The Affect of Employee Engagement Among Support Staff in Cork University Maternity Hospital

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The Affect of Employee Engagement among Support Staff in Cork University Maternity Hospital

MARION JOSEPHINE ANN COTTRELL
CORK INSTITUTE of TECHNOLOGY

"THE AFFECT OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AMONG SUPPORT STAFF WITHIN CORK UNIVERSITY OF MATERNITY HOSPITAL"

By:
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Submission for the Award of Master of Arts in Human Resource Management

Research Supervisor:
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SUBMITTED TO CORK INSTITUTE of TECHNOLOGY
19th JUNE 2015
Abstract

In recent years the academic research relating to employee engagement has flourished. Despite the increase in engagement literature, there is a gap concerning employee engagement regarding support staff categories. This dissertation focuses of the minority grouping, support staff.

The research methodology for this study is a quantitative method. In addition, questionnaires were administrated to ninety support staff working in Cork University Maternity Hospital, with seventy contributing to the data for this study. Analysis of questionnaires resulted in the identification of a number of findings.

One significant finding of this research study was the discovery of an extra dimension affecting employee engagement. The extra dimension is "The Implication of Governmental Decisions". This new factor affects this category of support staff, and the all public sector workers. In addition, this dimension contributes to the outcomes discussed within this research.

A related finding extends to employee engagement as a group phenomenon. This finding illustrates an employee's ability to be engaged and how it is affected by a number of contributing topics. Engagement as a group phenomenon affects the impact employee engagement has among relating concepts and factors. Engagement as a group phenomenon is reinforced throughout this body of research.

A third salient finding from this research highlighted engagement and the impact regarding a form of personality characteristics. This study suggests that characteristics of individuals contribute to engagement levels rather than work related factors being a determining factor for why people are engaged.

A fourth and significant finding within this study demonstrates the impact of the wider organisational environment. This finding illustrates that an employee's ability to be engaged is impacted by wider characteristics affecting the organisation. In addition, this finding illustrates the role an organisational environment plays on employee engagement among
individuals.
Declaration

The author hereby declares that, except where duly acknowledged, this thesis is entirely her own work and has not been submitted for any degree in any University or Institute of Technology.

Name (Researcher)  

19.06.15  
Date

Name (Supervisor)  

15.08.15  
Date
Dedication

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to two special groups of people. To everyone who faded into the background, while this project took centre stage. Additionally, this dedication includes the people who helped in any way (including putting up with my rants/ verbal abuse, and everyone who asked how it was going). Thank you all so much for your support, encouragement and understanding.
Acknowledgments

This Masters has been a unique experience, and at times a difficult journey. One I do not wish to repeat, however, the time has finally come to express my thanks. I would never have reached the end line without the encouragement and support of so many people.

My most gratitude goes to colleagues in CUMH who kindly gave up their time and energy to participate in the questionnaires. Without their contributions this study could not have materialised.

I would like to thank my supervisor Dr Deirdre O’Donovan, for her enthusiasm, encouragement and guidance throughout this project.

My MA HRM classmates, who accompanied me on this journey. I sincerely thank you for the continued support, entertainment and guidance throughout the last two years. I look forward to the friendships that are to follow.

To the girls, thanks for the welcomed distractions and much needed space over the last two year. I apologies for the countless times I bailed at the last moment and the phrase “sorry I cant” will be considerably reduced from now on!

My extended family, from granny who constantly had the kettle boiled, down to my little cousins who showed me childhood fun again, and everyone in between. Thank you all for everything. A special thank you goes out to Joseph for providing me with the books I could not source. Sorry for making you find the library!

My siblings Nora and Benjamin. Thank you for the endless support and friendly sibling banter over the years. Nora you have a way of bring positivity to hopeless situations, which is inspiring. Benjamin thanks for (as much as I hate to admit it) the brilliant ideas and the necessary resources to fulfil them.

I would especially like to thank my parents, who instilled in me the importance of
education and hard work. Your unconditional love, encouragement and constant support, has allowed me succeed in life's challenges. Thank you both for being my number one supporters in everything I do. Dad I would like to sincerely apologies for all the verbal abuse, especially during the writing of this dissertation. Mam thanks for trying to fix everything, particularly when I want to give up. Words cannot express how grateful I am to you both.
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<td>CUH</td>
<td>Cork University Hospital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HSE</td>
<td>Health Service Executive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OCB</td>
<td>Organizational Citizenship Behaviour</td>
</tr>
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<td>PIOCB</td>
<td>Profession Induced Organizational Citizenship Behaviour</td>
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Chapter One

Introduction
Chapter One Introduction

1:1 Introduction

This chapter provides both an introduction and background to this research study. A number of concepts are presented in this chapter to contextualise the study. In particular, the term *employee engagement* is discussed and a brief description of Cork University Maternity Hospital is included. Additionally, elements regarding this study are outlined. The reasoning behind rationale of study, research aims and objectives, and the structure of this dissertation are thoroughly illustrated. The following section will discuss briefly the term *employee engagement*.

1:2 Employee Engagement

Soane *et al.* (2012), state that the concept of engagement has caught the imagination of both academics and practitioners, yet, despite the volume of material that has been written, this same concept remains more contested than much of the practitioner literature would suggest. It is only recently, however, that scholars of Human Resource Management (HRM) have turned their attention to the topic, thus studies examining the HRM implications of engagement have begun to emerge. (Alfes *et al.*, 2013 a; 2013 b; Brunetto *et al.*, 2012, Shuck *et al.*, 2011; Truss *et al.*, 2013). Employee engagement takes place when people are committed to their work and the organisation. In addition, employees are also motivated to achieve high levels of performance when experiencing such engagement (Armstrong and Taylor, 2014). The concept and meaning of employee engagement, as well as other related concepts, will be outlined and discussed further in the definition section (2:2).

According to Kular *et al.* (2008), there is a great deal of interest in engagement, despite a significant amount of confusion. In addition, Dicke *et al.* (2007), discusses how the topic results in confusion and misdirection, arising from an inability to determine the exact nature of employee engagement. The primary causes of this
confusion and misdirection are a lack of congruity concerning the definition and measurement of employee engagement, as well as the lack of distinction from other closely related concepts. Furthermore, it can be argued that, unless employee engagement can be universally defined and measured, it cannot be managed, nor can it be ascertained if efforts to improve it are working efficiently (Ferguson, 2007). These issues are significant and require further and more detailed examination.

The concept of employee engagement was first explored by William Kahn in 1990, in his seminal paper in the *Academy of Management Journal* (Rasheed *et al.*, 2013). Since 1990, there has been a steadily growing stream of research on the concept (Wollard and Shuck, 2011). Recently, Truss *et al.* (2014) highlighted that the concept of engagement in academic research is flourishing. The start of this decade brought a vast increase in publications and in the period up to January 2013, 1,600 papers had been published with “work engagement” or “employee engagement” in the title (Truss *et al.*, 2014). Perhaps the reason engagement has gathered so much attention lies in the dual promise of enhancing both individual well-being and organisational performance (Christian *et al.*, 2011; Bakker and Schaufeli, 2008; Harter *et al.*, 2002). In effect, it side-steps the traditional trade-offs and tensions that exist between employers and employees that have for so long been the subject of debate within the human resource management and industrial relations domains (Truss *et al.*, 2014). Furthermore, understanding the drivers of employee engagement has become an important goal in many organisations today (Pitt-Catsouphes and MatzCosta, 2009; Lockwood, 2007). Factors which may impact on engagement will be explored below, as the literature review progresses.

Research in organisational theory has highlighted the importance of employee engagement as a phenomenon proven to have a strong positive statistical relationship with productivity, profitability, employee retention, safety, and customer satisfaction (Coffman and Gonzalez- Molina, 2001; Buckingham and Coffman, 1999). Harter *et al.* (2009) for Gallup Research group, adds turnover, shrinkage and reduced absenteeism as further potential benefits of employee engagement. In addition, the field of psychology has sought to further explore the meaning and significance of engagement (Wollard and Shuck 2011). As briefly outlined above, employee engagement is a topic worthy of further indepth study. Additionally, a background as
to where the study takes place is also needed. The following section will illustrate this insight in relation to the case study of Cork University Maternity Hospital.

1.3 Cork University Maternity Hospital

The foundation of this hospital was the result of an amalgamation of a number of previous maternity and gynaecology services, including Erinville Hospital, St. Finbarr’s Maternity Hospital, Bon Secours Maternity Unit and gynaecology services from Cork University Hospital. CUMH consist of one antenatal and three postnatal wards, a labour ward (birthing suite) and one gynaecology ward. In addition, the facility includes an outpatients department, an emergency room, a neonatal unit and operating theatres. There is a wide range of staff including doctors, midwives, health care assistants, nursery nurses, housekeepers, porters, security officers, clerical officers, and catering officers. The mission statement for CUMH reads:

*Women, babies and their families are at the centre of our service as we strive for excellence and innovation*

In addition, CUMH is integrated with and located on the campus of Cork University Hospital (CUH). CUH is the largest acute care hospital in the region and the only level one trauma centre in the Republic of Ireland. CUH primarily treats patients from Cork and Kerry, serving a combined population of more than 620,000. The hospital is also a tertiary referral centre for Munster, serving a population of more than 1,173,000. The hospital was designated one of eight centres of excellence for the delivery of cancer care in the Republic under the National Cancer Control Programme (2008), and CUH is one of just five gynaecological oncology specialty centres in Ireland.

1.4 Rationale for the Study

A strong rationale, comprising of a number of factors, was the driving force for this study. First, the researcher developed a significant interest in the topic of employee
engagement. This interest developed during the taught module on Employee Engagement included in the MA programme in Human Resource Management.

In addition, the researcher, through personal experience, noted that employee engagement within CUMH differs from that which is articulated in text books and discussed in a classroom setting. With further exploration of the CUMH working environment, the researcher discovered engagement is a complex topic and a "one size fits all strategy" cannot work.

Finally, it appears counterintuitive to the researcher that the support staff category is often overlooked in terms of employee engagement research. With the following components in place, the researcher decided that a study entitled 'The Affect of Employee Engagement among support staff in CUMH' to be worthy of full investigation, discussion and analysis.

1.5 Research Question, Aims and Objectives of the Study

The main research question driving this study is: "what affect does employee engagement play among support staff within the CUMH complex? Given this research question the aims and objectives for this study are as follows:

1. To explore the levels of employee engagement among support staff (e.g. housekeeping attendants, porters and security officers) in CUMH, and to analyse the range of possible contributing factors.
2. To examine the effect an amalgamation of three hospitals, each with a distinct tradition and ethos, into one institution has on support staff and their ability to show employee engagement qualities.
3. To determine the impact of governmental initiatives, policies and strategic decisions on employee engagement within CUMH.
The primary purpose of this research is to explore levels of employee engagement among support staff in CUMH, and to analyse the range of possible contributing factors. The primary research for this study, therefore, will examine the effects of a number of related areas. One related area concerns the extent of upheaval caused by the recent amalgamation of three hospitals, each with a distinct tradition and ethos, into one institution.

The study aims to explore the link between governmental initiatives, policies, strategic decisions, and employee engagement. CUMH operates within the public sector; therefore, government is a significant player within the organisation. The recent economic recession in Ireland has also taken its toll, resulting in pay reductions and staff layoffs, remedies the government introduced to boost economic recovery. The supporting literature argues employee engagement involves one hundred percent effort, regardless of inclinations. In contract, however, pay reductions and staff shortages visibly affect attitudes towards roles and organisations. Research for this study will engage with the sensitive element of pay and reductions, to discover their possible implications for employees in and impacts on employee engagement.

Furthermore, this study aims to explore the relationship between support staff and other sectors of staff, with a focus on engagement. Based on existing literature, it is arguable that individual characteristics of staff and organisational culture may have repercussions on areas such as relationships with superiors, subordinates, and colleagues. To generalise on the level of employee engagement across such a spectrum when considering varying levels of remuneration, experience and education would be almost impossible. In contrast, however, all employees work indirectly to achieve one goal that of excellent patient cares.

Recent criticisms of the Irish health care system has centred on its tendency to exhibit a "command and control model" in terms of planning, implementation, and management, with insufficient regard for engagement with health professionals and middle management (Byers, 2010). This research aims to build on previous research within an additional, yet related environmental segment. It can be argued that doing so will provide managerial levels in the healthcare sector a clear insight into the frontline operation of hospital wards, highlighting issues faced by hospital staff which may
negatively impact on their performance. In theory this will enable stronger policy formation and implementation into the futures.

1.6 Structure of the Dissertation and Outline of Chapter Content

The structure and content of the remaining chapters in this dissertation are outlined in the following section. The study comprises of five chapters, which are diagrammatically represented in Figure 1.1 (page 11).

The literature review, chapter two, explores pertinent existing literature relating to employee engagement and the main research question driving this dissertation. In particular, this review focuses on five major elements that have emerged repeatedly while this researcher has been reviewing literature. These elements are definitions, antecedents, impacting factors, components, and outcomes of engagement. Defining employee engagement is a central theme of this chapter, and is discussed in the next section.

Chapter three, "Research Methodology", outlines, discusses and justifies the theoretical framework of the research methods that were carried out in order to gain further insight into employee engagement among support staff in CUMH. The theoretical framework is composed of a number of research-specific areas. The research-specific areas in this study include the research problem, the research question, aims and objectives and research design. Additionally, the reasoning behind the choice of research methods is explored and matters relating to the questionnaires are discussed. The next section will address the research problem.

The fourth chapter "Findings and Analysis" relates to the research question that guided this study. Two fundamental aims drove the collection of data and subsequent data analysis. These aims were to identify, assess, and explore employee engagement among support staff. Furthermore, the study examined governmental and organisational decisions that may affect an employee’s ability to remain engaged.
The final chapter of this dissertation, chapter five, concludes the study. This chapter draws on key findings identified in chapter four in order to make a number of recommendations for both practice and future research. In addition, certain
limitations of the research are outlined. This chapter presents an overall conclusion, discussing the key points of the dissertation.

1.7 Conclusion

This chapter has provided an introductory overview to the background of this study, concerning existing literature. In addition, components regarding the reasons that have driven the study were outlined. The aims and objectives of this project were put forward and finally the structure and content were discussed. The following chapter (chapter two) “Literature Review”, will contain a review of existing literature which is pertinent to the areas of research identified in this chapter.
Chapter Two

Literature Review
Chapter Two Literature Review

2:1 Introduction

The following chapter will explore pertinent existing literature relating to the research question driving this dissertation. In particular, this review will focus on five major elements which have emerged consistently from literature reviewed. These elements are definitions, antecedents, impacting factors, components, and outcomes of engagement. Defining employee engagement is a central part of this chapter, and will be discussed in the next section.

2:2 Defining Employee Engagement

The term employee engagement refers to the situation that exists when people are committed to their work, their organisation, and are also motivated to achieve high levels of performance (Armstrong and Taylor, 2014). Soane et al. (2012), state that the concept of engagement has caught the imagination of both academics and practitioners. Despite the volume of material written on the subject, the notion remains more contested than much of the practitioner literature suggests. Furthermore, it is noted that only recently have Human Resource Management (HRM) scholars turned their attention to the topic (Truss et al., 2014). Studies examining the HRM implications of engagement, therefore, are just starting to emerge (Alfes et al., 2013 a; b; Truss et al., 2013; Brunetto et al., 2012; Shuck et al., 2011).

According to Kular et al. (2008), there is a great deal of interest in the management sector engagement, along with a great deal of confusion. Dicke et al. (2007), further state that confusion and misdirection arises because of a lack of understanding as to what exactly employee engagement is. The primary cause of this confusion and misdirection is a lack of congruity concerning the definition and measurement of employee engagement, along with a lack of differentiation from other closely related concepts (Kular et al., 2008; Dicke et al., 2007). In addition, it can be argued that
unless employee engagement can be universally defined and measured, it cannot be managed, nor can it be known whether efforts to improve it are working efficiently (Ferguson, 2007).

A major challenge outlined in the employee engagement literature is a lack of a universal definition (Markos and Sridevi, 2010; Kular et al., 2008; Dicke et al., 2007). The existence of different definitions makes the quality of employee engagement difficult to determine, as each study examines employee engagement under a different protocol (Kular et al., 2008). MacLeod and Clarke (2009), highlighted as many as fifty different definitions of engagement, and suggested that there may well be more. Consequently, Christian et al. (2011: 89-90) conclude that:

*Engagement research has been plagued by inconsistent construct definitions.*

Definitions of employee engagement vary from “a passion for work” (Truss et al., 2006), “the conditions under which people work” (Macey and Schneider, 2008) and “associating powers and devotions to assist the organisations customers” (Rasheed et al., 2013). Indeed, Downey et al. (2015), propose that developing a trusting climate is important for employee engagement.

Employee engagement has been defined as emotional and intellectual commitment to the organisation which the employees are affiliated with (Blessing White, 2008; Dernovsek, 2008; Macey and Schneider, 2008; Richman, 2006; Erickson, 2005; Lockwood, 2005; Shaw, 2005; Baumruk, 2004). Furthermore, employee engagement definitions frequently refer to the amount of discretionary effort shown by employees in their jobs (CIPD, 2014; Frank et al., 2004; Perrin, 2003; Borman and Motowidlos, 1997). According to Kruse (2015), engagement and employee appreciation picnics, compensation, or parties are insufficient. Research indicates that definitions agree on a presence of meaningfulness, safety, and availability. In addition, Kahn (1990) identifies a psychological state that is seen to encompass the three dimensions of engagement, specifically meaningfulness, safety and availability. Meaningfulness, safety, and availability are all represented in and captured by the common theme running through the various definitions (Kular et al., 2008).
It has been acknowledged that employee engagement has been defined in many different ways. It can therefore, be argued that definitions of employee engagement often sound similar to other better known, and established constructs, such as Organisational Commitment and Organisational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB) (Robinson et al., 2004). Robinson et al. (2004) describe engagement as one step up from commitment. As a result, employee engagement has the appearance of being yet another trend, or what some might call “old wine in a new bottle” (Jeung, 2011).

In seeking to understand the composition of employee engagement, Kahn (1990) argues that it has three interrelated components, specifically cognitive, emotional, and behavioural. The cognitive dimension of employee engagement encompasses the employee’s beliefs about the organisation, its leaders, and working conditions. The emotional aspect concerns how employees feel about each of those three factors and whether they have positive or negative attitudes toward the organisation and its leaders. The behavioural aspect of employee engagement is the value-added component for the organisation (Kulur et al., 2008; Konrad, 2006). This component consists of the discretionary effort exerted by employees to accomplish their work in the form of extra time, brainpower, and energy devoted to their tasks and to the organisation (Kulur et al., 2008; Konrad, 2006). More recently, Margolis (2014) suggests that employee engagement is the ability to apply one’s cognitive, affective, and physical energy into work practices.

Research around employee engagement lacks clarity as to whether it is an individual or a group level phenomenon (Little and Little, 2006). Based on previous literature, as well as various definitions, the phenomenon of employee engagement can be categorised into two main approaches. One approach is employee centred, while the second approach sees employee engagement as a combination of employee and organisational commitment. The next section discusses these two broad approaches in more detail.

As the above literature suggests employee engagement encompasses an employee’s power, devotion, passion, and energy (Rasheed et al., 2013). Seijs and Crim (2006) argue that without the employee’s enthusiasm, engagement would be compromised.
In contrast, however, Macey and Schnieder (2008) consider an employee's willingness to be fundamental and central to employee engagement. Others suggest an employee focus is relevant for employee engagement (Beal, 2005). Indeed, Wellins and Concelman (2004) consider the force of employees as holding strong ties to engagement. Additionally, an employee's ability to connect and commit to the organisation reflects his or her engagement (Lucey et al., 2005). Rothbard (2001) emphasises the extent to which employees think about, and become absorbed in, their roles, while Maslach et al. (2004) point to vigor and dedication. Finally, Blessing White (2008) suggests that an employee's discretionary effort contributes to employee engagement. The employee-centred argument considers the portrait of an engaged employee as one who is engrossed in his or her work, intensely absorbed, and dedicated to the completion of tasks and performance of roles (Truss et al., 2014).

