

Exploring the impact of remote working policies and organisational culture on Irish employee retention rates

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Exploring the impact of remote working policies and organisational culture on Irish retention rates?

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Abstract

Remote working (RW) policies heavily shifted due to a global response to the COVID-19 global pandemic, forcing organisations to restructure how they, and their employees approached work. This study concentrates on the impact of RW on employee retention rates with a focus on how organisational culture is linked with RW policy in Ireland.

By reviewing an array of related literature and utilising a semi-structured interview process, with a range of participants that currently work remotely in some capacity, the subsequent thematic analysis revealed that RW is an important part of some employee's decision to seek a new role and for others it bares less significance when choosing to accept or remain within a role. The findings also addressed the importance of organisational culture and the positive impact it can have on retention rates due to fostering trust and creating a more supportive working environment. Alternatively, when an organisation's culture is less likely to accommodate and develop a supportive environment, it was found to have a negative effect and with this came higher rates of attrition.

The research concluded that it is essential for Irish employers to continue to innovate and encourage flexibility in their organisation's culture, ensuring that they remain open to RW policies that place an emphasis on their employee's work-life balance and desires, leading to higher retention rates in the future.

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Abbreviations

The following abbreviations are used throughout this study.

Abbreviations	
Remote Work	RW
Social Exchange Theory	SET
Work Life Balance	WLB

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background & Retention

The retention of skilled staff members has become a major issue faced by organisations within Ireland, particularly since the COVID-19 pandemic. Ireland is home to over 1,000 leading multinational organisations, the majority of whom require employees who are specifically skilled and educated. There are a number of global powerhouses in sectors such as information and communication technology, gaming and the pharmaceutical industry with their international headquarters based on the island, for example: Google, Meta, Apple, Pfizer and Intel, all household names (Leading Global Companies in Ireland, 2025)(Appendix E). Due to the inundation of these employers there will inevitably be competition to attract and retain the best talent available, with a recent report from the CIPD (2024) stating that 91% of businesses are facing skills shortages in areas such as ICT, leadership, finance and general operations roles.

The Irish employee market is currently experiencing a skills shortage in many sectors, however, the strategy published this year by Enterprise Ireland (2025) shows that there is an appetite to grow the number of Irish start-ups by over 1,000 by 2029, inevitably increasing the strain on the Irish labour market. Although Enterprise Ireland, as part of their 2029 strategy, have published a plan to strengthen the skills and talent pool available to potential employers, it is the responsibility of the hiring organisations to ensure they are best positioned to attract and retain the best talent available within Ireland.

The two key concerns for this dissertation are remote working (RW) and organisational culture and the organisational challenges these key retention drivers present as a barrier for hiring and retention in Ireland. The research aims to explore whether RW and organisational culture can be utilised and leveraged by Irish organisations to lower attrition rates within the already competitive Irish labour market.

1.2 Remote Working

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, RW was not seen as a mainstream working method and just under 15% of Irish employees were being facilitated to work remotely (Redmond & McGuinness, 2020). Comparing this to the CIPD's report from last year (2024, pp. 5 - 6), the number has now grown to an average of around 39% with 40% of the organisations surveyed stating intentions to increase the use of a hybrid working model. The benefits of this increase can be seen by both the employer and employee.

From an employer's perspective, there is an opportunity to cut office rental costs and by accommodating their workforce with hybrid working while the adoption of flexitime to suit commuter needs can create a more positive culture of trust and respect, which in turn can lead to happier employees and a better retention rate (CIPD, 2024, p. 4). In the recent CIPD report, flexible working practices were found to be the second most effective recruitment and retention activity (Appendix F).

From an employee's perspective there are multiple reasons to strive for a remote working option such as a better work life balance, more flexible working hours as well as time saved on commuting, however it may come with the downside of a lack of social interaction and less opportunity for career growth which will be expanded on further within the dissertation.

1.3 Organisational Culture

Organisational culture is a concept that continues to be contested in professional and academic circles, and while it is multifaceted and challenged often, it is considered an integral part of a modern-day organisation's success (Lok & Crawford, 2004).

Organisational culture can be seen in an organisation's shared values, mission and the

communication and trust structure that is in place with their employees. The opportunity to empower employees to grow loyalty as well as motivate can be carried out through a supportive and evolving organisational culture whereas a more rigid and regulated environment may work best depending on the organisation, however, it can stifle creativity and innovation (Schein, 2010)

This dissertation aims to explore the impact that organisational culture can have on employee retention rates while also examining the link that RW can have and how it is integrated into an organisations culture.

1.4 Contribution of Study

The aim of this study is to further contribute to knowledge and understanding around employee retention, specifically in Ireland. As Ireland's labour landscape can be considered unique due to the elevated number of multinational corporations when compared to the rest of Europe, the need for a more focalised research study on Ireland alone seems worthwhile. The desired outcome is an academic contribution toward the establishment of a guideline for Irish organisations to abide by that will help increase employee happiness and reduce employee turnover long-term.

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2.0 Literature Review

The purpose of this section is to explore and analyse the existing research that has been carried out and published on employee retention rates. The major two issues investigated will base around the effects of organisational culture and remote working, examining their direct link to the rise or fall of retention rates within the Irish workforce. The focus will be on critiquing previous peer reviewed journals, articles and studies that relate to the topics such as retention, remote work and organisational culture while also questioning the interrelationship that exists between these three key topics.

The keywords used to search for the relevant information and articles online include remote working, company culture, organisational culture, retention, employee retention, staff turnover and management theory.

The comprehensive goal is to identify the major factors that influence an employee's level of contentedness and what affects or determines the decisions made, in relation to seeking a new role outside of their current organisation.

The two main topics and how they influence an employee's decision to remain or leave a role that will be focused on are that of remote working policy and organisational culture. An emphasis will be placed on the roots and evolution of organisational culture, as well as the effect it has on company's staff retention levels.

2.1 Employee Retention

Employee retention can be defined as the effort exerted by an organisation to encourage an employee to remain within their role (Sheridan, 1992). The early studies relating to employee retention include McGregor's Theory X and Theory Y which outlined the relationship between the employer and the employee and the assumed impact it can have on employee contentedness. Throughout the 20th century, interest and the importance of employee retention steadily increased with it becoming a prominent factor for all modern-day human resource (HR) departments within organisations (Hom, et al., 2017).

Employee retention has become increasingly more important within the last two decades as more modern studies have shown the major cost implication losing a staff member can have on an organisation. The loss of talent and experience is another factor that is not always quantifiable, however, there is often a directly increasing correlation between the cost of replacing an employee and their length of service and specific experience within a business (Dube, et al., 2010)

There has been a growing importance of HR departments since the turn of the century due to the direct impact they can have on an organisation's retention levels when utilised correctly. An important function of any HR department is to suitably recruit the right people, continuously train employees as well as liaising with staff to understand their career aspirations and possible path, all important factors when maintaining a team of content employees, directly leading to a lower rate of staff turnover (Herman, 2005).

The modern manager has also grown in importance relating to retention as global opportunities and international remote working has entered the mainstream, it is essential to attain and retain talent within the workplace. People managers are now more than ever, encouraged to seek feedback and open dialogue with employees to ensure that career opportunities are flagged and presented, continued recognition is normalised and the organisations culture and values are fostered and respected by the employee (Hom, et al., 2019).

2.1.1 The Cost Impact of Turnover on an Organisation

Employee turnover can be classed as the rotation of employees within the labour market between differing roles and organisations (Abassi & Hollman, 2000). The rate of employee retention and turnover increase and decrease due to many factors, but from a solely cost perspective, the factors that contribute to an organisation losing revenue relating to retention include, loss of productivity due to staff shortage, usage of the managers time committing to the exit process as well as the onboarding process of the new employee, investment of time into training of the new employee, and the less quantifiable but often equally important loss of the leaving employees skills and knowledge (Duda & Zurkova, 2013).

