionally and personally throughout this process. I now have a better understanding of critical thinking and can critically analyze the information presented to me. Within this project looking at the past literature around the topic of TM and critically evaluating it allowed me to get a better understanding of the topic. It also helped me within my career not to take things at face value but to read extensively around the topic in order to get a deeper understanding of it to and then make an educated decision or opinion on this.

References

Alias, N. E., Nor, N. M. and Hassan R. (2014) 'The relationships between talent management practices, employee engagement, and employee retention in the information and technology (IT) organisations in Selangor'. *International Conference on Business Management* 2014. pp. 101-115.

Ariss, A. A., Cascio F. W. and Paauwe, J. (2014) 'Talent management: Current theories and future research directions'. *Journal of World Business*, 49 (2): pp. 173-179.

Armstrong, M. (2009) *Armstrong's Handbook of Human Resource Management Practice.* 11th ed. London: Kogan Page.

Babakus, E., Yavas, U. and Karatepe, O. M. (2017) 'Work engagement and turnover intentions: Correlates and customer orientation as a moderator'. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 29 (6): pp.1580-1598.

Beechler, S & I.C. Woodward. (2009) 'The global 'war on talent''. *Journal of international Management*, 15 (3): pp. 273-285.

Boon, C. Hartog, D. N. D., Boselie, P. & Paauwe, J. (2011) 'The relationship between perceptions of HR practices and employee outcomes: Examining the role of person-organisation and person-job fit'. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management,* 22 (1): pp. 138-162.

Booth, S. and Hamer K. (2007) 'Labour turnover in the retail industry: Predicting the role of

individual, organisational and environmental factors'. *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management,* 35 (4): pp. 289-307.

Bui, H. T. M., & Baruch, Y. (2012) 'Learning organizations in higher education: An empirical evaluation within an international context'. *Management Learning*, 43 (5): pp. 515-544.

Bryman, A. (2016) *Social Research Methods*. 5th ed. London: Oxford Press.

Cadwallader, S., Burke Jarvis, C., Bitner, M. J. and Ostrom, A. L. (2010) 'Frontline employee motivation to participate in service innovation implementation'. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 38 (2): pp. 219-239.

Carter, G. (2011) 'The war on talent'. *Australasian Biotechnology*, 21 (1): pp. 14-16.

Cartwright, W. (2013) 'Engage for success: Why wellbeing matters: Sustaining employee engagement & wellbeing.' [Online] Available at http://engageforsuccess.org/wellbeing-employee-engagement-case-study-marks-spencer-wellbeing [Accessed August 13th 2017].

Central Statistics Office (2013) Men and women 2013. [Online] Available at http://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-wamii/womenandmeninireland2013/employmentlist/employment/#d.en.65815 [Accessed August 9th, 2017].

Chandani, A., Mehta, M. and Khokhar, V. (2016) 'Affecting Employee Engagement. Symbiosis Institute of Management Studies (SIMS).' *Indian Journal of Science and Technology*, 9 (15).

Chartered Institute of Personnel Development (CIPD). (2006) *Talent Management: Understanding the dimensions*. CIPD: United Kingdom.

Cohen, A. (1999). Turnover Intention Scale. *PsychTests* [Online] Available at http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/t10116-000 [Accessed March 12, 2017].

Cole, G. (2015) "Winning the talent war: How learning impacts on retention". *Development and Learning in Organizations: An International Journal*, 29 (3): pp. 21 – 23.

Collings, D., G. (2014) 'Toward Mature Talent Management: Beyond Shareholder Value'. *Human Resource Development Quarterly*, 25 (3): pp. 301-319.

Collings, D. G. and Mellahi, K. (2009) 'Strategic talent management: A review and research agenda'. *Human Resource Management Review*, 19 (4): pp. 304-313.

Dawn, S. K. and Biswas, S. (2013) 'Talent Management: Designing strategies'. *ASBM Journal of Management*, 6 (2): pp. 41-51.

Dierendonck, D. V., Lankester, A., Zmyslona, M. and Rothweiler, H. (2016) 'Linking HRM practices and institutional setting to collective turnover: An empirical exploration'. *Administrative Sciences,* 6 (4): pp.18.

Dries, N. (2013) 'The psychology of talent management: A review and research agenda' *Human Resource Management Review*, 23 (4): pp. 272-285.

