

# Investigating Trust and Organisational Effectiveness in a SME within the Irish Higher Educational Sector.

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# Submission of Thesis and Dissertation

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## **Abstract**

Trust is part of our everyday lives; it is a complex concept which occurs not only in personal lives but also within the workplace. During the current COVID-19 crisis, employees and managers have found themselves trying to sustain meaningful relationships while working remotely (Hickok, 2021). Additionally, organisations are trying to continue to meet their objectives and goals and operate effectively during these times. Therefore, it appears to be a fitting time in the world to investigate these two concepts in the workplace.

This study aimed to explore the two concepts, trust and organisational effectiveness, in a small to medium organisation operating in higher education in Ireland. The researcher explores the definition of the two concepts within the current setting of the organisation prior to carrying out quantitative research on both.

Both employees and management (N=45) participated in this quantitative research study and responded to Cooks and Walls (1980) measure of interpersonal trust. Additionally, participants were afforded the opportunity to give written feedback in relation to trust, which was then coded and analysed. Management (N=7), answered Cameron's (1978) organisation effectiveness questionnaire. A combination of statistical tests including a fisher-exact test, a pearson correlation analysis, an ANOVA analysis and a multiple regression model, were carried out to investigate four hypotheses.

Results indicated there to be no significant association between trust and overall organisation effectiveness in this setting. However, there was a significant relationship found between two types of trust, horizontal and vertical. Length of employment service was found not to significantly impact levels of trust. Finally, variables contributing to the organisation were found to significantly predict overall organisation effectiveness, whereas variables relating to student did not.

Limitations and future recommendations are discussed in relation to these findings within this paper. The research concludes with recommendations that the organisation can make to improve based on the findings alongside with the practical implications of these recommendations.

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# **Chapter One: Introduction**

## **1.1 Introduction**

The purpose of this research study is to explore the concepts of trust and Organisational Effectiveness (OE) within a small to medium sized organisation in Ireland. This current chapter will look to define the main concepts of the study and will also set out the objectives and rationale for the study. This chapter will also give some background to the organisation that is being used for the purpose of the study. The chapter will conclude by summarising the structure this paper will take.

## **1.2 Main Concepts**

### **1.2.1 Trust**

There has always been a struggle to define trust universally. This could stem from that fact that trust is based on an emotion and can vary from person to person and their values and ideals. One aspect of trust that researchers agree on is that it relates to being vulnerable to the actions and behaviour of others (Mayer, Davis & Schoorman, 1995; Costa, 2003; Victor & Hoole, 2017).

There has been research in previous years on the importance of trust in the workplace (Costa, 2003). According to Victor and Hoole (2017) there is different type of trust which can take place in the workplace; Organisational trust which is trust in the organisation as a whole and inter-personal trust which is trust between people such as management and co-workers.

Organisations today thrive to create trustworthy environments (Ozmen, 2018). Traditionally, organisations would operate for one single bottom line, profit, and due to this leaders within organisations were viewed as untrustworthy agents as they were constantly working towards this single bottom line and there was no need to build trust with employees (Blakey, 2020). However, in recent years the focus has shifted, and trust has become a more relevant concept in the workplace. Although, there are reasons for this, such as the influence of technology, globalisation, and Generation Y (Bannon et al., 2011), there must also be an advantageous reason as to why organisations prioritise relationship building within the workplace nowadays. Elkington (1997) outlines how this may be due to the fact that organisations are no longer working towards a single bottom line, profit, but rather, what he termed: a triple bottom line; profit, relationships and corporate social responsibility and how this triple bottom line feeds



into the successful functioning of the organisation. Hence, highlighting why building a trustworthy environment can be deemed beneficial to the everyday effectiveness of the organisation.

### **1.2.2 Organisational Effectiveness**

It is complex to define what exactly constitutes Organisational Effectiveness (OE). This is because organisational efficiency is a fluid concept which is niche to each individual organisation based on their own goals. However, researchers have agreed that it involves continuous work in order reach goals and achieve results within the workplace (Oghojafor et al., 2012). It is important when looking at this concept that one is aware of the difference between organisation efficiency and OE. Efficiency relates to the input versus the output of the organisation; in theory, how the organisation can operate efficiently without an over expenditure on resources whereas effectiveness relates to goals and objectives and whether your organisation is doing the right things in order to meet their goals and objectives. An ideal organisation would be thriving to be both effective and efficient in its workings (Osteroff & Schimtt, 1993). It may be argued that the although an organisation can be efficient in its use of resources, if it is not meeting its goals, the fact of the matter is the efficiency of the organisation is obsolete as it is not achieving what it is setting out to do. Therefore, highlighting the importance of OE.

## **1.3 The Current Study**

The current study is going to explore trust and OE within a small to medium organisation in the Irish Higher education sector. The organisation which is being used for the purpose of this study will be kept anonymous and therefore all referencing will be conducted in a confidential manner with the 'Placement College' being inputted in lieu of the organisations name.

### **1.3.1 Current Organisation**

The organisation is a private organisation which operates in the higher education sector in Ireland. The Irish Times have reported that higher level education in Ireland is at an all-time high, stating that there are almost two hundred and fifty thousand (250,000) students studying at this level in the country, making Ireland the highest in EU for school leavers to attend third level education (O'Brien, 2019). There is a need for strong organisations to operate in this sector and within that, it is important to understand what goes on within organisations in this sector and how their employees cared for. It can be easily forgotten that all institutes operating within the educational setting are in fact businesses, which are trying to meet objectives and

employ and retain staff. Therefore, it is important that the workers in this sector, whether that be marketing staff, administration staff, lecturers, or senior management, are not overlooked. This highlights the rationale behind the choice of the current organisation.

This organisation receives no government funding and therefore relies on its profit as its sole source of income. As the organisation sees hundreds of students through their third level studies in Ireland yearly, it is vital that the organisation is running effectively so as to ensure it can keep caring for its students and staff as it should. The organisation employs roughly 90 staff across two different locations; however, most staff are based in one location with a minority based at the second location.

### **1.3.2 Organisational Context**

The CIPD (2021) outline the importance of employee voice in the workplace and state that organisations should strive to create a speak up culture, which is promoted throughout the workplace to ensure that employees can safely express their views and raise any concerns they may have. The organisation that is being examined in this research operates a “speak up policy.” Within the employee handbook for the organisation, it states that “It is our policy to encourage open and proactive communication within the College” and encourages employees to approach management with confidence should they have anything they wish to voice (Placement College, 2018). This policy is actively enforced throughout the organisation and senior management ensure that employees are kept up to date on all important issues. This is evident from the monthly “town hall” meetings which are held where senior management offer updates to the employees on all activities that are ongoing in the organisation. During these meetings, employees are also given an opportunity to offer any feedback or updates on their own work. This encourages transparency across the organisation. Within the employee handbook document, the organisation is described as a “high trust environment.” (Placement College, 2018).

People analytics is a useful tool in the workplace. It can be utilised in different ways, the organisation can obtain vital information from the staff and stakeholders by measures such as interviews or surveys and then use this information to make more effective decisions when strategizing (CIPD, 2020). During the ongoing public health crisis, the organisation sought out people’s views to how they felt the organisation reacted to the pandemic so that the organisation could address any concerns or issues that employees may have had or problems that they felt were overlooked during the crisis. This data was collected by online surveys which were issued

to the staff surrounding topics such as remote working and staff wellbeing. One survey was issued in May 2020, quite soon into the crisis and a follow up was issued in December 2020.

In relation to the initial survey issued in May, there was a good response rate of 85%. The survey looked at the level of confidence staff members had to the approach taken by the organisation in responding to COVID-19 and found that 96% of respondents had high confidence in the organisation's response to the crisis. The survey found that 80% of respondents were happy with the communications amongst the organisation during this time and that 80% of respondents were adapting well to remote working. (Placement College, 2020)

Examining this initial survey in relation to the current study, the survey looked at three crucial areas which gives some background into staff's feelings in relation to organisation efficiency, leadership, management, and their colleagues. The survey sought to examine how staff felt the business was operating during this crisis and it found that 96% of respondents felt that the organisation was operating at a normal, if not higher, standard than before the crisis. As mentioned in a previous section, organisations efficiency relates to the ability to adapt and operate despite their internal and external forces (Bohn, 2010). Therefore, this result can be used to highlight how employees view the efficiency of the organisation during times of crisis. In addition to this, the survey looked at leadership and management and found that 85% of respondents felt that management were able to provide a sense of stability, approached health and wellbeing of staff effectively during this time and that managements actions were consistent. Finally, the survey also examined staffs' feelings towards health and wellbeing during this time, more specifically, their relationships with their peers and co-workers. Results indicated that 85% of respondents missed their colleagues, 9% felt indifferent about missing them and 6% did not miss them. As the majority were missing their colleagues, this indicates that there are good, strong interpersonal relationships amongst employees within the organisation. In addition to this over 80% of respondents outlined that they still feel strongly connected with their team during this time. (Placement College, 2021)

The purpose of reviewing this survey and outlining the results is to demonstrate the environment in which the organisation operates in. It is evident from that survey alone that employees feel secure in relation to the efficiency of the organisation, management, and their relationships with their colleagues, which is extremely positive considering that the survey was distributed during an unprecedented crisis.

The second survey which was issued in December 2020 had a high response rate of around 80%. The survey did not examine the same issues in relation to senior management's ability to respond to the current crisis but rather focused on the health and wellbeing and social interactions of staff along with working remotely. The survey found that 95% of respondents did know who they could turn too in the organisation for support while working from home. The survey also gave staff an opportunity to cite any social activities which may be good for the company to implement whilst working remotely such as virtual yoga, film clubs and coffee mornings. Overall, as this survey did not examine staffs feelings towards management it is not of particular relevance to the concepts in this current study but it is worth citing in order to highlight the overall views that employees hold about the organisation at the moment in terms of sociability and interpersonal relationships.

These surveys provided valuable insights into how the staff were feeling during the public health crisis. An article published by the Society for Human Resource Management, outlined that when using surveys, it is important to follow up and for them to be used frequently in order to be effective tools (SHRM, 2017). As there was a gap between the two surveys, this gave the organisation time to address any initial concerns, which may have been highlighted in the first survey, prior to issuing the second survey. Therefore, the organisation was able to use the data gathered in order to work on any key activities that needed addressing. As outlined by the CIPD (2020) this type of analytics can be applied to any aspect of HR in order to improve the workplace for both the organisation and the employees.

### **1.3.3 Aims and Purpose of the Current Study**

There has been a lot of research conducted around trust and substantial research within the area of OE, which chapter two of this paper will examine. As outlined in a BBC article, during the current COVID-19 crisis, there has been a rise in remote working which in turn can have a negative effect on trust levels that employees have in each other and between management, as it is easier to make negative assumptions about someone you have little face to face interaction with (Hickok, 2021). Therefore, the relevance of trust amongst employees, their co-workers and management is extremely vital. Additionally, Bohn (2010) outlined how OE relates to the organisations ability to operate effectively despite external and internal forces. Based on this, it is a prime time to examine the area of OE as the current crisis is a time in which a company that is not effective may not be coping well with the current uncertainty. Furthermore, given the current climate, organisations are relying on their employees to ensure that work is being carried out and goals are being met, in the same way that employees may be relying on

employers to make the right decisions in order to guide the organisation through this time. Therefore, it seems like a fitting time to research this topic and have a look at the relationship between employee trust and OE.

Based on this rationale, the main aim of the study is to establish if there is an association between interpersonal trust and OE. This study will then seek to examine the concept of trust and whether there is a relationship between trust in leaders and trust in peers.

Furthermore, different levels of trust based on someone's length of service in the organisation will also be explored. The rationale behind this objective originates from the idea that mutual trust and investment in a relationship could help to build a high trust environment (Zhang et al, 2008). It would be insightful to see if someone who is in the organisation a long time may have a stronger loyalty and view of trust than someone who is not there as long. This is of particular interest as employees who may have begun their roles during this current crisis would not have had the interactions that an employee who is there prior to the crisis would have. As Hickok (2021) outlines the difficulty of building relationships in a remote setting it, therefore, would be interesting to see if there is a difference in trust levels between the different cohorts.

Finally, the study will aim to examine what contributes to OE in this type of setting. Unlike other organisations, organisations which operate in the higher educational setting must consider both the achievements of students and the achievements of the organisation (Cameron, 1989). Therefore, the study will explore whether student related variables or organisation related variables are a bigger predictor of effectiveness in this organisation.

### **1.3 Structure**

This current paper will be broken down into separate chapters, in total there will six chapters along with a reference chapter and appendixes at the end of the paper. The structure for each remaining chapter is as follows.

*Chapter 2* of this paper will look to review relevant research in relation to organisation efficiency, trust and leadership and its implications for the everyday working world. Theories will be outlined, and various studies will be critically analysed in relation to the three main constructs of the study. The chapter will conclude by outlining the justification, research aims and hypotheses for the current study.

**Chapter 3** will look at the methodology of the current study by outlining the research process. The research philosophy, strategy, methodology, approach, time-horizon and techniques will be outlined in this chapter.

**Chapter 4** will outline the data that was collected and will layout the descriptive and inferential analysis for this data.

**Chapter 5** will discuss the findings from the analysed data in relation to the hypotheses and constructs of the study, including limitations of the study and future research recommendations.

**Chapter 6** will provide practical recommendations for the current organisation based on the findings of the study alongside a final conclusion for the paper.

## **Chapter Two: Literature Review**

### **2.1 Introduction**

When conducting research in any area, existing literature should be reviewed in order to identify and organise the concepts that are being researched (Rowley and Slack, 2004). Therefore, this current chapter will seek to explore and outline relevant literature in relation to the two main concepts of this study, trust, and OE.

The chapter will begin by seeking clarification as to what exactly defines trust. The chapter will then proceed to examine a model of organisational trust proposed by Mayer, Davis and Schoolman in 1995 and will then look at existing literature in relation to trust in the workplace.