The previous body of research sees employee engagement as essentially an intrinsic phenomenon. Nevertheless, other researchers have suggested that for employee engagement to exist, organisations must nurture and develop two-way relationships between the employee and the employer (Robinson et al., 2004). Similarly, an environment needs to be created where flexibility, improvement, and change are core, both to employees and employers (Truss, 2009). Additionally, Lauby (2013), states that the intersection of organisational contribution and employee satisfaction is critical. Holbeche and Springett (2003) draw on an extensive body of human relations research to argue that employees actively seek meaning through their work. Furthermore, Holbeche and Springett (2003), conclude that unless organisations cater to that need and try to provide a sense of meaning, they will be unlikely to retain their best employees. In addition, unless organisations cater to that need and try to provide a sense of meaning, they will be unlikely to retain their best employees. Saks (2006) confirms that engagement is both employee and organisational focused by arguing that one way for individuals to repay their organisation is through their level of engagement. To simplify, employees will choose to become engaged to varying degrees and in response to the resources that they receive from their organisation.

Crabtree (2005), distinguished three levels or categories of engagement among employees; engaged, non-engaged, and actively disengaged. Taylor (2007) proposes that an engaged employee is someone who is committed to quality, growth and the
organisation. In addition, Gallup (2009) defines engaged employees as those who work with a passion and feel a profound connection with their company; they drive innovation and move the organisation forward. Furthermore, according to Crabtree (2005), engaged employees are builders who want to know the desired expectations for their role so that they can meet and exceed them. Engaged employees want to use their talents and strengths at work every day. Engaged employees work with passion, drive, innovation, and move the organisation forward.

According to Asian News International (2012), workers who are "not engaged" are those who may be satisfied, but are not emotionally connected to their workplace and are thus less likely to put in discretionary effort. In addition, non-engaged workers are "checked-out" or sleepwalking through their jobs (Gallup 2009). Furthermore, it is proposed that not-engaged employees tend to concentrate on tasks rather than the goals and outcomes that they are expected to accomplish. Non-engaged employees typically want to be told what to do so that they can just do it and say they have finished. Non engaged employees focus on accomplishing tasks verses achieving an outcome. Employees who are not engaged tend to feel their contributions are being overlooked, and their potential is not being fully tapped. Non-engaged employees often feel this way because they don't have productive relationships with their managers or co-workers (Crabtree, 2005).

Disengagement can be described as the decoupling of one's self within the role, involving the individual withdrawing and defending themselves during role performances (May et al., 2004). Smith (2009) suggests actively disengaged employees are busy acting out their unhappiness and undermining that which engaged people accomplish. Furthermore, disengaged employees are akin to 'cave dwellers' (people who do not look outside the box), and are consistently against virtually everything. Actively disengaged workers are not just unhappy at work; they're busy acting out their unhappiness. Employees who are actively disengaged sow seeds of negativity at every opportunity. Every day, employees in this category undermine what their engaged co-workers accomplish. As workers increasingly rely on each other to generate products and services, the problems and tensions that are fostered by actively disengaged workers can cause great damage to an organisation's functioning (Crabtree, 2005).
Definitions of employee engagement proposed by companies, academic consultants, and research institutes do not necessarily directly conflict or contradict each other. Rather, different definitions may result in complimentary and/or overlapping views. There is commonality between the definitions, especially insofar as engagement is seen in a positive light for both employee and organisation. Furthermore, given that the term employee engagement can have numerous meanings, employers need to determine, identify and foster engagement within their organisation in a context-specific manner, in order to increase its effectiveness (Furness, 2008). The next section will discuss antecedents of engagement.

2:3 Antecedents of Engagement

Schaufeli and Bakker (2004), and Kahn (1990), conclude that research regarding the antecedents of employee engagement has primarily been conducted from two perspectives. The first perspective, according to Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) is work activities as reference for engagement. The second perspective was highlighted by Kahn (1990) as investigating engagement as an extension of the self. The next section will discuss work activities as reference for engagement.

2:3.1 Work Activities as Reference for Engagement

Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) posit that employee engagement can be explained by the availability of job resources as well as the balance between job demands and job resources. Job demands are the physical, social, or organisational aspects of the job that require sustained physical and, or psychological effort on the part of the employee (Bakker et al., 2007). Furthermore, job demands are therefore associated with certain physiological and or psychological costs (Bakker et al., 2007). According to Demerouti et al. (2001), job resources are those psychological, physical, organisational, or social aspects from work. Job resources can ease the demands and their associated costs are functional in the sense of helping to achieve objectives at work and encourage individual learning, growth, and development. In general, job
demands and resources are negatively related because job demands, such as high
work pressure and emotionally demanding interactions with clients, may preclude the
mobilisation of job resources (Bakker and Demerouti, 2007; Demerouti et al., 2001).
In contrast, however, Bakker (2011) includes personal resources as a work activity
related to employee engagement. Personal resources refer to characteristics of the
individual employee such as optimism, resilience, and self-efficacy.

According to Bakker and Demerouti (2008), opportunities for development stimulate
work engagement due to satisfying the need for competence. Furthermore, it is
proposed that having support increases the likelihood of being successful in achieving
one's work goals. This also increases the willingness to invest effort in one's work.
Salanova et al. (2005 a) suggest that training possibilities in organisations and job
autonomy are related to high work engagement.

Bakker (2005) has highlighted four specific job resources associated with high
engagement; social support at work, supervisory coaching, job autonomy, and
performance feedback at work. In contrast, however, Schaufeli et al. (2009), and
Xanthopoulou et al. (2009), consider opportunities for development to be more
important than social support. Previous research identified significantly important
groupings, specifically supervisory support, supportive interpersonal relations, and
task resources. Mitani et al. (2006), and Haslam and Mallon (2003), address the
subject of supervisory supports. Saijo et al. (2007) examined supportive interpersonal
relations. Finally, Lusa et al. (2006) studied task resources. Schaufeli and Bakker
(2004) investigated key job features such as demands, conflicts, and good relations
with other people. Furthermore, Rich et al. (2010) developed and tested a model
incorporating organisational support. The above factors (job resources) all impact on
engagement.

The personal resources highlighted by Bermejo-Toro et al. (2015) are (a)
organisation-based self-esteem and (b) optimism. These two specific personal
resources were selected by previous studies as demonstrating that they are beneficial
for engagement. Research by Mauno et al. (2007) and Xanthopoulou et al. (2007)
highlighted issues related to organisation-based self-esteem. Further investigation by
Xanthopoulou et al. (2009) included optimism. Xanthopoulou et al. (2007: 91) proposed that:

_Individuals who are confident about their capabilities and optimistic about their future may identify or even create more aspects of their environment that facilitate goal attainment. This capability leads to goal confrontation and consequently to work engagement._

Time demands predicted high absorption, work-to-family conflict predicted low vigour, and job insecurity predicted low dedication of personal resources (Mauno et al., 2007). Furthermore, personal resources are related to personality traits and not specifically to engagement (Bermejo-Toro et al., 2015). Personal variables studied previously include, for example: optimism, resilience, and self-esteem (Cheung et al., 2011; Xanthopoulou, et al., 2007).

It has previously been suggested that personality may influence how and to what extent individuals obtain resources and perceive demands (Bermejo-Toro et al., 2015). Extroverted individuals, for example, might perceive their job environment more positively. Thus, they may be more likely to obtain the resources they need (Lau et al., 2006). People who score high in extroversion often elicit more positive responses from their co-workers and supervisors (Bowling et al., 2005). Similarly, individuals who score high in conscientiousness actively manipulate job environments by reducing or eliminating demands and collecting resources (Kim et al., 2007; Barrick and Mount, 1991). In contrast, people who score high in neuroticism tend to perceive job assignments as more stressful and threatening, so it is intuitive that they will experience more demands (Brunborg, 2008).

Additionally, engagement is expected to be primarily associated with three of the ‘big five’: emotional stability (reverse-scored neuroticism), extroversion, and conscientiousness (Inceoglu and Warr, 2012). In contrast, however, Langelaan et al. (2006) considered relationships with only two: neuroticism and extroversion. Nevertheless, in a five-factor comparison controlling for some job variables, Kim et al. (2009) state that conscientiousness alone was significant. Xanthopoulou et al. (2009 b) reported the same pattern in analyses which measured job features (through a...
combination of autonomy, social support, coaching, feedback and development opportunities), with personal features (in terms of combined optimism, self-efficacy and organisation-based self-esteem). The concept of ‘personality-environment fit’ was introduced by Ostroff and Judge in 2007. According to Warr and Inveoglu (2011), in relation to more energised well-being in the form of job engagement, it appears that a greater want-actual discrepancy is instead linked to higher rather than lower scores, as engaged individuals value raised levels of many job features.

The next section will discuss engagement as an extension of self, and further as antecedents of engagement.

### 2.3.2 Engagement as an Extension of Self

When referring to engagement as an extension of the self, Kahn (1990) identified three psychological elements that contribute to these conditions and to employee engagement (May et al., 2004). Several studies have concurred and investigated the factors contributing to psychological meaningfulness, psychological safety, and psychological availability, which in turn affect employee engagement (Crawford et al., 2013; Rothmann and Rothmann, 2010; Steger and Dik, 2010; May et al., 2004; Pratt and Ashforth, 2003; Kahn, 1990).

Psychological meaning involves a sense of investing one’s self in work role performances (Kahn, 1990). Psychological meaningfulness, tasks, and role influences include job challenge, autonomy, variety, feedback, role fit, opportunities for development, rewards and recognition (Truss et al., 2014). These factors are associated with increased engagement because they offer opportunities and incentives for people to express more of their preferred selves in work role performances (Kahn, 1992). The extent to which individuals perceive work conditions offer clear and desired benefits for their personal investments. In addition, organisations ought to exhibit an increased willingness to fully engage in work roles (Crawford et al., 2013).

The experience of psychological safety refers to a sense of investing one’s self in a work role, without fear or negative consequences to self-image, status, or career (Kahn, 1990). Crawford et al. (2013), constructed psychological safety antecedents
including, social support, transformation leadership, leader-member exchange, workplace climate, organisational justice, and job security. These factors are associated with increased engagement because they contribute to more supportive, predictable, and non-threatening situations in which individuals perceive they can try and perhaps fail without negative consequences (Kahn, 1990). Perceptions of these elements in work social systems provide protective guarantees for self-investment. Furthermore, organisations should be more willing to take the risks involved in more completely engaging in their work roles (Crawford et al., 2013).

The experience of psychological availability refers to individuals sensing that they are ready to personally engage at a particular moment (Kahn 1990). Constructs theoretically discussed by Crawford et al. (2013) correspond to psychological availability include: role overload, family-work conflict, resource inadequacies, time urgency, off work recovery, individual dispositions, and personal resources. Based on self-assessments and individual distractions, people possess the personal energies necessary to fulfil the obligations of their work roles (Truss et al., 2014). Furthermore, individuals are more likely able and willing to invest those energies in the service of their work role performance (Crawford et al, 2013; Kahn, 1990). The next section will explore the factors impacting engagement, another significant element of the discussion of employee engagement.

2:4 Factors Impacting on Engagement

In addition to antecedents of engagement, other individual factors also impact on employee engagement. It can be argued that specific factors affecting engagement in this way include workaholism, burnout, work engagement, leadership and organisational culture. The following section will discuss factors impacting on engagement in further detail. Workaholism constitutes the first factor to be discussed in this way.
2:4.1 Workaholism

Oates (1971) considers a workaholic to be a person whose need to work has become so exaggerated that it may constitute a danger to their health, personal happiness, interpersonal relations, and social functioning. Research in the field of workaholism has resulted in a large volume of material (Shimazu et al., 2010; Bakker et al., 2009; Chamberlin and Zhang, 2009; Schaufeli et al., 2008; Russo and Waters, 2006). Nevertheless, to date there has been no consensus reached as to whether this phenomenon is positive or negative for organisations affected by it.

Several researchers have focused on the negative aspects of workaholism (Del Libano et al., 2010; Schaufeli et al., 2009; Robinson, 2007; Taris et al., 2005). According to Del Libano et al. (2010) and Schaufeli et al. (2009), workaholism is negatively conceptualised as working excessively and working compulsively. Robinson (2007) describes workaholism as a progressive, potentially fatal disorder of work addiction, leading to family disintegration and an increased inability to manage work habits and life domains. In contrast, however, some writers view workaholism positively, as involving a pleasurable engagement at work (Sprankle and Ebel, 1987; Machlowitz, 1980). Machlowitz (1980:16) proposes that:

As a group, workaholics are surprisingly happy. They are doing exactly what they love and they can't seem to get enough of it.

Similarly, Snir and Zohar (2008), posit that workaholics experience more positive effect during work than during leisure activity, in comparison to non-workaholics.

Engagement and workaholism can be distinguished as two separate constructs (Taris et al., 2010; Schaufeli et al., 2008 b). The crucial difference between workaholism and engagement is that workaholism lacks the positive affective component of engagement (Salanova et al., 2013); and engagement does not include the compulsive drive of workaholism (Schaufeli et al., 2008 b). Engagement is primarily characterised by intrinsic motivation, whereas workaholism is primarily characterised by a compulsive, extrinsic motivation (Gorgievski et al., 2010; Van Beek et al.,
2010). Status, peer admiration, and supervisor approval may drive workaholics to work hard (Taris et al., 2010). Robinson (2001) argued that clinical observations confirm workaholics depend upon work for their self-worth; if they do not fulfil their high standards and destructive self-criticism, negative feelings will result. The effect of burnout is explored in the following section.

2:4.2 Burnout

Leiter and Maslach (2004) suggested that employees experience one of two types of psychological relationships with their work; burnout, and engagement. According to Nelson and Cooper (2005), the introduction of engagement as a positive antipode of burnout indicated a transition from negative to positive psychology. The most widely used definition of burnout suggests that it comprises multiple psychological symptoms, including emotional exhaustion, cynicism, and inefficacy. Emotional exhaustion can be described as being drained of emotional resources. Cynicism is described as negative and/or callous attitudes toward clients, colleagues and tasks. Finally, inefficacy involves an employee negatively evaluating personal work ability (Tingting and Yiqun, 2014; Bakker et al., 2011; Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004; Shirom, 2003; Leiter, 1993).

Research demonstrating how burnout develops within a particular organisational context can be highly valuable for the application of intervention strategies that focus on changing the adverse environmental predictors of employee distress (Brough et al., 2009; Kelloway and Day, 2005; Fink, 2003; Dworkin, 2001; Maslach et al., 2001; Kim and Mauborgne, 1998; Maslach and Leiter, 1997). Pines (1993), maintained that the source of burnout is a sense of failure in the quest for meaning. Schaufeli et al. (2008), suggests that engagement and burnout consistently produce negative relationships. In addition Kelloway and Day (2005), found evidence that organisations should not ignore burnout among workers. Burnout and engagement are opposite poles of the one construct (Tingting and Yiqun, 2014; Maslach et al., 2001; Friedman, 2000). Indeed, Maslach (2011) suggested that burnout studies could inform studies of engagement. Furthermore, the relationship between demands and engagement will depend on the type of job demand in question (Hakanen et al., 2008; Bakker et al.,
2007; Mauno et al., 2007; Bakker et al., 2006; Llorens et al., 2006; Bakker et al., 2005; Llorens, 2004; Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004)

The 'job demands–resources' model, (JD–R) constructed by Bakker and Demerouti (2007) provides a basis for the integration of burnout and engagement studies (Tingting and Yiqun, 2014). Burnout researchers have started to pay attention to the conceptual opposition of burnout and engagement (Schaufeli et al., 2002; Maslach et al., 2001). Hakanen et al. (2006), found evidence for two paths: job demands–burnout–ill health and job resources–engagement–organisational commitment.

The JD-R model specifies how positive employee well-being may be produced or enhanced by the interaction of job demands and job resources. Additionally, the model has been widely verified in the past few years (Bermejo-Toro et al., 2015). There was necessity to include personal resources in the model, since only strict job-related resources were included up until recently (González-Morales et al., 2012; Bakker, 2011; Bakker and Bal, 2010; Bakker et al., 2007; Hakanen et al., 2007; Hakanen et al., 2006; Jackson et al., 2006). Research has found that the self-efficacy model plays a key role in coping with stress, and that job demands and resources mediated the relationship between self-efficacy, burnout, and engagement (Consiglio et al., 2013; Vera et al., 2012; Xanthopoulou et al., 2007). The JD-R model in particular provides useful guidelines detailing how to design a job in such a way that employee engagement is increased. It all boils down to increasing employees' job resources, providing them with challenging job demands, and building their personal resources (Truss et al., 2014). The importance of leadership and organisational culture is expanded in the following section.

2.4.3 Leadership and Organisational Culture

Leadership appears to be one of the single biggest factors affecting employee engagement (Zhang and Avery, 2014; Parimalam and Mahadevan, 2012; Attridge, 2009; Macey and Schneider, 2008; Wang and Walumbwa, 2007). Attridge (2009) emphasises that leadership style, the relatively consistent pattern of behaviour applied to leader-follower interactions, is critical for promoting employee engagement.
Leadership has its own impact on the organisational performance and its output (Parimalam and Mahadevan, 2012). The major prominent styles of leadership include transactional and transformational leadership style (Parimalam and Mahadevan, 2012). In addition, Berg et al. (2010) argue that certain leaders create a space enabling lower ranking employees to “craft” their jobs.

Howell and Avolio (1993) proposed that the employees and management exchange their rewards and targets, to avoid disciplinary actions. Other authors, for example Parimalam and Mahadevan (2012), Avery (2004), and Bass et al. (2003) agree with this insight. Transactional leadership concerns the fulfilment of needs from both the organisation and the employees (Pounder, 2002). According to Zhang and Avery (2014), however, transactional leadership does not demand engagement with the organisation or its vision.

Since leaders set the tone of the organisational culture, there needs to be a top-down articulation of the role of engagement and the resulting benefits. Leaders need to “walk the talk” and believe in creating an engagement culture. It is important that leaders continue to communicate their goals and the importance of engagement. The aim is to create a trickle-down effect, so that line managers take their cue from the top and value communication, staff development, active listening and support (Sylvester and Patel 2014).

Culture at an organisational level captures the behavioural expectations and norms that characterise the way work is done (Glisson et al., 2006; Verbeke et al., 1998). Ivancevich et al. (2008: 37) pointed out that:

"Organisational culture is what the employees perceive and how this perception creates a pattern of beliefs, value and expectations."

Studies have linked organisational culture to enhanced intrinsic motivation, employee commitment, job-involvement, an individual’s identity, and job-satisfaction (Woodruffle, 2006; Walumbwa et al., 2005; Bing, 2004; Lund, 2003; House et al., 2001; Maignan et al., 2001; Fogarty, 2000; Russo, 1998; Bloor et al., 1994; Harris,
Howard (2007) asserts that employees of an organisation think, act and behave in ways that are heavily influenced by the organisational culture. Javadi and Hossein (2013), suggest that there is a relationship between organisational culture and the effectiveness of an organisation. Behavioural expectations and norms explain how an organisation’s culture affects employees and quality of service delivery (Shim, 2010; Glisson, 2007). Indeed, while addressing how diversity should be approached within an organisation, Pless and Maak (2004) highlighted the importance of recognising, valuing, and engaging differences. This approach is not just concerned with identifying the differences of all individuals in the workplace, but also with integrating individuals and differences into the culture of the organisation (O’Donovan, 2015). In addition, work engagement is a critical factor of employee engagement. Work engagement is outlined and addressed in the next section.

2.4.4 Work Engagement

Work engagement refers to a persistent, positive, and satisfying state of mind, an affective-motivational state of work-related well-being, related to work that is not directed towards any particular event, object, or person (Bakker et al., 2008; Schaufeli et al., 2002). In addition, work engagement is primarily characterized by intrinsic motivation (Gorgievski et al., 2010; Van Beek et al., 2010). Work engagement becomes essential when studying subjective well-being at work (Bakker and Oerlemans, 2011). It is a positive affective-emotional state and sense of accomplishment that includes three dimensions: vigour, dedication and absorption (Schaufeli and Bakker, 2010). According to Schaufeli et al. (2006), engaged employees have an energetic and effective connection with work, and feel able to cope with demands at work.

Work engagement has been positively linked to higher levels of job resources such as job control, social support (Hu et al., 2011), innovative climate (Hakanen et al., 2006) and procedural justice and decision latitude (Boyd et al., 2011; Karatepe, 2011). Further research links it to positive outcomes such as organisational commitment (Hu et al., 2011; Boyd et al., 2011), job performance (Halbesleben and Wheeler, 2008),
team performance (Salanova et al., 2012; Torrente et al., 2012), and to outcomes such as mental health (Hakanen and Schaufeli, 2012; Shimazu et al., 2012) and lower turnover intention (Crawford et al., 2010; Halbesleben, 2010). Furthermore, work engagement is positively associated with personal resources (aspects of the self-linked with resiliency and referring to a sense of control and impact upon the environment; Hobfoll et al., 2003), such as organisation-based self-esteem, optimism, self-efficacy, or active coping (Weigl et al., 2010; Xanthopoulou et al., 2009; Xanthopoulou et al., 2007).

