Exemplar

A selection of outstanding undergraduate research projects of the final year students on the Bachelor of Business (Honours)

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Contents

Editorial

Welcome to the first edition of Exemplar. Exemplar is a collection of some of the best undergraduate projects of the final year students on the Bachelor of Business (Honours). The purpose of the publication is to showcase student work, recognise the quality of their work, and develop the research acumen of students and supervising staff.

After the formal grading of the final year projects was completed supervising staff were invited to nominate students for possible inclusion. Nominations were reviewed by the editorial team and a shortlisted selection of students were contacted to confirm if they would like to be included. Supervising staff then oversaw a revision and enhancement of the graded submission and the final work is published in Exemplar.

Students were required to identify a business topic that interested them and that they would like to learn more about whilst meeting the research expectations of the programme. This non-prescriptive approach allowed students to flex their intellectual muscle in a unique project of their own design. This edition demonstrates the breadth of student interests including workplace issues (staff well-being, motivation, and turnover), social issues (eating disorders amongst sportsmen, and the impact of sugar taxation policy) and technology (the potential of m-commerce).

Each student reviewed the available literature and looked at their issue through the lens of that literature to develop a deeper and more critical understanding of their topic. Students were not required to complete any primary research but to make best use of the secondary resources available to them to examine their issue. A review of the references used illustrates the students' ability to source relevant published materials to enable them to complete their task.

Congratulations to the students and their supervisors for completing the projects. My thanks to Kevin McDonagh, Laura McTigue and Deirdre Lusby for their support in compiling this first edition.

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An investigation into the potential relationship between male athletes and eating disorders, with a particular focus on male bodybuilders

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Abstract
This study focuses on the under researched area of eating disorders amongst male athletes. In particular, it will examine published research into bodybuilders who experience significantly higher body dissatisfaction than other sports people and are more prone to developing disordered eating. The motivation behind the research is to raise awareness with respect to potential hazards of strict dieting amongst sportsmen and examine how they could possibly be prevented. The investigation found various contributing factors to the relationship between male bodybuilders and eating disorders as well as how they can be treated.

Keywords: Eating disorders, Males, Athletes, Bodybuilding

Introduction

Prain et al. (1995) refers to the human body as a machine that can be trained, measured and controlled to achieve desired outcomes. Such a description lends itself to the complexities surrounding the relationship between competitive athletes and eating disorders.

The purpose of this project is to examine the link between male athletes and eating disorders. According to Sundgot-Borgen et al. (2004), studies have shown that athletes who compete in sports that require low levels of body fat or a certain body weight, are more prone to developing disordered eating. The research will attempt to decipher the contributing factors behind male athletes developing unhealthy relationships with food. The motivation behind the research is to raise awareness with respect to potential hazards of strict dieting in professional sports and determine how they could possibly be prevented. The study will examine key aspects of eating disorders within the context of athlete performance. It is hoped that a well-informed and rational conclusion will be reached based on the examination of the literature.

Firstly, the review will begin by examining what sports pose a greater risk for the development of eating disorders. A recent report (NEDA, 2018) mentions several sports that have a higher risk factor when it comes to developing eating disorders. Sports such as gymnastics, diving, wrestling and bodybuilding all require a particular body fat level or a certain level of muscularity. Goldfield et al. (2006) states that bodybuilding, more specifically male bodybuilding, has been associated with body dissatisfaction, bulimia and negative mental health characteristics. Endurance sports such as running, and swimming also fall under this category. A comparative analysis between different types of competitive activities and sports will be conducted to identify those that pose the most significant risk for developing eating disorders.

Once this analysis has been completed, the study will attempt to explore the factors that may contribute to the emergence of eating disorders. Currie et al. (2005) discuss factors such as goal orientation, perfectionism, performance anxiety and compulsiveness as being prominent driving forces behind the development of an eating disorder. Exploring these factors should give a more in-depth insight into how they can be treated or prevented.

The investigation will then be finalised by detailing possible treatment methods using the data collected throughout the research process and, conclude with the hope of establishing a greater knowledge of the potential relationship between male athletes and eating disorders.

Literature Review
Comparative Sports Analysis
When comparing sports on their prevalence of eating disorders it is first important to categorise them in terms of the sports physicality requirements. Chatterton et al. (2013) describes lean sports as activity that requires a desired weight goal that best allows the individual perform at their highest level. Examples of lean sports include gymnastics, diving, figure skating and long-distance running. Beals (2004) describes aesthetic sports as activites in which competitors are judged such as diving, figure skating, gymnastics, cheerleading and synchronised swimming. Endurance sports can be defined as sports that require activity for a long period of time such as cross-country skiing, cycling, long distance running and swimming. According to Schwarz et al. (2005, cited in Klasey, 2009) judged sports place great emphasis on the person's body image. Sports that also fall under this category include gymnastics, diving, cheerleading, and dance.

Refereed sports are sports that place more importance on training and conditioning rather than thin body appearance such as basketball,

swimming and cycling. Weight dependent sports, aesthetic sports and endurance sports also fall under another classification described as thin build sports. Thin build sports require low body fat levels to increase competitive performance (Beals, 2004). Weight dependent sports can be specified weight, such as bodybuilding, jockeying, karate, lightweight rowing, power lifting and wrestling.

Reinking et al. (2005) carried out a study investigating disordered eating symptomatology among eighty-four NCAA division one female collegiate athletes and sixty-two non-athletes. The investigation was then narrowed down into females who participate in lean sports such as swimming and cross country running and non-lean sports such as basketball, volleyball, soccer, field hockey and softball. The investigation discovered that higher body satisfaction was reported by athletes than non-athletes, more specifically, non-lean sport athletes exhibited higher body satisfaction than lean sport athletes. It should be noted that lean sports such as swimming and cross-country running are more individual based, while non-lean sports like basketball or soccer are more inclined to be team based. These findings may be extrapolated for male athletes.

Zucker et al. (2009) added to the debate with their own investigation. The investigation examined body weight and shape concerns, eating habits, anxiety, depression and neuroticism in three groups of NCAA division one students. The three groups were divided into athletes competing in refereed sports, judged sports and non-athletes. The study concurred that judged sport athletes scored highest for diagnosis of eating disorders followed by non-athletes and refereed sport athletes. Regarding anxiety and depression, no group differences were found. Nevertheless, judged sport athletes were at a considerably higher risk for developing disordered eating than the other two groups. The desire for thinness and body anxiety were contributing factors to judged sport athletes reporting higher levels of eating disorder symptomatology than non-athletes and refereed sport athletes.

Devrim et al. (2018) examine the potential association between male bodybuilders and body image perceptions, eating disorders and muscle dysmorphia. The study looked at one-hundred and twenty male bodybuilders. To determine the occurrence of eating disorders, an Eating Attitude Test (EAT-40) was administered. The EAT-40 is a 40-item scale applied in identifying eating disorder symptomatology in all sexes and age groups. The EAT-40 has well established psychometric properties. A total score greater than thirty generally indicates a higher possibility of developing an eating disorder. From the one-hundred and twenty bodybuilders that participated in the study, eighty-one scored higher than the threshold mark of thirty. A strong correlation was found between the three study variables. The results of the study suggest that bodybuilders possess high symptomatology.

Another example of a study that investigates the correlation between thin build or weight dependant sports was conducted by Anderson et al. (2016). The study investigated connections between sport-performance-related body dissatisfaction, general-appearance-related body dissatisfaction and the EAT-26 scores. The study involved a sample of adult runners who took part in middle and long distance races in the United States. The findings inferred that female adult runners showed more signs of body dissatisfaction and eating disorder symptoms than males. In terms of race lengths, those who participated in middle-distance race events scored higher EAT-26 scores than those who ran long distance race events. Body dissatisfaction may be prevalent for athletes who are exposed to sport specific risk factors as well as general risk factors such as thin-ideal internalisation (Bratland-Sanda et al.2013; Anderson et al. 2016; Smolak 2000).

On completion of the comparative sport analysis, various outcomes became apparent. Firstly, it is evident that those athletes that are classified under lean sports, judged and weight and thin dependant sports are more vulnerable to suffering from an eating disorder. The studies also suggest that those who suffer from an eating disorder are more likely to

suffer from body dissatisfaction and other mental health issues such as muscle-dysmorphia and general body anxiety. Individual based sports were more linked to eating disorders than were team sports. It has been specified that eating disorders such as anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa and binge eating disorder occur more commonly in females rather than males (Manzeto et al. 2011). However, this begs the question whether male eating disorders are less recognised than females eating disorders and if they are being under-diagnosed. It can be concluded from the comparative analysis that those males who engage in bodybuilding are particularly prone to developing disordered eating. This leads to the next step of the investigation:

What is the link between male bodybuilders and eating disorders?

According to a recent report (Mayo et al. 2014) body image concerns and eating disorders have long been associated more with females rather than males, it is possible that males find it harder to seek help when they have an eating disorder-related problem. The drive for a thinner physique in females has been portrayed in the media for years. It is only recently that the issue surrounding a male's obsession over obtaining a thinner and or muscular physique has become topical. Olivardia et al. (2004) conducted a study exploring the relationship between eating disorders and body dissatisfaction in one-hundred and fifty-four college men. A positive correlation was found between body dissatisfaction and with scores on the Eating Disorder Inventory (EDI), a self-report questionnaire that assesses the presence of anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa and other specified eating disorders (Garner et al. 1983). Inconsistent results were also found between actual body fat and body fat perception. Another study carried out by Raevuori et al. (2006) involving one-thousand two-hundred and forty-five men aged between twenty-two and twenty-seven, reported a positive correlation between muscle dissatisfaction and scores on the EDI.

Such studies show that eating disorders in males are evident and possibly under-diagnosed. The following section of this investigation will look at

some of the factors that may contribute to a male bodybuilder developing an eating disorder. The section will look at studies that investigated topics such as social media, muscle dysmorphia and body image.

Social Media

Griffiths et al. (2018) states that past studies have casually linked frequent use of social media to body dissatisfaction and eating disorders through several theoretical mechanisms such as self-objectification and body comparisons. For example, an individual may find themselves observing numerous pictures of people with lean and muscular physiques. The individual may (sometimes subconsciously) then compare their own body and feel dejected. Griffiths et al. (2018) explains social media as a potential threat in developing an eating disorder when compared to traditional forms of media (e.g. television and magazines) considering its ease of access and high levels of interaction with peer groups who share the same age, interests and location. Evaluative components such as "liking" a photo also adds to the likelihood of an individual feeling pressured.

Fardouly et al. (2016) notes that social media platforms such as facebook, snapchat and most importantly, instagram contain a high quantity of images of people motivated by terms such as 'fitspo' (short for fitspiration) and 'fitstagram'are omnipresent. Strubel et al. (2017) examined the link between dating applications and body dissatisfaction amongst one-hundred Tinder users and eight-hundred and forty-seven nonusers, with twenty percent being male. The report found that Tinder users experienced greater body dissatisfaction than the nonusers. The report also discovered that Tinder users more frequently compared their physical appearance to others. No gender differences were revealed. Griffiths et al. (2018) also highlights the point that men's body image anxieties are comparably different to women's body image anxieties. Men generally desire to achieve a lean and muscular physique. That is

why it is sensible to explore not only body fat dissatisfaction but muscularity dissatisfaction also as key variables.

A study completed by Hanna et al. (2017) looked at the possible role of social comparison and self-objectification and self-comparison as mediators of the relationship between frequent facebook use and three variables of psychological well-being: self-esteem, mental health and body shame. The sample consisted of male and female college students ranging from eighteen to twenty-four years old. Results of the study indicate that both sexes are liable for self-comparison and self-objectification through frequent facebook usage. Research on male bodybuilders suffering from disordered eating due to social media is scarce. Although the studies outlined above are not specific to male bodybuilders, it is clear from studies by Strubel et al. (2017) and Griffiths et al. (2018) that males suffer in a similar manner as do females with regards to body dissatisfaction through social media use.

Muscle Dysmorphia
Muscle dysmorphia can be described as "an emerging condition that primarily affects male bodybuilders" (Mosley et al. 2009, p.191). Muscle dysmorphia concerns an individual who is obsessed about his/her body. Typical symptoms of an individual with muscle dysmorphia include excessive exercise, carelessly spending money on supplements, unusual eating habits and potentially substance abuse. Severe cases of muscle dysmorphia can cause individuals to purposefully miss out on social occasions, not show up to work or train through an injury. Those with muscle dysmorphia also have a tendency to experiment with anabolic steroids in order to achieve their ideal physique goal faster. However, steroid abuse has been linked with raised cholesterol, prostate enlargement, male-pattern baldness, acne, gynaecomastia and testicular atrophy. Pope et al. (2000) also states that withdrawal from anabolic steroids can cause the user to develop depression and even attempt suicide.

Mosley et al. (2009) goes on to discuss the link between muscle dysmorphia and eating disorders. Although men with eating disorders generally obsess over losing weight, bodybuilders show the same obsession with gaining muscle. Both bodybuilders and non-bodybuilders with eating disorders have similar fixations regarding body image, diet and exercise. Murray et al. (2012) conducted a study involving twenty-one male muscle dysmorphia patients, twenty-four male anorexia nervosa patients and fifteen male gym-using controls who completed a set of questionnaires, tests and inventories regarding eating disorders, compulsive exercise and substance abuse. The study highlighted that men with muscle dysmorphia and anorexia nervosa showed extensive similarities in relation to negative body image, abnormal eating habits and exercise behaviour. The findings suggested those with muscle dysmorphia possess many of the same characteristics as those with anorexia nervosa.

According to Harvey et al. (2003) discussed men who suffer from muscle dysmorphia rarely feel relief from their obsessive thought patterns. Some studies suggested that muscle dysmorphia is a symptom of obsessive-compulsive disorder. Time spent away from the gym is when feelings of depression and anxiety appear more frequently. Harvey et al. (2003) also discusses the point that those with muscle dysmorphia rarely seek medical help and are faster to consult a plastic surgeon to resolve their feelings of attaining the perfect physique as portrayed by the media. Desperation to look a certain way can lead to the implantation of pectoral and calf muscles. It has also been noted that both gay men and heterosexual women show the highest amount of concern for their bodies in comparison to lesbians and heterosexual men. Gay men and heterosexual women who are in a relationship typically value their own appearance over their partners. The studies discussed in this section give an insight into the extremities and dangers male bodybuilders with muscle dysmorphia are under both physically and mentally.

Body Image

Blouin et al. (1995) designed a study to explore the connection between body image and eating habits among male bodybuilders in relation to two other lean sport groups, runners and martial artists. The study also looked into the relationship between negative body image and steroid use. The sample consisted of one-hundred and thirty-nine male volunteer athletes drafted from fitness centres. The breakdown of the three sports groups is as follows: forty-three bodybuilders, forty-eight runners and forty-eight martial artists. Measures of body dissatisfaction, drive for thinness, drive for bulk, bulimia, self-esteem, depression, maturity fears, perfectionism and questionnaires regarding outlook on steroid use were administered to the athletes. Predictably, bodybuilders showed considerably higher body dissatisfaction than the other groups, as well as a greater ambition to bulk and a greater ambition to be thin. Bodybuilders were identified as being at a greater risk of developing bulimia. Bodybuilders also reported the greatest use of anabolic steroids along with signs of perfectionism, ineffectiveness, and lower self-esteem.

According to Mishkind et al. (1986) also proposed that males who observe themselves as being underweight generally take-up bodybuilding and consider the use of steroids in order to achieve their desired goal physique. Pope et al. (1993) explains that bodybuilders also possess symptoms of psychiatric ill-health, particularly in relation to anorexia nervosa and a term known as reverse anorexia. Reverse anorexia refers to the fear or belief of appearing small, even though the individual may appear large and muscular. Cole et al. (2003) discuss the relationship between anabolic-androgenic steroid use and the symptoms of reverse anorexia in current and ex-users. Both current and ex users were found to strive for a somewhat unnatural body type. However, the findings did not conclude whether steroid use was one of the factors involved in the development of reverse anorexia.

Mangweth et al. (2001) constructed a study comparing twenty-eight male bodybuilders with thirty men who had eating disorders on measures of weight history, eating behaviour, body image, psychiatric disorders and sexuality. It was found that the bodybuilders shared several of the same symptoms as the men with eating disorders, particularly those symptoms related to body image and eating behaviour. What differentiated the two groups was what they both feared. While the men with eating disorders feared being overweight, the bodybuilders feared not being muscular enough. A term that describes the fear of not being muscular enough is known as 'femiphobia'. Klein et al. (1994) describes the term as the fear of lacking masculinity. It is evident from these studies that male bodybuilders possess many of the same characteristics as those with eating disorders.

It is important to note on that not all individuals who participate in competitive bodybuilding develop an eating disorder. Although it seems very unlikely that an individual would develop an eating disorder without being dissatisfied with their body, body dissatisfaction is insufficient to explain why they develop. Polivy et al. (2002) argue that various factors contribute to the development of an eating disorder and general body dissatisfaction. Depression, anxiety and low self-esteem are all primary features as well as environmental stressors, cognitive distortions and obsessive thoughts. Polivy et al. (2002) also identify personality features such as self-control over one's own body as being prominent in developing an eating disorder. The final section of the study will now investigate possible treatment methods for males with eating disorders.