Accordingly, the chapter will look at the conceptualisation of OE and different models and measures that have been put forward by previous researchers before going on to examine OE in relation to Higher Educational Settings.

Lastly, the chapter will conclude by describing the research questions and outlining the hypotheses for this current study.

### **2.2 Conceptualisation of Trust**

The conceptualisation of trust is complex; it is difficult to define exactly what it is, as it can vary based on an individual's perception and on their own expectations. When trying to generally describe the word trust in the English language, McKnight and Chervany (2000), outline how there are over 17 different definitions available. Over the years, there has been a lot of work centralised round trying to define exactly what trust is and what it means to trust someone or to be trusted. Definitions of trust vary across different disciplines, for example, Lewicki and Bunker (1995), outline that a psychologist would view trust as a personal trait whereas a sociologist would view it as a social structure. Thus, highlighting how difficult it is to gain a precise definition of the word and the concept. Nevertheless, even if definitions vary, there are universal characteristics regarding the concept such as the involvement of taking risks, being vulnerable and holding a positive attitude that the other person will not let you down (Blakey, 2020). The role of risk has become a huge component in the conceptualisation of trust as this concept has been found to be the deciding factor when trying to distinguish trust amongst other concepts such as cooperation, confidence and predictability (Mayer et al, 1995; Kee & Knox, 1970; Luhmann, 1980).

The dichotomy of trust and cooperation is important for definition of trust. Co-operation has been defined as individuals working together towards one end (Duetsch, 1949). Trust and cooperation are two separate entities, which can exist without the presence of one another. An individual may cooperate with someone that they do not necessarily trust (Gachte et al., 2004). Additionally, cooperation cannot be used as a measure for how much one may trust someone, as it is not a reflective of the levels of trust in a relationship (Kee and Knox, 1970). Nonetheless, there is evidence to suggest that trust may tend to promote higher levels of cooperation among individuals, especially in situations of conflicting individual goals (Balliet & Van Lange 2013)

The distinction between the two concepts, trust and confidence, was first noted by Luhmann (1980). Although both concepts involve expectations and may lead to disappointments, once again, there is a big difference between the two as trust requires risk and confidence does not. Further research in this area, differentiates between the two by describing how confidence involves high levels of familiarity whereas trust involves low levels of familiarity (Siegrist et al., 2005). Nonetheless, Cook and Wall (1980) described interpersonal trust as the extent to which someone is willing to have confidence in ones actions and words.

When examining trust in relation to predictability, Gambetta (1998) defined the concept that predictability refers to the probability that a person will act as expected by others based on their previous behaviours. However, Deustsch (1958) outlined how trust must go beyond predictability. If we were to define the two concepts as one or similar, it would imply that being predictable and reliable means that you can be trusted, which is not necessarily the case. If one was to act in a predictable manner, there is nothing to be lost, there is no risk and therefore as we adopt this idea that trust involves risk taking, we must refute this idea that the two concepts are the same. Based on this research, it is evident that although trust has shared similarities with different concepts, it is a concept within itself as the role of risk is a vital characteristic of trust.

### **2.2.1 Model of Trust**

The model of trust, also known as the model of organisational trust, was first introduced by Mayer and colleagues in 1995 and aims to investigate the workings of a trust relationship. This model is centred on the idea that risk is a huge component in the conceptualisation of trust, particularly in an organisational setting. This model can be exemplified in figure 2, which outlines the two parties that must be present for trust to be established, the trustor and the trustee, the model then proceeds to analysis the characteristics of these parties.



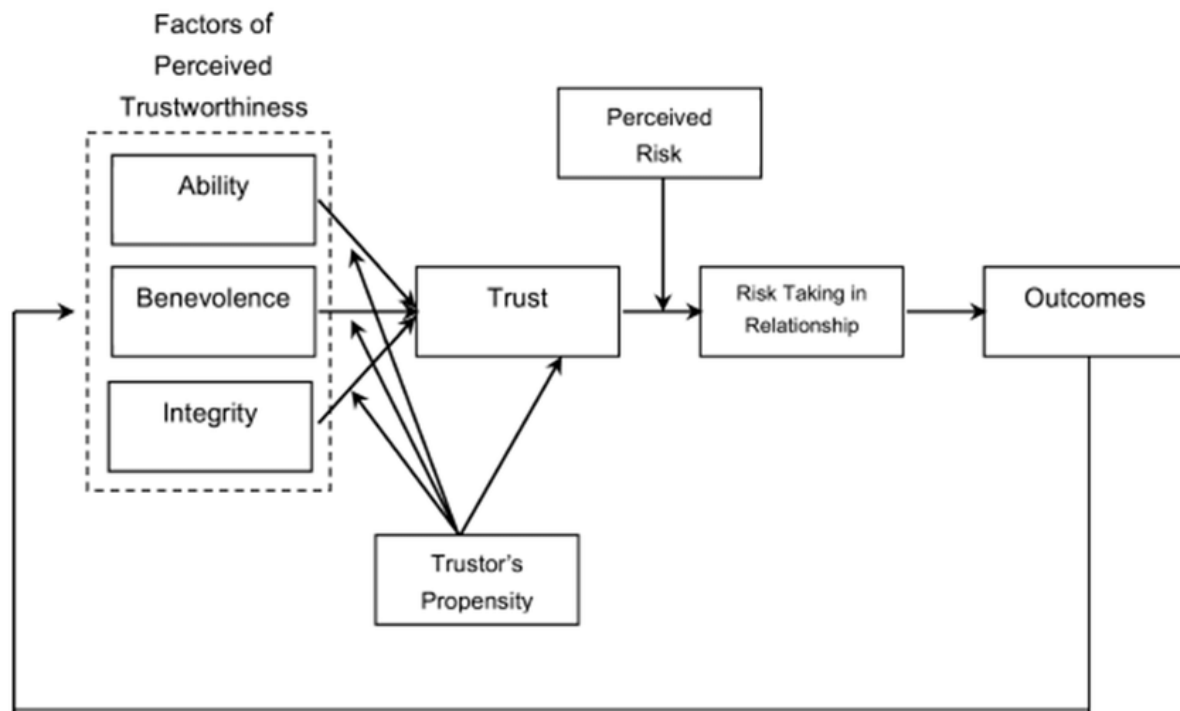


Figure 2: Model of Trust

In order to be able to trust, the model proposes that the trustor must hold a propensity to trust. This tendency to trust will differ from person to person and will affect how likely a person is to trust; and will especially influence how likely they are to trust someone prior to knowing much about them. Research into propensity to trust has found that those who have a high propensity to trust are more likely to be trustworthy themselves (Rotter 1980) and that propensity to trust varies based on cultural backgrounds and norms (Hofstede et al., 1990).

The trust model outlines how the trustee should demonstrate trustworthiness. In this model, trustworthiness is defined as having three distinct characteristics: Ability, Benevolence and Integrity. The characteristics are defined in the model as follows:

1. **Ability:** Group of skills or competencies that an individual may hold in a particular area which makes them more likely to be trusted with tasks in that specific area, such as technical skills.
2. **Benevolence:** The extent that the trustee is believed to want to do good by the trustor, suggesting that there is some specific attachment to the trustor.
3. **Integrity:** the trustors perception that the trustee follows specific beliefs, values or principles which the trustor deems acceptable.

(Mayer et al,1995)

It is noteworthy to mention that in this model, it is assumed that trustworthiness operates on a continuum, in which people can vary in their level of trustworthiness. For instance, someone may be high in ability but may be low in benevolence, it does not indicate that they are completely untrustworthy because they are lower in one characteristic, but that they are on a different level of trustworthiness compared to someone who may be high in all three. This model has big emphasis on the risk within trust, more specifically, perceived risk. This concept is seen to play a vital role in a relationship as this can be used as evidence for the level of trust that is present. Moreover, the model adopts the notion that once trust is beginning to form, this will lead to risk taking behaviour.

### **2.3 Trust in Organisations**

There have been multiple links established in previous research outlining how the presence of trust within organisations is beneficial to the organisation and its employees (Kramer, 1999). Organisations thrive to create meaningful relationships not just with their external stakeholders such as customers and investors, but also their internal stakeholders (Ozmen, 2018). To gain a more detailed understanding of trust in the workplace it is important to understand that trust can be both cognitive based and affective based. Cognition based trust relates to choice, how much one may choose to trust another whereas affective based trust is emotive, it relates to the emotional investment one may put into another (McAllister, 1995).

From an organisational context, trust can be seen to be institutional, which refers to the amount of trust one holds within the organisation as a whole, or interpersonal, which refers to the trust between people such as co-workers and managers (Victor & Hoole, 2017). Furthermore, institutional trust would generally be cognitive based, as someone would be less likely to hold emotive feelings towards the organisation but rather they would choose whether to trust it or not, whereas, interpersonal trust would generally be a combination of both cognition based and affective based (Lewicki et al., 2006). This study will focus on interpersonal trust that occurs within the workplace.

When examining interpersonal trust, for affect-based trust to develop, cognition-based trust must be present (Holste & Fields, 2010). There are two different types of interpersonal trust which can be found in the workplace: vertical trust and horizontal trust. Vertical trust occurs between that of a superior (a manager) and a subordinate (an employee) whereas horizontal trust, also known as lateral trust, is trust between peers (co-workers) (Costigan et al., 1998). An in-depth examination of these two concepts will proceed.

### **2.3.1 Vertical Trust**

As forementioned, vertical trust is a type of interpersonal trust that filters up and down, between a subordinate and a superior (Hasche et al., 2020). When examining this type of trust in the workplace, it is important to look at leadership types which occur, as the way in which leaders act can have a significant impact on subordinates' behaviours and feelings. For example, a study conducted on 230 employees found that the actions, behaviours and procedures of management had a significant impact on employee's trust within the organisation (Tzafrir et al, 2003). Therefore, in order to examine the role of trust in a vertical form, we must look at the implications different leadership styles may have on trust levels.

Transformational Leadership has been found to be extremely effective when looking at how to gain trust in the workplace (Gillespie & Mann, 2004). Bass and Riggio (2010) describe transformational leadership as the process in which people trust, admire and respect their leaders and has states how this in turn increases motivation in the workplace. Integrity, which has previously been cited as an important characteristic of trustworthiness, has been noted as being a direct link to transformational leadership (Parry & Proctor-Thomson, 2002).

Authentic leaders are in tune with themselves, they know who they are and are deeply aware of how they act and think (Gardener et al., 2011) This type of leadership style and transparent communication within organisations have also been found to be directly linked to high vertical trust levels in organisations (Jiang & Luo, 2018). Trustworthiness is viewed by society as being 'authentic,' therefore, it has been reported that trustworthy leaders can be viewed as authentic leaders (Hassan & Ahmed, 2011).

Another leadership style which has been identified is ethical leadership, which has been described as "the demonstration of normatively appropriate conduct through personal actions and interpersonal relationships, and the promotion of such conduct to followers through two-way communication, reinforcement, and decision-making" (Brown et al., 2005). Engelbrecht and colleagues (2017) carried out a study on 204 employees from different organisations which found a positive relationship between leader integrity and trust in a leader. This study reported that leader integrity and honesty were the characteristics of an ethical leader. Thus, concluding that a leader who actively shows integrity will be more likely to have a successful, high quality trust relationship with their employees. Based on the amount of literature that exists in relation to different leadership styles and trust, it can be stated that there doesn't appear to be one direct

leadership style that is associated with trust but rather different characteristics which are associated, as suggested in the model of trust.

Continuing with the concept of vertical trust the existence of this type of trust is essential for the everyday function of an organisation (Creed et al, 1996). When looking at vertical trust in relation to different workplace attributes, employee engagement and satisfaction has been seen to be significantly related to levels of trust (Engelbrecht et al., 2017). Employees are more likely to spend time on required tasks and have been found to be more willing to engage when there is a high-quality relationship between them and their leader (Dirks & Sharlicki, 2004). In addition to engagement, the presence of vertical trust has been found to have a positive impact on job performance (Gauinot & Chiva, 2019; Dirks & Ferrin, 2002). More specifically, it has been found that higher propensity to trust within the workplace positively relates to task performance (Colquitt et al., 2007) and that there is a more positive exchange relationship when high propensity is present amongst both managers and employees (Bernerth & Walker, 2009). Having adopted the idea that trust involves risk, the relationship between these work attributes and vertical trust could be due to an employee being more willing to take risks in the workplace.

Additional literature in the area surrounding vertical trust has found that that when trust levels are high in workplace leaders and there are changes implemented within an organisation, employees responded more positively (Martin, 1998) and that if the employee feels supported during the changes, change tends to happen more smoothly and effectively (Webber, 2001). In addition to this, Sharkie (2009) also highlighted how trust in leadership increases an employee's level of trust within their organisation. Additionally, it has been suggested that vertical trust relates directly to HR policies and procedures, that if employees support the HR policies and procedures within the organisation, they are more likely to hold higher levels of institutional trust (Costigan et al. 1998)

As outlined previously, there is a body of research into how a subordinate's trust in their superior may impact the everyday workings of an organisation, but it is important to note that vertical trust goes both ways and we must also examine the effects of superiors trust levels in their subordinate. Moreover, the amount of cognitive based trust that a manager is willing to put in their employee has been found to be linked to previous social interactions and the organisational context (McAllister, 1995). When a leader trusts their employee in the workplace, they are more inclined to delegate difficult tasks to them (Brower et al, 2009). This is further evidence of how risk plays a role in the trust relationship. An employer or a leader,

would be taking a risk in relation to the organisation by who they choose to assign particular tasks too and, therefore, if the employee is given difficult tasks, it can be assumed that they are trusted by the employer. In respect to Human resource management, HR managers in the workplace are also likely to shape different HRM systems in environments where leaders have high trust in their employees (Tzafir, 2005). Contrary to this, Hickok (2021) mentions how if a manager has negative levels of trust in an employee, they may supervise them more closely, which may actually be harmful to work performance.

