

National College of Ireland

Project Submission Sheet

Student Name:Sophie Rose Farrell.....

Student ID:23383925.....

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Lecturer:Bronwyn McFarlane.....

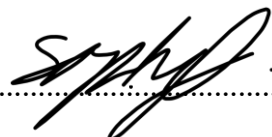
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Project Title: "Workplace Well-being: Investigating workplace health and well-being initiatives and their impact on the retention and engagement of graduate employees in Ireland"

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[Dissertation- MAHRMD]

[Investigating workplace health and well-being initiatives and their impact on the retention and engagement of graduate employees in Ireland]

Your Name/Student Number	Course	Date
Sophie Farrell/23383925	MAHRMD	15/08/2025

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MAHRMD Dissertation

Workplace Well-being:

Investigating workplace health and well-being initiatives and their impact on the retention and engagement of graduate employees in Ireland.

Sophie Farrell

23383925

Supervisor: Bronwyn McFarlane

Submitted to the National College of Ireland, 15th August 2025.

Abstract

This dissertation will investigate employee health and well-being initiatives and their impact on graduates' retention and engagement levels within the workplace. It examines and analyses how these initiatives influence graduate employees in an Irish context. By synthesising research and gathering primary data surrounding this topic, through the use of semi-structured interviews, the researcher aimed to answer the research question effectively.

The findings emerged that it is the health and well-being initiatives that focus on increasing social well-being and workplace connections that has the most influence on employee engagement levels among the graduate employees. Additionally, the research found that while formal well-being initiatives are valued, the two factors that have the most significant impact on graduate employees' retention is flexibility and company culture

The study's significance lies in its ability to inform and influence employers, universities, graduate employees, and graduate programmes, ultimately improving the organisations and employee's performance and engagement. Additionally, the findings will contribute valuable insights to the field of human resource management, guiding future research and practical applications aimed at supporting employees during the early stages of their careers.

Submission of Thesis and Dissertation

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

Name: Sophie Rose Farrell

Student Number: 23383925

Degree for which thesis is submitted: MA in Human Resource Management

Title of Thesis: “Investigating workplace health and well-being initiatives and their impact on the retention and engagement of graduate employees in Ireland.”

Date: 15th of August 2025

Material submitted for award

A. I declare that this work submitted has been composed by myself.



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



C. I agree to my thesis being deposited in the NCI Library online open access repository NORMA.



D. I declare that no material contained in the thesis has been used in any other submission for an academic award.

_____*Sophie Rose Farrell - 15/08/2025*_____



Acknowledgement

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to everyone who helped me produce this dissertation.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Introduction

The topic of people's health and well-being has gained significant attention in recent years due to greater awareness and access to information. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines health as “a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity”. Living a healthy life can have a positive effect on performance in both our personal and work lives. As people spend a significant amount of their time at work, on average around 90,000 hours over their lifespan (Stoewen, 2016) the workplace is a vital setting to promote and encourage health and well-being initiatives. According to CIPD (Suff, 2024), well-being promotion can help increase employee engagement and organisational performance helping both employees and the organisation to thrive. Therefore, it is important that organisations prioritise health and well-being by providing programmes, resources and support for employees.

Unhealthy workplace habits, such as prolonged sedentary activity, can negatively affect employees. According to the National Institute of Health, office workers spend around 76.9% of their day in a sedentary position (Waters, et al., 2016) this activity has been linked with negative health issues such as obesity, type 2 diabetes, cancer, and early death (NHS, 2022).

Mental health issues such as depression and anxiety results in high rates of absenteeism and staff turnover (Pescud, et al., 2015). It was estimated that poor mental health cost employers an estimated £51 billion in 2023 (Henstock, et al., 2025). These issues highlight the need for employers to implement effective health and well-being initiatives.

For employees entering employment from full-time education for the first time, the transition can present unique challenges, such as difficulties in managing workload, adapting to organisational culture, and balancing work-life commitments (Zayts, et al., 2023). These

challenges can be addressed through HR health and well-being initiatives. Health and well-being initiatives can enhance productivity, motivation and happiness among staff (Pescud, et al., 2015).

Despite much research highlighting the importance of health and well-being initiatives for employees, there is limited research examining its specific impact on graduates within the Irish context. This dissertation aims to address a crucial gap in literature by examining and investigating how health and well-being initiatives within graduate programmes influence retention and engagement among this cohort.

To achieve this research aim, this study will implement a qualitative approach. A number of semi-structured interviews will be conducted with both graduate employees and HR professionals. These interviews will allow the researcher to gain an in-depth insight into how these two groups view well-being initiatives and determine whether these initiatives impact or influence their engagement and retention levels. A thematic analysis will be applied to the collected data to identify important and reoccurring themes among the interviews, to ultimately answer the research question.

This dissertation will explore health and well-being initiatives, investigate the unique challenges graduate employee's face and analyse the impact of well-being initiatives on retention and engagement. The significance of this study lies in its potential to offer practical recommendations and insights for organisations on how to prioritise employee well-being and which results in higher engagement and retention rates among graduates. This dissertation hopes to contribute valuable knowledge to the field of human resource management, benefiting employers, graduates, and universities. Furthermore, the findings may offer direction for future research and practical applications in the field of human resource management.

Structure of the study

This dissertation is structured as follows:

- Chapter 1: Introduction- Presents an overview of the research problem, it's significance, and outlines the structure of the study.
- Chapter 2: Literature Review- Reviews and synthesis the existing literature regarding health and well-being initiatives, employee engagement and retention and graduate employees within the workforce.
- Chapter 3: Research Question- Clearly states the research question, the studies aims and objectives.
- Chapter 4: Methodology- Describes the research design, approach and philosophy that will be applied to the study. the ethical considerations and limitations of the study and lastly how the data will be analysed.
- Chapter 5: Findings and Analysis- Presents the interesting and reoccurring themes that were identified during the analysis process.
- Chapter 6: Discussion- Interpreting the key themes that directly links to the research question being investigated. Referring back to the literature previously reviewed and discussing their implications.
- Chapter 7: Conclusion- Summarise the key findings, discussing their significance, and presenting clearly how the research study answered the research question.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Workplace well-being has become an area of increased focus and interest for employers, Human Resource (HR) professionals and researchers as it has the potential to create a healthier, more engaged and productive workforce. In recent years, much attention has been given to health and well-being initiatives in general, however, there is a notable gap in understanding the specific impact these strategies have on graduate employees.

Graduate employees are an important group within the workforce, that often face new and unique challenges when transitioning from college into the workplace (Jusoh, et al., 2011). Reports have indicated that many graduate employees feel disengaged and high levels of staff turnover have also been reported (Van Der Baan, et al., 2025). Understanding how and if these initiatives health and well-being initiatives influence graduate employees' engagement, performance and retention is essential for organisations wishing to retain and support their new talent.

The purpose of this literature review is to examine the existing and current academic research on workplace health and well-being with a particular focus on its relationship with employee engagement, performance and retention. By synthesising academic and professional literature surrounding this topic, this review aims to highlight emerging trends, links and knowledge gaps throughout the literature. This review can also serve as a reliable resource for employers and HR professionals wanting to gain a deeper understanding of the impact health and well-being initiatives have on graduate employees.

2.1. Entering the Workforce: Graduate Employees

Graduates have been identified as an important part of an organisation's workforce (Van Der Baan, et al., 2025). Graduate employees are individuals who have recently completed a university degree and are entering possibly their first professional job. There has been a significant increase in university educated graduates within Ireland. According to the latest CBRE Research Report 2025, Ireland has the most educated population in the world, with 52.4% of the adult population aged between 25-64 having a bachelor's degree or higher (Conte, 2025).

Graduate employees are viewed as a vital source of talent for many organisations which makes recruiting, developing and retaining them a highly important organisational task (McCracken, et al., 2015). They are valued for their rapid learning skills, academic expertise, and creative thinking abilities they bring to a business (Dhanpat, et al., 2021). Dhanpat *et al.* (2021), discuss how graduates bring a new perspective and skillset to the workplace, an enthusiasm for learning, and importantly the relevant qualifications for the job. Oluyomi (2017), also examines how the labour market seeks employees with the most up-to-date skills and abilities.

However, retaining graduate employees remains a major challenge for many organisations, with about 50% of graduates leaving their first job within the first year (Van Der Baan, et al., 2025). This may be a result of the unique challenges and difficulties faced by graduate employees when transitioning into the workforce.

Entering the workforce for the first time after university is a critical developmental period for young adults (Fayard & Mayer, 2023). Fayard and Mayer (2023), discuss how this transitional stage can have long-term effects on graduates mental and physical health, their personality development, future career success and their social connections within the workplace. The transition from higher education to full-time employment can be a challenging and often a traumatic time for graduate employees (Jusoh, et al., 2011). Literature discusses how this transitional period can often negatively impact graduates' mental well-being resulting in increased levels of stress and exhaustion (Zayts, et al., 2023). Graduates have also reported difficulty in adapting to the high-pressure and demanding work environments (McCracken, et al., 2015). However, Zayts *et al.* (2023) highlights that not every transition from education to employment is the same and a graduate's experience is often shaped by the company's expectations and the particular demands of the job.

Researchers have acknowledged and discussed the significant misalignment between universities academic programmes and the labour market expectations (Zayts, et al., 2023). McCracken *et al.* (2015) article highlights that many employers are increasingly concerned that universities are not adequately preparing graduates for the workplace. While universities provide graduates with subject specific skills and knowledge ("hard skills"), many graduates often lack the "soft skills" needed for the workplace (McCracken, et al., 2015). These soft skills include teamwork, effective time-management, strong interpersonal abilities, and adaptability. Without these workplace skills, graduates can find it difficult adjusting to the workplace after college.

One frequently discussed challenge for graduates transitioning into the workforce is the difficulty adjusting to the workplace schedule. Graduates often report difficulties adapting to the 40-hour workweek, the reduced free time and a less enjoyable environment compared to their university years (Zayts, et al., 2023). Additionally, graduates reported challenges in navigating workplace politics, understanding organisational culture, and building professional relationships (Zayts, et al., 2023). These challenges have been shown to significantly impact graduates' self-confidence within the workplace and contribute to high levels of stress during their first year of employment (Zayts, et al., 2023). Van Der Bann *et al.* (2025), also highlight that a key challenge graduates face is unmet expectations. The absence of adequate challenges, support and development opportunities that many graduates expect from their employers can lead to feelings of frustration and disengagement and can also reduce organisational loyalty and increase employee turnover rates (Van Der Baan, et al., 2025).

Early turnover rates among graduates can have serious costs associated with it, for both the employer and employee. Costing organisations significant financially and operationally and causing employee's major psychological stress (Van Der Baan, et al., 2025). A lack of support and guidance can also cause recent graduate employees to become unmotivated and less engaged within their workplace (Dhanpat, et al., 2021).

Keeping employees engaged within the workplace can contribute to higher levels of organisational productivity, employee retention, and overall workplace efficiency (CIPD, 2025). Acknowledging the factors and values that influence graduate employees' engagement is crucial for retaining, motivating and supporting graduate employees.

Maloni *et al.* (2019) highlights that recent graduates entering the workforce are predominately from Generation Z (Gen Z). They discuss that while Gen Z share similarities with other generations, they hold many distinct priorities and values. Maloni *et al.* (2019) study reveals that Gen Z shows a significantly higher need for social connections at work, valuing workplace friendships and contact with colleagues, more than previous generations. Sufficient supervisory support was also discussed as an important factor for Gen Z, noting that they appreciate feedback, clear instructions and support from supervisors (Maloni, et al., 2019). Additionally, this study highlights that Gen Z places less significance on perks like extended vacation days and a slower work-pace, instead prioritising work-life balance and flexibility for activities outside of work as essential for their well-being (Maloni, et al., 2019). The significance of work-life balance and flexible working arrangements for Gen Z was reiterated by Osorio and Madero (2025). Hybrid and flexible working are a top priority for many graduates, it is viewed as an essential arrangement in promoting work-life balance and supporting their overall well-being in both their professional and personal lives (Osorio & Madero, 2025). A report from 2023 also highlighted the growing importance of flexible working arrangements,

revealing that about 49% of recent graduates would decline a job offer if it didn't offer flexible or hybrid work arrangements, an increase from 38% in 2022 (Gutz, 2023).

The issues and difficulties faced by graduates in the early years of their working lives, highlight the importance of creating well-being initiatives that help support them through this transitional phase from education to employment. Entering the workforce is a critical period for graduates, that can have long-term effects on their mental, physical and social well-being within the workplace (Fayard & Mayer, 2023). By organisations investing in the development of their employees' they can have a greater chance of reaching organisational success (Dhanpat, et al., 2021). When a graduate employee feels as though their employer cares for their health, well-being and happiness, they are more likely to remain engaged, motivated and within the organisation (Monteiro & Joseph, 2023). It is essential that organisations offer adequate and appropriate supports and resources to help graduate employees transition smoothly into the workforce as it plays an important role in engaging and retaining them (Van Der Baan, et al., 2025).

