An exploratory study to investigate the effects transformational change has on EE within PTSB

By

Niamh Fitzsimons

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Abstract

This exploratory research reviews the implications change management has on PTSB colleagues. The researcher will review the literature available to determine why organisations change. The relationship between employee engagement and change management has been studied however there is gap here to deepen the insights of the effect that change has on commitment and trust towards the organisation. The researcher identified some key highlights within the literature including the correlation between commitment, trust and employee engagement.

The researcher conducted eight semi structured interviews with participants across PTSB. The semi structured interviewed allowed the researcher gain trust and build rapport for a rich discussion around change and EE. The comparable and valuable views each participant shared, concluded key findings that allows PTSB to further review there change process for future endeavours

Declaration

Name: Niamh Fitzsimons

Student Number: x19101864

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Abbreviations

EE – employee engagement

ET – Enterprise transformation

SLT – Senior Leader Team

Chapter 1: Introduction

"To be the Bank of Choice for what we do and how we do it: trusted, valued and principled"

(PTSB, Mission and Values, Org Design pack 2021)

PTSB first established in 1884 as Irish Temperance Permanent Benefit Building society, changing its name in 1940 to Irish Permanent Building Society. In April 1999, Irish Permanent was merged with Irish Life PLC. In 2012, recession hit the Irish economy which seen the group split into Irish Life Group and PTSB Group Holdings. According to M. Sheehan and P. sparrow (2012) as companies emerged from the financial crisis with an unclear future, they can struggle through, leave, or search for aid from the government. PTSB became 99.5% state owned a phase known as "save the bank" and brought with it a key number of challenges including pay freezes, branch closures, broken trust with employees and customers. PTSB greatest challenge to move out of save the bank mind set was to improve the market share and grow but also to create a vision for the staff and customers, address the costs, income, and digitalisation.

PTSB recognise that the changing world require the organisation to adapt to continue to be competitive advantage in Ireland. PTSB remains 70% owned by the government and receive continued inspection by the CBI and Government. PTSB is starting to return in profitability however still experiencing a hierarchical structure to match the regulatory environment in which they reside. Staff turnover has increased due to the career and remuneration constraints. Employee's expectations are now changing. Working in a highly regulated environment results in rigid processes and procedures. Technology sees consumer and employee demands are ever growing. (PTSB, Future work of strategy, 2020) This results in an organisation which is slow to innovate, lacks flexibility and with a culture of command and control and limited investment in our future leaders. Over the past decade, PTSB has seen many change projects with voluntary severance packages for colleagues. In 2020, Senior Management launched , Enterprise Transformation which involved a total organisational redesign across all seven departments.

This research paper will focus on change management and EE. The paper will explore the effects of a radical change process on PTSB colleagues. It will uncover employees' perspectives on the change management programme and create a deeper insight on the level of engagement across the bank during this turbulent time.

Chapter 2: Literature review

2.1 Change management

Change management is implemented in companies to align their overall strategy to current trends and mitigate risks that could hinder their future success by ways of operational and employee optimisation (Skvarciany and Iljins, 2015) There is an inevitable point where organisations require change to stay relevant and sustain competitive advantage. Research (Jensen and Clayton, 2021) shows external environment factors including advancing technologies, political and employment legislation, social issues, sustainability, and current economic climate continually test organisations globally on their change management models and processes. Wylson and Chesley (2016) discuss **transformational change** is a drastic shift across all departments in the organisation, how they operate and smarter ways of working. Modernisation of a company is a continued momentum of changing strategy and vision to suit the needs and wants of the company and their goals (Bankar and Gankar 2013). Every organisation will face different and unique challenges as they transform their organisation. Such change is a long and difficult process but with the correct models and change agents in place, the company will reap the successes. As companies re organise their strategies, their employees , a crucial element to their success, are having to shift accordingly by ways of upskilling, change behaviours and adapt to new environment. Change is a process that all companies are aware of however it is difficult to get it right (Pulinka, 2020). IT is the company's duty to involve the employees from the beginning to see a positive outcome for the organisation. Pulinka (2020) studies found that employees are incremental to the change process and while there is resilience, if there is clear communication from the onset, employees will follow. As change is adopted within a company there is a direct effect on the employees. If change fails , **trust** is lost, lower **productivity** , **motivation** diminishes and eventually employees leave to competitors (Wylson & Chesley, 2016)

2.2 Employee Engagement

Employee EngagemenytE (EE) has seen to have numerous definitions. An earlier study, Kahn (1990) describes EE as how people interact with their role cognitively, physically, and emotionally. HRM magazine (2019) debate that EE can be enhanced through an array of HR initiatives including performance management, wellbeing, and robust reward incentives. Recognising employee's achievements and efforts in the company and having a clear path for career progression is shown to engage employees. Relationships between manager and colleague is vital with an ongoing communication between the two to stimulate engagement (P., A. and Thampi 2020). EE is the commitment a person gives to a company, aligning their objectives to the overall strategic priorities, their **trust** and commitment to their role, team & management, and the organisation (Bankar and Gankar, 2013). Those employees who understand their role and its importance to the overall strategy, go above and beyond to achieve their objectives for the company and feel valued by their team and management, which is key to long term success and financial gain (Veshneand Munshi, 2020). Bhattacharya and Banerjee (2018) studied those who are engaged in a company are confident and optimistic with a clear and open communication strategy led by employers' leaders. Recognition, clear career progression and initiatives for employees all allow for a more harmonious workplace which will give great benefit for employer to their competitors.

2.2.1 Trust

Jena, L. K., Pradhan, S. and Panigrahy, N. P (2019) found that EE and **trust** are interlinked and further aids the definition of EE. In part, described as employees' emotional behaviours they associate to their role. When employees trust the organisation, there is higher engagement. If there is little to no trust in a company, employees would be disengaged thus causing low productivity and activity for the organisation. Vanhala, M. and Dietz, G. (2019) research shows those who trust in their organization are those who work harder and are loyal to the organisation. Employee's trust can ensure the company can consistently achieve its purpose and withstand pressures such as a transformational change or a restructure. Studies suggest there are multiple dimensions of trust within an organisation. Roger C. Mayer, James H. Davis and F. David Schoorman (1995) define trust as the willingness a person has for another to complete a particular task the way he/she requires without control or or monitor. Shockley-Zalabak, Pamela; Ellis, Kathleen; Winograd, Gaynelle. (20000) discus the plethora of models and ideas around trust however Mayer et al (1995) found there was lack definition or understanding of what trust actually meant to the organisation. Throughout the study they

developed a model in which allows organisations to understand the cohorts of trust . Previous studies mentioned by Mayer et al (1995) discuss companies introducing HR policies and regulations to ensure there is no trust broken. However, trust goes beyond this with employee displays a much bigger role within organisations in today's society Warnock-Smith, D., Cameron, D. and O'Connell, J. F. (2020). Peter Holland (2019) further identify trust as ethical and juste for all colleagues. . Holland backs Mayer et al (DATE) study proposes that HR policies and procedures that cement trust into an organisation. Managers across the organisation will need to ensure there are strong frameworks in place to enable continued trust throughout turbulent external environment pressures. Mayer et al (1995) discuss the Factors of trustworthiness as the ability, benevolence and integrity.