In a recent 2024 article, published by the Shannon Chamber (Chamber, 2024) it was found that the average cost of replacing an employee in Munster is €10,600, up 40% from the same period in 2022, just two years prior. Within the same article, Adare HRM also averaged the Irish employee turnover rate at 12% of the total workforce, meaning up to 1 in 8 staff members will need to be replaced annually with an average cost implication of €10,600, a significant drain on any organisations resources no matter the size. An effective way for a modern-day organisation to lower costs relating to employee turnover, is to place a bigger focus on employee wellbeing in an effort to increase retention levels within an organisation (Adesubomi, 2018).

2.2 Remote Working and its Impact on Employee Retention

2.2.1 Rise of Remote Work and its Benefits

Remote working in its current format dates back over three decades (Roy, 2022), however, became prevalent due to necessity during the Covid-19 pandemic. It offered the employee more autonomy and an expanded sense of flexibility within their role which is highly valued in the modern working society. (Klotz & Bolino, 2021) Research carried out by Klotz et al. showed that flexibility and independence are two of the biggest drivers in the decision to remain loyal to an employer. Furthermore, the study also showcased up to a 25% higher retention rate within organisations that were willing to accommodate remote workers and offer the option to work from home.

In a major study by Bloom et al. (Bloom, J, Roberts, & Ying Z, 2015), on China's largest travel agent CTrip, the option to remote work was well received by their employees and was found to aid in attaining a better work-life balance in many situations. In this case, the option to work remotely was not suitable for over half of the CTrip workforce, nevertheless, the fact that the opportunity to incorporate remote working into an employee's schedule was available has helped to drive the retention rate of existing employees while also helping CTrip become a more desirable place to work for prospective new talent.

The main benefits of working remotely in some capacity include, better work-life balance, cost savings for both employer and employee, increased productivity and better flexibility (Orr & Savage, 2021). These are all important factors in both the decision-making process to accept a new role and to remain within one. The abundance of remote or semi-remote opportunities in many present-day job sectors mean that organisations must remain fluid and committed to their remote policies to continue to attract and retain the best talent (Ardi, et al., 2024).

2.2.2 Hybrid Working

Hybrid work, the combination of remote and on-site throughout a working week can have both positive and negative impacts for the employer and employee alike but has been seen as a compromise in roles that can accommodate it to appease all parties (Choudhury, 2021). The intricacies around equal opportunities for career advancement and equivalent recognition can cause consternation within a workplace leading to employee discontent. The favouring of employees that work more often in-person with their management can create a bias toward them as their work may be deemed more visible and valuable (Yang, et al., 2022)

The emergence of hybrid working as an organisational norm was accelerated due to necessity caused by COVID-19, however, it could be argued that in a technologically advancing world, a shift toward a hybrid model for many employees is inevitable. The emergence of hybrid work brought with it a more desirable work-life balance opportunity for employees, while many employers have used the introduction of hybrid working to reduce costs related to office leasing and furnishing as well as giving employers the opportunity to broaden the potential hiring pool geographically (Bloom, J, Roberts, & Ying Z, 2015).

The overall findings from recent studies show that a hybrid working model may be the best option when it comes to preserving employee and employer satisfaction while also negating any negative impacts on an employee's job fulfilment, progression opportunities and general work-life balance (Bloom, J, Roberts, & Ying Z, 2015) (Bloom, et al., 2024).

2.2.3 Barriers to the Adoption of Remote Working

In the major study carried out by Bloom et al. (Bloom, J, Roberts, & Ying Z, 2015) in conjunction with China's biggest travel agent CTrip, who employed over 16,000 people at the time the study was carried out, it was found that over 50% of CTrip employees independently chose to return to work in the office after 10 months of trialling working remotely. The main reasons cited for this shift back to the office environment, on a full or part-time basis, included the need for consistent social interactions and the onset of loneliness due to isolation when working remotely. There are contradictions within the study that prove individual preference exists within a workforce, therefore, not one method or way of working will be suitable for all employees' desires, especially noticeable in a workforce that numbers in the thousands.

A study conducted by Kaymaz et al. (Kaymaz, et al., 2014), found that there is a need for employees to form and develop social relationships with their colleagues within the workplace. These face-to face relationships were found to be essential for the employee to maintain a sense of self-worth within their role along with tackling loneliness in the long-term. Alongside this, there was a clear benefit gained for both the employer and employee due to higher levels of motivation when working in the office surroundings.

Overall, loneliness was found to be a key contributor to a higher rate of employee turnover, and while the option to work remotely in some capacity is found to be attractive to new and existing employees, finding the right balance of consistent team social interactions to tackle isolation and loneliness, while allowing an element of flexibility around remote work is the key to maintaining a low employee turnover rate. (Lam & Lau, 2012)

Lastly, with less time spent face-to-face, team members can overlook the importance of collaborating or innovating, it weakens communication structure and can lessen the team unity in the medium to long-term. The two clear themes that can be found within many of the journal articles and research papers on the correlation between remote work and retention is that of loneliness and loss of team cohesion or collaboration,

therefore, an opportunity presents itself to implement new procedures that can negate these effects. (Smith, et al., 2021)

With the fast-advancing technologies of virtual and augmented reality, it is plausible that the majority of these negative effects of remote can be negated using such prospects as the metaverse to create smoother communication channels and a more collaborative environment in the near future for remote employees. (Lim, et al., 2023)

2.3 Organisational Culture and its Impact on Employee Retention

2.3.1 What is Organisational Culture?

Interest in organisational culture and its potential positive impact on organisations has increased heavily since the mid-late 2000's. As organisational culture is a particularly multi-faceted branch of management within business, it has seen many researchers having conflicting views of its core tenets and its overall effects.

Although there is a large body of literature on organisational culture, it lacks a globally recognised definition. Van den Berg & Wilderom (2004) define organisational culture as shared perceptions of organisational working practices pertaining to five separate dimensions: autonomy, external orientation, interdepartmental coordination, human resource orientation, and improvement orientation. The application of these five dimensions can be utilised to make comparisons between organisations in without a bias of their industries, cultural backgrounds and geography (Van Den Berg & Wilderom, 2004)

According to Buchanan et al. (2017) organisational culture can be defined as a way of thinking and behavioural expectations that are ingrained into day-to-day operations within a company. The goal is to set a clear structure and ethos to ensure that the organisational culture will eventually occur and exist organically. Certain onboarding

processes and hiring parameters will be put in place to ensure that there is a clear, mutually aligned vision clearly communicated to the workforce. (Schein, 2010)

An organisation's culture can be viewed as its outlook or stance and will usually contain the purpose, vision and core values of said organisation, a clear example of this being Google. Google's core values are focus on the user, innovation, transparency, inclusivity, environmental responsibility, do the right thing and continuous learning. These seven commitments ultimately attribute toward their organisational goal and the company culture is formed around these seven tenets (Google, 2025).

When inspected further, organisational culture plays a pivotal role in dictating the leadership style of an organisation as well as the policies and work environment practices that are implemented within an organisation. Organisational culture can often trickle down to what is deemed an acceptable dress code within the office environment and how open or rigid management are when it comes to onboarding, training or accepting feedback from employees (P & Crawford, 2004) This is not an exhaustive list of factors that contribute to an organisations culture but should highlight some factors that play a key role in the formation of an organisation's culture.