2.2. Workplace Health and Well-Being

Understanding the concept of health is vital when discussing well-being in the workplace. The World Health Organisation defines health as not just the absence of disease or illness but a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being (WHO, 2025). Well-being is closely related to an individual's overall happiness and life satisfaction (Manuela, et al., 2025). Pandey *et al.* (2025) defines employee well-being as the overall quality of an employee's work life.

The topic of people's health and well-being has increased in popularity in recent years due to greater public awareness and access to information. Concerns around growing obesity rates, mental health issues and maintaining a work-life balance are at the forefront of many employees' minds (Cheung, 2024). Studies have found that stress, work overload and long work hours can harm an employee's mental, emotional and physical health (Oakman, et al., 2020). Many employees engage in unhealthy habits such as poor nutrition and high levels of daily inactivity (Ojo, et al., 2024). On average office workers engage in high levels of sedentary behaviour, 65-79% of their workday, these prolonged periods of sitting can result in serious health risks such as heart disease, diabetes and poor mental health (Ojo, et al., 2024). This highlights the importance of supporting and promoting employee well-being to benefit both the workforce and organisations goals.

The literature reviewed continuously highlighted the significant impact and influence that workplace culture has on the well-being and health of employees (Monteiro & Joseph, 2023). Monteiro and Joseph (2023) discussed that a positive workplace culture that includes supportive leadership, open communication, teamwork and trust can positively influence employee's well-being, job satisfaction, motivation and productivity within work. In contrast, a negative or toxic work environment that promotes stress and conflict can have a detrimental impact on employee's well-being (Monteiro & Joseph, 2023). A negative work environment has been reported to lead to an increase in employee absenteeism and a decrease in employee performance and engagement (Monteiro & Joseph, 2023). Molek-Winiarska *et al.* (2023) article also noted that organisations will often utilise "quick solutions" such as webinars to manage employee's well-being issues and concerns instead of investing in larger, long-term changes that could improve and enhance the organisational culture around well-being in work.

Sorensen *et al.* (2023) identified leadership involvement as another core factor that impacts and effects employee's well-being within work. They discuss that leadership plays a crucial in implementing and prioritising well-being at work by providing the necessary resources, ensuring accountability within the organisation and creating a company culture that truly values employee well-being (Sorensen, et al., 2018). Pescud *et al.* (2015), highlighted the important role that leadership plays in relation to effectively implementing well-being programmes and initiatives. Supportive and encouraging leadership is crucial to effectively implement well-being initiatives and ensure employee well-being within an organisation (Monteiro & Joseph, 2023). Sonnetag *et al.* (2022), also states how positive leadership and management styles can improve employee well-being. It is also crucial that line managers are trained to effectively identify and support employees who may require additional assistance (CIPD, 2024).

Grossmeier and Johnson (2020), discuss that for health and well-being initiatives to be successful, organisations must set strategic goals and involve strong leadership and organisational support. Goetzel (2019) acknowledges the employer's responsibility to provide, encourage and prioritise health and well-being throughout the organisation. Without organisational support it would be almost impossible for employees to adapt healthy habits within the workplace (Goetzel, 2019). For health and well-being initiatives to thrive throughout an organisation, it is vital that they are engraved within the culture of a company and are an integral part of the organisations aims and values.

Along with a toxic work environment and poor leadership, health issues and concerns are one the leading causes for absenteeism and presenteeism in the workplace (Proper & van Oostrom, 2019). Mental health disorders, such as anxiety and depression, along with musculoskeletal disorders and

acute medical conditions are the most common reasons for absenteeism (Proper & van Oostrom, 2019). The 2023 'Health and Well-Being at Work' report by the CIPD, revealed that employee absences due to sickness is at a record high, averaging 7.8 days per employee per year, up from 5.8 days in pre-pandemic data from 2019 (Suff, 2023). However, a report conducted by the Irish Central Statistics Office (CSO) in Q2 of 2024 revealed that 7.7% of employed people were absent from work during the reference week. A slight decrease from the 8.5% recorded from the same period in 2023 (CSO, 2024).

Absenteeism and presenteeism in the workplace can have a detrimental and costly impact on organisations. Estimates suggest that absenteeism and burnout cost the US and EU economies more than €1.8 trillion in lost productivity each year, with poor mental health potentially costing employers €2,000 per employee annually (IBEC, 2024). Henstock *et al.* (2025), highlights the need for organisations to invest in workplace mental health and well-being initiatives to address concerns around employee health, productivity, legal compliance, financial costs, and company reputation. The literature continuously underscores the importance of organisations supporting employee health and well-being to reduce absenteeism and presenteeism rates, increase productivity and engagement and reduce organisational expenses. Health and well-being promotion and initiatives play an important part in creating a healthier and more supportive workplace environment (Sorensen, et al., 2018).

According to the CIPD (2024), well-being promotion can help increase employee engagement, organisational performance, and decrease stress levels, helping both employees and the organisation to thrive. Implementing effective workplace health and well-being initiatives can create a more positive and productive environment. It can also help contradict unhealthy lifestyle practices such as poor nutrition and physical inactivity (Pescud, et al., 2015).

Workplace health and well-being initiatives are designed to benefit employees physical, mental and emotional health (Pescud, et al., 2015). It involves creating programmes that will increase employee well-being in the workplace. Examples of health and well-being initiatives might include offering flexible working hours, implementing work-life balance policies, such as job sharing, study leave, career breaks, shorter working year (Marecki, 2024), employee assistance programmes, offering mental and physical health support such as, access to health screenings and counselling, and lastly supplying healthy nutritious meals to staff (Molek-Winiarska, et al., 2023). Previous research has also highlighted that social activities such as community gardening can provide numerous health benefits for employees, including reduced stress and anxiety, as-well as improved mood, self-esteem and overall satisfaction (Gregis, et al., 2021). However, Sorenson *et al.* (2018), highlights how an integrated approach that involves health promotion and also health prevention is crucial to further improve workers well-being.

Work-life balance emerged as a significant contributing factor to employee well-being. A workplace culture that promotes work-life balance and offer flexibility can have extensive health benefits for employees, such as less stress, burnout and results in higher levels of work satisfaction (Monteiro & Joseph, 2023). Marecki (2024) note that organisations that recognise the importance of work-life balance to employees and provide flexible working arrangements, such as hybrid working, helps create a more productive and happier workplace.

The workplace has been noted as an ideal setting for well-being promotion, as a large portion of the adult population is actively engaged in the workforce (Pescud, et al., 2015). The workplace also provides a unique opportunity as it allows consistent access to individuals and the chance to utilise existing relationships to offer support and encourage positive behaviour changes that enhance overall health (Robroek, et al., 2021). Implementing effective health and well-being initiatives can improve employee's quality of life and happiness within work.

In the workplace, health and well-being can be assessed either through self-reports, which outlines employee's experiences or through objective health data, such as blood pressure readings (Sonntag, et al., 2023). This information can then be analysed and used to help create targeted health initiatives to tackle current or potential health related issues that staff members may face. However, the literature continuously reveals that without factors such as supportive leadership and an encouraging company culture these well-being initiatives are unlikely to succeed.

2.3. Employee engagement and well-being within the workplace

Employees are often considered an organisations most valuable and essential asset, they play an important role in the success or failure of an organisation and its goals (Tran, et al., 2023). One effective way for organisations to gain a competitive advantage is to have highly engaged employees (Anitha, 2014).

Researchers have struggled to define exactly what employee engagement is, with CIPD (2024) stating that over 50 different definitions for employee engagement currently exist. However, Chandani *et al.* (2016), defines employee engagement as a state in which an employee is passionate, committed and works towards achieving organisational goals. The most widely used and popular definition of employee engagement is by Schaufeli *et al.* (2002). They define employee engagement as the positive

and rewarding work-related state of mind, characterised by vigour, strong commitment and high levels of involvement (Schaufeli, et al., 2002).

High levels of disengaged staff have been reported in recent years due to higher work-related stress levels, increased mental health issues and the lack of positive challenges (Nienaber, 2022). Reports have indicated that only around 24% of the global workforce is highly engaged in work and this number is continuing to drop (Nienaber, 2022). This is a concerning trend that will negatively impact both the employees and employers involved. Researchers have discussed the extensive benefits of highly engaged employees. Increased employee engagement often results in lower staff turnover, improved well-being among staff and helps organisations reach their goals and objectives (Megha, 2016). Additionally, benefits such as higher productivity and enhanced performance have also been reported (Witt, 2023).

However, Sahni (2021) mentioned the potential negative effects of highly engaged employees. Constant high levels of employee engagement, especially when poorly managed or monitored, can result in increased stress levels, work-life imbalance and a decline in both motivation and over-all well-being (Sahni, 2021).

Research conducted by Nguyen and Nguyen (2023), highlights some major factors that impact employee engagement. They discuss that employer's investment into continuous learning, coaching and development can enhance employee engagement within a company. Without these opportunities for career development employees may choose to leave or seek out competitors (Nguyen & Nguyen, 2023). Kwon *et al.* (2024) also acknowledged the positive impact that opportunities for development, either formal (training) or informal (knowledge sharing with colleagues), has on employee engagement. However, Kwon *et al.* (2024) did identify the importance of employees receiving social support from colleagues and management to ensure that developmental opportunities are effectively implemented and used in the workplace.

Leadership also emerged as having a significant impact on engagement within the workplace. Both Li *et al.* (2021) and Bailey *et al.* (2017) discuss how the leadership approach taken can significantly influence employee engagement. They note that leadership approaches such as, transformational and authentic leadership styles, can positively influence workplace engagement and how toxic leadership traits such as abusive supervision can result in higher levels of disengaged staff (Bailey, et al., 2017). A recent article by Singh *et al.* (2024) highlights that leadership traits including strong communication, delegation, approachability, and team-building skills, play a crucial role in positively increasing employee engagement.

The literature identified company culture as one of the most important factors impacting the engagement levels of employees. An organisational culture that promotes open communication, teamwork, encouragement, and trust can create a positive company culture, that ultimately improves an organisation's effectiveness while also increasing employee's workplace satisfaction and engagement (Singh, 2019). A study conducted by HO *et al.* (2018), also discussed the notion that creating a supportive work environment that prides itself on equality, fair-treatment, effective communication and work-life balance can have a positive effect on employee engagement rates. They also underscore the importance that an organisations reputation, opportunities for career advancement, relationships with colleagues and the recognition employees receive can enhance workers emotional commitment, performance and engagement to the business (HO, et al., 2018).

Nguyen and Nguyen (2023) highlighted that when employees align or 'fit' with the company culture and supports organisational goals they are more likely to be committed and engaged within the workplace (Nguyen & Nguyen, 2023).

Across the reviewed literature the relationship between employee engagement and performance was consistently highlighted and discussed. Zhang (2024) refers to employee performance as how effectively employees carry out their work tasks and achieve results that align with the organisational goals and objectives.

A narrative synthesis conducted by Bailey *et al.* in 2017 identified a strong link between employee engagement and employee and organisational performance. This study identified that employees with higher workplace engagement positively impacts both their in-role task performance (job description and responsibilities) and their extra-role performance (daily behaviours of employees/organisational commitment and loyalty) (Bailey, et al., 2017). At an organisational level, higher employee engagement can boost organisational success, increase client loyalty, satisfaction and financial returns (Eldor & Vigoda-Gadot, 2017). While in contrast, Motyka (2018) noted that low levels of employee engagement result in a decline in work performance.

However, a more recent study conducted by Nguyen and Nguyen (2023) did not identify employee engagement as having any significant or direct impact on employee performance. The study recognised that employer attractiveness impacted engagement and performance, but engagement itself did not directly influence performance (Nguyen & Nguyen, 2023). This study offers a perspective on engagement and performance that contrasts with much of the literature reviewed.

The relationship between engagement and employee well-being was also highlighted throughout the literature. Research indicates that staff are more likely to be committed and engaged if their health and

well-being is supported by their employers (Kunda & Lata, 2017). A recent report conducted by De Neve *et al.* (2023), discussed the importance and benefits of investing in employee's well-being. The report found that organisations that prioritise and invest in their employees' health and well-being tend to achieve stronger financial performance, including increased gross profits and better stock market results (De Neve, et al., 2023). Li *et al.* (2021) also identified that engaged employees often had better psychological and physical health within the workplace. Initiatives focused on improving employee's health and well-being such as mental health resources, offering healthier snacks and flexible working schedules can significantly help employees and the organisation.

If an organisation wants to improve employee engagement, and in-turn increase employee well-being and performance, it is crucial they measure employee engagement rates and identify the factors that have the most significant impact and influence on engagement within the workforce (CIPD, 2024). The literature reviewed identified various ways in which employee engagement can be measured.