Regarding trust in the workplace, it is important for employees and leaders to build trust within the workplace; however, this is just one aspect of the trust building relationship. The most difficult part of the trust relationship is the maintaining of trust throughout. As aforementioned, vertical trust is dual process, so, who is responsible for building and maintaining the trust relationship with organisations? Mishra and Morrissey (2000) carried out a study in which they issued a survey to 426 managers, their results indicated that 95% of managers agreed that trust must start at the top and filter down, there must be strong commitment from management in the trust building relationship and that they must trust employees with all information, both good and bad. Further research outlines that it should be a mutual investment in order to maintain the relationship however, support from the immediate supervisor tends to help maintain the trust aspect of the relationship (Zhang et al., 2008).

It is important to consider what happens when there is a lack of trust within the organisation, particularly at a vertical level. Mayer and Gavin (2005) outlined that in a workplace setting if an employee is not willing to be vulnerable to their leader, they are less likely to contribute to the organisation's everyday workings. It is suggested that this is because in this instance, they would devote their time to self-preserving activities as opposed to activities that will help others. Daniel and Young (2003) discuss how lack of clarity around job roles and distant management practices can cause a lack of trust within the workplace, however, trust in co-workers can be a way to make up for lack of trust in management. Therefore, when looking at the concept of interpersonal trust, the concept of both vertical and horizontal trust should be considered.

### **2.3.2 Horizontal Trust**

As aforementioned, horizontal trust refers to trust between two peers (Hasche et al., 2020). A recent Irish Times article states how nowadays there is an emphasis on team-based work as organisations have begun to move away from hierarchal structures and into more lateral

structures (Clark, 2021). Based on this, it is more important than ever to look at horizontal trust within organisations. However, there appears to be a gap in literature as the focus of previous research has been vertical trust due to the nature of the hierarchical structure in the workplace. When looking at trust amongst co-workers, it should be noted that it is not a superior/subordinate relationship, it is a relationship where everyone is deemed to be of the same or similar rank and there is little or no power imbalance (Chami, R. & Fullenkamp, 2002). Similarly, as with vertical trust in the workplace, horizontal trust has been found to have an impact on workplace attributes. Costa (2003) carried out a study on 112 teams and the findings suggested that trust between team members was positively related to commitment, team satisfaction and task performance.

Conversely, Tan and Lim (2009) applied the model of trust to the study of trust in co-workers. They examined the three characteristics of trustworthiness: ability, benevolence and integrity as antecedents of trust in co-workers. They found that benevolence and integrity were significantly related to horizontal trust in the workplace. This research also outlined that if employees trust each other, they will spend less time trying to “protect” themselves and put more focus into their everyday role, thus leading to improved job performance.

Horizontal trust would be the form of trust that occurs with group settings. Groups who share similarities or who come from similar backgrounds are more likely to have cognitive based trust, and they may perceive people who are different as untrustworthy (McAllister, 1995). Similarly, as with any social relationship, if two people have a close relationship, they most likely share similar opinions and views and they may have the power to influence each other’s views. In fact, Schmitz and Fulk (1991) found that employees who communicate with each other openly, share similar views about their organisation. Correspondingly, to vertical trust, there is evidence to support that horizontal trust within the organisation has a significant impact on overall trust in the organisation (Rindfleisch, 2000). Therefore, it is implied that if one employee finds the organisation to be beneficial, someone who trusts them are more likely to feel similarly toward the organisation. Moreover, high levels of horizontal trust have also been found to be positively correlated with lower turnover intention and higher affective commitment (Ferres et al., 2004).

As aforementioned, research appears to be limited in the area of horizontal trust in the workplace. This lack of literature and research studies is something that should be addressed

due to the increase in team-based working and the increase of remote working, as relationships are harder to sustain whilst remote and it may be difficult to communicate effectively.

### **2.3.3 Length of Service**

Research has suggested that trust relationships require mutual commitment over time (Zhang et al, 2008). However, there is a gap in literature when examining trust in relation to length of employment service. There has been substantial research conducted when looking at whether job satisfaction is related to length of service, most notably, Gibson and Klein (1970), found a negative correlation between the two variables suggesting that as job satisfaction decreases so does length of service. Additionally, Oshagbemi (2000) conducted an analysis on length of academics services within higher education overall and length of their service within their current post in relation to satisfaction, this research concluded that there was a positive relationship between satisfaction and length of service in the current post as opposed to length of service overall.

In relation to trust and length of service, this concept has been examined in terms of customer relationships and their relationship length with service providers. Research has found that sales teams who engage in strong cooperative behaviour and follow up regularly tend to build a stronger trusting relationship with their customers (Crosby et al., 1990). Additionally, Hickok (2021) discusses how it can be difficult to build and maintain trust during remote working, which given the current crisis, this is a day to day issue most organisations may face. Based on the gap in literature surrounding trust and length of employment service and the remote working barriers the population is now facing, it appears to be a relevant area to consider when examining trust in organisations.

## **2.4 Conceptualisation of Organisational Effectiveness**

Following on from the concept of trust, this section will proceed to elucidate the concept of OE and its particularities as this study aims to examine the concept of trust in relation to the OE. OE varies from organisation to organisation. What is deemed as effectiveness to one organisation may not be to another. Over the years many different researchers have thrived to find a common ground as to what exactly constitutes as OE and how it can be measured. Although researchers agree that OE relates to goal achievement, different models have been produced as to what criteria constitutes OE and how it can be measured.

### **2.4.1 Different Models of Organisational Effectiveness**

When looking at OE and how it is measured, Steers (1975) explains how there are some factors which should be taken into account; firstly, what exactly your organisation is looking to measure, what is important to them and what constitutes as OE in relation to the organisation, secondly, the timeframe which OE is being measured as effectiveness may change over time and an organisation may have high levels of OE at one period in time but lower levels at another. In order to understand OE, it is important to look at different models which have been presented in previous literature. The following models will be discussed in this literature review: the rational goal model, systems resource model, process model and organisation culture and effectiveness model. These models have been selected for this paper to give an understanding on the diversity of OE.

#### ***1. Rational Goal Model***

One of the most utilised models to describe OE, is the rational goal model. Hitt (1988) describes how this model is based on an organisation's ability to achieve their goals and that goals are identified by the process of identifying a general goal and then identifying a set of objectives for each goal. Once these objectives are met, the organisation is deemed as being effective. However, this particular model is not only used as an effectiveness index, but is also used to measure efficiency, which as previously mentioned relates to more objective measures such as profit return (Ostroff & Schmitt, 1993). This can make it more difficult when trying to assess organisation effectiveness independently.

Limitations for this particular measure of OE have been uncovered, the main one being that goals may be difficult to determine (Warner, 1967). Additionally, as cited in Connolly and colleagues (1980), Khan (1977) outlined that they may often change as the organisation operates or an organisation may have multiple goals and goals are often driven by society rather than the organisation. Cameron (1981) also outlined two important issues with this particular model that should be considered, namely, that organisations are often effective outside of their own goal domains and secondly, that an organisation may actually be ineffective even when it has achieved its goals due to the goals being set too low.

#### ***2. The Systems Resource Model***

The systems resource model implies that an effective organisation is one that receives the necessary resources from their environment in order to operate (Cunningham, 1978). Unlike the rational goal model, this model does not view goals as a determinant for OE. However,



Cameron (1980) highlights how an organisation can continue to be effective when their resource input is not necessarily high and that therefore, resource input on its own cannot be used as a way to assess organisation effectiveness.

### ***3. The Internal Process Model***

This model looks at the internal workings of the organisation and argues that effectiveness is related to organisational health, internal process and procedures (Quinn & Rohrbaugh, 1981). Within this model of OE, the organisation is deemed to be stress free and relationships amongst people are based on trust and honesty (Ashraf & Kadir, 2012). However, Cameron (1981) explains how an organisation may be effective despite low levels of organisational health and there may also be times where the external environment causes internal processes to be questionable and an organisation may still be operating effectively. Contrary to this model, OE relates to how an organisation operates despite their internal and external environment (Bohn, 2010).

### ***4. Organisational Culture and Effectiveness Model***

The Denison and Mishra (1993) model looks at external cultural factors as a driver for OE. This model proposed that there were four organisational culture traits which were directly linked to OE: involvement, consistency, adaptability and mission. Results from a study carried out to test this model by the researchers found that two of the traits, involvement and adaptability were linked to organisational growth and the other two, consistency and mission were directly linked to organisation profit. Fey and Denison (2003) carried out qualitative analysis of 179 organisations in Russia and found that adaptability was the most useful trait for OE in Russia. However, Olughor (2014) examined this model in Nigeria; data collected from 200 employees found that the four traits were related to organisation performance and were less correlated to OE.

## **2.5 Organisational Effectiveness in Higher Education**

Having looked at different models which strive to find a common definition or measure for OE, this next section will focus on OE within higher education settings. As mentioned, OE is a fluid concept, it differs based on organisation as well as the industry in which it operates. The current study aims examine this concept in relation to a higher education institute and therefore, there are other variables which may need to be accounted for when measuring OE in this type of environment.

When examining the concept of OE in higher education, Cameron (1978) proposed nine dimensions which must be assessed, five of which relate solely to the students. These dimensions include: Student academic satisfaction, academic development, career development and personal development. Furthermore, in addition to these four dimensions, staff and faculty are then implemented into the measure. Thus, developing a measure for OE in a higher educational institution which is based on both students and staff. The five measures for the organisation and its staff include: Faculty and employment satisfaction, professional development and quality of faculty, community interaction, ability to acquire resources and organisational health.

Nevertheless, there are other models which have been developed for the assessment of OE in this type of setting. Pounder developed a model which had nine different criteria for the measure of OE. This model was designed to assess OE in Hong Kong universities. Anita and Cuthbert (1976) developed a qualitative model for OE. They outlined nine success factors: social tune, cost effectiveness, course development, corporate reputation, investment in human capital, physical facilities development, student relations, quality of employee relations and public responsibility. Achieving high in these nine factors would imply the organisation has high OE levels. Despite the validity of both these models, it has been elucidated that Cameron's (1978) model is the most comprehensive. This is because it incorporates criteria from different models of OE such as the rational goal model, system resource model and process model (Ahsraf & Kadir, 2012).

Further research in relation to higher education and OE has been conducted in the area of leadership. Research has found that heads of educational schools preferred to manage people as opposed to teams as the nature of academia is individualistic (Davis et al., 2001). Pounder (2001) outlined how a leader of an educational setting is often appointment based on academic ability as opposed to leadership competencies or vice versa which may have a direct effect on the OE of the institution and that a leader within this setting must be able to pull characteristics from a transformational leadership style while also holding academic ability.

## **2.6 Summary**

The literature review conducted in this chapter set out to explore the conceptualisation of trust within the workplace and the conceptualisation of OE. There has been a substantial amount of research conducted in the area of trust, particularly within the area of vertical trust and

leadership. As aforementioned, there appears to be a gap within literature in relation to horizontal trust. When considering both concepts, trust and OE, it is evident that both are fluid and can vary in their definition. It is vital when conducting research within these two concepts, that the researcher is clear on what definition of trust they have accepted and criteria of OE they are looking to assess.

Although interpersonal trust has been seen to influence job performance, task performance and in turn organisation efficiency (Gauinot & Chiva, 2019; Colquitt et al., 2007 Dirks & Ferrin, 2002; McAllister, 1995) it is unclear if there is a relationship between trust and OE. This research aims to establish if there is a relationship present between interpersonal trust in the workplace and OE in a small to medium sized organisation.

For the purposes of this study, the author has established that trust, as described by Mayer and colleagues (1995) involves being vulnerable to another's actions and involves a form of risk-taking behaviour. In addition to this, the author has clarified that the organisation which will be researched operates within the educational setting, so a model of OE in relation to higher education will be used. This will be discussed in greater detail in the succeeding chapter.

## **2.7 Justification and Aims for the Current Study**

The literature review conducted above has set out the theoretical framework for the current study. Based on the literature reviewed, the study has been developed with the aim to investigate trust in a small to medium sized organisation and whether this concept has an association with the overall OE of the organisation. This study will also seek to examine if there is a relationship between vertical and horizontal trust. The study also aims to look at whether trust levels differ based on the length of time an employee has worked for the organisation. As established, one must work to maintain a trusting relationship and therefore, it is important to see how this forms. It is also important to see whether first impressions of an organisation differ for long term employees, which in turn could help an organisation to establish why employees stay or leave.

### **2.7.1 Research Questions and Hypotheses**

From the above aims the following research questions have been compiled:

1. Is there an association between trust and OE within the organisation?
2. Is there a relationship between the two types of trust, horizontal and vertical?
3. Is there a significant difference between trust levels based on the length of employment?

4. Are organisation related variables stronger predictors of OE than student related variables?

From these four research questions, there have been four hypotheses developed, which this study will seek to examine.

- (a) That levels of trust will be significantly associated with levels of OE in the organisation.
- (b) That there will be a positive linear relationship between horizontal trust and vertical trust.
- (c) That trust levels will be significantly higher among those who are in the organisation for longer than those who are not.
- (d) That organisational health, employee satisfaction and employee development will be stronger predictors of organisation effectiveness than student related variables.

## Chapter Three: Methodology

### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter will offer an in-depth breakdown of the research onion in relation to the study. The research onion, developed by Saunders, Lewis and Thornville (2019), is the process of planning and conducting research using systematic steps. Essentially, the systematic steps are viewed as layers of an onion. The different layers involve the research philosophy, research approach, methodological choice, research strategy, time horizon and techniques and procedures. Byran (2016) highlights how the research onion consists of a simple approach to planning research which can be applicable to any disciplines. Therefore, highlighting the rationale for using this approach for planning this research.