In addition, opportunities for development and perceived supervisory and organisational support (PSOS), are related to work engagement (Schaufeli et al., 2009; Llorens et al., 2006; Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004). Work engagement can be considered to be a positive affective state that will start the resource-building process (Xanthopoulou et al., 2009; Lange et al., 2008; Salanova and Schaufeli, 2008). Indeed, Salanova et al., (2011), showed that work engagement is associated with all kinds of positive emotions, including enthusiasm, comfort, and satisfaction. Further to this, according to Xanthopoulou et al. (2009), work engagement mobilises job and personal resources in two ways. First, engaged employees are motivated to fulfil work objectives and look to activate or create job resources that will help achieve these objectives (for example, they search for help, for information, or for feedback). Second, engaged employees are more likely to succeed in achieving goals, leading them to feel more capable, valuable, and optimistic about work. This implies that engaged employees will build more personal resources. The next section will discuss components of engagement.

2.5 Components of Employee Engagement

According to Rafferty et al. (2005), and Robinson et al. (2004), the construct termed employee engagement emanates from two concepts that have won academic recognition and have been the subjects of empirical research, commitment and Organisational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB). Armstrong et al. (2010) concur, however, to highlight that more recent research also adds motivation. Therefore, engagement can be regarded as having three overlapping components: motivation,
commitment, and OCB (Armstrong et al., 2010). The components of engagement are discussed in the following sections. Engagement and commitment is the first component to be explored.

2.5.1 Engagement and Commitment

Commitment represents the strength of an individual's identification with, and involvement in, an organisation (Armstrong and Taylor, 2014). Wellins and Concelman (2005) suggest that to be engaged is to be actively committed. Furthermore Macey and Schneider (2008: 8–9) observed that:

Organisational commitment is an important facet of the state of engagement when it is conceptualised as positive attachment to the larger organisational entity and measured as a willingness to exert energy in support of the organisation, to feel pride as an organisational member, and to have personal identification with the organisation.

Accordingly, it is argued that concepts of commitment and organisational engagement are closely related (Armstrong et al., 2010). In contrast however, Robinson et al. (2004), state that while engagement contains many of the elements of commitment, it is not a perfect match. Robinson et al. (2004), present engagement as one step up from commitment. This suggests that it does not reflect sufficiently on two aspects of engagement. It has a two-way nature, and the extent to which engaged employees are expected to have positive attitudes about their job (Robinson et al., 2004). Furthermore, Storey (2007: 8), referred to the concept of employee engagement as:

A term that broadly equates with the notion of high commitment.

Additionally, Yalabik et al. (2013: 2803) proposed that 'affective commitment' is an antecedent of work engagement. Furthermore, Chalofsky and Krishna (2009), consider the connections between employee commitment, and employee engagement.
to be vital. The impact which motivation has on engagement is outline in the following section.

2:5.2 Engagement and Motivation

Motivation is the force that energises, directs, and sustains behaviour (Armstrong and Taylor 2014). The motivational element in engagement is intrinsic, while motivation is concerned with the factors that influence people to behave in certain ways (Mohanan et al., 2012). Macey et al. (2009: 67) commented that:

When the work itself is meaningful it is also said to have intrinsic motivation. This means that it is not the pay or recognition that yields positive feelings of engagement but the work itself.

The concept of work empowerment was introduced by Wang and Lee (2009). Work empowerment can be described as the situation whereby workers become motivated by a supportive work environment and assume an active orientation towards that environment. The three components of motivation, as listed by Arnold et al. (1991), are direction (what a person is trying to do), effort (how hard a person is trying), and persistence (how long a person keeps on trying). An employee needs to be encouraged to put in their best effort for the organisation (Mohanan et al., 2012). Motivation is concerned with the factors that influence people to behave in certain ways (Mohanan et al., 2012).

Intrinsic motivation is demonstrated through behaviours that are performed by employees for their inherent interest, and for the enjoyment of the activity itself (Dacey et al., 2008). Intrinsic motivation is driven from Self-Determination Theory (S-D T), which indicates that there are three fundamental needs that are essential for facilitating social development and well-being: competence, autonomy, and relatedness (Kordbacheh et al., 2014). Situations which promote such characteristics induce intrinsic motivation (Kordbacheh et al., 2014) Expanding on S-D T, Chalofsky and Krishna (2009), proposed that there is a deeper level of intrinsic motivation known as meaningfulness. Furthermore, Chalofsky and Krishna (2009), considers the
connections between workplace motivation, and employee engagement to be vital. The following section will discuss the topic of Organisational Citizenship Behaviour.

2:5.3 Engagement and Organisational Citizenship Behaviour

Organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB), as originally defined by Organ (1988), refers to employee behaviour that goes above and beyond the call of duty and contributes to organisational effectiveness. Essentially, OCBs are supra-role, contributory behaviours undertaken by individuals of their own volition, which are not required or practicably enforceable by superiors, but often help the organisation that the individual works for in some manner (Markóczy et al., 2009; Borman, 2004; Konovsky and Organ, 1996; Organ, 1988).

OCBs constitute the bigger construct of employee engagement and they cannot independently act as a replacement for engagement (Macey and Schneider 2008; Robinson et al., 2004). OCBs are discretionary behaviours and are not explicitly recognised by the employing organisation’s formal reward systems that are beyond formal obligations and lubricate the social machinery of the organisation, reducing friction and/or increasing efficiency (Podsakoff and MacKenzie, 1996). OCBs are similar to definitions in the engagement literature of being respectful of and helpful to colleagues, as well as willingness “to go the extra mile” (Robinson, et al., 2004).

In addition, OCBs include working longer hours, trying harder, accomplishing more and speaking positively about the organisation (Armstrong and Taylor 2014; Wellins and Concelman, 2004). Saks (2006), differentiates between OCB and engagement. OCB involves voluntary and informal behaviours that can help co-workers while engagement is one’s formal role performance rather than extra-role and voluntary behaviour (Saks 2006). Little and Little (2006), noted that this desirable behaviour has been shown to be related more to the work situation than to individual dispositions.

Finally, another element of OCBs according to O’Donovan (2015), are Profession Induced Organisational Citizenship Behaviours (PIOCBs). PIOCBs refer to a set of
voluntary, helping, goodwill characteristics carried out by members of certain professions, to the benefit of patients or clients (O' Donovan, 2015). This “customer focus” does not appear to be reflected in existing conceptualisation of OCBs, as the primary beneficiary is, in this case, the patient. The next section will explore outcomes of engagement.

2:6 Outcomes of Engagement

Employee engagement is crucial for any organisation (Tseng et al., 2012). Despite the recognised importance of engagement, there appears to be a lack of consensus as to the outcomes of the construct (Kim et al., 2012; Macey et al., 2009; Shuck and Wollard, 2010). Research, however, suggests that employee engagement results in organisational success if employees have the capability of giving their very best efforts in a spirit of maximum enthusiasm and eagerness in relation to their work within the organisation (Cook, 2008).

Stairs and Galpin (2010:197), suggest that high levels of engagement have been shown to relate to seven specific outcomes. In particular it is suggested that engagement assists in:

1. Lowering absenteeism and higher employee retention
2. Increasing employee effort and productivity
3. Improving quality and reduced error rates
4. Increasing sales
5. Increasing profitability, earnings per share and shareholder returns
6. Enhancing customer satisfaction and loyalty
7. Creating faster business growth and a higher likelihood of business success

In addition, Harter et al. (2002), contend that engagement is positively related to important business performance metrics including customer satisfaction, loyalty, profitability, and productivity.

Engaged employees, as proposed by Young et al. (2009), are typically friendly, attentive to customer problems, prompt in service delivery, and motivated to
recommend appropriate products based on customer needs. Nevertheless, Macey and Schneider (2008) proposed that employees' proactive personality, conscientiousness, auto telic personality and trait positive affect could lead to the development of higher levels of engagement. According to Everitt and Heathcock (2013), job security has a significant impact on employee engagement as feeling insecure in one's role affects aspects of work. In addition, Shuck et al. (2010) argued that the drive for self-actualisation parallels the concept of employee engagement, whereby employees strive to reach their full potential by being engaged.

Additionally, Rich et al. (2010), propose that extra-role behaviour such as OCBs. Rurkkhum and Bartlett (2012: 164), consider support for positive relationships between engagement and “every component” of OCB, making reference to altruism, conscientiousness, sportsmanship, courtesy, and civic virtue. Furthermore, Soane et al. (2012: 536) proposed that OCBs are a potential outcome of engagement because engaged employees tend to have a positive effect and are motivated to exhibit “beneficial” behaviours. Furthermore, Rich et al. (2010), suggest that there is a positive relationship between engagement and OCB. OCB is an important organisational construct and its positive relationship with employee engagement has been empirically validated (Rana et al., 2014).

According to Shuck et al. (2010), employees who reported higher levels of engagement were more likely to report lower levels of intention to turnover. Similarly, Soane et al. (2012) found that employee engagement explained a relatively moderate amount of variance in employee turnover intentions. In addition, Conrad (2013) proposed that career development is the key outcome to increasing employee engagement. In contrast, however, if the desire of career advancement is unfulfilled employee turnover will increase. Additionally, Meyer and Gagne (2008) proposed that employee engagement lowers intention to cease employment at an individual level. Crawford et al. (2010), and Halbesleben (2010), agree with Meyer and Gagne (2008), and added that strong employee engagement levels reduce staff turnover. Furthermore, Cropanzano and Mitchell (2005) consider engaged employees to be more likely to report positive attitudes and intentions toward the organisation.
Saks (2006) suggested that engaged employees are more committed, satisfied, and productive. In addition, Fleck and Inceoglu (2010: 35) posited that engaged people are more attached to their work roles and are “absorbed by enacting it”. Engaged people invest significant energy into performing their work roles (Fleck and Inceoglu, 2010). Furthermore, Meyer and Gagne (2008), considered that employee engagement predict higher firm performance at the organisational level.

Employee engagement is also a strong factor for organisational performance, success, and employee retention (Lewicka, 2011; Bakker et al., 2007; Fernandez, 2007; Hallberg et al., 2007; Xanthopoulou et al., 2007; Saks, 2006; Hewitt Associates, 2004; Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004; Harter et al., 2002). Alfes et al. (2010), assert that engaged employees perform better, are more innovative, want to stay with their employers, enjoy greater levels of personal well-being, and perceive their workload to be more sustainable than disengaged employees. Employers now realise that by focusing on employee engagement, they can create a more efficient and productive workforce (Markos and Sridevi, 2010). Furthermore, Menguc et al. (2013), propose that as employees become more engaged they find work more meaningful, self-fulfilling, inspirational, and therefore, become more dedicated, concentrated, and engrossed in their jobs.

In addition, Kim et al. (2012) literature, deals with the relationship between work engagement and performance. This review confirmed direct and/or indirect positive effects of work engagement on employee performance within an organisation. In contrast, however, Sparrow (2013: 102), warned against over-confident claims that high engagement results in high performance. Furthermore, Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) concluded that engaged employees likely have a greater attachment to their organisation and a lower tendency to leave their organisation. Research has shown that engagement influences not only in-role behaviour but also proactive behaviour (Sonnentag, 2003).

Duly, Cropanzano and Mitchell (2005), suggest that individuals who are engaged are likely to be more trusting and have high-quality relationships with their employer. Reio and Sanders-Reio (2011) agree that engaged employees have high quality relationships with both supervisors and co-workers. Moreover, it is considered that
engagement is positively related to organisational commitment, negatively related to intention to quit, and is believed to be related to job performance and extra-role behaviour (Schaufeli and Bakker 2004; & Sonnentag 2003). Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) consider that engagement can negatively relate to turnover intention and mediate the relationship between job resources and turnover intention.

Howard (2007) highlighted that the culture of an organisation influences the performance, commitment, and engagement levels of employees. Further literature proves a positive relationship between leadership, autonomy, and engagement (Halbesleben, 2010; Xanthopoulou et al., 2009). Finally, according to Maslach (2003), the results of engagement are reduced burnout, increased satisfaction, greater commitment and higher performance.

2.7 Conclusion

William Kahn first explored employee engagement in his seminal paper in the Academy of Management Journal almost twenty-five years ago. Since then, there has been an increasing amount of research regarding employee engagement. Employee engagement research related to this study has been discussed in detail throughout this chapter. In contrast, however, there is insufficient evidence of employee engagement among support staff. Throughout the literature review process, managerial staff and private sector workers served as examples for the authors’ previous studies. Indeed, a place where new contributions could be made to existing literature has been identified. The following chapter, chapter three, outlines and discusses the methodology of this study.
Chapter Three
Research Methodology
3:1 Introduction

This chapter aims to discuss and justify the theoretical framework of the research methods carried out in order to gain a deeper insight into employee engagement among support staff in Cork University Maternity Hospital. The theoretical framework is comprised of a number of research-specific areas. The research-specific areas in this study include the research problem, the research question, aims and objectives and research design. In addition, the rationale behind the choice of research methods is explored and matters relating to the questionnaires are discussed. The next section will address the research problem.

3:2 Research Problem

Tull and Hawkins (1990: 45-46) assert that defining the research problem is:

The most critical part of the research process. Unless the problem is properly defined, the information produced by the research process is unlikely to have any value.

Wisker (2001) concurs with this view, stating that defining the research area, choosing the research title, and asking the main research questions are essential points of entrance in the research process.

The research problem in this study originated from related topics discussed in an “Employee Engagement” module on the MA in Human Resource Management course, as well as the researcher’s own experience in a work environment. Furthermore, there is insufficient evidence of engagement studies among support staff in general and within the health services. For these reasons, the researcher considered employee engagement among support staff in CUMH a compelling topic, and worthy
of further study. The next section will explore the research questions, aims and objectives.

3.3 Research Question, Aims and Objectives

The research question is defined by Strauss and Corbin (1998: 35) as:

*The specific query to be addressed by this research that sets the parameters of the project and suggests the methods to be used for data gathering and analyses.*

Wisker (2008) contends that when the researcher is exploring a research question, relationships are examined and interpretations are discovered to underpin theories and concepts. Additionally, the research design will provide methods to discover responses rather than final fixed answers. The specific research question for this study is "are support staff in CUMH engaged, and to what level?" In addition, factors effacing support staff's involvement and commitment to CUMH will be explored. It appears counter intuitive to the researcher that the support staff category is often overlooked in terms of engagement research.

Burns and Bush (2010: 110) argue that:

*Research objectives are very specific and tell researchers exactly what information they must collect in order to solve the problem.*

Drawing upon this definition, the research objectives of this dissertation are as follows:
- To explore levels of employee engagement among support staff in CUMH (housekeeping attendants, porters and security officers), and to analyse the range of possible contributing factors.
• To examine the effect an amalgamation of three hospitals, each with a distinct tradition and ethos, into one institution has had on support staff and their ability to show positive employee engagement qualities.
• To explore the impact of governmental initiatives, policies, and strategic decisions on employee engagement within CUMH.

According to Haber (2014:28):

_The hypothesis attempts to answer the research question._

A hypothesis is a clear description of what is intended to be investigated. A hypothesis should be outlined before research is conducted and openly stated in the reporting of results. A hypothesis allows for the identification of research objectives, key concepts and the relationship to both the research problem and the literature review (Prasad et al., 2001). Hypotheses are a vehicle for testing the validity of theoretical framework assumptions and they also provide a bridge between theory and the ‘real world’ (Haber, 2014). In addition, quantitative hypotheses are forecasts a researcher makes about the expected relationships among variables (Creswell, 2008). The research hypothesis in this study is that employee engagement exists among support staff. The research design is discussed in the following section.

3:4 Research Design

Research design provides structure to a study. It furnishes the researcher with a “road map”, illustrating how data will be collected and analysed in order to satisfy the research question. Indeed, the research design is an arrangement of conditions for the collection and analysis of data in a method that aims to merge relevance with the research question (Brayman, 2005). According to Saunders et al. (2009), a combination of both primary and secondary data is required for research projects in order to answer research questions and complete research objectives. This study began with secondary research, following the advice of Saunders et al. (2009), who state that a researcher should begin a study with secondary data, and then proceed to
primary data when secondary data resources have been exhausted. Secondary research is explored in the next section.

3.4.1 Secondary Research

Burns and Bush (2010: 146), refer to secondary data as:

*The process of searching for and interpreting existing information relevant to the research objectives.*

The main drawback associated with secondary data is the fact that it is often collected for some other purpose (Burns and Bush, 2010). According to Hakim (1982), researchers do not consider reanalysing previously collected data as feasible. Data, having been accumulated already for a different purpose, is referred to as secondary data. Secondary data is assembled to gain an understanding within a certain topic. This data may not, however, satisfy the new or different research objectives (Latino, 2007). In addition, secondary data has association with analysis and interpretation stages from the original study. Furthermore, secondary data are derivatives or abstractions of multiple primary data. One can also argue that secondary data is more complex and sometimes proves difficult to directly observe, requiring additional levels of analytical manipulation and subsequent interpretation (Reitz and Wing, 2008).

For the purpose of this dissertation, the secondary information was compiled by the researcher reviewing pertinent literature: content from books, academic journals, theses, trade journals, and newspapers reports. These resources and other information were obtained from libraries at Cork Institute of Technology, University College Cork, University of Limerick, and University College Dublin as well as CD-ROM searches and internet sources.

One method of satisfying the research question was the conducting of desk research. Desk research is commonly referred to as secondary research and is comprised of the literature review. The overall goal of the literature review is to establish the
significance of the general field of study (by setting a background) and to identify a place where new contributions can be made in current literature. Robson (2011) describes desk research as comprising any re-analysis of data collected by another researcher or organisation. In-depth desk research will allow for further research to be made in the future and normally involves a synopsis, collection, and or synthesis of existing research while justifying new research that must be done in a given area. In this research project, a full citation of the original resources will be provided in the bibliography. Along with the bibliography, previous literature will be built upon to form new ideas and give new perspectives on recommendations for the research question. The next section explores the topic of primary research.

3:4.2 Primary Research

Primary data is data which has been collected for the first time by one or a combination of the following (Chrisnall, 2001: 45): observation, questionnaires and experimentation. Chrisnall (ibid.: 129) proposes these three aspects, stating that:

*Primary data refers to data that has been collected for the study in which it is used.*

The type of primary data collected will depend on the researcher conducting the study (Horn, 2012; Reitz and Wing, 2008). The interpretive impact of various analytical decisions was demonstrated by Gobalet (2001) in a blind analysis by researchers with different training and experience. Rigorous and detailed recording of primary data using adequate samples as defined by Gamble (1978) will ensure the outcome of the research.

Decisions regarding recording primary data vary depending upon the recovery methods, sample sizes, experience of the analyst, and, perhaps more importantly, the research design and the questions being asked (Atlici et al., 2013). The fact that even primary data carries implicit bias does not necessarily conflict with the need for more and better data sharing (Amorosi et al., 1996).
For any study, the research strategy relates directly to the research question being asked. There is much debate among academics with regards to the best way to conduct research. This debate is centred on the qualitative and quantitative paradigms. Both paradigms have strengths and weaknesses and may contribute themselves to certain types of study. The research paradigm should not be predetermined. Rather it should be decided on the basis of what the researcher is trying to determine (Punch, 2009).

Qualitative research takes a natural approach to research. Marshall and Rossman (2006:3), claim that:

*Qualitative research is pragmatic, interpretive and grounded to the lived experiences of people.*

Qualitative research focuses on the meaning and approaches of people rather than a statistical view on research. Additionally, qualitative research allows researchers to gain real-life experience and professional insights and to evaluate how well it suits real-life cases (Hirsjarvi and Hurme, 2010). Denzin and Lincoln (2005), argue that the term "qualitative" suggests qualities, processes, and meanings that are not examined through experimentation, or measured in terms of quantity.

In addition, qualitative research methods are used to explore and analyse the opinions and perspectives of the individuals relevant to the research domain (Udo, 2006; Silverman, 2005). Methods for qualitative research include in-depth interviews, focus groups, case studies, field research and participant observations (Hesse-Bieber and Leavy, 2006; Greenblatt *et al.*, 2004).