- Ability – the colleague skills to achieve a task within their role and likewise the ability the organisations have to enhance and develop the colleague (Y. Serkan Ozmen, 2017)
- Benevolence – the open and honest conversations the organisation is having with their staff can be seen as benevolence. Trust is developed through the supportive nature of managers. HR coaching to enable managers to have open and honest conversations increases trust within the company. (Y. Serkan Ozmen, 2017).
- Integrity – The management and c suite team reliability towards their colleagues can be described at the truthfulness within a company (Y. Serkan Ozmen 2017)

A trustworthy company is seen to be able to recruit & retain employees. Y. Serkan Ozmen (2017) recent studies provide evidence that belief in the management team, products offered to customers and working for company known to the public build a trustworthy organisation . However however having open conversations, and reliability are more important.

2.3 Change Process

When an organisation identifies the need for change, there are certain strategies companies can use to plan and drive change. There are many change models throughout the eras including Lewin 3 step model (1951) , Bridges (1991) & Kotter 8 step process (1995) (Szarek, 2017). Lewin's 3 step model (1947) has been suggested to be the best model for complex organisations (Hussain et al. ,2018; Levasseur, 2001) . Bakari , Hunjra and Niazi (2017) argue Lewin's 3 step change process theory is linear and rigid , however, that with the right leadership, this model can be adapted to an organisations change process. Hitt, Black and Porter (Pg. 429, 2014) discuss Lewin (1947) three phases of Change process as follows; Phase 1, Unfreezing, Phase 2 , Movement and Phase 3, Refreezing .

Phase 1, *Unfreezing*, arguably the more important of the three stages, changing the status quo and communicating the need for change. Levasseur (2011) acknowledges the importance of communication and clear reasoning for change to be communicated for the linear process to continue. Phase 2, *Movement*, Hitt et al (pg. 429 2014) discuss movement can cause challenges, and greater the change correlates with higher uncertainty between employees and their managers. Therefore, this planning stage is crucial to withstand these challenges for ultimate success. Balogun (2001) found that middle management (level 4 & 3) suffer the most at the initial change having to overcome team's ambiguity and anxieties while also dealing with a heavier workload. Kotter and Schlesinger (2008) mention the importance of staff members involvement in the company change process which brings about stronger engagement. Companies that involve employees in the design process give them responsibility from the onset. The more incentives an employer offers their colleagues, will bring about higher engagement and higher success rate for change (Baolgun , 2001). Phase 3, *Refreezing*, suggests that taking only the new approach will not be enough for long term success. What worked in the past may work in the future. Galli, B. J. (no date) argues Lewin's 3 step phase removes the human element and does not go into too much detail around how this change effects employees. This could be a major disadvantage for companies as employees are a core feature in a change management process. Kotter (1995) further expands into 8 stages adapting Lewins model with a modern approach as transformational change would not happen without employees. Pulinka (2020) sums up the limitations early change management theories as lacking in involvement staff and using manipulation to drive change manage processes. Kotter (1995) 8 step model.

1. establishing a sense of urgency *unfreezing*

Companies should review the market the changing dynamic of how their customers operate and how their competitors react to this. Financial institutions are now technologically advancing to adapt to their customers wants and needs to stay relevant. (Mihalcea, A. D. (2017))

2. forming a coalition, *unfreezing*

Building an ET Team involving an array of skills and capabilities including project management, to advocate and lead with the change process will enable management to focus on their strategic vision . (Kotter, 2011) Leadership team should delegate the transformation to a project team for success. Colleagues look to their leadership teams when uncertain of

changes. A project team can give another reliance for colleagues for questions or concerns throughout uncertainty.

3. creating a vision, *movement*

Companies should build their vision around their strategic priorities. Incorporating new values within organisations including agile thinking and resilience will allow the workforce to adapt to radical change (Kotter, 2011). Veldsman, T. H. (2019) suggests creating an organisational structure fit for purpose and designed to allow customer needs to be met. The importance of future forward thinking for an organisation is crucial for success.

4. communicating the vision, *Movement*

Roadshows, webinars, and guidance across a various amount of communication platforms with the use of intranet sites, web conferencing, presentations, booklets, and newsletters will ensure the staff are up to date with the latest information on the change across the organisation and what it means to them (Beer, R., Eisenstat, R, Spector, B,2011)

5. empowering others , *Movement*

Innovation and new ideas should be at the heart of the transformation. Allowing all colleagues from different levels be apart of the change will help the transformation team, HR and senior management implement new initiatives and smarter ways if work throughout the company (Kotter, 2011) HO, M. (2018) found that high performing companies are more inclined to promote creativity and curiosity in its workforce than low performing companies. Arifin, Z. and Dewi, R. S. (2020) concluded their study finding that innovation traits within a company achieves higher performance and allows colleagues to find creative solutions to a changing external environment

6. planning and creating short wins, *Movement*

Identifying those new ways of working, their improvements to the company whether profits increases or enhancements in the back office will recognise those small achievement that change is working and highlight those involved to motivate colleagues for future change. (Kotter, 2011)

7. strengthening improvements while continuing to change *Refreezing*

Developing your workforce through personal and professional development plans, strong performance management and educational assistance to upskill the workforce throughout the

change will continue to build a resilient workforce. Transformation team should constantly learn from their past mistakes and short wins to adapt for future success (kotter, 2011)

8. cementing new approaches *Refreezing*

Strong succession plans for future talent should be cemented into the company. New ways of working have been established and implemented through continued training, development and coaching. Change has been successfully implemented and a continued support from management, the leadership team will allow for the employees to settle into the new structure. It is important for employees to adapt to an ever-changing environment and are agile to change when needed.

From the above models, we can conclude the common theme is a linear phased approach with communication, planned action and involvement at all levels for change to happen and engage the workforce. A more comprehensive description can be found with Boonstra, J. (2019) with a similar linear strategy. Modernising the above called the rational strategy working from the basis of Kotters 8 step model. Throughout the company, colleagues will see clear areas for change or renewing, whether it be restructure of roles, AI involvement, updating commercial aspects to relate to customers demands. Therefore, it is inevitable that management will introduce the concept of organisation transformation with rational strategy, board management approval, consultants and ET team lead ultimately take the lead for change. Innovations in change are crucial here to attract the staff to this shifting working environment and changing of working ways.

2.4 Change management and EE.

Albrecht et al. (2020) discuss the relationship between **change management** and **EE** within their research, finding employees who are motivated by change in the workplace, positively contribute to the overall restructure with minimal restraint. Bankar and Gankar (2013) argue this point, proving there is a difficulty to maintain the engagement of staff throughout a radical change within a company regardless of if the employee is satisfied with their role. Companies failing to implement change correctly will have a serious impact on EE and trust which will in turn reduce profits and reputation (CIPD, 2020) .

For successful change, companies need strong leadership, a phased approach to the change management, and involvement from every level within the organisation. Change models require management and leadership skills to truly allow for change to take place and be successful (Szarek,2017). Messinger and Havely (2013) found there is a 10% decline in EE when company goes through major change. Both found that Change managements partial success is positive EE. Therefore, it can be established that there is a requirement for a high trust environment in order for any transformation to be totally successful . Recognising change and implementing such a transformation should incorporate the employees needs and provide an opportunity for them to engage in the change management process and thus planned approach is crucial. The senior leaders who implement this transformation will need to ensure it is a journey where all are involved, it is realistic and achievable, and it provides opportunity to employees to engage them throughout the process (Feete, 2019) Vanhala, M. and Dietz, G. (2019) found that employees who work in high trust environment will not question their management teams goals and tasks at hand. They also found that employees will not be resistant to HR initiatives. As a company start to establish a sense of urgency to change, managers and change leaders will begin to create a vision within their teams . HR will create new and more purposeful initiatives to adapt to these changes across the company. The change method will allow the company is to continue to build competitive advantage. However, leaders who create a sense of change required for the company, are at risk and creating a distrust between colleagues and the organisation (Mayer et al), 1995). In times of uncertainty, trust is the glue that allows a positive adjustment to change (Yue, C., Men, L. and Ferguson, M., 2019.)