One of the most popular and highly regarded employee engagement tools identified in various studies (Bailey, et al., 2017) is the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES), developed by Schaufeli and colleagues of Utrecht University in 2002 (Motyka, 2018). A systematic literature review conducted by Błażej Motyka (2018), discovered that 82% of their analysed publications regarding employee engagement have used and benefited from a version of the UWES. The UWES is held in high regard across academia and organisations to have the ability to accurately measure employee engagement. It is available in more than 30 languages and is widely used for research on health, well-being and performance across different occupations globally (Tatha, et al., 2024). However, some researchers such as Kulikowski (2017), question its validity and suggests the continued and regular evaluation of the scale is vital to ensure it is as accurate as possible.

The Saks Engagement Scale (2006) can also be used to assess employee engagement. However, it also measures organisational engagement using twelve statements that measures both job and organisational engagement (Motyka, 2018). Participants rate each statement from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) to determine their level of engagement with their own work and the organisation. According to Saks (2019), employees will have higher levels of engagement with their jobs and the organisation, depending on the resources provided to them. This scale offers a broader view of engagement for researchers and organisations.

There are a range of ways an organisation can measure employee engagement in addition to structured surveys. Employee attitude surveys, focus groups and one-on-one meetings are all options recommended by the CIPD (2024). Because employee engagement is a complex topic, using a mixed method approach is often advised to gain a better and deeper understanding of employee engagement (CIPD, 2024).

To achieve organisational goals and objectives, the literature implies that organisations should invest and implement effective employee engagement strategies (Bailey, et al., 2017). Implementing effective employee engagement strategies throughout an organisation, can help employees develop a positive attitude towards their work, which enhances engagement and performance levels. Employee engagement strategies should focus on the well-being and the continued motivation of staff (CIPD, 2024). Strategies should be monitored and supported by a company's HR professionals and management to ensure that staff can fully benefit from employee engagement measures.

2.4. Understanding employee retention

Employees play a significant role in the success and development of an organisation (Tran, et al., 2023). Efficient and loyal employees can also be a source of competitive advantage for an organisation, as they possess organisational knowledge, experience and an understanding of the companies' culture and values (Singh, 2019). The literature has consistently identified employee retention as a vital part of achieving organisational success and can provide many benefits for both the employees and employers.

Employee retention refers to the initiatives and strategies organisations use to keep employees within the organisation (Al-Emadi, et al., 2015). The primary goal of staff retention is to keep the talented staff within an organisation (Singh, 2019). Employee retention is a popular and well-researched area of human resource management. It has been investigated by many researchers and HR professionals, due to its significant impact on organisational performance, turnover rates, and employee engagement.

Kundu and Lata (2017), discuss the many benefits of staff retention for organisations, including how it can create a strong employer image, and aid in attracting top talent. Strengthening, retaining and developing a talented workforce is a sustainable source of competitive advantage for any organisation (Haar & Kelly, 2024). Employee retention can also benefit organisations by reducing the costs associated with recruiting, hiring and training new staff (Kunda & Lata, 2017). Additionally, low turnover rates can boost staff morale and increase employee engagement (Kunda & Lata, 2017). When employees are highly engaged and involved, both mentally and emotionally, with their work

and are aligned with the organisational goals, workers are more likely to remain loyal and stay within an organisation (Subhash & Lata, 2017).

Although many employers understand and recognise the importance of employee retention, employee turnover rates and risk of turnover rates are still high across various sectors and industries. Employee retention continues to be a critical concern for organisations globally, costing businesses both operationally and financially (Garg, et al., 2024). One source estimates that replacing a senior leader or manager could cost twice their annual salary and around 40% of frontline workers' salaries (Tatel & Wigert, 2024).

There are many reasons that would cause an employee to resign or leave an organisation. Research shows that turnover rates are often caused by limited training and development opportunities, extensive work commitments, and a lack of recognition, feedback, and mistrust in leadership (Al-Suraihi, et al., 2021). Kundu and Sata (2017), also discuss how turnover is affected by how much employees feel their organisation values their contributions. Conflict with colleagues, bad human resource policies and poor working conditions have also been identified to negatively influence turnover rates (Al-Suraihi, et al., 2021).

A recent report conducted by Gallup in 2024, discovered that almost 42% of employee turnover is preventable. The report highlighted how creating more positive interactions, a supportive company culture and offering opportunities for development and growth can deter employees from resigning (Tatel & Wigert, 2024).

Kunda and Lata (2017) suggested that to retain employees it is crucial to create a supportive and healthy work environment and company culture, that must be promoted by strong leadership, positive interpersonal relationships, and regular recognition and feedback. Additionally, a supportive work environment has been directly linked to increased job satisfaction and commitment to the organisation. It can also help employees avoid burnout and develop a positive attitude to their work and their employers (Kunda & Lata, 2017).

Kunda and Lata (2017), also discuss how organisational support for employee's well-being also has an effective and positive influence on retention rates. When employers care and support employee's health and well-being and value their contributions to the organisation has been shown to significantly reduce turnover (Kunda & Lata, 2017). By implementing health and well-being initiatives, such as mental health services and flexible working arrangements, it can significantly help employees avoid burnout, balance work-life commitments, and strengthen employee loyalty, engagement and commitment (Kunda & Lata, 2017).

In a report published by the Irish Business and Employers Confederation (IBEC) in 2024, it was stated that Irish businesses had an average turnover rate of 8.3%. Although this was lower than the previous year by 1.4% it is vital companies put strategies in place to retain talented employees (IBEC, 2024).

Evidence shows that employees can be retained by the three R's- reward, recognition and respect (Kunda & Lata, 2017). Reward refers to the fair compensation received, recognition involves acknowledging the employees work and effort and lastly respect is valuing and treating the employee with respect (Figueiredo, et al., 2025). Research suggests that the three Rs will increase employee retention and can help build a healthier and more supportive work environment (Duggal & Makwana, 2023).

There are several approaches organisations can take to improve employee retention and achieve the three Rs. Investing in employee training and development programmes does not only enhance their skill set but can also make them feel more engaged and involved in the organisation. When employees feel as though their growth, both personal and professional, is acknowledged, they are more likely to stay motivated and committed to the organisation (Al-Suraihi, et al., 2021). Reports also indicate that the involvement of staff members in decision making processes lead to increased rates of productivity, reduced absenteeism and lower turnover (Al-Suraihi, et al., 2021). Creating opportunities, such as team building and community engagement events can help employees feel more involved and connected to the organisational goals and values, which in turn supports stronger engagement and retention of staff.

The academic literature examined has identified a strong connection between retention rates and factors such as employee well-being, organisational support and positive work environment. When employers create a positive and supportive work environment and invest in health and well-being initiatives for their employees, it can contribute significantly to reducing turnover rates. It is crucial for organisations to prioritise retention, not only to avoid the costly fees associated with turnover but to enhance organisational performance and achieve organisational goals.

2.5. Conclusion

The literature review highlights a clear and consistent link between the topics of workplace well-being, employee engagement and retention. The in-depth analyses and review of the literature consistently identified the positive impact that strong well-being initiatives has on the engagement and retention of staff. However, there has been little research examining the impact these well-being strategies has on a specific and important group- the graduate employees.

Graduates are a vital part of the workforce offering new perspectives and skills to an organisation. However, the literature revealed that graduates often face unique challenges. These include difficulties in transitioning into the workforce from education, understanding organisational culture and building professional relationships with colleagues. As a result, high levels of disengagement and retention rates among graduates have been reported. It is vital that organisations understand, acknowledge and address these issues in order to develop an engaged, happy and high performing workforce, including and very importantly the graduate employees.

Although there is an extensive amount of research identifying the positive impact and influence that workplace well-being initiative has on employees, there is a significant gap in the literature on how and if these well-being strategies impact graduates. This study will address this gap by investigating the relationship between workplace well-being initiatives and their impact on the engagement and retention of graduate employees within Ireland.

Chapter Three: Research Question

3.1. Research Question

“Workplace Well-being: Investigating workplace health and well-being initiatives and their impact on the retention and engagement of graduate employees in Ireland”.

3.2. Research Aim

The aim of this research is to explore how Irish organisations support the health and well-being of graduate employees during the early stages of their careers. This study aims to investigate the types of well-being supports offered to them, examine how these health and well-being initiatives impact graduates, and determine whether these strategies influence their engagement and decision to remain within the organisation.

While much attention has been devoted to understanding and investigating workplace health and well-being, a notable gap remains in the literature regarding these initiatives specific impact on graduate employees. Despite the abundance of research surrounding this topic, studies often generalise employees without considering the unique needs and challenges graduates face when entering the workforce. By focusing on only graduate employees, the research aims to highlight specifically what well-being supports really make a difference, how they can be improved, and the impact they have on graduates.

The research will offer insights into how workplace health and well-being initiatives can be better designed and implemented to support graduate employee engagement and retention within the Irish context. Furthermore, the findings can guide HR professionals and employers in developing effective initiatives focusing on enhancing graduate employee’s workplace health and well-being.

3.3. Research Objectives

This study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how workplace health and well-being initiatives impact the engagement and retention of graduate employees within Irish organisations. To achieve this goal, several objectives have been outlined to effectively and efficiently answer the research question.

1. To identify the types of health and well-being initiatives currently implemented within Irish organisations.
2. To explore how graduate employees perceive and engage with workplace health and well-being initiatives.
3. To examine how workplace health and well-being initiatives influence graduate employees' engagement.
4. To investigate if health and well-being strategies impact employee graduates' decision to remain within an organisation.
5. To investigate ways to improve health and well-being initiatives to better support graduate employees within the workforce.

3.4. Study Significance

This study is significant in various ways. Firstly, it addresses a notable gap in workplace health and well-being literature by focusing on the experiences and opinions of graduate employees. The study investigates and analyses the needs, experiences, expectations and challenges faced by graduate employees within the workforce. Additionally, this study considers HR professionals views, opinions and knowledge on workplace health and well-being strategies. The combination of both perspectives, the graduate employees and HR professionals, allows for the reader to gain a deeper understanding of how health and well-being strategies are implemented, managed and experienced within Irish organisations.

The findings have the potential to help organisations and HR managers design and implement more effective and targeted well-being initiatives, ensuring that they meet the needs and goals of both the employees and employers. While also creating a more productive and engaged workforce.

Chapter Four: Methodology

4.1. Introduction

The methodology chapter outlines and justifies the methods and strategies utilised to investigate the impact of workplace health and well-being initiatives on graduate employees' engagement and retention rates. This chapter discusses the research philosophy, research design, data collection methods, data analysis approach, ethical considerations and the studies limitations.

As the study is investigating the experiences and perspectives of graduate employees and HR professionals a qualitative research design was employed. This research design is supported by an interpretivist philosophical approach. Both convenience and snowball sampling were used to identify and recruit potential participants. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with both graduate employees and HR professionals to investigate and answer the research question. While graduate employees offered their personal insights into the topic, HR professionals provided an organisational perspective on workplace health and well-being initiatives.

This chapter identifies how potential ethical risks were identified and managed. It also discusses the research studies limitations. This chapter considers several research methodologies available and discusses the rationale behind why the chosen methodology was employed for answering the research question.

4.2. Research Philosophy

Research philosophy refers to the assumptions and beliefs that shape our approach to how knowledge is created and developed (Saunders, et al., 2019). A deep understanding of research philosophies is vital for researchers to ensure that their studies are logical, well-structured and impactful (Mwita, 2025). The research philosophy guides and informs other methodological choices made by researchers, including the research approach, research design, and the data collection procedures. It is

crucial that researchers explore and investigate the different philosophical paradigms to ensure that their approach fits the purpose of the study (Quinlan, et al., 2019).

According to Saunders *et al.* (2023), there are five major research philosophies that are commonly applied in business and management research to guide research, these are: positivism, critical realism, interpretivism, postmodernism, and pragmatism. As the purpose of the study is to explore and understand graduate employees' experiences and perceptions of workplace health and well-being initiatives, as well as examining the perspectives of HR professionals, an interpretivist philosophy approach was applied.

Interpretivism is a philosophical approach that views social reality as a subjective construction, and that a person's reality is created from an individual's own experiences, interpretations and interactions (Quinlan, et al., 2019). Interpretivism argues that human beings and societies cannot be studied like physical objects due to the complexity of human experiences and meanings (Saunders, et al., 2019). This philosophical approach aligns with the main aim of the study, to gain an in depth understanding and insight into how these initiatives impact engagement and retention rates among graduate employees.

According to Sauders *et al.* (2023), there are several assumptions that underpin research philosophies and guides a researcher on how they conduct research, these are; Ontology (assumptions about reality), Epistemology (assumptions about knowledge) and Axiology (the role of values and ethics in research).