2.3.2 Improving Retention Rates Through Organisational Culture

According to the CIPD survey of employers in 2023, the highest percentage bracket (36%) responded that retention rates were averaging between 10% - 19%, with an increase of 27% in this bracket when compared to 2022. (Appendix 1.1). The factors such as better career progression and location were major contributors in employee's decision to seek new employment. (Appendix 1.2).

Organisational culture has the potential to play a pivotal role in retaining current employees whilst attracting new talent to the business. This can be achieved through the implementation of better communication, performance reviewing, staff trainings and feedback and while these are mainly HR led and implemented, a strong company culture is key to support these changes successfully. Fostering a culture of open and

honest communication, creating an environment where mistakes made are seen as an opportunity to learn and grow plus ingraining the ethos of teamwork and collaboration into the organisations culture is a key step in tackling these rising Irish retention figures published by the CIPD survey.

There is strong evidence of an increased rate of retention when organisations hire specifically to suit and align with their company culture goals as the employee will be more likely to commit their future to an organisation that aligns with their beliefs. (Lee & Robbins, 2021). From the opposite end of the spectrum, an employee that does not feel matched with the culture of an organisation can have a detrimental effect on their morale and will dramatically increase the likelihood of seeking employment elsewhere (Kirschner, et al., 2023).

2.3.3 The Intertwining of Remote Working and Company Culture

In today's competitive hiring environment, it has become ever more important to adapt and implement flexible working practices as part of an organisations culture. In the current 'employees' market' many interviewees are asking more questions and looking for guarantees of work-life balance and flexibility from their prospective employers. (Elliott, 2004). This has caused some companies to offer asynchronous working hours in an attempt to entice their employees and new hires with extra flexibility in their workday, in-turn, adding to their work-life balance.

These new practices of course come with the downside of handling change and implementing change management can be a step too far for some employers. (Taborosi, et al., 2020). One of the biggest challenges in recent years has inevitably been employers adapting to the introduction of remote working and change in how employees are monitored and motivated. With some middle managers struggling to adapt to these practices and learn to trust their employees, growing a positive and flexible organisational culture should be seen as a practical and efficient method of fostering a high performing and loyal team from top down. (Lunga & Murphy, 2023)

Another possible downside of remote working is the loss of in-person social interactions that occur on-site between colleagues. These conversations and connections are an important contributor to innovating through collaboration with colleagues (Fayard, et al., 2021).

2.4 Theories

This literature review will examine a number of management theories which can be utilised to understand the relationship between remote working, employee retention, organisational culture and job satisfaction.

2.4.1 Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory of Motivation-Hygiene

This theory was initially introduced by Frederick Herzberg (1959), but remains relevant today, particularly in the area of job satisfaction and employee retention and can be modernised and applied specifically to remote working scenarios.

Herzberg proposed that there are two differing categories that have the potential to influence and motivate employees: Hygiene Factors and Motivators (Herzberg, 1959).

Hygiene factors are the foundational conditions to any workplace, and are essential to prevent dissatisfaction, whereas motivators are what significantly impact positive feelings of fulfilment within one's role (Malone, 2018). Please see Appendix G for summary.

Hygiene factors can be reduced by ensuring that there are clear organisational policies surrounding flexible working arrangements, published and available, to ensure employees have access to up to date and accurate information on the topic, as evidence has shown that well drafted policies provide much needed clarity to employees (Beauchamps, 2017). To maintain relationships, it is crucial that employers provide equal opportunities to both remote and on-site employees. Survey data collected by Gallup (2025) found that fully remote workers, whilst are at a higher

likelihood of being engaged at work, are more probable to experience negative emotions due to a sense of isolation from their on-site peers (Gallup, 2025). It is therefore of high importance for employers to provide access to efficient technology and a supportive network infrastructure in order to maintain communication and foster relationships digitally.

In terms of barriers to motivators, remote employee's often face the challenge of visibility and presence, known as Proximity Bias (Tsipursky, 2021). A survey conducted by the Society for Human Resource Management found that 67% of managers responsible for the oversight of their remote subordinates believed that remote workers were more replaceable compared to their onsite counterparts (SHRM, 2021). A further 72% conceded that they would prefer all of their employees to work onsite, despite that fact that remote workers were found to be more productive.

It is therefore recommended that to alleviate these concerns, employers should organise regular check-ins to ensure individual goals are aligned with the company's overall mission (Tsipursky, 2021).

Herzberg concluded that the absence of job dissatisfaction, does not correlate with automatic job satisfaction and as such, merely eliminating the factors that lead to dissatisfaction is insufficient in itself and in order to maximise productivity, a balance between both tenets must be kept (Malone, 2018). Therefore, by applying Herzberg's theory to a remote setting, an employer has the potential to significantly impact retention rates. In a competitive talent market, it is proven that employees are far more likely to stay within an organisation that promotes a healthy work environment, as demonstrated in a survey conducted by Great Place to Work (2025).

By applying this theory, the research concedes that remote work has the potential to significantly enhance motivators, however caution must be maintained so as not to undermine hygiene factors and strike balance between both. The research finds that companies that understand this dual approach are in a better position to keep their employees satisfied.

2.4.2 Social Exchange Theory

Social exchange theory (SET) within the workplace is based around the concept of reciprocity, that is, SET maintains that interactions between parties, in this case the employer and the employee, result in mutual obligations and positive interactions rely on both parties to remain in an equitable relationship (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005).

This theory leads us to hypothesize that by delivering a positive organisational culture, employers can expect to be compensated with loyalty and a high level of commitment from their employees in the form of lower rates of absenteeism and a lower rate of employee turnover (Tsen, et al., 2021). This approach typically involves more nuanced and intrinsic factors, such as providing employees with a high level of trust, respect and career development.

In light of this information, it can be theorised that remote workers outperform their on-site colleagues due to the fact that they were rewarded with a flexible working arrangement and reciprocate the arrangement (Gallup, 2025).

2.4.3 Conclusion

Employee retention is an integral part to the success of an organisation, in many cases the most valuable asset a company has are its employees so should be treated as such (Elliott, 2004). This literature review analysed various literature relating to the topic of retention within an organisation with the aim of identifying the impact that an organisations culture and remote work policies have on it.

It is apparent that nurturing and maintaining a strong organisational culture is an integral part of retaining staff and ensuring that the top talent remains. Furthermore, the cost of turnover and loss of talent should be addressed on par within an organisation with priorities such as sales targets and profitability. The research has found that there is a detrimental impact on productivity when turnover rises, however, it is not always

given the attention it deserves when it should be prioritised alongside the impact of loss of income and profitability as they are directly correlated. (Ford-Colin, 2022)

The literature review critically analysed literature pertaining to the concepts and framework around organisational culture along with the effectiveness it has relating to employee retention levels. The literature review also determined the benefits of remote working and considered the reluctance of some organisations to more widely adopt it, finally concluding that a hybrid remote working model seems to be the arrangement that both the employer and employee can compromise on (Bloom, et al., 2024).

3.0 Research Question

3.1 Research Aim and Questions

3.2 Research Aim:

The aim is to define the relationship between an organisation's culture and remote working policies, comparing the overall impact on the rate of turnover within organisations in Ireland across multiple industries.

3.3 Research Question

To establish the impact of remote working policies and organisational culture on Irish employee retention rates.

The literature examined provided evidence of RW and organisational culture having a positive impact on employee retention rates. The research will establish if this evidence is corroborated by interview participants who have current experience of working remotely.

3.3.1 Sub-objective 1

What impact do remote working policies have on employee retention within Ireland?

3.3.2 Sub-objective 2

What is organisational culture?

3.3.3 Sub-objective 3

What is the impact of organisational culture on retention levels in Ireland?

3.3.4 Sub-objective 4

How employee well-being and work-life balance is impacted by remote work and organisational culture.