2.5 Hr Practices implemented through change.

Skvarciany, v. and Iljins, j. (2015) suggest it is crucial for the banks to foster a trust environment. This is a necessity for banks to succeed in their economy they reside. However, the bank requires internal organisational trust from its employers to deliver a successful service to their clientele. The lack of trust associated with the bank crisis in 2009 caused mistrust within the bank. Change is ongoing and foreseeable (Jensen and Clayton, 2021) however change throughout COVID took on extra uncertainty for colleagues. As companies review their target operating model to be fit for purpose, it is understandably a worry for those who are at risk within the retail sector (Ali Sulaiman, M. A. B., Ahmed, M. N. and Shabbir, M. S. , 2020) Leaders should aim to maintain the level of trust across the business through open and transparent communications from the beginning. (Y. Serkan Ozmen, 2017).

Change process through short steps should allow retail banks to update and move with the changing environment they are in to ensure success in their overall transformation. Their resilience to the external pressures while maintaining strong HR practices will eventually rap rewards in the long term success of the business and best fit for colleagues.

2.5.1 Severance

Through transformation, there are initiatives that will be presented to colleagues that will cause uncertainty and disarray. Cutbacks are inevitable for the public sector when trying to cut costs and reduce management numbers (van der Voet, J. and Vermeeren, B., 2016). Approaching displacements is tough on employee's wellbeing and trust within the organisation especially for those who are being displaced. Organisations manage turnover within an organisation through severance policy and terms . Au, P. H. (2020) discuss severance polices are incorporated in many companies that manage turnover and an important policy that should be incorporated into companies when the time comes to cut back on their operating model. As future plans and a vison is created by transformation team, and management, it is important for public sector organisation to ensure there is low legality issues to guarantee there is no hidden extra costs within the labour court. Therefore, Union's negotiations should take place for the best interest of the employee and to ensure there are enhanced terms. This process should be transparent to reduce any negative reputation for the company. The employees should be notified of possible displacement as soon as it has been approved by senior leaders in the team. There is risk of highly skilled with high impact leavers moving from the company however this should be taken on a case by case basis (Bergström, O. and Arman, R. 2017) .Smollan, R. K. (2017) study found support to be crucial for employees going through radical change. Organisations should understand the anxieties that severance can and will be brought on by colleagues. Especially those who have a high tenure within the organisation. Companies should develop support initiatives for those who have been displaced including education, career guidance and training facilities (Smollan, R. K. 2017). This can allow for a positive exit for employees. It also can show remaining colleagues the care and education the employer will do to look after each member of staff. Thus, a high trust environment and resilient positive workforce. Andrew, M. (2020) argue those who take Voluntary severance in fact was not voluntary and a selection process completed by management and what suited the organisation in its current positions. These findings suggest there would be a significant impact to colleagues, and their trust towards their employer.

2.5.2 Smarter working

A recent study by de Lucas Ancillo, A., del Val Núñez, M. T. and Gavrila, S. G. discussed technological advances and how this shapes the work place. Companies across the world are adapting to a drastic change from a normal 8 hour day in the office to home working. .The previous year seen COVID -19 pandemic uproot each organisations structure , moving to remote working where possible while front line workers remained in organisations. This brings challenges to organisations through technology disadvantages, management issues, control span and productive overview. Throughout this significant year, companies quickly are realising that business can take place from the comfort of a home office. This creates a shift in the way companies conduct business. As organisations re open for business over the next year , there is now a growing need from colleagues to continue their work life balance of flexible remote working (de Lucas Ancillo, A., del Val Núñez, M. T. and Gavrila, S. G. (2020) . Leadership and HR want to meet the needs of their colleagues to encourage employees to involve themselves in the changing structure. The company noticing their colleagues needs will build integrity between employer and employee Flexible working arrangement options presented to staff can build a trustworthy environment. The management team taking care of their staff will allow colleagues to engage positively knowing management care for their needs (Y. Serkan Ozmen , 2017)

 It was reported later by Gibson, D. and EY (2020) that those who can not remote work should also be taken into consideration. Denying those colleagues who cannot work from home requires senior leaders and project team to use innovation to ensure there is no disengagement and mistrust from this cohort of colleagues. Ali Sulaiman, M. A. B Et al. (2020) point out some key ideas for HR to implement with top management to ensure front line workers are not forgotten such as health benefits among other Hr initiatives.

2.5.3 Bridge the Skill Gap
PSTB Leaders and HR need to

 work collaboratively to understand the future skills necessary to enable our colleagues for career progression and future success for the bank.(S. O., O. 2017) The importance from top down will encourage and motivate staff to take ownership of their own development with the support of their managers. HR need to marry the skill gaps in bank with considerable loss of

capabilities from severance, to enable our colleagues to have the tools to adapt to new ways of working (D'Souza, S. 2019) Companies should upskill colleauges who find their job may not be needed in the future and enabling them to have an easy transition to a more strategic role within the company. Mihalcea, A. D. (2017) research shows digital capabilities in businesses are important for any company to continue to progress in today's climate. Castellano, S. (2019) found although their company is not a digital company, they need to adapt their skills like a tech company. Enabling your employees with the skills they need to grow within the organization will have a positive effect on our customer outcomes. COVID has pushed the boundaries of our colleagues and their digital skills. Therefore, HR need to strengthen improvements (Kotter, 2011) to enable our colleagues with the right set of skills for them to succeed in the new working environment. Ellis, R. K. (2018) suggest HR bridge the gap for those who lack the digital skills needed for today's job, including social media, data analytics, mobile management and security and privacy. HR need to create talent management practices to enable colleagues for future roles and responsibilities as they identify changing customer habits. Organisations are finding digital skills to be most `difficult skill gap to bridge especially for those who are not tech companies. The new way of working behaviour through COVID and a more flexible approach to working from home requires strong technological skills to complete tasks required for the job. A lack of tech skills could out a hindrance on any team regardless of their role, showing a greater need for tech HR practices (Newman, S. 2019)

2.6 Conclusion

The research above has shown important aspects of change that organisations should take into consideration. An oorgansaiton that takes on such a radical change will affect the colleagues however with the right teams in place along with a strong set of initiatives the change can take place in a positive environment above initiatives may be looked at by the leadership and project team for future success of its colleagues and the ultimate success of continued change management. It is important to establish a change process as this allows for a clear vision and timeline for the change. This also can be transparent to the colleagues to show the journey that the company is going (Feete 2019)

When implementing HR initiatives, it is important it bares no burden on the colleagues and presents clear and open prospects. Leadership team and management are important factors when change is introduced as these are the drivers of change.

Chapter 3: Research methodology

3.1 Research Aim and Objectives

The aim of this qualitative research is to understand the transformational change process within PTSB and the effects it has on their employees .The objectives as following :

- The Explore the effects that change management can have on employees.
- Uncover Employee's perspective of change management
- Unearth the level of engagement employees have with the organisation throughout this change process

3.2 Research Philosophy

 "Research philosophy refers to a system of beliefs and assumptions about the development of knowledge" (Saunders et al, 2019).