Ontologically, this research assumes that the experiences and perceptions of graduate employees and HR professionals are subjective, that each person may experience workplace health and well-being initiatives differently. From an epistemological standpoint, the study presumed that information about engagement and retention is best collected through qualitative methods, such as interviews. From an axiological point of view, the researcher acknowledges the importance of recognising and reflecting on own values and beliefs (Saunders, et al., 2023), to ensure that the researcher avoids conveying any bias.

By applying an interpretivism approach to this research study, while also being aware of the researchers underlying assumptions, will allow for this study to effectively explore the implications of workplace health and wellbeing initiatives on graduate employees. The interpretivism philosophy, allows for a more in depth understanding of graduate employees' experiences and perspectives.

4.3. Research Approach

Saunders *et al.* (2023), discuss the three primary approaches researchers can take to theory development: deductive, inductive and abductive. A deductive approach involves choosing a general theory or premise and testing it, to draw a conclusion from it (Quinlan, et al., 2019). However, an inductive approach involves collecting data to explore a phenomenon and then developing or generating a theory based on the collected data (Saunders, et al., 2023). An abductive approach, moves between theory and data, effectively combining inductive and deductive approaches. It starts from a surprising fact or conclusion and then works to determine the most sufficient explanation for it (Saunders, et al., 2023).

Due to the nature of this study is to investigate and explore if workplace health and wellbeing initiatives impact the engagement and retention rates of graduate employees within Irish organisations, the study can apply an inductive approach to the research. By applying an inductive approach to the research study, it will enable the researcher to efficiently identify themes, explore the phenomenon, and establish patterns (Saunders, et al., 2019) regarding the research question. Additionally, an inductive approach also emphasises the importance of subjective interpretations which aligns closely with the interpretivism research philosophy already adopted by the researcher for this study (Saunders, et al., 2019). This approach will allow the researcher to effectively identify common themes and patterns among graduate employees and the HR professionals regarding workplace health and well-being initiatives, through the exploration of their experiences and perspectives. This is a similar approach taken in a study conducted by Pescud *et al.* (2015), regarding a similar question regarding workplace well-being.

4.4. Research Design

The research design is the overall plan for how the researcher will investigate and answer the research question. It outlines the specific methods and techniques that will be used to complete the study (Henline-Hall, 2024) this includes, the research objectives, participant selection procedures, data collection and data analysis methods (Saunders, et al., 2019). The research design must be either exploratory, descriptive, explanatory, evaluative or a combination of these (Saunders, et al., 2023).

There are various ways to collect data, the three main approaches that can be taken to a research design is qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods.

Quantitative research is commonly associated with collecting and analysing numerical data (Saunders, et al., 2023). Typically following a deductive approach, when data is collected and analysed to test an already existing theory (Barroga, et al., 2023). Quantitative research uses methods such as surveys and questionnaires to collect data, to examine the relationship between variables. A larger sample size is usually required for a quantitative approach, to provide more precise results and less room for error (Henline-Hall, 2024). Barroga *et al.* (2023), discuss how quantitative research focuses on questions like ‘what’ and ‘when’, qualitative research aims to understand ‘why’ and ‘how’ questions.

Additionally, a mixed methods approach combines both quantitative and qualitative approaches within a single study (Saunders, et al., 2023).

Qualitative research was selected as the best method to carry out, investigate and answer the research question. Qualitative research focuses on studying participants meanings and examining the relationship between them (Saunders, et al., 2019). Instead of numbers, it uses words and images to gain an insight into participants experiences and meanings (Saunders, et al., 2019). By interacting with the participants, through qualitative research methods such as structured interviews, focus groups and case studies, it allows the researcher to identify common themes and gain a thorough understanding of the participants experiences, perspectives and values (Henline-Hall, 2024).

Qualitative research is often associated with interpretivism (Saunders, et al., 2019), because both focus on understanding and exploring the participants subjective views and experiences. Qualitative research also follows an inductive approach (Saunders, et al., 2023). Rather than testing a hypothesis, the researcher aims to answer a research question and build new theories from the data (Barroga, et al., 2023).

As the purpose of this study is to investigate the impact of health and well-being initiatives on graduate employees’ engagement and retention rates, it is vital that the researcher examines the experiences and perspectives of current graduate employees and HR professionals, adopting a qualitative research design will be most effective. A quantitative approach is effective for collecting and comparing large amount of data from a broad group of participants; however, this approach cannot accurately explore personal and complex issues as efficiently. Quantitative research would not be suitable for this research as the participants experiences and perceptions cannot be fully captured using numbers or surveys. A qualitative and inductive approach to this study will allow for an in-depth investigation into the research question and will allow for themes and concepts to be identified. This

is the same approach taken to a study by Pescud *et al.* (2015) who investigated a similar topic regarding workplace health and well-being. They used a qualitative approach to investigate and answer their research question.

4.5. Participation Selection and Recruitment

As the purpose of this study is to investigate the impact of workplace health and well-being initiatives on graduate employees' engagement and retention rates within Irish organisations, the intended participants for this study will consist of graduate employees currently working in Irish organisations. To be eligible, graduate employees must meet the eligibility criteria, this consisted of individuals who have completed their university studies within the last three years and are currently in full-time employment in an Irish organisation. There was no age restriction in place, and both male and female participants were included.

HR professionals were also interviewed to provide an organisational and professional perspective on workplace health and well-being initiatives. These professionals were required to hold a high/senior position in their organisation, have several years of professional HR experiences (20 plus), and have all the required and relevant HR qualifications. Additionally, they had to be a part of an Irish organisation with workplace health and well-being strategies in place.

Participant recruitment involved a combination of convenience and snowball sampling. Four graduate participants and the two HR professionals were recruited through convenience sampling. Convenience sampling is gathering data from an easily accessible group (Golzar, et al., 2022). These participants were contacted directly via platforms such as LinkedIn. The remaining three graduate participants were identified by the snowball sampling method. Snowball sampling is a sampling technique where existing participants identify further individuals who also meet the eligibility criteria (Saunders, et al., 2019). The snowball sampling technique allowed the researcher to increase the participant pool. However, the snowball sampling technique does face some criticism. According to Saunders *et al.* (2023), snowball sampling can introduce significant bias, as participants are likely to refer individuals similar to them. However, due to the time constraints for this study and limited access to potential participants, snowball sampling was an effective way to grow the participant pool.

Although the researcher does not think that full data saturation was reached, the participants that were interviewed provided a detailed insight that addressed the research objectives and overarching research question. The different perspectives from both the graduate employees and HR professionals allowed for a deeper understanding of how workplace health and well-being initiatives impact engagement and retention rates. While a larger sample of participants would have been ideal to strengthen the study, time, resource and access limitations restricted this.

4.6. Data collection methods

Due to the interpretivism and inductive approach being taken to this study, the data collection method most suitable to investigate the research question was interviews. Saunders *et al.* (2023), describes a research interview as a purposeful conversation between an interviewer and one or more participants. The purpose of a research interview is to collect valid and reliable data that addresses a research question and objectives (Saunders, et al., 2023).

The data for this research study was collected through 30–60-minute semi-structured interviews. A semi-structured interview process was chosen because of its common usage throughout human resource management literature. Semi-structured interviews involve asking a pre-determined set of questions and themes while also allowing the interviewer to ask follow-up questions, keeping the conversation flexible while also ensuring the themes are covered (Saunders, et al., 2019).

Semi structured interviews offer many benefits for a qualitative study, as it allows the researcher to effectively explore complex questions and gain a deeper insight into the participants experiences and perspectives.

The interviews were conducted during July 2025 with graduate employees and HR professionals.

4.7. Interview Process

After initial contact with the participants through LinkedIn/ personal connections, they were then sent an email containing an official invitation for participation, information about the researcher, along with an information sheet, containing all the relevant information about the purpose and objectives of

the study and also a consent form. Appendix 1 and 2, display the information sheet and consent form sent to participants prior to conducting the interview.

The participants were contacted the day before the interview to confirm their participation, and the Microsoft Teams link was set up. Interviews can be conducted either in-person or online platforms such Microsoft Teams. There are positives and negatives for both options. Microsoft Teams was chosen due to the time constraint on the research study and participants individual busy schedules. The researcher determined that Microsoft Teams was more convenient for participants and allowed the researcher to record the conversation more effectively. It also allowed participants to participate in the interview from the comfort of their own home/workplace.

The interview was recorded via MS Teams audio recording function. The participant gave both written consent (consent form) and verbal consent (prior to the interview beginning), to allow the interview to be recorded for analyses and transcription by the researcher. After consent was obtained and the researcher gave a brief explanation of the research study, the interview began.

4.8. Interview Schedule

The interview schedule for this study was carefully designed to ensure a thorough understanding of the views, experiences and perspectives of graduate employees and HR professionals regarding the impact of workplace health and well-being initiatives on graduate engagement and retention. To achieve this, the researcher carried out eight interviews, six with graduate employees and two with HR professionals. These interviews lasted between 30-60 minutes and were conducted over Microsoft Teams. Written and verbal consent was given by the participants, to ensure they understood the voluntary nature of the study. Once the interviewer introduced themselves and explained the purpose of the research study, the interview would begin.

The interview questions were based on the findings from the literature review, their purpose was to answer and explore the research questions and objectives efficiently. The interviews were divided into five main sections, that directly related to the research objectives already established, these are.

1. Types of health and well-being initiatives
2. Perceptions and experiences of these initiatives

3. How these initiatives influence engagement
4. Their impact on retention
5. Suggestions for improvement.

Questions were established to fulfil each research objective. Although the same five themes were explored in both the graduate employee and HR professional interviews, the questions asked were different. This was done to investigate the different perspectives of both groups. See Appendix 4, for a full list of all questions asked.

4.9. Data analysis

A thematic analysis approach was utilised to analyse the data collected during the interviews. Thematic analysis is one of the most widely used approaches to analysing qualitative data (Saunders, et al., 2023). It involves searching for meaningful themes or patterns that occur across a data set (Quinlan, et al., 2019). It provides an organised yet flexible approach to examining the collected data (Saunders, et al., 2023).

The researcher followed Braun and Clarks (2006) six-phase approach for thematic analysis. Braun and Clarks (2006), discuss how this approach should not be viewed as a linear model, as analyses is a recursive and flexible process.

The six-phase approach was followed as described below:

1. Familiarisation: The researcher familiarised themselves with the collected data.
2. Generating initial codes; Researcher identified and labelled common patterns that emerged regularly throughout the data collection. Used the highlight and 'insert a comment' function on Microsoft Word was used to label these patterns.
3. Searching for themes; themes are then formed from patterns/similarities identified.
4. Reviewing themes; Refinement of the themes, to ensure that the themes chosen were relevant to the research question and objectives.
5. Defining and naming themes; A deeper understanding and defining the themes, ensuring that they relate to the research question.
6. Writing the report; includes writing about the themes and supporting them with quotes from the data collection (Naeem, et al., 2023). The findings of this section are located in Chapter 4.

By following this approach, it allowed for a structured and clear method (Braun & Clarke, 2006) for identifying common themes and patterns within the data collected during the interviews.

4.10. Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations were acknowledged and followed throughout both the interview and analysis process. Research ethics are the set of standards that guides and influences the research design and approach (Saunders, et al., 2023). Ethical approval was gained from the National College of Ireland prior to data collection, following the submission of an Ethics Form Application by the researcher, in January 2025.

Potential ethical risks were identified and discussed in Saunders *et al.* (2023) book- Research Methods, 9th Edition. This resource helped the researcher to gain a better understanding of potential ethical risks and possible prevention methods, to ensure that the study remains ethical.

The following ethical risks were identified and considered prior to conducting research. Additionally, the researchers proposed preventions to these risks below.

- a. Informed consent: Participants were sent an email (Appendix 3), an information sheet (Appendix 1), and a consent form (Appendix 2) providing about the researcher, the purpose of the study, the participants role, and their rights, including to withdraw from the study at any point. The information sheet and coset form also outlined how and where the data collected will be analysed and stored.
- b. Voluntary participation: Participants had the right to withdraw from the study at any point.
- c. Confidentiality: Participants remained anonymous, any identifiable data was anonymised, to protect the participants identify.
- d. Company confidentiality: The organisations of the interviewees were also kept confidential to protect their organisations and their jobs.
- e. Reporting of findings: All data and results were reported accurately, regardless of whether they contradicted expected results.
- f. Data storage and protection: All data collected during the interviews, was transcribed for the purpose of analyses. After transcription data was then filed in a password protected file and

stored on the researcher's personal laptop. After a grade is appointed to this research study, the data will be kept for an additional 2 years and then deleted.

- g. Avoidance of harm: Any potential harm to participants well-being whether it's their emotional, physical, psychological or social well-being was carefully considered and actively avoided.

4.11. Limitations of research design

Saunders *et al.* (2019), discuss how all research studies encounter some limitations. Although this study offers valuable insights and explores the experiences and perspectives of both graduate employees and HR professionals, the researcher did encounter certain limitations during the research process.

