Employee Voice and participation in the Irish Retail Sector: a comparative study of the extent to which workers are able to express their views in unionised and non-unionised settings within the Irish supermarket industry.

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Abstract

This dissertation explores the area of employee voice and participation and how it operates within the Irish supermarket industry. It seeks to observe how the phenomenon of voice differs between unionised and non-unionised environments and looks to identify what comparisons, if any, can be made between the two.

The objective of this research is to draw on what has been discussed previously by various academics regarding the benefits enabling voice can offer businesses and seeking to observe whether voice was something which was afforded to supermarket employees in Ireland across the representational divide. The research conducted was of a quantitative approach and consisted of the administering of questionnaires to supermarket employees which sought to gauge employee opinion on attitudes to their job, the degree of control in their job and their role in the decision making process.

The findings of this research states that similarities exist between unionised and non-unionised respondents in terms of their attitudes and the level of control they have over their jobs. Significant differences however were observed in terms of their respective role in the decision making process with unionised supermarket employees more likely than their non-unionised counterparts to state that they were afforded a degree of say in issues which affected them.

This research succeeds in contributing further to the debate around the area of voice and participation and how it differs between unionised and non-unionised settings within the context of the Irish supermarket industry.

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Submission of Thesis and Dissertation

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1. Employee Voice

"Over the last century there has been increasing recognition that giving employees a say in how they experience their work is beneficial for organisations in a number of ways"
(Silverman, Bakhshalian, Hillman, 2013, p. 3).

Employee voice is one of the four main enablers of employee engagement (CIPD, 2010, p.2). Indeed engaging and involving employees in all aspects of their work is at the heart of many prominent Human Resource Management models of today (Van Wanrooy, Bewley, Bryson, Forth, Freeth, Stokes & Wood, 2011, p. 18).

Over the years employee expectations have undoubtedly risen. The average worker is increasingly knowledgeable and educated and as a result wants more independent decision making at their jobs (Freeman and Kleiner, 2000).

"It is thought that by developing a broader understanding of the workplace, employees will be able to contribute to improvement and innovation by connecting what they do with what others do, reacting effectively to problems that arise, and contributing to workplace decision-making".
(Van Wanrooy et al., 2011, p.18).

In other words, if employees are engaged and encouraged to contribute, they have the ability, potential and capacity to improve the organisation. Storey (1983) argues that affording the employee with some level of voice or involvement in the decision making process, an ongoing commitment, or at least a form of willing submission can be reached. Whilst 'submission' might not be regarded as entirely appropriate language within today's literature, the idea of employee voice as a tool which can provide benefit to both management, through the buy-in and engagement of workers, and employees, through their ability to contribute to issues which affect them, cannot be underestimated.

Recent research carried out by the Economic and Social Research Council in partnership with the UK Commission for Employment and Skills sheds light on the increasing importance of seeking voice and encouraging participation in today's economically arduous environment. According to this research worker insecurity is at a twenty year high however it was found that employees were more content and less anxious about job or status loss where employers adopted policies that gave them a degree of involvement in the decision making process (Groom, 2013). It has been estimated by this same research that Britain was losing £26 billion annually as a result of failure to motivate staff.

Employee perception	Per cent
A more cooperative relationship between management and the union	73
Greater job security	69
Better communications with management	61
Greater trust between management and employees	60
Employees are consulted on company issues	50
A stronger role for the AEEU	39
More satisfying work	35

Figure 1.1.: *Employee perceptions of the main benefits of partnership at Borg Warner, adapted from Suff & Williams (2004, p.37).*

Despite the seeming benefits of employee voice (an example of just some of them are identified above in Figure 1) and indeed the cost which is incurred in its absence or its inadequate implementation, problems do arise with regard to the extent with which voice is acted upon.

Acknowledging voice and listening to it are only the first step in the process and indeed at Borg Warner (a unionised company), the extent to which management was perceived to take on employees' views was problematic and indeed a demonstration of the restricted nature of employee voice within the company. In the words of one member of staff, "management always listens to employees, but doesn't always act" (Suff & Williams, 2004, p. 38).
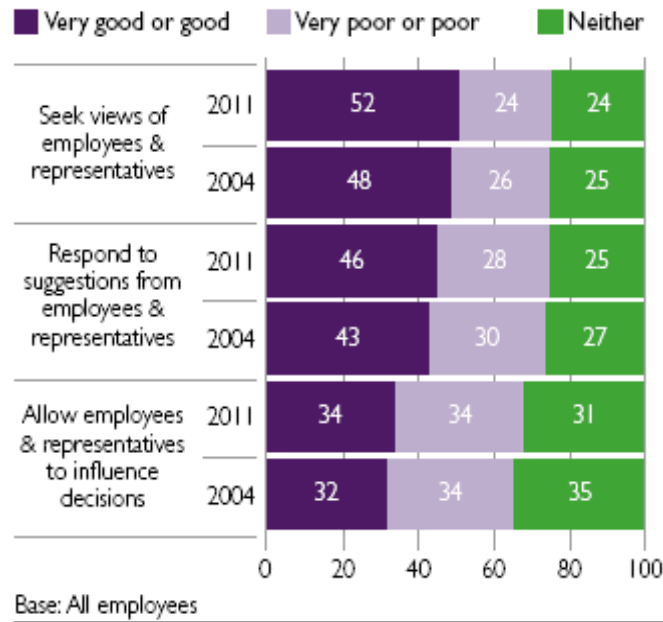
Figure 1.2.: Employees' rating of management's active consultation adapted from Van Wanrooy et. al. (2011, p. 18).

Figure 1.2 is rather telling in this respect in the sense that it illustrates how a situation similar to that experienced in Borg Warner is commonplace within organisations across the UK. Whilst the pursuit of employee thoughts and opinions remains relatively high, the decrease in positive reactions as the participation process progresses suggests that whilst organisations may be becoming adept to listening to voice, ultimately there is still a reluctance to respond to it or subsequently enable it to have an influence in the decision making process.

Indeed one of the greatest challenges facing leaders of large organisations today is to learn about, and more to the point to act upon the views of the employee base. While companies seek to be effective at listening and responding to clients and customers, they are not always aware of the voice of the worker which ultimately culminates in a major negative impact on business results (Sanchez, 2007, p. 48).

In fact according to Sanchez (2007), failure to engage employees and refusal to act upon worker opinion when it is sought can have the very opposite effect from that intended and can have a detrimental effect on employee engagement as well as a costly waste of organisational resources as well as contributing to a frustrated and angry workforce.

Employee voice can differ in the scope of decisions, the amount of power workers can exercise over management, and the organisational level at which decisions are made. Some forms of voice are purposely designed to give workers a very modest role in the decision making process while others are intended to give the workforce a substantial amount of power in organisational governance (Gollan & Wilkinson, 2007, p. 1133).

In summary voice occurs within many different environments to very different degrees and the lack of any broad consensus on the topic suggests that this is a debate which is far from over and will continue to require input from students and academics alike for the foreseeable future.

1.2.   Title/Research Issue

Employee Voice and participation in the Irish Retail Sector: a comparative study of the extent to which workers are able to express their views in unionised and non unionised settings within the Irish supermarket industry.

1.3.   Aims of this Research

The aim of this research is to explore the phenomenon of employee voice within the supermarket industry in Ireland and seek out the differences between how voice is perceived and interpreted from the point of view of the unionised and non-unionised employee. As has been discussed up to this point and indeed in terms of what follows, employee voice has potential benefit for both sides of the employment relationship.

What is also discussed amongst academics is that the area of voice within the non-union setting remains relatively under researched. Contemporary research findings contest the accepted wisdom in the industrial relations literature that unions are the primary mechanism of employee voice through their representative role (Benson & Brown, 2010, p. 80).

In fact non-union voice is seriously neglected compared to the research on union forms of representation, and a rebalance is long overdue given the prevalence of the non-union firm (Gollan & Wilkinson, 2007, p. 1183). In fact according to these same

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authors, it is somewhat anomalous that the topic of non-union voice has failed to emerge in its own right as a widely researched field of enquiry. What Gollan & Wilkinson (2007) also state is that the effectiveness of non-union voice is critical to a majority of employees and organisations in the economy of today.

Having identified that the area of voice within a non-unionised setting is under researched, the aims of this particular paper seek to contribute to the rebalancing of the phenomenon of voice within both sides of the representation divide, and as such provide a certain degree of clarity on how union and non-union voice differs in the supermarket industry in Ireland.

1.4. Potential Significance of Research

Employee Voice and participation offers many potential advantages and benefits to those organisations that embrace it including the enhancement of employees' skills and knowledge, an increased sense of value on the part of employees, an enhancement of reputation on the part of the organisation and the overall reduction of conflict (CIPD, 2012).The significance of this research seeks to understand the level to which employee voice is being listened to within the supermarket industry in Ireland and the extent to which perceptions and attitudes to voice differ between unionised and non-unionised environments and as a result whether or not the proposed advantages voice offers listed above do in fact prove to be valid.

The importance of this research is confirmed also by the recent marking of the 100 year anniversary of the 1913 Lockout. Significance can be found in the sense that a century later, the struggle for union recognition is far from over (O'Sullivan, 2013) and while the economic and political scene is vastly different from what existed at the beginning of the 20th century, the same struggle for greater employee involvement continues.

1.5. Purpose Statement

The purpose of this dissertation is to compare and contrast the areas of employee voice and participation and the extent to which workers are able to express their views within unionised and non unionised settings of the Irish supermarket industry.

1.6. Research Questions

The following are the areas which this research will look to explore:

- To what extent is employee voice listened to within the supermarket industry in Ireland?

- To what extent do unionised and non-unionised settings differ in terms of the degree to which voice is listened to within the supermarket industry in Ireland?

- To what extent does employees' control over their own jobs differ between unionised and non-unionised settings within the supermarket industry?

- To what extent does employees' role in the decision making process differ between unionised and non-unionised settings within the supermarket industry in Ireland?

- To what extent do general attitudes to work differ between unionised and non-unionised settings within the supermarket industry in Ireland?

1.7. Research Objectives

The ultimate objective of this research is to identify whether voice and participation differs between unionised and non-unionised sectors within the Irish supermarket industry.

1.8. Research Process

The process by which data for this research is to be collected will be in the quantitative form through the administering of questionnaires

1.9.   Limitations of Research

The nature of this research and the fact that it is being carried out in partial fulfilment of a Masters Course means that time constraints will predictably be a limiting factor. In terms of employee voice and participation, this research looks only to observe the phenomenon and how it operates within unionised and non unionised supermarkets in Ireland only and at that, a geographically limited area of it. It is therefore difficult to deem the results of this research as broadly encompassing and entirely transferable and relevant to other industries within the Irish economy.

1.10.   Structure of Dissertation

This dissertation is made up of a total of 5 separate chapters; this introduction, the literature review, research methodology, findings and discussion and finally the conclusion. This introduction seeks to establish a basis and a starting point for this research whilst stating what exactly this research hopes to achieve. The Literature Review following this section will discuss the various points of view put forward and discussed by academics and those writing about employee voice and its effect on the workplace and in doing so will introduce the various themes which make up the existing debate. In doing this, the Literature Review that is developed becomes the theoretical framework that the research project will be built upon (Quinlan, 2011, p. 4).

The research methodology chapter will provide an insight into how the research was conducted, the means by which data was gathered and the various philosophical assumptions that support and strengthen this study. The Findings and Discussion Chapter will present the results of this research and will seek to analyse the findings in a way that either supports or opposes the research objectives set out in the previous section. Finally the Conclusion will draw together the aims of this research and its results as well as offer a contribution to the arguments around the area of voice.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

"One of the more robust findings in organisational research is that providing the opportunity for employees to express their views and concerns leads to more favourable workplace outcomes."
(Avery, McKay, Wilson, Volpone & Killham , 2011, p.147).

Good managers recognise that much of the knowledge required for businesses to be competitive is actually in existence within the minds of employees (CIPD, 2012). The rise of non-union voice which has grown alongside the demise of the more traditional channel of union voice has seen a dramatic shift in the way voice, its consequences and potential benefits are viewed. Indeed it is widely argued that employees, as a result of the union's diminished role in the employment relationship, now have a reduced capacity to air grievances and articulate issues that affect them (Benson, 2000, p.453).

Voice and participation come in direct and indirect forms. Direct participation is one on one, face to face interaction between employees and their management counterparts; indirect participation is where the views and concerns of a body of employees are communicated to management by one or more employees selected to represent or act in an agency (Taras & Kaufman, 2006, p.515).

Employee's voice is thought of as a necessary condition for organisational success (Gordon, Infante & Graham, 1988, p. 101). The last decade has seen a growing interest in the area of employee voice, both from those seeking higher levels of organisational performance and from those desiring better systems of employee representation (Dundon, Wilkinson, Marchington & Ackers, 2004, p. 1149). There has been widespread agreement that employee voice also acted as a gateway to a more open and constructive Industrial Relations climate whilst also being renowned for contributing to improved performance in the creation of a better environment in which to work (Dundon, Wilkinson, Marchington & Ackers, 2005, p. 316).

Perhaps the greatest vindication of voice and the potential benefits it can offer to organisations can be seen in its absence in the sense that a lack of voice in organisations can exact a high psychological price on individuals, generating feelings of humiliation and resentment which can potentially taint every interaction, stifle creativity, and undermine productivity (Landau, 2009, p. 4).

However encouraging employees to speak up could backfire if management listens yet takes no action and as a result questions can arise asking if it is better to speak up and fail or never to speak up at all (Landau, 2009, p.4). What becomes quite clear from reading the literature is that very often certain organisational circumstances and environments have a great impact on whether or not employees are willing to risk their voice being heard.

In other words input from below may fall on deaf ears or worse in certain scenarios, employees may indeed be punished for speaking up essentially resulting in a situation whereby managerial responses to voice that specifically challenges the status quo and reactions to other types of voice that are supportive are likely to differ. Voice that fundamentally challenges is likely to be met with resistance by managers (Burris, 2012, p. 852/3).

In turn employees who fear significant personal losses from speaking up (i.e. restricted career mobility, loss of support from superiors and peers) are likely to choose defensive silence (Detert & Burris, 2007, p. 872). In fact there is evidence from a wide variety of sources that suggests employees often do not feel comfortable speaking to their bosses about organisational problems or about issues that concern them as employees for fear of sharing information that could be interpreted as negative or indeed threatening to those above them in the organisational hierarchy (Milliken, Morris & Hewlin, 2003, p. 1453).

In terms of Employee Voice there is evidence from the literature that employee perception of employer reaction plays a big role in determining the extent to which they are comfortable expressing their right to voice with often very negative consequences. The whole issue of silence and the reluctance to speak up, share

information and feedback has the potential to negatively affect employees trust, morale and motivation (Nikolaou, Vakola & Bourantas, 2007, p.667).

However many organisations send the message verbally or non-verbally that falling into line is the safest way to hold onto jobs and further careers. It is sometimes 'better to be quiet and thought of as a fool, then to talk and be known as one', however as long as conflicts go unresolved, repressed feelings and emotions remain potent and affect the way we relate to people (Perlow & Williams, 2003, p. 53/6).

What is clear at this point is that very little consensus exists around the area of employee voice. It can mean very different things to different people and there is a wide range of arguments for how the phenomenon of voice should be perceived, interpreted and the degree to which it is and should be acted upon, the main aspects of which will be explored over the course of this chapter.

2.2.   What is Employee Voice?

So what is Employee Voice or rather more to the point, what can it be defined as? Employee voice can be construed as somewhat of a vague term at times. It has been described as how employees are able to have a say regarding work activities and decision making issues within the organisation in which they work (Wilkinson & Fay, 2011, p. 65). It culminates in the two way communication between employer and employee which involves both employer communication to the employee as well as the employer receiving and listening to communication from the employee and is a concept which focuses on the opportunities for employees to be involved in decisions collectively through trade unions or by other means (CIPD, 2012).

It can be viewed as part of a triumvirate alongside procedural justice and social identification in terms of how employees react when faced with issues such as layoffs, salary cuts or shifting assignments, areas which are of increased relevance in today's current economic climate (Goldberg, Clark & Henley, 2011, p. 75). Voice can be seen as having both 'consensual and conflictual' implications. On the one hand participation could result in a beneficial impact on quality and productivity, whilst on

the other it can deflect problems which otherwise might 'explode' (Dundon et al., 2005, p. 309).

Employee voice also has connotations with wider society in terms of what it offers workers. No social system can survive in the long term by relying solely on direct repression and therefore those subject to rule must be persuaded to legitimise in some degree the rightness of the prevailing order in order to justify their own continued submission (Storey, 1983, p. 100/1). In other words, just like today's rulers who need to be legitimised through election or appointment, "management need to consent of the managed" (Joyce and Woods 1980, p30) which has obvious implications for the unilateral 'right to manage'.

2.3.   Early Thoughts on Employee Voice

There is evidence of a growing awareness of how the employment relationship operated as far back as the late 1950s. No longer could a system exist whereby the employer had total and ultimate control over his subordinates and as such academic attention to potential alternative theories of management began to emerge. It was now thought that higher productivity could be sought through genuine consultation and a sharing of managerial functions (Harbison & Myers, 1959, p.49). When the concept of employee voice emerged, it was seen as the opportunity for employees to influence management through membership of a trade union, the process of collective bargaining and the operation of grievance procedures (CIPD, 2010, p.3)

It was Hirschman who first referred to voice as a separate and distinct aspect of worker participation in his seminal work regarding 'Exit, Voice and Loyalty'.

> *"The role of voice increases as the opportunities for exit decline, up to the*
> *point where, with exit wholly unavailable, voice must carry the entire burden*
> *of alerting management to its failings"*
> (Hirshcman, 1970, p. 34).

Despite the considerable length of time which has passed between Hirschman's work on Exit, Voice and Loyalty, it is imperative to include his thoughts as a starting point

and an indicator of how far the area of Voice has come. Voice, Hirshcman goes on to say, is nothing but a basic function of any political system and is 'political action par excellence'.

Despite the nature of this early interpretation of Voice, its reflection of politics and wider society in general provides the building blocks of what resembles Voice in today's terms. Hirschman's argument suggests that employees respond to job dissatisfaction in one of four ways: exit, voice, loyalty, and neglect. Dissatisfied employees may choose to remain in their organization and actively try to improve conditions, searching for and coming up with new ways of doing things and advocating change *(voice)* (Zhou & George, 2001, p. 683).

Exit and voice are seen as active responses to dissatisfaction (as opposed to loyalty and neglect, which are very much seen as passive). As such exit is seen as destructive whilst voice alternatively is seen as constructive. An employee's exit from an organisation does not benefit an organisation in correcting existing problems and may prove to be a loss of valuable human resources for the organisation (Zhou & George, 2001, p. 683).

Voice on the other hand is an attempt to change, rather than escape from an objectionable state of affairs with the intention of forcing change in management (Hirschman, 1970, p. 30). Exit and turnover result in immediate efficiency disruptions for organisations as there will be too few experienced staff members to serve customers (Kacmar, Andrew, Van Rooy, Steilberg & Cerrone, 2006, p. 134). Therefore we can presume that the enabling of voice as a substitute or alternative to exit can succeed in improving efficiency through the retention of employees and the enhancement of what Kacmar et al. (2006) go on later to refer to as 'tacit knowledge'.

Other early explorers of Voice and its various potential implications include Freeman and Medoff who state that voice changes the employment relationship from a 'causal dating game' in which people look elsewhere at the first serious problem, to a more permanent 'marriage' in which they seek to resolve disputes through discussion and negotiation (Freeman & Medoff, 1984, p. 94).

Again Voice is mentioned in terms of wider society and political systems when it is stated that very often the problem is akin to that of operating a democratic parliament in a monarchical or dictatorial regime and ultimately as long as the monarch or dictator has the final word, the parliament cannot truly function (Freeman & Medoff, 1984, p.109). The nature of the environment in which people operate in therefore is critical to the level of participation the typical employee is afforded.

In terms of Freeman and Medoff's (1984) argument regarding voice, based on the previously mentioned work of Hirschman (1970), it is said that unions have two faces. The first being the 'monopoly face' associated with their monopolistic power to raise wages and the second being collective voice related to their representation of employees within an organisation. According to Freeman & Medoff, it is the second face of collective voice which promotes greater efficiency within an organisation. In other words by having a collective voice in their dealings with management, employees are more likely to remain with the organisation than quit which results in lower levels of turnover increasing the likelihood of a stable and well educated workforce (Benson & Brown, 2010, p. 81).

Building on these early contributions to the area of Voice, more contemporary and modern approaches and thoughts on participation and voice provide us with more substantial definitions which are based around the strategic potential of listening to employees and enabling them to have a say and participate. The underlying notion of voice is that employees possess sufficient ability, skill, knowledge and interest to participate in business decisions. Such reasoning of course runs counter to the more traditional notion that business decisions should be made only by those formally invested with decision making authority, namely managers and superiors (McCabe & Lewin, 1992, p. 112).

Nowadays employee voice is more widely interpreted to mean a process of two way communications, the exchange of information between managers and employees and enabling employees to 'have a say' about what goes on in their organisation. The reason behind this change mirrors the decline of union membership and the shift of focus of the employment relationship from the collective to the individual (CIPD, 2010, p.3).

2.4.   Voice as a Condition of Partnership

Voice can be considered as an expression of individuality and independent mindedness (Gorden, Infante & Graham, 1988, p. 102). It can also be seen within the parameters of partnership at work. The most positive outcomes of partnership practices for employers is reflected in higher employee contribution, better employee relations outcomes and superior performance. For employees there is a better psychological contract and greater voice, including scope to contribute and for employee representatives the process engages them more fully in decision making processes (Guest & Peccei, 2001, p. 232).

Partnership in terms of participation and voice on the part of employees according to these same academics culminates in what they refer to as the 'balance of advantage' which is the only scenario in which a sharing of responsibility between employer and employee can result in an improvement of performance. Like earlier employee involvement concepts, partnership combines seductive rhetoric with ambiguous and shifting meaning and cohabits with team working, total quality management (TQM) and empowerment among the latest generation of management 'fads' (Ackers & Payne, 1998, p. 544).

The idea of partnership here in Ireland is extremely relevant in the sense that industrial relations have been governed by a system of social partnership for the past 20 years (Teague & Hann, 2010, p.100). At first glance, the idea of partnership offers much and has great potential for improving the employment relationship. Indeed it is an idea with which almost anyone can agree, without having any clear idea of what they are agreeing about (Guest & Peccei, 2001, p.207).

According to the research conducted by Guest and Peccei (2001), partnership was found to be somewhat ineffective. Despite partnership being practiced, the level of direct participation in work decisions and representative participation in wider organisational policy decisions remained generally low with obviously negative implications for the enabling of voice. This low level of participation on the part of staff reflects a low level of trust amongst managers for their employees and their representatives.

It raises the issue of managerial prerogative and the fabled 'right to manage', which voice seeks to diminish. Partnership needs to compromise the manager's unilateral right to manage as well as impinge on collective bargaining. Ideally partnership should create an equilibrium whereby trade unions and employers get sufficient return to compensate for loss (Teague & Hann, 2001, p.103/4). Partnership can offer unions a way back into the political debate acting in place of the sterile debates of the past between conflict and cooperation (Ackers & Payne, 1998, p. 546/7), but in terms of its impact on voice and what it can offer the employee with regard to their level of participation the empirical evidence of research to date proves inconclusive.

The necessity for certain compromises to be made appears simply too unattractive for both sides of the employment relationship and despite the potential positives offered by the idea of partnership, in practice it is difficult to establish such arrangements as a result of the unwillingness of management and employees (and their representatives) to incur the costs associated with such compromise (Teague & Hann, 2001, p. 112).

Voluntary Partnership on a smaller individual scale exists too in Ireland with Waterford Crystal and Aughinish Alumina being examples. Despite it being found to be 'feasible' within these companies, certain lengthy criteria are essential for success and more to the point durability most notably management support, mutual gains practices, institutional supports and union postures. However as support for workplace partnership in Ireland are weaker than retardants, it is concluded that few truly mutual gains partnerships will take hold, and even fewer again will endure (Dobbins & McGunnigle, 2009, p. 546).