Egerova, D., Lancaric, D., Eger, L. and Savov, R. (2015) 'Perspectives of talent management: Evidence from Czech and Slovak business'. *E+M Ekonomie a Management: Liberec*, 18 (4): pp. 108-120.

Fisher, C. (2010) *Researching and writing a dissertation: An essential guide for business students*. 3rd ed. England: Pearson Education Limited.

Gallardo-Gallardo, E., Dries, N and Gonzalez-Cruz, T.F. (2013) 'What is the meaning of 'talent' in the world of work?'. *Human Resource Management Review*, 23: pp. 290-300.

Garavan, T. N., Hogan, C. and Cahir-O'Donnell, A. (2009) *Developing Managers and Leaders*. Dublin: Gill & MacMillan.

Gupta, V. (2013) 'Talent management practices and its relationship with employees turnover: A study on employees working in insurance sector industries in Uttarakhand: An empirical study. *Vedaang*, 4 (1).

Guthrie, J. P. (2001) 'High Involvement work practices, turnover and productivity: Evidence from New Zealand'. *ACAD Manage. University of Kansas*, 44 (1): pp. 180-190.

Harrison, S. and Gordon, P. A. (2014) 'Misconceptions of employee turnover: Evidence- Based information for the retail grocery industry'. *Journal of Business and Economics Research*, 12 (2).

Hassan, R. (2016) 'The Role of Human Capital Management in Enhancing Engagement and Retention Among Top Talent in Organization: A Critical Literature Review'. *Journal of Emerging Economies and Islamic Research,* 4 (special issue): pp. 54-67.

Horn, R. (2009) *Researching and writing dissertations: A complete guide for business and management students.* London: Charted Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD).

Ibec (2017) Retail in depth. [Online] Available at http://www.retailireland.ie/Sectors/RI/RI.nsf/vPages/Retail_in_Ireland~retail-in-depth?OpenDocument [Accessed August 4th, 2017].

Jahshan, E. (2016) 'Why does retail have such a high employee turnover rate?'
Retail Gazette. [Online]. Available at https://www.retailgazette.co.uk/blog/2016/10/why-does-retail-have-one-of-the-highest-employee-turnover-rates/ [Accessed May 5th, 2017].

Jones, D. A. and Skarlicki, D. P. (2006) 'The Relationship Between Perceptions of Fairness and Voluntary Turnover Among Retail Employees'. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology,* 33 (6): pp. 1226-1243.

King, K. A. (2015) 'Global talent management: Introducing a strategic framework and multiple-actors model'. *Journal of Global Management (JGM) Department of Management, London School of Economics and Political Science, London, UK*. 3 (3): pp. 273-288.

Lewis, R. E. and Robert, J. (2006) 'Talent management: A critical review. The New World of Work and Organizations'. *Human Resource Management Review*, 16 (2): pp. 139-154.

Lindner, J. R. (1998) 'Understanding Employee Motivation'. *The Journal of Extension*, 36 (3).

Mehdiabadi, H., A. and Li, J. (2014) 'Understanding Talent Development and Implications for Human Resource Development: An Integrative Literature Review'. *Human Resource Development Review,* 15(3).

Memon, M. A., Salleh, R. and Baharom, M. N. R. (2016) 'The link between training satisfaction, work engagement and turnover intention'. *European Journal of Training and Development*, 40 (6): pp. 407-429.

Meyers, M. C., and Van Woerkom, M. (2014) 'The influence of underlying philosophies on talent management: Theory, implications for practice and research agenda'. *Journal of World Business*, 49 (2): pp. 192-203.

Michaels, E., Handfield-Jones, H & Axelrod, B. (2001) *The war for talent*. U.S.A: McKinney and Company, Inc.

Milicevic, A. L., Cvetkovski, T. and Tomasevic, T. (2014) 'Employee motivation during the global economic crisis'. *Actual problems of economics,* 10 (160): pp.291-304.

Murphy, N. (2015) "Labour turnover rates: 2015 survey". *XpertHR.* [Online] Available at http://www.xperthr.co.uk/survey-analysis/labour-turnover-rates-2015-survey/156198/?keywords=turnover . [Accessed June 5TH, 2017].

Newman, A., Thanacoody, R. and Hui, W. (2011) 'The impact of employee perceptions of training on organizational commitment and turnover intentions: a study of multinationals in the Chinese service sector'. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management,* 22

(8).