Quantitative research explains a phenomenon by collecting numerical data that is analysed using mathematically-based methods (Aliaga and Gunderson, 2000). In addition, quantitative research aims to recognise and isolate specific variables contained within the study's framework (Brains, 2010; McNabb, 2008). Quantitative data approaches include systematic reviews, clinical trials, surveys, case studies, and cohort studies (Hoe and Hoare, 2012).
Furthermore, quantitative methods emphasise objective measurements and numerical analysis of data collected through polls, questionnaires, or surveys. Quantitative research focuses on gathering numerical data and generalises it across groups of people (Babbie, 2010). A quantitative approach is used to deliver comparable, generable results, expressed in numerical form (Tench and Yeomens, 2009). Quantitative studies provide data that is easily replicated and statistically significant results that with good sampling techniques can be extended to describe quite a large audience (Benoit and Holbert, 2008).

According to Johnson et al. (2007: 129), a "Mixed Method" research method is defined as:

*An intellectual and practical synthesis based on qualitative and quantitative research.*

Udo (2006), states that qualitative and quantitative methods should be combined in order to compensate for their mutual and overlapping weaknesses. Furthermore, Onwuegbuzie et al. (2010) concur noting a weakness inherent in both quantitative and qualitative research, and suggest a blend of both methods to be most accurate. In addition, quantitative and qualitative research methods have a claim to an autonomous existence. In contrast, however, it can be necessary to view quantitative and qualitative research methods as integral components of a system that seeks the truth (Kumar, 1998). In recent years, an increasing number of researchers are advocating that studies be conducted that utilise both quantitative and qualitative techniques within the same inquiry. Such investigations represent what is often termed "mixed methods", although other terms have been used, such as "multi-method", "blended methods", and "integrated methods" (Johnson et al., 2007).

The term "mixed methods" research has intuitive appeal as this class of research involves more than just mixing methods. Moreover, mixed research can involve the mixing of quantitative and qualitative paradigms, worldviews, techniques, methods, concepts, and/or language (Johnson et al., 2007; Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004).
According to Johnson et al. (2007), the phrase "mixed research" represents a deliberate decision designed to de-emphasise methods alone as a definition and focus more emphasis upon a methodological approach in defining the mixed research process. Indeed, mixing of different research approaches, representing both quantitative and qualitative research allows the researcher to address an important type of research legitimation, termed weakness minimisation (Onwuegbuzie and Johnson, 2006).

Muijus (2010), and Ng and Coakes (2014), claim that quantitative research studies allow the testing of hypotheses. The researcher collects relevant data and uses statistical techniques to decide whether or not to reject or accept the theory. This approach provides a direct answer. For this dissertation, by conducting quantitative research, the researcher will discover whether or not employee engagement is present among support staff in CUMH. In contrast, however, Merrian (2009) suggests that there is no specific answer to qualitative research. Qualitative data is flexible and assumes a series of possible realities.

It was therefore decided that for this research project, a quantitative research method is appropriate. The quantitative paradigm was deemed adequate by the researcher, as it was thought to include the best approach and methods to answer the author's research objectives. In addition, the choice of research is quantitative due to the research focusing on gathering numerical data and generalizing it across groups of people (Babbie, 2010). The data collection tool (questionnaires) is outlined in the next section.

3:5 Questionnaires

There are a number of different strategies that are relevant to the research. Yin (2009: 49), states that there:
Is not one correct strategy for every research, but the goal is to choose a research strategy that is appropriate.

Cohen et al. (2011) concur, and suggest that the issue is fitness for purpose, proposing that the more one tries to gain comparable data the more standardised the research method tends to become. Since the aim of this research concerns employee engagement among support staff in CUMH, the research will be conducted via questionnaires.

Jensen (2013) highlights the importance of surveys as having major significance in quantitative research, which does not involve any manipulation of participants or their circumstance in advance. In addition, Whittaker (2009: 61) states:

Surveys are used to study large groups or populations usually using a quantitative approach to identify beliefs, attitudes, behaviours and other characteristics.

Burns and Bush (2010) describe surveys as involving interviews with a predesigned questionnaire. Similarly, Chirsnall (1991) describes questionnaires as a method of gathering information in relation to a specific problem, resulting in a clearer outcome.

According to Ng and Coakes (2014), questionnaires are the most common instrument for data collection. The objective of the questionnaire should always be carefully borne in mind when compiling said questionnaire. Hague and Jackson (1996), argue that questionnaires fulfil four purposes. Their first and primary role is to draw accurate information from respondents. Secondly, they provide structure to interviews. The third role of questionnaires is to provide a standard form on which facts, comments and attitudes can be written down. Fourth and finally, they facilitate data processing (Hague and Jackson, 1996). In addition, Ng and Coakes (2014), state that questionnaires are designed around a hypothesis. Finally, it is important to ensure that there are sufficient questions to test a hypothesis (Haber, 2014).

According to Burn and Bush (2006), surveys have a number of advantages firstly, a questionnaire enables the researcher to investigate the opinions of staff in a relatively
inexpensive and timely manner. In addition, questionnaires allow the researcher to analyse the survey responses and gain valuable information. Indeed, questionnaires provide the opportunity to divide the respondents into specific group segments based on professional roles. It is argued that questionnaires provide standardisation. Furthermore, questionnaires are accepted as having certain advantages over other data collection methods such as interviews (Burns and Bush, 2006; Denscombe, 2003; Bowling, 2002). Finally, questionnaires enable the researcher to distribute and analyse easily. Given the above advantages this researcher conducted person administered questionnaires in accordance with recommendations found in the literature.

Possible disadvantages of questionnaires include low response rates and an associated bias, because those who do respond may not be typical of the subject group. In addition, there may be little or no contact between the researcher and the participants, which may also adversely affect response rates (Jones et al., 2008; Bowling, 2002; Cormack, 2000).

Questionnaires are deemed appropriate by the researcher as a means of data collection for this study due to the reviewed literature having highlighted the purposes of the questionnaire, the significance of quantitative research, and the need for a hypothesis. Furthermore, Groves et al. (2004) highlight that questionnaires gather information, producing statistical generalisation to large populations that share a common culture. In addition, Babbie (2010) notes that quantitative methods emphasise objective measurements and numerical analysis of data collected through polls, questionnaires or surveys. Questionnaires were used by this researcher in accordance with the above supporting literature. The following section will outline the study’s sample.

3.6 The Sample

This study was piloted with a sample group of five support staff members. The sample for the pilot consisted of two housekeepers, two security officers, and one porter. All respondents were able to complete the questionnaire without difficulty. In contract to this success, however, one major consideration arose out of the pilot study. Respondents were concerned that their identity would be discovered through the
captured data. All participants were assured that the collection of individual responses was not the objective of this study. In addition, measures taken to address this issue will be discussed further in the ethical consideration section. Limitations for the pilot study included a gender imbalance and a small sample. The pilot questionnaire was amended to better answer the research objectives and administrated to the sample.

Burns and Bush (2010: 292), define the population, from the perspective of research as:

*The entire group under study as specified by the research project. A sample is a subset of the population that should represent the entire group.*

**Table 3.1 Respondents Demographics**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
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<th>29</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>41</td>
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<td></td>
<td>36-45</td>
<td>25</td>
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<td></td>
<td>46-55</td>
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<td></td>
<td>56-65</td>
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<table>
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<td>Portering</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Security</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
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</table>

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<td>St Mary’s</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CUH</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This research project is based on support staff. Therefore, support staff departments constitute the sample, with representatives from housekeeping, portering and security forming the sample on which the study is based. A total of ninety questionnaires were
administrated to all staff who met the required inclusion criteria. Seventy-five respondents answered the questionnaire, representing 78% of the total staff population. Neither the reasons for refusal to participate nor the characteristics of the non-respondents were formally recorded. The unusable questionnaires returned were either blank or only partially complete with major portions of the questionnaire left unanswered. With seventy useable questionnaires out of the total population of ninety, the response rate was 77.78%. Table 3.1 (page 48) highlights the demographics of respondents. The ethical considerations of this study are highlighted in the next section.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

Miller et al. (2012) propose that ethics concern human conduct, and the honourable actions of the researcher throughout the research project. According to Burns and Bush (2010: 90), “philosophy usually determines what is appropriate, ethical behaviour”. They define ethics as “a field of inquiry into determining what behaviours are deemed appropriate”. Additionally, Gregory (2003) argues that the participants are in the hands of the researcher. It is essential therefore to behave in a moral and ethical fashion. The researcher aimed at all times to engage in a moral approach, with ethical consideration for participants in the study taken into account throughout.

In relation to the primary research, this researcher stressed to all participants that this study, while conducted within the organisation, was an independent project and not management-orientated or ordered by management. In addition, this researcher fully briefed all participants on the purpose of the study and the related research question. It was explained to all participants that copies of questionnaires would be kept for this research project, along with the possibility of review by both the research supervisor and external examiner. Throughout the course of person-administrated questionnaires, this researcher remained impartial. In addition, this researcher withheld any personal opinions that might potentially influence respondents. Furthermore, the questionnaires were conducted so that participants remained anonymous. Respondents completed a general questionnaire, selecting their relevant department and personal information.
On completion, the researcher placed all questionnaires in a folder by the researcher. All questionnaires were completed before the analysis of same was conducted.

With regard to secondary research, ethical considerations were also adhered to. Ethical considerations in relation to secondary research include the recording and acknowledgement of all secondary data used. All sources of secondary data are recorded and highlighted both as in-text references and in the bibliography section of this study. The permission granted for this study to be undertaken is discussed in the following section.

3:8 Gaining Access

For the purpose of this dissertation, the setting is a hospital. Due to the nature of the service environment, permission was required. The researcher contacted Miriam Lyons (manager) about the correct manner in which to conduct a study within CUMH. The researcher was advised that the process of requiring permission is carried out through the submission of an application form. The researcher completed this form and emailed it to Ms. Lyons. After the submission of relevant information, the ethical board of the CUMH discussed the researcher’s application. Further information was required, and permission was obtained.

In addition to acquiring hospital permission, the researcher contacted personnel from each department involved. Veronica O’Shea (Housekeeping Supervisor), Frank Power (Senior Porter) and Donal McCarthy (Dept-Chief Security Officer) were all satisfied to have the study conducted within their departments. The research validity is illustrated in the next section.

3:9 Research Validity

Validity is defined by Hammersley (1990:210) as:
Truth: interpreted as the extent to which an account accurately represents the social phenomena to which it refers.

Silverman (2005) argues that truth is another word for validity. The key function of validity is concerned with how data is collected. This concern can further be divided into whether or not the data was collected accurately, and if the data portrays an accurate picture of the topic being studied (McNeill and Chapman, 2005; Berkeley Thomas, 2004).

Research method justification is another method that can be used to ensure validity of research (Berkeley Thomas, 2004, Carson et al., 2001). In addition, it is fundamental that the data analysis process, and subsequent reporting of research findings, be controlled in order that a complete evaluation and appraisal of results can be ensured (Berkeley Thomas, 2004, Carson et al., 2001). When the aforementioned criteria are met, the validity of the research can be assured.

For the analysis of data to be successful, the questions were divided into eleven themes, specifically, career development, culture, job and work security, commitment and involvement, implications of government decisions on employee engagement, co-workers relationships, work engagement, compensation and benefits, management relationships, the work environment, and turnover. The themes were constructed by grouping similar questions together. The theme concerning career development, for example, is comprised of two statements:

1. The organisation is dedicated to my professional development
2. I have the opportunity to apply my talents and expertise

The next section discusses the research philosophy.

3:10 Research Philosophy

According to Wu (2014: 381):

*Philosophy sensitises the research situation toward alternative ways of doing research*
Trochim and Land (1982: 89), identify several issues that should be considered in the development of research. Specifically they suggest that research should:

• Be grounded in theory.
• Reflect the settings of the investigation.
• Be feasible and sequenced.
• Include redundancy.
• Be efficient.

The system of logic method depends upon the operationalisation of variables of interest into numeric data, which can then be subject to statistical analysis. Quantitative research is primarily deductive, leading to theory testing (Doueck and Lyons, 2009). In deductive studies there is a pre-formed theory, which the researcher aims to test and evaluate (Horn, 2012). In addition, because of the way quantitative research is structured and the way samples are selected, the results of quantitative research are more likely to be reproducible and thus allow for generalisations (Horn, 2012; Doueck and Lyons, 2009). Furthermore, the deductive nature of quantitative research stands in contrast to most qualitative research, however, which tends to be inductive (Horn, 2012; Doueck and Lyons, 2009). In other words, it generates rather than tests theory. Quantitative research requires the application of scientific methods to matter interest and profession (Doueck and Lyons, 2009). The system of logic method involves making observations, developing hypotheses, making predictions, and testing these predictions (Trochim, 2006).

The quantitative researcher is influenced by knowledge required of research philosophies and paradigms. Indeed, this researcher’s interpretation of how the theory should be utilised and implemented is noted. By choosing a quantitative research design, the theoretical route this researcher has chosen to follow is the deductive approach (Curtis and Drennan, 2013). In addition, according to Gray (2009), the process of deduction involves a number of phases. A literature search needs to be conducted in order to choose the theoretical concepts and theories most relevant to the research, followed by the development of a hypothesis. The research is conducted according to the chosen method and the data compared with the theory to ascertain if
the latter has been established. Depending on the outcome, the hypothesis is accepted or rejected (Gray, 2009).

As previously highlighted, an interest in the topic was shown by this researcher during a taught model on employee engagement. From this interest, observations were made by this researcher within a working environment. Through personal experience, this researcher noted employee engagement within CUMH differs from that in textbooks and from class discussions. With further exploration, this researcher discovered engagement to be a complex topic and that a ‘one size fits all’ strategy would not work. With observations from both the working environment and from the educational background, a hypothesis was developed; ‘Employee Engagement among support staff in CUMH’. This researcher predicted that employee engagement exists among support staff. In contrast, however, literature on employee engagement differs. Purcell et al. (2003), considers engagement to be linked to values, culture and relationships (with both employees and customers). To simplify, and for example, employees may be engaged towards customers but not towards the organisation. This researcher predicted that employee engagement exists among support staff. In contrast, however, predictions of how engaged employees are and to what exactly employees are engaged with are unknown. The objective of this research dissertation is to test the prediction of employee engagement among support staff within CUMH. It can therefore be argued that a deductive research philosophy is the correct approach for this study.

3:11 Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter critically evaluated the different methodologies used in this field so as to identify the appropriate approach for investigating the research question. Quantitative research, questionnaires and a deductive philosophy are the tools required in order to conduct the study of “Employee Engagement Among Support Staff within Cork University Maternity Hospital”.
Chapter Four
Findings and Analysis
Chapter Four Findings and Analysis

4:1 Introduction

The findings presented in this chapter relate to the research question that guided this study. Three fundamental aims drove the collection of data and subsequent data analysis. Those aims were to identify, assess, and explore employee engagement among support staff. Furthermore, the study examined governmental and organisational decisions which may affect an employee's ability to remain engaged.

In total, this chapter presents eleven themes, specifically, career development, culture, job and work security, commitment and involvement, implications of government decisions on employee engagement, co-workers relationships, work engagement, compensation and benefits, management relationships, the work environment, and turnover. The first theme, commitment and involvement, is discussed in the next section.

4:2 Commitment and Involvement:

From the recommendation proposed by Wellins and Concelman (2005), to be engaged is to be actively committed. In the questionnaire created for this study, the sample was asked about their commitment and involvement. This section was divided up into three sub-sections: work, department and organisation. Respondents were asked to tick the most appropriate box to indicate their agreement with statements regarding commitment and involvement (see Table 4.2 page 56). The three commitment and involvement questions were answered by all participants.

Participants responded positively to being committed and involved at work, with a significant majority either agreeing (44.29%) or strongly agreeing (52.86%) with the statement "I am committed and involved at work". To clarify, 97.15% of the sample answered in agreement to being committed and involved at work. This high
percentage indicates that there is a significant level of work engagement among the participants in the sample. In addition, the majority of participants either agreed (48.57%) or strongly agreed (42.86%) that they were committed to, and involved in, the department. Analysis from this study highlights that 91.43% of the sample are committed to, and involved in, their department. This study interprets that the sample are more committed to, and involved in their work, than their department. To clarify, this study illustrates that employee engagement is comprised of numerous components, for example, support staff within CUMH are more committed, and involved, at work, when compared to being committed to, and involved in, the departments.

Table 4.2 Commitment and Involvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Commitment and involvement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Not sure</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Work</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (1.43%)</td>
<td>1 (1.43%)</td>
<td>31 (44.29%)</td>
<td>37 (52.86%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisation</td>
<td>1 (1.43%)</td>
<td>8 (11.43%)</td>
<td>9 (12.86%)</td>
<td>36 (51.43%)</td>
<td>16 (22.86%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department</td>
<td>3 (4.29%)</td>
<td>2 (2.86%)</td>
<td>1 (1.43%)</td>
<td>34 (48.57%)</td>
<td>30 (42.86%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Similarly, a high proportion of respondents either agreed (51.43%) or strongly agreed (22.86%) to being committed to, and involved in, the organisation. In contrast, however, 12.86% responded negatively by either strongly disagreeing (1.43%) or disagreeing (11.43%) with the statement “I am committed and involved in the organisation”. The same number of participants (12.86%) selected “not sure” as to whether they are committed to, and involved in, the organisation. Indeed, negative and “not sure” responses (25.72%) contributed to a higher percentage than participants who strongly agreed (22.86%). One quarter of participants responded negatively, or “not sure”, which highlights that more employees expressed uncertainty or disagree with the statement “I am committed to, and involved in, the organisation” than those who strongly agree. Overall, 74.29% demonstrated either moderate or
strong engagement with the organisation. Therefore, approximately three quarters of the sample illustrated commitment to, and involvement in, the organisation.

Reflecting on the findings as outlined above, this study highlights that an employee can be engaged in their work and department but not completely engaged with the organisation. This suggests that engagement is composed of different aspects affecting work. To clarify, engagement is a group phenomenon. Findings suggest that 97.15% of the sample are committed and involved at work, 91.43% to the department, but only 74.29% to the organisation. Nevertheless, this theme represents very high levels of engagement regarding commitment and involvement, indicating that the support staff grouping is actively engaged.

When the sample is divided into individual departments, the highest negative and “not sure” responses came from housekeeping, suggesting that when compared to colleagues within CUMH, housekeepers are not as engaged. The sample consists of same-grade employees, despite different job roles and titles. Both the portering and security departments responded quite positively to questions regarding this theme. The structures of the departments in question vary, both demographically and in an organisational context. The housekeeping department consists solely of female employees. In contrast, however, the portering and security departments have representation from both genders. This raises a question as to whether a mixed gender department could contribute to higher engagement levels among employees, along with concerns relating to the nature of the work itself. In addition, it can be argued that employees may be satisfied with their jobs, just not connected to the overall organisation. This statistic highlights that a number of diverse factor influence and affect an employee’s ability and/or desire to be engaged. Additionally, this fact reinforces that employee engagement is a group phenomenon. Little and Little (2006), suggested that research around employee engagement lacks clarity as to whether the concept is an individual or a group level phenomenon. From this study it can be argued that employee engagement is indeed a group phenomenon, as department demographics, job descriptions, and the organisation, impact a workers ability to be engaged.
Furthermore, across the three areas being studied, job descriptions differ significantly between roles and departments. The sample consists of support staff, which makes up three separate departments. Housekeepers, porters and security officers, all have different job descriptions. The individual department carry out the necessary specific requirement within their varying departments. Housekeepers for example, distribute food, and provide the in-house cleaning services. In contrast, however, the security department is responsible for controlling entry and exit to the building, along with providing a safe environment to both patients and staff. This study therefore, argues that the factors of job description, status, responsibility, and department demographics, could contribute to varying engagement levels among the different categories within of the sample.

Commitment and involvement levels among the sample in general are positive. Despite this, commitment to, and involvement in, the organisation is notably lower, thus illustrating an area for improvement. Management in CUMH should take note of this finding, and attempt to improve commitment and involvement within the organisation. Methods to increase commitment and involvement within the organisation could include “Get to Know Your Colleague” events. These events would provide fun and games to all staff members. Teams for events could be made up with a mixture of staff members regardless of grades and positions, potentially further increasing engagement levels in relationships among co-workers. The importance of relationships with co-workers is explored further in section 4.4 (page 65).