4.0 Research Methodology

4.1 Introduction

Research methodology is the procedure for the examination and gathering of data to support the chosen research topic of retention rates in Ireland and their main drivers. The methodology to carry out the research is dictated by the overall research question that is being answered as well as the chosen style of study that is being carried out. Within this study the researcher will adopt a qualitative approach which will help to better understand the impact that organisational culture and remote working practices have on retention rates within Ireland while also justifying the reason for choosing this method.

The desired aims are to unveil the influence that organisational culture and remote working practices have on an employee's decision to remain in a role or to seek employment elsewhere. This chapter also aims to describe the philosophical approach to the study, the choice of research methods and the rationale for the decision, a breakdown of the data, its collection method and analysis. Lastly the researcher will examine the limitations and ethical demands of the study.

4.2 Research Philosophy

Research philosophy is a set of general assumptions and beliefs based around three main branches. Those are Ontology (Effingham, 2013), which is based on what is in existence and the knowledge that can be attained from it. Epistemology (Audi, 2010) which considers the knowledge acquired, creating assumptions about it. Axiology (Hart, 1971) then examines the aims of the research and what should be valued within the research.

Prior to the study taking place, a philosophical position must be chosen to implement by the researcher. A positivist stance believes that the social world can be interpreted just as the natural world would be through classic fact-based scientific measurements, a more epistemological approach. When a positivist approach is employed, the research is interested in objectivity, structure and making assumptions about the research information gathered (Saunders, Lewis, Thornhill, & Bristow, 2019). When a positivism approach is used the researcher will identify the relationship between the hypothesis formed from theory after it has been analytically tested. When this approach is taken, the researcher can either accept or reject the hypothesis, meaning that a quantitative approach is better suited to this method.

In contrast, interpretivism assumes that people are individuals with distinct differences between them and their opinions, leaving the world open to interpretation and a change of stance (Quinlan, 2011). Interpretivism assumes that reality needs to be explored and interpreted to find the meaning of one's behaviours and activities, therefore it focuses on a more detailed insight into the real-life experiences of a study's participants to create a deeper understanding. Accordingly, interpretivism is better suited to a qualitative research approach.

As the aim of this study is to answer the research questions with a more in-depth understanding using qualitative methods, an interpretivist philosophical approach is therefore best suited and has been implemented throughout this study.

4.3 Research Design

Research design helps to guide how the research question is answered, in this case, qualitative research is conducted to aid in obtaining results based on personal opinions and views. A qualitative approach was chosen to ensure that real life experiences and past lived situations are captured. The benefit of this approach is that the interviewee's answers are not led with a pre-defined rigorous set of questions, ultimately allowing them to be more open and meaningful when sharing their experiences (Hollstein, 2011).

Although a similar semi-structured set of questions is asked to each participant, there is scope left for personal interpretation from the interviewee and multiple opportunities given for them to further expand on their answer with genuine opinions, therefore, adding truer value to the answers using the qualitative research approach (Bavelas, 1995). Qualitative research aims to draw out information on the individual based around the factors that influence their behaviour and what motivates them (Barnham, 2015), this is the reasoning behind choosing the qualitative approach as the overall topic of retention being researched requires the use of open-ended discussion to extract how a person feels and their main motivating factors relating to the topic.

4.4 Research Strategy

The research strategy is the path taken to define a clear answer to the research question, in this case, it is to understand the impact of RW policies and organisational culture on employee retention. The research strategy will utilise both theoretical approaches and practical research methods to ensure parity in the study.

Choosing the correct research method and subsequent strategy is essential as it will dictate the method of data collection, analysis and how it is generally interpreted to draw learnings and conclusions. A qualitative approach allows for the use of multiple strategies (Kim & Chung, 2009) including grounded theory, phenomenology, ethnography and case study research. Each of these strategies offer a unique advantage but also come with limitations the researcher must remain aware of.

Glaser and Strauss's Grounded theory (2017) is one of the most significant strategies which focuses on creating theory directly from the data gathered from participants instead of relying on existing theories. Grounded theory is best applied to qualitative research when the researcher wishes to discover new information and concepts relating to the topic of the study. It can be argued that a limitation of this approach is that it purposefully does not consider the existing data and theories established during previous research.

Another major strategy applied to qualitative research is phenomenology, with its main focus on interpreting experiences lived through by the study's participants. It explores the opinion of the individual further, attempting to extract anecdotal evidence and the personal views of an individual pertaining to a situation or scenario.

Case study research is the process of a more in-depth questioning approach; it gives the researcher the opportunity to explore a further explanation and reasoning behind what is happening once this has been established, delving into the 'why'. Case studies give the researcher the opportunity to gather information and personal individual's accounts, which is then linked to the existing academic theory and literature on the topic. Through case study research, themes can be identified from the gathered data which helps to refine existing knowledge and theories on a subject.

For the reasons outlined in the above paragraph, the researcher has chosen a qualitative case study approach for this research paper due to the suitability criteria. The case study approach will allow the researcher to gather unique experiences and information relevant to the study from participants while also remaining aware that although themes may emerge, it is possible the participants will have multiple differing views on them.

A semi-structured interview process was established and will be carried out with willing participants to gain a better understanding of an employee's perception of the effects of a company's RW policy and organisational culture aims with an emphasis on the correlation between these topics and the participants decision to leave or remain within their current role. The questions are intended to remain open and encourage the participants to elaborate, share experiences and give their own perspective on the topics involved.

Qualitative research is conducted to aid in obtaining results based on personal opinions and views. To aid the prompt and efficient gathering of responses, the researcher utilised the Microsoft Teams platform to effectively carry out the one-to-one interview processes. The volunteer interviewees were made fully aware that the interview process and that results were to be kept anonymous with the collated data and interview answers being used with no link to the identity of the candidate.

The researcher sought to only include participants that have been employed within their current role for at least one year to ensure that they have a meaningful grasp on what their organisations culture and retention policies are.

4.5 Research Approach

The three main approaches for research methods are qualitative, quantitative and a mixed methods approach. This study implements a qualitative approach to analyse the experiences and opinions of working professionals in a number of fields, based around the impact of organisational culture and remote working on employee retention levels.

The reason for a qualitative research approach being most appropriate for this study is that it enables the researcher to gain a better understanding of the participants real-life experiences with a more realistic set of data being gathered, in contrast to a quantitative approach which results in a more structured and numerical outcome.

4.6 Data

4.6.1 Data Collection Method

There are multiple methods of data collection available to the researcher while carrying out qualitative research, in this case the researcher has chosen semi-structured, individual interviews for data collection in contrast to attempting a group interview or focus group approach. The researcher believes that the data gathered through an individual interview setting will ensure the interviewee remains open and honest while sharing their experiences and opinion without fear of judgement from their peers. As the research purpose is to examine the effects of remote working and organisational culture on retention rates in Ireland, the sole method chosen to collect the primary data was a qualitative approach. This method is the more appropriate method as it gives the

researcher a better opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of the motivators and driving factors that occur when an employee chooses to vacate a role within an organisation.

As previously mentioned, the qualitative research will be conducted through a semi-structured interview process with the focus on the topics of remote working, organisational culture and the impact they have on an employee's decision to leave their position and seek employment elsewhere (See Appendix C).

The structure of the questions allowed the researcher to ask for an explanation or expanded answer on a topic in many cases meaning that the interviewee gave a more definitive answer and opinion. All interviews were held and recorded over Microsoft Teams, all of which were then transcribed and stored safely.

4.6.2 Process of Data Collection

Following initially contacting the prospective participants and agreement to partake being established, a consent form along with a participant information sheet was supplied and signed before commencement of the interview process.