Treatment
Greenberg et al. (2008) discusses the point that males may feel more at ease seeking treatment for a weight concerning problem, rather than an eating disorder. Men feel as though asking others for help regarding emotional problems does not align with so called traditional masculinity, making it less likely that they will admit to having a problem. Cochran et

al. (2003, cited in Greenberg et al. 2008) suggests that mental health professionals should focus on gender-sensitive psychotherapy aimed at tackling men's issues. If a male has admitted to having a problem and sought for professional help, a therapist can positively use this in their road to recovery, seeing as the individual wants to make a change for the better in his life. Greenberg et al. (2008) continues to elaborate on certain aspects a therapists should focus on when dealing with male clients such as questions surrounding level of restriction, intensity of exercise, ideal body weight, concerns about current weight shape, history or temptations of using supplements such as steroids and temptations relating to such usage. Limbers et al. (2018) mentions that young adult males diagnosed with anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa, and binge eating disorder react positively to cognitive behavioural therapy and interpersonal psychotherapy. Research suggests that family-based therapy is also a good option for young adult males. In a study carried out by Chen et al. 2016 (as cited in Limbers et al. 2018) consisting of eighteen and twenty-six year old young male adults found after six months of family-based therapy, sixty-eight percent of participants were no longer underweight. Improvements in global functioning and less eating disorder tendencies were noted. Limbers et al. (2018) also mentions that therapist characteristics and the overall quality of the therapeutic relationships were key success factors when treating young adult males. The continuity of males in treatment becomes more prevalent when a collaborative treatment approach is applied, and the client perceives the therapist as an expert who is both caring and trustworthy. Young adult males also stated that male-only treatment groups were more beneficial as it helped them to feel less isolated.

Weltzin et al. (2012) conducted a study in search of the best possible treatment methods for males with eating disorders. The study focused on three aspects. Firstly, nutritional targets, normalising food intake, reducing feared associations with food and behaviours regarding weight gain. Secondly, identifying and challenging thinking patterns in relation

to food and body shape through cognitive behavioural therapy. Finally, recognising hurdles towards recovery which should be implemented to improve treatment response. It was found that, overall, eating disordered behaviours and unhealthy thinking patterns reduced to healthy levels. Other mental factors such as depression and anxiety fell to moderate levels and compulsive behaviours were reported to be low. Also, individuals who were reported as being underweight reached full weight restoration.

Conclusion

The purpose of this research was to investigate the potential relationship between male athletes and eating disorders, with a particular focus on male bodybuilders. As mentioned in the review, a wealth of studies has been carried out on females who develop eating disorders, with very little recognition given to males developing eating disorders. From conducting preliminary research on males with eating disorders, bodybuilding appeared more frequently than other sports. Reasoning behind this is the strict nature of the sport, and the great emphasis put on body image and social comparison.

Firstly, the research began by conducting a comparative sport analysis to gain a greater understanding of what sports appear confer more risk of developing an eating disorder than others. The findings concluded that lean sports such as swimming and cross country showed less body satisfaction than non-lean sports such as basketball and soccer. Regarding body weight and shape concerns, Zucker et al. (2009) discovered that judged sport athletes such as those who partake in gymnastics, diving and cheerleading were at a greater likelihood of being diagnosed with an eating disorder than were non-athletes and refereed sports. Factors behind this result included desire for thinness and body anxiety. The analysis then looked at a study by Devrim et al. (2018) that

explored the relationship between bodybuilders, body image perceptions, eating disorders and muscle dysmorphia. It was found that bodybuilders possessed high levels of symptomatology of disordered eating and body anxiety. Upon noting this, the rest of the investigation focused on the link between male bodybuilders and eating disorders.

The research then delved into three factors that contribute to the likelihood of a male bodybuilder developing disordered eating: social media, muscle dysmorphia and body image. Regarding social media, studies by Griffiths et al. (2018) and Strubel et al. (2017) found that self-objectification, body comparisons, social pressures and body dissatisfaction were evident in individuals who frequently used social media platforms such as Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram and dating apps such as Tinder. An insight into muscle dysmorphia was then provided by Mosley et al. (2009). This study found similarities between bodybuilders and non-bodybuilders in relation to body image, diet and exercise. Other studies in the investigation observed muscle dysmorphia as being an obsession and identified those diagnosed with muscle dysmorphia and anorexia nervosa as having extensive similarities in relation to negative body image, abnormal eating habits and exercise behaviour.

A study completed by Blouin et al. (1995) highlighted the founding that bodybuilders showed significantly higher body dissatisfaction than runners and martial artists and showed a greater ambition to bulk and a greater ambition to be thin. The former was at greater risk of developing bulimia. It was also found that bodybuilders were more prone to using anabolic steroids and showed signs of perfectionism, ineffectiveness and lower self-esteem. The investigation was then finalised by looking at possible treatment methods for males with eating disorders. Greenberg et al. (2008) suggested methods such as gender-sensitive psychotherapy aimed at tackling men's issues as well as questions surrounding diet and exercise intensity, body weight/shape concerns and steroid temptations. Limbers et al. (2018) suggested that cognitive behavioural therapy and

interpersonal psychotherapy are effective treatment strategies for disordered eating.

To conclude, the investigation found various contributing factors to the relationship between male bodybuilders and eating disorders as well as how they can be treated. This was backed up by past literature. Perspectives were gained from various authors. It is imperative that further studies are carried out on the topic and more recognition is given to those suffering.

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The challenge of developing reward programs that motivate multi-generational workforces

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Abstract

This literature review seeks to explore and develop a deeper understanding of the impact of reward programs and motivation on different generations and how management might effectively and efficiently manage this. The terms motivation and rewards will be defined and the meaning of each of five different generations of worker will be explained. Current motivation and reward practices will be reviewed and the effectiveness of the different approaches examined. The review will highlight a growing emphasis on meeting the needs of the individual and show that managers should develop tools and systems that help them understand their employees, identify their desires and values, and monitor their progress towards their goal attainments.

Introduction

The aim of this literature review, was to identify the impact that reward programs can have on the motivation of a multi-generational workforce. This research question has been in the spotlight for some time, and it holds great importance to businesses globally, as employers struggle to gain an understanding, of what rewards motivate different generations in the workplace (Gurchiek, 2016). Management must take steps to evaluate how reward programs challenge the workforce, particularly how they can be used to motivate different generations in the workplace (Higgininbottom, 2016). The transition of employees into different life stages, presents both challenges and opportunities for organisations, depending on how this shift is managed. Managers will need to alter rewards to manage this transition, and continue to motivate key employees. Therefore, it is vital that management develop a knowledge and understanding of motivational methods that can be adapted to the increasingly diverse requirements of employees (Higgininbottom, 2016). Close (2015) recommends that a company implement a more flexible approach to rewards and recognition, which allows employees to tailor their reward systems to meet their own specific needs. Rampton (2017) outlines that it's a manager's responsibility to make every employee feel engaged; integrated into the company's culture, and provide rewards that the employee would care about, regardless of their generation. Close (2015) also states that research outlines, that the differences in reward preference are essentially connected to life stages and the age of an individual of a generation.

This literature review aims to investigate the challenges that management face, in relation to reward programs and the motivation tools used on a multi-generational workforce. It is essential that the employer understands the dynamic needs of the workforce, particularly in relation to using rewards programs, to keep the multi-generational workforce

motivated, something that can be a significant impediment in an organisations competitive advantage (Brčić, 2015).

This review seeks to explore and develop a strong understanding and knowledge of the impact of reward programs and motivation on different generations' and how management effectively and efficiently manage this by inspiring a productive and satisfying working environment, to ensure success and continuity of the organization.

The questions that this project aims to address include:

- What are the motivational techniques that management can use to influence employees?
- What are reward programs and what traditional methods were used to motivate staff?
- What reward programs are used to effectively motivate the different generations in a modern workplace?
- If implemented successfully, how can reward programs and motivation influence a multi-generational workforce?
- Why do differences currently exist between different generations within a workforce and what are the reasons?

Motivation
Motivation can be defined as the process that initiates, guides, and maintains goal-orientated behaviour (Cherry, 2018). Today, managers are faced with the task of predicting what precisely motivates their employees, to inspire productivity and to guarantee job satisfaction. Motivated employees can drive businesses in achieving their desired goals or can place the business in a risky situation (Heathfield, 2019). This study also acknowledges that the most important emotion that an employee brings to work is motivation.

The objective of a survey conducted by Graves et al (2013) on employees at four different global organisations in China, where all employees

worked in the same geographical area, was to identify what motivated employees. Findings showed, that achieving goals that they considered important to them, motivated employees, however, the rewards, payment and enjoyment associated with achieving these goals, also play a part in motivating employees.

One of the most valuable results obtained from the research was, that employees who participated in the survey were motivated by the research itself, and how it personally affected them by participating in the environmental project (Graves et al, 2013). Nelson et al (2011) conducted a study on how "Motivation of young people can be best achieved by using online recognition programs." They state, that upcoming generations are expecting the rewards experience to be fun and exciting, not the unchanged and demotivating systems that companies have in place for years. Their research found that employees increasingly expect rewards to be creative, varied and personalised.

Research conducted on motivational theories showed that motivation influences performance, which leads to job satisfaction, attracts the top people to the organization, decreases absenteeism and turnovers and influences commitment (Rabey, 2001).

Reward systems
Reward systems refer to all of the monetary, non-monetary and psychological payments that an organisation grants to its workforce, in exchange for the work they conduct (Gold, 2012).

Heraty (1995) states that the basic premise of reward systems has been apparent for centuries, but only became important and utilised by managers during the late 1800s and early 1920s. Fredrick Taylor believed, that what employees primarily want from their employers, is high wages and nothing else (Caudill, 2014). He states, that money, as the only motivational tool, caused a lot of criticism, and that individual pay for performance was later introduced. The main reason for promoting

individual instead of team rewards, is that personnel ambition always will be the most powerful incentive (Caudill, 2014).

It was only later identified, that the greatest incentive next to promotion (skill development) was more pay for shorter hours and increased holidays. Over time, the strengths and weaknesses of many rewards were analysed, including profit and gain sharing, bonus plans, settling on group work as the most motivational and productive reward system. Reward systems today have a number of similarities, however it is difficult to distinguish between the variations of reward systems, prevalent today (Caudill, 2014).

Deeprose (1994) outlined that an active rewards system can support an organization in retaining key employees, reducing turnover, attract the best candidates available and become more competitive by increasing productivity. He suggested, that reward systems play a significant role in employee's motivation within a business. Deeprose (1994) also stated, that rewards include increased pay, company car, appreciation, respect, and security. He outlined that there is a strong link between motivation and rewards programmes, which is evident in all organisations and contributes to and improves organisational performance.

Baron (1983) noted that if successful performance leads to organisational rewards, such performance could be seen as a significant motivational factor for employees, as they see their hardwork and efforts result in valued rewards. The type of rewards that managers select will also have a significant impact in terms of productivity of the employees. Agarwal (2003) suggests that some organisations are more successful than others, and that the potential explanation for this success, is linked to the methods in which managers reward their employees. Agarwal also states that managers have begun to move away from traditional methods and are increasingly adopting new pay and reward strategies to increase motivation and productivity in the workplace.

Generations

A generation, is a group of people who are born around the same period of time, and are raised around the same place, and exhibit similar characteristics (Kayton, 2018). He suggests that differences evident in generations are linked to life stage, career stage, age and the stage in which the individual was introduced to work. The generation's timeframes according to Robinson (2019) are:

- Traditionalist – 1928-1944
- Baby Boomers – born 1945 – 1964
- Generation X – born 1965 – 1979
- Generation Y – born 1980 – 1994
- Generation Z - 1995-+

The timeframe into which individuals are born will control the culture they will experience throughout their lifecycle and are well-defined by significant life events and demographics that they experience together. (Robinson, 2019)

Traditionalist–1928-1944

This generation is leading and contributing to the success of many organisations mainly based in America. A traditionalist is motivated by rewards such as money but also want to be respected (Gurchiek, 2016). This links to the esteem needs in Maslow hierarchy. Maslow's hierarchy of needs, is a psychology motivational theory, that consists of a five-tier modal of human needs, represented as hierarchical levels within a pyramid (McLeod, 2018).

Baby Boomers 1945-1964

Baby boomers are exceptionally hardworking, and are motivated by position and perks, and enjoy long work weeks, defining themselves by their professional accomplishments (Kane, 2018).

Generation X   – born 1965 – 1979
Generation X tends to resent authority and have a lack of respect in relation to hierarchy, title, and status. Characteristics include a focus on self-reliance, Individual projects, and minimal supervision. This generation accounted for 65.8 million of the workforce in 2018 (Kane, 2018).

Generation Y– born 1980 – 1994
Generation Y believe respect must be earned, they are technologically savvy and they tend to be goal and achievement orientated. They desire jobs that challenge them;, flexible working conditions; recognition for their contribution and to have roles and responsibilities where they can make their mark (Keogh, 2017).

Generation Z- Born 1995- Present
Generation Z can work in groups but prefer to work on their own as they desire credit for their own work. They expect their salaries to be higher as they rate it to success. They are more motivated by security and money and care about making a difference and have the ability to multitask (Patel, 2017). They are hardworking but expect to receive their desired rewards in return, and are quite different from the older generation (Guardian, 2019).

Rewards used as a motivation tool
Rewards systems enhance employee motivation and support a positive image of an organization amongst key shareholders and future employees (Hurd et al, 2008). Understanding the different rewards programs that motivate employees of different generations is one of the key challenges that managers face today. This is the first time that all generations have been in the workforce at the same time. (Hurd, 2008)

Rampton (2017) believes the most interesting condition currently in the workplace, is that it is the first time in modern history, that there are 5 generations working alongside each other. This creates more stress on

management in relation to rewards, motivation, and the staff themselves. It is essential to understand how to influence employees and how are they motivated and ultimately having employees identify their own rewards within that of the organization (Ahmed, 2009). This research outlines, that at a minimum, employees expect organisations to provide reasonable pay, safe working conditions and fair treatment. He also suggests that employees expect extras based on the followings needs; security, status, involvement, challenge, power, and responsibility. His views are similar to Reynolds (2005), who believes that management must understand the different generations, and focus on what matters most to employees at varied life stages, and what they must do in order to motivate different generations using rewards systems.

Taylor (2005) states that Generation Z employees hold different reward motivations than older generations. He indicates that a growing gap has been established, between these different generations, in relation to motivation and rewards. Generation Z is entering the workforce with a frame of reference that doesn't include job security and pensions, but are attracted by access to opportunities for training and development, and achievement. This is supported by Gursoy and Park (2012) state that Generation Z are motivated by rewards such as challenging jobs, and better opportunities to develop and continuously grow their own career (status). Hewlett (2009) suggests that Baby Boomers expect work that is flexible in terms of hours, location and life stage, and continue to prize psychic satisfaction over money. Hewlett (2009) also believes that this is challenging for managers, as money is no longer the prime motivator, they must redesign incentives and rewards to become more complex and holistic.

Reward programs that are effective in motivating different generations
Before managers can choose rewards that will motivate a multi-generational workforce they must understand what each generation needs

and wants, and what reward system they value the greatest. While generation differences will continuously exist there are sufficient common traits across generations that can be used when building a well-rounded effective approach to rewarding and motivating the workforce (Kovary, 2017).

Baby boomers appreciate earning promotion for work well done, or formal recognition in a public setting such as acknowledgement from a senior manager and Kupperschmidt (2000) also believes that Baby Boomers are likely to concentrate fully on consensus building and are exceptional leaders who desire status, respect and advancements.

Kovary (2017) outlines that Generation X are focused on independence and are more self-sufficient than other generations. They are motivated by rewards that develops their skill, such as the opportunity for training and development, or engaging in special projects. According to Jorgensen (2005) employees are motivated by a strong work-life balance whereby rewards such as personal values and goals (Higher salary or more benefits) are more important to them than work-related goals.

Kovary (2017) outlines that Generation Y are motivated by skill development, they desire new challenges and new opportunities, engagement with senior members and need to be given some level of responsibility in relation to decision making, and being pushed to their limits motivates this generation. Kovary (2017) also believes that it is crucial that management understands these forms of rewards, as an organisation need to retain this generation. Martin (2015) states that Generation Y have the ability to become the highest productive workforce in history although they are very high maintenance.

Research conducted by Foxypreneur (2017) has suggested that Generation Z will make up 35% of the workforce by 2020. They also established that management need to tailor their rewards programs towards the newest entrants in the workplace. Rewards in the modern

world need to be personalised and technology savvy to motivate this generation. Rewards such as electronics and household appliances, event tickets and travel offer all motivate this generation (Foxypreneur, 2017). According to Baldonado (2018), they are also motivated by achievement, recognition, responsibility, advancement and, growth.

Gurchiek (2016) outlines that traditionalists are the oldest generation in the workforce today and are motivated by money, but also want to be respected. He states that they value milestone recognition and flexible hours, and benefits that motivate traditionalists are long-term care insurance, and catch-up retirement funding.

If implemented successfully, how can rewards programs and motivation influence a multi-generational workforce?

(Gallo, 2011) states that organisations are realizing that it is essential to discover a good balance between what employees are willing to contribute to an organisation, and what organization are willing to contribute to employees, and it is critical for managers help employees reach their goals. He suggests that if this is implemented correctly, reward programs and motivation can influence a multi-generational workforce by:

Decreasing the chances of key older workers and important leaders retiring early-
According to Proper (2009) research has indicated, that having the opportunity to conduct challenging work, is the main reason for workers not to take early retirement. Financial rewards such as bonuses and increases in salaries motivate key employees not to take early retirement.

Better productivity
A well-rounded rewards system can motivate employees to improve productivity. Increased productivity increases profitability as employees make more products without any increased cost and it increases business growth by allowing the organisation to grow and meet customers

demands (Hamel, 2019). Hamel belives that this can be a significant competitive advantage for organisations that competitors will find difficul to match.

Lower levels of staff turnover
Fitz-enz (1997) stated that on average, company losses are in excess of €1 billion each year for every 10 employees who leave their organisation. The total cost of an employees' turnover amounts to a minimum of one year's pay plus benefits and a maximum of two years play plus benefits (Ramlall, 2004).

Positive workplace
Emma Seppälä (2015) believes a positive workplace will influence employees to become leaders within the workplace; be committed and develop trust in the company, allowing the organisation to grow. She also believe this increases employees loyalty towards the workplace. Appelbaum (2007) identified that employers who empower their employees, are more likely to engage them, and employees become more innovative, upward influencing and inspirational resulting in a more positive atmosphere.