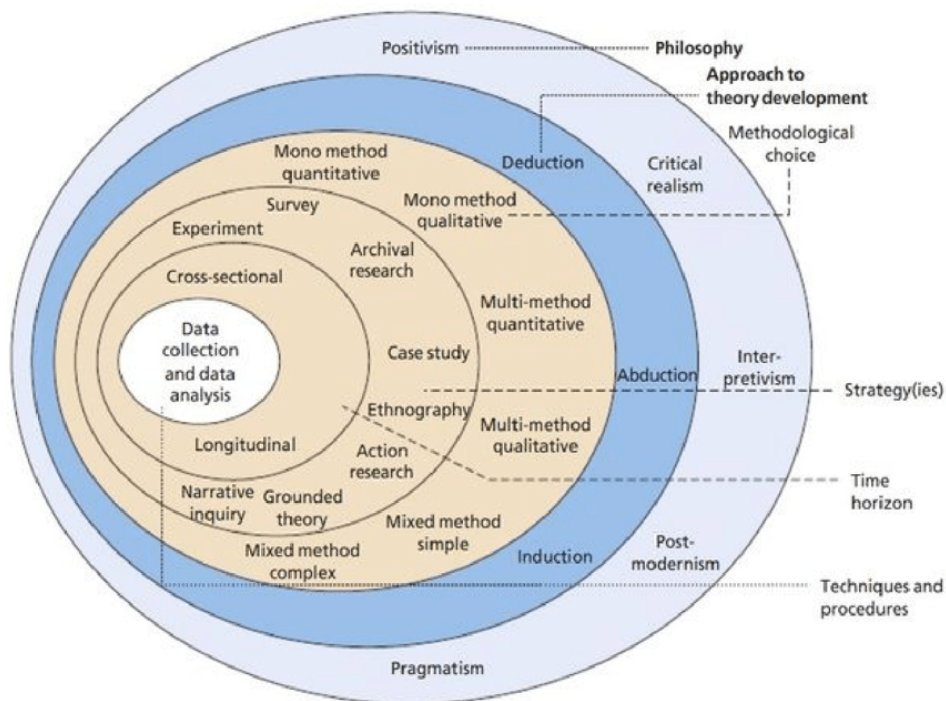


Figure 3 Research Onion

### 3.2 Research Philosophy

Research philosophy refers to assumptions and at almost every stage of research, the researcher will make assumptions, whether they intend to or not (Burrell and Morgan, 2016). There are three different types of assumptions that a researcher can make: assumptions about the nature of reality, known as ontology, assumptions about knowledge, known as epistemology and assumptions concerning personal roles and beliefs known as axiology (Maarouf, 2019). Assumptions form the basis for your research and impact your research strategy and

methodological choices. There are five research philosophies which one can adopt when researching business and management: positivism, critical realism, interpretivism, postmodernism and pragmatism (Jackson, 2020).

This research adopts a positivism approach. Positivism relates to establishing truths by experiment, evidence-based research and objective research (Park, Konge & Artino, 2020). Research that follows this philosophy is more inclined to use existing theories to develop a hypothesis. Within positivism research, the researcher may look for “casual relationships” and then try to form these into laws which may help predict behaviour within organisations, similarly to how scientists may use data to generate laws to explain how a phenomenon may operate (Saunders et al, 2019). The data generated from positivism research tends to be quantifiable data, the researcher is independent and must detach themselves from the data in order to stay neutral and not influence its findings (Shepard et al., 1993).

### **3.3 Research Approach**

As outlined in figure 3, there are three types of research approaches which a researcher may follow: Deductive, inductive and abductive. As aforementioned, the assumptions the philosophy, which is adopted, may impact the research approach which is selected. A deductive approach occurs when a hypothesis derives from a theory that has already been tested whereas an inductive approach occurs when an observation is made, concepts are formed and then theories are developed based from this (Locke, 2007). Abduction occurs when there is a “surprising” observation made that is inconsistent with the general understanding of a concept or phenomenon which then leads a researcher to create an idea which they intend to investigate (Gregory & Muntermann, 2011).

The research approach will be that of deductive as demonstrated by the literature review conducted in chapter two, the research being carried out has been formed based on different theories. Deductive research approaches are predominantly used when following a positivism philosophy (Saunders et al., 2019).

### **3.4 Research Methodology**

Research methodology refers to the different methods which may be adopted when collecting data. Quantitative research methods are the process of collecting numerical data in a systematic way (Choy, 2014). Qualitative research methods use descriptive data, such as peoples spoken words or observed behaviour (Taylor et al., 2015).

As outlined in figure 3.1, variations of these methodologies can take place, whereby the researcher may choose mixed methods approaches. A mixed method approach involves the collection of both quantitative data and qualitative data; however, this approach can be more challenge as it takes a substantial amount of effort to interpret results correctly and compile everything together (Almalki, 2016).

There are advantages and disadvantages and a researcher must decide on which methodology to choose based on what they are examining. If the aim is to test a theory or too look at differences amongst a particular population, then a quantitative methodology may be deemed more appropriate, but, if the aim is to look for a deeper meaning or to create a theory, then a qualitative study may be more appropriate (Newmon et al., 1998). Additionally, quantitative methods are more efficient for larger sample sizes whereas qualitative methods are generally adopted for smaller sample sizes (Allwoord, 2012).

As this study aims to investigate trust, either types of methodologies could be adopted, or a mixed-method approach could be adopted. These were all considerations for the current research. Goudge and Gilson (2005) published research which explored the advantages of using qualitative methods to investigate trust versus quantitative methods. This research outlined how, as aforementioned in the literature review, trust is context depending and definitions of trust can vary and because of that, a qualitative design would be more useful to explore how participants view trust or what trust means to them. Whereas, a quantitative design would allow only the type of trust being investigated to be examined, which would help extinguish personal views towards the concept of trust. Furthermore, the timeframe in which the current research was to be carried out in was quite limited, and as Muijs (2010) outlines, a distinct advantage of quantitative methods is that measures can be administered and evaluated quickly in comparison to qualitative methods. In addition to this, the study is following a positivism deductive approach, in which quantitative methods are predominately adopted (Ochieng, 2009). For these reasons outlined, the choice of quantitative methodology is justified for this methodology. ,

### **3.5 Research Strategy**

For this research, the strategy that was adopted was surveys. People analytic tools such as surveys in the workplace have been found to be useful for an organisation to be able to prioritise issues when strategising and to use as a benchmark when evaluating internal processes (Tursunbayeva et al., 2018). Additionally, the organisation has issued surveys to staff in the past, as cited in chapter one of this dissertation. Therefore, justifying the strategy of choice. In

order to test the hypotheses, two surveys were used, one to examine trust within the workplace and another to examine OE.

### **3.5.1 Measure for Trust**

Cook and Wall (1980) new work attitudes measure was used to measure interpersonal trust (Appendix A). Although the full version of this measure consists of three separate scales, the authors had stated that any of these scales can be used in isolation and therefore the decision was made to only utilise the interpersonal trust scale for the purpose of this research. The interpersonal trust scale had 12 items, 6 of which examined “Faith in management” i.e. vertical trust and 6 of which examine “faith in peers” i.e. horizontal trust. This measure of trust was deemed suitable to use for this research as it was a short questionnaire which measured both vertical and horizontal trust. Burchell and Marsh (1992) highlight how long surveys should be avoided where possible as it can decrease response rates and participants are more likely to lose focus as to what they are responding too, therefore, it is important to try select concise measures where possible.

This scale of interpersonal trust is a 7-point Likert scale. Likert (1932) developed the Likert-scale measurement in order to assess attitudes, this type of scale allows a respondent to respond to a statement by degrees of approval. Originally, the Likert-scale was developed using only 5 degrees of approval, however, there have since been variations of this which allow 7 degrees or 10 degrees, meaning the participant has more choice to select one that closely relates to their true feelings (Joshi et al., 2015). As this scale was a 7-point Likert scale this meant that the participants had seven degrees they could choose from ranging from ‘strongly disagree’ to ‘strongly agree’.

In relation to scoring, two of the items in the scale were required to be reverse coded. The purpose of reverse coding is to try and eliminate response bias, which occurs when participants adopt a pattern of responding to questions without paying attention to what the question is asking (Suárez Álvarez et al., 2018). It is important that any reverse coding is completed prior to carrying on analysis on the reliability of the scale. Cronbach’s alpha coefficient is a statistical tool used to assess reliability and internal consistency, which essentially means whether a scale is adequately measuring the correct underlying constructs (Pallant, 2013). DeVellis (2012) states that the Cronbach alpha coefficient should be above .7 for good internal reliability, however, for scales with 10 items or less, it is common to find this to be .5. Cook and Wall (1980) recorded good reliability for this scale, with the horizontal trust scale having a Cronbach



alpha of .77 and the vertical trust scale having a Cronbach Alpha of .78. Additionally, Leat and el Kot (1990) recorded a Cronbach alpha of 0.65 for this scale. The Cronbach's alpha was checked for this current study and the overall scale achieved a score of .79, demonstrating strong reliability.

### **3.5.2 Measure for OE**

Cameron's (1978) measure for OE in Higher Level education was used as the measure for OE. There are nine variables which are assessed using this scale: Student academic satisfaction, student academic development, student career development, student personal development, faculty and administration employment satisfaction, professional development and quality of faculty, community interaction, ability to acquire resources and organisational health.

Overall, this scale had 57 items (Appendix B). This scale was presented to HR in the organisation prior to distribution, who reviewed the questionnaire and deemed eight questions not applicable to the organisations setting. Based on the professional recommendation of this department, the following eight questions were omitted from the final measure:

**Question 4:** This college has a high ability to obtain needed financial resources in order to provide a high-quality educational programme.

**Question 6:** This college can attract the leading high school graduates in the country to attend.

**Question 19:** To what extent does this college emphasise or encourage college-community or college-environment relations?

**Question 26:** What proportion of the students who graduated from this college last year and entered the labour market would you estimate obtained employment in their major field of study?

**Question 27:** How many students would you say attend this college to fulfil definite career or occupational goals as opposed to attending for social, athletic, financial or other reasons?

**Question 28:** Approx. what proportion of undergraduate courses offered at this college are designed to be career orientated or occupation related as opposed to liberal education, personal development, etc.?

**Question 30:** Think of these students who have obtained employment after graduating from this college. For how many of them was the career training received at this institution important in helping them obtain their job?

**Question 42:** Colleges may be rated on the basis of their relative "drawing power" in attracting top high school students. In relation to other colleges with which it directly competes, what proportion of the top students attend this college rather than the competition.

The scale was broken down into nine different sections, with each section examining the nine different variables. Each question was answered using a 7-point Likert scale. As previously described, a Likert-scale was developed in order to assess attitudes and offers participants degrees of approval in their response selection (Albaum, 1997). In this case, participants had 7 degrees of approval for each question, these varied based on the different sections. A full breakdown of each Likert-Scale choice can be seen in Appendix B.

When scoring, the scale required 15 out of the 49 items to be reversed coded, which helps eliminate response bias (Paulus et al., 1998). Once these items have been recoded, the reliability and internal consistency of the scale was assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient (Pallant, 2013). In the past the scale has shown good reliability, a Cronbach's alpha ranging from .65 to .87 for each of the nine dimensions was noted by Smart (2003). Furthermore, a Cronbach's alpha from 0.76 to 0.87 was recorded for seven of the nine dimensions by Kwan and Walker (2003). In this current study, the scale had an overall Cronbach's alpha of .87, demonstrating strong reliability.

This questionnaire is not freely available and therefore prior to administering it, permission was obtained directly from the author of the scale, Prof. Kim Cameron. The correspondence of this and the full questionnaire can be seen in Appendix B.

### **3.6 Time Horizon**

There are two types of time horizons which are outlined in figure 3. Longitudinal time horizon and cross-sectional. Longitudinal studies are conducted over a long period of time whereas cross-sectional studies are carried out at single point in time (Levin, 2006). In relation to survey data, a longitudinal survey study would consist of multiple surveys being distributed across a longer period to obtain participants feelings or opinions at different intervals whereas a cross-sectional survey study would only collect data at a single point in time (Rindfleisch et al., 2008). Due to the time frame in which this study had to be conducted, cross-sectional was the most appropriate time horizon to use and so the study will only collect data once at a single point in time. Cross-sectional studies have been found to be beneficial as they are quick, easy and inexpensive, however, they may not provide an insight into causation effects as they are only looking at a single point in time (Sedgwick, 2014). Based on this, caution should be given when interpreting results as the results are a product of that moment in time.

### **3.7 Techniques and Procedures**

Techniques and procedures relate to the method in which the study was conducted (Saunders et al., 2019).

#### **3.7.1 Sample**

A combination of convenience sampling and purposive sampling techniques were deployed for the purpose of this study. Convenience sampling is a non-probability sampling technique where participants are selected based on certain criteria, such as accessibility (Etikan et al., 2016). This technique was used when selecting the organisation for the study and in turn for which participants would answer the questionnaire on trust. The participants for this research were all members of the organisation being examined. The organisation was chosen as it was within the higher education field in Ireland and was easily accessible to the researcher.

Purposive sampling techniques were utilised for the OE measure, where only senior management was chosen to take part. Purposive sampling involves selecting a particular person deliberately in order to gain information that cannot be offered elsewhere (Schreuder et al., 2001).

Both types of sampling methods which were used are both cost effective and not time consuming (Taherdoost, 2016). However, both sampling techniques are open to bias, convenience sampling has been found to be linked to selection bias and purposive sampling has been found to be linked to researcher bias (Sharma, 2017). Given the tight time constraints of the current research and the accessibility to the organisation, these were deemed applicable sampling techniques to use despite the risk of bias.

#### **3.7.2 Method**

The organisations Human Resource department issued the measure on interpersonal trust on behalf of the researcher. All Employees, including management, were emailed with full details as to what the questionnaire would entail, what it was going to be examining and that it would be used for analysis for this research. The questionnaire was issued using Microsoft Forms. All respondents were kept anonymous, names and job roles were not recorded however, respondents were asked to state how long they worked for the organisation. In total 45 employees, including the senior management team, responded to the questionnaire. The questionnaire also allowed for respondents to give their feedback after each question.