All participants are required to confirm they are consenting to take part in the interview at the beginning, prior to commencement along with being given a verbal guarantee of their data and answers remaining anonymous. Thereafter, the recorded Microsoft Teams call with a duration of 30 minutes was scheduled to take place with a cohort of professionals currently employed in different industries and at different levels of responsibility and seniority.

The semi-structured interview contains twenty-one questions based around three main sub-headings, remote working, organisational policy and workplace culture (See appendix C).

The recordings of each interview were then transcribed to aid in analysing the gathered data into themes that could be linked to the literature reviewed for this study.

4.6.3 Sample Size

This study aims to collate data from a sample size of 5 participants that are currently employed in a role that they work remotely in some capacity and have been employed in that role for more than one year.

The researcher has endeavoured to include participants that have been chosen on an equal basis to ensure a gender balance and mixed level of seniority and industries within which they are employed.

4.6.4 Data Analysis

The evaluation of data is an essential element of qualitative research, it requires the researcher to maintain an open mind, clear objectives and consistently self-reflect on whether they are remaining aligned with the research aims and questions, ensuring that the researcher interprets the data correctly and continues to accept new views or aspects as they emerge throughout the study.

The six steps of thematic analysis devised by Braun and Clarke (2006) were used by the researcher to familiarise themselves with the data prior to coding to aid in identifying the themes that arise throughout the data, finally these themes are analysed to ascertain the findings of the research study.

4.7 Ethical Considerations

Throughout the study, the researcher is responsible for the anonymity of the participants therefore must ensure that the data amassed is collected and stored

ethically. The researcher was required to submit an ethics form for approval prior to commencement to the National College of Ireland.

Each participant received an information sheet that outlined the aims and objectives of the study and signed a form of consent to certify that they were in agreement to take part and have their data included anonymously within the study.

Due to GDPR regulations and the ethical guidelines provided by the National College of Ireland the names of the participants and any defining characteristics or remarks were not included in the transcription process.

The recordings have been stored in a file with password protection for ethical and safety reasons.

4.8 Limitations

Qualitative research methods have been applied to this study with a semi-structured interview process with six participants being the main method of data collection. The qualitative research approach gives a comprehensive view of the interview participants opinion on subject matter and lived experiences, however there are various issues and limitations that can arise from this method that must be addressed. These limitations have been recognised by the researcher and attempts have been made to lessen the impact of these limitations where it is possible.

One of, if not the biggest challenge of the qualitative approach is the time consumed from the collection of the literature, interview processes and the transcription of the interviews (Hollstein, 2011). When compared to quantitative research methods, qualitative can be a longer and more arduous process. The quantitative process can generally be carried out with a larger sample size involved and in a shorter timeframe.

Another limitation that the researcher remained aware of throughout this study was that of researcher bias. Researcher bias occurs when the researcher allows their own personal perspective, opinions and assumptions can influence how the data is

interpreted (Braun & Clarke, 2006) therefore, it is plausible that two researchers interpreting the same set of qualitative data arrive at different overall conclusions.

Lastly, a qualitative data set is open to being influenced by a more personal approach, incorporating human preferences, opinions and beliefs, and while this gives the research a more relatable and realistic sense, it can hinder the researcher's ability to come to exact conclusions and identify clear sequences.

In spite of the limitations mentioned above, the qualitative research method is a valuable tool for evaluating human opinions and experiences that are likely not apparent when the quantitative research method is applied.

5.0 Research Findings

5.1 Introduction

Here the findings of the research interviews conducted will be analysed and presented. These interviews were conducted specifically with participants that work remotely in some capacity and have been employed by the same organisation for over 12 months with 5 participants representing a varied range of professions, roles and departmental levels.

In this chapter, the findings obtained through interviews, analysis and the implications of both will be described and expanded upon using Braun & Clarke's six-step approach (Braun & Clarke, 2006). As recommended by Braun & Clarke, the researcher remained vigilant when judging a smaller sample size, as was the case in this study.

5.2 Research aims

The overall aim of the research is to analyse the positive and negative impacts that organisational culture, remote working have on employee retention within the workplace in Ireland.

The overall objectives were to collate data that corresponds with the main research objectives. These are:

- To establish the impact of remote working policies and organisational culture on Irish employee retention rates.
- What impact do remote working policies have on employee retention within Ireland?
- What is organisational culture?
- What is the impact of organisational culture on retention levels in Ireland?

5.3 Identifying the Themes

The concurrent themes of the research were identified throughout the transcription process of the interviews, followed by a thorough readthrough and study of the transcripts by the researcher to determine the subject matter that was most appropriate to the study and reiterated by more than one participant.

Using Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis framework, the researcher identified related codes within the transcripts which helped to recognise themes that arose throughout the interview process. Although there were multiple themes that arose, the researcher remained vigilant of Braun and Clarke's advice regarding researcher judgement, they recommend against over-analysing and maintain that not all themes that arise will be relevant to the study while also warning against interpreting a small number of samples as an emerging theme.

The researcher also utilised some of Ryan & Bernard's (Ryan & Bernard, 2000) twelve recommendations to identify themes in qualitative data including word repetitions, key-words-in-context, the contrast comparison method and social science queries.

Implementing these methods created a clearer outline of the related themes discussed by each interview participant as well as the literature analysed. By the conclusion of this process, the researcher had identified and named multiple relevant themes that had arose with each theme being compared with the compatibility and its significance to the study.

There were several major themes identified from the data which the researcher has listed below in ascending order of deemed importance. Each theme has been expanded upon, further analysed and aims to show the knowledge gained from the research carried out.

5.4 Research Themes

The main themes of the research that were identified are outlined and expanded upon below:

- Organisational Culture
- Work-Life Balance
- Remote Working Policy
- Career Growth
- Social Interaction and Communication

5.4.1 Organisational Culture

Resulting from this study, it has been found that organisational culture is interpreted differently between the individuals taking part as well as academics. Each participant prioritised different aspects of organisational culture with some crossover occurring.

Participant one and four placed a heavy emphasis on trust being an integral part of organisational culture, particularly when related to remote working. When asked 'When working remotely, what features of organisational culture are the most important?', participant number two, three and four held the view it was based on a mutual trust model between employer and employee, suggesting that the employee is more likely to maintain a high standard of work when given a high level of trust and autonomy to complete their work. 'I think company culture has to be (based on) trust, and they have to trust you to perform to the same standard that you do in the office when you're being remote'. When asked the same question, participant 5 was the outlier, believing that continuous communication and check-ins with their superior were key to staying motivated and focused on their work while also ensuring that there is no alternate impact on the senior member of staff's perception of the employee's work ethic and by association, chance of career progression.

Participant 3 stated that organisational culture related to an organisation's way of working, relating to its environmental and social impact as well as their vision for the future, overall believing that organisational culture should foster a supportive and collaborative working environment. Contrary to this, participant two believes that an organisation's culture should develop a rigid set of rules to be followed which helps the company to maintain control to ensure stability and growth in the long-term. It was suggested by the participant that they may interpret organisational culture in this manner due to working in the legal sector.

Participant 3 and 5 expanded further on the importance of a positive working environment and a focus on employee wellness being a key pillar of organisational culture for them. Both participants believe that team-bonding exercises are essential to fostering a strong organisational culture and one suggested a running club or yoga morning being an extremely cost effective and easily organised method of implementation.

5.4.2 Work-Life Balance

This study has identified work-life balance (WLB) as a key driver to an employee's contentedness within a role and by association, their decision to remain or leave their position. Detaching from work in an increasingly digital age was identified as a factor affecting an employee's WLB (Gallus, 2022). When asked 'What matters most when it comes to remote working?' participant number one emphasised the importance of remote working opportunity and the effect it can have on familial life balance; 'I have a lot of friends that are doing nine to five (on-site) that have the same age bracket of infants at home, and they haven't had the opportunity to spend as much time with them as I have with mine'.

