

**How Awareness of Presenteeism Positively or Negatively Impacts
Managerial Attitudes and or Behaviours.**

By

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fulfilment of a BA (Hons) in Human Resource Management**

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Abstract

Background: Few studies explore the phenomenon of presenteeism in particular from a managerial perspective.

Context: A group of managers in one organisation within the hospitality industry.

Aim: How awareness of presenteeism positively or negatively impacts managerial attitudes and or behaviours.

Method: The collection of qualitative data through semi structured interviews with seven participants using a methodological approach of a case study under a phenomenological paradigm.

Results: Two overall themes emerged, that presenteeism was an expectation within the industry in order for career progression as 'face time' was indicative of commitment and this behaviour was now being driven by the managerial team through Social Learning Theory.

Conclusion: Presenteeism was perceived by the managerial team as a business expectation and necessity with minimal consideration of the impact of presenteeism on employee well-being.

Declarations

I hereby declare that the material contained in this dissertation, which I now submit for the assessment leading to the award of a BA (Hons) in Human Resource Management is the end result of my own work and that due acknowledgement for all materials consulted and ideas garnered in the process of the research has been given in the references and within the text of the paper.

Dedication

This paper is dedicated to John who supported and encouraged me through the last four years.

Thank you for being so patient.

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Chapter One - Introduction

1.1 Dissertation Topic

This paper began with the term *Presenteeism*, a word mentioned in passing during a class discussion at college around the topic of *Absenteeism*. The term was new to the author the concept was not, with presenteeism described by Cooper (1996) as attending work while unwell or where an individual has worked long hour that they are no longer effective. A brief overview of a body of research revealed that the number of empirical studies on presenteeism was significantly less than on absenteeism such as Steers and Rhodes (1978) research which developed models on employee attendance such as an employee's ability to attend and an employee's motivation to attend. *Bradford University School of Management* focused on the short term absence through the Bradford Factor (1980) as research showed short term absence more detrimental to an organisation. The financial implications to an organisation as a result of absenteeism, as found by Gunnigle, Heraty & Morley (2006) through loss of productivity and paying for substitute workers.

The financial incentive and body of research has prompted organisations to utilise methods such as *Absence Management* to manage the human relations aspect within the working environment. Human relations recognises the link between the well-being of the employee and the influence that this may have on performance through the ever evolving field of *Human Resource Management* from personnel management to Frederick Taylors 'Scientific Management' (1911) and Elton Mayo's 'Hawthorne work experiments & Human Relations Movement' (1945). Has the concept of presenteeism been left behind due to the lack of perceived cost to an organisation?

The term presenteeism was first documented by Uris (1955) and Cranfield & Soash (1955) and was viewed as positive employee behaviour. Further research on the phenomenon by Paton (2009) disagrees with this view point as the findings shown that 43% of employees in the UK have not been absent from work due to illness as they fear losing their jobs due to the economic downturn. This is perceived to have had a negative impact on the working relationship to such a degree that employee's feel that they will not be believed if they call in sick to work. Juniper (2012) further expands on Paton (2009) work and suggests that there are two common factors that contribute towards presenteeism which are work place stress and the perceived pressure from managers within the organisation, and offers a variety of

procedures that a company should employ to tackle presenteeism. Further that the policies should not only be understood by the employees but also the managers. Milano (2005) is in agreement with Paton (2009) and Juniper (2012) with managers being a cause of presenteeism and suggests that managers need to be trained in order to discourage presenteeism as the common view. Other researchers such as Prater & Smith (2011) have found that as well as the perceived pressure from the organisation external pressure such as financial reasons can be a cause of presenteeism with the employees in the research admitting that 41% went to work as they needed the money as sickness pay was not a benefit within their company.

The empirical studies on presenteeism are dominated by the employee view. Few studies have adopted a managerial perspective of the phenomenon. This paper addresses this deficit in the literature. Baker-McClearn, Greasley, Dale and Griffith (2010) state management style can impact the employee. The research is then taken further with a very valid question of the influences of Managers as role models?

1.2 Focus of this Study

The focus of this study is to examine the extent managers of an organisation can influence presenteeism, to what degree and what is driving this behaviour. Is it as Prater & Smith (2011) suggest that the managers are unaware of the pressure they place on employees. Or is it that managers perceive that presenteeism is not detrimental to the organisation and this is the norm, expected of an employee if they wish to succeed within their career? This paper will focus on managers in one company in the hospitality industry. This paper's focus will not be on the effects and cost to an organisation other than to acknowledge the prior research and take this to be true.



Figure 1: Conceptual Framework – authors thought process

1.3 Background

The hospitality industry is an industry within a competitive sector with longer non standard hours of work in a 24 hour a day operation and so creates an interesting working dynamic. A common view to the industry is that it has to be slow to adopt Human Resources Management into the business (Lye 2007).

1.4 Research Question

The research question for this study is: How awareness of presenteeism positively or negatively impacts managerial attitudes and or behaviours.

The research question is based on a need to understand the manager's awareness or lack of awareness of presenteeism and their perception of the phenomenon. In order to determine if the manager is aware of the influence they have and the pressure they may exert on an employee.

1.5 Philosophical Framework & Research Design

The framework that guides how research should be conducted is the research paradigm. Collis & Hussey (2009) discuss that historically the framework was positivism due to the scientific nature of research in that the focus was on the physical world. The introduction of the social sciences and the realisation that an individual's perception can affect social reality, a second paradigm emerged called interpretivism. The literature review and resulting theoretical framework supported a research question rather than a hypothesis, as the research question for this paper is based on the manager's awareness of the topic the appropriate research paradigm for the methodology is interpretive. The collection of data will be qualitative through the use of interviews with the nature of the research being exploratory and interpretive. The analysis of the research will give a greater understanding and potentially highlight a pattern. This methodological approach taken is a case study.

The author also proposes to utilise secondary data from sources such as the organisations records.

This research is limited to the perceptions of managers within a specific hotel in Ireland as this is the population the author has access to.

1.6 Research Objective

The purpose of this research is to aid to the existing knowledge and research of presenteeism from the managerial perspective.

The overall aim is to better understand the concept of presenteeism and overall impact on managerial attitudes and behaviours within a hospitality context.

Specific objective relating to this overall aim are to:

- To ascertain managerial awareness of presenteeism as a construct.
- To ascertain managerial understanding of presenteeism
- To explore how the managers understanding of presenteeism impacts their attitudes and behaviours

1.7 Structure of Paper

Chapter one introduces the topic of interest, the context within the working environment and the purpose and objectives of the proposed research with an overview of the research methodology utilised and the limitations of the research.

Chapter two reviews the current body of research on presenteeism concerned with the main themes of the topic and the theoretical framework.

Chapter three details the research paradigm and design used to collect the data and the analysis and evaluation of same with the conclusion of the findings.

Chapter four offers a summary discussion of the findings and the relationship to the research question and objectives.

Chapter five draws conclusions and the limitations of the research with improvements suggested for future studies.

Chapter Two – Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The first use of the term ‘presenteeism’ documented was by Uris (1955) and Canfield & Soash (1955) where presenteeism was presented as a positive behaviour for individual to move away from absenteeism towards presenteeism. Like much of the research that has followed presenteeism is researched as the other side of the coin to absenteeism rather than a construct on its own evident in the number of empirical studies. The main themes that are discussed in the current body of research focus on the several definitions to be considered, causes of presenteeism, organisational culture, effects and organisational context.

2.2 Definition of Presenteeism

Several different definitions are offered by the literature perhaps due to the relative infancy of the topic.

Presenteeism is defined as, “being at work when you should be at home either because you are ill or because you are working such long hours that you are no longer effective.”(Cooper, 1996, pg.25 cited by Demerouti, Le Blanc, Bakker, Schaufeli & Hox, 2008, pg 51)

Juniper (2012) suggests a third definition of presenteeism as well as the above in that the term can be expanded to include healthy employees who are just non-productive where the employee spends a significant amount of work time participating in non work activities such as making personal calls or surfing the net.

Milano (2005) further expand the term ill with regard to presenteeism that it may concern physical illness or emotional problems.

This makes the understanding and managing of presenteeism difficult with the scope being several factors as well as including mental illness. For the purpose of this paper presenteeism will be defined as attending work in lieu of absence and working such long hours that the individual is no longer effective.

2.3 Causes of Presenteeism

A common view in the literature on a cause of presenteeism is financial as shown by research by Milano (2005), Paton (2009) and Prater & Smith (2011) that cite the primary reason given

from the participants for attendance at work while unwell was fear of losing their jobs due to perceived pressure from managers and the current economic climate.

Research by MacGregor, Cunningham & Caverley (2008) has an element of disagreement as they conducted a study to investigate the relationship between stressful life events and health related events with sickness absenteeism and presenteeism. Their study focused on the definition that presenteeism is going to work while sick or injured. It was found that presenteeism might be affected by the perceived pressure from an organisation; fear that absenteeism is not an option or insecurity over their position however was not the primary cause. The main reason found in the study from the research group was that there was no one to attend to the work while they were absent and so would be a back log when they returned. This was not due to perceived pressure from their managers but rather lack of support from their colleagues.

Vivian (2012) research differed slightly in that the respondents reported in being too busy to take time off but did not respond to job insecurity.

Demerouti et al. (2008) also make the point that presenteeism may not always be for negative reasons, the employee finds their work interesting & stimulating or they have good relationships with their clients or colleagues.

This would suggest that as well as financial reasons through job insecurity, perceived pressure from managers and work colleagues, heavy workloads are also a factor.

2.4 Organisational Environment

Milano (2005) states that employers must first recognise the problems associated with presenteeism and then determine the resources required to tackle the issue such as changing the organisations policies in order to discourage presenteeism and employee education to address employee anxiety such as 'lunch & learn' wellbeing programmes.

Murphy & Doherty (2011) argue that long hour's dominates as an expectation for senior managers with a perception that people who try to reach a work life balance are viewed as less committed. This suggests that the expectation of the organisations now measure commitment in terms of hours spent at work rather than quality of work and length of service.

