

EMPLOYEE VOICE AND THE AMBIGUITY OF ORGANISATIONAL SIZE

A COMPARATIVE CASE STUDY OF EMPLOYEE VOICE MECHANISMS AND PRACTICES USED BY A MULTINATIONAL ENGINEERING COMPANY AND ONE OF THEIR SUPPLIERS IN EACH OF THEIR MANUFACTURING OPERATIONS INCLUDING HOW THEIR RESPECTIVE DEGREES OF EMPLOYEE VOICE INFLUENCE PRODUCTIVITY, PRODUCT QUALITY AND HEALTH AND SAFETY ISSUES

John Walburn

Doctor of Philosophy

York Management School

University of York

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ABSTRACT

This thesis compares the level of employee voice operating between two companies from the same industrial sector, one being a large multinational and the other a SME with a view to evaluate if size is a determinant. The findings are that whilst the level of voice is not statistically significantly associated with size and is not very different between the two organisations, size is not the direct determinant, it is other factors often connected with size that control it; namely the degree of formality and proceduralism. The very procedural nature of the organisation in the multinational appears to be a key factor retarding the involvement by employees whilst in the SME it is the lack of procedures designed to encourage participation which appears to be a factor retarding employee voice. Furthermore, both companies suffer from an absence of direct involvement of shop floor personnel due to the absence of team meetings, for differing reasons; a lack of confidence in the ability of team leaders in the SME and the lack of their permanent allocation to teams in the MNE.

It is stressed that these findings can only be assumed correct for these two particular companies but the research strategy could usefully be applied to other pairs of company differing in size but from different sectors and using longitudinal studies, rather than this type of cross-sectional study. There is however a warning that before any useful data can be accumulated regarding productivity and other operational outcomes, meaningful measures of potential outcomes must be in place or designed and agreement on how any such operational improvements are to be attributed to the level of employee voice and engagement by employees.

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DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is a presentation of original work and I am the sole author.

This work has not previously been presented for an award at this, or any other, University.

All sources are acknowledged as references.

John Walburn

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this research project is to explore what effect the size of an organisation can have on how readily their employees voice their opinions and contribute in its operation and in this chapter the techniques and practices available to facilitate this are described in broad terms. To this end, two companies of differing size were selected for a comparative case study and the justification for their choice is explained.

1.1. PARTICIPATORY MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES

Participatory Management is a process where subordinates share a significant, but often varying, degree of decision-making power with their immediate supervisors and others. It embraces several techniques such as;

- Employee Voice
- Employee Involvement
- Employee Empowerment
- Employee Participation
- Employee Engagement
- Industrial Democracy
- Teamworking

Employee Involvement has been described as when the employee is given the opportunity to be involved not only in their own work but also that of the organisation as a whole and not just in matters of monetary reward for their work (Armstrong, 2001).

Various definitions of what Employee Participation amounts to have been given in the literature. It has been defined as employees playing “a greater part in the decision-making process” (p.790) and alternatively where a person or persons determine what another person or group of persons will do (Armstrong, 2001), whilst others may see Participation as a term to describe the operation of that part of the structure of an organisation designed to foster the involvement of employees in its operation (Glew et al., 1995).

Christian, Garza and Slaughter (2011, p.95) defines Engagement as “a relatively enduring state of mind referring to the simultaneous investment of personal energies in the experience or performance of work”. In this research project the term has been treated as the participation of individuals but with an emphasis on the emotional involvement of employees in the wellbeing of their employing organisation; as such the two concepts are considered

synonymous and the term individual participation or employee involvement and participation (EIP), when used, are assumed to include the engagement of employees.

Employee Empowerment is seen academically as a difficult concept to define concisely but can be considered as a tool which can be used both for achieving efficiency improvements for the organisation but also as a way of improving the life of the individual, and with it, enhanced employee motivation (Slack et al., 1998, p.340; Betts, 2000, p.90)

Armstrong (2001) describes Industrial Democracy as “power sharing in industry” (p.791), the aim of which is to increase the rights of employees or their representatives to be involved in decision-making.

Teamworking is a central feature of successful EIP schemes. To be truly effective, the principles of team working must apply at all levels throughout the organisation. Personal experience has shown that when the practice of ‘genuine’ team working stops at the first supervision level, the benefits to the organisation as a whole, which should accrue, are stymied.

In the 10th edition of Armstrong’s Handbook of Human Resource Management practice (Armstrong, 2006), the concept of ‘Employee Voice’ is introduced. Boxall and Purcell (2003) are cited who define Employee Voice as “the term increasingly used to cover a whole variety of processes and structures (such as the preceding techniques and mechanisms) which enable and sometimes empower employees, directly and indirectly, to contribute to decision-making in the firm” (p. 807).

Notwithstanding these various definitions, fundamentally, Participatory Management can be considered as the direct opposite approach to the hierarchical and autocratic management style of simply issuing instructions to subordinates as to what and how tasks should be done, rather than creating an environment and atmosphere where staff of all levels feel free to voice their views and opinions and work together in concert to a common purpose, sharing power and influence.

RELUCTANCE TO PARTICIPATE:

In the field of Human Resource Management and writings on the subject, the concept of EIP is often considered a contentious issue. This is because the implementation of participatory practices within an organisation by definition demands that staff in supervisory roles have, as they see it, to relinquish their authority or control and replace this with the more difficult role of leadership. Human nature therefore makes the transition from an

authoritarian mode of management to a participatory form, rife with resistance and adverse reactions from all levels in an organisation whether it be large or small. The Production Director of a large multinational company may find it difficult to accept that when a first line supervisor and his team suggest an alternative to new work procedures designed by him and his advisors, that they, with their operational experience, may well offer a better way forward. The realisation needs to be that 'doing it my way' is not the same as 'doing it the best way'. At another level, an owner-manager of a very small but growing company which has just recruited a shop floor supervisor for the first time, may find that their views on how to operate are not coincident and that the authoritarian ways of working the owner-manager had developed since the company was a 'one-man-band' are different from those of the new starter. There may well be a natural reluctance by the owner-manager to accept that there is now someone else's view to take account of as the company develops.

PARTICIPATION:- APPROPRIATE FOR THE ORGANISATION:

The problems associated with the adoption of inappropriate participatory schemes by small organisations, including owner-manager businesses, is discussed by Wyer and Mason (1999) in their paper entitled "Empowerment in small businesses". They find that owner-managers accept the management of people as a very important role for them, but one they find the most difficult. They also feel that there is a case for arguing that much of the accepted wisdom in the field of human resource management "has relevance to large organisations and fails to address the distinctive characteristics of the small business" (p.180). However, it is suggested that employee empowerment may be the key to growth in successful small businesses.

Owner-managers are known to be reluctant to delegate and let key personnel take on a decision-making role and even more reluctant to recruit expertise, which may be necessary for growth, from outside the company; the owner-manager seeing this as an erosion of his/her control and autonomy. The resultant limited managerial experience stultifies the growth potential of the company.

Wyer and Mason (1999) expound on the value of introducing project teams into small businesses as a way of encouraging participation. Project Team Building is a well tried technique used by large organisations and is considered by the authors as suitable for small companies as well. Individuals are formed into a team to tackle a problem or potential improvement, but not as a permanent team; selection being by expertise and experience. By co-operation staff are empowered sharing their knowledge and understanding with others to the 'greater good' of the organisation as a whole. Project Teams can well institute learning

activities for the company involving experimentation and trial and error, transparent to all employees and the owner-manager.

In essence, the evolvement of EIP in small organisations firstly requires the management to feel confident to relinquish power and give authority to individual employees. The issue of showing trust in the employee comes to the fore as does the need to develop boundaries for empowered employees within which they can develop and innovate.

PARTICIPATION:- LIMITED SUCCESS

In fact, Participatory Management is not seen by all as a panacea for problems in the management of organisations. In their book, "Participation: The New Tyranny", (Cooke and Kothari, 2001), the authors explain how they felt so strongly that people did not see the downside of participatory schemes that they organised a conference to illustrate the shortcomings. The book is really a collection of papers by invited participation development practitioners who challenge conventional thinking; Cooke and Kothari acting as editors. Although the book and the papers contained within are mainly concerned with rural and indeed overseas development, it amounts to a refreshing constructive critique on the subject.

The problem of institutionalised participatory schemes is highlighted, i.e. when organisations set up a scheme by following, possibly slavishly, published/recognised/conventional practice without considering the local situation and local needs. This can result in significant differences between the intended scheme and the actual scheme in practice. In his paper Taylor (2001) postulates that "participation is more about an attitude of mind, or part of an organizational culture rather than a set of mechanisms that can be closely prescribed and measured" (p.129).

Taylor quotes Hyman and Mason (1995) who usefully attribute the failure of Employee Involvement and Participation (EIP) schemes in the UK to four main reasons :

- Many EIP techniques have been introduced in an uncoordinated way unrelated to organizational systems, culture, context and practice;
- Many initiatives have floundered on the rock of line manager hostility who have perceived a threat to their authority;
- Senior management support has either not been available or has not been sustained in the face of more 'urgent' business pressures; and
- Many initiatives are the result of hype and 'fad-surfing' by HR and Organization Development specialists, consultants and management gurus. (p.129)

In a similar vein, Heckscher (1995) in his unpagged paper, is sceptical of the efficacy of many EIP schemes. In the author's view the reason for the failures of Participatory Management schemes is clear. He derides those schemes where EIP really amounts to reinforcing bureaucracy rather than overcoming it. In interviewing 250 middle managers in large organisations in the USA Heckscher (1995) came to the conclusion that:

Managers and others have no difficulty in "participating" within the traditional framework: that is, they want to be left alone to do their jobs, to get out from under unnecessary rules; and they are delighted to discuss with superiors how their jobs can be done better.

On the other hand, Heckscher (1995) found some, what he termed "Flexible Organisations", which:

require that people participate beyond their jobs: everyone needs to understand and contribute creatively to the overall purpose of the organization. That kind of participation profoundly threatens traditional relationships.

Heckscher (1995) feels that "bureaucracy has reached its limits". In his view the traditional authoritarian management style had served organisations well in the past but at the expense of "responsiveness and continuous innovation". The solution, as Heckscher (1995) sees it, is teamworking and empowerment, in particular the use of 'Project Teams'.

Heckscher (1995) had come away from a five year study, talking to American middle managers, basically pessimistic. Their view was that "participatory management has generally *not* accomplished much. It is rarely successful in breaking the walls of bureaucracy."

PARTICIPATION:- TRUE SUCCESS:

But reports on the outcomes of Participatory Management are not all 'doom and gloom'. This is particularly true of schemes implemented outside the USA and UK with their long standing past histories of traditional autocratic hierarchical management structures. One of the most impressive examples of 'genuine' Participatory Management comes from Brazil. As president of Semco, Semler (1989) describes his firm as:

...a manufacturing company that treats its 800 employees like responsible adults. Most of them –including factory workers – set their own working hours. All have access to the company books. The vast majority vote on many important corporate decisions.

Everyone gets paid by the month, regardless of job description, and more than 150 of our management people set their own salaries and bonuses. (p.1)

Semler (1989) admits that this is not a conventional management style, but is one that works and as evidence of this he points out that Semco was “close to financial disaster in 1980, Semco is now one of Brazil's fastest growing companies, with a profit margin in 1988 of 10% on sales of \$37 million” (p.1). Furthermore, the company has a reputation as “the best company in Brazil to work for” (p.1).

Semler (1989) attributes the success of the company to three fundamental principles:

- Democracy
- Profit Sharing
- Information

These three attributes are interdependent and each essential to the managerial structure of the company.

In implementing Participatory Management Semler (1989) cites four big obstacles:

- Size
- Hierarchy
- Lack of motivation
- Ignorance

Semco limit the size of production units in the belief that staff cannot influence the ways of working in large units. Multiple layers of management are avoided with only three layers used. Semler (1989) advocates a fully transparent, easily understood, profit sharing scheme as the principal tool to ensure a well motivated workforce, fully conversant and with full access to the company's financial results.

However, Semler (1989) does not subscribe to the view that adopting a participatory management style is easy. His view as to why so many schemes flounder is encapsulated thus:

about 90% of the time, participatory management is just hot air. Not that intentions aren't good. It's just that implementing employee involvement is so complex, so difficult, and not uncommonly, so frustrating that it is easier to talk about than to do (p.2).

Semler (1989) sums up his views as to why Semco has been so successful by adopting genuine Participatory Management principles as “Participation gives people control of their work, profit sharing gives them a reason to do it better, information tells them what’s working and what isn’t” (p.9).

This paper describes a utopian vision of employee participation, which is not purely theoretical but obviously factual and serves to illustrate what is feasible. One gets the impression that it has come about by the author’s personal determination to prove that such a system can work and that without his determination and commitment to the principles of employee participation, it may not have been so successful.

1.2. THE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT

The primary aims of the research centre around evaluating and contrasting the levels of individual employee participation using employee voice mechanisms exhibited in a large multinational (MNE) organisation to those found in a small to medium sized (SME) organisation, in particular an owner-managed SME company.

There are two possible approaches to such a case study relating to the number of cases to be examined. Whilst there is an attraction in evaluating numerous organisations and their numerous suppliers, in that the sample size may give enhanced credence to the results of any hypotheses tested, it was decided that concentrating on a single pair of cases should allow more intensive and specific analyses to be undertaken. As Shalev (1980) advises, “this avoids the danger of lapsing into either vacuous description or superficial comparison”. Therefore, this study has been restricted to a single MNE company and one SME company.

Clearly there can be a multitude of factors which could influence the degree of EIP operating in an organisation, but the objective here is to concentrate, and as far as possible, isolate the ‘size’ factor. To achieve this two study companies were selected, one being a large multinational organisation and the other a small to medium sized company, but crucially both operating in the same business sector. Additionally, it was decided that the SME Company selected should be a supplier to the MNE Company with similar outputs, although on a smaller scale, which would tend to mean that each company was likely to use similar equipment and employ similar people with similar levels of skill and training.

Key to the integrity of this research is how levels of EIP were assessed and indeed how honestly and fairly it was evaluated in each company and furthermore how embedded and ‘genuine’ was the participation and voice of employees in the ambience of each company. To this end each company was assessed in an identical manner using the same

methodology and the results and conclusions determined likewise. The question of how genuine the EIP found in each company was, is undoubtedly one of the most difficult factors to estimate and inevitably demands a degree of subjective assessment and brings in focus the question of fair assessment again. From the very beginning, it was expected that the views of management and those of employees when describing the participatory environment that existed in their organisation would differ and would need to be subjected to comparative analysis to try to establish the true situation. For this reason the methodology chosen involved putting identical questions to both management and employees, although not necessarily using the same methods and techniques. This was applied in both study companies and indeed was further developed so that the same questions were put to similar classes of management and employees in both companies. It was envisaged from the inception of the research project that having the two study companies from the same business sector and with the SME Company being a supplier to the MNE Company, would facilitate this technique by making the questioning meaningful to all the respondents. Another feature considered worthy of investigation was any perceived reluctance on the part of employees, or for that matter managerial staff, to get involved and participate fully in the running of their company; an occurrence which questioning was expected to be able to bring to light.

Finally, one of the primary aims of the research is that its outcomes could well illustrate the opportunities open to SME companies to learn from the participatory practices of MNE companies, but also alternatively what MNE companies might well learn from SME companies in this field.

The secondary aims of this research are to do with what effect participatory practice has on operational issues. To achieve this as participatory practices were investigated in both companies; their influence on productivity, product quality and safe working practices was also evaluated. In seeking the views of managerial staff and employees at all levels, their views as to how the participation of employees has, and is likely to in the future, affect these issues was ascertained. This involved questioning specialists in these fields at both companies, where they were available.

1.3. THE STUDY PARAMETERS

1.3.1. THE CHOICE OF THE ENGINEERING SECTOR

The engineering sector was chosen for the study because by selecting one of the high tech. sections of the sector, it was felt likely that two companies could be found using similar

plant, equipment and production processes with one being a small company supplying the other larger company. Coupled with this, the researcher was familiar with the sector, had a body of contacts, and recognised a shortage of similar studies of participatory practice within the sector.

1.3.2. THE CHOICE OF LOCATION OF THE STUDY COMPANIES

The two companies selected were from north eastern England, not just for convenience, but also for the choice afforded. The latest Regional Gross Value Added (GVA) statistics, at the time the study companies were selected, from the Office for National Statistics show that manufacturing constitutes 15% of the Total Regional GVA in this part of the UK, whereas the average value for the whole of the UK is only 10.8% (Office for National Statistics: Regional GVA Statistics: June 2013.) In addition when looking for the location of a suitable multinational company, the fact that statistics showed that one area in north eastern England was home to many multinational organisations with mechanical engineering being one of two predominant fields amounting to 18% of the total with 16% of these multinationals being American owned (Crone and Watts, 2003), was taken into account. Furthermore, Bloom, Sadun and van Reenan (2012) reported that American MNEs in the UK have higher productivity levels than those UK owned, which has been attributed to the faster adoption of new technologies and more effective people management. This offered the possibility of investigating further insights into possible influencers on their participatory practices and subsequent operational outcomes. The choice of multinational company was therefore refined to be an American owned specialist high tech. engineering company with an SME supplier company also situated in north eastern England.

1.3.3. THE CHOICE OF THE STUDY COMPANIES

Within the area possessing many American owned multinational engineering companies, one from a specialist high tech. sector was approached which also used a supplier SME company also located in north east England providing it with components and subassemblies. After initial discussions with both companies, it was established that both used similar plant and equipment and worked to similar, if not identical, specifications and quality standards. Both organisations agreed to act as study companies for the research project but only on the strict understanding that their anonymity would be scrupulously maintained. For this reason, the descriptive details of the two companies have been restricted to avoid any possibility of them being identified. This includes stating which high tech. engineering speciality they operate in.

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

The review of the literature on the participation of employees through the medium of employee voice contained in this chapter covers the historical development of the concept from participatory practices generally to current practice and its application in the world of work.

2.1. AN INTRODUCTION TO CONTEMPORARY EMPLOYEE VOICE AND ITS ROLE IN EMPLOYEE INVOLVEMENT AND PARTICIPATION (EIP)

Since the publication of the work of Hirschman (1970), where the concept of voice was first introduced, voice has developed into a series of mechanisms and remains difficult to define precisely; indeed ambiguity still persists in the definition of what employee voice encompasses. The essence of voice is about employees having the opportunity to voice their opinions on how their places of work function and on the decisions promoting change taken, or about to be taken, which could affect their ways of working.

Hirschman (1970) defined Voice as “any attempt at all to change rather than to escape from an objectionable state of affairs”. Here Hirschman (1970) was conceptualising the reactions of an organisation to a decline in customer demand; nothing to do with their employees, let alone their views or involvement in the organisation. He postulated three alternative reactions that an organisation might take, Exit, Voice or Loyalty; the Exit option being for the organisation to search for operational remedies to correct the situation, whereas the Voice option is for the organisation to engage with their customers to ascertain the causes and possible cures for the lack of customer demand. Voice is thus seen as an alternative to Exit by Hirschman (1970) which may engender customer Loyalty if it is felt that the organisation is conscious of, and taking account of, the views of their customers. Later this principle was considered analogous to an organisation in need of improvement, in particular to its industrial relations by Freeman and Medoff (1984) where the Voice of employees could be sought in the same manner as Hirschman (1970) envisaged using the Voice of customers to benefit the organisation.

Up until the 1990s employee voice was predominantly conceived in the literature as a communication tool, based on Hirschman (1970)'s conception with the danger that if this involved only downwards communication without the opportunity for employees to respond, it is just that, and not Voice. However, more recent writings see employee voice as “expressing opinions and having meaningful input into work-related decision-making” (Budd, 2004), supplemented later by Budd, Gollan and Wilkinson (2010) who broadened the

concept to include even voice mechanisms covering participatory practices such as work autonomy where the “individual employee is given greater freedom to make decisions on his or her own”.

Two other reactions that employees may exhibit to any encouragement to voice their views, although not specifically mentioned by Hirschman (1970) or Freeman and Medoff (1984), are Silence and Neglect. Employees may choose to withhold their views and opinions and remain silent which they see as a safe response to an invitation to give voice which could have proved valuable to the organisation as a whole. Researchers such as Morrison and Milliken (2003) have termed this Employee Silence. Alternatively, employees may deliberately fail to perform their work properly or inadequately; termed Neglect by some researchers such as Turnley and Feldman (1999).

THE EVLN MODEL:

In the field of organisational behaviour, Hirschman’s original conceptual framework has been developed into a template to identify ways in which employees respond to dissatisfaction by selecting from the options open to them (Farrell, 1983). This is commonly termed the EVLN model based on the four possible responses identified by Hirschman (1970), i.e. Exit, Voice, Loyalty and Neglect, which in turn could result in the employee leaving the organisation, speak up, passively hope for a better future, or disregard his or her situation (Naus, van Iterson and Roe, 2007). These in turn Farrell (1983) argues could manifest themselves in organisational behaviours affecting operational issues such as staff turnover/retention, absenteeism, lateness, and communication with management and supervision. Specifically, Farrell (1983) sees the options open to dissatisfied employees proffered by the EVLN model as:

EXIT:- leave the job and the firm, which Hirschman (1970) saw as a “wonderful concentration of the mind for the abandoned employer”.

VOICE:- which Hirschman (1970) defined as “any attempt at all to change rather than escape from an objectionable state of affairs” and when this involves “actively and constructively trying to improve conditions” in the organisation, is also termed “pro-social voice” (Rusbult et al., 1988).

LOYALTY:- which Farrell (1983) envisaged resulting in the employee putting up with the objectionable situation for a period of time before reacting, if ever. He describes such loyal employees as “they suffer in silence, confident that things will soon get better”. Hirschman (1970) saw loyalty as a

“psychological barrier” to exit, adding strength to the likelihood of voice being activated.

NEGLECT:- Farrell (1983) sees this as an option chosen by employees with low levels of commitment to the organisation, showing itself with behaviours such as bad timekeeping, absenteeism and defective work.

However, nuances to these options can occur such as when the exit option of leaving the organisation is not viable for the employee for whatever reason, resulting in him or her “leaving the organisation in a psychological sense” with the probable deleterious impact on employee commitment. This is seen by Rusbult et al. (1988) as a “psychological form of exit”.

The typology groups in the EVLN model are subdivided into constructive or destructive groups and into active or passive groups by Farrell (1983). In the field of organisational development Voice and Loyalty are considered constructive by aiding the establishment of good relationships between management and employees, whereas Exit and Neglect are considered destructive since they only come into play after relationships have broken down. Voice and Exit are also considered active in that they both are influenced by change, or lack of it; Voice by precipitating change, but Exit due to employees leaving when deciding that feasible change is not forthcoming. Neglect and Loyalty can act passively when employees see no opportunities for beneficial change, causing Neglect through demotivation as can Loyalty by employees as they passively “soldier on” even after their voice has been ignored or due to no opportunities being available to Exit.

Additionally, Rusbult et al. (1988) are of the view that the EVLN model typology should be extended to include Organisational Cynicism (OC) to make it “a more comprehensive model of employee responses” which they see as distinct from Exit, Voice, Loyalty and Neglect. Naus, van Iterson and Roe (2007) define OC as “a negative attitude towards one’s employing organisation” and see this embodied by the employee as:

- believing that the organisation lacks integrity
- having negative feelings towards the organisation
- exhibiting disparaging behaviour towards the organisation
- feeling that there is a lack of “sincere” participation in decision-making
- believing that there is an absence of genuine support from the management.

More positively, Rusbult et al. (1988) do point out that there is also an opinion that cynics who still care deeply about their organisation may well make useful recommendations to

solve operational problems and act as “the voice of conscience” for the organisation. For these reasons, Rusbult et al. (1988) argue that “the nature of cynicism is not readily captured by Exit, Voice, Loyalty or Neglect” and should be treated as a fifth and distinct response in the EVLN model.

2.1.1. CLARIFICATION OF THE TERMS USED IN EMPLOYEE INVOLVEMENT AND PARTICIPATION (EIP) INCLUDING EMPLOYEE VOICE

A recurring theme throughout any review of the literature on EIP is the ambiguity in the definitions of the various forms of employee participation epitomised by many of the academic writers reviewed feeling the need to incorporate their own personal definitions into their writings.

Marchington et al. (1994) provide a well known definition of employee participation which reads “EI describes activities which are initiated principally by management and are designed to increase the amount of information which employees receive about their organisation, provide them with the opportunity to contribute to decisions made at workplace level and ultimately enhance their commitment to their employer” (p. 869). Marchington here is using the term Employee Involvement (EI) as being synchronous with employee participation. Even this definition falls short by not including for the empowerment of employees involved in the implementation of outcomes derived, or partly derived, from their suggestions. As mentioned above, Marchington et al. (1994) uses the term ‘Involvement’ rather than ‘Participation’ which he considers to have the same meaning. Other writers also use the term ‘Employee Involvement and Participation’ (EIP); Hyman and Mason (1995) and Cox Zagelmeyer and Marchington (2006) being examples. To avoid any misinterpretation in this review and throughout other chapters, the following definitions and demarcations have been employed:

INVOLVEMENT:

Employee Involvement schemes are those designed to provide employees with sufficient information to allow and encourage them to contribute to the decision making processes affecting their place of work with a view to increasing their commitment to the employing organisation (Marchington et al, 1994).

EMPOWERMENT:

Empowerment is seen as an extension of involvement where employees are given a measure of autonomy and control over their own work either individually or as members of a team (Honold, 1997).

PARTICIPATION:

Whilst Participation may be thought of by some writers as the participatory actions of individual employees, it is also defined by others as a term for collective action using organisational structures and formal systems that have been designed to facilitate participation by all employees (Glew et al., 1995). Indeed some restrict the term 'Participation' to formal institutions such as works councils (Budd, Gollan and Wilkinson, 2010). In this research project, the organisational aspect of the concept is considered a more valid definition and as the emphasis here is on individual views and actions, the term 'Voice' is used in preference to 'Participation'.

VOICE:

Of all the many definitions of Voice tabled in the literature, the more all-embracing definition is used here. This is based on including the 'third strand of thought' for the meaning of Voice described by Dundon et al. (2004) and not just the narrower definitions which can restrict Voice to communication. This third strand is entitled "Contribution to Management Decision-making" whose purpose is seen by Dundon et al. (2004) as seeking "improvements in work organisation, quality and productivity" using mechanisms and practices ranging from upward problem-solving groups, quality circles, up to self-managed teams.¹

2.2. THE ORIGINS AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND TO THE INVOLVEMENT OF EMPLOYEES IN THE WORKPLACE

To properly evaluate where the development of employee involvement in commerce and industry has reached world-wide, a study of the history of participatory social practices is apposite. Recognising how these have developed over the years, and indeed centuries, offers trend indicators as to how such practices are likely to further develop in the future.

¹ Consideration was given to use a bespoke term 'EIP voice' to distinguish the definition of voice used herein from other forms of voice, but it was decided that it would be too idiosyncratic.

2.2.1. UP TO THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY AND EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURY

History immediately reveals that contrary to popular belief, employee and people involvement is not a phenomenon of the second half of the twentieth century, in fact, Ilmonen (1986) in his book 'The Enigma of Membership' (p.14), notes that it can be traced back in Europe to "ancient Teutonic joint enterprises, Swiss dairy collectives and Russian artisan collectives" at a time before "capitalism had advanced from its feudal origins" But capitalism did rise in Europe in the thirteenth century, described by Watson (2012) as "the rise of the west" (p.85). Adding to this illustration of life in medieval Europe they describe it as a time where people worked hard for a living which was merely seen as something to be endured rather than "a way of improving oneself" (p.83)

Watson (2012) explains how in sixteenth century Europe, the hold of the Catholic Church on society was weakened by the rise of Protestantism and dissent in general resulting in "a growing stress on the individual rather than the corporate, and the rational rather than the traditional" (p.13), followed by the so called "Enlightenment" period when the current norms on equality, property ownership and even the monarchies of Europe, were questioned and a scientific approach to issues advocated.

Around this time, philosophers were also developing ideas about morality relevant to the treatment of workers. Mill and Heydt (2011) mention the German philosopher, Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) who put forward his standard which he called 'categorical imperative' prohibiting "treating people as things or instruments" (p.11).

However, then the pace of development in involvement began to accelerate markedly from the eighteenth century when certain well-known thinkers became prominent in intellectual society.

These early thinkers, eventually becoming well known nineteenth century philosophers, were mainly concerned with political rather than worker involvement. Das (1964) cites these as "Comte de Saint-Simon (1760-1825) and Charles Fourier (1772-1837) in France and Robert Owen (1771-1859) in Great Britain." However, these early socialist thinkers promoted the concept of worker involvement as well by advocating "the regulation and limitation of property rights with a view to minimising social disorder and exploitation" (p.1). These socialists however were not revolutionaries. When they expressed their belief that social control should be in the hands of 'producers', they included capitalist employers within the term, not just workers. Saint-Simon saw these 'producers' as the means by which production methods could be kept up to date using the latest scientific developments of the age. Fourier

also believed in employers and workers co-operating with each other, to the betterment of the worker's conditions, including making their work organised to be more fulfilling. He promoted the idea that work could be organised on a communal basis with groups of around 1600 to 1800 people sharing the work load and receiving wages according to their contribution. He envisaged that the communities, (or *phalanstères* as he called them), would organise themselves without any state help and would only require some rich philanthropists to provide the necessary start-up capital but unfortunately no such philanthropy was forthcoming (pp.1-2). In the political field, Fourier wanted to tax income from property heavily and to limit the shareholding of capital investors and managers but did not advocate the equalisation of incomes between these and workers nor the right to hold property; in effect to work within a capitalist system, not to destroy it.

One of the earliest British thinkers was Robert Owen (1771-1858), a pioneer of the co-operative movement. Das (1964) describes him as an idealist who "preached the philosophy of co-operative endeavour in production" (p.2). Das (1964) details how Owen's idealistic intentions were beginning to be brought to practical fruition at the turn of the century when he began to establish a profitable co-operative at New Lanark in Scotland where the workers enjoyed similar privileges to the managers and capitalist investors; this being achieved by limiting the return on capital to a "fair" return. Owen's strong conviction was that, "With goodwill, it is possible to humanise capitalist enterprise" (p.3).

Mellor, Hannah and Stirling (1988) compare and contrast the philosophies and ways of working of Owen and Fourier. Both were involved in creating co-operative communities but thought differently. Property in Owen's co-operatives was owned by the community as a whole, but Fourier allowed private ownership. Owen's communities were organised on an industrial basis, whereas Fourier thought that members should follow their own instincts and blend together naturally.

The development of worker involvement and co-operation should not be seen as an exclusively European phenomenon. Gunn (1984) states that in the United States co-operatives were established as far back as 1791 in Philadelphia and many others have since been formed across the country and similar developments have occurred in many other countries where "people share a belief that working people should organise and control the work that they do" (p.31).

2.2.2. THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

The late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were turbulent times with the industrial revolution and political turmoil in Europe due to the French Revolution. As Watson (2012) noted, many of the social institutions of the day “were further shaken and indeed often overturned”(p.13).

In 1832 the Reform Act came into being, which Lawrence (1988) took the view, finally distinguished the working class from the rest of society (p.36). The Chartist Movement was formed following the Reform Act. It set out a six point People’s Charter, which were:

- Manhood Suffrage
- Vote by Ballot
- Equal Electoral Districts
- Payments of MPs
- Annual Parliaments
- Abolition of Property Qualifications for Candidates

Lawrence (1988) describes the principle aim of the so called Chartists as looking for “the reconstruction of the state as an industrial democracy” (p.45).

At the same time, following on from Adam Smith’s (1723-1790) book “Wealth of Nations”, published in 1776, in which he put forward the idea that great increases in efficiency could be got by splitting up skilled work into several smaller unskilled tasks; Charles Babbage in 1832 recognised that this de-skilling would also reduce the cost of labour and in effect the bargaining power of workers. Watson (2012) realised the importance of this in the section of his book aptly entitled ‘Industrialisation and the Changing Division of Labour” (p.92). In fact this assumed much greater importance in the twentieth century; it really being the forerunner of “Taylorism” and “Scientific Management”.

The tradition of great social thinkers continued into the nineteenth century in Europe. Das (1964) quotes John Francis Bray (1809-1895), a follower of Robert Owen, (an Owenite), arguing that “workers could remedy their wrongs only under a system of common ownership of the means of production and common labour, under conditions of free and equal association in co-operative communities” (p.3). The Frenchman, Louis Blanc (1811-1882) is also quoted as “wanted the State, not to conduct industry, but to help promote national workshops and co-operative associations to be managed by the workers themselves” (p.3). To Blanc, workers’ control “would eliminate the evils of competition and ensure to workers the right to work and a just share in the products of industry” (p.3).

These thinkers, and those from the previous century, were reformers, but during the nineteenth century another breed of thinkers began to gain prominence; these were essentially revolutionists bent on a class conflict to create a more equal society. Das (1964) cites Louis-Auguste Blanqui (1805-1881), Michael Bakunin (1814-1876) and Karl Marx (1818-1883) as members of this school of thought. These and others of a similar persuasion preached that only by all means of production being owned by the community collectively could an end be put to “the concentration of wealth and to the exploitation of workers by the owners of capital” (p.4).