Selection and retention
Management can develop the organisation into an "employer of choice" and an "incredible work environment" resulting in attracting and retaining top talent that can be seen as a competitive advantage. To attract the best candidates and retain the best employees, it is essential that employers partake in human resource strategies to achieve business goals and business performance (Bubenik, 2019).

O'Neal (1998) states that rewards are vital to an organisation, as they help to identify and address the issues that are formed, by the processes of retention and recruitment. When implemented correctly and effectively it can help build a workplace that meets the needs of their employees, and

motivate them to be further productive, and to contribute more to the organisation (Armstrong, 2010).

Why do differences currently exist between different generations within a workforce and what are the reasons?

Rampton, 2017 states that for the first time organisations are made up of different generations ranging from ages of 18-80+. He established the main challenge that management encounter in their organisations is identifying the different generations, the difference that currently exists amongst them and what are the reasons for these differences.

Heathfield (2018) states that shared experiences at similar ages, results in similarities amongst generations in terms of work-related attributes, behavioural attitudes.

According to Miller (2011), the cause of generational differences is a result of technological advances. He states that this is one of the main factors, that impacts on the differences that currently exist between the various generations, and that forty years passed without any major technological advancement, resulting in the generations being unable to relate to each other. According to Haeger et al (2014) technology impacts work-life balance, job satisfaction, and psychological and job control. He suggests that the difference in technology use, causes conflict between generations, resulting in a negative atmosphere, and as the younger generations are talented in this area, older generations feel undervalued and pushed out. He also states that management will have to lever their rewards systems for the younger generation, such as working from home or tech accessories, to satisfy their needs.

According to Cennamo (2008) the differences that exist between generations are connected to changes such as ageing, experience, live stage, and career stage. He notes that as each generation was introduced to work at different time periods, this suggests that work value differences, may be evident between the five generations. Baby boomer

value learning new skills, and good relationships with colleagues is important to them. As Generation Y and Z place a high value on creativity, innovation and flexibility, older workers prefer putting in the time and hard work, and then going home at a fixed time each day (Cassady, 2017).

Acorrding to Lockley (2019) employers must implement policies and introduce different rewards designed for each generation that satisfies their needs. She also identifies that life stage and career stage is one of the biggest impacts of Generational difference and significantly impacts the following:

Workplace Values
Nordstrom (2016) identifies that workplace values is one of the biggest Generational difference in the workplace. Older generations such as traditionalists and Generation X and Y consider the relationship they hold with a company has highly important, requiring and demanding hard work for financial security (California, 2019). While Generation X and Y view these relationships as disable. They desire work-life balance with professional growth and development. Generation X enter the workplace without expecting job security as they grew up in a time where they experienced social change and technology (California, 2019).

Autonomy vs. Teamwork
Generation X is the last modern generation that values working as an individual rather than in a group. Generation Z tends to look to established authority for guidance and direction more than some of their older colleagues. Employers who regularly review and praise their hard work, helps to build their loyalty towards the organisation which is difficult to achieve (California, 2019).

For employers to effectively manage employees of different generations, they need to identify the current life stages of their employees. By identifying what employees' value, will assist in discovering their true

motivations. Employers who wish to treat employees as their most important asset, must be informed, on how to motivate them to achieve their full potential, and understand generational blockers (Gen X fear being replaced) as well as creating exciting new opportunities (Lawler, 2003).

 Kapoor (2011) identify that generations differ in relation to factors that contribute to success in the workplace. Traditionalist and Generation X believe in order to be successful they must meet deadlines on time. Baby boomer believe organisational skills, generation Y and Z believe it's the use of computers. According to McGuire (2015) this can cause conflict in the workplace and cause problems for management and she states that a multi-generational workforce can be a positive if managed correctly, and the main factor in achieving this is communication.

Zemke (2000) studied organisations that managed a multi-generational organisation, and identified the main factors for success as communication and respect, training, learning opportunities and retention.

Conclusion
It is evident, that management today are faced with the challenge of identifying the impact that reward programs will have, on a multi-generational workforce. It is the first time in history that all five generations are working together in the same workplace. Managers must identify the cause of the differences that exist in their organisations, and understand and identify solutions to overcome this challenge.

Employee motivation is an essential factor in every business, and it allows management to meet their goals. Without a motivated workplace, the workplaces may come under pressure and be placed in a risky situation. Motivating employees needs to become the routine, leading in a highly profitable productive workforce.

Rewarding employees is essential as it motivates people to be more productive, helps to attract and retain highly skilled key employees and make them feel valued, resulting in reduced turnover, which helps to encourage fairness and equity, for the work conducted. It is important that managers understand the various rewards systems and procedures.

Each generation has been shaped by their experiences in life, causing each to value different things. Managers need to recognise what motivates each generation, to determine how they can reward a multi-generational workforce to increase productivity and performance. Rewards and motivation are strongly linked, if rewards are removed from an organisation then motivation is gone.

Reward systems and motivation can additionally influence Human Resource procedures and practices within an organisation, which has an effect on the whole organisation, including employee performance. HR is one of the main factors to the success or failure of an organisation. It is evident that rewards and motivation are regarded as critical practices, which will have a continuous impact on improving organisations, and their resources in the future. If implemented effectively, organisations will be capable of taking advantage of developing a positive workplace, around satisfied, productive employees.

In order for employers to manage a multi-generational workforce effectively, they must see each employee as an individual within the organisation, and empower managers/supervisors to coach and train them on both organisational and personal goals. In today's diverse world, research has established that employers must understand the most effective motivational approach to take, in relation to the rewards system for each generation, as this can lead to a high performing, motivated, productive workforce, attracting and retaining the best employees.

Continuous changes to work such as technology advancements are inevitable, coupled with the fact that each generation was introduced to

work at different periods, suggests that work value differences exist between every generation. Current research has established the reasons for differences in a multi-generational workforce to include aging, experience, life stages and career stages. Managers need to develop tools and systems that help them understand their employees, identify their desires and values, and monitor their progress towards their goal attainments. How managers deal with generational differences, using relevant motivational and reward programs, will be a critical factor for the organisation to survive and prosper.

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An examination of some of the factors that influence staff well-being in customer-facing industries

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Abstract
This study will examine the influence of bullying, workplace patterns and self-medication on the well-being of staff within customer facing industries. Each of these issues will be examined and the consequences of negative well-being will be reviewed. The project highlights some of the challenges that face workers in modern workplaces and how they impact productivity and performance. The study is useful for any graduate embarking on a managerial career and incudes some suggestions for good practices in dealing with these real workplace issues.

Keywords: Negative well-being, productivity

Introduction

The purpose of this research project is to study the relationship between customer facing workers and their mental well-being within the retail and hospitality sectors. As it is an unskilled, customer facing industry, there may be unique situations that can affect one's mental well-being while conducting such work. The rationale for this study stems from 12 years of work experience within the retail sector and noticing with each organisation that a member of staff had taken stress induced sick leave as a result of negative mental health. The leave of absence which I have witnessed has varied from two weeks leave to five months leave. Each absence having been supported by a medical certificate. A portion of those who were on sick leave, left the organisation after several months of leave, opting to find a new employer.

Research has shown that the main causes for an employee to suffer poor mental health includes time pressure, emotional demands, job insecurity, effort-reward balance, physical demands, working patterns and bullying. (Russel *et al,* 2018, Bubonya *et al*, 2017). These are also known as job "stressors". Job stressors can cause adverse health implications such as cardiovascular disease and depression, but it can also affect personal relationships with family and friends. These job stressors can lead to self-medication, where an employee would abuse drugs and alcohol in an attempt to deal with their poor mental health. (Frone, 2016). The well-being of employees should be a major concern for employers as productivity within the workplace can be greatly reduced when employees are suffering.

Bubonya *et al* (2017) states that absenteeism and presenteeism greatly affects an organisation. Absenteeism affects them as employees who are

stressed at work can receive a medical certificate exempting them from work. As mental health does not always form physical symptoms, it can be difficult to treat. Employees can take months off at a time, greatly disrupting the work place and putting additional stress on their co-workers, which in turn, can affect their mental health as physical demands and the effort-reward balance can come into effect. Presenteeism is when an employee is present at work, but their productivity is greatly affected. They may not be working as hard as they should be and again, putting additional stress on co-workers.

The issues I intend to focus on for this project are the causes, the effects and the contributions of stress factors.

I will look at bullying and working patterns as a cause of stress which had been stated by Russel *et al* (2018) and Bubonya *et al* (2017).

I will look at the prementioned causes and contributions and the effect they have on an employee's mental health.

Finally, I will focus on self-medication as a contribution to stress. As the service industry is primarily made up of young workers, many of them tend to abuse alcohol and drugs recreationally. I believe this has an effect on their mental health. The combination of recreational substance abuse and customer-facing roles can lead young workers to use alcohol and drugs as a form of self-medication.

One in ten people are affected by negative mental health issues (Ipsos MRBI, 2016). Retail is Irelands largest industry, employing 280,000 people which accounts for 14% of the population (Retail Ireland, 2017). The hospitality industry employs approximately 250,000, therefore, it can be rationalised that approximately 53,000 customer facing workers are being affected by mental health issues. That is a large portion of employees who are suffering, and I think it is important to focus in on

what I feel are particular issues which contributes to that total, which I hope to add to the current body of knowledge.

Cause – Bullying

The first job stressor which can affect mental health within the workplace is bullying. Workplace bullying can be defined as offending, harassing, socially excluding, harming one's reputation, abusive supervision or negatively affecting someone's work task. (Valentine & Fleischman, 2018; Ramsay *et al,* 2011).

Workplace bullying can come from different sources. The main sources appear to be co-workers and supervisors (Mackey *et al,* 2018, Campbell & Göritz, 2014, Vishwakarma, 2018). In terms of supervisors, there is a sense of entitlement that supervisors perceive when they are in a position of power (Ramsay *et al*, 2011, Mathisen, *et al*, 2008). Supervisors feel that they should receive special privilege and can appear over optimistic which can be overbearing for employees and result in harsh criticism of one's work. As supervisors feel this way, employees in turn feel that they need to explain or justify their behaviours to them, this is known as 'Felt Accountability' (Mackey *et al,* 2018). This can put increased pressure on an employee as they feel that their work is being constantly scrutinised, this pressure is deemed a stressor (Mackey *et al*, 2018). The victims can often feel helpless and find it difficult to defend themselves from the bullying actions (Birkeland Nielson & Einarsen, 2012, Mathisen, *et al*, 2008).

Age was a factor when a study was conducted by Duru *et al* (2018) and it found that those aged between 20-29 were more likely to be victims of bullying. It could be said that this is the age group when people enter the workforce after completing further education, and it can relate to what Mackey *et al* (2018) said about supervisors being one of the culprits of bullying. A young person entering the workforce may be less likely to

stand up for themselves, especially if it is against a supervisor as they could feel that there may be consequences as stated by Birkeland Nielson & Einarsen (2012). From the researchers' experience, the majority of young people starting work at an entry level position are aged between 20-29 while managers would typically be in their thirties. From the research, it could be said that the majority of young workers would be more susceptible to bullying, leading to mental health issues.

Another customer facing industry which suffers from bullying is transport. According to a study conducted on bus drivers, not only was there bullying occurring from colleagues, but there was also bullying coming from passengers (Glasø *et al*, 2011). It is said from the study that bus drivers are four times more likely to face threats of violence from passengers compared to others working average jobs. Glasø *et al* (2011) states that 30% of long-distance coach drivers experienced complaints and criticism from passengers. It was in relation to their performance on the job and work effort. This highlights that employees can face bullying on two fronts. One from colleagues, which can include superiors and from customers themselves. This can prove very difficult for an employee to escape and can further decrease their mental well-being

Cause – Working Patterns

Working patterns can play a large role in relation to the mental well-being of employees. Employees who work over 40 hours are at risk of work-related stress and those who work considerably less hours are also at risk (Russell *et al,* 2018). It can be said that the working patterns of employees are out of their hands unless they are on a fixed contract. However, many customer facing positions such as retail and hospitality, work on a zero-hour contract basis. They also have to work non-standard hours, which can include over-time, working weekends and having inconsistent

working weeks which can be changed with little notice (McNamara *et al,* 2011, Henly & Lambert, 2014).

Zero-hour contracts is a practice amongst employers in which they do not provide consistent or set working hours for their employees. As a result, the employee on said contract can have varied working weeks or days resulting in inconsistent pay packages. The employer has an expectation on the employee to be fully flexible and available when required (Citizens Information, 2019).

Research conducted in 2013, revealed that Irish retailers had not recovered from a 17% decline in sales since 2007 (RGDATA, 2013). The retailer's response when posed questions made for interesting reading as it greatly affected employees. The sample size was 167 retailers. For example, when asked what was on Irish retailer's minds, labour/wage costs shared the same percentage as reducing profit margins at 59% each When asked about investment priorities, hiring more staff was third from the bottom at 13%, although investment in staff training was at 60%. This could point to employers wanting to add additional responsibilities to employees instead of hiring extra staff. Not only does the extra job demand count as a stressor, but it could potentially also affect the amount of time an employee will spend at work. The research conducted by RGDATA (2013) also highlighted that customers have been spending less money in-stores. When the retailers were asked how they were responding to that, the most popular answer at 66%, said they were reducing the number of floor staff. This clearly influences the working patterns of employees where there is a high percentage risk of them having their hours reduced.

Another factor relating to working patterns is the work-life balance that employees endure in the customer service industry. Work-life balance is

the prioritisation between an employee's personal life and their professional life and how one can impede on the other (HRZone, 2019).

Work-life balance is a growing concern amongst millennials and can greatly affect those working in customer service industries. Unpredictable work schedules is another aspect of work-life conflict. As many retailers plan their work schedules according to a budget set from the year before, the majority of weeks can differ for part-time workers, again, leading to stress (Henly & Lambert, 2014). Millennials are more concerned with the opportunity to partake in social events and to relax than monetary rewards (Henly & Lambert, 2014). Employees mental well-being is negatively affected by missing out on family and social events (Zhao, 2014).

As retailers are trading almost every day, many employees miss out on enjoying social events during Christmas, New-Years and national holidays throughout the year. Such days can have large social gatherings with friends and family and missing out can cause a great deal of presenteeism. From the researcher's experience, presenteeism was a form of revenge against the employer by the employees for having to work during those events.

Effects – Bullying
The effects of bullying and working patterns can have a major impact on the well-being of employees. Not only can these have an effect on the mental well-being of people, but it can also affect their physical well-being. While bullying is an attack on an employee by others, working patterns can cause similar symptoms, even though no other party is involved.

As mentioned, workplace bullying can have a serious negative effect on both mental and physical well-being. The physical effects of bullying can

form in the way of chest pains, hair loss, irritable bowel syndrome and stomach ulcers (Jenkins, 2013). It was also said that physical ailments can lead to further bullying, further worsening the condition for the victim.

The psychological effects of bullying include anxiety, depression (Berthelsen *et al*, 2011), anger and fear (Rodríguez-Munoz *et al*, 2017). Those being bullied can also suffer from post-traumatic stress and can suffer from a 'Gloomy Perception Mechanism' (Vishwakarma *et al*, 2018). This occurs when an employee develops a gloomy reality of life outside of work due to depressive thoughts and negative situations from the workplace. Janoff-Bulman (1992) has a theory on cognitive trauma in which those being bullied are more susceptible to it due to their beliefs, low confidence and the inability to defend themselves. This can lead to further psychological trauma. Victims of bullying also found there was a lack of emotional support from their organisation, their colleagues and also management which negatively affected their mental well-being even further.

Job dissatisfaction, burnout and the intention to leave work was higher amongst employees who were victim of bullying (Mathisen, *et al*, 2008). The effect of bullying on one's professional life can lead to resignation, dismissal and loss of income due to sick leave (Mathisen, *et al*, 2008, Duru *et al,* 2018). Presenteeism and absenteeism are issues which many employee's face. Absenteeism for when the employee needs to take leave to cope with the bullying and presenteeism is when the productivity of the employee is very low as they are mentally unwell from stress and anxiety (Bubonya *et al,* 2017).

As well as affecting people's professional life, bullying can also greatly affect their social and personal life (Berthelsen, *et al,* 2011, Duru *et al,* 2018). This is known as 'Spillover', when problems within the work

domain spill over into the non-work domain (Rodríguez-Munoz *et al*, 2017). The effect that bullying has on one's personal life includes loss of concentration, roughness, family problems and suicide (Duru *et al,* 2018). As mentioned earlier, bullying from superiors has a negative effect on one's metal well-being, but according to Rodríguez-Munoz *et al*, (2017) the one being bullied can relay their frustrations to their spouses by undermining them and can display aggressive behaviour to other family members.

From the experience of the researcher, many employees took medical leave due to negative mental health for what they described as a difficult relationship with their superior. Those on leave said that they felt they were being taken advantage of by having to do the work of the manager as well as their own and that consequences were threatened if all the work was not completed.

Effects - Working Patterns
As mentioned, those working in hospitality and retail, work non-standard hours, which includes over-time, zero-hours and inconsistent work patterns (Henly & Lambert, 2014)

Research has shown that zero-hour contracts can greatly contribute to an employee's mental well-being being affected by anxiety and stress. This is due to an employee facing social and financial uncertainty (Marsh, 2017, University of Cambridge, 2014). Although Ireland has created legislation abolishing zero-hour contracts as of the third of March 2019, other countries still uphold these practices. Working more than 40 hours can also cause stress and anxiety (Russell *et al,* 2018). The research also states that it can block employees' access to additional income and education, which can further amplify the negative effects of their mental well-being. However, the University of Cambridge (2014) have stated that employees who have input into their work schedule report a

significant reduction in negative mental well-being. The reason could be that it affords the employee better financial planning, knowing that there would be a consistent amount of income per pay package, therefore, relieving some of the stress and anxiety related to finances.