Research takes place to deepen our knowledge of a particular aspect of the world and to try creating a better understanding (Adams, Hafiz,. Khan and Raeside2014). It is how this knowledge is obtained and if deemed acceptable. There are a multitude of different research philosophies to enable the researcher to further explore a topic and conclude with a result that deems fit. Ontology and epistemology are two assumptions within the research philosophies (Saunders et al, 2019) Ontology can be described as the study of being and reality. Zyphur, and Pierides (2020) discuss ontology as value neutral and found through statistics and logical maths. Epistemology is the process that turns numerical data into knowledge (Horne, J., 2019.). Horne (2019) further describes the assumption as how information and data is transferred through rationalising and logical thinking with different viewpoints and opinions. Reflection and learning through past observations and looking to the future and how knowledge defined by tradition and history. Horne (2019) argues that epistemology allows for a deeper and authentic analysis on a research topic and I superior to other assumptions

3.3 Research Assumptions

The research question and topic will be based on the researchers own set of beliefs and assumptions (Saunders et al, 2019). Ontology considers two set of extreme beliefs, objectivism, and subjectivism. Objectivism is one true reality. Other's viewpoints and opinions do not change the world as there is only one version of truth. Therefore, solid evidence is deemed as proof (Saunders, et al ,2019). Subjectivism, researchers assume there are multiple realities, and each person has their own truth in the world. The use of analysis and numbers can prove these truths (Sheposh. 2019)

Epistemology considers both positivism and interpretivism in business. *Positivism* is the observable and measurable facts found in a study, it is an established fact and/or it is predictable. Those who chose to be a positivist researcher will base their research on facts and build a hypothesis from this. The researcher remains neutral and will not have feelings towards the study, data, or final conclusions. ((Chua, 2019 & (Bell, Bryman, & Harley (2018)). Quantitative data is found from a positive researcher with numerical explanation. In contrast, *Interpretivism* requires further explanation and personalisation to the data extracted from other humans and their realities in the world. Through a qualitative approach, a deeper insight into their opinions, beliefs and values allows the researcher to have a better sense of other realities and what they experience in life, this quality information creates a new and more understandable meaning to the subject studied (Chua, 2019). Saunders et. al (2019) further suggests individuals' narratives and stories builds on previous studies and broadens views on topics. **Interpretive research** will be looked at more closely for this research paper. The basis of this study is to review perspectives and different individuals' realities through radical change. People's viewpoints on change and their trust towards their employee before, during and after a transformational change within the organisation.

3.4 Research Approach

Saunders et al (2019) discuss two approaches the researcher can use to develop on the theory being researched: Inductive and deductive. *Deductive* research is a process using existing studies to help determine a proposal. By testing through data collection, the results will either prove the proposition true or false. Deduction has multiple hypothesis, a structured approach to the layout of the methodology and is quantifiable. From deduction, productivity could be identified throughout the organisational change while also studying the rate of motivation,

however, the researcher would not recognize the viewpoints of colleagues during the change process. *Induction* research is used when there is a gap in the knowledge that intends to be found by the researcher. The researcher's main objective is to understand the problem and the nature surrounding the issue by identifying key themes from the data collated and building a theory from this to understand the gap in the knowledge. This process is less rigid and broadens the understanding with different perceptions, ideologies, and beliefs. (Saunder et. al 2019)

3.5 Research Purpose

Saunders et al (2019) discuss how the research question will involve explanatory, exploratory or descriptive research. Explanatory research looks for the why and the how, the issue and the connection between the data found. This data collated would be reviewed through statistical diagrams and tests. Descriptive research allows the investigator to review an accurate description of an event and look for the who, what and where. Finally, exploratory looks at open questions to allow for a deeper insight into the topic the researcher is investigating. A particular problem or issue has been identified by the researcher and finds the need to explore this further to develop a richer understanding. This study will be conducted through reviewing previous literature on change management and EE. Semi structured interviewed with open ended questions will take place to further develop on the literature and create a deeper sense of awareness for the business. (Saunders et al, 2019)

3.6 Research Design

The philosophy and assumptions mentioned above will determine the method/s of research throughout this paper. Qualitative and quantitative are two distinct methods that can be utilised. *Quantitative* method is an analytical review and measured using numbers to verify the conclusion (Saunders et al, 2019). The researcher will be independent to the respondents involved in the research, have a strong research design, and follow a positivism philosophies Adams, J. *et. Al* (2014). According to Bell et al (2018) quantitative methods entail a deductive approach using scientific methods and analysing data shown through diagrams. *Qualitative method* involves collecting data and exploring the social aspects of this data. Data can include words, actions, images, and video. Tucker, Powell, and Meyer. (1995) discusses characteristics including rich explanations to topics researcheda and knowledgeable information. It allows the researcher to understand behaviours and emotions around a topic being researched. This interpretivist research helps find commonality between data and

through logical thinking, creates a deeper meaning for the theory being studied. Saunders et al (2019) relate qualitative research to inductive approach whereby the researcher builds on their research topic to identify deeper meanings. Chowdhury (2015) notes qualitative is questioned by quantitative researchers due to due to the lack of analysis it has compared to quantitative. Qualitative methods include in-dept psychology and motivational research and comprehensive understanding of the world view of colleagues. The researcher may understand emotionally and feel an empathy towards the people they research. Multi-method qualitative study will allow the researcher to hold in dept interviews across the company to get a richer conclusion to the aims and objectives o this study. (Saunders et al, 2019)

For the purpose of this research paper, the researcher has opted to choose multi method qualitative research. The key aim of this research is to understand the emotional effects radical change has on employees and their engagement. This methodology involves real life personal experiences and   behaviours. The research question requires an array of different opinions and mindsets towards not only EE but the change that they have been a part of. The information collated from these real-life situations via semi structured interviews will be less rigid and thus creating a richer conclusion to the study (Walle, 2015)

3.7 Research Strategy

There is a multitude of different strategies the researcher can chose to identify how their question will be answered. The methods and philosophy the researcher will decide upon will determine the strategy they decide. The aims and objectives of this paper will guide the researcher to decide on an array of different qualitative strategies to build upon. The researcher has chosen a case study to allow an in-depth review of the topic being studies in a realistic setting within the organisation. Saunders et al (2019) found a case study is used for a change process and to further investigate this using a case study strategy. These particular strategies can be intensive, however can create more evidence and also manageable for the researcher.

3.8 Semi Structured interviews

The researcher will lead Semi-structured interviews to gather the data for this research paper. The interview will follow an semi - structured layout with pre-determined questions. Saunder

et al (2019) discuss semi structures interviews allow the researcher to decide some key aspects to the topic they would like answered with pre-determined questions. As an interpretivist researcher, the data gathered through semi structured can change from the determined themes and questions, the conversations with each individual will progress naturally as possible . Peterson, J. S. (2019) suggests interviews will involve predesigned open-ended questions strategically designed to ensure there is enough data drawn for insight. The goal of the researcher is to record and note different experiences and viewpoints of those effected by the change within PTSB. Through an open and honest conversation, will allow for a rapport between interview and interviewee to create a safe environment to draw on experiences in a deeper level. This should enable a more authentic and honest result (Saunders et al, 2019). The exploratory nature of the research objectives will allow the interviewer to hone in on certain areas of interest or new themes that arise from the literature (Saunders et al 2019) The overall method and assumptions decided upon the researcher correlates with the choice of this date collection process.