In addition, this theme highlights engagement as a group phenomenon. Engagement is studied under three commitment and involvement factors, and lower positive responses can be seen throughout the three statements regarding commitment and involvement. The sample responded with exceptionally high levels of commitment and involvement to work (97.15%). A positive response rate drops slightly to 91.43% in relation to commitment and involvement in the department. Furthermore, it is noted that the lower level of commitment and involvement is illustrated between the statements concerning the department and the organisation. The decline in positive responses is approximately a quarter (22.76%) and is clearly stated at 74.29%. Analysis of this data therefore, indicates that, support staff are more committed to and
involved in work, when compared to the department, despite being more committed to and involved in the department when compared to the organisation. This highlights that engagement is a group phenomenon, as different factors contribute as to why an employee is engaged. From this study it is clear that engagement at CUMH consists of commitment and involvement to three critical elements; work, the department, and the organisation, thereby agreeing with Little and Little (2006), who state that the concept of engagement can be an individual or group level phenomenon.

Cropanzano and Mitchell (2005) propose that engaged employees are more likely to report positive attitudes and intentions toward the organisation. Findings from this study disagree with Cropanzano and Mitchell (2005), as there are high negative or not sure responses towards the organisation, despite employees showing engagement through work and department commitment. In addition, according to Asian News International (2012) workers who are “not engaged” are those who may be satisfied but are not emotionally connected to their workplace and are less likely to put in discretionary effort. The research carried out at CUMH concurs, highlighting that while employees are satisfied with their work and departments they are not connected to the organisation. Yalabik et al. (2013) proposed that to be actively committed is an outcome of work engagement. Therefore, it can be agreed that results from this study portray work engagement through commitment. To explore the implications of government decisions was a secondary aim and objective to this study. The theme regarding the implication of government decisions is explored in the following section.

4.3 Implications of Government Decisions on Employee Engagement

The impact which government decisions have had on employee engagement was deemed to be a topic worthy of further exploration. Respondents were asked to select the most appropriate box to agree with statements regarding the implications of governmental decisions (see Tables 4.3 and 4.3.1 on page 61, and 62, respectively). The three questions relating to this theme were not answered by all participants. One respondent failed to comment on the fairness of reductions, two participants did not
answer regarding the effect that amalgamation had on their working attitude, and four respondents did not offer their opinion on the effect of the amalgamation.

A combination of 90% of respondents either strongly disagreed (58.57%) or disagreed (31.43%) that the salary reductions implemented were fair. This indicates that support staff are not satisfied with the reductions. Analysis from this statistic argues the possibility of negative implications for employee engagement. Reductions in pay may negatively impact employee engagement as workers are annoyed that their pay has been cut. In addition, employees may no longer "go the extra mile", as any financial incentive has been reduced, and therefore, the morale of workers may also have been negatively affected. The literature review process was unable to find a control against which to measure this study in order to determine if there was a sense of disengagement prior to the governmental measures being implemented. The two bodies concerned with this matter are management within CUMH, and the Irish government. Recently, public sector pay talks are ongoing (May 2015), and a suspected result of reductions to levies is forecasted by public sector unions. It would be interesting to examine the effect of salary reductions once pay talk provisions have been implemented. In re-examining the relationships between pay and employee engagement within the public sector, it can be argued that employees may "go the extra mile", as their financial value has been reinstated, and therefore, the morale of workers may have been positively affected.

The second governmental implication of an amalgamation was addressed in a positive light. Indeed, a combination of 44.28% of respondents either agreed (35.71%) or strongly agreed (8.57%) that the amalgamation had no effect on their attitude at work. Nevertheless, some 20% of participants selected the "not sure" category. This may be as a result of 32 respondents originating from Cork University Hospital as opposed to the three maternity hospitals which merged. In addition, approximately one quarter (22.86%) of the sample indicated disagreement, by stating that the amalgamation had a notable effect on their working attitude. This suggests that one third of workers within the sample have negative attitudes towards the working environment. It can therefore, be argued that commitment to and involvement in the organisation is compromised due to government implications, decisions, and actions.
The percentage of the sample directly affected by a geographical move associated with the amalgamation is 48.57%. In addition, 5.71% of the sample failed to indicate what their previous hospital was. It can therefore, be argued that external work related factors contribute to an employee’s ability to be engaged. Such external factors may include parking, a change in job description, a change in hospital structure, wider campus activity, disruption regarding work and related factors, different cultures and an element of loneliness and the unknown. The above factors can impact on an employee’s ability to be engaged at work.

The final statement concerning this theme “the effect of the amalgamation” was answered evenly, with 47.14% of respondents selecting positive and 47.14% negative. In contrast, however, 5.71% of participants did not answer this question. While the exact reason for this equal divide is unknown. It is possible that a change in hospital structure, job descriptions, and campus activity are determining factors. It can also be argued that flexibility within departments, satisfaction with organisational culture, commitment to, and involvement in, the organisation have been affected by the amalgamation.

### Table 4:3 Implications of Governmental Decisions on employee engagement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Not Sure</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reductions taken out of my salary are fair</td>
<td>41 (58.57%)</td>
<td>22 (31.43%)</td>
<td>4 (5.71%)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The amalgamation has no effect on my attitude at work</td>
<td>13 (18.57%)</td>
<td>10 (14.29%)</td>
<td>14 (20.0%)</td>
<td>25 (35.71%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A secondary aim of this study is to explore the impact of governmental initiatives, policies, and strategic decisions, on employee engagement in CUMH. This study
highlights the potential implications of governmental decisions and notes concerns over levels of engagement extracted from the samples. Salary reductions taken from pay were considered unfair by support staff, which may result in disengagement, as staff may feel undervalued. In contrast, however, the amalgamation was not deemed to be a substantial disengaging factor. The 50:50 attitude towards the amalgamation highlights a split among the sample, with both positive and negative contributing equally. This discovery is of interest because an amalgamation affecting three hospitals, each with a distinct tradition and ethos, into one institution has failed to determine a majority effect. In this case it is clear that initial turmoil does not lead automatically to long-term unrest. Furthermore, support staff and their ability to remain engaged is intriguing, given the culture change (resulting from the amalgamation) and wider campus activity (governmental strategic decision). The campus activity within CUMH extends to Cork University Hospital and The Cardiac and Renal Centre. All three hospitals are situated in one location and operate both holistically and independently. The three hospitals operate independently from a client perspective, for example maternity and gynaecological services do not impact upon either the general or cardiac and renal services. In contrast, however, general complications can arise in maternity patients, thus, connections to wider facilities increases the holistic aspect offered by the Cork University Hospital group. In addition, some staff members rotate between the three hospitals, arguable affecting engagement both among support staff and the wider organisation. The effect that culture has on support staff and employee engagement is further explored in 4:11(page 94).

Table 4:3.1 The Effect of the Amalgamation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>Negative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The effect of the amalgamation was</td>
<td>33 (47.14%)</td>
<td>33 (47.14%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This study indicates that support staff remained engaged throughout the culture change of the amalgamation, the amalgamation being a significant implication of a governmental decision. Within individual departments, however, the majority of
housekeepers considered this effect to be negative (53.38%) compared to more positive majorities among porters and security at 52.38% and 52.17% respectively. This may have been fostered by 69.23% of housekeepers originating from a previous maternity facility, compared with 19.05% of porters and 8.70% of security officers. Amalgamation resulting in no geographical change had minimal impact of engagement. Nevertheless, in the case of those directly affected geographically by such changes it had a significant impact. It can be argued that it is the amalgamation, rather than geographical changes that has determined engagement levels. This conclusion stems from the recognition that housekeepers have both the highest levels of geographical change and consider the effect of the amalgamation to be the most negative. This study portrays the effect of the amalgamation rather than geographical changes due to 45.71% of the sample originating from CUH. Additionally, analysis from this study concurs, given the fact the sample failed to determine a majority positive or negative affect regarding the effect of amalgamation towards their working attitudes.

It would appear from the literature review process that existing literature fails to explore the relationship between government decisions and employee engagement. This study found governmental initiatives, policies, and strategic decisions to be unfair, given that 90% of the sample disagreed with the statement “Government reductions taken out of my salary are fair”. Despite high negative responses, the sample remained engaged through other themes affecting employee engagement, suggesting that there are many different components to employee engagement. To clarify, the sample still remain engaged despite take home pay having been reduced as a factor of the recent economic recession. In addition, management should note that the amalgamation failed to determine either a positive or a negative effect on engagement among the sample. Moreover, given that the amalgamation happened in 2007, an eight-year adjustment period might have tainted memories and responses to this governmental decision, thereby contributing to an equal (50:50) division. The passing of time may have reduced negative fallout which came from the amalgamation, along with the formation of new positive working relationships, further illustrates that upset in the beginning of an amalgamation may not automatically result in long term negativity.
This study contributes to existing research by exploring an additional relationship and its effect on engagement, by examining another factor creating disengagement for public sector workers (implications of governmental decisions). In addition, this study highlights that despite governmental reductions in financial support being deemed unfair by support staff, the decision to amalgamate has had a minimal influence on employee engagement among this sample. Another theme outlined within this study is the effect of relationships with co-workers. The effect that relationships among co-workers have on employee engagement for this study is explored in the next section.

4.4 Relationships with Co-workers

Reio and Sanders-Reio (2011) proposed that engaged employees have high quality relationships with their co-workers. As the survey was influenced by this literature, respondents were asked to indicate their agreement with statements regarding relationships with fellow co-workers (see Table 4.4 page 65). This section consisted of three questions. Two of these questions were completed by all respondents, while one participant failed to answer the question regarding prioritising the completion of tasks that a patient asked of them over tasks requested by a colleague.

Almost half of the sample (48.57%) indicated that they were more likely to complete tasks patients asked of them over tasks asked by a colleague. Arguably, this indicates that approximately half of the sample will put patients' needs first, as patients requests are prioritised over those made by a colleague. Despite this, 27.14% of the sample either strongly disagreed (5.71%), or disagreed (21.43%), with a further 22.86% "not sure" if they would complete tasks that patients asked of them over that of a colleague. To clarify, approximately half of the sample put patients need before colleagues. In contrast, however, the majority (51.43%) expressed disagreement or uncertainty. Consequently, it can be argued that relationships with co-workers have a significant impact on employee engagement. This theme illustrate both the qualities engaged people require, and consider engagement is a group phenomenon.

In relation to individual departments, Housekeeping answered most positively, responses from portering staff were more negative, and 10% of security officers
expressed uncertainty, contributing to the largest single group of unsure responses. This suggests that housekeepers are more customer-focused when compared with other departments included within this study. The sample consists of same-grade employees, despite different job roles and titles. Housekeepers, however, have more direct contact with patients when compared with porters and security officers. This raises a question as to whether the level of patient contact contributes to prioritising tasks between clients and staff. Divergent departments are thus a clear contributing factor, particularly when one takes job descriptions into account. Housekeepers, for example, may supply a patient with an extra meal, while security could refuse to open the pharmacy when asked by a client. Additionally, the fact that housekeepers are more inclined to prioritise patients' needs supports findings by Harter et al. (2002), who contend that engagement is positively related to important business performance metrics such as customer satisfaction.

Table 4.4 Relationships with Co-workers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Not sure</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Complete tasks a patient asks over that of a colleague</td>
<td>4 (5.71%)</td>
<td>15 (21.43%)</td>
<td>16 (22.86%)</td>
<td>25 (35.71%)</td>
<td>9 (12.86%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good working relationship with co-workers</td>
<td>2 (2.86%)</td>
<td>1 (1.43%)</td>
<td>6 (8.57%)</td>
<td>43 (61.43%)</td>
<td>18 (25.71%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feel respected by all staff regardless of position</td>
<td>10 (14.29%)</td>
<td>19 (27.14%)</td>
<td>13 (18.57%)</td>
<td>22 (31.43%)</td>
<td>6 (8.57%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Relationships with co-workers have an interesting effect on employee engagement. In this study, it is intriguing to note that less than half (48.57%) of the sample is more likely to complete tasks that patients ask of them over that of another employee. This is an interesting insight due to the environmental setting (a hospital) where voluntary, helping, goodwill behaviours are carried out by staff to benefit the patient. This study contradicts findings from Soane et al. (2012), who proposed that OCBs are a potential outcome of engagement, as engaged employees tend to have a positive effect on their environment by consistently modelling and exhibiting helpful behaviour towards others. In this study, OCBs are not a substantial outcome of engagement since under half (48.57%) of staff prioritised patients requests over those of their colleagues. It can be argued that for OCBs to contribute a positive effect on engagement, a higher percentage of the sample would need to respond more favourably and to prioritise patient tasks before those of other staff members.

Furthermore, it can also be argued that despite high agreement to good co-worker relationships (87.17%), the effect of the amalgamation significantly impacts this theme. Under half of the sample (48.57%) originated from a hospital setting other than CUH, and the departments answered accordingly. The security department displayed the highest uncertainty regarding completing patient tasks over colleagues, and had the largest number of CUH-originated staff. It can therefore be suggested that good co-worker relationships were a contributing factor of the amalgamation, affecting employee engagement among the sample.

The large majority of the sample (87.17%) answered positively to questions as to whether or not they have good working relationships with co-workers. This indicates that engagement levels relating to co-worker relationships are high among the sample. Within the individual departments, a strong majority of porters (95.24%) responded in the affirmative, while 15.38% of housekeepers are unsure if they have good working relationships with their co-workers. This highlights that the portering department have more robust relationships with co-workers, when compared with their housekeeping colleagues. While the reason for this is unknown, it is reasonable to speculate that department commitment and involvement levels (100%), and flexibility (76%) contributes to porters having stronger working relationships when compared to the wider sample.
In contrast to working relationships, a large amount (41.43%) of support employees does not feel respected by all staff. In addition, a further 18.57% are unsure if they feel respected. This suggests that respect is perceived to be absent among the different grades of employees within CUMH. Within individual departments, 47.83% of security officers agreed that they believed they are shown respect from other staff members, compared to 61.90% of porters, who disagreed with the statement. Both of these statistics constitute the larger figures in the respective categories. This highlights differences among departments, and stresses the importance of job descriptions within the organisation. Additionally, it can be argued that porters have stronger co-worker relationships with each other (95.24% in agreement) due to inadequate respect levels from other staff members (61.90% did not feel respected by all staff).

As well as this, it can be argued that relationships among co-workers are significant for the existence of an engaged work force. The largest part of the sample (41.43%) does not feel respected by all staff regardless of the different positions. This analysis further stresses a lack of engagement with an emphasis on co-worker relationships. In contrast, 87.17% of the sample considers themselves to have good working relationships with fellow co-workers. This study proposes that the negative response to feeling respected by all staff regardless of positions could be contributed to by not all staff changing geographic location, damaging long-term relationships. To clarify, staff working within CUMH have had to integrate with other grouping, both the staff from previous maternity hospitals and staff from CUH. Relationships from previous working conditions may no longer exist, or may have been compromised, and new relationships needed to be constructed. Furthermore, different staff positions are deemed more significant by clients. Doctors, for example, who perform caesarean sections, are considered more important than porters, who assist in transferring patients from the delivery suite or operating theatre to postnatal wards. This could be a major indicator as to why the portering department responded that they significantly disagreed (61.90%) to feeling respected by all staff.

This study illustrated that support staff have good working relationships with co-workers (87.14% agreement), despite the lack of feeling respected by all staff (41.43% disagreement). To clarify, staff perceives inclusion amongst their colleagues,
yet not amongst all organisational employees. This indicates that individuals can simultaneously be included and exclusion within the organisation. The concept of simultaneous inclusion and exclusion arguably adds credence to Davidson and Ferdman's (2002a) caution that nurturing inclusion solely at the level of the individual is insufficient for the development of an inclusive organisation. Management in CUMH should be aware, therefore, that the nature of inclusion as highlighted by both these respondents and Davidson and Ferdman (2003) indicates that fostering inclusion at the individual level, is an ongoing process, subject to change, regardless of an individual's present feelings towards the organisation. In addition, it can be argued that the perceived lack of respect shown by all staff (41.43%) is a possible result of the decline in positive responses regarding organisational commitment and involvement, when compared to work (97.05%) commitment and involvement.

This study examined the impact of co-worker relationships on employee engagement. The three questions addressing this theme failed to clearly determine if engagement is present among support staff regarding co-worker relationships. The study discovered that the majority (48.57%) of support staff show discretionary effort towards patients. In addition, the sample do not feel respected by all employees (41.43%) although they have good working relationships with co-workers from their own employment clusters (87.17%). Furthermore, this study proposes that the effect of staff relationships among colleagues recognises stability on the job.

Young et al. (2009) proposed that engaged employees are friendly, attentive to customer problems, prompt in service delivery, and motivated in fulfilling customer needs. This study argues that these are much more closely related to personality characteristics of individuals and have little to do with a special or specific engagement with the job. In addition, according to Reio and Sanders-Reio (2011) working relationships with co-workers matter and good relationships positively affect engagement. This study concurs with Reio and Sanders-Reio (2011) since 87.17% of the sample expressed good working relationships with their co-workers. Additionally, it can be argued that this study proposes contradictions to findings from Reio and Sanders-Reio (2011), as 41.43% of staff do not feel respected by staff regardless of positions. Analysis from this study indicates that wider co-worker relationships do not matter to employee engagement, as staff remain engaged despite the largest portion
(41.43%) of the sample disagreeing to the statement 'I feel respected by all staff regardless of positions'. Work engagement is a significant factor affecting employee engagement. The theme work engagement is discussed in the following section.

4:5 Work Engagement

Work engagement refers to a persistent, positive, and satisfying state of mind, and an affective-motivational state of work-related well-being, regarding work that is not directed towards any particular event, object, or person (Bakker et al., 2008; Schaufeli et al., 2002). Consequently, respondents were asked to select the most appropriate box to indicate their agreement with statements regarding work engagement (see Table 4.5 page 70). This theme is composed of four questions. Two questions were answered by all participants. The statement “I find the working day goes by quickly” had a non-response rate of 2.86%, while the question dealing with equipment was not answered by one respondent.

The majority of participants surveyed responded positively to the statement “the work I do is full of meaning and purpose”, with 50% of respondents agreeing and 24.29% strongly agreeing, giving an overall positive majority of 74.29%. This illustrates that, approximately three quarters of the sample believe the work they do is full of meaning and purpose. To simplify, support staff feel that they make a difference. This insight suggests that engagement levels in terms of job content having meaning and purpose among the sample is high. The reason for high engagement levels regarding this statement considers that 74.29% of the sample stated that “The work I do is full of meaning and purpose”. In addition, it can be argued that, three quarters of the sample consider their work to be full of meaning and purpose, despite the largest portion of respondents (41.43%) expressing a deficiency in respect. It can further be suggested that these statistical results reflect the characteristics of the respondents rather than the role engagement plays among the sample.

In relation to individual departments, four porters (19.05%) disagree with the latter statement, the largest number within the sample, thereby suggesting that almost one fifth of porters consider their job as unimportant. Similarly, three housekeepers
(11.54%) selected were unsure as to this statement, highlighting that they are uncertain as to the significance of their positions. It can therefore be argued that porters and housekeepers are less engaged in relation to meaningful job content, when compared with their security colleagues. The reason for this could be the nature of job descriptions, which vary from each department to the next. Security officers have the least patient contact within the sample; but the extent to which they disagree that their work is full of meaning and purpose is low (4.35%). The role that security plays is one of safety and availability for both patients and staff and therefore, a decline in both negative responses and disagreement levels is to be expected. Without the security department granting access to different areas, people could not enter. This ensures that the security department understand and believe in the vital contribution they make to the organisation.

Table 4.5 Work Engagement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Not Sure</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The work I do is full of meaning and purpose</td>
<td>4 (5.71%)</td>
<td>8 (11.43%)</td>
<td>6 (8.57%)</td>
<td>35 (50%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I get excited about going to work</td>
<td>6 (8.57%)</td>
<td>21 (30%)</td>
<td>14 (20%)</td>
<td>22 (31.43%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I find the working day goes by quickly</td>
<td>4 (5.71%)</td>
<td>8 (11.43%)</td>
<td>3 (4.29%)</td>
<td>41 (58.57%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The necessary equipment is available to carry out my duties</td>
<td>6 (8.57%)</td>
<td>13 (18.57%)</td>
<td>10 (14.29%)</td>
<td>34 (48.57%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Meaning and purpose is an interesting factor within this study since it is shaped by the attitude of employees in relation to their roles. Furthermore, departmental differences are a decisive factor. The different departments indicate the following results in relation to whether or not employees feel their job content is of worth 95.65% (security), 84.62% (housekeepers), and 80.95% (porters). This study clearly highlights that security officers consider that their job has the most worthwhile content when compared to the wider sample, and this lends further credence to the contention that the wider sample may be less engaged. In addition, management within CUMH should consider attempting to enhance the attitudes and perceptions towards meaning and purpose of positions among all support staff to improve engagement further. Improving perceptions of worthwhile job content might include staff members audibly thanking support staff in front of patients and the public. This would possibly increase the perceived and real importance of that position in both the staff member’s eyes and those of the general public.