As employees in the hospitality and retail industry work over-time and non-standard hours, it infringes on their work-life balance which can result in work-life conflict. There is a culture of long working hours associated with hospitality and other customer service industries such as bar work, which can also contribute to work-life conflict (Farrell, 2015). Although there are HRM practices which can benefit employees such as flexible work programmes and encouragement of leisure activities (Farrell, 2015, Zhao *et al*, 2014). Programmes like these can benefit women as they can balance both their work and family lives. This has benefited both employees and employers as it has been linked to better mental health, job satisfaction, performance and employee commitment amongst employees.

Work-life conflict can also arise from 'Emotional Labour'. Emotional labour is the emotional regulation required of employees by their employers to positively interact with customers. Emotional labour has also been deemed as stressor as employees often have to jump from positive to negative emotions and visa-versa depending on the customers and situations they must deal with at any given time. Jumping from both emotions can affect how they interact with their family which can therefore have negative consequences (Hofmann & Stokburger-Saur, 2017). Both emotional labour and work-life conflicts effect an employee's well-being by causing psychological stress, which can then lead to a lack of commitment followed by an employee leaving the organisation (Hofmann & Stokburger-Saur, 2017).

The researcher has previously witnessed employers abuse the use of zero-hour contracts, as a form of punishment. If an employee were to call in sick and the manager suspected them of being hungover, the manager would then cut their hours considerably the following week. This led to employees not calling in sick when they actually were, and increased presenteeism as previously mentioned. This can enhance the feeling of stress and anxiety within employees as they feel any mistake can lead to a reduction of their hours.

Contributions

The question which is also being asked is whether self-medicating can greatly contribute to the positive or negative mental well-being of an employee and how that can affect them in the workplace. According to Frone (2016), excessive or poorly timed use of alcohol within the workplace can lead to issues such as compromised health, poor role-performance and safety issues within the workplace. From previous experience in retail, employees often came to work hungover or still under the influence of alcohol. Their work was greatly affected as their productivity was greatly reduced. Their mood was also negatively affected.

It is said that high levels of stress can lead to the abuse of substances as a method of stress management. This can then lead to a person relying on these methods for stress management therefore developing substance abuse disorders such as alcoholism (Connolly *et al*, 2017). Substance abuse is a method used to deal with stress and anxiety in work as a coping method, but it can aggravate the symptoms once the substance has worn off (Hodgins *et al, 2009)*. In popular terms, this is known as the "come-down".

According to a study conducted on bar servers, who are one of the highest ranked compared to other industries in terms of alcohol usage. It has

shown that there is a link between job stressors and the use of alcohol (Bush & Lipari, 2015). It is said that it is due to "boundary-spanning" roles. This is when a worker must reach the expectations of both their employer and the demands of their customers (Hight & Park, 2019). An example in retail would be your manager wanting you to complete a task, such as doing a floor move where stock is repositioned while simultaneously serving customers. Both of their expectations must be met but puts a great deal of pressure on the worker. The study conducted by Bush & Lipari (2015) reported that 10% of retail workers abuse alcohol due to these stressors.

Hight and Park (2019) states that individuals who consume alcohol had increased feelings of cheerfulness and a reduction in anxiousness. Hight and Park (2019) also stated that employees consumed alcohol as they were anticipating work stress and that due to work stress employees consumed alcohol after work. This highlights that anxiety is an issue amongst workers as well as stress during work (Hight & Park, 2018).

A study conducted in Australia on the drinking habits of their customer facing workforce has shown that those most at risk of developing unhealthy drinking habits include male workers, those who are separated, non-urban dwellers and those with a high school education or less. (Berry *et al*, 2007). This can link to long term retail workers in Ireland in which many employees are male and have no third level education. Although, the researcher has noticed a pattern like this amongst female employees also. Other studies have found that a person's age, personality type and social norms had an effect on the amount of substance abuse that occurs (Hight & Park, 2018). Another link to negative habits includes the employee's feelings towards their work. Hight & Park (2019, 2018) say that job dissatisfaction, role-ambiguity and role-conflict, as mentioned earlier increases substance consumption. Employees within the customer

facing industry who work in retail, hospitality, tourism and food services are considered high risk for alcohol abuse. As there can be high stress levels involved in catering to customers, employees drink to alleviate their anxiousness. It is also said that drinking on the job is part of the work culture within the service industry and actively encouraged (Alcohol Rehab Guide, 2018). The type of substance used can also play a role with job satisfaction. Employees who consumed cannabis expressed a lower degree of job satisfaction compared to those who consumed different illicit substances (Hight & Park, 2018).

Organisations also suffer from the negative effects of their employee's substance abuse. The employer is likely to face issues such as absenteeism, presenteeism, a higher rate of staff turnover and lower productivity levels (Russell *et al,* 2018). Although Russell *et al* (2018) stated that alcohol abuse can have an increase on absenteeism, other studies have found that there was little effect between a person's drinking habits and their absence rate (Marmot *et al*, 1993, Vasse *et al*, 1998). This could suggest that the increased rate of absence is due to the employee's poor mental health and not solely due to substance abuse. However, the researcher has witnessed employees being absent from work due to alcohol consumption. Although it was not a regular occurrence, the employer still suffered as did the other employees due to the added demands (Alcohol Rehab Guide, 2018).

Productivity is also affected through presenteeism. Presenteeism is where an employee is attending work, unlike absenteeism, but they are suffering from low work productivity (Bubonya *et al*, 2017). Presenteeism can cost an organisation more than absenteeism. According to a study by Britain's Healthiest Workplace which the Financial Times published, the percentage of work time lost in retail and hospitality for absenteeism is 1.08% while presenteeism is 9.2%. While the average days lost per

employee every year is 2.7 days absenteeism compared to 23.1 days presenteeism (O' Connor, 2016). The report also suggested that those who work in retail and hospitality are on zero-hour contracts, possibly resulting in employees not calling in sick when they need to as it will result in a loss of earnings (O' Connor, 2016). It could be suggested that those who suffer presenteeism within customer facing roles may be unable to actively perform their duties as a result of substance abuse. The researcher has experienced colleagues enter the workplace while still under the influence of alcohol and has viewed employees on numerous occasions sleeping on the job. Because of this, it can be understood that presenteeism costs the employer more compared to absenteeism. If the employee were to call in sick then the employer would have an opportunity to call in another employee to cover the shift, which is commonly done in retail and hospitality and therefore keeping the workplace productive.

Conclusion

According to the research, bullying plays a very large role in the mental well-being of employees within an organisation. The research can be deemed relevant as all information reviewed is recent as it is a very topical subject. No studies were found which did not support the effects of bullying on an individual. However, studies of other industries have found that bullying is not unique to customer facing industries and that it does affect other workplaces, such as hospitals, IT and construction to name a few. The research on these industries showed that the effects of bullying suffered by customer facing employees such as stress, anxiety and physical symptoms are also suffered by those working in other industries.

Bullying is proven to be a negative consequence of the workplace, but it has still not been stamped out despite the many years of research on its

harmful effects. Although there are steps within organisations to tackle the issues, the main culprit appears to come from supervisors followed by colleagues. Therefore, it could be difficult for employees to report bullying as those within management roles could be friendly with each other. From experience, I know of employees who would not report issues about their supervisors due to the supervisor's relationship with management.

A potential method for dealing with bullying is to hire an independent consultant who can speak with employees regarding bullying and can anonymously pass on the details to management regarding the bullying behaviour. Once the facts have been brought to management, proper procedure could then be followed.

Working patterns also proved to cause negative consequences for an individual's mental wellbeing. Those who work very little hours are stressed due to the lack of financial security. Those who work overtime have a greater chance of suffering from negative mental well-being than those who work standard hours. Finally, those whose hours are inconsistent are suffering from negative mental wellbeing also as their opportunities to gain additional income or even to progress their education further are hindered from doing so. Work-life conflict is also an issue amongst these employees as they are missing out on social and family events due to work commitments.

Although very little can be done in terms of the opening hours of businesses, it was proven that any input an employee can have on their work schedule can greatly reduce the stress and anxiety they experience. This can be interpreted as employees having greater control of their finances as they know the minimum amount their pay package will be. It also offers the opportunity for employees to plan their personal time with friends and family. Organisations should be mindful of working

schedules and ensure best efforts to accommodate their employee's whenever possible to ensure their well-being.

Self-medication should be a major concern for organisations as it can greatly reduce the well-being of employees. Although the short-term effects of alcohol may lead to cheerfulness, it only appears as a mask to obstruct the true feelings of an individual. Self-medication also led to absenteeism, which in turn can lead to reduced pay packages and further stress. Anxiety was one of the reasons for self-medication, as employees perceived the difficulties they would experience in the workplace and consumed alcohol to combat those feelings.

Employers need to be more active to combat this phenomenon. They should ensure that the workload being placed on an employee is manageable and that there are supports in place for employees to utilise, such as spreading the workload equally with other employees. Other methods which could help employees could include workplace programmes such as fitness, wellbeing or counselling. It would be beneficial for both the employer and employee.

Further study would need to be conducted regarding the size of the organisations in relation to bullying and the management structure. Bullying could be difficult to confront in an organisation with twenty employees and only a few in management compared to a large multinational which would have a large management structure with a clearly defined procedure regarding bullying. Additional research would also need to be conducted on methods which could improve working patterns and be more beneficial to the wellbeing of employees.

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An investigation of Ireland's sugar taxation policy and its intended impact on Irish children's sugar consumption and obesity levels

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Abstract

This literature review investigates the intended impact on Irish children's sugar consumption and obesity levels after the introduction of a sugar tax in Ireland. The World Health Organisation (WHO) recognises that one of the major contributors to obesity is high levels of sugar intake. Unfortunately, national trends show that Irish children consume 2.5 times the daily recommended amount of sugar (HSE, 2018). This study will review some of the available literature to examine the extent of the obesity problem and look at the experience in other countries that have already implemented similar taxation policies. The review will show that overall international experience has had a positive effect on obesity levels and raises additional tax funding that have been successfully reinvested in other schemes to tackle the national obesity problem.

Keywords: Obesity, Sugar Tax, Ireland

Introduction

Recent statistics suggest that "6 in 10 adults and 1 in 5 children are overweight or obese in Ireland" (HSE, 2018). This study uses a positivist philosophical approach, to predict the potential impact of the Irish Governments' decision, to implement a new sugar tax policy on beverages, in 2018. O'Regan (2018) found that currently Irish children consume 2.5 times the daily recommended amount of sugar. According to the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK), obesity is classified as a disease, because of the health issues that can arise as a result of the condition, such as heart disease and diabetes. Childhood obesity will most likely result in obesity throughout adulthood (NIDDK, 2019).

The purpose of this study, is to identify the probability of success, of the implementation of a sugar-sweetened drinks tax (SSDT) in Ireland, which aims to reduce obesity figures amongst children. Recent publications highlight the severity of the problem in Ireland, as the country was recently ranked as having the highest BMI average in the EU for average BMI" (MacGuill, 2018) and "almost a quarter of a million people in Ireland are living with diabetes" (Harris, 2018). This literature review will examine the possible outcome of introducing a tax on sugary beverages, based on findings from other countries that have already implemented similar taxation policies. This study also aims to give insights into how Irish consumers could potentially change their buying behaviour of sugary products; the probability of increased awareness of the Irish obesity problem; and the possible resultant reduction in childhood obesity; as a result of the potential decreased demand for sweetened products, as a result of the introduction of the SSDT tax.

Recent research suggests that "Adults and children should reduce their daily intake of free sugars to less than 10% of their total energy intake" (World Health Organization, 2018). Other studies have suggested that

weight gain was found to be the 6th largest contributor to the world's disabilities and premature deaths (Oireachtas, 2011).

This review aims to formulate an understanding of the likely impacts of the Irish SSDT tax; particularly on the dietary habits of primary school children.

A key motivation for this research was to understand, given the health issues concerning childhood obesity in Ireland, whether the new tax policy is likely to be an adequate measure, or if further action will need to be taken by the Irish Government to ensure its effectiveness in tackling the obesity problem.

Aims of this review is to identify:

What can current data tell us about Irish children dietary habits in relation to sugared produce?

Following the introduction of the Irish government's sugar tax policy, what potential outcomes can be expected, based on available information from similar policies introduced in other countries?

Can any significant assumptions be made, regarding the potential impact of sugar taxation, on Irish school children's sugar consumption and health?

Literature Review

Current research suggests that there is an affiliation between the increased prices of sugar beverages and the reduction in consumption of these products. HSE (2015) statistics, indicate that 15% of the Irish population consume sugar-sweetened beverages (SSB) daily, and the highest daily consumers are young men at 29%. Increased consumption levels of SSBs, along with the population's tendency to consume sugared products, which currently stands at 65% of the adult population, stimulated the introduction of the tax policy (HSE, 2015)

Braesco et al (2017) reviewed national publications on sugar consumption and dietary habits of 11 European countries including France, Ireland, Italy, Spain and the United Kingdom. The study found that sugar consumption amongst children was higher than in adults, with an overall sugar intake for adults ranging from 15% to 21% of energy consumption, and from 16% to 26% for children. The study also outlined, that added sugars contributed on average to 9% of the total energy intake of adults, and 14% of children.

Braesco et al (2017) research, suggested that sweet products were the primary contributor to total sugar intake within all European countries studied. Fruit had a greater presence than sugar sweetened beverages in an adult's diet, whereas, children favoured sugar sweetened beverages to fruit. Added sugars in their diets, were mainly from sweet products, and ranged from 36% to 61% for adults and between 40 to 50% for children. The study revealed that sugar sweetened beverages, contributed between 12-31% of added sugars for adults and between 20 to 34% for children. This research suggests that sweet products and sweetened beverages are the highest contributors to added sugar consumption in Europe, and that the consumption of total and added sugars amongst children is especially high in the European countries studied.

Fitzgerald et al (2010) looked at the diet of Irish children prior to the introduction of the sugar tax, and suggested that there is no one signal factor influencing a child's food choice. The study involved children and adolescent discussions on individual, social and environmental influences on food choice. Findings of this research supported an integrated theoretical framework, behind the complex eating behaviour and food choices of Irish children. The research outlined a deeper understanding of children's perception regarding food choice, and found that there are subtle differences that change during the development from childhood to adolescence. Fitzgerald et al (2010) suggest that the greatest influence on diet changes was the diminishing influence from the home

environment, lifestyle factors and nutritional autonomy during adolescence.

Jotangia et al (2005) outlined a summary of the obesity figures for UK children between the ages 2 to 11. It reported that obesity in children under the age of 11 grew by 5% between 1995 and 2003. This research suggested that increased sugar and fat consumption, was consistent with rising obesity figures in older children aged 8 to 10, with an increase of 5.3% between 1995 and 2003. Furthermore, this research highlighted the impact of the home environment on childhood obesity, with 19.8% of obese UK children living in homes where both parents were overweight, compared to 6.7% of children living in households where neither parent were overweight, and 8.4% of obese children residing in homes with one parent overweight.

The Langley et al (2017) study on the diet of school children in Scotland, states that Scottish children aren't receiving sufficient nutritional benefit from their current diet. Their findings suggest that Secondary school children have particularly inadequate diets when compared to other age groups. Furthermore, this study found that 11-18-year-old adolescents consume minimal amounts of fruit and vegetables, while maintaining a diet consisting mainly of sugary minerals and highly fattening products.

Research conducted by Brown et al (2000) suggested that a considerable gap persists between childrens nutritional awareness and their willingness to take action, thus ignoring the reality of their daily food behaviour. The study outlined, that children are creatures of habit, particularly when consuming foods/beverages with high sugar content, and suggest that Irish children will struggle to change their buying behaviour for these foods/beverages, in particular sugar-sweetened drinks, as they tend to ignore nutritional advice.

Research undertaken by Lien et al (2001) into the changing consumption levels of fruit, vegetables and sugary foods from pre-teens to adolescent

children, suggested that sugary drink consumption levels increased, by one drink per week on average, between the age 15 and 16. This research also suggested that children's sugar consumption habits, changed by the age of 14, as the eating behaviour of young teenagers showed an awareness of more nutritional foods that contained less elements of sugar.

As outlined earlier, research on sugar-sweetened beverage (SSB) taxation, found that increasing the price of beverages with high sugar content will reduce consumption and ultimately reduce obesity figures among children. Ireland is following the growing trend by implementing a tax on sugary beverages; in 2011, Hungary introduced a tax on foods with high fat, salt and sugar content, and the following year saw France introduce a 'soda tax' on sugary beverages (Madden, 2013).

The UK issued their own tax on sugary beverages in April 2018, with the aim of reducing obesity levels among adults and teenagers. The UK government believe this tax can have the same positive implications as it did in Hungary and France (Ni Mhurchu et al, 2014). This report also states that implementing a 20% sales tax on sugar-sweetened beverages could reduce the chances of becoming obese in the UK by 1.3%, affecting an estimated 180,000 people and possibly reducing the pervasiveness of becoming overweight by an estimated 1.9% of the population.

Fletcher et al (2010) outlined that both the UK and Irish populations had similar characteristics. They suggest that creating deterrents for consuming sugar-sweetened beverages could generate changes in sugar consumption in both food and drink products. Fletcher et al (2010) also determined that SSB are the largest contributors to energy intake among adults and children, driven by the increasing consumption levels of soft drinks.

Batis et al (2016) suggest that Mexico has benefitted greatly from the introduction of a tax on sugar concentrated produce. They state, that prior to this, the Mexican government were concerned with the rising levels of

obesity in young people; 33% of young people aged 2-18 years were classified as obese. The study outlined that the Mexican government implemented an 8% tax on nonessential foods high in fat, sugar and salt content in January 2014 with a further 10% tax on sugar-sweetened beverages. Consumer purchasing of taxed products decreased by 12% by December 2014. The fall in sales of taxed products, coincided with a rise in the purchasing of substitute products, as consumption of water and healthier drinks rose by 4% following the introduction of the tax policy (Popkin, et al., 2016).