But why is this the case? After all partnership offers many potential advantages and benefits to both the organisation and the people that work within such as:

- A new approach to relationships at work
- Security of employment and job flexibility
- Sharing in the success of the organisation
- Information, consultation and employee involvement

- Representation of the workforce

(Ackers & Payne, 1998, p. 544).

Perhaps it is to do with the various potential implications which partnership has for both sides of the employment relationship. On the one hand, partnership can be seen as an opportunity to build union organisation and membership whilst on the other hand it can also be viewed as a means for management to enable better business performance through the 'emasculation' of trade union power and influence (Suff & Williams, 2004, p. 30). With regard to these different perceptions of what partnership means, it seems that the employee finds them self caught in the middle.

In the case of Borg Warner which was referred to in the Introduction Chapter, employees strongly endorsed the partnership approach and the company promotes itself as a leading exponent of partnership. Whilst employees were happy with the results and consequences of partnership at work within their company, they did express some concern that union representatives sometimes had too close a collaborative relationship with management. While partnership was seen to bring benefit, employees still sought an adversarial side to their union representation. Clearly the adoption of a partnership approach had not extinguished a belief that the role of a trade union is to oppose management not to help it do its work more effectively (Suff & Williams, 2004, p. 41).

What does that say for partnership and indeed how voice operates within it? Is partnership something that should be actively encouraged and pursued? Whilst the idea behind it is one which seeks to promote compromise and encourage cooperation, perhaps this is not always suitable or appropriate. Partnership very often can prove to be somewhat of a double edged sword.

Indeed within Waterford Crystal and Aughinish Alumina, it was found that unions lost some traditional bargaining power and that ultimately the 'balance of mutuality' favoured management (Dobbins & McGunnigle, 2009, p. 567). Despite the best intentions of partnership and mutuality it seems that ultimately one side of the employment divide will suffer, while one will ultimately thrive and do so at the expense of the other.

2.5.   Employee Voice and the Managerial Prerogative

Management styles that empower employees tend to be associated with growing businesses whilst managers who work in an authoritarian environment enjoy work less (Timmins, 2007, p.1). However despite such conclusions, the idea of voice and the inclusion of employees in the decision making process remains somewhat of a taboo for many organisations.

At the very heart of the employment relationship lies the question of control and discretion. What 'rights' does the employer have in this relationship and indeed what 'rights' are afforded to the employee? How much discretion is implicitly allowed to either side when labour is hired (Storey, 1976, p. 40)? Managerial prerogative is described as the employers' right to allocate and direct work (Rönnmar, 2006, p. 56). Employee voice and the inferences of worker participation it entails therefore can be seen to conflict with the idea of managerial prerogative in its terms.

Managerial prerogative is an emotive term which has different implications depending on what side of the employment relationship one finds them self on. When used in trade union circles it can raise suspicions and protests that the user is implying support of unilateral managerial rights. Alternatively when the term is used in management circles it can raise fears that an attack is being prepared on the 'right to manage' (Storey, 1976, p. 41).

The nature of the traditional employment relationship makes the idea of true cooperation between management and employees potentially problematic. A more cooperative relationship between labour and management indicates the necessity that management relinquish some of its traditional prerogatives. It is therefore quite possible that management's reluctance to relinquish such control will often make truly cooperative relationships within the workplace unlikely (Perline, 1999, p.149).

The phenomenon of voice is strikingly different between unionised and non-unionised settings. Representation through a trade union has been the traditional arena in which employee voice has been aired over the years. According to Freeman and Medoff (1984), it is essential that for worker voice to be effective it needed to be 'collective'

rather than 'individual' (Bryson, 2000, p. 7.). Today, a more direct form of non-union voice is becoming more common across the Western world as unions continue to lose ground.

These forms of non-union voice according to Bryson (2000) are primarily concerned with consultation as opposed to negotiation and secondly are not independent of management to the same extent that trade unions are. Is this good news for advocates of voice? Is a more direct form of voice which non union channels provide through consultation enough to replace the union emphasis on negotiation? It is difficult to say at this point but the idea of managerial prerogative can't be ignored.

Historically, under common law employers had the unfettered right to direct and control their workers on the job (Kuhn, 1962, p.21). Again it is important to note the time at which Kuhn was writing in establishing where the relevance of his comments to this research lies. It establishes certain aspects of the history of managerial thought and attitudes towards employees.

The relationship of the 'servant and the master' is what prevailed for many years and as such the idea of traditional managerial prerogative is entirely incompatible with employee voice and participation in the decision making process of an organisation. It therefore is often more the threat and the thought of giving up an authoritarian autocratic rule that is disturbing to a manager rather than the actual loss of any managerial function (Kuhn, 1962, p.21).

> *"No social system can survive in the long term by relying solely on direct repression. Those subject to rule must be persuaded to legitimise, in some degree, the 'rightness' of the prevailing order"*
> (Storey, 1983, p. 100).

One important recipient of employee voice is the employee's immediate supervisor. As a result of the power difference that exists between employee and supervisor it is important for the employee to consider how their managers will manage employee voice before they speak up (Saunders, Sheppard, Knight & Roth, 1992, p. 242). Therefore according to these same authors the effect of employee perceptions of their

supervisors as voice managers on the likelihood that employees will voice upward is an important factor. If voice is indeed seen as a threat to managerial prerogative and the 'right to manage' than it is likely that voice will not be heard.

For generations, work, for all but the privileged elite meant a form of servitude. Employees were supplicants without rights or protection who were reliant on the goodwill of their bosses to secure a day off or a pay rise. Nowadays, in the west, jobs have become part of an assumed right to self-actualisation. By this creed, a job is part of who we are and we are entitled not simply to a salary but also to satisfaction (Neville, 2013).

2.6.   The Union Versus Non Union Setting

Since the mid 1980s there has been a dramatic shift in forms of employee voice with non-union voice growing and the more traditional form of union voice contracting (Bryson, Willman, Gomez & Kretschmer, 2013, p. 194). Historically Trade Unions have been viewed as the most prominent way for employees to channel any potential grievances and to ensure due process in the workplace (Benson & Brown, 2010, p. 80). The growth of the non-union organisation however has ensured that today, union voice has become a 'minority phenomenon' which fairs little chance of a return to union centred forms of participation (Dundon et al., 2005, p. 307).

The aim of this research is to compare the phenomenon of Employee Voice within the confines of both unionised and non-unionised settings within the supermarket industry in Ireland. But to what extent do they differ? Is Voice significantly different within and between both environments?

Initially there was widespread consensus that non-union employee representation programs 'were largely employer promulgated shams operated for socially retrograde purposes of union avoidance and worker cooptation' (Taras & Kaufman, 2006, p. 513/4). It is a consensus supported by Dundon et al. (2005, p. 317) regarding the common perceptions amongst the average worker that there is a 'pre-packaged box' of sorts when it comes to employee representation; one is marked 'non-union and inadequate' while the other is marked 'union and effective'.

Employee Voice in many respects is seen in terms of either collective participation or as an alternative to union representation (Dundon et al., 2005, p.309). Indeed a defining feature of UK Industrial Relations over the last twenty years or so has been the decline of trade unionism (Butler, 2005, p. 272). It is a reality which has seen the decline of the employees' traditional form of representation in the union, decline as the non-union workplace continues to grow. The emergence of the non-union firm has left a void in terms of traditional representation at the workplace (Dundon and Gollan, 2007, p. 1183).

The fall in unionism and the rise in the non-union workplace over the past two decades raise the question as to whether workers now have a reduced capacity to initiate issues and articulate grievances (Benson, 2000, p453). Indeed in Benson's view, for some commentators independent unions are the only source of genuine voice while others have argued that the adoption of the HRM paradigm within an enterprise will provide workers with adequate voice mechanisms. It is what ultimately culminates in the battle between Union versus Human Resources for a degree of influence over the employee.

The literature suggests that the future will see a continuation of current trends whereby the non-union workplace will continue to grow at the expense of the more traditionally represented union workplace. It has been argued that individualised and specific non-union voice arrangements are likely to increase with a corollary that a single union voice channel has already been replaced with a multiplicity of non-union voice mechanisms for the majority of the working population (Freeman and Kleiner, 2000, p222.). In fact there is an emerging trend stemming from recent legislation which has promoted a more individualistic approach to rights in the workplace making it much harder for collective representation to have a role (Humphreys, 2013).

Given that commitment is commonly viewed as being allied to notions of involvement and empowerment, organisations are increasingly being extolled to 'recognise the importance, even the necessity, of maximising employee voice' (Butler, 2005, p. 273). According to Butler, given the presently increasing preoccupation with the area of voice, it is somewhat anomalous that the topic of non-

union voice has failed to emerge in its own right as a significant and substantive area of research. In fact it is believed by some that non-union voice is seriously neglected compared to the research on union forms of representation (Dundon and Gollan, 2007).

What becomes important is how unions are perceived among different levels of society and in turn amongst the labour force. Knowing what workers think about unions whether they be members or non members, men or women, high skilled or low skilled is crucial with regards to how unions are perceived and as a consequence the level of influence, if any, they will have in any given workplace (Kolins-Givan & Hipp, 2012).

The fact that 'never members' or those who have never had dealings with Trade Unions were the most likely to have negative views of Trade Unions is an important feature of the research done to date. Whilst this may seem like a rather obvious conclusion to come to it is an interesting concept regarding the current trends regarding the decline in Trade Union density and is further proof of the belief that there will never be a return to the dominant Union movement of yesteryear.

The fall in rates of union membership is to the detriment of the average worker's rights and abilities to exercise voice. Indeed for many employees the loss of voice has meant that their relationship with their employers are governed by contracts of adhesion, in which employers set the terms of employment which the employee can take or leave (Van Buren & Greenwood, 2008, p. 210). Issues are raised by the same authors around the area of voice in terms of its nature as a collective or individual entity.

Voice has collective and individual components; collective voice typically being represented by a relationship between union and employer; whilst individual voice is typical of what tends to emerge in the non unionised workplace between a particular employee and the employer (Van Buren & Greenwood,2008, p.212). Whilst it can be argued that both complement each other rather than act as substitutes for one another, collective (i.e. union) voice has been the traditional means of enhancing employee

power in the employment relationship and with its demise, it can be said that this traditional source of voice for the employee has also been lost to an extent.

Historically Trade Unions have been the traditional means of providing workers with a channel to voice their opinions. However it has been said that the collective voice model is deficient in so far as it equates collective Employee Voice with autonomous unionism (Benson and Brown, 2010). A point further argued by these same authors is that although collective voice is effective in providing security for the employee, it can ultimately also be construed to represent the interests of the employers. It is argued that it is this perceived dilution of Employee Voice through union channels which has contributed to the decline of union density and has accelerated the growth of a more direct, non-union mechanism of voice.

So what does the literature say regarding the effectiveness of union and non-union voice? Which is seen as the more valid channel of participation? Some believe that union voice is the only way in which employee views can influence management's decision making process, however with regards HRM the widely held belief is that the reason behind the widespread growth of direct, non-union voice is due to the fact that it delivers for both management and employees (Bryson, 2004). In general, non-union voice is more effective than union voice in eliciting managerial responsiveness in British workplaces and therefore worker voice does not need to be collective or independent of management to be effective (Bryson, 2004).

It seems the success of direct non-union voice lies in managerial responsiveness and the fact that it is perceived by management as a preferred means of dealing with Employee Voice. An important feature of voice is that it is challenging in nature, which could be perceived as threatening or damaging to interpersonal relationships between employee and employer (Whiting, Maynes, Podsakoff, Podsakoff, 1997). Perceptions of Employee Voice, particularly those of management are vital in determining the extent to which voice is recognised and acted upon.

2.7.   Employee Voice Within the Supermarket Industry

Despite a recent slowdown in the economy at large, soaring profits have generally been a feature of supermarket companies in Ireland over the past 15 years or so, none more so than Tesco. In the UK, over the last decade the retailer acquired 30% of the UK grocery market culminating in a share which was larger than the two nearest competitors combined. And what was believed by the CEO to be central to this success-the company's employees. Employee voice is gauged through an employee survey which is implemented across the company's vast employee base every year which is used to identify where change is needed (Strategic Direction, 2008).

By listening to what employees want (namely an interesting job, to be respected, to have a helpful manager and career opportunities), management place these issues at the forefront of the company's 'people agenda'. Despite the vast size of the organisation, Employee Voice and participation within Tesco is sought after and is recognised as a key aspect to the company's success.

Marks and Spencer's (M&S) have also seen the importance of Employee Voice and in its pursuit of embracing Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) it sought to ensure that all employees were involved in the running of the business. After setting up a Social Forum, a director of the company said that the hope was for staff to go beyond 'just turning up for work and hoped a new way of thinking could be embedded into the organisation's culture'. The company now surveys its employees quarterly to gauge the opinions of its staff more accurately and also launched a 3 month consultation period in which they spoke directly to past and current employees directly (Personnel Today, 2002). Being a non-union organisation in the UK, M&S saw the potential benefits of direct interactions with its employees.

Both companies identified the input of employees as key to success, whether it was in attempting to maintain record profits or alternatively in looking to embrace Corporate Social Responsibility. Its perceived importance is clear by the regard it is seemingly held in by these two supermarket giants. What's more telling is the fact that both companies, despite the fact that both are from opposing sides in terms of employee

representation, share an appreciation for the potential benefits of Employee Voice and participation.

Competing visions and expectations surrounding Employee Voice and participation are in constant conflict with each other (Wilkinson & Fay, 2011). Employee Voice is of special concern when considering its relationship to feelings of individual equity. Perceptions on both sides of the organisational divide (i.e. that of management and employers against that of employees) are directly related to employee satisfaction, commitment turnover and motivation (Goldberg, Clark and Henley, 2011). However with regards to caution, Employee Voice is not a 'silver bullet' or a simple solution in its own right. Instead it must be consolidated over time and be the subject of constant attention if it is to meet the ever changing demands of the business environment in which it operates (Brøgger, 2010).

Some debate whether or not sophisticated HRM procedures such as the pursuit and implementation of Employee Voice can be expected to matter much in settings where relatively low skilled workers carry out low skilled and mundane tasks (Jones et al. 2010). It is arguments such as these when compared to earlier arguments that place the idea of Employee Voice within the context of 'human rights agendas' (Dundon et al., 2005) which makes it difficult to identify whether or not the idea of seeking participation from all levels, (and more to the point specifically the lowest skilled levels) within an organisation is unrealistic or does everybody have the right and indeed the ability to contribute to an organisations success.

2.8.   Summary

As has been previously stated, employee voice and participation is a phenomena within which little consensus exists.

There is some level of agreement amongst academics that enabling voice and encouraging participation can indeed provide benefits and advantages to organisations and their employees. Businesses that are interested in adopting employee voice mechanisms and programs do so based on an underlying rationale which infers that such systems will elicit information from employees that is useful to improving work

products and processes, the decision making process and organisational performance (Lewin & Mitchell, 1992, p. 107).

Freeman & Medoff (1982) see the collective form of voice as a means of improving the efficiency of engagement between employers and their employees based somewhat on the old adage of 'strength in numbers'. From this perspective the role of unions is to help improve efficiency by replacing primitive employment relationship disputes (i.e. strikes and sabotage) with more peaceful and professional collective bargaining processes (Lewin, 2005, p. 210).

However voice more frequently occurs nowadays outside the parameters of union involvement with the emergence and continued growth of the non-unionised firm. Freeman and Medoff (1984) opine that the only valid form of employee voice is through a trade union, however the rise in non union voice has resulted in a shift toward direct voice which culminates in a two way communication between employer and employee (Bryson, 2000, p. 214), removing the role of the collective union channel in the process.

Arguments will always exist regarding the conflict of interest that employee voice and participation throws up. The right to manage will always conflict with the right of the employee in their simplest forms but strict, rigid hierarchies are constantly giving way to more inclusive forms of management. Whilst the manager-subordinate relationship is far from the brink of collapse, the unilateral rights of the employer are under constant review.

> *"In order to satisfy employees' need for independence and freedom, organisations need to provide essentially the same rights for employees that they have in society at large. Otherwise employees view their organisations as impediments to basic values. Lower organisational commitment and poorer quality work in such a case are very predictable outcomes"*
> (Gordon, Infante & Graham, 1988, p. 102).

When workers challenge management on such issues as discipline or dismissal, they do not attempt to totally nullify or destroy managements decision making role

nevertheless they make a conscious effort to set limits to decision making capabilities and in doing so to produce a reduction in managerial authority (Storey, 1976, p. 54).

Employee voice provides an opportunity for both management and employees. By enabling workers to have a say, management can seek to afford a degree of input to employees regarding the decision making process and in doing so, employees will feel an enhanced sense of loyalty to the cause of management.

Conflict is an inevitability of the employment relationship and one which should not be eradicated entirely. A degree of conflict is healthy in any situation but there is scope for improving the way certain conflict can and often does escalate to the point of dispute or dismissal. Enabling employees to have a voice and a degree of participation and recognising it, can provide potential benefit to the performance of an organisation and reduce the likelihood of costly disagreement and conflict from arising.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

3.1.   Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to explore and explain the way in which the information that provides the basis of this research and its subsequent findings was sought. The purpose of the Research Methodology Chapter is to signal to the reader how the research was conducted and what philosophical assumptions underpin the argument being made (Quinlan, 2011, p. 177).
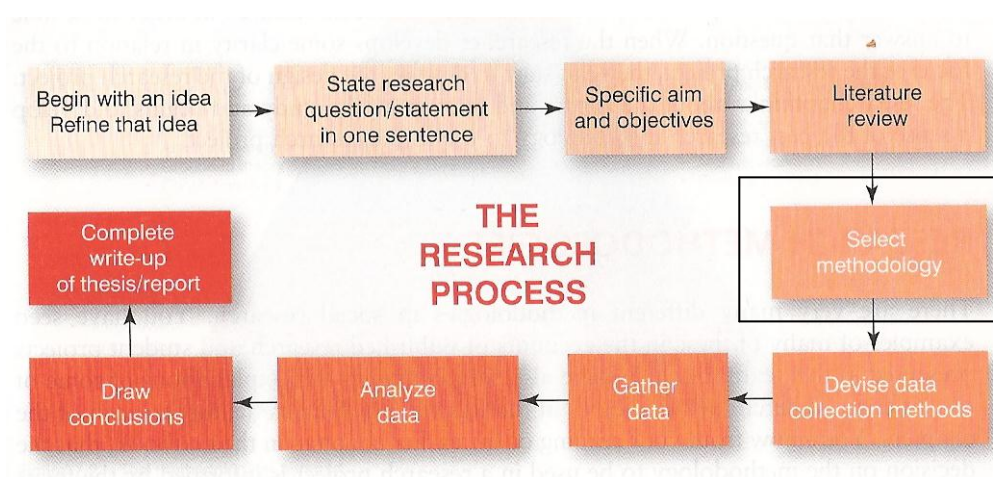
Figure 3.1.: *The Research Process adapted from Quinlan (2011, p.177)*

Figure 3.1 illustrates the location of the methodology chapter in the research process. It represents a vital component of the research process and according to Quinlan (2011, p.177), all of the elements of the research project have to fit together. The research methodology used must be capable of supporting the research and of enabling and facilitating its completion. In summary, the research methodology used must be the appropriate research methodology for, and must fit with the research project.

3.2.   Research Objectives

This research seeks to explore the area of employee voice within the supermarket industry in Ireland and compare and contrast the extent to which employees are able to express their views within unionised and non unionised settings.

The following are the areas which this research will specifically look to explore:

- To what extent is employee voice listened to within the supermarket industry in Ireland?

- To what extent do unionised and non unionised settings differ in terms of the degree to which voice is listened to within the supermarket industry in Ireland?

- To what extent does employees' control over their own jobs differ between unionised and non unionised settings within the supermarket industry?

- To what extent does employees' role in the decision making process differ between unionised and non-unionised settings within the supermarket industry in Ireland?

- To what extent do general attitudes to work differ between unionised and non unionised settings within the supermarket industry in Ireland?

3.3.   Research Philosophy

"The research philosophy you adopt contains important assumptions about the way in which you view the world. These assumptions will underpin your research strategy and the methods you choose as part of that strategy"
(Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2007, p.101).

There are three major ways of thinking about research philosophy and they are epistemology, ontology and axiology. Arguments for each type of research philosophy depend on what it is that is being researched and each contains important differences which will influence the way in which you think about the research process (Saunders et al., 2007, p. 102).

Epistemology concerns what constitutes acceptable knowledge in a field of study and distinction can be made within the field of epistemology between what are referred to

as 'the resources' researcher, and the 'feelings' researcher. As such, the resources researcher embraces what is called the positivist position to the development of knowledge whilst the feelings researcher adopts the interpretivist perspective (Saunders et al., 2007, p. 103). In other words epistemology is concerned with the study of knowledge and what we can accept as being valid knowledge (Collis & Hussey, 2003, p. 48).

The ontological perspective is, on the other hand, concerned with the nature of reality and raises greater questions than epistemology regarding assumptions about how the world operates (Saunders et al., 2007, p. 108). With the ontological assumption, a decision must be made regarding whether or not you consider the world to be objective and external to the researcher, or socially constructed and understood only by examining the perceptions of human actors (Collis & Hussey, 2007, p. 103).

Axiology is a strand of philosophy which studies judgements about value specifically the process of social enquiry as opposed to aesthetics and ethics (Saunders et al., 2007, p. 108). As a result of this, an axiological perspective is incompatible with any form of scientific approach which is accepted as being entirely objective and 'value-free' (Collis & Hussey, 2003, p. 48).

In terms of this research, the nature of employee voice and participation lends itself to the interpretivist strand of epistemology. What that means is that it is necessary for the researcher to understand differences between humans in our role as social actors. It is argued that interpretivism as a research philosophy is indeed more suited to business and management research particularly fields like Human Resource Management (Saunders et al., 2007, p. 107) and it holds that social reality is a subjective construction based on interpretation and interaction (Quinlan, 2011, p.96).

The fact that there is little consensus regarding the area of Employee voice suggests that it is an area which means different things to different people. Different cultures, corporate environments and academics have very different perceptions regarding voice and participation, what it means and how much scope it should have within an organisation. Interpretivism holds that all knowledge is a matter of interpretation (Quinlan, 2011, p. 99). Therefore in the way that this research hopes to contribute to

the argument surrounding voice and participation, a high degree of interpretation will be necessary.

Finally, the fact that the principle data collection tool of this research is quantitative and through the administering of surveys, it is research that can also be considered to fall under the philosophy of positivism which infers that advocates of such philosophy will 'prefer working with an observable social reality' (Saunders et al., 2007, p. 103).

3.4.   Research Paradigm

When discussing the philosophy of any research it is important to identify what paradigm that research falls under. There are four paradigms in total; functionalist, interpretive, radical humanist and radical structuralist. These four paradigms are arranged further to correspond to four conceptual dimensions (Figure 3.2.). In terms of identifying where this particular research lies, much must be taken into consideration.
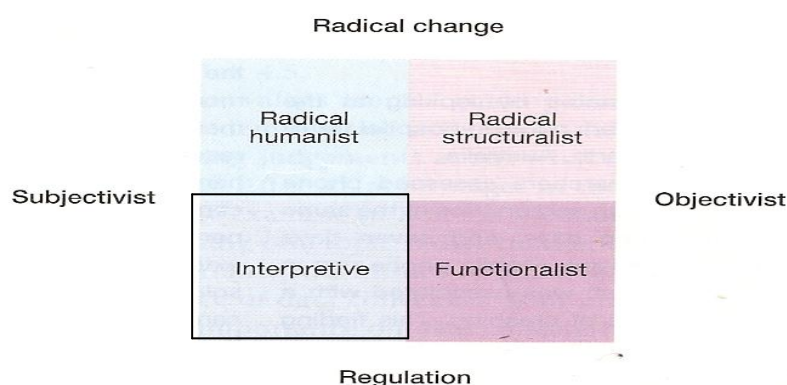
Figure 3.2.: *Four Paradigms for the analysis of social theory (Burrell & Morgan, 1972) adapted from Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill.(2007, p.112).*

The area of employee voice as has already been discussed, is an area in which consensus has been hard to find. Various different opinions from various different eras in various different industries have gained prominence and as a result there is no one accepted reality in terms of how employee voice is perceived and how it is applied as a result.