Gunn (1984) illustrates Marx’s total antipathy to capitalism when he quotes Marx’s opinion that it was the workers who should control the fruits of their labour and that this ideal would only be possible after oppressive capitalism had been eliminated by them. However, he concedes that Marx’s vision for the future of worker control did not encompass how this new model of production should be managed (pp.29-30).

Another great thinker, and in particular writer, of the nineteenth century was undoubtedly John Stuart Mill (1806-1873). He is probably best known for his book on Utilitarianism, originally published in 1861. In Mill and Heydt (2011) the basic premise of utilitarianism is defined as “What makes an act right or wrong?” and that “the consequences of an action determine its rightness, rather than its conformity to a moral standard or norm” (p.11). Linstead, Fulop and Lilley (2009) define utilitarianism in more modern language as “going along with those actions that give the greatest net benefit for the greatest number of people or meet intrinsic human needs” (p.364).

Mill and Heydt (2011) take the view that improvement in the social fabric of society has been a step by step process in which customs and practices have been progressively reconceived as injustices and despotic; a notion apposite to today’s thinking (pp.22-23). The similarity with the progressive evolvement from strict scientific management through to today’s trend towards employee involvement and empowerment is unmistakable.

Many of Mill’s writings covering the topic of ‘workers and masters’ can be seen in Fletcher (1971) where Mill is considered as a being more of a neutral observer bestriding both left-wing revolutionary principles and laissez-faire economics but fundamentally a Liberal-Socialist and advocate of the ‘Welfare State’ (p.1.).

In 1876 Mill wrote his “Principles of Political Economy” including a section entitled, “The Probable Future of the Labouring Classes”. Here he set forth two theories which epitomise his mid-way position:

1. The theory of Dependence and Protection
2. The theory of Self-Dependence

In the theory of Dependence and Protection, the paternalistic Mill, proposes that for the poor everything which affects them, should be controlled *for* them, not *by* them” and that the upper classes in society had a duty to do the thinking for them. However, Mill himself seems less than confident in the practicality of this theory when he concludes, “The working classes have taken their interests into their own hands, and are perpetually showing that they think the interests of their employers not identical with their own, but opposite to them” (p.262). Furthermore, he worries about the gradual improvement in education of the poor confidently expecting that the poorer classes gradually will resist being led and governed in this paternalistic manner and that the concepts expounded in his theory of dependence and protection will be rejected by them in favour of the concept of self-government for the working classes (p.263). Mill also prophesied, correctly as it happens, that “the relation of masters and workpeople will be gradually superseded by partnership, in one of two forms: in some cases, association of the labourers with the capitalist; in others, and perhaps finally in all, associations of labourers among themselves” (p.267).

With regard to the theory of self-dependence, Mill was more positive and intrigued by the employee involvement practiced on board American ships trading with China. Here each sailor had a monetary interest in each venture which resulted in unusually good conduct and lack of conflict with the crew (pp.267-268). Likewise in the Cornish mines at the time, the miners were paid a proportion of the selling price of the ore that they had mined (p.268).

Mill refrained from recommending either of the two theories and contented himself by establishing the pros and cons of each whilst maintaining his mid-way position.

Fletcher (1971) also includes Mill’s writings on the fledging Trade Union Movement in his 1876 publication “Principles of Political Economy” in a section entitled “The Combination of Workmen”. Here Mill strongly condemns the laws operating in England and France in the nineteenth century that had legislated against trade union activity which he describes as odious both in terms of their objectives and the ways of enforcement. These were laws that prohibited workers combining together to raise wages with the object of keeping wages low (p.342). He stridently asserts the proposition that worker associations, such as trade unions, rather than inhibiting a “free market for labour”, enhance it by facilitating workers selling their labour to protect themselves in a competitive market (p.345). However, he goes on to stress that for such bodies to be accepted, they must be voluntary organisations where no worker is compelled to join a union or to take part in strike action and that they should be free from

threats of any kind including violence. Where associations wish to persuade their members to take collective action, this should be done by “moral compulsion” unfettered by the law and relying on “enlightened opinion” to restrain excesses (p.346).

One of the defining developments in political and worker participation during the nineteenth century was the co-operative movement, led by Robert Owen (1771-1858). Prior to the advent of the co-operative movement, most reform had been of a political nature, but this had led to a demand for industrial democracy, answered by Owen and his followers. Lawrence (1988) describes the aims of an Owenite co-operative in its most extreme form to be “that working people should take over the industries which employed them and organise those industries into nation-wide co-operatives, the whole to be in the charge of one, all-inclusive, trade union” (p.38). The secondary aim was that industry should be run by the workers but through the auspices of trade unions. For a while the co-operative and trade union movements worked together but after a short while separated allowing each to pursue their own distinctive way of working within a capitalist system. Lawrence (1988) comments “in that separation, in that accommodation, there was no place for industrial democracy” (p.39). Lawrence (1988) takes the view that the struggle for political democracy succeeded in some measure because of public opinion, whereas there was no similar consensus in the public mind at that time for industrial democracy (p.39).

However, during the development period of the Co-operative Movement, it was subjected to severe criticism by the more revolutionary thinkers of the day as being merely a reformist movement, especially in the political sphere. Nash, Dandler and Hopkins (1976) recount that the socialists of the period rejected reformist co-operatives in favour of collectives and self-managed groups as a way of increasing the role of workers as decision making participants. The vehement division of opinion at the time between the reformists and the revolutionaries is exemplified by the contrasting views of Mill and Marx, who were contemporaries. Duncan (1973) describes vividly diametrically opposite views the two philosophers took. Mill foresaw workers joining together, all with equal rights, working under managements which were elected by them and which could be removed democratically by them and furthermore owning the capital which allowed their organisations to function. Mill saw the development of this form of association as a means of improving the lot of mankind away from the dominance of capitalism and workers without a voice in how they are managed. (p.247).

2.2.3. THE TWENTIETH CENTURY WITH THE RISE AND FALL OF SCIENTIFIC MANAGEMENT

In the field of industrial management, the twentieth century was dominated by the rise and fall of Scientific Management, or ‘Taylorism’, being replaced by a softer and more

participatory approach to industrial relations. Linstead, Fulop and Lilley (2009) divide the history of the century into three phases:

- The period up to around 1950, which was dominated by the ideas of scientific management
- The period from the middle of the century to around 1980, which, in reaction against scientific management, saw a concern to design jobs with worker's motivation and satisfaction in mind
- The period since the late 1970s/early 1980s, in which we have seen the emergence of team-based 'high performance work systems' (p.541).

F.W Taylor (1856-1915), an American, the founder of scientific management, wrote his original paper for presentation to the American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME) in 1911. In the paper, Taylor (1998) gave three reasons for writing it:

- First: To point out through a series of simple illustrations, the great loss the whole country is suffering through inefficiency in almost all our daily acts.
- Second: To try to convince the reader that the remedy for this inefficiency lies in systematic management, rather than in searching for some unusual or extraordinary man.
- Third: To prove that the best management is a true science, resting upon clearly defined laws, rules and principles, as a foundation. And further to show that the principles of scientific management are applicable to all kinds of human activities, from our simplest individual acts to the work of our great corporations, which call for the most elaborate cooperation (p.iv).

The basic principle of scientific management is that maximum efficiency, or productivity, can be garnered from workers by an external source studying in great detail the most effective way to conduct tasks and then to ensure in the future that all workers follow the best practice that has been found by observation to the letter. His view was that "The principle object of management should be to secure the maximum prosperity for the employer, coupled with the maximum prosperity for each employee" (p.1). Contrary to most people's view, Taylor in his own way, allowing for the social perspectives of 1911, did consider the well-being of employees. He saw his principles of scientific management as a way of not only increasing the productivity of employees and thus their wages but also increasing their abilities to undertake "the highest grade of work" their natural abilities allow and giving them opportunities to actually progress to these higher grades of work (p.1). He did not take into account the repetitive nature of work and its devastating effect on morale as was eventually

realised, even by Henry Ford, and led to the introduction of Group Technology and Cellular Production in the late twentieth and early twenty first century. However, Taylor (1998) did recognise that little mutual trust existed at the time between employers and employees and that the managerial thinking of the time was hardly conciliatory to the workers. He considered it “self-evident” that what is now termed the “Them and Us” attitude amongst employees and employers prevailed throughout the industrial world and that the majority on both sides accepted that their interests could not be reconciled so that the prosperity of the employer and that of the employee could be the management’s two prime objectives. Taylor believed that both sides of industry saw their separate interests “necessarily antagonistic”, whereas the core foundation of scientific management was the firm conviction that the true interests of the two were mutually inclusive and that in the long term employer prosperity was dependent on coincident employee prosperity with high wages for the latter and low labour costs for the former. Taylor’s hope was that over time these antagonistic views would change and that employers who saw their function as getting the maximum amount of work out of their employees for the lowest possible wage would change and that a more liberal policy would emerge where better pay would ensue and that workers would stop begrudging employers a fair, or even large, profit by considering that “all the fruits of their labour should belong to them” and that employers and business investors were entitled to “little or nothing” (pp. 1-2).

But Taylor’s methods were not universally popular with the workers made to adopt his methods. Kanigel (2005) quotes a worker as saying:

The work itself might be no more physically demanding, but somehow, by the day’s end, it felt as if it were. Going strictly to somebody else’s say-so, rigidly following directions, doing it by the clock, made Taylor’s brand of work distasteful. You had to do it in the one best way prescribed for you and not in your old, idiosyncratic, if perhaps less efficient way. And many workmen didn’t like that (pp.209-210).

During World War I, after America had joined the Allies, Kanigel (2005) described how labour and capital were forced to co-operate in the national interest. This reduced labour’s resistance to the adoption of Scientific Management. The embryo of participatory thought emerged from some groups of management. One group from the Taylor Society was found to be “more open to the notion that the feelings of workers just might matter too; maybe shop floor communication could go both ways” (p.487). America, including Taylorites, was beginning to see the merits of industrial democracy. Kanigel (2005) explains how Taylorites came to believe that the system was democratic by them asserting that the “claim rested on

the assertion that you need never negotiate, debate, or otherwise sink to angry workplace bickering, because its powerful science resolved every issue objectively” (p.517).

In the 1920s, Kanigel (2005) described how European countries compared themselves to booming America and its adoption of Taylorism along with the success of industrialists such as Henry Ford. In the Netherlands the trade unions embraced Taylorism and in the UK a National Efficiency Unit was set up advocating the principles of Scientific Management. Kanigel (2005) singled out Germany as being “fairly hypnotized by *Taylorismus* and *Fordismus*, produced a yet more encompassing idea, “rationalism,” that reached everywhere into its national life” (p.494).

Around the time that Taylor was introducing his thesis on Scientific Management, the work of what du Gay (2000) calls “the premier theorist of bureaucratic culture” (p.62), was coming to the fore. This was Max Weber (1864-1920). Weber believed in the social order imposed by bureaucracy. du Gay (2000) defends Weber by stating “Weber does not view the impersonal, procedural and hierarchical character of the bureau as a system of moral deficiency, instead, he indicates that ‘bureaucratic’ conduct does indeed possess a profoundly ethical character” (p.62). Taylor and Weber were very similar in many ways; both advocated form and order in life. du Gay (2000) describes Weber as a “misguided, representative of the ‘closed system’” (p.73). He also describes Taylor as a leading member of the same school of thought. du Gay (2000) concedes that although the bureaucratic school of thought of Weber and others “did some good things”, “it was ultimately a disaster”. du Gay (2000) puts this down to Weber because “he ‘pooh-poohed charismatic leadership and doted on bureaucracy, its rule-driven, impersonal form, he said, was the only way to assure long term survival” (p.73). F.W. Taylor could come under this category.

However, in the early years of the twentieth century, writers and thinkers on participatory matters were still in evidence. Das (1964) draws attention to the Syndicalists. This group of writers and philosophers promoted “The doctrine of workers’ control, as opposed to workers’ participation” (p.5). This movement was born in France, combining “Anarchist Communism with Trade Unionism” (p.5) and promoted worker control globally, including as far afield as Australia. The ideas of the Syndicalists suffered greatly at the outbreak of World War I in 1914 when the French trade unions supported the government and then finally were ended in 1921 during the Great Depression (p.5).

At the same time that Taylorism was beginning to be adopted in industry another significant social development took place with a very different philosophical basis; the emergence of the best known partnership in business, that of the John Lewis Partnership. This was started in

1914, not by John Lewis but by his younger son, Spedan Lewis. Flanders, Pomeranz and Woodward (1968) write that this “gave Spedan Lewis the opportunity to begin putting into practice a social and business philosophy which he had been developing since he started work as his father’s assistant” (p.31). Between 1914 and 1928, as Flanders, Pomeranz and Woodward (1968) describe, Spedan Lewis was successful in implementing his beliefs. Profit-sharing with his employees, famously called ‘partners’, was started and an employee-representation system set up. Flanders, Pomeranz and Woodward (1968) stress that Lewis believed that both of these aspects of his business plan were key in achieving his goal of the organisation becoming a co-operative enterprise where “all workers share all the rewards as fairly as possible and have the satisfaction of being well-informed about the affairs of the organisation, and of being able to influence its conduct”.

Up to the end of World War II, the predominant managerial structure in the UK and elsewhere was autocratic and bureaucratic with a Tayloristic approach in industry but at the same time a minority of more participatory approaches to management continued. However, after the end of the war, with the beginnings of the Welfare State, the old autocratic practices and often paternalistic practices in industry and elsewhere began to be questioned. Cotton (1993) tells of “the first direct criticisms against scientific management (which) surfaced in the 1950s and 1960s in the writings of McGregor (1957) and Herzberg (1966)” (p.7) and earlier the writings of Lewin, Lippitt and White between 1939 and 1940. These earlier pioneers undertook behavioural experiments with boy’s groups comparing the levels of aggression and discontent in the groups led by both autocratic and democratic styles. They encountered greater aggression and discontent coupled with less individualism in the autocratically led groups. Interestingly, they also found that the groups led in a democratic style were more productive when their leader was not present with the boys making their own decisions, which was not the case with the autocratically led groups (p.8).

Even in the 1960’s efforts were being made to implement more participatory industrial relations practices in industry, or at least experiment with them, with mixed outcomes, or at least contentious results. Blackler and Brown (1980) report on a project introduced by Shell in 1965 entitled “Whatever Happened to Shell’s New Philosophy of Management”; but rather worrying sub-titled “Lessons for the 1980s from a major Socio-Technical Intervention of the 1960s”. In 1965 Shell UK Refining Ltd decided to embark on a project designed to overcome their industrial relations problems and brought in the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations to help. The aim was to create “conditions in which employees at all levels will be encouraged and enabled to develop and realise their potentialities while contributing towards

the Company's objectives" (p.171). The psychological requirements the project were summarised as (pp.176-177):

- The need for the content of the work to be reasonably demanding of the individual in terms of other than those of sheer endurance, and for it to provide some variety.
- The need for an individual to know what his job is and how he is performing in it.
- The need to be able to learn on the job and go on learning.
- The need for some area of decision making where the individual can exercise his discretion.
- The need for some degree of social support and recognition within the organisation.
- The need for an individual to be able to relate what he does and what he produces to the objectives of the Company and to his life in the community.
- The need to feel that the job leads to some sort of desirable future which does not necessarily imply promotion.

The idea was for workers to not only be aware of what they as individuals were required to do, but also how their work integrated with that of others and what boundaries their roles and responsibilities incurred. The philosophy was stated as "Responsibility and authority must go hand in hand in order to avoid situations in which people are delegated responsibility but do not have the means to exercise it" (p.177). Blackler and Brown (1980), against the perceived view at the time the project was carried out, were very critical of the project and in fact deemed it a failure. Their findings when evaluating the project, some years after the event, with the benefit of experience that had since been gained in participatory management practice, was summed up as (p.120):

1. Despite the uncritical reports of its apparent success, the project never really 'took off' and in a number of important respects soon failed.
2. Top management and their social science advisors had somewhat different aims and expectations for the exercise.
3. In terms of the manifest aim of the Tavistock workers, to change the philosophy of management in Shell UK, the project was a failure.
4. In terms of the implicit aim held by Shell's top management, to restore the effectiveness of their call to collective effort, an evaluation is less straight-forward. Despite the broad failure to introduce long term change, certain benefits did accrue to the company.
5. The change strategy was ill-conceived and also poorly executed. It led to a betrayal of people's expectations.

6. The developments in this case lead one to question the quality of ideas incorporated in the philosophy programme and their appropriateness for a company like Shell.

All this illustrates that introducing genuine Participatory Management is not easy and requires a lot of deep thinking before implementation.

This was not a unique situation. Gunn (1984) expounds on the difficulties other schemes had experienced in the United States. These schemes had been introduced to deal with:

- sagging increases in productivity
- absenteeism
- falling quality of product
- worker-management discord
- worker dissatisfaction

The thought was that “Increasing worker participation in management seemed to provide a way out of these workplace problems” (p.25). Gunn (1984) noted that by the late 1970s, many worker participation programs in the United States had failed or at least been discredited. “General Foods’ ‘Topeka System’ had been quietly dismantled after workers sought even more participation” (p.25). Generally, the corporation’s given reasons for closing down participation programs boiled down to factors such as (p.25):

- Allowing participation proved too costly due to turmoil in the corporate structure.
- The productivity gains reported by other international experiments proved less dramatic than expected allowing for the added costs involved.

Adding to this, due to increasing unemployment levels in the 1970s and early 1980s, workers basically worked harder and were more pliable to management in order to try to safeguard their jobs. This led corporations to be less interested in the “more imaginative approaches to problems of the workplace” (p.26), such as worker participation. Gunn (1984) decried some diluted schemes, such as labour management schemes, which were enacted and which avoided the “difficult questions concerning worker involvement in decisions that affect profitability and private capital accumulation” (p.26).

Co-operatives also were still being founded around this time. Mellor, Hannah and Stirling (1988) mention the Mondragon group of co-operatives in Spain started by a small group of workers in 1956 which by 1982 had grown to employ 18,000 people. Also mentioned was the case of the Kirkby Manufacturing and Engineering Company (KME) factory in the UK which in 1974, with government support, was converted into a co-operative employing 913

people (p.ix). Mellor, Hannah and Stirling (1988) cite these two examples as having a similar desire, prevalent generally at the time, that is to satisfy, “employees who ask for a say in decision making or try to reorganize their jobs to make them more interesting” (pp.ix-x). Co-operatives were in fact being formed globally, often based on the UK tradition. Ilmonen (1986) reveals that co-operatives in Finland were modelled on the Rochdale co-operative and UK consumer co-operation schemes, (i.e. distributive co-operatives) (p.20). (Tynan and Thomas, 1984), a report into what happened written after the co-operative had failed, describe the rise and fall of the KME co-operative in more detail. It was set up in 1974, largely under the auspices of Tony Benn, but was closed in 1979, having failed to survive. KME prior to 1974 had been on the point of closure not least due to being troubled with militant trade unionism for many years before being turned into a co-operative. Tynan and Thomas (1984) list a number of reasons as to why the venture failed. These included:

- “In practice there is little expertise or experience available on how to encourage the ‘democratic’ processes at work, particularly in a large, unionised workplace” (p.6)
- discipline – in the co-operative setting this is ‘self-discipline’ (p.8)
- failure to develop democratic forms in the co-operative (p.8)
- the fear of traditional trade unionists that their function may be suppressed in the co-operative (p.8)
- “the collective ethos in an organisation derived from notions of worker control was antipathetic to management and thus to any acquisition of business expertise” (p.9)
- “industrial democracy and sizeable worker co-operatives will not work in Britain whilst worker attitudes and trade union policies remain as they are” (p.9)
- “KME was rejected as a model (*by Government Industry Dept.*) because it failed to devise proper democratic processes nor did it become commercially viable” (p.11)
- The workers “regarded managerial claims to authority with scepticism and those individuals committed to worker control wanted to expose the traditional managerial structures as unnecessary” (p.13)
- “a ‘us and them’ situation still existed. All ranks below foremen were still expected to clock on. The separate staff canteen continued in existence, and there were other staff benefits that were not extended to the whole workforce” (p.51)
- “While traditional management was weakened in the co-operative, alternative procedures and incentives were not devised to replace it” (p.53)
- “KME was a co-operative that was clearly seen as an experiment in practical worker control and was to be organised on union lines. Thus we might expect shop stewards to have played a key role in the democratisation of the workplace at KME. There is, however, an inevitable conflict of roles applying to middle-level worker’s

representatives in co-operatives and there is plenty of evidence of tensions arising from this conflict” (p.59)

- The dual structure of union on the one hand and management on the other, combined in the roles of Director Convenors may have inhibited the development of authority among managers” (p.63)

One cannot avoid the view, with the benefit of hindsight, that KME was a poor choice as an experiment as a co-op with its history. It would have been better to pick a more promising case and then after success it would act as a model for the more difficult cases. If nothing else, this illustrates that converting an existing non-participatory large organisation into a participatory one with worker control is a daunting proposition. This was actually borne out by another two less well-known similar ventures carried out by the government around the same period which also ultimately failed.

The question of participatory management schemes did eventually begin to be discussed in the sixties and seventies in the UK. Guest and Knight (1979) recount that in 1978 a government white paper, *'Report of the Committee of Inquiry on Industrial Democracy'*, “proposed a major extension of worker participation at company level, including the appointment of worker representatives to company boards”. This was somewhat surprising because as Guest and Knight (1979) recall, “In 1968 the Donovan Report, *'Report of the Royal Commission on Trade Unions and Employers' Associations'*, devoted a mere three and a half pages to the subject of worker directors and supervisory boards concluding that they were likely to be of marginal value and attracted little or no support amongst management and trade unions in the UK” (p.5). Whatever had caused this change of view on Participatory Management, Guest and Knight (1979) concluded that “from being a topic of minority interest until the mid-1970s, like it or not worker participation is now something which few managers or trade unionists can afford to ignore” (p.5). Guest and Knight (1979) list six reasons for this increased interest in employee involvement and participation (p.16):

- The search for a new means of overcoming industrial and economic problems.
- The influence of membership of the European Economic Community.
- A change of attitude in the TUC.
- The rising expectations of the workforce.
- Concern about the concentrations of power in industry.
- An interest in the concept of industrial democracy.

Guest and Knight (1979) also note that in the period, 1968 to 1978, the UK was perceived to be in decline economically and industrially due to the notoriously poor industrial relations that

prevailed. This was the time that the Social Contract was devised by the government and the Trade Union Congress (TUC). All sides were looking for an alternative to Collective Bargaining which many thought to be the 'villain of the peace' and as Guest and Knight (1979) comment "it was perhaps inevitable that worker participation would come to be viewed as another strategy that was at least worth a try" (p.6). In addition, this increase in interest in involvement and participation in the view of Guest and Knight (1979) was due to the realisation that many of the UK's more successful economic competitors had "the lowest levels of industrial conflict" and "well established systems of participation" (p.6). A third factor was "a change towards a more positive attitude to participation at board level among certain senior and influential members of the trade union movement" (p.7). Generally speaking, the time had come, as Guest and Knight (1979) remark, that workers were "no longer prepared to accept authoritarian management, arbitrary treatment, stressful working conditions, boring jobs and an insecure future, all of which they can do little to influence". At the same time they noted that employees were becoming more articulate when they voiced their demands, basically due to improvement in educational opportunities for them and this had resulted in demands for greater employee involvement in all levels of the management of organisations including operational issues ranging from shop floor practice to plant location and to influencing board level investment decisions (pp.7-8).

Whilst in the late eighties, workers were reacting against authoritarian managements; it was also true that there was a reaction building up against authoritarian union leaders. There was a growing feeling that some union leaders were more interested in promoting their own political agenda than the interests of their members. This became a major issue during the Miner's Strike of 1984-5. This conflict, essentially between the Thatcher government and Arthur Scargill, the President of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), ostensibly came about due to the impending large scale pit closures. In terms of worker involvement and participation (EIP), there was another issue which Adeney and Lloyd (1986) describe as "the core issue – the board's right to manage" (p.4). In the case of The National Coal Board, they describe an organisation which encouraged its trade unions, in particular the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), to adopt a progressive approach and grasp opportunities laid open to them by entering into a model of "joint authority" over the coal industry. This gave the unions the chance to be more involved in the Coal Board's procedures, but in return the Board expected the unions to accept the basic aims of the organisation. In reality however, in the 1970s and early 1980s, this meant that union officials, even at pit level, were able to veto managerial initiatives which stymied the management's freedom to act, as they saw it, for the good of the future of the industry (p.4). The Thatcher government, and the current

Chairman of the National Coal Board, were determined to root this out. In the end, the strikers, and Scargill, were defeated by their own union members.

By the 1980s, the management thinkers of the time were firmly in the anti-bureaucratic, anti-autocratic mould and positively embracing the participatory and people-friendly management style. The only doubt was how fast and how well would actual industrial and commercial managements follow suit and apply this style. du Gay (2005) draws attention to particular forms of post-bureaucratic thinking under the umbrella of 'Network Theory' (p.8). He sees a "terminal crisis in the vertically integrated and bureaucratically coordinated corporation" and that these will be forced to transform themselves into a "network of multi-functional decision-making centres to form a highly decentralised and extremely flexible structure" as "self-directed units based on decentralization, participation and coordination" (pp.127-128). Peters and Austin (1985) write that "a revolution is brewing" and that it is a "back to basics revolution". Peters and Austin express the view that "The management systems, schemes, devices and structures promoted during the last quarter century have added up to distractions from the main ideas: the achievement of sustainable growth and equity". "...when it comes to relations with one's workforce, paying attention to one's people, really listening to them, acting on what one hears, and treating them as full-scale partners" (pp.xviii – xix).

In the post war period, a number of management gurus came into prominence, many American; Dr. William Edwards Deming (1900 – 1993) being one of them. Although his field was virtually exclusively quality management, he still had something to say about the contemporary management style in general. In a lecture given in Philadelphia in 1990, Latzko and Saunders (1995) report he denigrated the American management style as authoritarian and that they believed mistakenly that this had led to post war prosperity (p.12). He further went on to condemn Taylorism asking "Is it the heritage of Frederick Taylor's management philosophy?" (p.28). Latzko and Saunders (1995) also report that he went further in his criticism of the Scientific Management approach by lecturing his audience on the evils of Taylorism saying:

Taylor told management that they and only they were knowledgeable and trustworthy. In effect he said that workers should park their brains at the door. They should do exactly as they are told. Management must see that they follow orders exactly (p.30).

This was the sort of comment that proved fatal to Taylorism and Scientific Management. Although a Quality Management specialist, Deming realised that what mattered was people, certainly where quality matters were concerned. Walton (1994) recalls how when Deming

visited American companies, he noted that although managers worked hard and worked long hours and did not flinch from tackling difficult operational problems, they shied away from dealing with people problems. His diagnosis was that this was because “management never invests employees with any authority, nor does it act upon their decisions and recommendations” and “Employees become even more disillusioned” (p.81). Deming was clearly sympathetic to worker involvement and participation.

Also in the 1980s, in the United States, the Entrepreneurial School was founded by such management strategists as Tom Peters and others. As Linstead, Fulop and Lilley (2009) suggest they were fundamentally concerned that an organisation should have a clear mission to fulfil and that that was of overriding importance, beyond detailed operational planning for the future. ‘Mission Statements’ and ‘Cultural Values’ came to the fore, with enthusiastic single minded adherence to mission fulfilment being expected at all levels in the organisation (p.717). Linstead, Fulop and Lilley (2009) sum this concept up as, “The key contribution from the Entrepreneurial School was that enterprises should be infused with a sense of ‘mission’, a singular and common sense of purpose, intended to provide a common source of motivation for all members of the enterprise and to which all the enterprise’s decisions should be ultimately referenced” (p.722). Proponents of the Entrepreneurial School see personalized leadership, based on strategic vision, as the key to organizational success - not only in starting up and building new organizations, but also in "turning around" faltering organizations; the key person being the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) or Managing Director (MD). But the real title, one to be earned not given, is “Leader”.

Peters and Austin (1985) make a particular point of the importance of leadership in the promotion of participatory management techniques emphasising “the concept of leadership is crucial to the revolution now underway – so crucial that we believe the words “managing” and “management” should be discarded” (p.xix). They feel that the term ‘management’ symbolises control and demeaning whereas ‘leadership’ denotes “unleashing energy, building, freeing, and growing” (p.xix). At the same time as leadership became to be seen as of paramount importance, teamworking also became the prescribed way of working in organisations of all types. This was another way of involving people in the ways of working and encouraging participation. Where it is fully effective, teamworking is practiced throughout the organisation, including the senior management team as well as shop or office floor teams, and all integrated together as the ‘big team’. The common problem initially feared as teamworking was introduced was that supervisors would feel they had lost their role, and even their jobs, as their traditional control moved downwards to the team members. But Watson (2012) quotes research carried out in Britain, Germany and the United States

which suggests that “the change is not, as might be expected, predominately one in which supervisors disappear from the scene”. Research found that supervisors, in their new role as team leaders, were freed from day-to-day problems which were dealt with by the team as a whole and that teamworking had the potential to “help to restore the influence of supervisors in strategic decision-making” which was lost in the old autocratic management systems” (pp.210-211). Crucial to successful teamworking is an adequate flow of information. If Team Members are to accept real responsibility for their work, they must be furnished with full information, the sort of information kept in the hands of management in autocratic systems. Peters (1989) is unequivocal about this stating that “Unprecedented information-sharing, interaction, and recognition are required to induce the attitude change and horizontal communication necessary to foster widespread involvement and commitment” (p.304).

By the 1980s and early 1990s, the practice of genuine Participatory Management was becoming embedded, even in the United States with its history of autocratic management structures and Taylorism. Peters (1989) cites the Delco-Remy plant in Georgia, where the workers (p.291):

- Handle all quality control (experts are on tap if needed in specific cases).
- Do all maintenance and make minor repairs on machines.
- Keep track of their own time; there are no time cards (no clock).
- Handle the “housekeeping” (no janitors).
- Participate in a pay-for-knowledge program (for learning almost every job in the plant).
- Are organised in teams which engage in regular problem-solving activities.
- Are responsible for safety.
- Have full-time access to the lock-free tool room.
- Do budget preparation and review (capital and operating).
- Help determine staffing levels.
- Advise management on equipment layout and generate requirements for new equipment.
- Are in charge of all recruiting and run the assessment centre for new recruits.
- Decide on lay-off patterns (whether to lay people off or have everybody work shorter hours, for example).
- Rotate as leaders of work teams.

This is clearly a complete change from the attitudes and ways of working prevailing at the start of the century.

Elsewhere, participatory forms of management were being adopted, probably nowhere more completely than at the Semco Group in Brazil, already cited as a success story in the Introduction. Since 1982 it has been introducing participatory management practices through good and not so good times and now it is probably the company with the most participative management structure in the world. Semco has prospered whilst still using participatory management practices, when many others have failed and Semco is still a very successful company to this day. Semler (1999) in no way suggests that changing to a participatory style of management is easy. Semler, the President of Semco, sums his views up as:

We are not the only company to experiment with participative management. It's become a fad. But so many efforts at workplace democracy are just so much hot air. Not that the intentions are bad, it's just that it's much easier to talk about worker involvement than to implement it. We have been ripping apart Semco and putting it back together for a dozen years, and we're just thirty percent finished (p.7)

2.3. THE CONCEPT OF EIP AND VOICE AS A MEANS OF ENGAGING EMPLOYEES IN THE OPERATION OF THEIR WORKPLACE

The idea that for employees to work effectively, they must feel that they are a vital and integral part of the process of production, whether it be manufacturing, providing a service, or administration, could be considered self-evident. EIP, in its various forms, could be seen as positive motivational procedures designed to create interest, by encouraging employees to voice their views and suggestions, not only in doing the job, but doing it well. Ideally, the end result of involving and empowering the workforce would be a 'keen to learn', 'keen to improve' ethos in the organisation, with a workforce receptive to new and improved working practices, in effect a 'learning organisation'. This may be brought about naturally and informally by groupings of individuals forming, where employees learn from each other by sharing their tacit knowledge and experience; such groupings being designated "communities of practice" by Lave and Wenger (1991) who termed the process of learning by this method "peripheral participation" and the overall learning process 'situated learning'. Initiatives to improve the knowledge bank of an organisation and explore new ideas are often facilitated by these informal groupings changing and reforming (Baxter and MacLeod, 2008). The key word here is 'involvement', with sometimes 'engagement' used synonymously. Involvement clearly invokes the concept of contributing to the success of the group within the organisation, or the organisation as a whole. This contribution could emanate from an

individual employee, involving direct communication with management, or a group of employees, such as a team. Furthermore, contributions from the team could be designed to promote improvements within that team's workplace, or throughout the organisation, i.e. the 'Big Team', both of which are the essence of genuine teamworking.

To achieve these well-intentioned goals, various ways of involving employees have been developed since the demise of scientific management and "Taylorism". Inevitably, these have been given titles by academics, but unfortunately not specific universally recognised definitions. There is also a tendency, certainly in industry and commercial enterprises, to use what is currently fashionable, probably urged on by external consultancies. Terms such as 'industrial democracy' used in the third quarter of the twentieth century have tended to be replaced with titles such as 'employee voice', 'employee involvement', or 'employee participation', terms which owe their conception to the advent of human resource management (HRM).