Research conducted by Finkelstein et al (2012) into the implications of a sugar-sweetened beverage tax in the USA, suggested that following the introduction of an SSB tax the purchasing of energy, fat and sodium products was affected, resulting in increased consumption of substitute products. The key finding of this research was the reduced consumption and purchasing of store-bought products, following the introduction of SSB tax.

Finkelstein et al (2012) also found that an average reduction in consumption of SSB products of 24.3 kcal per day coincided with an average recorded weight loss of 0.72 kg per U.S citizen, in the first year after the introduction of the sugar sweetened beverage tax. Potential weight loss is expected to rise to 1.3 kg on average in the long run. A 2012 Finkelstein et al understood this tax was implemented to increase consumption of substitutes for sugary foods while promoting healthier food options.

Alvarado et al (2017) looked at trends in SSB prices following the introduction of a 10% tax on SSB products in Barbados in September 2015. Using sales records from a supermarket chain in Barbados, the study analysed price variations in the aftermath of the introduction of the SSB tax, during the period 2014-2016. Findings concluded that prior to the tax; prices grew annually for SSB products and substitutes by approximately 1%. However, the first quarter following the tax

introduction, saw slight changes in growth trends, as sugar sweetened beverages prices grew by 3% whereas substitute prices gradually dropped. The following quarters saw overall growth of SSB prices increase to 5.9% while substitute prices dropped by 1%. Alvarado et al (2017) implied that further analysis on a longer time frame was needed to see the full extent following the sugar tax implementation along with additional sources to assess the growth and decline of SSB and substitute products prices.

Research undertaken by Lal et al (2017) was undertaken to gain understanding of the potential health benefits, from the introduction of a sugar-sweetened beverage tax in Australia, modelled on the successful SSB tax in Mexico. This research examined the potential cost-effectiveness, as well as the possible impact on health and finance, following the introduction of a 20% SSB tax. The study involved a two groupings model that predicted the effect of a 20% sugar sweetened beverage tax on life expectancy and health-adjusted life in Australia. The data used in this study from 2010 a year before the tax was introduced in Australia and followed the outcomes after the implementation of the SSB tax until 2016. The model concluded that the biggest health gains would affect the two lowest social classes, resulting in the highest healthcare savings generated from these social classes.

Lal et al (2017) estimated that purchasing of SSB products would be on average $5 less, for the lower social class group compared to the highest social class group. Findings concluded that a 20% SSB tax in Australia is likely to result in a gradual decrease in sugar sweetened beverage sales, leading to improved health and gradual savings on healthcare expenditure. Furthermore, this tax would generate revenue, which the government could reinvest to further develop the health of the lower social classes.

Briggs et al (2013) looked at the possible outcomes that may arise from a 10% tax on sugar-sweetened beverages in Ireland. This research was

undertaken prior to the initialisation of the sugar tax policy on sugar-sweetened beverages. The research suggested that a tax on sugary beverages in Ireland would be the first step in the right direction in tackling the childhood obesity problem. They suggested that although this tax policy would affect the entire population, from a health perspective, the tax would have the greatest impact on the younger population, who are the leading consumers of SSBs in Ireland.

An investigation carried out by the Department of Health (2016) looked at the potential outcomes and recommendations arising out of the introduction of a sugar taxation policy. The Department of Health (DOH) envisioned a desired outcome, of a reduction in consumption of SSB's, and a greater emphasis on drinking healthier beverages. The DOH also sought to reduce sugar levels, in soft drinks sold in Ireland. The study recommended reinvestment of potential income, into schemes that aimed to encourage healthy lifestyles. Shannon (2019) stated that the Irish sugar tax has generated €16.5 million in taxes, since its introduction in May 2018.

As previously discussed, the research conducted the implications from introducing a tax on sugar-sweetened beverages could be beneficial to children's obesity levels in Ireland. However, this tax has positive implications for children nutritional habits; it is unknown how much of an impact it could have in the long term. Finn (2018) estimated that the Irish Government will generate approximately €27 million in taxes, within one year of the sugar tax policy being implemented. They stated that if the outcome of the introduction of this tax has a similar impact as Mexico, Hungary and France, then all parties involved would benefit. Hospitality Ireland (2018) found that 76% of soft drink beverages sold in Ireland are not liable for the Irish sugar tax, as over the previous decade, they have voluntarily reduced their sugar content, and therefore no production changes were needed for their products. Furthermore, this investigation found that the majority of drinks that were affected by the introduction of the sugar tax, were part of the Coca Cola franchise, the

largest soft drink supplier in Ireland. Woods (2018) highlighted that the tax would have the most profound effect on Coca Cola products, as they would need to change product size and increase the price of some products to minimise the resultant damage of the Irish sugar tax implementation.

Diabetes Ireland (2018) outlined that over the last 40 years has seen obesity among children and adolescence increase dramatically. They stated, that although the tax would benefit the reduction of obesity in Ireland, it could have negative implications for the price of insulin and diabetes medication, which may increase as a knock on effect of the sugar tax. They believe measures should be in place to protect diabetics requiring insulin, such as the possibility of a tax refund.

Walton et al (2014) analysed the Irish Universities Nutrition Alliance survey, to gauge the current health of the nation. This paper found that the average Irish person's mean body weight was increasing at a faster rate to the average person's BMI. Results showed that dietary patterns among Irish children, were changing during adolescence, from a less energy dense diet in primary schools, to a more energy dense diet

Research conducted by the Central Statistics Office (2015) into the well-being of the Irish population, and primarily Irish children, found that 53% of the Irish population are overweight or obese.

The HSE (2017) Childhood Obesity Surveillance Initiative (COSI), found that obesity figures in children under the age of 8, have decreased from 21.6% in 2008 to 16.9% in 2015. The COSI report suggested that dietary changes contributed to the decrease in obesity, amongst younger children. Findings from Walton et al (2014) and HSE (2017) indicate, that progress had already been made, prior to the introduction of the sugar tax in Ireland, and although, younger children are presenting with reduced obesity figures, the growing influence of sugar products in

adolescent's diets, has led to in the implementation of the Irish sugar sweetened beverage tax.

Summary and Recommendations/Next Steps

Current literature on the dietary habits of Irish children indicates that sugar consumption is increasingly prevalent in the diet of Irish children. Sugar intake amongst children has continued to increase, to the point that serious health issue have developed in Ireland. Evidence suggests that sugar acts as an energy source, and that the home environment plays a significant role in the dietary habits of children as they develop. Irish children have become creatures of habit, and struggle to adapt to the nutritional needs of their bodies, resulting in increased childhood obesity levels, and ultimately the need for a sugar tax policy.

Similar taxation policies, which were introduced in other countries, have had an immediate effect on the fight against obesity. All of these countries have reported weight loss since the introduction of the tax, and others have seen sales of sugar-sweetened beverage fall, as healthier options have become more available. The introduction of a tax on sugar-sweetened beverages has contributed to better health, increased government earnings and reduced risk of children being affected by diseases such as obesity and diabetes. These countries have found that introducing a tax policy on sugar products, has led to escalating prices for the sugar-sweetened products, which has acted as a deterrent for the easily influenced younger generation.

Significant findings were identified, following the investigation of the potential impact of sugar taxation on Irish schoolchildren's sugar consumption and health. The Irish SSD tax was brought introduced as a deterrent for the entire population, however, it is evident that the biggest consumers of sugar-sweetened products are children. Ideally, the outcome of the new tax policy, from a health prospective, would be a reduction in sugar consumption and improved sales of healthier options. Although this tax is a step in the right direction, research suggests that it

only impacts a small percentage of the market, as the majority of the brands have reduced the sugar content of their products prior to the introduction of the tax. The Irish Government will gain financially, and the Irish population should benefit from the reinvestment of the tax income, into healthy lifestyle schemes, which can continue to help the fight against obesity and diabetes in Ireland.

As a result of the research undertaken for this literature review, it would appear that as yet, there has been little or no research into the effect of the Irish sugar taxation policy on Irish school children following the introduction of the SSD tax. Further investigation is also needed into the correlation between sugar intake and parental influence, and how best to approach future childrens' health campaigns.

Finally, looking at Ireland's new sugar taxation policy and its potential impact on children's sugar consumption and obesity figures, is imperative to the reduction of obesity levels and improving the health of the Irish population, in particular the health and wellbeing of Irish children. Further measures will need to be put in place to continue the progress started by this sugar taxation policy.

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The Potential of M-commerce for Irish Grocery Retailers

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 Abstract

The purpose of this project is to further investigate the phenomenon of mobile commerce, m-commerce, and to explore its potential for Irish grocery retailers. It will investigate the increasing popularity of m-commerce grocery shopping, the potential benefits it offers retailers and, the challenges they may encounter when implementing m-commerce. Furthermore, this project will explore consumer perceptions of m-commerce grocery shopping and Irish consumers' willingness to purchase groceries via their smartphone. A review of published literature and industry reports shows that online grocery shopping is a growing global phenomenon with increasing consumers making the transition from purchasing in store to purchasing from their smartphones. M-commerce offers the advantages of saving time, convenience, unlimited trading hours, and extended geographical reach. However, it also creates inventory management issues, technology issues including developing an app that can be used easily by all, many consumers enjoy the social aspect of shopping, and some may be concerned about security risks when purchasing online.

Keywords: M-commerce, grocery retail, smartphones

Introduction

There has been a significant increase in mobile browsing and purchasing in Ireland. Ninety-three percent of people now own a smartphone (Deloitte, 2018) and there has been a forty-six percent increase in consumers using their smartphones to browse for purchases from January 2017 to January 2018 (StatCounter, 2019; Ring, 2018). It was also found that there is a six percent increase year on year of consumers converting from browsing through products via their smartphones to making purchases. According to a report (PwC 2018) twenty-five percent of Irish consumers shop online weekly and interestingly this figure increases to thirty-eight percent for consumers aged twenty-five to thirty-four. However, Irish grocery retailers have been slow to develop mobile commerce, or m-commerce, options for customers.

Research by Berry (2018) argues that online grocery sales are currently only two percent of total spend which may indicate that consumers prefer to shop in store and purchasing groceries via smartphones may not appeal to them. The main competitors in the Irish grocery retail sector are Dunnes Stores, Supervalu, Tesco, Aldi and Lidl (Kantar-Worldpanel, 2019) but only Tesco and Supervalu have invested in m-commerce so far developing smartphone apps for consumers to purchase groceries online. Lidl have recently partnered with an Irish delivery app buymie to provide a smartphone grocery shopping service in Dublin city. Whilst Irish retailers have been slow to respond to the potential of m-commerce the international trend is predicted to experience combined growth of $227bn, at an annual rate of twenty percent, by 2023 (IGD, 2018). Online grocery shopping is increasing in popularity globally and it may be only a matter of time before Irish consumers start purchasing groceries from their smartphones.

The purpose of this project is to further investigate the phenomenon of m-commerce and to explore its potential for Irish grocery retailers. It will investigate the increasing popularity of m-commerce grocery shopping, the potential benefits it offers retailers and, the challenges they may encounter when implementing m-commerce. Furthermore, this project will explore consumer perceptions of m-commerce grocery shopping and Irish consumers' willingness to purchase groceries via their smartphone.

Literature Review

According to Keh and Shieh (2001), online grocery shopping is becoming a global phenomenon with increasing numbers of consumers making the transition from purchasing in store to purchasing online. This global phenomenon has resulted in leading grocery retailers such as Walmart, Tesco and Costco introducing online platforms as additional purchasing channels to capture new sales opportunities. The global growth in online grocery shopping is partly driven by the increasing popularity of smartphone grocery purchasing. As discussed by Jen-HuiWang et al. (2015) the increasing trend of smartphone purchasing is a result of consumers acquiring and becoming more accustomed to using smartphones. "Smartphones present significant m-commerce opportunities for all organisations, but such potential has yet to be realised" (Duane et al. 2011, p.1). Schierz et al. (2010) suggests that growth forecasts for m-commerce are positive and retailers should use this to their advantage. According to a survey conducted by Deloitte (2018), ninety-three percent of people in Ireland now own a smartphone. Furthermore, a report found (PwC 2017) that thirty percent of participants stated that their smartphone will be their main shopping tool in the future. Ring (2018) highlighted that there was a forty-six percent increase of Irish consumers using their smartphones to browse for purchases from January 2017 to January 2018. Furthermore, it was also found that there is a six percent increase year on year of consumers converting from browsing through products to making purchases via their smartphones. Interestingly, Pantano and Priporas (2016) argue that

consumers are beginning to make the transition from purchasing via e-commerce to m-commerce. Irish consumers are becoming more accustomed to purchasing from their smartphones. This may present a significant opportunity for Irish grocery retailers to increase revenues and market share if they have implemented m-commerce as a purchasing channel.

If Irish grocery retailers wish to remain competitive in the future, they may have to make investments in m-commerce. Seitz et al. (2017) argues that this is a way to retain and gain customers. According to Percival (2018), the Irish grocery market experienced growth of three percent in 2018 and Retail Ireland (2018) forecast further growth of two percent in 2019. This is attractive market conditions for new entrants such as Amazon Fresh, which is an international online grocery store. According to Melton (2018), Amazons grocery business is booming with year on year growth of fifty-nine percent ($2bn) in the US market, fifty-four percent ($245m) in the German market and fifty-six percent ($209m) in the UK market. Amazons strong sales performance puts them in a strategic position to expand into the Irish grocery market.

Mobile purchasing platforms can provide great opportunities for Irish grocery retailers to improve their existing business. For example, Marcia et al. (2018) suggests that online grocery retailers have the advantage of unlimited trading hours and extended geographical reach compared to the traditional brick and mortar retailer. Furthermore, online grocery retailers can provide enhanced customer service, establish faster transactions and shorten product cycles. According to Jen-HuiWang et al. (2015) retailers receive more than fifty percent of online traffic from smartphones. Interestingly, Jen-HuiWang et al. (2015) suggests once consumers develop a habit for mobile purchasing their order sizes increase and they place orders more frequently. Furthermore, smartphones provide convenience and easy access, which can cause increased spending. As discussed by Pantano and Priporas (2016) mobile purchasing can also benefit the consumer as it offers its own personal experience for the

consumer and has advantages such as avoiding queues in stores. Smartphones have the advantage of providing consumers with convenience, ease of access and a more personal, immediate shopping experience. According to a report (PwC 2019) twenty-four percent of consumers purchased online weekly or more often in 2017, interestingly, this figure increased to thirty percent in 2018. Therefore, trends suggest that m-commerce will continue to grow, and Irish grocery retailers should consider investing in m-commerce as it is becoming prevalent and could provide opportunities to retailers such as increased revenues and market share.

However, Marcia et al. (2018) discussed several challenges that retailers can encounter when implementing m-commerce into their existing business model such as balancing supply and demand, managing inventory and managing roles and responsibilities. In terms of managing inventory, specific challenges may include availability of products and dependence on other departments. Grocery retailers must keep inventory levels low to moderate due to the nature of the product and its short shelf life. The unpredictability of online shopping exposes the retailer to a situation where online orders exceed their existing inventory levels. Furthermore, online grocery retailers must also coordinate its operations across departments, which can add layers of complexity. For example, online operations must coordinate with in-store operations to ensure availability of products. In terms of managing roles and responsibilities, online grocers need to ensure they have competent staff to deal with online operations as it can be more complex than traditional retailing. Regarding the need to balance supply and demand online, grocers can face logistical challenges. For example, if online grocers want to remain competitive, they must provide a reliable and on time delivery service. Pressure from consumers and competitors has forced some online grocers to provide one-hour delivery slots. As discussed by Liu (2018), Amazon Fresh provide their customers with various delivery options such as same day, next day, doorstep delivery and attended delivery. Doorstep delivery

is a three-hour delivery slot that does not require the customer's presence to accept their delivery and attended delivery is a one-hour delivery slot, which requires the customer's presence to accept their delivery. Amazon Fresh could potentially enter the Irish grocery market offering this level of service; this could cause significant disruption and negatively impact existing grocery retailers in Ireland. Therefore, Irish grocery retailers should consider investing in m-commerce before a competitor like Amazon Fresh enters the Irish market.

If online grocers wish to remain competitive, they must constantly improve their operations and shopping experience to satisfy consumer needs and wants. Chua and Yoo (2018) suggests that consumers value the browsing experience when purchasing groceries online. Consumers may not value the browsing experience when purchasing standardized items such electronics and books as they are usually seldom, low quantity purchases. However, in the case of groceries, consumers could be purchasing multiple items such as bread and milk regularly. Therefore, Chua and Yoo (2018) argue that consumers will value a purchasing platform that is easy to use and allows them find and purchase items effortlessly. Chua and Yoo (2018) suggest that online grocers should sacrifice variety to ensure freshness. Although consumers prefer a wide product selection it is difficult for online grocers to offer this due to the short shelf life of perishables such as fruit, vegetables and fresh meat. Therefore, it is recommended for online grocers to offer minimum variety and focus on high product turnover to ensure freshness and keep inventory loss minimal. Furthermore, Chua and Yoo (2018) suggest that online grocers need to assure consumers what you see online is what you get. Consumers cannot physically see, smell or touch the product and they may receive a product that did not meet their expectations of what they viewed online. This can cause customer dissatisfaction which could result in loosing that customer, therefore, it is essential for online grocers to deliver products that meet expectations. "Very few retailers get their

online grocery model right, but when they do, it can be very successful" (Kruh 2017, p.6).