In terms of where this research lies in the above paradigm, the lack of consensus surrounding the area of Employee Voice is decisive in identifying its position. The

Radical Change perspective relates to a judgement about the way organisational affairs should be conducted and suggests ways in which these affairs may be conducted in order to make fundamental changes to the normal order of things (Saunders et al., 2007, p.112). This is incompatible with the nature of Employee voice and the research that is being conducted here.

On the other hand according to the same authors, the regulatory perspective is less judgemental and critical and seeks to explain the ways in which organisational affairs are regulated and offers suggestions as to how they may be improved within the framework of the way things are done at present. In summary:

> *"The radical change dimension approaches organisational problems from the view point of overturning the existing state of affairs; the regulatory dimension seeks to work within the existing state of affairs"*
> (Saunders et al., 2007, p. 112).

Developing further on the research paradigm illustrated in Table 3.2., and whether this research can be construed as being interpretivist or functionalist, depends again on the nature of the topic which is being researched. Employee voice again as a result of its often ambiguous nature means that this research will fall into the interpretive paradigm. Indeed according to Saunders et al. (2007, p. 113), the concern for the interpretivist would not be to achieve change in the order of things, it would be to understand and explain what is going on. Therefore, it can be identified here that this research belongs to the interpretive paradigm (as illustrated in Figure 3.2.).

3.5.   Research Approach

The research approach consists of identifying whether the research can be identified as deductive or inductive. Deduction according to Saunders et al. (2007, p. 117) possesses several important characteristics. 'First, there is the search to explain causal relationships between variables'. Following this, a hypothesis or various hypotheses are developed and in turn this hypothesis or various hypotheses are tested through the utilisation of quantitative data.

Alternatively, a researcher may choose to implement an inductive approach which seeks to formulate theory directly from the research that is being carried out and is particularly interested with the context in which certain events take place. In summary, with deduction, a theory and hypothesis are developed and a research strategy designed to test the hypothesis whilst with induction, data are collected and a theory developed as a result of the data being analysed (Saunders et al., 2007, p. 118).

The nature of this research in so far as it identifies certain research questions which it seeks to answer through the existing academic literature and indeed through independent research, means that it is more likely to fall within the realms of a deductive approach. The fact that the primary means of collecting data is through a questionnaire is also decisive in coming to this conclusion for the following reasons; deduction dictates that that the researcher should be independent of what is being observed; whilst at the same time, concepts need to be operationalised in a way that enables facts to be measured quantitatively (Saunders et al., 2007, p. 118).

3.6.   Research Design

Research design is a general plan of how to go about answering specific research questions. It can be divided into three main schools of thought; exploratory, descriptive and explanatory research (Saunders et al., 2007, p. 134).

Exploratory studies are an effective means of seeking and gaining new insight into an area or assessing various phenomena in a new light. It is particularly useful in clarifying understanding of a particular issue and can even prove useful in identifying whether or not a certain area of research is worth pursuing. Descriptive studies on the other hand tend to portray accurate profiles of persons, events or situations and often act as a forerunner to both exploratory and explanatory research. For descriptive research to be effective, it is necessary to have a clear picture of the phenomena on which you wish to collect data before commencing research. Finally explanatory studies look to establish causal relations between variables (Saunders et al., 2007, p. 134).

Having explained the various types of research which may be used, let us now identify which school of research design this particular study falls into. The ambiguous nature of voice makes it somewhat compatible with exploratory research. The lack of widely accepted clarity in the area of voice and participation mean that new insight and novel ways of assessing the phenomenon of voice are more relevant than ever.

Descriptive research and its objectives would appear largely incompatible with this research for the same reasons which make exploratory research relevant. It is a form of research that necessitates fact and doesn't tolerate ambiguity to a high degree as a result of its dependency on accuracy.

Finally it is the area of explanatory research which perhaps proves to be the most relevant to this particular research. The definition of what constitutes explanatory research put forward by Saunders et al. (2007) provides this research with direction in the sense that it seeks to study a situation or a problem, in this case employee voice and participation, in order to explain the causal relationships between variables, in this case unionised and non-unionised sectors of the supermarket industry.

Therefore it can be said that this research will be largely explanatory in nature in its while also borrowing from the exploratory field.

3.7. Research Strategy

Various options are available to any researcher when undertaking a study such as this one. In choosing the most suitable strategy for any piece of research there are a number of things which must be taken into consideration. It will be guided by your research questions and objectives, the extent of existing knowledge, the amount of time and other resources you have available, as well as your own philosophical underpinnings (Saunders et al., 2007, p.135).

In terms of this research, the survey/questionnaire provides the research strategy. The survey strategy is usually associated with the deductive approach and is a common strategy in business and management research (Saunders et al., 2007, p.138). Indeed

according to the same authors surveys also prove popular in the sense that it allows the collection of a large amount of data, from a sizeable population in a highly economical way.

When engaging a large population in a research project, it is not possible to engage every member of the population in in-depth research (Quinlan, 2011, p. 326). In terms of employee voice and participation it is imperative to obtain as large a sample as is possible in order to seek an accurate idea of how exactly it operates and is perceived within the supermarket industry. 'In addition, the data collected using a survey strategy can be used to suggest possible reasons for particular relationships between variables and to produce models of these relationships' (Saunders et al., 2007, p.138) which further emphasises the exploratory nature of this research.

In terms of time horizons or the length of time over which this research takes place, two main choices are left open to the researcher. Saunders et al. (2007, p.148) uses the analogy of whether or not the researcher wishes to represent a 'snapshot' taken at a particular time (cross-sectional) or whether alternatively the research should represent more of a 'diary' perspective (longitudinal) which seeks to record certain events over an extended period of time.

As a result of time constraints imposed upon any researcher carrying out a dissertation during the course of the academic process, the nature of this piece of research is cross-sectional. Surveys are commonly employed in carrying out this type of research which seek to describe the incidence of a phenomenon (in this case employee voice and participation) or similarly in explaining how factors are related in different organisations (in this case the phenomenon of voice within the context of unionised and non unionised supermarket companies) (Saunders et al., 2007, p. 148).

3.8.   Data Collection Method

The method of data collection for this research will be in the form of questionnaires.

3.9.   Questionnaire

Questionnaires and scales are very precise data gathering instruments. They are designed to elicit short, precise responses to concisely stated and precise questions. What questionnaires also allow is access to and engagement of large populations (Quinlan, 2011, p. 326).

A questionnaire can be defined as including all data collection techniques in which each person is asked to respond to the same set of questions in a predetermined order (Saunders et al., 2007, p. 608). Indeed 'using a survey strategy should give you more control over the research process and, when sampling is used, it is possible to generate findings that are representative of the whole population at a lower cost than collecting data for the whole population' (Saunders et al., 2007, p. 138).

Before carrying out a survey or questionnaire, certain questions need to be asked (Oakshott, 2006, p. 62).

- What is the purpose of this survey?

- What is my target population?

- Do I have a list of the population?

- How can I avoid bias in my sample?

- How accurate do I want my survey to be?

- What resources do I have at my disposal?

- How am I going to collect the required data?

The purpose of this questionnaire is to explore the phenomena of employee voice within the supermarket industry in Ireland and compare how it operates within the

unionised and non unionised sectors of that industry. Therefore my target population will consist of employees working within unionised and non unionised environments within the supermarket industry.

Having selected a target population, you need to determine whether there is any list that would allow you to identify every member of the population…this is called a sampling frame and examples include the electoral register, a company's personal records etc. (Oakshott, 2006, p. 63). Such means were not available for this research.

Bias is caused by choosing a sample that is unrepresentative of the target population (Oakshott, 2006, p. 63) and it is imperative that it is avoided if the findings of any research are to have any credibility. The specific nature of the aims of this particular research means that potential respondents are limited to those working within the supermarket industry.

Once this requirement is met, further sampling techniques become less relevant. Employee voice and participation is a phenomenon within the context of this research which will have an impact on all members of staff within a workplace and is significant for its presence or indeed its absence as opposed to the demographic implications that go with it.

In attempting to get as much of an unbiased and reliable sample as possible, I will be distributing my questionnaires, by hand, to four separate supermarkets; two to those of a unionised environment and 2 to those of non-unionised. 25 questionnaires will be attributed to each store. They are to be presented randomly amongst staff which will ultimately result in the distribution of 100 questionnaires in total, split evenly amongst unionised and non-unionised environments. This should provide sufficient scope of the issues around employee voice and participation and should increase the level of accuracy this research strives to achieve.

3.10.   Reliability

Reliability is concerned with the findings of the research. In more specific terms, reliability is to do with the likelihood that if one was to repeat the research that similar

results would be observed (Collis & Hussey, 2003, p. 58). In other words, within research it relates to the degree to which the research can be repeated while obtaining consistent results (Quinlan, 2011, p. 43).

In terms of reliability and this research, its interpretivist nature means that in seeking supermarket employees' own interpretations and assumptions, a high level of reliability regarding the 'replicability' of results should not be a major issue. Indeed, the nature of seeking opinion means that it is highly likely that if these same people were to be asked the same questions in one month or indeed one year's time, those responses would differ in some way.

3.11. Validity

Perhaps the key issue in all research projects is the degree of validity of the research (Quinlan, 2011, p. 42). Instead of being interested in predicting how replicable a piece of research is in the case of reliability, validity is concerned with measuring the extent to which the findings of a particular piece of research accurately represent what is really happening in the situation (Collis & Hussey, 2003, p. 58). In summary, whilst reliability may not be a prerequisite of all good research, validity is at the core of it.

Validity refers to the ability of your questionnaire to measure what you intend to measure and it represents somewhat of a problem for researchers in the sense that if you actually knew what you were measuring, there would be no point in designing your questionnaire (Saunders et al., 2007, p. 366).

This researcher identified a means of ensuring validity through the discovery of a study carried out by the NCPP (National Centre for Partnership and Performance), ESRI (Economic and Social Research Institute) and UCD (University College Dublin) on Employee Attitudes and Expectations of the Workplace 2003 (Geary, 2008, p. 544). Having contacted the ISSDA (Irish Social Sciences Data Archive), and upon applying to access the report (Appendix III), it was possible to borrow from the questionnaire which was used as part of the research.

3.12. Ethical Considerations

"Ethics can be defined very simply as a process of reasoning in terms of the right thing to do…ethics can also be defined as the moral principles governing the conduct of an individual, a group or an organisation"
(Quinlan, 2011, p. 69/70).

Indeed according to the same author, ethics within business research has become a critical issue as a result of basic ethical standards being largely overlooked in many businesses across the globe and often entire sectors (the banking sector here in Ireland being a prime example of ethics being sacrificed for the enhancement of profit). Where ethical standards were not adhered to, a culture of greed flourished within which dishonest and fraudulent activities and behaviours were tolerated and perhaps even encouraged (Quinlan, 2011, p. 71).

Two dominant philosophical standpoints exist within business and management research; that of deontology and that of teleology. Deontology infers that 'the end served by the research can never justify the use of research which is unethical' and if you were to adopt this approach, deception or covert research of any kind would not be considered a valid option. Alternatively, teleology provides that the ends of research justify the means and that 'the benefits of your research findings would be weighed against the costs of acting unethically' (Saunders et al., 2007, p. 178).

In the case of covert research whereby subjects are often unaware of the research being carried out, many ethical and moral dilemmas emerge. Despite this fact, the popularity of such research lies in its ability to access real time problems in real time situations, however the ethical rights of research participants must be upheld as well as the consequences of conducting covert research has on the researcher themselves (Oliver & Eales, 2008, p. 354).

This research will undertake a deontological viewpoint and as such, will aim to uphold high ethical standards which will seek to protect both the researcher and the subjects of this research as well as the institutions represented whether it be the National College of Ireland or the various supermarket companies whose employees

have been surveyed and consulted over the course of this research. It is important to think as an ethical practitioner, which requires a formal, open and acknowledged critical engagement with ethical standards and behaviours (Quinlan, 2011, p. 72).

In terms of this research, two important and basic precepts in research ethics are those of confidentiality, i.e. the non disclosure of certain information, and anonymity which enables the research subjects to be free from identification (Quinlan, 2011, p. 79).

Each questionnaire that was distributed opened with a declaration of confidentiality (Appendix I) which guaranteed that any information that was received and processed over the course of the research would be treated as strictly private. Once promises about confidentiality and anonymity have been given, it is of great importance to make sure that these are maintained (Saunders et. al, 2007, p. 187).

Lack of consent	Implied consent	Informed consent
• Participant lacks knowledge	• Participant does not fully understand her/his rights	• Participant consent given freely and based on full information about participation rights and use of data
• Researcher uses deception to collect data	• Researcher implies consent about use of data from fact of access or return of questionnaire	

Figure 3.3.: *The Nature of Participant Consent adapted from Saunders et al. (2007, p. 184).*

Informed consent is another ethical concern to consider and involves informing the potential participant of the nature of the research, the nature and extent of their participation in the research and any possible consequences for them that might arise from their participation (Quinlan 2011, p. 79). Figure 3.3. illustrates the importance of encouraging informed consent within research and how it fits in with the earlier arguments made for the deontological approach in the sense that a research subject can only be informed if they are provided with full information about participation rights and use of data, which can be seen in terms of this research in Appendix I.

Chapter 4: Findings and Discussion

4.1.   Introduction

The preceding chapter identified the methodology that was deemed to be relevant and suitable to the type of research being carried out. This chapter seeks to present the findings and results of the data which was obtained from the distribution of questionnaires. The questionnaires were distributed amongst the employees of four separate supermarket premises split evenly between unionised and non-unionised environments.

It is hoped that the collation of the subsequent data will allow this researcher to definitively answer the questions posed at the beginning of this research and to identify whether substantial differences exist between both sides of the representational divide within the supermarket industry. In doing so it is hoped also that this research will indeed be able to contribute to the wider argument around the area of employee voice and participation.

Initially this chapter will seek to analyse the data provided by the questionnaires. Once this has been done, it will then be possible to engage in some form of discussion regarding the potential significance and value of the outcomes of this research.

4.2.   Response Rate

The questionnaire which was developed and used as the primary source of data collection over the course of this research consisted of a total of 62 questions spread over 6 sections (section 5 and 6 being optional depending on whether the respondent works in a unionised or non-unionised environment).

This researcher received 68 responses out of a total of 100 questionnaires which were distributed resulting in a response rate of 68%. Since this research seeks to compare and contrast the views of two differing sets of employees it would be useful to look at how the response rate differed between both sides. 38 responses were collected from non-unionised workplaces whilst 30 responses were collected from their unionised

counterparts meaning a non-unionised response rate of 76 % compared to a unionised response rate of 60%. Frequency tables for each question analysed over the progress of the following chapter can be found in Appendix IV.

4.3. Findings

4.3.1. Section 1: Background Information

Background information provides the opening of many questionnaires and is vital in gauging the various factors which provide the context to the environments within which people work. This research sought to find out the following information with regard to its respondents; age, sex, whether they worked in a full time or part time capacity, how many hours they worked per week, how long they worked with the company, whether or not they consider their role to be supervisory or not and finally (and perhaps most significantly of all) whether or not the respondent worked in a unionised workplace or not. Upon analysis of the data through the SPSS program, the following was identified:
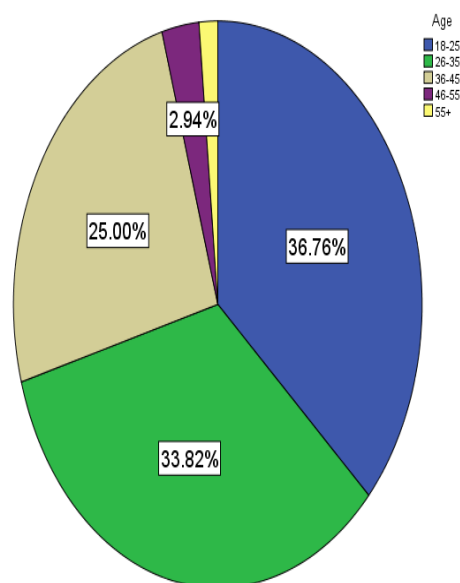
Age

From the chart on the left, it can be seen that 37% of those surveyed were between the ages of 18-25. A further 34 % made up the 26-35 age-group whilst 25 % of respondents were between 36-45. Only 3% of respondents were aged 46-55.

Figure 4.1: *Age of respondents.*
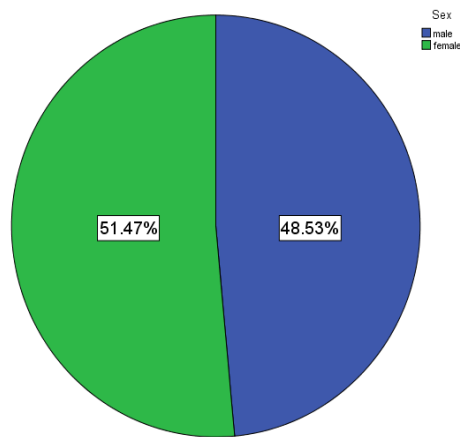
Figure 4.2.: *Sex of respondents.*

Sex

From the chart on the left it can be seen that 49% of respondents were male whilst 51% were female.
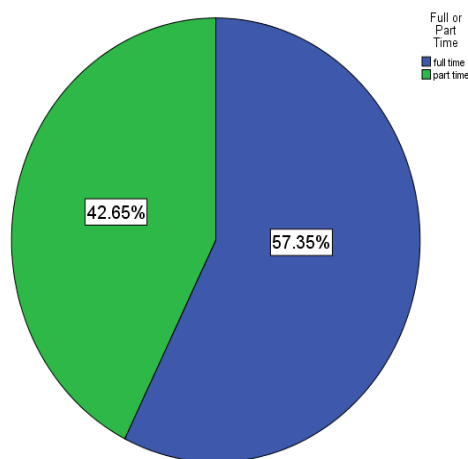
Figure 4.3.: *Do respondents work full time or part time?*

Full Time/Part Time

From the chart on the left it can be seen that 57% of respondents were full time workers whilst 43% worked part time hours.
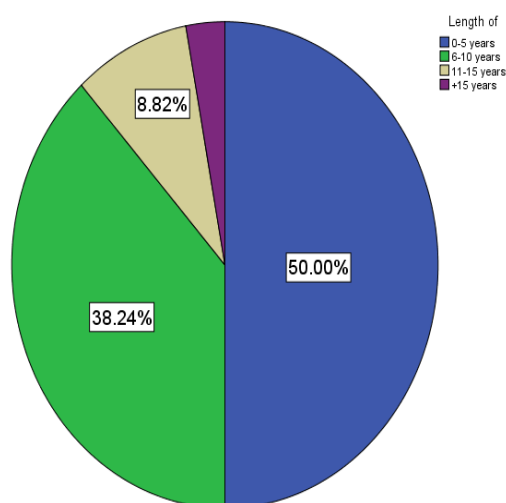
Figure 4.4.: *Length of Service of respondents*

Length of Service

From the chart on the left it can be seen that 50% of respondents have 0-5 years service, 38% have 6-10 years, 9% have 11-15 years whilst only 3 % have over 15 years service.
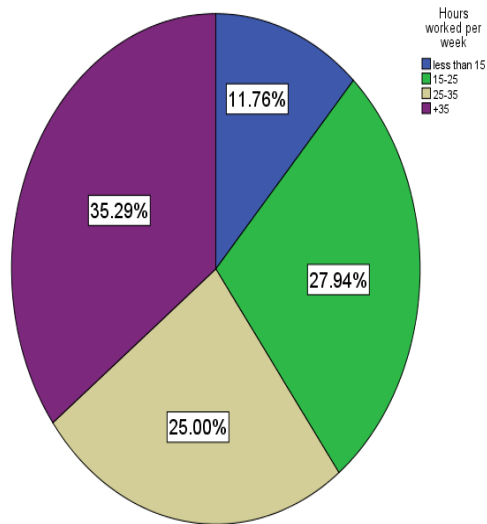
Figure 4.5.: *Hours worked by respondents per week*

Hours worked per week

From the chart on the left, it can be seen that 12 % of respondents work <15 years per week, 28% work between 15 and 25 hours, 25% work between 25 and 35 hours and 35% work more than 35 hours per week.
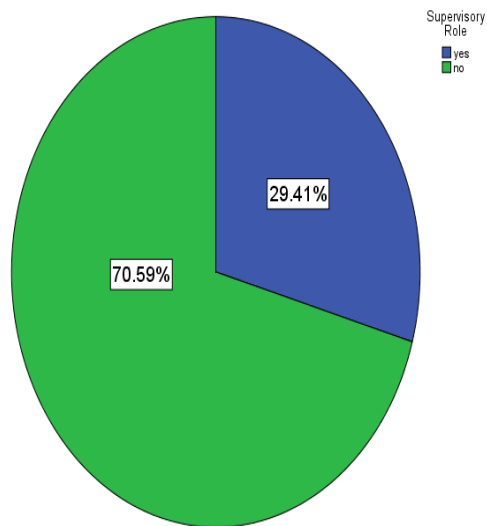
Figure 4.6.: *Do respondents consider their roles supervisory?*

Supervisory Roles?

From the chart on the left, it can be seen that only 29% of respondents consider their roles to be supervisory whilst 71% do not.
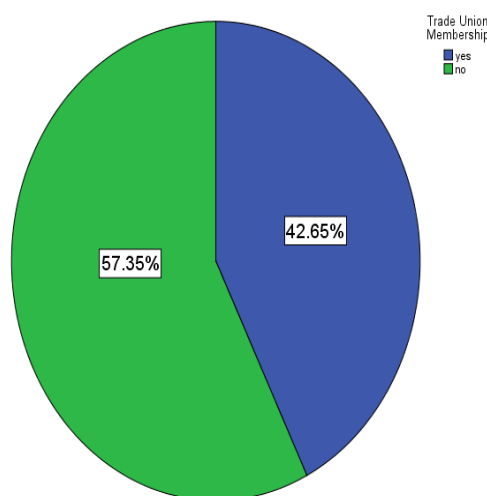
Figure 4.7.: *Unionised or non-unionised workplace?*

Workplace Environment?

From the chart on the left, it can be seen that 43% of respondents are members of a trade union whilst 57% are not.

4.3.2. Section 2: Attitudes to Job

Employee attitudes to their own jobs play a massive role in how they perceive their working environments. Voice and participation and the degree to which both are sought and listened to by management will depend greatly on the nature of general attitudes among employees.

It is only when employees are engaged in terms of attitudes and behaviours that performance gains are apparent, implying that too great a distortion in the balance of advantage will fail to lead to positive performance outcomes (Guest & Peccei, 2001, p. 232).

Observing the attitudes of those who took part in this research also allows us to gain insight into employee perceptions of their work which is ultimately what determines workplace behaviour (Benson & Brown, 2010, p.81).

Results pertaining to employee attitudes within the context of this research are as follows:

		Workplace	
		Union	Non-union
In general I am satisfied with my job	strongly disagree	0.0%	10.3%
	disagree	13.8%	15.4%
	neither agree or disagree	27.6%	10.3%
	agree	51.7%	53.8%
	strongly agree	6.9%	10.3%

Figure 4.8.: *Job Satisfaction*

According to Bryson, Cappellari & Lucifora (2004, p. 439), satisfaction as an economic variable, plays a major role in labour market theories and in our ability to determine and explain workers behaviour. In term of job satisfaction amongst this research's respondents, there is little significant difference between unionised and non-unionised employees within the context of this research. The greatest indicator of difference is in the fact that none of the unionised respondents chose the 'strongly

disagree' option while 10% of non-unionised employees did. In summary both sets of employees were in general agreement that they were satisfied in their current jobs.

		Workplace	
		Union	Non-union
	strongly disagree	0.0%	0.0%
	disagree	0.0%	0.0%
My job is secure	neither agree or disagree	24.1%	7.7%
	agree	48.3%	51.3%
	strongly agree	27.6%	41.0%

Figure 4.9.: *Job Security*

Job security or rather more to the point, worker insecurity are becoming a common feature in many of today's working environments. Indeed Britain's employees are feeling more insecure and under pressure at work than at any time over the past 20 years.