As this study adopted an interpretivist, qualitative approach it allowed for an in-depth exploration of the participants perspectives and experiences in regard to workplace health and well-being initiatives. However, this approach does possess several limitations. One limitation often associated with qualitative research according to Saunders *et al.* (2023), is the issue of transferability. The smaller sample size involved in this research study, only 6 graduate employees and 2 HR professionals, meant that the results gathered may not be easily applied to the wider population. A broader sample size could benefit and strengthen the study. However, limited time and access to participants made it difficult to conduct a deeper analysis. Additionally, the majority of the participants were from similar ethnic backgrounds (white, Irish). A more diverse sample that reflects the population of Ireland would bring a new perspective to the study and enhance the results validity.

Furthermore, due to the subjective nature of qualitative research, the results can be influenced by the researcher's interpretations, which may lead to bias. It is vital that all precautions are taken to avoid the researchers bias influencing the findings.

The use of the snowball method, while allowed the researcher access to appropriate and relevant participants, can introduce significant bias, as participants are likely to refer individuals similar to them (Saunders, et al., 2023).

While the use of Microsoft Teams for conducting the interviews was the most time efficient and accessible method, it did present certain limitations. One interview did encounter technical

difficulties, due to a power cut in the participants area. The issue was resolved but the interview had to be rescheduled.

It is crucial that the researcher acknowledges these limitations to ensure that they interpret and understand the findings accurately. Despite the stated limitations of a qualitative approach, it was the required approach to ensure that the research question and objective were answered and explored accurately.

4.12. Conclusion

In conclusion, this research study employed a qualitative, interpretivist approach to gain an in depth understanding of the impact of workplace health and well-being initiatives on graduate employees' engagement and retention. This approach, supported by the semi-structured interviews, allowed the researcher to fully investigate and explore the lived experiences of graduate employees and the perspectives of HR professionals. Within this chapter the researcher also identified certain potential ethical risks and the studies limitations. By acknowledging the ethical risks and limitations, can help identify areas of the study that needs improvement. This can benefit both the researcher and the readers.

The data collected during the semi-structured interviews will be subjected to a thematic analysis in order to identify common themes and patterns. The researcher employed Braun and Clarks (2006), six-phase approach to thematic analysis, as it provides a clear and structured method for identifying, defining and reporting common themes and patterns within the collected data.

Chapter Five: Findings and Analysis

5.1. Introduction

This chapter seeks to present the findings that emerged from the analysis of the 8 semi-structured interviews conducted with 6 graduate employees and 2 HR professionals working within Irish companies. The data from the interviews was analysed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase approach for thematic analysis. This approach allowed the researcher to identify reoccurring and important themes that emerged from the data. The findings will reference any relevant prior research from the literature review.

The analysis of the collected data from the interviews revealed four key themes. These four key themes, along with their associated sub-themes, express the perspectives and experiences of graduate employees and the HR professionals in regard to health and well-being initiatives and their influence on well-being, engagement and retention. These themes are:

1. Theme 1: Workplace Well-being
2. Theme 2: Unmet Graduate Needs
3. Theme 3: Organisational Culture and Leadership
4. Theme 4: Retention and Engagement

An overview of the key themes identified along with their associated sub-themes can be seen in Figure 1. This figure gives the readers a clear visual of the main themes and their sub-themes that were identified during the analysis of the data.

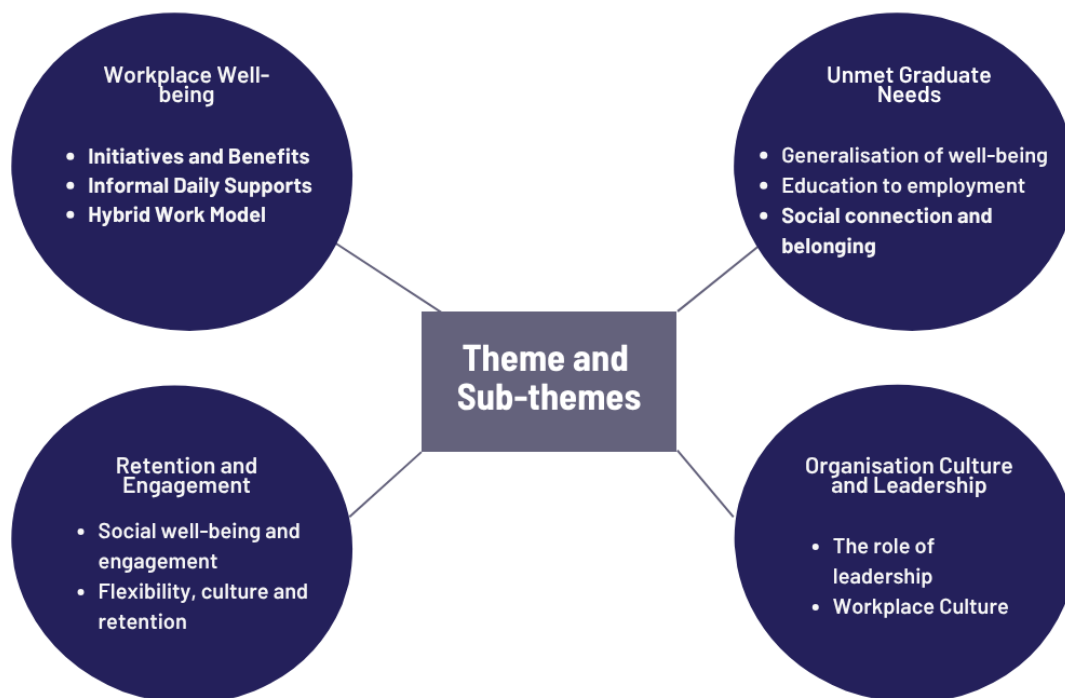


Figure 1. Overview of the main Themes and Sub-themes identified from the Thematic Analysis.

5.2. Overview of the demographics

This research study involved two distinct groups in order to effectively answer and investigate the research question: Graduate employees and HR professionals.

The interviews involved 6 graduate employees that were all in their early 20's, ranging from 22-25, in the early stages of their careers. All 6 graduate employees had completed either an undergraduate degree or a master's degree in the past three years. The graduates came from a range of different sectors, such as the financial industry, retail sector and the public service sector.

The two HR professionals interviewed both hold senior positions in their organisations HR departments. Each HR professional has had a long career within Human Resource Management, spanning more than 20 years. The involvement of the HR professionals added an interesting and valuable perspective to the study.

An anonymous overview of all the participants that were included in the study is provided in Table 1 below.

Graduate Participant:	Gender:	Age:	Sector:
Graduate Participant 1	Male	24	Financial services
Graduate Participant 2	Female	25	Financial services
Graduate Participant 3	Male	23	Financial services
Graduate Participant 4	Female	25	Public service
Graduate Participant 5	Female	22	Retail sector
Graduate Participant 6	Male	25	Public service

Table 1. Breakdown of the graduate employee participants interviewed.

5.3. Theme 1: Workplace Well-being

5.3.1. Official initiatives and benefits

According to Pescud *et al.* (2015) effective workplace health and well-being initiatives can create a more positive environment and help contradict unhealthy lifestyle practices. When asked about workplace well-being initiatives all of the participants were able to identify and discuss the various wellness programmes available to them. These ranged from “on-site gyms” and “lunch-time yoga classes” to “mental health seminars” and organised well-being campaigns such as “Mindfulness May.” However, the interviews revealed a significant difference between how these initiatives are viewed depending on the participants role within the organisation.

HR professional 1, viewed well-being initiatives as an essential part of an organisational strategy designed to support and create “an environment where employees can flourish”. They described how their well-being programme was a core part of their overall “people strategy”: “we had a programme called ‘Elevate’ and that was our well-being programme... which is really creating an environment

where employees can strive in.” This view that well-being should be at the centre of an organisations strategies was consistent with the findings of Grossmeier and Johnson (2020). They determined that organisations must set strategic goals, involve strong leadership and organisational support for health and well-being initiatives to be successful and impactful for employees.

HR professional 2 shared a similar view, implying that wellness is a vital part of their organisational strategy and policies. HR professional 2 described “providing well-being support” across the organisation through the “Employee Assistance Service”. This service provides proactive support to employees experiencing issues “related to work or not,” and access to webinars on topics like “mental health awareness, stress, resilience, and burnout.”

While graduates could identify many initiatives, they did not view them as a significant and integral part of their day-to-day wellness. Four of the graduate participants noted that these formal initiatives were often infrequent, inconsistent, and difficult to access. Graduate participant 1 reported only attending “two wellness initiatives a year”, while also mentioning that “both of them have been cancelled this year, so that did not help”. Three graduate participants revealed the ineffectiveness of online wellness initiatives such as seminars and talks, with one participant viewing online mindfulness talks as “background noise. They put them on while you’re working.” The view from graduate employees that wellness talks and initiatives are often a tick box exercise reflects a common belief among graduates that these initiatives, while well-intended, often lack efficient follow through and implementation from HR.

5.3.2. Informal daily supports

A significant and interesting insight emerged from the analyses process. The interviews revealed that it is often the small, informal, daily acts that have the most powerful and effective impact on an employee’s overall happiness and workplace wellness. One graduate employee gave a clear explanation of how these simple acts help create a more positive and supportive environment that they feel valued in, “but even just small things like people will bring in a cake for someone’s birthday, you know, or like our manager brought in ice creams last **week for our** team meeting, you know, just little things like that” (Graduate participant 4). The significance of these small, mundane gestures cannot be overlooked. Graduate participant 4 went on to reveal how these gestures make them “excited to go in to work” and contributes to a feeling of “being supported by management”.

A number of other graduates expressed similar views. Graduate participant 2 noted the positive impact of an “Employee Initiative Week” which included simple, even low-cost treats such as “free pizza” and “cookies from Cookie Boy”. Graduate participant 3 also mentioned that a “good selection of ice creams” was a significant positive in his workplace.

One participant also acknowledged the absence of these small gestures. Graduate participant 3 mentioned how his organisation did not offer “free coffee”, they referred to it as a “simple thing” that competing organisations offer. They go on to mention that “people are excited by that” suggesting that even a “simple thing” like coffee can significantly boost morale and have a positive impact within an office. While the findings from the interviews highlighted that the small, daily well-being activities has a significant impact on the graduate employees interviewed the literature reviewed tended to focus more on the formal well-being initiatives. Marecki (2024) and Monteiro and Joseph (2023) both determined that work-life balance was the primary factor affecting employee well-being. While the importance of work-life balance was also evident among the collected data, the importance of the small, daily well-being activities was not specially noted, examined or discussed in any previous studies reviewed.

Unlike the costly, planned initiatives these small, more frequent gestures provide constant reminders of the organisation’s support for an employee’s health and well-being. The analysis of the data continually showed how much these mundane, yet daily acts are appreciated and highlight the positive impact they have on employees.

5.3.3. Hybrid work model

The majority of the Graduate participants interviewed highlighted the significant positive impact that being able to work from home has on them. Graduate participant 4 commented that “if my job did not offer working from home, I would seriously struggle”, naming working from home as “the main one” in reference to what wellness initiatives they have encountered. Graduate participant 4 links the ability to work from home to wellness benefits, such as “feeling more refreshed” and “sleeping better”. The relationship between hybrid working and better sleep was also reiterated by Graduate participant 3, who is required to be in the office 5 days a week. Graduate participant 3 expresses the desire to work from home to be able to “prioritise my sleep a lot more” due to being “mentally tired” from his

demanding role, by working from home even one day a week he thinks would be beneficial to his well-being. Graduate participant 5, also stated “having more energy days that I am in the office” when allowed to have one day a week working from home. For these graduates, the ability to utilise hybrid working has a direct and significant impact on their overall, daily wellness. This finding is consistent with the research conducted by Marecki (2024) who discussed that offering flexible working arrangements such as hybrid working, can help create a more productive and happier workplace

This perspective however clashed with the opinions of both the HR professionals interviewed. HR professional 1 stated that their organisation’s graduate employees are required to be in the office 5 days a week. Although HR professional 1 acknowledged the positive link between hybrid working and employee well-being, she questioned the effectiveness of hybrid working on graduate employees stating that “how can they learn sitting at home? And it’s really about getting the best side of them and giving them the best, from a work perspective, development perspective, training perspective”. HR professional 1 viewed the workplace as an essential area for learning and growth, and office attendance is vital, in particular, for people at the early stages of their careers.

HR professional 2 also viewed office attendance for graduate employees as vital for their effective integration into the workforce. She identified graduates as a “vulnerable enough cohort when it comes to flexible working policies and working from home”, she noted the need for graduates to be in the office to “help them build that network and to feel that sense of connection to the organisation and colleagues”.