Participant number two had a similar view on the importance of work-life balance, how it is implemented by an organisation and its overall impact on retention. They stated that flexibility is key and brings a very positive balance to their role claiming it is best to

have a mix of remote working and on-site days giving them the opportunity to carry out their work with no distractions from home and to mingle with colleagues while on-site.

The overall consensus from the interview process showed that the participants heavily valued their work-life balance which coincides with literature reviewed, RW relating to WLB was not always seen in a positive light. Participant 3 and 5 both spoke about the difficulty to detach from work while RW as the home office environment tends to spill over and participant 3 in particular has felt pressured in the past to carry out tasks out of hours as they were 'deemed necessary for a deadline'. They did not feel comfortable to push back on this as it may have jeopardised their RW schedule or flexibility.

Participant 5 also expanded on the negative effect in WLB, stating they would often check their emails and phone communications before going to bed and on weekends to ensure they were prepared for the next working day.

The capacity to 'switch off' after work while working remotely is a theme that affected two participants and if not addressed may lead to a strain on the mental health of the employees, gradually increasing the likelihood of seeking a new role. The consequence of these findings show that RW needs to be compartmentalised by employees and clear boundaries should be set by both the employer and employee to ensure WLB.

5.4.3 Remote Working Policy

Another key theme of the research is based around an organisations remote working policy. The study's participants ranged between fully remote working models to a hybrid split of four days per week on-site giving a mixed range of inputs and opinions on the topic.

Participant three stated that their organisation's policy around remote work was rigid, there was not a choice of how many and particular days to work remotely whereas participants one, two, four and five had a flexible option from their organisation to choose days worked remotely and often could work fully remote, leading them to state

that they are unlikely to leave their role due to already being accommodated and entrusted with the choice of days to attend on-site.

When questioned 'How do you feel your working arrangements impact you in both a professional and personal perspective?' the answers varied depending on rigidity of the participants RW arrangements. Both participants one and two believed that their personal lives benefitted from their organisations RW policy, giving them flexibility to spend additional time with their friends and family or carry out a task or hobby.

Participant three felt that the strict RW policy within their organisation was not necessary, and productivity would not suffer if the strict adherence to it was relaxed.

Participants four and five believed they were lucky to have the flexibility offered to them by their organisation's RW policy and were more likely to be loyal to the company and carry out their role and responsibilities to a good standard due to the mutual level of trust created.

The researcher has determined from the participants that a flexible RW policy within an organisation is beneficial to both employee contentedness and retention rates, whereas a rigid structure is likely to deter future employees and possibly increase attrition rates within an organisation due to more flexible options elsewhere.

5.4.4 Career Growth

Career development processes are essential in ensuring an organisation is capable of attracting and more importantly, retaining the best talent and high-performing employees (Japor, 2021). In an ever increasingly competitive talent acquisition environment, organisations have increased focus on internal employee development to reduce the cost of employee churn and increase the chances of retaining employee expertise.

When asked about the inhibiting effect of remote working relating to career growth opportunities; 'Do you believe it has impacted your opportunity for career progression?', answers from participants were broad. Participant one believed that the

impact of remote work on career progression was dependent on the role which one was within, as they are within a senior management role currently, they did not see an impact on the likelihood of promotion being impeded but stated that the 'visibility' or on-site availability of an employee may have an impact on their decision to promote them internally.

When questioned whether remote working had impacted progression opportunities, participant three shared that they believed working remotely for more than two days per week had a direct impact on their chance for promotion within their current role, and that this had been unofficially suggested to them while conversing with a colleague. Alongside this, participant three had been overlooked in a previous role when interviewing internally as the prospective new line manager had insisted on hiring someone willing to work on-site five days per week. For additional context, participant three's role can be and is carried out successfully by a number of the existing team members through a fully remote working model.

Finally, when asked 'Do you believe it (RW) has impacted your opportunity for career progression?' participant 5 discussed having a clear progression path and timeline laid out by their line manager for their role and that the majority of the company works remotely in a similar capacity to them whereas participant 2 spoke about the lack of career growth opportunities within their industries but had not found any reason RW would have impeded their chances.

To conclude, the interviews conducted by the researcher resulted in a mixed review of answers relating to career growth opportunities which is believed to be impacted by multiple factors including the employee's industry, management styles, organisational culture and the absence of maintained on-site office communications, all of which were seen to both positively and negatively impact career growth depending on the individual.

5.4.5 Social Interaction

Findings from the study showed the importance of social interaction and communication when questions such as ‘Do you feel it hinders general communication with colleagues?’ and ‘Has your remote/office-based set-up had an effect on team morale?’ were asked. Although participant two stated they were not directly affected by a lack of communication or social interaction within their role, it has been something that they have conversed about with colleagues, with some of their colleagues finding remote work to have an isolating effect.

When asked around communication being hindered due to remote work, participant one stated that ‘Yes, I think there are definitely times where it does, it hinders progress or efficiency, and it's always easier, obviously working across an office environment, and you can speak to your colleagues to get a quick response.’ Both responses showing the negative impact a consistent in-person working environment can have on employees, however, participant 3 and 5 both discussed their social interaction was not hindered by RW and that their organisations encouraged consistent communication, daily briefings, lunch and learns as well as regular events that brought employees together.

Social isolation within the literature (Bloom, Liang, Roberts, & Ying, 2015) showed that employees could be affected negatively due to isolation and lack of human interaction, however, the majority of participants seem to value a better WLB, flexibility and more time spent having social interactions with family members and friends over work colleagues.

5.5 Limitations

The limitations that should be acknowledged regarding this study related to the methodology chosen, the small sample size and the subjective interpretation by both the researcher and interview participants.

There is also the risk of researcher bias arising from the way in which questions were presented to the participants as well as the manner in which the answers were deciphered. The researcher made every effort to remain impartial throughout the process and encourage the participants to give their open and honest independent views.

5.6 Conclusion

The findings of the thematic analysis of the data identified have been outlined in the above chapter with the consensus being all participants played a role in unearthing data that benefitted the study, however, some data gathered was less relevant and did not align with the overall research objectives.

There were multiple examples of crossover data from the literature reviewed which helped to identify themes within the interviews and focus on core topics that had arisen.

6.0 Discussion

6.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to discuss the interpretation of the findings of this research study in which five participants were interviewed in a semi-structured interview process. The themes identified around remote working, organisational culture and its impact on employee retention, identified throughout the interview process will be investigated, and the discussion will relate the findings to the research question and objectives of the study. As well as this the researcher will compare the study's findings with that of other researchers and literature while addressing the issues that emerge for the employer and employee.

6.2 Objective 1: What impact do remote working policies have on employee retention within Ireland?

Objective one of this study has highlighted the complex relationship between organisational culture, remote working practices and its impact on employee retention levels within Ireland. The paradigm shift toward remote working, its adoption and how it is utilised by organisations was accelerated due to COVID-19 and the subsequent lockdowns and is now a widely accepted part of many organisations' cultures, where possible. Due to this shift in working practices, organisations had to redesign their approach with emphasis on a more flexible working environment along with focussing on maintaining engagement with employees that were consistently working off-site in a semi or fully remote capacity.

A fully remote or hybrid working model has become a useful retention tool within the last decade with evidence suggesting that 92% of almost 6,000 respondents in a survey conducted through The University of Galway (McCarthy, et al., 2023), claimed that the opportunity for remote or hybrid work would be a major factor in a decision to change their employment. Within this survey, participants were also asked if they would change their role if their remote working preferences were no longer accommodated, with the consensus of close to half of those surveyed being that they would prioritise remote

working opportunities over a pay cut, less promotion opportunities and a general reduction in career prospects. This extensive survey suggests that one in two employees consider work-life balance, less commuting and overall flexibility to be more important than remuneration packages and career growth opportunities, thus highlighting the importance of the adoption of remote working practices by today's employers, where possible.

