

**Investigating the Impact of Human Resource Outsourcing on Employee
Job Satisfaction, Employee Loyalty, and Employee Turnover Intention.**

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Abstract

The model of the Human Resource (HR) department in organisations can be considered a crucial factor in determining the employee concepts of employee job satisfaction, employee loyalty and employee turnover intention. This study examines the impact of HR Outsourcing (HRO), the shared services model, and in-house HR on employee job satisfaction, employee loyalty and employee turnover intention on employees in Ireland. A quantitative approach was used for this study, with participants employed across various industries in Ireland. Questionnaires were employed to analyse the differences in the levels of employee job satisfaction, employee loyalty, and turnover intention, between groups of employees, based on the HR model used by their employers. The Kruskal-Wallis test was used for this purpose. No statistically significant differences were found in the levels of job satisfaction, employee loyalty and turnover intention amongst any group. These findings suggest that HRO does not impact the job satisfaction, employee loyalty and turnover intention of employees in Ireland.

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List of Abbreviations

HR	Human Resources
HRM	Human Resource Management
HRO	Human Resource Outsourcing
L&D	Learning and Development
JS	Job Satisfaction
EL	Employee Loyalty
TI	Turnover Intention
US	United States
HON	Hierarchy of Needs

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1. Background of the Research

The business environment in which organisations operate has unequivocally been transformed by globalisation over the last two decades. Many business operations and standard practices have undergone astronomical changes in order to maintain pace with their ever-changing and complex environments of operation (Sakib, et al., 2023). Human Resources (HR) is no exception to this. Many organisations over the last two decades have begun to outsource their HR activities in a bid to optimise their operations, by reducing costs and allowing internal resources to focus on competitive elements (Edvardsson and Óskarsson, 2021; Nguyen and Chang, 2017). However, there is much debate amongst researchers and HR practitioners on whether Human Resource Outsourcing (HRO) bears more risk than reward. The risks associated with HRO include the loss of in-house expertise, loss of unique competencies, and the risk of compromising employee morale within the workplace (Pandey, 2021; Reichel and Lazarova, 2013). This research aims to investigate the impact of HRO in Ireland on employee morale, more specifically the components of employee job satisfaction, employee loyalty and employee turnover intention.

1.2. Rationale of the Research

Much of the research available on HRO focuses primarily on elements such as the competitive advantage HRO may bring, cost and general efficiency, relationship between the client and HRO provider and quality of partnership. The research available that considers the impact of HRO on employee morale has been conducted in countries holding many different societal values and norms to the ones held in Ireland. With a few exceptions, the general consensus of such research suggests that HRO has a negative impact on employee job satisfaction, employee loyalty and employee turnover intention. However, due to many differences between the countries wherein past research has been conducted and Ireland, it prompts the question on whether HRO has the same impact on employees in Ireland. Currently, there is a dearth in the research on this specific topic in Ireland. This research hopes to contribute toward filling the gap on such research. Ultimately, it is hoped that the insight gained will be used to help make recommendations to HR practitioners and organisations who are considering implementing HRO.

1.3. Outline of the Research

Chapter two will review relevant HRO literature. Current insights on HRO in the Irish context will be outlined. The outsourcing of HR functions will then be outlined, followed by a discussion on the risks and reward associated with HRO. This will be followed by an overview of the concepts of employee job satisfaction, employee loyalty and employee turnover intention, alongside a review of the literature with studies the impact of HRO on such concepts. Chapter three will outline the research question and objectives of the study. Chapter four will explain the methodology of the study. Chapter five will present the results of the study, alongside a discussion of the key findings, including comparisons with literature discussed in Chapter two. Chapter six will present a broader discussion of findings, highlight limitations, and make recommendations for future research before arriving at the final conclusion.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

Since the late 1980s, globalisation has drastically changed the way organisations conduct their operations across the globe, with many organisations implementing a concept known as outsourcing. Outsourcing refers to the buying of a business service from an external provider (Wijesiri, et al., 2019). In the early stages of globalisation, organisations were seen to outsource a number of functions in a bid to increase efficiency, reduce costs, and ultimately maximise their competitiveness (Charles and Ochieng, 2023). Where initially, the outsourced activities were seen mostly in divisions such finance and accounting, IT and supply chain management, organisations began to see an increase of outsourcing in their other functional divisions, such as research and development, or Human Resource Management (HRM) (Song Li-li, 2011, Wijesiri, 2019).

HR Outsourcing (HRO) has emerged as a trend within the world of HRM only within the last decade (Sakib et al., 2023), with many organisations now opting to outsource a variety of HR functions, including learning and development (L&D), payroll processing and administration, employee relations, HR IT systems, recruitment and selection, and compensation and benefits (Gottardello and Valverde, 2018, Susomrith and Brown, 2013). As globalisation continues to increase market competitiveness across all industries, many organisations opt to outsource their HR functions also with the aim of saving financial costs and increasing efficiency, but also with the aim of reducing risk, accessing greater talent pools, access to expertise and to allow for their internal resources to be allocated to other areas (Armstrong and Taylor, 2014; Sakib et al., 2023).

2.2. Outsourcing in Irish context

A 2023 survey conducted by the CIPD found a global average of 72% of organisations to source one or more of their HR functions, and 71% of Irish organisations to outsource one or more of their HR functions, with payroll and complex case management being the most commonly outsourced. A 2022 survey conducted by the CIPD found that nearly a fifth of Irish organisations operate from a small, centralised HR function and outsource ‘much’ of its people management functions, indicating that HRO presence is vast. However, the academic literature concerning HRO within the Irish context is lacking.

2.3. The Outsourcing of HR Functions

HRO activities can be categorised into two main functions of HRM; the operational function, which includes the peripheral activities of HRM, or the strategic function of HRM, which includes the core activities (Lilly, et al., 2005; Wallo and Kock, 2018). The former refers to the day-to-day HR activities, such as recruitment and selection, payroll processing and administration, employee relations, and compensation and benefits. The latter refers to the development and implementation of a framework that links an organisations HR strategy to their long term business goals, focusing on larger scale areas such as organisational structure, culture and values, long term resourcing issues i.e. succession planning, learning and development (L&D) strategy, and reward strategy and contribute to the organisation's competitive advantage (CIPD, 2023, Wallo and Kock, 2018).

Many organisations that use HRO opt to adopt a 'shared services' model, which involves managing certain HR activities in-house, and outsourcing certain activities to HRO providers (CIPD, 2023). Both older and more contemporary researchers agree that the strategic elements of HR that contribute to an organisation's competitiveness should be kept in-house, and only the operational elements of HR should be outsourced (Belcourt, 2006; Reichel and Lazarova, 2013; Wallo and Kock, 2018). However, the CIPD (2011) outlines that this occurs mostly in large organisations, where there is sufficient expertise within the in-house HR department to facilitate the strategic and decision-making aspects of HR. Within the HR departments of smaller organisations, which may not have a high calibre of HR expertise in their in-house departments, the outsourcing of those strategic activities are more often seen to be outsourced.

However, there are many other factors, other than organisation size, that influence an organisation's decision to use HRO. These factors are outlined and discussed in the next section.

2.4. The Rationale for HRO and Perceived Benefits

There is much debate amongst researchers surrounding the basis on which organisations choose to use HRO and the perceived organisational benefits of its implementation. The contextual and structural setting of an organisation are found to be key determinants in an organisation's decision in implementing HRO, attesting that the advantages and disadvantages of HRO can also differ for organisations, based on their contextual and structural setting (Alewell, et al.,

2009; Edvardsson and Óskarsson, 2021). However, much of the research available on the benefits associated with HRO tends to be consistent in key areas.

Firstly, much of the research indicates that saving of both financial costs and time saving serve as incentives for organisations to use HRO i.e. reducing headcount; the financial costs associated with using a HRO provider may be less than the cost of remuneration of an employee performing those same tasks; and allows for the in-house HR department to delegate their time and resources their own areas of expertise (Edvardsson and Óskarsson, 2021; Nguyen and Chang, 2017; Reichel and Lazarova, 2013).

Secondly, HRO allows organisations to access expertise within the areas where they are lacking internally, therefore enhancing the quality of HR services provided i.e. accessing greater talent pools in the area of recruitment, access to more efficient reward systems in the area of compensation and benefits, legal expertise within employee relations (Abdul-Halim and Che-Ha, 2010; Cooke, et al., 2005; Edvardsson and Óskarsson, 2021). In a similar vein, HRO is seen to be used in organisations who operate internationally, and may opt to use local HRO providers with a thorough understanding of the industrial relations climate and legal environment of the host country, allowing for effective and legitimate operation (Sakib, 2023; Song Li-li, 2011). Thirdly, HRO may allow for greater flexibility and productivity i.e. HRO services can be used as required depending on the fluctuating demands within the organisation (Cooke, et al., 2005).

Although the benefits associated with HRO would appear to be vast in terms of improving organisational efficiency, there are also negative effects associated with HRO that should not be overlooked.

2.5. Risk and reward

There is growing debate amongst researchers on whether HRO bears more risk than reward for organisations. Though many organisations choose to outsource with the aim of reducing costs, the hidden costs associated with HRO pose the risk of outweighing those benefits. Costs that may be overlooked include transition costs, contract amendments that may occur due to uncertain environments, the implementation of unsuitable technology, and low efficiency due to employee ambiguity (Song Li-li, 2011). Moreover, many organisations grossly overestimate

the projected benefits versus the actual benefits experienced from HRO, not only with regards to the financial aspect, but also in regard to the quality of services provided (Belcourt, 2006).

Loss of in-house knowledge is another risk associated with HRO (Pandey, 2021; Reichel and Lazarova, 2013); It is argued that organisations can be challenged in retaining in-house knowledge and expertise upon the implementation of HRO i.e. the decision to outsource is made under the presumption that the L&D needs of the organisation will be wholly tended to by the HRO provider, who then cannot grasp the extent of training needed to maintain the overall skill supply within the organisation.

Furthermore, research conducted on recruitment process outsourcing (RPO), an area within HRO where the recruitment of employees is outsourced to an external provider, finds RPO to be problematic wherein an RPO provider may damage an organisation's employer image throughout the recruitment process, resulting in a loss of suitable candidates and damaging overall employer reputation (Claus-Wehner, et al., 2012).

Another major downfall of HRO that can be seen to be mentioned repeatedly throughout the literature is the negative effects it may have on the employee morale within organisations who avail of HRO. Pandey (2021), argues that HRO causes the number of employees within an organisation to decrease, and creates a gap between organisational and interpersonal relationships within the workplace where HRO is implemented. This can subsequently damage the psychological contracts between employees-employers (Pandey, 2021; Schlosser, et al., 2006). It can be argued that eventually, workplace culture may be compromised, as a result of loss of organisational values and culture clashes between the HRO provider and client organisation, therefore resulting in further inefficiency (Song Li-li, 2011; Pandey, 2021). Furthermore, the implementation of HRO can be regarded as an organisational restructuring to some degree, with its implementation bearing the risk of compromising an employee's sense of identification within the organisation, alongside their feelings of security and belonging (Belcourt, 2006).

In light of this, it is imperative to further discuss employee morale itself and the factors that may cause such breakdown in employee morale as a result of HRO, to gain a further understanding on why this might occur within organisations.

2.6. Employee Morale

Employee morale is a complex concept within HRM. It can be described as a combination of contributing factors that impact how employees feel about their jobs. These are employee job satisfaction, their feelings toward their organisation, the degree to which they are engaged, and the emotions they have toward their work environment based on the management, policies and culture of the workplace (Bhasin, 2018; Verma and Kesari, 2017, Webster, 2018). Generally, employees who have positive feelings towards their jobs, have high job satisfaction, are engaged with their work and are content within their work environment, can be regarded as high morale employees. The opposite can be said for employees who are regarded as low morale employees. Workplaces with high levels of employee morale tend to see employees display high levels of willingness and cooperation, have loyalty toward both the organisation and its leadership, display initiative and job interest, and show organisational pride (Bhasin, 2018). Workplaces with low levels of employee morale might see employees display disinterest toward their jobs, organisational distrust, disloyalty, higher levels of conflict and overall non-compliance (Bhasin, 2018).

2.6.1. Impact of HRO on Employee Morale

Much of the early literature on HRO suggests that it has a negative impact on employee morale within organisations. This is attributed to employee needs not being fulfilled as a result of HRO (Logan, et al., 2004), the decision to implement HRO may suggest to employees that their jobs are in jeopardy (Walsh and Deery, 2006), employees lacking trust in HRO provider (Cooke, et al., 2005).

More recent literature suggests that the implementation of HRO causes a breakdown in employee morale due to HRO providers being unable to grasp the organisational culture of the client and damaging the psychological contract between employee and employer (Pandey, 2021). However, while employee morale in itself is undoubtedly a key component within the discussion of employee well-being within organisations, it is also critical to further explore some of the individual aspects that contribute to employee morale, in order to gain a thorough understanding of how HRO might affect each of those individual components.