Following that, the questionnaire to measure OE was administered to the senior management team of the organisation. The senior management team consists of 7 members in total. The purpose of management answering this questionnaire was that it was assumed that they would have a better understanding of how the organisation fared in comparison to its competitors than employees. In addition to this, it was assumed that management would most likely have a greater understanding of the organisation across all levels from administration staff, to faculty, community presence and students. This questionnaire was issued via google forms and a cover email was issued alongside it, once again explaining the purpose and what the data would be used for. No identifiable information was captured.

### **3.7.3 Data Analysis**

The data collected from the two measures will be analysed using SPSS statistical software. To begin, descriptive analysis will be conducted on the data in order to generate information about levels of trust and levels of OE within the organisation.

Following this, inferential statistics will be conducted to examine the remaining hypotheses. As the data being analysed is not paired data and there are different sample sizes, a chi-square test will be conducted to investigate whether there is an association between the two variables, trust levels and OE. A Pearson correlation analysis will be conducted to investigate the relationship between horizontal trust and vertical trust in the organisation. Finally, A One-way between groups analysis of variance (ANOVA) will be conducted to examine if trust levels will be higher among those who are in the organisation longer than those who are not. A multiple regression analysis will then be conducted on OE in order to assess which variables contribute to OE within the organisation.

## **Chapter Four: Results and Findings**

### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter will outline the statistical methods used in order to assess the data collected from this study and to test the hypotheses. All data collected was inputted and analysed using SPSS (version 26) statistical software. Details of all the data analysis will be discussed in this chapter.

### **4.2 Descriptive Analyses**

Descriptive analyses are used in order to describe data, it is an important tool for statistical planning as it allows a researcher to understand what type of data they are working with (Thompson, 2009). Prior to running any statistical tests, descriptive analyses were conducted on the ordinal variable, length of service; and on nominal variables in relation to qualitative feedback for trust. Ordinal data is data which has an order to it, such as one year, two-year, three year etc. whereas nominal data is data which is distinct categories, in this case positive/negative (Daly & Bourke, 2008). Following this, descriptive analyses were carried out on the interval data, the trust scale and OE scale. Interval data are scales which have no zero point, it is continuous data (Daly & Bourke, 2008). These preliminarily descriptive analysis allowed the researcher to assess the data and decide on the most accurate form of statistical tests to run.

#### **4.2.1 Ordinal / Nominal Variables**

Descriptive analysis was conducted on the ordinal variable, length of service. There was a total of 45 participants. 17.8% were employed in the organisation for one year or less, 44.4% were employed between 2 to 5 years and 37.8% were employed for five years or longer. These results can be seen in table 4.3.1.

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage of Total</i>	<i>Valid Percentage</i>
<b><i>Length of Employment</i></b>	45	100	100
≤ 1 Year	8	17.8	17.8
2 – 5 Years	20	44.4	44.4
≥ 5 Years	17	37.8	37.8

***Table 4.2.1: Ordinal Variable***

Within the measure used for assessing trust levels, the researcher allowed participants to give any. Allowing for open ended questions in surveys, gives the participants the opportunity to provide any comments they may have during the survey, however any open ended type questions must be utilized and analysed correctly (O'Cathain & Thomas, 2004). As this research followed a quantitative methodology approach, this qualitative data was coded into quantitative data. Each question was coded into an ordinal variable. There were 6 questions in relation to vertical trust and 6 in relation to horizontal, totalling in 12 possible responses from each participant. Responses were then grouped into categories: Negative comments about management, negative comments about teams, negative comments about other aspects of the organisation, positive comments about management, positive comments about teams and positive comments about other aspects of the organisation. These comment boxes were optional and therefore, not everyone gave an input. Table 4.2.2 offers a breakdown of each question and the frequency of the type of response given.

The purpose of this data was to allow the researcher to understand in depth the trust levels in the organisation and any underlying issues which may be there, which the measure would not pick up on its own due to it being a questionnaire. This data also allows the researcher to establish whether the organisation is in fact a high trust organisation. The results outlined below suggest this to be true, it is a high trust environment.

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage of Total</i>	<i>Valid Percentage</i>
<i>Management is sincere in its attempts to meet the workers' point of view</i>			
<b><i>Vertical01</i></b>	13	28.9	
Negative Management	2	4.4	15.4
Positive Management	11	24.4	84.6
<i>Our organisation has a poor future unless it can attract better managers.</i>			
<b><i>Vertical02</i></b>	14	3.1	
Negative Management	1	2.2	7.1
Positive Management	13	28.9	92.9
<i>Management can be trusted to make sensible decisions for the organisation's future</i>			
<b><i>Vertical03</i></b>	8	17.8	
Negative Management	3	6.7	37.5
Positive Management	5	11.1	62.5
<i>Management at work seem to do an efficient job</i>			
<b><i>Vertical04</i></b>	8	17.8	
Negative Management	1	2.2	12.5
Negative Other	1	2.2	12.5
Positive Management	6	13.3	75.0
<i>I feel confident that the organisation will always try to treat me fairly</i>			
<b><i>Vertical05</i></b>	6	86.7	

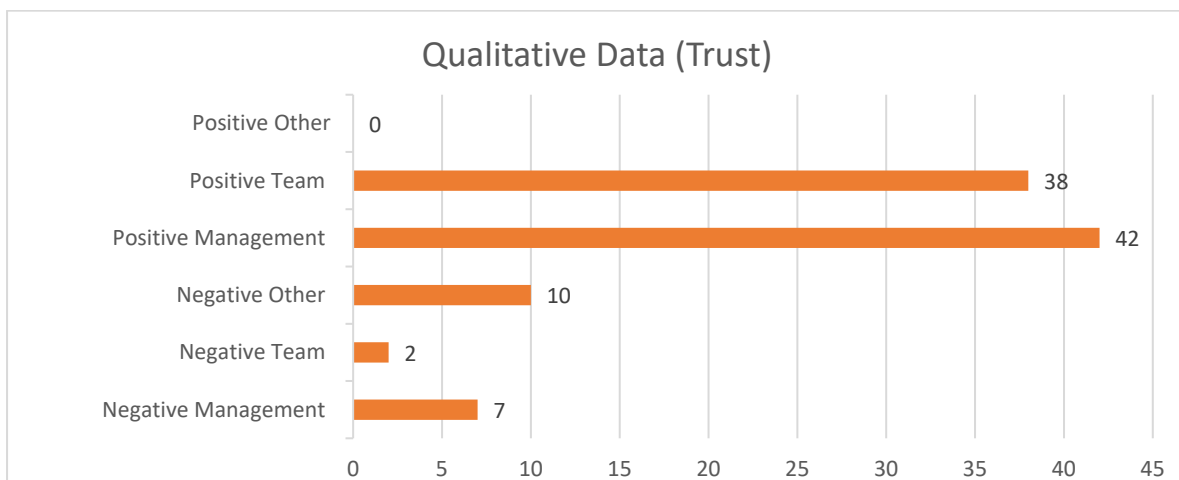
Negative Other	4	8.9	66.7
Positive Management	2	4.4	33.3
<i>Management would be quite prepared to deceive workers to gain advantage</i>			
<b>Vertical06</b>	6	13.3	
Negative Other	1	2.2	16.7
Positive Management	5	11.1	83.3
<i>If I got into difficulties at work, I know my work colleagues would try and help me out</i>			
<b>Horizontal01</b>	15	33.3	
Negative Other	1	2.2	6.7
Negative Team	1	2.2	6.7
Positive Team	13	28.9	86.7
<i>I can trust the people that I work with to lend me a hand if I need it</i>			
<b>Horizontal02</b>	9	20.0	
Negative Team	1	2.2	11.1
Positive Team	8	17.8	88.9
<i>Most of my work colleagues can be relied upon to do as they say they will do</i>			
<b>Horizontal03</b>	6	13.3	
Negative Other	2	4.4	33.3
Positive Team	4	8.9	66.7
<i>I have full confidence in the skills of my workmates</i>			
<b>Horizontal04</b>	6	13.3	
Positive Team	6	13.3	100.0



<i>Most of my fellow colleagues would get on with their work even if supervisors were not around</i>			
<b>Horizontal05</b>	7	15.6	
Negative Other	1	2.2	14.3
Positive Team	6	13.3	85.7
<i>I can rely on my colleagues not to make my job more difficult with careless work</i>			
<b>Vertical06</b>	1	2.2	100.0
Positive Team	1	2.2	

**Table 4.4.2: Nominal Variables**

In Figure 4.2.1, a bar chart represents the total count for each value. In total there were 99 comments recorded across the measure from participants and as can be seen from the bar chart, most comments were positive (N=38) with a minority being negative comments (N=19).



**Figure 4.2.1**

#### 4.2.2 Interval Data

Following the frequency analysis conducted on the relevant variables, exploratory descriptive analyses were carried out on the scale totals for the measures of trust and the measures of OE.

The total scores for trust were computed for each participant (N=45). The range for these scores was 52 to 84, with a mean score of 68.64 (SD=9.54). In addition to this, the scale was broken

down into two sub scales, horizontal trust and vertical trust. Total scores for these two scales were computed. For horizontal trust, the range was 24 to 42 with a mean of 36.88 (SD=4.73) and for vertical trust, the range of scores was 26 to 49 with a mean of 37.73 (SD=7.2). Test of normality on both sub scales and the scale overall for trust were investigated to see if there were any outliers present and concluded that there were no outliers for any scales. Descriptive analysis for these scales can be seen below in table 4.2.3.

	<b><i>Mean (95% Confidence Intervals)</i></b>	<b><i>Std. Error Mean</i></b>	<b><i>Median</i></b>	<b><i>SD</i></b>	<b><i>Range</i></b>
<b><i>Trust Overall</i></b>	68.64(65.78 – 71.51)	1.42	67.0	9.54	52 - 84
<b><i>Horizontal Trust</i></b>	36.88(45.46 – 38.31)	0.71	38.0	4.73	24 – 42
<b><i>Vertical Trust</i></b>	37.73 (35.56 – 39.89)	1.07	37.0	7.20	26 - 49

***Table 4.2.3: Descriptive analysis Trust scales***

Similarly, the total score for the measure of OE was computed for each relevant participant (N=7). The maximum score was reported as 267, with the minimum being 201. The mean of the scores was 237.71 (SD = 22.58). This scale was also broken down further to 9 subscales: Student academic satisfaction, student academic development, student career development, student personal development, faculty and administration employment satisfaction, professional development and quality of faculty, community interaction, ability to acquire resources and organisational health. Full information for descriptive analysis for these subscales can be seen in Table 4.2.4. Test of normality were inspected for the overall OE scale and the 9 subscales, there were no outliers present for any.

	<b><i>Mean (95% Confidence Intervals)</i></b>	<b><i>Std. Error Mean</i></b>	<b><i>Median</i></b>	<b><i>SD</i></b>	<b><i>Range</i></b>
<b><i>OE Overall</i></b>	237.71 (216.82 – 258.6)	8.53	237.0	22.58	201 - 267

<b><i>Student Academic Satisfaction</i></b>	15.28 (12.23 – 18.33)	1.24	14.0	3.30	13 – 22
<b><i>Student Academic Development</i></b>	25.57 (22.07 – 29.06)	1.42	24.0	3.77	21 – 31
<b><i>Student Career Development</i></b>	8.28 (7.25 – 9.31)	0.42	8.0	1.11	7 - 10
<b><i>Student Personal Development</i></b>	18.57 (16.25 – 20.89)	0.94	20.0	2.50	16 - 22
<b><i>Faculty and Admin Satisfaction</i></b>	32.00 (27.86 – 36.13)	4.47	32.0	4.47	24 - 36
<b><i>Community Interaction</i></b>	16.85 (14.90 – 18.1)	0.79	17.0	2.11	14 - 21
<b><i>Organisational Health</i></b>	81.42 (67.58 – 95.26)	5.65	83.0	14.96	56 - 101
<b><i>Resources</i></b>	18.42 (17.52 – 19.33)	0.36	18.0	0.97	17 – 20

**Table 4.2.4: Descriptive Analysis for OE scales.**

### **4.3 Inferential Statistical Analyses**

Inferential statistics involves a wide range of significance tests which can be carried out by a researcher in order to understand their sample data. Inferential statistics can be carried out in order to evaluate differences between two variables or more, examine the relationships between variables or to make predications (Allua and Thompson, 2009). Based on this, inferential statistical analyses were carried out in order to investigate the hypotheses for this research. When carrying out inferential statistical analyses, there are two types of test which can be conducted, parametric tests and non-parametric tests. Parametric tests are statistical tests which

assume that the data is normally distributed whereas non-parametric tests do not assume anything about the distribution of data (Pallant, 2013).

#### **4.3.1 Hypothesis One: Chi-Square Analysis**

As the trust scale was issued to all employees and the OE scale was only issued to management, there were only 7 participants which answered both the trust and the OE scale. Due to this, it would not have been possible to carry out a statistical test which looked for a relationship between the two and therefore, only an association between the two could be examined. A chi-square analysis is a non-parametric test which looks at the association between two variables, however, this test can only be conducted on nominal or ordinal variables (McHugh, 2013). Due to this, the scores of the two scales had to be recoded into ordinal variables prior to running any analysis. Three possible groups were created for each scale from the scores: high, medium and low. For the trust scale, high equated to scores ranging from 81 through to the highest score, 84, medium equated to scores ranging from 61 to 80, and low equated from scores ranging from the lowest, 52 up until 60. For the OE scale, high included scores ranging from 261 to the highest, 267, medium included scores ranging from 231 to 260 and low included scores from 201 to 230.

Following this, a Chi-Square analysis was conducted. However, as with any statistical test, this test has its own assumptions which cannot be violated, the most important assumption to be aware of when conducting a Chi-Square analysis relates to the frequency classes (Zibran, 2007). After inspecting the output from the analysis, it was concluded that there was a violation of the assumption on frequency classes and therefore, in order to ensure the results were applicable, the results from the Fisher-exact output were interpreted.