These differing perspectives highlight a significant disconnect between what HR thinks helps graduates and what graduates actually need on a daily basis. While the HR professionals interviewed regard office attendance as a means to support development and integration, many graduates view it as a significant contributor regarding their workplace wellness, affecting the quality of their sleep, stress levels and overall happiness when in work.

5.4. Theme 2: Unmet Graduate Needs

5.4.1. Generalisation of well-being

A key theme that emerged during the interviews is that organisations tend to apply a broad, generalised approach to their well-being strategy. Graduate participant 6 described their organisation's well-being approach as a "one-size-fits-all" and when asked if the initiatives address their needs accurately, they responded "not entirely". Graduate participant 6 also mentioned how they felt that many of the wellness initiatives were "quite aimed at the middle-aged portion of the workforce" and "tailored towards older people", with their organisation offering well-being talks that focus on balancing work and childcare, a topic that is just not "relevant" to their life. Graduate participant 2 shared a similar approach describing wellness talks about "preparing for retirement" and stated that they are "preaching to the wrong crowd" when directed at graduate employees. Graduate participant 4 also noted that they "never came across anything that was graduate specific" and that the majority of wellness talks they encountered just seemed a bit "random".

There is a general consensus among all interviewees that there is a lack of graduate specific initiatives that directly address the unique issues and concerns faced and experienced by this particular cohort. This absence of graduate specific initiatives was also acknowledged by both HR professionals interviewed. HR professional 2 stated that they are "not aware of any graduate specific initiatives" within their organisation. HR professional 2 explained that in their organisation graduates were "treated very much as employees... so anything that we did, be it on learning and development, be it on elevation, be it on DEI, for the graduate it was the same". The researcher identified a notable gap in the existing literature regarding the impact of well-being initiatives on graduates. While workplace well-being has been examined extensively little focus has been placed on the graduate employee cohort. even though this group often faces unique and new challenges when entering the workforce (Van Der Baan, et al., 2025)

Although using a general approach to well-being in an organisation may seem inclusive and fair, it is often ineffective. Such initiatives rarely have a significant impact on employees, as employees have diverse and specific needs, that a "one-size-fits-all" approach cannot fully address. The interviews revealed that this is particularly relevant among graduate employees, who often face unique challenges and difficulties when entering the workforce. To truly support staff, participants

emphasised the need for tailored and specific well-being strategies that support a graduate employee's diverse needs and challenges.

5.4.2. Transitioning from education to employment

“A lot of work needs to be done to bridge the gap between college and full-time employment”, stated Graduate participant 2. The difficulties graduate employees face transitioning from education to full-time employment was a common and reoccurring theme within every interview conducted for this study. This finding is consistent with the work of Fayard and Mayer (2023), who found that the transition period from education to employment is a critical and often difficult developmental period for young adults. The data indicates that organisations do not have enough supports in place to address the unique transitional challenges experienced by graduates, leaving them to feel “overwhelmed” and “underprepared”. The lack of supports and developmental opportunities available to assist graduates with this transition was also reiterated by Van Der Bann *et al.* (2025). They stated that a lack of support for this transition can lead to feelings of frustration, reduce organisational loyalty and increase employee disengagement and turnover rates among graduate employees.

Graduate participant 4 felt as though they were “spoon-fed in college” that assignments and expectations were clear to then go to a professional workplace where “it was suddenly all on me and I had to come up with everything myself”, stating that they were “completely lost at the beginning”. This feeling of being lost and unprepared was a similar view to Graduate participant 1. Graduate participant 1 expressed the need for “a lot more training, I feel like you got thrown very much into the deep end”, describing the workplace as “a whole different world to what you’re used to”. This highlights a potential huge misalignment between what the education system is preparing students for and what the actual workplace expects of them. A study conducted by McCracken *et al.* (2015) confirms this misalignment. Their article highlights that many employers are increasingly concerned that universities are not adequately preparing graduates for the workplace. While universities provide graduates with subject specific skills and knowledge, many graduates often lack the “soft skills” needed for the workplace

The HR professionals interviewed also shared this view. HR professional 2 specifically explained that “it’s very challenging to transition into a workplace”, noting that graduates often experience “less

support” than they did at university and are “kind of on their own to figure it out” which can make the transition period “very tricky”.

Despite all the graduates interviewed stating that they experience specific challenges and difficulties when transitioning into the workforce, many organisations do not have any specific supports in place to address these needs. Graduate participant 6 proposed that “more assistance in bridging that divide” is needed between education and employment. There is a clear need for supports such as “task prioritisation” and “navigating workplace social cues” for graduate employees entering the workforce. Effective implementation of graduate focused supports could help them succeed in the early stages of their careers and create a more welcoming and supportive workplace environment. Additionally, it could even lead to a better return on investment for the graduate employee’s organisations.

5.4.3. Social Connection and Belonging

The significance of graduate employee’s social well-being was highlighted across all the interviews conducted. Graduate interviewees reported that building relationships and connections at work with colleagues and developing a sense of belonging within the organisation were vital to their overall well-being and helping them transition into the workplace.

The importance of supporting a graduate employee’s social well-being was noted by both the graduates and the HR professionals. One HR professional noted that from their experience with graduates they believe that “the social side is really important for them I think.” This was a common view as HR professional 2, who noted that despite flexible working arrangements, many graduates attend the office because they are seeking that “social connection and network”.

The graduates also consistently highlighted the significance social well-being has on their overall health and happiness in the workplace. They noted the positive impact that initiatives which focus on socialising, team building and creating connections with colleagues has on them.

Graduate participant 3 fondly expressed the positive impact that their department’s tag rugby team has on their happiness and overall well-being in work, stated that it “created a bit of craic” and helped

them form stronger relationships with their colleagues. They went on to refer to “team building activities” as a “big thing” for them that helps create greater connections within the office. Graduate participant 1 discussed their company’s CSR day as a positive social experience that brought people together, he explained that it “definitely boosts the morale of everyone that is there” and made them “want to go into the office, you know, to talk to people” about their different experiences. Both Graduate participants 3 and 5 discussed even the impact that informal socialising in work has on their well-being and overall happiness. They both mentioned that their teams regularly “eat lunch together” and that it’s “the simple things” that have a positive impact on their daily work lives.

Graduate participant 2 did mention that the majority of their social budget centres around drinking and alcohol. They went on to state that this can “exclude a huge population” of the individuals that due to personal or religious reasons choose not to participate and can “alienate them” from co-workers.

It is evident from the findings that supporting a graduate employee’s social well-being is vital to support their transition into the workforce. Both formal initiatives like a CSR day and team sports and informal daily activities like eating lunch together play a crucial role in making graduates feel connected to their colleagues and creating a sense of belonging within the organisation. The interviews continuously highlighted how feeling socially connected and having a sense of belonging in their organisation is vital for graduate employees transitioning from education to the working world. To support graduates’ well-being organisations should prioritise team building and social activities, which all employees can participate in. These initiatives can boost employee morale and engagement within work.

Theme 3: Organisational Culture and Leadership

5.5.1. The role of leadership

The data highlighted the significant role that leadership plays in shaping and influencing an employee’s well-being. Interviewees continually noted that a supportive and encouraging manager has a greater impact on their daily well-being in the workplace than any formal initiatives have.

This is a view shared by both the HR professionals and the graduate employees, with HR professional 1 stating that it is “absolutely critical” for well-being strategies to be “supported from the top” if they are to be implemented successfully. They went on to note that even if an organisation had “all the glamorous initiatives, but yet you had a colleague or boss that didn’t treat them very well, makes life very hard for them”. All of the interviews emphasised the importance of having good, supportive managers and leaders within the organisation. HR professional 1 also mentioned the significance of “leadership training” within their company, to ensure that leaders and managers were properly prepared to encourage and support staff members. This is a similar view taken by HR professional 2 who recognised that it is vital to “help managers to understand how to engage with graduates” to ensure that they are able to support them accordingly. These findings support earlier observations made by Sorensen *et al.* (2023), Pescud *et al.* (2015), and Sonnetag *et al.* (2022), identifying positive leadership and management styles can enhance employee well-being.

The graduate employees also all stressed the importance of having an approachable and supportive manager. Graduate participant 3 attributes their positive experience in the workplace primarily to their manager, describing them as “brilliant” and “really, really encouraging”, and continuously promoting their “personal development”. In contrast, Graduate participant 3, reported that their manager’s approach was quite “old-fashioned”, resulting in them not being able to access and use organisational well-being policies such as hybrid working and availing of their summer “condensed working week”. This view of lack of support for their well-being by management was also shared by Graduate participant 1. Graduate participant 1 expressed that they felt little effort from managers in regard to supporting their well-being in work- “Management and HR, I feel like don’t try and help people, you know, stay happy within the workplace”. The significance of management was also highlighted by Goetzel (2019) who emphasised that for health and well-being strategies to be effective and impactful, management must actively encourage and prioritise them throughout the company.

The interviews highlighted how a supportive and encouraging manager and leadership has the greatest impact and effect on the well-being of employees. The data also acknowledges the significance of training and developing managers so that they have the skills and abilities to effectively manage and support their employees’ well-being. These findings strongly support the observations made by CIPD (2024) who stated that line managers should be trained to effectively identify and support employees who may require additional assistance. The significant impact that visible and meaningful support from management has on the impact of an employee’s well-being cannot be overlooked.

5.5.2. Workplace culture

Along with an organisation's management and leadership, the interviews revealed that company culture plays a huge part in shaping and influencing an employee's health and well-being. For well-being initiatives to be successful and effective it is vital that the organisational and office culture is supportive, safe and inclusive. Graduate participant 4 shared that their "office culture" has a "big influence" on their happiness and well-being in the workplace as it has a "welcoming feeling". In contrast, Graduate participant 1 described their work environment as "very draining. It's a lot of work and a lot of hours," little encouragement from leadership and management regarding supporting an employee's well-being is clearly felt by this graduate. HR professional 1 emphasised that a company could have "all the glamorous initiatives, but yet you had a colleague or boss that didn't treat them very well.... well-being initiatives go out the window". These findings align with the work of Monteiro and Joseph (2023) who discussed that a positive workplace culture that includes supportive leadership, open communication, teamwork and trust can positively influence employee's well-being, job satisfaction, motivation and productivity within work.

Creating an organisational culture where employees feel safe and encouraged to come forward if they need help is also critical to their well-being. Building trust between employees and employers and offering confidentiality is an essential part of this. HR professional 2 reported that their main well-being initiative- "The Employee Assistant Programme" is "completely confidential", stressing that this was "very, very important" to the employees that may need to access this service.

However, even with a promise of confidentiality, if there is mistrust or fear within the organisational culture, employees may not feel comfortable to utilise the well-being resources available to them. Graduate participant 2 identified a culture of "fear mongering" within their organisation, explaining that employees worry about using well-being initiatives, such as mental health resources, during "an actual crisis" in case "it will somehow come back to bite you". This data is in line with research conducted by Singh (2019) and Al-Suraihi *et al.* (2021) who determined that a mistrust in leadership can create a negative company culture that can decrease employee engagement and their workplace satisfaction. Many of the graduates mentioned that they were on a graduate scheme and working towards a permanent contract and sometimes fear that they will "be judged" if they utilise well-being resources, they will often prefer to suffer in silence than be potentially judged by their new colleagues. In contrast, Graduate participant 4, stated that they "definitely felt encouraged if I ever did have a problem that I would be go there"- referring to using the well-being services offered to them. This

highlights the impact that office culture can have on either encouraging or preventing employees from using well-being services.

The interviews consistently revealed that it is the company culture that has the most significant and direct impact on employees. Whether employees utilise and engage in the well-being initiatives and resources available to them is largely to do with the culture within the organisation. According to the data collected, for an organisation's well-being initiatives and strategies to be most impactful and effective, companies must establish and build a culture that is "supportive," "safe" and "welcoming". Organisations need to make well-being, as HR professional 1 put it, as an "integral part of the business", employees' well-being should be at the forefront of employers' minds.

Theme 4: Engagement and Retention

5.5.3. Social well-being and engagement

The interviews highlighted that for many graduates the link between well-being initiatives and their engagement levels was often indirect. When asked if well-being initiatives impacted their engagement levels, Graduate participant 6 responded "Not really, no". Similarly Graduate participant 5 noted that while they appreciated benefits such as the "food.... Does like help with my overall energy and mood," there is "nothing like massively" that increases their engagement.

However, the data identified that it is the initiatives that focus on increasing and encouraging an employee's social well-being that often have the strongest impact on employee engagement. While Graduate participant 1 described that their CSR day had only a "mild impact" on engagement, yet they noted after that it did have a positive impact on "office morale" and "supporting social connections" between colleagues, stating that "it kind of makes you want to go into the office you know to talk to people, about how they experienced it, cause we all got thrown into different gigs". Graduate participant 3 also described how well-being activities such as their "tag-rugby team" had potentially a "subconscious effect" by positively impacting the morale and productivity within the office and strengthening colleague relationships. The significance of initiatives that focus on increasing and encouraging an employee's social well-being, aligns with the conclusions that both

researchers Singh (2019) and HO *et al.* (2018) came to. They determined that a positive workplace culture ultimately improves employee engagement rates and enhance workers emotional commitment and performance within an organisation.