2.5 Effect & Cost of Presenteeism

Milano (2005) highlights the risk of presenteeism is the increased likelihood of mistakes from the extreme of working with heavy machinery to miss-typing that could result in financial implications to the organisation. A secondary risk is that employees who are sick pose a threat by infecting their colleagues. Prater et al. (2011) supports this with evidence from their research that an employee will knowingly come to work and risk infecting colleagues rather than be absent.

Demerouti et al. (2008) summarise that the phenomenon of presenteeism will not only cause a reduction in productivity and the increased likelihood of human error but that presenteeism will lead to both exhaustion and depersonalisation for the employee.

Aston (2010) informs that in the UK the cost of presenteeism surprisingly is nearly double that of the cost of absenteeism (Sainsbury Centre 2007) that organisations should take a more proactive approach to organisation health not only for the benefit of the wellbeing of the employee but will reflect in the bottom line for the organisation. Milano (2005) also agrees that the cost of lost productivity alone so excluding the costs of possible errors and potential infection of other employees exceeds the cost of absence with regard to American companies.

Indeed many researchers such as Schultz, Chen & Edington (2009) have devoted entire papers on the cost and impact of presenteeism to the employer and state that the final figure is still as yet unknown.

Juniper (2012) argues that with regard to the two factors of stress and perceived pressure from management the organisation could combat presenteeism by tackling workplace stress and reviewing the absence policy so that it is fit for purpose in that it is understood by the employee and the managers.

2.6 Organisational Context

The hotel industry is a fast paced 24 hour a day seven days a week 365 days a year competitive business with its own rule book and culture. O'Neill (2011) suggests that the industry has defining characteristics one of which he terms "expectation of face time" where hotel employees have said that this is a requirement within the industry to "see and be seen" (O'Neill, 2011, pg. 478). This organisation expectation is ingrained within the industry where presenteeism is encouraged in order to get ahead and is considered the standardised

norm across the industry in particular the management team. The management team would be the most inclined group to bend to this norm in order to further their career as supported by “Older hotel managers and managers with greater industry tenure will report significantly lower levels of face time” (O’Neill, 2011, pg. 483).

2.7 Managerial Behaviour

Cullen and McLaughlin (2006) conducted research on managerial presenteeism and the rationale for presenteeism as a managerial value within hotel. It was found that the managers viewed themselves as the face of the hotel with a need to be continually present. They also noted that this exacerbated due to the nature of the operational hours.

Prater et al. (2011) further suggests that the managers can create a competitive environment within the organisation that forces employees to work longer hours and even to come to work when unwell and that the managers may be unaware of the underlying pressure they have placed upon the employees.

This literature review has found that research from the managerial perspective on presenteeism is limited.

2.8 Variables

Schultz, Chen & Edington (2009) argue that the research on presenteeism requires more data and that certain health conditions may have more of an impact than others. Other factors that need to be considered are the different demographics of different groups.

Gosselin, Lemyre & Corneil (2013) state two very interesting factors to consider with regard to presenteeism the first being that initially presenteeism was regarded as marginal and only flagged in a small number of employees it is only through more research that it has shown to be more widespread. The second issue they mention which should be noted is that all current research could potential not show the issue of presenteeism as accurately as it would claim as it is harder to remember presenteeism rather than absenteeism for an employee and employer.

2.9 Themes & Theoretical Framework

The themes emerging from the literature were presenteeism as a result of career progression, perceived pressure from the organisation and colleagues or over whelming work-loads. With no common model or theory being used in the body of research interlinking themes such as

pressure from colleagues and the organisation can be linked to Schien's Culture Model as explains the behaviour of employees within the work environment.

Schein (1985) discusses that organisational culture is dynamic and that it will develop and not always in a beneficial way to the organisation. Schien's model has three levels, the first being attributes of the organisation meaning what can be seen and felt by the individuals such as facilities of recognition. The second level deals with the core values and beliefs of an organisation; this could also include company policies. The third level indicates the elements that are not seen and rarely discussed between those within the organisation.

The third level although not tangible may become the organisational norm through a learned behaviour in that the individuals learn behaviours not just by participation but by watching others and repeating the behaviour as described by Miller & Dollard (1950) work in Social Learning Theory. The theory describes that individuals observe each other and where a perceived positive consequence of certain behaviours the individual will emulate the behaviour in the hope to achieve the perceived positive result.

With regard to presenteeism the research shows that the manager can be a driver of the phenomena, with the consideration of the industry. Using Schein model this behaviour could be adopted by new entrants and the cycle continue through socially constructed reality, and social learning theory.

3.0 Summary

The research discussed the negative consequence of presenteeism through pressure, workloads and financial implications with the exception of one positive consequence of career progression. The research question is based on a need to understand the managerial awareness of presenteeism and how that awareness impacts their attitudes and behaviour. The research conducted by O'Neill (2011) on the hotel industry mentioned face time and that the industry drives the behaviour therefore this research will try to determine if the motivation is purely promotion, the norm or if others drivers become evident.

Chapter Three – Methodology

3.1 Introduction

Within this chapter the research methodology used with the reasoning behind the choice of action are discussed. A research method is “simply a technique for collecting data” (Bryman, 2008, pg 266) The objective of this research was to better understand the Managers perception of presenteeism and the influence they exert on an organisations culture, with that focus the elements of the methodological framework must ‘fit’ with the research question.

3.2 Paradigm Assumptions & Statement

The literature review and resulting theoretical framework supported a research question rather than a hypothesis, the research paradigm for the methodology is interpretive therefore the appropriate paradigm adopted was an interpretive one. Positivism would not have been appropriate due to the inductive rather than deductive experimental nature of the research.

Collis & Hussey (2009) note that positivism and interpretivism are the two polar ends of the scale with a number of other paradigms between the two. As the research question for this paper is based on the manager’s perception of the topic the epistemological stance is phenomenological insight from the individual managers who are reflecting on their experience of the phenomena and phenomenology is a “critical reflection of conscious experience” (Goulding, 2005, pg 302) hence phenomenology is the particular paradigm adopted by the author for the purpose of this research.

3.3 Methodological Strategy

The author now must provide a rationale for the choice of methodology, achieved by examining the various types of research relevant to the paradigm. The methodologies associated with interpretivism will support an inductive rather than deductive process where inferences are induced rather than tested by empirical observation therefore qualitative data was collected rather than quantitative numerical data. There are several methodologies that are associated with the interpretive paradigm including, Hermeneutics, Ethnography, Participative Enquiry, Action Research, Case Studies and Grounded Theory. The following table (see Table 1: Methodologies Associated with Interpretivism) outlines the different approaches to the process of the research.

METHODOLOGIES	APPROACHES
HERMENEUTICS	Interpretation of text in context of underlying historical and social forces in order to recover historical meaning
ETHNOGRAPHY	To use socially acquired and shared knowledge to understand the observed patterns of human behaviour derived from anthropology
PARTICIPATIVE ENQUIRY	A method which involves the participants as fully as possible. Questions and answers are developed as a shared experience
ACTION RESEARCH	Method used in applied research, enter a partly controlled environment, bring about a change and monitor the results
CASE STUDIES	The method used to explore a single phenomenon in a natural environment using a variety of methods for the purpose of obtaining in dept knowledge
GROUNDING THEORY	A method where a systematic set of procedures are used to develop an inductively derived theory about a phenomenon. Has been developed for behavioural research

Table 1: Methodologies Associated with Interpretivism

Source: Adapted from Collis & Hussey (2009, pg 78-84)

The researcher considered all methodologies however as this study was not concerned with historical text or a particular cultural group although a point to note for further research could view the managers within the hotel as a cultural group due to the group mentality of the group and antisocial and nonstandard hours of work however for the purpose of this research hermeneutics and ethnography were not employed. Participative enquiry and Grounded

Theory were considered due to the behavioural aspect of the research however the timeframe for this study was not viable for both methodologies. Action research as a method is not appropriate for this research due to the hotel not wishing to be a client where a change would be implemented and monitored. Therefore the methodology employed for this research was a case study due to the characteristics of a case study that were identified by Yin (2003);

- The research aims not only to explore certain phenomena, but also to understand them within a particular context.
- The researcher does not commence with a set of questions and notions about the limits within which the study will take place.
- The researcher uses multiple methods for collecting data, which may be both qualitative and quantitative.

(Yin, 2003 cited in Collis & Hussey, 2009, pg 82)

These characteristics would suggest that the case study is the most relevant methodology for the purpose of this research which is to understand not only presenteeism, but presenteeism of a particular group within an organisation and the influence of that group on the phenomena.

3.4 Rationale for Selecting a Qualitative Approach

Interpretive paradigm will “tend to use small samples, have a natural location, allow findings to be generalised and produce rich qualitative data” (Collis & Hussey, 2009, pg 62) which is the characteristics of this paper. The rationale for selecting an interpretive paradigm and qualitative data is simply that presenteeism unlike absenteeism is not documented and tracked by the organisation. The second factor to consider is as Gosselin et al. (2013) noted that it is harder to remember presenteeism for an employee, they will remember attending work while unwell and or longer hours but unless recently occurred cannot be accurately documented. This results in the nature of the research being exploratory and interpretive.

3.5 Research Strategy

In collection of qualitative research, researchers can employ several methods such as interviews, questionnaire, observation, diary method and documentary analysis. The timeframe, financial implications and researchers experience level determined the method of collection of qualitative data by interviews or questionnaire. An open-ended qualitative

questionnaire was initially selected as a larger sample would be reached within the timeframe however the theorist's recommend interviews to yield descriptive information with the nature of the research being exploratory and interpretive of the individual manager's perceptions of the topic allowing for probing and summary questions.

3.6 Interviews & Collection of Data

Interviews are a method of collecting information through open dialogue. (Hoyle, Harris & Judd 2004, pg 144) state that the questions a interviewer will ask should have "dual goals of motivating the respondent to give full and precise replies while avoiding biases stemming from social desirability, conformity, or other constructs of disinterest". Therefore the interviewer must prepare for the interview and decide on the most appropriate type of interview to conduct in order to support the research paradigm such as structured, semi structured or unstructured. The strategy of choice is to collect primary research data by conducting semi structured face to face interviews to allow the participants to state their view's in full without restrictions, in a semi structured process to allow for consistency in keeping with the interpretive paradigm. The list of questions is attached in Appendix C however diversion from the questions was necessary through probing and summary questions in response to the participant's answers.