What is particularly significant is that for the first time, public sector workers are more worried about losing their jobs than the private sector. After five years of recession and low growth, it paints a picture of a workforce that is more fearful and working harder than before (Groom, 2013).

Job security in the context of this research is another area where definite similarities exist between both unionised and non-unionised supermarket companies. There is a general sense of job security across the board with the majority of both sides agreeing with the statement regarding the safety of their employment. As both companies are private sector supermarkets, this observation would seem to support Groom's statement regarding the increase of public sector concern.

Job security judging by what we see above is not an issue amongst those who took part in this research whether they are union members or not. Similar likenesses exist regarding willingness to work harder than necessary to ensure the success of the organisation with 45% of unionised and 41% of non-unionised employees agreeing whilst 24% and 23% strongly agreed respectively.

		Workplace	
		Union	Non-union
	strongly disagree	41.4%	28.2%
I would turn down another	disagree	17.2%	41.0%
job with more pay in order to	neither agree or disagree	27.6%	15.4%
stay with this organisation	agree	6.9%	5.1%
	strongly agree	6.9%	10.3%

Figure 4.10.: *Employee willingness to turn down a better paid job to stay.*

Minor differences begin to emerge when employees are asked whether or not they would refuse a different job with more pay to stay with their current organisation. Whilst there is general disagreement with regard to that statement, it appears that non-unionised employees would be slightly more inclined to stay than their unionised counterparts.

		Workplace	
		Union	Non-union
	strongly disagree	6.9%	2.6%
	disagree	24.1%	7.7%
I work under a great deal of pressure	neither agree or disagree	34.5%	17.9%
	agree	17.2%	28.2%
	strongly agree	17.2%	43.6%

Figure 4.11.: *Level of pressure in job.*

Significant differences begin to emerge in terms of the pressure unionised and non-unionised employees find themselves under with non-unionised respondents stating that they perceive themselves to be under a greater deal of pressure. An independent t test supported this claim, **t (66) = -3.201; p = 0.02,** and specifically identified that non-unionised employees (M = 4.03) were under significantly more stress than their unionised counterparts (M = 3.14; SD = 1.187).

		Workplace	
		Union	Non-union
I often have to work extra time over and above the formal hours of my job to get through the job or help out	strongly disagree	20.7%	10.3%
	disagree	13.8%	10.3%
	neither agree or disagree	34.5%	20.5%
	agree	27.6%	15.4%
	strongly agree	3.4%	43.6%

Figure 4.12.: *Likelihood of enforced overtime.*

In terms of the likelihood of employees being asked to perform enforced overtime in order to get the job done, differences between both sets of workers emerge. An independent t test was again able to support this claim, **t (66) = -2.887; p= 0.005.** Predictably, non-unionised employees (M = 3.72) who as we have already identified work under a greater deal of pressure than those in unionised employment (M = 2.79; SD = 1.395), are also more likely to work beyond their set hours in order to get the job done with nearly half of non-unionised respondents strongly agreeing with that statement.

Non-union respondents are clearly put under more pressure in their jobs than their unionised counterparts and are generally expected to go above and beyond their set hours of work in order to get the job done. Perhaps this can be put down to managements' new degree of self confidence in exercising unilateral decision-making powers in the absence of union presence (Dundon & Gollan, 2007, p. 1182).

Union representation is often seen in 'ideal' terms and contrasted with 'ineffective' non-union representation (Dundon et al., 2005, p. 309). Given what has been observed so far it appears that non-unionised supermarket employees are under a far greater deal of pressure than their unionised counterparts in terms of the stress they are put under and the hours they are expected to work.

Dundon et al. (2005, p. 317) go on to say that while respondents (non-unionised employees) were reasonably confident of identifying potential positive outcomes of employee voice, they also identified significant barriers to effective employee

engagement which included a lack of employee enthusiasm, an absence of appropriate managerial skills to implement voice and issues concerning line managers.

The fact that job satisfaction and job security were observed to be quite similar in nature between both sides of the representational divide in this research suggests that perhaps expectations differ between respective workplaces.

4.3.3. Section 3: Control over job

> *"In general, better job control entails increased employee involvement and participation. The intention should be to improve the balance between the benefits of hard work and the costs."*
> (Groom, 2013).

At the heart of the debate regarding voice and enhanced employee participation lies the issue of control. Debate around the idea of managerial prerogative versus employee voice has already been explored and discussed over the course of this research. In terms of this research, respondents were asked to rate a series of statements regarding the level of control they perceive themselves to have over their own work. In terms of what this research seeks to find out, determining the level of control that each employee has over their own jobs will act as an indicator of just how much say they have in the running of business affairs which affect them and as such will also act as an indicator of how much of an influence these employees have and the extent to which their voice is listened to.

		Workplace	
		Union	Non-union
I decide how much work I do and how fast I do it	almost never	6.9%	28.2%
	rarely	20.7%	17.9%
	sometimes	37.9%	28.2%
	often	31.0%	20.5%
	almost always	3.4%	5.1%

Figure 4.13.: *Control over amount of work performed.*

The influence afforded to each employee regarding the level of control they have over how much work they do and how fast they do it represents another indicator of how much input and control is afforded by management and employers to their employees.

The above results have proven to be somewhat inconclusive in terms of how both unionised and non-unionised employees have presented their views. The most telling statistic is the fact that just over 28% of non-unionised employees almost never decide how much work they do and how fast they do it.

		Workplace	
		Union	Non-union
My manager describes the specific tasks I will perform from day to day	almost never	0.0%	0.0%
	rarely	17.2%	12.8%
	sometimes	20.7%	15.4%
	often	51.7%	33.3%
	almost always	10.3%	38.5%

Figure 4.14: *Input of management in performance of day to day tasks.*

Developing that point further, the above table looks at how much input management have in the control of what employees do on a day to day basis. Both unionised and non-unionised employees are predictably in agreement that there is a significant degree of managerial input into their every day work with both unanimously stating that the contrary almost never occurs. However it is at the other end of the spectrum where differences begin to emerge. Nearly one in four non-unionised respondents stated that direct and specific managerial input is a daily occurrence within their workplace while only 10% of their unionised counterparts agreed.

		Workplace	
		Union	Non-union
I decide when I can take a break during the working day	almost never	10.3%	25.6%
	rarely	17.2%	23.1%
	sometimes	27.6%	17.9%
	often	31.0%	20.5%
	almost always	13.8%	12.8%

Figure 4.15.: *Discretion given to employees regarding their break-time.*

In terms of the ability of employees to decide when to take their break, it is clear that again, non-unionised employees perceive themselves to be less likely to have a say in this particular issue with over a quarter on non-union respondents stating that they almost never have an input into that decision.

		Workplace	
		Union	Non-union
I have to get my managers consent before trying to change the way I do my work	almost never	0.0%	2.6%
	rarely	13.8%	7.7%
	sometimes	3.4%	17.9%
	often	34.5%	33.3%
	almost always	48.3%	38.5%

Figure 4.16.: *Extent of management consent required*

In terms of the extent to which employees must consult management before they make changes in the way they do their work, more similarities emerge than differences with 36% and 33% agreeing respectively whilst nearly half of unionised employees and almost 40% of non-unionised employees stating that they almost always had to ask management before they initiated change.

Very often non-unionised companies seek to effectively replace the void left by union representation through acts of either substitution or suppression. Companies such as IBM or M&S are seen as exemplars of good human relations that 'substitute' the triggers to the demand for unionism. At the other end of the non-union spectrum is the exploitative firm that seeks to suppress union demands (Dundon, 2002, p.235/6).

Far be it from this research to state that the non union supermarkets that were consulted as part of this research could be classed as belonging to the latter, it would be equally as misleading to class them a being exemplars of good human relations judging by the results we see above. A greater degree of control appears to be exercised over them by management when compared with their unionised counterparts,

4.3.4. Section 4: Role in the Decision Making Process

Carrying on from determining the level of control employees tend to have within their jobs follows the role employees have in the decision making process regarding issues which directly affect them.

Offering workers a role in the decision making process, is one of the key indicators of employee voice and epitomises participation in the workplace. From the perspective of employees, research has shown that employees want very much to be treated fairly and organisational procedures that give employees the opportunity to provide input into decisions that affect them are viewed as fairer than others (Feuille & Chacere, 1995, p.28). Therefore analysing the extent to which both unionised and non-unionised supermarket employees perceive their own role in the decision making process, will indicate just how fairly they feel they are treated within their respective workplaces.

Employee Voice is widely held to refer to the process of two way communication and the exchange of information between managers and employees and the enabling of employees to 'have a say' about what goes on in their organisation (CIPD, 2010, p. 3). Therefore the analysis of the following data should also shed much light on the nature of voice within both contexts of the Irish supermarket industry this research seeks to explore.

		Workplace	
		Union	Non-union
Am I likely to be consulted by management regarding matters which are important to me?	very unlikely	3.4%	30.8%
	unlikely	3.4%	30.8%
	neither likely or unlikely	34.5%	15.4%
	likely	44.8%	10.3%
	very likely	13.8%	12.8%

Figure 4.17.: *Likelihood of employees being consulted*

In terms of employees being likely to be consulted by management regarding matters which are of importance to them, definitive variations begin to emerge between

unionised (M = 3.62) and non-unionised (M = 2.44; SD = 1.373) environments **(t (66) = 4040; p = 0.00)**. Whilst similar figures exist regarding consultation being very likely, almost two thirds of all non-unionised employees would regard that statement as either likely or unlikely. Similarly over four times as many unionised employees would state that there is a high chance of them being consulted by management in relation to an issue affecting them than their non-union counterparts.

		Workplace	
		Union	Non-union
	very unlikely	3.4%	30.8%
Am I likely to believe that my opinion is valued by management?	unlikely	3.4%	20.5%
	neither likely or unlikely	24.1%	25.6%
	likely	44.8%	10.3%
	very likely	24.1%	12.8%

Figure 4.18.: *Likelihood of employee opinion being valued*

Through the use of an independent t test, **t (66) = 4.318, p = 0.00)** major distinctions can be made between how unionised (M = 3.83) and non-unionised employee (M = 2.54; SD = 1.374) opinion is perceived by employees themselves. Again, those of non-unionised employment are definitively less likely to believe that their opinion is valued by management with 31% of non-unionised employees stating that it would be very unlikely compared to just 3% of unionised workers. On the other hand over 69% of unionised employees would be likely to believe that their opinions are valued compared with only 23 % of non-unionised equivalents.

		Workplace	
		Union	Non-union
	very unlikely	3.4%	20.5%
Am I likely to believe that the work I do is valued by management?	unlikely	10.3%	25.6%
	neither likely or unlikely	10.3%	20.5%
	likely	58.6%	23.1%
	very likely	17.2%	10.3%

Figure 4.19.: *Likelihood of work performed being valued*

Similar patterns become apparent with the analysis of how likely employees are to believe that the work they perform is valued by management and again, it becomes

clear that non-unionised employees have more negative perceptions of how their performance is viewed by management with only 33% of non-unionised respondents likely or very likely to agree with the statement compared to over 75% of unionised employees. After conducting an independent t test the following was observed: **t (66) = 3.413, p = 0.001,** which supports the findings made in the above table that unionised respondents (M = 3.76) are more likely to believe the work they do is valued by management than non-unionised respondents (M = 2.77; SD = 1.307).

		Workplace	
		Union	Non-union
	very unlikely	10.3%	25.6%
Am I likely to receive regular feedback on my job performance?	unlikely	13.8%	28.2%
	neither likely or unlikely	24.1%	17.9%
	likely	41.4%	15.4%
	very likely	10.3%	12.8%

Figure 4.20.: *Likelihood of regular feedback on job performance*

Similar patterns transpire with regard to the degree of feedback which is offered by management to employees. Upon completion of an independent t test **(t (66) = 2.096, p = 0.04),** it was found that non-unionised employees (M =2.62) once again perceive themselves to be at quite a significant loss compared with their unionised counterparts (M 3.28; SD = 1.369) in terms of feedback they receive.

		Workplace	
		Union	Non-union
	very unlikely	10.3%	28.2%
Are management likely to discuss development opportunities/training needs with me?	unlikely	24.1%	46.2%
	neither likely or unlikely	10.3%	10.3%
	likely	41.4%	7.7%
	very likely	13.8%	7.7%

Figure 4.21: *Likelihood of training and development needs*

In a continuation of the themes emerging within this section of the research, non-unionised (M = 2.21) employees again perceive themselves to be less likely to converse with management about various training and development needs than their

unionised equivalents (M = 3.24; SD 1.272), **t (66) = 3.474, p = 0.001**. Only 8% of non-unionised employees were likely to have had discussions with management compared to 41% of unionised employees.

As further confirmation of this trend, over 28% of non-unionised respondents were inclined to say that such discussions would be very unlikely compared to only 10% of unionised respondents.

		Workplace	
		Union	Non-union
Is management likely to be supportive of me when I have a problem?	very unlikely	0.0%	15.4%
	unlikely	6.9%	28.2%
	neither likely or unlikely	13.8%	20.5%
	likely	62.1%	20.5%
	very likely	17.2%	15.4%

Figure 4.22: *Are management supportive when problem arises*

The question regarding how supportive employees perceive management to be is an indicator of the nature of the employment relationship. As has generally been the case within the realms of how employees perceive their role within the decision making process, unionised respondents (M = 3.90) within the confines of this research appear to exude a more positive response with none stating that the support of management would be very unlikely in the event of a problem arising (non-unionised M = 2.92; SD = 1.326), **t (66) = 3.531, p = 0.001**. In fact 62% would tend to agree compared to only 21% of non-unionised respondents.

		Workplace	
		Union	Non-union
Am I likely to perceive management as open and honest?	very unlikely	3.4%	17.9%
	unlikely	13.8%	33.3%
	neither likely or unlikely	17.2%	17.9%
	likely	48.3%	20.5%
	very likely	17.2%	10.3%

Figure 4.23.: *Are management open and honest*

The likeliness of employees to state whether or not they perceive management to be open and honest is another indicator of the nature of the employment relationship between employees and management. It is held by some that management openness is the leadership behaviour most consistently related to voice (Detert & Burris, 2007, p. 869) and it is no coincidence that a far greater proportion of the unionised respondents of this research were likely to perceive their management as open and honest.

Again the results are telling in the sense that a much greater proportion of unionised employees (M = 3.62) would be more likely to view their respective management teams as open and honest in comparison to their non-unionised equivalents (M = 2.72), **t (66) = 3.106, p = 0.003.**

		Workplace	
		Union	Non-union
	very unlikely	3.4%	10.3%
Am I likely to state that I am treated fairly in the workplace	unlikely	6.9%	17.9%
	neither likely or unlikely	6.9%	33.3%
	likely	58.6%	23.1%
	very likely	24.1%	15.4%

Figure 4.24.: *Are employees treated fairly in the workplace*

Finally in what can be construed as somewhat of a culmination of this particular section regarding employees' role within the decision making process, respondents were asked to state whether or not they considered themselves to be treated fairly in the workplace. In continuation of the trend which has become prevalent over the course of the last few pages, unionised employees were significantly more likely to consider themselves to be treated fairer than their non-unionised counterparts.

Overall, in terms of employees' role in the decision making process, unionised participants of this research were more likely to consider themselves to be treated fairly in the workplace. Some believe managers today are becoming increasingly overbearing and dogmatic at the expense of productivity (Timmins, 2007). Indeed, the slowness with which employers in Britain are enhancing employee participation is becoming an issue of considerable concern (Groom, 2013).

So what can be identified as the cause behind the differences this research has observed regarding how unionised and non-unionised employees perceive their role in the decision making process? Perhaps the unitary and ethnocentric managerial style exhibited suggests that it would be naïve to assume that non-union employers will necessarily be willing to cede their traditional prerogative or their right to unilaterally determine key issues (Butler, 2005, p.205).

In other words, perhaps workplaces that are traditionally unionised are more open to the idea of ceding a certain degree of their power as a result of being used to the collective nature of their employees through outside representation. On the other hand, having had no experience of dealing with unions, many organisations might be far less likely and willing to sacrifice any degree of control in how things are done

4.3.5. Section 5: Trade Union Members

The preceding sections of this chapter have looked at the various data in terms of how both unionised and non-unionised environments compare and contrast with each other in relation to attitudes, the degree of control employees have over their jobs as well as the extent of their role in the decision making process.

The following section and the one after it look to explore each side of voice as presented in this research and identify how employees perceive unions (within the unionised context) and management (within the non-unionised context).

Initially, the opinion of union respondents will be presented relating to how effective they perceive their union to be, where they feel union priorities should lie, general thoughts about union membership as well as some of the various effects the union has within the workplace.
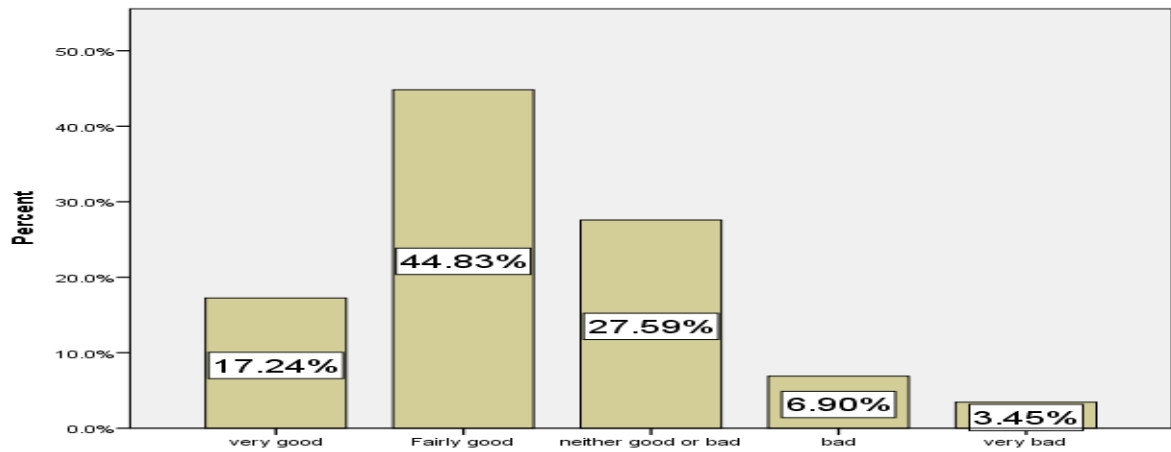
Figure 4.25.: *Effectiveness of Union in representing employee views*

Overall, there is generally a level of appreciation for union presence amongst union members within the workplace and the ability of the union to represent employee views according to the above chart with only a small number of respondents (10%) feeling that their union was unable to do so. It is argued that the continued relevance of union membership lies with the traditional reasons for joining a trade union organisation; the need for an independent, collective means of the defence and promotion of employee interests (Whitston & Waddington, 1994, p. 36).

Building on this point, the research shall now focus on the various areas where unionised employees feel priority should lie for their unions in relation to their own working environments.
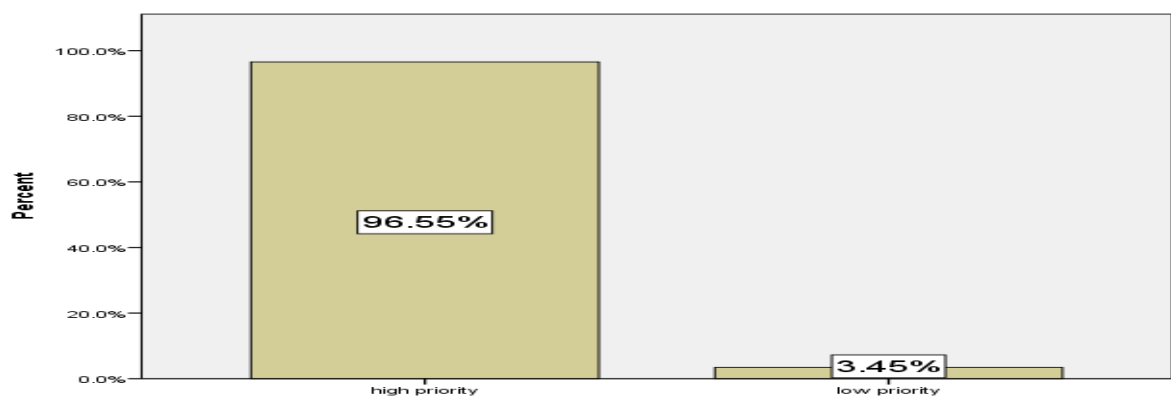
Figure 4.26.: *Should union influence pay and conditions*

Unionised employees resoundingly agreed that pay and conditions should be a high priority issue for their union (above) and almost equally so with regard to union influence on changes concerning their job (below).