During the study, it has also been identified that employee's now have an expectation to be guaranteed remote working in the long term if hired under that pretence. The 'return to office' initiatives carried out in recent years have seen employees respond with workers union involvement, calls for legislation to be introduced on the right to request remote work through the Work Life Balance and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2023 (2023) and a spike in attrition rates within organisations in retaliation. This can be compared to the conclusion drawn from Bloom et al. (2015) which showed that the retention rate of employees increased when employees were not solely office based. When viewed from an Irish lens, research suggests that the opportunity for remote work can be seen as a unique selling point for Irish organisations when attempting to attract and retain top talent.

6.3 Objective 2: What is organisational culture?

The second objective of this study was to explore what is defined as organisational culture with the aim of better understanding how employees perceive it. The findings of this research showed the participants had differing views of what organisational culture is with factors such as specific role, sector and personal experiences. The different interpretations of participants is in line with Schein's (2010) published concept in which he argues that organisational culture remains a debated concept with contested viewpoints in academia. Due to differing viewpoints, there is not one widely accepted definition of organisational culture, therefore, a researcher must have a diverse approach when studying it, ensuring to consider the multiple perspectives that can be applied to define organisational culture. Denison also applied a framework (2025) that

links four specific traits to organisational culture; mission, adaptability, involvement and consistency, these four pillars of the framework are implemented to maintain an internal and external focus on the organisation as well as aiding company profitability and flexibility. It is argued that a balanced application of these four pillars within an organisation, is the key to success and employee satisfaction.

Throughout this study, the researcher gained a better understanding of organisational culture by encountering and examining the multiple perspectives through the semi-structured interview process and the reading of the academic literature. A significant theme that arose during this study was the importance of organisational culture and its impact on employee satisfaction, suitability and overall employee productivity. With many employees spending up to forty hours per week embedded within the culture of an organisation, it is clear that it is benefitting for the employees to have a sense of belonging and aligned values with the organisation, which is inevitably shaped by the organisation's specific culture.

The researcher believes this study confirmed that an organisation's culture is complex and is designed to influence the employees within an organisation. It can influence how employees interact with one another, how they view and value their work environment as well as having both a positive or negative impact on productivity and retention. The importance of an organisation fostering a positive working culture that is aligned with the long-term company goals and the employee's mindset also became apparent during the research as some interviewees discussed how an organisational culture, they perceive to be positive would lessen the likelihood of them searching for or accepting a new role outside the organisation. An organisation's culture dictates how it is viewed both internally and externally by employees and customers alike, meaning it is essential in the modern-day to focus on growing a strong and suitable culture to ensure continued success and above average retention levels within an organisation.

6.4 Objective 3: What is the impact of organisational culture on retention levels in Ireland?

It has become clear from the research conducted that organisational culture can both positively and negatively impact the retention levels of an organisation, however there is no clear cut, one size fits all approach that can be applied by an organisation. As each organisation has differing goals, objectives and values there is no 'copy and paste' solution to retention issues when discussing organisational culture (Hom, Lee, & Shaw, 2017). Hom et al emphasised that employee retention and organisational culture are intrinsically linked and must be tailored to harmonise with employee demographics and the industry within which they work in.

The researcher has found that each organisation will have a tailor-made approach to organisational culture and linked to it, their own unique strategy to tackle retention. Some of the reasons proposed by Schein (2010) relating to employee unhappiness are elements of unfairness and a general lack of respect for the employee. These are clear triggers for a spike in employee turnover and correlate with the researcher gathered during the semi-structured interview process of this study.

Organisational culture plays an important role in maintaining commitment from employees and can establish a workplace ethos and set of values that are respected companywide when executed correctly. A key pillar of organisational culture is clear communication, an organisation that communicates with transparency with their employees helps to foster trust and can aid in being considered a reasonable and fair place to work. Another key part of what makes successful organisational culture is dedicated leadership. When leaders show genuine interest in employees wellbeing, career development and communicate clearly and with purpose, it has shown to lower employee turnover (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

7.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

7.1 Conclusion

With the Irish labour market experiencing shortages in multiple sectors according to data collected by the CIPD (2024), the realisation that organisations need to focus more on attraction and retention has become apparent. Those who adapt latest are likeliest to fail and a major effort now needs to be made to accommodate and meet employees needs to ensure they happy within their role and remain loyal to their employer.

Although there are many factors that attribute to this, the aim is to address some of the less tangible and quantifiable influences.

Organisational culture and its implementation are key to growing aspects such as trust, transparency and communication within an organisation that all attribute to a happier workforce and in turn, higher retention levels. The role of organisational culture is also integral in shaping the future of remote work as they generally coexist successfully together while complimenting each other. An organisational culture that promotes trust, open communication, employee wellbeing and WLB will usually dictate how successful and productive their RW employees will be.

With the widespread adoption of RW in Ireland due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it is now clear RW is here to stay and is in fact growing in popularity year on year. With the shift in expectation of many employees regarding the opportunity to RW and the benefits it brings such as better WLB, flexibility as well as time and money saved commuting, it is essential that RW is no longer considered a privilege for the lucky few and is offered and ingrained into organisational culture nationally. There are topics such as indistinct boundaries on when to 'switch off' as well as mental health strains due to lack of social interaction, however, the literature and interviews carried out during this study suggest that the benefits of RW far outweigh the negatives in this instance.

While there is still a long way to go to before the RW model is perfected, there needs to be a shift toward the accommodation of the employee's wants, which directly

correlates with higher retention levels, and also a focus on the upskilling of management to deal with an ever increasingly digital work environment.

7.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this research, recommendations to Irish organisations on the impact of retention and how to improve retention rates relating to organisational culture and RW. Some of these recommendations have an added cost for organisations attached, however, the long-term goal is to offset the initial investment through better retention rates, less loss of talent and knowledge, higher productivity due to retaining experience, and finally, the general HR cost savings in training and recruitment of new members of staff due to churn.

7.2.1 Employee Mentorship Program

The implementation of an employee mentoring program is recommended, this program will consist of an initial survey taken by the individual, usually in an entry level to middle management position, outlining their future career aspirations and direction they desire to take their career in the future. With this data collated, the HR team tasked with the exercise will match employees with their counterpart that best suits the area and background they have expressed an interest in. Following this, both employees will meet monthly with a set plan to grow the mentees knowledge and skill level relating to their chosen role. The employee will take part in a structured fortnightly check-in with their mentor and may be given some small tasks to complete each time. Not only can this be used as a tool for improving retention rates through recognition and personal growth, but it may also be viewed as a form of succession planning in the eventuality that the mentor gains promotion or departs the organisation. This will help to foster a culture of internal upwards movement and growth as well as retain knowledge and expertise in within the organisation in the long term.

7.2.2 Salary Benchmarking

A simple salary benchmarking exercise to be carried out annually is also recommended and a follow up salary review with employees to discuss their salary compared to current market rates. Although the employee and employer may oftentimes not agree on their 'value' and differ on the overall remuneration that should be offered, it gives each an opportunity to negotiate and helps the employee to feel empowered.

It is recommended that organisations within Ireland stay mindful of the cost implication of replacing an experienced employee, with the average published by Shannon Chamber last year (2024) being €10,600 per employee, this is an average cost meaning some roles that require expertise, specific education or have gathered knowledge throughout a long tenure can cost far more.