Initially contact was made personally with the General Manager of the Hotel where the proposed research topic was discussed. The author stated that the research was for undergraduate research therefore results would not be published externally. If the research were to be published the name of the organisation and respondents withheld. The General Manager granted permission for the identified participants to be contacted with the only restriction of their involvement was to be on a voluntary basis. The individual managers were contacted by email and the interview times were arranged. Invite to interview is attached in Appendix B. The author attempted to develop trust by stating the reasons for the study and that the respondent would not be quoted directly and only identified in the paper by initials. As the author is a colleague of the participants the relationship was relaxed and at ease. The timeframe used to contact the organisation and then individual respondents was generous so to allow sufficient time to collect and subsequently analysis the data. The interviews were held at the Hotel so that the managers would be comfortable in a private meeting room so that the conversation would be private and free from interruptions. All managers are on full time (40 hours per week) permanent contracts.

Transcribed interviews are attached in Appendix D.

Secondary data through archival research was also collected to verify the number of day absence through sickness of the participants and the company absence procedure. A review of the personal notes written during the process created from self reflection. The use of more than one method of collection of data results in methodological triangulation which will give an increased view on the experiences of the participants. (Collis & Hussey, 2009)

3.7 Reliability & Validity

As with all tests, certain criteria must be adhered to such as the test being reliable and valid. (Jackson, 1996, pg 27) “Reliability refers to the accuracy of measurement” in that if the test were to be repeated would the same results be achieved, and “validity is about the extent to which a test measures what it is expected to” The test must also be objective in that the testers must not impose their own views on the results, standardized so under controlled conditions and non discriminatory. Using an interpretative paradigm the author recognises that the results will trend towards a low reliability as if the interviews were repeated with the same participant with the same questions at a later date their views and experiences may have changed as the response is subjective to the experience to date and their opinion within in that particular ‘snap shot of time’. The results should achieve a high level of validity if the author designs the question to allow the research question to be answered.

3.8 Population & Sample

A population is every person under consideration within the research while the sample is the chosen subset of the population (Collis & Hussey, 2009) the population for this study would be all managers working within the hospitality industry. Due to the number of managers sampling will be done. The researcher is based in Dublin so several hotel’s were contacted with one responding. This sample of the population while being readily available to the research as a matter of convenience is also appropriate for the research as the participants have experienced the phenomena being investigated. 13 managers were selected as they were currently employed at the hotel. The final sample was reduced to 7 due to one manager submitting their notice, one being dismissed and 4 not wishing to participate in the research. All participants in the sample are over eighteen years old therefore legal responsibility rests with the individual managers in the decision to take part in the proposed research. This

number is sufficient for this research as previously discussed an interpretive paradigm will use smaller samples.

3.9 Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted with a small number of participants to test the interview questions and responses. It should be noted that the pilot participants were not from the focus group.

3.10 Ethical Considerations

The participants responded on a voluntary basis with no coercion used to take part in the interviews. Information was given to the participant on the general topic and the predicted amount of time frame of the interview. The semi structured questions were not released prior to the interview or the research question so to avoid jeopardising the purpose of the research. The interviews were recorded with the permission of the participants with the outcomes of the interviews transcribed. The participants were offered the opportunity to view the transcribed interview if they so chose prior to commencement of the reporting of the collected data. Anonymity and confidentiality was offered to all participants for reassurance and to contribute to increased honesty with their responses. Other considerations were personal safety of all individuals in the study which was eliminated by using the hotel as a location for the interviews.

3.11 Secondary Research

The organisations absence procedure was reviewed prior to the interviews and attached in Appendix E. The company does not offer sickness pay for employees who are absent from work through illness except in the case of the General Managers discretion. The procedure also includes that all absence is tracked and return to work interviews are conducted for each absence prior to the employee's first shift back at work. The researcher also was granted access to the employee's number of day's absence through illness for 2013 to verify the manager's level of absence.

3.12 Bias

The author is aware that bias is possible therefore will check with the participants during the interview with the responses if the author is concerned with meaning in order to reduce the risk of bias through interpretation of the data.

3.13 Analysing the Data

Collis & Hussey (2009) describe that data reduction is the main step in analysing qualitative data due to the sheer volume of data. This is achieved by the data being grouped and interpreted with all irrelevant data discarded. Through this grouping the researcher may identify common themes. The interviews were recorded by iPhone and transcribed by hand. The transcripts were then analysed line by line with the data then divided into coded segments. Codes were emerged based on themes from the theoretical framework and the interviews. As each segment was allocated a code, a master list of the codes was documented. The data was reduced with the aid of Microsoft Excel. The participant's views were interpreted and with the context of the views assigned a code. The codes then collated onto one worksheet where the data was then organised into the themes that emerged. The themes were then related back to the theoretical framework.

The coding process could have been achieved through the use of software such as NVivo rather than by hand however this was not used by the researcher due to the cost and lack of user knowledge and experience of the software.

3.14 Limitations of Research Design

The author acknowledges that the philosophical assumption being interpretive the research is value-laden and biases are present. (Collis & Hussey 2009) The author was aware while transcribing the interviews that due to the familiarity with the organisation and the participants that bias was evident at times. However the participant's views were evident therefore no adjustment was made. As previously discussed using an interpretative paradigm the author recognises that the results will trend towards a low reliability.

3.15 Conclusion

The findings from the collected data through the interviews, secondary data and authors self reflection are presented and discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter Four – Findings & Discussion

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this research is to aid to the existing knowledge and research of presenteeism from a managerial perspective within the management team of a hotel, to better understand the impact on managerial attitudes and behaviours.

4.2 Secondary Research

No analysis was required with the secondary research as was just to confirm the manager's contract, amount of sick days and company policy.

4.3 Themes and Patterns

Through-out the review of the literature and during the interview process general themes emerged. In order to analyse the findings the body of work was reduced by utilising the themes by coding to display the findings in order to understand the patterns. The results are detailed below.

4.4 Theme 1: Managerial Awareness of Presenteeism as a Construct

Each of the managers received a formal request to participate with in this paper which named the topic of the research, presenteeism. The author had contact with the managers prior to the interview as they were colleagues, and the managers were invited to participate informally at this stage. Each the managers at this stage had asked the question; what is presenteeism?

Summary:

The term presenteeism was new to each of the managers who participated in this paper, once the definition of the term given each manager responded (on review of the author's personal notes) that they had come to work when unwell but was unaware that this was a construct.

The managers also had not considered that working long hours where upon the individual is no longer effective would also be considered presenteeism. That being said unawareness of the construct does not means this is not to say they lacked understanding of the phenomena.

4.5 Theme 2: Attendance at Work While Ill

Each of the seven managers reported that they have attended work while ill citing not letting the other members of the team down as the main reason, then the perception that the sick day would not be seen as genuine and lastly the workload although only two managers made reference to the workload. The manager's attendance record would support the data collected in the interviews with the numbers of days through absence in 2013 listed in the order of the employee interviews as; 0, 1, 0, 0, 1, 2 and 1. With one employee having just one day in four years, this would suggest one of two things. The managers participate to some degree in presenteeism or they are an exceptionally healthy group of people.

The Team Factor:

“I just would feel too guilty. If I don't come in my work will fall to somebody else or someone may have to come in on their day off and I can't bear the thought of someone else having to do that for me.”

“I never call in the thought also of someone else covering for me would kill me.”

“You don't want to let down the others here. I feel it's a team or family element and don't want the others to work that bit harder.”

“I choose to attend because I don't like to let my team down”

“If someone is off then others will have to pick up the slack”

The Genuine Factor:

“I have a fear of calling in sick and would make myself sicker with worry if I did call in sick just in-case people wouldn't believe me”

“even though I know different here I worry that they would not believe me”

“Yes I suppose it did, I would worry if my manager was thinking I was pulling a sicky”

“I did hear them talk about people who they thought were just taking a day off and it wasn’t nice. Some people were not trusted at all and viewed as unreliable. I would not want people to think of me like that.”

The Waiting for Me Factor:

“it takes too long to catch up on missed work as no one will do your role when you’re not there”

“I know they will be waiting when I come back, for the manager the workload is always there.”

Sub-Theme 1:

What was of particular interest was the lack of sick pay was not the main driver for attendance at work while ill. Only two out of seven said that it was a factor with both suggesting that only part of the reason.

“The lack of sick pay is a factor now that I think about it”

“Yes not the only reason but it would be a factor”

One manager went so far as to suggest that the lack of sick pay was the reason for keeping sick days genuine as those on minimum wages could only afford to take the day off if they were really sick.

“having no sick pay is the only way you can be sure that the people are really sick when they take time off.”

Sub-Theme 2:

All the managers were asked if they would implement a sick pay scheme into the business which they responded yes with the exception of one however each of them applied conditions.

“Probably could but should only be paid if the manager thinks should be”

“It would need to be controlled and the company should challenge sickness”

“Only for staff who worked here a long time”

“for some circumstances”

“but only implement after a certain length of service. After 3 years”

“Not at junior level would be a bad idea”

Sub-Theme 3:

The underlining concern being the increase in absence through illness, the managers demonstrated a lack of trust with regard to genuine sick days. Behaviour driven by past experiences from the managers learned while in junior roles, as one of the main themes leading to their attendance at work while ill. The manager responded in favour of their team attending work if they were feeling unwell with the view that the manager would send them home where needed.

The Earn my Trust Factor:

“Yes for sure, with some people you just find it hard to trust as they can call in for something that they really should work through”

“Yes, as it removes the suspicion. Then at least you know they gave it a try”

“Yes “

“I would prefer this and this is mostly the case for my team. For me as a manager this shows me that they did try and are genuinely unable to perform their duties.”

“That’s difficult to say, if just minor I would prefer if they at least tried to come in”

“When it is someone I don’t know very well then yes, once I know their character that would not be necessary”

“That really depends on the person, for some not necessary but there is a few people”

Summary:

The finding for the main cause of presenteeism through attendance at work while unwell differs to the research of Milano (2005), Paton (2009) and Prater & Smith (2011) that cite the primary reason given from the participants for attendance at work while unwell was fear of losing their jobs due to perceived pressure from managers and the current economic climate. The managers did not cite job insecurity although perceived pressure through concern of the illness being viewed as genuine was a factor, the managers primary concern was letting their

team down. These findings emphasised a link with Mac Gregor et al (2008) and Vivian (2012) research where upon the heavy work load makes absence a less viable option.