A pilot interview took place to ensure the semi structured format suited the research. The researcher discussed with the participant in the pilot study that there is an open feedback session at the end to ensure the researcher conducted the interview with a clear format. There was no changes from the pilot study. (Quinlan et al 2019). The pilot interview was 35 minutes long, questions used at this study were used throughout the other eight interviews.

Nine semi-structured interviews took place from 30th June – 29th July 2021. All interviews were conducted via web conference, ZOOM. The researcher would have opted for face-to-face interviews however due to government guidelines; this was unsafe to do so due to COVID-19. Interview four took place via telephone as the colleague required adequate break time during work hours. The researcher scheduled each interview in peoples work diaries for 45 minutes however each interview varied from 20 mins to 45 mins. The researcher recorded each session with the permission of the participant via phone app called "voice memo". Each recording was saved down and password protected on the researcher's computer.

3.9 Sampling

The researcher should consider the population they are going to conduct interviews with, for this study, the target population will be the PTSB employees. However, as the researcher is time and cost bound it is essential to decide upon a sample technique in order to achieve the aims and objectives of this research (Saunders et al,2019).

Probability sampling can be used when the research question is depending on numerical and statistical results. It is seen through quantitative methods through surveys and experiments. The researcher deemed this inappropriate to use for this research as the methods and processes used do not correlate with this particiar method. (Saunders et al). Non-Probability sampling will not allow the researcher to find any statistical assumptions from the people you decide upon within the target population. This was taken into consideration by the researcher and found that on probability sample was the best approach for the questions raised. Judmental sampling will be utilised and allows the researcher to choose individuals who have been affected by the change. It is important for the researcher to exclude some cases when picking interviewees. This will later be discussed below in ethics.

Robinson (2014) discuss the four-point approach for qualitive sampling. Ensuring that those who work for PTSB were directly involved with the change will be interviewed as part of my inclusion criteria. I will ensure that those on the interview panel will have no disciplinary or performance issues as this could cause untrustworthy results as my exclusion criteria.   A sample 8-10 colleagues will be interviewed for practicality honing on the departments with the most upheaval due to change in the bank. I will ensure that those on the interview panel will have no disciplinary or performance issues as this could cause untrustworthy results. This will allow for diverse data and an insight for the bank how different levels adapt to change and their engagement correlating to their involvement (Walle, Pg.19 2015).

3.10 Data collection

Primary data will be gathered through semi-structured will take place through web conferencing tool, adhering to government regulations due to COVID-19. Peterson, J. S. (2019) suggests interviews will involve predesigned open-ended questions strategically designed to ensure there is enough data drawn for insight. Each interview will be transcribed in verbatim and reviewed using thematic analysis. Braun and Clarke (2006) discuss thematic analysis and the step-by-step process involved to gather your data and identify key themes, familiarise, and define the themes throughout that could be of potential interest the research.

Recording each interview will allow the researcher to listen and review each interview while taking notes to identify key themes.

3.11 Reliability & Validity of Data

The researcher should assure the data collected is both reliable and valid before representing in their research paper. The researchers aim is to gather detailed descriptions from the semi structured interviews to build out a pragmatic and meaningful result. Validity as being a defining issue for all researchers. The data collected should be logical and are both meaningful and useful. Quinlan (2018) relates validity to credibility, and how truthful the answers collected are which can be noted for qualitative research paper. Saunders et al (2019) split reliability definition to further explain into internal and external reliability. Internal reliability suggests that consistent measure is taken place by the researcher. External reliability refers to the techniques applied to collecting the data and if the findings would be consistent if repeated. Bias can cause threat to the reliability to the findings. Bias can be from either party, the interviewer, or the interviewee. As the internal researcher is aware of these possible Bias as their role as HR BP could alter the experience for each interviewee. Their answers may be more positive than wanted and dishonest due to the repercussion they may feel they will face. Internal Researchers bias could potentially skew the findings with their own views and ideas. The internal researcher has been directly involved with the transformation programme throughout the bank. The researcher should be aware of this bias whether bias or unbiased and ensure this not hinder on the results found. (Saunders et al, 2019)

3.12 Ethics

Throughout the research, it is essential for the researcher to be aware of others involved in the research and respect their rights of honesty and respect. (Adams et al, 2019). Ethical principles and standards should be set and submitted by the researcher before the study takes place to prevent any issues and avoid harm to emotional well beings. Researchers should approach their paper ensuring all aspects of the research was completed with ethical awareness.

Informed consent should be given to all participants involved in the study and should explain the study in detail and what is expected on everyone. (Adams, et al, 2018) Each candidate

must understand the consent form and voluntary sign and return to the researcher. A consent form was attached to an email and sent to each possible participant. The consent form informed the individual of the topic being researched, their role and a voluntary acceptance to the meeting invite attached to the email. As COVID 19 deterred people from signing, an acceptance of the email was taken as signing off. Before the interview began recording, the interviewer informed each induvial that interviews would be recorded and transcribed in verbatim, each recording would be saved down and password protected on the researcher's laptop. Only the researcher would be aware of these passwords. The interviewer confirmed if induvial was happy to proceed before turning the recorder on.

3.12.1 Confidentiality & Anonymity

Confidentiality is critical to and a practice of ensuring that information that is collected and used within the research is strictly private and confidential. This agreement will ensure there is no public embarrassment or emotional stress that could arise from the study .By ensuring confidentially, the researcher should anonymous all participants. All information received via semi structures interviews will not directly name the participant. The researcher will ensure upmost confidentiality throughout this research paper to ensure respect and dignity to all those who took part. Fake names will be used, and quotes and findings will not be easily identifiable.

3.13 Data Analysis

The researcher will use thematic analysis to review the data collated through semi structured interviews. Castleberry and Nolen. (2018) found this descriptive method to be best used qualitative research. This analysis is flexible way to review and deduce the data found during the interview process. The researcher will compile the data gathered from each interview by transcribing recorded session in verbatim. The researcher should become very familiar with the data they have collected to ensure they have a deep understanding of each interview and the insights provided by the participants. Following this, the researcher will begin to code the data, identity themes and group together. Through inductive approach, the researcher will start to build meaningful insights. Thirdly, the researcher can now reassemble the data found and the relevant subthemes that emerge. It is pertinent for the researchers to quality check their themes by maintaining the themes are useful to the aims of the researcher, is the data meaningful or is the theme/s found logical. The researcher should then interpret the themes and extract the key insights they feel is relevant and important in their research paper.

Finally, the researcher will conclude with a response to the initial research question, aims and objectives (Castleberry and Nolen, 2018)

3.14 Limitations

There are potential limitation while gathering the data. Those at a senior level within the organisation will have a closer involvement to the change process. Therefore, potential biased answer will come from these interviews. To overcome this, the researcher will ensure to pick those who would have been directly impacted by the change rather and colleagues that has been highly involved and leading the change from the beginning. The pandemic potentially could be blamed for the change across the bank. However, this change was approved by directors in early 2020 and was put on hold due to the pandemic. COVID-19 does not play a part in the reduction of headcount and other key ET initiatives.