The aim with a salary benchmarking exercise and guaranteed structured conversation surrounding it is to give both parties an opportunity to analyse the situation and discuss the overall worth of the role from different perspectives, with the hope of coming to an agreement and promoting a culture of transparency, openness and trust within the organisation.

7.2.3 Exit Interview Strategy

It is recommended that a robust exit interview process is created and rigorously implemented with every employee who resigns from the organisation. Not only will this give the employee an opportunity to give feedback, but it is essential for the organisation to understand if there are any easily avoidable factors that can be addressed and changed to aid in a more suitable workplace environment for the remaining and future employees.

The exit interview strategy which is heavily structured gives the opportunity to delve into the driving factors around an employee choosing to leave the organisation. It is recommended that there is specific questions based around RW opportunities,

organisational culture and whether they have been a factor in the employee's decision-making process to depart.

7.2.4 Learning Platform

The final recommendation requires organisations to seek out and implement a learning and development platform to be utilised by employees to upskill. The main benefits of this include a better skilled workforce, employees feeling empowered to further educate themselves to aid career progression and the utilisation of downtime when an employee may be between being assigned tasks.

Overall, this can limit major knowledge or skill losses in the event of employee churn when other employees are prepared to fill the role and simultaneously encourages employees to dedicate themselves to upskilling with a view to attaining a more senior role.

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9.0 Appendices

Appendix A: Consent Form

Title: The Correlation of Remote Working and Organisational Culture to Employee Retention Rates Within the Irish Workforce

Consent to take part in research

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 in a recorded video interview with a series of questions.

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 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 by researcher until the exam board has issued results, following this the consent forms and audio recordings will be deleted and destroyed.

I understand that a transcript of my interview in which all identifying information has been removed will be retained for two years.

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.

Kenneth Leon, Student National College of Ireland, Master of Business Administration.

Contact Email: x23228407@student.ncirl.ie

Signature of research participant

Signature of researcher

Signature of participant Date

Signature of researcher Date

Appendix B: Information Sheet

Title: The Correlation of Remote Working and Organisational Culture to Employee Retention Rates Within the Irish Workforce

Dear Participant, I am inviting you to take part in a research study. Prior to taking part, I would like to outline the purpose of the study and the role your interview will play. Please take time to read the following information carefully and feel free to ask questions if anything you read is unclear or if you would like me to elaborate on anything.

My Information and the Overview of the Study

My name is Kenneth Leon; I am a part time student at National College of Ireland (NCI) studying toward a Master's in Business Administration. This study will be part of my master's dissertation research. The aim of this study is to investigate the correlation of remote working and organisational culture to employee retention rates within the Irish workforce. The analysis will conclude by evaluating the data obtained and using it to interpret the relationship between organisational culture, remote working and employee retention within the Irish workforce.

WHAT WILL TAKING PART INVOLVE?

This will involve taking part in a structured interview through Microsoft Teams, they will be recorded for transcription purposes and audio taped and seek to gather information on remote working, organisational culture and its effect on retention in Ireland. Questions will be broken down into three main subheadings on, remote working, organisational culture and workplace policies. It is estimated that these interviews will take between 20 – 30 minutes to complete.

DO YOU HAVE TO TAKE PART?

Participation in this study is completely voluntary, and you have the right to refuse participation, the right to refuse to answer any question and the right to withdraw your interview up until the 6th August 2025.

WILL TAKING PART BE CONFIDENTIAL?

Every effort will be made to guarantee confidentiality of the participant. Participant names will not be recorded and all data pertaining to that participant will be assigned a code. The audio tapes will be stored on password protected laptop, and typed transcripts will be held within password-secured documents. Confidentiality of information provided is subject to legal limitations.

HOW WILL INFORMATION YOU PROVIDE BE RECORDED, STORED AND PROTECTED?

The interview will be recorded, and the recordings will be stored on an encrypted hard drive and any data that is no longer required will be destroyed or erased in a safe and secure way. Signed consent forms and original audio recordings will be retained in until after my degree has been conferred. Under freedom of information legalisation, you are entitled to access the information you have provided at any time.

Further Information Available From:

Student: Kenneth Leon

Email: x23228407@student.ncirl.ie

Supervisor: Dr. Conor Thornberry

Email: conor.thornberry@ncirl.ie

Appendix C: Interview Structure

Introduction

‘Firstly, thank you for taking the time to participate in the interview with me today, I’m conducting this interview as part of a study on retention rates in Ireland with a focus on the effects of remote working and organisational culture.

Can I please confirm that you’ve read the information sheet provided? I’d also like to remind you that this interview is entirely voluntary, and everything shared will be anonymous and confidential in any further writings or published work. As well as this, there is no obligation to answer any questions that you do not wish to as well as being able to withdraw from the interview at any time.

As previously discussed, the interview will be recorded with your permission and will be only for accurate transcription purposes with any identifying information being left out.

The interview itself will take approximately 20 – 30 minutes and there is no wrong answers as it’s your opinion, the overall aim is to gain knowledge of your experiences relating to the interview topics.

Consent

Do you consent to me recording this interview; to remind you, it is solely for the purpose of transcribing the relevant information gathered throughout the interview and any identifying information will be excluded?

Remote Working

- What is your current work arrangement in terms of a breakdown of office-based, remote or hybrid?
- How many days per week do you work remotely compared to office-based?
- Is this a choice on your part or is there set parameters given by your organisation?

- How do you feel your working arrangements impact you in both a professional and personal perspective?
- Do you believe it has impacted your opportunity for career progression?
- Do you feel it hinders general communication with colleagues?
- Has your work set-up had a correlation on your stress levels?
- Has your remote/office-based set-up had an effect on team morale?

Organisational Policy

- If you are comfortable, I would like to discuss your organisations policies on remote working?
- How important is remote working in your organisation for you?
- Has the lack of or inclusion of remote working ever been an influence on your decision to leave or stay in a role?
- What matters most when it comes to remote working – for example, the number of days available to work remotely, rostering flexibility etc.
- In an ideal world, what does your remote working policy contain?
- Lastly, would you be enticed into changing roles by a ‘better’ or more flexible remote working policy?

Organisational Culture

If you’re happy, I’d like to move on to the topic of organisational culture.

- What does organisational culture mean to you?
- When working remotely, what features of organisational culture are the most important?

- For example, some features of organisational culture can be trust, communication, career development opportunities among many others.
- How do you believe workplace culture differs when working remotely or working onsite?
- How important is workplace culture for you in your role and how do you believe it affects your overall experience and job satisfaction?
- Is there anything additional you would like to add that I haven't covered around organisational culture and its impact on your role?
- Lastly, if you could design your perfect working environment and rostering arrangements, what would this look like using a 37.5-hour work week as the baseline.

Conclusion

Thank you again for taking part today and sharing your thoughts and experiences, it has been extremely helpful to the study.

Once again, all of your responses will remain confidential and the full transcript will be anonymous, as well as this, you are free to withdraw your data and information until 06/01/25.

Appendix D:

(1.1)



(CIPD, 2023)

(1.2)



(CIPD, 2023)

Appendix E:

LOCATED IN IRELAND



Appendix F:



Appendix G:

Job Satisfaction (Motivators)	Job Dissatisfaction (Hygiene)
Achievement	Working Conditions
Recognition	Interpersonal Relationships
Advancement	Salary
Responsibility	Governance and Policies

FIGURE 1 HERZBERG'S TWO-FACTOR PRINCIPLES

Appendix H: Interview Participants

Participant Number	Age Range	Occupation/Sector	Tenure
1	31-36	Construction	2 years
2	31-36	Legal	3 years
3	25-30	Legal	2 years
4	31-36	Medical Sales	5 Years
5	37-41	Pharmaceuticals	6 years