2.7. Employee Job Satisfaction

Employee job satisfaction is defined as the attitudes and feelings employees have toward their work (Armstrong and Taylor, 2014) and a key component in the concept of employee morale. Where an employee has negative feelings and attitudes towards their job it indicates job dissatisfaction, positive attitude and feelings toward their job indicates job satisfaction (Kanapathipillai and Azam, 2020). Although employee job satisfaction and employee morale are similar, where both concepts focus on the levels of satisfaction that an employee attains from their job, they differ where employee job satisfaction concentrates on the satisfaction element alone; employee morale goes beyond that concept alone and is affected in a higher capacity by other factors such as employee engagement and commitment (Bhasin, 2018).

However, despite job satisfaction being primarily concerned with the attitude and feelings employees have toward their work, it is linked to many factors that impact organisational success. These factors include productivity, performance, turnover, and wider organisational culture (Bezdrob and Sunje, 2021; Rodjam, et al., 2020). These factors can be regarded as instrumental in an organisation's ability to achieve its goals (Ristovska and Eftimoy, 2019). This suggests that the job satisfaction of employees within an organisation can be an indicator of the organisation achieving their goals.

Job satisfaction in itself, however, is considered to be a complex multi-dimensional concept, and concerns itself in a large capacity with the theories of employee motivation, such as those of Maslow (1954), and Herzberg (Herzberg, et al., 1957).

2.7.1. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (HON) suggests that there are five categories of needs: fundamental physiological needs, safety needs, social needs, esteem needs, and self-actualization. All five categories must be fulfilled in order to achieve full motivation; and needs further down in the hierarchy must be fulfilled prior to the fulfilment of the needs in higher categories (Maslow, 1954). Based on the nature of HRO, it can be presumed that although there may not be an impact on the lowest tier needs of physiological needs, it could impact the safety, social, esteem and self actualisation needs of employees. This is further discussed in Section 2.7.3.

However, the literature linking HRO and Maslow's theory is lacking.

2.1.7.2. Criticisms of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Despite Maslow's HON being used as the foundation of many discussions surrounding motivation within an academic context, many researchers have been critical of the theory. Many have found a lack of empirical evidence supporting the theory itself. Hofstede (1984) highlights how HON is based upon Western ideology, and does not account for the needs of societies with a different culture i.e. where self actualisation may hold significance for individualistic societies, community and acceptance would be of a greater significance in collectivist societies. Furthermore, Tay and Diener (2011) criticise the HON ranking, stating that ranking of needs varies depending on age group. The ranking has also been criticised as being too simplistic by Cianci and Gambrel (2003), who suggest that factors such as recession and war can greatly alter the ranking of HON. Lastly, the methodology of HON has been criticised by many; Mittleman (1991), highlights that HON methodology involves data only drawn from subjects who are in the top 1% achievers of college populations and refers to high academic achievers within his research, and is therefore unrepresentative of the general population.

It is imperative to consider Maslow's HON, alongside its criticisms when reflecting how HRO may impact employee job satisfaction.

2.7.2. Herzberg's Two Factor Theory

Herzberg's Two Factor Theory, contrary to the previous, more traditional motivational theories, suggests that the factors that determine job satisfaction and dissatisfaction are independent from one another. Traditionally, it is suggested that the factors that determine job satisfaction and dissatisfaction are interdependent, i.e. where high salaries would have been indicative of high job satisfaction, low salaries would indicate the opposite. Herzberg argues that the presence of 'motivators', which are primarily intrinsic sources of motivation such as the need for achievement, the interest an employee has toward their work, responsibility, recognition, and opportunities for progression establish job satisfaction. The lack of presence

of ‘hygiene factors’ are primarily extrinsic sources, such as various environmental factors, salary, working conditions, relationship with supervisor and colleagues and company policies that cause job dissatisfaction. Herzberg argues that presence of these ‘hygiene factors’ alone are not sufficient for job satisfaction, but rather serve to prevent job dissatisfaction (Herzberg, et al., 1957). The impact that HRO might have on these needs may vary depending on the function of HR that is being outsourced, and whether outsourced service correctly identifies and meets the needs of the organisation i.e. where L&D is outsourced, correctly meeting the needs of the organisation and subsequently presents employees with opportunity for career progression. It can then be established that this may serve as a motivator for employees, therefore increasing job satisfaction. On the other hand, where compensation and benefits is outsourced (regarded as a hygiene factor), and does not meet the needs of employees, this causes job dissatisfaction amongst employees.

2.7.2.1. Criticism of Herzberg’s Two Factor Theory

Herzberg’s theory has been criticised by researchers for its methodology; wherein the research was conducted using a critical incident technique, requiring subjects to reflect retrospectively. This is deemed unsuitable for the analysis of the motivation/ hygiene factors and causes subjects to reflect on only their most recent experiences (Malik and Naeem, 2013). Furthermore, the research was conducted only on ‘knowledge workers’ i.e. accounts, engineers, and therefore the findings cannot be generalised to the overall workforce (Osemeke and Adegboyega, 2017).

As mentioned for Maslow’s Theory, it is also imperative to take Herzberg’s theory and its criticisms into account when determining whether HRO has an impact on employee job satisfaction/motivation.

2.7.3. Impact of HRO on Employee Job Satisfaction

Research has found contradictory results on the impact of HRO on employee job satisfaction. Elmuti, et al., (2010) found HRO negatively impacts employee job satisfaction in organisations. Specifically, it was within this research that the implementation of outsourcing within an organisation resulted in over half of employees deeming their workplace unreliable, and fearing for their job security. This subsequently decreased overall job satisfaction. It can

be argued that this would fall under the safety needs category of Maslow's HON. To reiterate, safety needs is the second tier of the hierarchy, essential for the fulfillment of higher tiers. This suggests that not only may HRO result in the safety needs of employees not being met, but it also may subsequently prevent the social, esteem and self-actualisation needs of employees being met. In terms of Herzberg's Two Factor Theory, it can be argued that lack of job security are associated with the 'hygiene factors', the lack of which lead to job dissatisfaction.

The research conducted by ul-Ain and Siddiqui (2020), was conducted using a quantitative approach. Although causation could not be established, the findings in the research were said to be attributed to HRO causing strain on employer-employee relationships, subsequently leading to low levels of job satisfaction. This research also found HRO to negatively impact employee motivation, attributed to HRO providers being unable to grasp the learning and development needs of employees, a concept also suggested by (Reichel and Lazarova, 2013). Furthermore, it was found within this study that industry experience of employees impacted their response to HRO. It can be argued that these attributions would fall into the 'social needs' category of Maslow's HON. This would subsequently prevent the esteem and self-actualisation needs of employees being fulfilled. In terms of Herzberg's Two Factor Theory, it can be argued that lack of learning and development fall into the 'motivator' category. The presence of motivators are said to contribute to job satisfaction. However, lack of motivators alone do not necessarily lead to job dissatisfaction. Within this theory's framework, this suggests that there are other attributes that have led to HRO causing job dissatisfaction.

However, although the findings of ul-Ain and Siddiqui (2020) are certainly insightful, the research was conducted with employees in Pakistan, and is not necessarily indicative of the impact of HRO on employees in Ireland.

Research conducted by Quartey (2013) finds contradictory results, finding that HRO activities do not cause job dissatisfaction amongst employees. However, Quartey (2013) suggests this may be attributed to the research conducted within a time period where jobs were scarce, with employees wanting to exhibit positive feelings about their jobs to keep them. Moreover, this research was conducted in Ghana, and again, is not necessarily indicative of the impact of HRO on employees in Ireland. Despite the limitations of Quartey's research, the findings cannot be

ruled out, however, research conducted in a time period where jobs are not scarce would draw more conclusive results.

It is also worth noting that much of the research concerning the impact of HRO on employees does not closely examine the impact on job satisfaction. It was therefore deemed essential to include such in this research to draw further conclusions.

2.8. Employee Loyalty

Another contributing factor to employee morale is employee loyalty. Employee loyalty refers to an employee's willingness to be dedicated, committed and responsible for contributing to their time and efforts towards their organisation's goals (Chen, et al., 2022). The greater the amount of loyalty an employee holds toward their organisation, the more likely they are to act in the best interest of the organization, display enthusiasm for their work; perform with the aim of achieving organisational goals; and be accepting of change that is presented in the interest of the organisation, due to their readiness to make personal sacrifice for their organisation (Mehta et al., 2017; Phuong and Vinh, 2021; Yan et al., 2022).

According to Abd-El-Salam (2023), organisations with high employee loyalty will benefit from employees who display readiness to make great effort in the interest of the organisation, who are committed and dedicated to their organisation, and who have a strong desire to remain employed within the organisation. Similarly, Khuong and Linh (2013), found that organisations with low employee loyalty will be at risk of employees having a lack of confidence in their organisation, poor performance, high levels of absenteeism and high turnover intention.

To achieve high levels of employee loyalty, it is argued that organisations must also demonstrate loyalty to their employees, to a level that is equal to or greater than what is aimed to be achieved from their employees (Dhir, et al., 2020). Organisations may opt to achieve this through the implementation of 'employee friendly' policies, such as flexible working policies, family leave policies, etc (Stojanovic et al., 2020). Employee loyalty may also be achieved by creating a work environment that corresponds to the organisation's vision and values in practice (Abd-El-Salam, 2023). Other factors that impact employee loyalty within organisations are opportunities for career progression, level of job security provided, work environment,

organisational culture, recognition and reward (Ineson et al., 2013; Khuong and Linh, 2013; Pawirosumarto et al., 2017).

Overall, it appears from the literature that employers can greatly benefit from high levels of employee loyalty, and that employers can indeed take measures to positively influence employee loyalty.

2.8.1. Impact of HRO on Employee Loyalty

As seen in Section 2.7.3, the research regarding the impact of HRO on employee loyalty also bears some contradictory results.

It is suggested that HRO may lead to employee disloyalty through the creation of an organisational culture that is fearful and lacks employer trust (De-Corte and Lieven, 2008; Sim, 2010). Furthermore, recent research conducted by ul-Ain, and Siddiqui (2020), finds that HRO negatively impacts employee commitment. This is attributed to poor employer-employee relationships.

In contrast, in research conducted by Sharma and Seema (2019), not only was it found that HRO does not have a negative impact on employee attitude, it was found to have a positive impact, specifically the components of employee morale and employee commitment. This is attributed to HRO providers being equipped to provide better HR services than internal HR departments. However, this research was conducted with a sample of HR practitioners only, who gave feedback on their perspective on the effects of HRO on employee attitudes of the employees within their firms. It can be argued that research conducted using a sample of employees themselves, rather than HR practitioners speaking on their behalf, would produce more accurate findings on the impact of HRO on employees.

Alongside this, research conducted by Quartey (2013), also found that HRO activity does not have an impact on employee commitment. Alongside the limitations of this research listed in Section 2.7.3, this research was conducted with a sample of 12 HR practitioners, deeming it difficult to generalise the findings. Therefore, further research with a greater sample size, and

including employees from a greater variety of divisions may draw results that can be generalised with greater confidence.

2.9. Employee Retention and Turnover Intention

Employee retention relates to the amount of employees that an organisation retains over a specified time period, typically measured on a year-by-year basis (CIPD, 2023). Employee retention is often discussed in conjunction with employee turnover and turnover intention, which relates to the amount of employees that leave an organisation over a specified time period, and employees who intend on leaving their roles within an organisation (CIPD 2021; Olusa and Bolaji, 2020).

With the recent trend in employee resignations continuing to climb, reducing employee turnover and turnover intention has been an increasingly key item of discussion for organisations (Dill, 2021; Kim, et al., 2022). With an increase in turnover, comes the loss of knowledge, skills and abilities of employees who leave the organisation, alongside the costs associated with the replacement of human capital (Stritch et al., 2020). Furthermore, organisations may be forced to allocate additional resources to the replacement and rebuilding of human capital, rather than allocating to the achievement of organisational goals (Lee, et al., 2021).

Employee job satisfaction levels within an organisation are considered to forecast employee turnover, where organisations that maintain high levels of job satisfaction amongst their employee have lower turnover rates, organisations with employees with lower levels of job satisfaction generally have higher turnover rates (Edwards-Dandridge et al., 2020; Porath, 2014; Tessema, et al, 2022). Low employee morale, poor levels of work engagement and employee recognition, lack of job progression and lack of job security are other factors linked with high turnover rates (Edwards- Dandridge et al., 2020; Porath, 2014; Bakotic, 2016). Wesemann (2024), lists professional development, supervisory support, and employee engagement initiatives as the measures most frequently seen to be employed by organisations in a bid to reduce turnover.

2.9.1. Impact of HRO on Employee Retention and Turnover Intention

As was seen in the literature on the impact of HRO on employee job satisfaction and employee loyalty, the literature on the impact of HRO on employee turnover intention can also be seen to have contradictory results.

Research conducted by Elmuti, et al., (2010) HRO finds that its implementation to lead to increased employee turnover/ turnover intention, as a result of the negative effects related to HRO such as decrease in job satisfaction, morale, loyalty and commitment.

Ul-Ain and Siddiqui (2020) also found HRO to negatively impact turnover, suggesting that the increase in turnover intention can be attributed to the strain that HRO places on the employer-employee relationship. This results in low job satisfaction and low levels of employee loyalty, and subsequently leads to high turnover intentions. However, the research conducted by Quartey (2013) finds that HRO does not lead to an increase in turnover intention amongst employees. Again, the findings of Quartey's research may be attributed to the research being conducted in a time frame where participants were fearful for their job security, and therefore needs to be conducted in a time frame where such fears are not present, in order to draw further conclusions.