2.3.1. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HRM AND THE VARIOUS FORMS OF EMPLOYEE VOICE

Armstrong (2001) defines HRM as "a strategic and coherent approach to the management of an organisation's most valued assets: the people working there who individually and collectively contribute to the achievement of its objectives". Among the characteristics of the HRM approach, relevant to participatory practice, which he lists, are: (pp. 3-4)

- "The importance of gaining commitment to the organisation's mission and values is stressed – it is commitment-orientated".
- "Employees are seen as human capital to be invested in through the provision of learning opportunities and the development of a 'learning organisation'".
- "The approach to employee relations is unitarist not pluralist: it is believed that employees share the same interests as employers, rather than that these interests will not necessarily coincide".

Foley, Maxwell and McGillivray (1999) see HRM as an indicator of the rise of postmodernity with the influence of issues such as empowerment and the demise of hierarchies coming to the fore. They explore the concept of HRM by examining differences between the interests of employers and employees in the context of work and society and contrast theory and practice in HRM. (p.163) Whilst the altruistic objectives, as expressed by some of the characteristics of HRM expressed by Armstrong (2001) are an integral part of HRM philosophy, these are often tempered by commercial imperatives in practice. This has led to

a division in HRM practice between the so called “hard” form of HRM and “soft” HRM. The “hard” version still incorporates a vestige of Taylorism in that whilst having policies encouraging employees to commit to the organisation; where necessary, for commercial reasons they will shed employees without compulsion. The softer approach puts commitment to the employees as a high priority, but neither ignores commercial realities. The “hard” approach in particular can cause suspicion among the workforce resulting in their loyalty being to the team and immediate supervision, which are likely to be their points of contact for involvement and empowerment, and not the organisation. Furthermore a dualistic approach can lead to employers using the “soft” approach for core employees and the “hard” approach for the less critical ones. This exemplifies where theory and practice in HRM diverge (pp.164-165). This is just one illustration that at the end of the day, commercial interests will prevail and that an organisation’s motivation in introducing participatory practices, such as EIP employee voice mechanisms, is fundamentally to extract the best value from their human resources, the only difference between a “hard” and “soft” HRM approach being whether they take a short term or longer term view. In fact Foley, Maxwell and McGillivray (1999) draw attention to the fact that in modernist times, even with the ‘iniquities’ of Taylorism, this was in fact coupled with job security and other benefits, whilst the post-modern world with its emphasis on involvement, participation and commitment, may see employees in fact committed to themselves rather than the organisation due to undue pressure to commit and participate and also being critical of the organisation and its ethos (pp.165-166).

To a large degree this examination of the concept of employee voice has been from the point of view of the employee. However, voice mechanisms clearly have an effect on those who supervise and manage the employee, not least of which is the feeling that their power and influence will be reduced. Pollock and Colwill (1987) investigated the literature on participatory decision making (PDM) including the evidence regarding this possible negative consequence. They conceptualise PDM as “Involvement and influence of one group of individuals in decision making processes which are customarily the prerogative or responsibility of a different group of individuals”. They come to the conclusion that some literature suggests that although PDM can be seen as a means of redistributing power in an organisation, at the same time the total amount of power in the organisation is also increasing, resulting in no diminution in the power of individuals. In fact most literature suggests that managers gain power by satisfying the needs of those employees who want to share in the decision making process. A study of ten German companies confirmed this when it was found that in companies practicing PDM, employees saw themselves as having more power than their equivalents in companies practicing PDM to a lesser extent, but at the

same time, their managers did not see themselves as less powerful than in these other companies. Pollock and Colwill (1987) accept that the literature does not show that this concept is always the case, but is so in the majority of cases (pp.7-8).

2.3.2. INVOLVING AND EMPOWERING EMPLOYEES THROUGH THE MEDIUM OF VOICE

INVOLVING EMPLOYEES:

Armstrong and Marchington (1982) undertook a research project into the voice mechanism, employee involvement, in unionised organisations in the north west of England, garnering the views of union representatives to the process. They saw involvement as a “broad concept” encompassing voice communications up to the appointment of worker directors to the boards of organisations (p.3). When interviewing union representatives from a variety of organisations, both in the private and public sectors and in both manufacturing and non-manufacturing organisations, they established five problem issues innunciated by union representatives (pp.18-19):

- 1) Role Conflict:- felt they should not be involved in managerial decisions.
- 2) Loss of Contact with the Membership/Elites:- felt divorced from union members.
- 3) Lack of Experience:- felt their inexperience made it difficult to contribute.
- 4) Management Unwillingness/Inability:- felt management were unwilling for them to contribute, considering themselves more able.
- 5) Shop Floor Apathy:- union representatives and management felt that the average worker has little interest in indirect employee involvement.

It should be noted that issues 1 and 2 would not apply in non-union organisations.

Armstrong and Marchington (1982) found no discernable difference in attitudes to voice mechanisms in manufacturing and non-manufacturing organisations (p.30). In addition, when comparing small and larger organisations, they found that union representatives in smaller organisations preferred informal ways of involvement rather than formal structures (p33). Union representatives in the larger organisations were more positive about employee involvement (EI) and optimistic for its future (p33). Armstrong and Marchington (1982) warn against inadequate managerial commitment within a unionised environment where management seek to restrict involvement to team level and avoid issues concerning the organisation as a whole. They see this as a means of avoiding challenges to management prerogative and a way of minimising union interventions (p.43).

Parkes et al. (2007) investigated specifically the role of management in employee involvement practices in the NHS using numerous case studies and interviews. Their findings reinforce some already attributed here to other researchers. Principally, employees at the level of the organisation saw employee involvement primarily as a management tool to achieve favourable operational outcomes. On a more positive note, employees at a local level had good relationships with their line managers who had received training in involvement and spoke highly of their leadership skills when being involved and appreciated that this enhanced their own skills base. They also were aware of the change from a management style based on control to one of cooperation. The findings clearly showed that the key to success in involving people lay with local managers and their teams and that exhortation by senior management was treated with suspicion. Parkes et al. (2007) saw the prime role of senior management to be supportive of junior and middle managers in their efforts to involve employees, ideally within a team-based structure (p.315). They found that to be successful, involvement programmes need to be operated on a continuous basis and not just used as a way of tackling some individual crisis. In effect, employee involvement (EI) should be an integral part of the strategic planning of an organisation. They also stressed the need to prepare employees for EI with easily understood training on the principles and operation of EI schemes with an absence of management jargon. A warning was also given regarding the tendency for managers to tamper with the design of an EI scheme to make it fit more closely to their previous management style. Managers therefore need to review their approach to management before embarking on an EI programme (pp.315-316).

Howard (1997) takes up the emphasis on leadership being a key requirement for effective employee involvement. She terms effective leadership in employee involvement as “High-involvement leadership” and concedes that it is not easily acquired, but that managerial training in the required skills is available (p.192). She categorises high-involvement organisations as those where all levels of employees and managers are considered partners in a collective enterprise all working together to achieve the desired outcomes by sharing information and responsibility leading to joint decision making. However, employees cannot be expected to rise to the challenge of commitment and involvement without considerable guidance and support from their leaders whose role must be coached appropriately (p.185). However, as with (Parkes et al., 2007), Howard (1997) saw that the level in the organisation that controlled the success or otherwise of EI initiatives was not the senior management but the first line managers. They, the senior management, tended to see what they expected rather than the real situation. This is described as seeing high-involvement through “rose-coloured glasses”. They assumed that having issued a directive on EI, that success would

automatically follow without further action from themselves (p.186). Howard (1997) itemises some of the barriers to high involvement such as (p.187):

- *Senior management barriers*:- when senior managers do not involve themselves in ensuring that the required practices are being implemented.
- *Systems barriers*:- lack of financial incentives to encourage involvement. Senior managers did not see this as a major barrier, whereas lower levels did.
- *Front-line employee barriers*:- lack of trust in the motivations behind involvement. Underestimated by senior management.
- *Leader/manager barriers*:- lack of leadership skills, motivation and acting jointly with other leaders/managers. Also fear of loss of status and lack of trust in employees.

Howard (1997) seems to imply that one of the major retardants to successful high-involvement lies with the inadequacies of senior management and goes on to recommend that they receive training in transformational leadership helping them to conceive how the organisation as a whole can achieve its improvement outcomes and in particular how to persuade employees at all levels to commit to the principles of involvement. This should include ensuring that the senior managers cultivate a visible presence by been seen by all employees at every opportunity (p.191).

Fenton-O'Creevy (1998) also concentrates on the role of managers in involvement practice; in this case, specifically middle managers. The study is based on the results from postal surveys carried out with 155 UK companies. The study evaluates the support offered, or resistance to, involvement by middle managers. To overcome any problems of definition, for this study he defines involvement as "any management practice that gives employees influence over how their work is organised and carried out" (p.68). Fenton-O'Creevy (1998) interpreted the results from the survey as showing that to obtain the active support of middle managers for an EI programme, organisations must first evaluate how the organisation is structured, in particular the communication paths, the decentralisation of resources and management training. If managers feel they lack the necessary skills, they are likely to resist EI. Naturally, resistance can be expected if middle managers feel their self-interest, or even existence, is in jeopardy. If however managers are able to take the view that employee involvement could facilitate their own personal desired operational outcomes, this clearly could act as a motivator. Thus the initial review of the organisation's structure prior to the introduction of EI and a reassessment of the status given to the role of 'coaches' as against 'controllers' within the organisation could be crucial to countering the resistance of middle managers. Fenton-O'Creevy (1998) also warns against senior management using the

perceived resistance of middle management as a “scapegoat” for EI inaction without striving to understand the underlying manager’s long held attitudes and behaviour (pp.82-83).

Rashford and Coghlan (1987) proffer the opinion that to advance EI in a complex organisation is a complex multi-faceted task in itself which must take into account the different individual behaviours likely to be encountered and not to solely concentrate on identifying desirable operational outcomes. These behaviours are classified into four “operating modes” referred to as levels and to be successful Rashford and Coghlan (1987) state that as all four are likely to prevail in a complex organisation, all four must be taken account of (p.17). The four operating modes are (pp.17-21):

Level 1 – Individual:-

in which the employees act as individuals to enhance their skills and knowledge, ultimately to the benefit of the organisation as a whole.

Level 2 – Face-to-face Team:-

in which the employees act collectively in groups, such as work teams, to enhance their skills and knowledge and so contribute to the overall skills-base of the organisation. Here, the objective is for the employee to behave as a team member, rather than as an individual.

Level 3 – The Group or Divisional Level:-

in which work groups or teams interact and work together to produce outcomes beneficial to the whole organisation.

Level 4 – Organisational Policy and Strategy Level:-

in which all employees of the organisation work together to achieve outcomes such as countering threats in the marketplace from the introduction of rival products.

EMPOWERING EMPLOYEES:

While Foley, Maxwell and McGillivray (1999) did not discuss employee empowerment as a specific voice mechanism, Honold (1997) devotes her literature review wholly to the concept of the topic, but concedes that although it is a widely used term, a precise definition is hard to find. She recognises that the problem in defining empowerment precisely stems from the need for each organisation to design its own empowerment programme and policy to suit its own particular requirements; in effect, to create its own definition of empowerment. She warns that without going through this stage of development, employee empowerment

invariably fails due to a sense of ownership of the concept of empowerment not being generated by the employees (p.202).

Empowerment can refer to the empowerment of individuals but also the empowerment of groups of all kinds throughout the organisation. Individual empowerment allows employees as far as possible to control their own ways of working. Obviously, there may be technical restrictions that dictate to what extent this is possible and also there may well be a need to harmonise an individual's work practices with preceding operations and subsequent ones. Honold (1997) notes that studies suggest that employees often think of empowerment as self-empowerment forgetting that for empowerment, vehicles such as work teams, need high levels of coordination and cooperation within and between teams to be effective (p.205). She sees the role of management to facilitate empowerment by creating an atmosphere where the stated, or unstated, mission of the organisation is to promote flexibility, EIP and autonomy. In addition, EIP should be rewarded and risk taking supported as well as developing an organisational ethos conducive to a healthy work and home life balance (p.206). Honold (1997) sums up the philosophy of effective empowerment as 'combining autonomy with responsibility' (p.207). However she does concede that there are detractors from this ideal who feel that empowerment is unworkable because it is incompatible with strong leadership, such as Koch and Godden (1997), but at the same time interestingly notes that there is an absence of literature describing empowerment in any large organisation, a gap in the literature relevant to this study (p.208).

Duvall (1999) however, puts forward an alternative insight into empowerment which has at its core the concept that leadership, by which is meant appropriate leadership, is in fact the key to successful empowerment programmes, rather than the opposite, but introduces two alternative empowerment themes, the adoption of the correct one being crucial to success. These two themes are termed:

- 1) "Organisational resource conservation" (p.205).
- 2) "Organisational resource integration" (p.206).

Duvall (1999) sees organisational resource conservation as empowerment to avoid failure whereas organisational resource integration is seen as empowerment to achieve success. She describes organisational resource conservation as when organisations apply rules and role restrictions to ensure that the chances of failure are minimised by restricting the decision making role of individuals .i.e. the degree of empowerment is controlled carefully by the management. Their tasks are predefined and the resources available to them are assigned by management. Here the individual is more concerned about 'doing things right' rather than

'doing the right thing'. Duvall (1999) also describes this theme as "playing not to lose" rather than "playing to win" (p.206). Organisational resource conservation, as the name suggests, means managers are largely concerned with controlling the use of resources, i.e. how to get the best out of what they've got. With organisational resource integration, employees are encouraged to work together to achieve both their personal ambitions and at the same time organisational goals (p.206). To be successful in adopting empowerment through resource integration, Duvall (1999) advises that organisations need to have rules and regulations designed to encourage the attainment of both individual and organisational goals. It involves balancing "top-down control" with "bottom-up empowerment" (p.207). Resource integration is in essence about improving the probability of success rather than attempting to reduce the risk of employee failure. Duvall (1999) sees organisational resource intergration as an opportunity for management to show their leadership mettle by focussing all their divergent resources on the problem in hand. With resource integration, managers seek to control system outcomes rather than the resources applied. This way individuals will feel they have been genuinely empowered by the freedom of action given to them. Otherwise they have only been given existing power, not whatever is required. Duvall (1999) concludes that empowerment is only possible with "strong but not domineering leadership" (p.211). To achieve genuine empowerment, Duvall (1999) advises that the organisation must support (p.208):

- 1) Freedom to act.
- 2) Commitment – individuals accept that their behaviour affects others.
- 3) Collaboration – their individual objectives should be simultaneous with the organisational objectives.

Empowerment is to do with the extent that employers allow individuals to exercise individual control but in such a manner that it produces outcomes favourable to both the individual and the organisation (p.205). The objective should be to create an environment where individuals work together collectively to achieve organisational goals. When individuals achieve their own perceived needs they feel successful but when they achieve assigned tasks and objectives, this may not be the case; they have only met someone else's expectations (pp.209-210).

What matters are outcomes. A manager as leader should give the employees freedom to act, obtaining what resources are required and create an atmosphere where collaboration is considered both essential and to be expected (pp.207-208). Here, Duvall (1999) is advocating the adoption of organisational resource integration, rather than organisational resource conservation, for effective employee empowerment. Duvall (1999) stresses that

managers cannot make employees act empowered. Empowerment is an individual's decision to commit to the goals of the organisation by collaborating with others and achieving personal goals at the same time within the boundaries and structure of the organization (p.207). When individuals themselves choose empowerment as a way of working, and to the same organisational goals, individual goals are achieved within the framework of the organisation's mission/objectives (p.208). "It is the responsibility of the organisation, through its management, to create the conditions under which success is possible: an environment in which individuals may choose to be successful" (p.211). Duvall (1999) sees compassionate leadership as what holds empowerment together. The right kind of leadership is crucial, i.e. accepting that the individual has objectives as well as the organisation and to moulding them together is the key to success (pp.208-209). In effect a knowledge organisation is being created.

VOICE AND SILENCE:

Whilst there are organisations which allow and encourage significant EIP by employees through the vehicle of employee empowerment, this is by no means always the case. Indeed some organisations, probably wisely, start enacting EIP policies with less demanding requirements for the employees, basically by tackling communication as a voice mechanism firstly both from the management to the employees and crucially from the employees to the management. Even then the phenomenon of reluctance to participate has to be overcome. This is often thought of as employee silence and is the reverse of effective communication from the employee to the management, i.e. employee voice. Donaghey, et al. (2011) offer some prognoses on how management in a non-union environment may inadvertently be the cause of lack of communication from the employee to the management. This is put down to management overlooking the restraints they themselves impose by setting agendas on what can be discussed which Donaghey, et al. (2011) attribute to them avoiding discussion on topics which they perceive as threatening their managerial prerogative. Silence, i.e. information deliberately held back, can prevent useful information being gleaned from employees which could potentially solve existing problems or lead to operational improvements (p.52). The reasons for employee silence suggested by Donaghey, et al. (2011) include (pp.53-55):

- Employee's fear of isolation from colleagues.
- The personality of the individual employee.
- Fear of retribution by the management.
- Individuals having differing goals to that of management.
- Management's bad reaction to criticism.

- Management only encouraging dialogue relevant to operational efficiency.

Allen and Tüselmann (2009) argue that to avoid employee silence and for voice mechanisms to be effective, employees and their representatives must be able to make their views known and have an influence on operational matters within the organisation. If voice is only enabling communication and employee's views to be heard without influence being brought to bear, then trust within the workplace will not be generated (pp.541-542). Allen and Tüselmann (2009) also consider two mechanisms for voice, collective through representatives, and individual, but emphasise that these are not mutually exclusive and indeed there may be circumstances when one mechanism complements the other; the deficiencies of one being mitigated by the other, when both are in operation (p.543).

Bryson (2004) compares union and non-union voice and their effect on managerial responsiveness in the UK. It is noted that in 1984 voice was cited as "whereby workers use direct communication to bring actual and desired conditions closer together". However, Bryson (2004) records that since then union-based voice has declined as has dual-channel voice involving union and non-union communication. At the same time direct voice, i.e. direct communication between workers and management had increased using media such as team briefings (p.213). Using data from the British Workplace Employee Relations Survey 1998 (WERS98) and measuring managerial responsiveness by the responses to the following five questions from the WERS98 survey (p.219):

- 1) "keeping people up to date about proposed changes.
- 2) providing everyone with the chance to comment on proposed changes.
- 3) responding to suggestions from employees.
- 4) dealing with work problems you and others have
- 5) treating employees fairly".

...in general Bryson (2004) found that managements were more responsive to non-union voice than union voice. Managements were also more responsive to direct voice than representative voice whether the representation was via a trade union or not. The most effective combination in terms of eliciting managerial responsiveness was direct voice coupled with non-union representative voice as far as non-union members were concerned (pp.234-235). As far as methods used for communication, it was found that meetings with senior management and the formation of problem solving groups were more effective in gaining responses from the management than briefing groups since these were less intensive (p.229).

Dundon et al. (2005) also looked at the operation of voice in non-unionised organisations using seven case studies, but from the point of view of managers. They point out that union voice is now a minority means of EIP compared with non-union voice and see no prospect of a revival. They believe this to be due to the change in the balance of the UK economy from traditional unionised, often manufacturing industries, to newer non-unionised sectors (p.308). Dundon et al. (2005) also point out that although union influence has waned in recent years, employee expectations have not, and managers have noticed that employees are more confident in expressing their views. This is typified by the fact that although managers control the agenda of voice and what is ultimately discussed, they often do not actually control the implementation of any agreed suggestions emanating from employees (p.318). As with all EIP practices, manager's prime motivation is to achieve positive operational outcomes. This is exemplified by Dundon et al. (2005) finding that upward problem solving was the most practiced form of voice (p.314). In this context managers are using voice to tap into worker's experience. However, 'softer' positive outcomes were also in evidence by managers stating that voice generated a better atmosphere in which to work and contributed to improved operational performance (p.316). Many managers stressed the importance of having informal structures for voice, rather than formal; a feature studied by Marchington and Suter (2013) and discussed in more depth later. One of the general managers from one of the case study organisations used by Dundon et al. (2005) crystallised a management's perspective of voice as "Voice is about having opinions and observations heard. How voice is realised, recognised and acted upon is what matters. There is no real voice if it is not listened to" (p.316).

2.3.2.1. GENERATING THE INVOLVEMENT OF THE SHOP FLOOR

EMPLOYEE VOICE MECHANISMS USED IN EIP:

In their book, Marchington, Wilkinson and Dundon (2001) entitled 'Management Choice and Employee Voice', the authors acknowledge that gaining the involvement of employees is primarily to do with communication and particularly so with employee voice. In the foreword they postulate the motivation behind those employers about to embark on a programme to introduce the concept of employee voice. "These mechanisms (ways of implementing employee voice) assume that employees are looking to have a voice in what goes on, not so as to extract better pay and conditions, but to make a bigger contribution and advance the interests of the business". Marchington, Wilkinson and Dundon (2001) promote voice as a two way communication tool not only for employers to transmit instructional messages to their employees but also, most importantly, to gain feedback from employees fostering good relationships and encouraging employees to get involved in the

running of the organisation. They perceive that employers are now finding many different ways of achieving voice and involvement and in particular the views and operational experience of employees, recognising that being able to tap into this valuable pool of knowledge can give them a competitive edge over their competitors. Marchington, Wilkinson and Dundon (2001) emphasise how crucial this can be for organisations planning for the future by describing those who do not exploit the potential of their employees as “trying to make bricks without straw” (p.vii).

They found that there was a multiplicity of communication methods in use for voice, including forming teams for specific improvement projects, conducting employee attitude surveys by electronic means and partnership schemes, as well as joint consultation and collective representation (p.ix). Usefully, Marchington, Wilkinson and Dundon (2001) show in tabular form how employee voice can be perceived in different ways by scholars and practitioners:

The meaning and articulation of employee voice (p.5).

Voice as	Purpose of voice	Mechanisms for voice	Range of outcomes
Articulation of individual satisfaction	To rectify a problem with management or prevent deterioration in relations	Complaint to line manager Grievance procedure Speak-up programme	Exit Loyalty
Expression of collective organisation	To provide a countervailing source of power to management	Union recognition Collective bargaining Industrial action	Partnership Derecognition
Contribution to management decision-making	To seek improvements in work organisation, quality and supervision	Upward problem-solving groups Quality Circles Suggestion schemes Attitude Surveys Self-managed teams	Identify and commitment Disillusionment and apathy
Demonstration of mutuality and cooperative relations	To achieve long-term viability for organisation and its employees	Partnership agreements Joint consultative committees Works councils	Significant influence over management decisions Marginalisation and sweetheart deals

:- the mechanisms providing a ‘Contribution to management decision-making’ being particularly relevant to this research and tally with the project’s definition of employee voice

described in section 2.1.1. and that repeated by Dundon et al (2004). The four interactive mechanisms listed are elaborated on as follows.

Upward Problem Solving Groups:

This is the process of tapping into the latent knowledge of employees so that their experience can be brought to bear in solving problems in the workplace (Armstrong, 2001). Drummond and Stone (2007) surveyed 30 highly successful UK SMEs and also found that employee membership in problem solving project teams was seen as an effective way of involving employees and enhancing their experience and skills base (p.198).

Strauss (2006) ruminates on the involvement of such managerial initiatives to listen to the views of employees and later to involve them in the decision making process, in particular by dealing with them as groups and without any financial incentives. He sees such schemes often going through a life cycle where at first well-known problems in the workplace are tackled jointly by management and employees successfully, but after these have been dealt with, interest and enthusiasm on the part of the employees in decision making wanes as the more difficult complex problems with no easy solution are tackled and only a proportion of employees are still genuinely engaged. Inevitably in some cases organisations revert to the old autocratic (management controlled) problem solving procedures. However, he sees the conception of teamworking, primarily imported firstly into the USA from Japan and later into Europe, as the key change from passive to active involvement (pp. 783-784).

Toyota see Quality Circles (QCs) as their preferred mechanism for upward problem solving, but cautionary advice is offered by Olberding (1998) to introduce new QCs to problem solving gradually, only a few problems at first until their problem-solving proficiency is well established and later for them to eventually progress to being virtually self-managed. Fundamentally, Toyota acknowledges that QC members are the real experts in terms of proposers of solutions to problems.

Quality Circles (QCs):

The one individual participatory mechanism found by Forde, Slater and Spencer (2006) using the 1998 WERS survey as being responsible for improved productivity was quality control circles (QC Circles); also called quality circles. As a tool to improve productivity, quality and motivate employees, QC Circles were first conceived in the USA but then put to work on the shop floor by the Japanese in the 1960s. QC Circles demand a consensual environment on the shop floor, rather than the adversarial Anglo-Saxon relationships then operating in the USA and UK amongst others. Nowadays QC Circles are operating

throughout the world. The operation of QC Circles follows the following five principles (Vaziri 1987, p.18):

- 1) The group of employees constituting a QC Circle choose the projects to be tackled (not individuals). The projects may also be jointly selected by management and the group.
- 2) Training is provided for the group to enable them to tackle the project.
- 3) The group *themselves* analyse the problem and possible solutions utilising the training they have been given.
- 4) The group are paid for any work done outside normal working hours but are *not* paid for successful ideas as such.
- 5) The group profit from the training provided, enjoy membership of the group, and being an integral part of the company organisation.

The key factor in the operation of QC Circles is that they are forums of employees without any representation of managerial staff.

As a measure of how effective QC Circles can be, at one stage Toyota used QC Circles to solve over 90% of its customer complaints, leaving only 10% to be tackled by professional staff (Vaziri 1987, p.19).

On the other hand, some surveys have reported only marginal increases in productivity due to the inception of QC Circles, especially when specific numeric measures of productivity are used. In an American study of a rapidly growing distribution organisation with a policy of expanding employee participation as one means of sustaining growth, including implementing a QC Circles programme, Mohrman and Novelli Jr (1985) found that when any ensuing variation in productivity was measured using specific numerical data, the results were at best a disappointing slight increase. In this case, it was accepted that it was not possible to distinguish the effect that QC Circles were having from other employee involvement practices being pursued. Mohrman and Novelli Jr (1985) argue that from such studies QC Circles should not be judged as failures by organisations, but as springboards to modify the processes and mechanisms used now with measured data to judge effectiveness.

The prerequisites for successful Quality Circles (QCs) are (Armstrong, 2001, p.799):

- Being in receipt of the full backing of management.
- Membership is voluntary.

- The leader, (*often but*) not necessarily a supervisor/team leader, has been trained in the running of such a group.
- Meet regularly.
- Is limited to no more than 10 members to avoid procrastination.
- Tackle problems in which they have expertise to contribute.
- Present their results to management.
- Implement any accepted proposals they arrive at.

Like a number of other concepts, quality circles originated in the United States, but it was the Japanese who began to make wide use of them in the 1960s. The philosophy behind Quality Circles (QCs) has been described as 'motivation by participation' which neatly encapsulates the principles behind them. The limited success of QCs in some economies such as the UK has been attributed to hierarchical management structures which resist change emanating from the workplace. When embarking on setting up QCs, a recommended approach is to start on a small scale and by then advertising a few, hopefully, successes use them as an example to motivate other employees to voluntarily get involved (Betts, 2000). In any organisation successfully operating QCs, the role of six groups of people are likely to be crucial (Bocker and Overgaard, 1982, p.23)

- 1) Circle members:- select problems for analysis, solutions, and implement chosen solutions (workforce volunteers).
- 2) Circle leaders:- convene meetings, train members where required (not necessarily supervisors).
- 3) Support staff:- provide technical support where necessary (professional staff).
- 4) Facilitators:- coordinate the work of all QCs (normally middle managers).
- 5) Middle management:- respond to the needs of the QCs.
- 6) Senior management :- provide overall support for QCs.

As the *raison d'être* of QCs is to tap into the knowledge and experience of the workforce on a voluntary basis, the voice and views of employees in organisations using circles is of paramount importance. As QCs began to be established in the USA studies found that employees were willing to tackle any issues which arose to do with employee involvement, and positive effects on worker morale and enthusiasm for involvement were recorded. However, one study took the view that such employee attitudes may not be universal throughout the organisation and argued that further research would be needed over a period of time to come to a conclusive opinion (Mohrman and Novelli Jr, 1985). Another study carried out by Cox and Dale (1985) around the same time in the UK surveyed the QC

facilitators of 63 circles in 12 engineering companies which had been operating QCs from between two months and two-and-a-half years. They found that 44% of the QCs studied expected eventual quality improvement to ensue from their work and in fact it was later found that 47% had generated quality improvements. On the motivational side, 83% of QC members felt that QCs were beneficial for themselves and 86% felt that QCs were also beneficial to employees who were not members of QCs. Of the only seven QCs whose members felt that they had not benefitted, three put this down to lack of training in the operation of circles, six attributed it to problems with the management and three to problems with trade unions but all seven put the blame on lack of interest on the part of non-member employees. Cox and Dale (1985) argue that for QCs to be successful the realisation of benefits achieved must be widely communicated throughout the organisation as a way of supporting the QC members and encouraging the participation of all levels of employees. They also take the view that management has the responsibility to detect any embryo problems and act to forestall these in a timely manner.

Following a survey of 31 machinists in an American owned company in the UK introducing QCs in an effort to harness cooperation from the workforce and improve efficiency, Wilson (1989) argues that employees are unlikely to be willing to contribute to QCs if they perceive that the relationship between management and workers is unequal. She also argues that non-financial psychological rewards can indeed suffice as incentives for employees to get involved with QCs. However she does argue that the attitude of managers may be a stumbling block to the success of QCs with managers not accepting suggestions from QCs because of their unwillingness to share power with subordinates, due to their long-standing control mentality.

The essence of Quality Circles (QCs) is that employee involvement in them is on a voluntary basis. Clearly for a QC programme to be successful a substantial number of volunteers will be required. In the late 1980s an American survey studied what made some employees volunteer for membership of a QC, while others did not. This was done by surveying 233 employees in an electronics factory and it must be said that the majority of the employees were female which may restrict extrapolating the results to a male or mixed gender population. QC members were found to be those who considered their supervisors to be considerate and sympathetic to their needs and also were long-serving and better educated than non-members. They also were found to be poorer performers with a lower job satisfaction values and higher absenteeism figures than the non-members, i.e. non volunteers. The survey authors argue that these possibly surprising results infer that the volunteers were attracted to the QCs by the opportunity to improve their performance and

with it their satisfaction in their work; whereas the non-volunteers may have felt that joining a QC was unnecessary for their own personal development. Interestingly, age was not a discriminating factor between QC members and non-members (Norris and Cox, 1987). As the authors admit the finding must be treated with caution since they are based on a single organisation and a single Quality Circle programme. Furthermore the findings may be only indicative of the times. In a later much larger study, also in America, an additional factor was brought to light; that of fear on the part of employees of getting involved. Here Elmuti (1997) stresses the need for training in QC practice for employees at all levels to allay these fears and feel confident to make their contributions as members. In a review of the use of QCs in the United States (US) a couple of years later, Mitchell (1999) made an additional observation on why employees may be reluctant to join QCs, by feeling that they are in danger of contributing to the loss of their own jobs by achieving the management's goal of making production more efficient and error free. Mitchell (1999) argues that economic gains derived from the work of QCs must be seen to be fairly distributed if this impression is to be avoided.

Suggestion Schemes:

For suggestion schemes to operate successfully, three component parts are essential (Tylczak, 1990):

- 1) Visibility:- ways of keeping employees looking for innovative improvements.
- 2) Ego-boosters:- ways of keeping employees' interest in the scheme including rewards of some kind for innovative suggestions.
- 3) Structure:- ensure the way the scheme operates is widely understood.

Japanese organisations, whilst recognising such schemes as a way of making the experience, voice and novel ideas of individual employees available to the organisation as a whole, see it primarily as a "management system to elicit the self motivation of the workers" (Hyman and Mason, 1995). Toyota has a well established company-wide suggestion scheme that has operated since 1951 and like other Japanese organisations is conscious of the advantages for harmonious industrial relations as well as innovative operational outcomes (Monden, 1998). In the Toyota system, individual involvement in the scheme is encouraged as well as group involvement, usually by Quality Control Circles. When an individual or group identifies a problem, and therefore a potential improvement opportunity, a five stage procedure is initiated (p.186):

- 1) The problem is defined:- a supervisor or team leader of the individual or group defines the problem and its effect.

- 2) The problem is examined:- the current conditions are examined by the individual or group in case other associated problems exist.
- 3) Ideas are generated:- the supervisor encourages the individual or group to generate ideas to solve the problem.
- 4) Summarising the ideas:- the supervisor summarises the ideas of the individual or group to help them choose the most innovative idea.
- 5) Proposal submission:- the individual or one member of the group completes a suggestion sheet and puts it in a suggestion box.

This is followed by a four stage evaluation procedure (p.188):

- 1) All suggestions are collected and logged on the first day of each month.
- 2) Committees examine each suggestion by the twentieth day of each month and determine any monetary reward.
- 3) All accepted innovative ideas are adopted and implemented immediately unless it is designated 'pending', in which case it will be re-examined in the following month. Some ideas may be termed 'reference' and will be examined by committees for improvement and used later.
- 4) The results are published, including in the Toyota newsletter.

Whilst this system is similar to those used in America and Europe, Monden (1998) argues that the Japanese system is more effective because the evaluation of ideas is carried out using a formal procedure which ensures that any innovative ideas are quickly assessed and if accepted, implemented. If required, this includes provision for a professional input, such as from a designer, and this is organised immediately.