4.6 Theme 3: Presenteeism by Working Long Hours

Each of the managers interviewed with the exception of one claimed to exceed their contracted hours each week. The manager that worked within their contract was the most senior of the interviewed group which supports O'Neill (2011) theory that "Older hotel managers and managers with greater industry tenure will report significantly lower levels of face time" (O'Neill, 2011, pg 483). This manager did however reference that this did not include;

"I work from home or attend to my emails on the train to and from work" the manager also added that "it has really been in the last number of years that my hours have been normal. In previous jobs god only knows many hours I worked"

This would further support O'Neill (2011) theory however due to the fact there was only one manager in the group with such tenure the data from this study lacks triangulation.

The remaining manager's cited the main reason for the number of hours as industry expectations, career progression and high workloads.

The Face Time Factor:

"Long hours are expected yes, very much so. It would be rare that someone would get away with doing just 40 hours even in the Front Office which is more structured than the F&B department."

"You have to show you are dedicated or no way would you be considered for a manager's job."

"Maybe because there is not enough hours in the 40 hours to get everything done so I definitely need to do over. Doesn't bother me just the way it is."

The author chose to show the reasons cited for the number of hours worked as a pie chart for the ease of interpretation.

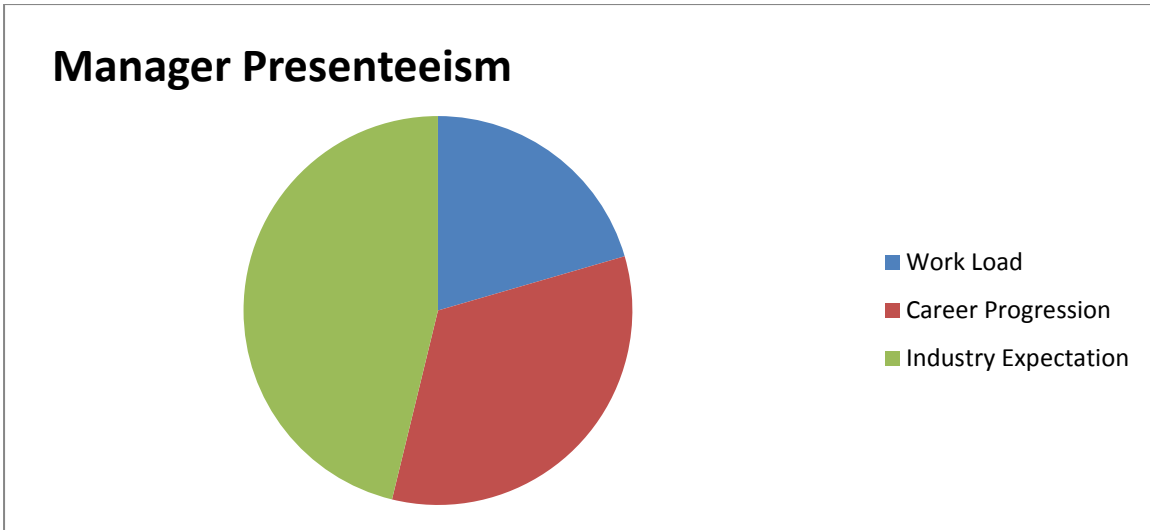


Table 2: Pie Chart Display: Cause of Presenteeism

Sub-Theme 1:

The managers also discussed the contact time in which they participated in outside of working hours. The managers are not contractual required to make them-self available yet each of them do so. The managers were each asked how they felt about this occurrence with only one responding negatively yet with a certain amount of resignation. Several of the managers actively drive this behaviour.

“Yes, but am used to it now although some-times you will be called into work and you see the phone ringing and think oh no.... but goes with the job”

“Yes by my choice and that’s the way I want it. When I leave my shift I say call me if there is anything”

“It’s not a rule but yes, I am responsible for my areas so if they are short staff I must cover”

“it makes more sense to call me”

“My contract does not state that I need to take calls after work but I do make myself available and I would always answer calls after hours”

“I don’t have to be contactable but I am, they call me every weekend”

“No I don’t but I am always on email so yes I do if that makes sense”

“It is my department I want to be called if there is an issue”

As stated by many of the managers that it's not a rule yet they all have participated in this. The author did not notice this pattern at the interview stage, in particular the lack of this being voiced as an intrusion in their personal lives infers to the author that this behaviour is so ingrained to the organisational that out of hours contact on a regular basis is viewed as the norm.

Summary:

The industry expectation does lend itself to presenteeism as dedication and commitment are viewed through hours at work by the managers for themselves and the reference they made to their teams supporting O'Neill's (2011) theory. High workloads were also cited however the workload is driven to an extent by the managers as several of them not only allow contact out of hours but actively encourage the behaviour due to a high level of ownership of their departments. The role has become more in-line with a vocational aspect which echoes Cullen & McLaughlin (2006) rational that the managers feel they are the face of the business which drives these extended hours. This rational and the perception that the face time has led to promotion through industry expectation may drive the managers to view their own team in such a manner and promote the behaviour to meet those expectations. The learned behaviour through the perception of Schein's (1985) third level of the unseen organisational values will then be continued as an on-going cycle by Social Learning Theory.

4.7 Theme 4: Manager Driven

The author tried to understand the manager's behaviour and asked if their direct managers present and past had been supportive towards them. The managers responded that in general their current manager was supportive with regard to absence but that past managers were not. The author recognises that this response may be that they are still within the current employment therefore it would be reasonable to assume that the answers could be affected. One manager did respond that the current direct line manager had made yet the manager seemed unfazed by the following remark;

“In general but there was an incident on the last time I was told I chose the worst day to be sick but they did apologise after, they were just stressed and didn’t mean it but things can get quite intense in this industry.”

The manager’s remarks regarding past line managers were less favourable.

“In a different hotel they were not supportive”

“In previous companies they were not supportive”

“No not always”

“At the start and middle of my career probably not”

“Manager was tough but I don’t mess around and think I am just lucky and don’t really get sick”

Has prior experience shaped the manager perception of presenteeism? During the process of reducing and displaying the data the largest theme to emerge was that of examples of the manager driving presenteeism within their teams and indeed their own behaviour through what they view as correct behaviour.

The following is the manager’s views on their team working additional hours to their contract;

“I would expect the guys in my team to stay on to some extent mostly the supervisors”

“Of course, we are in hospitality and the guests need come first”

“Only up to an hour per day and I like to see people go over the normal and prove they want to work hard”

“I don’t expect my team to work additional hours however I do expect that their duties/tasks are complete”

“No I don’t, I do expect them to complete their duties”

“That’s up to them, I give a reasonable amount of work, it would be up to them to get it done”

“The supervisors yes, they may have to stay but if they want to learn then that is just what they will have to do”

The following is the managers views on their teams attending work rather than being absent;

“I would expect them to come in if was a common cold etc but not if really sick”

“I want to say yes, of course that’s my judgement something like a migraine will effect ability to provide good customer service and meet standards bit other things they should just be able to work through”

“Yes if not serious they should work no reason not to”

“I would prefer this and this is mostly the case for my team”

“if just minor I would prefer if they at least tried to come in”

“Same as me, if you can work then fine”

“If just a sore throat or something small”

The managers it would seem drive presenteeism through longer hours and attendance at work while unwell if they deem the illness minor.

Summary:

Two of the managers did not expect hours over the employees contract however they did mention that there was an expectation of completion of duties which pushes the decision back on the employees time management. This could be perceived by the employee of an expectation to stay. The expectation to attend work while unwell if the illness minor can create unwritten expectations as individuals will perceive severity differently and so an employee very well may perceive pressure to participate in presenteeism as the managers may not view the illness as genuine if they have not seen the employee and the manager made the decision to send them home.

4.8 Theme 5: Managerial Understanding of Presenteeism

Each of the managers was asked if they considered the impact of presenteeism in order to determine their knowledge of presenteeism and how that would impact their behaviour and attitude. This was the last question asked so that the managers could reflect on all their prior responses.

Interviewee one responded that they considered the impact as illness could then be more easily contracted to other members of the team and that customers service may be impacted if you are tired from working extended hours but then added;

“Saying all that, I would always come in so thinking about it doesn’t change my actions”

Interviewee two stated;

“I suppose I don’t and I do drive and push my team but I’m not asking them to do anything that I haven’t done myself and they could choose to work in another industry”

Interviewee three’s view the impact from a service point of view with interviewee five resigned to the situation remaining as is. Interviewee’s six did not see why there would be an impact and interviewee seven did not view the situation as a negative, rather that the situation demonstrates teamwork.

Interviewee four did acknowledge the impact of presenteeism stating ***“It can cause fatigue, general unwell being and undue stress which can bring down staff moral and in turn silly mistakes are made”*** but they then added that, ***“the business would be in a worse position if there was a lot of absence and that the team would start to resent each other and we would be so behind in our work load that catching up would be far more stressful.”*** To these managers the alternative to presenteeism is viewed as more detrimental situation to the business.

Summary:

Given the responses from the managers the impact of presenteeism is not generally considered, or if it is considered the view point is towards the standards and level of service provided. These results are in agreement with Prater & Smith (2011) where the managers do not perceive that the pressure they are placing on the members of their team.

4.9 Conclusion

The results from the managerial perspective do differ in elements to the body of existing research. In that the cause of presenteeism is not primarily financial through job security or loss of earnings but rather industry expectation, career progression, ownership of department and high levels of team loyalty.

Chapter Five - Conclusion

5.1 Managerial Perspective to Presenteeism

Each of the managers who participated within this study attended work while unwell, work longer hours than contracted and were available to be contactable outside of work hours. The reasons cited for this behaviour were; not letting the team down, workload and career progression rather than job insecurity as found in the research from Milano (2005), Paton (2009) and Prater & Smith (2011).

The managers did not all state that they would expect additional hours over their shift from the employees but those that did not had a clear expectation that all duties must be completed prior to the employee ending the shift therefore pushing the onus on the employee. The managers also held the common view of attendance at work in lieu of absence if at all possible. The industry itself could be the factor for the difference to the attitude and behaviours of the managers compared to an employee perspective. The managerial view with regard to their team's presenteeism demonstrates commitment and dedication to the business as well as team solidarity. This compliments the findings from O'Neill (2011) of commitment being viewed by the company through amount face time.