2.10. Literature Review Conclusion

Based on the findings from the literature, it is apparent that although there are benefits associated with HRO, there are also risks relating to the impact it may have on the overall employee morale within organisations, in particular on employee job satisfaction, employee loyalty and employee turnover intention. Much of the research conducted presents contradictory findings, which could be based on a multitude of factors, such as the region where research was conducted, industry, organisation size, culture. However, as the research available on HRO in an Irish context is practically non-existent, it is crucial to explore the impact it has on organisations in Ireland.

Chapter 3: Research Question and Objectives

3.1. Research Question

Bloomberg and Volpe (2015) argue that the development of a research question is crucial in defining the problem after research methods for the study have been examined. Saunders et al, (2009), further emphasizes that the research objective should be linked to the overall research topic to be regarded by the research community as evidence of the researcher's clear sense of direction of purpose. The primary aim of this dissertation is to explore the impact that HRO in Ireland may have on several aspects of employee morale: employee job satisfaction, employee loyalty and employee turnover intention. A review of the literature has shown that although there is a general consensus within early and contemporary research on the topic of HRO, that HRO does negatively impact on many aspects of employee morale (Cooke et al., 2005; Elmuti, et al., 2010; Pandey, 2021; ul-Ain, and Siddiqui, 2020) the findings of other contemporary research indicates that there is in fact no negative impact associated with HRO on employee job satisfaction, employee loyalty and employee turnover intention (Quartey, 2013). Furthermore, as mentioned, the research surrounding the impact of HRO on employees in Ireland is lacking.

Therefore, the research question for this dissertation is :

“How does the use of HRO within organisations in Ireland impact employee job satisfaction, employee loyalty, and employee turnover intention?”

3.2. Research objectives

In order to determine such impact, the following objectives were developed, each with their corresponding hypotheses:

Objective 1:

To determine if the use of HRO within organisations impacts employee job satisfaction.

H1- The use of HRO within organisations has an impact on employee job satisfaction.

Objective 2:

To determine if the use of HRO within organisations impacts employee loyalty.

H2- The use of HRO within organisations has an impact on employee loyalty.

Objective 3:

To determine if the use of HRO within an organisation impacts the turnover intention of employees.

H3- The use of HRO within organisations has an impact on employee turnover intention.

Chapter Four: Methodology

4.1. Introduction

This chapter endeavours to outline the research methods used to examine if there are any significant differences found in the levels of employee job satisfaction, employee loyalty and employee turnover intention in organisations who use HRO and those that do not.

This will include an outline and a discussion of research philosophies, the benefits and drawbacks of quantitative versus qualitative methods, data collection techniques that determined the research approach and design, as well as the research instruments used within the study. This chapter will also outline the data analysis process, ethical considerations, and the possible limitations associated with the approach used.

4.2. Research philosophy

Research philosophy refers to a system of beliefs and assumptions regarding the nature, source and development of knowledge (Saunders et al., 2015). It is concerned with the approach used while collecting and analysing data regarding an anomaly (Bajpai, 2011). Saunders et al., (2015) suggests that the beliefs and assumptions that one holds influences their understanding of the research question, methodology and findings of any given research, therefore, an individual is more likely to design a consistent and rational study when there is a logical and rational understanding of research philosophy present.

Ontology and epistemology are the two key concepts to be considered within research philosophy (Horn, 2009). Ontology can be described as the researcher's view of the nature of reality (Saunders et al., 2009), and can also be regarded as objectivism, which proposes that social occurrences are independent and external of social factors (Collis and Hussey, 2021). Epistemology can be described as the researcher's view of knowledge, how it is developed and how it is created (Horn, 2009). The two outlooks within epistemology are positivism and interpretivism (Mkansi and Acheampong, 2012; Quinlan, 2011), and will be further discussed in the following section.

4.2.1. Positivism Versus Interpretivism

Positivism concerns itself with natural sciences, often involved with quantitative research and applied to the study of social realities (Bryman and Bell, 2011; Saunders et al., 2009). Researchers who adopt a positivist method tend to focus on general laws used to predict behaviours and tangible elements of human activity, while rejecting subjective ideologies (Fisher, 2010). Sharp et al., (2011) also describes research with a positivist approach to study elements of an objective world that are stable and predictable, through focusing primarily on quantifiable observations. This allows for statistical analysis to be conducted.

Interpretivism argues that there are many differences between people (Saunders et al., 2009), and enables researchers to gain such understanding of differences among individuals, rather than objects (Saunders et al., 2012). Interpretivism greatly emphasises people, observations of behaviours and their greater meanings, and is therefore more often seen in research that focuses on qualitative evidence (Saunders et al., 2015).

Through extensive research on the existing literature relating to HRO and its impact on employee job satisfaction, employee loyalty and employee turnover intention, and through the careful consideration of research philosophy, it was determined that a positivist approach would be appropriate in regard to the proposed research objectives and question. The academic literature on the wider topic of HRM concerns itself primarily with the study of people, where in many cases it is most definitely appropriate to use the interpretivist approach. However, this research in particular concerns itself with the wider impact of HRO on employees in Ireland, therefore a positivist approach was deemed most suitable. The positivist approach allows for an uncovering of facts as quantitatively specified relationships among variables (Rynes and Gephart, 2004), which is the primary aim of the research in this case.

4.3. Research Approach

The two primary methods of research that are used throughout academic research are quantitative methods and qualitative methods, each bearing their own respective approaches, as well as advantages and disadvantages.

4.3.1. Quantitative Research

Quantitative research is defined by Saunders et al., (2016) as using statistics or a questionnaire to produce numerical data. The quantitative approach is typically taken when the analysis of numerical and factual data is necessary (Barnham, 2015), and this method allows the measurement of multiple variables through the application of a deductive approach, and is therefore frequently seen when testing a hypothesis (Park and Park, 2016). The advantages of a quantitative approach include reliable and accurate results that can be generalised to a large population, and allow for collection of data from a larger pool of participants within a shorter period than what is possible when using qualitative methods (Dowd, 2018). The disadvantages of the quantitative approach is that many topics can be too complex to quantify numerically, therefore limiting the research that can be conducted using this method (McClain and Madrigal, 2012). Furthermore, the instruments used in the quantitative approach can be subject to errors including flawed sampling techniques and errors regarding measurement (Rahman, 2017).

A deductive approach entails the formulation of a hypothesis or theory, followed by a testing of such to determine its validity. This method is deemed suitable for research that aims to examine the relationship between two variables, and therefore is commonly seen to be used within quantitative research (Saunders, et al., 2009). This approach can be regarded as generally more favourable to use within the area of natural sciences. Laws presenting the basis of an explanation, subsequently allow for anticipation and prediction of the occurrence of phenomena, allowing them to be controlled (Collis and Hussey, 2021).

4.3.2. Qualitative Research

The qualitative approach is typically used where information can be classified into categories, mainly with linguistic data, exploring phenomena based on perspectives, beliefs, and opinions (Saunders et al., 2016). Data is primarily collected through in depth interviews or focus groups (Kuper, et al., 2008), and is most appropriate to be used in research that requires comprehensive knowledge and understanding of behaviours, views and attitudes (Barnham, 2015). Where the quantitative approach is seen to be used when testing a hypothesis, the qualitative approach differs in that it allows for the development of new hypotheses using an inductive approach and providing further insights into causation, which cannot be determined by the quantitative approach (Bansal, et al., 2018). It allows for the research findings to emerge authentically from themes within raw data, without the restrictions present in structured

methodologies (Thomas, 2003). The advantages of the qualitative approach include its ability to collect descriptive data and the gaining of a deeper understanding of the data, achieved through probing questions (Mills and Birks, 2014). A disadvantage associated with qualitative research is that the collection methods can be considerably more time consuming than quantitative research, and results can be difficult to generalise due to the smaller samples used (McClain and Madrigal, 2012). Furthermore, the research result may be subject to the researcher's unconscious bias (Rahman, 2016).

4.3.3. Research Approach Decision and Rationale

Based on the nature of this research, a quantitative approach was selected. Firstly, this approach was deemed most appropriate due to the objectives aiming to determine the impact of HRO on employees in Ireland, and therefore requiring a larger data set to determine such impact on a wider scale. This would have been difficult to achieve with a qualitative approach. Secondly, rather than seeking to gain a deep and detailed understanding of the opinions, beliefs and feelings of individuals toward HRO, this research seeks to measure the impact of HRO multiple variables using clear-cut evidence-based style methods. Furthermore, the results of quantitative research can be deemed as more reliable than the results of its qualitative counterpart (Pathak, et al., 2013), further deeming the method as most appropriate in this research.

Moreover, as the research question and objectives required the testing of hypotheses, it was also determined a deductive approach was suitable for this research.

4.4. Research design

Research design outlines the strategy undertaken in integrating the different components of the research in a logical and coherent manner. This serves as a blueprint for the process relating to the measurement, collection and analysis of the data, whilst ensuring the research problem is efficiently addressed (De Vaus, 2006).

As previously noted, a quantitative approach was chosen for this research, and a survey style method of data collection was deemed most appropriate in this instance. Surveys entail collecting data through questionnaires that can be delivered face to face, online, by post or by

phone, containing a series of questions, with the aim of gathering data from participants, and are characterised as an instrument in the collection of such primary data (Cohen, 2013; McLeod, 2018). Surveys remain one of the methods most frequently used for the gathering of data, and are used to measure elements that are essential to the management and development of human resources (Anderson, 2020). Online questionnaires were selected for this research as they allowed questionnaires to be distributed to a large and wide pool of participants within a short time frame.

This research set out to collect the data needed for analysis via survey. The questionnaire was designed in line with existing research on HRO and its impact on employee job satisfaction, employee loyalty and turnover intention, as per deductive approach methodology. This method allows for the measurement of different relationships between variables, which is essential in determining the impact of HRO on employee job satisfaction, employee loyalty and turnover intention. Said relationships were then examined through a series of statistical tests conducted in IBM SPSS.

Furthermore, the use of a survey allowed for a generalisation to be made from the sample, therefore allowing for inferences to be made about characteristics, attitudes, and behaviours of the population (Babbie, 1990). This further reinforced the suitability of surveys for this research, where one of the primary aims was to make a generalisation of the impact of HRO across the Irish workforce.

Finally, surveys were also deemed as the most suitable method for this research due to the high degree of respondent anonymity that they offer. It is argued that anonymity encourages participants to answer the survey questions more honestly and truthfully, allowing a sense of ease in being reassured their answers will bear no personal repercussions (Cleave, 2021), which was deemed essential for this research, due to respondents potentially disclosing their negative feelings toward their employers.

4.5. Questionnaire design

Greener (2008) argues that properly designed questionnaires are essential in attaining the research objectives of any research project, with respondents fully understanding and being capable and willing to answer such questions truthfully being a core element in the success of

research projects (Bourke, et al., 2016). This emphasises the importance of wording questions with due care and consideration in order for research to be successful. In light of this, clear directions were given to participants of the questionnaire, in order to guide them through the process being undertaken to collect the data, while outlining the purpose and objectives of the research.

The format of questionnaire was adopted from the formats used in the studies of a similar nature, notably the research of Quartey (2013), and ul-Ain, and Siddiqui, (2020) who conducted a similar studies relating the use of outsourcing and its impact on employee job satisfaction, employee loyalty and turnover intention. This was done to draw results that could be compared to previous research. The questionnaire was designed to contain five sections, each containing five questions or more. Questions were designed to measure the variables of employee job satisfaction, employee loyalty, and employee turnover intention, and their correlation to the use of HRO within organisations. In addition to this, the reliability of each question was tested with coefficient Cronbach's alpha.

The survey was made up of 29 questions in total and was distributed online to employees of organisations in Ireland via LinkedIn and email. An overview full questionnaire can be found in Appendix A.

The survey was created using GoogleDocs, a web-based platform. GoogleDocs is used as an online software that provides templates with various question options including multiple choice and scales ratings. This enabled the questionnaire to be set up in a style suitable for this research.

4.8. Questionnaire structure and measures

Each of the five sections covered different areas of the research. The information section included information on the purpose of the research, the variables being measured and how the data collected would be stored and used. This section, alongside the consent and demographic section were designed for this research.

4.8.1. Demographic questions

It is argued by Hughes (2016) that demographic questions should be included in all research involving human participants in order to gauge an accurate description of the research sample. Therefore, the first section of the questionnaire included single item questions used to obtain data on age group, position within the organisation and organisation size.

4.8.2. HR Outsourcing

A 3-item scale was adopted from Smith (2006) in order to determine the extent to which HR was outsourced within the organisation of participants. *1. All HR Functions are outsourced*
2. Some of the HR Functions are outsourced *3. No HR Function is outsourced.*

4.8.2. Employee Job Satisfaction

Employee job satisfaction was assessed using scales adopted from the Job Satisfaction Index (JSI), developed by Brayfield and Rothe (1951). The JSI is an 18-item scale and has been used extensively by researchers, with its Cronbach's alpha value equal to .87, indicating good reliability (Fields, 2013). However, for this research, repetitive questions were removed to shorten the scales. 12 questions were used in total.