Team Working leading to Self-Managed Teams:

Strauss (2006), however sees the conception of teamworking, primarily imported firstly into the USA from Japan and later into Europe, as the key change from what he terms passive to active participation; passive participation being having 'influence' and active participation having 'involvement' (pp. 783-784). He illustrates this by the impact of the introduction of teamworking into an American car plant when it became jointly owned by American and Japanese companies. Work teams were introduced and made responsible for worker's job rotation planning, balancing the work load, and engaging in continuous improvement programmes. Each team was also given space to hold team meetings to voice their views and suggestions. Even the appointment of team leaders involved employees as well as management. By the time teamworking had become embedded, the productivity of

the plant approached the best achieved in Japan, whereas before it had the lowest level in the original American company when it owned the plant. The difference is attributed to the participative nature of the teamworking since by and large the employees were the same that had been employed by the original American company and the plant and equipment remained unchanged (p.784).

However, Pruijt (2003) points out that teamworking can encompass different concepts. He draws attention to the contrast between Neo-Taylorism teamworking and Anti-Taylorism teamworking. The Neo-Taylorism form is seen as based on the well known Japanese Toyota Production System modified to be more acceptable to western organisations and employees. The Anti-Taylorism form is deemed to be based on the principle of industrial democracy but rebranded to make it more acceptable to those managing commercially minded enterprises (p.98). Pruijt (2003) draws attention to a partly sceptical view of these two forms of teamworking in the published literature which sees them simply as a way of increasing productivity by removing the role restrictions on workers imposed by Tayloristic scientific management or offering autonomy to teams of employees which is really designed to maintaining managerial control cloaked in more acceptable terminology. The spread of the Neo-Taylorism form led to the inception of 'lean' production methods and "dynamic work teams", although the Toyota System did not incorporate the concept of teamworking as conceived today. The Japanese industrial culture expected all employees to feel responsible to the 'Big Team' i.e. the enterprise as a whole. The intense pace of work then associated with the Toyota System, and hence the term Neo-Taylorism, led practitioners to incorporate the use of teamworking into lean production methods, that is production avoiding waste and duplication of operations with the work carried out in a team setting avoiding any concept of a rigid hierarchy in the organisation. At the same time a mainly European initiative formulated an alternative approach in which teamworking was considered paramount. This was Anti-Taylorism and placed 'quality of working life' as a major factor in performance improvement encompassing such values as job satisfaction and enrichment. This was not to say that Anti-Taylorism puts 'quality of working life' before productivity but it does stress moving towards worker autonomy and codetermination rather than control and enforcement. As these two opposing concepts of teamworking developed, they have tended to merge by the managerially acceptable Neo-Taylorism form being made more socially acceptable and the Anti-Taylorism variety more acceptable to management. Alternative names for these two versions of teamworking have also been used such as 'Japanese Style' for Neo-Taylorism and 'Swedish Model' for Anti-Taylorism (pp.77-80).

McHugh and Bennett (1999) address the possible problems that can arise when introducing teamworking into an organisation with a current bureaucratic structure. A study was carried out in a UK executive agency in the public sector with a typical bureaucratic organisational structure. Four challenges were identified from the literature which describes the main difficulties likely to be experienced by public sector bodies when converting to a team-based organisation (p.82).

- 1) naming a group of people a team, but still dealing with its members as individuals.
- 2) assembling people into groups, giving them their goals, but leaving them to work out how they as a group can achieve them.
- 3) issuing challenging team objectives but without adequate support from the resources of the organisation as a whole.
- 4) assuming that team members already possess the necessary behavioural skills to work as a team.

The essence of successful teamworking according to Twomey and Kleiner (1996) is that the team needs to have performance goals and that each member is committed to striving to achieve the goal(s). Furthermore the size of the team should be relatively small with a range of skills so that its members can feel a sense of personal responsibility for any team achievement. This is seen as the first step in creating an effective team.

Swenson (1997) cites teamworking, and in particular the adoption of self managing teams, as a way of counteracting the often mixed results found by organisations going through the transition from hierarchical structures to more flexible structures designed to accommodate the involvement of employees to a greater degree. Self-managed teams could be seen as the ultimate expression of EIP, but Swenson (1997) cautions that their successful introduction requires the unstinting managerial support at all levels and in particular middle management (pp.18-19). Self-managed teams, sometimes called self-directed or empowered teams, are described as those with a high level of responsibility for the team outcomes and who are given the necessary authority and resources to accomplish these, as well as accepting the accountability for outcomes. The reasoning behind companies introducing the concept of self-managed teams range from pure commercial advantages, such as improved quality and productivity, to softer human outcomes like enhanced job satisfaction and commitment (p.16). Swenson (1997), who limits his analysis to the use of self-managed teams in the United States, emphasises the need to provide the appropriate conditions within an organisation for teams to function properly; principally support from the senior management. The initial enthusiasm of teams and team members can be blunted if they find that their decisions, reached by team consensus, are overlooked or disregarded by

senior management. This inevitably will be seen by the team as an assault on their supposed autonomy and a major disincentive to accepting their self-managerial responsibilities. The introduction of self-managed teams is likely to have the effect of delayering the structure of companies and inevitably middle managers are likely to be the most affected. The elimination of a layer of middle management is often mitigated by the redeployment of staff into training roles and sometimes into team leadership of the self-managed teams. Swenson (1997) warns that deployment into team leader roles can nullify the concept of self-direction in teams if the ex-middle managers continue to operate their “directive” style and have not come to terms with a more collective style of leadership rather than their previous authoritative, ‘management by control’ perspective (pp.18-19). As with other EIP schemes, self-managed teams can suffer from ‘fatigue’ after the initial enthusiasm at the introduction of the concept. In this case Swenson (1997) cites studies that attribute this to inadequate team building training initially and insufficient attention being taken to renew team membership periodically to introduce, not only new blood, but new ideas and foresights (p.19). In addition he advocates reflective learning as a means of keeping team spirit alive and avoiding teams succumbing to the ‘fatigue’ phenomenon. Basically this involves teams looking back at what has been achieved and not achieved over a period and reflecting on how problems and opportunities could have been tackled better, thus invigorating the team to new approaches and innovative ideas for the future; in effect teams becoming learning organisations.

Paster (1996) considers the introduction of empowerment as a five stage sequential process. This is explained in the context of empowerment operating in a teamworking environment (p.6).

- 1) During the first stage all decisions are made by the management and the team are kept informed. Informing the team is crucial; wrongly often omitted by managers.
- 2) At the next stage the team are asked for suggestions by the manager, who makes decisions taking into account any team suggestions and then informs the team.
- 3) After the second stage of the process has been embedded, the manager starts to discuss issues at length with the team during which he seeks input from the team in the form of proposed actions.
- 4) The fourth stage of the development consists of consolidating the relationship established between the manager and the team during which the decision making process is conducted jointly and cooperatively by the manager and the team.
- 5) Finally, after the fourth stage of the process has been working satisfactorily, the manager hands over decision making to the team and the team begins to operate

autonomously. The team will now make operational decisions but *may* inform the manager of their intentions..

Paster (1996) warns managers embarking on an empowerment project not to leave the team to operate autonomously until they are satisfied that their training has made them capable of weighing up all the factors that need to be considered when tackling an issue. Managers must be aware that achieving team autonomy and empowerment is an evolutionary process and be conscious of the stage by stage process she advocates so that the team acquire an understanding of their new responsibilities, accountability and that they now share in the risks associated with decisions they may take. Paster (1996) emphasises the need for the team, and indeed the manager if necessary, to be trained in both communication skills and the skills required for effective empowerment.

2.3.3. THE AMBIANCE IN THE ORGANISATION AND ITS INFLUENCE ON VOICE

Academic writers are well aware that the atmosphere prevailing can have a direct bearing on the success or otherwise of employee involvement programmes in any organisation and that each organisation needs to design its own programme taking into account its own structure and ethos.

For instance, Marchington, Wilkinson and Dundon (2001) warn about the need to have, or create, a suitable ambiance in an organisation before introducing employee voice. They found that the whole culture of the organisation needs to reflect that it is now a participative environment and any latent tendency to still operate in a 'Taylorist' manner needs to be expunged. Employee voice is a mechanism that must permeate right through the organisation; it is not something that can be simply attached to the existing ways of operating (p.vii).

2.3.3.1. FORMALITY AND INFORMALITY WITHIN THE ORGANISATION

In a study of how organisations operate, Marchington, Wilkinson and Dundon (2001) found that the importance given to communication and the nature of the communication was crucial. In the cases that they studied, they found that many different voice mechanisms were being used. Furthermore, they found that informal ways of operating voice mechanisms proved particularly useful by supplementing the more formal mechanisms; in effect plugging any communicative gaps left by formal mechanisms. This was especially prevalent in the smaller and newly established organisations with their more informal managerial structures.

When Marchington and Suter (2013) investigated the question of formality and informality in employee involvement practice, they found that although informal modes of EIP were less likely to be researched than formal schemes, they stressed that informal EIP within teams and with teams and their team leaders is vitally important to encourage since it assists in making the more formal schemes in organisations work more effectively by acting as a “safety net” (p.309). The case study carried out was in non-unionised restaurants. Townsend, Wilkinson and Burgess (2013) carried out a similar case study, this time in an Australian luxury hotel; likewise non-unionised. They also found that although a great deal of the organisation’s resource was targeted into formal employee involvement and participation (EIP), informal EIP was responsible for much of the effectiveness of the EIP being practiced. They also found that the shortcomings of the formal systems were filled by informal dialogue and participatory exchanges between managers and employees. It was pointed out however that the continuous nature of work patterns in the hotel industry, as with restaurants, was more conducive to informal exchanges rather than the formal variety. A further consideration regarding informal EIP is that by its very nature it tends to be conducted in short time periods and so is not suitable for in depth discussions on matters such as workplace reorganisation. Additionally, informal EIP depends on a good relationship between a manager and his subordinates which may be transient. These two studies serve to illustrate how the choice of suitable EIP schemes, including voice mechanisms, must take into account the nature of the work being undertaken and that EIP appears to be most effective for both the organisation and employees when undertaken at Group or Team level on an informal basis.

Marsden (2013) examines the role and effectiveness of individual voice in workplaces with differing ways of worker representation. Individual voice is defined as when employees raise “issues directly with management”. Collective voice is said to operate “at the job level, with shop stewards and employee delegates, and at the establishment and enterprise levels, with unions and works councils,” (p.222). Amongst the conclusions that Marsden (2013) draws is that when using collective voice “it is essential to have an alternative source of opinion and the ability to consult informally with managers who are trusted by the employees using the voice models, regarding decision making”.

The work of Marchington and Suter, (2013) already mentioned, examined employee involvement in the hospitality industry at the level of the workplace using a chain of restaurants as the case study, with particular emphasis on the contrast between formal and informal involvement practices. The study company was a non-union company. They draw the distinction between formal and informal systems of involvement by describing formal

systems as “relates to codified, pre-arranged, and regular practices/concrete structures” and informal systems as “ad hoc or non-programmed interactions between managers and their staff which provide opportunities for information passing, consultation, and the seeking of ideas” (p.286). Although the study company operated an informal involvement and participation (EIP) system, Marchington and Suter (2013) found that employees at the workplace level were happy about the operation of the informal EIP system, both in terms of the range of work activities they were consulted about and how deeply they became involved (pp.286-287). However, a formal system of EIP was also in operation in tandem and therefore some comparisons could be drawn between the two. From their case study Marchington and Suter (2013) concluded that the formal EIP, running in tandem with the informal EIP, only offered a low level of involvement for employees, mainly taking the form of informing the employees by the use of notice boards, newsletters and occasional team briefings. The majority of the formal EIP was operated at the establishment level; in this case, the whole restaurant staff. In fairness, Marchington and Suter (2013) did point out the difficulties of organising employee involvement meetings with all the staff present at any one time due to the nature of work in a restaurant with its continual customer contact and working shift patterns. They also identified a preference for informal EIP amongst senior managers, local branch managers and their staff. It would appear that informal EIP would be the obvious choice for management and employees, rather than formal EIP, in this situation. However, on the downside, informal EIP in the prevailing workplace conditions could not ensure that all employees at branch level received all relevant information on pending decisions that could affect their work, let alone have the chance to be consulted or get involved in discussion about possible implementation (p.308). Overall Marchington and Suter (2013) came to the conclusion that “informality takes centre stage” although arguing that informal involvement and participation practices (EIP) need to be combined with formality to operate effectively” (p.284).

Parkes et al. (2007) investigated the role of employee involvement (EI) in a large organisation, specifically the National Health Service (NHS), as a tool for managers to promote high commitment strategies. All forms of employee involvement, including voice mechanisms, were considered and both formal and informal schemes. Amongst the conclusions drawn by Parkes et al. (2007) was that employees saw employee involvement “as another management fad that was brought in and didn’t do anything”. In effect they saw it as a higher management tool. More positively, employee relationships at a lower level with line managers as leaders were found to be good, especially if their leadership skills were being used effectively. Line managers who had been trained in EI techniques, were praised by employees they had used in EI projects during which they had enhanced their own skills

base (p.315). This seems to bear out the findings of Marchington and Suter (2013) that the degree of informality in an employee involvement programme has a positive effect on its efficacy.

An even more telling comment was posited by Bacon, et al. (1996) when they stated that “large organisations have much to learn from the informal nature of change in small businesses” (p.98). The informal style of management in smaller organisations was investigated by Matlay (1999) as part of a three year study of the influence of size on employee relations in British companies. Matlay (1999) took a particular interest in micro-businesses employing less than ten people as well as other SMEs and large organisations; 6,000 in total. Over 90% of owner managers expressed a preference for informal management styles (p.293). Matlay (1999) argues that employee relations in micro-businesses are as varied as the types of their owner managers with their contrasting personalities and attitudes (p.285). He also argues that growing micro companies find a mixture of informal and formal management styles used interchangeably can be appropriate, assuaging the reluctance of some owner managers to relinquish control of some managerial functions (p.294).

The question of what level of formality is appropriate in small organisations can be extended to the training of employees. Kitching (2007) accepts that formal external certifiable training has its place but contends that its importance can be overplayed whereas employee learning (employees learning from each other) has been a neglected subject for research. In this context, Kitching (2007) sees employers as ‘enablers’ of employee learning. Once again, informality in SMEs comes to the fore (p.43). He recognises that employers can still play a crucial role in employee learning by allowing employees access to diverse work roles and other employees, not just from an altruistic motive but with the bonus of producing a more multi-skilled workforce. However, he does concede that in this informal approach, whilst employers can provide the means for employee learning, it is the employees’ choice whether to be involved in the learning process. Furthermore, it will be the employees who decide what skills they choose to learn, and although this may well be their personal preference, this may not fit into the operational requirements of the business (p.45). Finally, Kitching (2007) does make the point that other researchers have found that employee learning is not the sole preserve of SMEs, it is practiced in large organisations as well but alongside more formal, and often external, training schemes (p.47). Anderson and Boocock (2002) also see the priority for SMEs is for their employees to acquire knowledge from colleagues informally and through contact with other local organisations, rather than embarking on formal training

programmes. In fact they argue that organisational learning may have a detrimental effect on organisational performance (p.5).

Westover et al. (2010) from an American case study, stress that the influence these informal employee learning groupings can have on productivity should not be underestimated. Indeed, Hussein (1989) takes the view that management have to accept that these informal arrangements will still exist in formal organisations whether or not they are supported; the difference being that with support potential productivity improvements are not only more likely to be implemented but also be made available throughout the organisation.

2.3.3.2. THE LEVEL OF PROCEDURALISATION WITHIN THE ORGANISATION

Organisations with a formal organisational structure would be expected to use intra-organisation procedures, usually set out in writing with a set of rules designed to leave little discretion for interpretation by the user. Informal organisational structures are more likely to operate with some form of interlocking social structure governing how people work together in practice using relationships built up over time amongst employees sharing a common affiliation to the organisation. In practice, no organisation is entirely rule-bound and procedural; there is always an undercurrent of informal relationships operating which can complement the more explicit structures and procedures of the formal system as suggested by Marchington and Suter (2013) which govern the level of proceduralism.

Should however some degree of formality be introduced into the structure of an organisation along with its attendant procedures, employees will expect to be dealt with equitably through these procedures; that is treated fairly in comparison with other individuals or groups of individuals, such as teams (Armstrong, 2001). By being treated equally, equity theory declares that employees are better motivated and demotivated when they are treated inequitably. Procedural justice, or procedural equity, is a term used to describe the perceptions that employees have about the fairness inherent in company procedures. Tyler and Bies (1990) put forward five situations which influence such perceptions:

1. adequate consideration given to the employee's viewpoint
2. suppression of any personal bias towards the employee
3. consistent application to all employees
4. providing timely feedback to employees concerning the outcome of decisions
5. providing employees with an adequate explanation of any decision taken

The fair treatment of employees can be subdivided into distributed justice referring to how fairly rewards are distributed and procedural justice referring to the fairness of how decisions

are made. Nasurdin and Khuan (2007) found that only distributive justice had a positive effect on the performance of employee tasks, whereas only procedural justice was positively related to non-operational qualities such as job satisfaction and their perceived job prospects. They cite the opinion that “procedural fairness alters an employee’s relationship with the organisation from one of economic exchange to one of social exchange. The specific relationship between procedural justice and EIP is dealt with by Cohen (1985). He invokes past psychological work on procedural justice showing that employees “given the opportunity to participate in a decision are more likely to see that decision as just than those given no such opportunity” and that procedures encompassing the provision of employee voice produces a greater acceptance of outcomes. Conversely, and usefully, he also accepts that voice mechanism procedures can reveal “unfair” processes and thus decrease their acceptability.

Although it has already been stated (section 2.3.3.) that formal written operating procedures are often supplemented by informal, often unwritten, procedures, there are circumstances where informality and ‘understandings’ cannot be tolerated, irrespective of the size of the organisation. These are situations where the organisation operates in a ‘high tech.’ environment, where the products could be hazardous to the user or adjacent populous, or where the operational methods are potentially dangerous. In these circumstances, written procedures, normally termed standard operating procedures (SOPs) are required to ensure that employees are fully aware of the detailed ways of working required producing a high level of proceduralism. However, as Wilkinson et al. (2014) point out that the voice of employees can still be heard by involving them in the construction of SOPs thus maintaining a degree of employee autonomy; a practice forming part of the Japanese system of Kaizen (Japanese for ‘*change for better*’). Indeed in the Toyota production system, employees are encouraged to question established SOPs; a practice termed ‘democratic Taylorism’.

The Brazilian company Semco has already been discussed in chapter1 and section 2.2. as epitomising an organisation embracing the ultimate in participatory practice and voice mechanisms. However, Semco although being a large organisation where one might expect a significant level of proceduralism, professes through its chief executive, Ricardo Semler, to ‘reject systematic ways of working, disliking procedures and planning’ (Fairtlough, 2005). Nevertheless, Fairtlough, (2005) suspects that others in Semco ‘actually use quite a few systems of this sort’ suggesting that in practice there was a need for some level of proceduralism in the operation of even such a participatory organisation.

2.3.3.3. CULTURAL VALUES WITHIN THE ORGANISATION

The atmosphere pertaining in the workplace can in large measure be the result of the culture permeating throughout the organisation. In his paper regarding perceptions of EIP, Taylor (2001) postulates that “participation is more about an attitude of mind, or part of an organisational culture rather than a set of mechanisms that can be closely prescribed and measured” (p.129) reinforced by Hyman and Mason (1995) who report that many EIP techniques have been introduced in an uncoordinated way unrelated to organisational systems, culture, context and practice. As has already been referred to in section 2.2.3., the Entrepreneurial School in the United States stressed that any organisation should place the adherence to its cultural values as at least as important as the detailed operational planning for the future (Linstead, Fulop and Lilley, 2009). Furthermore, to create an environment conducive to voice mechanisms and EIP, Marchington, Wilkinson and Dundon (2001) found that this must be reflected in the whole culture of an organisation.

Cacciattolo (2014) provides an understanding of the various component parts of an organisation’s culture and its inherent values. These are seen from an interpretative viewpoint by looking at the meanings behind them and from a structural point of view looking at the practices making up the organisational culture. The corporate culture comprising the beliefs held and the behaviours exhibited which affect how employees and management interact are also examined. From an interpretive view, the work of Johnson (2000) is invoked who identifies scenarios which can form the ‘cultural web’ of an organisation, namely:

a ‘*Role Culture*’ with many regulations and where the power associated with roles is clearly defined, an emphasis on individualism.

a ‘*Power Structure*’ clearly specifying those in charge of decision-making within the organisation.

‘*Symbols*’ such as logos and designs including status symbols such as reserved parking spaces managerial staff.

‘*Stories*’ circulating around the organisation about employees and past charismatic individuals, which influence the accepted standards of behaviour in the organisation.

Charles Handy identified four types of cultures from a structural point of view (Handy, 1993), as:

'Power Culture', - symbolised as a *'web of control'* spreading out from the centre of an organisation with the minimum of bureaucracy and with decisions being taken using persuasive arguments.

'Role Culture', - where the organisational structure is closely defined along with everyone's delegated level of authority. The status and power of members being based on their position in the organisation's hierarchy, rather than expertise, tends to make it slow to react to change.

'Task Culture', - where the priority in the organisation is getting the job done with everyone working as a team and making a contribution, where required, based on their expertise, rather than their role, contrary to role culture. This culture tends to be popular with lower and middle management.

'Person Culture', - *in which* individual members, or small groups, consider their interests and value more significant than the overall success of the organisation. This is a rare culture that is difficult to manage.

The differing ways members of an organisation may work together, as expressed in its corporate culture is identified by Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2003) who proffer four types, being:

'The family culture' is where there is a hierarchy led by well respected long-serving 'father-figures' who have progressed to this status through their years of service and are fully committed to the organisation. Promotion within the organisation is mainly dependent on seniority.

'The Eiffel Tower culture' is one centred round a rigid hierarchical structure composed of closely defined roles and relationships and where adherence to the structure is of paramount importance.

'The guided missile culture' is where the organisation's goals and objectives are of paramount importance rather than any hierarchical structure and where members are expected to contribute to these where they can, based on their expertise and experience, irrespective of any formal role or job description.

'The incubator culture' exists where organisational structure and hierarchy is minimised and the development of its members is given top priority. Authority and status are earned through being the instigator of innovation which in turn motivates others to follow suit.

Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2003) however accept that more than one of these four different corporate cultures may well exist together in an organisation.

These various cultures, depending on how embedded the values are in the organisation, can be identified by its norms and practices, with 'symbols' such as different uniforms provided for differing ranks indicating an hierarchical culture with members acting autonomously to a significant extent, whereas a common uniform is an indicator of an organisation functioning as a more egalitarian society with strong social relationships; in fact functioning as an extended family (Sagiv and Schwartz, 2007). Further influencers on the cultural values of organisations recognised by Sagiv and Schwartz (2007) were its history and the commercial or industrial environment in which it operates. In SME companies with the founder/owner manager still acting as the CEO, his or her own personal ways of working are likely to have a major impact on the cultural values of the organisation. However new starters in an SME, especially a young organisation, are more likely to influence its culture than individuals joining a mature well-established organisation where they may experience a resistance to change mentality. A distinction may also be drawn between the cultures in high tech. and low tech. companies, with the high tech. environment encouraging innovation and greater autonomy of their employees, but low tech. companies having well embedded static cultural values. In another distinction due to the cultural values operating, Smith et al. (2002) examined how the culture in an organisation may affect where employees seek guidance. They argue that in hierarchical cultures employees tend to consult with their superiors on a frequent basis, but in cultures such as the 'Guided Missile Culture' described by Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2003), where tacit knowledge is expected to be made freely available on an informal basis, reference to superiors is rarely required.

One of the less redeeming components of an organisation's inherent, but unstated, cultural values can be the existence of a blame culture. Dalton (2005) reveals her experiences when leaders in an organisation revert to pointing the finger of blame when a problem occurs rather than investigating how the problem came to occur and so be able to take measures to avoid a recurrence, i.e. 'scapegoating'. Furthermore, by taking this easier option, some individual may well be unfairly and unjustly scapegoated and procedural justice (see section 2.3.3.2.) denied. Outcomes such as this create a culture concentrated on blame instead of accountability and responsibility which Dalton (2005) sees inevitably permeating throughout

the organisation. The alternative culture based on accepting that people can make inadvertent mistakes without any malicious intent, rejects scapegoating in favour of an investigative culture. Apart from how an organisation reacts to revealed shortcomings or malpractice and treats the incriminated; how it treats the revealer or whistleblower forms another integral value in its culture. Pascoe and Welsh (2011) in their review of the literature, suggests they should be protected by whistleblowing being treated as an ethical issue and part of the organisation's corporate culture. In addition, operational protection can take the form of some externally administrated channel, to avoid negative reactions from other employees, i.e. bystanders (Gao, Greenberg and Wong-On-Wing, 2015). The writer sees the confidential reporting of relevant malpractice to appropriate internal specialists, rather than immediate supervision, as a way of partly meeting this objective. Larmer (1992) holds the view that the majority of internal corporate whistleblowers see themselves as loyal employees who use whistleblowing as a form of direct voice aiding management to avoid bad practice detrimental to the future of the organisation, but considers the risk that if their efforts are rebuffed, or worse still that they suffer in some way from their action, they may resort to indirect voice, that being external whistleblowing.

On a more positive note, the cultural values of an organisation, written or informally implied, can have a significant influence on the degree of job satisfaction its employees enjoy, which Holland et al. (2012) describe simply as the extent to which employees like or dislike their work. Morrison (2004) enlarges on this by restricting it to encompassing only specific aspects of work, rather than how the organisation as a whole operates and indeed Roos and van Eeden (2008) expect levels of satisfaction to vary as a continuum from positive to negative for different aspects of work. Although job satisfaction can originate from both operational and the more social/human aspects of work, it is the social/human sphere that predominates with the level of autonomy and challenge offered to employees being two major human determinants but with direct voice being the central mechanism underpinning employee's job satisfaction (Holland et al., 2012). Socially, a profusion of workplace friendships is also recognised as a significant determinant (Morrison, 2004); whereas poor relationships in the workplace are believed to have a detrimental effect on job satisfaction (Roos and van Eeden, 2008). Overall, a non-discriminatory environment coupled with procedural fairness is perceived as conducive to promoting satisfaction with employees (Roos and van Eeden, 2008).

Lund (2003) analysed how specific types of culture in an organisation contribute to the job satisfaction of its employees having classified its cultural typology using an adaption of the work of Cameron and Freeman (1991). His investigation was undertaken by surveying the

marketing personnel from a variety of organisations in the USA using questionnaires to allow selection from various operational scenarios to determine the cultural types in evidence and scalar questionnaires covering five indicators of satisfaction to establish the level of job satisfaction of the responding employees. The cultures prevailing in each organisation were classified as to whether they fitted into each or all of the following four types:

- Clan culture – characterised by an emphasis on mentoring, loyalty and tradition.
- Adhocracy – characterised by an emphasis on innovation, entrepreneurship and flexibility.
- Hierarchy culture – characterised by an emphasis on bureaucratic order, rules, regulation and predictability.
- Market culture – characterised by an emphasis on competition, goal achievement and market superiority.

It was recognised that most organisations would have elements of these different types of culture but the objective was to determine if organisations were dominated by one type, or if the attributes of several were in evidence. The questionnaire data was then analysed to seek any correlation between levels of job satisfaction and the types of culture predominating. It was found that job satisfaction levels varied with the types of culture functioning in the organisation with higher levels reported by employees working within a clan culture with a strong sense of fraternity and interdependence but, at the other end of the spectrum, lower levels of satisfaction from those from a market culture where independence and individuality was encouraged. There was a similar disparity when levels of bureaucracy were considered, with higher levels of satisfaction from those working in a flexible and informal adhocracy than those from a strongly regulated and procedural hierarchy culture. A similar piece of research was conducted by Roos and van Eeden (2008) but in this case in South Africa surveying employees in a market research company. Here also supporting evidence was found for some relationship between job satisfaction and some aspects of corporate culture. They also found that a culture of innovation and creativity enhanced the job satisfaction of employees as did a “people-oriented, encouraging and trusting environment”. They corroborated the results of Lund (2003) by finding that a bureaucratic and formalised structure had a negative effect on job satisfaction as did an hierarchical structure as against a more participative style, especially when it came to involvement in problem solving and the decision making process. Whilst Lund (2003) was cautious about extrapolating the results of his survey to other organisations without further research, Roos and van Eeden (2008) believe that their findings would be relevant to sectors other than the market research industry where success lay with “performance delivery by staff”.

2.3.3.4. THE DEMOGRAPHICS AND DEGREES OF EXPERIENCE OF THE WORKFORCE

Research has shown that the attitudes to work can vary between what one might call the older experienced generation of employees and the younger generation, less experienced in traditional workplace skills, but more skilled in modern technological skills and with expectations of modern social norms in the work environment. The studies of Martins and Martins (2014) and Westerman and Yamamura (2007) involved surveys of the attitudes and preferences of differing generations of employees, the former assessing accountants in the USA and the latter, employees in a large municipality in South Africa. Whilst Martins and Martins (2014) does concede that the results obtained may not be universally representative, South Africa being a developing country, Westerman and Yamamura (2007) take the view that the “profound demographic shifts as are currently underway in the USA are not limited to this nation”. Both studies divided the populations into two cohorts; Baby Boomers and Generation X and Y (also termed Millennials). Broadly speaking this divided the populations into above and below forty years of age. Both studies, drawing on previous research, categorised the two cohorts, with Westerman and Yamamura (2007) describing Baby Boomers as being optimistic and good team players and by Martins and Martins (2014) as experienced and more proficient in soft skills such as communication skills, relationship building and organising to meet deadlines, than their younger colleagues. The younger generations were seen by Martins and Martins (2014) as being better educated, especially technologically, than their older counterparts and as such a crucial asset in the current business atmosphere and by Westerman and Yamamura (2007) as, although being more vocal, participating in problem solving making use of their greater adaptability to change than older employees. The younger generation are often seen as impatient compared with the older generation with high expectations for quick promotion and working in a challenging work environment without which they are likely to seek a change of employer (Westerman and Yamamura, 2007). However, another study carried out in the hotel industry in the USA, comparing the job satisfaction exhibited by generation Y employees and older colleagues due to their use of employee voice, found lower values of voice, satisfaction and loyalty in generation Y than with older employees along with higher turnover intentions (Kim, Knutson and Choi, 2016). This could indicate that the attitudes of the different generations are sensitive to the employing industrial/commercial sector; the hospitality industry being less technically based than the previous surveys considered.

One of the contributors to an harmonious ambiance in the workplace is the development of strong friendships. Age similarity is a major factor in the likelihood of such friendship ties forming; second only to race among demographic drivers. This follows from social identity

theory which predicts that employees are motivated to feel positively about their own age group. Age similarity also is seen as a attribute to improved technical communication within the workplace. It is amongst the older generation that workplace relationships are most likely to flourish which in turn appears to strengthen their tendency to become engaged and thus give voice to their opinions and experience (Avery, McKay and Wilson, 2007). Avery, McKay and Wilson (2007) cite the opinion that organisations should take advantage of this phenomenon by corralling older employees with their peers whose enthusiasm and knowledge would create the right psychological conditions and environment for such engagement.

On the other hand, Avery, McKay and Wilson (2007) suggest that age dissimilarity may lead to an age group feeling threatened by another grouping resulting in members being disinclined to engage and voice suggestions and opinions. This was found by Koopman and Drenth (1981) to be particularly true where one group (presumably an older group) was lacking in knowledge and experience relevant to a pending strategic decision. Accordingly, Kim, Knutson and Choi (2016) stress the need for an organisation's workplace cultural policies to take into account the age groups of their workforce and their differing needs and attitudes. As Avery McKay and Wilson (2007) point out, these should foster a sense of psychological safety at work with employees feeling secure and thus confident to voice their views on any matters relative to their work. People working in an environment that they feel they "fit" into are more likely to enjoy their work, but the reverse is also true (Westerman and Yamamura, 2007). A key feature in the success of any enterprise is likely to be how well they facilitate and encourage the transfer of knowledge from the older generation to the younger; an issue that Martins and Martins (2014) sees organisations struggling with. However, that is not to say that transfer in the opposite direction is not also vital. Bacon, Ackers et al. (1996) found that the introduction of "new blood" into organisations, especially SMEs, aided essential management changes as they developed, but at the same time, as Westerman and Yamamura (2007) advise, if companies do not ensure, and modify if necessary, their cultures and work environments to meet the needs of their younger generation employees, they are likely to experience dissatisfaction amongst them and high rates of turnover.