This attitude and behaviour towards presenteeism has in part been attributed to past experience and perceived industry expectation linking the theory with practice of the learned behaviour through built in norms associated with the hospitality industry indicative of Schein's (1985) Culture Model of the unseen organisational values. These behaviours are then promoted and utilised as positive reinforcement through Social Learning Theory. Presenteeism is not viewed by the managers as a negative but rather a business necessity and little consideration given to the impact on the employee other than those who can keep the pace will succeed within the industry. The situation is very matter of fact and seemingly unchanging regardless of the implications.

The elements of difference in the findings of this paper compared to the body of research reviewed would be expected to a certain degree due to the different perspectives of the employee and manager. Where the managers have suggested that they have some

expectations of presenteeism shows the flip side detailed in the body of existing research of perception of pressure felt by the employee from the organisations.

5.2 Relationship of Results to the Research Question & Objectives

The research question for this paper is; how awareness of presenteeism positively or negatively impacts managerial attitudes and or behaviours within a hospitality context.

In answering the research question the author must first answer the specific objectives.

- 1) To ascertain managerial awareness of presenteeism as a construct.
- 2) To ascertain managerial understanding of presenteeism
- 3) To explore how the managers understanding of presenteeism impacts their attitudes and behaviours

The managers did not display awareness of presenteeism as a construct however they did display some understanding of the phenomena from a business stance of expectation and necessarily rather than from employee well being. The managers displayed high levels of ownership of their departments the long hours and contact with the business was self motivated. Cullen & McLaughlin (2006) found that this was evident in managers within the hospitality industry, that they are driven by a need to be continually present. This perspective of their understanding has impacted their attitudes and behaviours to such a degree they now are the key drivers within the business.

In answering the research question this author has found that the awareness of presenteeism has negatively impacted the managerial attitudes, their own behaviours and their expectations for their team's behaviours within this context at the expense of employee well-being as researched by Demerouti et al. (2008) that presenteeism can lead to exhaustion and depersonalisations for an employee. However for the managers their perspective of presenteeism would view these behaviours as positive.

5.3 Limitations of the Research

This research is from one perspective within one organisation in one context so the findings are limited to that view point and are not a generalisation of a managerial perspective of presenteeism. The findings may also be conservative as Gosselin et al. (2013) suggest that the levels of presenteeism discussed would not be as accurate as it is harder to remember

incidents of presenteeism rather than absenteeism and so the results could be more widespread than indicated in the responses from the managers.

Reflecting on the data collected from this research the author questions if the design of the questions fully allowed for the research question to be answered in depth with regard to the managers understanding of presenteeism. The author believes that the attitudes and behaviours of the managers are far more complex than the data collected has shown. This is a direct result of flawed questions. The style of the questions was slightly restrictive and closed therefore not reflecting a true interpretive paradigm. The responses to the questions posed were not sufficiently descriptive for the purpose of the research. In addition, opportunities for probing questions were missed where further expansion of the managers view point could have been explored. This is due to the inexperience of the author in question design and interview technique. The author's prior relationship with the participants was also evident during the interview process. It should also be noted that all participants are still within the employment of the organisation and so opinion given could reflect that fact to a degree.

5.4 Relevance of Study

The concept of presenteeism has been significantly less researched than its counterpart absenteeism in particular from a managerial perspective. In finding out the managers perception of presenteeism and why if they encourage the phenomena whether knowingly or unknowingly is to add to the existing knowledge and on-going research of presenteeism in order to aid organisations to develop better tools in the training of their managers and the impact of the managerial style and managers as role models in order to best reduce presenteeism within an organisation.

5.5 Further Research

As a result of looking into this interesting topic it would be of interested to further develop this research.

- 1) How the perceptions vary across departments within the hotel context. To determine if that is the case across different hotels such as the Food & Beverage Department show similar or different results in different hotels and likewise with all departments.
- 2) A greater mix of junior, middle and senior managers within a hotel context would also be beneficial to test if face time decreases with tenure.

- 3) Other sections of the hospitality industry such as restaurants, cafes, bar or retail to find if similar trends were evident among the managerial attitudes and behaviours.
- 4) The employee view within the hotel context to determine the gap between the employee and managerial perception.

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Appendices

Appendix A- Formal Request to General Manager for Company X

Appendix B- Email Invite to Individual Participants

Appendix C- Interview Questions

Appendix D- Transcribed Interviews

Appendix E – Organisations Absence Procedure

Appendix A- Formal Request to General Manager for Company X

Name:

Address:

Date: 22nd April 2013

Dear X,

As previously discussed with you I am currently undertaking a dissertation for fulfilment of a BA (Hons) in Human Resource Management with the National College of Ireland. The topic for my dissertation is Presenteeism in the Hotel Industry. This requires primary research which I hope to conduct by face to face interviews with the management team within the hotel as they may have experienced it through-out their career.

This is my formal request to ask if you would permit me to conduct my research. The name and participants of the company will be withheld in the dissertation and all participation would be on a voluntary basis. The interviews will be held on site for convenience of the participants, during a quiet period so not to interfere with the day's business.

All data collected will be made available for viewing prior to submission.

Many thanks for your consideration.

Kind regards,

Genevieve O'Callaghan

Appendix B- Email Invite to Individual Participants

From: Genevieve O'Callaghan

Date: 10th June 2013

To:

Subject: Interview Request

Dear X,

As previously discussed with you I am currently undertaking a dissertation for fulfilment of a BA (Hons) in Human Resource Management with the National College of Ireland. The topic for my dissertation is Presenteeism in the Hotel Industry. This requires primary research which I hope to conduct by face to face interviews with participants who may have experienced it.

The General Manager has granted permission for me to contact you with this request as the name and participants of the company will be withheld in the dissertation. Interviews should last no longer than 45 minutes and no one else will be present. The interview can be at any time at your convenience. I hope to record the interview on an iPhone so to transcribe the interview afterwards.

I would be delighted if you would agree to participate and ask you to respond to this email in order to discuss this further.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Kind regards,

Genevieve

Appendix C- Interview Questions

What attracted you to work within the hospitality industry?

To gauge what motivated the employee to work in the hospitality industry and if the position was a career or just a job to pay bills as this could influence an individual's work ethic.

How long have you worked within the Industry?

To gauge the length of service within the industry and so the individual's experience

On average how many hours do you work each week?

To gauge on average if the manager exceeds their contract hours (presenteeism through long hours at work where an individual is no longer effective)

If you exceed your contracted hours- what is the reason?

To gauge what motivates the manager to exceed their contract

Do you have to be contactable by phone when you are not on shift, if so how do you feel about that?

To gauge if this is a requirement by the company or driven by the individual

Do you feel longer hours are expected in this industry, can you give examples (can be over the course of your career and not just in your current role)?

To understand if this behaviour and if had been reinforced by prior experiences

Do you feel that you would have still been promoted to a managerial position if you had not worked extra hours over the years?

The employee's perception of the correlation between longer hours and promotion

Have you ever attended work while sick, if so why?

To gauge if the manager participates in presenteeism and what drives this behaviour

On average how many sick days do you have a year?

Just as a reference point

Is the lack of sick pay a factor for you in not being absent from work?

To determine if the managers presenteeism is financially driven

Do you think companies should pay sick pay? If so how would you implement it into the company?

To explore the managers views on absence polices

Is your direct line manager supportive on the occasions you have called in sick, what are you going to do the next time you are sick?

To gauge if the behaviour is influenced from above

In previous companies were your direct line managers supportive?

To gauge if behaviour has been influenced by prior experience throughout career

Do you expect a member of your team to work additional hours each week over their contract (not be paid for) If so why?

Is the manager is driving presenteeism within their department? (Query continuing cycle)

Do you expect a member of your team to come into work when sick if you felt the illness was not severe?

As above

Would you prefer if a member of your team came into work and you then decided to send them home?

To understand the managers personal opinion and stance on genuine/or not, absence through illness

Do you consider the impact of working long hours or working while sick can have?

The manager may participate in presenteeism and drive the concept within their teams but this question was to gauge if the manager considered the impact of these actions on the organisation and employees within.

Appendix D- Transcribed Interviews

Interview One

Interviewee: CM

Job Title: Front Office Assistant Manager

Hours of Work: Non Standard

Date: 05/07/13

GO'C: What attracted you to work within the hospitality industry?

CM: I actually got into it by accident to be honest, I was working in the electronics industry and the whole industry was going bust so got into hospitality through a friend of mine so I didn't go to college, that's how I ended up working on Front Office in hotels. Thing I like about it is you are not stuck in an office all day you get to meet people. So answering your question (laughs), totally by accident.

GO'C: How long have you worked within the Industry?

CM: 10 years now.

GO'C: On average how many hours do you work each week?

CM: I work about 50 ish hours.

GO'C: So you exceed your contracted hours, what is the reason for these additional hours?

CM: Maybe because there is not enough hours in the 40 hours to get everything done so I definitely need to do over.

GO'C: Does that bother you?

CM: Not really just the way it is.

GO'C Do you think that it's down to the workload or your time management?

CM: I would probably say a bit of both.

GO'C: Do you have to be contactable by phone when you are not on shift, if so how do you feel about that?

CM: Yes, but am used to it now although some-times you will be called into work and you see the phone ringing and think oh no.... but goes with the job.

GO'C: Do you feel longer hours are expected in this industry, can be over the course of your career and not just in your current role?

CM: Long hours are expected yes, very much so. It would be rare that someone would get away with doing just 40 hours even in the Front Office which is more structured than the F&B department. There will always be a need to stay back to finish something or a guest related issue.

GO'C: Do you feel that you would have still been promoted to a managerial position if you had not worked extra hours over the years?

CM: No, you have to show you are dedicated or no way would you be considered for a manager's job.

GO'C: Have you ever attended work while sick?

CM: I have attended work while sick as I can't stand the thought of ringing in sick. I just would feel too guilty. If I don't come in my work will fall to somebody else or someone may have to come in on their day off and I can't bear the thought of someone else having to do that for me.

GO'C: Have you every call in sick?

