

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

The discretionary role of the line manager
in inspiring work engagement and
innovative behaviour

a study of social exchange and job resources in the public sector

Alexis Southall

2014

Aston University

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The Discretionary Role of the Line Manager in Inspiring Work Engagement and Innovative Behaviour

A Study of Social Exchange and Job Resources in the Public Sector

Alexis Southall

A Thesis Submitted for Doctor of Philosophy

Aston University

March 2013

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The Discretionary Role of the Line Manager in Inspiring Work Engagement and Innovative Behaviour A Study of Social Exchange and Job Resources in the Public Sector

Alexis Southall
Doctor of Philosophy, Aston University
March 2013

Thesis Summary

This thesis is about the discretionary role of the line manager in inspiring the work engagement of staff and their resulting innovative behaviour examined through the lens of Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964) and the Job Demands-Resources theory (Bakker, Demerouti, Nachreiner & Schaufeli, 2001). The study is focused on a large British Public Sector organisation undergoing a major organisational shift in the way in which they operate as part of the public sector. It is often claimed that people do not leave organisations; they leave line managers (Kozlowski & Doherty, 1989). Regardless of the knowledge in the literature concerning the importance of the line manager in organisations (Purcell, 2003), the engagement literature in particular is lacking in the consideration of such a fundamental figure in organisational life. Further, the understanding of the black box of managerial discretion and its relationship to employee and organisation related outcomes would benefit from greater exploration (Purcell, 2003; Gerhart, 2005; Scott, et al, 2009). The purpose of this research is to address these gaps with relation to the innovative behaviour of employees in the public sector – an area that is not typically associated with the public sector (Bhatta, 2003; McGuire, Stoner & Mylona, 2008; Hughes, Moore & Kataria, 2011).

The study is a CASE Award PhD thesis, requiring academic and practical elements to the research. The study is of one case organisation, focusing on one service characterised by a high level of adoption of Strategic Human Resource Management activities and operating in a rather unique manner for the public sector, having private sector competition for work. The study involved a mixed methods approach to data collection. Preliminary focus groups with 45 participants were conducted, followed by an ethnographic period of five months embedded into the service conducting interviews and observations. This culminated in a quantitative survey delivered within the wider directorate to approximately 500 staff members. The study used aspects of the Grounded Theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) approach to analyse the data and developed results that highlight the importance of the line manager in an area characterised by SHRM and organisational change for engaging employees and encouraging innovative behaviour. This survey was completed on behalf of the organisation and the findings of this are presented in appendix 1, in order to keep the focus of the PhD on theory development.

Implications for theory and practice are discussed alongside the core finding. Line managers' discretion surrounding the provision of job resources (in particular trust, autonomy and implementation and interpretation of combined bundles of SHRM policies and procedures) influenced the exchange process by which employees responded with work engagement and innovative behaviour. Limitations to the research are the limitations commonly attributed to cross-sectional data collection methods and those surrounding generalisability of the qualitative findings outside of the contextual factors characterising the service area. Suggestions for future research involve addressing these limitations and further exploration of the discretionary role with regards to extending our understanding of line manager discretion.

Keywords: management, innovative behaviour, work engagement, social exchange, trust

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my parents Joseph and Susan Southall, and my husband Daniel Fullard for their everlasting belief, support and pride in my undertaking the doctoral research programme, and beyond.

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When entering the process of becoming a doctoral student, I had no idea of the magnitude of the task I was taking on. At times it has felt like a battle, complete with victories and times when it felt like the battle was not worth fighting. I am so very grateful to all of the people that helped me to get through it, as I certainly could not have done it alone!

This research would not have been possible without the research participants who gave up their time and trusted me with their responses; and the organisation that generously granted me access to those participants on several occasions. Without their co-operation this research would not have been possible.

Thanks must also be given to the ESRC and the organisation for providing financial support through the CASE Award scheme for the first three years of my PhD, and to the EREBUS fund for a further three months allowing me to design and implement my quantitative research both for the business and for my own research work.

Those who supported me through the whole thing are worthy of all of my thanks. My husband Dan, whom I married just 12 months prior to the submission date of this thesis, who has been there from the very beginning – pushing me forwards, encouraging me, and taking me away from it when I needed it! My parents for their unending love and support – I know they are both very proud of me for achieving this. Also my friends – not all of them have understood this period in my life, and as such not all of them have remained friends. But those who have understood and accepted that on occasion I must be neglectful of them have proven to be true friends. Special thanks to Dawn for keeping me (in)sane and making sure I never take myself too seriously!

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1 Introduction

This study is about the discretionary role of the line manager in relation to inspiring work engagement and innovative behaviours in their staff in a public sector environment. This thesis begins by introducing the researcher and explaining why this topic is of interest. Providing this insight into the researcher's history is essential in order to acknowledge the pre-existing values and beliefs of the researcher in entering the research environment. Following this, the chapter introduces the research environment – a large public sector organisation located in the UK. This is essential due to the nature of the case study method, requiring for the reader to understand the context of the organisation and the potential for this to impact on the results of the thesis.

1.1 The Researcher

The researcher has spent much of their professional life in academia, though also possessing a professional background of working in the public sector. For five years the researcher worked for the public sector as a library assistant, and the Masters degree thesis undertaken was in relation to job satisfaction, organisational commitment and organisational citizenship behaviour in a public sector organisation during a period of massive organisational change.

Due to the professional background of the researcher in the public sector, the researcher is especially interested in this sector of organisational life due to the differences in values and approach to the way in which public sector workers operate. Of particular interest to the researcher is the positive psychological approach (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000) to business research, and occupational health psychology through positive organisational outcomes. The researcher takes a particular interest in positive organisational health of employees and in creating an environment within the business whereby employees can flourish and contribute more readily to organisational life.

Having experienced differing approaches to management styles and the nature of discretion in action in the researcher's own employment in the public sector, and the way in which that affected the researchers willingness to contribute effectively, to go the extra mile, and the way in which it affected positive feelings towards work, the researcher developed an interest in how the manager is involved in affecting these on a wider scale in the public sector. The researcher's interests did not initially involve the focus on innovation and creativity behaviours in the public sector, but this emerged from the data as

an important factor for employees within the business and is an interesting topic for consideration in the public sector environment.

The researcher's interests in this research developed initially from an interest in the role of the manager in inspiring and influencing work engagement in the public sector, to incorporate innovation management as part of this, and the role of the manager in creating a climate for creativity.

1.2 A CASE Award PhD

The thesis is a CASE Award PhD funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and as such is required to provide not only theoretical contributions to the academic literature, but also includes practical requirements for the case organisation. The nature of a CASE Award PhD means that a practical element is included in the project. This required the researcher to spend the initial two years of the PhD work embedded within the Human Resources function of the business for three days per week whilst simultaneously completing research methods training at the university and developing the research questions and programme of research for the thesis. The practical element allows the researcher to develop a clear picture of the organisation, the problems at hand and the processes of change and culture that the organisation experiences. The benefit to the organisation is a resulting practical application of the results and tools that the business can use following the departure of the researcher from the business. Furthermore, throughout the research process, the business was provided with a number of reports detailing findings and recommendations for practice. These can be viewed in appendices 2 and 6.

1.3 The research context

1.3.1 Introduction to the organisation

This section aims to provide the reader with contextual information from which the rest of the story unfolds. It provides a detailed description of the organisation and the service involved in the research, illustrating the nature of their business, their uniqueness and the importance of investigating this case. Furthermore it serves to set the scene for the findings of the ethnographic interviews and observations that will be presented in Chapter 4.

1.3.2 The Parent Organisation

The organisation within which the service is settled is a large local authority in the UK. The local authority serves a population of over a million residents offering a range of public services. The organisation has a culturally diverse workforce in excess of approximately 59,000 employees at present. During the period of study (2009-2011), the organisation was already undertaking a change process involving organisational redesign through strategic human resource management (SHRM) initiatives. These initiatives consisted of flattening the management structure; devolving transactional HR responsibilities to line managers in order to allow the HR function to act more strategically; a focus on front line employee engagement; implementing new technology systems; workforce planning, succession planning and talent management; and streamlining services through cost efficiency ideas such as hot-desking and home working.

Due to its size, being the largest of its kind in Europe, the organisation is unique and interesting to other similar organisations, paving the way in terms of innovations in service efficiency. Its operations and organisational changes are observed with interest by other similar businesses, and as such provide an interesting case organisation.

1.3.3 The Service

At the time of beginning the research programme, [SERVICE] were part of the Development Directorate of the organisation. The service consisted of 74 employees, including their management team, employed in four different teams – Commercial, Community and Surveying Services on the technical side, and the Administration team. The Commercial team offered building control services in the commercial arena, working on buildings such as hospitals, libraries, shopping centres and universities. The Community team offered services to the public, working alongside architects and checking properties such as private housing. Surveying Services were responsible for constructions such as safety at sports grounds, dangerous buildings and on demolition work.

At the beginning of this research, the service were experiencing their own organisational change – a new technology system designed to bring their working practices up to date and to streamline service efficiency for customers had been introduced. This included computerising the process of building control with a paperless office and new approaches to electronic building control. In addition to these

changes, the managing director had opened the service up to a number of pilot schemes being run by HR surrounding workforce planning, succession planning and talent management. Being a part of the pilot schemes demonstrated a commitment to continuous improvement and desire to be innovative in their operations.

The purpose of utilising the service as the case study of this research relates to the essential nature of the business within the public sector and the uniqueness in the nature of their operation with a competitive market. All local authorities are required to provide a building regulations service by law through the public sector. However, the nature of their business means that they must also operate within a private sector industry, with the same competitive pressures for winning work that a private sector company will experience, but with the traditional public sector values, ways of working and the potential political and bureaucratic implications this may entail. At the time of entering the field, the service was operating a trading account, meaning that it was responsible for bringing in its own money and for breaking even each financial year. This is unique within the organisation, as at that time there were few services that operated in this manner offering a public service in a private sector environment.

1.3.4 The Recession and the Impact on the Public Sector

As the research progressed, situations within [ORGANISATION] and [SERVICE] changed dramatically. After initial consultations, [ORGANISATION] put a recruitment freeze on all jobs within the organisation, meaning no jobs would be advertised externally, and attempted to reduce the number of agency staff they employed as a cost efficiency measure. This occurred during the recession of the UK during 2010 as part of the global economic crisis. In examining the figures, it was reported that [ORGANISATION] were in excess of £330 million of debt, and as such had a huge financial deficit to recoup. With a workforce in excess of 65,000 in 2008 and 59,000 in 2012, their largest cost as a business is their workforce, and as such a council wide voluntary redundancy programme was issued in 2011. In a positive approach, [ORGANISATION] began working with local universities on a number of projects to improve service efficiency and understand their workforce more fully.

[ORGANISATION] was not the only council in the world to be taking drastic action due to the worldwide economic issues. Actions such as reducing wages of public sector employees, freezing pensions, making cuts to welfare and budgets and raising the retirement age have occurred in France, Germany, Italy, Spain and the USA (Baxter, et al., 2010). The UK in particular has had an especially difficult financial

period – growth and recovery have been witnessed in other affected countries, though the UK's debts have substantially increased as a result of the crisis (Baxter, et al., 2010).

Within [SERVICE], this voluntary redundancy exercise set in motion a service redesign plan that involved reducing the workforce to become 'fit for purpose'. This service redesign was the first of its kind within [ORGANISATION] and, being the flagship area of [ORGANISATION], [SERVICE] were seen as the service that could make this approach a success. Initially it seemed that [ORGANISATION] were intending to 'sell off' [SERVICE] to an external organisation, though at the time of writing this thesis, this agreement had been decided against by the higher echelons in [ORGANISATION]. [SERVICE] are a clear asset to [ORGANISATION] and are the example of what an effective and efficient service can look like.

1.3.5 The change process

The service was transitioning to a special purpose vehicle known as a Wholly Owned Company (WOC). The WOC meant that the service needed to undertake a service redesign process to become 'fit for purpose'. The WOC meant that the parent organisation would be the owner of the business, while the service would be able to operate in a more innovative, cost effective and competitive manner. The change, as previously acknowledged, required the voluntary redundancy of members that no longer wished to be a part of the vision created by the WOC. The WOC potentially opened up opportunities for being more competitive in the environment within which they were operating; to provide an improved service for the customers and ultimately to be a more innovative and creative environment for employees to operate in. Innovativeness and innovative behaviour became a central focus in the research due to the extensive changes being undertaken by the business to become more competitive and more commercial, while maintaining the public sector values inherent to the business.

1.4 Conclusions

With this in mind, the research aims to address some of the gaps in the existing knowledge regarding creativity and innovative behaviour in the public sector and the black box of line manager discretion with regards to positive organisational outcomes. Furthermore the research aims to provide a strong case study of a public sector service experiencing fundamental organisational change and how they maintain these relationships during this change through a mixed methods approach to collecting the data and triangulation of the data.

Developing from the literature review, the following propositions will form the basis of the line of enquiry in the research:

- Proposition 1: Managers will play a role in influencing levels of work engagement through the provision of resources such as support and autonomy, by enacting their discretionary role.
- Proposition 2: Employees will respond to the provision of resources and relationship with their manager with work engagement, through a social exchange process.
- Proposition 3: Employees will be more likely to produce innovative behaviour if they are engaged.
- Proposition 4: Employees will respond with innovative behaviour if they perceive a good quality relationship with their manager, and feel that their resource needs are being met.

These propositions are important to examine both on an academic and practical level, which will be demonstrated in more detail in the literature review in Chapter 2. Academically, the examination of the propositions will be useful in developing the depth of understanding of work engagement, broadening the scope of what the existing research has focused on in the direction of operational efficiencies and the employment relationship (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004; Xanthopoulou, et al., 2008). The propositions are useful academically for expanding our knowledge and adding to the developing construct of work engagement. Furthermore, developing a deeper understanding of the role of the manager within strategic human resource management and deepening our knowledge of the employment relationship with regards to organisational outcomes (Purcell, 2003). Practically, the examination of the propositions will provide organisations with a greater understanding of the managerial role in engaging employees in the first instance, and developing a climate for innovative behaviour and creative thought. In practice the propositions may create opportunities for developing training for management in their harnessing of discretionary behaviour.

This chapter has introduced the nature of the research through introduction of researcher history and the case organisation, and the choice of case study method, which will be introduced in more detail in Chapter 3. The following chapters will tell the story of the case through the responses of the participants involved in the research.

Chapter 2 will provide some background for the reader regarding the existing literature in the various fields of study. Drawing from prior research from strategic human resources management, work psychology and knowledge management, the literature review will introduce the reader to the core constructs examined in this research: the discretionary role of the line manager, work engagement, and creativity and innovative behaviour. This will contribute to identifying gaps in the literature and will be presented alongside the research aims and propositions to be addressed. Readers will also be introduced to the theoretical underpinnings of the research.

Chapter 3 details the methodological approach to answering the propositions. Readers will be introduced to the philosophical debates surrounding a mixed methods approach, followed by a breakdown of each method with justification as to why each method was chosen and information on how data were collected through qualitative and quantitative approaches. Triangulation, ethical considerations and researcher beliefs will also be discussed alongside the approach taken to analysing the data.

Chapter 4 presents the combined findings of the programme of research - the focus groups conducted within the service, and the ethnographic work consisting of interviews, field notes and observations. This chapter presents the core themes emerging from the data surrounding trust, work engagement, and innovative behaviours. Interpretation of the data is provided, illustrated with quotes from the data.

Finally, chapter 5 draws final conclusions about the data and provides ideas for further research and the strengths and limitations of the study. Readers will also be given the theoretical and practical contributions made by this thesis and conclusions will be drawn in relation to the existing body of literature.

2 Literature Review

This research is focused on the examination of the discretionary role of the line manager in creating a climate for work engagement and innovative behaviour of employees. This chapter aims to provide the reader with a review of the existing work in relation to these core concepts. The review will present the conceptualisations and empirical findings from the work engagement, creativity and innovation and line manager discretion streams of research, bringing them together to identify the gaps and develop the propositions that were presented in Chapter 1 (Section 1.3.4). The aims of the research to begin to unpack more of the black box of managerial discretion and examine work engagement and innovative behaviour in a public sector setting (with some characteristics of private sector operations) directed the review to incorporate studies from the fields of management, work psychology, innovation management and human resources management in both public and private sector research environments.

Much of the work around work engagement has tended to be published within the field of work psychology, while work around line managers has tended to be a focus in the HRM literature and innovative behaviour and creativity in the knowledge management literature. This chapter attempts to integrate these streams of knowledge to create a clearer theoretical base for the reader and to assimilate the independent but closely related work of these literature streams.

The chapter will conclude with a reiteration of the research propositions and a summary of the main contributions of this study to the work psychology and HRM literatures.

2.1 Line Manager Discretion

Front line managers are frequently considered the only visible point of contact between employees and the organisation for which they are employed (Purcell, 2003). Managers espouse the organisation's values and objectives and 'translating strategy into operations' (Hales, 2005: 471), by interpreting and enacting policies. It has often been argued that employees' loyalty does not lie with their organisation but with their immediate supervisor (Therkelsen & Fiebich, 2003), and so the crucial role of the relationship between line manager and subordinate is demonstrated.

Much research into line manager roles exists, such as their contribution to organisational performance and effectiveness (Thomas & McDaniel, 1990; Babakus, et al., 1996; Gibbs, 2003). Dierdorff, Rubin &

Morgeson (2009) recently identified three common categories most frequently mentioned in the management literature as being key line management roles: conceptual (knowledge, skills, behaviours, planning), interpersonal (interacting, influencing, leading), and technical/administrative (operations, accounting, administration). In recent years however, line managers are seeing an increased devolvement of transactional Human Resource Management (HRM) activities in addition to their existing roles (MacNeil, 2003), attempting to give HRM a more strategic role within businesses. Communication of these HR activities through policy and procedure interpretation is an important part of the line manager role through their ability and desire to communicate these effectively (McHugh, O'Brien & Ramondt, 1999), and it has been argued that devolution of HR can positively affect business performance through increased commitment of employees (Maxwell & Watson, 2006).

This difference between managers in the uptake and delivery of HR responsibilities has been termed discretion (Purcell, 2003). Generally, managers are required to have quick reactions to problems as they arise rather than inventing methodical and systematic decisions (Mintzberg, 1973) with an inclination towards focusing on short term deliverables (Maxwell & Watson, 2006; Gibb, 2003), while research has shown that many line managers have a reluctance towards dealing with some aspects of the HR devolved activities all together (DeJong, Leenders & Thijssen, 1999; Budhwar, 2000; Renwick, 2003). This highlights the opportunity for differential activities in latitude of action. While managerial discretion is not a new topic in management research, the majority of prior investigations have been limited to top management teams that are typically responsible for more strategic business decisions (Haleblian & Finkelstein, 1993; Hambrick & Abrahamson, 1995; Carpenter & Golden, 1997; Shen & Cho, 2005). Line managers have been largely ignored in this respect (Purcell, 2003) despite the clear significance of their role with regards to employee relations (Therkelsen & Fiebich, 2003).

As illustrated by Dierdorff, Rubin & Morgeson (2009), line managers possess numerous roles as part of their jobs. All managers have administrative aspects to their work, in addition to liaising with other key decision makers within firms and performing operational duties (Hales, 1986), though the only aspect of their work that managers feel they have some autonomy to complete how they wish is in the way they supervise and manage their subordinates (Purcell, 2003)

Purcell (2003) has identified this discretionary role of the line manager as an important concept in organisations, primarily due to the way in which policies and procedures can be interpreted however the manager chooses. A great deal of a manager's time is spent engaged in interpersonal contact with their employees (Mintzberg, 1975) and that a significant amount of their time is spent communicating

information to their staff (Mintzberg, 1973). Even within organisations where rigorous standardisation is the norm, the line manager is still responsible for how much enthusiasm they give to implementing policy (Montanari, 1978; Renwick & MacNeil, 2002), and due to individual differences it would be foolish to believe that managers would communicate these ideas in parrot fashion (Marchington & Grugulis, 2000). This discretionary role of managing people and policy implementation, and its relationship to performance has been described as the 'black box' of the HR-performance link (Purcell, 2003), and is something which requires further investigation. Line Managers are of clear importance in the relationship due to their individual differences and the way in which their employees will vary in their experiences of HR (Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007).

Due to the multifaceted nature of this construct, managerial discretion is difficult to be observed directly (Hambrick & Abrahamson, 1995). A lack of empirical measures surrounding the subject has meant that the small amount of prior research into the area has focused on the collection of qualitative data. This is unsurprising as the theory is developing and the construct has been noted to be dependent upon contextual factors both within the environment and within individual differences (Montanari, 1978; Hambrick & Abrahamson, 1995; Dierdorff, et al, 2009).

The discretionary role in senior management has been indicated as consequential, highlighting that the result of this discretion can be positive or negative (Hambrick & Finkelstein, 1987; Greening & Johnson, 1996), and so thinking logically about this at the line manager level, discretion of the manager has the potential to impact on organisational factors within teams and in the employment relationship. Scott, Colquitt & Paddock (2009) argued that any organisational member possesses some degree of discretion, and thus support the notion of moving away from the senior management team and studying discretion in the broader organisational context.

The perception of how much or how little discretion a manager feels they possess, and how much they actually enact their discretionary role is key within this context (Carpenter & Golden, 1997). Some theoretical development around these differences has been presented in the AMO model - ability, motivation and opportunity (Boxall & Purcell, 2003). The AMO model suggests that firm performance is dependent upon managers' ability to do their job, motivation (both intrinsic and extrinsic), and opportunity (i.e. appropriate environment). The overarching principle of this model is that the presence of these three conditions links the behaviour and attitudes of employees with performance.

The idea of managerial discretion has the potential of going some way to understanding other organisational phenomena (Hambrick & Abrahamson, 1995). Much of the previous research into discretion highlights the need for greater theoretical development of the construct (Purcell, 2003; Scott, et al, 2009), with the involvement in the people-performance link being described as ‘the most pressing theoretical and empirical challenge in Strategic HRM literature’ (Becker & Huselid, 2006: 915). Likewise, Gerhart (2005) has emphasised the need for additional research in different contexts. This is especially the case with regards to the intricacies and nuances of this pertaining to performance and this requires more thorough examination (Harney & Jordan, 2008). Harney & Jordan’s research highlighted the importance of the line manager in this relationship, though they suggest that there is a requirement for research to more closely examine the contribution of managers, especially in relation to employee outcomes. With this in mind, this research aims to unpack areas of the black box and examine the role of the line manager within the HRM-performance relationship – most specifically performance as work engagement and innovative behaviour. Harney & Jordan (2008) chose to depart from the traditional measures of performance – namely productivity and financial analysis (Huselid, 1995), focusing on performance as employee outcomes. This approach feeds more closely into the discretionary aspects of competitive advantage (Applebaum, Bailey, Berg & Kalleberg, 2000).

The role of line managers with regards to the social exchange processes of organisations, particularly with regards to positive responses of their employees can be discussed in relation to job demands and resources. One of the most important resources that managers enact their discretion towards is that of trust. Trust is defined as being willing ‘to be vulnerable to the actions of another party based on the expectation that the other will perform a particular action important to the trustor’ (Mayer, Davis & Schoorman, 1995, p712; Dietz & Den Hartog, 2006). Much of the previous research in the area has been surrounding employees’ trust of their managers rather than the opposite direction of the exchange (Dirks & Ferrin, 2001; Brower, Lester, Korsgaard & Dineen, 2009).

The need for more theory in the black box of line management discretion is an enormous task, considering the nature of employee-manager relationships and the numerous facets of organisational life that can be represented within the black box. The necessity of unpacking the black box is heightened in clarity considering research which emphasises employee loyalty to their ‘local’ managers over their ‘global’ commitment to a firm (Becker, 1992; Chen & Farh, 2002). As this task would need to form a larger research agenda, being too broad a task for a PhD thesis, a narrower line of questioning will be explored. Examining the role of the line manager with regards to employee related outcomes of work

engagement and innovative behaviour. For the purpose of this research, focusing on employee outcomes in a public sector environment, the HRM-performance link is difficult to explore in the typical financial sense, and as such engagement and innovative behaviour of staff will be viewed as an approach to performance of the individual in this environment.

The next part of the review will focus on defining work engagement as a construct, and develop the existing understanding of the managerial role within the construct.

2.2 Work engagement

The concept of work engagement was introduced to the literature by Kahn (1990: 694) as a psychological state, defined in his theoretical paper as ‘the harnessing of organisation members’ selves to their work roles’, consisting of three components – physical, cognitive and emotional – describing the different ways in which individuals become engaged. Kahn (2010) developed the construct as a reaction to what he felt was overlooked in the traditional theories of motivation at work. His research provided the theoretical basis for the development of the work engagement construct, and the further research into its importance in the workplace, which began in earnest in the 2000’s. The interest in engagement in academic research has boomed during the past decade due to an increased interest in positive psychology (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000) and occupational health psychology (Schaufeli & Salanova, 2007).

Engagement is an intuitive concept that has gained a large degree of attention within organisations globally (Wefald & Downey, 2009a). Johnson (2004: 1) stated that ‘the ability to engage employees, to make them work with our business, is going to be one of the greatest organisational battles of the coming 10 years’. Over the past few years, the interest in this construct has gathered force, initially within the practitioner community, and in reaction, within the academic community. It has been noted in the literature that the majority of published texts regarding engagement has come from practitioner literature in the past, demonstrating the dearth of publications in academia. However academic interest in the construct has spiked over the past 5 years, though the unpacking of this construct and its usefulness to academia and to organisations is still being explored (for details see Saks, 2006).

Organisations see fostering engagement as one of their top priorities in the modern workplace. This is especially timely with consideration of changes in the psychological contract and the employment relationship – a reduction in the provision of a job for life, with a shift in focus towards creating

employability. Engagement can be considered 'the 'deal-breaker' for organisations seeking sustainable success' (Robertson-Smith & Markwick, 2009: 3).

Indeed engagement has been suggested to be positively related to organisational commitment (Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner & Schaufeli, 2001), and it is this kind of relationship that has attracted the attention of organisations. The subject of engagement, particularly with its suggested positive organisational outcomes is of great importance in the modern workplace, especially during the aftermath of a global economic crisis. The challenge of retaining the best employees and keeping them engaged at a time of uncertainty is an increasing question within organisations. BlessingWhite (2008) found that 41% of engaged employees in their study said that they would stay at their organisation, even if it was struggling to survive. This is of exceptional interest to organisations needing to keep their most talented employees in order to remain competitive, and especially with regards to retaining knowledge, professions which require particular skills and qualifications and in light of the ageing population. In contrast to this, DeLange, DeWitte & Notelaers (2008) found that those who were less engaged were more likely to choose to leave than to stay. With organisations changing to meet the needs of new markets, it is suggested that engagement could be the key in successful organisational change and protecting profit when in a recession (e.g. Graen, 2008).

For [ORGANISATION], work engagement has become a focus of strategic human resource management, through the shift of HR from an operational approach to strategic force within the business. The change of how HR operates within the business has incorporated programmes such as talent management and workforce and succession planning, and has become more focused on increasing positive responses in employee behaviour. As such the work engagement construct has been a particular focus for the business, which worked on a project with the CIPD focusing on this in 2008-2009, and they were looking to add an engagement measure into their staff survey at the time of the researcher's entry into the business.

2.2.1 Engagement Definition

A large proportion of the extant literature on engagement, both in the academic and practitioner streams have focused on identifying a universal definition of engagement (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003; Schaufeli & Salanova, 2007; Scottish Executive Social Research, 2007). In addition to this, its relationship with other organisational constructs such as burnout and the positive effect it has been frequently

claimed to have towards organisational outcomes (Salanova, Agut & Peiro, 2005; Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Heuven, Demerouti & Schaufeli, 2008; Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti & Schaufeli, 2009) has been a recurrent focus.

In scanning the academic and practitioner literature for a definition of work engagement, or employee engagement as it is often referred to in the practitioner literature, numerous definitions can be found. However, an examination of these definitions show that while differences occur in the semantics used, they all connote to the same outcome: engaged employees are fully involved in their work, are passionate and focused, exhibit energy, are dedicated, loyal advocates of the organisation and are willing to go the extra mile in investing time and effort (Scottish Executive Social Research, 2007). Furthermore, the concept of engagement is clearly defined as a positive psychological construct (Macey & Schneider, 2008). A selection of practitioner and academic definitions can be read in Table 2.1.

The construct falls into the category of Positive Psychology (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000), which is an approach that rejects the principles of the medical model of 'fixing that which is broken' through treatment and prevention, focusing instead on 'improvement and betterment' (Schaufeli & Salanova, 2010: 399). Schaufeli & Salanova (2010) refer to this as 'amplification', whereby using the positive psychological approach, engagement is extended as a 'long term mission that requires continuous and sustained effort' within the entire workforce, rather than being the focus of one employee.

The most established and widely tested definition of engagement in academia is that of Schaufeli, Bakker and colleagues. They define engagement as 'a positive, fulfilling, affective emotional state of work related well being that is characterised by vigour, dedication and absorption' (Bakker, Schaufeli, Leiter & Taris, 2008: 187), which is a 'persistent and pervasive affective-cognitive state that is not focused on any particular object, event, individual, or behaviour' (Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzalez-Roma & Bakker, 2002a).

Vigour refers to energy and resilience at work, investing effort and being persistent when facing difficulties; dedication is involvement in one's work, significance, pride, enthusiasm and inspiration; absorption refers to concentration, being engrossed and difficulty detaching from work (Bakker, et al., 2008: 188).

Table 2.1 Definitions of Work engagement

Author	Definition
Kahn (1990)	Harnessing of organisation member's selves to their work roles: in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, emotionally and mentally during role performances.
Buckingham & Coffman (2006)	One who is in the right role, is consistently productive in that role, and is psychologically fully committed to bringing their best efforts to bear on that role. Engaged employees are passionate, feel profoundly connected to their organisation and drive innovation.
CIPD (2008)	It can be seen as a combination of commitment to the organisation and its values plus a willingness to help out colleagues. It goes beyond job satisfaction and is not simply motivation. Engagement is something the employee has to offer: it cannot be 'required' as part of the employment contract.
Baumruk (2004)	Engagement refers to the energy, the passion, the "fire in the belly" that employees have for their job and their employees. By definition, it is the state in which individuals are emotionally and intellectually committed to the organisation as measured by three primary behaviours: passionate advocates, an intense desire to stay, they routinely go above & beyond, exerting extra effort.
Hewitt Associates (In Vance, 2006)	Engagement is the state of emotional and intellectual commitment to an organization or group producing behaviour that will help fulfil an organization's promises to customers - and, in so doing, improve business results. Engaged employees 'say, stay, and strive'.
Harter, Schmidt & Hayes (2002)	The individual involvement and satisfaction with, as well as enthusiasm for work.
Britt (1999)	Feeling responsible for and committed to one's work performance so that a person's performance matters to the individual.
Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzalez-Roma & Bakker (2002)	A positive, fulfilling, affective emotional state of work related well being that is characterised by vigour, dedication, and absorption.
Tasker (2004)	A beneficial two-way relationship where employees and employers "go the extra mile" for one another.

In examining the development of the engagement definition in the academic literature, it is possible to draw direct comparisons between the Bakker, et al. definition and the original groundwork by Kahn (1990) in the components of engagement. With vigour corresponding to physical, dedication corresponding to emotional, and absorption corresponding to cognitive. Going beyond this definition, engagement can be seen more than simply a psychological reaction, but rather the incidents where employees are able to fully bring themselves into their work (Kahn, 2010).

One conflicting proposition made by Macey & Schneider (2008) suggested that engagement should be split into three facets in order to effectively bring together the differences in reporting engagement as a trait, state or behaviour. Their suggestion was that trait engagement (world view) is reflected in state engagement which leads to behavioural engagement (discretionary behaviour). However this assumption has been criticised as adding no useful value to the engagement construct. In fact Newman & Harrison (2008) argued that dividing engagement in this way actually makes the construct redundant due the ability to measure this way by other existing constructs.

The newly established popularity of the engagement construct within organisations has led to an increased number of studies in the work psychology and management fields. Alongside this increase in relationships testing, the construct has come under some criticism from the academic field and its dimensionality in particular is a subject of much debate.

Wefald & Downey (2009b) conducted a confirmatory factor analysis to test the assumption that the three cited components of engagement – vigour, dedication and absorption – make up this three factor model. Their findings suggested that neither one nor three factor solutions were a good fit with their data. While a two factor solution fitted the data best, this failed to reach the expected goodness of fit statistics, and has no theoretical basis for existing as a two factor construct. From their findings, they suggested a one factor solution was most appropriate in consideration of the principle of parsimony. Similar results were also shown in a confirmatory factor analysis of the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) in a study by Shimazu, et al. (2008). However, the possibility of cultural differences may have influenced the results – the UWES measure which was developed by Schaufeli and colleagues was created in the European context, while the factor analyses of Wefald & Downey (2009b), and Shimazu, et al. (2008) were conducted within the USA and Japan respectively. This has given rise to questions about the application of engagement outside of the European context.

Shimazu, et al (2008) suggested that their one factor structure is indicative of summing the scores on the three individual dimensions tested by the UWES when analysing engagement data in the Japanese context. This is in contrast to Wefald & Downey's (2009b) assumption that that engagement is merely a poorly defined concept. However this belief has sustained a great deal of research attempting to differentiate engagement from other existing constructs. Semantically, in the literature the word engagement has been used synonymously with staff involvement and participation, and organisations continue to measure this as job satisfaction.

2.2.2 Construct overlap

This argument regarding the overlap of work engagement with other constructs has resulted in a large number of articles endeavouring to dispel the notion of engagement as merely 'old wine in new bottles' (Newman & Harrison, 2008). Beginning with staff involvement and participation, this is defined as involving employees in making decisions that may affect themselves and the organisation (Cotton, 1996), and any situation where an employee has influence over their work (Fenton-O'Creevy, 2001). This is in contrast to the operationalisation of engagement as an affective state in which employees become engrossed and inspired by their work, demonstrating passion and dedication. Much of the confusion regarding this overlap claim can be censured to the use of the word 'engagement' in the English language. The Oxford English Dictionary (2008) states that the word engage means 'participate or become involved with', which more accurately reflects the meaning of the construct involvement than it does the construct of work engagement.

With regards to other positive organisational constructs within work psychology, the evidence is conflicting. Wefald & Downey's (2009b: 104) work around engagement's dimensionality demonstrated 'a great deal of overlap' between engagement and satisfaction, implying that engagement's ability to add value to knowledge is limited beyond that which exists with job satisfaction. The limitations of their study, however, present questionable generalisability to engagement as a concept within organisations – their sample consisted of undergraduate students at one university, and thus the comparison between full-time employment and full-time undergraduate scholarship can be called into question in this case. In defending the work engagement construct, Schaufeli & Salanova (2010) admitted that there was some potential overlap in their definition of engagement with that of positive emotions such as happiness or subjective well-being, stating that their measurement of engagement specifically questions individuals about positive experiences of work, rather than the general context-free notion of happiness for

example. Furthermore, Inceoglu & Fleck (2010) support the differentiation of engagement from job satisfaction, stating that engagement activates higher level arousal feelings such as enthusiasm and energy, while job satisfaction is more likely to activate feelings of contentment.

In addition to job satisfaction, other constructs have been identified as potentially similar to engagement. Hallberg & Schaufeli (2006) examined the construct overlap of engagement with job involvement and organisational commitment, finding these to be distinct constructs to that of work engagement. The limitation of this study is its cross sectional nature and relatively small sample size ($n = 186$), particularly by comparison to Wefald & Downey's (2009b) 453 participants, and potential for industry specifics. However, in considering the overall characteristics of much of the research around engagement, cross-sectional quantitative research has tended to be the norm, with longitudinal studies now beginning to increase in frequency.

Other constructs such as job embeddedness (Halbesleben & Wheeler, 2008), and burnout and workaholism (Schaufeli, Taris and van Rhenen, 2008) have also been found to be empirically distinct through analysis of variance and structural equation modelling. As previously stated, all of these studies may benefit in terms of their limitations, from testing longitudinally and from using multiple sources of data to enhance knowledge claims.

The most frequently reported relationships within the field of engagement is with employee and organisational level outcomes, usually with a focus on Positive Psychology. The next section will introduce the current knowledge on these relationships within the academic literature.

2.2.3 Public Sector Ethos

Some of the perceived overlap for the particular sector involved in the research may be between engagement and the notion of the public sector ethos. The public sector ethos idea can be traced back to the 1854 Northcote and Trevelyan report of the Organisation of the Permanent Civil Service (Koumenta, 2009). Different academic literature streams have used different terminology to refer to the public sector ethos (Carr, 1999; Horton, 2003) – public service ethic (Chapman, 1994), public service ethos (Pratchett & Wingfield, 1994) and public service motivation (Perry & Wise, 1990) – though all refer to a collective set of behaviours and attitudes that make up the ethos. Labour and Conservative governments are favouring the usage of 'public service ethos' rather than 'sector', highlighting a greater focus on service, with the public now being considered customers rather than passive users (Brereton &

Temple, 1999). In short, the public sector/service ethos suggests that employees working within the public sector differ in behaviour and attitudes to those in the private sector (Lyons, Duxbury & Higgins, 2006).

The House of Commons (2002: 8) identified common threads running through the public sector ethos. These included 'impartiality, accountability, trust, equity, probity and service'; while Vandenberghe, et al. (2006: 15) describe it as 'the belief, values and attitudes that go beyond self-interest and organisational interest, that concern the interest of a larger political entity and which induce through public interaction motivation for targeted action'. Essentially, the public sector ethos boils down to doing a 'socially useful job' (John & Johnson, 2008: 105), and the characteristics shared by those working in these roles. Altruistic motivation is highlighted as a key component to the public sector ethos (Crewson, 1995; Houston, 2000; Buelens & Van Den Broeck, 2007), and moreover the intrinsic rewards received from public sector work is argued to outweigh typical forms of reward such as pay (John & Johnson, 2008). Guest & Conway (2001) have argued that due to having chosen to work in this sector and the notion of the public sector ethos, workers are generally committed to their work even if they are not committed to their employer. Pratchett & Wingfield (1996) highlighted in their study of local government that age and length of experience were of high importance to explaining the public sector ethos, particularly in those with over 20 years of service to the sector. Interestingly, their research also showed that those workers that experienced a higher level of exposure to competition were less likely to report strong feelings of the characteristics believed to make up the ethos (which in Pratchett & Wingfield's (1996) research were indicated to be accountability, bureaucratic behaviour, public interest, motivation and loyalty).

In many ways this ethos and the notion of work engagement draw comparison to one another. However there is a distinct difference between the two, with work engagement being considered more of a state of being (Bakker, et al., 2008) within an organisation which can be influenced by many factors and can fluctuate on a daily basis (Xanthopoulou, et al., 2009); while public sector ethos is more of a predisposed attitude towards one's work (Perry and Wise, 1990), a shared ideology between workers within this sector (Pratchett & Wingfield, 1996; Hebson, Grimshaw & Marchington, 2003). Moreover, the public sector ethos is considered embedded within the fabric of public sector life as tradition (John & Johnson, 2008), with a long history in the British public sector (Koumenta, 2009), while work engagement is a relatively recently developed psychological construct to explain the varying degrees of positive behaviours at work, both between and within individuals (Schaufeli & Salanova, 2007). On this basis the

research for this PhD focuses on engagement as an independent construct, as opposed to the public sector ethos, particularly as the service within which the data collection takes place operates in a competitive, private sector style environment, which Pratchett & Wingfield (1996) highlighted as being less likely to invoke the public sector ethos.

2.2.4 Engagement and Employee/Organisational Outcomes

As stated earlier, a large proportion of research in recent years has been surrounding the relationship of engagement to other employee and organisational outcomes. Burnout was the original concept of which engagement was tested with, and has often been cited as the antipode to engagement (Gonzalez-Roma, Schaufeli, Bakker & Lloret, 2006). Burnout's dimensionality consists of three components – exhaustion, cynicism and inefficacy (Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter, 2001), propositioning that engagement's three dimensions are polar opposites of these. Prior to the development of the UWES, academics in Europe had been using the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) as the scale to measure engagement, using the opposite pattern of scores that indicate burnout to indicate engagement. Schaufeli, et al. (2006) argued for the independent measurement of engagement from burnout as the assessment of two constructs using the same instrument is not always supported.

Criticism of the polarisation of the three dimensions has also existed, with various studies contesting the original research of Gonzalez-Roma, et al. (2006), finding weak correlations across dimensions and a tendency for inefficacy to correlate strongly with all engagement dimensions (Schaufeli, et al., 2002b). On this basis, engagement was developed as 'an independent, distinct concept that is related negatively to burnout' (Bakker, et al., 2008). Negative correlations between engagement and burnout have been demonstrated (Hakanen, Bakker & Schaufeli, 2006), but it is also suggested that one cannot be burned out and engaged at the same time, supporting the notion for these to be distinct, independent constructs (Shimazu, et al., 2008). This ties in with the research surrounding construct overlap and identifying engagement's distinction from other constructs in its own right.

Perhaps the most encouraging claims for organisations is that of engagement's relationship to performance, at an individual level, team level and organisational level. Intuitively, it makes sense that employees that are passionate and absorbed in their work would likely contribute to enhanced organisational performance. With this belief being propagated in the realm of practice, with organisations actively measuring and changing on the basis of engagement results, academia has sought

to identify if this relationship exists, and to what extent, and studies have been conducted within numerous occupational groups.

Balain & Sparrow's (2009) examination of a Human Capital Forum survey of 23,000 company directors, found that three in four directors believe that work engagement improves organisational performance. In terms of empirical evidence, thus far academics have found increases in performance related to engagement to be reflected at an individual level, with no studies currently finding evidence at an organisational level.

Positive associations between engagement and individual level performance have been a popular topic of investigation in the literature thus far. In their study of university students in Spain and the Netherlands, Schaufeli, et al. (2006b) found that engagement in their work positively correlated with exam performance, and that this was particularly the case in those scoring highly on the vigour dimension. The cross-sectional nature of this study, and engagement research at large, is a drawback of the research as a cause and effect relationship cannot be established. In the United States, Wefald & Downey's (2009b) similar study investigating student engagement was unable to find support for the hypothesis.

Engagement is more often identified as a mediator variable rather than finding a direct effect on performance. In their mixed methods study of flight attendants, Xanthopoulou, et al. (2008) found that engagement mediated the relationship between self efficacy and in-role and extra-role performance. Similar results were found in Xanthopoulou et al's. (2009) investigation of Greek fast food outlets, with engagement mediating the relationship between coaching and financial performance at the day level.

Those studies that have identified direct positive correlations between engagement and performance have established only very small correlations. Halbesleben & Wheeler (2008), in their study of 573 working adults in the USA supported this small correlation, however their performance measure was based on co-worker ratings rather than more specific individual level data which creates a potential for bias.

Regardless of the limited effects sizes attributed from academic studies to an increase in performance, evidence suggesting some kind of relationship exists, and this belief continues within organisations. In a meta-analysis of all Gallup studies prior to 2002, Harter, Schmidt & Hayes (2002) claim that engagement and its relationship to productivity and profitability was generalisable across organisations in the USA. However we must be careful in determining direct causality between engagement and performance,

particularly considering the frequency with which other concept measurements are used which are then attributed as engagement.

Engagement has been of great interest to organisations, not only due to its reported relationship with performance but also due to other employee related outcomes. Engaged employees tend to report higher levels of positive affect (Sonnentag, Mojza, Binnewies & Scholl, 2008) and experience lower levels of exhaustion (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Furthermore, engaged employees are considered to be positive advocates of the organisation, telling others outside how they enjoy working for the organisation, its positive attributes, and encouraging them to use their services (Scottish Executive Social Research, 2007). Other positive outcomes include positive well-being and health (Mauno, Kinnunen & Ruokolainen, 2007; Rothbard, 2001; Kahn, 1990), lower levels of sickness and absence (Schaufeli, Bakker & Van Rhenen, 2009) and decrease in intention to turnover (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Engaged employees are considered to act more on their initiative and are proactive and interested in learning (Schaufeli, Taris, Le Blanc, Peeters, Bakker & De Jonge, 2001 (in Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003); Sonnentag, 2003; Schaufeli & Salanova, 2007), which implies a suggestion of being more innovative. Evidence of crossover experiences has also been presented in the literature, suggesting a phenomenon of collective engagement may exist in some cases (Bakker, Demerouti & Schaufeli, 2005; Bakker, van Emmerik & Euwema, 2005; Bakker, Shimazu, Demerouti, Shimada & Kawakami, 2011). Engagement has also been suggested to be a chronic state rather than transient, having been shown to demonstrate an acceptable level of stability over a one year period, in the same way that has been demonstrated in the burnout literature (Schaufeli & Enzmann, 1998).

In examining demographic variables there have been some reported differences between groups (e.g. Robinson, et al. 2007, Balain & Sparrow, 2009; Koyuncu, Burke, & Fiksenbaum, 2006). However, a report by the Corporate Leadership Council (2004) in their global study of 50,000 employees in many organisations, found that there were no differences in the ability to predict engagement in any segmented groups, e.g. age, gender, tenure, etc. Rather, they found remarkable differences between organisations, suggesting that specificities of businesses such as policies, company strategies and line manager behaviour are likely to have the greater impact on work engagement. They also found that work engagement was positively related to retention.

Essential drivers of work engagement include work-life balance (Johnson, 2004; Sonnentag, 2003), provision of resources (Kahn, 1990) and social support (Schaufeli, et al. 2009). These can be considered

as significantly influenced by the individual that many employees see as their only visible link with the firm that they work for – their line manager.

The next section will detail the existing knowledge regarding the role of managers in the work engagement construct, which will be important in demonstrating the need for further work on this particular relationship – an aim of the research and the driver for the propositions reiterated at the end of this chapter.

2.2.5 Engagement and the Line Manager

Research regarding the line manager's role in work engagement has been limited. This is surprising considering the emphasis in the management literature regarding the potentially positive and negative influences of the line manager on employee outcomes such as job satisfaction, team performance, organisational commitment (Judge & Piccolo, 2004; Judge, Piccolo, & Ilies, 2004; Lowe, Kroek, & Sivasubramaniam, 1996), employee well-being (Baptiste, 2008), stress and mental health (Kelloway, & Day, 2005). There has been a wealth of research into the psychological contract (Rousseau, 1996) and leader-member exchange (Dansereau, Graen & Haga, 1975; Graen & Scandura, 1987) that continue to demonstrate the importance of the relationship between manager and subordinate. Luthans and Peterson (2002) for example have suggested that engaged employees are more likely to respond positively to their managers, which underscores the vital nature of good relations between employer and direct supervisor.

The implication of the manager affecting levels of work engagement appears to be intuitive, however the actual processes of how managers have an effect has not been addressed. From research surrounding other topics in the management literature, it would make sense to assume that managers would have some kind of influence over an employee related concept such as engagement (Robinson, et al., 2004), though thus far this relationship has been purely speculative. Indeed, Bakker, et al. (2011) indicated the need for an exploration of the relationship of the leader to their followers' engagement as one of the key research agendas for the work engagement construct.