O' Neal, S. and Gebauer, J. (2006) 'Talent management in the 21st Century: Attracting, retaining and engaging employees of choice'. *World at Work Journal*, 15(1): pp. 6-17.

Oladapo, V. (2014) 'The impact of talent management on retention'. *Journal of Business Studies Quarterly*, 5 (3): pp. 19-36.

Pallant, J. (2013) *SPSS survival manual*. 5th ed. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Rathi, N. & Lee, K. (2015) 'Retaining talent by enhancing organizational prestige: A HRM strategy for employees working in the retail sector'. *Personnel Review*, 44 (4): pp. 454–469.

Rog, E. (2008) 'Talent management: A strategy for improving employee recruitment, retention and engagement within hospitality organizations'. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 20 (7): pp. 743-757.

Rose, S., Spinks, N. and Canhoto, A.I. (2015) 'Tests for the assumption that a variable is normally distributed'. *Management Research: Applying the Principles*.

Saunders, M., Lewis, P. and Thornhill, A. (2009) *Research methods for business students*. 5th ed. England: Pearson Education Limited.

Sekran, U. and Bougie, R. (2010) *Research methods for business: A skill building approach.* 5th ed. England: John Wiley & Sons Ltd.

Schaufeli, W. B., Salanova, M., González-Romá, V., & Bakker, A. B. (2002). Utrecht Work Engagement Scale-17. *PsychTests* [Online] Available at http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/t07164-000 [Accessed 19th April, 2017].

Sheehan, M. and Anderson, V. (2015) 'Talent Management and Organizational Diversity: A call for research.' *Human Resource Development Quarterly,* 26 (4): pp. 349-357.

Shuck, B., Twyford, D, Reio, T. G., and Shuck, A. (2014) 'Human Resource Development Practices and Employee Engagement: Examining the Connection with Employee Turnover Intentions'. *Human Resource Development Quarter*ly, 25 (2): pp. 239-271.

Stewart, J. and Rigg, C. (2010) *Learning and Talent Development*. CIPD: United Kingdom.

Swailes, S. (2013) 'The ethics of talent management'. *Business Ethics: A European Review*, 22(1): pp. 32-46.

Tarique, I. and Schuler, R. S. (2010) 'Global talent management: Literature review, integrative framework, and suggestions for further research. *Journal of World Business*, 45 (2): pp. 122-133.

Thunnissen, M., Boselie, P. and Fruytier, B. (2013) 'A review of talent management: 'infancy

or adolescence?''. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management,* 24 (9): pp. 1744-1761.

Tian-Foreman W. A. (2009) 'Job satisfaction and turnover in the Chinese retail industry'. *Chinese Management Studies*, 3 (4): pp. 367-378.

Ton, Z. and Huckman, R. S. (2008) 'Managing the Impact of Employee Turnover on Performance: The Role of Process Conformance'. *Organization Science,* 19 (1): pp. 56-68.

Uren, L. and Jackson, S. (2007) 'From talent compliance to talent commitment'. *Strategic HR Review, 6 (3): pp.27-35.*

'An Investigation in Talent Management in the Irish Retail sector'

Dear Participant

As a Masters student from National College of Ireland, I invite you to take part in a survey I am carrying out in regards to Talent Management in the Irish retail sector. Your answers will be used to help me conduct research on my thesis as part of the Human Resource Management Masters Dissertation I am currently undertaking. I am interested in getting your honest opinion and perceptions on this in your current retail position and appreciate your participation with this survey. All surveys will be confidential and anonymous. Please tick the box below to indicate your consent to voluntarily answer the below survey.

If you have any questions about this research or require any other information about this study, I can be contacted at the following email address:

manda-90@hotmail.com.

It should take you approximately 10-15 minutes to complete.

Do you consent to take part in the following survey in relation to your current experience in the retail sector?

Yes ☐

Section Ones

Please tick the correct answer in relation to yourself for section 1.

Gender:

Male ☐   Female ☐

Age:

18-25 ☐

26-35 ☐

36-50 ☐

50 + ☐

How long have you been employed with your current employer?

6- 12months ☐

1-3 years ☐

4years + ☐

How long have you been in retail?

6-12months ☐

2-4years ☐

4 years + ☐

How would you describe your current position?

Part-time ☐

Full-time ☐

Flexible ☐

Please tick the highest level of education achieved?