CM: Not here no.

GO'C: As well as feeling guilty about letting down your team is part of you lack of sick days down to the company does not pay sick pay and so you would not be paid for the time you were absent from work?

CM: The lack of sick pay is a factor now that I think about it, I think the company should pay sick pay to an extent say a long term member of staff is out say once a year or something beyond their control but not for something like the common cold or flu.

GO'C: Do you think a sick pay scheme would increase levels of sickness?

CM: Probably could but should only be paid if the manager thinks should be. Managers know their teams and the individuals.

GO'C: I know you have had no sick days in this employment but do you think that your line manager would be supportive?

CM: Yes, well I hope she would be.

GO'C: In previous companies were your direct line managers supportive?

CM: In a different hotel they were not supportive, I went to work with a tooth abscess and my face was so swollen. Out to here (indicated with hands the extent of swelling) I was giving my manager notice for the next day as I had booked an appointment with the dentist which I had thought was way over the requirements as it 4 hour notice before your shift to be absent and this was like 24 hours. She was not supportive at all and was not going to let me. She tried to guilt me into changing my appointment but it just was not possible as the dentist didn't do appointments after office hours and I was in so much pain I didn't want to delay it any further. I was so surprised at her reaction as I had never had a sick day with the company she did eventually back down but it's the industry way they try to guilt you into it.

GO'C: Did that influence your decision the next time you were sick?

CM: There wasn't a next time so yes it did. I have a fear of calling in sick and would make myself sicker with worry if I did call in sick just in-case people wouldn't believe me, even though I never call in the thought also of someone else covering for me would kill me. I suppose I feel this way as from the start I have been guilted into it; in every hotel.

GO'C: I know you work extra hours but do you expect a member of your team to work additional hours each week over their contract, I mean where they are not paid for the hours?

CM: I would expect the guys in my team to stay on to some extent mostly the supervisors but some things they can pass over to me or the next shift as there is always someone on duty 7am-3pm, 3pm-11pm and 11pm-7am. So I do try to allow them to go but most times it's pushing them to go as they have stayed on to long as not really fair on them.

GO'C: So why is it not fair on them but it's fair on you to stay?

CM: I know not fair on me either but I don't want them to be resentful.

GO'C: Do you expect a member of your team to come into work when sick if you felt the illness was not severe?

CM: With my team I would expect them to come in if it was a common cold etc but not if really sick and it would depend on the person if I would believe them or not. You do know by your team.

GO'C: So for some members of you team going by your previous comment you may not believe them would you prefer if they came into work and you then decided to send them home?

CM: Yes for sure, with some people you just find it hard to trust as they can call in for something that they really should just work through. I try to be supportive though and we do return to work interviews here for every absence so to make sure they are fit to come back.

GO'C: Do you consider the impact of working long hours or working while sick can have?

CM: I do consider the impact cos if you are really sick you will pass on to the other members of the team and working long hours as well your customer service will not be up to standard after a 12/13 hour day but it is annoying when people call in for a cold or headache. Saying all that, I would always come in so thinking about it doesn't change my actions.

GO'C: Thank you for your time.

Interview Two

Interviewee: JP

Job Title: Duty Manager

Hours of Work: Non Standard

Date & Time: 05/07/13

GO'C: What attracted you to work within the hospitality industry?

JP: I feel as though my personality suited the industry, I knew what good service was so even when I was young at the start. My training as a supervisor in Burger King kicked started it all when I was in school and that was the reason I chose not to go to college and was given the opportunity to go into a restaurant full time. It was each for me to jump into, I always felt I was a good judge of character and I can tell by a word or a look what a guest wants. I can anticipate what the guest wants to enjoy the experience.

GO'C: So you know what the customer wants and needs before they do?

JP: Yes exactly. Which is so important in this job.

GO'C: How long have you worked within the Industry?

JP: 15 years now.

GO'C: On average how many hours do you work each week?

JP: I was working around 55-60 hours per week but I recently attended a Failte Ireland course which made me realise I could do all the hours in a week and there would still be work to do so it taught me to use my own skills and too streamline my hours so now only work around 50 hours a week.

GO'C: What was driving you to work this number of hours?

JP: From my experience it is, I mean if something comes up a situation I want to be managing it myself. I am the right person for that job with my experience and I want to handle it. So regardless if it is a broken toilet or getting someone a taxi or what-ever I know I could hand that over but they won't give the personal experience that I will give. It's what I want when I'm a guest. When I do leave I know I have kept my friends and family waiting

but I know I've done the right thing. I take pride in my work and have no time for someone who does not. Just think why bother if you are not going to give 100%.

GO'C: My understanding is that you are driving this?

JP: I drive myself not the company I won't let my standards drop I also feel if I show other employees that if I do it then it will trickle down the ranks and they will take a leaf out of my book. Being a role model in that they will see if a manager is doing it I will too.

GO'C: So you actively encourage employees to stay on?

JP: Of course, we are in hospitality and the guests needs come first.

GO'C: Do you have to be contactable by phone when you are not on shift, if so how do you feel about that?

JP: Yes by my choice and that's the way I want it. When I leave my shift I say call me if there is anything. Last week I was called back as the night's team needed my support and it made them feel more comfortable as I was making the call on the decision. It's all about supporting each other.

GO'C: Don't you worry about the intrusion on your life and work life balance?

JP: No, I know the hotel will still run without me bit I personally feel better even with other roles in other companies I always feel that the place is mine and I have personal attachments. I have put in the hours, I know every single inch of this place and I think I know it more than anyone else as I am a very hands on manager.

GO'C: Do you feel longer hours are expected in this industry, can be over the course of your career and not just in your current role?

JP: Thinking over my career yes I think so but it's so normal for me now that I don't give it much thought.

GO'C: Do you feel that you would have still been promoted to a managerial position if you had not worked extra hours over the years?

JP: No, why would anyone get promoted without showing commitment and desire to succeed.

GO'C: Talking about longer hours leads me on too; have you ever attended work while sick?

JP: Of course, I do have some health issues and with the unsocial hours and the amount of running around and no set meal times but I just work through even when I'm ill but will take a back seat role maybe on that day.

GO'C: Why come in at all if you are not well?

JP: (Laughs) maybe a guy thing and just being a bit macho and don't want to admit I'm sick but also even if I stay home I'm still going to be sick not going to make me feel any better. I know the law says that I shouldn't be here but if I'm presentable and it's not a stomach thing where I could make my guests or staff sick I feel I can come in and still do my job.

GO'C: How many occasions have you called in sick?

JP: Once this year and twice last year but only for one day on each of those occasions.

GO'C: That is very little, can I ask is it because the company does not pay sick pay and so you would not be paid for the time you were absent from work?

JP: For me, know. I don't work for the money. Does not drive me at all. Time off and free time is what I find special which I know is contrary to me staying longer hours. I know it's a vicious circle that gets me but I will still do it over and over again.

GO'C: Do you think companies should pay sick pay? If so how would you implement it into the company?

JP: From past experience when there has been sick pay people have taken advantage of it. It would need to be controlled and the company should challenge sickness which every company needs to do better. But if you had proper doctor's notes it can work and would be a good benefit to say we have.

GO’C: Was your direct line manager supportive on the occasions that you called in sick?

JP: In general but there was an incident on the last time I was told I chose the worst day to be sick but they did apologise after, they were just stressed and didn’t mean it but things can get quite intense in this industry.

GO’C: Would that kinds of comment influence your decision the next time you were sick?

JP: No I don’t think so, I know what duties need to be done so I know they will just be waiting when I come back, for the manager the workload is always there but you don’t want to let down the others here. I feel it’s a team or family element and don’t want the others to work that bit harder.

GO’C: Do you expect a member of your team to work if they are sick?

JP: Honest answer?

GO’C: Yes please.

JP: I want to say yes, of course that’s my judgement something like a migraine will effect ability to provide good customer service and meet the standards but other things they should be able to work through. That’s just how I feel.

GO’C: Would you prefer if a member of your team came into work and you then decided to send them home?

JP: Yes as it removes the suspicion, and then at least you know they gave it a try and didn’t want to let you down. That would be the ideal case.

GO’C: Do you consider the impact of working long hours or working while sick can have?

JP: I suppose I don’t and I do drive and push my team but I’m not asking them to do anything that I haven’t done myself and they could choose to work in another industry. Funny when

you start talking about this you really think what you. But at the end the focus is the guest, guest and guest.

GO'C: Thank you for your time.

Interview Three

Interviewee: KW:

Job Title: Food & Beverage Assistant Manager

Hours of Work: Semi Non Standard (7am – 3pm with some flexibility)

Date & Time: 05/07/13

GO'C: What attracted you to work within the hospitality industry?

KW: Actually I had just moved to Ireland I used to work as a PA but a waitressing position was the only role I could get but I loved that I was not stuck in one place and got to interact with so many people and it helped improve my English. I worked really hard and got promoted in every role so when I came here I was hired as a supervisor but in 6 months I was promoted to F&B Assistant Manager

GO'C: How long have you worked within the Industry?

KW: Since I came to Ireland so 3 and half years.

GO'C: On average how many hours do you work each week?

KW: At the moment 40-45 but I think that is because I work the morning shifts and so is quite structured. I manage breakfast which is finished by 10am and then lunch which is over by 3pm so I can be so organised to get all my duties done. Some weeks I can work a lot more if we have something special on but that would be very rare.

GO'C: You have only worked here for a year what were your hours like in your previous roles?

KW: My previous job I worked 65 hours per week which was ok as I was paid by the hour but they did not like that but they needed me so they promoted me which meant they could put me on a salary so I worked the same hours but got paid for 40 hours. That was hard but it gave me a supervisory title and so it meant I could then apply for this job.

GO'C: That was a-lot of hours, why so many?

KW: The place was not as organised as here and you were not allowed to leave until everything was done. Plus I have to finish my duties I can't leave because it would just make

the next day harder until I know I could not catch up and the level of service and standards would be very bad. You just can't.

GO'C Do you think you were being exploited?

KW: I know I was but it was worth it to get to my position now and was not just for my manager was for my team. We all help each other.

GO'C: Do you have to be contactable by phone when you are not on shift, if so how do you feel about that?