Approximately three quarters (74.29%) of the sample expressed a sense of meaning and purpose. This study therefore, highlights the concept of employee engagement through employees being engaged in their work. Kahn (1990) proposed that meaningfulness is fundamental to employee engagement. In addition, later investigation by May et al. (2004) considered that job meaning positively affects employee engagement. This study concurs that meaning and purpose are significant factors for engagement as support staff illustrate engagement and demonstrated high levels (74.29%) of meaning and purpose in their roles. Furthermore, this study indicates that engagement with a focus on meaningfulness exists among support staff within CUMH.

The statement regarding excitement about going to work arguably determines an element of work engagement. This question investigates whether employees are satisfied in their positions. Indeed, if employees get excited about going to work, it is reasonable to suggest that engagement is present. Regarding this statement, slightly more (2.86%) answered positively than negatively. The positive breakdown consists of 31.43% agreeing, and another 10% strongly agreeing with the statement. In comparison, 30% of the samples disagree, and 8.57% strongly disagree. In addition, a
further 20% selected “not sure”, implying that engagement, in the form of excitement about going to work, is minimal.

The researcher finds it interesting that 2.86% is the difference between the sample agreeing and disagreeing, with a further one fifth voicing uncertainty about the statement “I get excited about going to work”. This concern is further highlighted when other themes are explored. Approximately three quarters (74.29%) of the sample indicated that their job content was meaningful, 87.14% maintain good relationships with co-workers and 97.05% are committed to and involved in their work. It can be argued therefore, that excitement about going to work should also be high, yet, positive excitement levels are considerably lower (41.43%). Evidently other factors are at play and it is certainly reasonable to posit that organisational culture has a significant role. Culture is discussed in section 4:11 (page 94), however 54.29% of the sample either responded negatively or uncertainly to being satisfied with the organisational culture.

This study raises a question as to the origin of the disparity, and proposes questions regarding why employees do not get excited about going to work. It can be argued that a lack of excitement in relation to going to work has little to do with the nature of the position. This study indicates that excitement is strongly linked to being committed to and involved in other factors relating to employment. Reflecting on findings from section, 4:2, employees are engaged in their work and department, despite not being completely engaged with the organisation. Commitment and involvement levels to work (97.05%) and the department (91.43%) are significantly higher when compared to levels felt towards the organisation (74.29%). It can therefore, be argued that the organisational culture may affect employee engagement regarding excitement about going to work.

Similarly to the results pertinent to meaning and purpose, the highest disagreement again came from the portering department. Just under half (42.86%) of porters disagree with getting excited about going to work. When the individual departments are compared, 30.77% of housekeepers and 17.39% of security officers disagree with the statement. It can thus be argued that there is an element of disengagement among porters, when compared to the wider category of support staff. The sample consists of
same-grade employees, despite different job roles and titles. Housekeeping and security departments have set tasks to carry out daily (e.g. distributing meals to patients, ensuring access to relevant areas, etc.). In contrast, the duties befalling the portering department do not follow a set pattern. Adequate time is required for emergencies and possible long periods of inactivity exist when urgent tasks are few. In addition, portering chores are on a demand basis, and waiting for requests could result in the lack of excitement among this category in relation to work. This could explain the lack of excitement among this group. Furthermore, the perceived lack of respect and reduced commitment and involvement to the organisation may result in possible contributing factors as to why staff do not get excited about going to work. The lack of respect shown to employees and (negative) personal feelings towards the organisation may result in a workers inability to be engaged. This study therefore indicates that the wider organisational environment and engagement as a group phenomenon affects the ability of employees to be engaged.

Salanova et al. (2011) proposed that work engagement is associated with all kinds of positive emotions, including enthusiasm and excitement. In contrast, however, this study emphasises that excitement is not a fundamental prerequisite for engagement. This conclusion is drawn as 58.57% of the sample expressed disagreement or uncertainty, in relation to excitement compared with 2.95% regarding commitment and involvement at work. In addition, 42.86% of porters disagree with being excited at the prospect of their workday, despite indicating high levels of commitment and involvement towards work (100%).

Another statement in this theme is “I find the working day goes by quickly”. This statement was answered positively by the majority of those surveyed, as 58.57% of the sample agreed and another 17.14% strongly agreed with the statement. When aggregated, over three quarters (75.71%) of support staff consider the working day to go by quickly. This high percentage indicated engagement among the sample regarding the fast passing of time, as the sample does not consider the working day long. It can be argued further that staff do not find their workday long as they are engaged. Nevertheless, one quarter of the sample (24.29%) either responded negatively or with uncertainty. It can therefore, be suggested that approximately half of the sample is disengaged. Management within CUMH should note this finding.
Efforts should be made to try and increase the perception among support staff that time passes quickly for those workers who are sufficiently engaged, and when disengaged it appears to drag. One way this could be achieved is by introducing flexible working arrangements. Flexibility is discussed further in the theme compensation and benefits 4.6 (page 77).

In this study, three quarters of support staff are of the opinion that the working day goes by quickly. This suggests that support staff are engaged and do not find the working shifts long. It is interesting to note that support staff work between six and eight hour day shifts, but all night shifts consist of twelve hours. The researcher notes with concern that all three “not sure” responses came from the security department. Shift length and rotation could have resulted in how participants responded, since both the housekeeping and portering departments have set shifts without rotation, while security officers have compulsory rotation from day to night shifts. Within the security department, 13.04% voiced uncertainty. It can therefore, be suggested that shift rotation may be a factor contributing to disengagement within the security department, and may contribute to increased staff turnover.

According to Fleck and Inceoglu (2010), engaged people invest a lot of their energy into performing their work roles. This study further develops the theory proposed by Fleck and Inceoglu (ibid.) and considers that investing energy into work increases engagement. This conclusion is evident since three quarters of the sample answered positively to the statement “the working day goes by quickly”. In addition, this study illustrates engagement as a personality characteristic, given that certain people will invest energy into work despite circumstances in the work environment that could lead to disengagement. Ninety percent of the sample for example, disagrees with the salary reductions being fair; despite 97.15% of participants responding positively to being committed and involved at work.

The majority of the sample (57.14%) answered positively regarding the statement “The necessary equipment is available to carry out my duties”. The numerical data consists of 48.57% agreeing and 8.57% strongly agreeing. Conversely, 18.57% of the sample disagrees, a further 8.57% strongly disagreed and another 14.29% voiced uncertainty. It can be argued that necessary equipment facilitates enhanced work
engagement, since looking for equipment may be frustrating, thereby disengaging otherwise engaged workers. It is interesting to observe that the portering department showed the highest negative response among the sample, in relation to necessary equipment, since almost one quarter (23.81%) disagreed with the statement. This suggests that the employees of portering department are less engaged when compared to the entire sample.

In relation to work engagement, the porters had concerning levels of disagreement, with the largest negative data provided in response to three out of the four questions. This negative data consists of 19.05% disagreeing to meaning and purpose job content, 42.86% disagreeing with excitement about going to work and 23.81% disagreeing with the having the necessary equipment. Analysis of this data suggests that the porters lack work engagement, despite high levels of commitment to and involvement in their working roles (100%), and good working relationships with colleagues (95.23%).

Management within CUMH and the portering department should note with concern the attitudes towards work engagement. Efforts should be increased to improve work engagement within the organisation, in order to benefit employee engagement further, and reduce possible staff turnover. The main reason work engagement needs to be addressed is that one department, or 30% of the sample, showed significant disagreement with elements of work engagement. It can be argued that 30% of the sample or one entire department appear disengaged with their work. This study confirms findings from Crabtree (2005), who argues that the problems and tensions that are fostered by actively disengaged workers can cause great damage to an organisation's ability to function effectively and efficiently. By improving work engagement among all departments, especially the least engaged, possible future damage to the organisation's aims and objectives can be reduced. In addition, by addressing attitudes towards work engagement, commitment and involvement to the organisation may also be improved. This would thereby further increase the holistic approach of employee engagement. A further significant component of employee engagement within this study is compensation and benefits. The theme compensation and benefits will be explored in the next section.
4:6 Compensation and Benefits

According to Kruse (2015), compensation has little to do with engagement. With the referenced literature in mind, the sample group was asked questions in relation to compensations and benefits by having participants select the most appropriate box to gauge their agreement with certain statements (See Table 4:6 page 77). This section is constituted of four questions. Three questions were answered by all participants. The question concerning satisfaction with paid leave was omitted by one respondent.

The largest part of the sample (42.85%) was in agreement regarding the competitiveness of the salary. This majority was composed of 35.71% agreeing and 7.14% strongly agreeing with the statement. In comparison, 18.57% of the sample disagreed, another 10% strongly disagreed and a further 28.57% were uncertain as to whether the salary is competitive to industry norm.

Compensation and benefits outside of the norm are not offered to employees within the Health Service Executive (HSE), and therefore, do not affect employee engagement. An important insight into this research, however, is the 28.57% of respondents who selected “not sure” to the statement “The salary is competitive when compared to industry norm”. It can be argued that analysis from this data suggests that the support staff grouping is uninformed about pay trends within their respective industry. The effect that engagement has on staff turnover is discussed in section 4:9 (page x), but the uncertainty of salary norms may be a possible contributing factor to the low number of staff considering leaving the organisation (21.43%). In addition, another 28.57% of the sample (18.57% disagree and 10% strongly disagree) voiced negative opinions on the competitiveness of their salary. It is possible to suggest that negative responses to salary competitiveness are strongly related to high levels of disagreement regarding implications of government decisions. Ninety percent of the sample expressed negative opinions regarding the fairness of governmental reductions. In addition, analysis of this data shows that 57.14% of the sample either disagree or indicate uncertainty about their salary. It can be argued that this majority indicates disengagement to compensation and may lead to possible staff turnover.
The responses to satisfaction of overall compensation reveal 40% disagreeing, 20% expressing uncertainty and a further 40% agreeing. Satisfaction with overall compensation indicates an equal divide among responses. Despite this even divide, 20% of respondents voiced their uncertainty. The reason for this divide and uncertainty may reflect government actions. New regulations for sick pay and universal social charge, along with other government levies, have been introduced since the start date of all employees within the sample. Ninety percent of the

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<th>Strongly disagree</th>
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<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The salary is competitive when compared to industry norms</td>
<td>7 (10%)</td>
<td>13 (18.57%)</td>
<td>20 (28.57%)</td>
<td>25 (35.71%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am satisfied with my overall compensation</td>
<td>9 (12.86%)</td>
<td>19 (27.14%)</td>
<td>14 (20%)</td>
<td>26 (37.14%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am satisfied with the amount of paid leave offered by my organisation</td>
<td>5 (7.14%)</td>
<td>15 (21.43%)</td>
<td>9 (12.86%)</td>
<td>32 (45.71%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am satisfied with the workplace flexibility offered by my department</td>
<td>3 (4.29%)</td>
<td>11 (15.71%)</td>
<td>9 (12.6%)</td>
<td>36 (51.43%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
employees surveyed responded negatively to the statement “reductions taken out of my salary are fair”. The data clearly indicates that there is a strong relationship between satisfaction with overall compensation and implications of governmental decisions. This indication and the related recommendations result from 90% of the sample responding negatively to the reductions taken from their salaries.

The majority (57.14%) of the sample is satisfied with the amount of paid leave. This satisfaction is a combination of 45.71% agreeing and 11.43% strongly agreeing with the statement. In contrast, 21.43% disagree, 7.14% strongly disagree, and another 12.86% of the sample selected “not sure”. To clarify, over half of support staff (57.14%) are satisfied with paid leave, reinforcing that the 24 days annual leave (plus bank holidays) are sufficient. Analysis from this study illustrates satisfaction regarding annual leave among the sample.

Furthermore, satisfaction with workplace flexibility dominates over dissatisfaction. In relation to this subject, 67.14% of the sample agreeing (51.43% agree and 15.71% strongly agree), 20% disagree (15.71% disagreeing and 4.29% strongly disagreeing) and a further 12.6% expressing uncertainty. Despite overall positive majorities regarding satisfaction with flexibility, it is interesting to observe that the majority of negative responses came from the housekeeping department. Over one third of housekeepers (38.46%) clearly not satisfied with the flexibility in working conditions offered by their department. One possible reason for one third of housekeepers expressing dissatisfaction with workplace flexibility is related to larger percentages of housekeepers originating from previous hospitals (80.77%). Analysis for this study therefore illustrates that governmental actions may act as a contributing factor for housekeepers expressing negative opinions regarding departmental flexibility.

According to Kruse (2015), employee appreciation picnics, compensation, or parties have little to do with engagement. Data from this study concurs with this view, as support staff illustrated high levels of engagement as a result of other factors, despite lacking positive majorities in relation to compensation and benefits. Relationships with management were a key component in this study. The theme of relationships with management is examined in the following section.
4.7 Relationships with Management

Cropanzano and Mitchell (2005) suggest that individuals who are engaged have high-quality relationships with their employer. Influenced by this finding, questions regarding relationships with management were included within the questionnaire. Participants were asked to tick the most appropriate box to indicate their compliance with statements regarding relationships with management (See Table 4.7, page 80). The theme relationships with management is reflected in the content of four questions, questions that aim to determine if this theme affects employee engagement among support staff in CUMH. Three questions were answered by all participants. One participant omitted the question concerning ‘good working relationship with my supervisor’.

In relation to the statement “I am able to make decisions affecting my work” the majority of participants responded in agreement (51.43%) with 44.29% agreeing and another 7.14% strongly agreeing. In contrast, 38.57% of the sample disagreed (32.86% disagreeing and another 5.71% strongly disagreeing) with the statement. A further ten percent of participants expressed uncertainty regarding the statement. To clarify, over half of the sample (51.43%) considers themselves able to make decisions affecting their work. This highlights engagement among the sample, as the majority of those surveyed responded positively to this statement. It can be argued that high levels of commitment to, and involvement in, the individual departments contributes to workers being able to make decisions affecting their own work. In addition, it is interesting to note that 67.14% of the sample are satisfied with the flexibility of their department. In contrast, however a lower figure (51.43%) answered in agreement to being able to make decisions affecting their own work. It can thus, be argued that either a higher percentage of employees make decisions affecting their work, or departmental flexibility has reduced impact with working decisions. Nevertheless, staff may be able to make decisions affecting their work due to the wider factors of their working environment.

This study illustrates that when employees are able to make decisions affecting their work, engagement is present. This conclusion was arrived at due to the agreeing
responses of 51.43%. Management in CUMH should take note of this figure (51.43%) and encourage ways for employees to make decisions affecting their work when appropriate. One way in which management could increase flexibility is by introducing shift and location changes among employees in individual departments. This incentive may further improve engagement among staff.

4:7 Relationships with Management

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<th>Strongly disagree</th>
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<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am able to make decisions affecting my work</td>
<td>4 (5.71%)</td>
<td>23 (32.86%)</td>
<td>7 (10%)</td>
<td>31 (44.29%)</td>
<td>5 (7.14%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management within my organisation recognise strong job performance</td>
<td>8 (11.43%)</td>
<td>19 (27.14%)</td>
<td>14 (20%)</td>
<td>23 (32.86%)</td>
<td>6 (8.57%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good working relationship with supervisor</td>
<td>2 (2.86%)</td>
<td>5 (7.14%)</td>
<td>19 (27.14%)</td>
<td>31 (44.29%)</td>
<td>12 (17.14%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust between management and employees</td>
<td>12 (17.14%)</td>
<td>18 (25.71%)</td>
<td>18 (25.71%)</td>
<td>18 (25.71%)</td>
<td>4 (5.71%)</td>
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Responses to the statement concerning management’s ability to recognise strong job performance has an agreeing majority of 2.86%, with a further one fifth responding with uncertainty. The numbers include 32.86% agreeing, and another 8.57% strongly agreeing. In contrast, 27.14% disagree with a further 11.43% strongly disagreeing that management recognise strong job performance. It can be suggested that the high level of uncertainty (20%) negatively impacts on engagement. Two concerns can be noted.
Firstly, staff do not feel appreciated by management. According to Crabtree (2005), employees who are not engaged tend to feel their contributions are being overlooked. Literature from Crabtree (2005) and findings from this study suggests that one fifth of the sample may be disengaged. Additionally, employees fail to see management recognising strong job performance. The literature review suggested that the leadership style is critical for promoting employee engagement (Attridge, 2009). It is possible that management’s inability to recognise strong job performance may negatively affect engagement, as management are not seen to care. Efforts should be made to increase awareness among employees of management recognising strong job performance. This could be achieved by management walking around, getting to know all staff members, and thanking employees on a regular basis.

The majority of support staff (61.43%) considers that they have good working relationships with their supervisors. A further 27.14% of participants selected “not sure”, with one respondent failing to comment on this relationship. To clarify, the sample indicates good working relationships between staff and their supervisors, which the literature argues is an outcome of engagement. According to Emerald Insight (2015), the most influential factor in employee engagement is that of leadership. This suggests that relationships between management and staff are important. Analysis of this data highlights that all four questions have substantial “not sure” responses. While the reason for this uncertainty is unknown, the question of identity may have caused concerns for participants. The details addressing the question of anonymity are illustrated in chapter three. Nevertheless, it can be argued that one third of the sample do not have good working relationships with their supervisors, and therefore, are disengaged. In addition, high levels of uncertainty also suggest that staff may harbour some fear of having their anonymity compromised. The survey also indicates that approximately one third of the support staff questioned are disengaged due to poor working relationships with supervisors. Hospital management need to address the issues regarding working relationships with supervisors, and efforts should be made to increase good working relationships between supervisors and employees.

In addition, Reio and Sanders-Reio (2011) propose that engaged employees have high quality relationships with their supervisors. Indeed, Cropanzano and Mitchell (2005),
suggest that individuals who are engaged have high-quality relationships with their employer. In contrast to Reio and Sanders-Reio (2011), and Cropanzano (2005), this study indicates strong levels of uncertainty concerning management relationships, despite the sample showing high levels of engagement to other elements. To elaborate, 27.14% of respondents expressed uncertainty regarding working relationships with supervisors. It can therefore be argued that strong working relationships with management are not the most influential factor in employee engagement, thus suggesting that the conclusions reached by Emerald Insight (2015) do not accurately reflect the reality 'on the ground' at CUMH.

This study has revealed that the largest proportion of support staff in CUMH disagrees with the statement concerning management and employees trust each other. This group (42.85%) consists of 25.71% disagreeing and 17.14% strongly disagreeing. Such analysis draws the conclusion that working relationships are present, despite employees clearly lacking trust. In contrast, however, according to Gould-Williams and Davies (2005), trust is an essential element of any positive exchange relationship. Furthermore, Downey et al. (2015) propose that developing a trusting climate is important for employee engagement. Therefore this study proposes that engagement among support staff is compromised due to insufficient levels of trust between management and staff. In contrast, to existing literature however, this study portrays engagement despite the insufficient trust between management and employees. In addition, the lack of satisfaction regarding organisational culture, and department flexibility maybe a contributing factor as to why management and employees do not trust each other.

Analysis resulting from this study suggests that the theme relationships with management is important for employee engagement. Three out of four questions regarding this theme were answered in a positive manner. The sample answered in agreement on the subject of making decisions affecting their work (51.43%). To clarify, over half of the sample (51.43%) indicated that they were able to make decisions affecting their own work. Nevertheless, a significant reduction of ten percent indicated that management do recognise strong job performance (41.43%). Finally, the sample positively responded to having good working relationships with their supervisors (61.33%). In contrast to positive majorities, however, support staff
disagreed with the statement regarding trust between management and employees (42.85%). The work environment for this study plays a fundamental role within the concept of employee engagement. The theme concerning the work environment is discussed in the following section.

4.8 The Work Environment

Wang and Lee (2009) first introduced the concept of "work empowerment" whereby workers become motivated by a supportive work environment and assume an active orientation towards that environment. Based on Wang and Lee's (2009) findings, participants in this study were asked to indicate their agreement with statements concerning the working environment (see Table 4.8, page 83). This theme consisted of four questions, which were answered by all participants.