In their white paper, Balain & Sparrow (2009) stated that it was likely that engagement is mostly the result of factors that are controlled by line managers. Furthermore, Bhatnagar (2008) argued that the line manager was the key in the equation to harnessing engagement as a difficult to replicate form of competitive advantage for organisations. The engagement literature, however, has mainly discounted

the managerial relationship from the equation, focusing more closely on direct linkages to performance. Bleeker & Roodt (2002) have indicated a requirement for line managers to cultivate work engagement, suggesting a need to understand how managers can do this, and what the employee-manager relationship means in this equation. Yet in the past 10 years since this publication, advancement on this in the academic world has been left largely untapped. Aspects of the kinds of roles managers play, and how they affect employees have been mostly alluded to in literature regarding the underpinning of the job demands-resources model in relation to engagement. Hakanen, et al., (2006) found that provision of an innovative climate, a supportive social climate and supportive supervisors increased the level of work engagement reported by teachers in Finland. The Corporate Leadership Council (2004) examined data from 50,000 employees in 27 countries, and identified 25 levers of engagement. Of those 25, 19 of those were described as manager characteristics. Similar results were found in a study by Melcrum (2007). However the academic research on this subject has been extremely limited.

The only academic study that is printed with regards to management and engagement is that of Tims, et al. (2011), who investigated the relationship between leaders who exhibited transformational qualities and follower work engagement. It was found that transformational leadership was positively related to work engagement at the daily level. Even in light of this study, the apparent dearth of research opens opportunities for researchers to begin to further unpack the role of line managers in the engagement equation.

In terms of barriers to engagement, many of those that have been identified in academic and practitioner literature streams can be directly attributable to the line manager. Purcell (2009) cited the following as being particularly damaging or limiting of engagement: job insecurity; unfairness and inequity; lack of job variety; jobs which lack autonomy and are stressful; line manager behaviour; long periods of working; and trust. Trust was conceptualised as an important factor for engagement research by Chughtai & Buckley (2008) and has recently been highlighted as an important antecedent to engagement, particularly at the team level (Acosta, Salanova & Llorens, 2012).

So while line managers have been indicated in the literature as potentially important drivers of, or indeed barriers to engagement (Robinson, Hooker & Hayday, 2007), the literature thus far has not explored *how* the manager drives engagement, and through what mechanisms. Distinguishing the differences between managers who inspire engagement and those who do not is a detrimental gap in the literature which requires further exploration, and contains a practical result of understanding what training might be needed in order to improve ability of managers in this area (Roberston-Smith &

Markwick, 2009), thus bridging the gap between academia and practice (Wefald & Downey, 2009a). The understanding of how engagement affects the role of the line manager and benefits organisational outcomes is still high on the agenda for the development of the engagement construct, particularly with consideration of the involvement of HR (Wefald & Downey, 2009a; Albrecht, 2010).

As work engagement is shown to affect organisational outcomes and individual level responses of employees, it appears intuitive that this would have some contribution towards an important topic for businesses at present – creativity and innovative behaviour. This PhD is a CASE Award PhD, requiring practical and theoretical contributions both for the literature and for the case organisation. Considering the nature of innovative behaviour as both a process and an outcome, it would be interesting to know in more detail the relationship between work engagement and innovative behaviour. The knowledge academics and practitioners have at present is limited.

Also being highlighted in addition to the manager role is that of the engagement role in the public sector. Very little research has been done within the public sector on work engagement from an academic perspective, with the focus being more on data collection from private sector organisations. Public sector investigations have tended to be conducted by bodies such as the CIPD, rather than in academic journal publications.

Temple's (2011) investigation of work engagement in a public sector organisation in the Republic of Ireland found that 50% of employees demonstrated average levels of engagement, with a mean score on the UWES of 3.9. Recently the CIPD (2012: 2) identified engagement as being an important driver of culture change initiatives in public sector businesses, and could be used 'as a means to evaluate the success of culture change'. Of the limited research involving the public sector in engagement, much of it has been focused on defining engagement within the public sector rather than the relationships that occur within this framework (CIPD, 2011). Interestingly Alfes, Truss, Soane, Rees & Gatenby (2010: 21) found that there were 'no consistent or distinctive differences between public and private sector strategies around employee engagement', but that public sector workers are typically more highly and more frequently engaged than their private sector counterparts. However, the differences between public and private sector were small, and as such it appears that there are similarities in the approach to engaging employees.

2.3 Innovation, Innovative Behaviour & Creativity

It has long been posited in the academic literature that innovation plays a central role in the long-term survival of organisations (Ancona & Caldwell, 1987). Innovation is one of the primary considerations within organisations seeking to differentiate themselves from their competitors, creating competitive advantage, either with regards to technological advancement, research and development or improvement in the way they go about service provision to their customers. It is frequently claimed that innovation benefits organisational effectiveness and survival (e.g. Kanter, 1988; Amabile, 1988; Mumford, 2000, Ramamoorthy, et al., 2005). Increasingly, organisations are looking for employees who are willing to exert extra effort and be forthcoming in the generation of ideas that are cost-effective and improve services.

Innovation in the public sector has been argued to be one of the key factors in creating cost efficiency and recovery from the recession (NESTA, 2007; Bichard, 2009; ESRC, 2009), though the word innovation is not typically associated with the public sector (Hughes, Moore & Kataria, 2011; McGuire, Stoner & Mylona, 2008; Bhatta, 2003). This may be in part due to a lack of commercial pressures compared to that of the private sector, due to bureaucratic restrictions or due to the tendency towards risk aversion that is typical of the public sector (Baxter, Schoeman, Goffin & Micheli; 2010; Mulgan & Albury, 2003). However, innovation in the public sector has been claimed by some to be an essential task due to the nature of the work – providing services to the public, creating ways in which new needs can be met, and effectively improving the way old needs can be met in a more efficient way (Donahue, 2005).

Traditionally theories of innovation within the Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) literature have focused on innovation as a competitive advantage source (Drucker, 1985; Amabile, et al., 1996; West, 2004; Som, 2008), value creation and profitability (Stokes & Wilson, 2010).

Innovation has been defined with two meanings: an idea that is put into practice or the process through which an idea is turned into a product (Fay and Shipton 2008, p.214). Innovation is often seen to go hand in hand with creativity, and the two are indeed linked. There are suggestions that creativity pertains to ideas generation and innovation describes idea implementation (Ensor, et al., 2001; Heye, 2006). The close link between the two constructs has meant that in the chain of innovation, creativity has been viewed as the initiator of the process, beginning with idea generation and the recognition of a problem or opportunity for which innovative ideas may be required (Harvard Business School, 2003). With creativity as the foundation to innovation, it is individuals that ultimately engender, consider and implement ideas (Scott & Bruce, 1994). Amabile, et al. (1996), however state that while creativity is a necessary precursor to innovation, though this is not necessarily sufficient. In order for a creative idea to

become an innovation, and therefore useful to the organisation, it must first be implemented. Amabile (1988) refers to this as organisational innovation. It is argued that creativity in the workforce should be viewed as 'a corporate necessity, not an add-on luxury (Rickards, 1990: 40). Appropriate organisational culture will manifest the creativity of individuals and groups (Tesluk, et al., 1997). This will be discussed in more detail below.

Further investigation of the innovation construct has created distinctions between different forms of innovation: incremental, radical and transformational, with incremental building on improving existing practices or products or adapting this extant thing to be used in a different way; while radical innovation is the introduction of something entirely new (either to the company or to the industry); and transformative consisting of dramatic change that often takes several decades to come to fruition (Mulgan & Albury, 2003). Radical innovations require breaking from the norm and stepping into unknown territories (Rose-Anderssen, Allen, Tsinopoulos and McCarthy, 2005). It is recognised that some organisations mitigate against radical forms of innovation, whether that is due to an incompatibility with traditional management methods (Leifer, et al, 2000), or through risk aversion due to legal implications. However academics have warned against the potential for a focus on incremental innovations and a rejection of radical innovations due to the way in which incremental improvements can become inhibitors to innovation (Tushman & Anderson, 1986; Ahuja & Lampert, 2001).

2.3.1 Innovative Behaviour

It is suggested that innovative behaviour is typically non-linear (Quinn, 1985), 'thrives on challenge' (Tang, 1998: 301), and is ultimately about change (Tidd, Bessant & Pavitt, 2001). Van de Ven & Poole (1989:32) suggest that 'the process of innovation refers to the temporal sequence of events that occur as people interact with others to develop and implement their innovation ideas within an institutional context'. For innovation to occur, interaction between, and input from, organisation's members needs to occur, and this is achieved through the influence of the organisation (Hargadon & Sutton, 2000).

It is suggested that as many as 85% of ideas in organisations are generated by employees (Getz & Robinson, 2003). In spite of this, innovative behaviour is not a requisite part of most employees' work roles, rather being an additional discretionary behaviour (Katz & Kahn, 1978) which most organisations must work towards encouraging and harnessing (Amabile, 1988; Oldham & Cummings, 1996; Ramamoorthy, et al., 2005). Moreover, innovative behaviour of employees has been highlighted as important in management principles like kaizen (Imai, 1986) and continuous improvement (Fuller,

Marler & Hester, 2006). New ideas do not have to be new to the world, but should be pertinent to the division implementing them (Åmo, 2005).

Innovative behaviour has been defined in the literature as 'individuals' behaviours directed towards the initiation and intentional introduction (within a work role, group or organisation) of new and useful ideas, processes, products or procedures' (De Jong, 2007: 19). This explanation suggests that innovative behaviour encompasses the exploration, generation, sharing and implementation of innovative ideas towards incremental or radical innovation within organisations (De Jong & Den Hartog, 2010).

Many researchers have attempted to identify individual characteristics that influence the likelihood that employees will behave innovatively (Axtell, et al., 2000; Seibert, et al., 2001; Åmo & Kolvereid, 2005; Hartjes, 2010). However other researchers have suggested that rather than innovative behaviour being exclusively as a result of characteristics unique to each individual, that the perceived risks and gains of behaving innovatively as well as the climate in which they are operating may have as much influence on their willingness to share their ideas (Scott & Bruce, 1994; Isaksen, et al., 1999; Yuan & Woodman, 2010). Moreover issues of job autonomy (Ramamoorthy, et al., 2005) and job demands (Janssen, 2000; Hartjes, 2010) have been theorised to have implications for willingness to behave innovatively. Factors such as autonomy and job demands and resources can be considered in the realm of manager responsibility.

In summary, innovative behaviour goes beyond mere creative thinking, (Miron, Erez & Naveh, 2004) through to the intentional sharing and implementing of ideas; it varies between individuals and it is often reported as being a risk taking behaviour due to potential costs and benefits and evaluations of the individual of the consequence of their actions, in this case sharing innovative ideas (Vroom, 1964; Yuan & Woodman, 2010). It is different from innovation in the sense that innovation itself is the result of an idea having come into fruition (Mulgan & Albury, 2003) while innovative behaviour is the process through to the implementation.

Research has identified a number of individual differences that affect employees' abilities to be creative and behave innovatively (e.g. Martinsen & Kaufmann, 1999; Amabile, 1996). However, there are broader organisational factors to consider, particularly an atmosphere or climate for creativity and innovative behaviour to flourish (West & Richards, 1999; Amabile, et al., 1996; West, 1990). An increasing number of studies are emphasising a relationship between SHRM and innovation in the public sector (Som 2008; West 2004; Barney 1991; Purcell, 2003).

Hughes, et al. (2011) found that innovation in the public sector tends to focus on targeting efficiencies in the various localities of the business rather than organisation wide innovations, forming incremental innovation. It has also been argued that public sector services seek to continue with service performance rather than working towards innovation because they have a monopoly over this service and no competitive pressures (Borins, 2002). Furthermore, with the focus of public sector businesses being on delivery to the citizen as their customers, feedback tends to be the mechanism for not only evaluation of service innovations, but also the driver behind the kinds of innovations produced. At the time of their research, competition was not yet a key incentive for the production of innovative ideas. However in the current economic situation and the changing face of the public sector, competition will become of great concern to the public sector and innovative behaviour of staff will develop into competitive advantage as well as the provision of customer efficiencies. In their report on public sector innovation, Baxter, et al. (2010) state that organisations within the public sector must begin to look beyond service innovations and efficiencies and consider working with commercial partners, suggesting purely focusing on service improvement, while important, fails to fully exploit public sector expertise. This is already evident in the service that has been worked with throughout the duration of the research, with competition from private sector organisations and the difference in their set up compared with other services within the public sector (See Chapter 1, section 1.3 for more information on the organisation), particularly with regards to their service redesign programme.

2.3.2 Innovative Behaviour and the Line Manager: The Black Box

The line manager is a key player in SHRM, particularly with the increased devolvment of HR responsibilities and the role of discretion in policy interpretation (Purcell, 2003). This devolvment of HR to line managers is a core aspect of SHRM (Budhwar & Ayree, 2008), with SHRM being linked to innovation in the public sector in a growing number of studies (Som, 2008; West, 2004; Barney, 2001).

Research around the role of the manager suggests that supportive managerial behaviour has a positive effect on creativity and task performance (Deci & Ryan, 1989), with the suggestion that these relationships are generalisable in numerous contexts.

Considering the way in which the relationship between employee and line manager has been shown to affect other organisational outcomes on various levels, it make intuitive sense that the manager would also have some kind of effect on innovative behaviour of individuals and teams. Amabile (1996)

identified a link between creativity and motivation and knowledge in an individual's working domain. The extant research suggests that individuals are creative and foster ideas when their mood is positive and are experiencing intrinsic motivation (Fay & Shipton, 2008). These pieces of research support the notion that with the appropriate skills and motivation, innovative behaviour can occur within organisations at the staff level (Senior, 1997; Wilson, 1992).

Line managers have the discretion to influence the climate for innovative behaviour and creativity. DeSalvo (1999) argues that creativity and innovative behaviour require open and trusting environments, and that the biggest barriers for creativity are fear and lack of passion. Amabile & Gryskiewicz (1989) argue that organisations should provide good innovation management skills of the front line manager, motivation to innovate and resources in order for creativity and innovation and innovative behaviour to flourish.

Stokes, et al. (2010) stated that flourishing creativity and innovative behaviour requires opportunity, resources, training and motivation. These are conditions under which managers have a great deal of influence, and their discretionary role can determine the extent to which these conditions are provided to or promoted to employees. These conditions are also perceived by employees to be characteristics of the organisation's climate at large, based on their relationship with their manager. Kozlowski & Doherty (1989) found that those with high quality relationships with their manager perceive any positive attributes given to them by the manager, for example autonomy, supportiveness, etc, as being a characteristic of the wider organisation climate. This is due to the issue of managers being the only visible point of contact that an employee has with the organisation for which they are employed.

As well as being a driver of innovative behaviour, though, line managers can also be a barrier to the same. This is particularly relevant when considering their role in creating a climate for creativity and innovation to occur. A number of reasons prevent employees from sharing their ideas, many of which can be attributed to the climate created by managers. A number of barriers that could be related to management and the climate they create exist, such as fear (both of losing face in front of their manager and peers, and fear of reprisals), self-assessment of ideas, lack of autonomy (Amabile, 1997), and inadequate communication (Hauschildt, 2001).

However it must be remembered that the removal of barriers is not the solution to creating a flow of creativity, innovative behaviour and ultimately innovation. Rather managers should also focus on creating a climate whereby people are engaged, motivated, risk tolerant and interested in their work

(Hadjimanolis, 2003). A notable gap in both the work engagement and creativity and innovation literature streams is how the concepts are related to each other. Engaged employees are alleged to be more willing to invest effort, go the extra mile for the organisation and bring themselves to their work role, and so logically it seems that engaged employees would be more likely to express creative ideas and be more willing to be creative and innovative in their work for the betterment of the organisation. However this hypothesised relationship has not been explored in the literature, and considering the line manager's potentially enormous involvement in and influence upon both processes, an examination of the two would be incomplete without also incorporating management and the HR processes they are responsible for.

2.4 Theoretical Underpinnings of the Research

It is proposed that two theories, working in cohesion with each other, will underpin the relationships that emerge from this research. The first is Blau's (1964) Social Exchange Theory, the second Demreouti, et al. (2001) Job-Demands Resources theory.

Social Exchange Theory is based on the idea that we enter into relationships that maximise benefit and minimise cost, and that long term reciprocity is necessary for both parties to benefit from the relationship (Sabatelli & Shehan, 1993). Social exchanges are characterised by norms of reciprocity and norms of fairness – that is, if an individual perceives a fair exchange has occurred, they will reciprocate with an exchange that they believe is just and fair to the other party (Sabatelli & Shehan, 1993). The theory assumes that relationships involve exchange of resources between parties seeking mutual benefits. Essentially, relationships are formed under a cost-benefit analysis undertaken by each party (Emerson, 1976). Typically this exchange in organisations is modelled on reward versus punishment and that those rewards are usually economical (Blau, 1964). However the nature of human relationships is that not all exchanges can be based on economics, and particularly in the public sector where reward and recognition is usually impossible in a monetary sense, there are other wider scopes for the application of social exchange in organisational life.

The core of the exchange theory is the notion of individuals being responsible for one another and depending on each other for the desired outcome to be achieved. Fundamentally, this requires individuals to place trust in one another that they will both reciprocate with the desired outcome (Standford, 2008). Exchange theory has been used to explain organisational citizenship behaviours

(Elstad, Christopheresen & Turmo, 2011), and as such it seems logical that this theory could underpin the relative positive psychological construct of work engagement. In situations where the relationship is no longer seen as mutually beneficial by one party, this is where breakdown of relationships occur – with regards to work engagement this may mean that the individual starts to feel less engagement or disengagement due to feeling there is no longer any point in participating in the exchange. This is also relative to the exchange of creative ideas and innovative behaviours. It is proposed that whereby individuals feel there is no longer any benefit to themselves for sharing ideas with the organisation (whether that be long-term benefit from sharing the idea, or lack of recognition after successful implementation) that they will be less likely to share them. Relationships require trust and as such is completely discretionary in terms of timing and contribution (Hom, et al., 2009).

Emerson (1976) views Social Exchange Theory as more of a framework for which other theories can sit within, rather than being a theory within itself. As such, it is proposed that the theory of Job-Demands Resources (JD-R) sits inside the theory of social exchange to explain the relationship between managerial discretion, work engagement and innovative behaviours. The JD-R was introduced by Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner & Schaufeli (2001) as an alternative explanation of employee wellbeing, particularly in relation to employee burnout. The theory proposes that every occupation possesses job demands (such as work pressure and emotional demands), and job resources (for example autonomy, role clarity, career opportunities) (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Job resources have been found in the prior literature to promote work engagement (Hakanen, Bakker & Demerouti, 2005; Bakker, Hakanen, Demerouti & Xanthopoulou, 2007), however the role of the line manager in providing those resources (whether they be physical or psychological) has been largely neglected. Job resources, particularly psychological resources such as support, trust and communication, are essential during organisational change processes, especially those characterised by redundancies and major job-role change. This is due to the way in which high demands caused by job insecurity, uncertainty, rumours and in some cases lack of communication can have negative impacts on employee wellbeing particularly in relation to stress (Bakker, et al., 2003; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004; Bakker, Demerouti & Euwema, 2005; Schaufeli, Bakker & Van Rhenen, 2009).

Overarching these theories is the notion of positive psychology (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000) that suggests that psychological phenomena should be viewed in a positive manner rather than as problems that need to be fixed. Positive psychology ‘studies what people do right and how they manage to do it’ (Compton, 2005: 3), or the study of optimal functioning (Sheldon, Fredrickson, Rathunde,

Csikszentmihalyi and Haidt, 2000). The positive psychological approach helps individuals and organisations to see how people flourish in their work for the benefit of the business (Sheldon & King, 2001), and as such this positive approach enables organisations to see how to move forwards and create positive environments for their workforce, as opposed to attempting to cure organizational dysfunction (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000).

Linking the above two theories to the research context, staff members are engaging in social exchange relationships on a daily basis. Through the fulfilment of their perceived psychological contract (Rousseau, 1996), and through perceived organisational justice and fairness (Greenberg, 1987), employees are constantly negotiating their responses within the exchange framework (Masterson, Lewis, Goldman & Taylor, 2000). As such, this constant negotiation of how individuals respond in organisational relationships ultimately can be considered to impact on other employee and organisational level outcomes. In this research context, staff members are close in proximity and typically have built up a prior relationship with their manager over a number of years. As such the exchange context has been characteristic of the research environment for a long period of time. With regards to the Job Demands-Resources approach, the research context is characterised by the reliance of staff members on each other in order to successfully fulfil their job roles – with each member having a role to play in the successful delivery of public services, demands and resources become part of the fabric of daily operations. The demands and resources identified by staff members within this environment will be detailed in the quotes illustrating the findings of Chapters 4 and 5.

2.5 Research Aims and Objectives

Through the literature review, a number of gaps have been acknowledged and brought together to create a knowledge gap that can begin to be answered through this research. The research aims to bring together the literature streams on managerial discretion and the HR people-performance link through an examination of climate for creativity, with work engagement and innovative behaviour. The intention is to explore these ideas within one high-performing service within a public sector organisation forming an in depth case study design, and beginning to unpack the ‘black box’ of managerial discretion at the line manager level using creativity and innovative behaviour as a performance measure. Contextual factors such as the creation of a climate for innovation and the public sector values inherent in this type of organisation will be considered and acknowledged.

The initial focus of the CASE Award surrounded the discretionary role in relation to work engagement. As the initial wave of data was collected, the focus of the research grew to incorporate important findings from that data, namely innovative behaviours and creative thought. The research initially sought to close the following gaps identified from the literature:

- Continued exploration of the 'black box', particularly with regards to line manager discretion and employee related outcomes
- The role of the line manager in inspiring employee engagement and employee related outcomes.
- Need for examination of work engagement in public sector

Having identified innovative behaviour as a core construct from the first wave, innovative behaviour was incorporated into the propositions to provide the following focus of the research programme. This identification of innovative behaviour in regards to the discretionary role and engagement in the findings necessitated the inclusion of this in the literature review and for further investigation.

2.5.1 Research Propositions

In light of the literature review and identification of the gaps in the literature, including adjustment from the initial wave of data collection, the research propositions are as follows (as previously presented on page 14 of this thesis).

- Proposition 1: Managers will play a role in influencing levels of work engagement through the provision of resources such as support and autonomy, by enacting their discretionary role.
- Proposition 2: Employees will respond to the provision of resources and relationship with their manager with work engagement, through a social exchange process.
- Proposition 3: Employees will be more likely to produce innovative behaviour if they are engaged.
- Proposition 4: Employees will respond with innovative behaviour if they perceive a good quality relationship with their manager, and feel that their resource needs are being met.

In examining the above propositions, it is expected that this thesis will make a number of academic and practical contributions to knowledge. With regards to academic contributions, it is expected that the thesis will continue to add to the expansion of the work engagement construct, and extend our understanding of the discretionary role of the manager. In particular, being examined in the public sector context provides additional information that has not yet been widely investigated in the work engagement literature in particular, assimilating the streams of knowledge from work psychology, human resources management and innovation management. Furthermore it is expected that findings will increase our understanding of the application of the job demands-resources model (Bakker, Demerouti, Nachreiner & Schaufeli, 2001) and social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) in organisational relationships. Furthermore, the approach to examining the research propositions through the use of a mixed methods programme will enhance the breadth of enquiry within the work engagement and innovative behaviour literature. Similarly in practice, answering these propositions are expected to contribute to the practical understanding of how management might behave to create optimum conditions for innovative behaviour and engaged employees. Furthermore, this is in addition to the contextual factors of public sector values, organisational change and uncertainty.

The next chapter will introduce readers to the methodological approaches utilised to collect data to answer the above research propositions.

3 Methodology

The preceding chapters have presented the propositions of this thesis and their development through review of the existing literature. This chapter will introduce the research design employed to address the propositions. The chapter will outline the rationale for selecting the approaches used in this thesis, including a discussion of the philosophical debates that exist through the use of this method. Issues regarding organisational access negotiation, data collection and organisational exit will be discussed. Ethical considerations that were employed throughout the research will also be presented. The final section of this chapter will provide a summary of analysis and interpretation of the data, presenting the emerging themes that will form the basis of the succeeding chapters.

3.1 Method Selection

In selecting the methodology used within this thesis, it was necessary to select methods that would appropriately answer the research propositions. This involved an understanding of the philosophical world view held by the researcher in addition to how the multitude of research methods available offer a best fit to answering the propositions. The following sections will discuss the philosophical debates surrounding the creation of knowledge and the importance of acknowledging researcher beliefs in methodological choice.

3.1.1 Philosophical Debates

Two dominant approaches to acquiring knowledge exist – positivism and interpretivism (Burrell & Morgan, 1979; Hudson & Ozanne, 1988). The various debates involved in choosing an appropriate method of inquiry are rooted in the differing philosophical assumptions regarding the nature of knowledge within these positivist and interpretivist research approaches.

Traditionally, positivist epistemology utilises the framework of the scientific method of the natural sciences, for the generation and testing of hypotheses (Lee & Lings, 2008; Bryman, 2003). Its axiology involves setting out to investigate causal relationships between predetermined variables (Steckler, McLeroy, Goodman, Bird & McCormick, 1992; Hudson & Ozanne, 1988). Ontologically, for positivists the social world is a concrete and constant construction (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). Hudson & Ozanne (1988) describe this as a fragmented reality that can easily be measured. In addition to this, they believe that

the researcher is removed from the external social world (Bryman, 2011) 'in order to maximise objectivity' (Steckler, et al., 1992: 1), and they are typically associated with the use of quantitative methodologies.

In contrast, interpretivists are typically interested in understanding the world through the thoughts and experiences of participants, and how people apply meaning to phenomena (Burrell & Morgan, 1979; Ritchie & Lewis, 2003), viewing this as 'the primary data source' (Mason, 2002: 56). Their epistemological view is that the social world is based on series of interactions and consists of multiple realities, while their ontology suggests that the world is constructed by individuals' interactions with the world and others within that social world (Gill & Johnson, 1997). As such, interpretive research is typically associated with qualitative methods such as in-depth interviews and focus groups.

In examining the research propositions, a qualitative dominant approach appears to be the most appropriate course of action with regards to choosing appropriate methods to collect the data. However a quantitative survey was also completed as part of the CASE Award work required for the organisation, which is presented in appendix 1.

With this in mind, a mixed methods approach, drawing methods from qualitative methodologies, was deemed the most appropriate course of action. The use of a mixed methods design in the social sciences is becoming recognised as the third major research paradigm, alongside qualitative and quantitative research (Bryman, 2006; Johnson, Onwuegbuzie & Turner, 2007). The increase in the number of social scientists using this approach is becoming so common that its use 'has become unexceptional and unremarkable in recent years' (Bryman, 2006: 97). Johnson, et al. (2007) have cited mixed methods approaches as being the methods that overcome the debate, which has been termed the 'paradigm wars' – the epistemological and ontological arguments surrounding qualitative and quantitative methods.

The debates regarding the mixing of methods lie within the perceived commensurability of these distinct philosophical assumptions. Separatists feel that mixing is impossible due to opposition of the positivist and interpretivist epistemologies. However, during the last decade many scholars are beginning to contest this view (Hammersley, 2000; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). Johnson & Onwuegbuzie (2004) argue that interpretivists and post-positivists actually agree on several points about the nature of research, for example the inability for research to be fully independent of biases, the possibility of attributing more than one theory to a data set, and that alternative explanations for our findings may

exist. Furthermore, researchers supporting the mixing of methods argue that qualitative and quantitative methods share similar objectives and nature of enquiry, with both striving 'to understand and explain behaviour and events, their components, antecedents, corollaries, and consequences' (Dzurec & Abraham, 1993: 76).

Proponents of the case for mixing of methods believe that this approach opens up avenues for enquiry allowing researchers to better answer their research questions. In considering the advantages of a mixed methods approach, it is widely agreed that mixing assists in compensating for the shortcomings of using qualitative or quantitative approaches in isolation (Steckler, et al., 1992), enhancing data quality and producing a richer tapestry of information from which to draw conclusions.

3.1.2 Researcher Beliefs and Philosophy

It is important to present the beliefs of the researcher regarding world view as their ontological perspective has an effect on their epistemological beliefs. Therefore this has an effect on the methodology chosen to answer research problems (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). The researcher has adopted a critical realist approach (Bhaskar, 1989), which is supportive of utilising mixed methods approaches to research.

Critical realism is a post-positivist philosophical perspective developed by Bhaskar (1989). 'A central idea of critical realism is that natural and social reality should be understood as an open stratified system of objects with causal powers', (Morton, 2006). Morton introduces three strata in the world – real (mechanisms that generate actual events), actual (events) and empirical (observable experience). The critical realist perspective can be applied to both natural and social sciences. In the realm of social science, critical realism posits that humans generate culture, and therefore culture is constantly shifting and being shaped by human action (Archer, 1996). Essentially, critical realism 'argues for a shift from prediction to explanation', (Wikgren, 2006: 13) acknowledging that cultures are not universally generalisable constructs, but something that is relevant to particular location and time. A critical realist approach goes beyond observation into mechanisms behind relationships and events. Furthermore, critical realism rejects falsification, believing that if a social mechanism cannot be perceived, it does not mean that it does not exist.

Post-positivist movements such as critical realism favour the importance of multiple methods of investigation into social phenomena, and advocate the use of triangulation of sources in order to

ameliorate the effects of error within individual methods of data collection (Byrne, 2002). Moreover there is an acknowledgement of the inherent biases that researchers bring to their data collection and analysis, and rejection of the notion of incommensurability of world views and approaches (Schostak, 2002).

Reichardt & Cook (1979) have suggested that it is possible to be an advocate of one paradigm, either positivist or interpretivist, but still see the value of utilising methods from the other paradigm. Those who favour the mixing of methods suggest viewing the world from the philosophical positions such as pragmatism (Worren, Moore & Elliott, 2002) and critical realism (Bhaskar, 1989). For many scholars, the emerging trend for mixing methods is a result of a focus on problem-driven research, choosing methods that will best answer their research questions (Flyvbjerg, 2011: 313). Flyvbjerg goes on to state that 'more often than not, a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods will do the task best'.

3.2 Mixed Methods Approach

In line with the philosophical beliefs of the researcher and the requirements of answering the research propositions, a mixed methods approach was chosen as the appropriate methodology for collection of data. The mixed methods programme for this research consists of initial focus groups to fully establish the problem and follow a line of enquiry that encourages user involvement. Following this, a period of ethnographic research was conducted for approximately six months within the service area being studied which consisted of a number of data collection techniques. A quantitative survey was also conducted in line with the wishes of the organisation, and the results of this can be seen in appendix 1, but which were not formally used in the results of the PhD due to its focus on theory development. Evidently this chosen approach has a qualitative dominance which is both suited to the researcher's world view as well as to answering the propositions presented in an effective way, providing a substantial understanding of the issues.

In conducting research using a mixed methods approach, Steckler, et al. (1992: 5) suggested four models illustrating the ways in which qualitative and quantitative data can be mixed: Using qualitative methods to develop a quantitative measure or instrument; using qualitative methods to explain quantitative results; using quantitative methods to embellish a qualitative dominant study; and using the two methodologies 'equally and parallel', i.e. analysing the two separately and then cross checking to see if they are producing the same results.

The approach used in this research is model three of the Steckler, et al. (1992) propositions. They suggested that the use of model three is often used in cases of ethnography where a survey has been administered within the population that has been studied. However, the quantitative methods used in this study were not used as part of the theory development which this PhD focuses on. Brought together, the results of the mixed methods in a qualitative approach present a single case study of a public sector business attempting to encourage and maintain innovative practices during difficult financial circumstances and an uncertain future and how the line manager has involvement in this.

A qualitative dominance seemed an appropriate approach also based on the pre-existing literature. There is a significant lack of qualitative research on the subject matter of employee engagement. The majority of the research in this field (with a few exceptions, for example Kahn, 1990) has been conducted using surveys and quantitative methods. In addition to this, there is a limited amount of longitudinal research on this subject.

3.2.1 Triangulation

Triangulation is often used in social science research as a way of cross examining results from one form of data collection with another. The purpose of data triangulation is to be more confident of the results of a study where the use of different methods produce the same result (Bogdan & Biklen, 2006), and is argued to add confidence to interpretation of results (Bryman, 2001). Webb, et al. (1966: 3) suggest that 'once a proposition has been confirmed by two or more independent measurement processes, the uncertainty of its interpretation is greatly reduced'. They continue to emphasise that occurrences where findings do not converge serve only to highlight the problems of relying on one form of data collection to report findings, and also the potential for developing new lines of enquiry. Researchers incorporating triangulation into their research program should be aware of the potential limitations of the approach, for example assuming that data from differing research methods (qualitative and quantitative) can be viewed as exact equivalents of the other. Triangulation is useful for addressing issues of internal validity (Barbour, 2001), and for decreasing investigator bias (Denzin, 1978). Some argue that a more reflective term than triangulation would be 'crystallisation', in reference to the nature of crystals being reflective and refractive, while triangles are two dimensional (Richardson & St Pierre, 2005). Denzin (1978) defined four basic types of triangulation: data triangulation, investigator triangulation, theory triangulation and methodological triangulation. This research focuses on methodological triangulation through the utilisation of a mixed methods program of research and interpretation of results, using the between-

methods approach (Denzin, 1978). Furthermore, this research also uses data triangulation, employing multiple qualitative methods to collecting the data as a way of ameliorating some of the effects of common method bias (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee & Podsakoff, 2003) and some of the limitations inherent in each method (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003), which is a key tenet in the critical realist perspective. The next section will introduce the reader to the case study approach used in this study, outlining the fundamentals of the case study method.

3.3 Case Study Approach

The overall research design of this PhD was the use of case study method. Case studies seek to understand phenomena in their real life setting, and often draw upon multiple sources of data. While the use of mixed methods does not define a case study (Flyvbjerg, 2011), it is not unusual to use multiple evidence sources in order to fulfil the expectations of intensiveness of the case study method – ‘more detail, richness, completeness and variance – that is, depth – for the unit of study’ (Flyvbjerg, 2011: 301). Triangulating evidence across a case study allows for the complementarities of methods to be utilised (Yin, 2004). Case studies tend to consist of a series of interlocking events observed over a period of time in one place (Yin, 1994) and are focused on context and dynamics within that context (Eisenhardt, 1989). Understanding of expert knowledge and experiences in such a context-dependent environment is at the core of the case study approach (Flyvbjerg, 2011).

Case studies have been frequently referenced within the literature as being unable to ‘provide reliable information about the broader class’ (Abercrombie, Hill & Turner, 1984: 34), due to their focus on a single case involving any given phenomena. This view of their unsuitability as a standalone research method has been criticised as gross misunderstanding by Flyvbjerg (2006, 2011), stating that the more academics try to develop a set definition for the term ‘case study’, the more confusing the situation gets, and the further these misunderstandings are proliferated. The view of case studies’ inability to reliably generalise and predict behaviour has often been stated, though some of the biggest critics have demonstrated a dramatic U-turn in favour of the case. Eysenck (1976), who had previously criticised the case study method, later recognised the value of case studies in the realm of learning as opposed to proving or predicting. Looking at cases with a deeper awareness enables us to learn about phenomena and about certain social groups. Furthermore, making a contribution to knowledge of any given field is typically the purpose of academic studies. Generalisation is only one aspect of expanding knowledge, and the use of case studies in theory development and expansion cannot be dismissed as adding no

value to the accumulation of knowledge (Eisenhardt, 1989; Flyvbjerg, 2011; Eckstein, 1975; George & Bennett, 2005; Walton, 1992).

Despite the criticism of the use of case studies as a research methodology in social science research, tied in to the paradigmatic arguments of qualitative versus quantitative, Flyvbjerg (2011) highlights the complementarities of using case studies alongside statistical studies. Having an in-depth case accompanied by the breadth of statistical significance gives more weight to the phenomenon (Yin, 1994).

The case study method is appropriate in this situation due to the nature of the business being studied. The organisation is the largest of its kind in Europe which leads the way for other similar organisations and therefore is of interest in the wider public sector arena. Furthermore, the particular service area within which the majority of the research was conducted is operating in a very different way to much of the rest of the organisation. It is beneficial to understand this particular case in depth for the potential to inform practice of other services within the business, but also the practice of similar organisations. It is especially important for this organisation to understand the practices of this service in order to assess the suitability of similar practices in other services to improve the business, financially and from the perspective of their clients and customers. From an academic perspective, the size of this particular organisation and the diversity of the workforce make this case interesting to study, while the innovative approach to work employed by the service under study brings to light new knowledge of innovative behaviour and creativity in public sector organisations.

Furthermore, the case study method was chosen as the most appropriate lens through which to examine line manager behaviour and the differences in how they manage their subordinates from the angle of management perception and employee perception. This allowed for integration of the results about innovative behaviour, creativity and employee engagement with an understanding of management behaviour from multiple perspectives. The case study approach allowed for a holistic approach to developing contextual understandings of knowledge, experience and behaviour, processes, routine and possible dissonance that occurs within the public sector with relevance to the topics under study.

3.4 Longitudinal vs. Cross-sectional Data

Two approaches tend to be available for data collection in research studies: longitudinal and cross-sectional research. Longitudinal research involves collection of data at multiple points in time, usually over periods of years or decades, observing the same variables and typically the same participants to measure fluctuations or consistencies in results.

The disadvantages to longitudinal research include resources in time and finance (Churchill, 1999). Due to the need to leave suitable time intervals between data collection points, and the changing nature of the business with regards to redundancy efforts within the organisation, the ability to construct a longitudinal design for this research programme may have been problematic.

Cross-sectional data involves collecting data at one point in time, typically associated with quantitative survey measures and focusing on identifying associations between variables and aiming to identify causal links.

The present research, though having data that was collected at multiple points in time, does not typically fit the description of longitudinal research. While some participants provided accounts of data during both qualitative collections, others participated only once. Furthermore the supporting quantitative data in appendix 1 possesses no identifiable markers of the participant, meaning it is impossible to match survey responses to qualitative accounts. Furthermore, the aims of the study do not require a longitudinal approach in order to answer the propositions, not intending to measure fluctuations over time, but to develop theoretical understandings of the phenomena, providing a basis for further exploration in other contexts. The present research bears more resemblance to a cross-sectional design, although periods of collection were over a course of 18 months, meeting the aims of identifying relationships in this case between variables and using qualitative data to provide rich accounts of the phenomena alongside the supporting survey measure in a wider area of participant base.

The next section will introduce the reader to the methods utilised for the initial data gathering process through the focus group approach.

3.5 Focus Groups

Six focus groups were conducted with a total of 45 participants within the [SERVICE]. The aim of the focus groups was to develop an understanding of the population and to gather initial data regarding the core constructs of the research. The focus groups were run with individuals who had line management responsibilities, and with their subordinates within the service. Findings were produced which identified issues conducive to further investigation, and allowed for appropriate adjustment of the initial propositions. This meant that it was possible to make the research more relevant and current to issues within the sector and that a contribution to knowledge was assured.

The purpose of the focus groups was to provide a foundation of data from which to refine propositions (see those presented in Section 2.5 of Chapter 2), and to formulate some initial theory about the research problem in this area of the organisation. While this phase of the qualitative data collection was not entered into without an idea of what would be researched and the relating propositions, the emerging categories and concepts that were produced from the data were rather different than the preconceived ideas I may have taken in to the groups as a researcher. While the Glaserian assumption of entering the field 'tabula rasa' (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) without influence from previously read literature and without making assumptions was not strictly adhered to, it is recognised that researchers always bring to their data collection and analysis 'their own lenses and conceptual networks' and that not having these would result in not being able to 'perceive, observe and describe meaningful events any longer – confronted with chaotic, meaningless and fragmented phenomena they would have to give up their scientific endeavour' (Kelle, 2005: 5).

3.5.1 Justification of Methodological Choice

The aim of this stage of the research was to establish some exploratory data with the sample involved. This was to ensure that the propositions were relevant and current; to develop an understanding of the population being studied where the knowledge was limited; and to identify the importance of the constructs being studied to the population as a whole. The use of focus groups allows for gaining consensus on topics as well as gathering differences of opinion and experience. The aim was to understand the similarities and differences within the groups in order to establish some conceptual development of the constructs and to develop some theory with which to move forwards into further data collection. Individual interviews would be used in future to explore this theoretical foundation in

more depth. One of the advantages of conducting focus groups is that the stimulation group discussion provided for respondents helps them to recall events and experiences which may not occur in the individual interview (Fontana & Frey, 2005). A major advantage of a focus group is that participants act as an audience for each other which 'encourages a greater variety of communication than is often evident within more traditional methods of data collection' (Kitzinger, 1994: 108),

It was also felt that this initial contact with participants would engender the development of a trust relationship between researcher and participants and establish rapport, which would in turn encourage more depth of sharing in the later planned individual interviews. Kitzinger (1994) states that working with a group to collect data allows the researcher to gain insight into the language of participants and their world view, thus allowing the researcher to personalise the conversation and have opportunities to probe where there is something that is not understood, for example an unfamiliar acronym. Conducting the focus groups allowed the researcher to identify specialist terms which the researcher was not familiar with, giving the opportunity to understand their language, their work roles and the purpose of their service.

Furthermore, initial data collection using focus groups would provide a foundation for observing interactions within the group. Kitzinger (1994: 103) defined focus groups as 'group discussions organised to explore a specific set of issues such as people's views and experiences'. She states that the groups are focused on 'some kind of collective activity', and analysis of focus groups typically incorporate observations of group dynamics and interactions as part of the research findings. The interaction of the group forms part of the data itself, and while it is an artificial environment, it enables the researcher to incorporate dynamics of the group into the data. This distinguishes the use of focus groups from group interviews. Focus groups are most commonly known for their use in market research, gathering the views of consumers about particular products or services (Fontana & Frey, 2005).

A major disadvantage which is frequently mentioned in the literature is that participants may be less inclined to disclose their views and experiences than they would in an individual interview situation. The results of this issue of privacy depends on the composition of the group. Kitzinger (1994) found that in some focus groups, being in a group situation actually encouraged others to disclose information they would have otherwise kept to themselves, and that more audible members of the group helped participants who were shy to feel less embarrassed. She also found that participants provided support for each other when individuals raised matters relative to the group which may have differed from the mainstream and reduced the potential for social desirability bias. She goes on to explain 'being with

other people who share similar experiences encourages participants to express, clarify or even to develop particular perspectives' (Kitzinger, 1994: 112). In short, Kitzinger views the process of being in a group situation has positive rather than negative effects on the production of data and argues that the disagreement as well as the consensus that occurs during group working prevents the researcher from 'arm chair' theorising about the reasons behind disagreement, which may occur from individual interviews.

Of course, there are issues within focus groups that warrant attention from the researcher in planning the involvement of participants in particular groups. One of these issues is that of pre-existing power relations. Attempts to ameliorate the effects of these were made in this research by keeping managers in a separate focus group to that of their staff. However it is acknowledged that there may be other existing power relationships that are outside of these clear-cut distinctions of manager-subordinate; and as such these can be difficult to control (Reed & Payton, 1997); and theorists have argued that the use of focus groups as a stand-alone research tool is, in a sense, 'fast food' qualitative research (Agar & MacDonald, 1995: 78).

The choice of number of focus groups was based on an opportunity sample of available participants rather than explicit theoretical saturation (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Theoretical saturation suggests that researchers should continue to collect data until their key categories have been saturated with data (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). In other words, no new data emerges through continuing to collect data with new participants. Despite the limitation of the sample, saturation was experienced around key categories, some of which were not anticipated but emerged in each group.

As with number of groups, the size of each group was determined by opportunity. All groups had been initially of a similar size, though participants had contacted me directly to arrange to move to a different group based on their convenience, and others were no-shows on the day. This meant that the size of group ultimately varied from between five and eleven participants in each group. Morgan (1998) suggests that between six and ten participants is a typical size for a focus group. Morgan also suggests creating smaller groups where participants are likely to be very opinionated or have a lot to say about the subjects of the research. The experience of the larger groups demonstrated this logic, and as a result took longer to complete than the smaller groups.

3.5.2 Procedure

Recruitment of participants began with a letter being sent to all employees within the service, a total of 74 people. I attended a service planning day with my academic supervisor. A key purpose was to be introduced to the employees of the service so that they were aware that the research was taking place. A letter was distributed at this meeting which detailed information about the proposed focus groups, outlined the topics for discussion and invited their participation in the research. The letter was intended to brief potential participants so that they may make an informed decision over whether they wished to participate in the research, and that their participation was entirely voluntary.

The arrangement of the focus groups required the establishment of a relationship with an additional gatekeeper. The gatekeeper within the service took responsibility for arranging the attendance of participants to the focus groups. It was agreed that the gatekeeper would do this in order to minimise the disruption of attending a focus group to their work schedules, and so that a mix of participants would attend each group. The gatekeeper randomly assigned participants to groups and informed me of the lists of names for each session.

Once the focus groups had been arranged and participant lists received from the gatekeeper, two emails were sent to participants. The first was sent immediately after receiving the session lists from the gatekeeper to confirm with participants the date, time and location of their focus group. A final reminder email was sent to participants the day before their group, with details of location with directions from their building and a map, time and date of their sessions and where the group should congregate due to the swipe card floor access in place at the university. All focus groups were conducted within Aston University, and were facilitated by the researcher and a co-facilitator.

Topics for discussion were decided in advance, which was provided to participants as a guide of what to expect. Some questions were developed to assist in guiding the discussion around the relevant topics. This was not a structured interview situation where all the developed questions were asked in the same way in each focus group. Rather it was a reminding tool for the researcher to ensure that all topics were covered adequately within the discussion. Many of the questions that had been developed as an aide to the discussion were answered by the participants without being explicitly asked, and other topics were highlighted as important as a result of discussions. The question and topic guide acted as a useful tool in encouraging discussion from groups that were more reluctant to share their experiences in a focus group environment. After each focus group, questions and topics were refined and adapted as data

emerged.

Some critical incident style questions (Flanagan, 1954) were used in the groups in order to encourage the relay of participants' experiences and accounts of events and their working lives (for example, 'Can you think of any examples when your line manager provided additional support to you or your team beyond the call of duty?'). Critical incident technique involves asking respondents to provide detailed examples of situations and experiences, typically in organisations where things were successful or not successful and why (Flanagan, 1954). The data produced is focused on critical incidents in task performance and is a useful technique for studying organisational effectiveness and climate (Krishnaswamy, Sivakumar & Mathirajan, 2006). The focus group schedules for subordinates and managers can be viewed in appendices 7 and 8.

On the day of each focus group, the room was arranged so that participants were seated around one table, with the audio recording equipment in the centre. Participants were greeted, invited to seat themselves where they wished. Refreshments were provided by the co-facilitator, while I informed participants of the ethical considerations of focus groups. Participants were made aware of the limitations of focus groups regarding confidentiality and anonymity, and Chatham house rules were suggested and agreed upon by participants. Participants were made aware that if they wished to withdraw at any time, they had the right to do so. Some unexpected issues arose as a result of using a gatekeeper for the arrangement of the focus groups, which will be discussed below.

It was necessary to organise the attendance of an interpreter to attend one of the focus groups in order to support the needs of some of the group members. Participants were asked permission for the recording of their focus group. One group was not recorded due to the objection of one of the participants, and this objection was respected. In this particular group I made general notes about the group's answers and non-verbal behaviours while the co-facilitator made detailed notes for analysis.

The expected length of the focus groups was one hour, however the actual length of each group varied from one hour to two hours depending on the richness of the discussion. About half of the focus groups adhered to the one hour expectation. One of the groups was disrupted due to maintenance work in the building we were located in, requiring the speedy migration of the group to a new room, and thus adding time to the focus group length. All groups, except for the disrupted one, took place in a spacious and private room at the university. The disrupted group was moved into a private office for their discussion. In those groups which ran longer than one hour, several efforts were made by me and my co-

facilitator to close the discussion, but participants were intent on sharing more and more experiences with us. It was a difficult balance between ensuring that participants were not away from their work for much longer than expected and gaining richer data due to a longer group.