Chapter 4: Findings and Discussions

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the findings collated by the researcher and relate the data to the initial aims and objectives of the study. Thematic analysis will be used to discuss key themes identified during the semi structured interviews. The researcher will familiarise themselves with the data collated on semi structured interviews. The data will be coded and reviewed with commonalities to the literature researched (saunder et al 2019)

The researcher identified 2 major themes throughout the semi structured interview. Sub themes emerged which will be discussed below:

- Change
  - Subtheme 1: Work Pressure
  - Subtheme 2: Opportunity
  - Subtheme: Communication
- Engagement
  - Subtheme 1: Commitment
  - Subtheme 2: Trust

4.2 Change

The aim of the researcher paper was to explore the effects of the change across the business. Very early on in each interview, the participants discussed a consistent change that transpired within PTSB. There was no surprise when ET was announced, and many found it as another change programme. Participants are aware of the inevitability to change to allow for organisations to adapt and withstand the external pressures, the meet the new customer demands and to adopt a new strategy to allow for this to happen. (Wylson and Chesley (2016)) Martin stated *"this is another day at the office, I have been through it a lot"* while similar Caoimhe *"banking is constantly changing"* and Mary *"There is a lot of movement all the time and roles constantly change"*. The colleague's mindset of change is it always is prevalent. Sarah mentioned *"technology company rather than a bank"* Financial institutions are always advancing, and colleagues are aware of the urgency PTSB faces to adapt to meet their competitors of the fintech companies such as Revolut. The researcher finds it important

to note, that some participants mentioned this change being different from the rest, Harrison stating "*felt a bit different. If that, like it was a bigger, it was gonna have a bigger impact on everyone* "and Jack "*this was your last chance for us to get this package* "

4.2.1 Work Pressure

HR initiatives were launched through ET to try adapting to the new operation model and meet colleagues needs. Participants were very aware the reasoning behind VSS to reduce costs with Mary "*it seems fair as it cuts costs* "and Caoimhe "*were saving costs*." Interestingly, Joe, directly involved in the ET project, noted that the exercise was not to solely focus on cutting cost but the "*deliver and achieve overall transformation to the way we operate as a bank*" and to "*implement organisational design properly*" however no other participant recognised this. Participants did discuss the additional pressures it has and will cause in the future. Especially the pressure in front line work within branches all commented on the loss of colleagues and the reduction in headcount is adding serious pressures to their day-to-day tasks. Harrison "*big worry there, seven down the three staff*". Jack, who does not work in RBD also comments on the added workload "*pressure is really intense right now*" and on the additional recruitment across the bank. This creates mixed messaging to PTSB colleagues. A reduction in headcount to cut costs while also adding in new bodies is counter acting the ultimate end goal. Another skilled participant did voice their concerns on the headcount reduction and the highly skilled tenured leavers. Those interviewed who were directly involved in the ET commented on the workload too, Sarah "*I had no personal life for about eight weeks*". Kotter's 8 step model (1995), Veldsman, T. H. (2019) suggests creating an organisational structure fit for purpose. PTSB should be aware that designing a fit for purpose structure should not only reduce headcount but ensure the reductions in headcount sees mundane tasks moved to alleviate the front-line staff. The future forward thinking of reducing people to cashless branches should not cause extra burden on the staff remaining

Ellis (2018) discuss the importance HR plays within a change process and the essential need top bridge this skill gap. This should be at the forefront of managers and HR to ensure that those leaving transfer their knowledge and we can offer our colleagues personal development to remain a skilled workforce.

The researcher also noted the additional pressures the ET has caused to the colleagues, The senior leaders are relying heavily on the mid to lower-level management to bear the brunt of the reduced headcount which hinders on the integrity factor of trustworthiness (Mayer et al, 1995) the researcher will discuss the below findings under a separate sub theme, trust in more detail.

4.2.2 Opportunity

Many participants mention the opportunity it presented to them when ET was announced and possibly the last chance to take VSS. Mary mentioned *"initial feeling was this was an opportunity|"* The HR initiatives offered , initiated an introspective view for our colleagues about their personal life and career development. All colleagues participating in the interview process applied for a smarter working option or severance bar one in retail as they "*knew I would not have been selected for their application*" Those working in the branch did mention they did not apply for homeworking as it is not available to them. Y. Serkan Ozmen (2017 point out the importance of taking care of all PTSB staff throughout a change. Those interviewed in RBD work part time which they believed was a benefit for them however Harrison voiced concerns about getting their job done within the four days. Caoimhe mentioned *"it would be great to work from home"*. Sarah directly involved in the project team did note their concerns for RBD colleagues "*hopefully remote type work and flexible arrangements in the branch network*".

The researcher notes, that those who are leaving on VSS also bares opportunity for those staying in the bank. Strong succession plans for the future talent should be reviewed and implemented by the HR department which gives rise to new, innovative leaders (Kotter, 1995)

4.2.3 Communication

Creating a clear vision should be a top priority for a transformational change within an organisation (Kotter, 1995) Pulinka (2020) also notes that adopting a change requires clear communication plan. The researcher found from the participants that the communication between direct manager was open and honest. Mary stating "*That was a really positive experience*". The researcher noted, that each participant discusses how supportive their direct

manager was with the smarter working initiatives. Joe *"We had really open conversations, I felt supported by him in terms of my decision I've made, ultimately, a positive outcome"*

The researcher found that communication was not as strong when it came promoting the change across the business via the leaders, and the ET team. This was a similar perception from those directly involved with the ET project and other participants. The researcher found that participants were *"drip fed"* (Eoin) information and lacked transparency from the beginning. Mary mentions *"communication could have been better"*. Jack states *"Communication was flat from leadership team"*. The results from all participants were negative towards communication especially from the higher management team. Caoimhe says *"communication was very poor; the branch still doesn't know what's going on"*. This common finding had a direct impact on the trust colleagues have for the change process and the leadership team. Mary mentions *"I felt let down by others"* when discussing communication with SLT and how they felt about it throughout the business. Martin took from a meeting that everyone was *"very lucky to have a job"*.

4.3 Theme 2: EE

The researcher noted common subthemes under EE that enable objectives from the study explored further. Throughout the literature noted that colleagues who are engaged within the company are committed and trust their peer's and their organisation (Bankar and Gankar, 2013) The average tenure of the participants was 13 years which shows the researcher they have continued loyalty for the bank over previous changes. Joe mentioned "*I have felt more engaged in the last 6 years* "and Harrison confirming their team "*have been fully engaged throughout the process"*. Participants had similar views on their peers and enjoyed working in their teams. All participants take pride in their role within PTSB. Both enjoying their team and their colleagues, and their role allows colleagues to be engaged in the business. This is seen though such responses *"community feeling"* and Joe *"Met fantastic and good people within this organisation"*. This community feeling is something that PTSB are committed to, and results shown throughout the interviews that take place. Each participant respected their teammate and the company with Sarah "*the organisation has been really good to its people"*. The researcher discovered when engagement is split down were 3 key sub themes emerging, which uncovers some key findings

4.3.1 Commitment

The researcher found that all participants are committed to their role however few mentioned that commitment is lost towards senior leaders. Commitment and trust are correlated according to Bankar and Gankar (2013). The researcher notes similar responses from all colleagues when asked about their commitment to the bank. Participants were fully committed to their role, regardless of the change. Jack mentions *"I am always 100% committed to anything I do"*. The researchers found that all those committed to their role, understand the importance of their role they play in the bank, and they would all be committed to achieving the strategy of the bank. However, the researcher found that the participants shared a common idea that commitment was lost for their senior leaders. Martin mentioned *"commitment for my team, yes, commitment for that person, No"*

The researcher noted that participants responded similar for what brings them to work every day. They are motivated and committed to the people they work with within the Bank, Jack *"the kind of family kind of close-knit culture"* The researcher found that all participants motivation and commitment to their fellow team members is consistent regardless of the change programme. Those participants in RBD also answered similar with their motivation is their customers. Regardless of the pressures they face with a reduction in team, displacements of their fellow peers, they thrive to continue to their job the best of their ability. Caoimhe *It's engaging with customers. I love all of that"*

Martin mentioned their manager went above and beyond to confirm their value add to the company when accepted for VSS, reiterated their value, and we didn't want to let go. This ensured the colleague did not feel they were being cut from company due to costing. This is similar with Jack moving to another project while others accepting VSS are not leaving until as late as 2022 to close off work across the bank.