4.8.3. Employee Loyalty

Employee loyalty was assessed using scales adopted from Dutta and Dhir (2021), with the scales holding an overall Cronbach's alpha value equal to .75, indicating a good reliability. This scale is a 13-item scale. However, only 7 items from the scales were used in this questionnaire. The questions used aimed to determine the factors of sense of ownership, commitment, and employer trust, in order to establish the degree of employee loyalty within organisations. Although this scale is relatively new in comparison to other scales used when assessing employee related concepts, it does not appear that there is any general consensus amongst researchers regarding the scales that should be used to measure employee loyalty. This may be due to employee loyalty being a relatively new concept in comparison to its other employee measure counterparts, which have been discussed within academic literature for many decades. Although there are a larger variety of scales to choose from when measuring similar concepts, such as employee commitment and employee engagement, they alone do not include all of the core elements necessary to measure employee loyalty, and therefore the newer scale was selected for the purposes of this research.

4.8.5. Turnover Intention

To measure turnover intention, questions adopted from the Turnover Intention Scale (TIS) developed by Roodt (2004) were used. This is a 6-item scale, with a Cronbach's alpha value equal to 0.8, indicating its reliability. This scale is widely used within research determining the turnover intention of employees. 5 items from this scale were used in the questionnaire.

4.8.6. Likert scale

Five-point Likert Scales are seen to be used in a vast amount of research across all disciplines, and are described as a reliable set of scales used to measure the opinions and attitudes of respondents towards questions within a survey (Forys and Gaca, 2016). Questions allowing respondents to rate certain variables on a five-point Likert Scales were also used throughout the questionnaire, wherein they indicated the degree of their opinion to certain statements, ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

4.9. Sampling methods

Probability sampling and non-probability sampling are the two sampling methods used by researchers. Probability sampling entails the selection of individuals to participate in the research on a random basis, therefore allowing for the research to create significant statistical inferences regarding the sample as a whole (McCombes, 2021). Non-probability sampling is concerned with convenience and whether or not those being asked to participate fit the criteria needed for the research (Wiśniowski et al., 2020), and therefore samples are chosen consciously by the research (Flick, 2015).

Given the research objective of this research, a non-probability sampling technique was selected, and participants were selected via a convenience sampling technique. The rationale for this was due to the eligibility to participate being that respondents must be employed by an organisation in Ireland, an area where the author is relatively well connected and had access to willing participants. Furthermore, a probability sample would not have been feasible due to the time and financial constraints of this research.

Bryman and Bell (2015) suggest that a larger sample size constitutes to a greater degree of precision within the data analysis process, due to less sampling errors, and therefore this

research aimed to reach as many participants as possible. The sample size consisted of 80 employees of various companies in Ireland, who were contacted via LinkedIn or email, inviting them to participate in the study (see Appendix D). Participants in this study were employed across a range of industries, mainly the financial sector, banking, aviation, management consulting and logistics. Participants were also employed across various divisions within the companies. This was done to produce results that could be generalised to a greater degree.

The survey ran for a total of 12 days, from the 29th of March 2024 until the 4th of April 2024.

4.10. Analysis strategy

The data analysis process involves examining, evaluating and comparing information collected for the purpose of the research (Blumberg et al., 2014). Upon the data collection process's completion, the questionnaire results were exported to a Microsoft Excel file, where they were uploaded to the data analysis software used, IBM SPSS. This allowed for the data to be analysed as complex sets in a statistical environment, where the results of the questions seeking to obtain information on the variables were examined and compared to one another. The statistical findings allowed for the comparison of means between employees, depending on the degree to which HRO is used in organisations. The variables where means were tested were employee job satisfaction, employee loyalty and turnover intention, in support of the research question and objectives. This is further outlined in Chapter 5.

4.11. Limitations of Study

There are numerous factors which may cause any given research to be subject to limitations, such a limited sample size, participant unwillingness, and issues surrounding research bias (Bloomberg and Volpe, 2008). This study, like many others that opt to use a quantitative approach, was subject to limitations associated with the selected approach. As previously highlighted, it is argued that research that uses a quantitative approach can lack human interpretation of the respondents' circumstances, which consequently influences its ability to determine the causation of its results, and therefore it can be argued that this approach can lack depth.

Finally, the sample size required to produce results that can be generalised proved to be the greatest challenge of this study. Where a convenience sampling method may bear its own challenges in being considered unpredictable and unable to guarantee a large sample size, it is also worth considering that the content of the research is considered to be the most critical factor in stimulating response rates (Baruch, 2008). Therefore, it was ensured that the questionnaire was composed and presented in a way that would interest participants.

4.12. Ethical considerations

The ethical considerations of any given research play a pivotal role in protecting participants who are partaking in the research, and are concerned primarily with ethical principles, professionalism, and legal requirements (McMillian and Schumacher, 2010). It is highlighted by Saunders et al., (2012) that under no circumstances should participants be exposed to any harm or mistreatment throughout the research process. For this study, the ethical considerations that were thoroughly reviewed was the privacy of participants, deception, confidentiality and objectivity.

4.12.1. Consent

A critical element to be considered within research is ensuring the informed consent of participants. It was ensured that surveys were completed by participants on a strictly voluntary and independent basis, who were well informed on the nature and purpose of the research they were taking part in, as well as a reassurance that their involvement would be kept fully confidential. The information sheet provided to participants is displayed in Appendix B. Furthermore, the contact information of the author and the supervisor was made available to all participants, in order to provide any further information required or to answer any questions regarding the study. A copy of the information regarding consent in the survey is displayed in Appendix C.

4.12.2. Anonymity

The use of the software used to create and collect the surveys allowed for participants to remain anonymous in all stages of the research, thus alleviating concerns regarding fear of employer confidentiality, as well as concerns regarding the disclosure of personally identifiable information. Although the demographic questions in the survey required respondents to answer questions regarding their age group and position within their organisation, respondents were

not required to input any specifically identifiable information, and instead were required to select their answers from a range of ages and positions, therefore aiding in ensuring they could not be identified by this information.

4.12.3. Data Management

The processing, storing and movement of data within this research strictly followed the National College of Ireland's Guide on Ethics and Data Collection, as well as the guidelines as set out by the European Union Directive 95/46/EC for data protection. The data gathered for this research was stored in a password protected file within a private password protected laptop, to which access was strictly limited to the sole author of this research. This ensured utmost confidentiality of respondents' data.

4.13. Conclusion

From this chapter, it is evident that there are many different methods of conducting research, each bearing their own benefits and drawbacks. Following the extensive research and discussion of the different research philosophies, research approaches, design and sampling methods, it was determined that a positivist approach, in combination with a quantitative method of data collection and a convenience sampling method was most appropriate for this research. Due to the quantitative approach selected, IBM SPSS statistical analysis software was selected for the analysis stage of the research. The following chapter will outline and discuss the tests used to perform the statistical analysis and their respective outcomes.

Chapter 5: Findings

5.1. Introduction

This chapter endeavours to provide an outline of the findings collected from 80 questionnaires collected. An overview of the key findings and peripheral findings will be outlined; followed by an outline of the process undertaken to prepare the data for analysis; an outline and discussion of the key findings, each corresponding to their respective research objective; alongside an outline and discussion of the peripheral findings.

5.2. Overview of Key Findings

The first key finding of this research reveals that employee job satisfaction does not appear to be affected by HRO; the second key finding reveals that employee loyalty does not appear to be affected by HRO; and the third reveals that employee turnover intention does not appear to be affected by HRO. This was determined by comparing the means of three groups of respondents for each construct. The groups were divided based on whether their organisation's used an in-house HR model alone, a shared service model, or HR outsourcing alone. The process undertaken to determine these findings are outlined in greater detail, in Section 5.4.2, Section 5.4.3, and Section 5.4.3, alongside a discussion of their significance and positioning within the academic literature.

5.2.1. Overview of Peripheral Findings

The first peripheral finding of this research explores the relationship between employee job satisfaction, employee loyalty, and employee turnover intention. It was found that employee job satisfaction and employee loyalty together are both strong indicators in the prediction of employee turnover intention. However, it was also found that employee job satisfaction's contribution to employee turnover intention is approximately five times greater than the contribution of employee loyalty to turnover intention. This is discussed in greater detail in Section 5.5.1.

The second peripheral finding of this research explores the influence of role seniority on employee's reaction to HRO. It was found that role seniority does not appear to influence reaction to HRO. No significant differences were found in the means of employee job satisfaction, employee loyalty and employee turnover intention of any group based on whether

their organisation's used HRO or not, further divided by their seniority within their organisation. This is discussed in greater detail in Section 5.5.2.

5.3. Data analysis and rationale

The data from the questionnaires was analysed through SPSS version 29. The tests used included the testing of normality and reliability; a series of general descriptive tests; and the testing of the hypotheses using the Kruskal-Wallis test. The rationale for the Kruskal-Wallis test is further discussed in the next section.

5.3.1. Preparing the data

Data gathered from the questionnaires via Google Docs was imported into an excel sheet, where it was then transferred to SPSS. The dataset was then checked for errors, such as abnormal values or missing data, prior to analysis. No errors were found in this process, and all responses were usable.

The data was further reorganised once imported into SPSS. This included the reversing of negatively worded items, and checking for internal consistency using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. Although the scales used in the questionnaire had been tested for reliability by their developers upon their creation, it is necessary to check the Cronbach's alpha coefficient when used in different time frames and under different conditions to ensure internal consistency (Saunders et al., 2016). The value of the Cronbach's alpha coefficient should be greater than 0.7 to be accepted, with higher values indicating higher reliability (DeVellis, 2012).

The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for employee job satisfaction and employee loyalty produced a value of 0.88 and 0.86, indicating a good reliability (Table 1.1, 1.2, 2.1, and 2.2). These values were accepted. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for employee turnover intention produced a value 0.597, which can be regarded as unsatisfactory (Table 3.1). Upon further analysis of the scale, it can be seen that the fourth item, '*How often do you look forward to another day at work?*' appeared to be lowering the overall value (Table 3.2). The decision was made to remove the item in order to achieve a greater Cronbach's alpha value of 0.854. The rationale for this decision is that the item is not exclusively indicative of an employee's

turnover intention, as are the other items on the scale, and is not as highly of a critical item to measure for the purposes of turnover intention.

Table 1: Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient for Job Satisfaction

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.888	12

Table 2: Item- Total Statistics for Job Satisfaction

Item-Total Statistics				
	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
My job feels like a hobby to me.	39.8875	50.683	.152	.907
My job is usually interesting enough to keep me from getting bored.	38.8000	45.478	.677	.874
I enjoy my work more than my leisure time.	40.4000	46.268	.433	.891
I feel fairly well-satisfied with my present job.	39.0000	43.468	.757	.869
Most of the time, I have to force myself to go to work.	38.9375	46.844	.507	.884
I feel that my job is more interesting than other jobs I could get.	39.2625	44.297	.716	.872
I dislike my work.	38.7500	45.532	.777	.871
I feel that I am happier in my work than most other people.	39.1000	45.559	.683	.874
Most days I am enthusiastic about my work.	39.0125	44.671	.816	.868
Each day of work seems like it will never end.	39.1000	48.623	.416	.888
I find real enjoyment in my work.	39.0250	44.632	.816	.868
I am disappointed that I ever took this job.	38.4250	46.931	.632	.877

Table 3: Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient for Employee Loyalty**Reliability Statistics**

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.857	7

Table 4: Item-Total Statistics for Employee Loyalty

Item-Total Statistics				
	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
I promote the brand of my organisation.	21.5750	20.602	.688	.830
I recommend the products and services of my organisation to others.	21.5500	20.352	.718	.826
I have a sense of owing my organisation.	22.2000	20.289	.573	.845
My organisation has given me lots of things in my life.	21.9000	20.091	.652	.833
I can always rely on my colleagues.	21.6000	22.471	.435	.861
If I could choose again, I would choose to work for my current organisation.	21.7250	19.620	.683	.828
Management at my firm always try to resolve employee issues as quickly and efficiently as possible.	21.9250	19.159	.640	.836

Table 5: Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient for Turnover Intention**Reliability Statistics**

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.597	5

Table 6: Item- Total Statistics for Turnover Intention

Item-Total Statistics				
	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
How often have you considered leaving your job?	11.2875	7.347	.619	.394
How often are you frustrated when not given the opportunity at work to achieve your personal work-related goals?	11.2250	8.177	.543	.454
How often do you dream about getting another job that will better suit your personal needs?	10.9000	6.597	.710	.321
How often do you look forward to another day at work?	10.7250	14.227	-.393	.854
How likely are you to accept another job at the same compensation level?	11.4625	6.505	.615	.368

Once the Cronbach's alpha scores for each scale was accepted, the sum of each construct was computed in order to determine the total scores of job satisfaction, employee loyalty and turnover intention for further analysis.

The normality of variables was assessed using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test of normality (Pallant, 2016). A *p* value of greater than 0.05 indicates normality, while a *p* value of less than 0.05 indicates a violation of the assumption of normality.