Line managers were assigned to a separate focus group to reduce the potential for issues relating to power from suppressing the ability of their subordinates to express their experiences and opinions freely. Creating focus groups without management involved encouraged a safer environment in which subordinate could share and discuss ideas with reduced fear of repercussions from management.

Focus group recordings were transcribed as soon as possible after the event so that a verbatim written record existed for analysis. Voice recording of focus groups in particular is a preferred method of recording data in order to reduce disruption to the group, alleviate the difficulties of trying to write verbatim quotes from multiple participants and in order to maintain an understanding of the construction of opinions, to have an idea of the dynamics of the group, and to record how things are said as opposed to just what was said (Bryman, 2001).

3.5.3 Focus Groups with Subordinates

Focus groups with subordinates were conducted in order to gather preliminary data to further the understanding of managerial discretion, beginning to unpack the black box as it is viewed in this organisation from the view of the employee, and to identify important themes to the subordinate members of the organisation.

3.5.3.1 Participants

Five Focus groups were conducted with 34 team members, with a minimum of five and a maximum of 10 participants in each group. Participants were randomly allocated to groups by the service gatekeeper to allow for schedule planning and minimal disruption. Despite this limited control, there is no reason to suggest that the service had chosen participants strategically. The assignation of participants to groups meant that the sample was a mix of both males and females and groups were a mixture of occupational groups, with each group of employees – administration staff and surveyors from Community, Commercial and Surveying Services teams – being represented in all groups.

A lively discussion was evident in the majority of the groups with differing opinions expressed and debated, suggesting that participants had simply been chosen for their availability in their work schedule

rather than any purposeful sampling by the organisation. The details of the issues involved in the sampling procedure will be discussed in section 6.3.2.

The sample was a convenience sample based on who was available to attend focus groups at a given time. The only restriction on participation was that participants must be an employee within the [SERVICE] within the organisation. There is no reason to suggest that those who were unable to attend a focus group would have significantly different views to that of the participants in the group. Participants were predominantly male (n = 22, females n = 12) and predominantly over the age of 40. Most had worked at the organisation for more than 10 years. These attributes are typically characteristic of the service's workforce as a whole, and so does not indicate a biased or non-typical group. The service's workforce was limited to 70 employees, and their business situation is somewhat different to other services within the organisation making them a unique and interesting population for study. An opportunity sample was the most convenient method of gaining participants in terms of the limited amount of potential participants in the population and availability of participants for a focus group at the same time.

3.5.3.2 Issues in Data Collection

Having received lists of participants and group allocation from the gatekeeper, it was assumed that the individuals were volunteers for the focus groups. It was left to the gatekeeper to arrange this due to schedules and ensuring that certain roles were still represented within the service during the absence of others. As there were fewer participants than the total population, it was assumed that those who did not wish to take part had elected not to be assigned to a group. The following experience has taught me that nothing in the research process should be taken for granted and everything should be checked to ensure the most rigorous and ethical research is being conducted.

When welcoming participants to the first focus group, thanking them for volunteering their time, we were informed that they had not all volunteered. Some participants told us they had been allocated to groups and it had been made clear from management that it was important that they must attend. This was naturally surprising to me and my co-facilitator, as great care had been taken to emphasise the voluntary nature of participation by distributing the letters during recruitment, making potential participants aware of giving informed consent to be present. There was some initial hostility from members of the first group regarding their attendance. We apologised profusely for the misunderstanding and all participants were given the option of withdrawing from the research before

the commencement of the focus group. We made it clear that we would address this misunderstanding with management and the gatekeeper to ensure that no other groups had received the same experience. No participants chose to leave and the atmosphere did not remain hostile after this initial revelation.

The gatekeeper was contacted to ask that all participants were reminded that their participation was voluntary and if they wished to withdraw in advance of the focus group they had been assigned to, they were within their rights to do so. We continued to check this matter in each group, and some group members told us they had not volunteered but were allocated to groups and told to attend. We made the same offer to all participants that they may withdraw, though all declined. Some participants commented that while they had been told to be there, they understood the importance of assisting in my data collection, while others wanted to help the organisation, hoping that their participation would contribute to that. Other participants made it clear that their managers had approached them with lists of dates and times and were told to assign themselves to a group if they wished to do so.

We abided by the code of ethics of voluntary participation, despite the finding that participants had been forced to attend, by allowing each participant the option of leaving. Despite the unfortunate start, many of the groups continued to have a lively discussion of the topics and told us they had enjoyed the experience of participating in the group.

Having confronted this situation where participants had not volunteered, I have learned not to take things for granted. I expected that it was clear from my initial correspondence with the service that the focus groups were voluntary, yet an opposing idea had been communicated to those participants that attended. In arranging my further data collection I did not assume that the gatekeeper would adhere to the ethical practice of voluntary participation and kept a closer eye on the recruitment of participants for this phase

3.5.4 Focus Groups with Managers

Focus groups were conducted with managers to further unpack the black box from the managerial perspective, providing a well rounded account of discretion in this particular service area. The focus groups with management also served to highlight the nature of the social exchange as reported by participants in the subordinate group, and identify formative traits of managerial approach towards inspiring engagement and desire to behave innovatively.

3.5.4.1 Participants

As with the subordinate focus groups, a convenience sample was used to recruit line manager participants for the focus group. The gatekeeper arranged for 11 line managers to attend one focus group. Two focus groups would have been preferable due to the large number of participants involved, however the gatekeeper arranged it in this way to ensure minimal disruption to working patterns, as well as being the preferred approach of the management team. With this in mind it was decided that one group was acceptable in this case. The group was entirely comprised of male participants, which is consistent with the gender attributes of the management team in this service. The service's Associate Director was not invited to attend this group in order to reduce the effect of power relations, and he agreed that this was the best approach for working with his staff. He was however invited to be interviewed individually in order to gain a wider scope of data.

3.5.4.2 Procedure

Managers were notified with an email of the confirmation of the date, time and location and were given directions as per the team member groups. A voice recorder was used in order to transcribe the discussion verbatim. Participants gave their permission for the discussion to be recorded. The focus group lasted the expected one hour. The same procedure to ensure participants were aware of the ethical considerations relating to focus group was adhered to as with the subordinate groups.

3.5.5 Data Analysis of the Focus Groups

Having transcribed each recorded focus group verbatim, and having typed up the written notes from the one group in which recording was not permitted by participants, data were coded by using an open coding approach (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Open coding involves applying descriptive labels to chunks of data to develop emergent concepts. The data were analysed using NVivo 8 which allowed for the addition and organisation of memos and broad observations. Self transcription and recordings allowed for full immersion in the data by having two sources to refer to for verification. After the initial analysis a report of the findings was written and delivered to participants for comments regarding the trustworthiness of the interpretations (Watts & Ebbut, 1987).

Over several weeks an iterative process was used to analyse the data, returning to it on several occasions to elucidate and refine emerging categories and concepts. Recurring and dominating themes were utilised in further revisits to the data to aid in identifying relationships in the data and with organising concepts into more solid categories. Care was taken to ensure that during analysis of the data, the relationships, interactions and inflections of participants were not lost within the text. Emerging concepts and categories were compared to the findings of the co-facilitator as a form of investigator triangulation in order to increase the validity of the findings (Denzin, 1978; Kimchi, Polivka & Stevenson, 1991).

The findings section brings together quotes and examples from the raw data describing the core categories and providing an interpretation of the data and the meanings attributed by participants. In analysing the data, a report was sent to all participants to read for their approval that their views had been accurately represented in an effort to improve internal consistency of the data (see appendix 2 for a copy of this report). Participants were given two weeks to respond with queries or concerns. None of the respondents made contacts asking to make changes, and so it can be assumed that they felt their views were adequately represented. This demonstrated an internal validity to the data, cross-checking the views of respondents with the interpretations of the researcher (Bryman, 2003).

3.6 Ethnography

Following from the focus group data analysis, an ethnographic approach was deemed appropriate for the next course of action in the research approach. Ethnographic research would allow the researcher to embed within the organisation observing day to day practice of the phenomena identified as important from the preceding focus groups, providing a thorough and rich account of the phenomena through observation, interviews and documentary analysis. The ethnographic route was chosen as a way to fully immerse into the culture of the service and to experience the process of innovation first hand. Furthermore, the ethnographic route would further enhance the ability to answer research propositions surrounding the innovative behaviour of employees and observation in the context of the black box of managerial discretionary behaviour.

The data required to answer the propositions would be enriched through experiencing real-life occurrences of the process of innovative behaviour and engagement in the field, observing the actions and relationship dynamics of the respondents in their daily setting. Furthermore, the unique context

within the business – the change process which had the intention of being implemented company-wide – provided unique opportunities for understanding that could not be as deeply and richly explored by being removed from and external to the business (O'Reilly, 2005).

This multi-method approach was seen as the best way to gather the data required for answering the research problem – using multiple sources to cross-check, challenge and support the findings from other methods, and as a logical next step from the preliminary focus groups findings. Furthermore, using a variety of methods within the ethnographic framework helps to ameliorate the effects of each individual method's limitations, allowing for cross-validation, also known as triangulation (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2002).

3.6.1 What is Ethnography?

Ethnography is a methodological and analytical approach utilised within social research and is unique in its pragmatic orientation (Van Maanen, 2011). Ethnography is used to study culture and tends to focus more on 'how' and 'why', with the ethnographer immersing into an environment different than their own to document culture. Van Maanen (2011: 219) describes this as to 'live with and live like someone else'. Ethnographers set out to understand the social world perspectives in a particular environment of the people being studied, which is achieved differently to that of a natural scientist adhering to the scientific method (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007), understanding these perspectives from within the ethnographer (Kleinman, 1999), in a naturalistic setting (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2006; Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006; Buscatto, 2007). Expanding upon this further, ethnographers must 'resocialise' into participant observation, becoming part of the group being studied. Wax (1980: 272) describes this as 'to enter into the matrix of meanings of the researched, to participate in their system of organised activities, and to feel subject to their codes of moral regulation'.

Recently scholars have highlighted the relative scarcity of ethnographic methods in organisational studies compared to other traditional methods in the qualitative and quantitative realms (Van Maanen, 2011), and agree that ethnography may be 'the most telling way of learning 'how things work' in the equivocal and enigmatic worlds of organisations and management' (Van Maanen, 2011: 218). The objective of this type of research is not uncover 'the truth' but to 'reveal the multiple truths apparent in others lives' (Emerson, Fretz & Shaw, 1995: 6)

Through combinations of formal interviews, observations, informal interactions with participants and document analysis, the ethnographic work produced the richest body of data for the research project, and was the most revealing part of the mixed programme.

Ethnographers may use a variety of methods to collect their data in the field (O'Reilly, 2005), 'watching what happens, listening to what is said, asking questions – in fact, collecting whatever data are available to throw light on the issues that are the focus of the research' (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995: 1). Furthermore, the ethnographic account should acknowledge the role of theory, and the researcher's own role in the experience and interpretation of the data (O'Reilly, 2005); and those undertaking ethnography must recognise that they cannot be a detached and fully objective observer (Mishler, 1979; Pollner & Emerson, 1988).

Ultimately, ethnographic research is the act of being involved with other people and witnessing their response to events, and experiencing those events for oneself (Goffman, 1989). Goffman saw being a witness rather than simply a listener as an essential component of the ethnographic method.

3.6.2 Ethics of Ethnography

Ethnographic methods are currently seen as 'at risk' by researchers in the field due to the nature of ethics in psychological research (Lewis & Russell, 2011). Simpson (2011) details the problematic nature of ethics in anthropology and ethnography, through reassurance to funders and avoidance of litigations, this has become more important a topic than ever within educational institutions. This is a view that has been supported by other researchers in the field of ethnographic data collection (see also Johnson 2008; Lincoln & Tierney, 2004; Tope, Chamberlain, Crowley & Hodson, 2005). Ethical considerations in any kind of participant research should be considered as part of the fundamental approach to data collection, regardless of method and epistemology favoured by the researcher.

The four ethical principles that must be considered in any research: autonomy, non-maleficence, beneficence (benefit of research outweighs the risk) and justice (research strategies/procedures just and fair) (Robertson, 2000). Participants should give informed consent to participate in the research, with an understanding of what is the purpose of the research and the risks and benefits of participating. Participants should be debriefed, should be deceived as little as possible (if the research may cause demand characteristics), data should kept confidential and anonymous and option to withdraw from the study should be provided. While the ethical principles upheld in psychological research are arguably

tailored to that of positivist research and thus cause some incongruence in the approach of some qualitative, or more specifically ethnographic work, it is no less important to adhere to these ethical principles in ethnography. While some of this may appear more difficult, it is the responsibility of the researcher to find ways that their fieldwork may follow the ethical principles of research.

Contemporary ethnography must comply with stricter ethical codes of conduct than those researchers that originated the approach to collection of data in this manner, with the inclusion of anonymity and confidentiality agreements (Johnson, 2008; Mauthener, Birch, Jessop & Miller, 2002). Because of this, the traditional ethnographic approaches, particularly the use of covert observation, are becoming virtually impossible and practically and ethically inappropriate (Bulmer, 1980; Dingwall, 1980).

Contemporary ethnographers must be creative in the way they approach their data collection to ensure adherence to the ethical codes.

In this research, attempts were made at fulfilling the principles of ethics as closely as possible.

Particularly challenging for ethnographic work is that of informed consent. Formal interviews began with participants reading an information sheet detailing the purpose of the research and information on how their data would be used, right to withdraw and anonymity and confidentiality. Participants were given the right to withdraw and information on how to contact the researcher should they wish to withdraw at a later date. Participants were asked to sign to indicate that they understood and agreed to the terms outlined in the document and were given a copy of this information to take with them for reference purposes. Throughout the research, reports have been delivered to participants in the organisation for feedback and agreement that their views were adequately represented (Guba & Lincoln, 1981; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Bryman & Bell, 2003; Richard, 2005). In informal interviews, participants were made aware that their answers would be reported in themes to ensure confidentiality and were given the option with regards to their participation. Informed consent in participant observation, however, is a little more complex. Even in situations where the participants know that the researcher is conducting ethnographic research and collecting data through observation, participants may not have a shared understanding of the purpose of the research (Bryman, 2001). Furthermore, relationships resulting from ethnographic research may also cause participants to reveal more than they ordinarily would to a relative stranger (Dewalt & Dewalt, 2002). Reminding participants on a regular basis that one is a researcher can help to alleviate some of the issues arising from inability to obtain informed consent from every individual a researcher interacts with through participant observation. At every group meeting attended as part of this research, introductions allowed the researcher to remind attendees of the

purpose of the research and the identity of the researcher. Furthermore, information was sent out to participants via email detailing the purpose of the ethnographic work.

3.6.3 The ethnographic process

During the first two years of the research programme for this PhD, the researcher was located in the wider organisation's Human Resources department as part of the Workforce Intelligence and Planning (WIP) team for two days per week. This involved taking part in group meetings, observing daily practice and contributing to events such as the HR Conference held by the business. This provided a foundation of understanding of the business' transformation programme and the change efforts that encompassed the entire organisation. This was particularly important in understanding the climate of the organisation, the events that participants would be experiencing prior to and during the data collection process and providing a richer context from which to work.

Creating the ethnographic fieldwork, the researcher was located in the [SERVICE] department for two to three days per week for a period of five months (the number of days in attendance at the business varied weekly depending on the researcher's existing university commitments for teaching. A period of six days was also missed at the research site due to a family bereavement). The immersion into the field was not a full one in the sense of participating in working life. The researcher was well known to the staff as being a PhD student conducting research in their area from the prior focus groups. At times this made the ethnographic experience more difficult, as staff were aware that the researcher was listening and observing. Some traditional ethnographers would view this 'visitor' role for the researcher as insufficient to meet the expectations of ethnography and that the resocialisation period should last for at least one year (e.g. Goffman, 1989). However, contemporary ethnography must recognise the increasing challenges for researchers in adopting this methodological approach to data collection. This is particularly true of the present situation – being a PhD student with a finite amount of time to collect data, and with prior commitments at that time to training courses and teaching at the university, a full immersion for a longer period of time was not entirely feasible. In addition to these barriers to a full immersion, the availability of the research site and the amounts of changes being experienced meant that a longer period of immersion was not possible.

Having visited these problems, and the notion of the ethnographer as 'visitor', entering as anything but a researcher could have been perceived as suspicious by the research population. Regardless of the

participants' prior knowledge of the researcher, no disguise would have been possible for the researcher to assume – with a freeze on agency employment and recruitment and with a redundancy exercise in progress, entering under the guise of agency or new staff member would not have been believable. Furthermore, this would have resulted in deception of participants as to the true identity of the researcher, breaching ethical principals. However, it is the view of the researcher that participant's knowledge of the identity as researcher did not significantly hinder the results of participants' observations and informal interviews, particularly as weeks passed and more trust and rapport was established between researcher and respondents. Other researchers have also experienced this (see for example Marzano, 2007).

During the ethnographic period the researcher was located in the offices of [SERVICE], being situated within different teams throughout the research period, observing and talking to staff. In addition to this, the researcher was invited to observe a number of meetings relating to decision making and the change process the service were undertaking, in addition to conducting the individual interviews with various stakeholders.

Attempting to integrate into the environment of the office was important. Building rapport with staff, while ensuring that they understood the nature of the exchange they would be making with the researcher, was a fundamental process within the research. Initially the researcher would have to probe for responses and further information from respondents' answers, but as time passed a rapport was built with respondents and trust was gained, resulting in spontaneous information sharing and responses. Whyte & Whyte (1984, in DeWalt & DeWalt, 2002: 125) state that 'if people accept you, you can just hang around, and you'll learn the answer in the long run without ever having to ask the questions'. As an ethnographer, it was important to employ the technique of active listening, in order that important information was captured but also elaborated on with respondents in a manner that felt more like conversation than interrogation or interview (particularly in the case of the informal interviews).

This form of ethnographic enquiry is in contrast to the typically perceived long-term immersions in the field that is typical of anthropology, and forms an approach which Knoblauch (2005) has termed 'focused ethnography'. Focused ethnography involves focusing on small elements of a society or particular work related activities, featuring short-term or part-time field visits, data and analysis intensity, background knowledge and adopting a field-observer role (Knoblauch, 2005). This research focused on specific relationships within the wider context of one specific group of people on a short-term basis. Rather than

a lengthy and completely immersive experience, focused ethnography allows researchers to participate in ethnographic research in a more contemporary manner – shorter intervals but with richer and more labour intensive collection and analysis of data.

3.6.4 Sample

Sampling in an ethnographic context, where all is potentially data, can be a complicated but not impossible process. Much of the sampling conducted in this ethnographic research was opportunistic in nature, meaning as interactions and events arose, these events were observed and noted in field notes and data collection. However, in order to maintain a level of validity in ethnographic research, it is the responsibility of the researcher to attempt to implement some form of sampling, with the goal of capturing data from a representative sample of the research population (Johnson, 1990). All members of the research site were invited to participate in individual interviews, though the majority of participants were not attracted through this invitation. Many were selected on the basis of conversations during informal office discussions, and approached directly. Some of those approached preferred not to be interviewed individually, and this request was respected, though the respondents were happy to discuss and answer any questions I had on an informal basis. Those that were approached were chosen for their group membership (male or female, job group, job role), opportunity to answer the propositions of the research through rich descriptions, age range and expertise on the topic at hand; known as judgement sampling (Bernard, 1995). However, the nature of many of the interactions was opportunistic, at least on an informal basis, but efforts were made to reach greater representativeness (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2002).

3.6.5 Ethnographic Methods

3.6.5.1 Formal Interviews

Interviews are recognised as being a fundamentally instrumentalised technique in ethnographic research (Jensen & Janowski, 1991). Interviews are defined as ‘a purposeful conversation in which one person asks prepared questions (interviewer) and another answers them (respondent)’ (Frey & Oishi, 1995:1)

Individual interviews were conducted with various stakeholders within the [SERVICE] and the organisation at large. A total of 17 in-depth, formalised interviews took place, mainly with staff and management within the service, but also with the legal team, senior management and staff from other

departments working on business transformation projects with the service. As the qualitative interview is more focused on exploring depth and understanding of context, meaning and experiences, the small number of participants is typical of a qualitative approach. This is in contrast to the quantitative approach which collects a shallow band of data from many participants (Baker & Edwards, 2012). While a larger number would have been preferable in terms of generalisability, the total number of participants when including informal interviews increases the sample size.

Formal interviews were offered to all members of the service, regardless of their job role, which provided rich descriptions from managers, employees, and key stakeholders. Participation in any individual interview was entirely voluntary, and interviews were conducted during normal working hours. Questions developed from the focus group data and initial weeks of observation within the ethnographic process were used in the formal interviews. These were adapted and developed following the analysis of each interview, and provided a structure to the data that allowed for responses to remain relevant to the propositions, while still allowing for rich description (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Creswell, 2003). Qualitative interviews allow for greater depth of data collection and deeper exploration of participant experience (Baker & Edwards, 2012). Anonymity of respondents was assured and participants were asked to sign consent forms to give their informed consent to participate.

Despite the offer service wide for private, formal interviews, many individuals within the service preferred to discuss things with me on a more informal basis. Those who asked for interviews were more likely to be inclined to tell me about sensitive topics relative to the economic environment that the entire business was facing, particularly during the voluntary redundancy exercise. Very few, in this environment, would reveal personal feelings, worries, fears and concerns about sensitive topics regarding the change process, both in their environment and organisation-wide, though there were a few exceptions. As the formal interviews ran alongside the ethnographic process of observation, informal discussions with staff and documentary analysis, the number of participants may appear small at 17, but the data from other sources created a rich tapestry of information and data from which to draw conclusions. Formal interview respondents tended to be those who were not available or able to discuss or answer questions within the office environment, or had limited time available, for example senior management and members from different teams that acted as a stakeholder in the [SERVICE].

Interview questions were prepared in advance to aid interviews in a semi-structured fashion, allowing for base questions to create opportunity for comparison between participants, but having the freedom to follow up interesting lines of enquiry within the broad scope of the research problem. Having this

framework of questions allowed for opportunity to cross-compare without constraining the data to be less case-sensitive, but maintained the structure meaning that the data was not immense, unmanageable and irrelevant (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

The interview guide consisted of eight core questions regarding the change process, opportunities and climate for creativity and innovation and the role of the line manager within that. Each question was open-ended, allowing the participant to explore their own perceptions, thoughts and feelings regarding certain events, interactions and relationships. Questions remained as open-ended as possible in order to avoid guiding participants to a particular answer – following the advice of Creswell (2003: 8), questions were kept ‘broad and general so that the participants can construct meaning of a situation’. Questions used in the interview can be viewed in appendix 3.

The interview was designed to last approximately 20-30 minutes in order to create minimal disruption to the working day, encourage participation and to not overburden respondents (Weiss, 1994). However, some respondents talked more in depth about their experiences and spoke for significantly longer (40-50 minutes). Length of interview varied not only on how much the participant wished to share, but also on how much time they had available at the time of interviewing, with some requiring more stringent time keeping than others. While additional prompting questions were asked as new lines of enquiry were introduced by the participants’ accounts of events and relationships within their working environment, the interview guide was returned to before the end of each interview.

Each interview was tape recorded with the permission of the participant, and each participant was asked to sign a consent form (see appendix 4). After interviews were conducted, they were transcribed for analysis. Recordings were transcribed verbatim, and the transcripts averaged 8.5 pages. Two interviews were not tape recorded – both interviews took place at a public cafe for the convenience of the participant, where the environment was too noisy to tape record. In this case, detailed notes were taken at the time of the interview and afterwards.

The aim of the research at this stage of data collection was to further explore through a variety of data collection methods, exactly what was going on inside this section of the organisation. Building on the findings from the focus groups, this section of the ethnographic work was designed to explore in depth with participants.

A great advantage of individual interviews is that they provide contextualised data that provides rich descriptions from the perspective of the interviewee. Furthermore the individual interview provides

opportunity for the researcher to draw on social cues such as intonation, body language and so forth (Opdenakker, 2006). Moreover the spontaneity of the interview allows for immediate probing and questioning that may not be permissible in a time delay situation such as online or email (Opdenakker, 2006) – what this means is that the interviewer must enact ‘double attention’ (Wengraf, 2001: 194), actively listening to responses, checking for understanding and either formulating the next question off of the basis of the answer, or ensuring that the respondent does not veer too far off course with their response so that all the required questions are answered in the time the researcher has with the respondent. Tape recording interviews can result in a very rich account of the interview, providing a verbatim account and ensuring that verbal information is not missed. However, researchers must continue to take notes in case of technological failure and to record non-verbal cues. A disadvantage of individual interviews that have been tape recorded is that transcription is incredibly time consuming, with Bryman (2001) suggesting one hour of tape equates to around five hours of transcription time.

One of the major limitations is that researcher influence can be a potential drawback of interview techniques (Kvale, 1994), specifically the non-verbal cues such as nodding being interpreted as agreement rather than acknowledging understanding of the answer, which can be reduced by being aware of the actions as a researcher and following an interview protocol (Opdenakker, 2006). Additionally, a structured interview, while being easily quantifiable, does lack flexibility, leaving ‘little room for unanticipated discoveries (Breakwell, Hammond & Fife-Schaw, 1995: 231). The sample of interviewees were partially drawn from opportunity (were invited to interview by the researcher or had requested an interview), though many were targeted due to their recognition for being key informants.

3.6.5.2 Informal Interviews

Informal interviews, also known as unstructured interviews, are recognised as allowing researchers in the field to be ‘free to deal with the topics of interest in any order and to phrase their questions as they think best (Nichols, 1991: 31).

Despite the service-wide invitation to participate in formal interviews, it was noted that much richer data was produced from informal discussions within the office and the coffee stations, rather than in the formal, tape recorded setting. Due to the nature of not being tape recorded, participants appeared to be significantly more candid in what they would reveal to me as a researcher. This should not have been surprising, as Fetterman (1989: 133) explains, ‘people often accord ethnographers the same level of

trust they give to priests, rabbis and psychiatrists'. Participants were aware that my role in the organisation was that of external researcher and that I was observing their working patterns. I was always overt in my being there, listening and observing, and as such the initial weeks of the ethnographic process were, at times, difficult, producing restricted interactions, but which improved as trust and rapport was established.

These informal interviews were recorded in the form of note taking at the research site, and afterwards through annotations and recollections, and recordings of the biases and reflections of the researcher. During informal interviews, field notes were recorded in the form of short notes and bullet points, with greater detail being added after the conversations had finished. This allowed the researcher to fully listen to the respondents and to reduce the interruptions and distractions, both for the researcher and for the respondents. Important points were noted during the conversations and details recorded immediately afterwards, also allowing for greater flow of conversation. Participants were, however, still aware of my being a researcher and in providing the researcher with their constructions of events through conversations, were aware that anything that they said could be used as part of the research project and were frequently reminded as such. These informal interviews took place alongside and as part of participant observation.

3.6.5.3 Participant observation

Participant observation 'is essentially one of checking exceptions by studying a series of relevant incidents, occurrences or cases (Krishnaswamy, Sivakumar & Mathirajan, 2006). Observational data was collected overtly on a daily basis during the period of engagement at the research site. Through observation the researcher was able to bear witness to the day-to-day interactions between employees and managers, observe office politics, collegiality and innovative behaviours in action. It also allowed for gaining a deeper cultural awareness of the group and the climate of the business, particularly during times of political and organisational change. Observational data is a useful data collection method as it has the strength of removing the researcher from the flow of events (Adler & Adler, 1994), meaning that the researcher is able to observe daily life and events as they unfold, without bearing much influence on the outcome of the event.

Observational data were captured in the form of detailed field notes. Field notes were taken on site to capture important details at the time of the observations, but were also added to later through interpretations, thoughts, feelings and potential biases as an ethnographic researcher in the field.

The majority of members of the service had participated in focus groups previously and therefore were aware of the researcher's status as a PhD student involved with conducting research within their service. At times this made participant observation difficult – harbouring an awareness of the researcher's potentially listening to them occasionally stifled the conversation between participants during at times. Over time this feeling began to dissipate, while other participants relished the opportunity to talk candidly about their thoughts and feelings regarding a number of topics. The participant observation, despite some early limitations, appeared to be the most fruitful of the methods of data gathering during the ethnographic period. This was due to the informal interviews and conversations participants would have with the researcher on a variety of topics, and not limited to the questions being asked in formal interviews.

In addition to the day to day office interactions and team meetings the researcher was able to observe, the researcher was also invited to observe three important meetings during the time stationed at the organisation. The first was a Charter Mark meeting; the second, a management meeting with a strategic division of the organisation's HR department (WIP), looking at the Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal, and Environmental (PESTLE) factors affecting the business during that present economic climate and organisational restructuring; and the third, a much larger meeting held at an external location which encompassed employees and management from the services within the Development directory that were facing restructuring and redundancy efforts in order to streamline the business. Furthermore, participants were present in the initial access negotiation meetings for working with the service to gauge responsiveness and acceptance for the research to take place in the service area, and to involve participants in the research process from the beginning (Bryman, 2003).

3.6.5.4 Document Analysis

Document analysis in this case was used to a very limited degree, due to the availability of documents for analysis. Many documents relating to change structures and intended future directions for the business were confidential and therefore access was restricted. Some documents were made available, but in practice the opportunity for documentary analysis was limited, and therefore it was felt that the

other approaches used in the ethnographic body of work added more value to the analysis than this particular method.

However, the documents that were available publicly to the staff within the organisation were of great interest in terms of scene setting during a time of uncertainty, particularly with regards to the political perspectives on the situation through communications from the organisation and influences from unions and press.

3.6.6 Data Analysis of Ethnographic Methods

In analysing the data collected through an ethnographic approach, the task appears huge due to the mass of data collected through the various methods. Brewer (2000) suggests organising the data logically through indexing and categorisation, developing theories and typologies.

Typically in the analysis of qualitative data, a Grounded Theory approach is often adopted (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The key tenets of Grounded Theory are apparent in much of the analytical approaches to dealing with qualitative data, namely data reduction, display and conclusion-drawing (Huberman & Miles, 1994: 429; in Denzin & Lincoln, 1994); or rewriting, coding and comparison (Pfaffenburger, 1988: 26; Tesch, 1990). Grounded Theory is recommended for exploring social relationships and collective behaviour where research on the contextual factors surrounding them has been limited (Crooks, 2001).

Following the detailed approach of Glaser & Strauss (1967) to analyse the data in this case was not entirely possible. The use of Theoretical Sampling in particular was incredibly difficult in this particular study – Theoretical Sampling suggests that researchers enter the field *Tabula Rasa*, as a blank slate with no predetermined conceptual framework or knowledge of prior research in this field (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) and pursuing data collection that will further support or direct the emerging theoretical constructions. If little was known about the phenomena under study, this may be an appropriate approach to entering the research environment. This approach to the use of Grounded Theory is much debated in the literature, as some scholars believe it is entirely acceptable to enter the field having completed a literature review and with a research design in place, but that this pre-existing knowledge should not be used to force the emerging categories to fit the literature (for example, Glaser, 1978. In Goulding 2002; McGhee, Marland & Atkinson, 2007). As PhD theses require a guaranteed contribution to knowledge, entering the field with no knowledge of the previous research in that area is a risky strategy, creating potential for replication of existing work rather than extending our knowledge around

a subject. Furthermore, the linking of theory and ethnographical accounts 'grounds theory in the richness of social life' (Snow, Morrill & Anderson, 2003: 182) and provides greater stability to the findings of ethnographic research (Prus, 1996). As such, with a reduction of theoretical sampling in this case, particularly with regards to taking opportunities for data collection where they arose, a 'true' Grounded Theory approach was not undertaken in the analysis.

The data was analysed using the computer data analysis software Nvivo 8. Dohan & Sanchez-Janowski (1998) suggest that this more contemporary approach to qualitative data analysis is suitable due to the shared bases in Grounded Theory of all Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis (CAQDA).

Furthermore, the ability for researchers to record electronically in the field and analyse in the same way enables some amelioration of the problems of ethnographic research reporting, such as reporting the events that stick in the memory of the researcher as being most significant, and reporting events that happened later in the fieldwork as these are most recent in memory (Dohan & Sanchez-Janowski, 1998).

The first approach was to use open coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) to code the data gathered from formal and informal interviews, field notes and observations and documents gathered, writing memos and applying these as concepts. This approach to analysis was completed as the data was received in order that the research could follow the direction needed and questions could be asked based on the existing findings and developing theoretical sensitivity (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). This was followed by developing a series of categories by grouping codes and concepts together logically, and identifying the core categories in the data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Data was then examined for theoretical relationships between the categories and existing theory compared against that of the resulting categories from the analysis.

Part of any qualitative data collection and analysis requires the researcher to be reflexive in their practice as a method of increasing confidence in their knowledge claims by readers, and as such the following section will deal with researcher reflexivity.

3.6.7 Researcher Reflexivity

Remaining truthful, emotionally detached and objective in describing the events witnessed are problems faced by all researchers (Kornblum & Smith, 1996) – being an active participant in the world observed, and the nature of being a human being tainted with experience, knowledge and emotions creates this incongruence. Reflexivity as a researcher is a most essential part of qualitative research, and allows the

researcher to acknowledge the potential impact of their role on the process and results (Hammersley, 2004).

Reflexive notes were taken throughout the fieldwork process. The process ranged from beginning, feeling that there was difficulty in gaining respondents' trust, to beginning to feel accepted by some members of the group having built a rapport with them. There were occasions where, at the time, attributions of malice or ignorance were noted (for example when two members from the focus groups sat nearby in the office, failing to acknowledge my presence, or actively ignoring it) rather than acknowledging that this could be due to uncertainty or trepidation on the part of the respondent, and that judgements of malice perhaps reflected the researcher's fear that trust would not be gained or that the qualitative research would not be rich and fulfilling in making knowledge claims. The more frequently similar situations occurred, the more the researcher felt isolated and fearful of fruitlessness of the research. However, as time passed these events reduced in number, suggesting a socialisation of the researcher into the environment. As the weeks passed, it was felt that ignorance of researcher presence was more related to an acceptance into the group rather than open rejection – in a sense this 'invisibility' felt different than the initial rejection felt by the researcher. On occasions where the researcher was not in attendance at the business (such as on teaching days), respondents were keen to find out where the researcher had been and why they were not in the office – a suggestion of successful socialisation. However the full socialisation could not be fully realised in just five months. Although respondents began to feel at ease around me, there would, on occasion be some hostile attitudes from some members of staff. Comments such as 'I see you've moved up in the world now then, you're with the big boys', upon moving to sit in a different area of the office (whether this was based on desk space availability or an active decision to observe other groups), could cause a tainting of the views of the researcher with regards to the actions and behaviours of those individuals in the analysis. The researcher tried to keep an open mind and be reflexive on the way comments such as this felt and make decisions as to whether these comments were based on historical conflicts in the environment (as revealed by respondents) or whether these were defence mechanisms towards the forthcoming changes.

The paradox of being a researcher and a participant in the research was felt, sometimes significantly. While some respondents delighted in having an external body to share their feelings and stories with, others behaved warily and in a reserved manner (for example, respondent 8 beginning their interview with 'how much are we allowed to say, that's the trouble. We're not sure what we're allowed and not allowed to say'). Relationships with certain respondents were more friendly than others. While the

researcher did not socialize outside of the office environment, and did not lead people into greater friendship than with other respondents, as occurs when spending any length of time with people, the researcher did find greater connections with some respondents than others. It was important that the researcher acknowledged these 'friendships' (or in more accurate terms, acquaintanceships) in analyzing the data, not appearing more sympathetic to the views of more 'favoured' individuals and not reporting the responses of those individuals as more truthful than those with whom the researcher felt less close to. Attempting to remain impartial was a difficult but essential process for the researcher, and not allowing the respondents' views to taint perceptions of those they discussed.

A further insecurity of the researcher was that of age, particularly with regards to industry experience. While the researcher made efforts to read about the industry and gather information about the role of the business in that industry, it was difficult not to feel inadequate in terms of knowledge at times. Particularly age was a factor that pressed on the researcher quite heavily – fear that others would deem the researcher as inexperienced and therefore irrelevant or worse, an inconvenience to the respondents echoed through the research experience. The gap between the age of the researcher and the age of the youngest member of the organisation was six years, though the typical difference in age was closer to 15 or 20 years. Perceptions of 'being treated like a child', or talked down to by older members of staff, while few and far between, were on occasions experienced. In this case these feelings were identified with that of the respondent that had reported experiencing that kind of relationship with their manager. It was difficult not to over-sympathise with this feeling, particularly as it was impossible to argue that as a PhD student and not an individual with 20+ years of experience in a field; as someone who had never been solely responsible for a managerial role. Likewise, this lack of experience of being a manager, and knowing what that felt like, could have a bearing on the outcome of the analyses produced.

The only way to truly diminish researcher bias would have been to have multiple researchers collecting and analysing the data. However, researcher reflexivity allows for some acknowledgement of the potential for bias that a researcher brings when they enter a process of qualitative enquiry. In addition to reflexivity, measures taken to counteract methodological bias included the respondent validation feedback loop (Richards, 2005; Bryman & Bell, 2003) where participants verified the accuracy of their accounts. Furthermore, data triangulation, that is drawing data from a variety of sources to examine whether the same findings will be found under different circumstances or through using different methods of inquiry (Yin, 1994). In this research, a mixed methods approach was used, ensuring a variety of qualitative sources (interview, observation, documentary analysis) could be triangulated. The

quantitative data collected as part of the research programme served as an additional piece of work for the organisation, and as such the approach for collecting this data can be viewed in appendix 1.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

Ethical issues were considered at each stage of the research process, and these differed in their ease of adherence depending on the type of data being collected. Particularly in the case of qualitative research, or more specifically ethnographic work, the consideration of ethics is especially intensive.

Informed consent requires researchers to ensure that participants are fully aware of what the research entails, their role as a participant in the research and that in light of this that they agree to take part (Oliver, 2008). Attempts were made at all levels of the research to adhere to informed consent. Parts of this were more straightforward than others. For individual formal interviews, participants were given an information sheet with details of the project and what to expect from the interview, as well as information about how their responses would be used (reported in themes in the thesis document, in reports to the organisation and research funders, and potentially in publications in academia), emphasising the voluntary nature of participation, right to withdraw and anonymity. Participants were required to read this and sign a consent form agreeing that they had read and understood the information presented and that in light of this they agreed to participate. Participants were given a copy of this information should they wish to have referred back at a later date, along with contact details of the researcher in case of a later decision to withdraw. This was also the case in the additional quantitative data collection in appendix 1, with information sheets and consent forms. In addition to this, participants were asked to provide a unique identifying reference for use in case they later decided to withdraw from the study. It was made clear that the identifier would not be used to identify the participants and their answers, but rather that this enabled the researcher to find and remove the data from the data set easily should participants wish to withdraw further down the line. The ethnographic portion of the research gave a more problematic fulfilment of informed consent. The best that the researcher could offer was introducing themselves to staff members as a researcher and maintaining with the respondents that everything raised, discussed and observed could be used as data, reminding the respondents at regular intervals.

Anonymity and confidentiality are further considerations to be dealt with. Confidentiality in the case of a thesis cannot be reasonably guaranteed. Confidentiality would mean that only the researcher would

have access to the data. This is not feasible for a thesis whereby the reporting of the data will be read by examiners, academic supervisors, and potentially the organisation and academic community. However, anonymity is something that can be addressed through the removal of possibilities of attributing the identity of a respondent to their responses. This has been achieved through the reporting of data in themes and never referring to respondents in reports with the use of their name, replacing this instead with a respondent number. Respondents were made aware in their information sheets about the nature of reporting their data and clarity regarding confidentiality and anonymity. Focus groups are a particularly problematic area in terms of anonymity and confidentiality. While as a researcher it is possible to promise anonymity through the reporting of themes and use of participant numbers with removal of identifying features, there is no possibility to prevent fellow participants in a group from discussing the information shared in a group with others outside of the focus group. This was explained in the brief read out at the beginning of each focus group and participants were given the right to leave prior to the commencement of the group. A 'Chatham House Rules' approach was taken to focus groups, asking participants to be conscientious and not discuss the responses outside of the focus group. Unfortunately it is not possible to guarantee anonymity and confidentiality on the part of fellow participants, but all participants were made aware of this prior to beginning the focus groups.

Further considerations include that of deception. Due to the nature of the research, there was no reason to partake in any level of deception or misinformation of participants in order to avoid social desirability biases. Participant observation during ethnographic work was overt rather than covert, and participants were reminded of the role of the researcher at regular intervals. As there was no purpose to deceiving or misinforming participants, the researcher was explicit in the purpose of the study, the way in which responses would be used and the role of the researcher in the organisation.

Finally, benefit of participation in the research should outweigh that of the risk. Ultimately, the risk of participating in this research was minimal for participants. The only obvious part of the research where risk was involved in participating was that of the focus groups, where participants were made fully aware of the potential risks before participating. The benefits of participating were identified as contributing to a more efficient running of their business and potentially contributing to the change that participants wanted to see in their service area.

3.8 Conclusions

This chapter has detailed the methodological approach of the entire programme of research for the PhD thesis. This included details of the qualitative mixed methods approaches with reference to triangulation of the data. The following chapter will detail the findings from the combined programme of research, touching on emerging themes from the data and illustrative quotes, drawing together the common thread that ties together each of the core constructs – the role of the line manager.

4 The Social Exchange of Managerial Discretion, Work Engagement and Innovative Behaviour

This chapter details the cumulative findings of the research programmes. The chapter will draw attention to the key themes and constructs that emerged from the data and will be illustrated with quotes from the focus groups, individual interviews, observations and ethnographic work as a whole. The key constructs include work engagement, innovative behaviours and creativity, and the role of the line manager in inspiring employees to behave in these ways. The data also touches on issues of knowledge sharing and protection in order to travel the direction that the organisation wishes to go in light of the changes in operation. The wealth of mixed methods data collected through codifications of transcripts, field notes and documents provides a rich tapestry of information that has been developed into the core concepts presented in this chapter, as well as providing a snapshot of culture and climate within the business at the time through illustrative citations from respondents and the observations of the researcher.

4.1. Entering the Research Site

During the focus group data collection, the organisation was a flagship area of the business, operating as public sector but with a trading account which allowed them to pursue work within the commercial market. However this also meant that the limitations and bureaucratic processes, as well as the risk aversion from the legal department, restricted how much they could achieve on a commercial basis. However, their business model required them to be competitive in a private sector market, as other private sector businesses could also be hired by homeowners and community customers to do the work in place of the service. At the time there were rumours of a takeover from an external company, and it was clear that change was in the pipeline for the organisation, though at the time it was not clear what that change would be.

At the time of entering the research site to begin the ethnographic series of enquiry, a large scale change process was being undertaken by the service, the directorate, and the organisation at large. Multiple change events were impacting on the entire organisation. In summary: redundancy exercises, cutbacks due to the recession, central government restrictions on spending and change in the function of HR from transactional to transformational roles (workforce planning, succession planning, talent management). Line managers were also facing changes to their roles, by taking on the more

transactional roles of HR, and some devolvement of responsibilities to employees (for example booking leave, changes in personal information and so forth).

The service was located in an office environment, though much of the technical team's work may take place on site at an external location. The office floor was shared with that of another service within the directorate, which was separated by furniture such as large lockers and partitions. The office was an open plan design, with managers and staff members sitting together, and a selection of empty hot desks near to the administrative team. Although the plan of the office was open, there were clear divisions between functions in their location. The only exception to this was that of the Community team – members of this team utilised hot desks and any free desks on a given day. This was due to their work being primarily on sites away from the office. The only team that was truly separated from the rest of the service was the administrative function that was devoted to working for the [SERVICE] director, alongside three of the management team, and the director himself. However, their separation from the rest of the staff was through the use of partitions rather than separate rooms, and as such maintained the openness of the office environment. The kitchen was shared with other service areas located on the floor, and there were quiet areas for people to hold meetings or to leave their desks for lunch. The meeting rooms varied from large to small and enabled staff members needing to work on a project without distraction to have an area in which this could happen. These were glass walled rooms, making individuals visible, but able to shut themselves away. These rooms were equipped with internet and a phone that individuals could log into, should they wish to remain contactable. At the office desks, line managers and their staff were sat together, in close proximity. The office was bright and clean, with large windows covering one wall allowing for substantial natural light to enter the office. My location in the office varied from sitting with commercial staff to sitting at the hot desks, observing the community and administration teams.

At the time of joining the service for the ethnographic research, the service had just abandoned the notion of a potential sell off of their part of the business to an external firm, which was suspected by participants in the initial focus groups as being in the future of the service. Instead the business was intending to operate as a private sector arm of the public sector organisation, a so called 'arms length company' or 'wholly owned company' (WOC). This is a potential opportunity being investigated by the larger organisation as a solution to many of the problems of central government cut backs and restrictions, pursuing a more innovative way of maintaining the services provided by the public sector. The service was one of two that were undergoing this change, providing opportunities for the research

to understand how innovative behaviour and engagement work in practice when line managers are in the process of implementing change processes, voluntary redundancy and maintaining their day to day line managerial duties.

4.1.1 Becoming a Wholly Owned Company

Interviews with members of the business revealed that it was essential to move forwards from the old ways of working to a more commercial mindset and that should the voluntary redundancy exercise not reduce the workforce enough, then compulsory redundancy exercises would need to be undertaken. Members would have to demonstrate their ability to adapt to a commercial approach and that they possess the ideas and desire to be innovative. Respondent 1 (manager) explained the change to WOC as focusing on, 'more income generating work, reducing the size of the organisation but with consensus (i.e. no agency staff, voluntary redundancy trawl), and service redesign to business needs'. The WOC would be responsible for its own finances, and operating in much the same way as a private sector business in the same field. What is interesting about this period in the organisation's history is that those staff members that remain with the business will have to change their attitudes and working approaches to fulfil the needs of the business. All members of the business would need to take on a more proactive and private sector minded role to winning work for the business, no matter what their day to day role in the organisation is. ICT implementations should be received with an open mind, and an eagerness to learn. Overall employees would need to become more creative and innovative in their approach to their work.

However, acknowledging that change was essential did not prevent feelings of uncertainty and fear of the unknown. Potentially the service's management team had to consider more options than voluntary redundancy (many respondents spoke of possible job redesign, potential for reapplying and re-interviewing for your job). However management requiring a more commercially driven and minded team understood that in order for the organisation to be successful and survive when moving into the WOC that, 'you're not gonna make it work with people who aren't right' (Respondent 11, manager).

Employees in individual interviews and informal interviews within the office possessed varying levels of resistance towards the changes being made. The mixed responses demonstrated a myriad of varying perspectives – some were quite secretive in their discussions, wishing only to speak with the researcher on an individual basis, or whispering inaudibly to each other when they felt the researcher might be

listening during observations. Some respondents expressed the opinion that, 'A lot of people are worried about the change' (Respondent 4, surveyor) and, 'Morale is very low at the moment across the organisation' (Respondent 10, surveyor). Many respondents were quite open about their feelings of fear or acceptance of the change. There was, however, a sense of resignation rather than support in some cases. For example one administrator commented how they were initially worried about the future of their job, but having had time to think, they had realised there was nothing that they could do about the change – that it would push ahead regardless of their fears or thoughts about the change. Further respondent 6 (surveyor) stated in interview,

'I'm not gonna sort of sit there trying to resist it type of thing because I'm only a small cog in a big wheel, and the wheel's a lot bigger than me and it soon could crush me so no, personally from my point of view I've got no sort of qualms about it'.