The statement "In my department employees take the initiative to help others when the need arises" was largely agreed with. The figures consist of 41.41% agreeing and a further 28.57% strongly agreeing with the statement, portraying a combined positive majority of 70%. The remaining 30% consists of 11.43% strongly disagreeing, another 7.14% disagreeing and a further 11.43% unsure if employees in their department take the initiative to help others when the need arises. In contrast, however, participants responded negatively to the statement "All employees within the organisation take the initiative to help others". Negative opinions were expressed by the sample as 42.86% disagreed with the statement. Nevertheless, positive responses contributed to 38.57% (30% agreed, 8.57% strongly agreed) and another 18.57% of the sample were unsure regarding all employees within the organisation taking the initiative to help others.

This study illustrates that most staff within the individual departments take the initiative to help each other. Moreover, a slight majority (4.29%) of the sample do not believe that all employees take the initiative to help others. When employees take the initiative to help others engagement is present. Engaged employees are those who work with passion and feel a profound connection with their company; they drive innovation and move the organisation forward (Gallup 2009). This is an interesting
finding, as employee engagement within the organisation (CUMH) might be compromised.

### 4.8 The Work Environment

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<th>Not Sure</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In my department employees take the initiative to help others when the need arises</td>
<td>8 (11.43%)</td>
<td>5 (7.14%)</td>
<td>8 (11.43%)</td>
<td>29 (41.43%)</td>
<td>20 (28.57%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All employees within the organisation take the initiative to help others</td>
<td>7 (10%)</td>
<td>23 (32.86%)</td>
<td>13 (18.57%)</td>
<td>21 (30%)</td>
<td>6 (8.57%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employees in my organisation willing accept change</td>
<td>7 (10%)</td>
<td>28 (40%)</td>
<td>18 (25.71%)</td>
<td>15 (21.43%)</td>
<td>2 (2.86%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I understand how my work impacts the organisation business goals</td>
<td>1 (1.43%)</td>
<td>5 (7.14%)</td>
<td>17 (24.29%)</td>
<td>39 (55.71%)</td>
<td>8 (11.43%)</td>
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When two statements from different themes are compared differences are evident. The two statements in question are, employees take the initiative to help others, and I
am commitment to, and involvement in, the organisation. Three quarters of support staff are committed to, and involved in, the organisation, despite higher figures regarding work, and department, commitment and involvement. In addition, the majority of support staff (42.86%) believe that not all employees in the organisation take the initiative to help others. Analysis from this data indicates that organisational culture is a contributing factor regarding all employees taking the initiative to help each other. Management should note the slight majority of employees who consider all employees within the organisation do not take the initiative to help each other and efforts should be made to create a culture of helping others (showing initiative). One way this could be achieved is by management taking the initiative to help others. According to Sylvester and Patel (2014), the aim is to create a ‘trickle-down’ effect, throughout the entire organisation. The objectives of creating a culture of showing initiative to help others would improve employee engagement, increase workplace satisfaction, and therefore reduce possible staff turnover.

The majority of participants in this study expressed disagreement with the statement “Employees in my organisation are willing to accept change”. The numerical responses of the sample are ten percent strongly disagree, 40% disagree, 25.71% are “not sure”, 21.43% agree and 2.86% strongly agree. This insight suggests that staff within CUMH do not willingly accept change. In contrast to this finding, however, employees working in CUMH did not object or protest to extra tax reductions (2008) or changes in sick pay (2014). It can be argued that while staff do not willingly accept change, the impetus to prevent such changes is lacking by employees in this sample. The effect that this contradiction has on engagement, however, is undetermined. In addition, it is important to note the similar responses between willingness to change and organisation culture. It can be suggested that both factors influence each other. If the culture of an organisation is to not accept change, no matter how engaged, committed or involved workers are, resistance will result. Organisational culture I discussed further in section 4.11 (page 94).

The statement “I understand how my work impacts the organisations business goals” was answered with significant agreement. Over two thirds of the sample (67.14%), either agreed (55.71%) or strongly agreed (11.43%) with the statement. In contrast, 8.57% of the sample responded negatively (7.14% disagreed with a further 1.43%
strongly disagreeing). When the positive results are compared with the negative results, a difference of 58.57% can be seen, indicating a significant majority towards positivity. Nevertheless, 24.29% of staff demonstrated uncertainty. Results from this study highlight that approximately one quarter of staff are ‘not sure’ if they understand how their work influences the organisation’s business goals. Analysis from this data suggests that the respondents in question are unable to connect their positions with the goals of the business, despite a significantly lower “not sure” if they understand how their work impacts the organisations business goals. Analysis from this data suggests that the respondents in question are unable to connect their positions and the business goals, despite a significant lower “not sure” response rate (8.57%) in relation to meaning and purpose towards job content. This study indicates that the sample consider their work meaningful, despite a lack of foresight and recognition relating to the bigger picture. The concept of turnover is directly mentioned in literature as being a benefit of employee engagement. Turnover was included in the questionnaire and the theme is discussed in the following section.

4:9 Turnover

Crawford et al. (2010) and Halbesleben (2010) have proposed that employee engagement lowers intention to cease employment at an individual level, and reduces staff turnover. It was therefore decided that statements addressing turnover should be included in the questionnaire which forms the basis of this study. Participants were asked to express their agreement with statements regarding turnover (see Tables 4:9.1, 4:9.2 A and 4:9.2 B, pages 88, 90, 91). This section consisted of four questions, three of which were answered by all participants. The question “Are you considering leaving the organisation?” was not answered by one respondent.

Under half of the sample (48.57%) responded in the affirmative to the statement “I am satisfied with my current work environment and would not change positions”. This agreement included some 28.57% agreeing and 20% strongly agreeing with the statement. In contrast to this agreement, 18.57% responded negatively (15.71% disagreeing and another 2.86% strongly disagreeing), with a further 32.86% indicating uncertainty. To clarify, over half of the sample (51.43%) are not satisfied
with their current position, despite 97.15% indicating that they are committed, and involved, at work. This statistic provides insight for management, as over half of support staff (51.43%) either indicated dissatisfaction or voiced uncertainty regarding their current working environment and would possibly change positions. One concern for management to note is that over half of the sample may have intentions to seek a change in emplacement. Analysis from the study argues that this high percentage (51.43%) creates disengagement among workers. Additionally, this insight also poses the question as to whether satisfaction with current working environment, despite indicating possible change in positions, creates an element of disengagement. Furthermore, it can be argued that satisfaction with current working environment exists because employees are disengaged. An element of disengagement among workers is displayed in the 51.43% responding negatively or uncertainly to being satisfied with their current working environment while having no definite intent to change positions or seek other employment.

Alfes et al. (2010) assert that engaged employees want to stay with their employers more than disengaged employees. Analysis from the current study concurs, given that 62.85% of the sample expressed having good working relationships with supervisors. Results from this study indicate that half of the sample either disagree or indicate uncertainty regarding their intention to change positions. This finding highlights contradictions among the sample concerning commitment and involvement levels to work and the department. Commitment and involvement levels at work (97.05% of the sample responded positively) and the departments (91.43% answered in agreement) are high despite only 48.57% indicating that they are satisfied with their position. While it is highly unlikely that public sector employees would leave their positions for roles in private industries, it can be argued that these employees are disengaged. According to May et al. (2004), disengagement is the decoupling of one’s self within the role, involving the individual withdrawing and during role performance. Analysis from this study concurs with May et al. (2004) and Alfes et al. (2010), as approximately half of the sample are satisfied with their current working environment and would not change positions. In contrast, however, the sample indicated significant levels of engagement in relation to commitment and involvement, an element which further shows engagement to be a group phenomenon.
Table 4:9 Turnover

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<tr>
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<th>Strongly disagree</th>
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<th>Not Sure</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am satisfied with my current work environment and would not change positions</td>
<td>2 (2.86%)</td>
<td>11 (15.71%)</td>
<td>23 (32.86%)</td>
<td>20 (28.57%)</td>
<td>14 (20%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am satisfied with my current work environment and would not change location</td>
<td>1 (1.43%)</td>
<td>11 (15.71%)</td>
<td>15 (21.43%)</td>
<td>28 (40%)</td>
<td>15 (21.43%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results relating to satisfaction of the working environment and not changing location had a positive majority (61.43%). This agreement consists of 40% agreeing and another 21.43% strongly agreeing. In contrast, 17.14% of the sample expressed negatively, with 15.71% disagreeing and a further 1.43% strongly disagreeing. In addition, 21.43% of the sample selected “not sure” to the statement “I am satisfied with my current work environment and would not change location.” The positive majority indicates that approximately two thirds (61.43%) of the sample is not actively considering changing locations. This further illustrates agreement with previous findings regarding commitment, and involvement, to work (97.15%) and the department (91.43%). Analyses from this data confirm findings from Schaufeli and Bakker (2004). They suggest that engaged employees are more likely to have a greater attachment to, and a lower tendency to leave, their organisation. Approximately two thirds of the sample indicated satisfaction with the working
environment, with no intention of turnover in relation to location, thereby agreeing with the stated literature.

The majority of the sample (77.14%) is not considering leaving the organisation. Despite this, a high majority of support staff (21.43%) indicated that they were thinking about turnover and this elevated number should be noted by management at CUMH. Overall, this study indicates that over three quarters of the sample have no intention of leaving the organisation. It can therefore be argued that staff retention among support staff in CUMH is high. Shuck et al. (2010) proposed that employees who report higher levels of engagement are more likely to report lower levels of intention to turnover. This study illustrates that support staff in CUMH portray high levels of engagement, and therefore do not wish to leave the organisation. Management within CUMH should welcome this result, particularly since the literature is clear that staff retention and employee engagement have both financial and non-financial benefits for the organisation. In contrast, however, approximately one quarter of staff expressed tendency to turnover. This statistic could cause concern for management, as 21.43% of the support staff grouping is considering leaving the organisation within five years. A recruitment plan should be implemented to replace staff considering leaving. Additionally, strategies to reduce the amount of staff indicating their intention to exit the organisation should also be implemented.

The largest proportion of the sample (44.29%) indicated that they are considering leaving the organisation in five years plus. Despite this, only fifteen participants responded positively to considering leaving the organisation. The data input was recorded manually. With this in mind, the researcher is disregarding the “five year plus” category, as no respondent who is considering leaving the organisation expressed the opinion of doing so in the five years plus category. The category “five years plus” was also selected by participants who are not considering leaving the organisation.

When further analysis is completed, management should find it interesting to note that the number of staff considering leaving the organisation (not due to retirement or required service) is 20%. This 20% consists of 13.33% in the age category 26-35 and 6.67% in the age category 36-45. The literature suggests that the age category 18-35 is
known as "Generation Y". According to Bartley \textit{et al.} (2007), Generation Y can multitask, acknowledge authority, and want a relationship with their employers. Literature also states that Generation Y change job positions often, thus employing staff within Generation Y can lead to increase staff turnover. To clarify, the majority of staff (80\%) considering leaving the organisation are either at retirement age or have the required service completed, thereby contradicting Generation Y stigmas. Analysis from this study illustrates that 16.67\% of those answering who could be categorised as "Generation Y" expressed an intention of turnover. The other 20\% of the sample considering leaving the organisation are aged between 26-45, and do not solely consist of persons in Generation Y.

\textbf{Table 4:9.2.A Timeframe of Turnover}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Timeframe</th>
<th>6 months</th>
<th>1 year</th>
<th>2 years</th>
<th>5 years</th>
<th>5 years plus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>When are you</td>
<td>3 (4.29%)</td>
<td>3 (4.29%)</td>
<td>3 (4.29%)</td>
<td>6 (8.57%)</td>
<td>31 (44.29%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>considering</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>leaving the</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>organisation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the public sector, it is typically unusual of an individual to receive permanency and then leave the organisation. It is arguable that this finding is reflective of this study, as 77.14\% of staff have no intention of leaving the organisation. Support staff within the sample formed five age categories over three generations. These include "Generation Y" (18-25 and 26-35), 'Generation X' (36-45 and 46-55) and 'Baby Boomers' (56-65). Given that participants indicated their age by category, service was calculated as an average (see Table 4:9.2.B page 91).

Table 4:9.2B illustrates the number of employees according to generation and highlights the percentage of those employees who have held their position within the HSE for their working lives. One third of Baby Boomers, over half of Gen X and exactly half of Gen Y, have the maximum length of service for their age grouping. This highlights that permanent public sector positions are long term. In addition, the percentage of staff considering leaving the organisation is outlined. Huybers (2011)
argues that Generation Y individuals are loyal to people, not to their employers, unlike previous generations. It can be argued that this study does not align with findings from Huybers (2011), as 83.33% of Generation Y is not considering leaving the organisation, compared with 55.56% of Baby Boomers. Nevertheless, it can be argued that the above data is based on averages and perhaps the reason more Baby Boomers are intending to turnover is due to required length of service and legislation for retirement. Another theme within this study is career development. The next section will discuss the theme career development and the impact it has on employee engagement within this study.

Table 4:9.2.B The Samples Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Baby Boomers</th>
<th>Gen X</th>
<th>Gen Y</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maximum service for age</td>
<td>33.33%</td>
<td>54.17%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intention of turnover</td>
<td>44.44%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>16.67%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4:10 Career Development

Conrad (2013) proposed that career development is the key to increasing employee engagement. In connection with Conrad’s (2013) findings, the employee engagement questionnaire for this study consisted of two statements regarding career development. Participants were asked to express their agreement with the following statements (see Table 4:10, page 93). One participant failed to comment on the statement “I have the opportunity to apply my talents and expertise”.

The sample showed that the largest proportion of respondents (38.57%) were in agreement with the statement “The organisation is dedicated to my professional development”. The statistics include 27.14% agreeing, 11.43% strongly agreeing, 21.43% disagreeing and 12.86% strongly disagreeing. It is interesting to note that the percentage difference between those who answered positively and those who
answered negatively is 4.28%. This indicates a slight positive majority. Additionally, this query’s results are important, as they indicate that over a quarter of the sample (27.14%) articulated uncertainty. This researcher’s interest in uncertainty is linked to findings by Conrad (2013), who suggested that if the desire for career advancement is unfulfilled, employee turnover increases. However, it can be argued that the findings from this study do not support this, as over three quarters of the sample (77.14%) are not considering leaving the organisation. In contrast, however, one third (34.29%) of the surveyed support staff, disagreed with the statement “The organisation is dedicated to my professional development”. This data indicates employee engagement is an outcome of the wider organisational environment, and further proves employee engagement to be a group-based phenomenon.

When one divides the sample into individual departments, housekeeping voiced the highest level of uncertainty, with 30.77% “not sure” if the organisation is dedicated to their professional development. The portering department expressed the highest level of disagreement, with 42.86% responding negatively to the statement. This data indicates that both the housekeeping, and portering, departments are not dedicated to professional development. Analysis from this data therefore, argues the possibility of disengaged employees. The security department, in contrast, to housekeeping, and portering, responded with a majority of 43.48% agreeing that the organisation is dedicated to their professional development. This illustrates that security is the most concerned with dedicating resources to professional development among the sample. It can therefore, be argued that the security department is more engaged when compared to the other support staff in this study. Additionally, Conrad (2013) stated that educating employees will have positive affects for the organisation, thereby, highlighting that engagement affects the wider environment. This study concurs, as the security department is dedicated to professional development and appear more engaged when compared with the wider sample. Management within CUMH should take note of both literature by Conrad (2013), and the findings from this study. Moreover, efforts should be made to enhance career development among all support staff departments, in order to increase employee engagement, organisational growth, and higher satisfaction to the wider organisation environment.
Table 4:10 Career Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strong disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Not Sure</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The organisation is dedicated to my professional development</td>
<td>9 (12.86%)</td>
<td>15 (21.43%)</td>
<td>19 (27.14%)</td>
<td>19 (27.14%)</td>
<td>8 (11.43%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have the opportunity to apply my talents and expertise</td>
<td>8 (11.43%)</td>
<td>14 (20%)</td>
<td>16 (22.86%)</td>
<td>23 (32.86%)</td>
<td>8 (11.43%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The sample also answered positively to having the opportunity to apply their talents and expertise. This positive response (44.29%) consists of 32.86% agreeing and 11.43% strongly agreeing with the statement. A further 33.43% of the sample disagreed and another 22.86% selected "not sure" as to whether they have the opportunity to apply their talents and expertise. Similarly, on the question of professional development, the individual departments answered accordingly; security had the most agreement (60.87%), portering had the highest disagreement (30.43%) and housekeeping expressed the most uncertainty (30.77%). These statistics illustrate that security officers are able to apply their talents and expertise more than those in other departments, resulting in higher engagement levels when compared with the wider sample. The researcher discovered that two statements "Opportunities to apply talents and expertise", and "Working roles having meaning and purpose" are related statistically. The majority of the sample (44.29%) indicated that they have opportunities to apply talents and expertise, while approximately three quarters of respondents (74.29%) indicated that they believed there was meaning and purpose in their working roles. When individual departments are compared portering has the highest disagreement (19.05%), while security officers expressed the highest
agreement (95.65%) to the statement “The work I do is full of meaning and purpose”. Analysis of this data therefore, argues that meaning and purpose is linked with opportunities to apply talents and expertise. This link is evident, since similar responses being expressed are clear within individual departments regarding both statements. Furthermore, this study’s data clearly indicates that engagement is a group phenomenon, as the different factors studied affect employee engagement.

According to Xanthopoulou et al. (2009), engagement mobilises job and personal resources in two ways. Firstly, engaged employees are motivated to fulfil work objectives and look to create job resources that will help achieve these objectives (they search for help, information or feedback). Secondly, engaged employees are more likely to succeed in achieving their goals, leading them to feel more capable, valuable, and optimistic about work. This implies that engaged employees will apply their talents and expertise more in order to carry out their tasks. This study confirms the findings of Xanthopoulou et al. (2009), as 44.29% of the sample concurred that they had opportunities to apply their talents and expertise in the work environment. The theme of culture has a significant role on employee engagement. The impact organisational culture has on employee engagement for this study is explored in the next section.

4:11 Culture

The literature review discussed how culture at an organisational level captures the behavioural expectations and norms that characterise the way work is done (Glisson et al., 2006; Verbeke et al., 1998). Howard (2007) argued that employees of an organisation think, act and behave in ways that are heavily influenced by the organisational culture. In conjunction with findings from Howard (2007), it was decided by this researcher to explore the relationship between organisational culture and employee engagement within this study. Participants were asked to voice their agreement with statements regarding their organisational culture (see Table 4.11, page95). Both statements regarding the theme of culture were answered by all participants.
The majority of the sample (57.14%) answered positively (48.57% agreeing and 8.57% strongly agreeing) to being satisfied with the culture of their departments. Similarly, 45.71% of the sample voiced agreement (40% agreeing and 5.71% strongly agreeing) to satisfaction with organisational culture. In contrast, 15.72% (12.86% disagreed and 2.86% strongly disagreed) demonstrated lack of satisfaction to departmental culture. In addition, 22.86% of the sample responded negatively (20% disagreeing and 2.86% strongly disagreeing) to organisational culture satisfaction. Analysis from this study therefore illustrates differences in satisfaction among departments and the overall culture of the organisation. Furthermore, findings from this theme agrees with previous findings relating to commitment and involvement. Commitment and involvement levels vary from levels felt towards work (97.15%), the department (91.43%) and the organisation (74.29%). Additionally, data from this study portrays employee engagement as a group phenomenon.

Table 4:11 Culture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I am satisfied with the culture of my department</th>
<th>Strong disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Not Sure</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am satisfied with the culture of my department</td>
<td>2 (2.86%)</td>
<td>9 (12.86%)</td>
<td>19 (27.14%)</td>
<td>34 (48.57%)</td>
<td>6 (8.57%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to Shim (2010), organisational culture affects an employee's working attitude and quality of service delivery. It is therefore, possible that organisational culture can negatively affect employee engagement and the culture of individual departments. This study reveals that almost a third of respondents (31.43%) expressed uncertainty, and a further 22.86% answered negatively, to being satisfied with the organisation's culture. Analysis of this data suggests disengagement from the
organisation, despite high levels of organisational commitment (74.29%). CUMH management should note these findings and efforts should be made to increase culture satisfaction within departments and the organisation, thereby enhancing employee engagement. By enhancing engagement among the sample, it is proposed that employee engagement relating to the culture theme would be increased. Increased engagement results would certainly benefit the wider organisational environment, and perhaps increase commitment to, and involvement in, the organisation. In addition, employee engagement results affect the wider organisational environment.