As discussed by Seitz et al. (2017), consumers can take different perspectives to grocery shopping, some perceive it as a stressful everyday task, and therefore smartphone grocery shopping may be an attractive option for this type of consumer. Irish grocery retailers could capture some of the value from these consumers if they have invested in m-commerce. Seitz et al. (2017) suggests that the increasing popularity of smartphone grocery shopping is partly due to the convenience it offers consumers compared to conventional shopping. Furthermore, Ramus and Asger Nielsen (2005) suggests that online grocery stores may also offer a larger product range at lower prices, this can be achieved as they have lower operating costs in comparison to traditional brick and mortar stores. Seitz et al. (2017) suggests that m-commerce can benefit the elderly, some elderly people may be physically impaired or have reduced mobility. If Irish grocery retailers develop m-commerce in line with delivery options, they could help serve this segment. Furthermore, busy parents, young professionals and consumers who simply dislike grocery shopping could benefit from smartphone grocery shopping as it saves time and the hassle of going to the store. Moreover, groceries delivered to their doorstep would be a relief as it would abolish the burden of carrying heavy groceries home from the supermarket.

In contrast, Seitz et al. (2017) discussed that some consumers perceive grocery shopping as an enjoyable experience and mobile purchasing may not appeal to them as they prefer the in-store experience. Ramus and Asger Nielsen (2005) suggests that online grocery shopping can be considered less fun and exciting than the conventional trip to the supermarket. Furthermore, online grocery shopping lacks the social aspect, some consumers like going to the grocery store as it is part of their social life. Smartphone grocery shopping can also lack customer service, for example, consumers may have questions about a product or if they are not satisfied with the quality of a product, they may want to return it.

Ramus and Asger Nielsen (2005) highlighted a common complaint by consumers which was the trouble they had to go through if, for some reason, had to complain about a product or return it. Seitz et al. (2017) suggests that some consumers enjoy going to the grocery store as it is an experience and they like to see, smell and touch the groceries before they buy them. Smartphone grocery shopping certainly lacks that aspect, consumers cannot physically see and smell the freshness and quality of the fruit, vegetables, bread and meat they purchase. Seitz et al. (2017) highlights that when purchasing online consumers cannot pick the products themselves, it is the retailer's decision and consumers may not be happy with their decision. Furthermore, consumers are concerned about grocery shopping online as there is a lack of control and issues may arise such as poor product quality, unsatisfactory delivery conditions and negative user experience. Lack of trust was also an issue when purchasing grocery's via smartphones. Seitz et al. (2017) stated that the size of the retailer and gaining consumers trust are important factors for successful online grocery shopping. Furthermore, Ramus and Asger Nielsen (2005) argues that to be successful, online grocery retailers will have to build-up consumer's general trust in their business before they can safely reveal their credit card details.

If Irish grocery retailers adopt m-commerce into their existing business models they must ensure a willingness from the Irish consumer to make purchases from their smartphones. Duane et al. (2011) argues that consumers may be reluctant to make purchases via their smartphones due to security risks. Chau et al. (2007) highlighted that consumer trust has a significant impact on their decision to purchase a product from a retailer's website. Therefore, it is essential for online grocers to build up trust with their customer base. Gefen (2002) identified competence, integrity and benevolence as key characteristics that online grocers require to gain consumer trust. Gefen et al. (2002) defines benevolence as the retailer's commitment to act fairly, competence as the expectation of technically competent role performance and integrity as the assurance that the

retailer will keep promises. Furthermore, Cheung and Lee (2003) highlighted perceived integrity, perceived competence, perceived security control, and perceived privacy control as four key characteristics specific to online retailers. Irish grocers may have to implement practices that support these key characteristics. In the context of benevolence, Irish grocers should act fairly through each step of their supply chain. In terms of competence, Irish grocers must implement effective and efficient procedures to satisfy the needs and wants of consumers, user friendly m-commerce platforms can support this. In the case of integrity, security and privacy, Irish grocers should assure consumers that it is safe to purchase from their website and keep this promise by ensuring sensitive data such as credit card details are safe.

According to a recent report (PwC 2019) one in five Irish consumers are shopping via smartphones weekly or more frequently, this figure has doubled since 2017. Furthermore, fourteen percent of Irish consumers purchased groceries online in the last twelve months. Interestingly, groceries were the third most purchased item online during this period. Clothing and footwear were second at eighteen percent and books, music, movies and video games were first at twenty-six percent. This data may suggest that Irish consumers are willing to purchase groceries from their smartphones. According to a report (PwC 2019) smartphones are now a fundamental online platform to drive growth, adopting a mobile first strategy is critical as consumers are choosing smartphones as a key shopping platform. Therefore, retailers who excel at implementing m-commerce are the most likely to succeed.

Van Droogenbroeck and Van Hove (2017) applied a motivation, opportunity and ability model to better understand consumer willingness in the adoption of online grocery shopping. Motivation can be defined as the consumer's desire to purchases groceries online due to the perceived benefits. Picot Coupey et al. (2009) identified convenience, time saving and flexibility as benefits of online grocery shopping. Consumers can purchase groceries from the comfort of their homes whenever it suits

them. Opportunity can be defined as consumers not being limited by technical issues such as poor internet connection. According to the CSO (2018), eighty-nine percent of Irish households have access to internet at home. Fixed broadband is the most common type of internet access at eighty-two percent and mobile broadband is fifty-two percent. Therefore, most Irish consumers have the opportunity to purchase groceries from their smartphones. Ability refers to the consumer's capability to purchase groceries from their smartphone. A survey conducted Deloitte (2018), revealed ninety-three percent of Irish consumers own or have access to a smartphone. However, this does not necessarily mean that all individuals observed have the ability to purchase groceries online. Particularly the older generation as smartphones can be difficult for them to use. However, a report (Statista 2017) shows that there was a forty-two percent increase in smartphone users in Ireland fifty-five years of age or older between 2012 and 2017. This data may suggest that elderly people are acquiring and becoming more accustomed to using smartphones.

Irish grocery retailers need to understand the shopping behaviour and profile of online grocery shoppers to successfully implement m-commerce as an additional purchasing channel. Several studies were conducted to define the profile of online grocery shoppers. "There have been indications that Internet consumers earn more money than non-Internet shoppers and are less risk averse, and more innovative and impulsive" (Hanus 2016, p.11). It is well documented (Corbett; Raijas; Morganosky and Cude; Verhoef and Langerak) that online grocery shoppers are typically mothers, less than 45 years old and university graduates with time-consuming jobs. Both Hansen (2005) and Teller et al. (2006) suggest that grocery shopping appeals to this type of consumer due to the convenience and time saving it offers. Childers et al. (2001) suggest the convenience perceived by consumers is the flexibility to shop when and where they want and the avoidance of the physical effort of going to the store and standing in line. Irish consumers may be reluctant to purchase certain groceries online such as fruit, vegetables and fresh

meat, however, Picot Coupey et al. (2009) suggest that the shopping baskets of online grocery shoppers contain all product categories. Furthermore, Morganosky and Cude (2002) argue that consumers purchase all product categories as time goes by. This may suggest that Irish consumers will purchase everything from tinned food to fresh and frozen food as they become accustomed to purchasing groceries online.

According to Kelly (2019) Lidl have recently launched an online shopping service in Dublin city. The supermarket chain has teamed up with Irish delivery app Buymie to provide this service. Consumers interact with Buymie in a similar way to Deliveroo, the shopping list is sent to a personal shopper who will then go to Lidl and pick up the consumers items. This is a strategic move by Lidl to use m-commerce to their advantage with the aim of increasing revenues and market share. Irish grocery retailers such as Tesco and SuperValu could soon make similar strategic moves by improving their existing m-commerce platforms to remain competitive through this purchasing channel. Furthermore, Aldi and Dunnes may also recognize the potential of m-commerce and make investments in this purchasing channel. However, it is worth noting that Irish consumers prefer to shop in store and Irish grocery retailers shouldn't invest in m-commerce at the expense of the in-store experience. According to a survey conducted by PwC (2018), the store remains the most important shopping channel for consumers with seventy-three percent of Irish consumers shopping in-store monthly or more frequently. Furthermore, McMahon (2018) suggests that Ireland may not be an attractive option for online grocers due to the low population. Therefore, to achieve a return on investment, Irish grocers should consider the costs of implementing m-commerce into their existing business and determine what profits would be attained from m-commerce.

Conclusion

Keh and Shieh (2001) suggest that online grocery shopping is becoming a global phenomenon with increasing consumers making the transition from purchasing in store to purchasing from their smartphones. Consumers are acquiring and becoming more accustomed to purchasing from their smartphones. Irish grocers need to recognize this change and consider the potential of m-commerce as an additional purchasing channel. Hansen (2005) and Teller et al. (2006) suggests that consumers such as busy mothers and young professionals' value smartphone grocery shopping due to the time saving and convenience it offers. Mobile purchasing eliminates the burden of physically going to the store and standing in line. Irish grocery retailers could capture value from this type of consumer if they have implemented m-commerce as a purchasing channel. M-commerce could also benefit Irish grocery retailers, Marcia et al. (2018) highlighted that Irish grocers could have the advantage of unlimited trading hours and extended geographical reach, this may result in higher revenues and market share. However, Marcia et al. (2018) identified challenges that Irish grocery retailers could encounter in the adoption and development of m-commerce such as balancing supply and demand, managing inventory, and managing roles and responsibilities. Furthermore, Irish grocers must constantly improve the shopping experience to satisfy consumer needs and wants. Groceries are often bought weekly or more frequently, therefore, consumers place high value on the browsing experience and want a smartphone app that allows them to browse and purchase items effortlessly.

Irish grocery retailers must also be aware that mobile purchasing does not appeal to every consumer. Seitz et al. (2017) argues that some consumers perceive grocery shopping as an enjoyable task that is part of their social life. This type of consumer likes to physically go to the store to see, smell and touch the ripeness and quality of the products before they purchase them. Duane et al. (2011) suggest that Irish consumers may also be reluctant to purchase via their smartphones due to security risks.

Therefore, Irish grocers must assure their customers that sensitive data such as credit card details are safe when purchasing via their smartphone apps. As discussed by Van Droogenbroeck and Van Hove (2017), Irish consumers must also have the motivation, opportunity and ability to purchase via their smartphones. According to a report (PwC 2019) Irish consumers are showing a willingness to purchase groceries from their smartphones. However, these surveys do not provide enough of an insight into the online grocery market prospects in Ireland. Therefore, further research is recommended to specifically measure the demand for online grocery retailing in Ireland.

Grocery retailers such as Lidl have recently recognized the potential of m-commerce which has resulted in a partnership with Buymie to provide a smartphone shopping service in Dublin city. This is a result of the increasing popularity of smartphone grocery shopping and services like this may expand across the country. The UK are the fourth largest online grocery market in the world with Amazon Fresh being one of the main players in the market. The Irish grocery market is growing and Amazon Fresh may recognize it as an attractive option for expansion. Irish grocers may have to develop m-commerce before a major online grocer like Amazon Fresh enter the Irish market or suffer the consequences of decreased revenues and market share. However, m-commerce may not be worth the expense as Irish consumers still prefer the in-store experience. M-commerce may cost Irish retailers more than it's worth due to economies of scale. Ireland has a much lower population compared to the UK; therefore, Irish grocers may not achieve the same return on investment as their UK counterparts. More research needs to be conducted to determine would retailers achieve a return on investment. Using third party services like Buymie may be the best option until further research is conducted.

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An exploration of the applications of wearable technology in the workplace

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Abstract
This purpose of this research project is to examine the phenomenon of wearable technology and explore its applications in the workplace. The project seeks to understand the impact of wearable technology on productivity and how it is incorporated into businesses today. It will reveal some of the underlying reasons as to why employees are reluctant to utilise wearable technology and how employers can overcome this, and present insights into the possible direction and future of wearable technology in the workplace.

Introduction

Wearable technology or 'wearables' is a term used for electronic devices worn on the body by individuals. (Kenton, 2017) These devices present themselves in various sizes in forms of glasses, watches, bracelets, headpieces or items of clothing. Wearing these devices can track various activities for an individual such as; sleep, movement, location, blood pressure or time spent on tasks. (Johnson et al, 2014) The personal data is transmitted to computers or smartphone devices, which is translated by software applications to provide feedback to the user. (Arnow, 2017)

The purpose of this research topic is to examine the phenomenon of wearable technology and explore its application in the workplace. It seeks to understand the impact of wearable technology on productivity and how it is incorporated into businesses today. This research topic reveals some of the underlying reasons as to why employees are reluctant to utilize wearable technology and how employers can overcome this. It will give readers a new insight into the possible direction and future of wearable technology in the workplace. It is expressed by Springbuk research that 35% of employers have already introduced wearables in the workplace as technology is seen as the future for business. (Mittag, 2018)

The purpose of this research topic is to examine;

Is there is an increase in productivity using wearables in the workplace?

Does this phenomenon cause employees to experience the 'big brother effect'? Will employees accept new technology in their work life?

What industries are likely to use wearables in business today?

How can businesses implement to gain benefits and ensure employee retention?

What is the predicted outlook of wearables?

I believe this research topic is important as wearables are the future for business growth. As indicated from a survey conducted on the manufacturing industry, suggesting 550 global enterprises plan to introduce this technology by 2022. Employers are now noticing the potential benefits of wearables to achieve strategic competitiveness and optimize productivity. This research is useful as it aims to give readers an insight into the benefits of using wearables in the workplace. (Schatsky, Kumar, 2018) The research will help to understand employee's acceptance of wearable devices and how they can be implemented by employers effectively in the future. As it is a relevantly new phenomenon, there is an important need for more research.

Methodology

An interpretive view will be taken to effectively answer this research topic. This will mean observing an organisation from a human resource management perspective. To interpret feelings, perceptions, and experiences to understand employee's reality of using wearable technology in the workplace. To explore this phenomenon, an inductive approach will be necessary, consisting of collecting data from of employee's experiences and views of wearable technology.

The methodological choice pursed will consist of qualitative research, as it is influenced by the interpretive inductive approach. This is suitable as a qualitative approach is not looking for the absolute truth, but to understand the impacts of wearables from within an organisational context. As a result, a multi-method qualitative study will be used to collect data and analyze using two qualitative techniques.

The purpose of this research design is to conduct an exploratory study on the phenomenon of wearables, to understand the impacts when applied in a workplace. To achieve these goals, I identified a suitable research strategy Critical Ethnography, to explore the impact of wearables within an organisation. Accordingly, it is intended to undertake employee

observation to collect data with interviews to follow up. (Saunders et al, 2016)

Literature Review

It is expressed by Statista (2018) that the first wearable device to gain global success was Pulsar's Calculator Wristwatch in the 1970s. In recent years there has been a considerable amount of advancements in the wearable technology market, which is expected to increase in the coming future. Attention was based on personal use and, health and fitness such as; Fitbit, GoPro and Google Glass. Up to the end of 2016, Fitbit was the market leader but due to the increase in popularity, more companies decided to invest in the wearable technology market.

However, wearable technology is not limited to personal and health use, employers in a variety of industries are now becoming part of the rising trend of wearable technology. Employers are now recognizing the benefits of wearables, which is becoming a new trend for business purposes. These monitoring devices are worn on an individual's body which can assist employees in completing various tasks. (hrspecialist, 2017) Globally companies are exploring the use of devices and how they can revolutionize the workplace. (Johnson et al, 2014) It is estimated by Deloitte Insights, that wearables are expected to increase globally by 60 billion dollars in 2022. (Schatsky, Kumar, 2018) The purpose of this literature review is to explore wearables concerning productivity, big brother effect, wearables in business today, implementation and predicted future.

Productivity

There are many benefits from the use of wearables in the workplace, for this research topic the emphasis is placed on productivity benefits achieved. The USG Corporation + U.S Chamber of Commerce Commercial Construction Index Report indicated that 66% of contractors surveyed revealed that improved labor productivity is seen as the top

reason to invest in emerging new technologies. Similarly, it was reported that contractors viewed wearable technology as 36% responsible for improving productivity in their industry. (Donohue, 2018)

Figures show since introducing tracking armbands into Tesco warehouses from 2007, the number of employees needed has dropped by 18% due to improvements in efficiency and productivity, according to Wilson (2013). However, an article for the Independent outlines a former employee claim, for which it was suggested that emphasis was based on unrealistic targets rather than quality, with a marking scheme based on efficiently to improve performance. (Rawlinson, 2013). DeBree (2017) research acknowledges wearables for offering benefits in the area of manufacturing, felid service workers and health. The article states that Google Glass contributed to productivity for workers regarding maintenance, problem-solving and gives instant access to data.

Manufacturing company AGCO, have been using Google Glass since 2017, as shown by Shamma (2017). AGCO director indicates since using the devices, they have been a game changer for better productivity by improving quality and allowing employees to work smarter, faster and safer. Which allows us to infer that some factories are applying this technology approach and direction globally to improve their productivity, including companies such as Boeing, Tesla, GE, and DHL.

Further research by HR Specialists (2016), concluded that workers using wearable devices are 8.5% more productive and generally 3.5% more satisfied with their jobs. This is evident at Amazon, as workers desire wearable GPS technology wristbands within large warehouses to efficiently achieve the fastest route to find products without interrupting workflow. However, Jacobs et al. (2019) survey reveals employee's willingness to use wearables in the workplace for the use of tracking information to improve productivity, received the lowest acceptance reason.

Employers need to provide employees with cutting edge technology such as wearables, to revolutionize the workplace, according to Forester's report 'The Technology-Augmented Employees' In which it suggests, employee's productivity can increase by 76% if there is a use of wearables in the workplace. (Loh, 2018)

It is evident the recent trend of wearables has increased globally for productivity benefits. Emphasis is based on increasing users' productivity by accessing information, tracking activities, collecting data, monitoring health and for communication, as suggested by Sinha and Gupta (2018).

Big Brother Effect

Although, employers are having difficulties to overcome the 'big brother' reaction, as employees lack the trust and confidence of their employers regarding privacy. Research conducted by PwC in 2016, revealed of those employees surveyed, only 46% would accept a free device offered by their employer, as they are considered 'spy tools'. (Maslakovic, 2016)

Souter (2018) reveals employee's acceptance of wearables will be difficult to achieve due to the 'big brother effect' where employees feel their movements are being monitored. In which it is implied, without transparency and effective training, it could have an impact on employee morale and productivity.