4.3.2 Trust

Those who trust the organisation will work hard and remain loyal to an organisation. When employees trust the organisation, there is a higher level of engagement (Jena, Pradhan, and Panigrahy 2019) Mary *"commitment & Loyalty"* are both aspects they would mention when discussing engagement. Hannah *"it's in our DNA, and I couldn't give it up"*. Trust was a prevalent subtheme in which everyone had swaying views towards their trust towards PTSB.

All participants trusted the policies and procedures and firmly trusted the products PTSB offered to their customers. However there seemed to be a lack of trust when discussing Senior leaders within the bank and their intentions. Martin *"I would never have trusted them"* The researcher found that those who were at a higher level within the bank had a higher level of trust in their senior peers than those who were at lower management level, Sarah "there *is a huge level of trust".* It is crucial for organisations to have colleagues at all levels who trust in not only their policies but their management as this allows the company to achieve the purpose set out (Vanhala, M. and Dietz, G., 2019). PTSB need to be mindful of this result to ensure there is high trust environment. The factors of trust can be split into ability, benevolence, and integrity. From the data found, the researcher has noted the following:

- Ability – all participants are committed to their role and the tasks. Those leaving on voluntary severance will continue to work their best and provide success for their team. Jack mentions previous changes developed their career and without that change would not have seen their growth within the company. Likewise, others mentioned the opportunity was to either work on the ET transformation project or be apart of it from a wider perspective. Mary *"I was given the opportunity to do what I wanted to do"*
- Benevolence - Trust is developed through the support of managers and open, honest conversations. All participants had similar responses to their communication with their direct manager (Y. Serkan Ozmen, 2017) –the researcher under communication which correlates with trust factors and the objective set out at the start of this paper
- Integrity – The reliance on management towards their colleagues and vis versa is crucial for trusting organisation. The researcher found there was a heavy reliance on the L4 and L5 staff to successfully deliver the ET objectives. The sub theme, pressure, shows the reduction in staff and the Project team added a massive workload to people directly and indirectly working through the change, Joe *"very heavy lift from a small number of people"*. Szarek (2017) noted within their study, organisations need a strong leadership and involvement from every level for successful change, a phased approach to the change management, and involvement from every level within the organisation for change to take place and be successful.

From the above, benevolence factor for trust was overall negative. The researcher made some key findings within trustworthiness. The findings show that colleagues trust their direct manager and their fellow peers. However, they lack trust with senior leaders and the movement. The researcher identifies this could cause an impediment on the ET overall result.

4.4 Conclusion

The researcher's data findings were pertinent to the aims and objectives for the overall study. The key themes identified, change and EE allowed the researcher to find sub themes and place them into groupings for the clearer data analysis, this allowed the researcher to identify with the literature and pull-out important issues that the change process has had on the colleagues across the bank. The first finding, colleagues are aware of the change and their perspective of change is that it will continue to evolve due to external pressures. Although, many identified the change process was a cost cutting exercise however PTSB goal was not to just cut cost but to promote total redesign of the operate model for future fit.

Change brings with it opportunity for PTSB employees. Participants identified with this and found ET an opportunity for their career or personal development. The opportunity to either receive a sum of money or move around the company brings with it positive opportunity. However, change has also created work pressures across the organisation. The researcher noted that reduction in headcount has created additional stressors on the front-line staff along with a heavy lift in the back office. It is critical for leaders to recognise colleagues' efforts put in to allow ET to successfully implement throughout the organisation. Without the most important asset being valued ,PTSBs workforce, the change will not be a success. Kotter (1995) discusses short wins to enable future success and motivate colleagues. Communication was overall poor between colleagues and senior leaders. The researcher found that this poor communication had a direct impact on the trust the colleagues had for PTSB. Although they trust the policies products and their team, the lack of trust is prevalent for top line management.

The researcher identified two sub themes under EE that they found significant to discuss within their findings. EE throughout the process was positive with some participants not totally engaged after the process. However, when the researcher analysed deeper, colleagues related their commitment to the role and their peers a direct relation to the engagement. From the literature . it suggests colleagues require to be fully committed and trusting towards the organisation. After analysing the data, the researcher can say that there is a positive commitment the participant gives to their team. The community bank advertises this to their internal and external stakeholders and there is a deep sense of family bond within the company. This is noticed via each participant and is shown in their daily working lives,

commitment to their job and tasks every day and is the essence of what PTSB stand for. Participants lack trust in their leaders which correlates with the effect of change it has had on our colleagues within the organisation. Colleagues' ability to perform within the organisation is positive, however they cannot rely on their senior management.

Chapter 5: Discussions , Recommendations and Conclusions

5.1 Discussions

This research paper main objective was to explore the effects of change management on employee's engagement within PTSB. An interpretive qualitative research was undertaken to unearth a deeper insight on PTSB colleagues, their views on the change management process.

Change management is a process that takes time and consideration by leadership to implement. There will inevitably be resistance to change from employees however ensuring there is a transparent process and roadmap for every individual will create a smoother transition. Throughout the findings, it can be said that change is an opportunity for the company to update their strategy but also an opportunity for the colleagues. This opportunity presents itself as career development, flexibility, and personal gains. Within the literature review, Kotter (1995) discusses change management is celebrating the short wins with colleagues along this journey. PTSB leadership team need to recognise those colleagues on the ground. The researcher discovers work pressures from many of the participants which was directly affected by ET. It is important the leadership team understand the heavy lift it entails and the negative effects it has had on the colleagues.

This research also highlighted the important aspects of communication which is critical for change implementation. This study shown positive communication between participant and their line manager, having open two conversations over the ET initiatives, the options available to colleagues and what to expect . However, the researcher found that the lack of transparency from SLT and the ET team caused uncertainty. As mentioned within the literature Hitt et al (pg. 429 2014) discuss a greater the change correlates with higher uncertainty between employees and their managers. The findings suggest that this is true when talking about senior management rather than direct line manager in this case. The researcher found it important to highlight that most participants seen the practice as a cost cutting exercise however this is only a single factor to why change is brought in the first instance.

The findings presented a loyalty amongst the participant as each participant had over 13 years tenure within the bank. The commitment colleagues have for their role within the organization does not change. The researcher found a commonality with all participants and

the main motivator is the people. Those participants were committed to their team .Those leaving on VS will maintain their commitment until they leave and this has not put hindrance on their motivation to achieve success for themselves and their team. It is important to note, the researcher found that commitment is lowered towards the leadership team due to lack of transparency mentioned above. Similarly, an important finding for the research, colleagues trusted their teams to do the right thing, but this trust diminished with the senior leadership team. The researchers final note, those who are fully engaged which states in the literature Jena et al (2019) trust and EE is interlinked. From the findings, it can be found that employees are not fully engaged within the organisation due to ET implementation.