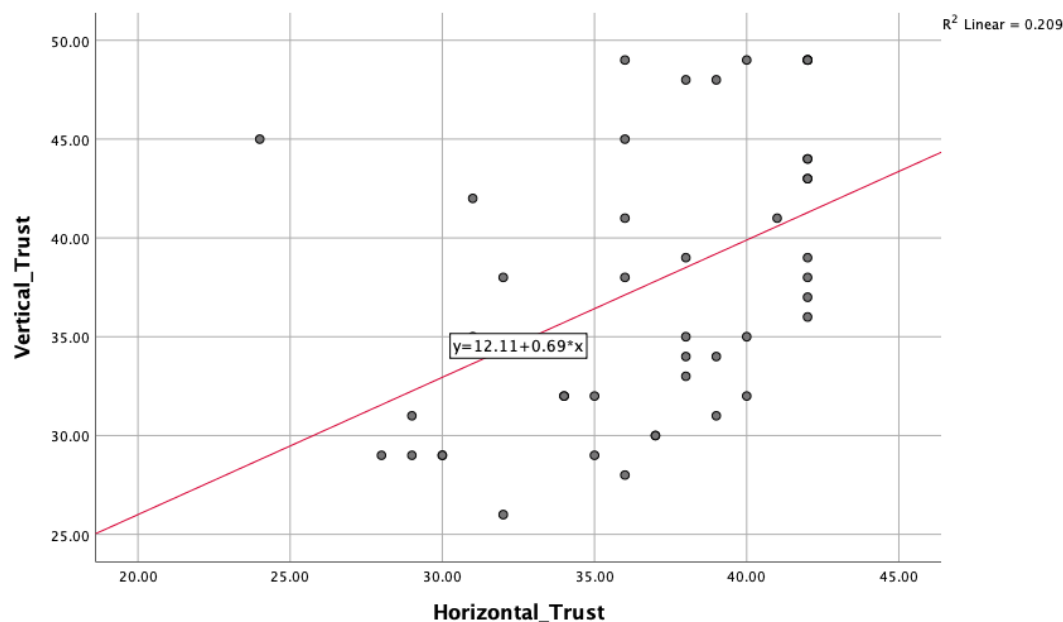
A Fisher-Exact analysis looks for dependency amongst two ordinal variables, it is often used when the assumptions of a chi-square analysis are violated (Dziak, M. 2020). Results from this analysis indicated a non-significant dependence between the two variables, trust and OE ( $p = .30$ ). Based on these findings, hypothesis one, that there is an association (or dependence) between trust and overall OE is rejected and the null hypothesis, that there is no association (or dependence) between the two variables, is accepted.

#### **4.3.2 Hypothesis Two: Pearson Correlational Analysis**

Correlation analysis is commonly used to assess whether a relationship between two variables exists (Goodwin & Leech, 2006). A Pearson product-moment correlation analysis is a parametric test which is conducted when two variables have normal distribution. In addition to

this, one of the assumptions of the test is that the variables must have a linear relationship (Schober et al, 2018). Cook and Wall (1980) previously applied correlational analysis when investigating the new works attitude scale, which is the same scale that comprises of the trust measure used for this research, based on this it was deemed appropriate to run analysis on this scale using correlation analysis.

The relationship between horizontal and vertical trust was investigated using a Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. Preliminarily analyses were conducted to ensure that the assumptions of this statistical test were not violated. A scatter plot was produced with the best fit line inputted to ensure that the data was linear and to gauge an initial understanding of the correlation effect (Figure 4.3.1). Findings from this test, showed there was strong, positive correlation between the two variables ( $r = .457$ ,  $N=45$ ,  $p = .002$ ). Results of this correlation can be seen in Table 4.3.1. From this analysis, it is concluded that there is a positive relationship between the horizontal trust and vertical trust. Based on these results, the null hypothesis, that there is no positive linear relationship between the two is rejected and the alternate hypothesis (hypothesis 3), that there will be a positive linear relationship between horizontal trust and vertical trust, is supported.



**Figure 4.3.1**

Variables	1	2
1. Horizontal Trust	1	-.002*
2. Vertical Trust	-.002*	1

\* Note. Statistical significance: \* $p < .05$  **Table 4.3.1: Correlational Analysis**

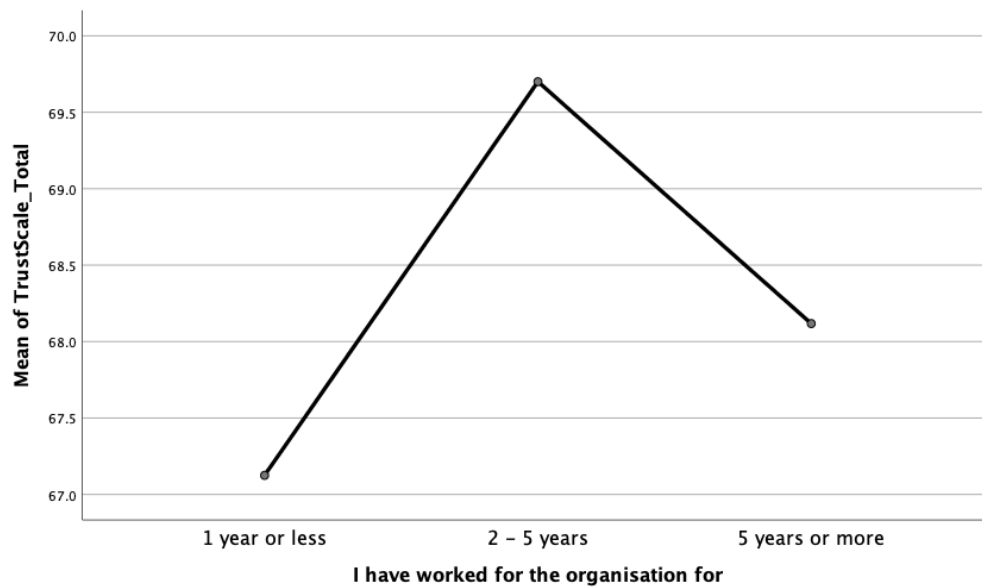
### 4.3.3 Hypothesis Three: One way between groups ANOVA

An analysis of variance (ANOVA) test is used to test for significant difference amongst means in three or more groups (Pallant, 2013). ANOVA analyses have been previously used when examining different attitudes such as job satisfaction in relation to length of service (Gubsin & Klein, 1970; Oshagbemi, 2000), thus justifying this choice of statistical test for hypothesis 3.

A one-way between groups analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to explore the impact of length of employment on trust levels. As aforementioned, there were three categories for length of employment ( $\leq 1$  year, 2-5 years and  $\geq 5$ ). There was no statistical difference found in levels of trust scores between the three categories  $F(2, 42)$ ,  $p = .787$ . Results from this can be seen in figure 4.3.2.

A Tukey post hoc test indicated that the mean score for the  $\leq 1$  year ( $M = 67.13$ ,  $SD = 10.41$ ) had no statistical difference ( $p = .802$ ) between people in the organisation for 2 – 5 years ( $M = 69.70$ ,  $SD = 9.92$ ) and even less of statistical difference between people in the organisation for  $\geq 5$  years ( $M = 68.12$ ,  $SD = 9.11$ ). The difference between the means of people in the organisation 2 -5 years compared to people in the organisation  $\geq 5$  years was not statistically significant,  $p = .875$ . Figure 4.3.2 shows a graph with the differences between the mean scores.

Results from this analysis indicate that there is no statistically significant difference in levels of trust based on length of time in the organisation and therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted and the alternate hypotheses (hypothesis 3) is rejected.



**Figure 4.3.2**

#### **4.3.4 Hypothesis Four: Multiple Regression Analysis**

Regression analysis is conducted in order to examine how much an independent variable contributes to a dependent variable, a regression analysis with more than one independent variable is known as multiple regression analysis (Muijs 2010). Although in previous literature using the OE scale, factor analysis has been conducted (Cameron, 1989; Smart 2003; Kwan and Walker, 2003), it was decided that multiple regression analysis would be appropriate to test hypothesis 4, That organisational health, employee satisfaction and employee development will be stronger predictors of organisation effectiveness than student related variables. This is because the researcher is trying to establish which independent variables are bigger predictors in overall OE within this setting.

Prior to conducting this statistical test, the scales for the three variables, organisational health, administration and faculty satisfaction and faculty professional development were combined in order to create a single independent variable out of the three. Similarly, the three student related variables: student satisfaction, student personal development, student academic development and student career development were combined to create one independent variable. The variables relating to resources and community interaction were omitted from this analysis as the hypothesis is seeking the explore whether organisation related variables or student related variables have a higher impact on OE.

The results of the regression indicated that the model explained 98.7% of the variance and that the model was a significant predictor of overall OE,  $F(2,4) = 151.9$ ,  $p = <.001$ , with an  $R^2$  of

.987. While Organisation variables contributed significantly to the model ( $\beta = 1.09$ ,  $p = <.001$ ), student related variables did not ( $\beta = .541$ ,  $P = 1.84$ ). The final predictive model was: Overall OE =  $45.153 + (.541 * \text{student variables}) + (.109 * \text{organisation variables})$ .

Results from this analysis indicate that the null hypothesis can be rejected in this case and that hypothesis 4 can be accepted, that organisational health, employee satisfaction and employee development will be stronger predictors of organisation effectiveness than student related variables. However, it should be noted that this model may not be entirely accurate as the participant sample size was extremely limited with only 7 respondents to the OE scale. Therefore, it would be beneficial to conduct this on a greater scale should it be carried out again in the future, but the results are a good starting point when looking to explain the predictors of OE in this organisation. This will be discussed further in the discussion aspect of this paper.

#### **4.5 Findings Conclusion**

Firstly, the descriptive analysis conducted highlighted that the organisation does have high levels of trust, this is particularly evident when looking at the qualitative data. Majority of respondent's comments were positive compared to a minority of negative comments (Figure 4.2.1).

The results from the inferential statistical tests have demonstrated that for this study, that hypotheses two and four can be accepted. However, as aforementioned with hypothesis four, although accepted in this instance, it may not be completely accurate due to the small sample size. Additionally, due to the discrepancy in sample sizes for each scales, a correlational analysis could not be conducted for hypothesis one, this is something to be considered going forward as it could have been more accurate and beneficial as opposed to the attempted chi-square analysis. Furthermore, problems arose with the data violating the assumption of the chi-square analysis so this is something which should be taken into consideration for future research. The results from these statistical tests will be discussed in the proceeding chapter alongside limitations and recommendations of the study as well as recommendations for the organisation.



## **Chapter Five: Discussion**

### **5.1 Introduction**

Within this current chapter, the researcher will seek to discuss the findings from this research in relation to relevant literature. Limitations of the current study will be examined prior to concluding on possible future recommendations for research and recommendations for the organisation which has been investigated.

### **5.2 Current Findings**

The main purpose of this study was to examine the two concepts, trust and OE, within an SME. Based on the descriptive analysis conducted in the previous chapter, it appears the organisation is operating in a high trust environment. Nonetheless, the qualitative data which was collected highlighted some interesting concerns which management should work to address. Multiple participants highlighted how they were unhappy with current HR policies in the organisation and the fact that there is no health care provided by the organisation. Costigan and colleagues (1998) implied that trust levels within management is formed from their decisions as managers as opposed to their character and therefore, if decisions around policies and procedures within the organisation are beneficial to employees, then the employees will hold more trust. This had an overall effect on certain employees' level of trust within management. Highlighting the impact that management decisions can have on the trust levels that employees hold. Furthermore, one of the benefits of allowing the space for participants to offer feedback in relation to their view of trust, was that it gives HR the opportunity to address what impacts employees' levels of trust in depth. It is evident from this feedback that the vast majority of employees have positive feelings towards their colleagues and management, however, it should not be overlooked that reported, actions, behaviours and procedures of management can have a significant impact on employees' vertical trust levels (Tzafrir et al., 2003). Furthermore, some responses outlined how they feel workloads are too heavy, this is important as it may not only have an impact on employees views towards management but also their views towards their colleagues, if they feel there is a unfairness in work delegation. Although employee's openness was most likely due to the anonymity of the study, a limitation for this particular part of the study would be that it is difficult to follow up with individual concerns due to this. Therefore, the feedback received can only be followed up with in a general sense.

There was no association found between trust and overall OE within this organisation. However, despite this non-statistically significant finding, this study found that organisational

variables, such as employee satisfaction, contribute significantly to overall OE. Additionally, previous literature, it has been found that trust impacts different aspects of the organisation such as employee engagement and employee satisfaction (Engelbrecht et al., 2017), improved job performance (Gauinot & Chiva, 2019) and improved task performance (Colquitt, et al. 2017). Based on this previous literature and the findings from the fourth hypothesis, it could be considered that although there was no significant association found in this particular study between trust and overall OE, as trust impacts different organisation behaviours and organisational variables were found to impact overall OE, there may still be some form of a relationship or association between the two variables. Additionally, there may be reasons as to why this hypothesis was rejected, the limitation in sample size meant that a chi-squared analysis had to be conducted as opposed to a correlational analysis. Alongside this, as the assumptions of the chi-square were violated, the test of association used was not as reliable. Therefore, based on this, it would be suggested that for future research purposes in this area, that the sample size is equal across both measures so that a pearson correlation analysis can be conducted to look for a relationship between the two variables.

Based on analysis conducted, there was a positive relationship found between vertical and horizontal trust. This suggests that when one form of trust increases, so does the other and therefore, it can be inferred that there is a relationship between the two. This is concurrent with previous research that indicated that trust amongst peers can have a knock-on effect on each other's views of the organisation, particularly if peers are vocal about their opinions, (Schimitz & Fulk, 1991). It could be suggested, and should be examined further, that perhaps an individual's opinion on management may influence their peer's relationship with management. However, as with any correlational analysis, correlation does not equal causation and although there is a relationship there, it does not necessarily mean that one thing causes the other, it simply means that by happenstance high levels of one are correlated with high levels of the other.