It is believed monitoring in the workplace is nothing new as employers have measured the behavior and output of employees throughout history, according to Parmenter (2017). The author explains management has been tracking employees to improve productivity since Fredericks Taylor's concept of Scientific Management. But, implies since the rapid expansion of wearable technology, it has not been accepted and normalized into existing social structures. As a result, wearables have caused employees to feel uncomfortable regarding monitoring. The author indicates this is due to employees feeling discriminated against based on their health data.

The Independent newspaper identifies Tesco as being accused of using wearables to intensely to monitor their staff. Employees using wearables within a Tesco warehouse found monitoring was intense and put staff under pressure, as they were brought upon management if unscheduled toilet breaks were taken. (Rawlinson, 2013)

Amazon has recently identified an opportunity to introduce AR Goggles to improve performance and inventory systems within their large warehouse, according to Palmer (2018). However, there have been concerns from employees and the public, regarding monitoring performance too intensely. As the device collects detailed information and monitors employees throughout the day, it could impact on employee stress, work morale, work culture and strain employment relationships.

Burjek (2018) identifies further research in 2018, with a survey by the HR Metrics & Analytics Summit. In which it was found that 57% of employees find wearables unacceptable for the use of monitoring physical movements in the workplace. Particularly, many employees feel uncomfortable organisations have an opportunity to take advantage of surveillance technology. It was indicated that 48% of employees are worried their data will be at risk, due to their employer not sufficiently protecting their data. The author states that contextual factors contribute to how employees react to monitoring. For instance, monitoring may hinder the ability of a job which requires creativity and flexibility. Therefore, it will have an opposite effect in the context of a non-complex job, as it is likely an individual could find monitoring helpful.

Jacobs et al. (2019) researched employees' acceptance of wearables in the workplace. The results discovered employees working in the area of construction were more willing to use wearables for surveillance purposes, compared to service/office jobs functions. Consequently, workplace safety received the highest acceptance reason from those surveyed. However, it is indicated that 40% of participants that received

an incentive, 57% of those expressed that an incentive affected their willingness to use wearables in the workplace.

Thus, to improve employee acceptance, emphasis could be placed on awareness of the financial and non-financial awards, as indicated by Bersin et al. (2017). In which it is suggested to reduce the impact of monitoring, financial awards could be awarded in the form of bonuses or salary increases. Employers could influence employee's perception of wearables by educating and communicating of non-financial rewards. For instance, offering employees a workplace that is safer, uncomplicated and efficient.

However, the adaption of new technology will depend on the perception of the user of that technology, according to Saleem et al. (2017). In which the author implies the benefits of wearables will not be accepted by employees unless they trust the technology.

Wearables in Business Today

Businesses are now considering wearable technology such as Nike+, Fitbit, Apple smartwatch, smart textiles, exoskeletons, and smart glasses to improve health, productivity and safety in the workplace. The demand has risen within industries of healthcare, distribution, transportation, manufacturing, and construction. (Hender, 2017)

In the view of Donohue (2018), technology is rapidly changing our economy today, which is seen as an opportunity for businesses. Although, many individuals lack the skills and qualities needed for 21st-century jobs. The author identified research by the USG Corporation + U.S Chamber of Commerce Commercial Construction Index Report in which it expressed the highest issue reported in 2018 indicated that of those contractors surveyed, 58% reported difficulties finding skilled workers. In which it is suggested to address this challenge, businesses must leverage and adapt technology.

The importance of wearables is being considered by many industries as a crucial aspect to address 21st century needs, as raised by Mardonova, Choi (2018). The authors identified industry-specific needs of wearables. Particularly in the mining industry, as wearables have the potential to address safety issues, occupational health, and communication on sites. Therefore, the mining community believes their industry could benefit from wearables in terms of increasing efficiency and production.

Wilson (2013) argues towards wearable technology becoming the 21st version of Frederick Taylor's concept in business today. The article explains the relationship between monitoring sports performance using wearables and the use of monitoring to improve workplace performance. In which the term 'physiolytics' is used for emerging concepts in recent years, linked with wearable technology data analysis and quantified feedback to improve performance. The author believes 'physiolytics' is increasing within factories and offices, representing an improved evolved version of Taylor's concept. The author uses the example of a Tesco distribution center, which uses wearables to improve efficiency and effectiveness for employees within a 40,000-square- foot store, 10 miles of shelving and 111 loading bays.

Many industries today are taking advantage of different opportunities gained from using wearables in the workplace. This is evident as Fitbit, known for the personal health and fitness industry, is now supplying their devices to employers, as indicated by Parmenter (2017). In which it is suggested since 2016, multinational companies offered fitness trackers to their staff to gain workplace benefits. Such as; BP, Bank of America, IBM, Time Warner, alongside 10,000 US companies.

Wearables are used in the healthcare industry by physicians as a reliable method to monitor and have easy access to patient's health, as expressed by Arnow (2017). As a result, the author purposes that monitoring patient's health data through wearables is a crucial step for an increasingly complex healthcare system. Which can be achieved through

monitoring patients physical, sleep patterns, heart rate, blood pressure, and calorie consumption.

Similarly, an upper exoskeleton is a type of wearable technology widely used for employee's health to prevent against shoulder musculoskeletal disorders. Manufacturing companies are now using exoskeletons for individuals' arms during overhead tasks for health and safety reasons, according to Butler (2016). Car company Audi is using exoskeletons for their manufacturing processes, in which they reported a 20-30% decrease in back strain for factory workers. BMW and Hyundai have invested in similar wearable devices. (Bruce, 2017)

Also, Humanyze badges are used in offices and other industries which are used as tracking badges for employees. They are wearable devices that are almost identical to normal employee ID badges but fitted with RFID and NFC sensors. (Carey, 2017)

Figures from the Occupational Health and Safety Administration from the U.S. Department of Labor reveal there are approximately 13 job-related deaths each day. Wearable technology is revolutionizing worker safety to prevent accidents. (O'Neill 2016) (HDI, 2019) For instance 'Smart Cap' monitor's fatigue of workers which is used for mining, commercial and transport. Managers can use the device to monitor brain waves of their drivers and receive real-time fatigue alerts to prevent microsleeps. (Holmes, 2018) The wearable market offers high-vis smart safety jackets fitted with GPS and alerts wearer of potential risk or hazard. Which can also measure air quality, noise levels, heart rate, and breathing. (HDI, 2019) In addition, IBM supplies wearable devices to many industries, with a focus on employee safety in extreme worker conditions e.g. excessive temperature exposure. Their devices use sensors that connect to employers' smartphones to give real-time notification to prevent workplace-related injuries, improve health and ensure workers safety is always being monitoring. (Mashkif, 2019)

Moreover, as discussed wearables are conductive in many industries such as; healthcare, distribution, manufacturing, construction and are becoming a powerful tool for employers. However, in other industries, wearables may be less desired, such as; retail, agriculture, education, entertainment or hospitality. For example, in the retail industry, there have been experiments to assist shoppers and create an improved user experience. Customers can make contactless payments by glove, wristband or sticker with wearable payment device Barclaycard, but such devices are restricted within retail. (Snelling, 2014) It is suggested the agriculture sector is seen as incapable of introducing technology into their business practices. However, there have been experiments with smart farming practices to assist farmers. (Friedman, 2015) An online survey by computer magazine PCWorld suggests that office staff don't see wearables as a useful application in the workplace. In which 19% of those surveyed feel wearables are irrelevant to their job, with 12% expressing that devices are a distraction. (O'Connor, 2015)

Collecting information on each employee can cause numerous issues. There may be separate reasoning as to the cause of industries not using wearables such as; cost, legal issues, time constraints, the accuracy of data, culture, privacy or demographics. Often employers are self-employed and do not possess the technical skills or resources needed for wearables. In addition, some industries consider wearables as being a non-current business need. (Nicastro, 2018) (Krivin et al, 2016)

Wearable technology is in the early days, as it is suggested it 'can transform' or 'has potential' for industries but is not yet widely used due to reasons discussed. But as a growing trend, we can infer that there is potential for more deployment in the future. (Elton, 2017)

Implementation

Implementation of wearables will depend on a variety of factors such as; cost, security, deployment, tech-savvy individuals, communication and training.

Those that have early exposure to technology have an increased ability adapting to wearables and more willing to use in the workplace, according to Godfrey et al. (2018). In which the authors indicate those using technology as part of their daily personal life, find it easier to rationalize when implemented in the workplace. In contrast, older generations may require continuous training and increased time to adapt. It is implied wearable technology is seen as disruptive currently, but for maturing generations, it will eventually become the norm with limited or no learning curves needed.

Employers offering wearables will gain a relativity affordable method for an effective and efficient wellness program, as raised by Mittag (2018). While assisting employers in determining the needs of their employees and optimize organisational performance. In which it is implied due to most employees already being tech-savvy, wearables are becoming more popular in the workplace and achievable to manage. As a result, employers are gaining positive results such as; productivity. But the author argues there is issues that must be observed to ensure effective implementation. For instance, to avoid putting employees at risk, security issues need careful consideration regarding regulations, data storage, and communication. Accordingly, employees adjust to technology at different levels. Therefore, this issue will require ongoing training, support, and assistance.

Palmer (2018) argues to overcome issues implementing AR Goggles at Amazon, managers are communicating that there is no malicious intent to invade employee's privacy. With intentions to ensure the devices are used to make employees happier and more productive.

But in the view of Schatsky and Kumar (2018) in which they point to the conclusion that due to emerging technologies, wearables will be implemented into business processes in the close future, regardless of employee concerns. The authors imply that 550 global manufacturing enterprises plan to introduce this technology by 2022.

Dennis (2017) suggests for employers using wearables or plan to introduce in the future, must ensure employees provided with sensitive data collection devices, are protected with strict workplace privacy rights. Subsequently, data should be stored on highly advanced storage devices to protect against malicious intent. For example, Cloud devices.

Research by DeBree (2017) reveals for employers to create and implement a positive work culture around wearables, policies should be in place that respect employee's privacy rights, gain consent and advise on how the data will be used and protected.

It is suggested that employers are at risk due to holding personal employee related information. To overcome risks, Haskins (2017) suggests before deployment employers should communicate to employees why the new technology is necessary, how it will be used and what information it collects.

Because of new technologies emerging, disruptions are likely to occur within the HR department. There is now more emphasis on the 'new world of work' towards more tech-savvy employees, according to Bersin (2017). Consequently, to remain competitive, introducing wearables will require managers to redesign and reevaluate their recruitment and selection process to find suitable candidates. Emphasis on effectively utilizing training, communication and wellness programs for existing employees to avoid employee turnover.

Furthermore, it is clear implementation will pose difficulties for businesses. It is important to address issues as it is a crucial aspect for

business today for productivity, success and to remain competitive. (Nicastro, 2018)

Future of Wearables

The wearable technology trend is gaining a small share of the mobile market, with the benefits of smaller touchscreens and consuming less power. Devices such as; Apple Watch, has the capability to access essential features that can also be achieved with a smartphone. Developers are now applying emphasis on apps for these devices as they have the potential to drastically change the future of how we interact, engage and consume technology. (Bibbiani, 2018)

The future of wearables is set to be prosperous. IDTechEX estimate sales are expected to grow in the coming years with an expected market value of $150 billion by 2027. Although further research by PwC suggests the effectiveness of wearables will decline due to difficulties for companies translating a mass amount of data collected. (O'Brien, 2018)

It is suggested that in time, wearable technology will be enhanced to offer chip implants. Biotech company 'Dangerous Things' believe the next step of human evolution is enhancing humans with chip technology. (Schulz, 2018) These advancements can be seen through the company 'Three Square Market' which allowed employees to volunteer to have RFID microchips embedded into their hands. Alternatively, chips could be inserted into a wearable bracelet or ring. The chip is the size of a grain of rice, and as of 2018 has over 80 employees using. Which consist of making purchases in the cafeteria, opening doors, storing medical information and logging into computers. (Metz, 2018) However, Gauttier (2019) argues that employees may be under pressure to use microchips due to work culture expectations. For which it is advised to conduct interviews to analyze their approval of emerging technologies.

Smart contact lenses are the most anticipated wearable technology yet to reach the market. Google began to develop the idea since 2014. Which if

successful, will have the capability to monitor glucose levels and assist those with eye problems. (Birch, 2018)

The success of wearables in the future may be hindered by the big brother effect. In addition, protecting personal data looks difficult for employers, particularly after the Facebook scandal of September 2018, where hackers gained access to user's data. (Perez, Whittaker, 2018) Furthermore, it is predicted robotics are likely to cause accelerating job losses, which could also remove the need for wearables in the future as technology advances. (Waldrop, 2018)

Conclusion

This research paper investigated the factors of wearable technology and its application in the workplace. Considering the market of wearables was focused on personal and health use, the popularity in the workplace is increasing. During this research topic, emphasis was applied on productivity in the workplace. However, wearables are not limited to achieving productivity. Employees are more likely to accept the monitoring aspect of wearables for safety purposes in the workplace rather than for productivity, as demonstrated by Jacobs et al. (2019)

There is a concern that the future of wearable may be hindered by the 'big brother effect'. However, technology is becoming a crucial aspect of business today, as discussed by Donohue (2018). It is difficult to predict if wearables will be strongly used in the workplace, but there is strong evidence to suggest it is a possible path for businesses. As this emerging technology is currently being used and is the likely future strategy for business to achieve productivity, it must be effectively implemented to avoid a big brother reaction. In the future, I believe wearables will be somewhat present in every industry for different business needs.

Recommendations arising from my research would suggest a need for more research as many issues need to be addressed. Issues such as; policies, regulations, data storage, and privacy.

For instance, Facebook is considered as a massive organisation which was not protected from third-party malicious intent. As a result, organisations cannot guarantee personal data will be safe. This may hinder an employer's implementation and employee's acceptance of wearables in the future. However, to introduce wearables, employers must make every effort to protect their employees, as raised by Dennis (2017). This could be achieved by closely following GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) rules concerning the protection of personal data.

In certain industries, employers may not have the capability and resources to store large amounts of data while protecting against malicious intent. Many smaller companies may not have IT support for each department using wearables within an organisation. For this reason, employers should address challenges such as connectivity concerns and data stored on vulnerable network systems. Larger organisations should incorporate all departments effectively communicating with the IT department regarding wearables. In doing so, this will provide fast accurate safe data, while gaining trust from employees.

Before employers engage with wearables, they must first analyze what devices are necessary and more importantly, how to engage with employees. Employers could introduce change management programs that support and engage employees for the deployment of wearables. This could include clear communication on the purpose and scope while engaging with trade unions. It is also a crucial part of a deployment that software integrates with existing enterprise systems. While having a systematic plan to ensure enough time for deployment.

Although wearables provide benefits, employees seem unwilling and hesitate to use in the workplace, as mentioned by Burjek (2018). There will always be a new emerging technology, employees should engage and communicate with their employers for effective implementation.

Nevertheless, as the wearable market begins to expand, governments will need to respond proactively to create regulations.

To conclude, I believe wearable technology will continue to evolve within the workplace, eventually with limited or no learning curves needed, as outlined by Godfrey et al. (2018). But will take time for regulators and individuals to adjust with privacy issues in the age of the internet.

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Addressing staff turnover in small and medium sized organisations

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Abstract

Staff retention is a major issue for organisations caused by many internal and external factors including changing demographics, low unemployment rates and an individual's desires to move job. However, the cost of replacing staff is high and whilst larger companies have dedicated recruitment teams SMEs may not have the same resources. This review examines the connected issues of retention and turnover by examining a range of HR practices and approaches including training and development, performance appraisal, remuneration and benefits, security and stability, and flexibility to establish their impact on employee turnover within SMEs. The review will suggest that SMEs must take the time to develop and implement a suitable bundle of human resource practices and approaches if employee turnover is to be reduced.

Introduction

The idealistic perceptions within the business world would lead people to believe that Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) should be the most productive and efficient organisations. They have smaller number of employees and a flatter hierarchy structure than their larger businesses counter-parts. This would further emphasise the belief that they should be more effective and efficient at implementing changes quickly to work procedures. However, this is certainly not always the case. Many of these SMEs suffer from high rates of employee turnover. These high rates of turnover can have a huge impact on the organisation in terms of productivity and profitability at both an individual and organisational level and also at a national level.

SMEs play a vital role in the Irish business economy, they are chiefly responsible for the generation of 56.1% of total turnover in the business economy (CSO, 2014). They are also responsible for the generation of 70% of all jobs in the non-financial sector. Most of these SMEs operate in the construction, services and distribution sector and are defined as those businesses that employ between ten and 250 employees.

Human resource management is described as the act of managing the people within an organisation. It is primarily concerned with the management of the employee in relation to the skills and competencies required, which are used to ensure that the organisation can successfully achieve the organisational objectives. Furthermore, the human resource function of any organisation should ensure that the organisation is acquiring, developing, utilising, and maintaining a competent and committed workforce. This, however, can be difficult for SMEs that may not have the same resources and financial means as that of larger organisations.

High employee turnover can result in the organisation having to engage in further recruitment processes, which are often expensive depending on

the number of stages involved. This recruitment process can be even more difficult depending on the state of the economy, along with the number of people seeking employment. It is vital that these SMEs develop Human Resource strategies that can successfully reduce employee turnover rates. Furthermore, it is imperative that these organisations ensure that they adopt the best possible human resource strategies in order to attract and retain the very best employees.

While an SME may not have the same resources and tools available as their counterparts, they should strive to identify and implement suitable policies and practices. This project will examine the strategies of Training and Development, Security of Tenure, Compensation and Performance Management. It will look at the importance of these in an SME, in terms of reducing turnover and creating a feasible environment in the competitive market of today's business economy.

The Importance of Retention

It has become a unique challenge for SMEs to attract and retain talented employees (Cardon & Stevens, 2004). This challenge has become more prominent in recent years for several reasons, not least the more stabilised economy and the reducing unemployment rate as well as the desirability and ease of movement between jobs. High employee turnover can, however, be a contentious issue for SMEs and is something that all organisations, regardless of size, need to investigate and take measures to prevent. "People must be considered a factor of equal importance to finance, marketing, production … because they are the medium through which plans are turned into successful reality" (McEwan *et al.,* 1998).