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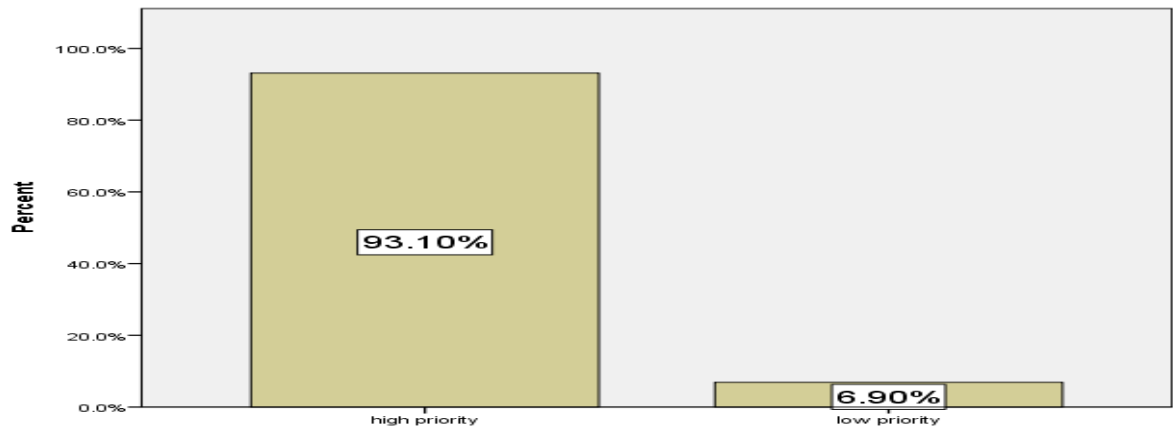
Figure 4.27.: *Should union influence changes concerning job*
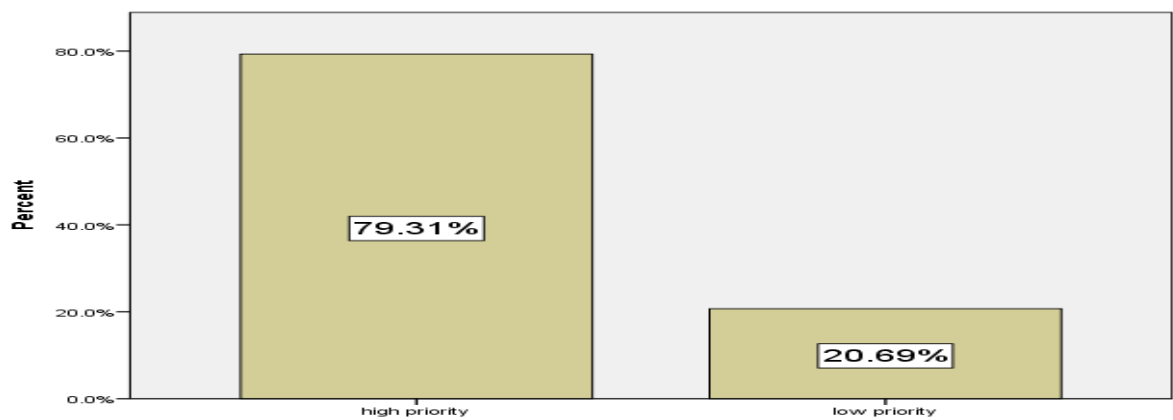
Figure 4.28.: *Should union influence future of company*

In terms of union influence on the future of the company, the response was less conclusive but should still be classed as a significant priority for unions in the opinion of this research's respondents. Indeed the same can be said for union influence on flexible working conditions with identical results being analysed in Figures 4.28 and 4.29.
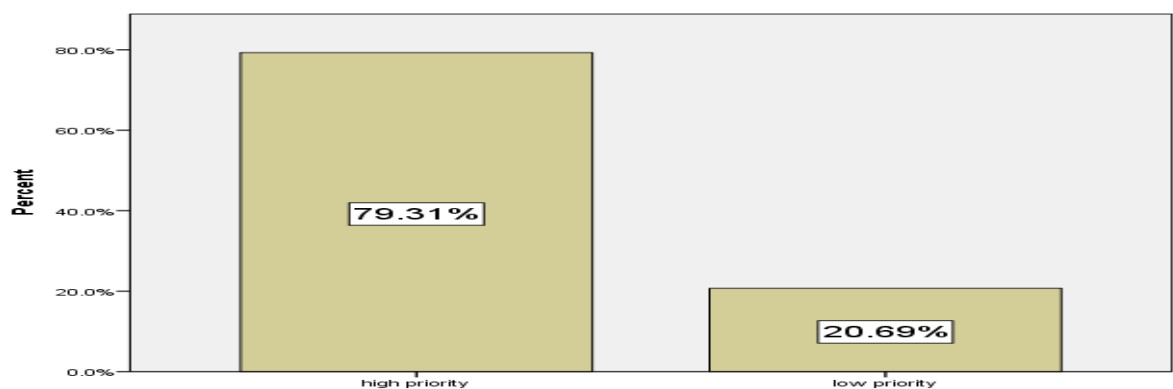
Figure 4.29.: *Should union influence flexible working condition*
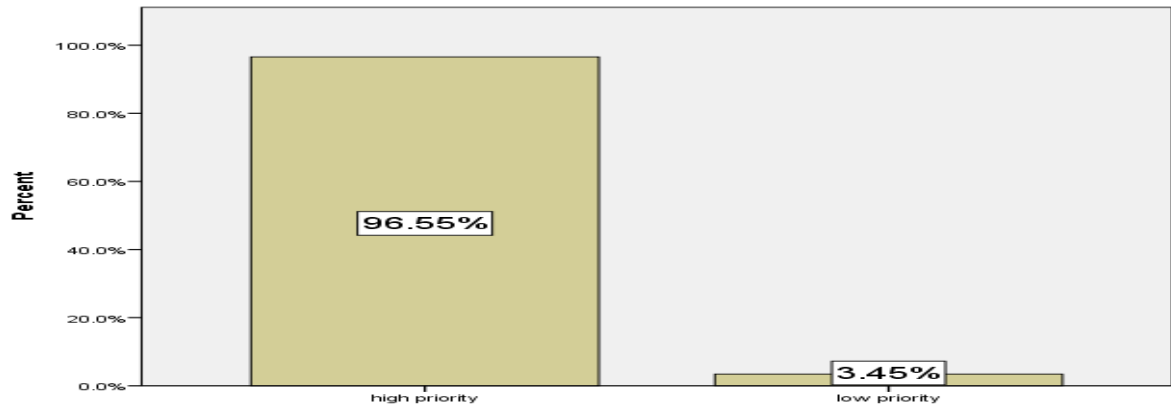
Figure 4.30.: *Should union influence safety from abuse and violence*

Protection and safety from abuse and violence is seen by unionised respondents in terms of this research as an obligation on part of the union to protect (above). Similarly, unionised employees felt that their right to respect in the workplace should also be a high priority for the union to uphold (below).
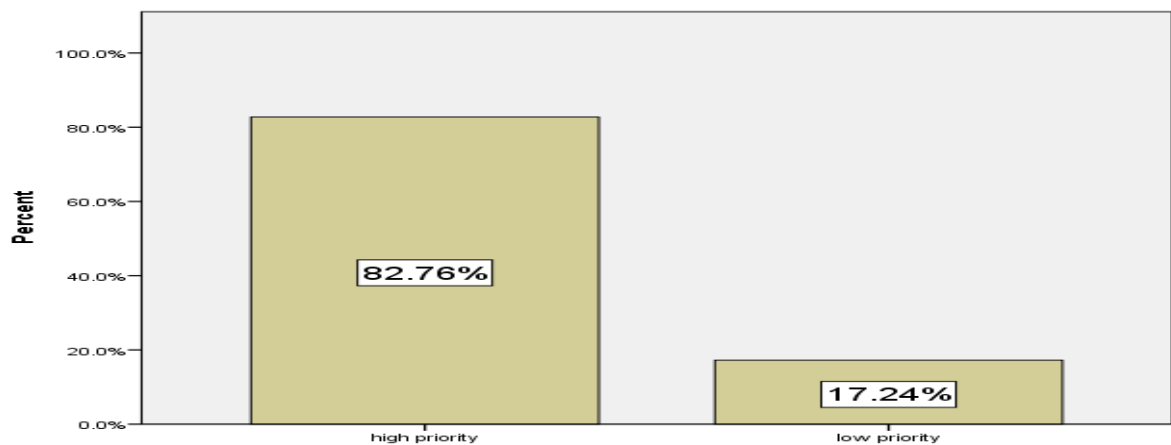
Figure 4.31.: *Should union influence employee right to respect*

With regard to the various priorities presented to respondents in this research there was a distinctive tendency to view all of the listed areas as high priority issues for the union. It is clear and rather predictable that pay and conditions are seen as something almost unanimously as a high priority of unionised respondents as is the case with changes relating to employees' work.

Priority in relation to issues regarding union influence and the future of the company as well as flexible working conditions were significant but to a lesser extent than the previously mentioned areas. Safety and protection from abuse and violence were of paramount importance to employees whilst union protection of the employees' right

to respect was also notable in the large proportion of respondents who saw it as an issue but more relevantly the proportion that did not see it as a union priority was one of the highest in relation to the other areas.
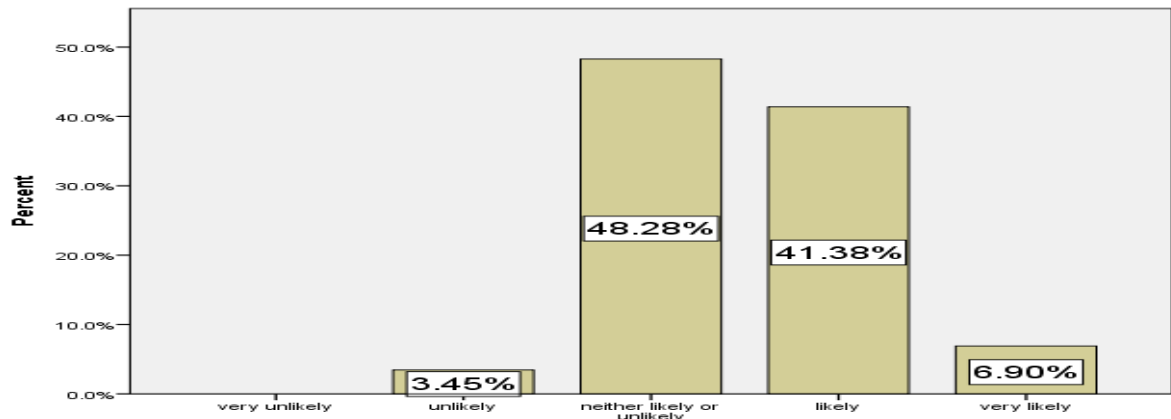
Figure 4.32.: *Do you value union membership?*

Interestingly union respondents weren't entirely likely to be completely enamoured when asked about the extent to which they value their membership of a trade union. Nearly half of respondents and the largest proportion of responses stated that they were neither likely nor unlikely to state they valued union membership which perhaps suggests a certain degree of disinterest on their part. Just fewer than 7 % of those union members who partook in this research were very likely to value their position as union members. Perhaps there is a 'take it or leave it' attitude amongst union members to their channel of representation. The fact that union membership with regard to the respondents of this research is compulsory perhaps goes some way in providing an explanation of these figures.
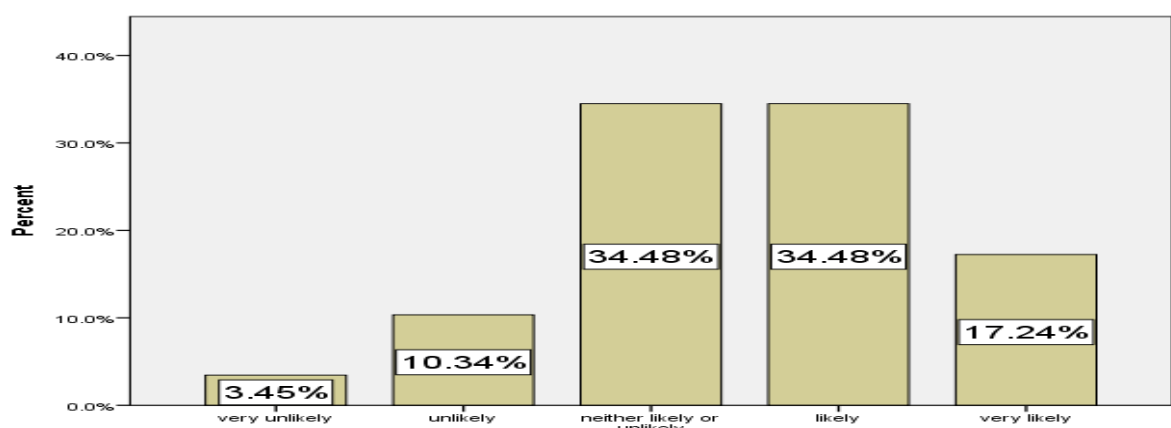
Figure 4.33.: *How likely would you be to consult union in event of problem arising?*

When asked whether they would be likely to consult their union in the occurrence of an issue arising, unionised respondents were similarly indecisive with the majority of candidates divided amongst those who would be likely and those who were not able to decide.
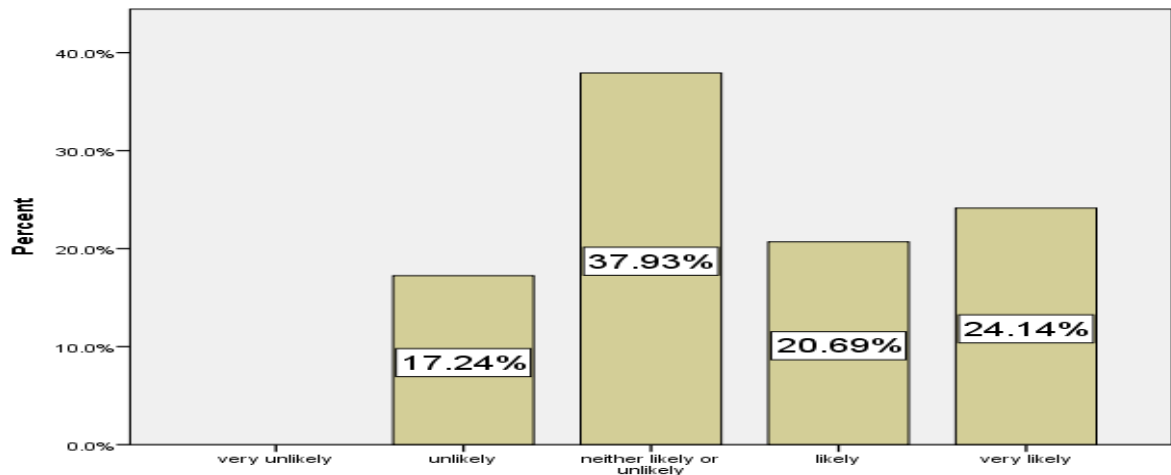
Figure 4.34.: *Does union membership strengthen your position in workplace*

Figures relating to questions regarding the extent to which employees believe membership of a union strengthens their position in the workplace and the extent to which it improves their working environment were equally indecisive. There seems to be a tendency amongst unionised participants of this research to select the middle ground and provide a neutral response. Is this an indicator of a lack of interest on the part of employees or a lack of engagement on the part of the union or both?
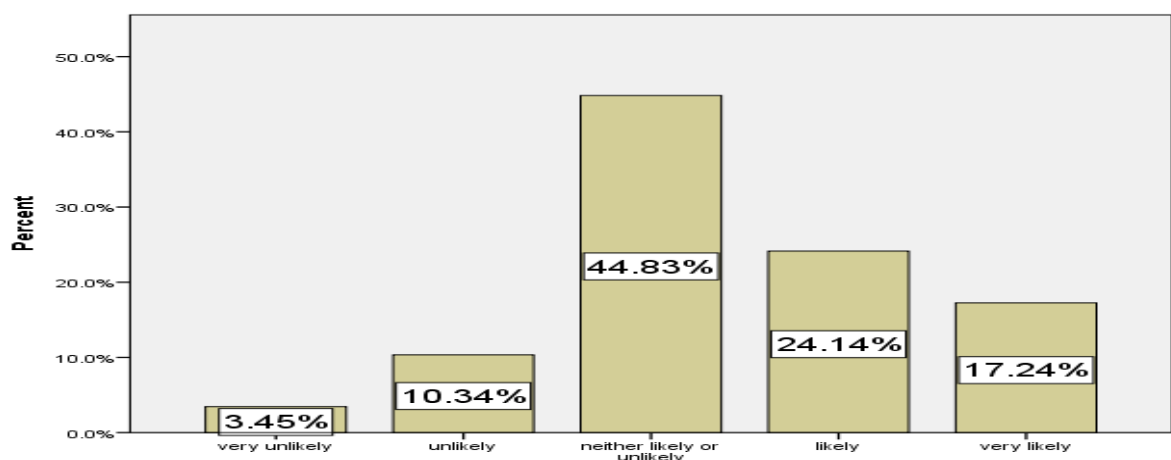
Figure 4.35.: *Does union membership improve working environment?*
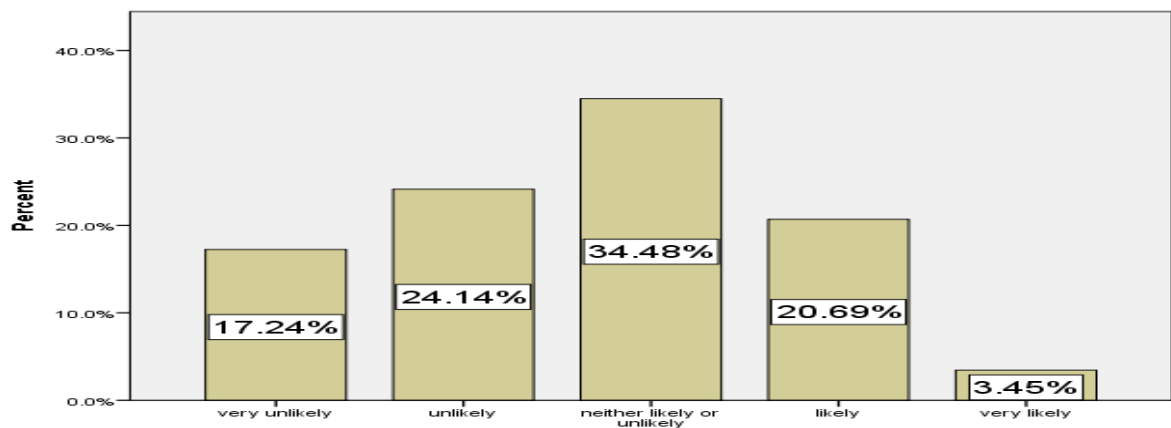
Figure 4.36.: *Are you aware of any initiatives being carried out by union?*

Finally in terms of employee awareness of trade union activity, results were not particularly flattering to unions within the context of the participants of this research at least. Only 24% of those asked were likely or very likely to be aware of current trade union initiatives compared to 41% who stated that they were very unlikely or unlikely to have done so. In a continuation of a theme which has emerged during the course of Section 5, the majority of respondents opted to state that they were neither likely nor unlikely which points towards a lack of awareness as opposed to a distinct absence of it.

Union influence on job satisfaction		
positive effect	no effect	negative effect
31.0%	62.1%	6.9%

Union influence on productivity and performance in the workplace		
positive effect	no effect	negative effect
24.1%	69.0%	6.9%

Union influence on pay and conditions		
positive effect	no effect	negative effect
82.8%	13.8%	3.4%

Union influence on employment security		
positive effect	no effect	negative effect
79.3%	20.7%	0.0%

Union influence on employees willingness to embrace change		
positive effect	no effect	negative effect
34.5%	44.8%	20.7%

Figure 4.37.: *Effect of trade union in workplace*

In terms of unionised employee opinion regarding what kind of effect unions have on certain aspects of the workplace, certain interesting observations can be made. A significant majority of respondents believe that union membership has no effect or influence on job satisfaction or productivity and performance within the workplace whilst a significant majority believe union membership has a positive effect or influence on pay and conditions as well as employment security. The results regarding employees' willingness to embrace change saw the greatest divergence of opinion with a slim majority of respondents claiming that the union had no effect.

4.3.6. Section 6: Non-union Members

Non-union voice is an area that has been identified as under researched compared to the unionised alternative and a rebalance is long overdue given the growing prevalence of the non-union firm (Dundon & Gollan, 2007, p. 1183).

Having explored how union membership influences the unionised workplace, the focus of this research now turns to how opinion of employees shapes the non-unionised environment. Similar questions were posed to the non-union participants of this research in the hope of creating a common ground between the two sides in an attempt to provide a platform on which to successfully compare the two sides in a valid and quantifiable way.

The reality is that for most of the western world, union density is in decline and increasingly as a result of this, individual employees have to either engage directly with their manager or find themselves disenfranchised and have to turn to other third party institutions for help and assistance (Dundon & Gollan, 2007, p. 1182).

Over the following section the opinion of the non-union respondents will be presented relating to how effective they perceive their management (in absence of a union) to be, where they feel management's priorities should lie, the likely effect of union membership if it was made available to them and some of the various effects management has within the workplace. It should be noted that this stage that

management in the context of this research refers to the role of managers in the absence of a trade union.
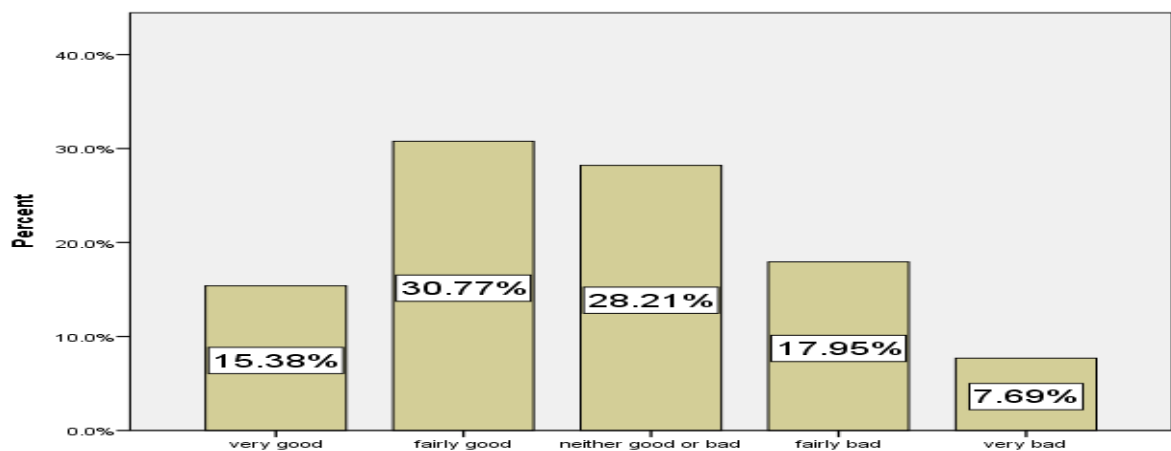
Figure 4.38.: *Effectiveness of management in representing employee views*

In terms of how effective management are perceived to be regarding their role as representatives of employee views, attitudes can be deemed to be positive. The majority of employees state that management is fairly good at representing their views while a further 15 % state that management is very good at doing so.
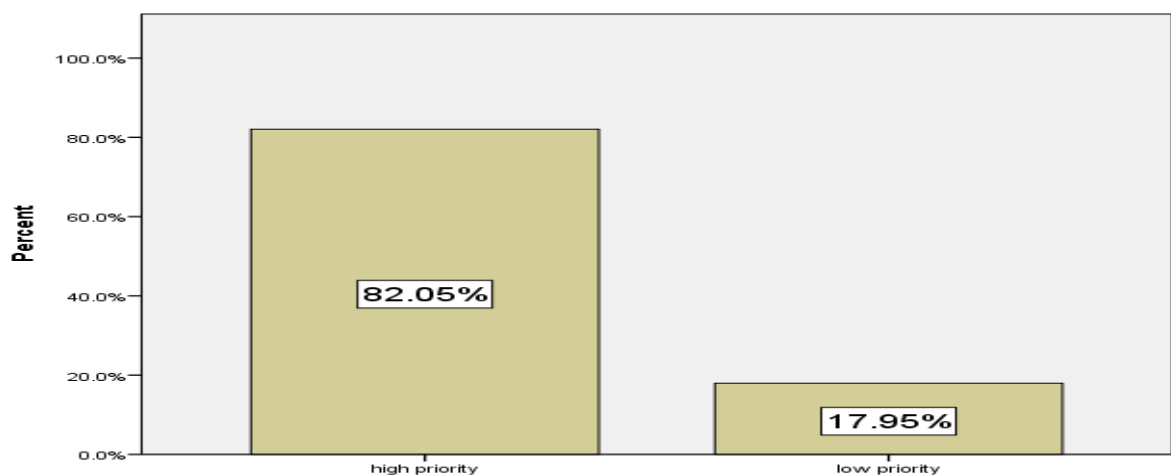
Figure 4.39.: *Should management influence pay and conditions*

In relation to where non-unionised employees feel management's priority should lie, many similarities can be drawn between them and their unionised counterparts. The majority of non-unionised employees feel that pay and conditions should be a high priority but less resoundingly than the union members who partook in this research.
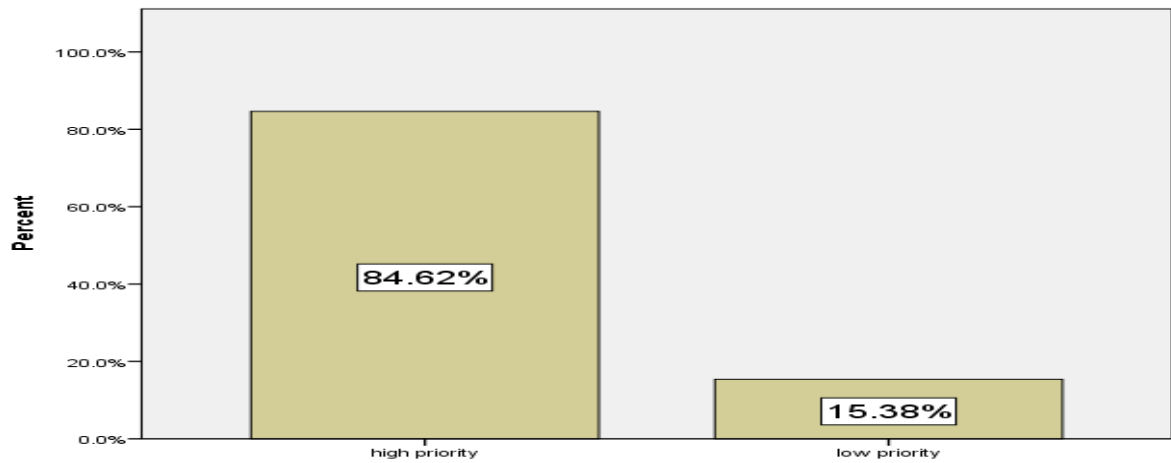
Figure 4.40.: *Should management influence changes concerning job*