Several respondents, both in interview and in informal chats within the office stated that the change process was inevitable. Their approach towards this was, as they put it, to 'just go with the flow' (Respondent 6, surveyor; respondent 7, administrator). The difference in how respondents reacted to the change process appeared to be typically dependent on the job roles they possessed. Respondent 9 (administrator) explained that 'technical staff have dealt with many changes but admin has tended to stay the same', which may explain some of the different levels of fear and uncertainty towards the change. However one manager stated that admin has gone through a series of changes over the years, particularly with regards to headcount reduction, and so they were used to fairly regular changes in their work.

Some members of the teams were logical in their approach to the inevitable change. As well as 'going with the flow', respondent 4 (surveyor) explained, 'how this change affects you will depend on your attitude towards the job and what you want to get out of it'. This statement encompasses much of the personal role an individual takes when entering a job role – their citizenship behaviour, their willingness to be flexible, their engagement and their reciprocity towards the organisation, as well as developmental considerations, training, relationships and psychological contract implications. Furthermore respondent 14 (surveyor) added, 'I always tend to think the people who are making the mountains are the people who have got the most to worry about'.

The concern for jobs, however, was not only limited to the administration team. The admin team appeared to feel particularly threatened due to the devolution of administrative duties to the technical

staff, removing aspects of their roles and reducing their workload and therefore their workforce. One admin stated that historically their roles had not changed so much, but now they were worried (Respondent 9, administrator). But technical staff were not immune from potential upheaval in their roles. This was felt particularly in the community department. There was concern that 'it'll probably work but it'll work for commercial... I imagine that'll be it' (Respondent 14, surveyor). The focus on the commercial side is due to the nature of what lies ahead with a WOC – operating now as a private sector company, with public sector values and still being committed to providing public services which were not making profit for the business. The commercial team set to benefit most greatly from the WOC due to their ability to make money in the commercial arena. Questions were asked of managers regarding how they felt about the security of their workers' jobs in the face of transitioning to the WOC, considering the devolution from the administrative functions meaning that particular team felt the most threatened. Respondent 17 (manager) explained,

'For different reasons than admin, the state of the economy – if our income is reducing because the construction industry is earning less money, there is a threat there that there could be need for less surveyors. But I think you're right to say it's not the same threat, it's not as worrying but it is still there'.

Certainly the traditional local authority view is no longer a valid one. As respondent 6 (surveyor) states, 'I don't think it's gonna be the case where you're in a local authority, you're in a job for life. Because I think that's the old, the old view, the old way of looking at it'.

As well as fears about their future in the organisation, respondents speculated on what would happen after the transition, particularly with regards to the local authority input to their privately run business. One concern about the change was that of pleasing central government through 'creative accountancy' with staff levels and budget provision by the larger organisation. Respondent 18 (administrator) explained,

'I could be wrong and I hope I am but I see it as their way of saying... we've got rid of all these staff so it looks good to central government but in fact they haven't, they're just sort of sitting in the wings these staff. They've been told they've gotta reduce by 20,000 staff... how you gonna do all the services?'

The local authority's role in the business was also queried with regards to bureaucratic processes and political involvement. How much of a role the local authority would have in the daily operations of the business was at that time unclear beyond being the ultimate owner of the WOC. Concern about what

the future held was evident at all levels, especially with regards to responsibility and historical public sector values. As respondent 11 (manager) explained,

‘What it will want will be an organisation that delivers profit at minimal cost or no cost, but which functions with all the baggage that a council carries... And they won’t want the risk either you know, they’ll want the directors to take the risk’.

4.1.2 Widening the Scope

Interested in the benefits of making the potentially massive upheaval of organisational change by transitioning to a WOC, beyond the benefits of reduced costs and headcount for the local authority, Respondents were asked what would change for their business and how they would benefit from the change as a company and a workforce. Respondent 11 (manager) explained the immediate benefits,

‘What would change overnight would be the ability to do more in terms of scope, so we could do some things that we’re currently prohibited from doing, so widening our trading portfolio in other areas and there are certain things that are quite lucrative in the construction industry that we’ve got the skills to do that we can’t do cos it’s not a local authority function’.

It appeared that the bureaucratic restrictions of being unable to make a profit as a public sector service would be reduced, if not eliminated for the WOC. At the time of the ethnography, although the business was responsible for their own money through a trading account, ultimately they were prevented from making a profit due to being a local authority function. Breaking even was the only acceptable result, and due to the risk averse nature of local authorities, legally they were restricted in terms of the work they could feasibly pursue, even at a commercial level.

Several staff members, from technical staff, to admin, to manager echoed similar sentiments over what they would be able to do more of as a WOC. Respondent 7 (admin) explained,

‘I think where they’re limited at the moment with certain things that we can’t do to what we’d hopefully be able to do in the near future. So this I think is the other reason for the way that they’re taking the company, because we’re limited at the moment for trading, there’s certain things that we can’t trade and hopefully it will open up that we can. So what we’ve missed out in the past, we’ll go to in the future to be able to do’.

Staff felt that this positive change in the way they work would not only benefit the service as a fully functioning business, providing greater opportunities for winning work at the private sector level and

becoming a more competitive force to be reckoned with in the commercial and community arena, but also would make a difference in their psychological contract as well. As respondent 6 (surveyor) stated, 'If we can trade that means we get more income coming in. More income, more job security'.

With the ability to widen their scope comes greater responsibility. The organisation needed to become 'fit for purpose' (Respondent 1, manager), meaning a streamlining of their workforce numbers was not the only approach that would see them through to a successfully operating WOC. The business would be requiring the right people, staff that are 'more creative and innovative, open to using ICT technologies, and... more open to promoting the service to gain more work' (Respondent 1, manager). Furthermore, efficiency in the community arena (the non fee paying part of the business that must continue to be offered) was deemed a priority – 'not less, just more efficiently' (Respondent 1, manager), and smarter ways of doing things across the business was essential.

The next section of this chapter will focus on the data analysis of the core concepts. Unpacking the data collected through interviews and observations on creativity and innovative behaviour, as well as the role of the line manager in this area, and the importance of shared knowledge.

4.2 Sharing Knowledge and Tacit Knowledge

Sharing knowledge was identified within the data as being a fundamental part of how the organisation operates on a day to day basis, and part of the driving force behind the process of being creative and inventive. This was initially identified in the preliminary focus groups, and later observed in action through the ethnographic fieldwork.

Individuals were observed to be so knowledgeable about their roles within the organisation, and the environment that the organisation operates in, that this creates a form of competitive advantage for the business. Employees were observed in action using their knowledge, skills and experience to operate independently of the line manager, completing tasks without assistance, and providing assistance to colleagues through the sharing of knowledge on a daily basis. On the other hand, consideration of the context at the point of data collection demonstrates that a loss of shared and tacit knowledge also becomes a potential problem for the organisation during their downsizing of the business. The following section will discuss the role of shared and tacit knowledge in [SERVICE], how this applies to innovative behaviour and competitive advantage and the potential pitfalls of a business losing this form of

knowledge that manifests through knowledge sharing. This will lead into the section about creativity and innovative behaviour in practice within the business.

4.2.1 Explicit and Tacit Knowledge as a Form of Competitive Advantage

Explicit and tacit knowledge forms an important part of the operations of the [service] at all levels of employment, regardless of job roles. Whether it was offering technical help and advice to customers, or completing administrative duties in an efficient manner, the knowledge of each individual played an important role in operational efficiency and customer satisfaction. Explicit and tacit knowledge relating to client links was also highlighted as being incredibly important, particularly regarding the commercial section of the business. Having individual clients and understanding those clients' needs creates great competitive advantage, but also potential problems if those clients move on with staff members that have been made redundant and employed elsewhere in the future.

Due to the nature of the workforce composition within [SERVICE], knowledge has become part of the fabric of how their business operates. The workforce is largely made up of employees that have occupied their roles for a number of years, and is experiencing an aging workforce population, with the majority of workers being over the age of 35. Respondents in focus groups spoke of the length of service many times, and felt that this inherent knowledge and experience that they have collected over the period of their working lives for the business was recognised by management and utilised for the success of the organisation.

‘There’s a lot of professional people in the office if you’ve got a query you can go and talk to anybody. Nobody sort of says, no you should know this, go away, everyone’s very helpful’. [Administrator, FG5].

The concern for the business with regards to the voluntary redundancy exercise was losing the ‘wrong people’. That is, losing the commercially minded and driven individuals that would make a highly positive contribution to the success of the WOC, and those that are innovative, creative, connected and knowledgeable. Management and the workforce themselves were asking questions about the future when voluntary redundancy was complete – ‘now that person’s gone, who’s gonna do that?’ (Respondent 11, manager).

Management could identify which of their staff would be the least beneficial to have leaving. Considering the aging population of the workforce as a whole, it is a logical consideration that those with the widest network of clients and contacts, and those with the greatest level of experience, would most

likely be those nearing retirement age that had been employed at the service for a number of years. Management recognised that this level of experience and network development was something that could not be easily replaced, and certainly would take time to recreate. In this sense, the knowledge of their employees is one of their greatest competitive advantages.

Respondent 4 (surveyor) explained the potential loss to the organisation if certain members were to leave,

‘To give you an example to lose somebody like [employee]... he’s been in [service] for a long time, he’s got so many links with the different clients and [employee]’s the same. I mean all the senior surveyors are the same. If you lose somebody like that you lose such an amount of work, I mean you know that can’t be good for the organisation’.

Emphasising the competitive advantage of having a team reliant on sharing knowledge, networks and many combined years of experience, respondent 4 (surveyor) continued,

‘We’ve all got information there that would be ideal for other people in the market... even if you can’t have direct clients, you’ve still got a lot of information about [service] and the way it works.... that’s gonna be very difficult to keep that information in house. It’s like everything else when people move, they could hand in their notice, move somewhere else and take all the client’s knowledge and everything with them.... there’s no way to keep a lid on that’.

This remark demonstrated that while knowledge and experience formed a fundamental part of the competitive advantage of the business, particularly in moving forwards into the WOC, the potential for that advantage to move elsewhere was perhaps something the business had little control over. But also emphasised the need to harness that knowledge for the greater benefit of the organisation as it moved to the WOC, and recognizing which employees were too important to leave and how to keep them.

Respondent 4 (surveyor) added, ‘I just think the people who go will be carefully selected for the least impact on the business’.

In light of the potential loss of important knowledge, the organisation had taken some precautions to ensure the retention of certain members of staff. Respondent 6 (surveyor) explained that some restrictions had been placed on voluntary redundancies of those in higher positions, recognising that some staff were too important to allow to leave, ‘If you’re a surveyor around a certain grade you can’t apply for voluntary redundancy... I think that’s come down from the establishment at a higher level’.

However, despite these restrictions on particular staff groups, other members of the organisation expressed concern over how the business would retain their knowledge after they left. As respondent 18 (administrator) explained,

‘I said don’t do what the *organisation* are good at and leave everything to the last two days. What you need to do is ask people who want to be involved so I can impart the knowledge I’ve got instead of walking off with it. Because the *organisation* are very, very good at saying yes, bye bye, yes you can go, bye bye and then a week before you go, oooh how do I do this, how do I do that’.

They continued to explain the importance of the knowledge they possessed,

‘With what I do you can’t, I’ve got a lot of background knowledge from where I’ve worked you see, working with architects and builders...I’ve got quite a wide range of knowledge from what I did you see, and when I started work [explains previous roles within the business]... that’s where it stems from is having this being able to, at that time being able to move around and expand your knowledge. Plus you keep your networking going.... I still have like [names person], I worked with him in [year], but I can still ring him up and if I’ve got a problem...say who’s the best person to speak to?’ (Respondent 18, administrator).

Emphasising the nature of explicit and tacit knowledge being so personal to the individual, respondent 18 (administrator) stated, ‘I can’t force it on people, they’ve just gotta ask people if they wanna learn part of the job or whatever’. Respondent 16 (manager) emphasised the critical nature of knowledge with regards to competitive advantage in a private sector environment, highlighting the potential problems that losing certain members of the business could occur.

‘The biggest threat to this organisation is gonna be those people that leave. Particularly if they’ve got lots of 30, 40 years of experience because clearly they’ll be head hunted. When the market place picks up they’ll be head hunted, and that’ll be the biggest threat to us as an organisation’.

Based on this potential loss of knowledge and the ultimate losses that could occur should members move on to other businesses, a number of approaches to protecting and conserving knowledge had been implemented or were planned for completion of migration to the WOC.

4.2.2 Protecting Assets of Knowledge

Questioning what had been done locally in addition to the restriction on applying for voluntary redundancies in certain job roles, respondent 11 (manager) explained, 'we've spent the last few months, 6 months, mirroring the job and understanding everything that [employee] does with a colleague'. The respondent continued that in the section for which they were managing, 'Most of the people are doubled up any way or tripled up or on a wider basis, it's very few people that have specialist individual roles. Just about every other job is mirrored up in one way or another'. Respondent 11 (manager) described those restricted from applying for voluntary redundancy as the 'protected species', due to their highly specialised technical knowledge that the organisation felt was essential to keep in house in order to be successful in moving forwards.

These barriers from applying to voluntary redundancy have been achieved through the transformational approach of HR – this is a new approach for the business which has historically worked under a transactional HR process. The newer approach to HR, which has been implemented through a business transformation that has been in process for the past few years, works with a number of transformational HR projects, one of which being workforce planning and talent management. As a further step to protect their assets – people and knowledge – the business worked with an apprenticeship, attempting to transfer the knowledge possessed by many employees to another. This worked through succession planning, due to the nature of the aging workforce, particularly in this area of the wider organisation. However, due to the freeze on recruitment and additional spending, respondent 18 (administrator) stated, 'they've made a start but they've stopped doing that'.

In addition to restriction on spending preventing the organisation from hiring new staff from any age group, respondent 11 (manager) explained in their interview that contingency plans had been implemented prior to any targeted job shadowing using the performance review process.

'In the PDR's that was the target for them, a performance target – get to grips with the tasks that each of you do so that it's all understood and there's a switchover. Not so much when [employee] goes but when one of them is absent, because we'd had some historical problems with them not talking basically... We've smashed that down the middle'.

Moreover, it was felt that sharing knowledge was also the key to bringing employees over to the new, more commercial operation of the WOC. Respondent 1 (manager) explained that significant money had been spent on formal training in the past in an attempt to influence employees to bring a more

commercial mindset to their approach to work, but that this had been unsuccessful. Respondent 1 (manager) felt that if they were to achieve a blanket commercial mindset of the remaining staff, they would need to 'implement shadowing, mentoring and coaching in order to transfer this knowledge to those staff that need to learn to become more commercial'.

Despite some of the potential limitations in loss of knowledge and experience during the changeover, staff felt that the move to the WOC was destined for success based on the knowledge and skills of the workforce that remained,

'Things have to change in the way we do and look at things. Like community and admin that sort of thing. But I think in theory we've got enough experience in place that we shouldn't really fail in what we're trying to do because there's enough experience around' (Respondent 8, administrator).

Furthermore, the employees care about the future of the workforce, regardless of their intention to stay. Their willingness and desire to share what they know with those that will remain was evident in interviews. Respondent 14 (surveyor) stated, 'I'm not getting out of here thinking... forget you lot, I'm going or words to the equivalent. I'm quite happy to pass the knowledge over'. Respondent 11 (manager) agreed,

'I could guarantee that if [employee] was told to walk out the door tomorrow and not come back and get a pay off, she'd come back on Monday and happily spend time sitting through, talking through for free. Cos she's that kinda person'.

Fundamentally, the organisation operates significantly on the personal knowledge and connections that their staff possess, regardless of whether they are a manager, a member of the technical staff or the administration team. Each individual possesses a thorough knowledge of processes that work that they have developed on an individual basis throughout their working lives. The business holds their competitive advantage in their staff networks and attitudes towards knowledge sharing will ensure that during the shedding of staff, at least some of the important tacit knowledge will be retained and become shared explicit knowledge as the organisation changes their design. It was felt that the nature of the length of service of employees resulted in the mass of tacit and explicit knowledge of the business, but that the advantage of working in small teams and with a small workforce enabled clearer knowledge sharing and fewer opportunities for 'secrets' to be kept. As respondent 17 (manager) explained, 'There's enough close working within the smaller teams that people have brought all their knowledge is... passed on anyway, because the same in the business environment you know, you can't afford to keep secrets'.

4.2.3 Knowledge & Innovative Ideas

Underlying first-hand knowledge enabled staff members to make logical thought processes about presenting creative ideas that would benefit the business and their day to day working lives. Creative ideas were discussed with relation to logical purposes. For example the addition of a communications tab within the computer system to track changes in the situation of the client in order that others can pick up the work more efficiently; with the employee recognising the need for this communication to occur between staff members, while understanding this may not always be possible due to technical staff being out on site, or potentially off sick or on holiday. Possessing individual first-hand knowledge about the business enabled staff members to contribute working ideas that have been derived from experience of the business and of approaches to achieving desired outcomes. Respondents presented ideas regarding their work during interviews, drawing on their experience of operating day to day in the office and on site, and further in ways of income generation and promotion of the service moving forwards into the WOC.

Examples of innovative ideas that had not worked were presented which had failed due to the overlooking of individuals' knowledge (for example the paperless office described by respondent 14, surveyor). Personal knowledge was demonstrated as important for idea development (for example respondent 12 (surveyor) explained an idea they had based on previous experience in another organisation where a similar approach was successful in winning work), and in the case of the unsuccessful paperless office, similarly neglect of the knowledge and experience of the workforce resulted in ideas that were possibly destined to fail. During observations, these kinds of experiences were not immediately evident. However certain problems with computer systems were observed, in instances where the system had crashed and the whole office was unable to access their work. This highlighted the difficulties in a reliance on computerised working, and emphasised the perceived 'failure' of the paperless office idea. It appeared that this was a regular occurrence from the jovial way in which respondents would react. One respondent (surveyor) commented, 'Warning, warning, [system] has crashed!'

First-hand users of the daily business operations such as the computer system enabled staff to draw on this knowledge to suggest ways to improve and streamline operations and provide a better hand over to other staff when multiple staff members were working on the same project or in cases where jobs are picked up months later or the principle worker is sick. For example respondent 12 (surveyor) explained

an idea where a new box could be added to the computer system files in order to create greater communication potential, enabling for cross-collaborative working on projects. 'It's all electronic, that's the way forward so previously we'd record things on paper now that's gone, we've got the computer system but the computer system doesn't allow for recording of any agreements you might make with people on the phone whether it's a client architect or whatever. We don't need to make a recording for every phone call but just the critical part of the conversation that we think we might need to record which later on might help us jog our memory or help any other officer picking up that application'. This demonstrates the idea development based on tacit knowledge and logical thought process, which led to the implementation of a discussion record on the computer system for ensuring more effective communication both between staff members and moving forwards with projects for the client. The role of tacit knowledge will continue to run through the following section about innovative behaviours and creativity.

4.3. Innovative Behaviour

Innovative behaviour was highlighted in the initial focus groups as an important issue within the service being studied, as this was repeatedly alluded to by members in all focus groups without any prompting within the topic guide being covered. The focus groups, being conducted before the transfer of the business from being a central local government function to a wholly owned company, served as a rather pre-emptive set of data, as the switch to the WOC resulted in a requirement for staff members to show their innovative behaviour. However, the need for behaving innovatively and commercially existed long before this became an expected behaviour in the WOC, as the business was already a flagship area of the organisation, and operating as a public sector organisation, with public sector values in a private sector field with competition for work. Innovative ways of winning work within the bureaucracy and restrictions of the public sector have been essential for survival prior to the existence of the WOC. This was all achieved while maintaining the values of public sector workers.

Innovation in the public sector is not traditionally perceived as a priority, or indeed a frequent occurrence. However [SERVICE]'s unique business model within the local authority demonstrates the need for a creative and innovative workforce, particularly with regards to the nature of the climate of the industry and the job market as a whole.

‘Because of a lot of our income is from external clients that we’re in competition with the private sector, subconsciously you’ve gotta be creative to give a good service, and you’ve gotta give a good service because you want to bring income through the door, which keeps you in a job’ (Respondent 17, manager).

In particular, the word ‘subconsciously’ in the above quote demonstrates a need for employees to draw on their tacit knowledge to be creative and behave innovatively.

As stated above, the desire to be innovative shone through in the focus groups, which were conducted before news of moving to a WOC broke. The conversations with the focus groups pointed to an overwhelming desire to improve the service and invent innovative ways of working within their industry and within the organisation. These varied from larger scale ideas about how to more easily reach clients and customers, and how to improve the efficiency of the business; to minor modifications to working practices and the use of their office environment. Participants demonstrated a keen interest in becoming more innovative and expressing ideas on how they could make an increased contribution to the service beyond their written job roles (which would become an expected behaviour of staff when transferring to the WOC, and would have been used as a way of identifying potential redundancies if moving from voluntary to compulsory redundancies).

In focus groups, creative ideas were discussed with relation to logical purposes. The main reasons for this underlying desire to innovate were to improve the focus on the business’ clients and customers, and an internal desire for the organisation to be successful, and this linked in to behaviours which could be considered under the umbrella of employee engagement.

‘It’s personal motivation because we want to help out the customers. It’s a commitment to the customers’ (Building Surveyor, FG1).

The client and customer focused ideas became the expectation of workers wanting to remain within the service, and wanting to contribute to the future of the business in an effective way. Ideas at this point were mainly around the idea of creating awareness of the business, particularly within the community area, where home owners and general public may require their services. Innovative ideas revolved around promoting the importance of the work done by the service into the conscience of the general public.

For example, when discussing the role of promotion of the service to the conscience of the general public and the important work that the service do, it was said that at a national level

'It's rubbish in terms of getting information to members of the public', and 'it's not fantastic to the nation and the general public as a whole'. (Building surveyor, FG 5).

The initial ideas from the focus groups were mainly about making service users aware of the essential role of their service provision within the community and promoting the business to customers. A number of ideas were communicated and debated within the focus groups with regards to marketing the service and ensuring that building regulations were pushed to the forefront of public consciousness when they were intending to do work on their homes. This varied from very public interaction becoming part of their roles as employees of the service, to negotiating larger scale interventions.

'The only way you're going to do that is to do a national paper spread really. You can't generate enough leaflets to advertise that fact... Or through the media. So the media would be able to solve that but whether or not it'll be took up or not- the Channel 4 programme was very useful' [Building Surveyor, FG2].

The logical approach to these ideas resulted from their experience of on the job issues that had reoccurred over their years as administrators and surveyors within the service. The participants were open about their experiences of abuse from the public both on site and on the telephones in the office, usually due to members of the public unwittingly employing 'cowboy builders'. It was felt that the issue was *'a matter of educating the general public. Because if the general public are aware then they can challenge their architect, the surveyors they're employing, have you done this and have you done that'* (Building Surveyor, FG3). Furthermore, members of the general public simply were not aware of the need for building regulations when making changes to their property, resulting in work that then needs to be rectified by the service, costing home owners more money,

'The general public don't know about it. The architects don't tell them, builders don't tell them. And that's why half the time we have illegal work being done. Because people don't know' [Administrator, FG3].

Surveyors told stories of the consequences of illegal work, ranging from the additional cost of correcting the work for the home owner, to the complete collapse of a row of houses in the city. Another administrator mentioned that they had had illegal work done on their own home before they worked for the service as they did not know about the regulations surrounding making changes to your own building. These examples highlighted the importance of making the public aware of their service.

Their ideas to address this issue included, *'setting up like a little kiosk and saying you need building regulations for a roof, loads of people go through these shopping centres'* [Administrator, FG4]. They believed that public knowledge could be improved if, *'[service] go out to the neighbourhood offices and have a little surgery'* [Administrator, FG4].

Adding to this debate, an administrator in the same group told of the confusion about their service and suggestions on how to improve promotion of the business,

'There's nothing national or local to say that [service] is separate from Planning. There's nothing to say 'this is the service, you need Building Regs for a roof'. Why just tell- send out letters to people you're contravening, why not do an advertisement campaign? Something in the City Centre or go out to local neighbourhood offices?' [FG4]

Utilising their existing shared knowledge and understanding of the business, the employees considered their ideas in terms of cost-efficiency, with ideas offering preventative services that shared knowledge with the general public and their clients. Another idea involved creating promotional materials to be made available to the public in DIY stores to make home owners aware of the necessity to consult the service for building work to be legal.

'I never worked out why in Focus and Camberbest and that where they put the angling windows, there was a brochure but there was never anything about building regs you know, just where you put flyers saying building regs, extension, garage, whatever, contact building regs' [Surveyor, FG3].

Another suggestion involved further media promotion driven and created by the subordinates and managers.

'We need to do one [a video] of our own and get it done properly, professionally, and let people know exactly... and then to send it out that way. When we rely on other people to put us in a good light it never materialises.'

While these initial impressions from focus groups were important in the development of creative thought and innovative behaviour within the workforce, the ideals of the industry required individuals to tap into a more commercial mindset, beyond promotion of the service and into profitable ideas and incremental innovations that push the service forwards. In the past the service employees felt that they had been portrayed in a bad light and that their attachment to the wider organisation had sometimes been a hindrance in winning more work. Public perceptions of the larger organisation creating a spill over into the perception of their service, *'I always remember the joke.... where people used to say paper*

pushers – pen pushers at the [organisation]’ (Administrator, FG3); as well as client perception being tainted in the same way, potentially impacting on their ability to win work. As one building surveyor told us,

‘We looked at the fit-out, finished with the err the client and we walked off to go to our next job. And errr the client says to us oh are you going for a coffee now? Kind of thing, thinking like [organisation], they do a job, have a coffee, have a break, you know and it’s not like that you know in our division.... So we’ve gotta overcome that barrier as well for winning work’ [Building Surveyor, FG3].

Furthermore, there are stories within the business of the perception of potential clients about the wider organisation, or other services within the organisation, impacting on the ability of the service to win work. It became evident that promoting a positive image to potential clients, existing clients, the general public and indeed other professionals working within the industry was incredibly important for being competitive within the industry.

‘A fee that we did for the [business], we lost just because they think – don’t quote me on this but the client doesn’t like [our organisation] because he’s had a bad experience with [another service]. And that was it. The architect he wanted to use, it was a big job, probably would’ve bought a lot more work in but he just wouldn’t use us’ [Administrator, FG3].

In contrast to the perception-laden past of the public service, and the apparent stigma associated with being attached to a local authority, the WOC allows the service to externalise themselves from the parent company, going into the business world as a private sector company while still offering the same public services as previously. As such, becoming a WOC potentially opens up greater opportunities to trade in a wider arena than what [service] have been restricted to in the past. While nothing was certain at the time of the ethnographic data collection, it was hoped that there was scope to open up into trading in international markets and more widely within the UK for the commercial arm of the business. The freedom to pursue more work would require the members of the business to be more creative in their approach and the act of wider trading would be an innovation for the public sector in itself. The business needed to ‘be more adventurous’ (respondent 1, manager) in the way they sought out work rather than the ‘traditional and narrow’ view they were currently governed by.

Respondent 16 (manager) explained the current restrictions in trading as a public sector business.

‘Building regulations are quite specific you know, and we’re only allowed to carry out our function in terms of building regulations and obviously we have a lot of legislation that we’re responsible for. In a company we’ll have the opportunity to branch out

and do other things’

Becoming a WOC appeared to be a catalyst for providing new and innovative ways of pursuing work and building a successful business that would continue to be a role model, flagship area of the organisation and demonstrate the capabilities of expanding their business to other areas of the local authority.

Respondent 11 (manager) explained the potential changes that would benefit the organisation’s success in transitioning to the WOC,

‘If we were moved to a wholly owned company, what would change overnight would be the ability to do more in terms of scope, so we could do some things that we’re currently prohibited from doing, so widening our trading portfolio in other areas and there are certain things that are quite lucrative in the construction industry that we’ve got the skills to do that we can’t do cos it’s not a local authority function’.

Broadening the scope of where they could pursue work meant that crossing industry and physical boundaries would be a new part of how they would be operating on a daily basis, and this was an exciting prospect for the business due to the expansive nature of these changes. Respondent 16 (manager) explained, ‘We have that opportunity to look further afield, not only in this country for work but also internationally as well. So it’s gonna be a quite exciting time really’.

It was hoped that the transition to the WOC would create opportunities for greater freedom to innovate and create new opportunities for winning work; being a model of how the WOC set up will be successful to other areas of the business that could also make this transition while continuing to provide public services. Previous local authorities that operate on a smaller scale than the organisation have made a success of this. For example, respondent 15 (senior manager) had worked with a local authority in the East of England that had had a service transfer to a WOC and ultimately a merger with another WOC in the authority. This conglomerate WOC was trading in the North and South of England from its base in the East, being responsible for some of the public services being provided in these cities in the North and the South. With the organisation being the largest of its kind, this similar level of success in becoming a WOC would mean championing the way forwards for other local authorities in the country. The opportunity to work as a private sector business, free from the perceived bureaucracy, hoop jumping and red tape (for example inability to court clients to win work as in the private sector (respondent 4, surveyor)) of the public sector but with the continued public sector values of the workforce. However respondent 18 (administrator) explained,

‘We’re a trading account now, the bureaucracy is still the same and I can’t see it changing that much being a wholly owned company seeing as the city council own all the assets. They’re still gonna wanna have a finger in the pie aren’t they? That if you’re gonna do something, I can’t see a lot changing, we’re still gonna have to put reports to committees and chief execs. Could be wrong, I hope I am and they let them go off and do their own thing.... but I can’t see that happening.’

Respondent 18 (administrator) felt that the change process could have a positive impact on new innovations on day to day operations. The respondent indicated that currently the service has what they referred to as a ‘geriatric workforce’, and that in some of the older members of staff taking redundancy, that ‘if my job remained, they could amend it, bring in somebody your age, pay them less money but you’ve got a young workforce coming in. And your ideas about how I did something, you might think well god that was long winded! You know, so, you get a balance then, you get a balance of personalities in the office’.

It was acknowledged that the need to be more innovative has been due to the need to operate in a commercial manner in order to win work. As respondent 11 (manager) stated, ‘I think being in a commercial environment’s forced us into that’. Potentially the transition to the WOC would provide the opportunity to act on more innovative ideas, particularly with regards to the routes to winning more work and building a successful business alongside the legal provision of public services. Members of the team had already been taking advantage of the forthcoming change by informing their clients about the potential expansion in service provision they could offer. Respondent 16 (manager) stated,

‘I’ve already had several meetings with several architects and several companies and you just drop it out in passing and say do you realise we’re heading towards this WOC and this will give us the ability to do other things for you’.

The nature of the tacitly driven organisation meant that these connections through prior work agreements resulted in contact being made for jobs external to the city based on the expertise and quality service provided by the team. One member had been approached by a former client for future work for the business abroad, demonstrating opportunities to be innovative as the business moves forwards into the WOC. The general approach to this was ‘planting the seeds in people’s minds’ – utilising connections through trust to ensure that this work was ready waiting for them when they moved into the WOC – foresight and creative forward thinking. This was especially important when considering the shrinkage of the external market (the construction industry) and the potential for the

specialisms of the commercial team (schools, hospitals) to also begin to dry up in terms of available work.

It was evident that employees were making attempts at demonstrating their innovative competence in relation to the creative potential of becoming a WOC. Ideas such as seeking out corporate sponsorship from the motoring world in order to ameliorate the loss of car petrol allowance from the organisation, and utilizing this as a vehicle for advertising as well as transportation, and ensuring that they are an agile and available workforce for their customer base. Also ideas regarding use of two business cards – one for the local authority and one for the new WOC – requiring thorough knowledge of the client (tacit and explicit) regarding their feelings about the parent company (the local authority). Prior experiences have resulted in a loss of work to the private sector due to the stigma of being involved with a local authority, while for others the local authority equates to safety and quality. These ideas demonstrate their forward thinking and all-encompassing approach to idea development.

4.3.1 The Role of Management in Inspiring Innovative Behaviour

The role of managers, and in particular relationships between manager and employee were highlighted as playing a fundamental role in the daily operations of the business. The relationships that were developed included out of office activities that allowed for building stronger ties between the team and the management. Flexibility and give and take were noted as being important in developing relationships whereby a social exchange would occur. For example,

That's where it sort of comes back to being flexible both ways because they know you're gonna pull your weight back... I mean if they know they could let you go and you'll work twice as hard tomorrow, it's a two way thing [Administrator, FG3].

Management were seen as being essential in the relationship of being willing to share innovative ideas. The way that management treated their employees within the psychological contract, in daily interactions in the office and providing opportunities for them to test out and share ideas were seen as imperative. Respondent 11 (manager) felt that their role as manager was, 'about engaging with people, getting the ideas and then talking them through sensibly. And I think as managers we've got to facilitate these discussions'.

One of the key requirements of the managerial role for creating a climate for innovative behaviour was that of trust. Employees that felt trusted by their manager expressed their desire to share creative ideas, while those that felt poor quality levels of trust from their manager were more likely to keep to

themselves ideas that could potentially make a huge difference to the organisation. For example, respondent 14 (surveyor) appreciated that their line manager allowed them to, 'Just get on with it', while respondent 6 (surveyor) explained that this was a historical decision made by the current head of service, 'If you were happy with doing something and could justify it then you know you're responsible for your own decision really and that's the way it's been ever since. So you know you've got greater freedom, which is a blessing really'. On the other hand, those who were experiencing less trust from their managers were observed to be less interested in contributing to discussions around improvements and ideas for moving forwards, and as detailed elsewhere in the chapter, some respondents explicitly linked their poor quality relationship with the manager to feelings of disengagement and unwillingness to share creative ideas. That is not to say that respondents experiencing low levels of trust were less creative than those experiencing high levels of trust. Rather that those feeling distrust from their manager were less likely to be willing to exchange their ideas with the business.

When asked about opportunities for sharing innovative ideas, team meetings were indicated as the most appropriate forum for sharing their creativity and suggestions. Respondent 14 (surveyor) explained, 'every four weeks you've got opportunities to talk about it'. Respondent 12 (surveyor) agreed that team meetings served a purpose as opportunities to put forward innovative ideas, but felt that management were not taking advantage of this forum or encouraging the use of this forum as a place to harvest ideas from their staff,

'It's not proactive, you know they don't say right has anybody got any ideas... it's not really constantly drilled you know what I mean? Which I think if it was we could have 5 or 10 minutes brainstorming session every team meeting saying has anyone got any ideas this week...you know, that doesn't happen'.

Respondent 12 (surveyor) preferred a management approach that 'keeps you on your toes', so that staff cannot complain that they 'didn't have a chance to raise anything' in the team meeting environment. From observations in the office and from the reported relationships and preference for a team meeting environment, it appeared that staff preferred to discuss ideas within the meetings rather than directly with their manager. Furthermore the team meeting avoided situations of debates via email and opportunity to be honest with each other face to face.

In addition to team meetings, discussing ideas with the first-line manager, or indeed with managers at the top of the tree in that section, was always an option for creative opportunities to be given the go-

ahead. Respondent 18 (administrator) stated, 'I can't see that changing at all', as they move forwards into the WOC.

It is clear that management form an important cog within the wheel of innovation in this service. From being a driver of the motivation to be innovative, to facilitating innovative practices and providing forums and a climate free of fear to make mistakes and to share ideas that may not necessarily work when thought through together. Being given some freedom and autonomy to be creative was one of the most important discretionary roles of the manager in this type of business. Respondent 14 (surveyor) told us, 'I always have ideas. I just do it. Tell him afterwards [laughing]... to be honest. Yeah, I tend to be self sufficient'.

This self sufficiency also demonstrated the level of trust placed in many staff members by their line managers. To be allowed to behave self sufficiently and be given autonomy to behave innovatively indicates that management are generally providing trust as a job resource to their staff. However not all team members had good experiences with regards to their managers and being able to share ideas. Certainly the relationship between manager and employee played a very important role in motivational behaviour. Respondent 12 (surveyor) explained, with regards to an idea that they wanted to put forwards,

'One I've already emailed to [the director]... and he says good idea, explore it with [your manager]. I haven't had a chance to discuss it with [manager], but me and [manager] errrm, I can't say we get on the best. I don't really get on with him as I'm supposed to which always causes a problem but what can you do?'

In attempting to explore how ideas were put forwards, if at all, when relationships with managers were strained, respondent 12 (surveyor) continued, 'Well I don't really share ideas with [manager] to be honest with you. I mean, me and [employee] are pretty close so we discuss things together and stuff'. The importance of the relationship with managers for inspiring and engaging employees to be innovative was highlighted by respondent 12 (surveyor). Their statement also reflected the importance of creating a climate where employees were involved and understood the future of the business during times of uncertainty. Furthermore, this demonstrates how poor quality relationships with management, or in situations where managers were using their discretion to deprive staff members of resources such as trust, restricts the flow of ideas. This statement highlighted the reciprocal nature of engagement and innovative behaviours, particularly relating to social exchange with the manager and shades of the psychological contract.

‘When you’re happier you think of more things, more ideas. Whereas when you’re not so happy, you’re demotivated you’re not gonna think of many ideas, you think why should I bother? I wanna get out of here, why should I come up with ideas? I’m not happy here and if I’m not happy here why should I give, bring the ideas up, you know? They don’t help me out, they don’t look at my concerns. They don’t want that, why don’t they look after me? You know cos I believe you look after your employees and your employees will look after you’ (Respondent 12, surveyor).

The utilisation of a social exchange approach is evident in the attitude of the employee, expecting something in return for their contribution to the organisation – in this case, evidence that the organisation cares about the employee, some level of job security, and a better relationship with their manager. However, respondent 14 (surveyor) felt that managers were typically supportive of taking an innovative approach to work and sharing ideas, ‘There’s no kind of we will do it my way syndrome. No, it’s we’ll do it any way it works, as long as it’s legal and according to standing orders. Yeah, not a problem’.

Respondents’ motivation to work hard and to be innovative was affected by breaches of their psychological contract that had been imposed, in their opinion, by management. As respondent 14 (surveyor) explained,

‘I think the way the cuts are, the way it, you know, losing our allowance for cars, etc that’s a thousand pounds I’m down a year, then there’s your tax and your mileage. I’m about £1500 down come April. I know they ain’t done it yet. Nothing’s happened but [laughing] I’m £1500 down so... why bother?’

In reality this potential change in terms and conditions of employment may have come from higher echelons of the business, but being the main point of contact between the employee and the business, their delivery of changes may be attributed by employees as being their ideas. Again the statement reflected a kind of social exchange, in this case between provision of satisfactory terms and conditions, and is particularly important in terms of car mileage as employees use their own vehicles to travel to work out on site that forms a fundamental part of their daily operations in their jobs as surveyors.

Employees also recognised the importance of the managerial role in inspiring the workforce to be more innovative. This inspiring nature of the line manager appeared to be an imperative characteristic during a time of shift in the service, in encouraging the right people to stay and not move on to companies that offer them the incentive to be more creative. The creativity of the managers was deemed an important trait that needed to be inherent in the leaders of the business.

‘If you have a creative person running it, yeah it’ll be creative. If you don’t have a creative person running it, the existing structure may or may not let the people who are creative have a go. Or, putting it bluntly, the people who are creative may have already gone. I’m quite industrious in the way I get clients and work but there’s no scope for me to do that, so why hang around?’ (Respondent 14, surveyor)

Managerial discretion is clearly an important factor in the relationship between creative thought and innovative behaviour. The individual differences between managerial approach, and the relationship between the manager and their employees greatly affected the motivation for individuals to give back to the organisation through the sharing of innovative ideas to better the business. Managers being the first point of contact at the organisation for many staff meant that changes in the psychological contract were attributed to them regardless of the origin of the change, and in some cases the direct line to line manager was detrimental to the development of innovative behaviour due to poor relations and an inability to go above them.

4.3.2 Managerial Perspective on Creativity, Innovative Behaviour and Engagement

Considering the importance placed by employees on the manager’s discretion regarding innovative behaviour and desire to be creative and to give back to the service in this way, managers were also asked about their role in this regard. Use of the word ‘creativity’ meant different things to different managers interviewed, and so this highlighted that the differences in the discretionary role is likely to be affected by semantics. For example respondent 17 (manager) defined creativity as ‘somebody picking up a paintbrush’ or ‘creating a number one selling song, it’s not that kind of environment’. Creativity to this manager was not something that existed in the service, taking a particular view of the definition to be relative to artistic endeavours rather than ideas generation. This manager suggested that a more appropriate phrase for the business would be ‘open-mindedness’ to different ways of working.

In preliminary focus groups, autonomy and feeling empowered emerged frequently from the data. Being imbued with trust from management and given the freedom to do their work in an autonomous manner was frequently cited as being one of the reasons that the business was a successful and flagship area of the council. In spite of this, autonomy to act on innovative ideas was less autonomous than the average contracted roles of individuals. Respondent 17 (surveyor) stated that employees were given ‘a degree of empowerment’ depending on their level of experience and competence. More typically managers would be presented with an idea and would have the final decision on whether the idea was recognised, but

that employees should be expected to be challenged on their decisions. Respondent 11 (manager) explained this as being due to the unique manner in which managers view the organisation,

‘I wouldn’t sit there thinking that any manager knows better than anybody out there but.... by the nature of being a manager you tend to have a more kind of holistic view of things. People generally take a very isolated view of their own role or their own team, or their own function’.

Furthermore, the empowerment aspect of the discretionary role of the manager was explored with respondent 16 (manager). Certainly for an idea to be explored, it would need to be logical and implementable within the legal restrictions and boundaries of their work, and not ‘totally outside the box’. Although it was expected that management were consulted before any kind of innovative idea was implemented due to the potential for ‘not really thinking it through’, ultimately the onus for getting an idea implemented was on the employee. ‘I guess the whole of the management team are not there to errrrm... do the work, I mean if somebody comes up with an idea it’s up to them really to drive it.’ (Respondent 16, manager).

Picking up on the reciprocity of the nature of creativity and idea sharing expressed by the employees, managers were asked how employees’ creative efforts were recognised and rewarded in an environment where monetary rewards were not permitted. Respondent 17 (manager) explained, ‘the commercial team meetings – team successes. It’s not a regular agenda item but if something has particularly worked well it’s discussed and the individuals involved, spotlight put on them. And in the newsletter that generally comes out, any success stories’.

Innovative behaviour and creativity however were not recognised formally in the organisation’s performance development review (PDR) system. The celebration of local successes did not translate into overall business recognition of doing a good job, which appears particularly important in cases where employee ideas and innovations create fundamental shifts in the way the business operates. Respondent 17 (manager) spoke about the PDR process, ‘you know, you’ve got your objectives... and your objectives are how you carry out your business... we’re not a creative organisation as such... it doesn’t hinder creativity and it doesn’t lead to creativity either’. This potentially draws attention to some of the strategic HRM initiatives and the role they play in creating climates for creativity and innovative behaviour of staff.

Further picking apart the social exchange reciprocity occurring when considering the process of ideas sharing, respondent 17 (manager) continued, especially highlighting the need for something given by management (freedom or job security for example) in order for an exchange to occur.

‘I would say, you know, in the current climate people are looking to keep hold of their jobs... If you’re in an environment where you are being recognised or rewarded or safe in your job... and you get from A to B and the 11 steps of how you get there, you’ve got a say in what those steps are.... you’ll obviously feel better for it in the working day, better for it when you’ve got there... done it your own way within the rules but still achieved the results. Gotta be a driver hasn’t it you know?’

Ultimately, while management are playing an essential role in the opportunities to be innovative through their relationship with their employees, their discretionary role (approachability, openness to receiving ideas, level of autonomy provided), and being the ultimate decision makers on the implementation of creative ideas; employees also played an equally essential role through giving back to the organisation reciprocally through the sharing of creative ideas. Managers felt that ‘The service creativity just comes from within’ (respondent 15, senior manager), and that this meant focusing and engaging employees in the creative thought process. Managers’ role was to provide the environment in which employees felt that their opinions and ideas were valued and that they were trusted to make appropriate decisions, while employees’ were expected to work with foresight and inventiveness through utilisation of tacit knowledge and skills towards building a brighter future for the organisation and for their roles within that framework. Respondent 16 (manager) explained,

‘It’s about them driving the organisation forward isn’t it really and the creative thinking has gotta come, I think, from them. And that’s why I say to them that, you know, this is your organisation, how do *you* want it shaped?’

This engagement of the workforce was recognised as being challenging in an organisation the size of this local authority. However with the nature of service delivery meaning smaller teams, at least in the case of [SERVICE], meant that this engagement driven from the line manager was more achievable. At the directorate level it was felt that people were ‘creative by nature’ and that when given the opportunity staff would come up with ‘101 solutions’ to a problem. The nature of organisations was that they ‘find ways of stopping them and getting in the way’ of idea development and creative thinking, or thought of differently, stifling the 101 ways that people could solve a problem by placing restrictions, whether legal or organisation, on staff. While this is an essential part of operating successfully as an organisation, in the same manner in which the id, ego and superego are theorised to work together to protect the

individual (Freud, 1923, in Strachey, 1961), respondent 15 (senior manager) felt that encouraging creativity was all about 'changing value sets'.

Considering this positive and encouraging view being driven down from the higher echelons of managerial position within the directorate, the other parts of the business with which they work were observed delivering mixed messages to the management team. In observation of a meeting discussing the external and internal factors shaping the business moving forward initiated by another team, contradictions in messages delivered to managers were noted. On one hand the message was that no idea is a bad idea and that there are no wrong answers when it comes to thinking of innovative ways to improve the business and overcome the obstacles that lay ahead. On the other hand the presenter conveyed the message that having multiple views would allow managers to choose the 'correct answer' for moving forwards. This contradiction highlights the mixed messages that managers receive, and emphasises how this then moves forwards depending on the discretion of the manager to utilise this information. Ultimately, the decision of the manager over how they manage their people, and the approach to inspiring innovative behaviours is the important outcome, and this difference between manager merits further investigation.

4.3.3 Routes to Ideas Sharing

A number of opportunities to communicate ideas within the organisation exist, both at the local level and organisational level. During the focus groups, members introduced us to several approaches through which ideas could be shared, though opinions on the effectiveness of these varied.

Respondents told of an organisation driven programme known as BEST (Belief, Excellence, Success and Trust) developed to promote the values of the wider organisation and provide opportunities to innovate within service areas.

'Basically there's a support...Workshop group where we can put forward ideas and best practices and things that we don't like or want to see improvement in. Put that forward and out of that should come, errr, a solution? Or a better way of doing something. So that's the new topic at the moment isn't it? BEST' [Trainee Building Surveyor, FG2]

The reception of this initiative by staff was not necessarily positive, with some cynicism towards it expressed. As one administrator told us. '*That's just a lot of [organisation] drivel that is*' [FG2], while a surveyor joked '*as far as I'm concerned it's Bacon, Eggs, Sausage and Tomato*' [FG5]. There was also

some concern about the fairness of the group with regards to decision making, with suggestions that its existence did not necessarily mean staff input made a difference. Rather that the final word was driven by the management.

‘There is a way of the workers as you might say, the staff level influence and things which is through the BEST group. But, ultimately, most decisions are top down’ [Administrator, FG2].

Furthermore there was concern that while one of the purposes of the group was to drive staff level decisions to fruition, the success of this was dependent on who exactly occupied positions of power within this group.

‘There was a period where the person who was sort of the coordinator was quite controlling and in terms of what would get past him and fed back to management so-so that becomes quite a pivotal role really, you know and that completely can undermine the purpose and the achievement of the group so it all depends really on who’s in the group and what roles they occupy’ [Administrator, FG2].