Although in the past managers were likely to be older than those that they supervised, it is now becoming increasingly common for managers to be younger than their subordinates. Shore, Cleveland and Goldberg (2003) investigated whether this had specific implications on interaction between the two classes, their attitudes to each other, and their work experiences generally. This was done by conducting a survey of many managers and employees in a

large multinational company in the USA. It was expected that employees who were younger than their managers would have more favourable work experiences than those older than their managers. In this situation it was envisaged that older employees would perceive their situation was contrary to their original career expectations and that they might feel they received a lower level of support and consideration from their managers than that afforded to their younger colleagues. Coincidentally, their managers might feel that they in turn received a lower level of loyalty from the older employees. Basically, it was expected that managers would have a more friendly relationship with younger subordinates than with those older than themselves. The results of the survey did not however fully support these expectations. It was found that fewer opportunities for career development did exist when the manager was younger than his subordinates, but for both manager and employee. In general it was found that when employees are older than their manager, they will suffer negative consequences. Where there was age similarity, positive outcomes such as promotion and personal development ensued but only with younger employees working with younger managers, whereas older managers treated younger and older employees similarly. Overall, it was found that “employees who are younger than their managers will have the favourable work experiences, whereas employees who are older than their managers will experience the least favourable outcomes”

2.4. THE IMPACT OF EMPLOYEE VOICE IN PRACTICE

Bashshur and Burak (2015), when reviewing the published work on the impact of employee voice in organisations, came to the conclusion that although on balance desirable outcomes invariably resulted, such as operational improvements following employee suggestions and enhanced job satisfaction within the workforce, this was an “oversimplification” since the impact may vary depending on what level in the organisation is being considered, be it at the level of the individual, the group/team, or the organisation as a whole. Similar variations were also arrived at when the impact on human aspects was considered, such as between individual job satisfaction and group harmony. However, the possibility of resultant negative outcomes was also aired such as interpersonal relationships being impaired due to changes from the status quo which in turn may have an adverse effect on organisational performance. One possible determinant, which may influence the impact of voice in an organisation not considered by Bashshur and Burak (2015), was the size of the organisation; a factor which O’Toole and Lawler III (2006), cite as relevant.

2.4.1. THE IMPACT OF EMPLOYEE VOICE WHEN EMBEDDED WITHIN THE ORGANISATION

Cox, Zagelmeyer and Marchington (2006) consider what they term the 'embeddedness' of employee involvement and participation (EIP) mechanisms in organisations, which would include voice with its all-embracing definition used herein. They define 'embeddedness' as how extensively and thoroughly EIP has permeated throughout the organisation and how strategically important it is considered by the management. In fact they consider that to be effective, employee involvement and participation should be embedded within the strategic management of the organisation. For instance, embeddedness could be evaluated by how regularly team briefings are held and whether problem-solving teams are currently operating. They acknowledge, as do many other writers on the subject, that EIP, including employee voice, is a broad church covering many techniques with often 'elastic' definitions and offering varying degrees of 'employee power' (p.251). Based on data extracted from the 1998 UK Workplace Employee Relations Survey, Cox, Zagelmeyer and Marchington (2006) sought to evaluate whether the embeddedness of EIP significantly affected the degree of commitment of employees and their job satisfaction rating. Embeddedness was measured by the number and depth of EIP practices in operation at the same time; depth being measured by the frequency of interactions amongst other factors (pp.255-256). They found that a combination of EIP practices (such as the all-embracing form of voice) has a positive effect on employee's commitment to the organisation and their job satisfaction; whereas the results when considering the application of single EIP practices used in isolation was less positive (pp.258-259). Cox, Zagelmeyer and Marchington (2006) also found when studying the data on depth of EIP that it was important to ensure that EIP practices were not allowed to slip into disuse by, for example, interactions being regularly postponed or aborted. The avoidance of this would be a measure of how embedded EIP was in an organisation.

As there is a general acceptance that the definitions of these various forms of EIP are imprecise and even ambiguous, there is a strongly held view that the concept of EIP may well be best studied by considering to what degree employees can be made aware of what is happening, or better still what is about to happen, in their place of work and how they may be able to get involved in the decision making process there, especially taking into account the findings of Cox, Zagelmeyer and Marchington (2006) that EIP is most effective when applied broadly and in depth. Marchington (1992) encapsulates this in his well known Marchington's Escalator. Here Marchington illustrates diagrammatically, ascending step by step, what he terms the 'degree' of EIP that could be made open to employees (p.24).



Here, Marchington (1992) shows how any EIP scheme should take into account the degree of involvement intended to be offered to the employees; the title of the scheme being merely indicative of this.

The various degrees of EIP range from:

- simply informing employees after the event or decision.
- having meaningful dialogue with employees after the event.
- consulting to gain the views of employees before the event.
- making any decision a joint decision between the management and the employees as far as possible;
- or even allowing the employees to make decisions concerning their workplace.

Marchington (1992) goes on to list and define four other categories of EIP along with the above ‘degree’ which schemes need to take into account (p.24):

Degree (how much employees influence decisions)

Level (whether EIP occurs at individual, department or enterprise level)

Form (whether EIP is direct. i.e. with the individual)

(whether EIP is indirect through an intermediary, such as a trade union)

(whether EIP is financial, such as a profit sharing scheme)

Range (what type of subject can be brought into the participatory process)

Armstrong (2001) also offers similar definitions of degrees of EIP by developing a “Scale of participation”. This is clearly based on Marchington’s Escalator with five step by step degrees of participation, being:

- 1) “management decides unilaterally”
- 2) “management communicates decision to employees”

- 3) "management consults employees before making final decision"
- 4) "management joins with employees in making decisions"
- 5) "employees decide unilaterally"

He makes the point that as a participatory scheme moves from step 1 to step 5, the degree to which the management prerogative is preserved is reduced and the degree to which employees are involved is increased (p.795).

2.4.2. THE VOICE OF EMPLOYEES WITHIN SMALL TO MEDIUM ENTERPRISES

Here, a small to medium enterprise is defined as an organisation with fewer than 250 employees, as prescribed by European Law.

To a large extent human resource management (HRM) and industrial relations research has concentrated on the larger companies, neglecting SMEs. As Wilkinson (1999) points out, this flies in the face of current projections that SME companies will be the major contributors to economic growth in the UK. (p.206) He also argues that the literature categorises SMEs in one of two ways; positively or negatively. The positive view of SMEs is that of companies with harmonious relationships, good human relations, minimal bureaucracy and a family atmosphere. The alternative negative point of view being of companies with conflict hiding under the surface, dictatorial management with little opportunity for employees to get involved in the running of the company, and lack of procedural control (pp.207-208). Wilkinson (1999) takes the view that few SMEs give a high priority status to human resource management, often due to a lack of specialist knowledge being available to them. Human resource issues only come to the fore in times of conflict when a lack of contingency planning becomes all too apparent (p.209). Generally speaking the atmosphere in most SMEs is to "get the product out of the door" and this can lead to a marked reluctance to accept holdups in production for essential training purposes. Wilkinson (1999) also sees the fact that trade union membership and recognition is less common in SMEs than in larger organisations, a relevant factor in the character of SMEs (p.210). Without representative communication paths, SMEs tend to have an open communication philosophy and often use informal communication methods such as an owner manager talking to an employee about another "problem employee" who in turn talks to this employee, in effect on behalf of the management. Wilkinson (1999) argues that this lack of direct contact can lead to HR problems (p.211). However, on the other hand, he does concede that being an SME does encourage open communication which contributes to the "family atmosphere" and can build up trust of the management in the employees. He also argues that owner managers in SMEs see management prerogative as a right since they effectively created the company, and a

right not to be challenged. Their attitude can be “what is good for the firm is good for the employees” (pp.209-210).

Wilkinson (1999) does however see this informal approach changing (p.212) since many SMEs form part of the supply chain for larger organisations. He sees them being influenced to take up the employee involvement and participation (EIP) practices of their clients, although probably at the lower end of the Marchington escalator, i.e. the management providing information to do with their work (pp.213-214). He notes that since the late 1990s, the management of SMEs have been starting new initiatives such as self-management, team working, job rotation, communication strategies and employee involvement, including in the engineering sector. He argues that there is in fact some evidence that after SMEs have adopted these practices, they are then taken up by larger firms; the reverse of the expected procedure. Wilkinson (1999) argues that the reason for this is that it is easier for SMEs to introduce these schemes due to their size and therefore fewer people to convince and get committed to the concept, than in a larger organisation with a divergence of views (pp.212-213). He also makes the point that some researchers have found that SMEs who have embraced modern HR practices, have experienced a reduction in employee satisfaction as their implementation has become more formal. In summary, Wilkinson (1999) argues that SMEs have a distinctive approach to industrial relations with roots that go far beyond their size including such factors as their dependence on key customers and the type of ownership (p.214).

In the 1990s a survey of 560 organisations in Leicestershire was conducted by Bacon, Ackers et al. (1996), 229 of which were SMEs and all were companies which were adopting new management practices such as team working and quality task forces and who had maintained their practice after the initial introduction and furthermore had achieved positive operational outcomes. The SMEs were thus small companies epitomising the positive view of SMEs rather than the negative, sometimes called the “Bleak House”, image of an SME (p.83). 30 of the SMEs were surveyed further to check against overclaiming. Finally, 13 were selected to be surveyed in more depth to ascertain what new management techniques they were using. The most widely used practices were devolved management, job flexibility, team working and team briefings (pp.87-88). In the case of an engineering company, one of the 13, the changes introduced were EIP, communication practices and flexible working (p.91). When the organisational culture in the SMEs was addressed, the question of formality or informality was covered as had been by Wilkinson (1999). Bacon, Ackers et al. (1996) noted that previous research had found a tendency to formalise HR procedures in the SMEs, whereas large companies were drifting away from formalisation. However they did not

consider that this could be due to growth in the SMEs which Wilkinson (1999) had argued could be a factor. They did however note that these formal procedures were being introduced in the SMEs alongside the expected overall informal culture (p.90). In their survey Bacon, Ackers et al. (1996) found that managers in the SMEs felt that they had insufficient time to formalise procedures and used informal communication with employees to express what they expected would be gained from the managerial changes (p.92). They also found that SMEs were more active in promoting team working than larger companies, or at least its concept, even if the teams or groupings were informal (p.93). In the engineering company surveyed, a new manager who had been professionally trained introduced a flatter management structure and employee involvement procedures along with the necessary training (p.96). In their overall survey, they also found that those SMEs most resistant to change were those still in family ownership and without professional managers (p.97). Maybe the most telling and final comment from Bacon, Ackers et al. (1996) was that “large organisations have much to learn from the informal nature of change in small businesses (p.98).

It is widely accepted that HRM practices in SME companies tend to be of an informal nature; whereas in larger organisations, the reverse is true. However, as SME companies grow their HRM practices are likely to move on to a more formal basis. Kotey and Slade (2005) go further in arguing that during this progression, managers are the last group to embrace formal procedures. They go on to warn however that to therefore start training managers in formal procedures may destroy the basic flexibility inherent in SME companies whose larger clients expect and require them to react to changing circumstances much faster than they themselves are capable of (p.37).

The operation of high performance work systems in SMEs is examined by (Drummond and Stone (2007). Using the SME section of the 2004 Sunday Times “Best Small Companies to Work For” publication, they explored employee relations in the organisations which were listed and their use of a high performance work system (HPWS) (p.192). High performance work systems were defined as “work practices that are deliberately introduced with the purpose of improving business performance” or alternatively as “improvements in ability, motivation and opportunity to participate which result in higher productivity and better overall organisational performance” (p.193). HPWS’s consist of ‘bundles’ of HRM practices working together to a common purpose and thus have a greater effect than each would have operating separately (p.192). Conventionally 35 HRM practices are grouped into three ‘bundles’ or areas of practice; the first and last being relevant to EIP practice (p.193):

- 1) employee involvement, self-managing teams, quality circles, sharing company information. (*constituents of all-embracing employee voice*).
- 2) HRM practices such as recruitment, appraisals and mentoring.
- 3) financial participation, family friendly policies, job rotation, flexible working.

From the Sunday Times list, Drummond and Stone (2007) surveyed 30 highly successful UK SMEs (p.193). This consisted of pre-interview questionnaires followed by in-depth interviews, mainly with owner managers (p.194). The respondents were universally very positive about the outcomes accruing from a HPWS. Many interviewees felt the system had allowed them to outclass other companies in the field by taking advantage of the enthusiasm and creative talents of their employees (pp.195-196). They believed in cultivating creative solutions to operational problems from the workforce, with consequent rewards, accepting that they were the best people to decide on the most appropriate solutions, rather than the management. Skills development was quoted as playing a big part in their success and in particular 'soft' skills such as team working and effective communication. In fact, in some cases the training was initiated as a request from the committed employees themselves. Employee participation in problem solving project teams was also seen as an effective way of involving employees and enhancing their experience and skills base (p.198). Respondents saw regular and effective communication between managers and workers as vital, often aided by a flat organisational structure and autonomy (p.196). All these measures demanded and promoted a high degree of trust between the management and employees from which a well motivated and committed workforce had emerged (p.195); indeed a "phenomenally engaged" workforce (p.197). Although the companies were clearly putting the human aspects of management to the fore in their relations with the workforce, they were clearly doing so with operational outcomes in mind, as one CEO put it "its' not a kibbutz" (p.196).

In summary, Drummond and Stone (2007) argue that in these successful SMEs the philosophy of high performance work systems and their adherent culture is so synonymous with them that it personifies the fundamental character of the companies (p.196). They also argue that the 'bundles' comprising the HPWS must form a coherent mix for the whole system to be effective, even though the SMEs may not recognise the mix of bundles as a single identifiable system (p.202). In addition they point out that the actual bundles must be, and in these companies are, chosen to suit the particular needs of the individual company. They argue that it is a fallacy to think of a HPWS as a defined system that can be applied to any company whatever its' nature. Drummond and Stone (2007) argue that the actual 'bundles' must be chosen to suit the requirements of each company; there is no "one size fits

all” solution. Moreover, the mix of ‘bundles’ and their individual practices should be allowed and encouraged to evolve over time, yet remain coherent, to reflect the inevitable changes occurring in an organisation keeping up with market trends (p.200).

When Drummond and Stone (2007) explored the operation of high performance work systems (HPWSs), they saw these operating in an environment using self-managing teams. Clearly such teams must also be high performance teams (HPTs) which are teams exclusively committed to common goals with high levels of innovation resulting in outstanding outcomes. The implementation of such teams in UK SMEs is examined by Castka, et al. (2001) by reviewing the literature on the subject. They also conducted a case study of a UK engineering SME. From the former they collated the elements which contribute to the successful implementation of HPTs and from the latter, they make recommendations for SMEs about to introduce HPTs. The elements required for HPTs are divided up into two categories by Castka, et al. (2001); ‘System Factor’s and ‘Human Factors’ (p.128). They consider that four system factors and three human factors are critical for the successful implementation of HPTs, these being:

System Factors:

Organisational Impact (p.127)

:- The organisation must support team empowerment, innovation and open communication. The organisation must also monitor team performance and have a reward and appraisal system.

Defined Focus (p.127-128)

:- The team must have a well defined purpose(s) and goal(s) along with a participatory management culture, designed to disseminate knowledge. At the same time, the team’s authority must have clearly defined boundaries.

Alignment and Interaction with External Entities (p.128)

:- The team must be outward looking, co-ordinating effectively with other teams, managers, suppliers, and depending on the role of the team; customers.

Measures of performance (129-130)

:- The performance of both individual team members and the team as a whole must be measurable and the criteria for measurement decided ahead of operations, possibly designed by the team as a form of empowerment. Measurement is essential so that the team can continually check their performance.

Human Factors:

Knowledge and Skills (p.129)

:- Team members need training in task skills but also in dealing with conflict, team working, communication, improvement and problem solving skills.

Need of the Individual (p.129)

:- Individuals need to know their performance as well as that of the team. Empowering the individual empowers the team. For team working to be effective, team members need to know each others' needs and aspirations.

Group Culture (pp.128-129)

:- HPTs demand a clearly apparent team culture embracing empowerment, a collective understanding, enthusiastic participation, dedication to team objectives, mutual trust, respect and support coupled with open communication. In addition, an acceptance that "learning by mistakes" is a feature in the accumulation of knowledge and that all members may, when appropriate, take on a leadership mantle; what Castka, et al. (2001) term "distributed leadership".

From their single case study research, Castka, et al. (2001) argue that SMEs wishing to implement high performance teamwork, should adopt a four point plan consisting of (pp.132-133):

- Assess whether the seven system and human factors contributing to HPTs, described previously, are being met currently.
- Having analysed the findings, develop plans to comply with each factor.
- Draw up development plans for individual team members, teams and the organisation as a whole.
- Implement the development plans.

It is argued by Castka, et al. (2001) that this four point plan also serves as a vehicle to rejuvenate team performance in UK SMEs (p.133).

One of the human factors listed by Castka, et al. (2001) was 'knowledge and skills' referring to the need for employees to be trained not only in operational skills, but also in 'softer' skills such as problem solving skills. In effect, they are arguing that SMEs need to be learning organisations. This is amplified by Kitching (2007) who, having undertaken a telephone survey of 1005 SMEs followed up by interviewing 50 employers, argues that the emphasis in SMEs is for learning, originated by the employee, rather than external training initiated by the employer. The employers surveyed came from a variety of sectors and employed between 2-60 staff and were located in Greater London and South Yorkshire (p.45). The distinctive culture of SMEs and its effect on the learning process is also covered by Anderson and Boocock (2002), who concur with Kitching (2007) that learning practices associated with large organisations are inappropriate for SMEs. Their findings are based on a comprehensive review of the published research on organisational learning and a case study of six diverse companies with less than 50 employees primarily related to their learning processes to do with their ability to operate internationally. However, their findings and conclusions are considered relevant for SMEs in general, whether operating internationally or not (pp.11-12).

Anderson and Boocock (2002) divide the learning process into two categories, individual learning and organisational learning, along with their progressive sub-categories. Individual learning may take the form of 'surface learning' which is for immediate use and offers no potential for further development. 'Assimilative learning' is designed to influence behaviour step by step in the course of meeting operational goals. The terms 'single-loop' or 'adaptive learning' are also used for this process. The final stage of individual learning is termed 'generative' or 'double-loop' learning and involves standing back from the problem and reflecting prior to embarking on any major organisational change (p.7). 'Organisational learning', or the 'learning organisation', is the accumulation of all the individual learning processes which are shared and embedded throughout the organisation. Learned social interaction skills are however more difficult to share than operational skills (pp.8-9). Based on their review of the literature, Anderson and Boocock (2002) argue that double-loop learning is rarely appropriate for SMEs because internal communication is mainly verbal and informal and a 'family' atmosphere is likely to prevail (p.11). They also found from their review of previous research and published literature that what training is conducted in SMEs tends to be informal and designed to meet short term needs, because owner managers value their independence so much and are reluctant to bring in external help, even in a

critical situation. Finally, Anderson and Boocock (2002) argue that SMEs must resist the urge to simply translate practices such as double-loop learning, which they see operating in large organisations, into small company versions (p.20).

2.4.3. THE VOICE OF EMPLOYEES WITHIN LARGE/MULTINATIONAL ENTERPRISES (MNEs)

VOICE MECHANISMS IN TEAM WORKING ENVIRONMENTS

THE IMPACT ON TRADITIONAL SKILLS:

Teams are now the basic organisational unit in most large enterprises. In the manufacturing sector, the introduction of team working has meant the traditional responsibilities being broadened. On the positive side this has meant, with training, enhanced knowledge and skills for employees. On the other hand, some employees may feel that the mix of skills inherent in their particular craft or trade have been lost through dilution, which means that there could be a tendency for skilled workers to have a negative response to team working whilst unskilled or semi-skilled workers would welcome it (Bacon and Blyton, 2003). This is a situation which could be experienced by process-based manufacturing organisations, such as in the chemical or metal producing sectors, which employ skilled maintenance workers and unskilled or semi-skilled process workers. British Steel (now absorbed by Tata Steel) was a case in point. The British Steel Shotton plant introduced team working in the 1990s. This involved the elimination of traditional maintenance craft titles such as fitter and welder and the absorption of some previous craft/trade workers into process-based production teams, along with the necessary training. Other craft/trade workers were formed into broader based teams. By the end of the 1990s Bacon and Blyton (2003) conducted a survey on the reaction of employees to team working. The results were mainly positive with over 70% feeling their job was more skilled than before the inception of team working; more than 60% feeling their job was now more varied and only 10% feeling their job was less varied. However, most felt their work load had risen, revealing evidence that work intensification had occurred. There was also evidence that job satisfaction had increased, including employees being free to give voice over working methods. Overall, Bacon and Blyton (2003) argue that the introduction of team working had resulted in conceptions of increased skill, variety and influence by employees. They also argued that the high job satisfaction levels of the craft/trade employees, even though they had lost their craft status and titles, was due to them being formed into broader-based multi-skilled maintenance teams. Other craft/trade employees who had been moved into process-based production teams also expressed job satisfaction, but mainly because they had been appointed team leaders and as such earned some financial benefit. Dissatisfaction among

some of the more senior process workers was noted due to team leaders being appointed from craft/trade employees. Whilst employees were generally in favour of team working, it had not been well-received by all groups with the lower grades feeling that team working provided less benefit for them than for the higher grades. Taking up this point, Bacon and Blyton (2003) argue that any existing grading structure must be carefully taken into account when introducing team working so that all groups see themselves able to benefit from the change of work organisation (p.27).

LEADING SELF-MANAGED TEAMS:

Self-managed teams, a progression from conventional team working, are characterised by having a high degree of autonomy including controlling the allocation of tasks and even where practical, control of the pace of working. Research suggests that the possible outcomes from such groupings include increased employee satisfaction and motivation, socialisation in the workplace and learning opportunities, as well as increased productivity. However, the obvious key feature of these teams is the lack of a conventional manager or supervisor. To lead, as against manage or supervise, such a team requires a fundamentally different approach from that in a command and control organisation. The leader is less involved in the day to day operation of the team, indeed in some cases the role of the team leader is rotated amongst its members. The leader functions more as a facilitator and coach and the team as a learning organisation (Elloy, 2005).

The effectiveness of the leadership in an American non-unionised paper mill which had been using self-managed teams since it was founded a year earlier was studied by Elloy (2005). He evaluated the impact of a particular style of leadership, often known as the 'superleader' style, on the attitude of team members to their roles and to the organisation. The superleader style consists of six leadership behaviours (p.122):

- 1) The superleader encourages high levels of team performance.
- 2) The superleader encourages self-evaluation by team members.
- 3) The superleader encourages team members to be self-critical.
- 4) The superleader promotes group outcomes to assist team members to set their individual goals.
- 5) The superleader encourages team member's expectations to engender high expectations for the team as a whole.
- 6) The superleader encourages the team to first rehearse new tasks.

He found that the levels of job satisfaction and commitment to the organisation by members of self-managed teams were directly associated with this style of leadership. In addition this behaviour pattern positively reflected on levels of job satisfaction, commitment and self-esteem in the teams. Elloy (2005) argues that superleader behaviours along with self-managed teams result in positive outcomes for the organisation, but that those promoting the introduction of such teams must realise that they require a specific style of leadership and must be prepared to train individuals to acquire and develop superleader behaviour skill sets.

EMPLOYEE REPRESENTATION

THE ROLE OF TRADE UNIONS IN PARTNERSHIP ARRANGEMENTS AND OTHER EIP PRACTICES:

Trade union membership and influence has been declining in the UK since the 1980s especially in the private sector. The decline in membership has been partly attributed to the emergence of company unions, thus diminishing the collective bargaining power of the unions. At the same time managements had been trying to restrict union influence on pay and conditions and avoid negotiating over work organisation, intensity, or ways of working. This decline of union membership has been most apparent in small organisations but union recognition and influence has also declined markedly in large manufacturing enterprises. In the 1990s the term 'partnership' came into vogue meaning a cooperative approach between employers and unions which the unions saw as their only option to maintain influence in the workplace. After the labour government came to power in 1997, the partnership concept was boosted by the "Partnership at Work Fund" set up to finance projects designed to improve partnership in the workplace and around the same time the Trades Union Congress (TUC) acknowledged the failure of union confrontational policies with management (Terry, 2003).

The union reaction at local level to the introduction of EIP practices such as voice was not necessarily conciliatory. Four possible reactions are suggested by Bacon and Blyton (2004) with their downsides (p.753):

- 1) Cooperative engagement.

Moderate unions may take on the mantle of the management's agenda to the detriment of the employee's interest.

- 2) Militant opposition.

Union branches with left wing political leadership may prevent employees engaging with the management in restructuring the organisation and defend the status quo.

3) Moderate opposition.

Moderate union branches which initially cooperated with restructuring may abruptly change and oppose changes when they feel that the expected benefits become one-sided in favour of the management.

4) Militant engagement.

Militant union branches may still cooperate actively with management in restructuring if they can convince their membership that it does not involve capitulating to the management.

Union reaction to change may be both complex and varied. In the case of a restructuring exercise carried out at British Steel on Teesside, Bacon and Blyton (2004) found that cooperative engagement was in evidence in one of the beam mills whereas militant opposition was shown in another beam mill. At the same time, the attitude of blast furnace employees was described as militant engagement. Bacon and Blyton (2004) argue that local issues always contribute to the union reaction. In the case of the Teesside blast furnace staff, they realised their vulnerability due to there being only one blast furnace at the plant which meant that they were relying on management's support when the time came for a shutdown for relining. In effect the union's cooperation was a tactical decision. The differing approaches at the two adjacent beam mills were argued to be due to the ideology of the particular branch and their local leadership, but even then conditioned by pragmatic rational choices.

THE IMPACT OF VOICE PRACTICES ON INNOVATION

THE MANAGEMENT OF CHANGE:

Change can be initiated by either top down communication processes with the management exhorting acceptance by the workforce or by bottom up communication where ideas or ways of implementing change are garnered from the voice and tacit experience of the workforce; neither approach being mutually exclusive. The former method is termed 'programmatic implementation' by Russ (2008) and the latter, 'participatory implementation'.

He stresses that communication is key to success in change management. Whilst programmatic implementation involves presentations, meetings, memos, newsletters and the like with the objective of forestalling any potential challenges to the preconceived change or changes, to achieve compliance; participatory implementation invites input from those likely to be affected and empowers them to affect the way the change(s) is to be made. Although the proposed change(s) may emanate from the management, the participatory method gives

employees a voice during the design and decision making stages of the change mechanism with the aim of achieving consensus and support. The programmatic method may communicate with the entire workforce but may communicate different messages to different groups to ensure that the message is relevant to their roles and interests. Alternatively the communication may be on a 'need to know' basis. On the other hand, the participatory approach is normally based on dialogue using forums, working groups or teams to elicit views at the various stages of implementation as well as informal conversations. Russ (2008) argues that whilst the programmatic approach may seem to be hierarchical, inflexible, and not so welcoming for comments, the participatory approach can be prone to losing precision as the original intension of the proposed change is blurred due to the many responses obtained from many actors with different roles and indeed different perspectives and reactions to the change. He also argues that further research is warranted to study the efficacy of the two approaches which hopefully would include how effective each communicative method is in bringing to the fore the fact that the original change concept was basically flawed, a possibility not covered by him and particularly relevant to the programmatic approach.

Before any attempt is made to introduce change into an organisation, the possible barriers to change need to be established, particularly in a large organisation where the barriers may be numerous and complex. In a study of how to instigate organisational change and empowerment in the UK construction sector, Dainty, Bryman and Price (2002) argue that it is essential that any attempt to institute change must be founded on a carefully selected appropriate implementation mechanism. Here, the project-based structure of the construction sector being a particular factor to be taken into account. They advocate the participatory approach but that before instituting change mechanisms, the sector must be first restructured away from rigid hierarchical and bureaucratic ways of working into organisations more conducive to the participatory approach and more project team based with regard to responsibility. In addition, support for each empowered team must be made available from the onset to ensure that commitment from the teams does not wane. Dainty, Bryman and Price (2002) also argue that even with the peculiar challenges associated with the construction industry, with proper preparation, significant operational advantages are available to the sector. In the public sector, the participatory approach is also advocated by O'Brien (2002) as against the programmatic top-down approach. She argues that employee participation is the most effective management tool to gain acceptance of organisational change. In a study of a large Irish public sector organisation, Social Welfare Services (SWS), she found that using the participatory approach, staff were more receptive to the change process as a consequence of accepting the supporting information provided. However, this

encouraged the staff to seek more involvement in the decision making process and better communication. Whilst O'Brien (2002) argues that public sector organisations have much to gain from the participatory approach to change management, she warns that the difficulties of implementing direct participation and the realigning of relationships should not be underestimated, but that the result should be a more adaptive to change organisation in the long run.

2.4.4. EXTERNAL INFLUENCES ON AN ORGANISATION'S STANCE ON VOICE

How the introduction of HRM practices in SMEs is influenced by the pressures from major customers is considered by Bacon and Hoque (2005). They analysed data from the 1998 UK Workplace Employee Relations Survey. (p.1981) and categorised the factors possibly influencing the adoption of HRM practices into internal and external factors. The external factors included the influence of major customers and the association with bodies such as chambers of commerce (p.1991). Bacon and Hoque (2005) also put forward the case that major customers had a strong influence on SME managements in influencing them to adopt contemporary managerial practices; much more than bodies such as employers' associations which only have an advisory role (p.1990).

The influence of multinational parent companies on the EIP practices of subsidiary companies is examined by Lumley and Misra (1994). Although the subsidiary companies studied were not SMEs, the results are still considered to have some relevance to this research project since they cover the influence that an external commercially connected organisation may have on the EIP, including employee voice, practices of another, to some extent, subservient organisation. In their study, Lumley and Misra (1994) examined the influence that two UK multinational companies had on their Indian subsidiaries with regard to their use of EIP mechanisms. Both UK organisations had a long history of enabling EIP, but neither sought to impose their participatory policies on their subsidiary companies. Lumley and Misra (1994) argue that their only interest in the EIP practices being carried out in their subsidiaries would be if it encroached negatively on business performance (p.646). In addition they found that what influence the UK parent companies brought to bear were indirect controls such as 'auto-controls' where the subsidiaries' management imposed restrictions on themselves based on what they perceived as their limits of autonomy (pp.631-632). This situation can be considered analogous to the relationship between an SME supplier company and a larger customer, where the customer is really only going to wish to influence HR practices if they feel that they are contributing to negative outcomes such as extended deliveries or quality issues. The degree to which an MNE dictates and controls the HRM practices of its subsidiary companies can play a significant part in the development of

such practices globally, including influencing the practices in organisations in its host countries which are not part of the MNE. To date there has been little research into how HRM practice has evolved in host countries due to the influences of MNEs. Generally speaking, MNEs based in countries with a liberal market economy, such as the USA, tend to impose some form of centralised control over HR policy and practices in their global subsidiaries; whereas MNEs based in countries with a coordinated market economy, such as Germany, tend to be less centralised and rely on the statutory obligations associated from their mother country to offer an adequate measure of control. Japanese MNEs are inclined to use indirect control by placing Japanese nationals, steeped in Japanese HR practices, in key positions in their subsidiary companies (Femer, et al., 2011).

This analysis of the influence that MNEs have on their subsidiary company's HR practices was basically confirmed by Femer, et al. (2011) in an extensive study of the amount of discretion given by foreign MNEs in the UK to their subsidiaries. They also found that where an intermediate regional headquarters exists, such as a European divisional authority, greater control is afforded to the MNE, but made sensitive to local conditions by the intermediate body 'fine tuning' the control of HR practices. Similarly, where some form of HRM international policy making body has been set up, with representatives from global subsidiaries, this acts as a "social control" mechanism for ensuring commonality and control, but with awareness of local conditions and can lead to subsidiary companies influencing corporate policies. Femer, et al. (2011) also found that the level of control from the MNE varied with the area of HR policy. Such matters as union recognition were considered a local issue with discretion given to the subsidiary company. Employee participation and involvement practices such as voice were also considered a local issue, but operational performance was treated as a corporate issue under the control of the MNE headquarters. Femer, et al. (2011) argue that with the large number of subsidiaries of US MNEs in the UK, with their low level of discretionary powers, their presence has significantly influenced the shaping of HR practices in the country. They also argue that where networking of HR personnel within an MNE exists, this also restricts the discretionary powers of the subsidiaries. Finally, they argue that further research is needed, in particular to study the discretion afforded to MNE subsidiaries in other host countries. As organisations expand and assume a global presence, institutional theory would suggest that their international companies would acquire at least some of the operational practices associated with their host nations. Thus it might be expected that MNEs would have differing ways of working, including HRM practices, in their world-wide companies. On the other hand, MNEs may wish to have operational consistency throughout their organisation, but subsidiaries of MNEs may well experience pressure from their employees to adopt the practices of the country in which

they operate; a dichotomy known as institutional duality. What research has been done shows that MNEs, certainly when establishing themselves in a country, have had to adapt their HRM practices to that of the host although over time it is possible that they may endeavour to make changes to conform to their own HRM policy. This is a subject ripe for further research and is relevant to this research project (Poutsma, Ligthart and Veersma, 2006).