Again opinion amongst non-unionised employees is very much in favour of changes concerning their jobs being a high priority for management with similar percentages being observed between both groups.
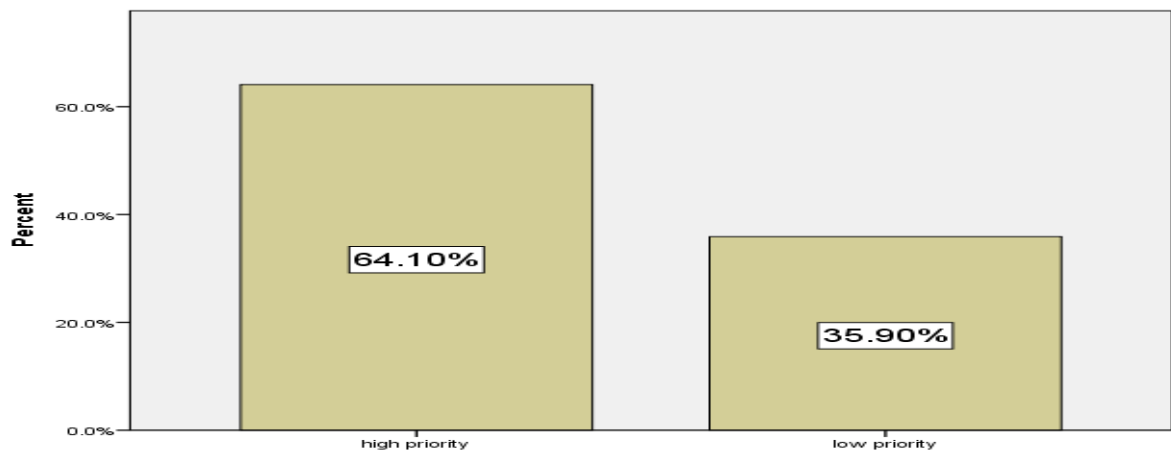
Figure 4.41.: *Should management influence future of company*

In terms of management's representation of employees in the future of the company, interestingly, over one third of non-unionised respondents believe that this should not be a pressing concern for their superiors. Despite the majority of respondents stating that it should be, the relatively high proportion of those that don't should not be ignored especially when compared with the corresponding figure for unionised respondents.
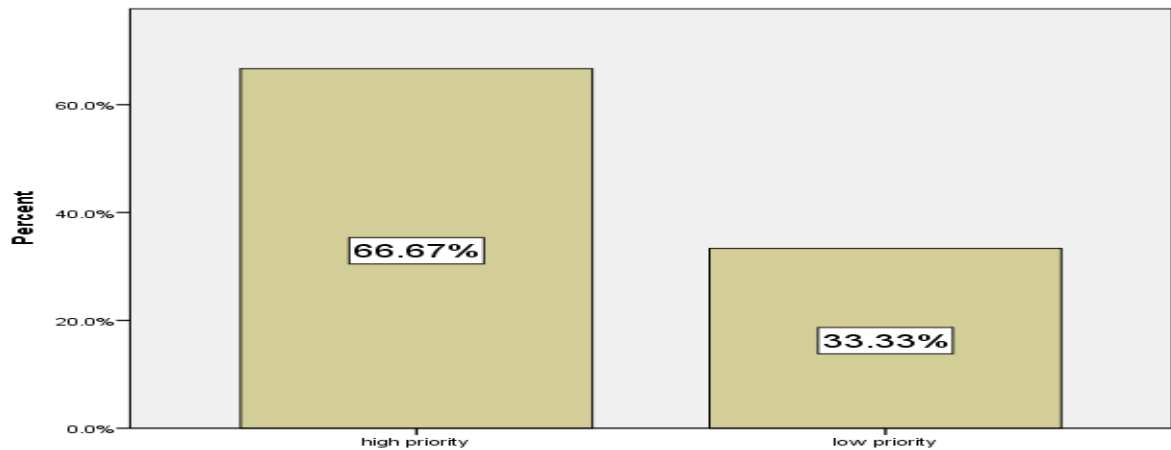
Figure 4.42.: *Should management influence flexible working conditions*

Flexible working conditions are another area which the majority of non-union respondents feel that management should have an influence in on behalf of their employees. Again there appears to be a greater tendency amongst non-unionised respondents to state that it should not be seen as a high priority, but it cannot be viewed as a significant difference.
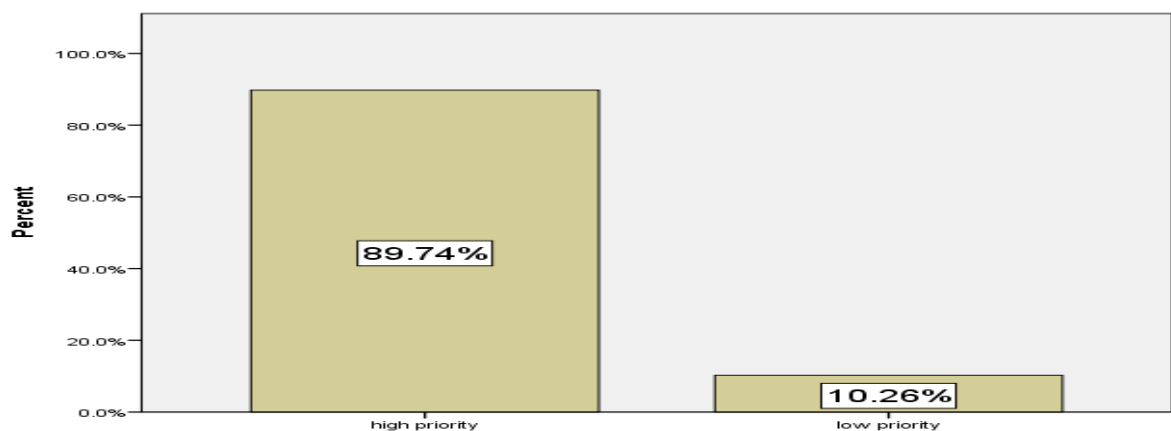
Figure 4.43.: *Should management ensure employees are safe from violence*

Ensuring employees are safe from violence in the workplace proves to be the area in which non-unionised employees are most resounding in their positive response. Equally, over three quarters of non-union respondents believe that the protection of the employee's right to respect should be viewed as a high priority for management.
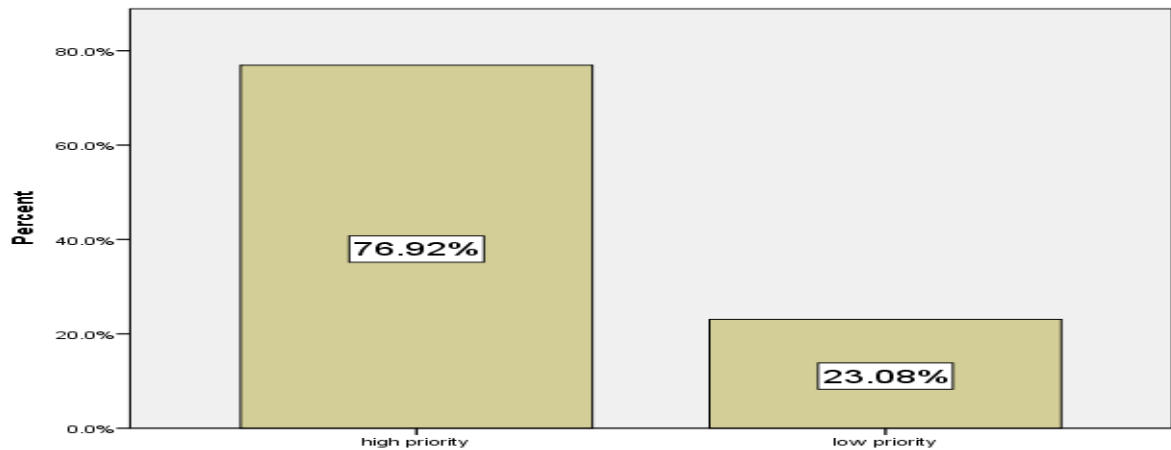
Figure 4.44.: *Should management ensure employee right to respect*
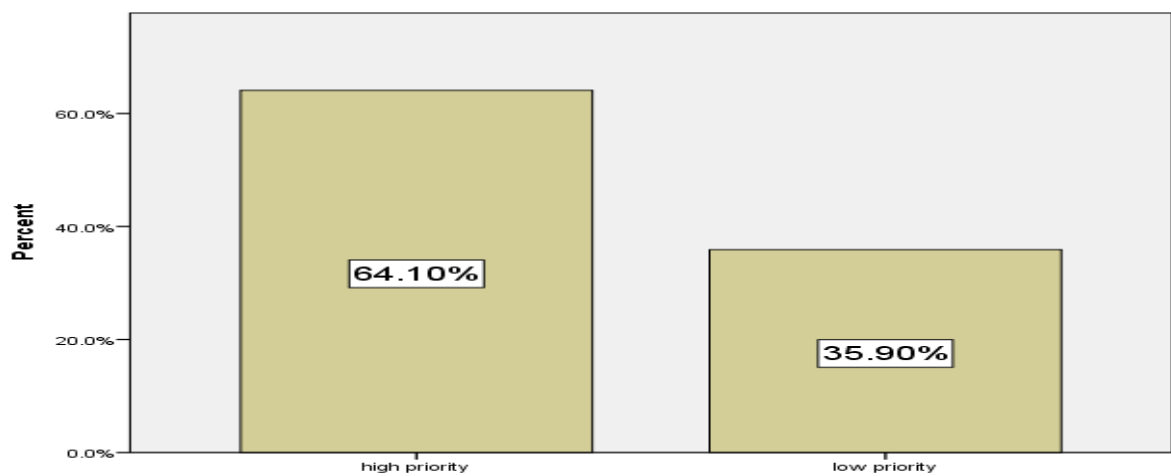
Figure 4.45.: *Should management ensure employee future job security*

Future job security is an issue in which most non-union members believe should be a priority of management however once again, it can be seen that a significant number believe that it shouldn't be. Perhaps an explanation can be found from looking back to Figure 4.3. and observing non-union opinion with regard to how secure they currently believe their job to be.

92% of non-union respondents state that they either agree or strongly agree that their job is secure whilst not one single respondent was inclined to state the contrary. It is clear that job security is not an issue pressing on the minds of the non-unionised participants of this research and therefore might not be seen as an area worthy of managerial priority for many of those who stated that it shouldn't be viewed as such.
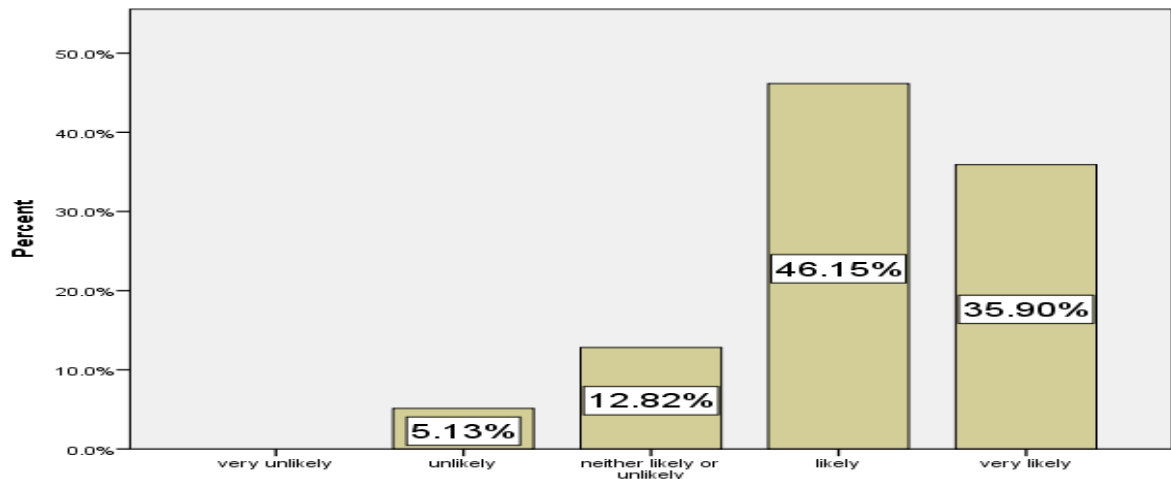
Figure 4.46.: *Value of union membership if made available*

Figure 4.46 provides us with a telling glimpse into the non-unionised employee's view on union membership and how receptive they would be to availing of union membership if it was hypothetically made available to them. The response of the non-union supermarket employee is highly decisive in favour of union membership and the value they would place on it if the option to join was afforded to them. In terms of how approachable management are in the event of an issue arising, only a relatively small proportion of respondents were very unlikely or unlikely to state that they would consult management if a problem did arise. Despite a high majority of non-unionised respondents stating they would value membership of a union, it appears on first glance that management within the non-unionised supermarket setting are not entirely responsible for this attitude.
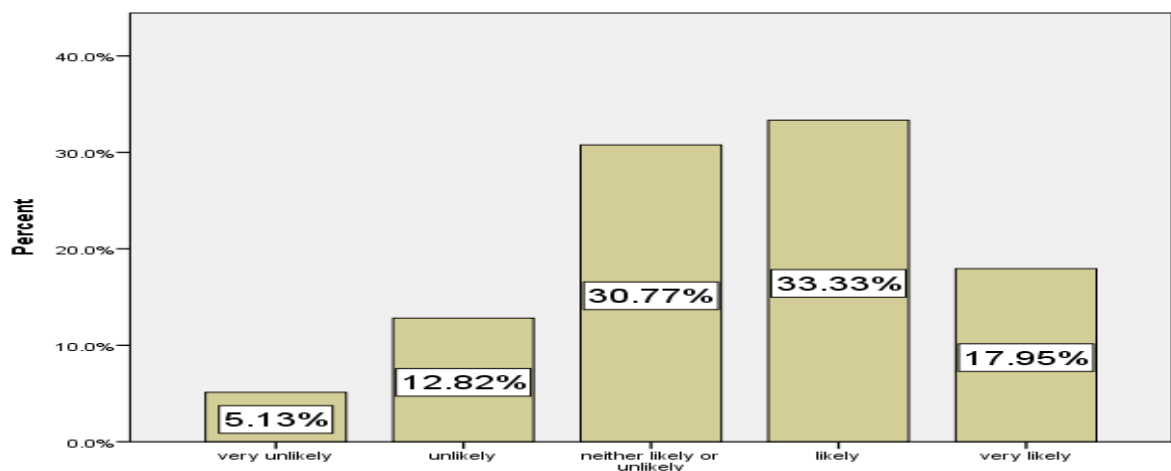
Figure 4.47.: *How likely would you be to consult management in event of issue arising*

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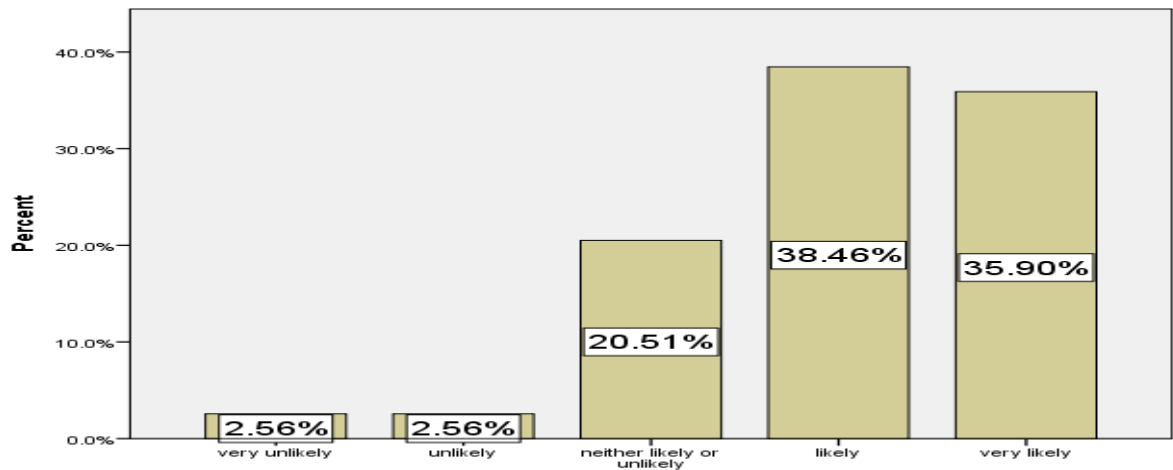
Figure 4.48.: *Would union membership strengthen your position in workplace*

It is believed by a very high majority of non-union respondents that membership of a union would strengthen their position in the workplace with only 5% of respondents likely or vey likely to disagree with this statement. Similarly favourable results towards union membership can be seen in terms of non-union response when asked whether such membership make their working environment better with a combined 72% of those asked stating that it would be likely or very likely to do so. It appears that union membership is indeed something which a very high proportion of non-union members would welcome if the choice was made available to them.
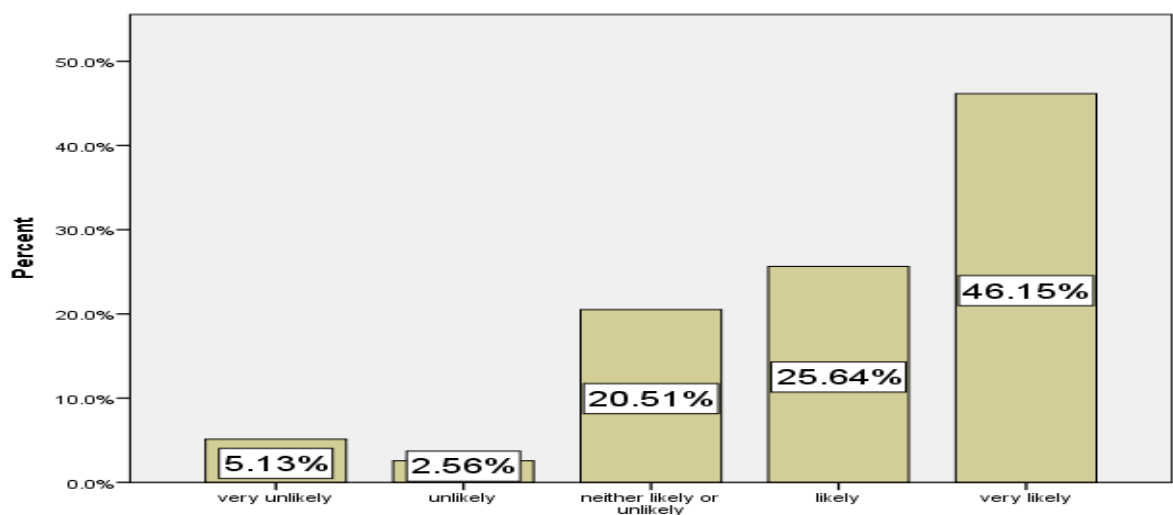
Figure 4.49.: *Would union membership make your working environment better*
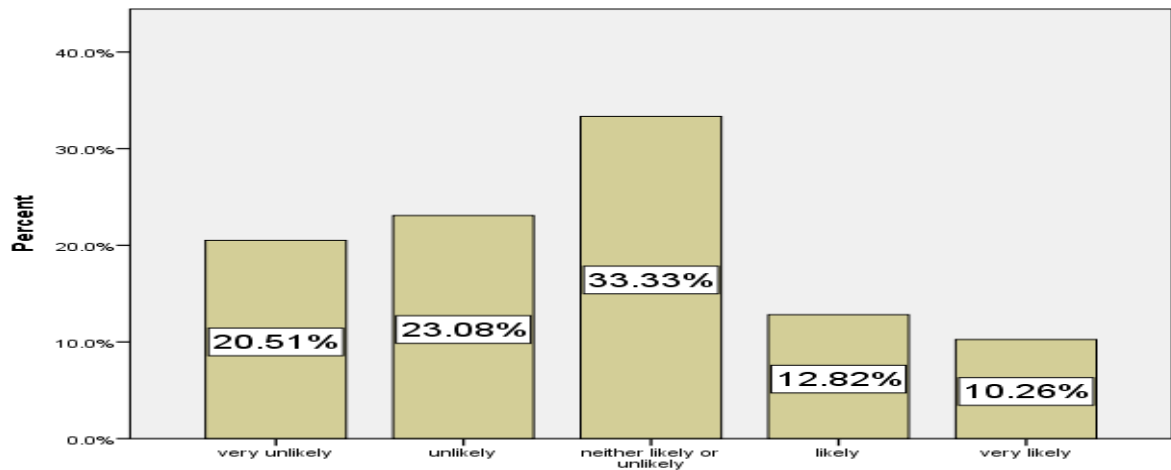
Figure 4.50.: *How aware are you of current initiatives being carried out by your employer*

In terms of current initiatives being carried out by management, similar results can be observed when compared with the degree of awareness which exists among their unionised counterparts. The response is largely one of disinterest and is equally unflattering to management in this case as it was for the unions in the preceding section of this chapter.

Manager influence on job satisfaction		
positive effect	no effect	negative effect
43.6%	43.6%	12.8%

Manager influence on productivity and performance in the workplace		
positive effect	no effect	negative effect
38.5%	46.2%	15.4%

Manager influence on pay and conditions		
positive effect	no effect	negative effect
20.5%	66.7%	12.8%

Manager influence on employment security		
positive effect	no effect	negative effect
25.6%	64.1%	10.3%

Manager influence on employees willingness to embrace change		
positive effect	no effect	negative effect
30.8%	35.9%	33.3%

Figure 4.51.: *Effect of management in workplace*

So what can be said about how management influence the workplace in the absence of a trade union from an employee's point of view? There is largely agreement amongst non-union respondents that management largely have no effect in areas such as pay and conditions and employment security. In terms of management's influence on employee's willingness to embrace change opinion was quite evenly divided between those that felt management had a positive, negative or no effect at all whilst there was inconclusive opinion on the part of employees regarding managements influence on job satisfaction and productivity in the workplace with most respondents choosing to state management had a positive impact or none at all.

4.4. Discussion of Results

It is argued by some that non-union representation can act as either a compliment or substitute to traditional unionisation (Campolieti, Gomez & Gunderson, 2013, p. 378). As a result and according to these same authors non-union voice can have the effect of 'dampening desire' for unionisation. Non-union voice in terms of this research seems to be in a far less healthy state than its unionised equivalent and serves neither to act as neither a complement nor as a substitute.

Historically the primary function of a trade union is to advocate the interests of vulnerable workers who they represent (Burchielli, 2006, p. 137). The growth of the non-union firm however has resulted in a scenario where it might be expected that the demand for trade unions has significantly declined (Turner and D'Art, 2012, p.34). Nowadays, the non-union firm is in the ascendency in comparison to the more traditional unionised workplace but it is hard to say whether this is a reality which is of benefit to the non-unionised respondents of this research.

Whilst similarities emerge in where employees feel management's priority should be when compared to where unionised employees feel their union's priority should be, the reaction of this research's non-unionised respondents when asked would they be likely to value trade union membership cannot be ignored. The decline in unionism and the rise of the non-union workplace raises a question for some commentators as to whether employees generally have a reduced capacity to initiate issues and articulate

grievances (Benson, 2000, p. 453). In terms of what this research has explored so far it would appear that these are very real concerns.

According to Benson (2000, p. 453), for many, independent trade unions are the only source of genuine voice and act as a key mechanism in revealing workers preferences. On the other hand, the emergence of Human Resource Management (HRM) has seen an increased emphasis on information-sharing, collective decision making and a variety of employee participation schemes (which are more likely to be found within non-union workplaces).

But what about non-union employees who are not afforded such attention? Without a union to represent them and their interests how are they expected to have their voices heard when management in the absence of a union presence are unwilling to listen? The more effective employees perceive voice mechanisms to be, the more likely they will be to exercise the 'voice option' (Benson & Brown, 2010, p. 83). What immediately springs to mind on the back of this statement is how likely will employees who do not perceive voice mechanisms as effective be to express themselves?

There is a strong belief amongst this research's non-unionised respondents that union membership is something that they would be likely to value which says much about how strong they perceive their own voice to be (Figure 4.46). There is also a belief that their own position would be strengthened in the workplace if union membership was made available to them which also speaks volumes about how they perceive their own position in the workplace (Figure 4.47).

Having discussed the position of the non-union employee in terms of this research, what can be said about its unionised respondents? Two reasons for joining a union stand out above all others: support in the event of a problem at work, and improved pay and conditions (Whitston & Waddington, 1994, p. 38). This statement despite being published almost twenty years ago still bears significance in terms of what this research has told us about the unionised supermarket employee of today.