Table 7. Tests of Normality

Tests of Normality						
	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
JobSatisfactionTotal	.183	80	<.001	.934	80	<.001
Employee_Loyalty	.082	80	.200*	.976	80	.142
TurnoverIntention2	.139	80	<.001	.964	80	.023

*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

The above table indicates a *p* value of below 0.05 for employee job satisfaction and employee turnover intention, indicating a violation of normality on both scales. The *p* value for employee

loyalty is shown to be .200*, indicating that there was not sufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis for the assumption of normality.

5.4. Descriptive Statistics

Job Satisfaction (JS): A mean score of 42.7 was indicated for JS. The minimum value was 22; the maximum value was 56 ($SD = 7.368$). Skewness was -.881. Kurtosis was .568. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test of normality showed a significance value of <.001, indicating a lack of normal distribution. The JS histogram can be seen in table 8 below. Although extreme values are considered to impact normality, outliers were not removed due to the significance they bear on the true results.

Employee Loyalty (EL): A mean score of 25.412 was indicated for EL. The minimum value was 12; the maximum value was 35 ($SD = 5.204$). Skewness was -.360. Kurtosis was .11. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test of normality showed a significance value of .200*, indicating not enough evidence to reject a null hypothesis for the assumption of normality. The EL histogram can be seen in table 9 below. Outliers were not removed, for the same reasons as listed for JS.

Turnover Intention (TI): A mean score of 10.725 was indicated for TI. The minimum value was 4; the maximum value was 20 ($SD = 3.772$). Skewness was .424. Kurtosis was -.465. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test of normality showed a significance value of <.001, indicating a lack of normal distribution. The EL histogram can be seen in table 10 below. Again, outliers were not removed.

Table 8: Job Satisfaction Histogram

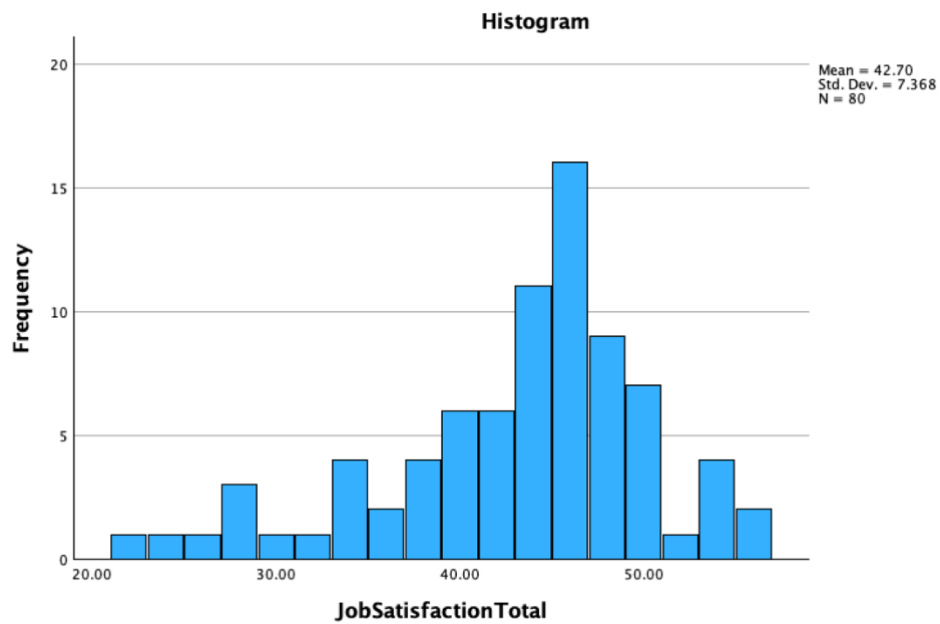


Table 9: Employee Loyalty Histogram

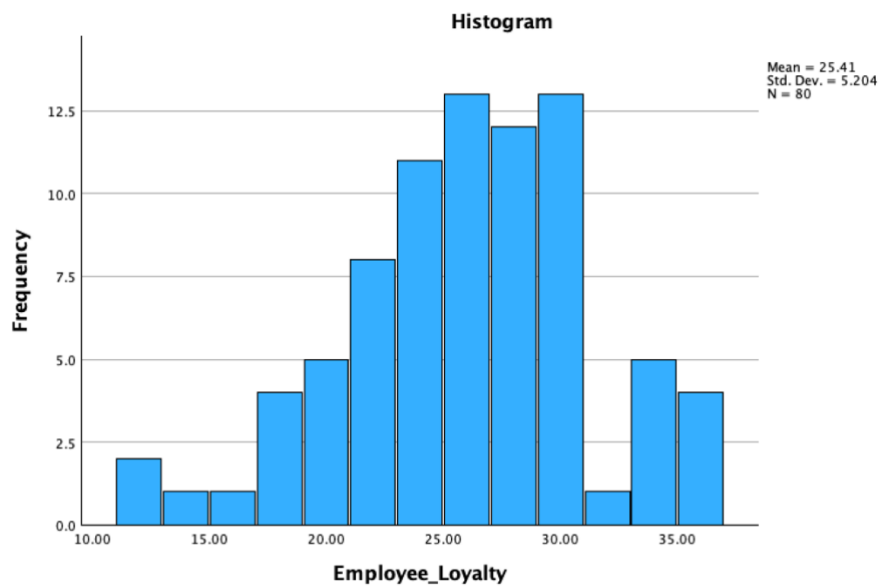
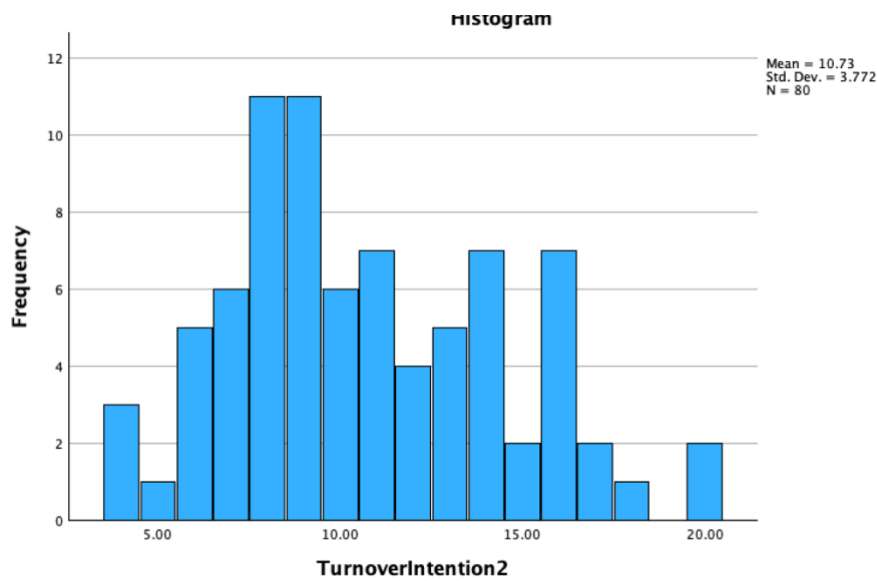


Table 10: Turnover Intention Histogram



5.4. Results and analysis

The following section outlines the primary analysis of the data for the research objectives. All three research objectives aim to determine whether there are differences in the levels of employee job satisfaction (RO1), employee loyalty (RO2) and turnover intention (RO3), between three groups of employees: those whose organisations use in-house HR only, those who use a shared service model, and those who use HRO only. Typically, analysis of variance (ANOVA) would be deemed the most suitable method of testing for the three objectives. However, abnormalities were found in the distribution of both job satisfaction and turnover intention. Therefore, it was considered that a non-parametric testing method, such as the Kruskal Wallis Test, should be used in place of ANOVA. Furthermore, due to differences in sample sizes of the three testing groups, it was determined that the Kruskal Wallis method would be the most appropriate test for all three variables.

The Kruskal Wallis method is a non-parametric alternative to ANOVA, and is used to compare the mean scores of a dependent, continuous variable for three or more groups (Pallant, 2016). The dependent variables for this research are employee job satisfaction (RO1), employee loyalty (RO2) and turnover intention (RO3). The Kruskal Wallis Method allows for the differences of means between the three groups of employees (in-house, shared service model, and HRO) to be compared for each of the dependent variables.

The threshold p value (presented as Asymp. Sig.) for this test is 0.05 (Pallant, 2016). A p value of less than or equal to 0.05 would indicate that there were significant differences amongst the mean score for the variable being tested between the groups, and a p value of above 0.05 indicating no significant difference.

A summary of the findings of the Kruskal Wallis Method is illustrated in Table 8.1 below.

Table 11: Kruskal Wallis Summary

Hypothesis Test Summary				
	Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig. ^{a,b}	Decision
1	The distribution of JobSatisfactionTotal is the same across categories of HR Model.	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	.491	Retain the null hypothesis.
2	The distribution of Employee_Loyalty is the same across categories of HR Model.	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	.990	Retain the null hypothesis.
3	The distribution of TurnoverIntention2 is the same across categories of HR Model.	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	.846	Retain the null hypothesis.

a. The significance level is .050.

b. Asymptotic significance is displayed.

5.4.1. RO1: To determine if the use of HRO within organisations impacts employee job satisfaction.

The first objective of this research is to determine if the use of HRO within organisations impacts employee job satisfaction, depending on the degree it is used within the organisations. The following hypothesis was developed for this research objective:

H1- The use of HRO within organisations has an impact on employee job satisfaction.

Table 12: Kruskal-Wallis Test for Job Satisfaction

Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test Summary	
Total N	80
Test Statistic	1.422 ^a
Degree Of Freedom	2
Asymptotic Sig.(2-sided test)	.491

a. The test statistic is adjusted for ties.

The above table presents the Kruskal-Wallis test for RO1. The p value reads at 0.491. As the p value is greater than 0.05, it can be concluded that there was **not** a significant difference in the means of employee job satisfaction between the three groups. Therefore, *H1- The use of HRO within organisations has an impact on employee job satisfaction*, was rejected.

These results contradict the findings of Elmuti, et al., (2010) and ul-Ain and Siddiqui (2020), who found that HRO negatively impacts employee job satisfaction, as discussed in Section 2.7.3. The research conducted by Elmuti, et al., (2010) was conducted using mixed methods research, with participants from one organisation in the United States (U.S.) who had recently implemented HRO in a bid to reduce costs due to financial hardship. The negative impact on employee job satisfaction in this instance was attributed to employees fearing for their own jobs, alongside the perception that opportunities and skill advancement would be stunted as a result of the implementation of HRO. It can be argued that the contradictory results of this research and the research of Elmuti, et al, (2010) may be attributed to the different employment laws in Ireland and the U.S.. The differences in the findings may also be attributed to the difference in time frames of the research. This is further discussed in Chapter 6.

The research conducted by ul-Ain and Siddiqui (2020) was conducted with participants from multiple organisations in Pakistan, with an overall methodology and analysis process similar to what was used in this study. As their research was conducted using quantitative methods, causation could not be determined. However, it can be argued that the contradicting results can be attributed to cultural differences between Ireland and Pakistan. This is further discussed in Chapter 6.

Moreover, the results of RO1 are consistent with the findings of Quartey (2013), who found that HRO does not impact employee job satisfaction, as seen in Section 2.7.3.. This research was conducted with participants from multiple organisations in Ghana using quantitative methods. Therefore, causation could not be determined. However, it is speculated by Quartey (2013) that the findings may have been attributed to the economic climate in Ghana at the time of the research. This is further discussed in Chapter 6.

5.4.2. RO2: To determine if the use of HRO within organisations impacts employee loyalty.

The second objective of this research is to determine if the use of HRO within organisations impacts employee loyalty, depending on the degree it is used within the organisations. The following hypothesis was developed for this research objective:

H2- The use of HRO within organisations has an impact on employee loyalty.

Table 13: Kruskal-Wallis Test for Employee Loyalty

Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test Summary	
Total N	80
Test Statistic	.020 ^a
Degree Of Freedom	2
Asymptotic Sig.(2-sided test)	.990

a. The test statistic is adjusted for ties.

The above table illustrates the Kruskal-Wallis test for RO2. The test indicates a p value of 0.990, also indicating that there was **not** a significant difference in the means of the groups. Therefore, *H2- The use of HRO within organisations has an impact on employee loyalty*, was also rejected.

The findings of RO2 contradict the findings of Sim (2010) and ul-Ain and Siddiqui (2020), who found that HRO negatively impacts employee loyalty, as seen in Section 2.8.1. The findings of Sim (2010), based on employees in Malaysia, were attributed to a loss of trust in the HRO system due to poor integration and poor communication between organisations, HRO providers and employees. The research of ul-Ain and Siddiqui (2020) was conducted through quantitative methods, therefore causation could not be established. However, the contradictory results of this research to both these studies may be attributed to cultural differences between Ireland, Pakistan and Malaysia.

Furthermore, the findings were also not consistent with those of Sharma and Seema (2019), who found that HRO positively impacts employee loyalty. These findings were attributed to the implementation of HRO allowing employees to dedicate more time to other areas and their own learning and development, therefore increasing overall efficiency and subsequently

employee commitment. However, it is worth noting that the research of Sharma and Seema (2019) was conducted with a sample of HR practitioners. Therefore the findings are more reflective of the impact of HRO on HR departments, rather than employees within the organisation as a whole.

Finally, the findings were consistent with those of Quartey (2013) who found that HRO did not impact employee commitment. Again, it is speculated by Quartey (2013) that the findings may have been attributed to the economic climate present at the time of the research. This is further discussed in Chapter 6.