When the evolution of employee involvement and participation (EIP), including voice, is being considered, its practice in Japan inevitably becomes central to any discussion or argument. This follows after the post second world war period in the UK when the industrial practices of the then mighty United States were held up as the model to follow with its record of high output and 'Taylorist' attitudes. Later the industrial relations systems developed in Sweden with its 'softer' more 'human' approach came to prominence, followed by the West German unionised system, but all were eventually replaced as the sought after model by the Japanese system of employee loyalty, employee contribution and the emphasis on product quality (Hall, 1985, p.17). However doubts were frequently aired as to the 'exportability' of the Japanese way of working to the rest of the world. Many saw the effectiveness of the Japanese systems of employee involvement and commitment as highly dependent on the unique cultural and philosophical nature of Japanese society and argued that the more individualistic nature of society in other parts of the world rendered such systems inoperable. Nevertheless it was conceded that the more operational tenets of the overall Japanese system such as the just-in-time (JIT) system were eminently transferable because they did not rely on the cultural attributes of Japanese society. In fact some of these operational systems were copied from American practice by the Japanese (Grint, 1993, p.15). As Japanese companies established overseas subsidiaries, either by taking over existing plants, or creating new companies, they brought with them Japanese style unitarist HRM practices; employee voice and other EIP practices being amongst them. The transformation of foreign companies by the Japanese was often dramatic. Such striking changes are described by Lewis (1989) when a British manufacturing company was taken over by a Japanese organisation. Before the takeover in the 1980s the British company was riven by strikes, high labour turnover, indiscipline, absenteeism and above all, a total collapse of trust between the employees and management. Additionally, the British management had five trade unions to contend with when negotiating. The Japanese negotiated a single union and no strike deal, similar to the Japanese 'Company Union' arrangement along with a company employees' board whose remit included ensuring "full and meaningful involvement of all employees in the company's plans and activities". Lewis (1989) argues that the Japanese management introduced the employee's board with its participatory credentials as a

symbolic gesture of its unitarist intentions, along with other practical symbols such as company uniform jackets, open managerial offices and a single status canteen. It is however accepted that operational benefits did also ensue with the board operating as a means of conflict prevention as well as an absence of industrial disputes, lower absenteeism and labour turnover along with increased productivity, but how much of these outcomes could be laid at the door of participatory practice was unproven. At this time, the 1980s, Lewis (1989) argues that only time will tell if these advances constitute a permanent change in industrial relations with EIP practices acting as a catalyst for change.

2.4.5. THE INFLUENCE OF CLIENTS ON SUPPLIER COMPANIES' STANCE ON VOICE

As already put forward in section 2.4.4., Bacon and Hoque (2005) consider that major customers have a strong influence on SME managements in influencing them to adopt contemporary managerial practices, including giving voice to their employees. They observed major customers frequently ran supplier development programmes with the aim of ensuring an uninterrupted source of quality product. Bacon and Hoque (2005) do however acknowledge the alternative view that customers simply push SMEs to reduce costs and adopt 'hard' HR policies but argue that this is unrepresentative of the current prevailing attitudes (p.1981). On the other hand, a survey carried out by Drummond and Stone (2007) suggested that few very successful SMEs recounted any external influence from customers, contrary to the findings of Bacon and Hoque (2005).

When Castka, et al. (2001) identified the elements required for successful high performance teams, they listed among the system factors, 'alignment and interaction with external entities' (p.128). They included customers and suppliers within this category. With SMEs, their customers and indeed their suppliers are quite likely to be larger than themselves. It is also possible that a small subsidiary of a larger parent company may act as an SME. Thus external influencers could be any or all of these. The influence of a larger organisation on a smaller supplier SME is relevant to this research project and in particular its influence on the EIP practices of the smaller organisation.

In contrast to an "arms length" approach, Winfield and Hay (1997) describe the alternative partnership approach between suppliers and customers as epitomised by the way Toyota deal with their supply chain and evaluate how Toyota influence their HR practices. To do this they compared the influences brought to bear on 11 Toyota suppliers with 123 other regional companies who were suppliers to organisations other than Toyota, using postal surveys. The aim was to assess the influence customers had on the relationships and views between the employees and management in the supplier companies (p.459). Winfield and Hay (1997)

describe how once a company becomes a supplier to Toyota they are expected and helped to adopt not only the Toyota production methodology, but also are directed towards the social or HR practices upheld by Toyota (p.457). The aim is to encourage the suppliers to adhere to HRM policies similar to Toyota's designed to optimise employee voice and commitment (p.459). One feature which came to light in the comparative case study was that Toyota suppliers were encouraged to visit frequently but especially shop floor and first level supervisors; whereas the suppliers to other companies tended to send senior managers on such visits. This small difference was designed to reinforce Toyota's policy of involving the shop floor in the decision making process and recognising the value of their experience (p.462). Winfield and Hay (1997) argue that a large well known and respected client can be seen as having a major interest in a supplier's wellbeing and future prosperity and a source of help in implementing change especially in coping with the current demands for more involvement from the workforce (p.464). In his book "The Toyota Way", Liker (2004) elaborates further on the power dynamics between Toyota and its suppliers. This is encapsulated in the 11th of the 14 Toyota Way principles which is "to respect your extended network of partners and suppliers by challenging them and helping them improve". Toyota sees this being achieved by:

- Have respect for your partners and suppliers and treat them as an extension of your business.
- Challenge your outside business partners to grow and develop. It shows that you value them. Set challenging targets and assist your partners in achieving them (p.40).

This however has not always been the attitude of Toyota. Liker (2004) argues that Toyota has over the years changed its management style from a punitive approach to a more supportive style having found that the punitive way did not work (p.211). The present day Toyota culture is one of involving people in continuous improvement, stimulated by a preponderance of suggestions voiced by employees working in cells and teams (p.298). Toyota argue that employees are their most valuable resource and see them as "analysts and problem solvers" (p.145). Toyota's policy is to inculcate this approach into all their major suppliers with the aim of providing a reliable supply chain of quality products. To this end, Toyota founded Toyota Supplier Support Centres on an international basis which advises suppliers on the implementation of the Toyota Production System (pp.210-211). Importantly, and relevant to this research, the advice is not exclusively concerned with operational matters; the Toyota HR department also assist suppliers in acquiring the softer social skills operating in Toyota plants (p.213).

It is widely acknowledged that the dominance of the Japanese car producers acquired in the 1980s, in particular over its US multinational rivals, has been in large part due to their management of supply chains. It is also true to say that the Japanese producers all followed a similar concept; that of the Toyota Production System. Furthermore, the fundamentals of this system were soon adopted by most other large volume car producers' world-wide and indeed manufacturing organisations from other sectors. The automobile assembly industry is particularly dependent on its supply chain because all have adopted a form of the Toyota Production System which operates on a just-in-time principle (JIT) where parts from suppliers are not stocked but are delivered from the supplier just before required for assembly. An additional feature of the Toyota system is that assembly is no longer operated on a batch production system; that is a batch of vehicles with the same specification. Nowadays individual vehicles are built to order to meet the specifications of the individual customer. This, along with the JIT system, makes the reliability of supply even more critical (Monden, 1998). Whilst many organisations in the western world have relied on formal onerous contractual obligations, along with legal sanctions and penalties, to manage their supply chain, those using the Toyota system develop mutually beneficial relationships with fewer suppliers based on informal commitment and mutual trust (Lambrechts, Taillieu and Sips, 2010).

The Volvo plant in Belgium is an example of a car assembler who changed from a legalistic relationship with its suppliers to a partnership arrangement based on the Toyota system after a bad experience due to strikes at its suppliers which resulted in a total shutdown of the plant since they had no components stock due to the JIT system. Firstly a Suppliers Team Volvo Cars forum (STVC) was formed and from that the Suppliers Team Volvo Cars-HRM forum (STVC-HRM), recognising the criticality of their suppliers having a stable collaborative, consensual relationship with their employees, following the Toyota model. All Volvo suppliers are members, represented by their HR staff with Volvo HR personnel acting as facilitators. As all members are dependent on each other being reliable suppliers, they meet to discuss any outstanding or potential HRM issues they might have and seek to resolve them by discussion, and if necessary, compromise with the 'greater good' in mind. Discussion tends to be steered away from operational issues by the facilitator and towards general HRM themes as advocated by the participative nature of the Toyota system (Lambrechts, Taillieu and Sips, 2010). Lambrechts, Taillieu and Sips (2010) argue that the Volvo supplier forum has succeeded in managing their HRM issues collectively and that high levels of supplier interdependency could not have been managed by formal contracts and procedures and so it is imperative that suppliers develop a shared non-confrontational HRM policy. They also argue that the experience at Volvo shows that the Toyota model is the one to follow but that

more research could be considered to study the actual relationships and collaboration issues involved.

2.5. THE VOICE OF EMPLOYEES AND ITS IMPACT SPECIFICALLY ON OPERATIONAL OUTCOMES

The concept of empowered employees with the power not only to give voice to their views but also to make decisions on behalf of the organisation is recognised as not only providing a motivational force for the individual, but also as a vehicle for improved operational efficiency. It has been reported that, for instance at IBM, EIP mechanisms, especially through team working and in particular self-managed teams, has led to improvements in productivity, quality and innovative behaviour. However, there is evidence that the initial degree of improved operational efficiency may be short lived after the 'novelty' of the participatory practices has 'rubbed off', unless the promotion of the EIP mechanisms is sustained (Elmuti, 1997). In fact, the simplistic view that all participatory practices are considered favourable for operational efficiency is not universally accepted. In a survey of British organisations using the 1998 Workplace Employee Relations Survey (WERS), Devaro (2008) took the view that team working produced increased productivity but not increased product quality and that there was no significant difference between the results from self-managed teams and conventionally managed teams (p.686).

2.5.1. THE IMPACT ON PRODUCTIVITY

Using the 1998 WERS survey, Forde, Slater and Spencer (2006) found strong evidence that productivity is improved by EIP practices such as voice, whether or not this was in an era of high unemployment and potential job loss. They do however also argue that, with the exception of quality control circles, individual mechanisms of EIP are ineffective and that multiple mechanisms, such as embodied in contemporary all-embracing voice, including communication channels, representation, discretion to decide on ways of working and some form of financial participation are required to produce productivity gains. It is conceded though that this is contrary to other published work and may be due to the individual participatory variables used in the survey. In terms of the broader institutional mechanisms of EIP, the presence of a joint consultative committee or works council was found not to have a positive effect on productivity which was in line with other published work and was argued to be due to such bodies not giving employees a meaningful voice and being perceived as a tool of management. On a more positive note the provision of training in participatory techniques such as team working did result in an improvement in employee's attitudes to participatory practice, even allowing for the effect of any work intensification accruing from these practices which could affect productivity levels. There also seems to be

a disproportionate reliance on a relatively crude method of defining productivity. Although accepting that productivity can be problematic to define and measure, the WERS survey productivity data is merely based on self assessed subjective views of respondents. Forde, Slater and Spencer (2006) use a non-numeric comparison with the average value shown in the WERS survey for similar industry sectors, which they deem a tried and tested method although they recognise it as purely qualitative.

PRODUCTIVITY MEASUREMENT:

The American study on EIP's contribution to productivity improvement carried out by Mohrman and Novelli (1985), previously described in section 2.3.2.1., illustrated the need to ensure that when studying the effects of participatory practices on productivity, viable numeric measures of productivity must be used, rather than subjective assessments. The fact that Mohrman and Novelli (1985) used several measures of productivity to be sure of their findings, illustrates the need to have specific and constant measures when comparing productivity levels before and after the introduction of any new participatory practice. A similar problem even exists when trying to compare the productivity levels between countries, yet alone between two study companies. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the USA calculate labour productivity differently and even within the European Union there is no agreed definition of productivity (Teng, 2014). There is also the need, when considering productivity outcomes, that a clear distinction is made between productivity and production; the latter being the amount of product or service produced irrespective of the resources expended to achieve this, whereas productivity is a term expressing the amount of production achieved per resource unit (Tangen, 2005). Apart from the various measures used by Mohrman and Novelli (1985), all of which were measures of the productivity of groups, Tangen (2004) argues that to diagnose the efficacy of productivity improvement programmes in an organisation, a variety of measures need to be considered, including the productivity of individuals. These measures are usually termed partial productivity measures which are relatively easy to understand, especially by employees, whereas total productivity measures of an organisation are less so. Jagoda, Lonseth and Lonseth (2013) also emphasise the need to use productivity measures and targets for individual employees as part of any operational improvement programme, which they term a 'bottom-up approach' arguing that broader based measures are too general for employees to focus on and be meaningful to them.

TIMESCALE FOR POSITIVE OUTCOMES IN PRODUCTIVITY:

Although there is considerable data to support the contention that participatory practices can have a positive effect on productivity, maybe the word 'eventually' should be inserted into such proclamations. One of the outcomes from a Japanese study of the relationship between participatory practice and productivity using data collated over decades in the post war period showed that any productivity gains can take several years to come to fruition. There is a clear warning that employee participation practices such as all-embracing voice mechanisms are not an instant solution to enhanced productivity. It was found that introducing a combination of various employee participation and involvement (EIP) mechanisms at all levels in the organisation, along with financial participation, could produce an 8-9% improvement in productivity but only over a seven year period (p.517). An additional finding was that this was reliant on the implementation of both EIP and financial participation (Kato and Morishima, 2002).

FINANCIAL PARTICIPATION:

Forde, Slater and Spencer (2006) argue that any package of participatory mechanisms designed to improve productivity, should include a financial participation component. Clearly, organisations can easily provide a direct link between productivity gains and discretionary compensation. There is in fact a wide agreement from practical studies carried out on the relationship between financial participation (FP) and productivity, that such participatory schemes have a positive, or at least neutral, effect on organisational productivity (Robinson and Wilson, 2006). This was borne out by a study carried out in a large American manufacturing organisation which included investigating the influence that contingent reward (FP) had on productivity, which was measured as the percentage of the targeted finished goods that was shipped per week. Here it was found that contingent reward was positively associated with productivity, especially if combined with participatory techniques such as transformational leadership (Brown and Dodd, 1999).

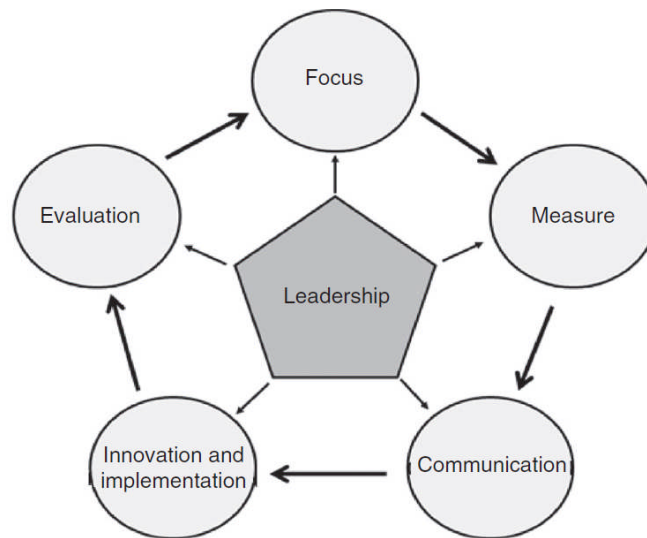
In a study of 93 manufacturing organisations in the UK in which they used percent resource usage as a measure of productivity, Robinson and Wilson (2006) found additional insights into the relationship between FP and productivity. They concluded that using FP as an incentive to encourage employees as a group to work more productively can cause resentment from those fully participating when they see others not contributing but still benefitting financially to the same extent. This can be particularly troublesome using cash-based FP schemes which produce relatively quick financial benefits whereas share-based schemes produce more long term benefits and are in effect deferred payments which can

engender a long term commitment to the organisation. The deferred payment mechanism employee stock options, has been contrasted with executive stock options in an American study. Whilst there is clear evidence that executive stock options are associated positively with operational outcomes such as productivity, the findings for employee stock options are not so positive and were found to diminish soon after the introduction of schemes if stock is not issued on a regular basis. This is argued to be due to executives retaining their stock whereas employees tend to encash them when this becomes an option rather than to retain them as a sign of commitment to the organisation (Sesil and Lin, 2011). These are findings that will need to be taken into account when analysing the data from the two case studies selected for this research project.

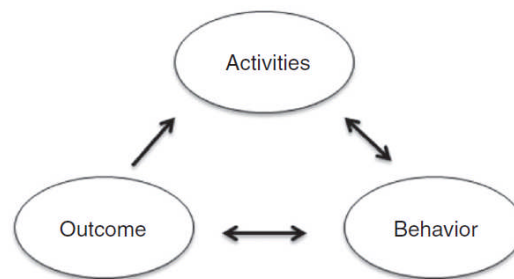
The view was also propounded by Robinson and Wilson (2006) that indirect participation mechanisms, such as works councils, have a more radical effect on productivity than direct participation methods such as quality circles and team working. This may be due to these direct schemes being perceived as management tools with work intensification as the real motivation behind them. However when such direct schemes are coupled with FP, this may nullify this viewpoint to some extent as employees see that they are receiving something tangible in return. In addition, if the direct participation practices include effective communication through the medium of employee voice, this may engender trust in the management of the FP scheme. In fact, Robinson and Wilson (2006) argue that any FP scheme should be accompanied by a broad range of employee participation practice. Possibly relevant to this research project, it was also found that FP is less effective in promoting productivity in male dominated workforces, but more effective in highly skilled environments.

EMPLOYEE, AND EMPLOYEE GROUP, BEHAVIOUR AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON PRODUCTIVITY IMPROVEMENT:

The importance of giving due consideration to the likely participatory behaviour of employees when designing any productivity improvement programme, is emphasised by Jagoda, Lonseth and Lonseth (2013) in their continuous improvement model for productivity improvement, which was applied in several North American case studies and which they illustrate in diagrammatic form (p.389).



In the model, each of the five steps and the role of leadership in achieving success are designed to be applied by using a three step framework which includes taking into account the behaviour of employees (p.390).



Thus the employee in effect initiates each step of the programme designed to produce a positive productivity outcome. It is argued that the success of the model is due to its emphasis on the behavioural aspects of employees allowing and encouraging them to engage in personal improvement, i.e. individual participation, as against group participation. Jagoda, Lonseth and Lonseth (2013) name this a 'bottom-up' approach which is exemplified at each stage as follows:

- *Focus*:- making programme targets relevant to individual employees as against what the management see as relevant.
- *Measure*:- having measures that are understandable by employees and regularly fed back to them.
- *Communication*:- employees collate productivity measures and pass them up to the management, rather than the other way round.

- *Innovation and implementation*:- instead of relying on formal problem-solving teams, mobilise the experience and instincts of all of the employees.
- *Evaluation*:- look back at the results obtained at regular intervals with all employees and alter priorities where necessary.
- *Leadership*:- The success of the programme centres round the quality of leadership. As data is provided by employees, they become the driving force and leaders acquire a supportive role, rather than one of control.

Overall Jagoda, Lonseth and Lonseth (2013) argue that the success of this 'bottom-up' approach, being a behavioural-based model in producing positive productivity outcomes, hinges on employees engaging in their own personal improvement (p.402).

The contention that the involvement of the individual employee is crucial to the success of any productivity improvement programme is also supported in a case study carried out in a Canadian steel processing plant exhibiting low productivity by Appelbaum, et al. (2005). They found that the low productivity was directly related to low job satisfaction, low employee morale and poor communication between the management, supervisors and employees. Amongst the recommendations put forward to improve productivity were that a personal empowerment plan be developed for each employee and that direct communication channels between employees, supervisors and management be established. Their basic conclusion and argument was that the low productivity was due to behavioural aspects such as lack of commitment to the organisation, or poor 'organisational citizenship' and not due to lack of capital investment or compensation levels. In addition the hierarchical managerial structure was considered unhelpful since it deterred individual participation and effective communication.

In a similar vein, Westover, Westover and Westover (2010) from a single American case study in a social work organisation, also argue that increased job satisfaction and organisational commitment will lead to increased employee productivity and organisational performance in the long term. Interestingly, they highlight an often neglected aspect of human behaviour, that of passion; by which is meant, passion for their work/trade. They perceive underused talents as having a negative effect on job satisfaction and hence productivity improvement. In fact they go so far as to suggest that organisations should recruit based on potential employees' passion for their work/trade and thus hire staff ready to participate, get involved, are committed, and are eager to voice, make use of, and disseminate their knowledge and experience throughout the organisation. They also consider the role of organisational citizenship where the employee's behaviour goes beyond

the regular call of duty, includes expressions of interest in their work and suggestions for improvement.

In an interview with J. R. Hackman of Harvard University, Hackman (2004) discussed to what extent the use of self-managed teams can be attributed to increases in productivity levels in organisations; the interviewee being sceptical about the frequently reported positive role of teams in this connection. Firstly Professor Hackman reinforced the view that productivity is all but impossible to measure in absolute terms in a way that is universally accepted and that the only really reliable method of establishing whether productivity is increasing is to select the most appropriate measure for the particular organisation, and keeping to that measure precisely, assess the results over time. Furthermore, even with an acceptable measure, he sees no way to be able to categorically attribute any productivity increase to the presence and efforts of the team, other than over a long period of time (p.87).

2.5.2. THE IMPACT ON PRODUCT QUALITY

Quality can be defined in many ways. Some may approach defining quality by using such words as 'perfection' or 'excellence' but manufacturers are more likely to use definitions such as 'free from errors' or 'fit for purpose' and even as a 'balance between cost and price'; in effect a 'saleable product' (Slack, et al., 1998). More numeric criteria are normally used as targets when conducting quality improvement (QI) programmes such as (Slack, et al., 1998, p.680):

- Number of defects per unit.
- Level of customer complaints.
- Scrap level.
- Warranty claims.
- Mean time between failures.
- Customer satisfaction score

Product quality values are in many ways synonymous with productivity values on the simple premise that there is nothing productive in generating sub-standard or defective products. It therefore follows that mechanisms used to improve productivity are also used to improve product quality; a typical example being Quality Circles (Vaziri, 1987) which are designed to inculcate improvements in both quality and productivity by involving employees in the process, i.e. a participative mechanism (Norris and Cox, 1987). Quality improvement programmes can take one of two forms; participative and non-participative. Non-participative systems are typically management driven and 'top-down' processes, whereas participative

systems are 'bottom-up' mechanisms with significant employee involvement and engagement.

PARTICIPATIVE & NON-PARTICIPATIVE SYSTEMS FOR QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

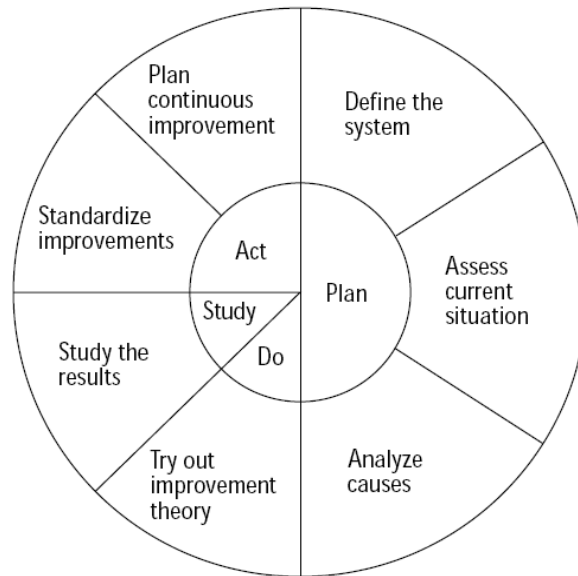
NON-PARTICIPATIVE SYSTEMS:

These systems, apart from being controlled and driven by management, tend to be bureaucratic and hierarchical in nature. One such system is the ISO-9000 standard which imposes a multitude of standard operating procedures throughout an organisation designed to ensure that rules laid down for everyone involved in meeting quality standards are followed and are periodically audited, both internally and externally. Another top-down, managerially led, system is the Six Sigma quality system which analyses the percentage of defective products being produced using sophisticated statistical tools with the aim of achieving 3.4 or less defects in each million tasks carried out. The system is staffed by qualified "professionals" armed with the required statistical knowledge. Neither system requires the involvement of shop floor employees and basically serves only to point out shortcomings rather than solve them. Interestingly, Toyota does not have a Six Sigma programme although making use of some of its components as 'tools' to flush out problems to be solved by participative approaches (Liker, 2004).

PARTICIPATIVE SYSTEMS:

TOTAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT/CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT/KAIZEN

Total Quality Management is a mechanism designed to empower employees to contribute to an organisation's efforts to improve the quality of its products or services. The concept is to involve those who are privy to the details of the processes required to produce the organisation's output and for them to take responsibility for them. This concept is central to the arguments of the quality theorist W Edwards Deming who advocated the empowerment of employees as the means of creating quality improvements. The core of Deming's proposition is the PDSA cycle attributed to him; an acronym for 'Plan-Do-Study-Act'. The purpose of the cycle is to help teams or groups of employees to identify and solve quality problems and at the same time improve their sense of self esteem and of being empowered (Cleary, 1995, p.38).



Cleary (1995) illustrates diagrammatically the PDCA cycle surrounded by a seven step implementation process and stresses that no improvement process is ever really completed, since further improvements are always possible, hence the seventh step being 'continuous improvement'. She also argues that quality improvements in any organisation are best accomplished by those closest to the activities able to be improved and that hierarchical organisational structures with errors being put at the door of individuals are not conducive to the improvement process and in fact create an atmosphere of fear within the organisation.

Definitions of quality improvement mechanisms, like EIP mechanisms, tend to suffer from imprecision. Some writers think of Continuous Improvement as the same process as Total Quality Management (TQM), whilst others such as Chase, Aquilano and Jabobs (1998) consider Continuous Improvement as an integral part of TQM. Whatever the definition, the key stipulation for either mechanism is that it should pervade throughout the organisation and involve employees at all levels. This philosophy is sometimes called "quality at source" and is yet another alternative name for TQM. Here the term emphasises the potential each individual employee has to get product quality right and indeed has the responsibility to do so. Furthermore, it is argued that everyone is capable not only of improving the way they do their own jobs, but also to help others in the organisation to improve on theirs; the key participative theme in "quality at source" being empowerment (Slack, et al., 1998). Another two phrases often associated with TQM are "quality disillusionment" and "quality droop" which refers to the problem that even successfully implemented TQM programmes may lose their effectiveness over time for which Slack, et al. (1998) advocate various measures to counteract this, including integrating TQM into the day by day management of the organisation.

There are however detractors from the view that 'top-down' systems such as Six Sigma are less effective than participative models such as TQM, due to them being management driven and not directly involving workplace employees. They argue that TQM has been found to have a number of shortcomings, the principle ones being (Pande, Neuman and Cavanagh, 2000, pp.42-48):

- Managers feeling that they are being side-lined due to the emphasis on shop floor involvement.
- Too much importance being placed on the measurement of quality rather than delving deeply into processes for root causes.
- TQM tending to be departmentalised and failing to promote interdepartmental improvement projects.
- TQM promoting incremental change rather than radical overhauls.

Whilst these criticisms are no doubt valid in specific cases, they are not endemic in TQM systems. The balance between the two approaches, Six Sigma and TQM, is between management feeling peripheral in TQM and employees feeling out of the picture due to the statistical complexities of Six Sigma.

QUALITY CIRCLES (QCs)

Quality Circles, or Quality Control Circles, sometimes called 'Improvement Groups', are designed to draw upon the tacit knowledge of employees at all levels and are often associated with TQM/Continuous Improvement/Kaizen programmes. As the name implies they were basically conceived to generate quality improvements which coincidentally produce improvements in productivity as well. The basic concept and requirements for the successful operation of Quality Circles has already been covered in section 2.3.2.1., for which Wilson (1989) considers the relationship between management and employees and in particular the attitude to QCs by employees as crucial. She challenges some of the assumptions made by studies into the relationship between management and employees and the attitude of employees to Quality Circles. She accepts three basic assumptions regarding employees' potential role in QCs, namely (p.28):

- 1) All employees have the inherent capability to improve quality.
- 2) All employees have a stock of knowledge and experience which can be brought to bear through the medium of QCs to produce quality improvements.
- 3) Quality is the responsibility of all employees.

....but she further adds to the list in the form of two assertions, namely (p.28):

- 4) All employees want to improve workplace efficiency.
- 5) Employees are willing to accept non-financial rewards for their efforts; including psychological rewards.

RELUCTANCE TO PARTICIPATE/ENGAGE IN QUALITY IMPROVEMENT (QI):

Since improvements in product quality automatically result in improved productivity, the foregoing findings are equally apposite for reluctance to participate in productivity improvements, although some employees may associate productivity improvements more directly with the economic wellbeing of their organisation and thus their job security and financial compensation.

In a recent paper reviewing the progression of ways of engaging employees in how the methods of working in their organisation could be improved, Miller (2014) of the International Kaizen Institute Consultancy Group reported that the 2013 Gallup poll showed that 70% of American workers were either not engaged or actively disengaged. (The Gallup poll is used biannually by the multinational study company used in this project to gauge employee engagement.) He sees continuous improvement being inevitably associated with change and the human condition of resistance to change. This in turn sets in motion responses such as fear of criticism, embarrassment and other fearful emotions. Miller (2014) argues that these behaviours show that improvement is 'more of an emotional exercise than an intellectual one'. He advocates the simplest position approach, based on the philosophy of Deming to encourage engagement in the workplace by (p.14):

- removing slogans.
- eliminating quotas.
- removing barriers between departments/sections/teams.
- stop using inspection to guarantee quality (every employee is his own inspector).
- remove fear in the workplace.

Miller (2014) argues that the removal of fear is the key to the acceptance of change and that demotivation is a prime cause of the disengaged employee. To counteract the reluctance of employees to get involved in quality improvement, he suggests to initially concentrate on the process of EIP mechanisms, such contemporary, all-embracing voice, rather than operational results, using effective communication and developing trust throughout the organisation; all of which is firmly at the door of the management.

THE BENEFIT OF TEAM WORKING IN ACHIEVING QUALITY IMPROVEMENTS (QIs):

Leading writers on QI advocate basing QI programmes on eliciting proposals and implementing solutions at team level in organisations; that is rather than the individual employee level. Were an individual to voice an idea only to have it squashed by management or other employees with experience in the field, the individual is likely to be profoundly demotivated and very reluctant to offer suggestions in the future. On the other hand, if the suggestion had been offered by the individual as a member of a team, it could well be that the team as a whole could have pointed out the shortcomings at that stage, suggested amendments to make it workable, or pointed out that this had been tried unsuccessfully before. In either case the individual is less likely to feel demotivated and more likely to offer suggestions in the future (Townsend, 2002). However, one detractor, Devaro (2008), concluded that, using the British 1998 Workplace Employee Relations Survey (WERS), organisations did not in fact gain significant statistical increases in product quality by operating in a team working environment. Although using 1998 data, his analysis was published in 2008 and one is at a loss to know why a later WERS survey, such as the 2004 survey was not used. Furthermore, the data used to make the statement was essentially subjective in that respondents only stated whether they felt their product quality levels were above or below what they perceived was the average value of their industrial sector.

Apart from recognising that team working is considered beneficial to the promotion of improvements in quality, the work of Lemieux-Charles, et al. (2002) puts forward evidence that the QI process operating in teams also improves the overall effectiveness of the team in areas other than QI. This was based on a Canadian study in the health care sector. Lemieux-Charles, et al. (2002) suggest that this may be due to the use of the 'scientific' practices associated with QI procedures being used by the team in other areas of improvement. However, a word of caution is offered by the writers in that the teams surveyed were few in number and multi-disciplined project teams rather than work teams. The view that QI is best carried out by teams is also supported by Klagge (1997) who also emphasises the need for the teams to have the appropriate leadership. His findings are based on a case study in a large organisation whose team-based QI activities had experienced problems due to lack of clarity as to what was the role of management in QI. Both managers and the workforce were confused. Senior management therefore formed a working party comprising members of the workforce, managers and external advisors to identify what constitutes an effective leader and what skills need to be applied or acquired. This was done by an organisation-wide survey of the workforce and a sample of managers

to ascertain their views as to what attributes an effective QI leader should possess. The results were in many ways predictable in that leadership skills such as communication, listening, supporting and sharing information were identified and the appropriate training was instituted. However three less obvious managerial qualities were also identified and addressed by a mentoring programme, these being (p.361):

- The *honesty* of first and second line supervision.
- The *knowledge* of first and second line supervision.
- The *trusting* of others by first line supervision.

The training and mentoring was a success in the view of Klagge (1997) since leadership became more effective in the organisation and who argues that this form of survey could allow others to reap the same benefits. To ensure that the team members also have, or acquire, the necessary skills to be successful in QI, Lyons (2007) argues that the Skills Charting process may prove useful to examine, and where necessary, improve the skills knowledge and thus experience of QI team members. Skills Charting basically takes the form of listing the skills required to conduct QI and so identify any shortfalls, in particular human aspects, which can then be covered by some form of training or mentoring, thus facilitating learning.

The benefits of team working can also be illustrated in the context of rewards. In an American longitudinal study over a four year period in a manufacturing organisation as it changed from individual reward to an organisation-wide (the big team) gain-sharing, performance-based, reward system incorporating employee involvement, a marked increase in product quality was observed (Hatcher and Ross, 1991). The argument put forward for the beneficial effect of team-based rewards was that individual rewards, i.e. piecework, encouraged individual production at all costs and resulted in defective product being shipped; whereas with a team-based rewards system, which included the inception of self-inspection, employees realised more readily the eventual effect on the organisation's performance, and with it, their group bonus reward. The results from this transition amounted to a ten-fold decrease in defective product shipped and repair costs being more than halved.

OPERATIONAL OUTCOMES FROM PARTICIPATIVE MECHANISMS:

Inevitably, when considering successful quality improvement (QI) outcomes, the example of Toyota systems comes to mind, whether practiced within the Toyota organisation or elsewhere adopting the principles of the Toyota system. But that is not to say that success

has been universally achieved and a comparison between how Quality Circles (QCs) have been introduced successfully and unsuccessfully yield lessons for QI participative practice.

Quality Circle (QC) programmes began in the UK in 1978 at Rolls Royce, although it was not until the 1980s that such programmes began to proliferate; not always with successful outcomes. An analysis of published work at that time revealed some of the many factors which were deemed to have been the cause of these failures, including failures in Japanese organisations, often after they had been in operation for three or four years. It was found that failures could be attributed to four main causes, (Dale and Hayward, 1984a, p.12) (Dale and Hayward, 1984b):

1) Organisational readiness.