Barber *et al..* (1999) and Heneman, Tansky & Camp (2000) found that small businesses typically do not have a human resource department, or a specialised human resource manager/officer employed within the organisation. Additionally, they also indicated that many SMEs do not have an approved and developed range of human resource practices in

place for the organisation. The lack of a human resource department or specialist employee who is responsible for human resources can cause difficulty within the organisation, not only in dealing with employees but also in ensuring the effective management of the organisation.

Employee retention is a critical challenge being faced by many organisations throughout the world. A survey conducted by Towers Watson Malaysia (2014), a professional services firm based across the world, found that employee turnover rates in Malaysia increased from 12.3% in 2012 to 13.2% in 2013. Furthermore, this survey indicated that employees are most likely to remain in employment with the organisation for two years before leaving. Aon Hewitt (2016), reported that ICT companies in Malaysia had the second highest annual voluntary employee turnover rate. However, it was also observed that Malaysian researchers, compared to global human resource management researchers, found little evidence of a relationship between human resource practices and employee turnover. This may be because Malaysia is still operating in a more traditional society and business environment than other areas of the world and that they have little influence over employee turnover decisions (Todd & Peetz, 2001).

Research also implies that SMEs may lack the capability to develop human resource practices, but they are more likely to pursue and adopt policies if they employ highly skilled employees who are networked and exposed to the practices of other organisations (Bacon & Hoque, 2007). Carlson, Upton & Seaman (2006), examined the impact of human resource practices of 168 family owned SMEs. The results from their research implied that training and development, as well as attractive recruitment packages should be considered as vital for any organisation. Maintaining staff morale, performance appraisals, and competitive advantage were found to be a further aid in reducing employee turnover rates in organisations.

The remainder of this report will conduct a literature review in training and development, performance appraisal, remuneration and benefits, security and stability, and flexibility and their impact on employee turnover.

Training and Development

"Within companies, our success depends on our skill with human beings: building and developing the consistent knowledge base of our enterprise" DeGeus (1997).

Instances have been noted where competent employees have departed organisations due to the lack of other competent and skilled workers in the organisation. An organisation which has a higher number of unskilled employees compared to skilled employees is more likely to see a high turnover rate, whereas the competent employees will search for and find alternative workplaces. Training and development should be one of the most prominent human resource practices in ensuring employee retention (Benson, 2006).

Patton (2005) reported that SMEs were providing less formal training for their employees than that of larger organisation. This is alarming considering that research by Sherman *et al..* (1998) emphasised that organisations need competencies to ensure a competitive advantage. Sherman *et al.. (1998)* believed that ensuring a sustained competitive advantage should be achieved through the development of a dedicated training programme in which employee's skills and qualities could be nurtured and developed.

Organisations that placed a high value on the competency development of their employees were more likely to retain their employees (Conway, 2004). This training and development, which is measured in the number of weeks of training a core employee receives, should be implemented across all employees. There are various forms of training available, some of which vary depending on the industry the business operates in.

However, the distinction, as discussed by Garavan, Costine & Heraty (1995), should be made between learning, training and development and what exactly is involved in each of these.

Learning primarily deals with fundamentals such as the values and attitudes of the individual, which can be particularly hard to identify, and it can take a significant period of time to change these. Training refers to the knowledge and skills of the person. This can involve building upon existing skills and knowledge that the employee may have. It can also involve the teaching of new knowledge or skills. This training can be generalised or may be specific to the employee or the industry and organisation they operate within.

Development revolves around the person themselves and the innate potential that the employee possesses. Undoubtedly every person within an organisation is different and will have different abilities and skills. Furthermore, there will always be people who will be more willing to engage with development than others. This professional development should be encouraged and facilitated, whether it be in a specific area or more generalised. Encouraging and utilising this desire for development can have future benefits for the organisation as well as for the individual themselves.

A study of businesses within the Western Australian Accommodation industry found that high staff turnover rates were as a result of individual companies, such as hotels and smaller accommodation providers, being reluctant to spend money on training of casual and part-time employees. In this case, the industry was reluctant to invest in employees who were working a shorter working week as it could be viewed that they would not be receiving the same level of commitment and work in return from these employees. However, all employees, regardless of the number of hours they work, should be trained and given the opportunity for development.

The impact of competent versus unskilled workers in terms of turnover rates is compounded further in the case of SMEs based in China. The research from these Chinese organisations is, however, correlated to findings from the United Kingdom and United States of America. Organisations in these countries reported a greater focus on selective hiring and a reduced emphasis on the strategy of training and development.

It is not enough, however, for an organisation to provide training and development opportunities to their employees. The employees themselves must have a desire and willingness to engage in these processes to ensure the development of their skills and competencies, as well as their career path in general. Barrow & Loughlin (1992) propose that organisations should seek to employ individuals who have the ability and desire to learn new skills, adapt to new circumstances, work without supervision, be creative and innovative and generally aid the overall effectiveness of the organisation through their work.

"In the complex enterprises of the new millennium, learning has moved from the periphery – from something that prepared people for employment – to the lifeblood which sustains them. There are few places left for employees at any level who do not continue to learn and improve their effectiveness throughout their working lives" (Barrow & Loughlin, 1992).

Ensuring that the human resource strategy of training and development is implemented effectively in any organisation shows that the organisation is committed to the development of their employees. This in turn creates a psychological relationship whereby employees are willing to work to their utmost ability in return for a work environment that is supportive of their professional desires and capabilities. Analysis of archived data from 667 employees from various SMEs indicated that on the job training was seen as an indicator of a positive relationship in an organisation. Further studies have indicated that high levels of employee

commitment, as a result of a greater attachment to the organisation, resulted in a reduced level of employee turnover.

Performance Appraisal

The success of any effective organisation hinges on their ability to match their strategic goals and objectives with the skills of the employees they hire. It is therefore vital that all employees, regardless of their actual ranking within the company, are aware of these goals and strive to work towards them. "Performance appraisal is a systematic approach to evaluating employee's performance, characteristics and potential" (Gunnigle & Flood, 1990) and should be conducted regularly to ensure both good communication and the continuous working towards achieving the organisational goals.

Gilbert & Jones (2000) found that performance appraisals were uncommon in the majority of SMEs. In cases where performance appraisals were conducted, they were found to be done informally. The lack of formal performance appraisals being conducted indicates that smaller organisations are overlooking one of their main, and perhaps most important elements of competitive advantage, as it is broadly considered that the employees of a company are their main source of sustainable competitive advantage.

Poor performance appraisals lack strategic direction and can often be outdated or inadequate. This inadequacy, or blatant lack of appraisal, can have a negative effect on the organisation as reported by Abdullah *et al.* (2011), who stated that it can have an adverse effect on the morale of the employee, as well as impacting on their turnover intentions. The primary reason for performance appraisal should be to ensure there is a shared vision within the company and that all employees understand and are contributing to the organisation through the work they perform.

In order for performance appraisals to be considered beneficial to the organisation, it must be well designed and structured. This involves

ensuring that the appraisal process is tailor-made for the organisation, as well as for the employee, and supports the mission and values of the company as a whole. Furthermore, it should encourage communication and define the accountabilities of the employee and should enable a systematic review of their performance.

A publication from Allen, Ericksen & Collins (2013) discussed their belief that human resource practices have a huge impact on the performance of the organisation and that all organisations should encourage exchange relationships between employees and managers. The practice of exchange relationships, otherwise referred to as communication, could be easily improved by ensuring that employees and management are continuously encouraged to communicate within the organisation.

Undoubtedly, there are huge benefits to performance management and appraisals within an organisation, particularly in smaller organisations. Performance appraisals are highly valuable to these organisations as they allow for planning and future potential as well as the facilitation of human resource planning and improved communication (Evenden & Anderson, 1992). Further research also showed that improved human resource practices resulted in an improvement in employee relationships, quality, commitment and productivity, as well as ultimately leading to a reduction in employee turnover (Davies, Taylor & Savery, 2001).

However, for this to be effective it is vital that the methods and procedures chosen are a correct fit and specific to the organisation. It is also important that employees receive a clearly defined explanation of their roles and responsibilities and know exactly what it is that the organisation expects from them along with their conduct. Ensuring that this is communicated within the organisation will allow all parties involved to obtain the best possible results from the performance appraisals.

Remuneration & Benefits

Compensation in the form of monetary benefits has long been the chief method of enticing and rewarding employees for the work they do. Monetary payments for the working week, as well as additional cash benefits for extra work and targets, is typically the primary method of rewarding employees. Employees want a compensation package that is fair and matches not only their skills and competencies but also their expectations. "Pay therefore, is a major consideration in an organisation as it provides employees with a tangible reward for their services" (Thwala *et al.,* 2012; Adbullah *et al.*, 2012).

Expectancy theory, as described by Daft (2000), predicts that an employee's level of motivation depends on the methods they are rewarded through and the attractiveness of these rewards. However, it can be argued that it is somewhat more difficult for SMEs to match the desires of their employees as their financial resources are typically more confined than that of a larger organisation (Williamson, 2000).

Conversely, there is now a growing demand for alternative compensation and benefits in the modern working environment that are not necessarily cash payments. On a basic level, more employees are demanding recognition in the workplace. This recognition is not always in terms of monetary benefits but rather a verbal or written recognition for the work they have done and excelled in. The practice of ensuring that employees feel valued, respected and praised for the work they do can encourage them to not only work more effectively but also to stay with the organisation.

Research from Leslie T. Szamosi (2006), based upon a survey conducted in which graduates were asked what they wanted when working in SMEs. It found that graduates wanted an organisation that is "caring, environmentally concerned and sensitive". These potential employees want an organisation that promises they will be empowered, respected,

cared for and supported by management. The desire for cash and monetary benefits ranked lower on their list of desires. Furthermore, the graduates also wanted workplace involvement and the provision of both tangible and intangible benefits.

As is often the case, SMEs do not have the same finances as that of a larger company and can therefore struggle to provide the same benefits to their employees. However, the study conducted by Szamosi (2006) shows us that graduates, who are the future of all organisations, are placing higher value on intangible benefits and the design and culture of the organisation, rather than monetary benefits.

This is further compounded in the research of Roberto (2007) which stated that they believed that job enrichment, as a separate entity to salary increments, also contributed to a reduced turnover in organisations. The practice of ensuring employees are respected, recognised, cared for and supported is a basic and cost-effective strategy that can ensure that employees are enticed to stay within the organisation.

Security & Stability

Employment security, originally noted as one of Pfeffer's seven best practices, has been found to increase employee retention. Ensuring that employees feel safe and secure has been shown to have a positive influence on the organisation. Houseman (2001) found that the practice of employers using part-time and conditional workers to cut costs resulted in a negative effect on existing employees within the organisation. The use of these part-time workers created an environment where employees feel that they are at risk of being replaced. This is further illustrated in research by Kate & Krueger (1999), where it was demonstrated that the increased use of temporary workers as substitutes created an enhanced incentive for existing employees to leave the organisation.

Ensuring that employees are committed and loyal to the organisation they work for is vital in terms of efficiency. Beer *et al.* (1984), showed that guaranteeing employees who were committed to the organisation created a more efficient workplace. Fundamentally, high staff commitment was shown to lead to reduced employee turnover.

Research conducted by Rosemary Batt of Cornell University found that the human resource practices and strategies of an organisation, particularly in the service sector, had a direct implication on performance and employee turnover rate. This was further compounded through a study of a nationally representative sample of call centres. This survey found that the rate of employee turnover was reduced in cases where the organisation placed an emphasis on high skills, employee participation, teamwork and incentives such as high relative pay and employment security.

Furthermore, it has been indicated that teamwork can help in the task of reducing employee turnover. Gotton (1983) described how employees who engaged in problem solving and who worked in self-directed, or micro-managed teams, experienced a greater autonomy and sense of satisfaction from their work. This ultimately resulted in a reduction in employee turnover for these organisations.

Singh and Sharma (2015) found that employees in over a dozen private sector organisations in United Arab Emirates were more interested in ensuring the continued growth of the company and their job security than short-term rewards such as remuneration packages. In this case, employees felt that if the organisation was continually progressing, they had greater job security and would be less likely to be made redundant. This was more important to these employees than other human resource strategies such as pay and benefits or performance appraisals.

Other human resource strategies, such as compensation, selective hiring, appraisal and morale have been shown to encourage employee retention.

Research has been shown to suggest that organisations that do not have an efficient and developed recruitment process are more likely to hire employees that have lower skill sets. As a result, organisations are more likely to experience a greater level of employee turnover. Moreover, ensuring that the job description is accurate and meets the expectations of the employee can have an influence on employee turnover. Employees who are employed in a well described role means they are better able to meet the challenges they face and the objectives of the organisation.

Flexibility

As the culture of the world changes around us, it is expected that the culture of our working environment changes too. The desire for a more flexible working life has, and is continuing to gain momentum. This increase can be attributed to several factors but is primarily linked with the employee's desire to have a better work-life balance. Furthermore, a Eurobarometer study revealed that one in four Irish workers receive flexible working arrangements. Research from Thwala *et al.* (2012) found that employees are increasingly likely to search for and find alternative positions in other SMEs that offer better pay and conditions for them and their families. The demand for a more flexible working environment is coming in many forms. This includes part-time work, flexitime, working from home, job-sharing, extended maternity leave, parental leave and emergency leave.

For many, family and work are the basis of their day and are the two duties that they spend the greatest amount of time and attention on. Ensuring that these duties link as well as possible can be beneficial to employee morale, and ultimately retention rates within the organisation. Meeting the desires of employees in terms of supportive discretionary treatments, such as with flexible working, can see an increase in loyalty

and work effort as employees feel supported and encouraged to repay the organisation with extra effort (Eisenberger *et al.,* 2001).

Research by Kossek, Thompson & Lautsch (2015), states that flexibility should be treated as an organisational change and not an accommodation for employees. They also recognise that flexible working has the potential to empower both individuals and teams in the workplace. The possibility of a reduced fairness perception amongst other employees should be considered as one possible affect of allowing flexible working for some employees. If employees believe that some of their colleagues are receiving more accommodating treatment, there may be a reduction in productivity and staff morale and ultimately an increased desire to move to another organisation that has a greater perceived equality.

Managing the demand for this flexibility is vital. Mismanaging, or failure to consider the future implications of a flexible working request can be problematic, especially in SMEs. The culture of the organisation should play a pivotal role in deciding the form flexibility will take place in. If the desired flexibility does not match the organisations culture or has the possibility to set a new precedent that will be hard to continue, then management need to seriously consider the request, and its implications. Therefore, it is important that all businesses decide on a suitable protocol for decisions regarding flexible working and that all employees, regardless of family status or specific needs, feel like their request has been handled and considered justly.

Conclusion

Two of the most important elements of the Irish economy and its success are undoubtedly SMEs and their employees. Ensuring that these organisations are organised as effectively as possible has benefits for not only the employees themselves, but also for the organisation and the national economy. It is vital that these SMEs recognise the importance of human resource strategies and management in ensuring the effectiveness

of their business and most importantly, a reduction in their employee turnover rates which is noted as being one of the main challenges facing these organisations.

Employee turnover is a major challenge facing these organisations, it must be managed properly, especially as there are increasingly more highly skilled employees entering the marketplace that are demanding better working conditions. It has now become tremendously easy for employees to move between organisations as exposure to and demand for skilled employees is consistently growing in the Irish economy. This is making the challenge of retaining these employees even more difficult. These skilled and committed employees are vital to the organisation and ensuring there are good human resource practices, such as training and development, appraisals, remuneration, security, and flexibility in place will encourage these employees to remain within the company.

It is recognised that not all SMEs will be in a financial position to design, develop and implement all of these practices. However, every organisation, regardless of actual employee numbers, should review what they currently provide and examine if it is a match to what their employees need. Doing this will help to ensure greater satisfaction and long-term retention. For some organisations, there may only be a few changes and procedures that should be introduced. For other organisations, however, there will be major changes required. In these cases, the organisation should consider either giving an existing employee the duty of human resource practitioner or alternatively, employing someone on either a full time or freelance basis.

Implementing procedures such as improved training and development, pay and benefits or employment security does not have to be incredibly expensive. Making simple changes, such as giving praise and communicating with employees, can have a huge impact on the

organisation and ensure that employees feel valued and committed. This act of ensuring that employees feel cared for, supported and recognised for their efforts can be inexpensive and can ensure that employees remain within the organisation for longer.

Providing training and development should also be seen as a key area to ensure employee commitment, and therefore reduce employee turnover. Ensuring that the employee is continually improving their skills and competencies will have a positive impact on the organisation and will also show the employee that the organisation is committed and interested.

Undoubtedly, the human resource strategies of training and development, remuneration and benefits, employment security and performance appraisal are not enough to ensure complete employee retention. It is vital that organisations recognise that they need to ensure that they are hiring the right people for the job, and meeting the culture of the organisation. Organisations who excel in the provision of these human resource strategies could still experience employee turnover as the individual employee may not fit within the organisation.

Therefore, organisations should ensure that they have a satisfactory and developed recruitment policy in place. They should ensure that the individual will be a good fit for the company and that they have all the necessary attributes needed for the job. They should also ensure that the person has a desire to be committed to the organisation and to perform their work to their best ability, even if this involves engaging in further training and development, and performance appraisal process.

In conclusion, SMEs who take the time to develop and implement human resource strategies, such as training and development; performance appraisals; employment security and accommodate flexible working conditions and engaging in communication between all employees, will be more likely to experience a reduced employee turnover level. This

reduction in employee turnover levels will ultimately be of huge benefit to the organisation.

"People must be considered a factor of equal importance to finance, marketing, production ... because they are the medium through which plans are turned into successful reality" (McEwan *et al.,* 1998).

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