Some younger members of the organisation expressed a difference of opinion about the initiative, which was developed to empower employees through encouraging BEST leaders within each area of the organisation, providing a staff driven process for change and improvement, and incorporating ideas from popular culture to encourage participation (for example a ‘Dragon’s Den’ style competition to encourage business improvement innovations). The differing opinions of the group surrounded the level of investment in the scheme and how that contributed to the success of innovations being implemented, with staff being required to take responsibility for their input and commitment.

‘It’s the time factor as well you’ve gotta put the time into it to get anything out of it. And there’s always something else to be done really before. Which I think is a bit wrong really isn’t it because we should make time for it. Don’t always have the time to do it. And then you can get a few people in the group who are quite anti-BEST and quite negative cos of where they are in their life in terms of re-retirement so they don’t wanna contribute any more to it, got no interest in it. So when you go to them sort of meetings it can be quite negative cos they’ve got nothing good to really say!’ [Trainee Building Surveyor, FG2]

As stated previously in this chapter, team meetings were seen by both management and staff as the best forum for communicating their ideas to other members of the team for discussion and implementation. However the extent to which employees actually had involvement in deciding which ideas were then used in practice was not highlighted as a function of the team meetings. When asked if there was

anything else that could be done to improve the process of sharing ideas, respondent 14 (surveyor) felt that the team meeting scenario was a sufficient forum.

‘I think it’s pretty good. You can over-egg it sometimes with bouncing emails. It’s better to say ok sit there and talk about it. And then we can have a discussion about it then rather than somebody doing something and then it all changes and then nobody else likes it and you change it again. You go through a process of discussing it. Then we try and run with it, an idea that’s come up’.

Respondent 12 (surveyor) agreed that the team meeting, despite reservations about the lack of proactive nature of the forum, was the best approach to getting ideas out there. Explaining their thought process behind sharing ideas, respondent 12 (surveyor) detailed the logical decision behind choosing a group forum and in person discussion over other options available to staff.

‘I was going to send an email round to everyone in the Commercial team, but I thought I’d best just mention it at the team meeting, see what people think. If I start sending an email round, chances are you’ll get a smart arse saying what about this what about this in an email and before you know it you’re going back and forth. So I’ll bring it up at the meeting as an idea, see what people think about it and discuss it’.

Managers agreed that this in person approach was the most useful form of communication when it came to sharing their creativity and ideas for driving the business forwards. This was due to the nature of what being in that situation meant – shared explicit knowledge, and individuals’ tacit knowledge and experience coming in to play in an environment where discussion and involvement were at the forefront. In a business where their combined years of experience are vast due to the length of service most employees boast, opportunities to discuss ideas in a logical and understood fashion were essential.

‘The best forum is the meetings ...the reason I say that is that the people in that meeting are doing the same kind of role, they understand that sector of the business better, and so the ideas are bounced around, people are already on the same level of understanding’. (Respondent 17, manager)

Based on these responses, other options for sharing ideas were discounted as being appropriate and deemed inefficient. Email provided opportunities for fractures and arguments within teams, whereas it was felt the face-to-face contact of team meetings presented a greater chance of reasonable and logical debate and discussion. Having observed a team meeting in which innovative ideas moving forwards into the WOC were requested to be shared with the group, it was evident that the management discretion made the difference when it came to presentation of ideas. Referring back to respondent 12’s (surveyor)

statement about lack of proactivity in team meetings, members were asked for ideas but not necessarily actively encouraged to share, and some staff members remained silent in the meeting rather than being drawn into conversation and discussion. However this seemed contradictory to the norm, representing only one meeting's climate. This is in contrast to other meetings observed where staff members were forthcoming and willing to participate, and certainly a difference in how respondents behaved in the office environment. It is possible that the reduced participation of staff members was due to the set up of that particular meeting – run by two members of the business from Human Resources rather than by the management team, there was potential for trust to be an influencing factor in the decision to share ideas. Again, this draws out the trust relationship and the importance developing this in order to encourage staff to behave innovatively and to be willing to exchange their creative ideas.

4.3.4 Climate for Creativity

In addition to being provided with autonomy, a further part of the discretionary role of the manager was creating a climate for innovation to take place. The importance of climate for creativity and its various facets have been explored in the prior literature on creativity (see for example West, 2001, Isaksen, 2007).

Fear of failure, or rather the lack of this fear, is an important part of the climate in this organisation. Staff did not feel afraid of being shot down if they produced an idea that was not accepted by the rest of the group. Furthermore, providing innovative solutions were within the regulations and legal boundaries of the business, staff were encouraged to test out their ideas without the fear of reprisal should the idea be unsuccessful. Respondent 14 (surveyor) stated, 'As long as it doesn't get anybody into trouble, it's fine as long as it's according to you know, the [organisation's] rules, you can do it.

Asked for examples of where ideas had been tried and failed respondent 14 (surveyor) explained about the transference to a paperless office. The paperless office was piloted for a period of 6 months but was later deemed impractical. The idea was to streamline the office systems, but due to the nature of the work requirements for taking plans on site, the completely paperless office, 'didn't make sense to us' (respondent 14, surveyor). However the idea was tested out and no reprisals for failure of this idea for streamlining work processes were dealt. Respondent 17 (manager) explained the approach from a management perspective,

‘If they’re repeatedly making the same mistake then there’s something wrong there. If they’ve discussed something, given it a go and it hasn’t worked then you learn by it and move on... even if that idea never led anywhere they wouldn’t be thought of any less, they’re not wasting an hour discussing it you know, it was worth going through’.

Mutual trust seems to play an important role in this creation of climate for innovative behaviour. Feeling trusted in spite of potential for failure allows innovative behaviour to flourish through a lack of blame culture and freedom to fail. Trust was highlighted both in focus group and ethnographic data as an important theme within the managerial approach and creation of climate. In the focus groups in particular it was an important topic which was raised in all groups including that of the managerial group without prompt or direct questioning, highlighting the centrality of this construct to the climate of the business. This sense of trust also fed into the autonomous nature of the work that the employees in particular felt they needed in order to adequately perform in their roles. Numerous examples of granted autonomy and freedom to do their work, with feelings that they were trusted by management were presented by participants,

‘You’re trusted to do it; you’re given that freedom to do the job, nobody’s constantly looking over your shoulder, what are you doing? In my case, with my particular line manager... I’m just given the freedom to get on with my work’. [Surveyor, FG5]

‘They can leave people to do their job [Administrator]... Yeah I feel the same way; you’re just left to get on with your job’ [Surveyor, FG5].

‘Management recognise that most of the jobs in, within our department, there’s a lot of responsibility. They can’t come out and talk for you, they can’t make the decisions for you, they can’t answer the phones for you, and with that they have to give you a lot of trust, relying on your integrity’ [Surveyor, FG4].

‘They know they can trust us’ [Surveyor, FG3].

This level of trust has developed an absence of role ambiguity and subordinates are confident in their ability to achieve and get work done. There was some consensus that this level of trust from management was the catalyst for why the service was so successful. One participant explained, ‘*I think our line managers just let us get on with the job, that’s the thing. You know you’re not, they don’t interfere, they [stutters] I think that’s a lot of the reason **why** our department is the way it is*’ [Surveyor, FG4].

Managers also reported trust being a core belief in the climate of the service and how they operate, particularly with regards to this being a behaviour which managers should keep central to their role. Managers talked about a 'strong ethos' of empowerment given to the staff, and they felt that this empowerment drove the success of their relationships and professional activities. One manager highlighted the social exchange of trust, telling us, *'Ours is trust. Trust one hundred percent with me, the staff. I trust them one hundred percent and you've got to. And they do the same'* [Manager 1]. Allowing the staff to have freedom over their work, granting them autonomy and trusting them to use this in a positive way and not abuse the freedom was an essential part of being a manager in this service. As one manager told, *'we all work with a large view of empowerment, freedom'*. Another manager added, *'we try and create healthy debate as I call it, which is fine, everyone goes away, knows where everyone stands and judgment call is made. And then we move on to the next thing'* [Manager 4].

Furthermore trust and collegiality between staff members was highlighted as being important to the managerial team in developing and generating innovative behaviour of staff members.

'People are able to agree to disagree and not fall out afterwards. You can see some people where you know, in other organisations if they have a disagreement it's total loggerheads and they don't get on after that. You rarely experience that, I wouldn't say never but rarely' [Manager 8].

This ability to share ideas and problems, and the collegiality shared was perceived by managers as extending to include them and the senior management team of the service. As one manager shared,

'I think there's certainly a comfort with most teams about being able to share, upwards and downwards about issues, so you can, you can... you're not on your own' [Manager 6].

Management felt that the climate they had created through their leadership of the business was one which did not inhibit creative thinking. Respondent 17 (manager) explained, 'In general I suppose there isn't this kind of, you know, perception that you can't be creative'. In a climate where fear of failure or rejection was minimal, giving opportunities to test out ideas, management felt that, 'when you follow one opportunity and it works, it opens up more [opportunities]' (Respondent 15, senior manager).

From the directorate level, the change to the WOC would create a shift in the way that individuals think or would increase the opportunity to think in a creative and innovative manner, becoming direct counterparts to their private sector competitors. Respondent 15 (senior manager) explained their view on the positive nature of migration to the WOC.

‘There’s something about people having a bit more of a commercial ethos, a bit more of an entrepreneurial ethos and there’s something interesting about people in the public sector thinking about efficiency and cost effectiveness in the same way as someone in the private sector would. But at the heart of it you’ve still got the public sector ethos’.

4.4. Work Engagement

Outcomes of work engagement have been largely reported in the literature as positive outcomes both for the organisation and the individual. Engaged employees are said to be advocates of the firm, demonstrate greater commitment and citizenship behaviours and maintain better health (Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner & Schaufeli, 2001; Hallberg & Schaufeli, 2006). Work engagement itself has been described as a catch all term for established concepts such as organisational citizenship (CIPD, 2008), and the subordinate participants demonstrated many examples which could be considered as engagement.

The focus groups highlighted behaviours consistent with those identified in the work engagement literature, particularly with regards to reports of abuse from customers both on the telephone and in person on site. This kind of high pressure stressor could in many cases lead to employees engaging in the opposite of what work engagement identifies as its key components in the literature; however employees at this firm still reported feeling engaged in their work. Commitment and a sense of looking forward to work had not waned regardless of the potential for stressors such as abuse and the change process that was currently being undertaken, with voluntary and potentially compulsory redundancies in motion.

‘I think people do the work as they’re interested and passionate about it’ [Surveyor, FG5].

‘I know I’ve got that to look forward to. It’s not all, ‘oh I don’t want to go into work today’ type of thing’ [Surveyor, FG 5].

Managers felt that the climate they had created contributed to the seemingly high levels of engagement in the workforce. One manager stated, *‘we’re not that kind of organisation that people want to stay away from’* [Manager 2]. Another manager added,

‘Most of the staff we’ve got would survive **easily** outside but quite often we’re courted – most of us don’t go, some do get tempted, but the nucleus that we’ve got of genuine people, we’ve got the right interests at heart. And that’s why it works’ [Manager 1].

Furthermore, notions towards going beyond the call of duty in order to offer greater levels of commitment and knowledge to the business were key in the formulation of higher levels of engagement. Employees demonstrated that they cared about the organisation and gave examples of being willing to go the extra mile for the benefit of the service. One administrator explained that they had learned sign language in order to better communicate with a deaf colleague, and had used the qualification to assist customers when no other facility was available.

‘You know I’ve gone down and signed. You know, I’ve sorted out their building regs application. Although I’m not registered to do that, I went down just to help, but... you know, if you can help you help’ [Administrator, FG2].

The same individual had, in the past, worked with one other colleague on a particular function within the service. They both demonstrated a commitment to the service and tried their best to avoid disruption of the service provision, understanding that they were the only two employees that were able to provide that particular function, *‘There was just the two of us, and we always managed to work out that our holidays never clashed’*.

Furthermore, there was expression that the employees would like to make contributions, particularly with regards to creative ideas and innovations, to improving the business. As one administrator explained, *‘we want to try and improve the organisation....people really take an interest’* [FG2]

A surveyor in one of the groups told of about his own experience of going the extra mile both for his benefit and for the service’s benefit. Respondents in some of the focus groups explained that while training opportunities had been abundant in the past, since the recession these opportunities had waned due to financial constraints. While the employees accepted that training would now be limited and that resources were most likely to be spent on technical staff, this surveyor had gone out of their way to make themselves fully professionally qualified,

‘I’d see it if you’re doing the [qualification], you’re doing something, you know that you’re bettering yourself, showing the organisation that you’re doing something more. I mean, you don’t **have** to do the [qualification], you know you’re showing that, you know it’s better for business...In my situation I’ve paid for it myself anyway because it’s not a requirement for the job itself to have’ [FG3].

The issue of public and client perception with regards to the business and the ability to win work was discussed in the previous section. Public perception frustrated members of the subordinate group, but

this did not lessen their engagement behaviours, such as advocacy of the firm. One respondent described a conversation she had had with a friend about who she worked for.

‘Oh you doss about all day’ and I say no we don’t! We work bloody hard cos we have to! I says we have... it’s a trading account, we’ve got competition, we have to fight for the work, I says and we’re really, really professional, I says and I like working there and I’ll always stick up for them [Administrator, FG2].

There was a sense of pride in some groups in working for their service. As one administrator stated, ‘*I think one of the things with [organisation], people can say what they want about us but at least we’re honest*’ [FG3]. The satisfaction that came with being acknowledged for their work as a service was mentioned by the staff.

‘We’ve got a lot of good work going on in both teams and like in the commercial team and for all the categories actually you know and we have these awards dinners, that sort of thing which are sponsored and that’s good for giving us some good press amongst the industry. And those go off really well and everybody keeps on saying how good they are’ [Administrator, FG3].

Employees reciprocated the key provisions given to them by their managers by demonstrating the behaviours which are evident in highly engaged employees, and despite several barriers to becoming engaged existing such as public perception of their work and abuse becoming an almost daily phenomenon, the line manager-subordinate exchange appears to be the winning formula to overcoming these difficulties.

Following on from the focus groups, several months had passed between data collection periods, and while situations had changed in the form of uncertainty about the future of both the organisational structure and the future of some of the workforce’s job roles remaining in tact, the levels of observed engagement did not appear to change that much. During observations, it was often noted that staff would discuss how time would fly when they were enjoying their job and felt immersed in their role, which is indicative of work engagement. During this time, what became key was feeling involved and informed – communication on a two-way level between staff and management and mutual trust became very important during this period of change uncertainty.

Line managers had indicated however from the beginning that involvement and two-way communication was fundamental to their creation of a climate that allowed for innovative behaviour and work engagement to flourish.

‘Something else that helps on the division together is a strong involvement of all staff in the way that we run. And that, everyone has a say at some point in the way the organisation’s running and has an involvement, so they feel part of that organisation’ [Manager 1].

Managers had given several examples of engagement behaviours continuing outside of the office, extending into the home during sickness and absence.

‘All those staff have been happy to work at home doing work they **could** do but can’t get into the office. So we’ve been taking plans over to them and they’ve been checking plans for us and they’ve been quite happy to do that. Fully committed. In actual fact, those individuals as well live quite a distance away from the city, so they put a lot in to the city. Quite happy to do it’ [Manager 1].

From the individual’s point of view if you are sitting at home and you are poorly, I think upper most in their mind is to get back to help out, cos they know someone, their colleague might not be performing 100% if he’s covering someone else’s job. So brings back to that team spirit doesn’t it really? [Manager 4]

Giving employees the opportunity to use their initiative, knowledge, skills and capabilities in an environment in which they feel trusted to fulfil their roles served as a form of job resources supplied by the manager, thus feeding into the social exchange with the employee. Employees responded to this challenging work with an engagement in their working roles due to a feeling of being trusted and belief in their capabilities.

‘I think that’s a quite a big component as to why people are motivated to come into the job, everybody’s got their own project. Their own project it’s not, you know, you miss a couple of days off the job, your project might not be going the way you wanted it to go when you come back. It is, it’s about ownership of the work stream’ [Manager 7].

Empowerment was a key word in the vocabulary of the manager group. Managers continually referred to this as being one of their primary tools for creating engagement and motivation in their subordinates and for training them to be self-sufficient and confident employees. As manager 1 explained, *‘It’s empowerment with us isn’t it really, we try and make them think and make them problem solvers. Try and bring them to the standard that we’re looking for’*. Manager 3 echoed these thoughts saying, *‘I think*

there's a strong ethos within the organisation of empowerment and I'm not aware of anybody round this group here that doesn't empower their staff.

Being a public sector organisation, a challenge always exists to reward employees for good work. Managers embraced this challenge through pushing success of the service as a reward system for employees, and bringing them in to work on projects which demonstrated their success.

'There's a strong ethos of success. I mean, they're linked but I think we're all very proud of what we are and what we've achieved and continue to always do more. We're never content with, you know, where we're at, we're always looking for the next thing... Things like Charter Mark and ISO9000, they're steps forward all the time for us, they're not just things to stick on the wall, they're vehicles for gathering people together and saying look, we're actually good operation, we demonstrate that to others' [Manager 3].

Overall, managers were highlighted to have an important role in creating the climate for innovative behaviour and work engagement. The following section will discuss the consequence of manager involvement in work engagement promotion, followed by a discussion of the relationship between work engagement and innovative behaviour.

4.4.1 Line Managers and Work Engagement

Similarly to innovative behaviour and creativity potential, engagement was, at least to some degree, affected by the actions of the line manager. Whether that was through their choices made regarding communication of the forthcoming events, or through the way they interacted on an interpersonal level with staff. These discretionary decisions appeared from the data to be directly linked in some way to the work engagement of staff, and that this could potentially vary on a daily basis.

Management felt that they achieved work engagement from the staff by making investments in them – taking time to develop a relationship and rapport was acknowledged as being fundamental to creating a positive exchange relationship. Manager 9 in the focus groups explained, *'It's about taking time out to talk to them. You might think it's an hour or two out your day, but it's an investment and even if it's in your nature or not, it's an investment and it will pay dividends in the long run'*. Most of the staff that participated in the research had good relationships with their manager, some to the point that managers

were taking their own time to greatly invest in the development of this positive relationship. For example, in discussing a sick employee,

‘I was visiting him at home, taking him out for meals, phoning him up in my own time, and really spending a lot of time with him, well, well beyond what I’m required to do, but...I’ve got an investment and you know, he’s not a **friend** in that sense...But I felt that that’s something I had to do, and he’s actually commented that you know, that’s got him through... someone showing that they care about him ‘[Manager 3].

But for those that did not share this positive experience with their manager; they noted that their engagement fluctuated significantly. Respondent 12 (surveyor) explained how they perceived a negative relationship with their line manager, ‘I feel he treats me like a kid... I shouldn’t be treated like a kid... I know how to do my job, everyone’s got their own way of doing it. It’s just [*manager*] thinks it’s his way or no way’. Respondent 12 (surveyor) gave office based examples of when line managers would interject authority regardless of the outcomes of following their approach. The respondent indicated that it was required to ‘make it his way or it don’t count’.

Work engagement is defined as a positive and fulfilling state of vigour, dedication and absorption. Engaged employees typically immerse themselves in their work and experience feelings of looking forward to being at work. Respondent 12 (surveyor), however, explained the impact that negative relations with their line manager had on their engagement behaviours.

‘I don’t look forward to coming to work and when he’s off I’m more happy and get more things done when he’s not there. Like the other day I bumped into someone down by the kitchen and I thought, shit I’d better get back to my desk, [*manager*] will be wondering where I am. When he’s there I feel that pressure. When he’s not there I don’t feel that pressure... That’s why I said to you last week when we spoke... don’t come and talk to me when he’s here because he don’t like it you know....I’m not happy’.

While this negative experience of line manager – employee relationship was not a common experience, at least in the reports from respondents and observed behaviour, this example illustrates the level of influence the manager’s discretionary role has on engagement. However, while the majority of employees experienced positive relationships, there were observations of interactions on site that indicated a negative relationship – the way staff members were spoken to by their manager, and likewise the way employees responded to their line manager, or the way in which they carried out their work as a result of an observed negative interaction. Outside of interviews I was told of staff members

that had, in the past, gone on sick leave due to poor relationships with management and instances of being willing to take pay cuts in order to escape managers they did not gel with. Choosing to manage their people in a particular style, managers do affect the individual level experiences of being engaged at work – dreading coming to work, looking forward to the days when management are not there, affecting feelings of well being and a reduced interest in work. Moreover, prior behaviour of the employee similarly impacts on the relationship, which also affects engagement. This is where the discretionary role is truly apparent, not just in observations of individual differences between managers but also differences in interactions between a manager and his various staff members. The relationship is a complex one, which merits further investigation, and is clearly influenced theoretically through social exchange theory.

Furthermore, discretionary behaviour of the management surrounding trust and empowerment, as identified in the focus groups, were further highlighted in the ethnographical phase. It was agreed by several members of staff in an observed meeting that these two factors in addition to not ‘feeling like a non-entity’ (respondent 18, administrator) led to a greater level of engagement in job roles and in achieving more as a business. It was indicated that this line manager – employee relationship and the discretion that lay behind that greatly influenced how much work was completed due to feelings of being appreciated and trusted. Respondents identified trust as being one of the fundamental aspects of experiencing positive relationships with their line managers – being trusted to complete their role without constant supervision and trust in their ability to contribute ideas was highlighted as important for feeling engaged at work. This was particularly evident with regards to how they felt trusted by managers even when complaints were put through by those clients from whom staff members had received abuse, with managers believing and trusting their staff. This was also directly observed in the office whereby managers would leave early, leaving their staff members unsupervised and trusted to be working rather than using the lack of presence of the manager as an opportunity to ‘slack off’ from work.

It is perhaps the physical proximity to the manager that allows the majority of employees interviewed and observed to have good relationships with their manager, and which allows managers to place greater trust in their employees from prior observations of their work ethic. Observations of the daily interactions between managers and staff in all areas of the business noted a diminished sense of seniority of the manager, acting more as a colleague than a boss, but still enacting the sagaciousness of the managerial role. On the other hand, observations of management leaving the office early trusting their employees to continue working after they had gone enabled noting of where trust was sometimes

exploited by staff members. That as soon as the manager had left the office, concentrating on the task at hand ceased and chatting about non-work related topics ensued. This emphasises the need for management in the work engagement relationship, but raises further research questions about the role of trust in that relationship. The level of care that employees took over their work was indicative of their engagement and social exchange. For example a respondent observed in one meeting stated that as a surveyor on 24 hour call out duties, they would not simply 'hand over the job to someone else and forget about it', but would thoroughly hand over and see through to the end if possible, preferring to take responsibility for the work and to do this in support of other staff members so as not to overburden or put pressure on colleagues.

Engagement being the responsibility of the manager was reflected in the response of respondent 15 (senior manager). 'The theme of engagement of your workforce... the key thing really I think from that is it is about leadership basically and you've gotta be consistent you've gotta be clear, you've gotta occasionally defend those sort of things where maybe it's quite difficult to defend'. Respondent 15's (senior manager) responses regarding the change process revealed his feelings about the role of the manager and engaging employees 'from the heart' in order to move forwards with a successful change, in order to inspire them to contribute their ideas and to create a climate where employees could be creative and respected.

Managers recognised that, in the current economic situation and particularly with the massive changes occurring within the business, the motivation to engage with one's work could be reduced. It was felt that it boiled down the very fundamentals of protective behaviour rather than other reported drivers of engagement (for example challenging work role, available resources, encouragement, autonomy). Respondent 16 (manager) explained, 'There's no reward really to work hard other than the fact that you wanna make sure that you're secure as an individual... and the team is'. However, employees had previously revealed that their engagement in the job was a reflection of their challenging work roles, trust and autonomy, and resources in the form of managerial support, trust and relationship – more latent forms of resources influenced by the manager's discretion to supply them. Moreover, this protective behaviour is unlikely to reflect the true feelings and experiences of work engagement.

The notion of reward for a business that operates in a private sector environment, with private sector pressures, but with the political and bureaucratic processes that exist in public sector, drew the line between the business and its competitors. Being unable to reward staff in the same way as the private sector was highlighted an issue. However, rather than money being a driver in the variance of innovative

behaviour, the feeling of being appreciated and recognised seemed a more reasonable comparison. One manager explained about a member of his team working at the top of the grade, but being unable to give this member of staff a pay rise due to the restrictions of the local authority. Public sector workers are rewarded in different ways (for example flexi-time and allowances), but it was felt that this was sometimes taken for granted and that if staff paid more attention to the differences between their roles if they were in private sector and the public sector role they occupy, they would be surprised.

Respondent 16 (manager) explained how this unseen difference may affect engagement in the role,

‘Unfortunately it’s the people that are not at the coal face, they don’t see the private sector like we see it and the cold, cool and calculated way that they deal with people out there. I did [*project*] and shortly after that there was a mass unemployment around the country and there was an architectural practice of about 60, 70 people that went down to about 5 or 6 people in a matter of months. And that’s what happens in the private sector. If there’s no work you don’t get paid. But with the city council, they’re cocooned, and they’ve been cocooned for many years. They just think the council owes them a living and I think that almost sort of detracts from the fact of driving themselves forward’.

This statement of ‘driving themselves forward’, was reflected in a comment made by respondent 9 (administrator). The respondent explained that to settle into the administrative function and the service, it required between two and three years of working in that environment, and it would be difficult to then move on to another administrative role in the organisation or externally. While the knowledge of building control regulations may take some time to learn and understand, and therefore provide a specialist knowledge of that particular administrative role, it seems unlikely that the role would be so specialised that there would be no transferable skills for the administrative team if they needed to obtain employment elsewhere. Further, if this is indeed the case, it calls into question why the administrative team have not demanded training in skills that would make them attractive to other administrative vacancies, particularly with the redundancy exercises and cutbacks that have been evident in the organisation for some time. The issue of individuals ‘driving themselves forward’, in this sense is in stark contrast to members of the surveying staff, many of whom had funded their own training, obtaining chartership so as to better themselves, enable them to be able to give more back to the business and ultimately to be more attractive as an employee should the worst happen. This is particularly comparable to the focus groups conversations where surveyors especially outlined the lengths that they went to to educate themselves for the good of the business, demonstrating instances of going the extra mile, as is typical of engaged employees.

4.4.2 Redundancy, Retirement and Work Engagement

Likewise to the role of the manager, an individual's perceived future at the organisation also had a big impact on the engagement of the individual with their work, and the exchange that existed between themselves and the organisation. From observations of office exchanges and also from formal and informal interviews, the level of care that an individual had about the future of the business varied depending upon how they saw their own future there.

Respondent 10 (surveyor) explained that this had an affect on the daily operations of how they work as teams and as individuals. Remarking about one member of the business with whom I observed them converse with, respondent 10 (surveyor) stated, *'He no longer cares about [organisation] or [service] or any of the work. He just goes around all day disturbing everyone else because he's taking voluntary redundancy'*. Respondent 10 (surveyor) went on to explain that this poor attitude or disengagement from the working role made it difficult for the people that do care about the work and the organisation and for those that have to pick up the work after those individuals have retired or been made redundant. This attitude also carried over to monetary compensation, particularly in those roles being threatened by redundancy. Comments such as *'I'm not paid to do that'*, and *'I could be at home doing [action] instead'*, suggested some level of lack of engagement on the part of the individuals occupying those roles. This relates back to the statement by respondent 4 (surveyor) about the reaction to the change being a reflection of what they want to get out of their jobs.

On the opposite side of the coin are those that are leaving that wish for their legacy of tacit knowledge to be maintained at the business. Those that are so engaged with their role and so passionate about the success of the business, that managers perceived that they would be willing to return to work after their redundancy to train those remaining for free (Respondent 11, manager). Linking in to the redundancy thread, the rumours and external chatter from sources such as local media and friends and family may have had some influence on employees' social exchange perspective, with regards to engagement, innovative behaviour and other exchanges. Due to the nature of change processes, discussion and rumour can become a rife phenomenon particularly with uncertainty and if there is a lack of communication or perceived secret-keeping by management. In the [service], management maintained efforts to be open and honest with staff, and to communicate everything that they knew at the time about the progress of the change, and most staff being formally interviewed explained that there wasn't

much talk about the change in the office. However, respondent 1 (manager) explained that almost as soon as the initial brief outlining the change was revealed to staff there were rumours regarding which section they were '*getting rid of*'. Simultaneously undergoing the same change approach, another service within the directorate, closely related in purpose and proximity to [SERVICE] were also being the cause of rumours and scaremongering. Respondent 8 (administrator) stated, '*There's been an awful lot of rumours from people just trying to upset people*'. Highlighting the crossover between services, respondent 7 (administrator) agreed,

'I think a lot of people talk to others in here [*other service*] and I've seen as far as I know they're going through a similar thing. Then they come back and say that lot over there, they're doing this that and the other and it just gets all spread around, it gets all out of proportion. And not the right story you know.'

Respondent 4 (surveyor) explained that this crossover of fear and rumour spreading was not only isolated to the office environment however. '*Yeah, you hear a lot of rumours in our section. And then of course you've got outside rumours, you know, family and friends. So there's a lot of speculation from outside [organisation] as well. By the public*'. During the ethnographic period, spending time within the staff kitchen area and the shared quiet areas in the building, observations could be made where this crossover of services would discuss the change informally. Respondent 18 (administrator) gave an example of this occurrence, in talking with someone from another service, they were told, '*Oh we've been told by our managers that's been approved*'. Respondent 18 (administrator) also stated that, having contacts in various parts of the organisation that they liaised with as part of their role, '*I tend to pick up bits that aren't officially told out before they're officially told out*'.

Rumour spreading and general feelings of discontent, uncertainty and dread would logically have an impact on the satisfaction and engagement of individuals with their work. However observations of the staff in the work setting and quotes from interviews suggest that, without external influence from others, the majority of staff are willing to '*go with the flow*' when it comes to the change. While there was little observed disengagement from individuals' work roles, it is possible that a reduction in the level of individuals' engagement occurred, or further that engagement levels fluctuated on a daily basis dependent upon rumour or manager communication.

5.4.3 Engagement, Employee Involvement and Creativity

Previous discussions in the innovative behaviour and creativity section of this chapter pointed towards incidences of engagement being a precursor to being creative. And as previously explained, employees in this organisation find their level of engagement affected by the relationship and provision of latent resources from the discretion of the line manager. Both engagement and innovative behaviours seem to grow from the discretionary role via a perceived social exchange. Drawing on a previous quote from respondent 12 (surveyor) to illustrate the importance of the manager in inspiring engagement to be creative, the reference to the manager and the social exchange involved becomes apparent.

‘When he says something to you and you think why do I bother? I wanna get out of here, why should I come up with ideas? I’m not happy here and if I’m not happy here why should I bring the ideas up, you know. They don’t help me out, they don’t look at my concerns. Cos I believe you look after your employees and your employees will look after you’.

Respondent 15 (senior manager), looking from a managerial perspective, was very clear in his intentions and beliefs regarding engagement and creativity. Having observed this at previous organisations experiencing similar changes to [service], he highlighted the need for managers to use discretion over employee involvement as a precursor to engaging employees on a deeper level.

‘The more ownership we were giving people about the way we designed and styled their future, the more interest they had and more engaged they became. And therefore, more creative they became. And it is this old adage about if you help build it, you’ll own it down the line’.

Explaining the approach taken in the previous organisations within which he had worked on similar changes, respondent 15 (senior manager) saw a dramatic change in the feelings and creativity of employees experiencing that change through involvement and engagement – switching from a climate of fear, resistance and disengagement to idea creation and development.

‘What was amazing was the power through which they were kind of coming up with, oh you need to do this, you need to do that. So this is kind of, a few months earlier people the other side of the table were saying no, we’re not prepared to talk about that, we’re not prepared to talk about this. So we really kind of at an early stage saw the power of engaging people in a different kind of narrative... And it was, I think, just an example of what you could classically say that by empowerment and delegation and involving people in helping design the solution in a true kind of bottom up sense, it led to some startling results. And it did. And it over recovered on its targets, it over

achieved on its performance measures for the things it did on the front line and it gave us all more confidence to do more’.

Indeed, informal interviews within the office and observed conversations suggested that staff wanted to be involved in the change and that managers wanted to involve them in shaping the future of the business, and previous quotes within this chapter have illustrated this approach. Involvement of staff was something that the management in [service] was aiming for from the very beginning of the change process. The initial briefing was *‘for information, not consultation’*, but respondent 1 (manager) emphasised that moving forwards into the WOC, the staff’s involvement in directing and creating the change would be sought, and management agreed: *‘you’ve gotta get into those kinds of discussions because everybody’s got a different view of the world’* (respondent 11, manager). Staff responses within the focus groups and later in interviews and observations expressed a wish to be involved in how the business’ change process developed and the final outcomes in moving forwards. Respondent 4’s (surveyor) statement appeared to be the general consensus from the majority of staff: *‘It would be nice to get our own input into the future of it’*. Respondent 15 (senior manager) felt that involvement of the staff was of the upmost importance in the change process, and frequently referred to *‘engaging employees from the heart’*, suggesting that the two were interlinked and that this was a management responsibility from the outset, *‘Lots of people say it but not many people do it, you know people **are** your most valuable asset, if you’re in the service based industry’*. Being involved in the change process enables opportunities for managers to encourage their staff members to behave innovatively and contribute ideas to the business. This was observed in action during a planning meeting initiated by a team from elsewhere in the business and ideas were shared freely and with logical purpose drawing from the tacit and explicit knowledge of the employee.

4.5 Conclusions

This section of the chapter will summarise the core findings from the mixed methods qualitative research conducted within the service for this PhD – combining results and interpretations from focus groups, ethnographic research incorporating individual interviews, observational data and field notes.

From the data, four categories emerged as being important to this research – knowledge (tacit and shared), trust, innovative behaviour (and creative thought) and work engagement. The thread that tied these three categories together was the role of the line manager. The line manager was the thread

weaving through the responses on all of the categories and in particular, the discretionary role and the relationship individuals had with their manager. The opportunity for management to enact their discretionary role in different ways was indicated as an influencing factor in the enactment of the employee in their roles.

Ultimately it appears that the black box in this section of the organisation is formed by the discretion of the manager to provide a climate for engagement and utilisation of the tacit knowledge to create and be willing to share innovative ideas. While other factors also have an effect on engagement levels, willingness to share tacit knowledge and willingness to act creatively (for example the future of the individual at the organisation (redundancy) and rumour mongering), ultimately the line manager played the most fundamental role in this case. Provision of resources, particularly latent resources such as autonomy, trust and support were deemed essential by staff towards their engagement in their role, and this was particularly important in their willingness to contribute creatively. Furthermore, managers' belief in what creativity was defined as affected the way in which they encouraged this quality in their staff. The belief of creativity being the arena of artists, musicians and marketing executives was a belief held by few of the managers spoken to in this research, with the majority acknowledging that encouraging creativity in staff would help the business move forwards, and that this required involving employees in the change process.

Ultimately, the central component to making use of the three core constructs and ensuring that these three constructs existed in [SERVICE] was the discretion of the manager. How they chose to involve their employees in the driving forwards of the business and how they chose to provide latent and physical resources required for role completion was viewed as important to the level with which staff enacted their own exchange in the form of engagement and innovative behaviour. The theory underpinning this is Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964), and the norm of reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960) in that positive exchanges occur when both parties contribute something in an exchange process, receiving something in return. Through provision of latent resources and active positive communication of the manager, employees tended to respond with positive behaviours – engagement in their work role, utilisation of tacit knowledge to provide greater return for the business, and sharing of innovative and creative ideas as a result of logical purpose and tacit knowledge.

Managers wanting to cultivate work engagement in their staff, and ultimately create this climate whereby engaged employees produce innovative behaviours and ideas, were those who behaved positively towards their employees, giving them resources such as autonomy and freedom

With managers being the key thread in entwining the core concepts, it is pertinent to conclude what behaviours managers enacted and demonstrated within this research to create the innovative climate they strived to develop within the service, and how they went about engaging their employees in their job roles. Managers felt that their role demanded balance, managing multiple roles and responsibilities within the people management framework.

We have to be absolutely multi-flexible really, as your day changes by the minute, by the hour. That's one of the big things we have to do isn't it really. Respond immediately to the situation... you can't tend to put things off, [Manager 1].

Manager 3 added,

'I have to manage it by... flexible thinking in that I have to switch off the part of my brain that's working on something high to deal with something low and then switch back to something high and that's just flexible thinking... My reality is I'm going to work on this for two hours, I'm going to get interrupted five or six times with a whole range of different things and I'll be able to drop in and drop out'.

The main ways in which managers appeared to contribute to the development and sustenance of work engagement in their staff were through clear and effective communication, involvement, and provision of resources such as trust, support, autonomy, challenging work and the physical resources required by individuals to enact their working role and create new ideas. Managers with positive relationships with their staff were those who considered the latent resources they gave to their staff. Employees that perceived a negative relationship with their manager were those who felt stifled through lack of trust, support and freedom, and in feeling a reduction in their levels of engagement and recognition reciprocated by withdrawing innovative behaviour and the desire to share their ideas.

The next chapter concludes the PhD with discussion of the findings and conclusions. Following from the qualitative research, a quantitative survey was developed for the organisation, which was implemented in the wider Development directory, as each service within followed suit of [service] in transitioning to wholly owned company status. The survey examined work engagement and creativity and innovation levels, and acts a benchmarking and temperature checking tool for the business. The results and analysis of this can be viewed in appendix 8.

5 Discussion and Conclusions

The purpose of this chapter is to draw conclusions about the findings from the various sources of data with regards to answering the propositions, detailing the theoretical and practical contributions of the research. Opportunities for further research and limitations of the research will be addressed, and reference to the nature of the CASE Award will be explained.

5.1 Overview

The literature review explored the raft of studies involving work engagement, the discretionary role of the line manager and innovation in several fields of organisational research, identifying gaps within the literature to which this research could make a contribution. The research aimed to explore the black box of managerial discretion (Purcell, 2003) with regards to work engagement and innovative behaviours, and particularly taking into account the role of these in the public sector environment. Several propositions were identified from the literature review, questioning the contribution that line managers make towards work engagement, how that influences innovative behaviours and the nature of social exchange between the manager and employee. As a result the study found that qualitatively there is a significant relationship between work engagement and the discretionary role of the line manager, with employee involvement (Cotton, 1993; Cotton, 1996) being a central feature in inspiring work engagement and the desire to partake in social exchange through the reciprocation of creative ideas and innovative behaviour (Amabile, 1996).

The first step to answering the research propositions was to run focus groups in order to identify the key topics that were important to the research population and to gather initial exploratory data surrounding the constructs core to the propositions. The second step was to undertake ethnographic work to explore the findings in more depth, and to observe the processes in action, creating a deeper level of understanding in a contextual manner. The final step was the administration of a quantitative survey in the wider directorate at the request of the organisation, and which formed part of the CASE Award work for the business – this can be read about in appendix 1 – and not as a contribution towards the theory development that formed the central focus of this PhD.

The following section draws conclusions from the mixed methods approach to the data collection and discusses the contributions and implications of the study for theory and practice.

5.2 Work engagement and the Discretionary Role

Work engagement is defined as ‘a positive, fulfilling, affective emotional state of work related well being that is characterised by vigour, dedication and absorption’ (Bakker, Schaufeli, Leiter & Taris, 2008: 187), which is a ‘persistent and pervasive affective-cognitive state that is not focused on any particular object, event, individual, or behaviour’ (Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzalez-Roma & Bakker, 2002a). The findings of this research appear to support the notion that engagement is a positive emotional state that possesses these characteristics in its nature. Academic research aims to generate theoretical positions that can be applied universally. It is not possible to develop a one-size-fits-all definition of engagement due to the differences in the operations of different organisations and the actors that participate in that organisation. The relationships, interactions and reciprocal exchanges that exist in organisations become an important factor in defining how engagement works, and this research shows that the line manager is a particularly important actor within the engagement construct.

The first proposition within this thesis suggested that managers would play an important role in the development of work engagement through enactment of managerial discretion. The findings emerging from the various programmes of data collection illustrated the importance of possessing a workforce that is engaged with their work during a period of immense organisational change. The role of the manager forms the essential part of this relationship. This provides a unique contribution to the extant knowledge surrounding work engagement, and the discretionary role of the line manager.

Theorists of SHRM have been challenging academics to identify which collections of policies and procedures most influence staff attitudes and behaviours for more than a decade (Schuler & Jackson, 1999; Budhwar & Ayree, 2008). Considering the way in which management have discretion to choose how they interpret, implement and communicate SHRM policies and procedures to their staff (Hales, 2005; Purcell, 2003), their role is essential in examining how employees respond, and the theory of social exchange (Blau, 1964) underpins the nature of the discretionary role. Ultimately, the act of increasing engagement is something which managers need to be aware of as a long-term focus (Saks, 2006), of which the repeated interactions and social exchanges should contribute a great amount to through the increased and enhanced development of trust, identified as an essential resource appreciated by staff and given by management. The perceived amount of trust has an affect on the level of willingness of staff to reciprocate with engagement in addition to the other demands and resources delivered by management. In the same way that communication, trust and collaboration are essential parts of organisational change (Lewis, 1999), these also appear to be essential in the promotion and

encouragement of staff to reciprocate engagement, potentially reducing resistance to said change (D'Aprix, 1996). Managers form the essential part of this process of communication, trust and reciprocity in this exchange (Armenakis & Bedian, 1999; Larkin & Larkin, 1994; Pfeffer, 1998; DiFonzo & Bordia, 1997). Overall, with devolvement of human resource management functions to the line manager, particularly with regards to those practices which have a strong focus on people, the impetus on the manager to socially exchange with their staff in this way is stronger than ever before. SHRM functions that focus on people have demonstrated in prior research to greatly affect productivity, job satisfaction and performance (Kular, Gatenby, Rees, Soane & Truss, 2008), and as such it appears reasonable to assume that this may also have an effect on reported work engagement of staff. It is suggested that the SHRM policies and practices experienced by the respondents, for example team working (West, 2004), devolved HRM (Budhwar, 2000), talent management (Lewis & Heckman, 2006) and workforce planning (O'Brien-Pallas, Birch, Baumann & Murphy, 2000) and a flattened management structure (Wei, Liu & Herndon, 2011), has contributed to the ability for management to create an engaged workforce and to reap the rewards of innovative behaviour. However it is not suggested that this is the only bundle of SHRM policies and procedures that would achieve this, particularly in other organisations.

Numerous examples of engagement shone through in the focus groups and ethnographic work with the service involved, particularly with regards to staff members going the extra mile so that they may further benefit both the organisation and themselves as an individual. In reference to the survey which was conducted for the organisation, the data from this showed that the organisation was experiencing a majority case of moderate to high engagement scores, and this seems unusual considering the amount of uncertainty, rumours and adaptation that large scale organisational change tends to encompass (DiFonzo & Bordia, 1999). This is particularly interesting considering that findings in the literature indicate that employees reporting negative rumours tend to report higher levels of change-related stress (Bordia, Jones, Gallois, Callan & DiFonzo, 2006) – this provides support for the notion of engagement during organisational change in this case, as staff typically reported that any negative rumours being shared were coming from other services in the organisation rather than within the service, and with a management focus on heavily communicating the future and the vision of the change, this ameliorated opportunity for rumour-mongering.

Examining the data, it appears that the things that make a difference to an individual's willingness to engage in a social exchange of work engagement are resources and demands placed upon the individual by their line manager. Typically in this area of the organisation, management have been perceived as

supportive and providing employees with a high level of trust. The perception of quality relationships with the manager as well as their provision of resources and amelioration of high demands through trust and support measures were essential for employees to be willing to enter into an exchange relationship. Employees participated in a social exchange relationship, whereby managers' role was to provide autonomy, interesting work, creative freedom and the tangible and intangible resources employees felt they needed to do their job effectively. Examples of where the exchange relationship between the manager and employee were fraught demonstrated qualitative disengagement, whereby staff no longer enjoyed or relished the prospect of coming to work, and as such created a resistance to participating in a social exchange.

The resources model is well known in the work engagement literature, accompanied by job demands, suggesting that the provision of resources increases work engagement and positive well-being (Bakker, Nachreiner Schaufeli, 2001; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004), which in turn combats the effects of job demands (Hakanan, Perhoniemi & Toppinen-Tanner, 2008). Underpinning the job demands and resources fulfilment is the Social Exchange Theory developed by Blau (1964: 89) – Blau defines social exchange as 'an individual who supplies rewarding services to another obligates him' – in this case the 'rewarding services' are increased work engagement and reciprocation of the sharing of creative ideas. Data from both the qualitative and quantitative portions of the data collection demonstrated significant relationships between these two variables. Members of the Building and Consultancy service demonstrated through their interviews and actions that in order to engage more fully in their roles, they required the tangible and intangible resources that were the responsibility of the manager to deliver. Rather, this responsibility as perceived by the staff was at the discretion of the manager – each individual manager differed in how they delivered resources, how much of those resources they provided their staff with and the overall relationship they fostered between themselves and individual staff members.

This finding adds something unique to the work engagement literature (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003). In prior studies into the concept, little attention has been given to the role of the manager. Considering the nature of the way we work in organisations, with interaction between members forming the basis of organisational life, this examination of engagement in isolation from the social underpinnings of the work environment leads to the painting of a picture whereby managers are not recognised for their essential role (Bakker & Xanthopoulou, 2013). While some would suggest caution that this moderate engagement of staff could be a form of 'pseudo-engagement' (CIPD, 2011), whereby staff are working in

an engaged state as a form of gratefulness for still having a job, this does not appear to be the case in this organisation. This is due to the level of employee involvement (Cotton, 1993; Cotton, 1996) experienced by staff, whereby their opinions are not muted and the manager is still focused on the future vision of the business. Management are balancing a great deal of responsibility during organisational change – they must be aware of the big picture, while remaining interested in the fine details; they must listen to the needs, fears and ideas of their staff while making appropriate decisions based on the facts and evidence presented to them. They must be more vigilant on how they communicate to staff in order to avoid rumour-mongering and they must continue with their usual roles as a manager – conceptual work, technical and administrative work, and focus on the interpersonal nature of their roles (Dierdorff, et al., 2009). The line managers and directors of the services undertaking the major change experienced in this organisation have focused on the vision for the future. During times of economic uncertainty, particularly with relation to pay freezes and job cuts throughout the public sector, it is easy for management to focus on the minimising of pain that these will cause, both to the business and to its workers. However in this part of the organisation, the change process has been focused on the future – voluntary redundancies that will ensure the service is fit for purpose in its new vision; involving employees in how they shape the business moving forwards, and painting the picture of a brighter future as a new service has been the focus of the management teams.

5.3 Engagement and its Influence on Innovation Behaviours

Polanyi (1958: 134) argued that ‘positive passions affirm something that is precious’. In this case, the ‘positive passions’ can be viewed as work engagement (a positive and fulfilling state of vigour, dedication and absorption (Bakker, Schaufeli, Leiter & Taris, 2008)), and the ‘something that is precious’, the innovative behaviour of employees that the service so strongly requires for their future. Work engagement in this environment appears to be an essential component of the innovation framework. It would be easy to blame the business for the restrictions put in place regarding the recruitment of new staff for any decrease in innovative behaviour or innovative outcomes. But in reality the industry within which the service works has an aging population in general. One respondent described the industry as, ‘not a sexy industry to be in’. As such, the amount of younger people, with fresh ideas and new knowledge, coming into the business is limited due to a cultural association between the industry and age.