5.2 Limitations

5.2.1 Covid -19
While ET has been in planning with PTSB pre-Pandemic, this potentially has impacted the results. Front line staff were extremely busy meeting customers across the country and this increased workload could have changed their perception and thought process against the change programme. The VSS with strong terms negotiated with the unions is a lucrative package for a long tenured staff however since the pandemic people are valuing their permanent job as partners and family are facing potential issues with business and money. The researcher also found that a face-to-face interview could have potentially created a better rapport and allowed for further discussion on the topic.

5.2.2 Sample Size
The researcher feels that a larger sample size with more diverse levels of seniority within those groups could have broadened the findings. As the sample size consisted of only 1 senior manager (L1), 3 middle management and the remaining were Level 4. Time and resources played a factor in this

5.2.3 Ulster bank Announcement
PTSB announced possible take over of NAT WEST, Ulster bank €7.6 Billion loan and SME business. This will see c500 jobs transferred under PTSB if this deal is closed. This

announcement will cause another viewpoint of change and therefore if this research was to be completed again results may be different.

5.3 Recommendations

5.3.1 Cross skill

The researcher recommends The ET project team required more bodies in place. The heavy workload caused negative emotions towards the change process. As the bank are reducing costs, PTSB should have cross skilled and called on people across the bank. Those who applied for voluntary redundancy or had been displaced could have had the ability to work on this project. this in turn cross skills and brings about further opportunity for people who are placed at risk

5.3.2 Communication

Although huge efforts were put in for the communications within PTSB , there needed to be consistency. A stronger communication plan with SLT in each department involved would have allowed the SLT to be seen more throughout the bank, and have a more personal touch to it. Roadshows and webinars were planned however not many were seen.

5.3.3 Flexibility for Retail

While HR initiatives for a more flexible hybrid work environment were recognised, the RBD participant do not have this option. PTSB should work towards a possibility for the colleagues in branches to work from home on certain days. The technology is available for this to happen. The operational side can be reviewed by management and time schedules can be reviewed to create an easy transition. Admin work can be completed from home working and this should be called out .

5.3.4 Succession planning

The researcher notes, that those who are leaving on VSS also bares opportunity for those staying in the bank. Strong succession plans for the future talent should be reviewed and implemented by the HR department which gives rise to new, innovative leaders (Kotter, 1995)

5.4 Personal learning statement

It was an incredibly difficult task of staying unbiased towards the research. As a HR business partner, I worked very closely with the enterprise transformation team, senior leaders and the colleagues across technology and finance. from very early on in the project. As covid -19 has taken a strain on everyone, I found it a difficult yet rewarding challenge to write this while continuing to work in a very busy department. My resilience has been challenging but I know if I can face this, I can really achieve anything I put my mind to. I am very happy with this piece of work I have created and will guide me in making my next move in my Career.

5.5 Practical implications

These findings have important practical implications for PTSB. Additional support for the ET team should enable a smoother transition. As PTSB try and reduce headcount, this provides an opportunity to hire someone from across the business who has been either put at risk or in the deployment pool. This bares no recruitment cost and allows the organisation to maintain candidate that knows the business well. This will reduce training costs and home working kit costs.

5.6 Future Study

Future study should review the change management and the effects it has on leaders within an organisation. Leaders face different challenges and the ability to not only lead, manage their teams and others stresses but also their own ambiguities within an organization while maintain focus on the future goals.

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Appendices

Consent Email Sent

Hi There,

I hope you are keeping well.

I am currently studying my Master's degree in National college of Ireland and conducting a research paper within the bank. As we have gone through radical transformation throughout PTSB our most valuable asset, our people, have taken a direct impact. Initiative's including Voluntary Severance and smarter ways of working are offered to adapt to our new ways of working. Transformational change enables us to satisfy our employees and customers needs while also adapting to the external pressures including technology advances, social environment and economic status.

The aim of my research is the understand the change process and the effects it has had on our colleagues across the bank . The objectives explore

- The effects the change process has had on our colleagues
- Perspectives on the change process
- Level of engagement and trust in our bank through this transformation
- Thoughts on future changes

The bank value honest and open conversations, which I will hope to achieve in this hour. Your participation is anonymised and names will be changed in my research paper in which you will be totally unidentifiable. All information I collect will be confidential however quotes may be used for my findings . I have attached a consent form, if you are willing to take part, please return at your earliest convenience and accept the meeting. If you do not want to participate, please decline this meeting. I will forward the questions a day before for the research meeting.

Feel free to give me a shout on the mobile should you have any questions

Many thanks for your support

Niamh Fitzsimons,

MSC HRM , CIPD qualified

An exploratory study to investigate the effects transformational change has on EE within PTSB

Consent to take part in research for Niamh Fitzsimons

☐ I…………………………………… voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.

☐ I understand that even if I agree to participate now, I can withdraw at any time or refuse to answer

any question without any consequences of any kind.

☐ I understand that I can withdraw permission to use data from my interview within two weeks after

the interview, in which case the material will be deleted.

☐ I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me in writing and I have had the

opportunity to ask questions about the study.

☐ I understand that participation involves…[outline briefly in simple terms what participation in

your research will involve].

☐ I understand that I will not benefit directly from participating in this research.

☐ I agree to my interview being audio-recorded.

☐ I understand that all information I provide for this study will be treated confidentially.

☐ I understand that in any report on the results of this research my identity will remain anonymous.

This will be done by changing my name and disguising any details of my interview which may

reveal my identity or the identity of people I speak about.

☐ I understand that disguised extracts from my interview may be quoted in…[list all forum in which

you plan to use the data from the interview: dissertation, conference presentation, published

papers etc.].

☐ I understand that if I inform the researcher that myself or someone else is at risk of harm they

may have to report this to the relevant authorities - they will discuss this with me first but may be

required to report with or without my permission.

☐ I understand that signed consent forms and original audio recordings will be retained in [specify

location, security arrangements and who has access to data] until [specific relevant period – for

students this will be until the exam board confirms the results of their dissertation].

☐ I understand that a transcript of my interview in which all identifying information has been

removed will be retained for [specific relevant period – for students this will be two years from

the date of the exam board].

☐ I understand that under freedom of information legalisation I am entitled to access the

information I have provided at any time while it is in storage as specified above.

☐ I understand that I am free to contact any of the people involved in the research to seek further

clarification and information.

Names, degrees, affiliations and contact details of researchers (and academic supervisors when relevant).

Signature of research participant

--- ----------------

Signature of participant Date

Signature of researcher

I believe the participant is giving informed consent to participate in this study

--- ----------------------

Signature of researcher Date

Interview Questions

1. How long have you worked for PTSB?
2. What Smarter Ways if Working did you chose and was it accepted?
3. What motivates you coming into work? Defines
4. When was the first time you heard about Enterprise Transformation ?
5. What was your initial feelings towards Enterprise Transformation?
6. How did you feel regarding the communications from the beginning?
7. Tell me about the communications between you and your manager
8. What is your concept of employee engagement? Do you feel engaged? Talk about employee engaged, talk about it, do you feel engaged. (not at all, sometimes, yes, yes so motivated). 1-10 how motivated do u feel.
9. What is your perception of trust towards you employer? trust, do they trust your manager, trust your ET team and the senior managers .
10. Was there an opportunity for you to actively participate in the change across the bank?
11. What did it mean for you within the company?
12. Tell me your thoughts post change regarding your motivation, Trust and engagement? Probe on trust and engagement.