KW: It is not a rule but yes, I am responsible for my areas so if they are short staff I must cover. Also I know my areas so others may have a query so they can call me and know the answer very quickly or spend a lot of time that they don't have looking for the answer so it makes more sense to call me.

GO'C: Do you feel longer hours are expected in this industry, can be over the course of your career and not just in your current role?

KW: Yes but some companies only expect some which is fine but others too much.

GO'C: Do you feel that you would have still been promoted to a managerial position if you had not worked extra hours over the years?

KW: No it was the long hours that made it cheaper for them to promote me.

GO'C: Talking about longer hours leads me on too; have you ever attended work while sick?

KW: Yes I can't call in sick; I would have to be in hospital not to come to work. My job is important to me I don't want to miss time and not get everything done. It's my responsibility.

GO'C: Do you every call in sick?

KW: Once in my last job and they were so bad with me.

GO'C: Does that influence your decision to not call in sick here?

KW: Yes, even though I know different here I worry that they would not believe me

GO'C: Do you think sick pay is a factor?

KW: Not for me,

GO'C: Do you think companies should pay sick pay? If so how would you implement it into the company?

KW: Only for staff who worked here for a long time should get sick pay or there would be an increase in the amount of staff sickness.

GO'C: Do you expect a member of your team to work additional hours each week over their contract (not be paid for) If so why?

KW: Only up to an hour per day, can't just finish exactly on time as the business can change so fast and I like to see people go over the normal and prove they want to work hard but not more than that as it may impact their level of service and that is the most important.

GO'C: Do you expect a member of your team to come into work when sick if you felt the illness was not severe?

KW: Yes if not serious they should work no reason not to. I will always check that my team are okay so if they finding the day harder as time passes then I will send them home. I think if they are just off for a day or two it's not very serious and they just didn't want to work and I may not trust them because they lied to me.

GO'C: So for you it is better for your team to come into work and go home early if they need to?

KW: Yes.

GO'C: Do you consider the impact of working long hours or working while sick can have?

KW: Just that service is not affected, but I will look after my team. If they are tired I will always do my best to support them.

GO'C: Thank you for your time.

Interview Four

Interviewee: JW

Job Title: Front Office Manager

Hours of Work: Non Standard

Date & Time: 07/07/13

GO'C: What attracted you to work within the hospitality industry?

JW: I always liked to work with people as I found it very interesting as everyday brings a new challenge and a chance to meet new people from all over the world. Members of my family also work in the hotel industry which I think played a role in my choice.

GO'C: How long have you worked within the Industry?

JW: Since I was a student so around 9 years.

GO'C: On average how many hours do you work each week?

JW: I work approximately 50-55 hours per week.

GO'C: That means you exceed your contracted hours by 10-15 hrs ever week. What is the reason for the need for all of these additional hours?

JW: The main reason for working extra hours is, as a HOD (Head of Department) you work in many different areas and are required to manage different departments on occasion. Because of this there is not enough time to look after your own responsibilities in your own department therefore you need to stay back in order to ensure that your own department is not suffering.

GO'C: Can you explain how you are required to manage different departments?

JW: All HOD's will work one or two Duty Manager shifts a week and even if I am not on a DM shift if something happens which it will due to the nature of the business (laughs) then if the DM on shift is busy then as a senior manager I would need to manage the situation.

GO'C Do you think if you didn't work DM shifts could you manage your department within your contracted hours?

JW: em, probably not, something will always come up we are a 24/7 business and we are working with the general public so all on track all day but 5 minutes before you are going to leave an issue could come up so.....

GO'C: Do you have to be contactable by phone when you are not on shift, if so how do you feel about that?

JW: My contract does not state that I need to take calls after work but I do make myself available and I would always answer calls after hours. I do this to ensure that no other department has issues and if I know that I can help one of my colleagues. However honestly I do think I would be expected to take calls.

GO'C: Do you encourage them to call you?

JW: Yeah I would much rather fix an issue as it happens as easier at that stage plus also minimises the upset to our guests. I don't mind never really takes that much time, not a problem for me. Would be so much worse to come into a big mess the next day don't you think?

GO'C: Do you feel longer hours are expected in this industry, can be over the course of your career and not just in your current role?

JW: I do feel longer hours are expected in this industry. The main reason for this is that business levels can fluctuate quite drastically in minutes so you are never sure when it will be busy or when it will be quite. I think this is a given no matter what your role or position is within the company.

GO'C: Do you feel that you would have still been promoted to a managerial position if you had not worked extra hours over the years?

JW: I do think it played a factor in my promotion. I think on occasion working extra hour's shows dedication and commitment in ensuring all tasks are completed. It's a place where you have to care. Our product is not just a building, like facilities but customer service so if you don't get that you will not do well.

GO'C: Talking about longer hours leads me on too; have you ever attended work while sick?

JW: Yes I have attended work plenty of times whilst unwell.

GO'C: Why?

JW: I choose to attend because I don't like to let my team down and if I am still able to do my job without damaging my health then I don't believe in calling in sick

GO'C: Do you every call in sick?

JW: I have only called in sick once within my 4 years working for the company.

GO'C: That is very little, can I ask is it because the company does not pay sick pay and so you would not be paid for the time you were absent from work?

JW: Sick pay not a factor for me, plus the policy states that at the manager discretion so if I was out I think I would most likely be paid. So no

GO'C: Do you think companies should pay sick pay? If so how would you implement it into the company?

JW: I don't think any company should pay sick pay as it encourages an influx of people calling in sick for minor issues. I do however think that for some circumstances sick pay should be given for example major injury or sickness. For managers and HOD's it should be at the general or deputy general managers discretion as instead of paying sick pay they should pay this time with back with time in lieu for the extra hours that are built up.

GO'C: So you believe a sick pay scheme would increase levels of sickness?

JW: Definitely.

GO'C: Was your direct line manager supportive on the one occasion that you called in sick?

JW: Yes, like I said was only once but there was no issue.

GO'C: In previous companies were your direct line managers supportive?

JW: I generally don't call in sick but in previous companies they were not supportive.

GO'C: Did that influence your decision the next time you were sick?

JW: Yes I suppose it did, I would worry if my manager was thinking I was pulling a sicky.

GO'C: Do you expect a member of your team to work additional hours each week over their contract (not be paid for) If so why?

JW: I don't expect my team to work additional hours however I do expect that their duties/tasks are completed. If they can't complete their duties and it is not a duty of urgent importance I will tell them to leave it for another time. If it is urgent I do expect them to work after time. I don't think that they should be paid for it because it is a part of their job description and duties and if important tasks are not complete it is due to their own poor time management.

GO'C: So you drive ownership of their roles?

JW: Very much so, it is the only way to ensure that all duties are completed everyone in my team must be able to hold their own. Or it just doesn't work. I just don't have time to carry their work load.

GO'C: Do you expect a member of your team to come into work when sick if you felt the illness was not severe?

JW: Luckily my team rarely call in sick and when they do 99% of the time I know that it is genuine due to the years of service and dedication they have to their position and their team members. If they are genuine sick I would prefer they did not come in.

GO'C: Would you prefer if a member of your team came into work and you then decided to send them home?

JW: I would prefer this and this is mostly the case for my team. For me as a manager this shows me that they did try and are genuinely unable to perform their duties.

GO'C: Do you consider the impact of working long hours or working while sick can have?

JW: I do think in the long run working extra hours and working whilst sick can have a major impact on the business. It can cause fatigue, general unwell being and undue stress. These factors cause issues as it brings down staff moral and in turn silly mistakes are made but I think the business would be in a worse position if there was a lot of absence and that the team would then start to resent each other and we would be so behind in our work load that catching up would be far more stressful.

GO'C: Thank you for your time.

Interview Five

Interviewee: VD

Job Title: Revenue Manager

Hours of Work: Standard

Date & Time: 07/07/13

GO'C: What attracted you to work within the hospitality industry?

VD: I studied in college on the recommendation of teacher. I did a placement in second year in a Hotel and stayed there for 7 years.

GO'C: How long have you worked within the Industry?

VD: 17 Years

GO'C: On average how many hours do you work each week?

VD: 55 hours give or take

GO'C: That means you exceed your contracted hours. What is the reason for the need for all of these additional hours?

VD: At the moment we are under staffed but generally down to business demands.

GO'C: Do you have to be contactable by phone when you are not on shift, if so how do you feel about that?

VD: I don't have to be contactable but I am, they call me every weekend.

GO'C: Do you feel longer hours are expected in this industry, can be over the course of your career and not just in your current role?

VD: Yes, they are expected. Your line manager will make comments that you're leaving early when you leave on time. I have put in a PMS System in 2 different properties and longer days and extra days are expected, whatever it takes to complete the task.

GO'C: Do you feel that you would have still been promoted to a managerial position if you had not worked extra hours over the years?

VD: I would have hoped so.

GO'C: Talking about longer hours leads me on too; have you ever attended work while sick?

VD: Yes.

GO'C: Why?

VD: Yes, I don't get paid for a sick day. I would go in as the team would be under pressure and it takes too long to catch up on missed work as no one will do your role when you're not there

GO'C: Do you every call in sick?

VD: I day

GO'C: That is very little, can I ask is it because the company does not pay sick pay and so you would not be paid for the time you were absent from work?

VD: Yes not the only reason but it would be a factor.

GO'C: Do you think companies should pay sick pay? If so how would you implement it into the company?

VD: Yes I do, but I would only implement it after a certain length of service. After 2 years?

GO'C: Was your direct line manager supportive on the one occasion that you called in sick?

VD: Yes they are supportive.

GO'C: In previous companies were your direct line managers supportive?

VD: No not always

GO'C: Did that influence your decision the next time you were sick?

VD: If I could walk I would always go in.

GO'C: Do you expect a member of your team to work additional hours each week over their contract (not be paid for) If so why?

VD: No, I don't. I do expect them to complete their duties within their contracted hours. Revenue is more in line with office hours, like the HR department and accounts. The team don't want to stay.

GO'C: Do you expect a member of your team to come into work when sick if you felt the illness was not severe?

VD: That's difficult to say, if just minor I would prefer if they at least tried to come in.

GO'C: Do you consider the impact of working long hours or working while sick can have?

VD: Yes I can get tired but I can still do my job. It's not going to change so not much point in over-thinking the situation.