A QC is a participative process and the organisation needs to be functioning in a participative manner before embarking on a QC programme. This should include the senior management being committed to employee involvement, listening to the voice of employees, and with an atmosphere of trust and stability between the management and the employees. Without these pre-conditions failure could be inevitable.

2) Implementation issues.

The introduction of a QC programme should not be rushed and introduced progressively with one or two QCs at first, or possibly with a pilot study; thereafter growing at a rate governed by the demand and interest of the employees. Also the management must not use QCs as a devious means of circumventing the influence of trade unions and middle managers in particular must avoid adverse reactions due to a misplaced worry that their influence is being subsumed by improvements emanating from QCs. Above all however, the ethos in the organisation must be such that the voluntary nature of the QCs is stressed.

3) Operational issues.

Failure may result due to the experience and background of members of a QC being too broad-based where many members may not be able to contribute to the issue being tackled. Similarly, if specialists are also included in the membership, rather than being invited in by the QC members, this may inhibit other's contributing. A fundamental principle of QCs is that the members select the problems to be considered, thus ensuring commitment and avoiding tackling problems outside the expertise of the members.

4) Long term viability.

Here, the role of management is crucial, especially with the question of rewards which must be considered carefully. Whilst Japanese employees may well be quite content to receive virtually immediate feedback and psychological recognition for their work; this may not be the case with organisations operating in a Western environment. However, any financial reward scheme needs to be agreed from the outset and seen to be fair and equitable. In addition, to sustain the impetus of QC programmes, management must provide training as circumstances change and QCs begin to tackle more sophisticated problems, or when QC members put forward a substantiated case for it.

This work was then extended by undertaking case studies in five UK organisations from varying industrial sectors which had introduced QCs but had for differing reasons either suspended their QC programme or some of their QCs. The reasons for these QC failures were then analysed. These followed the pattern suggested by the foregoing review of literature; however Dale and Hayward (1984c) do make some interesting arguments resulting from these studies. Firstly they stress that a QC programme will not necessarily be a failure when a number of individual QCs fail. It is more or less inevitable that some QCs will in fact fail and will need to be reconstituted. The success of a QC programme should be judged by considering the degree of employee involvement in QCs throughout the organisation and the effectiveness of their problem solving abilities, not how many QCs were considered failures. They also advise against introducing QCs at too rapid a rate which could overstretch the support systems available for them. Finally, they warn against keeping QCs operable even when they have run out of fresh ideas for improvement; suspending them temporarily until they can become revitalised with some new ideas is preferable to simply writing them off as failures.

Unfortunately, even with the knowledge being gained on how to avoid QC failures, examples still occurred in the second half of the 1990s, when the popularity of QCs had fallen, and were being replaced with Total Quality Management (TQM) systems, especially in the UK. Land Rover's was considered an example of a failing QC programme at this time and was closed in 1997 after operating for nearly nine years, but Pinnington and Hammersley (1997) argue that this was due to the management restricting the participation element of the so called QC programme. In fact the QCs were called 'discussion groups' and the clue is in the name. It appears that members of the QCs were not directly involved in implementing any ideas or suggestions voiced by their group, contrary to the principles of QCs, and one could justifiably call them 'talking shops'. Significantly, after the demise of the discussion groups, 'improvement teams', voluntary in nature like the discussion groups, were created as part of

an overall management-led TQM system which had smaller memberships all coming from a single work team or trade, contrary to discussion groups. In fact, it is reasonable to comment that discussion groups were never constituted to be proper QCs and that their improvement team successors were the real QCs.

On a more positive note, around the same time that Land Rover was undergoing their problems, Olberding (1998), not an employee of Toyota, recounts discussions with the quality circle administrator at the Georgetown Toyota plant in the USA about the philosophy behind Toyota's successful quality improvement outcomes from their QC programmes. The scale of savings accruing from QC's work has risen from \$747,000 in 1991 to \$19.9 million in 1997 in Georgetown alone. Toyota recognises that many QC programmes have failed in other organisations and attribute this to a lack of true participative management with an undue emphasis on cost savings. Even so, Toyota accepts that not everyone will want to participate in QCs and fully supports its voluntary nature. A further warning for others is to avoid short-termism; expectations for success should encompass several years and not just a couple of years.

2.5.3. THE IMPACT ON SAFE WORKING PRACTICE

Central to the involvement of employees in health and safety matters in the UK was the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. This legislated for trade union appointed representatives to be given at least joint consultation rights if not joint decision making opportunities, and was passed into law in 1978. At the time the justification for restricting safety representatives to union appointees was that the highest accident rates were to be found in union-based organisations; an argument supported by Beaumont, Coyte and Leopold (1981). This restriction was later amended to cater for organisations which did not recognise any trade union, or had no, or very few, union members. In these cases the Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations 1996 come into force where employees can elect a representative(s) or for very small organisations, the management can elect to consult directly with individual employees. However, irrespective of the provisions for representation, the 1974 Act lays down the duties that all employees have regarding health and safety provision whilst at work, as to...:

- Take reasonable care for the health and safety of him/herself and of other persons who may be affected by his/her acts or omissions at work.
- Co-operate with employers or other persons so far as is necessary to enable them to perform their duties or requirements under the Act.

Added to this, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), created by the 1974 Act, state that they place “great importance on worker involvement and consultation, which has proved to be a key factor to improving health and safety in the workplace”.

A study of six engineering companies in the London area, carried out over a three year period in the late 1970s, sought to establish how relevant employee involvement had become in health and safety issues after the 1974 Act. It was found that at that time, trade unions were often seen as a more effective source of information than management by employees, but were not always successful in ensuring that employees were aware of this aspect of their work. It was also found that the longer serving employees had a greater understanding of health and safety issues, gleaned from experience over the years, than the younger employees relying on the provisions of the 1974 Act. However the Act had stimulated the need for training in the subject. The authors do argue that employers may find it difficult to comply with the requirements of the newly established Act to provide the required training for the employees and to ensure that they have a safety policy duly brought to the notice of all employees (Barrett and James, 1981).

THE PARTICIPATIVE PERFORMANCE OF JOINT HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEES:

Prior to the 1974 Health and Safety at Work Act, employee involvement in health and safety matters was primarily undertaken by joint committees of management and employee representatives, but on a voluntary basis. In fact by the end of the 1960s, even in industries with a high accident risk, such as shipbuilding, only just over half of these large organisations had established joint committees covering health and safety matters with the employee safety representatives normally being from the ranks of their union representatives. However, the 1974 Act made such committees a legal requirement for unionised organisations with the unions able to appoint safety representatives to serve on the committees. With non-unionised organisations, the employer could decide whether to have elected safety representatives or to consult directly with employees on health and safety matters.

However formed, Leopold and Beaumont (1982) argue that Joint Health and Safety Committees' (JHSCs) participative nature can be retarded by the legalistic and technical nature of the issues being debated, with the advantage being held by any safety or technical advisor present, thus degrading the employee representatives to mere 'rubber-stampers' and the committee ceasing to be a problem-solving vehicle. Nevertheless, a viable measure of the effectiveness of JHSCs can be the number and quality of suggestions voiced by the workforce and fed to the committee for consideration. This in turn requires channels of

communication such as meetings with employees and their safety representative and the distribution of records of meetings. Inevitably, following discussions in committee, the time comes for decisions to be made, which may well involve significant expenditure. For this reason the presence of senior management is advantageous making the decision making process expeditious, rather than protracted. Although Leopold and Beaumont (1982) stress the need for training in health and safety matters for both management and safety representatives, they recognise that this can have the unintended consequence of exasperating the problem of communicating the work of the JHSC to the workforce due to the often technical nature of the issues being difficult to understand by the untrained employees. Generally it was found that JHSCs usually concentrate their deliberations on matters affecting the whole organisation or plant and not the individual concerns voiced by a particular employee; these being better dealt with by the employee's safety representative. What was not considered was the possible wasted opportunity by not realising that the individual's concern was in fact more widely applicable.

The 1974 Act allowed for some organisations not having recognised unions, and as stated previously, the management of these was allowed to decide whether to adopt a representative arrangement for health and safety communication or to deal with such matters on an individual basis. This is particularly relevant for small organisations where it is more likely that there is no recognised trade union. In the UK the Health and Safety (Consultation of Employees) Regulations 1996 covers for the circumstances where there is no trade union presence but the management decide to have a form of representation with bodies known as "representatives of employee safety" being elected by the employees. The Regulations also allow for a combination of this and individual consultation. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) do advise small businesses to maintain regular contact with individual employees and give them the opportunity to voice their concerns on safety matters but concede that this may not be practical in all circumstances when representative consultation may be more appropriate. Empirical evidence suggests that health and safety performance in small enterprises is below that of their larger counterparts and a cause for concern in the view of Walters (1998), (p.182) who goes on to promote the concept of regional representation pioneered in Sweden where it has statutory status. Sweden has experimented with regional safety representation for many years and has over 2000 regional safety representatives who are trade union appointees. Walters (1998) sees this arrangement appropriate for such sectors as farming and construction where they are made up of small individual entities as well as SMEs. Coincidentally, he points out that these are areas with an above average accident rate. Drawing on the experience from the Swedish model Walters (1998) argues that the involvement of trade unions in assisting SMEs in

health and safety issues could still be possible even if an SME had no recognised trade union or union members. He foresees regional safety representatives being appointed from the ranks of large company's senior safety representatives or full time union officials; this work being additional to their normal duties. However he concedes that a pilot regional representative scheme in the UK agricultural sector has shown limited effectiveness partly due to lack of support by the employers, in this case the National Farmers' Union (NFU), and opposition to the trade union movement. Nevertheless, he argues that regional health and safety representatives offer a viable solution to providing preventative health and safety measures for SMEs and that the expertise of trade unions, particularly in the field of training, would be a valuable asset.

EMPLOYEE INVOLVEMENT IN HEALTH AND SAFETY ISSUES:

Just as quality has been described as part of productivity in that there is nothing productive in producing defective goods, in the same way and at the same time, Vassie (1998) believes that 'total quality' should encompass a goal of healthy workplaces and freedom from injury. She notes that whilst the HSE promotes Total Quality Management (TQM) as part of Continuous Improvement (CI) programmes, any CI programme should include health and safety matters but that organisations tend to place more emphasis on other managerial imperatives. Based on a UK case study in the chemical industry involving a team-based approach to CI, with the premise that everyone has a contribution to make and that employee involvement is fundamental to the success of any CI programme, including teams of employees making a series of observations of safe and unsafe practices within their teams, Vassie (1998) concludes that CI programmes are viable vehicles for implementing health and safety management, particularly in a team-based environment. Unfortunately the scope of the study did not include any quantified analysis of safety performance values following the inception of the observational procedures. Apart from the involvement of employees in health and safety management, Fuller (1999) also stresses the need for the commitment and involvement of management, and indeed the necessity for management and employees to work together to a common purpose. Fuller (1999) argues that for a CI programme to be effective in tackling health and safety issues, a consensus between management and employees is of paramount importance. Reporting on a UK case study carried out in an international oil company, initiating an employee involvement programme centred round a consensual approach between the management and the employees, Fuller (1999) considers the resultant operational outcomes in terms of the employees' views voiced on safety management and safe working practices in their workplaces. Prior to this initiative, health and safety practice was seen as purely a

management function, and in particular the responsibility of the safety manager. Using a combination of observation and employee questionnaires eliciting any perceived unsafe working practices, the employees' view of current safety management and their opinions on employee representation, Fuller (1999) argues that employees' awareness of health and safety issues is more focussed than that of the management, simply because they are the ones most likely to suffer the consequences of unsafe practice (p.417). Additionally, he argues that employees are not distracted by other issues such as output and costs as are the management. However, this may be a simplistic view since employees also may have a multiplicity of concerns although different to those of the management.

As one would expect, the construction industry has a particularly tight set of health and safety regulations which Greasley, et al. (2005), in a study of empowerment in the UK construction sector, argue tends to restrict employees willingness to get involved and empowered in suggesting improvements in their ways of working, in case they inadvertently breach such regulations. In this way, stringent health and safety regulations could be considered 'partially self-defeating'. Clearly this could also be the case in other industries, such as high tech. engineering, where stringent technical requirements necessitate the adoption of detailed operating procedures. This reluctance to participate could also include involvement in the improvement of current safe working practices and the adoption of new ones. On construction sites this is compounded by the fact that employees are likely to only have local site management to communicate with on such matters. Greasley, et al. (2005) feel that construction sites should be ideal for employee involvement, either individual or team-based, being distant from a central control point. Surely this reinforces Walters (1998)'s earlier work arguing for regional safety representation.

Apart from the differing influences which management and employees may have on the subject of health and safety management, Robinson and Smallman (2013) also consider the differences between the powers of trade unions and management. Legally, in the UK, employers are obliged to consult with employees on health and safety issues and furthermore if union recognition prevails, to consult and negotiate with a union appointed health and safety representative(s) who in turn is required to represent the interests of both union and non-union members. The authors argue that participation with management is more pronounced in unionised organisations than those without union recognition due to the legal obligations imposed and that the majority of research shows that employee involvement results in lower accident rates. However, using a study of the British Workplace Employment Relations Survey 2004 they found that nearly half of employers still deny employees their legal right to consultation on safety issues. Whilst Robinson and Smallman

(2013) concede that it is management which sets the style for participation in health and safety matters, it is primarily their ability to facilitate and encourage employee response that is paramount for success. They also argue that where genuine union participation is prevalent, this results in enhanced safe working practice and that the reverse is true where union involvement is weaker or nonexistent.

Although clearly organisational initiatives can play a large part in successful health and safety management, in the end it is the attitude of people to the subject, i.e. human factors, that is the prime influence on safety practice. This argument was the subject of a study in the 1990s by the Safety Research Unit (SRT) of the Department of Psychology at the University of Liverpool (Donald and Young, 1996). From this study carried out in an unnamed UK major power generation company, using safety attitude surveys, the authors found that by involving all employees in the running of safety teams, each of which was constituted appropriately to the workplace conditions pertaining, they “began to feel that they had a greater opportunity to play a more active role in addressing issues of safety that concerned them” (p.16). This attitudinal perspective was aimed at management as well as individual employees, being accomplished by the introduction of written action plans which in turn gave feedback to both on each other’s actions related to safety matters. As the study company was a multi-site organisation, regional action plans were also issued to all employees in order to ensure that senior management’s safety programmes were focussed and made clear to all. Although the author did not stipulate whether the organisation being studied was unionised or not, the techniques being used were clearly apposite to a non-unionised organisation where the emphasis was on effective communication between management and individual employees as well as genuine involvement by employees. The measures introduced resulted in the number of self-reported accidents being reduced by half. Donald and Young (1996) argue that the appreciation of the psychological factors effecting human behaviour, rather than the reliance on organisational mechanisms initiated by management, can have a positive effect on health and safety management.

Whilst the majority of research into the attitudinal tendencies of participants in the management of health and safety has concentrated on the attitudes of employees, Gibson and Kidd (1982), writing about their research carried out in 1980 as the 1974 Health and Safety at Work Act was being firmly established as part of the UK industrial relations framework, stressed the need to also consider the attitudes of other players, principally, safety representatives, safety officers and line managers and their role in consultation on issues of safety. From a survey of 25 wide-ranging UK organisations the authors found that problems could arise when dual roles were in existence. A typical problematic situation could

be when a safety representative was also a union official. In this circumstance, it could be that as a union official, the safety representative would be loathe to insist on stringent safe working practice if this could result in reducing the earning potential of his or her members. Similarly, following an accident, the safety representative could be engaged in both accident investigation and seeking compensation for the injured party. Safety officers generally were anxious about health and safety issues being entangled with other industrial relations issues and indeed disputes, which could result in health and safety matters being used to further unrelated causes. The survey also found that a crucial requirement for successful safety management was the responsiveness of line managers and their willingness to consult with safety officers and representatives. Overall, Gibson and Kidd (1982) argue that consultation on health and safety matters will not be effective without commitment and support from management, irrespective of the efforts of safety officers and representatives and the legally enforceable penalties available. Surprisingly, the authors failed to make the point that many of the enforcement and consultative problems of safety officers and representatives identified by them could be eliminated if the legislation had not encouraged the appointment of union officials as safety representatives.

CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH DESIGN

This chapter details how the research project was designed and how its aims were translated in specific research questions to be answered and hypotheses to be tested.

3.1. THE DESIGN PROCESS

As stated in Chapter 1, the aim of this research project is to investigate what effect the size of an organisation might have on the readiness of its employees to get involved in its operation. The design process includes choosing the research philosophy and strategy for the project along with the justification for the choices made; a subject covered in more detail in section 4.2. In addition, the identification of the key variables likely to influence the research outcomes is explored along with the general methodological approach selected including the data collection and analysis methods used. In considering the methodological options available from which to select those most relevant to the research being undertaken, within the philosophical perspective chosen, those likely to provide an in-depth understanding of the views and attitudes expressed by the participants in the study companies has been considered of paramount importance.

This research project has been designed as a comparative case study of two UK companies, one a large multinational and the second an SME company, both operating in the same high

tech. engineering sector; the smaller company being a significant supplier to the larger organisation. As has already been mentioned in section 1.2. of the introduction, the decision was made to limit the study to only two organisations which as far as possible, other than their size, were a “matched pair” so as to facilitate analysis in depth and limit the number of variables which would need to be taken account of. This was intended to make the study more manageable, focussed, and reduce what Shalev (1980) terms ‘the danger of lapsing into either vacuous description or superficial comparison’. However, it is recognised that the findings of such a case study cannot be used as a statistical generalisation beyond the boundaries of the two study companies (Yin, 2003) but rather as a comparison with current theories applicable to this study (Yin, 1989). Such a comparative study requires an appropriate conceptual scheme which can provide a framework of commonality between the two study companies with common measures and standards leading to the establishment of key variables and relationships. As Berry (1980) states:

To compare two phenomena, they must share some features in common, and to compare them to some advantage, they should usually differ on some feature (in this case, size). That is, it must be possible to place two phenomena on a single dimension in order to judge them validly in relation to each other, and for comparative judgment to be of value, they should not be identical in all respects.

For a comparative study to be valid, Brewster and Tyson (1991) identify several issues which need to be addressed to justify the choice of design taken. These include whether to study a single variable in great detail, such as organisational size in this case, or several variables which might contribute to an understanding of say the effectiveness of employee voice. The first scenario was chosen for this study. A second issue highlighted by Brewster and Tyson (1991) was the relevance of the subject to the society under scrutiny which is why an emphasis on appreciating the ambiance prevailing, and possibly changing, in each study company forms an integral part of the research design. To this end, the intention is to ensure that informal dialogue with participants at all levels in the study companies will ensue at the start and end of more formal interviews and when explaining the objectives of the research study to employee respondents. Finally Brewster and Tyson (1991) suggest that researchers examine their role in terms of their expertise, style and cultural values. In this case the researcher chose an industrial sector for the study in which he had significant experience and was aware of the terminologies and technicalities prevailing, in order to gain the confidence of respondents and make the aforementioned informal dialogues with them more revealing. In fact any culturally comparative exploration of EIP, such as this study, must and will consider the organisational cultures prevalent in the industrial sector to which the study

companies belong including the importance placed on the role of employees in the workplace and the opportunities for involvement that the culture provides.

One of the objectives of this research study is, as Punch (2000) puts it, to “proceed from the more ‘pragmatic’ approach of questions that need answers or problems that need solutions” to two of the recommendations made by Feurer and Chaharbaghi (1995) when considering research strategies within dynamic environments, such as those of both study companies (elaborated on in chapter 4 section 4.1), namely:

- That the research findings should be relevant to organisations operating in uncertain and dynamic environments.
- That the research should represent a continuous learning process to accommodate emerging issues.

Based on this objective the research design is based on using qualitative and quantitative approaches side by side, with triangulation between the two; a mixed method approach. This approach is one approved by Bryman (1994) where he accepts that although the qualitative approach with its epistemological position is seen to reject the natural science approach to human research, the quantitative approach is influenced by the natural science model with its positivist position. However, in his view “each has its own strengths and weaknesses....it is these strengths and weaknesses that lie behind the rationale for integrating them”.

The research design takes the form of a descriptive study aimed at illuminating issues and problems found concerning voice mechanisms in both study companies rather than purely an exploratory study of the research questions posed without offering solutions to any problems. As Churchill and Iacobucci (2005) advise, this will require a structured approach with larger samples and the testing of hypotheses (Malhotra, 1993). In fact full populations will be applied for this study rather than samples. Although to flush out possible problems and solutions connected with EIP mechanisms, a longitudinal study would be ideal, a cross-sectional study of necessity will be employed due to the time restraints of a PhD research project. Nevertheless, it is expected that this will still allow a representation of the EIP situation at a specific period of time to be developed from which summary statistics can be generated and evidentially attributed findings.

To answer the research questions formulated in the next section, (section 3.2), it was deemed essential that in order to illicit the true views on, and attitudes to, what opportunities were available in both study companies for effective employee voice and the subjective meaning that they have of their situation, in-depth and appropriate communication with

employees at all levels would be required. The design of the data collection process has therefore been based on semi-structured interviews wherever feasible, basically supervisory and managerial staff, designed to permit flexibility in gaining the greatest possible insight to these questions which a structured interview would not permit. In addition, a key feature of the design was to facilitate, at every juncture of the collection of data, informal dialogue with respondents. To achieve this, the voice recorder used for semi-structured interviews was to be activated during the researcher's introduction to the project (with the permission of the respondent) and after the formal part of the interview when the respondent was invited to make any contribution not already covered. Likewise, when questionnaires were issued or collected from shop floor employees, any comments made by the respondents was to be noted as contemporaneously as possible. In fact, the last entry in every questionnaire was an invitation to have an informal and confidential conversation with the researcher. Questionnaires were used for the shop floor employees in both study companies, since it was not feasible for them to be released from their duties for interview due to the long continuous process times of their work requiring their attendance. Collectively these informal inputs have been designed to constitute a research diary to be completed progressively throughout the data collection process, using pre-prepared entry points and to be an additional source for data analysis including the researcher's thoughts and feelings as they developed throughout the research process from design, through data collection and analysis to writing and presenting the study and also to provide a source of reflection to be, if necessary, added to the researcher's informal introductory remarks at the start of interviews or when issuing questionnaires. Otherwise, the content of the interview schedules and questionnaires remained consistent throughout the data collection process. The selection of respondents and how this was done to have corresponding similarity in both study companies is detailed in sections 4.4 and 4.5 of chapter 4 covering methodology. As this research design involves collecting human data, which may result in ethical issues, ethical approval to conduct this study was first obtained from the University of York Economics, Law, Management, Politics and Sociology Ethics Committee.

3.2. THE FORMULATION OF RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This research project centres around a study of how employee involvement and participation (EIP) voice mechanisms may differ between a large multinational organisation and a small to medium organisation, both operating in the same business sector; in this case, the engineering sector. This underscores the principal research question of the study, namely:

Q1:- Do the employee voice mechanisms used differ between large companies and small to medium sized companies in the engineering industry?

During the preparatory stages of the project, whilst visiting what was then potentially the SME supplier study company, it was very apparent that the then potential multinational company had a very significant presence there, including personnel and documentation. It therefore seemed likely that they could be a significant influencer on the SME Company, including in the field of participatory practice. As the multinational company in question was American owned, this provided an additional source of influence both on the practices in the multinational company as well as how these might be passed down to its SME supplier company. The propensity for multinationals to influence their suppliers also became evident during the review of literature on the concept of employee involvement and participation's associated voice mechanisms; as did the differences in how the concept was pursued internationally. This was the rationale underpinning the second research question:

Q2:- Is the level of employee voice in the supplier company influenced by the practices of their larger client company?

Throughout the literature on employee involvement and participation, the differing views of the various actors feature widely. The third research question is designed to probe further into the underlying reasons behind this and how it manifests itself in two engineering organisations, one large and one small; the large multinational organisation being unionised and the SME not.

Q3:- What accounts for the differing perceptions of the degree of employee involvement and participation (EIP) voice in force between the management and that of the job level employees?

As the review of the literature shows, and as one would expect, businesses motivation in promoting and encouraging employee involvement and participation is not entirely altruistic. The need to prosper and indeed survive commercially must be the prime responsibility of any management. However, published work illustrates that although there has always been a strong body of opinion that an involved workforce is one more likely to engender efficient working practices than a disengaged one, employee involvement and participation voice initiatives have not always achieved this ideal. The fourth research question seeks to add to the bank of knowledge on this subject in large and small engineering organisations.

Q4:- To what extent does the degree of employee involvement and participation (EIP) voice in an engineering organization influence operational outcomes such as productivity, product quality and safety levels?

3.3. THE HYPOTHESES

To supplement the four research questions designed to be investigated qualitatively and in the main inductively, the following six hypotheses are posited to be tested quantitatively and with a deductive approach.

H1: The level of employee involvement and participation (EIP) voice in the MNE company is greater than that enjoyed in the SME supplier company.

H2: The level of employee involvement and participation (EIP) voice in the SME supplier company is greater than that enjoyed in the MNE company.

H3: The degree of self-management in employee groups is higher in the MNE company than in the SME supplier company.

H4: The degree of self-management in employee groups is higher in the SME supplier company than in the MNE Company.

H5: The level of employee involvement and participation (EIP) voice in efforts to improve operational outcomes such as productivity, product quality and safe working practices is greater in the MNE company than in the SME supplier company.

H6: The level of employee involvement and participation (EIP) voice in efforts to improve operational outcomes such as productivity, product quality and safe working practices is greater in the SME supplier company than in the MNE company.

These hypotheses upon which this study in large part is predicated are designed to provide tentative explanations for the similarities and differences of how employee involvement and participation voice is perceived and practiced by the workforces in the two study companies and will be used as measures for some of the eventual conclusions.

CHAPTER 4 METHODOLOGY

Following on from the research design formulated in Chapter 3, more details of the two study companies are given in this chapter and the approach taken to evaluate the EIP practices involving voice mechanisms, and attitudes in each in order to answer the posed

research questions itemised in section 3.2 and provide data to test the hypotheses itemised in section 3.3.

4.1. THE TWO STUDY COMPANIES

Whilst the two companies selected as fulfilling the necessary criteria for a comparative case study agreed to cooperate in the research project and allow access to their employees, it was on the understanding that although they would encourage employees to cooperate and get involved, this would be on a voluntary basis. Additionally, and most importantly, as far as the companies were concerned, their identity was not to be disclosed and the researcher undertook to ensure that nothing written on conclusion of the research could be used to compromise this and that their anonymity would remain intact. For this reason the following descriptions of the two companies are couched in such a manner that their identities cannot be arrived at by curious readers. At the same time and following the same reasoning, the identity of the employees surveyed is protected by the use of generic job titles, rather than their official designation.

Both study companies were selected on the basis that they operated in the same industrial sector; a feature crucial to the aims of the comparative case study which required as many variables as possible to be common to each organisation, other than their size. For reasons already expressed in section 3.1. covering the research design process, a high tech. engineering sector was chosen for this purpose. This particular sector is engaged in the design and manufacture of large, high cost, complex capital plant for a branch of the energy production industry which are bespoke designs for very specific environments in which they are to operate. Due to the specialised equipment required to manufacture these products, in effect both study companies are single product organisations. Furthermore due to the bespoke nature of the products, any opportunity for products or parts to be made for stock is precluded. Coupled with the cyclic nature of demand in the energy sector involved, this has over the years resulted in a variable demand for the products, not on a day by day basis, but in periods of years. Operating in this widely fluctuating market has resulted in a history of periodic layoffs in both companies and results in the management of companies giving high priority on retaining the key highly skilled employees awaiting an upturn in the market. However, when demand reasserts itself, clients place delivery performance above all other requirements due to the enormous loss of revenue from any delay to energy production. For these reasons the companies have always operated in what Feurer and Chaharbaghi (1995) call a “dynamic environment” (see section 3.1.) having to cope with low demand, low production loads and uncertain employment suddenly changing to high demand and the highest possible production levels with the inevitable deleterious consequences for the

general ambiance throughout the organisations and relationships between management and shop floor employees.

4.1.1. THE MULTINATIONAL (MNE) COMPANY

Initial discussions prior to its selection, showed that the multinational company is American owned and engaged in the field of medium to heavy mechanical engineering in a specialist field described in section 4.1. The Company employs around a thousand people on the site under study but by no means are all employees there involved in product manufacture. The shop floor manufacturing departments are fully unionised.

Its products can best be described as 'High Tech', manufactured to onerous specifications and compliant with international standards demanding tight dimensional control and material integrity. Meeting these standards is crucial not only for the commercial well-being of the Company, but also for safety reasons due to the potentially dangerous environment in which its products are used.

The manufacture of these products necessitates the use of modern highly sophisticated, often computer controlled, equipment particularly in the fields of machining and welding. This in turn requires many of its employees, including those involved with production on the shop floor, to be highly skilled, trained, conversant with the latest techniques and able to apply them.

To make sure that this level of excellence is maintained, the Company's ways of working appear very procedural and leave little to the discretion of employees on matters which could have an impact on product quality. However, the Company professes to have formal programmes designed to encourage voice mechanisms and involve employees in continuous improvement.

The hierarchical structure of the Company seemed quite traditional and based on team working on the shop floor with team leaders and groups of teams controlled by first line supervision, who in turn are managed by a production manager reporting to the senior executive responsible for the overall operation of the site. The Company also employs human resource, quality and health and safety professionals.

The teams are product-based and the team leaders are all working team leaders, that is, they operate machines or have similar duties as well as leading their teams. Because of the three/four shift system that operates throughout the production area to maintain continuous production, in most cases the teams do not have a permanent designated team leader; their

leader can vary as shifts change. There are times when a team may have two team leaders as part of its compliment. The size of team can vary considerably ranging from a single member team to one with ten members.

Although the multinational study company tended to use the term 'engagement' rather than 'participation', the term was intended to embrace all participatory practices. However, in deference to this, the term 'voice/engagement' is used from time to time when appropriate in describing matters related to the multinational company.

4.1.2. THE SMALL TO MEDIUM SIZED (SME) COMPANY

Initial discussions with the multinational company's supplier company, later selected as the second study company, revealed it to be basically an owner managed company other than that one long serving senior manager has a small minority shareholding stake. It supplies the MNE Company with finished products and subassemblies as a supplement to its own capacity and so as such also operates in the same field of specialised medium mechanical engineering producing similar high tech. products. This also means that it has to work to the same tight specifications and international standards using very similar modern plant and equipment operated by highly skilled and trained employees.

The company employs around one hundred people, half of which are directly concerned with manufacture on the shop floor. The workforce is not unionised and works very flexibly. It is not unusual for a highly skilled shop floor employee or someone in a supervisory or managerial position to undertake tasks such as moving products around if that is what is required. The ambiance on the shop floor is generally informal and non-procedural except for that which is required to ensure product quality and safe working. There appeared to be no formal procedures covering matters such as continuous improvement or voice. The company does not employ a human resource professional but two of the managerial staff cover that aspect alongside their normal duties, backed up by an external consultancy. There is one member of staff who manages all the product quality and health and safety issues for the Company.

The Company is structured along traditional lines with a strong emphasis on team working. The shop floor teams, ranging in size from a single member to ten employees, are product-based and each has a permanent team leader who reports to a production manager and he in turn to a production director who reports to the chief executive of the Company; effectively the owner manager.

4.1.3. THE TWO COMPANIES COMPARED

Both companies satisfy the main criteria for the two study companies to be compared, in that they operate using very similar manufacturing processes likely to demand similar types of skill and expertise from their operatives and that the principal factor that marks them out as different from each other is their size; the factor to be researched.

However, although the number of variables between the two companies, other than size, appears to be as low as it is ever practically likely to be between two organisations, the preliminary discussions between them did throw up some instances where their manner of operating differs. One major difference established was that the multinational company is unionised, whereas the SME Company is not. The impression was also gained that the multinational company operates in a more formal and procedural manner than the SME company. Another more detailed point is that the team leaders in the SME Company are permanently attached to their teams but this is not the case in the multinational company. What effect, if any, these particular differences have on how employees are involved in the running of each company should be identified as each is surveyed during the comparative case study.

4.2. THE RESEARCH STRATEGY

As with all research studies, the design of the methodology, along with its research philosophy and strategy, is intended to provide answers to the research questions and be suitable for analysis to test the hypotheses. In this case the philosophy behind the study is that of the positivist epistemological tradition with the data being sought, factual rather than subjective. The overarching strategy to be adopted is that of a case study, in this case a comparative study between two organisations where the alternative situations and attitudes in each type of company to do with voice mechanisms can be compared and contrasted. The strategy is also intended to contribute to a better understanding of how each type of company might realise the opportunities open to them from greater involvement by their employees.

This strategy is to be implemented using a mixed method approach using a combination of qualitative and quantitative methodological data collection techniques. Creswell (2008) describes six mixed method strategies open to researchers. What he entitles the 'Concurrent Transformation Strategy' best describes the process adopted in this study. This is where the researcher, with a reformist viewpoint, combines concurrently an existing theoretical perspective of the subject, in this case EIP practice, with the collection of data both

qualitatively and quantitatively. Here the 'existing theoretical perspective' is one gained from existing personal knowledge and experience and a review of literature on the subject. The strategy for qualitative data analysis will be largely inductive concerned with establishing any, especially new, theoretical principles arising from the research questions which lie behind the data. Although the main philosophical thrust governing the research is positivist, the inductive nature of the qualitative analysis could well result in some interpretivism thinking being applied. The analysis of the quantitative data will follow a deductive approach concentrating on testing hypotheses. Convergence between the two data sources is however considered essential and triangulation between the qualitative data derived from interviews and quantitative data from questionnaires is considered essential in obtaining well considered answers to the research questions.