Additionally, it is important to consider that the findings from the current research is examining vertical trust levels from a bottom-up perspective, and therefore, future research recommendations in this area would involve examining if management having higher levels of trust in their employees has an impact on horizontal trust in the organisation. For example, Brower and colleagues (2009) suggested that if management have strong levels of trust in their employees, they may be more willing to delegate difficult tasks to employees. Based on this, future research could examine whether delegation of tasks helps improve teamwork and

horizontal trust in the organisation. This would also be of particular interest, as it has been outlined previously, that research in the area of horizontal trust in the workplace is limited.

Despite not finding a significant difference between levels of trust and length of employment, from examining the graph (figure 4.3.2), there does appear to be a slight difference amongst trust levels and the length of time an employee has been there. Most notably, trust levels appear to peak at the 2 to 5-year mark. Hickok (2021) discusses in the BBC article how during these strange times, it may be difficult for employees to build and maintain relationships. This could be the reason for the slightly lower levels of trust for people in the organisation less than year. Additionally, the most vital part of a trusting relationship is the maintenance, so it may be difficult for people given remote working to sustain relationships. It would be suggested that further research be conducted in this area, perhaps by examining trust levels, length of employment service and age of employees to try and establish what may cause the slight difference. Again, a qualitative research design could be implemented in order to actively speak and discuss why employees trust or distrust the organisation, this could be broken down into groups based on length of service.

Cameron (1978) outlined how when examining OE in relation to an organisation in the Higher Education sector, there are additional variables in relation to students that should be considered alongside organisational variables. This study found that organisation related variables were significant predictors of OE and student related variables were not. However, it is really vital to be aware that the sample size of who answered the OE scale would have had an impact on this. It would be recommended that based on this significant limitation, this be replicated with a larger group of employees to gain a further insight into OE in the organisation. Additionally, it should be noted that senior management and employees may not be in a position to answer on how satisfied a student is with the organisation and therefore, it would be recommended to try and gather some feedback from students based on their experiences there.

### **5.3 Limitations**

As with all research, this study had its own set of limitations. Individual limitations for each hypothesis have been briefly discussed such as the impact of the sample size on statistical tests, however, there were bigger limitations that the study faced as a whole.

One of the biggest limitations this study was faced with was the time frame for completion, overall, there was eight weeks to carry out this research which had an impact on the methodology methods and statistical analyses that were chosen. Had there been a longer time

horizon, the study may not have been limited to cross-sectional type of study and there could have been data collected at multiple points throughout the year, especially during remote working times. As employees have been working remotely for the last year, this could be viewed as a limitation as their perception of trust may be different to what it may have been if they were engaging with their colleagues and managers face to face.

Participation was also a limitation faced by this study, as outlined there are 90 employees in the organisation yet only 45 took part in the trust measure, if more employees had taken part there is a possibility that findings of this research could have been different.

Despite these limitations, there is one distinct advantage of conducting this study. As employees were all anonymous, they were afforded the opportunity to give honest, feedback to the organisation. In turn this will allow for problems to be addressed in an adequate manner, hopefully improving employee satisfaction overall.

#### **5.4 Future Research Recommendations**

As outlined previously, there is some alternative and further research which could be conducted in this area. There are some recommendations which have already been outlined, firstly, a relationship between trust and OE could be examined as opposed to an association. Secondly, when examining the relationship of horizontal and vertical trust, the idea of managements trust levels in employees and that implication on horizontal trust levels could be explored. Comparative research in the area of length of employment and horizontal versus length of employment and vertical trust could be conducted.

There was a substantial amount of literature outlined in Chapter two of this paper regarding leadership types and trust levels (Gillespie & Mann, 2004; Engelbrecht et al., 2017; Jiang & Luo, 2018). Therefore, a further research recommendation would for the type of leadership in this organisation to be examined and explored in relation to the trust levels.

Additionally, it may be worthwhile looking to explore Mayer and colleagues (1995) model of trust and the three attributes, ability, benevolence and integrity to see if they are present within the employees who hold higher levels of trust in management or their peers.

In relation to OE, there could be different models applied to this organisation, such as Anita and Cuthbert (1976) qualitative model, which may give an alternative insight into the levels of OE and what is driving it. Additionally, it would be recommended to examine OE from an employee's point of view as opposed to managements to see what employees feel are driving

effectiveness in the organisation. Similarly, to trust, a recommendation would also be to explore leadership type and overall OE, as Davis and colleagues (2001) suggested that there should be a particular type of leader within an educational setting.

There is also the possibility to replicate the current study using qualitative measures to examine trust and OE, which would involve taking a sample of the employees and gaining an insight into their views and feelings surrounding trust and OE in the organisation. Alternatively, the same study could be conducted again, however, with the additional recommendation of follow up surveys once issues have been addressed to see if change has occurred in the organisation. Recommendations for how to actively address these findings will be discussed in the following chapter.

## **Chapter Six: Recommendations and Conclusion**

### **6.1 Introduction**

In the final chapter of this paper, the researcher will make some recommendations for the organisation in relation to the findings discussed previously. Following this, there will be a concluding section at the end of the paper.

### **6.2 Recommendations**

The current research explored a private SME in the Higher Educational Sector in Ireland and found there to be high levels of trust within the organisation. Despite this, employees did outline some concerns they held regarding HR policies and procedures that are currently in place within the organisation and therefore, the first recommendation that the researcher is offering is that the senior management team and the HR department of the organisation complete an in-depth review of current HR policies and procedures and look to see if these can be amend to align with both employees and the organisations best interests. Additionally, the senior management team should investigate the potential opportunity of offering health care and pension schemes as not only could this improve morale among current employees, it would also benefit the recruitment of new starts.

Additionally, the feedback from staff in the trust survey highlighted that some people would like to see more frequent communication from management during this period. Therefore, it would be recommended to implement a monthly newsletter from management outlining current events in the organisation to improve communication across both management and employees, and departments.

Although a statistical significance was not found between length of employment and trust levels, the lowest levels were seen among employees who have been in the organisation for one year or less. Therefore, the second recommendation would be to implement different engagement strategies with newer employees to try and improve these levels. As remote working continues, it would be recommended that team coffee mornings are organised and maybe online team building activities in order to allow the newer employees to engage and build a relationship with their peers and management outside of work tasks.

### **6.3 Practical Implications**

When implementing the recommendations outlined above, there are certain things which should be considered such as cost, usage of time and the overall timeframe. The first recommendation, to conduct an in-depth review of policies and procedures, would be the costliest in terms of both time and finance. This review could take up to a year to conduct and following that, any additional time it would take to formulate new policies and procedures. This could have financial implications as the organisation may need to take on additional HR staff in order to help with this overall task.

The second recommendation, improving communication methods, could be implemented almost immediately. It may take a couple of weeks to organise the first organisation newsletter and collect stories from staff and management, however, this can be an additional task that is undertaken by someone in the organisation who could be working on it alongside their daily tasks. Additionally, management could immediately begin issuing more frequent communication with staff, having more one to one catch up meetings with their team and this would all be cost-effective.

The third and final recommendation, encouraging social interaction to build trust, could also be implemented quickly and initially in a cost-effective manner. Coffee mornings and society clubs, such as book clubs could be organised, which would have minimal cost however, there would be the practicality of organising a time to suit the majority, especially the newer staff.

### **6.4 Conclusion**

Overall, this current study has offered an immense insight into how employees are feeling towards each other and towards management within the organisation. Alongside that, the research has given an insight into areas which help the organisation to operate effectively. Despite two of the hypotheses not being supported and the limitations that have been identified, the research is still of immense value to the organisation being investigated. It allows practical intervention to address issues that arose all while examining current, relevant research within the areas of trust and OE to gain a better understanding of how to improve their workplace.

## **Personal Learning Statement**

I began this journey after becoming a new parent and working a full time and then the pandemic hit. During this period, I feel we have all learned something about ourselves, I know for a fact that I have. I have discovered that I have a great deal of determination to complete any task I put my mind too, that I do in fact work a very well under pressure. I discovered that although I don't work within the field of HR (just yet) I do have the capabilities and knowledge to pursue that path, something a year ago I would have never dreamt possible. I also learnt to trust my ability and demonstrate that I can conduct a research project of a level 9 standard.

As with anything though, there are things that I must still improve on. I discovered throughout this project, that I have a tendency to over complicate things but this process has thought me to take a step back and to try and organise my thinking in a more systematic manner, something I will continue to work on long after this project. Additionally, this project has helped me realise the importance of timekeeping and organisation skills, something I too need to improve on. Although I do work best under pressure, I think given the opportunity to go back and repeat this experience, I would make a substantial effort to organise my time better.

The project itself has given me an insight into the practicalities of conducting HR research in the real world and how to address real-life issues and try to examine how to improve or resolve these issues. That is something I lacked experience in as I currently do not work in HR.

Overall, completing a masters has been one of my biggest achievements to date. I know that this is something to be extremely proud of and given the circumstances in which it was completed makes it that extra bit special. I am truly grateful for all the lessons I have learnt from this experience.



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## Appendix A

### Measure for Trust

Please respond to the following statements by indicating how much you agree or disagree with the statement

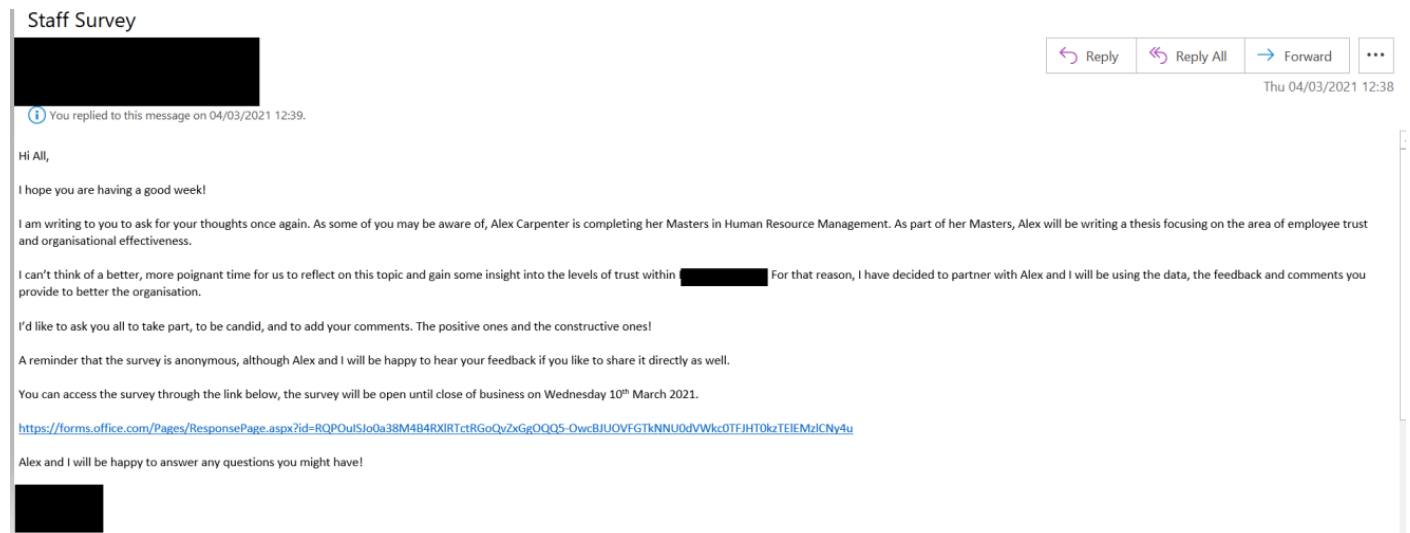
**1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Somewhat Disagree, 3 = Disagree, 4 = Neither Disagree or Agree, 5 = Agree, 6 = Somewhat Agree, 7 = Strongly Agree**

Management is sincere in its attempts to meet the workers' point of view.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Our organisation has a poor future unless it can attract better managers	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
If I got into difficulties at work, I know my work colleagues would try and help me out	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Management can be trusted to make sensible decisions for the organisation's future	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I can trust the people that I work with to lend me a hand if I needed it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Management at work seem to do an efficient job.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I feel quite confident that the organisation will always try to treat me fairly.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Most of my work colleagues can be relied upon to do as they say they will do.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I have full confidence in the skills of my workmates	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Most of my fellow colleagues would get on with their work even if supervisors were not around	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I can rely on my colleagues not to make my job more difficult with careless work.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Management would be quite prepared to deceive workers to gain advantage.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

*Question 2 and 12 were reversed scored.*

## Information Sheet:

*This measure was sent around by the HR department in the organisation via email which included complete details of what the information was being used for. The survey also included a box after each question for employees to give any opinions they had about the statement being asked.*



# Appendix B

## Correspondence regarding using the OE Measure:

Dissertation Research

Alex Carpenter

to kim\_cameron

Tue, Mar 23, 3:55 PM

☆ ↶ ⋮

Good afternoon Prof. Cameron,

I am writing to you as I am a Human Resources Masters student based in Ireland. I am doing my dissertation in employee trust and its implications on organisation effectiveness in an Irish Higher Education Institute.

I have been researching online and I have come across your previous work in the area, which is very interesting. I was wondering, would I be able to obtain a copy of your organisation Effectiveness scale with the 9 dimensions so that I can use it as part of my studies?

I look forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards,  
Alexandra Carpenter

Kim Cameron

to me

Wed, Mar 24, 1:41 PM

☆ ↶ ⋮

Thanks very much for your note, Alex, and best wishes in your project. Here is the instrument on organizational effectiveness.