GO'C: Thank you for your time.

Interview Six

Interviewee: AON

Job Title: Sales & Marketing Manager

Hours of Work: Standard

Date & Time: 07/07/13

GO'C: What attracted you to work within the hospitality industry?

AON: It was not planned, I studied Sales & Marketing and when I finished that I got a job in a Hotel in the Sales and Marketing team and worked up from there. My first job got me my second and then I went to work for a group of Hotels. Then I had made so many contacts that if I left the Industry I would have to start over again so I stayed.

GO'C: How long have you worked within the Industry?

AON: Many many years, I'm not going to give you a number (laughs)

GO'C: On average how many hours do you work each week?

AON: I work around 40 but I would do a bit of work at home or attend to my emails on the train to and from work if that counts?

GO'C: So in general you work within your contracted hours?

AON: Yes in general.

GO'C: Was this always the case over the course of your career as this department would trend towards office hours?

AON: No not at all, it has really been in the last number of years that my hours have been normal. In previous jobs god only knows how many hours I worked. Definitely much better now.

GO'C: Do you have to be contactable by phone when you are not on shift, if so how do you feel about that?

AON: That's hard to say, No I don't but I am always on email so yes I do if that makes sense? I don't mind the emails but I would not go into work anymore after hours unless something went really wrong.

GO'C: Do you feel longer hours are expected in this industry, can be over the course of your career and not just in your current role?

AON: Yes, the business is just so busy and things can change in a flash. Plus you are dealing with so many different groups and departments internal and external that it can take time to get all that organised. You have to be seen to be proactive and people that only did the basic never did well in the business.

GO'C: Do you feel that you would have still been promoted to a managerial position if you had not worked extra hours over the years?

AON: Probably not, I always took pride in my work and I am very good at my job but if you don't have the commitment why would you get promoted. My assistant now is staying late to finish projects so too keep ahead of the curve and I have noticed that. Why would I promote someone now if they didn't get my attention and demonstrate their ambition.

GO'C: Talking about longer hours leads me on too; have you ever attended work while sick?

AON: Yes

GO'C: Why?

AON: It depends on how sick I feel; if just minor I will come in (pause) doesn't everyone. I know myself if I am very sick I won't. If I can work I will.

GO'C: How many days in general per year would you miss work through sickness?

AON: Can remember off the top of my head but each year probably three max except a few years ago I was out for two weeks due to an injury but I worked from home each day and with sales you can do that. I just couldn't physically get to work.

GO'C: Do you think companies should pay sick pay? If so how would you implement it into the company?

AON: Not at junior level would be a bad idea, maybe when you have length of service but in general that is what happens. I have been paid for the one or two days as they know it's genuine.

GO'C: Was your direct line manager supportive on the one occasion that you called in sick?

AON: Yes no issue, why would she doubt me I have a very good record.

GO'C: In previous companies were your direct line managers supportive?

AON: At the start and middle of my career probably not, but I was really never sick and I never called in just for a day off or hangover days so I suppose I built up the trust factor.

GO'C: Did that influence your decision the next time you were sick?

AON: I would have thought about it, I never really had many issues over the years but I did hear them talk about people who they thought were just taking a day off and it wasn't nice. Some people were not trusted at all and viewed as unreliable. I would not want people to think of me like that.

GO'C: Do you expect a member of your team to work additional hours each week over their contract (not be paid for) If so why?

AON: That's up to them, I give a reasonable amount of work and expect nothing more than I achieve myself. It would be up to them to get it done. Their hours are in their hands but I want all projects and pieces of work completed to the deadline unless there is a valid reason to extend.

GO'C: Do you expect a member of your team to come into work when sick if you felt the illness was not severe?

AON: Same as me, if you can work then fine if not that's fine too. I don't like days off for a cough though. They have to be sensible about it. This is work not school you know.

GO'C: Would you prefer if a member of your team came into work and you then decided to send them home?

AON: When it is someone I don't know very well then yes, once I know their character that would not be necessary. You tend to know who in your team is prone to drama or not.

GO'C: Do you consider the impact of working long hours or working while sick can have?

AON: Like I said, don't come in when you can't genuinely work but aside from that why would it impact?

GO'C: Thank you for your time.

Interview Seven

Interviewee: RB

Job Title: Accommodation Manager

Hours of Work: Non Standard

Date & Time: 10/07/13

GO'C: What attracted you to work within the hospitality industry?

RB: I always loved the industry worked as a Housekeeper and worked my way up. I am now the Accommodation Manager but I am now doing a college course in Hospitality Management as eventually I want to be a General Manager.

GO'C: How long have you worked within the Industry?

RB: 10 years I think, when I started was part time as a school. Went from there.

GO'C: On average how many hours do you work each week?

RB: I don't know don't really keep track, we are a very busy department and I also do DM shifts.

GO'C: I take it that you exceed your 40 contracted hours. What is the reason for the need for all of these additional hours?

RB: Things just happen, you are all organised and then a million things happen at once. You could leave but then all these things will build up. Plus I think it a learning curve; I find each day will help you know how to deal with a new situation so for me it's worth it. Sometimes if it is an issue in another department then I want to see what happens too, you can't just know your own department we are one building so you need to learn all the different aspects.

GO'C: Do you have to be contactable by phone when you are not on shift, if so how do you feel about that?

RB: It is my department I want to be called if there is an issue, my supervisors can handle most situations but they don't have my experience so I like to be called if they are not sure so they don't make the issue into a huge problem.

GO'C: Do you feel longer hours are expected in this industry, can be over the course of your career and not just in your current role?

RB: Yes, I don't really know anyone who does just only 40 hours maybe just when you are very senior and then only if you have a good team around you. My department is very hands on not like accounts where they could leave and then work from home. The only thing I can really do from home is my rotas or if I'm working on new procedures.

GO'C: Do you feel that you would have still been promoted to a managerial position if you had not worked extra hours over the years?

RB: No, I had to prove myself and show my dedication to the companies, I still do. I want to be a General Manager so I have to keep learning and develop my skills

GO'C: Talking about longer hours leads me on too; have you ever attended work while sick?

RB: Yes

GO'C: Why?

RB: Taking time off will leave my department short of cover; we have how it runs down to a fine art. Everyone knows what and how much they have to do. The number of bedrooms per accommodation assistant and so on. If someone is off then others will have to pick up the slack which is fine for the cleaning of the rooms but not the checking off. Also the ordering and stock management, plus the training and all of that. So when supervisor or manager is off another would have to come in on their day off so then working 6 days.

GO'C: Do you every call in sick?

RB: No we kind of have a deal among my team that if you really are too sick to work you call another person who is on the same level and you swap days off so they would work for you and give you their day and then you would give them your day off. If you have had your days off then you ask them to work and the next week you work an extra day and give them the day back then.

GO’C: Can I ask is it because the company does not pay sick pay and so you would not be paid for the time you were absent from work?

RB: No not for me, it’s all about the cover. But I think that would be a factor for some of the others

GO’C: Do you think companies should pay sick pay? If so how would you implement it into the company?

RB: No having no sick pay is the only way you can be sure that people are really sick when they take time off. People don’t want to lose money especially if you are just paid over minimum wage so when they are out you know that they just can’t work. They could take the days as holidays if they want though in that case.

GO’C: Was your direct line manager supportive on the one occasion that you called in sick?

RB: Yes I believe so, as it happens so rarely and I always organise the cover myself so does not affect her. I think if she had to start arranging cover or it gave her more work on top of her own she would probably not be happy but who would. It’s my department to manage so I do.

GO’C: In previous companies were your direct line managers supportive?

RB: I was a supervisor in my last company and the Accommodation Manager was tough but I didn’t mess around and think I am just lucky I don’t really get sick.

GO’C: Did that influence your decision the next time you were sick?

RB: Yes, I know if I can’t be in then I have to get cover. I think this is good though as it made me take responsibility for my area.

GO’C: Do you expect a member of your team to work additional hours each week over their contract (not be paid for) If so why?

RB: They have a certain amount of time for each task so no reason to go over the shift as the labour budget is important. The supervisors yes, they may have to stay but if they want to

learn then that is just what they will have to do. To be honest for my supervisors I am actually telling them to go home.

GO'C: Do you expect a member of your team to come into work when sick if you felt the illness was not severe?

RB: If was just a sore throat or something small but if they were really not well then of course they should not be at work.

GO'C: Would you prefer if a member of your team came into work and you then decided to send them home?

RB: That really depends on the person, for some not necessary but there is a few people I just think it happens too much and they are not really sick. In those case would be better because now I'm just not sure they are telling me the truth.

GO'C: Do you consider the impact of working long hours or working while sick can have?

RB: Not as a bad thing no, we do all at times get tired but then we are a good team and we will cover for each other so when someone just needs a break we can do that. I also try to be very flexible with days off and holidays. When they need I try to always accommodate and give them the days they want. Can run two days off on week 1 with two days off on week two plus a bank holiday that you are owed which gives you a week's break without using any off your holidays so we can fix breaks and rest time among ourselves

GO'C: Thank you for your time.

Appendix E – Organisations Absence Procedure

Absences from Work for Company X

Should a situation arise and you are not able to come to work, you must contact your department manager or the Duty Manager at the earliest possible time at the hotel but must be no less than 4 hours prior to the start of your shift. It is not sufficient to leave a message at the reception or with another employee as this will not be recognized. You must state the reasons for your absence and when you expect to return to work. Your department manager must be kept informed of any changes at all times. On your first day back regardless of the length of absence you will be required to attend a return to work interview.

Sick pay is not offered by the company therefore please apply to the department of social protection with regard to payments through absence due to illness.

If you are sick for 3 days or more, a medical certificate from your doctor is required and should be sent to your manager immediately. Should you remain off work after the period of expiration of the certificate; a further certificate will be required. If you wish to return to work before the medical certificate runs out the company needs an updated medical certificate to state that you are fit to return to work. Persistent certified / authorised sickness may be dealt with under the disciplinary procedure. Persistent Absence is where:

An Employee will be considered persistently absent (unauthorised) when he / she lose:

- More than one (1) day per month or
- Three (3) days in any six month period

In the event of prolonged or regular absence due to illness or injury, the company reserves the right to require the employee to undergo a medical examination by the Company Doctor.