At present, the business has been feeding off of the tacit and shared knowledge and experience of their workforce in order to enhance business prospects through idea generation and innovative behaviour. At the heart of this must be engagement of the workforce. A workforce that is not passionate about what they do and are entering the work environment and completing their tasks without having much care about their role within the business will not reciprocate with creativity and ideas generation that will benefit the organisation. Engaged employees care about the organisation, they go the extra mile to fulfil their role within it, and they advocate the business to others (Macey & Schneider, 2008; Baumruk, 2004; Bakker, et al., 2008; Kahn, 2010), and this was demonstrated numerous times within the data, for example completing training that the individual paid for themselves in order to be able to work more effectively. In a situation where creativity and ideas generation cannot be enhanced through the introduction of fresh recruits (Kirton, 1984), work engagement appears a logical step to creating a passionate workforce that wants to behave and contribute innovatively. This is consistent with work surrounding intrinsic motivation, positive mood and job satisfaction, whereby those individuals experiencing higher levels of these positive psychological constructs are more likely to behave creatively and innovatively (Amabile, et al., 1996; Amabile, Barsade, Mueller & Staw, 2005; Shipton, West, Parkes, Dawson & Patterson, 2006; Fay & Shipton, 2008). It makes sense that engagement would have similar effects due to employees approaching their work with passion, dedication and vigour, thus having positive implications for innovative behaviour. A recent study by Bakker & Xanthopoulou (2013) found that those who were engaged were perceived by other staff members to be creative and more charismatic.

What stands out as most important from the findings are those instances whereby individuals gave examples of poor quality relationships with their manager; or lacking in enthusiasm towards the organisation because they were taking voluntary redundancy. Demonstrating a qualitative level of engagement or lack thereof with regards to their willingness to engage in innovative behaviours suggested that those who were experiencing perceived negativity at work, or whom no longer had any perceived reason to contribute to the future of the firm were less likely to enter into an exchange of innovative behaviours (Billett, 2001). This is consistent with findings in previous research whereby the exchange relationship between manager and employee has implications for empowerment and trust in management (Gomez & Rosen, 2001), and therefore makes a logical step for engagement to also be influenced in a similar way.

Overall the findings point to engagement being a contributing factor to the innovative behaviour of employees. It appears that the more highly engaged an individual is, the more likely they are to be willing to enter the social exchange. Moreover, individuals that have little or no vested interest in the future of the company, whether that be through retiring, redundancy, or more troublingly a negatively perceived relationship with their manager, are less likely to be willing to share innovative ideas. That is not to say that they are less creative or less innovative than their more highly engaged counterparts, but rather that they are less willing to contribute this knowledge and creative effort to the success of the business. Dekker & Schaufeli (1995) found that job insecurity, such as that experienced by individuals being made redundant or operating in an environment where redundancy or change is occurring, is associated with deterioration in psychological health. The surprising part of their findings was that support from management or colleagues did not buffer the negative impact on psychological health of those feeling threatened. In contrast to this, this study showed that supportive line managers were an essential part of the process for entering into the exchange relationship. Managers tended to be the contributing factor to employees' responses regarding their feelings during the organisational change and how they reported their relationship to engagement. Ultimately the association between engagement and the discretionary role of the manager appeared to be the most important factors in this relationship to sharing creativity and innovation with the organisation.

5.4 Innovative Behaviours and the Line Manager

As suggested earlier in the chapter, the findings demonstrate the essential role of the line manager in the relationship between the action of creative thought and the sharing of that through innovative behaviours of employees. Much of the work engagement literature has overlooked the crucial role of the line manager in the production of work engagement, and the resulting outcomes of engagement. Underpinning the relationship presented in these findings are, as previously stated, Blau's (1964) Social Exchange Theory and Bakker, et al.'s (2001) Job Demands-Resources theory.

The role of the manager is subject to their individual discretion in how they enact that role (Carpenter & Golden, 1997), and the way in which each manager perceives their ability to act in a discretionary manner will vary from manager to manager. Managers can choose how much of the resources needed by staff they are willing to share. While innovation can occur as a method of working around a lack of resource provision, it appears that in this organisation, the intangible resources are the most essential for creating a willingness to participate in social exchange of creative ideas. Of particular importance

within those resources is the level of trust that managers place in an employee and the level at which organisation members perceive that trust. Employees form beliefs about how much their contribution is valued based on prior experiences (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison & Sowa, 1986), and while trust in management has been identified as an important factor in the process of individuals behaving innovatively (Clegg, Unsworth, Epitropaki & Parker, 2002), this research implicates manager discretion regarding the level of trust they place in employees to be equally as important through the provision of autonomy and involvement (Cotgrove & Box, 1970; Michie & West, 2004). Sharing creative ideas and behaving in an innovative manner can be risky, and this is a trait shared by the trust relationship – placing trust in an individual can be a risk (Kramer & Tyler, 1996) – trust to behave innovatively in a manner that will benefit the organisation and giving staff freedom to do this is a risk taken by managers, especially considering the legal implications that restrict their business. Bidault & Castello (2008) argue the need for trust to be a joint effort, a social exchange between manager and employee.

The matter of risk and the autonomy to take risks (whether these were minor or significant) was an interesting subject within the findings. The wider business is a risk-averse business due to the nature of their work and the legal and political structures placed upon them. This risk aversion and a legal team that works towards avoiding any kind of risk, has placed restrictions on the way in which the service can innovate – with incremental innovations becoming a focus due to the risk tied to radical changes. While the focus on incremental innovations in a service industry is not a negative focus, the barriers to being more innovative through the avoidance of risk can be negative, causing inhibition in staff to be innovative and risk itself to be an inhibitor of radical changes in the way things are done (Sutton, 2001; Farson & Keyes, 2002). While the business is risk averse, the managers in this service have done their best to create a culture within which staff members are given autonomy to be innovative and a culture where failure is not punished but celebrated as a platform for learning more about what works, what is unsuccessful and why, and how to move forwards. However, due to the legal restrictions and lack of manoeuvrability within the wider organisation's framework, radical innovations have been impossible for their business. Moving to a WOC situation may present greater opportunities for frame breaking behaviour and expanding into greater territories, rather than focusing on 'doing better', or 'doing more with less'.

Focusing the culture on increasing the innovativeness and creativity of the workforce requires management support and a management team that provides the necessary resources, both latent and tangible to enact the ideas presented by staff. Staff should feel involved, and managers should focus on

a participatory style, particularly when the focus is on innovation during a time of organisational change (West, 2002). Furthermore, the innovation culture would benefit from considering the inclusion of work engagement in this equation.

Overall, the findings point to a need to consider the managerial role in the engagement and innovative behaviour equation. Managerial discretion surrounding the intangible resources of trust, autonomy and freedom in particular stand out as being essential resources for behaving innovatively. Meanwhile the level of engagement an individual reports appears to be associated with their willingness to engage in the social exchange, with those reporting signs of disengagement being less likely to contribute innovatively. The role of the manager plays a fundamental role in the level of engagement reported by staff members, with those experiencing poor quality relationships experiencing lower levels of engagement and feelings of disengagement – this highlights something not previously considered in the engagement literature, with the focus having been on providing interesting, challenging work and work-life balance. It appears from the data that the manager plays a more fundamental part in driving engagement than previously considered, and that trust plays a key role in this. Furthermore, with regards to interesting work, the staff members reporting experiences of disengagement were also losing interest in their work, and this appeared to be more an act of disengagement whereby their desire to come to work had waned, and as such so had their interest regardless of the interesting challenge they would face when coming in. The challenge of their job roles had not significantly changed during the period of organisational change, and as such this suggests that the lack of interest is a result of disengagement rather than a driver of it. This is in contrast to the previous findings in the literature (Hadjimanolis, 2003) and creates opportunities for further research to concentrate on differentiating between the previously considered drivers and whether they are really components of engagement.

In short, managers wishing to create an engaged workforce, and a workforce which participates in innovative behaviour, should be considerate of the autonomy and trust they award their staff, be conscious of building good quality relationships, offer high levels of support and freedom, aim to offer resources that enable staff to behave innovatively, and aim to involve employees with decision making and with good communication of decisions that they cannot make a contribution to.

5.5 Contribution to Knowledge

The literature cited in this thesis has focused on examining the role of work engagement with regards to its make up and its predictors. Furthermore relating the construct to positive organisational outcomes such as performance has been a major focal point in the existing literature on the topic. Moreover, there is much knowledge regarding the importance of the employment relationship such as leader-member exchange (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995), psychological contract (Rousseau, 1996) and so forth. However, the literature presented several gaps in our knowledge on both subjects, particularly with regards to creativity and innovative behaviours in the public sector environment.

The vast expanse of the black box of the discretionary role of the line manager and the people-performance link (Purcell, 2003) is an ever expanding body of research that continues to grow as we understand more about the relationships explored within it. Engagement research has limited reference to the role of the manager in the equation, which seems intuitively essential to the relationship considering the vast literature spread on the way in which first line managers and the employment relationship affect organisational outcomes. Moreover, the relationship between work engagement and innovative behaviours of staff had not been explored at the time of beginning the research, and as such due to the way in which engagement has been shown to influence organisational outcomes at the individual and group level, investigating the links demonstrated an expansion of our understanding of the role of engagement in organisations. This research makes a contribution to addressing the gaps highlighted in the literature and developing a survey tool that can continue to be used within the business.

5.5.1 Academic Contributions

For academics, the research contributes to knowledge surrounding the discretionary role of the manager and the black box of what this forms, which was recommended by Shen & Cho (2005) as an important next step in the development of the construct. It also contributes to extending the knowledge of the emerging work engagement construct and how the manager is involved in creating a climate for creativity and innovative behaviours through social exchange and reciprocity (Blau, 1964). This knowledge brings together the streams of knowledge within several areas of organisational research, drawing together strategic human resources management, work psychology and knowledge management literatures.

Furthermore, the extension of application of the social exchange theory of Blau (1964) enhances our understanding of this within organisations and the role that this plays within the engagement construct in particular. Social exchange appears to underpin the Job Demands-Resources model (JD-R. Bakker, Nachreiner & Schaufeli, 2001), which demonstrates an applicability also in the arena of innovation and creativity management through the provision in particular of latent resources such as trust, autonomy and development a climate for creativity. The JD-R has been limited in its application to innovation. Only one such study has been found published, which focused on individual level innovation being a coping strategy to high job demands (Martin, Salanova & Peiro, 2007). The research brings to light the importance of the managerial role in providing job demands and resources in addition to the external pressures faced by employees operating in a competitive industry. Particularly interesting is the application of the theory in a public sector organisation experiencing competition from external sources in addition to the potential bureaucracy, red tape and risk aversion of the public sector. Extending the knowledge about what contributes to the innovative behaviour of employees, particularly in the public sector environment adds value to the literature.

There have been reports in the practitioner literature highlighting work engagement and involvement of staff as being a necessary component of successful change management (Goodman, Rousseau & Church, 2004; Price & Chahal, 2005). The work completed for this thesis has provided some empirical evidence in support of their findings in practice and brings together some of the gaps in the academic literature that have been previously identified in practice. Furthermore, gaps in our understanding of the discretionary role of the manager with regards to employee relate outcomes were identified by previous researchers (Harney & Jordan, 2008). While the multitude of outcomes that research could examine could not all be addressed in this thesis, this research has gone some way to aiding our understanding of the discretionary role with a focus on work engagement and innovative behaviours of staff in the public sector.

Trust in particular has been identified as an essential motivator for inspiring the engagement of employees, but particularly important for the reciprocation of employees with innovative behaviour and ideas sharing. The research highlights the importance of the consideration of the manager's discretionary behaviour with regards to both constructs, particularly as engaged employees experiencing trust from their managers appeared to be more inclined to behave innovatively. This highlights the interpretation of SHRM policy and procedure as implicated in the exchange relationship between the manager and their staff (Kular, Gatenby, Rees, Soane & Truss, 2008).

In addition to these findings, the role of tacit knowledge (Polanyi, 1966), while not the major finding within the research, did arise as a potential influencing factor on an individual's ability to behave innovatively. Employees possessing both tacit and shared knowledge, which were fundamental to the way in which this service operated, are more able to contribute innovative ideas that are taken forwards into improving service delivery and business functionality. Knowledge management studies have alluded to the importance of tacit knowledge (see for example, Seidler-de-Alwis & Hartmann, 2008; Kakabadse, Kouzmin & Kakabadse, 2001), but this has not been addressed in depth in the case of human resource management and work psychology. This brings to bear a further finding that adds value and pulls together HRM and knowledge management in particular, creating opportunities for further research into the role of tacit knowledge in innovative behaviour in the public sector.

Considering the nature of the work engagement construct, there is also a contribution of this thesis to the positive psychology work of Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi (2000). The positive psychological approach treats psychology in the opposite way of the medical model, looking at phenomena with positive outcomes rather than at problems that needs to be treated (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). The findings from this research add to the body of literature developing in the positive psychological approach.

Finally the study makes methodological contributions to the field, particularly with regards to work engagement. The contribution of qualitative work surrounding the role of work engagement is a contribution to academic understanding of the subject. A criticism of the work engagement literature stream has been that of a dominant focus on cross-sectional, self-administered questionnaires as the major form of data collection and formative understanding of the construct (Simpson, 2009; Kular, Gatenby, Rees, Soane & Truss, 2008; Shuck, Rocco & Albornoz, 2011). Approaching the topic from a mixed methods perspective has allowed the research contributions to overcome some of the associated common method bias of using one method (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee & Podsakoff, 2003).

5.5.2 Practical Contributions

The nature of completing a CASE Award PhD has meant that there is an increased necessity for practical contributions to the organisation, in addition to theoretical contributions to practice.

While the generalisability of the findings is limited due to the nature of the data collection, the study was intended to be a case study of one organisation experiencing this change over process and the way in which managerial discretion and work engagement had an affect on innovative behaviours at that

organisation. Generalisability was not an aim of the study, however relativity was important. The case organisation is the largest of its kind in this part of the world, and as such the operations and successes of this business are example-setters for other similar organisations. Although the findings will be somewhat contextual to the organisation, there will be features that are typical of all local authorities, and identifiable with other public sector bodies that may deliver relevancy outside of the business researched. Parker (2000: 222) states that 'all organisational cultures are unique, yet at the same time they share similar features'. This similarity between the way in which public sector bodies are run and in the shared experiences of the recession, cost effectiveness measures and political and social similarities will likely cause identification with core themes and findings from the data collection. Furthermore, the nature of the business as a public sector body operating in a commercial and private sector driven competitive environment, practitioners in the private sector may also draw some inference from the data that could be useful in private sector businesses with a similar cultural context.

For practitioners in the field of innovation management and work engagement in the public sector in particular will benefit from a development in the understanding and consideration of the line manager role within the two constructs, and how they relate to each other. In particular it highlights the need for management to be trained in understanding the role they play in inspiring engagement and understanding the need for maintaining engagement moving forwards into new ways of working.

Due to the CASE award requirements of the PhD, it was essential to provide the organisation with something that they can use following the departure of the researcher from the business. The organisation was in need of a survey that created 'temperature checks' for work engagement and innovation climate, which they were able to use after the end of the research, potentially organisation wide. Part of the survey development has resulted in an innovation survey that the organisation can now use. A disadvantage of the Amabile, et al. (1999) KEYS survey was the cost efficiency of the use of the measure. At a cost of \$2000 per 100 responses, the use of this in an organisation of this size would result in a cost of over £1,000,000 for the business. Considering the current economic climate and the financial status of the organisation, whereby measures to reduce costs and restrict spending are in place, the use of a survey of this expense is unlikely to be high on the corporate agenda. This is regardless of the additional cost of requiring a qualified KEYS administrator. The advantage of the survey developed for the organisation is the use of this tool free of charge, and an ability to use this in other areas of the business and potential to use this survey in other local authorities and public sector bodies. Again, the Amabile KEYS scale would not be usable without significant investment, both in terms of finance and

time. The survey developed for the business is now potentially transferable to other parts of the business to pursue these temperature checks, particularly with regards to those service areas that are experiencing the same organisational change processes and similar ways of working to that of the service areas and directorate investigated. Providing something long-lasting and for practical use for the organisation was an essential component of fulfilling a CASE Award PhD, and as such the resulting survey is provided to the organisation as a future research tool, that is easy and free to administer within the business without an external researcher needing to be responsible for administering it.

Additionally, the qualitative groundwork conducted for the organisation in the development of the survey contributes a practical donation to the organisation as outlined by the CASE Award requirements. The organisation lacks the time available to invest in the extensive qualitative research undertaken for this PhD, forming the foundation of the development of the survey. The time intensive nature of qualitative research means that organisations are unable to invest the time in planning and executing qualitative research, and as such external researchers are suitable candidates for completing the groundwork for survey development. Easy to administer quantitative surveys such as the one developed here require less in the way of time intensiveness. Although the subsequent data input and analysis can be time consuming, this pales in comparison to the time involved in qualitative transcription, analysis and interpretation. Development from qualitative data contributes to the relevance of the questions to the organisation and the members of staff, providing a tool that is pertinent to its members. Further research into the measure would need to be undertaken should the organisation wish to use the survey outside of the organisation for other similar businesses.

The benefit of the qualitative work undertaken and the resulting survey to the organisation is the engagement of staff in capturing their ideas to innovate, and potential for associated cost efficiency savings and improved service delivery. Ultimately, the innovative behaviour of staff demonstrated a desire to be innovative, contributing ideas surrounding ways in which the provision of services (both to commercial and community clients) could be improved, streamlined and managed more efficiently from a cost perspective.

Finally, the research adds to the knowledge surrounding engagement of the workforce in a public sector environment characterised by change, redundancy exercises and cutbacks. The research highlights the need for practitioners to examine closely the discretion perceived by management to enact their role of engaging employees in a reciprocity agreement and how they are perceiving their ability to provide resources to their workforce to increase engagement, and therefore sharing of innovative behaviours.

Furthermore, the notion of trust is very important in this relationship, and as such is something which greatly contributes to creating a climate for creativity and a culture of innovative behaviour. These findings are unique within the public sector, which has had little attention in the engagement literature, and which research has tended to focus on efficiencies and the definition of what it means to be an engaged employee in the public sector. This research adds some value to the understanding of how employees become engaged at work, and how they respond socially and organisationally. This will enhance public sector understanding of how to manage work engagement, provides further support for its usefulness in organisational life (with reference to beneficial employee outcomes such as innovative behaviour), and demonstrates the need for management to understand the importance of their role in the social exchange relationship of employment.

5.6 Limitations

While the findings of the research display interesting results and contributions to knowledge, this research is not without its limitations and as such should be acknowledged. One limitation is that of cross-sectional versus longitudinal design. Although the data was collected over a longer period of time, the research was still cross-sectional in nature. Longitudinal research involves observation of the same variables over a long period of time, tracking the same people and the differences that occur over time (Menard, 2002), and as such this study was not a truly longitudinal study. Aspects of the research took a longitudinal stance – for example many of the interviewees in the ethnographic work were also respondents in the focus groups. However the nature of the study was not intending to follow a longitudinal design. Future research into change processes of this type may benefit more greatly from a longitudinal design in order to track the changes of respondents in their levels of engagement and innovative behaviour. It may also be pertinent to quantitatively test the relationships identified in this research over longer periods of time in order to track the changes that occur throughout the change process, or to triangulate data with a quantitative approach. While the research was not truly longitudinal, the increased time spent within the organisation also demonstrates a strength of the research, with much of the previous research focusing on survey level data (work engagement) or multiple short term case studies (discretion). Furthermore, this research was multi-method in nature, further developing its strengths beyond its cross-sectional nature.

The themes that emerged from the data surrounding the organisational culture of the service area are not intended to represent the complete picture of organisational culture in the directorate, or indeed within the wider organisation. The themes exist as representations of the service area at that time with

regards to managerial discretion to provide the resources and exchange relationships required for successful engagement and inspiration of creative thought and action in staff. The nature of a case study means that the culture and picture portrait presented is representative only of that period in time. Further progressions may occur during and after the data collection process. Indeed the nature of the business has changed since the withdrawal of the researcher from the research organisation, with successful implementation of the WOC vehicle and operations existing in this manner for approximately 12 months. Case studies provide a snapshot in time, but the relevance of this will be useful for other businesses experiencing similar change processes, and for academics working with businesses that are moving to a WOC within the public sector or with similar workforce compositions.

As discussed previously, the generalisability of the findings to other organisations is limited due to the nature of case study method (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Wainwright, 1997; Creswell, 1998). That is not to say that no qualitative research is generalisable (Donmoyer, 1990), however the goal of the research was not generalisability – rather the focus of the research was into theory development, and to bring to light one in depth case study that similar organisations may experience the changes of in the future, looking more in depth into the nature of the constructs in one public sector body. Applicability or transferability rather than generalisability should perhaps be the focus of this research (Patton, 2002; Stake, 1980; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003), due to the nature of the constructs investigated and the context specificity of the relationships. Leonard-Barton (1992: 25) suggests that when a part of an organisation is ‘pulled out to be examined, it comes out vinelike, trailing roots back to deeply held values and widely observed management practices’. The ability or lack thereof to take the findings from this case and look at them in isolation without consideration of the culture, history and shared values of the public sector and its workers is a strength of the research as much as it is a weakness. All human behaviour is rooted in the experience of the actors within that social world, and as such context is an essential consideration that decreases plausibility of generalised findings, however that does not mean that a sufficiently detailed account of a case study can not be deemed transferable elsewhere (Mays & Pope, 2000; Wainwright, 1997). It is the interconnectedness of such contextual factors that create opportunities for achieving difficult to copy competitive advantage and form the most interesting basis upon which the research is built. Where there are clear similarities between the case organisation and another business, the applicability of the findings may present usefulness to those businesses.

5.7 Suggestions for Future Research

This research has identified the role of the line manager, particularly with regards to their discretionary role, as being an important role in the creation of a climate for creativity and inspiring the engagement of their employees. Furthermore, level of engagement influences the willingness for employees to engage in exchange relationships whereby the management provide certain resources through their discretionary role, and employees choose whether or not to respond with sharing their creative ideas and behaving innovatively. Essential components in the resources are identified trust, autonomy and freedom to complete work effectively and to operate within their role based on their knowledge, skills and capabilities.

Further research would benefit from testing whether these relationships are similar in other areas of the public sector. Within services that are not operating in the competitive environment of the service researched, the experience of engagement and climate for creativity may be very different. Certainly innovation is not something that is typically associated with the public sector (Hughes, Moore & Kataria, 2011; McGuire, Stoner & Mylona, 2008; Bhatta, 2003), and as such the differing way in which different services operate within the public sector warrants further research. It is possible that the reasons for possessing a workforce that has a desire to innovate and to engage themselves in their working role is a result of the context within which they operate – with a necessity to be competitive this may explain why this service has a more innovative climate than potentially seen in other areas. Further research would benefit from cross-examination of the findings in other service areas, initially within the same organisation and later across organisations to identify the generalisability of the findings presented here. The way in which management are perceived will depend on their enactment of the discretionary role. The service area examined were already known within the business as being a shining example of how other services should be operating, and as such the research would be interesting to replicate in areas where management approach is typically very different, and in areas that are low performing compared to this service area which was considered a high performing area. Being able to make comparisons in behaviour between high and low performing areas, and how to transform low performing to high performing would be an interesting topic of future research.

The nature of the research was that it was not a truly longitudinal design, utilising cross-sectional methods to achieve the collection of data. The study provides an understanding of a public sector business experiencing organisational change, but further research would benefit from the use of longitudinal methods. A longitudinal design would allow for greater tracking of changes in engagement

levels and willingness to exchange with innovative behaviour, as well as any potential changes in the way management behave and enact their discretionary role during major organisational change. This would provide a greater understanding of the relationships presented here and potentially opportunity to generalise the findings more meaningfully to other similar organisations.

Finally, further research would focus in more detail on developing the understanding of the black box of managerial discretion. This research focused on discretion with regards to climate for creativity, and engagement and the social exchange that is the underpinning theory of this relationship. The breadth of managerial discretion within organisations is still not fully understood, and this research identified only one area within which the discretionary role is applicable within organisations. In order to more fully understand the role, it will be essential to examine the role more closely and in relation to other constructs that are important for businesses both in the public, private and third sectors. It would be interesting to see if similar findings are presented in the private and third sectors to that which has been found in this organisation, and furthermore the variety of ways in which the manager impacts on the multitude of processes within organisational life. Future research should focus on identifying further ways in which the discretionary role impacts on employees and business related outcomes. Certainly the interrelatedness of organisational life means that there are potentially more variables at play that will influence the outcomes of the discretionary role, and further research will be essential in order to expand our knowledge regarding the line manager's important role in this environment.

5.8 Conclusions

This chapter has provided an overview of the findings and conclusions drawn from this thesis in relation to previous research and identified the limitations and opportunities for further research to expand our understanding as well as the practical and academic contributions to knowledge that this PhD provides. Ultimately the findings show that line managers play an essential role in inspiring engagement, and this is something that has not been previously considered or investigated in the engagement literature. Furthermore engagement is an important antecedent to the likelihood that employees will engage in a social exchange relationship with the business and the latent provision of resources from management increases opportunities for engaging in the sharing of innovative behaviour. Latent resources that are particularly important are the bundle of SHRM policies and procedures interpreted and implemented at the discretion of the manager, and in particular trust and autonomy to behave innovatively. These unique findings add to the body of existing research on engagement and innovation and the

discretionary role, bringing together some of the research themes within work psychology, strategic human resource management and innovation management.

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Appendix 1 – Survey Analysis.

Quantitative Survey

At request of the business, a quantitative survey was distributed within the overarching directorate. The survey served the organisation by providing a measure of climate for innovative behaviour and work engagement within the directorate. For the findings of this research, the survey was used as a method of data triangulation, seeking to provide support for the qualitative findings.

The survey was distributed both via paper and electronic methods. It was decided that this were the most appropriate way to increase opportunity for higher response rates for a number of reasons. Firstly, the issue of access to the survey due to some members of the organisation not having access to email. Secondly the issue of historical response rates for the organisation's staff survey being under 10% return rate. All employees have been given access to both version of the survey.

500 paper surveys were distributed within the Development Directory by a contact within one of the service areas in this directorate, along with a stamped return envelope. The website link to the electronic survey was emailed to all employees in this directorate by the same contact. The electronic survey was hosted by the company Survey Monkey. The complete paper survey can be viewed in appendix 5.

Surveys were available for a period of one month, after which point the Survey Monkey site closed access. A return date was printed on the paper copies and was delivered in the email to participants with the electronic link. The address for return of the paper surveys was included both in the covering letter and printed on the survey itself, as well as the pack including the return envelope to ensure that response could still come through if envelopes were lost.

The sample is essentially an opportunity sample due to the easy access to the Development directorate. Development was chosen due to pre-negotiated access, approval of the survey by the director and due to the close ties to [SERVICE]. Surveys were sent to all 500 members of the directorate in an attempt to gain a decent response rate – typically the business attains poor response rate on the delivery of surveys, most specifically the staff survey which receives a response rate of fewer than 10% of the total workforce. A targeted sample may have involved more aggressive approaches to get respondents to reply, and may have resulted in an equally skewed outcome. Sending the survey to all members of the directorate allowed for greater opportunities for response and likelihood that a better response rate

would be achieved than through targeting individuals. While opportunity sampling is generally considered to be less effective for obtaining representative samples of respondents than purposeful sampling methods such as stratified sampling or systematic sampling, it does not necessarily mean that the data collected will not be representative of the sample. Only that there is an increased possibility that data collected will be skewed (Gravetter & Forzano, 2009), and that there may be a decrease in ability to generalise to the wider population. As the aim of the research was not to generalise to the entire organisation (rather that the survey acted as a triangulation method for the qualitative research, looking to support or refute the findings from [SERVICE]), it was deemed that the convenience sample was not detrimental to the study, particularly as the purpose was to present a case study of a segment of the organisation.

Importance of Line Manager Discretion towards Work Engagement

The quantitative survey, as outlined above, the survey was completed as a complementary method to the qualitative methods, as a form of triangulating the data and seeking numerical support or challenges for the rich descriptions provided by the ethnographic findings. Furthermore, the survey sought to provide answers to the propositions of the research, most specifically addressing the nature of the relationship between work engagement and innovative behaviours. The survey was distributed to the Development directory, with 500 paper surveys and weblinks to an online version (identical in questionnaire order and set up) being sent out by the contact in Building & Consultancy service. This chapter will detail the choice of scales used in the measure, the procedure undertaken for administering the survey and the analysis of the data produced.

Developing the survey

Prior to the survey development, a great deal of work was undertaken in examining the existing staff survey delivered by the organisation. A critical analysis of the existing survey was examined and the report of this that was delivered to the organisation can be read in Appendix 6. Having completed the critical analysis, issues identified were used as a basis for developing a survey which would garner a greater response rate and ameliorate any of the existing issues within the staff survey.

Scales

Scales for work engagement and climate for creativity were carefully chosen for the survey from extant academic literature. The engagement scale was ordered before the creativity scale, followed by demographic questions. This was the case in both the paper and electronic versions of the survey, and was ordered this way to encourage completion of the survey, with the engagement scale being considerably shorter in items than creativity.

Work Engagement

Work engagement was measured using the 9-item version of the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES, Schaufeli et al., 2003). Numerous measures of work engagement exist ranging from academic approaches to practitioner climate measures. Organisations creating their own measures of engagement face the problem of being unable to compare and generalise with other organisations (Robinson, et al. 2007), while the contention over the definition of work engagement continues to make the choice of instrument for organisations more difficult. Engagement has often been measured as job satisfaction (Hallberg & Schaufeli, 2006) and academia has identified cross-contamination of concepts within some of the available practitioner measures (Bhatnagar, 2008)

Early conceptualisations of engagement viewed the concept as being the polar opposite of burnout (Maslach & Leiter, 1997). The corresponding facets of burnout (exhaustion, cynicism and reduced efficacy) to engagement (vigour, dedication and absorption), resulted in the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI. Maslach, Jackson & Leiter, 1996) being used as a measure of engagement, suggesting that scoring the opposite pattern on this scale to that characterising burnout implied engagement. This measure was discounted for use in this study for a number of reasons. Since the creation of the UWES, the popularity of use of the MBI has waned considerably. This is due to the plausibility of the two concepts, burnout and engagement, being perfectly correlated. Later research has suggested that theoretically an engaged individual may score high or low on burnout, and vice versa (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2001, in Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003). The MBI fell out of favour also due to the frequency with which engagement and burnout are studied within the same piece of research, this making it empirically impractical to measure both with the same questionnaire.

The UWES was developed due to issues with the polarity of the three characteristics of engagement and burnout. There has been a growing body of evidence to suggest that the third characteristic of burnout – professional efficacy – is a less important part of the burnout concept, with exhaustion and cynicism

being at the core (Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter, 2001; Shirom, 2002); while engagement research demonstrated absorption as being the third characteristic of engagement as opposed to efficacy (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003).

UWES was chosen due to being considered the most rigorous academically of the available measures through multiple testing of the scale in various countries. The scale has demonstrated acceptable to high internal consistency across cultures (e.g., Shimazu, et al., 2008; Storm & Rothman, 2003; Schaufeli, Martinez, Pinto, Salanova & Bakker, 2002c; Hallberg & Schaufeli, 2006; Seppälä, et al., 2009), frequently exceeding the acceptable Cronbach's Alpha scores of .70 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994; Schaufeli, Taris & van Rhenen, 2003; Demerouti, et al., 2001). In the UWES test manual (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003) the overall alpha score for the measure was .90. Stability of the measure over time has been shown to be high (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003; Seppälä, et al., 2009).

There have been discussions in the literature debating the suitability of the three factor structure of the engagement concept, as measured by the UWES. In a confirmatory factor analysis Wefald & Downey (2009a) argued that neither a one factor nor three factor model fit their data. A two factor model was best, but failed to meet acceptable goodness of fit and has no theoretical justification. Based on the principle of parsimony they felt a one factor structure of the concept was best when measured using the UWES, though indicated their feeling that engagement was a poorly defined construct. Shimazu, et al., (2008) found similar results in their Japanese sample, though indicated that these findings may be due to the cultural differences between individual and collectivist cultures rather than being poorly defined. They suggested that in such contexts, engagement may be better utilised through summation of the subscales.

Conflicting confirmatory factor analysis studies found a three factor model superior in fit to one factor in European countries (Schaufeli, Martinez, Marques-Pinto, Salanova & Bakker, 2002 (in Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003); Schaufeli, Martinez, Marques-Pinto, Salanova & Bakker, 2002c; Schaufeli, Taris & van Rhenen, 2003; Hallberg & Schaufeli, 2006). Due to the high correlations demonstrated in prior research between the latent factors of the UWES, Schaufeli & Bakker (2003) suggested that, while the measure is psychometrically a three dimension measure, condensing these into an overall score of engagement may be used for practical purposes, particularly in the case of the shortened 9-item version. Three dimension scores may be of use where the individual characteristics are of interest to the propositions (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003). For studies whereby the overall outcome of engagement is more important to the study than the individual parts, the 9-item scale is suggested to be the most appropriate measure

due to the goodness of fit of a one factor model, hence the decision to use this shortened version based on psychometric properties.

Analysis of the data collected for this research show that engagement works best as an overall factor as opposed to the three separate subscales due to very high correlation of the scales.

Recent examinations of the UWES have advised caution in interpreting extreme scores at either end of the work engagement scale. In a study of Japanese and Dutch versions of the UWES, reservations were made about particularly the higher end of the scale in Western employees due to issues of self-enhancement in this culture (Shimazu, Schaufeli, Miyanaka and Iwata, 2010)

The UWES was originally developed as a 24-item measure, consisting mainly of MBI items that had been rephrased to reflect the positive nature of the construct. Testing the psychometric properties of the measure, seven items were removed, creating the 17-item scale (Schaufeli, et al., 2006). Schaufeli, et al., (2006) tested the 17-item version of the scale across 10 countries which indicated that the scale could be shortened to the 9-item version, with good internal consistency and test-retest reliability (see also Mauno, et al., 2007; Llorens, et al., 2007). The short item version of the scale was found to share 80% of variance with the longer scales.

In order to avoid potential for bias, the term 'work engagement' is not included anywhere within the UWES, and is titled as the 'Work & Well Being Survey'.

Creativity and Innovation

Creativity and more specifically innovation were measured using the Siegel Scale of Support for Innovation (SSSI) (Siegel & Kaemmerer, 1978), a 61-item scale consisting of five dimensions – Leadership, Ownership, Norms for Diversity, Continuous Development and Consistency. Their factor analysis demonstrated loadings on three factors – Support for Creativity ('the extent to which members of an organisation perceive it as supporting its members in their functioning independently and in pursuit of new ideas'); Tolerance of Differences ('the perception of the organisation as being supportive and tolerant of diversity among its members'); and Personal Commitment ('The degree of personal commitment a member feels toward an organisation') (Siegel & Kaemmerer, 1978: 559-560).

While other scales exist within the realm of creativity and innovation, the SSSI was chosen as the scale for this research due to the nature of the items within the scale. A great deal of focus within the scale

was placed on leadership, and as the purpose of the study was to examine the role of the first line manager in the engagement and creativity relationships, it was felt that this would be a useful scale to employ. A major limitation of the SSSI is that few reports exist regarding the validity and reliability of the measurement. Although other options were available for consideration in terms of measuring creativity and innovation climate within the business, the SSSI was deemed the most appropriate given the time constraints of the project, as detailed below.

Alternative options that were available included the KEYS to Creativity & innovation scale (Amabile, Burnside & Gryskiewicz, 1999), which was a preferred measure due to its statistical reliability and validity. However the process for obtaining permission to use the scale was time consuming and would have resulted in a halted delivery of the survey (by many months), which was not plausible given the limited time frame within which the research needed to be completed and in which access to the population was granted. KEYS also becomes an expensive option for PhD study, with users requiring a qualification in its administration (hence the inability to pursue this as an instrument for the PhD due to time involved), requiring to pay \$2000 per 100 surveys administered (Culpepper, 2010). This was also problematic due to the requirement of a survey that is transferable across the business, or indeed the public sector as a whole. Most specifically, the need was for a survey that could be used repeatedly within the organisation at no further cost, and the requirement for added value to the business through the CASE Award method.

A further option was that of the Situational Outlook Questionnaire (SOQ; Isaksen, Lauer & Ekvall, 1999). However, similarly to the SSSI, few reported reliability and validity statistics have been reported in the academic literature. With less focus on the role of the manager, which was deemed important for this study, it was felt that the SSSI provided greater opportunity for answering the propositions of the research. Further measures such as the Team Climate Inventory (Anderson & West, 1998) and Team Factor Inventory (Rickards, Chen & Moger, 2001) were felt to be inappropriate in this case, due to the focus on the team rather than the individual.

Due to its focus on leadership and the managerial role in creating the climate for innovation, the SSSI was chosen as the measure for this research, regardless of the limited amount of academic information regarding its validity and reliability. Feedback was sought from the academic supervisor regarding the choice of scale, and it was felt that because of the relevance of the item wordings, this could be an effective scale within the survey. Furthermore, the questions had practical and personal relevance as

those in the organisation who read the survey prior to its administration felt that the relevance of the questions were very high in this case.

Demographic details

Demographic information was requested at the end of the survey, and each answer was optional to participants. Demographic information was requested about job status (part time or full time, and temporary, permanent or agency); the service area within the directorate for which they worked; time worked in current role and time worked for the organisation; whether they had management responsibilities; and gender, age and ethnic group. Demographic questions were based on the demographics usually requested of [ORGANISATION]'s employees when the organisation administers their own surveys and complied with [ORGANISATION] rules and regulations regarding the collection of demographic information. The complete survey can be seen in Appendix 5

Procedure

The quantitative survey was distributed within the wider Development Directorate. The directorate consists of approximately 500 employees in administration, technical and managerial roles. Some services within the directorate were undertaking similar change processes to Building and Consultancy, while others were operating as normal.

In order to maximise potential participation and in an effort to increase response rate to the survey, both electronic and paper copies of the survey were distributed within the directorate. This was also essential due to the nature of the work that many of the services within the directorate undertake. Some members of the business do not have regular computer access in order to access and complete an electronic survey. Furthermore, some of the work provided by some of the services within this directorate is delivered 'on site', away from the physical environment of the directorate offices, meaning time spent in front of a computer for some employees is limited. Using the paper and electronic methods of distribution allowed participants to complete the survey at their leisure. The additional reasons for providing as easy access as possible for participants is that historically the response rates for the organisation's staff survey is below 10%.

Using anonymous paper and internet survey methods was seen as most efficient in terms of administration of the survey and in terms of encouraging response. It is often cited that non-anonymous forms of response can potentially bias results, while anonymous responses minimise this potential and provide greater security in revealing information that may be sensitive (Zikmund, 1997; Diamantopoulos & Schlegelmilch, 1996). This was particularly important in using the quantitative measure as a form of supporting data following a lengthy period of non-anonymous qualitative data collection. Using telephone administration was also discounted as a method of administering the questionnaire due to the length of the survey (consisting of a long creativity measure, engagement measure and demographic information), with recommendations to avoid this method in this situation (Churchill, 1999) and a potential lack of trust with the interviewer that may be present over the telephone, which was not frequently experienced in the focus group and individual interviews. Furthermore, many of the participants in this directorate are typically away from their desks for most of the day working on site with clients and customers, meaning sparing the time to complete a substantial survey over the telephone could reduce response rates considerably due to time constraints of the job. The survey can be viewed in full in appendix 5.

500 paper surveys were distributed within the directorate through the primary contact within Building and Consultancy. All copies were accompanied by a letter explaining the purpose of the survey and the rights of participants regarding the ethical considerations of the study – right to withdraw, informed consent – and a stamped addressed envelope. The website link to the electronic version of the survey was sent via email to all members of the directorate by the primary contact. The internet survey was hosted through Survey Monkey, which provides a secure data transfer and acts merely as a host for surveys and data. As the questionnaire was hosted by an external company, email addresses could not be traced, and therefore provided similar levels of anonymity as the paper questionnaire.

Issues

Few issues were encountered in administering the survey, however one major issue was met which resulted in time delays to the project. Each intervention or collection of data by any party, whether they be internal or external must first be delivered to a steering group and approved by cabinet. While the survey was agreed to and approved by the initial service area's director, and the director of the

Development directorate, this process of approval from the higher echelons was essential to complete before the administration of the survey. Due to the nature of this process, it was difficult to maintain knowledge of who was currently responsible for the survey at a given time as it was passed up through layers of the wider organisation. Ultimately the amount of time it took for the survey to be approved and eventually distributed caused a considerable delay in completing the overall data collection, meaning my ethnographic work had finished several months prior to the survey being distributed. On one hand it may be seen as advantageous in collecting data at different points in time as a more longitudinal fashion, however the aims of the study did not extend to longitudinal research, rather to provide practical relevance to the organisation, particularly the Directorate development. However frustrating the process of approval may have been, the experience is in fact a finding in itself, demonstrating some of the bureaucratic processes that still exist in the wider organisation for achieving change and other work related activities.

Analysis of Data

Upon receipt of completed questionnaires, data were entered manually into SPSS and the data was cleaned by crosschecking the data input between the software and the original documents. Descriptive statistics were used to identify any mistakes in entering the data, and errors were corrected using the identifying code assigned to each questionnaire. Negatively worded items were recoded prior to beginning analysis of the data.

Of the 500 surveys distributed within the directorate, in addition to the electronic option of completing online, a total of 145 surveys were returned. This demonstrates a response rate of 32.5%. While this number appears to be low, for this organisation the response rate was a satisfactory result. In previous staff surveys, the organisation's response rates have often been fewer than 10%, and as such it is a surprisingly large result for this organisation. Although academics prefer to gather higher response rates for survey data, Visser, Krosnick, Marquette & Curtin (1996) report that surveys that received lower response rates (in the region of about 20%) were demonstrated to be more accurate in measurement than those with higher response rates. Also Keeter, Kennedy, Dimock, Best & Craighill (2006) compared the statistical differences between a low-response survey and high response survey, finding the results 'statistically indistinguishable'. Furthermore Holbrook, Krosnick & Pfent (2005) assessed results from 81 national surveys to check for differences in the representativeness of the demographic data, finding minimal differences in accuracy for representativeness.

In examining the data, a number of missing cases were identified. In paper returns this appeared to be intentional, with respondents typically missing demographic questions. However the issue of missing data was more of an issue with the electronic version of the survey. A total of 93 participants began the survey, with 75.3% (n = 70) of those completing the entire survey. Five participants dropped out before completing the first scale, while a further 11 dropped out after completing the first scale.

A normal distribution curve was applied to all of the nominal data to check for any skewness in the data, and to identify how representative the sample was of the overall workforce in this directorate. A normal distribution was evident in all aspects of the demographic data except for Service Area and especially in the case of ethnic origin, which was majorly skewed towards White British. This is not surprising considering that the ethnic majority employed by the business, and indeed of the British population in general, is White British.

Demographic Variables

Demographic data was collected from the respondents in order to understand the sample of respondents and check for any skewness in the data. A breakdown of the demographics of the sample can be viewed in Table 6.1.

The most skewness was identified in the ethnic origin question, which as stated above is unsurprising considering the wider organisation's workforce composition. Almost 75% of respondents were full time employees (n=114), though this is, again, unsurprising considering the reduction in agency employment in the organisation during the recession period. In line with that, almost 80% of staff responding were permanent employees.

Data Analysis

With a satisfactory response rate with comparison to typical returns on organisation led surveys, the data was analysed within SPSS. The five respondents that dropped out of the online survey prior to completing the first scale were removed from the data in order to reduce the effects that missing data would have on the analysis.

Table 6.1: Characteristics of the Survey Sample

	Total	Percentage
Total respondents	154	48.7
Gender:		
Male	75	33.8
Female	52	17.5
No Response	24	
Age:		
< 30	19	12.3
31-40	29	18.8
41-50	48	31.2
51+	33	21.4
No Response	25	16.2
Ethnic Origin:		
White (British/Irish/Other)	106	68.8
Other Ethnic Groups	22	14.3
No Response	26	16.9
Full Time/Part Time:		
Full Time	114	74.0
Part Time	7	4.5
Student Placement	1	0.6
No Response	32	20.8
Contract terms:		
Permanent	123	79.9
Temporary	2	1.3
Agency	2	1.3

No Response	27	17.5
Years Worked at Organisation:		
< 3 years	11	7.1
4-6 years	17	11.0
7-9 years	17	11.0
10-12 years	17	11.0
13+ years	66	42.9
No Response	26	16.8
Years Worked in Current Role:		
< 3 years	42	27.2
4-6 years	30	19.5
7-9 years	17	11.0
10-12 years	11	7.1
13+ years	27	17.5
No Response	27	17.5
Service Area:		
Building & Consultancy	21	13.6
City Centre Management	2	1.3
Development Strategy	24	15.6
Employment	4	2.6
Investment, Enterprise & Innovation	6	3.9
Planning Management	15	9.7
Regeneration	24	15.6
Urban Design	31	20.1
No Response	27	17.5
Management Responsibility:		
Yes	61	39.6

No	68	44.2
No Response	25	16.2

In examining the properties of the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale, the three latent subscales were found to be highly correlated. Because of this, the UWES results appear to work more effectively as an overall measure of engagement rather than utilising the three separate subscales. The shared variance can be seen in Table 6.2, which demonstrates only one factor with an eigenvalue above 1. This is consistent with prior testing of the UWES (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003), and because the individual subscales are not the primary interest of this research, it is acceptable based on the principle of parsimony to pursue data analysis with a single score for the engagement measure. Evidence from the associated scree plot of the factor analysis supports the acceptance of a one factor solution, which can be seen in Figure 6.1. As such, for the further analysis of engagement in this study, engagement will be treated as an overall scale rather than utilising the sub-sections of the measure. The factor loadings of the UWES can be seen in Table 6.3.

Internal consistency statistics were calculated for the UWES and for the SSSI. The UWES was calculated as an overall reliability statistic, achieving $\alpha = .93$, which is well above the usually accepted alpha score of .7. The SSSI subscales reliabilities were calculated individually, with all achieving above .7 (scores ranged between $\alpha = .76$ and .92). The overall reliability of the SSSI was calculated at $\alpha = .97$.

Work Engagement in Development Directory

Examining engagement on its own, the mean overall score on the engagement scale across the sample was 3.5, showing that the sample is scoring just above the middle of the response options. This suggests that staff in this area are neither highly engaged or entirely disengaged from their work. Similarly, each individual subscale of the engagement measure (which were disregarded from the Pearson's analysis due to high inter-correlation) demonstrated mean scores of no higher than 3.7. Dedication accounted for the highest scores (3.7), with absorption scoring 3.5 and vigour 3.0.