Further analysis within individual departments illustrates similarities to among previous themes, security agree, housekeeping express uncertainty and porters disagree. Within the theme of culture, the highest level of agreement came from security (65.22% department 43.48% organisation), housekeeping expressed the most uncertainty (30.77% to both department and organisation), while the porters voiced the largest level of disagreement (23.81% department and 28.57% organisation). It is important to note the differences between department and organisational culture since one is subsumed within the other. Analysis of this data supports findings from Crabtree (2005), who highlighted three categories of engagement among employees: engaged, non-engaged, and actively disengaged. Within these categories and this theme, the following is evident. Security is the engaged grouping, as they express the highest level of agreement. Housekeepers fall into the non-engaged category as they expressed most uncertainty. Finally, the porters fill the actively disengaged role by voicing the largest levels of disagreement.

Pless and Maak (2004) highlighted the importance of recognising, valuing, and engaging differences. In addition, O’Donovan (2015) argued such an approach is concerned with not just identifying the differences of all individuals in the workplace, but rather, integrating them into the culture of the organisation as needed. Analysis from this study argues that culture is linked to employee engagement, and reinforces the findings of O’Donovan (2015), Crabtree (2005) and Pless and Maak (2004). Additionally, this study has highlighted the impact that culture has on employee engagement among the individual departments within the sample. The final theme within the questionnaire is job and work security. The effect that job and work security has on employee engagement is discussed in the following section.
According to Everitt and Heathcock (2013), job security has a significant impact on employee engagement since feeling insecure in the employment role negatively affects all aspects of job performance. As a result of findings from Everitt and Heathcock (2013) the theme job and work security was included within the questionnaire for further investigation. This theme influenced the creation of two questions concerning a safe working environment and satisfaction with job security. All participants responded to the statements and selected responses to gauge their agreement with statements regarding this theme (see Table 4:12, page 98).

The majority of the sample (58.57%) considers the organisations working environment to be safe. This positive result is comprised of 52.86% agreeing and a further 5.71% strongly agreeing with the statement “The organisation has a safe working environment”. In contrast, however, analysis from this study reveals that 17.15% of the sample responded negatively to the question about a safe working environment and just under a quarter (24.29%) voiced uncertainty. This illustrates a divergence in opinion regarding the organisation’s safe working environment. In addition, there are divergent opinions about whether or not the work environment is a safe one.

When analysis of the different departments was conducted, differences regarding the safe organisational environment became evident. The exact cause for such differences is unknown, but this study argues the possibility of varying job context among the categories. It is interesting to note that when the individual departments are analysed, Security expressed the largest percentage of uncertainty (47.83%) and negative responses (21.74%) in relation to a safe working environment. To clarify, 69.57% of Security employees indicated uncertain or negative responses about their safety at work. It is therefore reasonable to suggest that the main reason for high levels of negativity and uncertainty among Security is related to job responsibilities. The role that Security provides is the provision of safety to all staff and patients. This role could result in security officers’ personal safety being compromised at work.
In addition, members of the security department rotate among all areas of the wider hospital campus, not solely assigned to the individual departments. A security officer could be stationed in accident and emergency (CUH) today, while tomorrow’s duties could involve being stationed in the maternity department (CUMH). This rotation affects employee safety, as some areas would be considered more dangerous (e.g. a shift in accident and emergency would pose stronger safety concerns to security officers when compared with colleagues performing duties in the maternity).

Table 4.12 Job and Work Security

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strong disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Not Sure</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The organisation has a safe working environment</td>
<td>2 (2.86%)</td>
<td>10 (14.29%)</td>
<td>17 (24.29%)</td>
<td>37 (52.86%)</td>
<td>4 (5.71%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am satisfied with my overall job security</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2 (2.86%)</td>
<td>6 (8.57%)</td>
<td>48 (68.57%)</td>
<td>14 (20%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition, a significant majority (88.57%) of the sample answered in agreement with the statement “I am satisfied with my overall job security”. The statistics regarding this statement are; 2.86% disagree, 8.57% expressed uncertainty while 68.57% of the sample agrees and another 20% strongly agreeing with the statement. This data reinforces that public sector positions are jobs for life. Furthermore, analysis of this study argues that the public sector has higher job security, due to the high percentage of this sample (88.57%) answering positively. Analysis of this data in conjunction with findings from Everitt and Heathcock (2013) suggest employee engagement is present among the sample, as high responses of satisfaction to job security is evident.
4:13 Conclusion:

This chapter discussed a number of thematic areas streaming from the research. Eleven themes in total were explored. The findings from this study were presented, discussed and analysed in light of the literature review. The following chapter, chapter five will present and discuss the key findings and overall conclusion to this study.
Chapter Five

Overall Conclusion
Chapter Five Conclusion

5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses a number of topics relating to the study’s findings. Key findings are explored, along with recommendations for both research and practice. Additionally, the limitations of this study are highlighted, and an overall conclusion is presented. The key findings of this study are explored in the following section.

5:2 Key Findings

Analysis from this study revealed four key findings specifically;

1. An additional factor at play was discovered- Implications of governmental decisions
2. Employee engagement is a group phenomenon
3. The significant impact that personality has on engagement
4. The impact that the wider organisational environment has on engagement

These key findings have highlighted issues and concerns relating to employee engagement among support staff within CUMH. All key findings, when observed both holistically and individually, affect employee engagement within this body of research. Additionally, all the key findings subsidise each other and impact on all aspects of this study.

The primary key finding consists of the identification of a new category: implications of governmental decisions affecting employee engagement. This study was conducted on a part of the public sector, and within one maternity hospital. In early 2007, three Cork hospitals joined together to form one identity. In addition, this sector has experienced a significant pay cut in the form of levies. This researcher sought literature relating to external factors and their effect on employee engagement. It appeared that there was no extant literature involving a higher authority in relation to
engagement outside of an organisational context. Exploration of the impact of government decisions on employees' ability to be engaged was therefore necessary. This theme produced results which contribute to an employee's ability to remain engaged. This category therefore contributes new research to existing literature. Furthermore, the study of implications of governmental decisions on employee engagement shows that initial turmoil does not automatically lead to long term unrest.

A significant percentage of the sample indicated that reductions in salary were deemed unfair. Analysis from this study argues that government decisions are highly likely to have been a contributing factor for the reduction in positive responses regarding commitment and involvement to the organisation. Commitment and involvement levels towards the organisation are reduced when compared with such levels towards work. In addition, it is difficult to be committed to, and involved in, the organisation when the decision to amalgamate was taken with no input from the employees most affected. Furthermore, this study highlights the possibility that the lack of respect among all staff could be a lasting legacy from implications of governmental decisions. Additionally, it can be argued that the impact of government decisions is a contributing factor to only one department expressing strongly negative feelings and dissatisfaction with departmental flexibility.

Analysis of this study argues that it is problematic to be satisfied with a salary given once strong reductions have been implemented. In addition, this point reinforces that overall satisfaction with compensation has being compromised due to recent changes made by the government regarding sick payment terms. Moreover, it can be argued that it is difficult to make decisions affecting one's work when governmental implications are put in place without discussion taking place with all personnel involved. Furthermore, the lower levels of satisfaction with the organisation's culture, compared to the department's, may be directly affected by implications of government decisions.

Another influential finding from this research is that employee engagement is a group phenomenon. This key finding was revealed by the study of the differences among data, and observing similar concepts within themes. Engagement as a group phenomenon affects employees' ability to be engaged. This effect contributes to the
relationship that employees have with one another. Engagement as a group phenomenon is a vital finding resulting from this study. Engagement as a group phenomenon establishes that workers can be engaged with one aspect of their work but not engaged towards every factor relating to their employment.

Significant findings from this research has highlighted how an employee can be committed and involved in their work, and department, despite being less committed and involved in the organisation. The majority of the sample agreed that the amalgamation has had no effect on their working attitude, despite a reduced positive response to organisational commitment and involvement. In addition, despite high negative responses to the fairness of salary reductions, the sample indicated engagement through meaningful and strong purpose job content. Furthermore, employees within this sample indicated that they have good working relationships with their co-workers, despite expressing a certain lack of respect among hierarchical employees. Thus, engagement as a group phenomenon is illustrated and reinforced throughout this study.

The sample expressed agreement that they find the working day goes by quickly, despite voicing a lower positive response regarding excitement about going to work. In addition, the sample mostly answered in satisfaction with workplace flexibility, despite a reduced positive majority indicating that they were able to make decisions affecting their work. Furthermore, most respondents indicated that they had good working relationships with their supervisor. In contrast, however, they do not believe that management and employees trust one another. Moreover, the sample understands how their work impacts on the organisation’s business goals, despite the organisation failing to dedicate resources to their progression development. Finally, engagement as a group phenomenon is reinforced throughout this study. Engagement as a group phenomenon is evident as one third of the sample indicated that they were not satisfied with their current work environment and would change locations, but only a fifth of the sample are actively considering leaving the organisation.

A third salient finding from this study is the impact that personality has on engagement. Analysis from this study suggests that the impact of personality characteristics among individuals engages people more than directly affecting work
issues. This key finding was determined due to contradicting elements illustrated within this study. Employees indicated high engagement levels despite expressing a number of concerns that should indicate disengaged workers. Analysis of this study therefore argues that, regardless of how literature defines engagement, certain individuals are optimistic or engaged despite indicators which would create disengagement in others.

The main impact that personality has on engagement revolves around respect. This study presented findings directly relating to a deficiency of respect among the different hierarchal positions. Data from this study highlights that the support staff group prioritises patients’ needs over colleague requests. Analysis from this study therefore, that the lack of respect is a contributing reason for the procrastination of colleagues’ requests. In addition, most of the sample believe that their work is full of meaning and purpose. Similar to prioritising patients’ needs, meaningful and purpose-orientated job content coincides with respect. Nevertheless, the sample expressed meaning and purpose regarding their roles, despite indicating that they do not feel respected by all staff. Furthermore, the sample illustrated that they find the working shift goes by quickly and indicated high levels of commitment and involvement towards work, the department and the organisation. It is interesting to note however, that the support staff grouping also expressed high levels of insufficient respect among the different positions. Analysis of this study therefore, concludes that the impact personality has on engagement is vital.

A fourth and significant finding demonstrates that the wider organisational environment also has an impact on engagement. This key finding was established by this researcher, while considering the impact that the entire organisation has on individuals. When taking a holistic view of employee engagement, the impact that the wider organisational environment plays is crucial. The culture of an organisation determines how things are carried out within that environment. This research therefore, suggests that contributing factors for engagement are entrenched by the wider organisational environment impact. To clarify, employees are engaged or disengaged due to factors affecting the wider organisational environment.
This study indicates that the wider organisational environment impacts engagement throughout this study. This is especially evident in relation to commitment and involvement. The sample expressed a lower rate of commitment to and involvement in the organisation, when compared to corresponding attitudes to work and department. Additionally, the wider organisational environment is a contributing factor. The sample expressed the view that all employees do not take the imitative to help, a factor associated with the wider organisational environment. Analysis from this study argues that commitment and involvement in the organisation is compromised. Additionally, a considerable percentage of the sample originated from CUH. Analysis of this study thus argues a difficulty forming either a positive or negative impact regarding the amalgamation. This difficulty is likely a result of some employees being previously based on this campus, while others had to move base from other campuses. Moreover, analysis from this study suggests that the lack of respect among all staff is a direct response to dissatisfaction with the organisation's culture.

Additionally, the wider organisational environment impacts on employees' reasoning and ability to complete tasks requested by patients, before those of a colleague. The contrary is also possible. This study's analysis illustrates a lack of excitement regarding going to work, which contributes to a direct impact on the wider organisational environment. This may be as a direct impact of the wider organisational environment not supplying the necessary equipment to perform duties. Finally, the satisfaction with job security illustrates strong connections with the impact from the wider organisational environment. The limitations of this study are outlined and further explored in the following section.

5:3 Limitations of the Study

There are a number of limitations to this body of research. The primary limitation was time. Time constraints posed a particular challenge, as they dictate the length dedicated to research. Two issues, in particular, had a significant limiting effect regarding this study. First, the entire sample of support staff was unavailable to complete questionnaires, due to shift changes and holidays. Additionally, this
researcher would have liked to use mixed research methods and empirical research as the methodology for this study. Nevertheless, due to the university's semester system however, there was insufficient time to undertake this investigation.

A significant related limitation concerns the sample. The impact of this limitation concerns two fundamental issues. Firstly, this study was conducted in CUMH but members of the security and portering departments rotate between the wider campus. This factor needs to be considered, as responses maybe tainted to accommodate wider campus activity, rather than being specific to CUMH as a single entity. Moreover, the sample consisted of support grade staff with lengthy service, and issues may have been festering in their minds for some time. It may be argued that long periods of service negatively impacted the survey results. In addition, considering employee engagement surveys are not the norm within the health sector, respondents may have failed to understand the meaning of this research.

Another limitation of this study includes the data collection method. Questionnaires were used as a tool to gather data. There were a number of findings in which it was clear that extra information was necessary to determine the exact affect of employee engagement among the sample. This limitation is illustrated clearly within the theme relationships with co-workers. The researcher asked participants questions relating to the priority of patients requests, working relationships with co-workers, and the issue of respect from staff who are higher on the organisational chart than the respondents. The researcher however, failed to include questions to determine how these issues influenced the samples ability to perform duties. Thus, information to establish engagement levels among the sample was compromised.

In addition, the researcher is currently employed within the support category in CUMH. This poses a limitation of study as questionnaires were person administered. It is possible that the sample answered the questionnaire in an attempt to assist a colleague. A number of questionnaires were only partially completed and this leads to some uncertainly as to the overall validity and reliability of the data from the study. The researcher did not express opinions in the time before distribution and while questionnaires were being answered, yet, body language or previous conversations might have influenced participants to answer in a certain way. In contrast, however,
there are significant possibilities for research with some of these problems being eliminated. The next section discusses recommendations for research.

5:4 Recommendations for Research

Findings within this study illustrate opportunities for research to further explore a number of areas affecting employee engagement. This study contributes to existing research by exploring an additional relationship and its affect on engagement, and by examining another disengaging factor for public sector workers (implications of governmental decisions). In addition, this study highlights that even though governmental reductions are deemed unfair by support staff, the decision to amalgamate has had a minimal influence on employee engagement among this sample. In contrast, however, it would appear from the literature review process that existing literature fails to explore the relationship between government decisions and employee engagement. In terms of recommendations for future research, this researcher deems the impact of government decisions as a topic worthy of further investigation, in order to determine the affect on employee engagement.

Analysis from this study highlights the affect a number of themes have on employee engagement as being undetermined. The sample illustrated high levels of engagement among a number of themes, despite lacking positive majorities in relation to others. It is therefore, recommended that further investigation regarding compensation and benefits, trust, excitement, job security, and business goals warrant further research to explore their affect on employee engagement.

It would appear from the literature review process that existing literature fails to explore the impact that employee engagement has on specific public sector factors. This study illustrates that public sector positions are long term, due to the notable high periods of service among the generation categories. The affect employee engagement has on the public sector is deserving of further research for two fundamental reasons. Firstly, to explore the power employee engagement has on the public sector bodies. Secondly, further study could create comparisons between the private and public sector and establish possible norms concerning engagement of employees.
The impact that personality has on engagement is also mentioned in the literature review. In contrast, however, this study argues that the impact personality has on engagement is fundamental. It is therefore recommended that further research explores this finding, to establish the importance of personality on engagement. In addition, this study proposes that the wider organisational environment impacts on employee engagement. It would appear from the literature process that the impact of the wider organisational environment is lacking from previous research studies. It is therefore recommended that further research is carried out to establish the exact impact that the wider organisational environment has on employee engagement.

The primary limitation for this study was insufficient time. It is therefore recommended that this research study be carried out over a longer time scale. With more time, there is means to include a wider sample, and other research methodologies. In addition, it is proposed that an independent person with no ties or relationships to the organisation or its employees conducts the research study. While the affect of these factors are unknown, it is possible that the exact influence of employee engagement among support staff could be determined. Recommendations for practice are outlined in the following section.

5:5 Recommendations for Practice

Findings from this study have illustrated a number of areas where employee engagement can be improved upon within CUMH. In addition, these recommendations for practice affect the wider concept regarding employee engagement and can be adapted widely and used by other organisations regardless of sector.

For employee engagement to be a serious human resource element, organisations need to firstly determine what employee engagement is. From this study it is proposed that employee engagement is a group phenomenon, affecting an employee's ability to be committed and involved. This theme is addressed under three subsections: work, department, and the organisation. It can be argued that within large multi-disciplinary
organisations, engagement should to be studied under a number of subsections. Analysis within this study indicates that support staff are more committed to and involved in work, when compared with their commitment to the department, despite being more committed and involved to the department when compared with the organisation. It is therefore recommended for practice to explore engagement levels under the necessary subsections relating to that industry’s norm.

It is evident from both existing literature and the research findings from this study that employee engagement consists of relationships among individuals (human) and all aspects of work (resources). Work relationships with people such as co-workers, management, and all individual employees, influences workers’ ability to engage. To clarify, this study reveals fluctuating differences in relationships between different personnel categories. It is therefore, proposed that all organisations examine the affect of work place relationships among employees first. From this exercise, management should clearly see where cracks and strains are developing among workers, factors which can negatively impact on engagement. This study has established that the support staff grouping has superior relationships among themselves, despite the deficiency of respect from hierarchical employees. The affect of inadequate respect from all staff within the organisation was not accurately explored. It can be argued that this lack of respect negatively impacts on engagement among the sample. In addition, it can also be argued that this finding significantly influences the employee relationships that comprise engagement. Analysis from this study therefore recommends an examination of persons with regard to employee engagement for practice purposes.

A key finding of this research is the identification of another factor affecting employee engagement in relation to the implications of government decisions. It would appear that the literature review process failed to explore the affect of employee engagement regarding decisions implemented by the government. It is can therefore, be suggested that future practice examine employee engagement with a focus on how the government affects an employee’s ability to carry out work duties in an engaged fashion.
In addition, a fundamental element of this study concerns the impact of relationships within the wider workings of the organisation. To simplify, factors that affect the organisations wider environment will likely impact on employee engagement. During the literature review a number of outcomes for engagement were highlighted. This study therefore, recommends that individual organisations observe the impact that their wider working environment has on engagement. In doing so, it is possible that organisations will discover specific industry outcomes of engagement and further improve their workforce’s ability to remain engaged.

The final recommendation for practice is to explore employee’s personalities. This body of research proposes that the impact which personality has on engagement is critical since, despite disengaging factors some people will remain engaged. An examination of employee personalities is therefore, recommended to practice. In addition, when engagement qualities within specific industries are detected, these personality traits should be present among future employees. While the affect of such qualities is undetermined, this study presents the argument that organisations will reap a wide variety of benefits. The overall conclusion regarding this study is discussed in the next section.

5:6 Conclusion

An extra dimension for examining employee engagement was found as a result of this body of research. The section “implications of governmental decisions" explores the influence and power that forced resolutions have on employees and their ability to be engaged. The upset caused by forced decisions within the organisation studied failed to determine an overall positive majority. In contrast, however, this study indicates numerous examples of how government decisions impact on employee engagement.

Another key finding of this body of research is that of employee engagement as a group phenomenon. This research illustrates that employees can be engaged to one element of work or the organisation, despite being less engaged to another factor which normally contributes to engagement. In addition, this body of research
illustrates that engagement levels among employees are affected by a number of elements that both engage and disengage workers.

This body of research, through recurring issues, accentuates the impact that personality has on employee engagement. The impact of personality characteristics among individuals appears to engage people, rather than having a direct impact on work issues. This study highlights that some employees are engaged despite overwhelming reasons to be disengaged. Analysis therefore, argues that engagement is a personality trait that some individuals have, rather than the ability to be engaged in a job based on a variety of factors external to the individual. Employee engagement as a personality trait is further illustrated by the deficiency of respect that support staff perceive from all employees regardless of position.

The wider organisational environment impacts on engagement by playing a significant role within this research, and therefore contributes to a fundamental key finding. This study stresses the importance of a holistic view regarding the impact on employee engagement. The wider organisational environment influences how employees act, think and behave. Therefore, it can be argued that relationships at work are affected, resulting in a change in an employee’s ability to demonstrate engagement. This study focuses on how holistic views affect engagement. The wider organisational environment influences employee engagement through a concerning percentage of disrespect and lack of trust between employees and management. This study therefore argues that this concern reflects a general lack of employee satisfaction in, and engagement with, organisational culture.


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