5.4.3. RO3: To determine if the use of HRO within an organisation impacts the turnover intention of employees.

The final objective of this research is to determine if the use of HRO within organisations impacts employee turnover intention, depending on the degree it is used within the organisations. The following hypothesis was developed for this research objective:

H3- The use of HRO within organisations has an impact on employee turnover intention.

Table 14: The Kruskal-Wallis Test for Turnover Intention

Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test Summary	
Total N	80
Test Statistic	.335 ^a
Degree Of Freedom	2
Asymptotic Sig.(2-sided test)	.846

a. The test statistic is adjusted for ties.

The above table presents the ANOVA test for RO3.. The *p* value reads at 0.846. As the *p* value is greater than 0.05, it can be concluded that there was **not** a significant difference in the means of employee turnover intention between the three groups. Therefore, *H3- The use of HRO within organisations has an impact on employee turnover intention*, was also rejected.

The findings of RO3 contradict the findings of Elmuti, et al., (2010), ul-Ain., and Siddiqui, (2020), who found that HRO leads to an increase in turnover intention, as seen in Section 2.9.1..

The increase in turnover intention within both of these studies was attributed to employees' overall negative feelings toward their jobs and organisations as a result of HRO. As previously outlined, the contradictory results of this research may be attributed to cultural and legislative differences between Ireland, Pakistan, and the U.S. Again, the findings are in line with those of Quartey (2013), who found that HRO does not lead to an increase in turnover. This is further discussed in Chapter 6.

5.5. Peripheral Findings

5.5.1. Impact of Job Satisfaction and Employee Loyalty on Employee Turnover Intention

An additional test was conducted as part of this research to further explore the relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intention, alongside the relationship between employee loyalty and turnover intention. These tests were conducted with the use of multiple regression.

Table 15: Model Summary

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.728 ^a	.530	.517	2.62050

a. Predictors: (Constant), Employee_Loyalty, JobSatisfactionTotal

The above table presents the model summary of the regression, with employee loyalty and job satisfaction as independent variables, and employee turnover intention as the dependent variable. The R Square value is 0.530, indicating that employee job satisfaction and employee loyalty account for 53% of variance in turnover intention.

Table 16: Coefficients

Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	26.989	1.778		15.175	<.001
	JobSatisfactionTotal	-.323	.054	-.631	-5.989	<.001
	Employee_Loyalty	-.097	.076	-.134	-1.277	.205

a. Dependent Variable: TurnoverIntention2

The above table presents the coefficients table of the regression. The standard coefficient beta value represents the contribution of job satisfaction and employee loyalty to employee turnover intention. The value for employee job satisfaction is $-.631$, while the value for employee loyalty is $-.134$. This indicates that job satisfaction's unique contribution to employee turnover intention is approximately 5 times stronger than employee loyalty's unique contribution.

Furthermore, a sig. value of less than 0.05 indicates a significant unique contribution of the independent variables on the dependent variable (Pallant, 2016). The sig. value for job satisfaction is $<.001$, indicating a significant contribution to turnover intention. The sig. value for employee loyalty is 0.205, indicating no significant contribution to turnover intention.

Pallant (2016), highlights that overlap between independent variables may affect their significant contribution toward the dependent variable. As highlighted by Khuong and Linh (2013), job satisfaction is one of the elements within employee loyalty. However, employee loyalty also has many other components, in particular organisational commitment, and has more of an emphasis on the extent to which an employee has trust in their employer (Chen, et al., 2022). Furthermore, particular care was taken to remove items from the employee loyalty section of this questionnaire that related to the employee job satisfaction element, and focused on the elements that were reflective of an employee's feelings toward their organisation as a whole, rather than their specific work. Similarly, care was taken to ensure the items in the job satisfaction element of the questionnaire were reflective of an employee's feelings toward their work and specific jobs, rather than their feelings toward their organisation. This was done not only to prevent repetition, but also to minimise the overlap between the two.

These findings suggest that an employee's feelings toward their work and specific jobs are a greater indicator of whether or not they intend to leave their organisation, than their feelings toward their organisation. Considering that much of the literature suggests that factors relating to both employee job satisfaction and employee loyalty are contributors to employee turnover intention (Edwards-Dandridge et al., 2020; Porath, 2014; Bakotic, 2016), this is an interesting finding. Although this is briefly discussed further in Chapter 6, a greater and more in depth analysis of this finding goes beyond the scope of this research.

5.5.2. Influence of Role on Employees Reaction to HRO

Despite no significant differences found in the levels of job satisfaction, employee loyalty and turnover intention between the overall groups of this research, it is worth noting that ul-Ain and Siddiqui (2020) found that role seniority did influence employees' reaction to HRO. Therefore, additional analysis was conducted in this research to test if there were any significant differences between groups based on their seniority.

The Kruskal-Wallis test was also used for the purpose of this test. Test groups were separated by role within their organisation; entry level (Table 17); senior employee (Table 18) ; middle management (Table 19); and senior management (Table 20), and further divided based on the degree to which their organisation's used HRO. Again, the threshold p value (presented as Asymp. Sig.) for this test is 0.05 (Pallant, 2016). A p value of less than or equal to 0.05 would indicate that there were significant differences amongst the mean score for the variable being tested between the groups, and a p value of above 0.05 indicating no significant difference.

For entry level employees the p value for job satisfaction was 0.580, employee loyalty was 0.712 and turnover intention was 0.599. For senior employees the p value for job satisfaction was 0.138, employee loyalty was 0.932 and turnover intention was 0.703. For middle management the p value for job satisfaction was 0.983, employee loyalty was 0.929 and turnover intention was 0.858. For senior management the p value for job satisfaction was 0.165, employee loyalty was 0.358 and turnover intention was 0.150.

As all p values were greater than 0.05, this indicates that there were no significant differences between any of the groups. The results of these tests indicated that contrary to the results of ul-Ain and Siddiqui (2020), as experience did not appear to influence employees' reaction to HRO in any capacity. Again, this may be attributed to cultural differences between Ireland and Pakistan. This is further discussed in Chapter 6.

Table 17: Kruskal-Wallis Test for Entry Level Employees
Test Statistics^{a,b}

	JobSatisfaction Total	Employee_Loy alty	TurnoverIntent ion2
Kruskal-Wallis H	1.088	.679	1.024
df	2	2	2
Asymp. Sig.	.580	.712	.599

a. Kruskal Wallis Test

b. Grouping Variable: HR Model

Table 18: Kruskal-Wallis Test for Senior Employees

Test Statistics^{a,b}

	JobSatisfaction Total	Employee_Loy alty	TurnoverIntent ion2
Kruskal-Wallis H	3.957	.142	.704
df	2	2	2
Asymp. Sig.	.138	.932	.703

a. Kruskal Wallis Test

b. Grouping Variable: HR Model

Table 19: Kruskal-Wallis Test for Middle Management

Test Statistics^{a,b}

	JobSatisfaction Total	Employee_Loy alty	TurnoverIntent ion2
Kruskal-Wallis H	.033	.148	.305
df	2	2	2
Asymp. Sig.	.983	.929	.858

a. Kruskal Wallis Test

b. Grouping Variable: HR Model

Table 20: Kruskal-Wallis Test for Senior Management

Test Statistics^{a,b}

	JobSatisfaction Total	Employee_Loy alty	TurnoverIntent ion2
Kruskal-Wallis H	3.600	2.000	3.789
df	2	2	2
Asymp. Sig.	.165	.368	.150

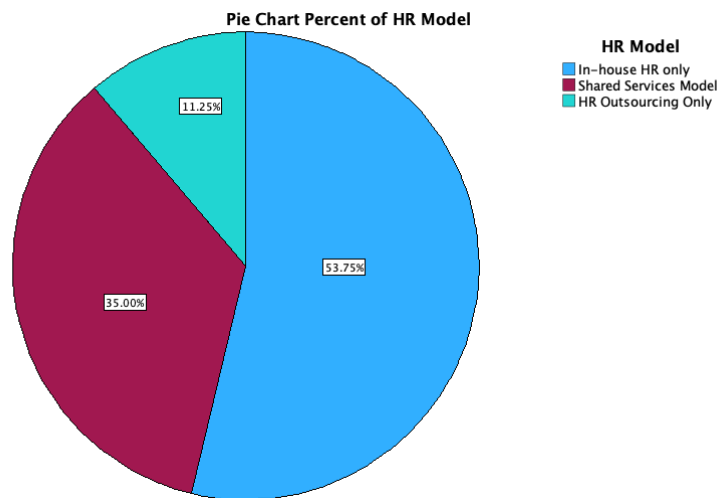
a. Kruskal Wallis Test

b. Grouping Variable: HR Model

5.6. Demographic of Respondents

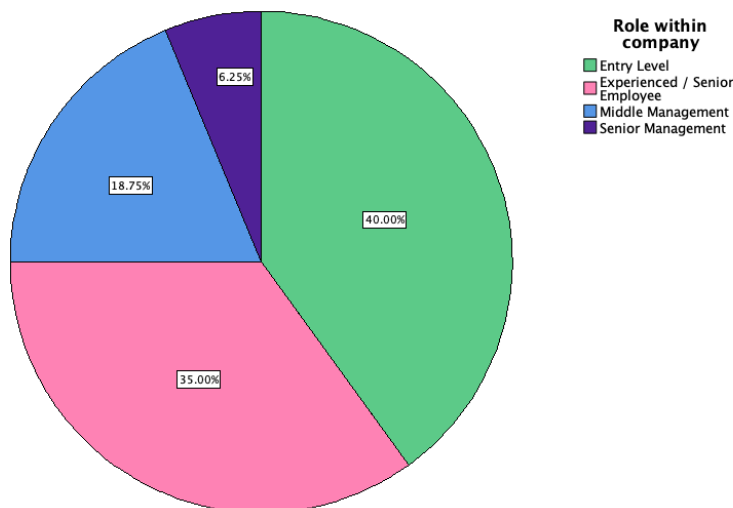
The following section outlines the peripheral findings of the research, illustrated by pie charts and stacked bar charts.

Figure 1: Pie Chart presenting HR Models



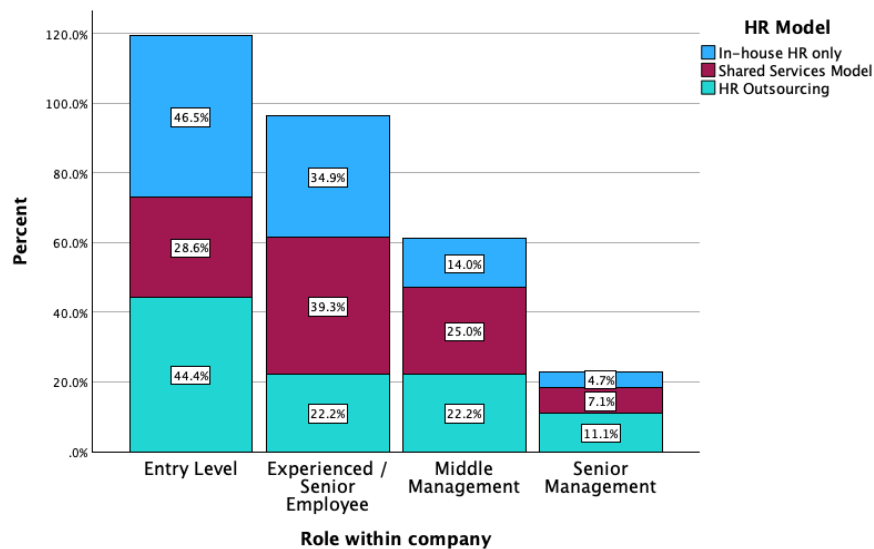
It can be seen from the above pie chart that 53.75% of respondents were employed by organisations using an in-house HR model alone, 35.00% using a shared service model, and 11.25% using HRO only.

Figure 2: Pie Chart presenting respondents roles within their organisation



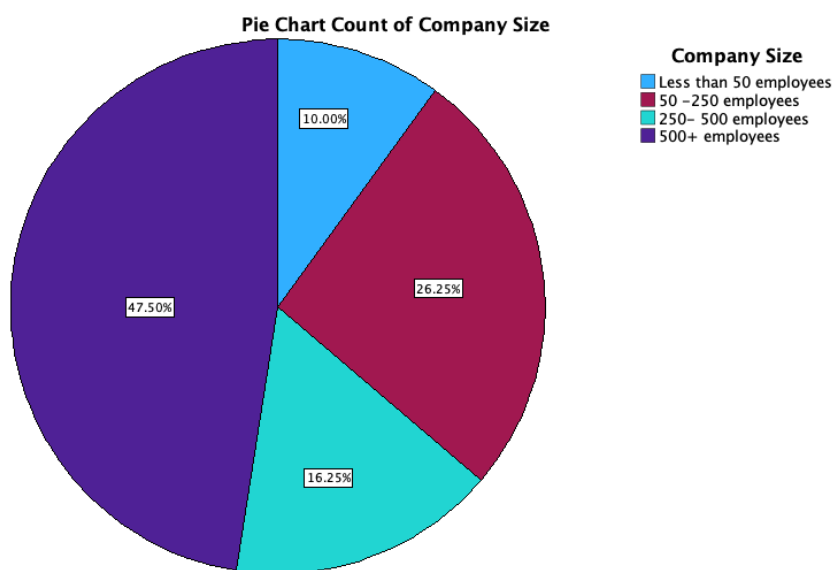
It can be read from the above pie chart that 40.00% of respondents held an entry level position within their organisation, 35.00% holding an experienced/ senior role, 18.75% middle management, and 6.25% senior management.