Table 6.2: Total Variance of UWES Explained

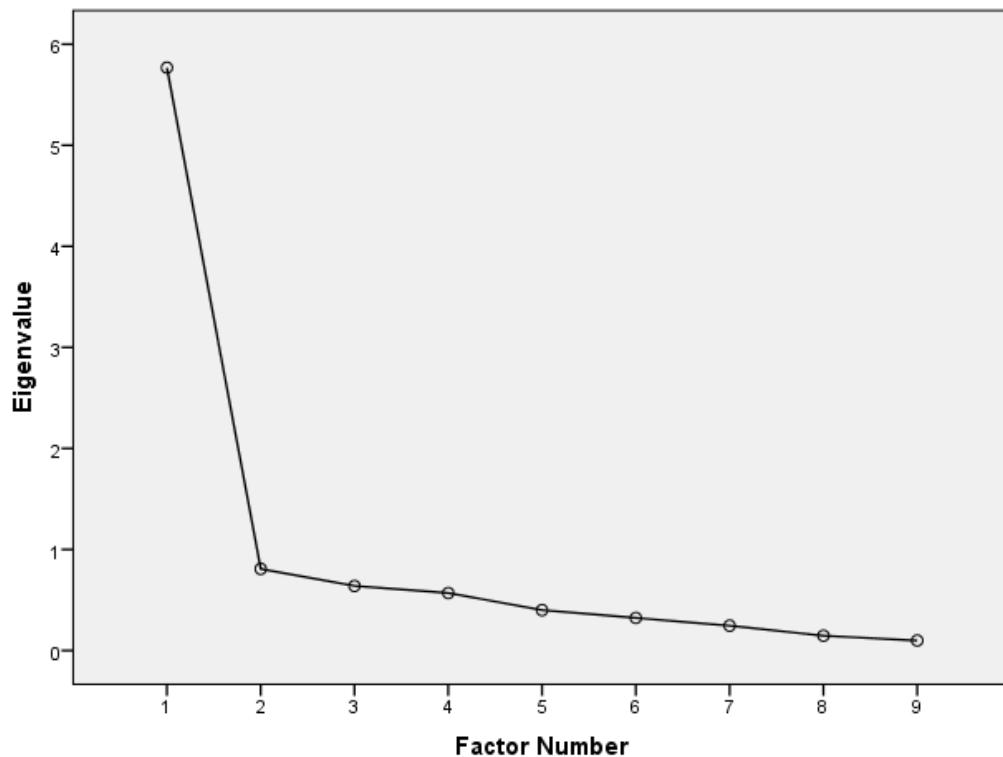
Factor	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	5.768	64.091	64.091	5.404	60.040	60.040
2	.808	8.980	73.071			
3	.639	7.105	80.176			
4	.569	6.327	86.503			
5	.400	4.447	90.950			
6	.323	3.588	94.537			
7	.246	2.733	97.270			
8	.147	1.630	98.901			
9	.099	1.099	100.000			

Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring.

Engagement was examined with regards to the demographic information collected to ascertain whether any relationships could be identified here. Balain & Sparrow (2009) have stated that biographical factors influence engagement, and as such it was deemed important to test these relationships on the sample, particularly given the conflicting reports in the extant literature.

Reportings of gender differences have been inconsistent in the literature. Academic findings have found men to report significantly higher engagement scores than women, though in practical terms the difference is small (less than one standard deviation. Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003). Robinson, et al. (2007) found that women were slightly more engaged than men in their study of eight organisations in public and private sectors. It appears, however, that any differences between genders are negligible due to the small levels of significance presented in the data. The findings of this research support this notion of negligible differences – no significant differences were found in the data with regards to gender through regression analysis ($F(1, 147) = .015, p > .05$). The relationship identified was not only lacking in significance, but also very weak ($\beta = .01$). Examining the differences between males and females, both genders reported almost identical mean scores on engagement (males reporting a mean of 3.4978 and females mean of 3.4936). Again, these minor differences in scores were non-significant ($p > .05$).

Figure 6.1: Scree Plot for Work Engagement Measure (UWES)



Age showed a slightly stronger correlation ($\beta = .073$), but still very weak and non-significant ($F(1, 147) = .782, p > .05$). This is consistent with the academic research in the field, which identified no statistically significant relationship between age and engagement (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003). Age has only been found to be an important influencing factor in practitioner research on the subject. Greater reporting of engagement in under 20's and over 60's, with the least engaged being those between 20 and 39 years. BlessingWhite (2008) found those born since the 1980's, a generation they name Generation Y, to report the lowest levels of engagement – they suggest this is due to older employees occupying senior and leadership roles, implying that engagement comes with greater degrees of perceived power and seniority. Asthana (2008) however suggests that lower engagement in younger age groups may be due to the psychological contract of Generation Y. Asthana states that the modern psychological contract consists of work-life balance, personal development, managers that motivate and interesting and fulfilling roles – an inability to meet these expectations, alongside their different values and attitudes, may be creating an epidemic of poorly engaged younger workers. (Robertson-Smith & Markwick, 2009). In contrast to these findings however, Robinson, et al. (2004, 2007) found younger employees to be the most engaged, demonstrating a major conflicting result in the literature. Those identifying as over 50

scored higher on engagement than younger respondents, however, the findings from the Development directory find agreement with the academic findings of extant literature, with non-significant weak relationships.

Other variables were also treated with ANOVAs. None of the demographic variables were shown to have a significant relationship with engagement, and all effects sizes identified were very small. Service areas differed in their mean engagement scores (ranging from 2.89 to 4.11), however the effects were non-significant. These non-significant results suggest that demographic factors do not have a significant influence on individuals' inclination to be engaged or not engaged, and as such any further relationships identified will be more likely to be free of influence from the demographic factors.

Factor Analysis of the SSSI – From Three Factors to Five Factors Model

The factor structure of the Siegel Scale of Support for Innovation was tested using an exploratory factor analysis. The factor analysis produced a five factor structure for the SSSI, which is in contrast to the originally reported factor structure of three factors: Support for Creativity, Tolerance of Differences, and Personal Commitment (Siegel & Kaemmerer, 1976). The five factors emerging from the data collected in the Development directory were compared with the original factor loadings, and five new factors were named. Of the three existing factors, two remained, sharing the majority of the same items as the original factors of the SSSI – these were Support for Creativity (Factor 1) and Personal Commitment (Factor 3). The new factors presented from the data were named Employee Involvement (Factor 2), Norms (Factor 4) and Barriers of Creativity (Factor 5) based on the items loading on those factors. (See Table 6.4)

Factor analyses were conducted on the data using Principal Axis Factoring (PAF) with a direct oblimin (oblique) rotation. PAF is used to establish the smallest number of factors which can explain the common variance in a set of variables. This is suitable for establishing the dimensionality of items in a scale and whether one factor accounts for the majority of common variance. Each set of items were factor analysed within their subscales and items were removed from the survey based on their factor loadings.

Table 6.3: Factor Loadings of the UWES

	Factor
	1
Vigour Q1 Energy	.799
Vigour Q2 Strong	.809
Absorption Q1 Morning	.738
Absorption Q2 Intensely	.646
Absorption Q3 Immersed	.834
Absorption Q4 Carried Away	.544
Dedication Q1 Enthusiastic	.902
Dedication Q2 Inspires	.859
Dedication Q3 Proud	.777

Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring.

a. 1 factors extracted. 5 iterations required.

Kaiser-Meyer Olkin (KMO) test and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity were conducted on each analysis to test that factor analysis was appropriate in each case. Kaiser (1974) advocates values of 0.5 as being acceptable, with values above 0.8 being considered marvellous (Hutcheson & Sofroniou, 1999). Bartlett's measure 'tests the null hypothesis that the correlation matrix is an identity matrix' (Field, 2005: 6). Correlations in an identity matrix would be zero, and for factor analysis to be successful, some correlation between variables is required. On this basis, Bartlett's measure should be significant to approve factor analysis as appropriate for the data. Factor analyses with a total amount of variance that accounts for more than 30% are generally considered to be adequate.

The subscales of the SSSI are: Continuous Development, Ownership, Leadership, Norms for Diversity and Consistency. From each subscale, those items which did not load on any factor, or those which presented low factor loadings were chosen to be removed. The analysis suggested that 14 factors should be selected based on eigenvalues of above 1, but given the size of the sample and the theoretical considerations of the structure, a 14 factor model does not make sense. As such an examination of the accompanying scree plot was necessary to determine factor number. The scree plot in Figure 6.2 indicates that a five factor solution is more suitable, with the tail of the scree plot beginning to flatten out after five factors.

Having acknowledged the results of the scree plot, the factor analysis was re-run extracting five factors. Table 6.4 demonstrates the pattern matrix of the factor analysis, showing the 61 items of the questionnaire and how these load onto the resulting five factors. Factor loads that are above .40 are highlighted in red to show where each of the items loads onto a factor.

Following this, reliability was calculated for the new factors. Each factor had an alpha value of between $\alpha = .76$ and $.96$, suggesting excellent internal consistency for the factors. These items were then recoded into new variables for the further analysis. In examining the factor loadings, the loadings for factors 1 and 3 of the new five factor model, the items loading onto these two factors were shared with that of the original item loadings for the SSSI's Support for Creativity and Personal Commitment factors.

The items loading onto new factors were inspected for their theoretical soundness in forming three new factors. In this research, there were theoretical underpinnings to support the three factors that emerged in this five factor model. It was chosen to name these as Employee Involvement (example item: 'I have a voice in what goes on in this organisation'), Norms (example item: 'This place seems to be more concerned with the status quo than with change'), and Barriers to Creativity (example item: 'The leadership acts as if we are not very creative'). With regards to the data and the constructs being examined in the research alongside the original factors of Support for Creativity and Personal Commitment, these factors appear to make sense theoretically together. Of particular interest was the Employee Involvement factor, which was originally brought to the fore in the qualitative data, and supported as a likely factor in the quantitative analysis.

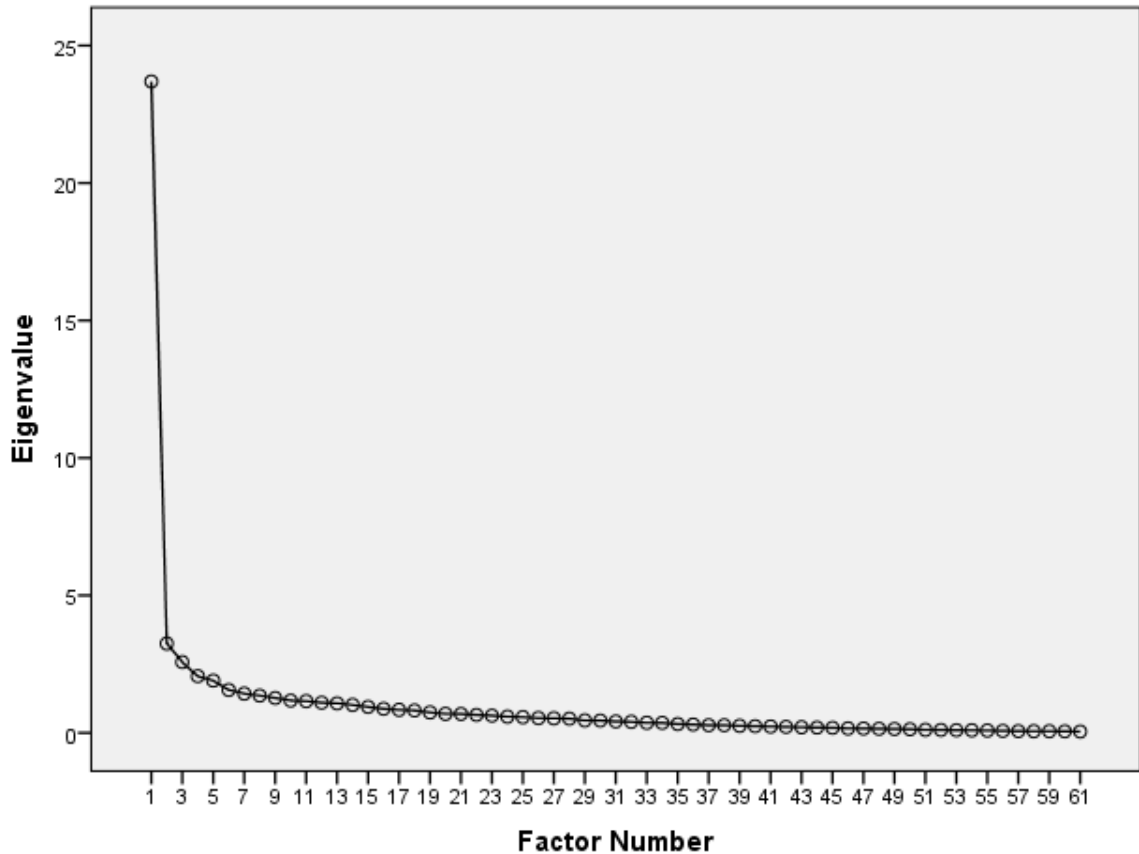
Using the newly established factors, correlations between the overall score of work engagement and the five factors were tested using Pearson's R test.

Testing Relationships between the SSSI and Work Engagement

Descriptive statistics for each of the new five factors of the SSSI and the cumulative score on engagement measures can be seen in Table 6.5. The descriptive statistics suggest that respondents are, on average, scoring within the middle ranges of the Likert scales for each measure. The engagement measure in particular demonstrates interesting findings, with the rather large ranges in response between the minimum and maximum (due to the nature of the scoring, the lowest number on the Likert scale of the UWES is 0, which explains the very low number reported on the minimum in Table 6.5). An

average of 3.5 suggests that employees are neither highly engaged, nor disengaged, but that some level of engagement does exist within the workforce.

Figure 6.2 – Scree Plot for SSSI Factor Analysis



Correlations between each factor and engagement were tested with the Pearson’s R test to test the hypothesis that work engagement has a positive relationship with the five factors of the SSSI, thus supporting the findings of the qualitative data analysis. All factors demonstrated a strong positive relationship (above .40) with engagement, other than Norms which scored at .39, and were all significant at the 0.01 level. This suggests that the relationships between the variables tested in this data are unlikely to be related due to chance. Significance at the 0.01 level suggests highly significant observed relationships between these variables. Correlations can be observed in Table 6.6.

The strongest correlation between engagement and any of the five factors was with that of personal commitment. This makes sense theoretically as engagement comprises elements of commitment both at the individual level and the organisational level. Personal commitment according to the SSSI forms part

of the essential climate for creativity, and as such it seems that engagement of the workforce could also form an essential part of the climate for creativity and resulting innovation behaviours.

Interestingly, the weaker relationships with engagement are that of Norms and Employee Involvement. This is interesting, particularly in the case of involvement as this was alluded to several times in the qualitative answers of respondents. While the relationships reported are the weakest of the set, the correlations are still quite strong. Involvement is an essential part of the manager-employee relationship, particularly during times of organisational change and having an input on shaping the way their organisation moves forwards. At the time of the research two of the larger groups within the directorate were experiencing major organisational change, and the other services experiencing restrictions from government regarding spending, agency employment and the changes to human resources functions with devolvement of the transactional functions. However, unsurprisingly, stronger correlations were identified between support of innovation and engagement, and especially barriers to innovation and engagement, which produced a strong negative correlation. This suggests that barriers to innovation may negatively affect work engagement, which makes theoretical and intuitive sense in organisational cultures.

Ultimately, the discretionary role of the manager is in the provision of a climate for creativity. Climate is inevitably affected by the line manager due to the way they interpret and communicate between their superiors and their subordinates. The scale captures the various facets of managerial discretion, particularly in regards to creativity and innovation, through the development of norms surrounding the way employees approach innovative behaviour, affect their levels of personal commitment and engagement, involve employees in decision making and process, and the provision or deprivation of latent and physical resources creating support or barriers of innovation.

Table 6.4: Pattern Matrix for Factor Analysis of the SSSI

	Factor				
	1	2	3	4	5
1. This organisation is always moving toward the development of new ideas	.397	-.023	.276	.313	.030
2. This organisation can be described as flexible and continually adapting to change	.446	.054	.207	.376	-.013
3. I can personally identify with the ideas with which I work	.001	-.295	.512	.092	.009
4. Our ability to function creatively is respected by the leadership	.587	-.201	.009	.312	-.070
5. Around here people are allowed to try to solve the same problem in different ways	.231	-.188	.204	.484	.106
6. I help make decisions here	.106	-.125	.362	.118	.325
7. Creativity is encouraged here	.509	-.061	.165	.300	.103
8. People talk a lot around here but they don't practice what they preach	-.194	.587	-.150	.076	.068
9. People around here are expected to deal with problems in the same way	.190	.450	-.192	-.489	-.049
10. The people in charge around here usually get the credit for others' ideas	-.058	.480	-.183	-.105	-.077
11. There is one person or group here who assumes the role of telling others what to do	-.131	.598	-.035	-.073	.014
12. Sometimes the way things are done around here makes matters worse, even though our goals aren't bad	-.325	.412	-.072	.173	.049
13. The role of the leader in this organisation can best be described as supportive	.624	-.103	.116	-.094	-.022
14. The leaders in this organisation talk one game but act another	-.379	.416	-.124	.067	-.053
15. In this organisation, we sometimes re-examine our most basic assumptions	.246	.263	.141	.420	.037
16. The members of our organisation are encouraged to be different	.568	-.183	-.197	.284	.013
17. People in this organisation are always searching for fresh, new ways of looking at problems	.311	-.075	.236	.461	.074

18. The way we do things seems to fit with what we're trying to do	.472	.100	.317	.094	-.052
19. Persons at the top have much more power than persons lower in this organisation	.111	.461	-.096	.034	-.025
20. Work in this organisation is evaluated by results, not how they're accomplished	.016	.109	-.200	.432	-.143
21. A person can't do things that are too different around here without provoking anger	-.486	.331	-.023	.067	-.139
22. The leadership acts as if we are not very creative	-.449	.440	-.033	.023	-.018
23. I really don't care what happens to this organisation	.080	.051	-.561	-.109	-.013
24. I am committed to the goals of this organisation	.056	-.046	.759	-.163	.048
25. The methods used by our organisation seem well suited to its stated goals	.581	-.036	.162	.071	-.058
26. Most people here find themselves at the bottom of the totem pole	-.087	.593	-.167	.089	.090
27. My goals and the goals of this organisation are quite similar	.177	.061	.626	.061	-.189
28. Members of this organisation would rather be working here than anywhere else	.140	-.127	.290	.152	-.349
29. In this organisation we tend to stick to tried and true ways	.071	.304	-.160	-.489	-.220
30. Assistance in developing new ideas is readily available	.538	.087	.155	.288	.093
31. New ideas can come from anywhere in this organisation and be equally well received	.505	-.102	.181	.166	-.001
32. On the whole I feel a sense of commitment to this organisation	.041	-.141	.765	-.038	-.022
33. We're always trying out new ideas	.469	-.086	.121	.252	.075
34. People in this organisation are encouraged to develop their own interests, even when they deviate from those of the organisation	.593	.034	-.090	.016	-.046
35. Members of this organisation feel encouraged by their superiors to express their opinions and ideas	.605	-.187	.065	.080	-.009
36. The people here are very loyal to this place	.041	-.267	.429	.078	-.190
37. Members of this organisation realise that in dealing with new problems and tasks, frustration is inevitable; therefore it is handled constructively	.330	-.053	.313	.063	.021

38. I have the opportunity to test out my own ideas here	.330	-.228	.335	.045	.210
39. I feel a real sense of responsibility for my work.	.132	-.003	.524	-.125	.245
40. In this organisation, the way things are taught is as important as what is taught	.472	-.078	.140	.004	-.002
41. This organisation is open and responsive to change	.502	.011	.117	.381	.122
42. A motto of this organisation is "The more we think alike, the better job we will get done"	.253	.053	.128	-.071	-.467
43. My ability to come with original ideas and ways of doing things is respected by those at the top	.366	-.295	.184	.094	.152
44. This place seems to be more concerned with the status quo than with change	-.143	.067	-.169	-.382	-.340
45. The role of the leader here is to encourage and support individual members' development	.667	-.071	.124	-.133	.041
46. The best way to get along in this organisation is to think the way the rest of the group does	-.342	.222	-.007	-.188	-.326
47. Individual independence is encouraged in this organisation	.704	-.163	-.011	.090	.018
48. Nobody asks me for suggestions on how to run this place	-.192	.093	-.151	.085	-.539
49. One individual is usually the originator of ideas and policies in this organisation	-.343	.039	-.283	.078	-.415
50. In this organisation, the power of final decision can always be traced to the same few people	-.149	.530	.158	-.030	-.199
51. Creative efforts are usually ignored here	-.697	.051	-.087	.146	-.220
52. Once this organisation develops a solution to a particular problem, that solution becomes a permanent one	-.061	.296	.073	-.255	-.053
53. Around here, a person can get into a lot of trouble by being different	-.587	.119	.044	.104	-.401
54. I have a voice in what goes on in this organisation	.327	.102	.452	.031	.432

55. People here try new approaches to tasks, as well as tried and true ones	.328	.136	.302	.274	.340
56. Others in our organisation always seem to make the decisions	-.159	.468	.031	.079	-.291
57. The leader's "pets" are in a better position to get their ideas adopted than most others	-.344	.240	-.103	-.188	-.203
58. The main function of members in this organisation is to follow orders that come down through channels	-.131	.481	-.003	-.122	-.165
59. I mostly agree with how we do things here	.639	-.074	.108	.146	-.175
60. There is little room for change here	-.216	.220	.124	-.150	-.246
61. These aren't my ideas, I just work here	.092	.293	-.367	-.047	-.393

Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring.

Rotation Method: Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 25 iterations.

Table 6.5: Descriptive Statistics for the SSSI and UWES dimensions

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Support for Innovation	132	1.18	4.95	2.9451	.85990
Barriers to Innovation	138	1.33	4.75	3.5302	.73658
Personal Commitment	132	1.13	5.00	3.6558	.83987
Norms	138	1.00	4.60	2.8217	.84255
Employee Involvement	132	1.20	4.80	3.0598	.84662
Engagement	149	.67	5.33	3.5006	1.02895
Valid N (listwise)	132				

Suggestions for Improvement from the Population

The survey included one qualitative question alongside the quantitative measures, which invited respondents to share their innovative ideas for their service area. 26% of the sample responded to the qualitative question. Those who responded to the question tended to score marginally higher on engagement than those who did not respond, though this was fractionally higher and the relationship was non-significant. However, with the small amount of respondents on this portion of the survey, it would be necessary to examine this relationship on a larger sample in order to ascertain a more accurate nature of the relationship. In examining the qualitative answers on the survey question, this relationship would also be contested as not black and white, but with shades of grey depending on the kind of response – responses ranged from actual innovative ideas or ideas for improving the service, to aggressive and angry responses about management, the organisation-wide cuts. Perhaps the large amount of non-response (74%) on this particular question is equally as indicative of lack of reciprocity in the social exchange as the amount of response. This is something that would require greater attention in future research, as any conclusions drawn from this particular instrument would be purely speculative.

One respondent criticised the use of the survey instrument for its perceived inability to account for variation in support of creativity, 'The problem with tick-box surveys (easy to analyse with a computer) is that they don't take account of the variety / individuality of management attitudes that exist in a relatively large organisation i.e. the extremes when it comes to supporting creativity!'

Table 6.6: Correlations between Work Engagement and Five Factors of the SSSI

		Support of Innovation	Barriers to Innovation	Personal Commitment	Norms	Employee Involvement	Engagement
Support of Innovation	Pearson Correlation	1	-.722	.688	.747	.659	.436
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	132	132	132	132	132	132
Barriers to Innovation	Pearson Correlation	-.722	1	-.630	-.625	-.625	-.491
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	132	138	132	138	132	138
Personal Commitment	Pearson Correlation	.688	-.630	1	.601	.576	.692
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	132	132	132	132	132	132
Norms	Pearson Correlation	.747	-.625	.601	1	.512	.390
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000
	N	132	138	132	138	132	138
Employee Involvement	Pearson Correlation	.659	-.625	.576	.512	1	.402
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000
	N	132	132	132	132	132	132
Engagement	Pearson Correlation	.436	-.491	.692	.390	.402	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	132	138	132	138	132	149

Interestingly, responses touched on facets of work engagement, particularly what management could do in order to inspire greater work engagement in their staff. 'More needs to be done at a high level to ensure our dedicated staff get the exciting work and do have a good reason to get out of bed in the morning!!' Moreover, staff in various areas of the directorate were keen to emphasise the importance of good management skills, and this highlighted the findings around managerial discretion, 'There are so many people in my team who are great hard working people being managed incorrectly and de-motivated'.

Limitations and barriers to creativity were also touched upon in the qualitative responses, also inferring to the importance of tacit and explicit knowledge in the organisation. 'These middle ranking functions are based on knowledge and experience, like the civil service, but the way such functions work is not analysed. Basically the revenue generation that many sections of the council are tasked with stifles ingenuity and doing things differently. Another example is if we want to check out the legality of a new way of doing something, we have to pay legal services to do this, and we have no budget to do so - hence no exploration of the idea'.

Money was definitely seen as an influencing factor in the ability to be creative. Atypically, this was not due to a lack of money to implement ideas – rather that a focus on revenue and income and money efficiency targets appeared to staff to be more important to managers than encouraging new ways of doing things. 'The increased influence of finance officers and the desire to minimise fees and staff costs can hamper ability to be creative and come up with new ideas'. A refocusing away from targets and finance and more investment in knowledge sharing across the entire directorate was a sentiment echoed by many of those that responded to this question. 'We should start to work as teams across the disciplines with a common aim, which means we would deliver a better service to our clients'. This was a sentiment echoed by several respondents, with barrier to creativity being mainly identified in the survey as the systems and corporate side of the business with efficiency targets and revenue generation. One respondent suggested 'There is little personal incentive to demonstrate creativity and this is further constrained by the demand of the corporate business systems'. Furthermore the respondent suggested that 'feedback mechanisms' to track the source of creative ideas that have been implemented in order to recognise good work was needed as 'people can begin to think their ideas aren't valued'. Again, knowledge sharing and

multi-disciplinary working was suggested as a practical solution to generating ideas on operational efficiency and saving.

Other issues highlighted as needing addressing by staff were bureaucracy, HR communication and devolvement to line managers (potential need for more training on this issue due to perceived ineffectiveness) and reward and recognition to be implemented (not necessarily through monetary reward, but through 'more celebrations' of good work). Being involved in the shaping of the business through employee involvement was also highlighted as important to respondents.

Conclusions

The data showed support for previous findings in the literature regarding the engagement of employees based on biographical factors such as age ($\beta = .073$, $F(1, 147) = .782$, $p > .05$). and gender ($\beta = .01$, $F(1, 147) = .015$, $p > 0.5$), with agreement that although there are relationships, the relationships are weak and non-significant, and therefore negligible to their contribution to variations of engagement. This consistency with the previous findings in engagement research is encouraging as it continues to provide support for the notion that engagement is influenced by environmental and interpersonal factors at the workplace, rather than through demographics.

The SSSI was factor analysed and produced a five factor model as the best fit to the data, as opposed to the original three factor model. Due to the latent and vastly encompassing nature of the managerial discretion construct, an effective measure of discretion that captures the construct has not yet been developed, and is therefore difficult to account for in a quantitative way. The SSSI was chosen as a measure for this study due to the emphasis in the items on leadership and management responsibility in regards to the climate for innovation and creativity. The new factors presented in the SSSI form some of the fundamental underpinnings of the black box of managerial discretion, and as such, this has been the most effective way of capturing this quantitatively in this research. Ideally, further research would focus on developing a more specific measure of managerial discretion, enabling correlations to be interpreted with specific regards to discretion and other variables.

One of the limitations of using the SSSI has been in the inability to identify whether the climate for creativity and innovation in this case leads to actual innovations or creative thought occurring. Additional measures would need to be included in further research in order to identify the potential for causal relationships between discretion, climate and actual innovative behaviour. Of those that responded to the qualitative question asking for innovative and creative ideas, their scores on both engagement and four of the five factors of the SSSI demonstrated non-significant relationships. The only factor to demonstrate a significant relationship was that of barriers of innovation, though this relationship was weak. This was a negative relationship ($\beta = -.22$, $F(1, 136) = 6.85$, $p < .05$), suggesting that barriers to innovation negatively influence the feedback of innovation. This is a result that requires testing on larger samples to identify the nature of the relationship in a wider sense.

The quantitative findings support the qualitative results in identifying quantitatively that climate for innovation is part of the black box of the manager's discretionary role. Also the importance of employee involvement as much as engagement was an essential component of the discretionary role of the manager, as identified in the five factor model of the SSSI. Involvement in the running of the business was identified as important by many respondents, particularly in the initial focus groups, and in moving forwards into a WOC situation. Being highlighted as a factor in the SSSI draws attention to this as being an important part of discretionary role, and important for innovation and creative thinking to be reciprocated by employees. In testing the mean scores on involvement over the various demographic groupings, there were no significant differences in the levels of involvement scores between groups, suggesting that factors such as age and gender do not significantly impact the results. Similarly on all other factors of the SSSI, no significant differences were found between different groups.

On the surface, the findings demonstrate a support of the qualitative findings, particularly with regards to the composition of the black box and the relationship of the line manager to engagement with strong and significant correlations. With non-significant findings in the relationships between the demographic variables and the outcome of innovation, it appears that demographic factors do not have a major influence on the inclination of individuals to be innovative or behave innovatively. However while some differences were very small, other variations in mean scores between groups were quite large (with some groups possessing low

mean scores and others much higher). This suggests that further investigation into this phenomenon would be beneficial in order to identify whether statistical significance exists in larger samples or in other areas of the organisation. Specifically across service areas the differences would benefit from further investigation, and a greater number of responses of actual innovations would enable a better understanding of the relationship between engaged employees and ultimate innovation behaviours.

The quantitative findings suggest further research into the black box, and creating a measure specifically around that subject will be an important next step in future research on the topic. One qualitative finding that was not highlighted in the survey's quantitative output was that of tacit knowledge and its relationship to innovative behaviour. Tacit knowledge was highlighted in the qualitative question as being something that managers should take greater advantage of, particularly with regards to cross-service, and multidisciplinary working for a more effective delivery of Development services. Further research would benefit from a quantitative question to provide support for this relationship as developed from the qualitative findings.

Overall, some of the relationships observed qualitatively have been supported by the quantitative findings, namely that there is a significant relationship between engagement and the discretionary role of the line manager in their provision of creativity climate as a job resource, and that employee involvement is identified as an important factor in inspiring employee engagement and desire to participate in social exchange through reciprocation of creative ideas and innovative behaviour. Further research is required to examine in more detail the importance of involvement and the strength of the relationship between discretion and engagement with actual innovative behaviour. Unfortunately a limitation of this survey was that this relationship was not ascertainable, partially due to the small number of respondents for the qualitative question.

Appendix 2

[SERVICE] Stage One Findings Report

April 2009

The 'Discretionary' Role of the Line Manager: Trust and Innovative Behaviours

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Stage 1: The stage one report contains the Executive Summary Findings from the focus groups conducted with [SERVICE] respondents. Stage one has been developed for the 45 respondents from [SERVICE] who attended the focus groups. Stage one of the research process is to ensure that respondents have the opportunity to view, and to comment on the findings, which will be used to develop the interview questions. (The stage two Interim Report will include findings from the focus groups and interviews, a detailed literature review, methodology section and discussion section).

Executive Summary

Research into human resource management informs us that the 'discretionary' role of the line manager contributes towards staff engagement and staff satisfaction (Purcell, 2008). However the 'discretionary' role also presents something of a 'black box' regarding how it works in practice.

A key aim of the research is to explore how the 'discretionary' role of the line manager operates in a high performing area in [ORGANISATION]. [SERVICE] was identified as a high performing service characterised by good staff retention and low sickness and absence rates. They are currently working with the Workforce Intelligence Planning Team, and agreed to participate in research exploring this issue. To ensure user-involvement through internal validation this report has been developed for the 45 respondents from [SERVICE] who participated in the focus groups.

This is to ensure that we have adequately represented their accounts, and to allow them to comment on the findings. Hence the report is based on the first phase of the research and shows the key findings from five focus groups. Participants in the focus groups include 34 staff and 11 managers from [SERVICE], which amounts to 61% of the total employees in the directorate. All employees in the service were invited to participate.

The findings have been developed through grounded theory analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) and categorised under three core themes that emerged from the data: the 'discretionary' role of the line manager; Innovation behaviours and Ideas for future. In particular 'trust' was a key theme relating to the role of the line manager theme and 'tacit knowledge' featured strongly within the innovation behaviour strand. In the next stage Interim Report the findings from the three sections will be integrated with the strategic human resource management literature on Line management, Leadership and Innovation. The findings will inform the development and design of semi structured interviews with staff and managers and the subsequent design and development of a quantitative staff engagement questionnaire that will be piloted in the organisation with approximately 500 employees.

All errors are our own.

The Executive Summary findings are organised under three broad themes: **The Discretionary Role of the Line Manager; Innovative Behaviours and Ideas for the Future.**

The 'Discretionary' Role of Line Manager

The research focused on exploring the discretionary role of the line manager. The findings in the first section identified a number of themes of which 'trust; was dominant.

Trust

'Management recognise that within our department there's a lot of responsibility. They can't come out and talk for you, they can't make the decisions for you, and with that they give you a lot of trust, relying on your integrity'

'I think our line managers just let us get on with the job, that's the thing'

The dominant and overriding finding from the focus groups was the extent to which staff knew that their managers had trust in their professional ability to complete a high standard of work. Respondents in all of the focus groups spoke about this level of trust, which was also evident when staff, including surveyors and administration staff worked with distressed, and sometimes difficult, members of the public who had been let down by 'cowboy' builders. In general the surveyors explained that they were able to get on with their work without management looking over their shoulders and that they were trusted to handle difficult situations. Both surveyors and managers had trust in the high standard of support from administrators, who also managed difficult clients by phone. In the sense trust was ubiquitous, supported by strong collegiality and line manager support. Respondents explained that they could function effectively through the freedom they were afforded by their line managers, and not needing their constant presence or reassurance. This freedom to do their work in their own way characterised some of their motivation for being at work and allowed them to handle difficult situations by themselves. This links in to the notion of overriding trust from the line manager in how the respondents perform in their role and trust in their decision making. In this sense trust was a key aspect of their psychological contract with their line managers.

Professional Support

'my line manager's pretty positive about sending people on courses...half the time its not something the staff identify, rather the manager, which is, I mean, it's good that way'

'I needed to work in a different section with a different team, and my line manager supported me to do that'

Managers were praised for providing professional support, and respondents spoke of being comfy to approach their managers for technical advice. Staff also explained that they seek knowledge sharing and professional support from each other, regardless of their technical level demonstrating a feeling of equality of opinions. It was evident that staff benefited from understanding the roles of their colleagues in order to get the best support from one another. Staff also spoke about how they look to each other for professional and collegial support. This is true across service areas as well, with communication between Community, Commercial and Surveying Services been noted as, for the most part, successful. The majority felt that this cross-team professional support working was taking place effectively, and their communication and collegiality with each other was a characteristic of what made the service successful. The one area of contention that drew a debate concerned the request for IRCS. The debate was about whether or not good staff might leave once chartership was acquired, particularly for the higher pay offered by their main competitor, Approved Inspectors.

Personal Support

I've had compassionate leave granted to me and I'm grateful for that'

'with personal things the manager helps, it's the system that has been the problem'

Staff noted that management, both past and present, had provided support in a personal sense for a variety of reasons, be it allowing time off for health purposes, leaving early for appointments and showing understanding and providing flexible working practices for those with family issues. Staff acknowledged how valuable these discretionary behaviours had been for their respective situations and that this contributed to their motivation and engagement with work. Their managers were spoken about as being the buffer to the wider council system. Hence whilst personal support from their line managers was spoken about as strong there was some concern that council procedures imposed a greater rigidity.

Job Satisfaction

'It's personal motivation because we want to help our customers. It's a commitment to the customers'

Respondents demonstrated a strong motivation and high professionalism for their work, which included providing the best service possible for their client base and articulating an in depth

knowledge of the function that they provided. Their job satisfaction also came from the variety and challenge that their work provided them, particularly in the surveyor role, and that they found their work interesting and challenging. Some respondents spoke of how the support they are able to provide to their colleagues was an important motivator. Recognition for doing their work well was greater currency to the respondents than any monetary reward. Combined these findings inform the HRM literature on job satisfaction.

Loyalty

'if you go to work in private companies the bosses, the minute you do anything slightly wrong, you've done it completely wrong'

Respondents demonstrated an obvious loyalty and commitment to [SERVICE] and its aims, to the clients and to their colleagues. Respondents' passion for providing an excellent service for their clients was evident in all groups and the desire to be there for colleagues was particularly apparent. Many respondents indicated their commitment to the service at large from both a professional perspective and personal perspective, with advocating the service externally being a particularly positive behaviour. This level of loyalty was also associated with their history of working together and the shared values they had developed over time.

Innovative Behaviours

A dominant theme from the respondents' accounts revealed a raft of innovative behaviours. These are summarised below. We begin with 'tacit' knowledge because research shows that 'tacit' knowledge (Polanyi, 1967) is evident where creative acts and innovative behaviours are shot-through or charged with strong personal feelings and commitments and reasoned argument.

Tacit Knowledge

'We're pretty unique in local government terms... you hear stories about combat veterans and the things they would do for people in a very difficult situation and I'm not saying were in combat in that sense but it's similar in that we have a common bond that we all have a vested interest'

The respondents' accounts showed how they transferred knowledge and how this was characterised by strong personal feelings, creativity and reasoned argument. In this sense they displayed what has been termed 'tacit' knowledge. This concept also resonates with their accounts of their history of working together and their shared value of providing the highest standard of work. They provided detailed accounts about how they shared knowledge with each other at both a formal and informal level and how they shared their knowledge with relevant

stakeholders. They reflected on how there was a strong ethos between staff and how through mutual support and knowledge transfer they were able to deal with all of the technical and complex demands of the job. Formally technical knowledge was transferred as a process akin to on the job training or with a range of clients. Their responses showed how, at an informal level, they gave, shared and listened to advice. In this sense their 'tacit' knowledge enhances the clients, builders and public understanding of building regulations, surveying and demolition services. They applied a reasoned argument to explain the importance of the need to support the public to make informed decisions about how they appointed builders.

'Collectively Competitive'

'the biggest difference for me coming to Birmingham was that competitive drive...to win work for everybody's benefit. It's a big part for me'

'and those jobs we don't win, we learn from why but we don't have too many hangovers and we move on to the next one'.

They respondents are acutely aware of the need to be at the cutting edge of their profession. A key theme that emerged from the data was the extent to which the majority of respondents are 'collectively competitive'. Hence the importance of being competitive and winning work for the service was talked about extensively. Moreover respondents are clear that not only was it important to win tenders for the service area but it was a bonus for the client and citizen because they knew that they would provide a higher standard of excellence compared to their competitors. The same drive for excellence was evident in respondents from the commercial, demolition and community team, the latter of whom who spoke of rectifying problems caused through poor workmanship and explained how they were prepared to go the extra mile to ensure that this work was completed professionally and to the standard of safety required. Managers also spoke of how all of the challenges contributed towards making the job more interesting, and how this was supported by having a good stable workforce. It was also viewed as very important that they were ahead of their competitors in the field.

Passion and Professionalism

'what is nice to say with [SERVICE] we've always been in the forefront of absolutely everything'

The respondents brought building regulations alive with their enthusiasm and passion for their work. The commonality they shared was a high standard of professionalism and a passion in how they explained their work. Managers spoke of various types of professional behaviours, associated with their management style and the technical advice they gave. This included 'flexible thinking' which showed how they were able to deal with multiple priorities in a professional manner. They

also spoke about how they were the kind of organisation that people did not want to stay away from. Their commitment to their customers was exemplary. They explained that their clients did not know what they were getting until it was finished and as such they were not buying a finished product off the shelf, rather they were buying something that they were not seeing, and one that progresses. As such the extent of their knowledge throughout this progression, and how it was communicated to a wide range of clients, was critical to this success. Staff from the community team explained how at times they would need to communicate explicitly with builders by phone and with builders whom English was not their first language.

Collegiality/ Laughter/ Ethical

'I think one of the things with local authority, people can say what they want about us but at least we're honest'

'we try and create health debate, which is fine'

'people are able to agree to disagree and not fall out afterwards'

There was evidence of strong collegiality in all of the focus groups. At one level this was observed in their openness, honesty and familiarity when the respondents spoke to each other, what they spoke about, and how they were sensitive to the fact that they all had to pull together in a difficult economic climate. At another level their collegiality was evident in the way they disagreed and how they reflected on how the service could be improved. They were comfy to disagree with each other and hold a healthy discussion, which was generally tinged with humour. Hence there was a great deal of openness and laughter in the groups as well as a good banter between the respondents. There was an agreed understanding that, *'commercial brings in big jobs but community's the bread and butter'*. They also spoke about social events and how, without being in each others pockets, most groups had some events outside work. There was some discussion about how they used to have 'away' weeks, albeit these were now reduced to the discussion in team meetings. When one respondent explained how he believed that the Birmingham area is unique in relation to the challenges the area presents for building regulations another interrupted laughing saying that it was the builder's that he needed to tell not them. He laughed back in agreement but insisted that he still thought the area unique.

High Standards – A History of Working Together

'I've only been here ten years'

The respondents spoke of a history of working together which had created shared norms and values. The accepted norm to provide the highest standard included how they recognised each others strengths and weaknesses and how mutual support was something they valued. In practice this meant that they were able to agree to disagree and not fall out. All of the groups had extensive knowledge of the responsibilities of the different sub-divisions within the service, and the difficulties they encountered. All of the groups made some reference to the fact that they had worked together for a considerable amount of time, and how they valued the high standard in the service that they offered. This was also evident in how they referred to systems and earlier legislation that had previously informed their practice, and how they compared these to current systems in terms of how efficient and effective they were for their clients. Respondents also commented on how people who had left the service would contact them to say how they much they missed the people.

Commercial Awareness

'It's a trading account we've got competition, we have to fight for the work—and we're really professional—I like working here and I'll always stick up for them''

'there is a realisation that the real world outside does affect what we do. I think that we embrace that'

The respondents' discussion of commercial awareness was underpinned by the importance of gaining work to maintain the service and the good management of existing large scale projects to enhance reputation. Being commercially aware was spoken about as being part of an organisational culture that 'drip fed' the necessity to win work. The processes identified to win work included networking with other local authorities, understanding what their competitors were doing, recommendations by architects on past experience, searching new opportunities, never standing still and also being proud of what they had achieved. Respondents also explained how they learnt from the jobs that they did not win and how they built up good relationships with clients through their reputation.

Opportunities to Innovate

'A colleague will have done something that nobody else has experienced in the group so they will bring that to the group technical meeting'

'and we've got these workshops now where we think of ideas'

There was strong agreement that the economic climate had changed and that they had to embrace that change and manage it. Respondents pointed out that in relation to building regulations they have the opportunity and ability to work anywhere in England and Wales. They also explained how they had been successful in picking up work in other areas. It was also agreed that they were not resting on their laurels and quite recently have been looking at international markets. Hence they were investigating the legalities of implementing a plan checking service in these potential new markets. They also explained why they that they were not allowed to encroach on to the private sector to win work for demolitions and that they were not allowed to tender for some work because it had not reached the level acceptable to planning.

They talked at some length about their main competitor in the private sector, Approved Inspectors, and were confident that the standard of their own service was the best in their field. However there was discussion about the difficulties of competing with a private competitor, who could take a client out or network socially, when they were not allowed any budget to buy a coffee for a client. Whilst they were very aware of the accountability of the public purse they were also very commercially aware of the importance of networking to win work. They also pointed out that when their competitors made a mess of a job, *'it ends up coming to us anyway'*.

Ideas for Future Effectiveness

Effective Social Marketing to Educate the Public

'The general public don't know what building regulations are'

'And it's a matter of educating the general public. Because if the general public are aware then they can challenge their architect, the surveyors they're employing, have you done this and have you done that'

'Why can't [SERVICE] go out to the neighbourhood offices and have a little surgery'

'setting up you know, like a little kiosk and saying you need building regs for a roof, loads of people go through these shopping centres'

There were lots of suggestions from the groups about how to improve the public knowledge about how to select reputable builders, a process that required an understanding of where to obtain information on building regulations. This issue is not new, and they spoke about running public surgeries five or six years ago, which had been abandoned because no one turned up. Ideas to inform the public included flyers in local building and DIY stores and advertising in council papers, such as the Voice.

Improving Public Perception

‘we need to do one of our own and get it done properly, professionally’

‘there’s nothing to say ‘this is the service, you need building regs for a roof’

There was considerable concern that public perception of the service was not a true reflection of the professional service that they provide for the public. It was widely acknowledged that the channel four television programme, ‘the inspectors coming’ had misrepresented the service. Suggestions included producing their own CD to show the service in a professional manner and the development of their own web site.

More Effective Team Working and Greater Efficiency

‘we used to sit in teams’

‘I still feel good at my job but you do feel slightly less valued coming in and you’ve got nowhere to sit’

‘well we used to have teams, where you felt part of a team’

‘If you’re dotted all over the place it can be very difficult for anything to actually to come in use’

Some respondents suggested that team working would be enhanced if the new office space provided desks for all staff rather than hot desking for the community team. There were a number of efficiency reasons for this suggestion. In particular it was believed that permanent close proximity would enable better team work. There was some concern that teamwork had deteriorated since the move because some teams were not working in the close proximity they had established prior to the move. Respondents explained that their work required them to discuss plans, which are relatively large scale documents. It was therefore suggested that having designated desks would be more effective for this and other related tasks that necessitated close proximity.

Effective Reporting Procedures

‘they’re abusive to the female staff but as soon as they speak to a surveyor, they’re as good as gold and it’s like nothing’s happened’

‘when they’re ringing up they’re crying’

It was viewed as important that the administrators should have a robust reporting procedure when they were subject to abusive phone calls from the public. This is a regular occurrence and

generally comes from public who commission 'cowboy builders' to conduct different types of building work on their homes. The administrators gave examples which showed how they were sensitive to the clients who phoned the call centre and were very distressed. They viewed this type of phone support as intrinsic to their work. However on a number of occasions the public distress is communicated in an abusive way. The administrators are supported informally by their colleagues and managers when this occurs but the reporting of these incidents is not systematised.

Effective Flexible- Time Systems

'sometimes you have a plan that you have got to check the same day or, you know you've got a deadline to meet and you've got to stop late. So when the management say look 5.30, or 7.30 in the morning, that sometimes can be a problem'.

The respondents explained that the flexible-time systems that [ORGANISATION] had previously introduced, particularly the 7am -7pm flexi time, were more effective for the service. They viewed flexi-time as essential for the work effectiveness and essential for work life- balance issues. Hence there was concern that the potential change in flexi- time systems to decrease the office opening hours could be detrimental to clients and unhelpful to staff who, at times needed appointments during work hours and other work life balance issues.

Effective Purchasing

'most of us are here because we want to try and improve the organisation'

Respondents understood why they had to purchase other services from within [ORGANISATION], however, they are also very commercially aware that many of these services could be purchased externally at a lot less cost to the service. It was therefore suggested that this area could be investigated for overall cost efficiencies for the organisation.

Literature Review

Line Managers

Research shows that employees don't leave organisations; they leave line managers (Purcell, 2003).

The importance of the line manager role is often noted (e.g. Purcell, 2003), although much of the previous research has focused on senior management (e.g. Carpenter & Goldman, 1997; Hambrick & Abrahamson, 1995; Halebian & Finkelstein, 1993). Research has shown that line managers contribute to team performance (Babakus, Cravens, Grant, Ingram & LaForge, 1996; MacNeil, 2003), organisational performance and effectiveness (Thomas & McDaniel, 1990; Babakus, et al., 1996; Gibb, 2003)

Line managers' work is complex, with them juggling numerous roles as part of their everyday work. Dierdorff, Rubin & Morgeson (2009) identified three roles which were identified in previous literature as common to all line manager positions – conceptual (knowledge, skills, behaviours, planning), interpersonal (interacting, influencing, leading), and technical/administrative (operations, accounting, administration). In addition to this, Purcell (2003) identifies the discretionary role of the line manager.

Line managers are often the only visible point of contact between an employee and the organisation to which they belong, espousing the organisations values and objectives, as well as interpreting and enacting policies. How they manage their people is often seen as the only area in which line managers have discretion in their role, and is seen as discretionary due the managers' reliance on their motivation and commitment (Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007). Purcell (2003) identified the importance of the discretionary role in his research with 12 UK organisations, suggesting that discretion is one of the latent links between how HR policies and procedures convert to performance.