Pay and conditions were perceived almost unanimously by unionised employees as areas within which union involvement should be of paramount importance. Tellingly in terms of how unionised employees perceived union influence within the confines of this research, the vast majority (83%) believed unions had a positive effect on pay and conditions. The ensuring of job security was another area in which unions were largely accredited in improving by their members.

> *"Union voice is not dead: it has some theoretical conviction, it has witnessed some development, and it still manages to summon a modicum of empirical support"*
>
> (Addison & Belfield, 2004, p.590).

What has been observed in terms of union voice within the Irish supermarket industry supports Addison's idea. Union voice is far from dead. Whilst a certain vagueness and ambiguity exists around certain areas of union membership, there exists a general appreciation amongst this research's respondents and the collective nature of voice which unionism provides.

Unionism it is argued enhances equity in the employment relationship because without the institutional mechanisms it provides, workers will be at a power disadvantage and employment relationship conflicts will be resolved in the employers favour. In other words the pluralist perspective implies that unions reduce the incidence of this kind of conflict and helps to resolve such issues. Alternatively, it is viewed by others that unions for various political and institutional reasons exacerbate conflict with very negative consequences in order to justify their existence to their members (Lewin, 2005, p. 210).

In terms of this research and the effects unionism has on the Irish supermarket industry, unionism provides its members with a higher standard of employment. Unionised employees find themselves in a far healthier position than their non-unionised counterparts in many areas but especially those pertaining to their role in the decision making process. Therefore at this point, upon analysis of the data, it can be stated that unionised employees have a greater degree of employee voice than their non-unionised counterparts.

Chapter 5: Conclusions

5.1. Summary of Findings

What this research has identified is that unionised supermarket employees are more often than not likely to have a more positive outlook on their own perceptions of voice and the extent to which they feel it is valued and listened to.

Where attitudes to jobs are concerned and in terms of job satisfaction and job security both sides of the representational divide are quite similar in their respective outlooks. No significant differences can be found between unionised and non-unionised respondents which speaks volumes about the nature of the work and the position of the companies whose employees acted as the subjects of this research. With regard to how likely employees would be to turn down a better paid job in order to stay with their current organisation, minor differences begin to emerge but nothing that could be regarded as significant.

When respondents were asked about the volume of their workload and the pressure that they found themselves in, it was found that non-unionised employees worked under a greater deal of pressure than their unionised counterparts and perceived themselves to be more likely to work beyond their normal hours of work in order to get the job done.

Workers covered by collective bargaining have higher wages, better fringes, better seniority protection, better grievance systems and greater voice in determining the conditions of their employment than do other workers (Freeman & Medoff, 1984, p. 136). While these authors go on to say that paradoxically, unionised employees are not always happier than non-unionised (which also proved to be the point in this research in terms of job satisfaction), it is perhaps down to these reasons that union members in terms of this research at least find themselves under less pressure and typically working less enforced overtime. In simpler terms, unionised employees are better protected and as a result are less likely to be asked or expected to do more than is necessary for the sake of the organisation.

With regard to the level of control employees are afforded over their own jobs, the results of this research show that both unionised and non-unionised employees retain little control. Both sides of the representational divide provide inconclusive results regarding how much work is performed by them and the pace at which they do it. What is clear is that non-unionised respondents were far more likely to state that they almost never had the opportunity to decide as much in comparison with their unionised counterparts. Both unionised and non-unionised employees however were in agreement in terms of the minimal extent to which they would be likely to state that they almost always decided the rate of their own output.

Both sets of employees were also in agreement that more often than not, management would specifically describe and assign the tasks to be performed suggesting that the level of control afforded to employees across the board is quite low. Generally unionised employees have more control in deciding when to take their break but nothing that would warrant a significant difference.

The issue of consent and seeking permission before attempting to change individual work patterns is an issue which is perhaps most significant in the way that both sides are likely to state that they always need the consent of their superiors before implementing changes to they way they work. The general level of control and the minimal degree of autonomy afforded to both unionised and non-unionised respondents of this research, indicates that this is perhaps a reality of the industry and not specifically an issue regarding whether the individual is a union member or not.

It is in the extent of the role in the decision making process where the most significant differences emerge between unionised and non-unionised employees. Unionised employees emerge as quite definitively better off in terms of the extent of their ability to influence decisions which affect them. Indeed unionised employees are far more likely to state that management consult them on issues affecting them, that their opinion is valued by management, that the work they do is valued by management, that they receive regular feedback concerning their job and that management would be likely to discuss training and development needs with them. Resoundingly unionised employees within the context of this research at least felt that they had a role in the

decision making process in comparison to their non-unionised counterparts whose own role was perceived to be minimal at best and entirely absent at worst.

Dundon et al. (2005, p. 318) claim that recent management initiatives such as empowerment have raised the expectations of many employees and the managers they questioned as part of their research stressed that employees are now more confident in expressing their views. It seems within the context of this research the confidence of employees to express their views has little relevance to the above remark in the sense that non-unionised respondents are given little opportunity of expression in the first place. It seems the management initiatives mentioned are not in existence within the realms of the non-union Irish supermarket of today.

Similarities exist regarding unionised and non-unionised respondents respective views on the influence of trade unions and management in the workplace. Similar results can be observed in terms of how effectively employees perceive their views to be represented with the majority of both sides opting to state that union/management were fairly good or neither good nor bad in doing so. The majority of both unionised and non-unionised employees were also largely in agreement regarding where they feel priority should lie with unions and management respectively.

Interestingly when asked whether or not union members valued trade union membership, the response wasn't as unanimously positive as expected. Nearly half of union members stated that they would neither be likely nor unlikely to state that they value trade union membership. Whilst a further 41% stated they would be likely to do so there was not an impression that union membership was something that many people were not passionate about.

Similar patterns emerge when asked whether they would be likely to consult their union in the event of an issue arising, whether they believed union membership strengthened their position in the workplace, whether they believe union membership makes their working environment better while most were unlikely to have been aware of any current initiatives being carried out by their union. Whilst these reactions can't be classed as entirely negative, there seems to be a distinct lack of enthusiasm for union membership for members themselves.

On the other hand, non-union members when asked if they would be likely to value union membership if it was made available to them were extremely positive in their reactions. Similarly, the majority of non union members would be likely to believe that union membership would strengthen their position in the workplace as well as making their working environment better.

Whilst union members might take their membership of a union for granted, it is clear that non-unionised respondents in the context of this research would be extremely likely to avail of union membership if the option was made available to them.

5.2.   Results and their link to Research Questions

The research questions set out in Chapter One which this research set out to find answers for are as follows:

- To what extent is employee voice listened to within the supermarket industry in Ireland?

- To what extent do unionised and non unionised settings differ in terms of the degree to which voice is listened to within the supermarket industry in Ireland?

- To what extent does employees' control over their own jobs differ between unionised and non unionised settings within the supermarket industry?

- To what extent does employees' role in the decision making process differ between unionised and non-unionised settings within the supermarket industry in Ireland?

- To what extent do general attitudes to work differ between unionised and non unionised settings within the supermarket industry in Ireland?

5.2.1   Is employee voice listened to?

In relation to the first research question, can it ultimately be said that employee voice is listened to within the Irish supermarket industry. The fact is that unionised workplaces within the context of the Irish supermarket industry and this research provides employees with more of a role in the decision making process and is applied more effectively than it is within the non-union setting.

Non-union voice does not appear to be something which is actively sought by management. Some feel they have more of a voice than others but there seems to be little strategic value placed behind voice at least upon analysis of the employee point of view. As was discussed in the introduction of this research very often companies seek proficiency in the outward facing task of listening and responding to clients and customers (Sanchez, 2007, p. 48).

Supermarket companies in Ireland and across the world face increasing pressure to adapt to customers needs. Increased globalisation is another common aspect of retail chains operating in Ireland. Voice in its truest sense is being overlooked within the non-union setting. Change to the nature of work and employment relating to globalisation, the deregulation of labour markets and the fragmentation of production processes presents many challenges for both unions and management alike (Burchielli, 2006, p. 133).

Without the presence of a union to represent the worker and protect his/her rights as an employee, it seems that voice is proving to be a significant casualty of such changes within the non-unionised Irish supermarket setting.

5.2.2.   How voice within unionised and non-unionised settings differs

Overall the responses of both sides were very different. Unionised respondents enjoyed a better quality of employment in terms of their role in the decision making process inferring that voice within both settings differs in the sense union members perceive themselves to have more of an input into issues affecting them than their non-unionised counterparts. Voice in other words seems to be more conducive to the

unionised supermarket workplace. It is argued that managers respond in different ways to direct (non-union voice) and union voice. The likes of Freeman & Medoff (1984) argue that for worker voice to be effective in terms of how it influences managerial behaviour, it must be union voice. On the other hand, those who believe in the ability of HRM mechanisms as a replacement for union influence maintain that direct voice has become increasingly common because it delivers for both managers and employees (Bryson, 2004, p. 204).

In terms of what this research has explored and identified, it appears that direct non-union voice is all well and good when there is a strategy behind it but in the case of this research's respondents, it appears that little direct voice is afforded to them. Whilst the merits of non-union voice are understandable from Bryson's point of view and in certain circumstances, there is little conceivable benefit on the part of employees of continued union suppression when voice is not sought after or acknowledged.

5.2.3. Employee Control over their job

It has already been discussed that the level of control afforded to both sides of the representational divide is equally minimal across the board. The nature of shop level 'floor' work perhaps provides an explanation for this apparent agreement amongst both unionised and non-unionised respondents.

Control is central to the issue surrounding managerial prerogative and its often inevitable conflict with greater worker participation. The work of Kuhn (1962, p. 21) suggests that managers will continue to manage, they will have to perform with added restrictions, but they will continue to initiate changes despite the growing influence of the average worker which he observed over 50 years ago.

It seems control is an issue which can only go so far. In other words, how much control can be afforded to an employee before the position and the very purpose of management becomes redundant. Joyce and Woods (1980, p. 30) state that few managers that took part in their research were completely opposed to greater worker participation yet few were unconditionally in favour of it either. With this in mind, it

appears that the level of control afforded to employees, whilst useful in terms of promoting participation, is not entirely conducive to the nature of the employment relationship especially within the context of this research.

5.2.4. Employee Role in the Decision Making Process

It was found over the course of this research that despite similarities emerging regarding the level of control being minimal across the board, significant differences were evident with regard to how unionised and non-unionised respondents perceived their role in the decision making process.

Voice is defined most typically in terms of two-way communications, an exchange of information between managers and employees or 'having a say' about what goes on in the organisation (CIPD, 2012). Therefore the extent of the role employees' have in the decision making process serves as a good indicator to the health of voice within a specific organisation.

Overall, unionised respondents were more likely to perceive themselves as being consulted by management regarding matters which are important to them, that their opinion is valued by management, that the work they do is valued by management. Unionised respondents were also more likely to receive regular feedback on job performance, have discussions with management about training and development needs while also stating that they would perceive management to be supportive when a problem emerges as well as management being open and honest.

Interestingly, despite this difference of opinion in terms of the decision making process, there was no significant difference observed when employees were asked whether they believe they are treated fairly in the workplace. Perhaps this points to different expectations of the workplace that unionised and non-unionised respondents have. Knowing what workers think about unions whether they be members or non members, men or women, high skilled or low skilled is crucial with regards to how unions are perceived and as a consequence the level of influence, if any, they will have in any given workplace (Kolins-Givan & Hipp, 2012, p. 8). In other words, if employees have not had previous exposure to union membership than what is their

perceived alternative? The fact that perceptions of fairness don't differ significantly suggests that these different perceptions are borne from the differences in each respective environment.

5.2.4. Employee Attitudes to their Job

In terms of how employee attitudes differ between the unionised and non-unionised contexts, more similarities emerge than differences. Job satisfaction and job security figures are very similar amongst both sides. Unionised employees would be less likely to stay with the organisation if offered a better paid job elsewhere. Attitudes differ when respondents were asked about their workload and the level of pressure they were under in their job.

It was found that non-unionised employees felt that they worked under a greater deal of pressure than their unionised counterparts and were more likely to work beyond their set hours in order to get the job done. It is argued by some that trade unions have featured prominently in explanations of Britain's industrial decline. Indeed for at least a century ever since Britain's industrial might began to waver in the face of foreign competition, unions and their members have been accused of damaging productivity, increasing labour costs and destroying jobs (Nolan, 1992, p. 3).

Whilst this research does not agree with such bold and inaccurate statements, there is perhaps some link between union membership and the level of work they carry out compared to their non-union equivalents. The union provides its members with a degree of protection not afforded to non-members which means that they are less likely to be expected to go above and beyond their set hours.

5.3.   Implications of the research

This research implies that overall, unionised employees working within the Irish supermarket industry are afforded a generally greater degree of voice than their non-unionised counterparts. Arguments which state that the only true form of voice is that which operates through the collective setting provided by the union (Freeman & Medoff, 1984) have been held to be true at least within the context of this research.

Many commentators argue that initiating voice and encouraging employees to have a say in issues affecting them provides many benefits to both employers and employees (CIPD, 2012). Ultimately, voice potentially offers much to organisations in the sense that it provides employees with an enhanced role and sense of worth while also providing employers with relevant and valid input from below.

Certain environments have a negative impact on employee expression of opinion. Non-union voice within the context of this research or more to the point, the lack of it, does not appear to have the major impact upon job satisfaction and productivity than expected. Perhaps the nature of non-unionised retail employment is such that voice is not as significant a factor as it should be. Voice it seems is not within the remit of management nor is it within the expectations of employees within these workplaces at least not within those who took part in this research.

Union Voice, argued Addison and Belfield (2004, p.590), is far from dead. Based on the findings of this research union voice is well and alive in the sense that it provides its members with a role in the decision making process which non-unionised employees are deprived of. Landau (2009, p. 4) states that a lack of voice can impose a high psychological price on the well being of employees and can lead to high levels of anger and resentment. Those employers who continue to ignore not only the benefits of voice but also the consequences of its absence do so at their peril.

5.4.   Recommendations

This research was of an exploratory nature which intended to observe the differences which exist within the area of employee voice and participation between unionised and non-unionised members. Therefore as a result, this research does not purport to provide recommendations.

5.5.   Limitations of the Research

Some limitations should be taken into consideration having observed the research process and the results which followed. Voice and participation are analysed and

discussed within the context of the unionised and non-unionised Irish supermarket. Therefore to state that the findings of this research could be applied to voice and participation in other areas would be inaccurate. The specific nature of this research means that its results should also be viewed as specific and should not be regarded as automatically applicable to other sectors of business organisation.

5.6. Implications for Future Research

This research looked at employee voice and participation from the point of view of the employee only. As is mostly the case with dissertations carried out as part of a Masters program, time inevitably proves to be an issue. With hindsight and the hypothetical provision of more time, perhaps this research would have benefitted from seeking management's point of view with regard to voice and the various potential opportunities and constraints it provides for those in a position of authority and influence.

Another potential drawback of this research is the absence of a qualitative research process. Voice and participation is an area which can invoke emotions unlike many other topics within business organisation. As such, future research should incorporate a qualitative aspect in order to sufficiently engage with respondents in a manner that enables the better expression of emotion.

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Chapter 7: Appendices

Appendix I: Cover Page & Declaration of Confidentiality

National College of Ireland

Dissertation Questionnaire

Masters in Human Resource Management

Brian Allen
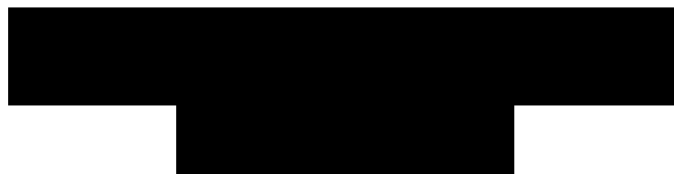
Dissertation title

Employee Voice and participation in the Irish Retail Sector: a comparative study of the extent to which workers are able to express their views in unionised and non unionised settings within the Irish supermarket industry.

My name is Brian Allen and I am conducting research that explores the phenomenon of Employee voice within unionised and non unionised businesses of the supermarket industry in Ireland. The research is being conducted as part of a Human Resource Management Masters dissertation in the School of Business at the National College of Ireland and is being supervised by Colin Whitston.

You are invited to take part in this study. Participation involves completing and returning the attached anonymous survey.

Participation is completely voluntary and so you are not obliged to take part. Participation is also anonymous and confidential. Thus responses cannot be attributed to any one participant. For this reason, it will not be possible to withdraw from participation after the questionnaire has been collected.

The questionnaires will be securely stored and data from questionnaires will be transferred from the paper record to electronic format and stored on a password protected computer. It is important that you understand that by completing and submitting the questionnaire that you are consenting to participate in the study.

Should you require any further information about the research, please contact Brian Allen ████████████████████ e or ██████████

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

<div align="center">**Appendix II: Questionnaire**</div>

Section 1: Background Information

1. Age	2. Sex	3. Full time or Part time?	4. Hours worked per week?
☐ 18-25 ☐ 26-35 ☐ 36-45 ☐ 46-55 ☐ +55	☐ Male ☐ Female	☐ Full time ☐ Part Time	☐ >15 ☐ 15-25 ☐ 25-35 ☐ +35

5. How long have you been with the company?	6. Would you consider your role to be supervisory?	7. Are you a member of a Trade Union
☐ 0-5 years ☐ 6-10 years ☐ 11-15 years ☐ +15 years	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No

Section 2: Attitudes to Job

Please rate the following statements with regard to the way you feel about your work. You can answer by saying whether or not you strongly agree (5); agree (4); neither agree or disagree (3); disagree (2) or strongly disagree (1).

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
8. In general I am satisfied with my present job	1	2	3	4	5
9. My job is secure	1	2	3	4	5
10. I am willing to work harder than I have to in order to help my organisation succeed	1	2	3	4	5
11. I am proud to be working for this organisation	1	2	3	4	5
12. I would turn down another job with more pay in order to stay with this organisation	1	2	3	4	5

13. I work under a great deal of pressure	1	2	3	4	5
14. I often have to work extra time, over and above the formal hours of my job to get through the job or help out	1	2	3	4	5

Section 3: Control over your Job

Please rate the following statements regarding the level of influence you have over your work. You can answer by saying almost always (5); often (4); sometimes (3); rarely (2) or almost never (1).

	Almost Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Almost Always
15. You decide how much work you do and how fast you do it during the day	1	2	3	4	5
16. Your manager describes the specific tasks you will perform from day to day	1	2	3	4	5
17. You decide when you can take a break during the working day	1	2	3	4	5
18. You have to get your managers consent before you try to change anything with the way you do your work	1	2	3	4	5

Section 4: My Role in the Decision Making Process

Please rate the following questions in relation to how likely they are to be accurate in your current circumstances by saying very likely (5); likely (4); neither likely or unlikely (3); unlikely (2) or very unlikely (1).

	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Neither likely or unlikely	Likely	Very Likely
19. Are you likely to be consulted by management regarding matters which are important to you?	1	2	3	4	5

20. Are you likely to believe that your opinion is valued by management?	1	2	3	4	5
22. Are you likely to believe that the work you do is valued by management?	1	2	3	4	5
23. Are you likely to regularly receive feedback on your job performance?	1	2	3	4	5
24. Are management likely to discuss development opportunities/training needs with you?	1	2	3	4	5
25. Is management likely to be supportive of you when you have a problem?	1	2	3	4	5
26. Are you likely to perceive management as open and honest?	1	2	3	4	5
27. Are you likely to state that you are treated fairly in your workplace?	1	2	3	4	5

Section 5: Trade Union (if you are not a Union member skip forward to Section 6)

28. How effective/ineffective in your view is your Trade Union in representing your views?

☐ Very Good ☐ Fairly Good ☐ Neither Good or Bad
☐ Bad ☐ Very Bad

Please rate whether each one SHOULD BE a high priority issue or low priority issue for your Trade Union:

Should be:	High Priority	Low Priority
28. Pay and conditions in your job	❑	❑
29. Changes concerning your job	❑	❑
30. Decisions concerning the future of the company you work for	❑	❑
31. Flexible working conditions	❑	❑

Should be:	High Priority	Low Priority
32. Ensuring employees are safe from abuse and violence	❑	❑
33. Ensuring the promotion of employee right to respect in the workplace	❑	❑
34. Working to ensure future job security for employees	❑	❑

Please rate the following questions in relation to how likely they are to be accurate in your current circumstances by saying very likely (5); likely (4); neither likely or unlikely (3); unlikely (2) or very unlikely (1).

	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Neither likely or unlikely	Likely	Very Likely
35. Do you value Trade union membership?	1	2	3	4	5
36. How likely would you be to consult your Trade union in the event of an issue arising?	1	2	3	4	5
37. Do you believe Trade Union Membership strengthens your position in the workplace?	1	2	3	4	5
38. Overall do you feel Trade Union membership makes your working environment better?	1	2	3	4	5
39. How aware are you of any current initiatives currently being undertaken by your Trade Union?	1	2	3	4	5

What kind of effect does Trade Union Representation have on the following areas in your workplace?

	Positive Effect	No effect	Negative Effect
40. Job Satisfaction	❑	❑	❑
41. Productivity and performance in the workplace	❑	❑	❑
42. Pay and Conditions	❑	❑	❑

	Positive Effect	No effect	Negative Effect
43. Employment Security	❑	❑	❑
44. Employees willingness to embrace change	❑	❑	❑

Section 6: Non Trade Union (If you are a member of a Trade Union you are not required to answer this section)

45. How effective/ineffective in your view is your Manager in representing your views?

❑ Very Good ❑ Fairly Good ❑ Neither Good or Bad
❑ Bad ❑ Very Bad

Please rate whether each one SHOULD BE a high priority issue or low priority issue for your Manager:

Should be:	High Priority	Low Priority
46. Pay and conditions in your job	❑	❑
47. Changes concerning your job	❑	❑
48. Decisions concerning the future of the company you work for	❑	❑
49. Flexible working conditions	❑	❑
50. Ensuring employees are safe from abuse and violence	❑	❑
51. Ensuring the promotion of employee right to respect in the workplace	❑	❑
52. Working to ensure future job security for employees	❑	❑

Please rate the following questions in relation to how likely they are to be accurate in your current circumstances by saying very likely (5); likely (4); neither likely or unlikely (3); unlikely (2) or very unlikely (1).

	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Neither likely or unlikely	Likely	Very Likely
53. Would you be likely to value Trade Union membership if it was made available to you?	1	2	3	4	5
54. How likely would you be to consult your manager in the event of an issue arising?	1	2	3	4	5
55. Do you believe Trade Union Membership would strengthen your position in the workplace?	1	2	3	4	5
56. Do you believe Trade Union membership would make your working environment better if it was made available to you?	1	2	3	4	5
57. How aware are you of any current initiatives currently being undertaken by your Employer?	1	2	3	4	5

What kind of effect does your Manager have on the following areas in your workplace?

	Positive Effect	No effect	Negative Effect
58. Job Satisfaction	❑	❑	❑
59. Productivity and performance in the workplace	❑	❑	❑
60. Pay and Conditions	❑	❑	❑
61. Employment Security	❑	❑	❑
62. Employees willingness to embrace change	❑	❑	❑

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. All information/data that is collated during the course of this research will be treated as strictly confidential.
Appendix III: Application for ISSDA Research

COPY

DATA REQUEST FORM

CONTACT DETAILS

Name	Brian Allen
Address	███████
Email	████████████
Phone	██████
Fax	n/a

DATASET(S) REQUESTED

Details of current ISSDA datasets may be found on the ISSDA website: www.ucd.ie/issda/data/.
Please list the dataset/s you require; where more than one dataset is available from a data provider please specify which is / are required:

NCCP Employee Attitudes and Expectations of the Workplace.

INTENDED USE OF DATA

Please provide a short description of your intended use of the dataset/s. Please provide an estimated end date for this use:

As a Masters student of National College of Ireland in Human Resource Management I am required to carry out a dissertation which requires a high level of independent research which includes the development, distribution and collation of .