Figure 3: Bar Chart presenting the breakdown of role seniority by HR Model, by %



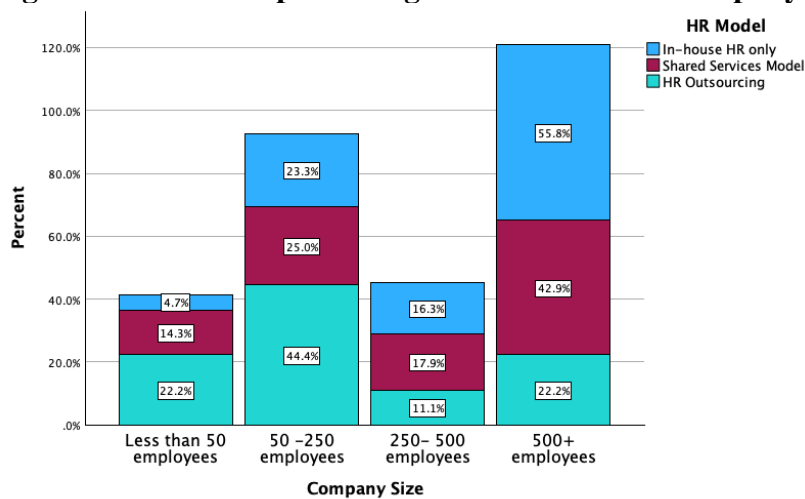
The above stacked bar chart represents the breakdown respondents role within organisation to the HR models by %.

Figure 4: Pie Chart presenting organisation size



The above pie chart indicates that 10.00% of respondents were working in organisations that employed 50 employees or less, 26.25% in organisations with 50-250 employees, 16.25% in organisations with 250-500 employees, and 47.50% in organisations with 500+ employees.

Figure 5: Bar Chart presenting the breakdown of company size by HR Model, by %



The above stacked bar chart represents the breakdown respondents role within organisation to the HR models by %.

5.7: Conclusion

The key findings of this research revealed that HRO did not impact the job satisfaction, employee loyalty, and turnover intention of employees in Ireland. These findings were contradictory to the previous research of Elmuti, et al., (2010), Sim (2010) and ul-Ain and Siddiqui (2021). This may be attributed to differences in time frame, as well as cultural and legislative differences between Ireland and the countries wherein the past studies were conducted. This is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 6: Discussion.

Chapter 6: Discussion

6.1. Discussion of Key Findings

Prior to the analysis stage of this research, it was thought that all the hypotheses relating to the research objectives would be supported. This was not the case. Much of the literature on HRO is not concerned with the impact on employees, and instead is concerned with its impact on organisational costs, performance and effectiveness. However, in the limited research that does mention the impact of HRO on employees, it is generally projected to have a negative impact.

The first research objective, 'To determine if the use of HRO within organisations impacts employee job satisfaction' corresponds to the first key finding of this research. The results of this finding indicated that HRO did not appear to impact the job satisfaction of employees. The second research objective, 'To determine if the use of HRO within organisations impacts employee loyalty' corresponds to the second key finding. This finding indicated that HRO did not appear to impact employee loyalty. The third research objective 'To determine if the use of HRO within an organisation impacts the turnover intention of employees' corresponds to the third key findings. This finding indicated that HRO did not appear to impact the turnover intention of employees.

Overall, the findings of this research, which indicate that there do not appear to be significant differences in the levels of employee job satisfaction, employee loyalty and turnover intentions of organisations regardless of if HRO is in use or not, was unexpected. These findings were surprising due to the general consensus amongst past researchers that HRO has a negative impact on employees. However, there may be several reasons for this.

Firstly, a large portion of the literature which suggests that HRO has a negative impact on employees was conducted in the early days of HRO. The studies conducted by Cooke et al., (2005), Elmuti, et al., (2010), Logan et al., (2004), Sim (2010), and Walsh and Deery (2006), which suggest a negative impact of HRO on employees due to employee needs being unfulfilled by HRO providers, fears surrounding job security, and employees lacking trust in HRO providers, were conducted whilst HRO was beginning to emerge as a trend. It can be argued that HRO has since developed and no longer affects employees in those ways due to improvements in HRO on a wider scale.

Secondly, the vast majority of the literature that suggests that HRO has a negative impact on employees were conducted in countries with different cultures to Ireland. The research conducted by Pandey (2021), which found HRO to cause damage to the psychological contract between employees and their employers was conducted in India, which bears many cultural differences to Ireland. Similarly, the research conducted by Sim (2010), suggesting employees lack trust in HRO systems due to poor integration and poor communication between organisations, HRO providers and employees, was conducted in Malaysia. Both Indian and Malaysian societies place great emphasis on hierarchy, and challenges to authority are generally not well-received (Hofstede, 2023). By comparison, Irish society places a greater emphasis on two-way communication with those lower on the chain of organisational hierarchy, valuing lowering inequalities amongst society (Hofstede, 2023). It can be argued that communication and interaction between HRO providers of organisations and employees in Ireland may take place more frequently and to a greater extent than what is seen in India and Malaysia, based on the differences seen in societal values as a whole. This may offer some explanation as to why HRO does not appear to affect employee loyalty in Ireland, where it does in India and Malaysia. However, further research would be required to verify this.

The research conducted by ul-Ain and Siddiqui (2020), although most similar to this research in terms of overall research design and sampling method, found contradictory results to what was found in this research. As previously noted, the research of ul-Ain and Siddiqui (2020) was conducted in Pakistan, a society known for its emphasis on tradition, and in many cases is sceptical of change (Hofstede, 2023). It can be argued that it is partly due to those reasons that it was found that HRO has a negative impact on employees in Pakistan; with HRO being a relatively new concept and its implementation being regarded as a considerably large organisational change. In contrast, Irish society can be regarded as considerably more adaptable (Hofstede, 2023), which may offer some explanation to the contradictory findings.

Furthermore, the research conducted by Elmuti, et al., (2020) which found that HRO negatively impacts employee job satisfaction due to fears surrounding job security, was conducted in the U.S.. Employees in Ireland can be regarded as generally better protected by Irish employment law than employees in the U.S., in particular in terms of legislation surrounding job termination (Carr, 2017). It can be argued that employees in Ireland would not be subject to fear

surrounding job security upon the implementation of HRO due to being protected by the Unfair Dismissals Act, 1977.

Finally, the findings of this research, which indicated that the use of HRO in organisations did not impact job satisfaction, employee loyalty and turnover intention, are in line with the findings of Quartey (2013). Again, this was unexpected. The research conducted by Quartey (2013) was conducted in Ghana, also bearing many cultural differences to Ireland; and in times of a different economic climate. It was argued that Quartey's results may be attributed to the research being conducted in a time period wherein jobs were scarce in Ghana, with employees wanting to exhibit positive feelings toward their work in order to keep their jobs. This research, however, was conducted in a time period where unemployment rates are low in Ireland (CSO, 2024). This suggests that economic climate is not a factor in whether HRO impacts employee job satisfaction, loyalty and turnover intention.

6.2. Discussion of Peripheral Findings

6.2.1. Impact of Employee Job Satisfaction and Employee Loyalty on Employee Turnover Intention

The peripheral findings of this research revealed that job satisfaction's contribution to turnover intention was approximately five times greater than the contribution of employee loyalty. This indicates that an employee's feelings toward their specific job and work is a greater indicator of turnover than is their feeling toward their organisation. This suggests that organisations should consider implementing measures that cater toward improving job satisfaction levels in a bid to improve turnover rates, rather than to focus on measures which cater toward improving employee loyalty. As it relates to HRO, it is vital for both organisations and HRO to be aware of the contributing factors of turnover within the organisation, and to implement measures accordingly.

6.2.2. Influence of Role on Employee's Reaction to HRO

The peripheral findings of this research also revealed that role seniority did not appear to influence employee reaction to HRO in any capacity, contrary to the results of ul-Ain and Siddiqui (2020). Again, this may be attributed to the cultural differences between Ireland and Pakistan. It may be attributed to Irish society's tendency to have minimal inequalities between

those in higher level roles and those in lower level roles in comparison to other countries, with Irish organisational hierarchy not being subject to the same rigour as those in countries such as Pakistan, Malaysia and India. Upper management in Ireland is generally aware of their dependency on the expertise of their employees, valuing their input to a much greater extent than what is seen in those countries (Hofstede, 2023).

Furthermore, as Ireland is a part of the European Union, Irish organisations must abide by the European Works Councils (EWC) Directive, which requires organisations with at least 1,000 employees with operations in EU countries to form work councils, composed with elected employees, with the purpose of informing and consulting with employees regarding matters that have an impact on the employee. It can be argued that the contradictory findings of this research and those of ul-Ain and Siddiqui (2020) regarding the impact of HRO on employees based on seniority, may be attributed to those cultural differences. Where lower level employees in Ireland may have the opportunity to have their input and concerns addressed regarding matters such as HRO, lower level employees in Pakistan may not. It can be argued that those in Pakistan with higher level roles, if satisfied with service provided by a HRO provider, may not be aware if there is dissatisfaction amongst lower level employees with the service provided. Therefore the services that are unsatisfactory to lower level employees continue, in turn causing employee morale to diminish.

However, again, future research is required to determine whether cultural differences impact how HRO may affect employees.

6.3. Implications

These findings of this study would suggest that HRO in Ireland does not have a negative impact on employee job satisfaction, employee loyalty or turnover intention. Therefore, organisations in Ireland which are hesitant to implement HRO as a means of cost reduction; time saving; access to expertise; and to facilitate a greater focus on other elements of HR within their in-house departments, should not be discouraged by the research that suggests HRO has a negative impact on employees.

However, despite these results, it is worth noting that an organisation's decision to outsource their HR should not be taken lightly, and should be done with due consideration. Both early

and contemporary research on HRO suggest one of its downfalls is employees lacking trust in the HRO systems implemented by their employers (Elmuti, et al, 2010; Pandey, 2021; Walsh and Deery, 2006). It is also speculated that the respondents of this research that came from organisations who use HRO alone, came from three different organisations only. These may be organisations who have successfully implemented HRO systems while maintaining employee trust, subsequently maintaining their employee loyalty levels. Therefore, due to the recurring theme in both early and contemporary literature suggesting HRO may result in employees lacking trust in their employers, it is vital for organisations who wish to use HRO to take such into consideration. Precautions that can be taken to prevent loss of trust include ensuring the selection of a HRO provider who provides a high calibre of HR services, has experience providing HRO services in the industry of the organisation to ensure prior understanding of the needs of employees, and who has similar cultural values to those of the organisation.

It is also suggested within the discussion that HRO does not affect the job satisfaction, loyalty and turnover intention of employees in Ireland due to a culture that emphasises the importance and value of employees. It is therefore essential for organisations who opt to use HRO to ensure that employee voice and employee involvement does not diminish upon the implementation of HRO. Measures that can be taken to ensure this include the implementation of consultation forums for the collective voice of employees (CIPD, 2020), run in a similar fashion to what is suggested by the EWC Directive. This entails the formation of a work council made of elected employees, with the purpose of informing and consulting with employees regarding matters that may impact them. Measures that can be taken for the individual voice of employees include organisational intranet forums or employee surveys (CIPD, 2023).

6.4. Limitations

A limitation of this research is the quantitative method used to conduct the analysis. The quantitative analysis alone did not allow for causation to be established. Although it can be speculated that there are many reasons for the differences in findings between this research and past research, further research using qualitative methods would allow for a more in depth and evidence based understanding of the findings.

Another limitation of this research is the sample size used. 80 questionnaires were gathered in total. Ideally, a larger number would allow for the findings to be generalised with greater confidence. It is unfortunate that the time constraints of this research did not allow time for more participants to be gathered.

Finally, it is speculated that the respondents of this research who came from organisations using HRO only were employed by three organisations, two of which are aviation. It can be argued that these alone do not represent the broader feelings toward HRO in Ireland as a whole. The organisations who participated in this research may have successfully implemented HRO without negatively impacting their employees, where other organisations in Ireland using HRO, who were not a part of this research, may not have the same results.

6.5. Recommendations for future research

A recommendation for future research would be to conduct longitudinal research on multiple organisations within various industries, who are transitioning from the in-house HR model to the HRO alone model. It is suggested to measure job satisfaction, employee loyalty and turnover intention both prior and post the transition, in order to gauge the success of the implementation of HRO. It would also be beneficial to adopt a mixed method approach, in order to present both factual, evidence based findings that can be generalised through quantitative methods, but to also gain an in-depth understanding of results through qualitative methods. Furthermore, it is suggested to use multiple organisations from various industries in order to establish the industries that HRO may be most successful in, and also to establish the industries that HRO is not successful in.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

This research set out to investigate the impact of HRO on employees in Ireland. The majority of previous research had suggested that the impact of HRO on employees is negative (Elmuti, et al., 2010; Pandey, 2021, Sim, 2010; ul-Ain and Siddiqui, 2020). The primary reasons identified within the literature for HRO causing a negative impact on employees were fears surrounding job security, lack of trust in HRO providers and strain on employer-employee relationships. Research conducted by Quartey (2013) presented contradictory results, suggesting HRO does not impact employee concepts within organisations. It was argued that none of the findings of those previous researchers were necessarily indicative of the impact of HRO on employees in Ireland. It was therefore determined that further conclusions could be drawn if the research was conducted using the participation of employees in Ireland.