As stated above, previous research into management has tended to focus on the senior team, despite the importance of the employee-line manager relationship for communicating information from above (Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007) and their reflection of the culture within their area (Truss, 2001). Regardless of the type of manager investigated, it is recognised that managerial discretion is a complicated and multifaceted construct which, while of high importance to organisational research and operations, cannot be directly observed (Hambrick & Abrahamson, 1995: 1398). This poses issues for the empirical testing of managerial discretion due to the lack of an objective measure, and prior research has suggested the criticalness of further exploratory development of the discretion construct. In the absence of an existing empirical measure, it is necessary to explore the discretionary role qualitatively in order to enhance our understanding of the construct.

Further research and theoretical development of the line manager's discretionary role is important based on our limited knowledge of what comprises the discretionary role and the lack of a one-size-fits-all approach to measuring discretion. There have been recent calls to research the discretionary role to enhance our theory and knowledge (Shen & Cho, 2005), and for this to be empirically related to other constructs.

Trust

While there have been calls to research trust from the perspective of both manager and employee, much of the previous literature in the area has focused on the subordinates' trust in their manager (Brower, Lester, Korsgaard & Dineen, 2009; Dirks & Ferrin, 2001). Trust is defined as being willing 'to be vulnerable to the actions of another party based on the expectation that the other will perform a particular action important to the trustor' (Mayer, Davis & Schoorman, 1995: 712; Dietz & Den Hartog, 2006). Dietz & Den Hartog (2006:558) suggests that trust takes three forms – as a belief, a decision and an action.

Trust is highlighted as essential in organisation as it can affect productivity (Dirks & Ferrin, 2001), job performance and organisational citizenship behaviour (Colquitt, Scott & LePine, 2007) and intention to quit (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002). Brower et al (2009) pointed out that the vast majority of prior research into trust in organisations has focused exclusively on trust in the manager from the subordinates' perspective. Their research was one of the first to begin to address this limitation in the literature, seeking to understand the effects of being trusted on behaviour and intentions. Their findings indicated strong support for this relationship in relation to organisational citizenship behaviours, performance and intention to quit. Job satisfaction, however, has previously been more strongly linked with trust in senior management (Ellis & Shockley-Zalabak, 2001), although again, this was not investigated in a dyadic context.

Employee Engagement

Line managers are often considered to be a crucial factor in inspiring employee engagement (CIPD, 2008). However, the academic research into this relationship is limited.

Employee engagement is defined as 'a positive, fulfilling, affective emotional state of work related well being that is characterised by vigour, dedication, and absorption' (Bakker, Schaufeli, Leiter & Taris, 2008: 187), which is a 'persistent and pervasive affective-cognitive state that is not focused on any particular object, event, individual, or behaviour' (Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzalez-Roma & Bakker, 2002b).

Employee engagement has most often been researched in relation to job demands and resources (e.g. Mauno, Kinnunen & Ruokolainen, 2007; Schaufeli, Bakker & Van Rhenen, 2009; Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti & Schaufeli, 2009; Bakker, Hakanen, Demerouti & Xanthopoulou, 2007), with limited attention being paid to its relationship with psychological variables, such as trust (Chughtai & Buckley, 2008).

In their conceptual paper, Chughtai & Buckley (2008: 57) proposes that 'employees are likely to be more engaged in their work when they feel that their supervisors are supportive and concerned

about their welfare and interests'. However, these relationships have not been investigated either qualitatively or empirically, and the authors have neglected to address the dyadic relationship between line manager and subordinate in relation to trust, which was recommended by Brower et al (2009).

Innovation and Tacit Knowledge

Often viewed as the remit of economists and econometric analysis, theories of innovation traditionally focus on a competitive business environment that inculcates innovation process and system. From this perspective the innovation process, is thus defined as, 'the set of activities undertaken by a firm to search for, select, develop and exploit new sources of value'. It follows that an innovation system refers to the set of resources, capabilities, technologies and institutions, broadly conceived, that systematically contribute to the process of innovation (Lundvall 1992).

The impact of human resource management on innovation is less well developed compared to the impact on organisational performance (Fay & Shipton, 2008) or the systematising of HRM strategies and corporate strategies. However SHRM can lead to competitive advantage by the creation of new systems that are leaders in their field and thus innovative in essence (Barney, 1991;Huselid et al.1997). To some extent the argument here builds on Michie and West's (2004) model on organisational innovation which identifies employee involvement as a key factor linked to innovation. Moreover the impact of SHRM on innovation offers a catalyst of creative thought that is applicable to the challenging times faced by all organisations and professionals in the public sector (Ferlie et al , 2005). Add to this the Polanyi (1967, 1983) argument about the importance of tacit knowledge and the belief that creative acts, (for example innovative acts of discovery) are accompanied with strong emotions and commitments and we have a model for understanding the innovative behaviours of the service area in the study .The study will demonstrate in Polanyi tradition, that argues against the dominant position that science was somehow value-free, that the concept of the creative tension and the reasoned interrogation with other, more 'tacit', forms of knowing contributes towards innovation.

Appendix 3

Interview questions

1. What information have you already received about the upcoming change?
 - + What was said?
 - + Can you explain to me what is happening/changing
2. How are your line managers keeping/intending to keep you up to date on the changes?
3. Will you be consulted for your ideas about the change as it moves forwards?
4. What was [SERVICE] like before [manager] was appointed?
 - + How has it changed?
 - + How were the changes communicated then?
 - + How did people react to the changes then?
5. Do you feel confident that the current change will be successful?
 - + Are you worried? Why/why not?
6. How will the change affect the way [SERVICE] do business?
 - + How will the change affect how you do your job?
7. Do you think you will have more opportunities to be innovative and creative in your role and how you do business compared to now?
8. How do you currently share creative ideas?
 - + Methods
 - + Management

Consent for Participation in Interview Research

I volunteer to participate in a research project conducted by Alexis Southall from Aston University. I understand that the project is designed to gather information about the role of the line manager and employee engagement and trust. I will be one of approximately 30 people being interviewed for this research.

1. My participation in this project is voluntary. I understand that I will not be paid for my participation. I may withdraw and discontinue participation at any time without penalty. If I decline to participate or withdraw from the study, no one in my organisation will be told.

2. I understand that if I feel uncomfortable in any way during the interview session, I have the right to decline to answer any question or to end the interview.

3. Participation involves being interviewed by researchers from Aston University. The interview will last approximately 1 hour. Notes will be written during the interview. With my permission an audio tape of the interview and subsequent dialogue will be made.

I agree for this interview to be taped ☐ Yes ☐ No

4. I understand that the researcher will not identify me by name in any reports using information obtained from this interview, and that my confidentiality as a participant in this study will remain secure.

5. Members of my organisation will neither be present at the interview nor have access to raw notes or transcripts. This precaution will prevent my individual comments from having any negative repercussions.

6. I understand that this research study has been reviewed and approved by the Ethics Committee at Aston University.

7. I have understood the explanation provided to me. I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction, and I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

8. I have been given a copy of this consent form.

My Signature

Date

My Printed Name

Signature of the Investigator:

For further information, please contact:

Alexis Southall

southaae@aston.ac.uk

Employee Opinion Survey

Creativity at Work

Information & instructions:

What is this survey about?

This survey forms part of a larger study which is exploring the role of line managers in relation to creativity and innovation at work. The research is being conducted by Alexis Southall, a PhD student at Aston Business School, Aston University, and is sponsored by the Economic & Social Research Council and [ORGANISATION]. You will be asked to complete measures of engagement and creativity, and provide some demographic details.

What do you need to do?

- This is not a test and there are no right or wrong answers. Please give your personal views to the questions using the rating scales enclosed.
- Completing the questionnaire will require you to answer by placing a tick in the tick box which best fits your answer.
- Try not to spend too much time thinking about your answers to each question – the first response is usually the best one to put down.
- Please answer all the questions on the survey.
- The survey should take no more than 20 minutes to complete.
- On completion, please return the questionnaire in the pre-paid envelope provided.

How is the data used?

- All respondents will be provided with a stamped addressed envelope returnable to Aston University
- All surveys will be analysed by the researcher at Aston Business School, independently from [ORGANISATION].
- Data will be stored in compliance with the 1998 Data Protection Act.

Confidentiality

- Individual responses will not be accessible by anyone at [ORGANISATION], and findings of the research will be fed back to the organisation using broad trends whereby individual responses cannot be recognised or traced.
- Complete anonymity is guaranteed.
- Analysis of the data will form part of my PhD research and articles may be submitted for publication in academic journals – it will not be possible to identify individual responses from either of these items.

If you have any queries or require further information regarding the questionnaire, please do not hesitate to contact Alexis Southall at:

Email: southaae@aston.ac.uk

Thank you for taking the time to fill in this questionnaire.

Please provide a code in the box here in order to identify your data if you wish to withdraw. Please make a note of your code as you will need to quote it to the researcher in the event that you wish to remove your data from the study:

Section One

The following 9 statements are about how you feel at work. Please read each statement carefully and decide if you ever feel this way about your job. Indicate how often you feel it by ticking the box (from 1 to 7) that best describes how frequently you feel that way.

	Never	Almost Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very Often	Always
1. At my work, I feel bursting with energy	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 7
2. At my job, I feel strong and vigorous	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 7
3. I am enthusiastic about my job	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 7
4. My job inspires me	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 7
5. When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 7
6. I am happy when I am working intensely	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 7
7. I am proud of the work that I do	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 7
8. I am immersed in my work	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 7

9. I get carried away when I'm working ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7

Section Two

The following 61 statements are about creativity at work. Please read each statement carefully and decide how much you agree with each statement. Indicate your level of agreement by ticking the box (from 1 to 5) that best describes how you feel about the statement.

In questions which refer to **“this organisation”**, please base your answers on **the area in which you work**, rather than [ORGANISATION] as a whole.

In questions which refer to **“the leadership”** or **“the leaders”**, try to think about the **management in your area**, rather than the leaders of [ORGANISATION].

	Strongly Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Slightly Agree	Strongly Agree
1. This organisation is always moving toward the development of new ideas	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
2. This organisation can be described as flexible and continually adapting to change	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
3. I can personally identify with the ideas with which I work	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
4. Our ability to function creatively is respected by the leadership	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
5. Around here people are allowed to try to solve the same problem in different ways	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
6. I help make decisions here	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
7. Creativity is encouraged here	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
8. People talk a lot around here but they don't practice what they preach	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
9. People around here are expected to deal with problems in the same way	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
10. The people in charge around here usually get the credit for others' ideas	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
11. There is one person or group here who assumes the role of telling others what to do	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
12. Sometimes the way things are done around					

here makes matters worse, even though our goals aren't bad

☐ 1

☐ 2

☐ 3

☐ 4

☐ 5

13. The role of the leader in this organisation can best be described as supportive

☐ 1

☐ 2

☐ 3

☐ 4

☐ 5

14. The leaders in this organisation talk one game but act another

☐ 1

☐ 2

☐ 3

☐ 4

☐ 5

15. In this organisation, we sometimes re-examine our most basic assumptions

☐ 1

☐ 2

☐ 3

☐ 4

☐ 5

16. The members of our organisation are encouraged to be different

☐ 1

☐ 2

☐ 3

☐ 4

☐ 5

17. People in this organisation are always searching for fresh, new ways of looking at problems

☐ 1

☐ 2

☐ 3

☐ 4

☐ 5

18. The way we do things seems to fit with what we're trying to do

☐ 1

☐ 2

☐ 3

☐ 4

☐ 5

19. Persons at the top have much more power than persons lower in this organisation

☐ 1

☐ 2

☐ 3

☐ 4

☐ 5

20. Work in this organisation is evaluated by results, not how they're accomplished

☐ 1

☐ 2

☐ 3

☐ 4

☐ 5

21. A person can't do things that are too different around here without provoking anger

☐ 1

☐ 2

☐ 3

☐ 4

☐ 5

22. The leadership acts as if we are not very creative

☐ 1

☐ 2

☐ 3

☐ 4

☐ 5

23. I really don't care what happens to this organisation

☐ 1

☐ 2

☐ 3

☐ 4

☐ 5

24. I am committed to the goals of this organisation

☐ 1

☐ 2

☐ 3

☐ 4

☐ 5

25. The methods used by our organisation seem well suited to its stated goals

☐ 1

☐ 2

☐ 3

☐ 4

☐ 5

26. Most people here find themselves at the bottom of the totem pole

☐ 1

☐ 2

☐ 3

☐ 4

☐ 5

27. My goals and the goals of this organisation are quite similar

☐ 1

☐ 2

☐ 3

☐ 4

☐ 5

28. Members of this organisation would rather be working here than anywhere else	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅
29. In this organisation we tend to stick to tried and true ways	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅
30. Assistance in developing new ideas is readily available	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅
31. New ideas can come from anywhere in this organisation and be equally well received	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅
32. On the whole I feel a sense of commitment to this organisation	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅
33. We're always trying out new ideas	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅
34. People in this organisation are encouraged to develop their own interests, even when they deviate from those of the organisation	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅
35. Members of this organisation feel encouraged by their superiors to express their opinions and ideas	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅
36. The people here are very loyal to this place	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅
37. Members of this organisation realise that in dealing with new problems and tasks, frustration is inevitable; therefore it is handled constructively	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅
38. I have the opportunity to test out my own ideas here	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅
39. I feel a real sense of responsibility for my work.	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅
40. In this organisation, the way things are taught is as important as what is taught	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅
41. This organisation is open and responsive to change	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅
42. A motto of this organisation is "The more we think alike, the better job we will get done"	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅
43. My ability to come with original ideas and ways of doing things is respected by those at	<input type="checkbox"/>				

	1	2	3	4	5
the top					
44. This place seems to be more concerned with the status quo than with change	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
45. The role of the leader here is to encourage and support individual members' development	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
46. The best way to get along in this organisation is to think the way the rest of the group does	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
47. Individual independence is encouraged in this organisation	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
48. Nobody asks me for suggestions on how to run this place	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
49. One individual is usually the originator of ideas and policies in this organisation	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
50. In this organisation, the power of final decision can always be traced to the same few people	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
51. Creative efforts are usually ignored here	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
52. Once this organisation develops a solution to a particular problem, that solution becomes a permanent one	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
53. Around here, a person can get into a lot of trouble by being different	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
54. I have a voice in what goes on in this organisation	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
55. People here try new approaches to tasks, as well as tried and true ones	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
56. Others in our organisation always seem to make the decisions	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
57. The leader's "pets" are in a better position to get their ideas adopted than most others	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
58. The main function of members in this organisation is to follow orders that come down through channels	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
59. I mostly agree with how we do things here	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5

60. There is little room for change here

☐ ₁☐ ₂☐ ₃☐ ₄☐ ₅

61. These aren't my ideas, I just work here

☐ ₁☐ ₂☐ ₃☐ ₄☐ ₅

Section Three

1. If you have any good ideas for your service area, we invite you to write them in the comments box below:

Section Four – Demographic Information

*In order to help with data analysis, it is important that we know some background information about you and your job. This information will only be used to determine differences between groups and **NOT** to identify individuals.*

Gender:

Male ☐ Female ☐

Age:

16-18 ☐ 18-20 ☐
21-30 ☐ 31-40 ☐
41-50 ☐ 51-65 ☐

Ethnic Origin:

White:

British ☐

Irish ☐

Any other White ☐
background

Mixed:

White & Black Caribbean ☐

White & Black African ☐

White & Asian ☐

Any other Mixed ☐
Background ☐

Asian:

Indian ☐

Pakistani ☐
☐

Bangladeshi ☐

Any other Asian ☐
background

Black/Black British:

Caribbean ☐

African ☐

Any other Black ☐
background

Chinese:

Any other:

Job status:

Full time

☐

Part time

☐

Job status:

Permanent

☐

Temporary

☐

Agency

☐

Years worked at BCC:

< 1

☐

1-3

☐

4-6

☐

7-9

☐

10-12

☐

13 +

☐

Years worked in current role:

< 1

☐

1-3

☐

4-6

☐

7-9

☐

10-12

☐

13 +

☐

Service Area:

Building & Consultancy

☐

City Centre Management

☐

Development Strategy

☐

Employment

☐

Investment Enterprise & Innovation

☐

Planning Management

☐

Regeneration

☐

Urban Design

☐

Do you have responsibility for managing people?:

Yes

☐

No

☐

Appendix 6 - A Critical Evaluation of [ORGANISATION]'s Employee Census

The [ORGANISATION] employee census was last run in 2006 by the Ipsos MORI Social Research Institute. According to Ipsos MORI, 'the aim of the survey was to provide data on the thoughts, feelings and opinions of [ORGANISATION] staff to help make improvements throughout the organisation. Specifically, the survey enabled staff "to say what they value and what they would like to see change about working for the [ORGANISATION] and about helping it to deliver excellent services".' The survey was designed in conjunction with the [ORGANISATION] project team. Key themes covered within the survey were advocacy; customers; vision and values; change; motivation; satisfaction; managers; and communication. The use of the Ipsos MORI survey is to compare the [ORGANISATION] to other local authorities in the UK based on Ipsos MORI's norm index.

The response rate for the 2006 employee census was 22%, equating to 11,573 employees from an organisation consisting of over 50,000 employees. This is concerning as low response rates can produce error. Low response rates themselves are not always necessarily cause for concern, though the common agreed standard for a 'good' response rate is around 50-60% (Healy, 1991. In Baptiste, 2008; Yang & Miller, 2008), while some would say that the ideal depends on the population and what the impact of non-response would be (Biemer, 2003). If the 22% responding to [ORGANISATION]'s survey are representative of the population as a whole (Witte & Pargas, 2004), then it is likely that similar views will be held, making the results more generalisable across all employees. Care should be taken when reporting the views identified in the staff survey when low response rates and a non-representative sample are involved, as these will not be accurate claims. It is preferable to obtain a large response rate in order to make reasonable claims about results, as well as providing greater statistical power and better confidence intervals (how sure we can be that the data is accurate and reflective of the entire population) (Cook, Heath & Thompson, 2002. In Baruch & Holtom, 2008)

Questionnaires were distributed via email to all [ORGANISATION] employees with an email address. Those without email access were sent a paper questionnaire. Immediately, there is a major issue with this. There is some evidence to suggest that response rates tend to be lower to electronic questionnaires than to paper based (Shih & Fan, 2008), and [ORGANISATION]'s employee census appears to remain consistent with this evidence. More than three times as many [ORGANISATION] employees completed their survey on paper than did electronically. Web based questionnaires are increasing in popularity, and there is contradictory evidence suggesting that internet surveys can produce response rates that are at least as high as mail surveys (Baruch & Holtum, 2008). Based on the conflicting assumptions in the literature, it may be preferable to continue to utilise a multi-method approach to [ORGANISATION]'s survey administration, but to make both of these available to all respondents. Evidence suggests that professionals prefer paper based questionnaire formats over electronic surveys (Shih & Fan, 2008), which is perhaps reflective of [ORGANISATION]'s response rates for each type. This demonstrates self-selection bias, as some individuals are more likely to complete an online survey than others, which limits

the generalisability of the responses (Wright, 2005). Sampling issues are not unique to web based surveys, and therefore making both types available to all respondents may assist in increasing response rates by allowing respondents to make a choice regarding which type they prefer. Further, having worked within the WSBI team, I have seen first hand how many emails team members receive. Being based at [ORGANISATION] twice a week, I find myself having a backlog of three working days worth of emails that are mostly irrelevant to me. Were I a more active member of the team, I am sure I would have a lot more. It may be that employees receiving an email about the staff survey didn't respond because they simply did not read it. This is the danger of using one method of data collection, particularly as there are many other issues surrounding the use of web based questionnaires.

Web based questionnaires can provide numerous advantages, such as sophisticated design and hidden question routing (Witte & Pargas, 2004), as well as the ability to have data fed straight into statistical analysis packages saving time for the surveyor (Wright, 2005). Furthermore, online surveys can be used a cost reducing measure, comparable to the large costs associated with a paper based survey (Wright, 2005) of an organisation of [ORGANISATION]'s size. However, there is further evidence to suggest that electronic surveys may increase the possibility for inaccurate and biased data analysis through non-response error (Bosnjak, Tuten & Wittmann, 2005; Tomaskovic-Devey, Leiter & Thompson, 1994). Non-response is particularly important when considering the role of trust in an online context (Fang, Shao & Lan, 2009). It is probable that computers at work are shared in some departments (which the Ipsos MORI survey failed to ask about in their section about computer access), which creates issues surrounding trust in colleagues, and the possibility for others seeing your answers. Further there could be cause for concern based on security of the internet access, as well as impersonal factors (Fang, Shao & Lan, 2009).

Other disadvantages surrounding web based surveys tend to centre around sampling issues in online communities, particularly in gaining representative samples and avoiding multiple responses from individuals (Wright, 2005), which are not applicable criticisms in the case of [ORGANISATION]'s target population being a known group of individuals.

Researchers have suggested a number of rules that should be followed in order to design an effective questionnaire that make sense to potential respondents. Good questionnaire design can also improve response rates, though this tends to be only a 'modest degree', though it is likely to increase response rates from those who would have otherwise not completed the survey (Dillman, Sinclair & Clark, 1993. In Dillman, 2007: 81). Some of these will be outlined below with a discussion as to whether [ORGANISATION]'s survey has met these requirements (Dillman, 2007):

- *Do not use double barrelled questions.* This means not asking two things in one question. [ORGANISATION]'s survey has several double barrelled questions in their survey, for example 'I have seen or used People Solutions'. Respondents will not know what they are answering to, and further if they respond you will not know which of these their answer

relates to. Double barrelled questions seem like a logical phrasing, but should actually be two separate questions. To further criticise this particular question, a respondent may have seen People Solutions, but not used it. Therefore, can they answer this question accurately? The section on BEST values is of particular importance when looking at double barrelled questions. While [ORGANISATION] think that outlining the entire value of, for example, 'Success', we may be achieving outcomes that are value for money for the citizens of [city] but that doesn't raise the quality of life in the city. How would one answer that question? The sub-values within each overall value needs to be split.

- *Clear instructions provided where necessary, placed precisely where needed.* [Organisation] have provided very clear instruction in their questionnaire, particularly regarding acronyms and terminology (such as defining what the cabinet means). However, these were at the start of the questionnaire before the questions begin. Dillman suggests that instruction for a specific question should be placed precisely at the moment they are required in order to avoid error, encourage respondents to read the question thoroughly and give them a sense of immediate progress. This means that during any question where the cabinet is mentioned, for example, the definition outlined at the start should be placed here in order that respondents know that definition at the point of answering. Having these instructions at the start may cause respondents to forget by the time they reach that question. [ORGANISATION] did follow this principle at the BEST values section, though there are some flaws here that will be discussed below
- *Avoid the use of distracting images.* [ORGANISATION] have done this well. Placing images or larger font sizes on a page is distracting for respondents as it draws the eye towards them rather than the questions. This is also true of the way questions are formatted in that the answers should not be in a larger or bolder font than the question. [ORGANISATION]'s survey is fairly plain overall, meaning that questions are unlikely to be missed due to distraction.
- *Consider costs, design and trust.* These are relating to the respondents – surveys should be easy to complete in order to reduce costs on respondents' time and effort; surveys should be designed to appear important and look interesting to respondents; attention should be paid to the details in order to foster trust, for example ensuring questions are linked to the survey topic, and that sensitive questions are placed towards the end. [ORGANISATION]'s survey is laid out in a way that is easy to complete, with sensitive questions being left until the end to build trust. However there are some design flaws in terms of question wording and amount of text.
- *Try to make questions and explanations as short as possible.* Evidence suggests that respondents skip words that they don't feel are important when reading questions and blocks of text. This often results in important words such as 'not' being skipped, and respondents answer the question inaccurately. [ORGANISATION] have included a section about BEST values, where each value is defined for participants. The blocks of text are

large and spread across the page in continuous prose. This also has the potential to make respondents give up on filling in the questionnaire as it challenges the costs of them completing it. [ORGANISATION]'s survey may benefit from better spacing in order to make long prose appear easier to digest.

- *Ensure questions are connected.* This refers to connectedness of both question to question and question to title. The title of the questionnaire should be clearly reflected in each of the questions, so participants must be able to see the link between a particular question and the purpose of the survey. For example respondents being asked to complete a questionnaire about their quality of healthcare would not see the relevance of being asked about their spending behaviour, as this is completely unrelated to the survey's purpose. This linkage makes the survey seem important, as views are clearly being related to purpose. In terms of question to question linkage, questions should be grouped by topic to ensure that intellectual costs are minimised. Further, questions that are related tend to result in responses that are well thought out. Dillman (2007) tells us that when answering question about a new topic, respondents tend to give a 'gut' answer, so if questions are frequently unrelated and spread across the page when they could have been groups, responses are likely to be inaccurate and respondents are likely to give up completing it early on. Further, Heberlein & Baumgartner (1978. In Dillman, 2007: 87) state that 'a major predictor of response rates to mail surveys is the salience of the questionnaire topic'. Ensuring that questions are relevant to respondents and to each other could be important in gaining more responses. [ORGANISATION]'s survey tends to follow this principal in general, although errors can be seen in the first section where questions jump from asking about employees' satisfaction with present job, then advocacy of the organisation, then back to satisfaction with present job.
- *Keep sensitive questions until the end.* Questions that may be perceived as sensitive include demographic information such as religion, sexuality or financial information such as salary. These questions are preferable to be left until the end. This is for two reasons – firstly, as stated above, respondents should be able to see the link between the survey title and the questions they are answering. Using sensitive demographic information as the first question may cause non-response through perceptions of irrelevance. Secondly, 'A respondent who has spent five to ten minutes already answering questions is less likely to respond to an objectionable question by quitting. Moreover, some questions may seem less objectionable in light of previous questions already answered' (Dillman, 2007: 87). [ORGANISATION] have adhered to this principle leaving demographic information about their workforce until last, and also sensitive question such as what the [ORGANISATION] can do to improve and what respondents think of management.
- *First question is most important to avoid non-response.* There are three rules surrounding the first question. It should apply to everyone, should be easy to answer and should be interesting. Many questionnaire designers make the mistake of placing demographic question first because the questions are easy to answer and apply to everyone. However, these can be perceived as sensitive and are not linked to the survey topic, and should

therefore be left until last. Questions should be easy and quick to read, comprehend and respond to. They should be interesting in that they relate to the topic of the survey and should apply to everyone in order that all have an opportunity to respond, and therefore avoid non-response. [ORGANISATION]'s first question is something that all can respond to, as employees are either satisfied with their job, or not. It is quick to read and comprehend and relates to the purpose of the survey. However, the way that the response options are laid out forces respondents to carefully read the options before making a choice. If respondents do not read these properly then inaccurate responses may be collected. It may have been more appropriate to number options on a Likert scale.

- *Ensure all response options are covered.* This is essential in order to accurately capture the views of respondents. If there is the possibility of individuals providing a neutral answer, this option must be accounted for. If there is no possibility that individuals can answer neutrally, designers may want to remove this. In addition, the neutral response may actually mean that an employee doesn't know the answer to the question, and this is where a 'don't know' response would be appropriate. However, care needs to be taken when providing these options as we may get inaccurate responses by not forcing respondents to make a choice. There are occasions where individuals may not know the answer to the question, for example in [ORGANISATION]'s survey, 'I believe the [ORGANISATION] effectively tackles discrimination and harassment in the organisation' (note that this is a double barrelled question) – individuals may not know whether the [ORGANISATION] effectively tackle these issues. Not allowing for a 'don't know' option could have resulted in a 'neither agree nor disagree' response, or further inaccurate positive or negative response. However there are occasions in the questionnaire where a 'don't know' response should be wholly inapplicable, for example the first question about satisfaction with job. An individual may be able to give a neutral response, but it is highly unlikely that they wouldn't know if they were satisfied or not. [ORGANISATION] should consider this in future questionnaire design.
- *Follow the Gestalt Law of Pragnanz.* The Law of Pragnanz suggests information should be simple, regular and symmetrical (Pearson, Barr, Kamil & Mosenthal, 2002). This means that items on a scale should be symmetrical, and designers should not force individuals to switch between ratings on a numbered scale, to ticking boxes, to filling in circles, as this confuses people. Further, response options, whichever type used to elicit the response, should be consistently placed on the right or left of the response statement throughout the questionnaire in order to avoid confusion and mental costs to the individual. [ORGANISATION] follow this principal throughout the bulk of the questionnaire, with tick boxes being provided for each response, although the final section regarding demographic information swaps the tick box from the right of the response statement to the left.
- *Use of colour.* The use of colour in surveys is important, firstly in terms of non-discrimination against those with colour blindness for example. Reds and greens cannot be distinguished by those with colour blindness, so these colours should be avoided in

order to obtain information from this population. Secondly, there has been research to show that certain colours are preferential for readability. Monochromatic colours and blues have been found to provide greatest aesthetic quality, while ensuring that there is a large contrast between background colour and text is very important for readability (Hall & Hanna, 2004). [ORGANISATION]'s survey is good in terms of colour in that it is wholly readable with a white background and black and blue writing.

- *Follow the Gestalt Law of Proximity.* The Law of Proximity refers to the spacing on a page to distinguish between bits of text. Spacing is especially important between questions, as individuals immediately look for a signal for the next question after completing the previous. If the next question is written in continuity from the previous, individuals may skip it, as respondents tend to skip information that they don't see as important. [ORGANISATION]'s spacing is reasonable in that it is clear when a question has ended, and when answers listed below are related to that question. However, larger spacing may be beneficial. The next questions in the 2006 survey were indicated by a large question number in a different colour to the rest of the question, so this may have helped in aiding direction.
- *Provide a good covering letter.* A good covering letter should consist of the purpose of the survey, as well as providing reasons that respondents should complete it. These reasons should be relevant and important to respondents (Haworth, 1996). Further, they should contain reassurance of confidentiality or anonymity (if this is the case), a realistic and honest indication of how long the questionnaire should take to complete, a return date (if required) and the return address (this should be done even if a return envelope is provided as individuals may lose the envelope, and without knowledge of where to return the survey it may garner non-response). [ORGANISATION]'s covering letter provides reasons for the survey and outcomes of the last survey and how results were used to make changes. There is also reassurance of confidentiality in that only Ipsos MORI would have access to survey data and that the [ORGANISATION] would not. A reasonable estimate is given of how long it would take to fill in, as well as a return date and how survey findings will be fed back to employees. Finally, a helpline had been provided to ensure that respondents who had questions could contact someone for advice. A return address however was not provided.
- *One should cognitively test questions prior to administration.* It is not clear as to whether [ORGANISATION] did this with the 2006 questions, so it is difficult to criticise or praise this. However, one might suspect that these questions were not cognitively tested based on the numerous double barrelled questions and provision of response options that cannot apply to certain questions.

Overall [ORGANISATION]'s survey is acceptable in terms of its layout and design; however questions and response options need to be considered, in that there are too many double barrelled questions within the survey, and that some of the questions may be cognitively misinterpreted. It is important that [ORGANISATION] consider this in the design of future surveys. On first glance their survey is clear and understandable, as well as having some relevant

questions. However, upon closer inspections there is space for error in response with many of the questions, and there are also questions missing that need to be asked in terms of employee engagement (such as the sharing of computer access and team working). [ORGANISATION] want to incorporate employee engagement questions into their staff survey, and recommendations for the next staff survey design will be made following a comparison with another staff survey – the National NHS Staff Survey – and an engagement questionnaire – the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES. Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzalez-Roma & Bakker, 2002).

Comparison with National NHS Staff Survey

The National NHS Staff Survey is sponsored by the Healthcare Commission and designed and analysed by Aston University. New questions are added to the survey each year and these are rigorously tested before being added to the final questionnaire. Each trust is given the core questionnaire, with the option to add more trust relevant questionnaires to their survey. The NHS survey frequently receives response rates of more than 60%, which was equal to approximately 200,000 respondents in 2003. 60% response in an organisation of the NHS' size is very good, and demonstrates that good response rates can be gathered from such large sample sizes. Response rates tend to be high not only on the basis of good questionnaire design but also through good promotion. It is not clear how well promoted the [ORGANISATION] staff survey was when it was last run in 2006, though the NHS use a variety of methods to make employees aware. Firstly, they ensure that publicity is made to inform employees that the survey will be commencing on a particular date. These are distributed within trusts in the form of posters, emails, flyers and briefings at team meetings. These promotional materials emphasise the importance and purpose of the survey, how the results of the previous survey were used and a message of support for the survey from senior management.

In comparison, [ORGANISATION] have no evidence of promotional materials prior to or during the data gathering process. However, they do provide a signed message of support from [ORGANISATION]lor Rudge, the Director of Human Resources, and the Chief Executive in their covering letter for the questionnaire.

Below is an outline of the various aspects of the staff survey, and these will be contrasted with [ORGANISATION]'s survey:

- *The Covering Letter:* This is clear and concise. The letter tells us what the results of the survey will be used for, with clear instructions on how the questionnaire should be completed. There is reassurance of confidentiality and tells us who will see the responses. There is an address given to return the questionnaire to in case of envelope loss, and an advice line is provided for information and guidance.
In contrast to the [ORGANISATION] staff survey, most of the bases are covered by both. [ORGANISATION] do not provide a return address, which may reduce response rates of those completing the paper version of the questionnaire. [ORGANISATION] have included a deadline date for return of questionnaires, and presumably the NHS survey would have a cut off date where additional late responses would not be included in analysis, as results need to be fed back to the organisation. This is one of the potentially negative aspects of the NHS' survey compared to [ORGANISATION]'s. Another negative compared to a

[ORGANISATION] positive, is that the NHS survey does not outline how long it will take respondents to complete their survey, and considering the large amount of questions within, one glance at the length may put people off completing, particularly if their job does not allow much time for sitting down to complete a survey. Further, it is not made clear whether they are allowed to complete it in work time, whereas [ORGANISATION] employees are given this permission.

- *Colour of text:* The NHS survey follows a monochromatic colour scheme, in keeping with the evidence that this increases readability. [ORGANISATION]'s staff survey also follows this general advice, but with a splash of blue colour.
- *Double barrelled questions:* The NHS survey is also guilty of including double barrelled questions, though this is not as prominent as those seen in [ORGANISATION]'s survey, which is more frequent. As previously stated, double barrelled questions should be avoided in order to elicit an accurate response from respondents.
- *Use of 'Don't Know' options:* the NHS survey utilises 'don't know' and 'not applicable' options, only in conjunction with questions where this is a viable response. [ORGANISATION]'s survey allows 'don't know' options for almost every question, with the primary exception of demographic information, regardless of whether this is reasonable as a response. The reasons that this is dangerous for results are discussed above, and could be rectified through cognitively testing the questions prior to mass roll out.
- *Clear instructions provided where necessary:* The NHS survey outlines particular instructions and meanings for each question at the point of asking. For example the question asking about how many additional paid hours individuals work over and above their contracted hours. This question states that individuals should include paid overtime, bank shifts and additional paid hours on-call. This question may be cognitively misinterpreted by respondents without the additional instructions at the point of reference. Had these instructions followed the same path as [ORGANISATION]'s survey, by putting definitions and instructions at the beginning, this may have been misunderstood as definitions had been forgotten. It is preferable to avoid having respondents flipping back and forth between questionnaire pages in order to reduce error and missing values. This is one important aspect where the NHS survey is better designed than the [ORGANISATION] survey.
- *Sensitive issues left until the end:* Both NHS and [ORGANISATION] have left sensitive issues until the end of the questionnaire, as evidence suggests is good practice. Demographic information and open questions are at the end of the questionnaire, and in the case of the NHS survey particularly sensitive questions relating to important practices such as hand washing and harassment are left until the end. The difference with these questions compared to the [ORGANISATION] survey is that they truly capture the experience of NHS staff. For example, they are asked if they have personally experienced physical violence in the previous 12 months before being asked whether the trust takes effective action

around this area. [ORGANISATION] ask the same question about harassment with relation to their organisation, but are unable to find out whether harassment is a prominent problem within the organisation. Furthermore, the NHS survey explains why collection of demographic information is important – that they are asked in order to compare different types of staff. [ORGANISATION] have utilised a similar approach, going as far as to express the Ipsos MORI policy on looking at small groups (that they will not look at groups of less than 10) and reassuring confidentiality in that results will not be analysed in such a way as to identify individuals. This may be a better approach than the NHS – while both are explaining the purpose of this collection, Ipsos MORI are reassuring confidentiality. The NHS' open question comes after the demographic information collection. There may be a possibility of missing this question, as there is no clear space that indicates that this is a question. It would be preferable for the NHS survey to provide a box or lines for employees to complete their answer, as the [ORGANISATION] survey has for their open question, in order to ensure respondents notice this and complete it if applicable.

- *Questions are connected by topic:* As discussed previously, [ORGANISATION] generally adhere to this, but there are occasions where questions could be grouped more effectively. The NHS survey is very effectively grouped, with questions around the same topic grouped under 9 overall subject headings, and set out in a logical order beneath these.
- *Thanking respondents for their time:* Both the surveys succeed in thanking participants for their time in completing the survey at the end.
- *First question is easy to answer and applies to everyone:* Both surveys succeed in this, though the NHS survey asks a more general and shorter question regarding contracted hours that applies to all respondents and is easy to give an immediate answer to (a choice of two options) without having to think too hard about the question or the response. [ORGANISATION] will not have used this type of question as it is probably not something that they are interested in assessing, however this may be something that is relevant in terms of assessing employee engagement.

Comparison with existing employee engagement survey – Utrecht Work Engagement Scale

It is difficult to compare the two of these based on most of the above principles as they serve a different purpose, with the UWES used for academic research around engagement, and a staff survey being organisation specific. There are a few design flaws with the UWES, which can be viewed in the appendix 5. The rating scale is a little confusing, requiring respondents to thoroughly read the instructions before answering. Further, one may criticise the rating scale itself, as some of the response options may be cognitively interpreted as the same. For example, semantically, is there a difference between almost never and rarely? Further, there are two potential double barrelled questions within the scale, which would almost certainly cause

inaccurate responses to be given. This is where cognitive testing of the questionnaire for [ORGANISATION] will be hugely beneficial to ensure that it is possible to differentiate between, for example, the meanings of almost never and rarely. Having this kind of rigour behind the [ORGANISATION] survey should engender more accurate, meaningful responses, and potentially also produce a higher response rate.

In terms of questions being asked, while [ORGANISATION]'s survey touches on issues of employee engagement, such as advocacy for the organisation, there is not enough detail in the questions to capture the level of engagement [ORGANISATION] has, the experience of employee engagement. Indeed, it is not known what [ORGANISATION] employees understand about engagement, what it is and what it involves. Finally, we cannot gauge from the existing staff survey anything beyond a general finding, such as how satisfied [ORGANISATION] employees are with their job. There are no further questions to identify areas of improvement, such as what particular aspects of their jobs employees are satisfied with (line manager, available resources, working hours, and so forth). Similarities and distinctions between the UWES and [ORGANISATION]'s staff survey are difficult to identify, due to their different usages and focus, beyond the construction of the questions. However, looking to academically verified scales to inform the design of [ORGANISATION]'s questionnaire will be useful.

Recommendations

There are a number of issues that it is recommended [ORGANISATION] should address in the design and implementation of their next staff survey. These are outlined below, with accompanying evidence for their effectiveness:

- [ORGANISATION] need to focus on improving their response rates. As previously stated this can be achieved through good questionnaire design, though there are other ways to increase response rates. Firstly, evidence suggests that sending reminders to respondents who have not yet responded can increase response rates nearly equal to that of the initial questionnaire response (Dillman, Christenson, Carpenter & Brookes, 1974. In Dillman, 2007). Further evidence suggests that sending a reminder can boost response rates by at least 10-15% (Janes, 2001). Evidence also suggests that sending new questionnaires to non-respondents is greater than sending postcard reminders in terms of getting a response, though this costs 2-5 times more (Becker, Cookston & Kulberg, 2000). This would be difficult for [ORGANISATION] in terms of logistics and cost. As responses should be confidential in order to foster trust prior to completion, it may be impossible to tell who has returned a questionnaire and who hasn't. This would mean sending out another 60,000 surveys regardless of how many people have responded to the initial roll out in order to avoid missing those who haven't completed. A better option in [ORGANISATION]'s case, both in terms of costs and logistically, would be to issue postcard reminders to each employee, initially thanking those who have already completed the survey, and reminding those that haven't to return it. It may help to indicate how many have already responded to the questionnaire as a form of social desirability. Emails can also be sent, but multiple email reminders can be regarded as 'spam', particularly to those

who have already completed the questionnaire (Grover & Vriens, 2006). Further, there are some employees without email access at the [ORGANISATION], and this could result in coverage error (Witte & Pargas, 2004).

Improving response rates is essential not only to getting a representative sample and for purposes of generalisability, but also because in the long term, it reduces the costs of the research in terms of wasted expenditure, as well as reducing non-response bias. Further, it allows for improved validity and reliability of the data (Becker, et al., 2000)

- Multi-modes should be used to administer the questionnaire in order to avoid coverage error by excluding specific people from the sample (for example, those without email access, those who share a computer at work). [ORGANISATION] already use multi-modes, but inappropriately. Multi-modes should be used to ensure that respondents have a choice of which they would prefer to use. Further, using multi-modes may outweigh the bias associated with each method individually, as neither online or paper surveys are free from bias (Dolnicar, Laesser & Matus, 2009)
- [ORGANISATION] have public backing from [ORGANISATION]lor Rudge, Director for HR and the Chief Executive. This demonstrates that the senior management are behind the survey and this visibility is important. However, evidence suggests that having the most influential person in an organisation asking for responses should attract a much higher response rates (Connolly & Connolly, 2003) suggesting that this is not working for [ORGANISATION]. The most influential person is not necessarily the chief executive, but may be a directorate leader. It depends who is most influential to the majority of individuals and this is something that could be tested in focus groups (Connolly & Connolly, 2003).
- 25% of those surveyed felt that the results of the 2006 survey would bring about change at the [ORGANISATION]. This is quite low considering the covering letter demonstrated how the results of the 2004 survey had brought about changes and what those changes were. Perhaps changes should be communicated effectively throughout the year, rather than just at the time of the staff survey. This has the potential to build trust in the survey for the future, as well as keeping employees constantly informed around change.
- [ORGANISATION] need to create additional questions in order to have a more comprehensive and informative survey. As mentioned previously, at present the questionnaire asks very basic information about such things as satisfaction with present job, without digging deeper for more information on what aspects of their job people are satisfied with, and if they are not satisfied, why not. These kinds of questions could inform [ORGANISATION]'s policies and approaches to work, as well as making improvements at the local level. At present, it is difficult to see how any of the questions would contribute to a meaningful change as experienced by the employees. It is one thing to know how motivated staff are, but this question is meaningless without knowing how the organisation can make a positive impact on this. Below I will outline what

[ORGANISATION] needs to ask more about in their survey, particularly relating to engagement:

- As stated above, asking 'how much' tells us nothing about how we can improve this for those who answer negatively. [ORGANISATION] need to consider what they want to find out and whether they are prepared to make changes in working practices around this question having looked at the results.
- If asking about access to computers, there needs to be a question regarding shared access. It is unavoidable that some employees will have to share a computer, particularly if its usage is not a primary function of their job role. This may affect the way people feel about completing online surveys, or about access to the computer in general.
- More needs to be asked about team working
- Specificity of engagement. There will need to be some cognitive testing of the word employee engagement.

Appendix 7

Focus Group Schedule

1. Introduction

Where are the toilets, refreshments, any special needs

To research objectives

Acknowledge importance/value of participation

To aims of the focus group - how the group will run

Group rules and understanding - good to have differences, respect all contributions – no right or wrong answers, group confidentiality – whatever’s said in the room stays in the room.

use of audio tape – can I record? Data storage, etc

Timing and breaks

Turn off mobile phones

Any questions

2. Background to Participants

Does everybody know each other already?

I would like to start with a brief round of introductions. It would be useful for me to know everyone’s names and what area of [ORGANISATION] you come from.

- who you are, and what area you work in within [ORGANISATION]

3. Questions:

3a. Line Management

1. Can you think of any examples when your line manager provided additional support to you or your team beyond the call of duty?

PROMPT: Well-being

2. What do you think your line manager needs from senior management to support them in their role?

3. Does your line manager follow policies and procedures rigorously?

PROMPT: Does your line manager ever 'bend the rules' in order to provide support for you and your team?

4. Can you think of any examples when your line manager provided support for you or a team member in relation to your/their well-being?
5. Are there any questions about line management that I should have asked you that I have not asked you?

3b. Your teams

1. How often do members meet with other members of the team?
2. How does your line manager allocate role responsibilities and tasks?
3. How does your manager involve the team and contribution in the team processes?
4. What motivates the team?

PROMPT: Can you think of examples when you or other team members have demonstrated engagement – i.e. passion, drive, absorption, dedication – beyond what is expected?

PROMPT: Does your manager provide you with the things that motivate/engage you? What's missing?

5. What pattern of communication does the team adopt?
6. How well are decisions made in the team?

PROMPT: Is there access to appropriate resources to facilitate multidisciplinary team working?

3c. Team leadership

1. What leads to team cohesiveness?
2. What leads to conflict within your team?
3. How well do you feel team members work together?

PROMPT: Is there dominance within the team?

4. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the team?
5. Do team members feel that they can contribute fully to the team's processes in the form of offering their opinions and knowledge assertively?
6. Do you consider opinions that are contrary to your own?

PROMPT: Do your managers consider opinions contrary to their own?

4. End

Reiterate thanks

Reiterate confidentiality

Any final questions?

Debrief

Appendix 8

Line Manager Focus Group Schedule

1. Introduction

Where are the toilets, refreshments, any special needs

To research objectives

Acknowledge importance/value of participation

To aims of the focus group - how the group will run

Group rules and understanding - good to have differences, respect all contributions – no right or wrong answers, group confidentiality – whatever's said in the room stays in the room.

use of audio tape – can I record? Data storage, etc

Timing and breaks

Turn off mobile phones

Any questions

2. Background to Participants

Does everybody know each other already?

I would like to start with a brief round of introductions. It would be useful for me to know everyone's names and what area of [service] you come from.

who you are, and what area you work in within [service]

Line Management

6. What are the main advantages of being a line manager?
7. What are the main disadvantages of being a line manager?
8. Can you think of any examples of when you provided additional support to your team beyond the call of duty?
9. What do you need from senior management to support you in your role of line manager?
10. Can you think of any examples where senior management supported you in your role
11. Can you think of any examples when you provided support for a team member in relation to their well-being?
12. Was your approach to this a personal choice, or was it dictated by external factors (e.g. senior manager, policy etc)

13. Are there any questions about being a line manager that I have not asked that you think that I should ask?

Your teams

7. How many people are there in your teams?
8. How often do members meet with other members of the team?
9. How do you allocate role responsibilities and tasks?
10. How do you involve the team and contribution in the team processes?
11. What motivates the team?
12. What pattern of communication does the team adopt?
13. How well are decisions made in the team?
14. Is there access to appropriate resources to facilitate multidisciplinary team working?
15. Can you think of examples when team members have demonstrated engagement – i.e. passion, drive, absorption, dedication – beyond what is expected?

Team leadership

7. What leads to team cohesiveness?
8. What leads to conflict within your team?
9. How well do you feel team members work together?
10. Is there dominance within the team?
11. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the team?
12. Do team members feel that they can contribute fully to the team's processes in the form of offering their opinions and knowledge assertively?
13. Do you consider opinions that are contrary to your own?

4. End

Reiterate thanks

Reiterate confidentiality

Any final questions?

Debrief