Although HR professional 2 believed that there is a “direct correlation between well-being engagement, and productivity”, a view that most of the graduate employees did not share, they also did acknowledge the importance of tailoring “our interventions to individual needs”, and that for well-being initiatives to be impactful and effective, a more specific and individual focused approach is required.

Across the interviews it was acknowledged that providing more social well-being events and activities can strengthen a graduate’s social connections, boost team morale and ultimately improve their engagement in the workplace.

5.5.4. Flexibility, culture, and retention

The interviews revealed two factors that have the most significant impact on graduate employees’ decisions to remain within an organisation: flexibility and culture.

HR professional 1 stated that graduate employees often “look for flexibility. They need connection more I think,” implying that for graduates, hybrid working is not essential and that they benefit more by coming into the office. Although, the need for social connection is a need that graduates themselves have also highlighted. HR professional 1’s view on hybrid working is the very opposite perspective and opinion to the graduates interviewed. Many graduates emphasised the significant positive impact that hybrid work and flexible working policies have on them.

Graduate participant 4 expressed how crucial hybrid working is to them and that they would “seriously struggle” if it was not an option. They went on to make a direct link between flexibility and their decision to stay within their company stating “if I didn’t have working from home, I would think, I would think twice” in regard to remaining within the organisation. Graduate participant 6 emphasised the positive and significant impact that flexible working arrangements has on them. They shared that their organisation allows them “to take work from abroad days,” which as an international employee, lets them visit their family and is a key factor for them to remain within their organisation. Many other graduate participants constantly emphasised the positive impact that flexibility has on

them and how it is a significant element in their decision to remain with a company. Maloni *et al.* (2019) highlights that recent graduates entering the workforce is predominately from Generation Z, they discuss how flexibility for this cohort is essential to support their well-being. The importance of flexible working arrangements for Gen Z was reiterated in a study conducted by Osorio and Madero (2025).

Alongside flexibility, a “good company culture” that is encouraging, trusting and positive was the other factor that constantly emerged when discussing retention among graduates. A work environment that is supportive and contributes positively to their happiness is crucial in the retention of graduates. HR professional 1 acknowledged the significance that a supportive workplace culture can have on retention, stating that if an organisation “didn’t look after their people and did not support you. Yes, absolutely. It would have an impact on their retention.” Kunda and Lata (2017) research also aligns with these findings; they identified that staff are more likely to be committed and engaged in the workplace if their health and well-being is supported by their employers

Graduate participant 4 reported that if they did not have “the nice culture that I have now”- that is welcoming, supportive and encouraging, they would “think twice” about remaining within the company. When asked what influences them to remain within a company, Graduate participant 6 also shared that their “environment is quite supportive” and this is the main factor influencing their retention.

In comparison, an unsupportive culture emerged as a key reason employees choose to leave an organisation. Graduate participant 1 shared that they work in a company where “retention isn’t very high at all”, they attributed this to a lack of organisational support for well-being. They mentioned that without the current well-being supports “it would definitely make my decision a lot easier if I was to leave,” they expressed a strong preference to work “in a place that is very, like, concerned about everyone’s well-being.... and have initiatives and supports in place.”

The data revealed that flexibility and culture can have the most significant and direct impact on graduate employees. According to the graduates interviewed, organisations can increase retention rates among graduate employees by offering more flexible working arrangements and building a supporting, trusting, and encouraging culture that supports employees’ well-being, and motivates employees to come to work and perform at their best.

Chapter Six: Discussion

This chapter discusses the key findings identified from the thematic analysis in relation to the two main objectives of this study:

1. Examine how workplace health and well-being initiatives influence graduate employees' engagement.
2. Investigate if health and well-being strategies impact employee graduates' decision to remain within an organisation.

6.1. Factors Influencing Graduate Engagement

One of the main goals of this research study is to investigate whether well-being initiatives impacted graduate employees' engagement within the workplace. The analysis of the data indicated that well-being initiatives that focused on increasing social well-being and workplace connections has the most potential to increase engagement levels among graduate employees.

The HR professionals interviewed in this study view well-being initiatives as an essential part of their organisational strategies, with one HR professional stating that employee's well-being was at the core of their "people strategy". This view supports the findings of Grossmeier and Johnson (2020), who found that for health and well-being initiatives to be successful, organisations must engrave them into the organisation's strategic goals. However, this view differs to the graduate employee participants. Although, the graduate employees interviewed were able to identify the health and well-being initiatives available to them, many of them did not regard these formal initiatives as an integral contributor to their day-to-day well-being or to have any significant impact on their workplace engagement. With graduate participants stating that most of the formal well-being initiatives seemed "a bit random" and not "relevant" to them and their current career and life stage.

The thematic analyses of the qualitative data consistently identified it is the well-being initiatives that focus on increasing and encouraging graduate employee's social well-being that often has the strongest impact on their engagement. The graduate employees noted that it is the socialising,

networking and team building activities, such as “tag rugby teams” and “CSR days” that increases their engagement the most. These social well-being initiatives were reported by graduate employees to have had a positive impact on “office morale” and “supporting social connections” between colleagues which ultimately increases their engagement within the company. The significance of initiatives that focus on increasing and encouraging an employee’s social well-being, aligns with the conclusions that both researchers Singh (2019) and HO *et al.* (2018) came to. They determined that organisations that focuses on supporting and providing social well-being initiatives ultimately improves employee engagement rates and enhance workers emotional commitment and performance within an organisation. While the research by Singh (2019) and HO *et al.* (2018) does relate to employee engagement, it does not specifically focus on graduate employee engagement. This dissertation offers a new perspective on employee engagement research by focusing specifically on the experiences and views of graduate employees.

The literature review highlighted that most recent graduates entering the workforce are from Gen Z, a cohort with unique needs and values. The findings revealed that graduate employees prioritise finding social connections and forming relationships with colleagues as a crucial part of their workplace well-being. This is in line with research by Maloni *et al.* (2019) whose study revealed that Gen Z shows a significantly higher need for social connections at work, valuing workplace friendships and contact with colleagues, much more than previous generations. The alignment between the existing literature regarding Gen Z’s social needs and the findings from the thematic analysis from this study highlights the importance for organisations to implement and support social well-being initiatives, to improve graduate employees’ engagement and well-being within the workplace.

There is a significant gap in the employee engagement literature regarding graduate employees, with limited research addressing the specific factors that impact their engagement and motivation within the workplace. This is an interesting area for future research, as graduate employees are a vital and valued part of an organisation’s workforce (Van Der Baan, et al., 2025).

Leadership also emerged as a significant contributor to employee engagement. Both groups, Hr professionals and graduate employees, interviewed emphasised the importance of having supportive and encouraging managers and leaders within an organisation. The graduate participants described organisational leadership and management as having a “big influence” on their engagement and happiness within work as it is the management that has the ability to create either a “very draining” or “welcoming” environment. Monteiro and Joseph (2023) study emphasised the importance of having supportive leadership as it can positively influence employee’s engagement, productivity and job satisfaction. This data is also in line with research conducted by Singh (2019) and Al-Suraihi *et al.*

(2021) who determined that a mistrust in leadership can create a negative company culture that can decrease employee engagement and their workplace satisfaction.

6.2. Factors Influencing Graduate Retention

Another primary goal of this research study was to identify the factors that influence graduate employees to remain within an organisation. The thematic analysis of the data indicates that two factors have the most significant impact on graduate employees' retention: flexibility and company culture.

Flexibility emerged as a consistent and important theme throughout the interviews, with many graduates viewing flexibility as the most important well-being initiative available to them. Several graduates expressed that the availability of flexible working arrangements has a direct impact on their decision to remain within an organisation. One graduate participant stating that “if I didn’t have working from home, I would think twice” in regard to remaining within the organisation. The importance of flexible working arrangements for the graduate employee cohort, primarily Gen Z, confirms the research conducted by Kunda and Lata (2017) who found that implementing and offering, health and well-being initiatives, such as flexible working arrangements, can significantly benefit employees by avoiding burnout, and strengthening employee loyalty and commitment to their company. The graduate employees interviewed strongly expressed the crucial importance of offering flexible working arrangements to retain staff. This also reinforces the findings of Maloni *et al.* (2019) and a study conducted by Gutz (2023) who highlighted that flexibility is a priority for many graduate employees, that are currently employed and also for those seeking employment.

Company culture also emerged as a major theme when discussing the factors that influence graduate employees to remain within an organisation. With one graduate participant sharing that their “environment is quite supportive” and this is the main factor influencing their retention. Another graduate specifically linked their “nice culture” with their desire to remain with their company. This supports a recent report conducted by Nguyen and Nguyen (2023), which found that a supportive company culture that offers opportunities for development and growth has a significant and direct impact on an employees decision to stay with an organisation. Research by Kunda and Lata (2017) also highlighted the importance of creating a positive and healthy work environment, supported by strong leadership and positive interpersonal relationships, to retain employees.

One of the most common themes throughout the data was the difficulties graduate employees face when transitioning from education into full-time employment. One graduate stated that “A lot of work needs to be done to bridge the gap between college and full-time employment”. The difficulties faced by graduates entering the workforce is also emphasised by Fayard and Mayer (2023), who found that the transition period from education to employment is a critical and often difficult developmental period for young adults. It is important that organisations are aware of these difficulties and challenges faced by graduate employees and implement effective well-being strategies to help them integrate smoothly into the workplace.

The thematic analysis identified other interesting themes, such as the significance of the daily, informal supports for employee’s well-being in the workplace, this chapter specifically focuses on the key findings that addresses the two main objectives of the study. This approach allows for a more focused and interesting discussion that directly addresses the research question, investigating how health and well-being initiatives influence the engagement and retention of graduate employees within Ireland.

6.3. Implications and Recommendations

These findings offer practical implications for organisations and HR professionals, seeking to better understand how to support, engage and retain graduate employees within their organisations. This dissertation also has implications for universities, identifying how they can better support graduates and address the specific difficulties that graduates face when transitioning from education to full-time employment.

The findings consistently highlighted the significant and direct impact that an organisations culture has on their engagement, retention and overall productivity within work. Organisations should recognise the importance of prioritising a strong and supportive work environment where employees feel valued, supported and trusted. This can be achieved by embedding employee well-being in their organisational strategies and employing strong leaders and managers to effectively implement well-being initiatives into the company. The data revealed that it is often the direct line managers that have the most influence on graduate employees well-being, engagement and decision to remain with a

company. Developing supportive, encouraging and approachable managers have more of an impact on the well-being and retention of graduate employees than any formal well-being initiative can have.

The difficulty in transitioning from full time education to employment was a topic that was discussed in every interview conducted by both the graduate employees and HR professionals. While, this topic was also highlighted in the literature review by researchers, Fayard and Mayer (2023) and Zayts *et al.* (2023), who emphasised the difficulties this transitional period can have on graduates' mental, physical and social well-being. The participants interviewed highlighted that these challenges are made worse by the lack of well-being supports in place to support this transitional period. Although both the literature and the findings from this study identify the need for graduate-specific initiatives, particularly to support the transitional stage, most organisations do not have any supports in place. This is an area that organisations and their HR department should focus on if they wish to retain and engage their new talent.

6.4. Limitations and Future Research

The study offers valuable insights into the factors that influence graduate employee's engagement and retention levels within an organisation, however, there are a number of limitations to be aware of.

Although, the 6 graduate employees and 2 HR professionals interviewed provided valuable insights into their lived experiences and perspectives, this small sample size means that the findings identified cannot be generalised to all graduate employees. A quantitative research approach to this study would've allowed for a wider range of participants. Using a quantitative research approach would be interesting to explore in further research, as it would allow a larger sample size and would produce findings that could be more generally applied.

Another limitation was the focus on geographical location. This study only focused on graduate employees within Ireland. The findings may not align or apply to other countries' graduate employees' culture and values. Future research could include graduates from different countries, possibly applying a comparative study approach to the research to determine if international graduate employees' engagement and retention are influenced by the same factors.

Future research could take a quantitative approach to this research question, by developing a questionnaire to examine the impact of well-being initiatives on graduate employees engagement and retention rates.

Chapter Seven: Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to investigate the types of well-being supports offered to graduate employees, examine how these health and well-being initiatives impact them, and determine whether these strategies influence their engagement and retention within the organisation. The research question was determined as “Workplace Well-being: Investigating workplace health and well-being initiatives and their impact on the retention and engagement of graduate employees in Ireland”.