The objectives of this research were to investigate the impact of HRO on employee job satisfaction, employee loyalty and employee turnover intention in Ireland. The key findings of this research indicated that HRO had no impact on employee job satisfaction, employee loyalty and turnover intention in Ireland. The peripheral findings of the research indicated that role seniority also did not appear to influence the impact of HRO on employee job satisfaction, employee loyalty or turnover intention. Despite the contradictory results to previous research, there were key issues identified that may offer some explanation for this. These were differences in time frames of research conducted, cultural and societal differences, and differences in labour law. However, as this research was conducted using quantitative methods, causation could not be established. Therefore, further research would be required to verify this.

While it is unfortunate that the quantitative approach used could not establish causation, it is hoped that this study has contributed to filling the gap in the research on this specific topic in Ireland. From a practical standpoint, it is hoped that this research could be useful to organisations and HR practitioners in Ireland who are considering implementing HRO. Although there are other risks associated with HRO, this research would suggest that employee job satisfaction, employee loyalty and employee turnover intention in Ireland appear to be less affected by HRO than what is seen in other countries. However, as outlined within the implications and limitations of the study, the decision making process surrounding the implementation of HRO in Ireland should still be done on a case by case basis, taking factors such as industry and organisation size into consideration. The recommendation to take

measures to ensure employee voice and employee involvement does not diminish should also be considered. Finally, although the overall organisational benefits associated with HRO can be rewarding, it is vital not to lose sight of risks that may be overlooked. While it is of utmost importance for HR practitioners and organisations to have the best interest of the organisation while in the HRO decision making process, it is also of utmost importance to have the best interest of employees, in particular in preserving their levels of employee job satisfaction, employee loyalty and turnover intentions.

Recommendations for Organisations (CIPD Requirement)

The results of this study suggest that HRO does not impact the job satisfaction, employee loyalty and turnover intention of employees. However, as mentioned, it is speculated that the respondents from this research who came from organisations using HRO alone were employed primarily within the aviation industry. This makes it difficult to generalise these results across all industries. Therefore, it is recommended that organisations in other industries who are considering implementing HRO in replacement of in-house HR take a number of measures to ensure suitability.

It is suggested that organisations opt to use specialised HR consultants to assess whether HRO would be appropriate for them. The reasoning for seeking advice of consultants in this instance is due to their level of expertise and the unbiased view they would hold on the organisation. NFP Ireland, a consulting firm, advertises prices ranging from €150- €300 per hour, or a flat rate of €1,500 per day for HR consulting (NFP, 2023). It can be assumed that the assessment would take no longer than two days to complete, depending on the assessment type and organisation size.

Furthermore, it would be beneficial to conduct employee engagement surveys prior to and post HRO implementation. Such longitudinal approach would allow to gauge whether the implementation of HRO has had an impact on employee engagement. Gallup's 12 question employee engagement survey can be purchased for €12.00 per employee (Gallup Store, 2024), where the survey results are analysed and sent back to the organisation. It is recommended to distribute the surveys prior to implementation and on a quarterly basis for 18 months post implementation, before returning to surveys being conducted on an annual basis. It is recommended to report turnover rates on the same basis, to assess whether the implementation

of HRO has affected turnover rates. Furthermore, exit interviews may be conducted with leavers to investigate whether HRO has influenced their decision to leave the organisation.

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Appendix A

Demographic Section

This section will ask a series of questions relating to demographics. Please select a response for each question from the options below.

3. Age: *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ 18 - 24 years old
- ☐ 25 - 35 years old
- ☐ 35 - 45 years old
- ☐ 45 - 55 years old
- ☐ 55 + years old

4. Gender: *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Prefer not to say
- ☐ Other: _____

5. Company size: *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Less than 50 employees
- ☐ 50 - 250 employees
- ☐ 250 - 500 employees
- ☐ 500 + employees

6. Role within company: *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Entry Level
- ☐ Experienced / Senior Employee
- ☐ Middle Management
- ☐ Senior Management

HR Models

The HR models being looked at in this study are:

1. HR outsourcing
2. In-house HR
3. A combination of both

1. HR Outsourcing:

HR outsourcing is a business practice where a company contracts with a HR Specialist company to handle some or all of its HR functions. Some of the functions of HR are payroll, recruitment, training and employee disciplinarys. When a company is using HR outsourcing, instead of managing all HR functions in-house, the company delegates these responsibilities to a third-party provider.

2. In-house HR

Some companies may not outsource any of their HR functions i.e. all HR affairs are looked after by the in-house team.

3. Combination of Both

Some may only outsource some of their HR functions i.e. the internal HR department will look after some HR functions, and some will be outsourced to an external provider.

Please select which your company uses from the options below.

7. My company uses...:

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ HR Outsourcing only (all recruitment, payroll, employee relations, training are outsourced to an external HR specialist)
- ☐ In-house HR only (the in-house HR department looks after all HR functions)
- ☐ A combination of both (some functions are outsourced and some are performed by the in-house HR department)

Job Satisfaction

This is the longest section of the survey, containing 12 questions relating to your job satisfaction.

Please select a response for each question, which most closely corresponds to how you feel about your job from the scales indicated.

8. My job feels like a hobby to me. *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Strongly Agree
☐ Agree
☐ Neutral
☐ Disagree
☐ Strongly Disagree

9. My job is usually interesting enough to keep me from getting bored. *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Strongly Agree
☐ Agree
☐ Neutral
☐ Disagree
☐ Strongly Disagree

10. I enjoy my work more than my leisure time. *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Strongly Agree
☐ Agree
☐ Neutral
☐ Disagree
☐ Strongly Disagree

11. I feel fairly well-satisfied with my present job. *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Strongly Agree
☐ Agree
☐ Neutral
☐ Disagree
☐ Strongly Disagree

12. Most of the time, I have to force myself to go to work. *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Strongly Agree
☐ Agree
☐ Neutral
☐ Disagree
☐ Strongly Disagree

13. I feel that my job is more interesting than other jobs I could get. *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Strongly Agree
☐ Agree
☐ Neutral
☐ Disagree
☐ Strongly Disagree

14. I dislike my work. *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

15. I feel that I am happier in my work than most other people. *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

16. Most days I am enthusiastic about my work. *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

17. Each day of work seems like it will never end. *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Strongly Agree
☐ Agree
☐ Neutral
☐ Disagree
☐ Strongly Disagree

18. I find real enjoyment in my work. *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Strongly Agree
☐ Agree
☐ Neutral
☐ Disagree
☐ Strongly Disagree

19. I am disappointed that I ever took this job. *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Strongly Agree
☐ Agree
☐ Neutral
☐ Disagree
☐ Strongly Disagree

Employee Loyalty

This section contains 7 questions relating to your loyalty as an employee.

Please select a response for each question, which most closely corresponds to how you feel about your job from the scales indicated.

20. I promote the brand of my organisation. *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Strongly Agree
☐ Agree
☐ Neutral
☐ Disagree
☐ Strongly Disagree

21. I recommend the products and services of my organisation to others.

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Strongly Agree
☐ Agree
☐ Neutral
☐ Disagree
☐ Strongly Disagree

22. I have a sense of owing my organisation. *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Strongly Agree
☐ Agree
☐ Neutral
☐ Disagree
☐ Strongly Disagree

23. My organisation has given me lots of things in my life. *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Strongly Agree
☐ Agree
☐ Neutral
☐ Disagree
☐ Strongly Disagree

24. If I could choose again, I would choose to work for my current organisation. *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Strongly Agree
☐ Agree
☐ Neutral
☐ Disagree
☐ Strongly Disagree

25. Management at my firm always try to resolve employee issues as quickly and efficiently as possible. *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Strongly Agree
☐ Agree
☐ Neutral
☐ Disagree
☐ Strongly Disagree

26. I can always rely on my colleagues. *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Strongly Agree
☐ Agree
☐ Neutral
☐ Disagree
☐ Strongly Disagree

Turnover Intention

This is the last section of the survey, containing 4 questions relating to your intention to leave your job. Please select your response from the scales indicated.

27. How often have you considered leaving your job? *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Always
☐ Often
☐ Sometimes
☐ Rarely
☐ Never

28. How often are you frustrated when not given the opportunity at work to achieve your personal work-related goals? *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Always
☐ Often
☐ Sometimes
☐ Rarely
☐ Never

29. How often do you dream about getting another job that will better suit your personal needs? *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Always
☐ Often
☐ Sometimes
☐ Rarely
☐ Never

30. How often do you look forward to another day at work? *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Always
☐ Often
☐ Sometimes
☐ Rarely
☐ Never

31. How likely are you to accept another job at the same compensation level? *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Highly likely
☐ Somewhat likely
☐ Neutral
☐ Somewhat unlikely
☐ Highly unlikely

Appendix B

Information Sheet

Please take time to read the following information carefully.

About the research:

My name is Gwen Leleu, and I am conducting this research as part of my Master's Dissertation in HR Management at National College of Ireland. Through this survey, I am attempting to explore the impact of HR Models on employee job satisfaction, employee loyalty and employee turnover intention.

Participation in this survey will take approx 5-10 minutes.

Participation and data collected will be confidential and anonymous. This survey will not use any identifying information, such as your name, email address, company or IP address. All data and responses will be stored in a password protected folder, on a password protected laptop, and will only be used for the purpose of this research. As per, NCI's Data Retention Policy, data will be securely stored for a maximum of 5 years, after which it will be destroyed.

Participation is completely voluntary, and if at any point you wish to stop, simply exit the survey.

If you have any further questions about the survey and research, please do not hesitate to contact me (Gwen Leleu) via email at gwenleleu@yahoo.ie. Alternatively, you can also contact the research supervisor (Rachel Ramirez) via email at rachel.ramirez@ncirl.ie.

1. I have read and thoroughly understood the above information. *

Mark only one oval.

☐ Agree

Appendix C

Consent Form

-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 have understood the purpose and the nature of the study mentioned above and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.

-I understand that participation involves completion of online questionnaires which will be stored confidentially for academic purposes only.

-I understand that I will not benefit directly from participating in this survey.

-I understand that all information I provide for this study will be treated with confidentiality.

-I understand that in any reports of this research, my identity will remain anonymous.

-I understand that selecting the box indicates giving consent and that the digital data collected will be stored in a password protected folder and can be stored for a maximum of 5 years as per the policy of National College of Ireland.

-I understand that once the online questionnaire is submitted, I will not be able to retrieve my responses as no identifying information was collected by the researcher. For the same reason stated above, I will not be able to withdraw participation from the study once the responses to the questionnaires have been submitted.

-I understand that I am free to contact any of the people involved in the research to seek further clarification and information.

2. I have read the consent form and voluntarily agree to participate in this survey. *

Mark only one oval.

☐ Yes

☐ No

Appendix D

Hi (Name),

I hope you're well and don't mind me reaching out.

I'm currently conducting research for my dissertation as part of my masters in HRM at NCI. The research is centred around how different HR models impact employee job satisfaction, loyalty, and turnover intention in organisations Ireland. Anyone who is an employee in Ireland is eligible to participate.

I would be incredibly grateful if you could spare 5 minutes to participate in a short survey. Your input will provide valuable data for this research.

Here's the link to the survey:

Rest assured, all responses are fully confidential and anonymous, and your time will be greatly appreciated.

If you have any questions or need further information, please don't hesitate to reach out.

Kind regards,

Gwen

Appendix E

Personal Learning Statement

Overall, I really enjoyed writing this dissertation. One of the main challenges with this research was the literature review. I found it difficult at times to find past research that was relevant; as a lot of the research conducted on HRO is not concerned with its impact on employees. Much of the research that does concern itself the impact of HRO on employees was dated, or conducted in parts of the world that are very different to Ireland. This made it difficult to find what I felt like would be a fair comparison to my research.

I must also admit, in hindsight, prior to the analysis stage of the research, I may have been subject to a slight bias against HRO. Much of the literature indicated that HRO has a negative impact on employees, and I was nearly certain that my research would also have similar results. I was taken aback when my research had opposite results from what I was expecting, and I had to approach my analysis and discussion chapter from a completely different angle than what I had planned.

I was also nervous about conducting the analysis. However, it was not nearly as daunting as anticipated, and it was actually one of the most enjoyable parts of writing this research. I also sought advice from the school statistician, who gave me some good pointers and was overall very helpful. I definitely would be more than happy to use quantitative methods in any future research I conduct.

However, despite the many challenges I faced, I can wholeheartedly say I enjoyed writing this dissertation. I have learned so much about the topic of HR outsourcing, but also on the wider topic of HR, in particular relating to employee job satisfaction, employee loyalty and turnover intention. I feel that this will be hugely beneficial moving from an academic environment to a corporate work environment.