Best regards,

Kim

Kim Cameron  
William Russell Kelly Professor of Management & Organizations  
Ross School of Business  
and  
Professor of Higher Education  
School of Education  
University of Michigan

TEDx: <https://vimeo.com/336435909> <https://vimeo.com/336434182> <https://vimeo.com/336434183>

IPPA: [http://www.ippanetwork.org/congress-library/fifth\\_library/positive-leadership-and-positive-energy-kim-cameron/](http://www.ippanetwork.org/congress-library/fifth_library/positive-leadership-and-positive-energy-kim-cameron/)

RADIO: <https://omny.fm/shows/business-of-giving/kim-s-cameron-author-of-positive-leadership-state>

70 |

Appendix B

## **Organisation Effectiveness Measure:**

See Methodology Section (Page 31) for questions which were omitted from this current study.

**AN INSTRUMENT TO  
ASSESS ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS  
IN INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

**©Kim Cameron  
University of Michigan**

### SECTION I

TO WHAT EXTENT ARE THE FOLLOWING CHARACTERISTICS  
TYPICAL OF THE UNDERGRADUATE PORTION OF THIS  
COLLEGE? PLEASE MARK THE APPROPRIATE RESPONSE  
USING THE SCALE IMMEDIATELY BELOW.

- | Very true, or<br>highly typical<br>of this institution |     | Neither<br>typical nor<br>atypical |     | Very untrue, or<br>highly atypical<br>of this institution |
|--|-----|------------------------------------|-----|---|
| (7)  | (6) | (5)                                | (4) | (3)   |
| (2)  |     |                                    |     | (1)   |

### SECTION II

PLEASE MARK THE APPROPRIATE ALTERNATIVE

13. Think of last year's graduating class at this institution. Please rate the academic attainment or academic level achieved by that class as a whole.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 1) That class is among the very top college graduating classes in the country
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 2) That class is well above average
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 3) That class is slightly above average
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 4) That class is about average
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 5) That class is slightly below average
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 6) That class is below average
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 7) That class is near the bottom of college graduating classes in the country



Section II - Page 2

14. Estimate what percent of the graduates from this institution go on to obtain degrees in graduate or professional schools.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1) From 91% to 100% of the students here go on to obtain advanced degrees
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2) From 76% to 90% go on
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3) From 61% to 75% go on
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4) From 46% to 60% go on
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5) From 31% to 45% go on
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6) From 16% to 30% go on
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7) From 0% to 15% go on the obtain advanced degrees

15. How important is it to students here that opportunities for personal and non-academic development (e.g., social, emotional, cultural, etc.) are provided at this institution?

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1) Personal development activities are very important to students here
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2) They are important
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3) They are somewhat important
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4) They are neither important nor unimportant
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5) They are somewhat unimportant
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6) They are unimportant
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7) They are very unimportant to students here

SECTION III

TO WHAT EXTENT DOES THE UNDERGRADUATE COLLEGE EMPHASIZE OR ENCOURAGE THE FOLLOWING? PLEASE MARK THE APPROPRIATE RESPONSE USING THE SCALE BELOW.

Very high degree of emphasis or encouragement here		Moderate degree of emphasis or encouragement here				No emphasis or encouragement here
--	--	---	--	--	--	---

(7)	(6)	(5)	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)
-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

- \_\_\_\_\_ 16. Activities outside the classroom designed specifically to enhance students' academic development.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 17. Activities outside the classroom designed specifically to enhance students' personal, non-academic development.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 18. The engaging in professional activities outside the college by faculty members and administrators.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 19. College-community or college-environment relations.

SECTION IV

PLEASE MARK THE APPROPRIATE RESPONSE USING THE SCALE BELOW.

A very large number or amount		A moderate number or amount				None
-------------------------------------	--	-----------------------------------	--	--	--	------

(7)	(6)	(5)	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)
-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

- \_\_\_\_\_ 20. How many career development opportunities are provided for students at this college?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 21. How much would you say students develop and mature in non-academic areas (e.g., socially, emotionally, culturally, etc.) directly as a result of their experiences at this college?

Section IV - Page 3

- | A very large<br>number or<br>amount |     |     |     | A moderate<br>number or<br>amount |     |     | None   |
|-------------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----------------------------------|-----|-----|--|
| (1)                                 | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5)                               | (6) | (7) |  |
| _____                               |     |     |     |                                   |     |     | 22. How many faculty members and administrators at this college would you say serve in the community in government, on boards or committees, as consultants, or in other capacities? (Combine federal, state, and local levels.) |
| _____                               |     |     |     |                                   |     |     | 23. How many community oriented programs, workshops, projects, or activities would you estimate were sponsored by this college last year?  |

SECTION V

PLEASE MARK THE APPROPRIATE  
RESPONSE USING THE FOLLOWING SCALE.

- 7 - Almost all
- 6 - A large majority
- 5 - More than half
- 4 - About half
- 3 - Less than half
- 2 - A small minority
- 1 - Almost none

- \_\_\_\_\_ 24. How many faculty members would you say have national reputations in their respective academic fields?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 25. How many students would you say engage in extra academic work (e.g., reading, studying, writing, etc.) over and above what is specifically assigned in the classroom?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 26. What proportion of the students who graduated from this college last year and entered the labor market would you estimate obtained employment in their major field of study?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 27. How many students would you say attend this college to fulfill definite career or occupational goals as opposed to attending for social, athletic, financial, or other reasons?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 28. Approximately what proportion of the undergraduate courses offered at this college are designed to be career oriented or occupation-related as opposed to liberal education, personal development, etc.?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 29. Of those students who went on the job market after graduating from this college last year, how many would you say obtained the job of their first choice as opposed to settling for a less than optimal choice?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 30. Think of those students who have obtained employment after graduating from this college. For how many of them was the career training received at this institution important in helping them obtain their job?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 31. If given the chance of taking a similar job at another school of his/her choice, how many faculty members do you think would opt for leaving this school rather than staying?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 32. If given the chance of taking a similar job at another school of his/her choice, how many administrators do you think would opt for leaving this school rather than staying?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 33. Estimate how many faculty members at this college are personally satisfied with their employment.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 34. Estimate how many administrators at this college are personally satisfied with their employment.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 35. Estimate how many faculty members are personally satisfied with the way things are done around this school.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 36. Estimate how many administrators are personally satisfied with the way things are done around this school.

- 7 - Almost all
- 6 - A large majority
- 5 - More than half
- 4 - About half
- 3 - Less than half
- 2 - A small minority
- 1 - Almost none

- 37. Approximately what proportion of the faculty members and administrators at this college attended a conference or workshop specifically oriented toward professional and/or personal development last year?
- 38. How many of the faculty members at this college would you say published a book or an article in a professional journal, or displayed a work of art in a show last year?
- 39. What proportion of the faculty members would you estimate teach at the "cutting edge" of their field--i.e., require current journal articles as reading, revise syllabi at least yearly, discuss current issues in the field, etc.?
- 40. How many faculty members at this college would you estimate have at some time received an academic award or honor such as a teaching, research, or professional award or a listing in a national honorary directory?
- 41. How many faculty members at this college are actively engaged now in professional development activities--e.g., doing research, getting an advanced degree, etc.
- 42. Colleges may be rated on the basis of their relative "drawing power" in attracting top high school students. In relation to other colleges with which it directly competes, what proportion of the top students attend this college rather than the competition?

#### SECTION VI

THIS SECTION ASKS YOU TO RATE YOUR PERCEPTIONS OF THE GENERAL DAY-TO-DAY FUNCTIONING OF THE UNDERGRADUATE PORTION OF THE OVERALL INSTITUTION. PLEASE RESPOND BY CIRCLING THE NUMBER THAT BEST REPRESENTS YOUR PERCEPTIONS OF EACH ITEM. IF YOU AGREE STRONGLY WITH ONE END OF THE SCALE, CIRCLE A NUMBER CLOSER TO THAT END OF THE SCALE. IF YOU FEEL NEUTRAL ABOUT THE ITEM, CIRCLE A NUMBER NEAR THE MIDDLE OF THE SCALE.

For example:

\*\*\*How is the weather in this town?

warm, bright, 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 cold, wet,  
and sunny and dismal

#### HOW DO YOU PERCEIVE THE FOLLOWING?

##### 43. Student/faculty relationships.

unusual closeness, lots of informal interaction, mutual personal concern	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	no closeness, mostly instrumental relations, little informal interaction
--	---------------	--

##### 44. Interdepartmental relations in the college.

lots of coordination, joint planning, collaboration, no friction	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	no joint activity, conflict, lack of coordination and communication
--	---------------	---

##### 45. General pattern of supervision and control.

rigid control, strict supervision, pressure for conformity	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	respect for differences, personal freedom, individual autonomy
--	---------------	--

##### 46. Equity of treatment and rewards.

people treated fairly and rewarded equitably	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	favoritism and inequity present, unfair treatment exists
--	---------------	--

Section VI - Page 5

47. Recognition and rewards received for good work from superiors.

recognition received for good work, rewarded for success	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	no rewards for good work, no one recognizes success
---	---------------	--

48. The amount of information or feedback you receive.

feel informed, in-the-know, information is always available	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	feel isolated, out-of-it, information is never available
--	---------------	---

49. Type of communication that is typical.

guarded, screened, cautious, formal	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	open, authentic, personal, free
-------------------------------------	---------------	---------------------------------

50. The general social environment.

cooperative, supportive, mutual concern for others, humane	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	competitive, no support, unsympath- etic, "every man for himself"
---	---------------	--

51. The flexibility of the administration.

willing to change, adaptable, progressive, flexible	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	rigid, unwilling to change, stagnant, unyielding
--	---------------	---

52. General levels of trust among people here.

high suspicion, fear, distrust, insecurity	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	high trust, security, openness
---	---------------	--------------------------------

53. Conflicts and friction in the college.

large amount of conflict, disagreements, anxiety, friction	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	no friction or conflicts, friendly, collaborative
---	---------------	--

54. Resolution of disagreements or conflicts.

imposition, avoidance, dictum, suppression; bad feelings result	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	face-to-face, compromise, democra- tically; positive feelings result
--	---------------	---

55. Use of the talents and expertise of faculty members and administrators.

competencies and talents used maximally, chances for fulfillment and development are present	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	competencies not used, no opportuni- ties for growth, talents unused
--	---------------	---

56. Organizational health of the college.

college runs smoothly, healthy organization, productive internal functioning	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	college runs poorly, unhealthy organization, unproductive internal functioning
--	---------------	--

57. Long term planning and goal setting.

much goal directed activity, long-term planning, continuous goal assessments	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	no goal directed activity, no planning, no goal assessments
---	---------------	--

# ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS QUESTIONNAIRE ITEMS

## Key

### SCALE

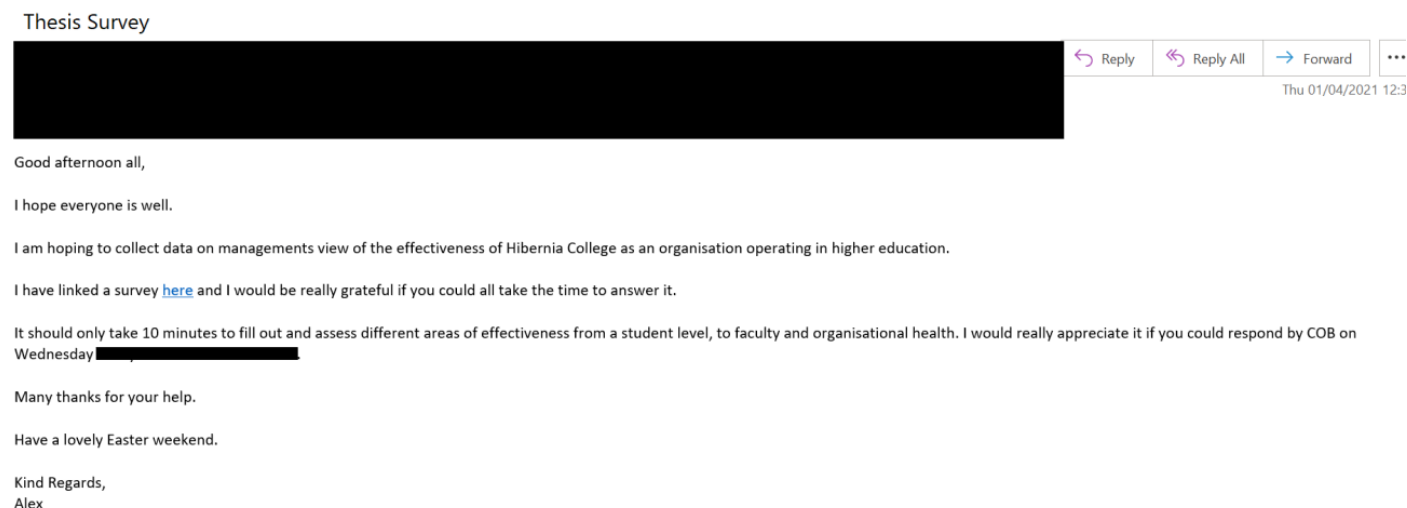
- 1 - Student Educational Satisfaction
- 2 - Student Academic Development
- 3 - Student Career Development
- 4 - Student Personal Development
- 5 - Faculty and Administrator Employment Satisfaction
- 6 - Professional Development and Quality of the Faculty
- 7 - System Openness and Community Interaction
- 8 - Ability to Acquire Resources
- 9 - Organizational Health

ITEM	SCALE	ITEM	SCALE	ITEM	SCALE
1	2	21	4	41	6
2	4	22	7	42	8
3	7	23	7	43	9
4	8	24	6	44	9
5	8	25	2	45	9
6	8	26	3	46	9
7	8	27	3	47	9
8	1	28	3	48	9
9	1	29	3	49	9
10	1	30	3	50	9
11	1	31	5	51	9
12	1	32	5	52	9
13	2	33	5	53	9
14	2	34	5	54	9
15	4	35	5	55	9
16	2	36	5	56	9
17	4	37	6	57	9
18	7	38	6		
19	7	39	6		
20	3	40	6		

## Information Sheet:

This survey was sent to senior management via email, outlining what the survey is being used for. Once they began the survey, there was also information relating to the survey at the beginning.

### *Email:*



### *Information at start of Survey:*