The title of my dissertation is as follows: *Employee Voice and participation in the Irish Retail Sector: a comparative study of the extent to which workers are able to express their views in unionised and non unionised settings within the Irish supermarket industry.*

The use of the information I am seeking from the *National Centre for Partnership and Performance's* survey on *Employee Attitudes and Expectations of the Workplace* will provide vital background information in the development of the questions I will be hoping to ask.

With regard to an estimated end date for the use of the dataset, my dissertation is due to be submitted in September 2013.

REGISTER OF USE

ISSDA would like to facilitate researchers using other datasets to collaborate, where appropriate. If you consent to allowing your details to be shared on this website, please tick one of the following options:

- √ Description of project and contact details
- ☐ Description of project only
- ☐ No details

APPENDIX 1: PERSONS PERMITTED TO ACCESS THE DATA UNDER ARTICLE 8 OF AGREEMENT

Brian Allen

Agreement between:

THE IRISH SOCIAL SCIENCE DATA ARCHIVE (hereinafter the "ISSDA")

and

XXXXX (hereinafter the "USER")

concerning the supply and non-exclusive use of data from [DATASET].

1. For the purposes of this agreement, "data" shall be taken to mean [DATASET], together with any documentation concerning the files, on paper or other media, which the ISSDA may supply to the USER; and any derived or reformatted data files at the level of individuals or households which the USER may create therefrom.

2. The ISSDA agrees to supply to the USER anonymised data from the [DATASET]

3. The data are supplied subject to the provisions of the Statistics Act, 1993 and, in particular, Section 34 thereof and subject to the conditions laid down in this agreement.

4. The data may be used for data analysis and presentation by the USER for the purpose of research, including use in projects carried out by the USER but funded by other agencies or bodies. Use of the data and/or any results obtained from use of the data for any other purposes is prohibited.

5. The USER undertakes that XXXX , or such other employee of the USER as it may designate, shall be responsible for compliance by the USER with the terms and conditions of this agreement and, in particular, for controlling access to the data. The USER shall notify the ISSDA of the name of the employee given responsibility for compliance with this agreement.

6. One copy of the data may be held centrally on the USER's computer systems. Apart from the purpose of back-up, no other copies of the data shall be made by the USER. The data may not be copied to local workstations or computers, whether standalone or linked to the USER's computer system.

7. Security arrangements on the USER's computer facilities will be established to ensure that access to the data stored centrally is limited to those persons who are permitted under this agreement to access the data.

8. Only persons listed in Appendix 1 shall be permitted to access the data provided under this agreement.

9. In exceptional circumstances, written permission to access the data provided under this agreement may be given by the Director of the ISSDA to other individuals, subject to the USER and the individuals concerned undertaking in writing to observe such additional terms and conditions as the Director of the ISSDA may require.

10. The USER undertakes to make all persons who are granted access to the data aware in writing of the terms under which such access is granted, in particular the conditions laid down in Articles 3, 4, 8, 9, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17 and 18 of this agreement.

11. The USER shall keep a register of all persons who are granted access to the data and shall maintain a log of all access made. The USER shall provide to the ISSDA, at any time the ISSDA requests, a copy of the aforementioned register and log.

12. The persons permitted to access the data under this agreement may not use or attempt to use or claim to have used the data, or any results obtained from use of the data, to obtain or derive information relating specifically to an identified or identifiable individual or household.

13   The persons permitted to access the data under this agreement may not match or attempt to match or claim to have matched the data, or any results obtained from use of the data, with any other data at the level of individuals or households.

14   Access to the data by any other person or body apart from those authorised under the agreement is prohibited.

15   The USER shall ensure that any report or published analysis based on the data shall not directly or indirectly disclose information relating to any identifiable individual or household.

16   The USER shall supply the ISSDA, in advance, with details of any report or analysis based on the data which it is intended to publish or release to a third party and, if requested by the ISSDA, with copies thereof, which the ISSDA may make available to [DATA SUPPLIER].

17   The USER shall ensure that all such reports and analyses acknowledge "[DATA SUPPLIER, DATASET]" as the source.

18   Copyright and all other intellectual property rights relating to the data are vested in [DATA SUPPLIER].

19   In the event that this agreement is terminated by either the ISSDA or the USER, the USER and all persons who have access to the data shall cease to use the data and shall:
      (a)   return all copies, including back-up copies, of the data to the ISSDA;
      (b)   retain only those unpublished results or analyses obtained from the use of the data agreed by the ISSDA; all other results, analyses and records relating thereto shall be destroyed.

20   A representative of the ISSDA shall be permitted access, at all reasonable times, to the results and analyses obtained from the use of the data together with any records and documents relating thereto for the purpose of verifying compliance with the conditions of this agreement. The USER shall provide the ISSDA with any information which the ISSDA requests in relation to the USER's compliance with this agreement.

21   The USER shall notify the ISSDA as soon as is practicable of any errors that may be discovered in the data or accompanying documentation. No warranty is given by the ISSDA that the data or accompanying documentation is error free.

22   Permission to use the data for the specified purpose may be withdrawn by the ISSDA at any time, without notice and without cause assigned, by written notice to the USER signed by or on behalf of the Director of the ISSDA.

23   Any alteration to the terms of this agreement must be made in writing and must be signed by or on behalf of the Director of the ISSDA.

24   The USER may not assign the rights granted under this agreement to any other organisation or body.

25   If the USER becomes aware of any breaches of the conditions laid down in this agreement, it shall notify the ISSDA promptly.

26   Correspondence from the USER concerning this agreement shall be addressed to: Irish Social Science Data Archive, UCD Library, University College Dublin, Belfield, Dublin 4.

27   The USER agrees to be bound by the terms and conditions of this agreement.

Signed   _____   Signed   _____
          Administrator for   USER
          Irish Social Science Data Archive

          22/3/2003

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Appendix IV: Frequency Tables

Section 1: Background Information

Figure 4.1.: Age of Respondents

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	18-25	25	36.8	36.8	36.8
	26-35	23	33.8	33.8	70.6
	36-45	17	25.0	25.0	95.6
Valid	46-55	2	2.9	2.9	98.5
	55+	1	1.5	1.5	100.0
	Total	68	100.0	100.0	

Figure 4.2.: Sex of Respondents

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	male	33	48.5	48.5	48.5
Valid	female	35	51.5	51.5	100.0
	Total	68	100.0	100.0	

Figure 4.3.: Do Respondent Work Full Time or Part Time?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	full time	39	57.4	57.4	57.4
Valid	part time	29	42.6	42.6	100.0
	Total	68	100.0	100.0	

Figure 4.4.: Length of Service of Respondents

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	0-5 years	34	50.0	50.0	50.0
	6-10 years	26	38.2	38.2	88.2
Valid	11-15 years	6	8.8	8.8	97.1
	+15 years	2	2.9	2.9	100.0
	Total	68	100.0	100.0	

Figure 4.5.: Hours worked by Respondents per week

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	less than 15	8	11.8	11.8	11.8
	15-25	19	27.9	27.9	39.7
Valid	25-35	17	25.0	25.0	64.7
	+35	24	35.3	35.3	100.0
	Total	68	100.0	100.0	

Figure 4.6.: Do Respondents Consider their Roles Supervisory?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	yes	20	29.4	29.4	29.4
Valid	no	48	70.6	70.6	100.0
	Total	68	100.0	100.0	

Figure 4.7.: Do Respondents Belong to Unionised or Non-Unionised Workplaces?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	yes	29	42.6	42.6	42.6
Valid	no	39	57.4	57.4	100.0
	Total	68	100.0	100.0	

Section 2: Attitudes to Job

Figure 4.8.: Job Satisfaction

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	strongly disagree	4	5.9	5.9	5.9
	disagree	10	14.7	14.7	20.6
Valid	neither agree or disagree	12	17.6	17.6	38.2
	agree	36	52.9	52.9	91.2
	strongly agree	6	8.8	8.8	100.0
	Total	68	100.0	100.0	

Figure 4.9.: Job Security

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	neither agree or disagree	10	14.7	14.7	14.7
	agree	34	50.0	50.0	64.7
	strongly agree	24	35.3	35.3	100.0
	Total	68	100.0	100.0	

Figure 4.10.: Employees' willingness to turn down a better paid job in order to stay

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	strongly disagree	23	33.8	33.8	33.8
	disagree	21	30.9	30.9	64.7
	neither agree or disagree	14	20.6	20.6	85.3
	agree	4	5.9	5.9	91.2
	strongly agree	6	8.8	8.8	100.0
	Total	68	100.0	100.0	

Figure 4.11.: Level of Pressure in Job

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	strongly disagree	3	4.4	4.4	4.4
	disagree	10	14.7	14.7	19.1
	neither agree or disagree	17	25.0	25.0	44.1
	agree	16	23.5	23.5	67.6
	strongly agree	22	32.4	32.4	100.0
	Total	68	100.0	100.0	

Figure 4.12.: Likelihood of Enforced Overtime

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	strongly disagree	10	14.7	14.7	14.7
	disagree	8	11.8	11.8	26.5
	neither agree or disagree	18	26.5	26.5	52.9
	agree	14	20.6	20.6	73.5
	strongly agree	18	26.5	26.5	100.0
	Total	68	100.0	100.0	

Section 3: Control over your job

Figure 4.13.: Control Over Amount of Work Performed

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	almost never	13	19.1	19.1	19.1
	rarely	13	19.1	19.1	38.2
	sometimes	22	32.4	32.4	70.6
	often	17	25.0	25.0	95.6
	almost always	3	4.4	4.4	100.0
	Total	68	100.0	100.0	

Figure 4.14.: Input of management in performance of day to day tasks

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	rarely	10	14.7	14.7	14.7
	sometimes	12	17.6	17.6	32.4
	often	28	41.2	41.2	73.5
	almost always	18	26.5	26.5	100.0
	Total	68	100.0	100.0	

Figure 4.15.: Discretion given to employees regarding their break time

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	almost never	13	19.1	19.1	19.1
	rarely	14	20.6	20.6	39.7
	sometimes	15	22.1	22.1	61.8
	often	17	25.0	25.0	86.8
	almost always	9	13.2	13.2	100.0
	Total	68	100.0	100.0	

Figure 4.16.: Extent of Management consent required

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	almost never	1	1.5	1.5	1.5
	rarely	7	10.3	10.3	11.8
	sometimes	8	11.8	11.8	23.5
	often	23	33.8	33.8	57.4
	almost always	29	42.6	42.6	100.0

	Total		68	100.0	100.0	

Section 4: My Role in the Decision Making Process

Figure 4.17.: Likelihood of Employees being consulted

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	very unlikely	13	19.1	19.1	19.1
	unlikely	13	19.1	19.1	38.2
	neither likely or unlikely	16	23.5	23.5	61.8
	likely	17	25.0	25.0	86.8
	very likely	9	13.2	13.2	100.0
	Total	68	100.0	100.0	

Figure 4.18.: Likelihood of Employee Opinion being valued

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	very unlikely	13	19.1	19.1	19.1
	unlikely	9	13.2	13.2	32.4
	neither likely or unlikely	17	25.0	25.0	57.4
	likely	17	25.0	25.0	82.4
	very likely	12	17.6	17.6	100.0
	Total	68	100.0	100.0	

Figure 4.19.: Likelihood of work performed being valued

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	very unlikely	9	13.2	13.2	13.2
	unlikely	13	19.1	19.1	32.4
	neither likely or unlikely	11	16.2	16.2	48.5
	likely	26	38.2	38.2	86.8
	very likely	9	13.2	13.2	100.0
	Total	68	100.0	100.0	

Figure 4.20.: Likelihood of regular feedback on job performance

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	very unlikely	13	19.1	19.1	19.1
	unlikely	15	22.1	22.1	41.2
	neither likely or unlikely	14	20.6	20.6	61.8
	likely	18	26.5	26.5	88.2
	very likely	8	11.8	11.8	100.0

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Total	68	100.0	100.0	

Figure 4.21.: Likelihood of training and development needs

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	very unlikely	14	20.6	20.6	20.6
	unlikely	25	36.8	36.8	57.4
	neither likely or unlikely	7	10.3	10.3	67.6
	likely	15	22.1	22.1	89.7
	very likely	7	10.3	10.3	100.0
	Total	68	100.0	100.0	

Figure 4.22.: Are Management supportive when problem arises?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	very unlikely	6	8.8	8.8	8.8
	unlikely	13	19.1	19.1	27.9
	neither likely or unlikely	12	17.6	17.6	45.6
	likely	26	38.2	38.2	83.8
	very likely	11	16.2	16.2	100.0
	Total	68	100.0	100.0	

Figure 4.23.: Are management open and honest?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	very unlikely	8	11.8	11.8	11.8
	unlikely	17	25.0	25.0	36.8
	neither likely or unlikely	12	17.6	17.6	54.4
	likely	22	32.4	32.4	86.8
	very likely	9	13.2	13.2	100.0
	Total	68	100.0	100.0	

Figure 4.24.: Are employees treated fairly in the workplace?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	very unlikely	5	7.4	7.4	7.4
	unlikely	9	13.2	13.2	20.6
	neither likely or unlikely	15	22.1	22.1	42.6
	likely	26	38.2	38.2	80.9
	very likely	13	19.1	19.1	100.0
	Total	68	100.0	100.0	

Section 5: Trade Union Members

Figure 4.25.: Effectiveness of Unions in Representing employee Views

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	very good	5	7.4	17.2	17.2
	Fairly good	13	19.1	44.8	62.1
	neither good or bad	8	11.8	27.6	89.7
	bad	2	2.9	6.9	96.6
	very bad	1	1.5	3.4	100.0
	Total	29	42.6	100.0	
Missing	-1	39	57.4		
Total		68	100.0		

Figure 4.26.: Should Union influence pay and conditions?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	high priority	28	41.2	96.6	96.6
	low priority	1	1.5	3.4	100.0
	Total	29	42.6	100.0	
Missing	-1	39	57.4		
Total		68	100.0		

Figure 4.27.: Should Union influence changes concerning job?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	high priority	27	39.7	93.1	93.1
	low priority	2	2.9	6.9	100.0
	Total	29	42.6	100.0	
Missing	-1	39	57.4		
Total		68	100.0		

Figure 4.28.: Should Union influence future of company?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	high priority	23	33.8	79.3	79.3
	low priority	6	8.8	20.7	100.0
	Total	29	42.6	100.0	
Missing	-1	39	57.4		
Total		68	100.0		

Figure 4.29.: Should Union influence flexible working conditions?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	high priority	23	33.8	79.3	79.3
	low priority	6	8.8	20.7	100.0
	Total	29	42.6	100.0	
Missing	-1	39	57.4		
Total		68	100.0		

4.30.: Should Union influence safety from abuse and violence?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	high priority	28	41.2	96.6	96.6
	low priority	1	1.5	3.4	100.0
	Total	29	42.6	100.0	
Missing	-1	39	57.4		
Total		68	100.0		

Figure 4.31.: Should Union influence employee right to respect?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	high priority	24	35.3	82.8	82.8
	low priority	5	7.4	17.2	100.0
	Total	29	42.6	100.0	
Missing	-1	39	57.4		
Total		68	100.0		

Figure 4.32.: Do you value trade union membership?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	unlikely	1	1.5	3.4	3.4
	neither likely or unlikely	14	20.6	48.3	51.7
	likely	12	17.6	41.4	93.1
	very likely	2	2.9	6.9	100.0
	Total	29	42.6	100.0	
Missing	-1	39	57.4		
Total		68	100.0		

Figure 4.33.: How likely would you be to consult union in event of problem arising?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	very unlikely	1	1.5	3.4	3.4
	unlikely	3	4.4	10.3	13.8
	neither likely or unlikely	10	14.7	34.5	48.3
	likely	10	14.7	34.5	82.8
	very likely	5	7.4	17.2	100.0
	Total	29	42.6	100.0	
Missing	-1	39	57.4		
Total		68	100.0		

Figure 4.34.: Does union membership strengthen your position in workplace?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	unlikely	5	7.4	17.2	17.2
	neither likely or unlikely	11	16.2	37.9	55.2
	likely	6	8.8	20.7	75.9
	very likely	7	10.3	24.1	100.0
	Total	29	42.6	100.0	
Missing	-1	39	57.4		
Total		68	100.0		

Figure 4.35.: Does TU membership improve working environment?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	very unlikely	1	1.5	3.4	3.4
	unlikely	3	4.4	10.3	13.8
	neither likely or unlikely	13	19.1	44.8	58.6
	likely	7	10.3	24.1	82.8
	very likely	5	7.4	17.2	100.0
	Total	29	42.6	100.0	
Missing	-1	39	57.4		
Total		68	100.0		

Figure 4.36.: Are you aware of any initiatives being carried out by union?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	very unlikely	5	7.4	17.2	17.2

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	unlikely	7	10.3	24.1	41.4
	neither likely or unlikely	10	14.7	34.5	75.9
	likely	6	8.8	20.7	96.6
	very likely	1	1.5	3.4	100.0
	Total	29	42.6	100.0	
Missing	-1	39	57.4		
Total		68	100.0		

Figure 4.37.: Union influence on job satisfaction

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	positive effect	9	13.2	31.0	31.0
	no effect	18	26.5	62.1	93.1
	negative effect	2	2.9	6.9	100.0
	Total	29	42.6	100.0	
Missing	-1	39	57.4		
Total		68	100.0		

Figure 4.37.: Union influence on productivity and performance in the workplace

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	positive effect	7	10.3	24.1	24.1
	no effect	20	29.4	69.0	93.1
	negative effect	2	2.9	6.9	100.0
	Total	29	42.6	100.0	
Missing	-1	39	57.4		
Total		68	100.0		

Figure 4.37.: Union influence on pay and conditions

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	positive effect	24	35.3	82.8	82.8
	no effect	4	5.9	13.8	96.6
	negative effect	1	1.5	3.4	100.0
	Total	29	42.6	100.0	
Missing	-1	39	57.4		
Total		68	100.0		

Figure 4.37.: Union influence on employment security

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	positive effect	23	33.8	79.3	79.3
Valid	no effect	6	8.8	20.7	100.0
	Total	29	42.6	100.0	
Missing	-1	39	57.4		
Total		68	100.0		

Figure 4.37.: Union influence on employees willingness to embrace change

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	positive effect	10	14.7	34.5	34.5
Valid	no effect	13	19.1	44.8	79.3
	negative effect	6	8.8	20.7	100.0
	Total	29	42.6	100.0	
Missing	-1	39	57.4		
Total		68	100.0		

Section 6: Non-union Members

Figure 4.38.: Effectiveness of Management in representing employee views

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	very good	6	8.8	15.4	15.4
	fairly good	12	17.6	30.8	46.2
	neither good or bad	11	16.2	28.2	74.4
Valid	fairly bad	7	10.3	17.9	92.3
	very bad	3	4.4	7.7	100.0
	Total	39	57.4	100.0	
Missing	-1	29	42.6		
Total		68	100.0		

Figure 4.39.: Should Management influence pay and conditions?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	high priority	33	48.5	84.6	84.6
Valid	low priority	6	8.8	15.4	100.0
	Total	39	57.4	100.0	
Missing	-1	29	42.6		

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Total	68	100.0		

Figure 4.40.: Should Management influence concerning job?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	high priority	33	48.5	84.6	84.6
Valid	low priority	6	8.8	15.4	100.0
	Total	39	57.4	100.0	
Missing	-1	29	42.6		
Total		68	100.0		

Figure 4.41: Should Management influence future of company?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	high priority	25	36.8	64.1	64.1
Valid	low priority	14	20.6	35.9	100.0
	Total	39	57.4	100.0	
Missing	-1	29	42.6		
Total		68	100.0		

Figure 4.42: Should Management influence flexible working conditions?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	high priority	27	39.7	69.2	69.2
Valid	low priority	12	17.6	30.8	100.0
	Total	39	57.4	100.0	
Missing	-1	29	42.6		
Total		68	100.0		

Figure 4.43.: Should Management ensure employees are safe from violence?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	high priority	35	51.5	89.7	89.7
Valid	low priority	4	5.9	10.3	100.0
	Total	39	57.4	100.0	
Missing	-1	29	42.6		
Total		68	100.0		

Figure 4.44.: Should Management ensure employee right to respect?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	high priority	30	44.1	76.9	76.9
	low priority	9	13.2	23.1	100.0
	Total	39	57.4	100.0	
Missing	-1	29	42.6		
Total		68	100.0		

Figure 4.45.: Should Management ensure employee future job security?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	high priority	25	36.8	64.1	64.1
	low priority	14	20.6	35.9	100.0
	Total	39	57.4	100.0	
Missing	-1	29	42.6		
Total		68	100.0		

Figure 4.46.: Value of Union membership if made available

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	unlikely	2	2.9	5.1	5.1
	neither likely or unlikely	5	7.4	12.8	17.9
	likely	18	26.5	46.2	64.1
	very likely	14	20.6	35.9	100.0
	Total	39	57.4	100.0	
Missing	-1	29	42.6		
Total		68	100.0		

Figure 4.47.: How likely would you be to consult management in event of issue arising?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	very unlikely	2	2.9	5.1	5.1
	unlikely	6	8.8	15.4	20.5
	neither likely or unlikely	12	17.6	30.8	51.3
	likely	13	19.1	33.3	84.6
	very likely	6	8.8	15.4	100.0
	Total	39	57.4	100.0	
Missing	-1	29	42.6		

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Total		68	100.0		

Figure 4.48.: Would union membership strengthen you position in the workplace?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	very unlikely	1	1.5	2.6	2.6
	unlikely	1	1.5	2.6	5.1
	neither likely or unlikely	8	11.8	20.5	25.6
	likely	15	22.1	38.5	64.1
	very likely	14	20.6	35.9	100.0
	Total	39	57.4	100.0	
Missing	-1	29	42.6		
Total		68	100.0		

Figure 4.49.: Would union membership make your working environment better?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	very unlikely	2	2.9	5.1	5.1
	unlikely	1	1.5	2.6	7.7
	neither likely or unlikely	8	11.8	20.5	28.2
	likely	10	14.7	25.6	53.8
	very likely	18	26.5	46.2	100.0
	Total	39	57.4	100.0	
Missing	-1	29	42.6		
Total		68	100.0		

Figure 4.50.: How aware are you of current initiatives being carried out by your employer?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	very unlikely	8	11.8	20.5	20.5
	unlikely	9	13.2	23.1	43.6
	neither likely or unlikely	13	19.1	33.3	76.9
	likely	5	7.4	12.8	89.7
	very likely	4	5.9	10.3	100.0
	Total	39	57.4	100.0	
Missing	-1	29	42.6		
Total		68	100.0		

Figure 4.51.: Manager influence on job satisfaction

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	positive effect	17	25.0	43.6	43.6
	no effect	17	25.0	43.6	87.2
	negative effect	5	7.4	12.8	100.0
	Total	39	57.4	100.0	
Missing	-1	29	42.6		
Total		68	100.0		

Figure 4.51.: Manager influence on productivity and performance in the workplace

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	positive effect	15	22.1	38.5	38.5
	no effect	18	26.5	46.2	84.6
	negative effect	6	8.8	15.4	100.0
	Total	39	57.4	100.0	
Missing	-1	29	42.6		
Total		68	100.0		

Figure 4.51.: Manager influence on pay and conditions

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	positive effect	8	11.8	20.5	20.5
	no effect	26	38.2	66.7	87.2
	negative effect	5	7.4	12.8	100.0
	Total	39	57.4	100.0	
Missing	-1	29	42.6		
Total		68	100.0		

Figure 4.51.: Manager influence on employment security

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	positive effect	10	14.7	25.6	25.6
	no effect	25	36.8	64.1	89.7
	negative effect	4	5.9	10.3	100.0
	Total	39	57.4	100.0	
Missing	-1	29	42.6		
Total		68	100.0		

Figure 4.51.: Manager influence on employees willingness to embrace change

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	positive effect	12	17.6	30.8	30.8
	no effect	14	20.6	35.9	66.7
	negative effect	13	19.1	33.3	100.0
	Total	39	57.4	100.0	
Missing	-1	29	42.6		
Total		68	100.0		