Leaving certificate/ Equivalent

Post leaving Certificate/ Diploma

College degree

Masters/PHD

Professional qualification

Other

HR practices in relation to Talent Management

For the below sections 2-: *The following questions evaluate your views about your job and workplace. Please rate your opinions about each of the following statements ranging from 1 strongly disagree to 5 strongly agree.*

Section 2
HR Practices

1. My job and tasks offer opportunities to learn new things.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

2. I know how the managers rate my performance on my work tasks.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

3. Promotion systems exist within my workplace.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

4. Annual appraisals are given in my workplace.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

5. Constructive criticism is an aspect of performance management in my workplace.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

6. Teamwork is encouraged.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

7. I am given freedom within my job to use my own initiative.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

8. My role profile and job design is clear.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

9. The training given is practical.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

10. The training given is relevant to my daily tasks.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

11. Initially there was sufficient training provided to enable me to carry out my role.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

12. There are good career prospects in my workplace.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

13. My strengths in my current role are acknowledged.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

14. There are opportunities to develop new skills and knowledge for my current job.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

15. Coaching is provided.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

16. There are opportunities to train in order to progress further in my workplace.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

17. I am supported in planning my future development.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

18. There is an opportunity for an increase in job responsibilities if I perform well at my current tasks.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

19. My manager knows my weaknesses and support is given to help improve these.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

20. Performance improvement plans are used to clearly communicate any further development needed within my position.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

Section Three

Services

1. Employees in the store have knowledge of the job and the skills to deliver superior quality work and service.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

2. Employees receive recognition and rewards for the delivery of superior work and service.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

3. Employees are provided with tools, technology, and other resources to support the delivery of quality work and service to customers.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

Section Four

Employee Engagement

1. At my work, I feel bursting with energy.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

2. I find the work that I do full of meaning and purpose.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

3. I am enthusiastic about my job.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

4. When I am working, I forget everything else around me.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

5. My job inspires me.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5

6. When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

7. I am immersed in my work.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

8. To me, my job is challenging.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

9. I get carried away when I am working.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

1	2	3	4	5

10. At my work, I always persevere, even when things do not go well.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

Section Five

Other Opportunities

1. I think a lot about leaving my job.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

2. I am actively searching for an alternative to the organisation.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

3. As soon as it is possible, I will leave the organisation.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

4. I see a career in the retail sector in the long run for myself.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

I would like to take this time to thank you for your time and participation.

Appendix 2: Utrecht Work Engagement Scale -17

1. At my work, I feel bursting with energy.

2. I find the work that I do full of meaning and purpose.

3. Time flies when I am working. (Removed)

4. At my job, I feel strong and vigorous. (Removed)

5. I am enthusiastic about my job.

6. When I am working, I forget everything else around me.

7. My job inspires me.

8. When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work.

9. I feel happy when I am working intensely. (Removed)

10. I am proud of the work that I do. (Removed)

11. I am immersed in my work.

12. I can continue working for very long periods at a time. (Removed)

13. To me, my job is challenging.

14. I get carried away when I am working.

15. At my job, I am very resilient, mentally. (Removed)

16. It is difficult to detach myself from my job. (Removed)

17. At my work, I always persevere, even when things do not go well.

Appendix 3: Submission of Thesis to Norma Smurfit Library, National College of Ireland

Student name: <u>Mandy Dempsey</u>   Student   number: <u>x15000079</u>

School: National College of Ireland   Course: <u>Masters in Arts in HRM</u>

Degree to be awarded: <u>Masters in Arts in Human Resource Management</u>

Title of Thesis: <u>An investigation into talent management in the Irish retail sector.</u>

One hard bound copy of your thesis will be lodged in the Norma Smurfit Library and will be available for consultation. The electronic copy will be accessible in TRAP (http://trap.ncirl.ie/), the National College of Ireland's Institutional Repository. In accordance with normal academic library practice all theses lodged in the National College of Ireland Institutional Repository (TRAP) are made available on open access.

I agree to a hard bound copy of my thesis being available for consultation in the library. I also agree to an electronic copy of my thesis being made publicly available on the National College of Ireland's Institutional Repository TRAP.

Signature of Candidate: <u>Mandy Dempsey</u>

For   completion   by   the   School:
The   aforementioned   thesis   was   received   by_____
Date:___26/8/17___

This signed form must be appended to all hard bound and electronic copies of your thesis submitted to your school