A literature review was conducted to examine and synthesise the existing research regarding the topics of workplace well-being, employee engagement and retention, and lastly graduate employees. A review of the existing literature determined a notable gap within research regarding health and well-being initiatives specific impact on graduate employees. The literature review highlighted that graduate employees often face unique challenges when transitioning from education to employment. By focusing on only graduate employees, the research aims to highlight specifically what well-being supports really make a difference to graduates engagement and retention.

To address the research question, the study used a qualitative research methodology with semi-structured interviews to collect data. Eight interviews were carried out with 6 graduate employees and 2 HR professionals, to gain an in-depth insight into the perspectives and opinions of these two groups. The data collected was then analysed using thematic analysis, to identify reoccurring and interesting themes that emerged from the interviews.

This study effectively addressed the research question and aims, by identifying the health and well-being initiatives factors that has the most significant impact and influence on graduate employees’ engagement and retention levels.

The interviews with both the graduate employees and HR professionals identified that it is the health and well-being initiatives that focus on increasing social well-being and workplace connections that has the most influence on employee engagement levels among the graduate employees. The graduate employees interviewed consistently discussed the significance of having positive social connections with colleagues and a sense of belonging within their organisation has the most impact on their daily engagement within the workplace. The participants identified that social well-being initiatives such as team-building activities and networking events can increase their productivity and engagement levels. By focusing on supporting and providing social well-being initiatives can ultimately improve employee engagement rates and enhance workers emotional commitment, engagement and

performance within an organisation (Singh, 2019). Graduate employees need for social connections and strong relationships and contact with colleagues, was also highlighted by the 2 HR professionals interviewed and throughout the literature regarding this cohort (Maloni, et al., 2019).

The second main objective of this study was to identify if health and well-being initiatives have an impact on the retention rates of graduate employees and what factors have most influence on graduate employees to remain within an organisation.

The research found that while formal well-being initiatives are valued, the two factors that have the most significant impact on graduate employees' retention is flexibility and company culture. Many of the graduate employees expressed that the availability of flexible working arrangements has a direct impact on their decision to remain within an organisation. Many of the graduate employees interviewed consider the availability of flexible working arrangements as an important well-being initiative. Flexibility can significantly benefit employees by avoiding burnout, balancing work-life commitments, and strengthening employee loyalty and commitment to an organisation (Kunda & Lata, 2017).

Company culture also emerged as a major factor impacting graduate employees' decision to remain with an organisation. The graduate employees interviewed highlighted that a supportive company culture that offers opportunities for development, supportive leadership and a welcoming culture has a significant and direct impact on their decision to stay with an organisation, this aligns directly with recent research conducted by Tatel and Wigert (2024).

One interesting finding that emerged from this research study is the difficulties that graduate employees faced when initially transitioning into full-time employment from education. This topic was consistently highlighted by the graduate employees and HR professionals throughout the research process. Many of the graduates reported feeling "overwhelmed" and "underprepared" in the initial weeks of employment. This confirms the significant misalignment between what universities academic programmes are providing and the labour market expectations of graduates (Zayts, et al., 2023). With many graduate employees having the "hard skills" but often lacking the "soft skills" needed to integrate smoothly into the workforce (McCracken, et al., 2015).

Although the qualitative research approach allowed an in-depth understanding into the perspectives of the two groups that were interviewed. The small sample size means that these findings cannot be generalised to the wider population of graduate employees. A quantitative approach, through the use

of surveys, would allow for a broader range of participants and allow for the findings to be applied to the wider population of graduate participants.

This study underscores the significance of organisations and HR professionals investing in and implementing effective health and well-being initiatives that focus on and takes into consideration the unique needs and values of graduate employees. By doing this, it can enhance graduate employees' engagement and retention levels.

Additionally, the findings from this study can also carry significant practical implications for universities. There is a notable gap in the literature and within the findings between what universities are teaching and what employers expect from graduates. To better prepare students for the workforce, universities should not only focus on the “hard skills” (the knowledge) necessary for work but also the “soft skills” such as effective communication, adaptability and teamwork skills. These skills are essential for graduate employees to have a smooth transition into employment.

In conclusion, this research study found that it is not necessarily the formal well-being initiatives that have the greatest impact on graduate employees but rather the informal, daily activities that include building relationships and social connections and creating a supportive company culture that offers flexible working arrangements and promotes good work-life balance, that has the most influence over graduate employees. The findings offer valuable implications and recommendations for employers, HR professionals and universities on how to prepare graduate employees for the workplace and increase their engagement and retention levels within an organisation.

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Appendices

Appendices 1 - Information Sheet for Research Participants

Title: “Workplace Well-being: Investigating workplace health and well-being initiatives and their impact on the retention and engagement of graduate employees in Ireland”.

Principle investigator: Sophie Farrell

Institution: National College of Ireland

Contact Information: x23383925@student.ncirl.ie

I would like to invite you to take part in a research study. Before you decide you need to understand why the research is being done and what it would involve for you. Please take time to read the following information carefully. Ask questions if anything you read is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not to take part.

INTRODUCTION

My name is Sophie Farrell, and I am conducting research as part of my dissertation in partial fulfilment of the requirements of a MA in Human Resource Management at the National College of Ireland. The purpose of this study is to examine and explore the impact of health and well-being initiatives on graduate employees’ engagement and retention rates within Irish organisations. The study aims to gather insights from both graduate employees and HR professionals.

WHAT WILL TAKING PART INVOLVE?

If you agree to take part in this study, you will be invited to take part in a structured interview lasting approximately 30-45 minutes either in person or via Microsoft Teams. With your permission, the interview will be audio-recorded for transcription and analysis purposes. You have the right to decline to respond to any of the questions and you can also end the interview if you wish.

The interview will ask a range of questions regarding your perceptions, insight and experience with workplace health and well-being strategies in hope of gathering research that answers the research question.

WHY HAVE YOU BEEN INVITED TO TAKE PART?

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and you have the right to stop or withdraw from the interview at any time. You have been invited to participate because you are either:

- A graduate employee, either involved in a graduate programme or have entered the workforce in the last 1-2 years.
- A HR professional, that has knowledge and expertise around workplace health and well-being.

WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE RISKS AND BENEFITS OF TAKING PART?

There are no foreseeable risks associated with taking part in this study. While there are also no direct benefits or incentives in taking part in this study, your insights and insight will contribute to a better understanding of the impact workplace health and well-being strategies have on graduates.

WILL TAKING PART BE CONFIDENTIAL?

All information collected during the study, and the interviews will be kept strictly confidential. At no time will the participants employers, names or backgrounds be identified. The research gathered will only be used for the researchers intended purpose. The audio recordings and transcriptions will be stored securely and only the researcher, and the research team will have access. The data will be stored until the thesis is graded and then destroyed, in accordance with NCI policy.

The only circumstance that confidentiality may need to be broken is if you disclose information that suggests a serious risk of harm to yourself or others.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE RESULTS OF THE STUDY?

The results gathered from interviews will be included in a dissertation, which will be submitted to the National College of Ireland.

WHO SHOULD YOU CONTACT FOR FURTHER INFORMATION?

If you seek further information or have any questions regarding the study or interview process, do not hesitate to contact Sophie Farrell at x23383925@student.ncirl.ie. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact The National College of Irelands Ethics Committee/Review Board at info@ncirl.ie or 01 4498 500.

Appendices 2 – Participant Consent Form

As per the information sheet, the purpose of this study is to investigate the impact of health and well-being initiatives on graduate employees' engagement and retention rates within Irish organisations.

- I..... voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.
- I understand that even if I agree to participate now, I can withdraw at any time or refuse to answer any question without any consequences of any kind.
- I understand that I can withdraw permission to use data from my interview within two weeks after the interview, in which case the material will be deleted.
- I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me in writing and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.
- I understand that participation involves being interviewed and the data that I provide be recorded and analysed to use in a dissertation.
- I understand that I will not benefit directly from participating in this research.
- I agree to my interview being audio-recorded.
- I understand that all information I provide for this study will be treated confidentially.
- I understand that in any report on the results of this research my identity will remain anonymous. This will be done by changing my name and disguising any details of my interview which may reveal my identity or the identity of people I speak about.
- I understand that disguised extracts from my interview may be quoted in a dissertation results and discussion chapters.
- I understand that if I inform the researcher that myself or someone else is at risk of harm, they may have to report this to the relevant authorities - they will discuss this with me first but may be required to report with or without my permission.
- I understand that signed consent forms and original audio recordings will be retained in a password protected personal laptop owned by the researcher and only the researcher has access to it. The data will be destroyed after the exam board confirms the results of their dissertation.
- I understand that a transcript of my interview in which all identifying information has been removed will be retained for a further two-year period.
- I understand that under freedom of information legalisation I am entitled to access the information I have provided at any time while it is in storage as specified above.
- I understand that I am free to contact any of the people involved in the research to seek further clarification and information.

- **Consent:** By signing this form, you acknowledge that you have read and understood the information provided above and you agree to participate in this study. You consent to the audio recording of your interviews and for the researcher to analyse and transcribe the results provided.

Signed by Participant: _____ Date: _____

Signed by Researcher: _____ Date: _____

Contact Details: Sophie Farrell- email: x23383925@student.ncirl.ie.

Appendices 3 – Email Invitation to Participate in Research Study

Dear X,

My name is Sophie Farrell, and I am currently completing a MA in Human Resource Management in the National College of Ireland. As part of my degree, I must complete a final year dissertation. The purpose of my dissertation is to investigate the impact of workplace health and well-being initiatives on graduate employees' engagement and retention rates in Irish organisations.

I will be conducting semi-structured interviews with graduate employees and HR professionals to gain a deeper understand about how these well-being strategies are experienced and perceived by both groups and if there is a link between these initiatives and graduate engagement and retention. I'd like to invite you to participate in this study as I believe your insights will be helpful in exploring this topic and answering the research question.

I have attached an information sheet for research participants and a consent form below. The information document will outline all aspects of research and the structure of the interview. If you would like to take part in this research or require any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me via this email address.

I really appreciate your time, and I look forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards,

Sophie Farrell

MAHRM Student,

National College of Ireland.

Appendices 4 – Interview Questions

Based off the research question, 5 research objectives were identified. These objectives can be broken down into 5 broad headings: types of initiatives, perceptions and experiences, influence on engagement, impact on retention and lastly, suggestions for improvement. The researcher must determine interview questions for both graduate's and Hr professionals based off these 5 headings. Asking questions regarding the 5 research objectives will allow the researcher to effectively answer the research question.

Graduate employees interview questions:

The following questions were chosen to fulfil the research question.

Objective 1: Types of initiatives.

1. What types of health and well-being initiatives have you encountered in your current organisation?
2. Have you ever taken part in any health and well-being initiatives?
3. Can you describe or name any well-being strategies aimed at supporting graduate employees?
4. How were these initiatives communicated to you?

Objective 2: Perceptions and experiences.

1. How often do you participate in well-being initiatives?
2. Does anything encourage or stop you from participating in them?
3. How would you describe your experience with well-being initiatives?
4. Do you feel as though these initiatives address your needs and well-being accurately?

Objective 3: Influence on engagement.

1. Do you think any of these initiatives influence your engagement levels in work? If so, which ones and how?
2. In your opinion, do you think any of these initiatives have had a positive effect on your well-being, physically, emotionally or socially?
3. Would you classify that impact as having a strong impact on your engagement, a mild impact or no real impact at all?

Objective 4: Impact on retention

1. Does support for your well-being from your organisation influence your decision to remain within the company?
2. Are there any well-being supports that would encourage you stay within your organisation longer?
3. If there were no wellbeing supports in place, would it make it more likely that you would leave the organisation?

Objective 5: Suggestions for improvement.

1. What changes or additions would you add to improve your organisations health and well-being initiatives?
2. Is there anything you think would be useful to support specifically graduate employees in the early stages of their careers?
3. Have you heard of any well-being initiatives that other organisations have used that you would like to be implemented and why?

HR professional interview questions:

Objective 1: Types of initiatives.

1. How does your organisation support employee's health and well-being? What strategies or initiative does it have in place?
2. Are there any graduate specific well-being initiatives? Or is a more general approach to well-being taken?
3. Do you think that graduate employees have different well-being needs than longer term staff, and should organisations tailor specific strategies for graduates?

Objective 2: Perceptions and experiences.

1. What initiatives seem to be the most beneficial for employees?
2. Do you measure the effectiveness of the well-being programmes? If so, how?

Objective 3: Influence on engagement.

1. Do you find graduate employees to be highly engaged and productive in the workplace?

2. In your opinion, do you believe that organisational support for graduates' well-being has a direct impact on their engagement levels?

Objective 4: Impact on retention

1. How long do most graduates stay with the company for?
2. Do you find that investing in workplace well-being strategies has a direct impact on retention rates?

Objective 5: Suggestions for improvement.

1. What improvements or changes to well-being initiatives do you think would better support graduates?
2. Do you specifically measure the impact of well-being strategies on graduates? If so, how?