The eventual quantitative analysis of the questionnaire data and to some extent interview data, will follow a hypothetico-deductive methodology mode. A key objective of this comparative case study is to investigate the various environmental parameters which could influence the research findings, so that conclusions on the key research question which is whether the form of employee involvement differs between large companies and small to medium sized companies in the engineering industry, can be drawn. The following parameters were considered significant:

1. **Age** (*although a delicate subject to ask for in questionnaires and might discourage response, it is considered relevant*)
2. **Gender** (*this is likely to be predominantly, if not exclusively, male and the fewer female respondents could be easily separated*)
3. **Educational level** (*this could be a delicate subject to ask for in questionnaires and might discourage response*)
4. **Skills level/expertise** (*this could be established by questionnaires*)
5. **Length of time in engineering industry** (*this could be established from questionnaires*)
6. **Length of service with company** (*this could be established from questionnaires*)
7. **Organisation structure** (*this could be established from interviews and company records*)
8. **Level of latent power** (*an idea of this could be established from interviews and questionnaires*)
9. **Level of freedom of action** (*an idea of this could be established from interviews and questionnaires*)
10. **Trade union strength** (*an idea of this could be established from interviews*)

11. **Works councils/committees** (*this could be established from interviews*)
12. **Industrial relations system** (*this could be established from interviews*)
13. **Collective bargaining** (*this could be established from interviews*)
14. **Macro-economic environment** (*this could be established from interviews and is likely to be a constant for both companies*)
15. **Financial participation** (*this could be established from interviews and questionnaires*)
16. **Industrial sector** (*both companies were chosen on the basis of being in the same industrial sector*)
17. **Machinery used** (*both companies are expected to use the same machinery/equipment/ processes. This could be confirmed by observation*)

4.3. THE NATURE AND SCOPE OF THE FIELD WORK

Key to the integrity of any eventual conclusions drawn from this case study into the effect of company size on levels of employee participation is the avoidance wherever possible of the effect of intervening variables. For this reason, the scope of the operational areas subjected to field work has been limited to those common to both study companies. As mentioned in section 4.1.2., preliminary visits and discussions with the SME Company established that their manufacturing activities were limited to welding and machining, although technically advanced. Visits to the multinational company around the same time showed that their production operations also included very similar manufacturing processes, but also others. It was therefore agreed with the company that the field work would be restricted to their welding and machining areas. Roughly speaking this would involve 50 shop floor employees in the SME Company and 100 in the multinational company.

As justified in section 3.1. describing the research design process, due to the long time span necessary to evaluate EIP practices in a working engineering environment, the field work was of necessity of a cross-sectional nature; i.e. a 'snapshot'. Initial discussions with the companies suggested that it was unlikely that it would be possible to attend and observe team briefings, which might have given an opportunity for some longitudinal study, but it is felt that even though the field work is totally cross-sectional, it does still provide a reasonably comprehensive understanding of the EIP processes being used and the influence of the employees, along with their attitudes to voice practices.

Field work began with a series of semi-structured interviews with key actors such as the person in overall charge on-site, whoever is responsible for human resource management, those directly responsible for supervising the shop floor teams and their leaders, and then

the persons holding the data concerning productivity, quality and health and safety. The interviews schedules, structured identically for both companies, were specifically designed for each class of interviewee, and to evaluate their views on local EIP practice. Each interviewee was given the choice of having their interview digitally recorded/transcribed or recorded by note taking, but all chose the former. Each interview was preceded by a short explanatory discussion with each interviewee setting out the research objectives and purposes which were also supported by a short written statement handed to each interviewee. The voluntary nature of their involvement and the anonymity of their responses were also stressed. The interviews were followed by issuing questionnaires to all shop floor employees, both team leaders and team members, in both companies. The questionnaires were designed to probe employee's attitude to the participatory opportunities open to them and what genuine influence they felt they had on how the company was managed. Two questionnaires were designed, a comprehensive one for team leaders, and a shorter one for team members. Each was identical for both companies and each gave the respondent the opportunity to ask to see the researcher privately and anonymously to "explain their feelings about an issue or issues covered in the questionnaire more fully". To ensure as high a response rate as possible, the questionnaires were issued and collected by the researcher in person which again also involved having a short explanatory discussion with each respondent setting out the research objectives and purposes and stressing the voluntary nature of their involvement and the anonymity of their responses. To preserve this anonymity, each questionnaire was headed by a random number coding, but not the respondent's name. The researcher also asked that the respondents complete the questionnaires alone, rather than as a group.

4.4. THE INTERVIEWS AND THE SELECTION OF INTERVIEWEES

Each company provided the researcher with a copy of their organisation chart from which to select potential interviewees and their HR personnel were made available to answer any queries which might be forthcoming concerning their roles. Neither company placed any restriction on who could be invited for interview and the final decision as to who to invite was solely that of the researcher, thus avoiding any possible bias by the companies. Nor was any possible censure of the responses critical to the Company discussed or requested. Finally, the companies were told that should the researcher be asked for his views or advice on what could be a contentious issue during interviews, his response would be to take it up with other appropriate bodies. Both companies allocated a HR staff member to liaise with the researcher and organise the scheduling of the interviews. The voluntary and anonymous nature of their interview was impressed on each respondent by the HR staff at

each company as it was by the researcher at the start of each interview when their formal consent was also gained.

As anonymity was considered to be such a crucial factor in ensuring that genuine and unfettered views were obtained from the interviewees, they were additionally assured that should their name, job title, or any other comment be given during the interview that could possibly lead to them being identifiable, it would be erased from the transcription and replaced with numerical coding. They were also assured that not only would their identity not be disclosed, nor would the identity of their company. All those selected agreed to be interviewed.

Using the organisation charts from each company and the advice from their HR staff, managerial and specialist staff were selected from each company as potential interviewees. These were all staff involved in the management and supervision of the pre-selected manufacturing operations. From each company their equivalent person with a similar role and responsibility was identified, so that their views could be compared and contrasted by following an identical interview schedule.

The selected interviewees and their generic job title are shown alongside their equivalent role holders in the following table:

INTERVIEWEES

SME Study Company	Multinational Study Company
<i>* interview schedule used shown in brackets</i>	
Company CEO/Owner Manager (1)	CEO on site (1)
Senior Manager responsible for HR (2)	HR Manager responsible for production activities (2)
Middle Manager assisting with HR activities (2)	
Sen. Manager responsible for production (3)	Sen. Manager responsible for production (3)
Production Supervisor (3)	Production Supervisor 1 (3) Production Supervisor 2 (3) Production Supervisor 3 (3)
Productivity, Quality & H&S Specialist (4)	Productivity & Quality Specialist (4) H&S Specialist (4 part)

Six members of staff were interviewed at the SME Company including both managers with HR responsibilities as part of their role. Eight members of staff were interviewed at the multinational company including all three supervisors responsible for the teams covering the

manufacturing operations common to both companies and both specialists relevant to the research study.

A separate interview schedule was compiled for each category of interviewee from each company, so that the views held by similar role holders in each could be fairly analysed, compared, and contrasted. The four schedules used were as follows:

1. Interview Schedule for CEO/Owner Manager
2. Interview Schedule for HR Manager (or whoever is in charge of HR)
3. Interview Schedule for Production Management
4. Interview Schedule for whoever is in charge of productivity, quality or health & safety records

All four schedules are shown in Appendix 1. The expression 'participation/engagement' can be seen in some of the interview schedules which was used because the word 'engagement' was used more widely than 'participation' in the MNE Company. The phrase 'engagement or participation' was employed during the questioning and the synonymy of the two terms discussed before the start of each interview in the MNE Company.

During the interviews, the participants were not only asked to express their own personal views on EIP as openly as possible, as against "the party line", they were also asked about any participatory actions they had taken part in or had initiated. They were also asked if they had voiced any suggestions, either to higher management or employees who reported to them, of a participatory nature and what type of response they had received. As there was thus every possibility that comments critical of the management or other employees could result, which could form an integral part of the research data, their absolute anonymity was again stressed at this juncture. Furthermore, they were assured that in any publications emanating from the research, critical comments or grumbles about company policy, members of the management teams or other employees, their identity would be protected and only shown in general terms in the form of aggregated data.

The semi-structured method was chosen to interview all fourteen interviewees. As already explained in section 3.1. of the research design chapter, this method was chosen because it was considered the best way to extract the viewpoints of interviewees and their equivalent from the other study company on common issues in a disciplined manner but at the same time allow these views to be expanded upon in a conversational style. With the agreement of all interviewees, the interviews were recorded and transcribed by the researcher for

subsequent mainly qualitative analysis. This allowed a freer flow of discussion than note taking would have allowed.

4.5. THE QUESTIONNAIRES AND THE SELECTION OF RESPONDENTS

With the agreement of the companies, every team leader and team member in the areas pre-selected for survey in each company, rather than a sample, was asked to complete a questionnaire personally by the researcher. This was done on an individual basis on the shop floor or occasionally by talking to a small group of employees. Before issuing questionnaires to those who agreed to complete one, the researcher outlined the purpose of the study, which was also laid out in a short note accompanying each questionnaire. The researcher stressed that cooperation was entirely voluntary and covered how the anonymity of respondents would be preserved. It was explained that although the envelopes containing the questionnaire did have each employees name on it, their only use was to return the questionnaires to the researcher after sealing so that the researcher could keep a check on who had been issued and returned a questionnaire. The questionnaires did not show the employee's name, they only had an individual random number respondent code which would be used to input data for statistical analysis. No employee name would ever be used when returned questionnaires were analysed. The respondent code would tell the researcher all he needed to know, such as which company the respondent came from and their general job category. Nevertheless, some employees were suspicious because obviously, if the researcher did not keep to this undertaking, it would be possible to identity respondents to the management, even though the researcher assured them that ethically this would never be allowed to happen in academic research. A minority did however decline to complete a questionnaire. It should be noted that these surveys were undertaken while there was widespread rumours of pending redundancies at both companies, creating atmospheres of suspicion in what Feurer and Chaharbaghi (1995) called a "dynamic environment".

Separate questionnaires were designed for team leaders and team members. Identical questionnaires were used in both study companies. Each was designed to contribute to answering the research questions and to cover the central issues of EIP; that is the all-embracing employee voice form of EIP. The questions were couched to provide valid and reliable measures of the respondent's attitudes and views held on EIP and to what extent they and their company practiced the concept. Both questionnaires are shown in appendix 2. The word 'participation' is used in questionnaires, rather than 'engagement' or 'voice/engagement' for reasons of brevity but only having established in the preliminary conversations with both study companies that the meaning of the term would be understood.

However, in the MNE Company, the synonymy and interchangeability of both terms was also explained by the researcher to each respondent as the questionnaires were issued.

The number of potential respondents targeted in each study company was as follows:

TARGETTED QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONDENTS

SME Study Company	Multinational Study Company
Team Leaders (8)	Team Leaders (15)
Team Members (40)	Team Members (89)

All completed questionnaires were used to compile statistical datasets and subjected to mainly quantitative analysis.

CHAPTER 5 DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

This chapter describes how the project data, both qualitative and quantitative, required from each study company was chosen, collected and analysed as well as showing the actual results obtained.

5.1. THE MIXED METHOD APPROACH

In line with the chosen research strategy (see section 4.2.) for the case study, the interview data was analysed using mainly qualitative methods and the questionnaire data mainly by quantitative methods; a mixed method approach.

5.2. QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE INTERVIEW DATA

Based around the subject headings from the Interview Schedules, the themes running through the fourteen interviews were identified and coded using NVivo software into parent nodes and child nodes. These were as follows:

PARENT NODE	CHILD NODE
Company features	Organisational control
	Communication and involvement channels
The voice policy of each company	The SME company's voice policy
	The multinational company's voice policy
Personal views on voice	CEO's personal views
	Production management's personal views
	Production supervisor's personal views
Influencers on voice	Influencers on the CEO's views
	Influencers on production management's views
	Influencers on production supervisor's views
Advantages and disadvantages of voice	Advantages of voice
	Disadvantages of voice
	'Them and Us'
Operational outcomes	Productivity
	Quality
	Health and safety
Looking ahead	The immediate future
	Anticipated future problems
	Extending towards self-management

This coding was progressively created as the interview transcriptions were studied and selected sections of the transcripts were then entered into already created NVivo child nodes or new ones created to cover the concepts discussed by the interviewees. These child nodes were clustered around the parent nodes or broad nodes; in effect themes as part of a thematic analysis of this case study data. These broad themes and their sub-themes were used to formalise the qualitative analysis of the data derived for the interviews held at both study companies.

5.2.1. THE FEATURES OF THE STUDY COMPANIES RELEVANT TO VOICE

ORGANISATIONAL TOPICS:

The basic features of how each study company was organised which could have a bearing on how employees were able, or were not able, to become involved in the running of the organisation was derived principally by interviewing the HR personnel in each company judged as being most likely to have unbiased views. Whilst both companies had a formal written organisational structure, its availability to all employees varied. In the SME Company,

although they had a “visual organisational structure” document it was not widely issued and they used it “when we need to use it on a need to know basis”, but the HR personnel did feel that they needed to rectify this situation, especially as they grew, so that everyone at all levels was aware of each other’s role. At the moment only those with access to, and knowledge of, the Company’s developing IT system were aware of it and that would not include the shop floor. Even in the multinational company the HR personnel felt that although all employees, including the shop floor, had access to the organisational structure of the Company through the IT system, their awareness of its availability was “probably quite low”. Both companies, being high tech. engineering companies, had of necessity, voluminous and prescriptive standard operating procedures which governed many aspects of their operational activities and were issued in written form to all relevant employees along with the required training in their use. Even in this high tech. environment, the SME Company, when asked, still felt that they operated generally in an ambience of informality but that this was likely to change as they grew and adopted a more structured and possibly more rigid organisational approach. Even the much larger multinational company took the view that although they operated “on the formal side” in a more structured manner than the SME company, this was not “extreme formal”.

Control and surveillance was a topic in which both study companies saw scope for improvement, especially at the SME Company where it was seen as becoming a critical issue due to company growth. In both companies control was centred on achieving and monitoring the production schedule; i.e. ‘getting the product out on time’. In the SME Company this had resulted in little attention, concern, or consideration being given to promoting a reasonable degree of team autonomy, or as the senior manager responsible for HR put it, “we’ve failed miserably on that particular target”. In his view their current method of control, consisting of detailed specific instructions and directives issued through hierarchical top down communications was proving to be “unsuccessful” in their growing company. In an effort to rectify the situation, targets had been introduced for various levels in the Company, including for individual teams/cells, but at the moment the Company had not imposed or suggested any systems of control within the teams and left it to the team leaders, which were working team leaders, “to do what they need to do”. The senior manager, who was a relatively new member of the management team and with a large company background, was of the opinion that their problems stemmed from the many years that the Company had been run as a “happy relaxed family-type business” which was a “completely different mindset” to that required to operate “in the real world”. The multinational company differed in that it had instigated some direction for the team leaders to follow in controlling the activities of their teams, including defining their role and responsibilities. This also involved holding regular

team meetings and in turn attending meetings with their own supervision. Even so, the HR staff member responsible for production felt that the direction given to the team leaders, which like their counterparts in the SME Company were working team leaders, as to how to control their teams was “quite loose” and basically “they do as they think fit” but that “it’s an area that, you know, we’ve highlighted could really be improved”. Nevertheless their top priority, like that of the SME Company, was the production schedule which left no discretion to team leaders as to the order in which operations were to be carried out and he was “not too sure” that the teams “were very autonomous”.

The SME company which had just begun to give some formal guidance to its team leaders on their expected duties, had not as yet arranged for any training in aspects of their work to make their teams more autonomous including team EIP even though they took the training of shop floor employees seriously with Training Needs Analyses being kept and individual Training Logs. The training was exclusively “from a technical perspective rather than a management perspective”. The multinational company also had similar active training programmes but in their case this included training in EIP which had been delivered before they embarked on their voice/engagement initiative and was attended by managers, supervisors and team leaders on a voluntary but ‘expected’ basis. Voice/engagement was also included in their new starter induction programme which as expected did not figure in the induction process at the SME Company, but their HR staff now felt that it should be.

Although the multinational company, as distinct from the SME company, was unionised with a single union agreement, trade union representatives were not invited to their training programme to introduce voice/engagement and the HR staff member admitted that the level of involvement by them in voice/engagement was a “token gesture” even though the Company usefully involved union representatives in other matters which might affect their shop floor members. Not only was the SME Company non-unionised, it had no real form of employee representation. A Works Committee existed but this was not elected and consisted of “one or two people who tend to be the spokespeople” not even formally appointed, being there “just by their age and experience and length of service” and they were not even used as a means of communication because the Company preferred to communicate directly with employees “to make sure that everyone gets the message”. The only formal employee representative body was a committee dealing mainly with health and safety matters.

CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION AND INVOLVEMENT:

Even the multinational company admitted that communication within the organisation was predominantly top down, from the management to the employees, as was also the case in the SME Company where communication was described by the senior manager responsible for HR as being in the main “directors to the employees”. However both companies were taking steps to address the issue. The SME company had been holding meetings with small groups of employees every six months to discuss topical key issues affecting the organisation and at the same time encouraging individuals to discuss any concerns they might have with their supervisor, or whoever was appropriate, at any time. The responses resulting from these meetings had been mixed, with some being productive for which encouraging feedback had been given. They were also considering issuing handouts more often following these meetings and possibly starting a company newsletter. The multinational company, as part of their efforts to promote two way communication, had also been holding similar meetings every six weeks with employees as forums for discussion as well as meetings with trade union representatives knowing that “definitely improvements could be made”. Biweekly meetings with union representatives and operational managers had also been held as channels of communication as well as teams meeting with their supervisors or team leaders for briefings and ‘Welcome to Work’ meetings conducted by team leaders for their team at the start of each shift. Even so, the view of the HR staff member was that employee responses from these various meetings were not “on the whole” productive. In the SME Company team briefings were not being held; the reason put forward was that the team leaders were, “not as yet real team leaders“, capable of holding meaningful meetings. Both companies were of the opinion that communication between teams left something to be desired. The SME Company described it as “poor” and the senior manager responsible for HR put this down to “no one owns the teams” and that communication within the teams varied with some better than others due to having a more effective team leader.

In terms of how much employees were encouraged to air their views; the SME Company considered that although the word ‘encourage’ may not be appropriate, “we give them every opportunity to do so” but there was no formal mechanism for employee voice. They basically constantly reinforce the message that; “if you’ve got anything to say tell us either now or later on”. However, in the view of the senior manager responsible for HR, the Company’s senior management was failing to get the message across to motivate employees to involve themselves in organisational matters affecting either their team or the organisation as a whole. He felt that the only thing that motivated them was “their hourly rate” and that they did

not see it as their role to get involved, they saw it as a “job of management, end of story”. He put this down to the legacy from when the Company was smaller and all decisions were taken, and expected to be taken, by the Managing Director/Owner; something the Company was having to counter as it grew and changed the “laissez-faire” attitude prevailing. His junior, longer serving, colleague agreed but did think that some employees would settle for recognition for their involvement effort rather than direct or indirect monetary reward and that it was mainly the long serving team members who were the most reluctant to get involved due to being used to the past practice. The employee views that had actually been received had come from individuals rather than from the teams as a whole. Even the multinational company had to admit that employees were “probably not on the whole” encouraged to make their views known either as individuals or through their teams. The staff member responsible for HR activities in the production department, saw Performance Reviews as the only motivational tool where involvement could be recorded and possibly lead to promotion to say team leader and consequent monetary reward. On the whole his experiences were similar to his counterparts in the SME Company in that many employees, with the exception of the team leaders, did not see it as their role to be involved in matters other than their own operational tasks; a situation he described as “across the board proactiveness is quite low”. The view that such matters were the job of the management was also “quite common”. When it came to discussing how strongly employees were encouraged to actually get involved in decision making affecting their own workplaces and their Company in general, both study companies thought they did, but not in strategic decisions, basically only decisions involving their own workplaces. Although the SME Company did encourage individual employees to get involved, the senior manager responsible for HR did not think employees took full advantage of the opportunities open to them to be involved in the decision-making process, even in very informal ways such as discussions on the shop floor between individuals and members of the management and his junior colleague didn’t even think it actually happened. Any employee involvement initiated by management was in the main channelled through the teams. In fact the senior manager responsible for HR in the Company was very dismissive of more formal mechanisms since in his experience “I’ve never seen it work”. The multinational company had the same approach to the SME Company, limiting involvement to issues directly concerned with operational activities in the employee’s workplaces, but in their case employee involvement was always channelled through the teams, other than their formal ‘Enterprise Excellence’ scheme in which both individuals and teams could take part by making suggestions. Even so the staff member responsible for HR in the production departments thought there could be more involvement by employees and he had detected that there was sometimes a perception by the shop floor that “managers and supervisors are there to do the managing and problem solving”. In

discussing the current level of employee involvement available to employees in both study companies, the logical next step was to consider the opportunities open to them to actually implement, possibly with others, their own ideas or suggestions which had been deemed worthy of at least a trial by management or supervision; that is for the employee(s) to be empowered. The HR staff in both companies thought that the level of empowerment was low with the senior manager in the SME Company frankly doubting that shop floor employees had ever been encouraged to investigate, yet alone implement, their own good ideas or suggestions. However, his longer serving junior colleague felt that this may have happened “to a certain degree”. In the multinational company investigating a suggestion emanating from a team member(s) was seen by the HR staff member as more likely one of the roles of their team leader but there could be the opportunity for shop floor employees to be part of one of the project teams which were formed from time to time and empowered to investigate some new proposal. Even so, there was clearly strong reservations expressed in both companies when it came to releasing employees from their normal duties to participate in such work; the HR senior staff member in the SME company vehemently stating this just would not happen and the other HR staff member and counterpart in the multinational company felt it would be unlikely due to a loss of productive time from the busy and vital production schedule. One other common view from both companies was that if an individual’s suggestion was to be pursued, they would advocate it being a team operation so that wider viewpoints could be brought to bear and possibly improve on the initial idea or suggestion.

As a formal Continuous Improvement programme can often be used as a vehicle for employee empowerment, in this case all interviewees, not just the HR staff, were asked if they had one built into their organisational structure or alternatively if they had adopted the concept in a more informal mode through accepted custom and practice, since it was felt that HR staff may not be aware of informal activity. All those interviewed in the SME Company, including the Compliance Manager who was responsible for quality assurance and the key performance indicators amongst other matters, were clear that there was no formal programme operating in their company; whereas all interviewees in the multinational company confirmed that they had a formal Continuous Improvement programme operating there. Although there was universal agreement in the SME Company that there was no formal programme in operation, all acknowledged that informally there was an understanding of the need to continually seek out improvements in the way the business was operating. The senior HR staff member, whilst not being aware of any form of continuous improvement system in operation, did think that the Company should have one “in the future without question” but his longer serving junior colleague saw the shop floor team leaders acting as

agents for continuous improvement from time to time but not the actual shop floor employees. The CEO, whilst realising that “certain sections” of the Company knew of the concept of continuous improvement, and although admitting that a recent survey of the organisation by external consultants had pointed out the “opportunity” to adopt such a programme, had some reservations of its practicality due to the lack of the “right kind of skill sets” possessed by the team leaders and had doubted that the shop floor would contribute because in his view past experience had shown their sole interest would be in its effect on wage rates and enhanced work satisfaction would not feature. This mirrored a similar observation generally about the skill sets of the team leaders by the senior manager responsible for HR. As the discussions reached staff nearer to the actual shop floor, the interviewees were clearly more aware of the informal activities to do with continuous improvement that were actually taking place. The senior manager responsible for production described these activities as;

“it’s a philosophy and if you said, ‘Do you encourage continuous improvement as an ethos’, if you like, then Yes, absolutely”

...and he used the term ‘Continuous Improvement’ in the workplace. He saw the shop floor workforce “in the main” as an integral part of the Company’s improvement efforts but accepted that there were some who “don’t feel as though they are” and through “dialogue” was trying to “encourage them to get involved”. Nevertheless shop floor employees did serve on project teams solving problems and investigating possible improvements, often alongside members from other teams which also served to promote inter-team coordination. The production supervisor managing the production teams and their team leaders, relatively new to the Company, echoed these sentiments and described their efforts as “we look at ways of moving forward” and “how we can make things better” but was of the opinion that to formalise their efforts and make more significant improvements they would have to “have teams set up within the Company that would specifically look at those sort of things”. He described the informal system as an “understanding” promoted by the directors and he definitely thought that the employees felt that they were an integral part of the improvement efforts being made which he encouraged by having discussions actually on the shop floor rather than more formal meetings “around a table” and making sure that valuable suggestions were acknowledged and senior management made aware of them. He saw some advantages in formalising such a system, mainly by having written records which could help project improvement teams, a concept which he supported, when they were operating, but no project team had been formed in the eight months he had been at the Company.

In contrast to all the interviewees in the SME Company, all in the multinational company confirmed that a formal Continuous Improvement programme was operating in their organisation. The staff member responsible for production HR activities indeed felt that the shop floor employees saw themselves very much as part of the programme with “a lot of involvement” by them in workshops organised by the Company and, encouraged by the management, participated in incentive schemes to achieve Company objectives. The CEO on the other hand did not see the programme as a total success with mixed reactions from the shop floor. He had observed that when successful outcomes were achieved, the shop floor were enthusiastic and felt engaged, but when there was not a successful outcome, the opposite reaction occurred and they became actively disengaged. Even so he was very supportive of the programme and had instigated schemes such as ‘Kaizen’ (Japanese improvement technique) and authorised employees to be taken off their normal duties to work on improvement initiatives. The senior manager responsible for production also “thought” the shop floor felt part of the improvement programme to which end he had arranged for production supervisors, team leaders and the teams, to meet every week to discuss possible improvement activities and he felt that;

“There’s been real engagement from the guys on the shop floor and they’ve seen the benefit of it as well”.

He also felt the programme had contributed to increased productivity. Like the SME Company, the multinational company also formed improvement project teams whose membership included shop floor employees on a full time basis, often drawn from more than one team of which he was very supportive. The views of the three production supervisors varied on the efficacy of the Company Continuous Improvement programme. One of the three thought that his team members did feel part of the programme. Another took the view that only some felt involved and others “keep their mouths shut” and “just get on with the work”. The third supervisor definitely felt that his teams did not feel that they were an integral part of the programme. However, all three encouraged their teams to get involved and contribute either by setting an example and/or holding regular meetings with them and they all helped in forming project teams to varying degrees with members being taken off their normal work where appropriate or being switched to another shift to enable them to take part in the improvement work which had resulted in many solutions to problems coming from the shop floor team members. Whilst the more sceptical supervisor only saw “some” increase in productivity due to these efforts, the other two were more positive with one, when asked if he was aware of an increase, replying “most definitely”. The Continuous Improvement programme had in fact only been operating for around a year and had replaced an informal

approach to improvement which one of the supervisors saw as a benefit now when proper record-keeping could provide suggestions for solutions to problems in the future. The multinational company also deployed a Six Sigma quality system as part of its Enterprise Excellence programme and the staff member leading the programme took the view “without doubt” that the Company’s Continuous Improvement programme had contributed to improvements in product quality, but he did not feel that shop floor employees were being encouraged to participate or engage in continuous improvement. In addition the Company employed a specialist senior manager who led the health and safety enforcement activities and he did feel that the Continuous Improvement programme had contributed to improved safe working practice in the Company since it involved “looking forward about where we need to be”, but most of the specific health and safety issues were initially identified by observations rather than the Continuous Improvement programme. Whilst he acknowledged that the Company encouraged the employees to engage in continuous improvement, he was not sure that the encouragement was effective.

An indirect way that organisations can communicate their commercial situation to employees is through financial participation schemes. The SME Company did in fact have such a scheme which took the form of an annual bonus based on the profitability of the Company. This was linked to the overall commercial success of the Company and was not related to the profitability of individual sections or teams within the organisation. However, employees were not made aware of the actual financial position of the Company or how that had been used to calculate the bonus, but the senior manager responsible for HR did add that “we are looking are changing that”. In fact even the middle manager with HR responsibilities did not know how the bonus was calculated. The multinational company did not have any form of financial participation operating, yet did publish a monthly report to employees on the Company’s performance, not only the physical output achieved but also the revenue that had been gained against the target.

5.2.2. VOICE POLICIES OF THE STUDY COMPANIES

Before considering how voice was practiced in both companies, an awareness of any company policy on the subject, if any, that the individuals and groups at all levels operate under, is essential. Clearly this can have a significant bearing on their attitudes and ways of working. It should also again be emphasised that both study companies were high tech. engineering enterprises manufacturing similar products using similar methods with onerous technical restrictions which have to be followed to the letter for safety reasons.

THE SME COMPANY'S VOICE POLICY:

The SME Company did not as such have a human resource (HR) department or anyone dedicated full time to the function. However, one of the senior management team was charged with looking after HR issues assisted by a member of the middle management team who also did not have HR as a primary role. They also retained an external consultancy for HR advice.

Both managerial staff looking after HR were clear that the Company did not have a formal EIP policy, what the senior manager defined as "something written down". When asked if the Company therefore had an informal policy, in effect an 'understanding', the senior manager seemed unclear what voice entailed. After this was very briefly defined as 'involvement in decision making', he did feel that they were "structured sufficient" for this to happen. He went on to elaborate;

"...any individual is able to make a decision relevant to their particular job area, or if they have any thoughts about improving or maybe changing things in different areas, then there's, I believe, sufficient forums for them to raise that question with their line manager, with other managers, with the directors etc. etc. So from that respect if I would say, yes, we encourage employees to participate in the well-being of the business".

With regard to how this 'informal policy' is communicated to employees; he saw his being achieved by "custom and practice". By this he meant that the shop floor employees were quite happy to discuss issues directly with senior management, middle management or supervisors because;

"I don't think there's any particular barriers stopping anyone asking any question up and down the sort of business hierarchy".

The middle manager felt that the SHEF (safety, health, environment and fire) committee meetings, which were held monthly, could be considered as an informal vehicle for the encouragement of voice since it involved team leaders off the shop floor who could bring the views of the shop floor employees with them. Presumably though, the issues raised would have to be SHEF related and would not cover the broader aspects of voice. However, personally she did think that a formal EIP policy "wouldn't be a bad thing to get employee's thoughts" and that such a policy could well be communicated to all employees through the existing Company notice boards or by memos to each individual which are issued currently on various topics.

The question of any influence from external bodies, including clients, who might have influenced the Company's views on EIP, was discussed, but the senior manager could only recall a time quite recently when they were visited by 'Investors In People' staff because they were considering applying for accreditation, but did not pursue the objective. The feedback from 'Investors In People' after the visit was "quite positive in terms of employee engagement as a general comment" but that they were lacking in structure and strategic thinking for the business. They had not had any comments from clients such as; "Oh you need to have a formal participation process in place". The middle manager was not aware of any external influences.

Following up on the comments of 'Investors In People', the senior manager was asked if he thought the Company should have a more formal attitude to involvement by employees. His response was that in a growing company needing some restructuring, the emphasis should be more on employee supervision, especially at team leader level, rather than employee involvement. He foresaw enhancing the quality of leadership in team leaders as a way to increase involvement and by more closely defining the expected role of team leaders, to make them more effective supervisors, rather than a "notional" role with accompanying higher rate of pay. He added that they were about to embark on such an improvement programme having sought advice from their external HR advisors who had stressed the need for effective communication with the team leaders and within the teams.

When asked how they encourage team members to get involved in the running of their own workplace, the senior manager saw the advantage of a regular presence of managerial and supervisory staff of all levels on the shop floor ready to indulge in two way communication. At the same time the senior manager accepted that there will always be some individuals who "by their very nature" keep any good ideas or suggestions they might have "to themselves". The middle manager was not sure how best to encourage the shop floor to engage, admitting that she didn't know the mindset of the people on the shop floor and whether their view on EIP might be "it's a waste of time".

When the CEO of the SME company was asked if the Company had "in the broadest sense, a participation policy", he replied without any hesitation, "No". When asked if he thought he should have one, he responded, "I don't know is the answer", and then elaborated by saying that he would have to consider what benefits employee involvement and participation would bring to the business. He also was of the opinion that the Company did not have the "right skills sets" for "correct employee participation" and had some employees not able to "contribute anything". He reminisced that when the Company was smaller, involvement and participation was in effect automatic when "you saw everybody every day" with no need for

any formality, and now as the Company has grown that “participation and intimacy” had been lost. Asked if he would consider formulating some form of policy, formal or informal, his response was, “It’s certainly not been on the agenda” but then wondered if “this discussion” might provoke “some other thoughts about it”. On the other hand, when asked what might be the motivator for such a move, he replied;

“...it’s usually if something looks as though it’s broke and needs fixing and at the moment I don’t detect it’s broken”.

Without any form of voice policy, the CEO relied on such means as regular production meetings and management reviews to gain the involvement of employees, hoping that any “policy or philosophy” expounded there would filter down but conceded that “I don’t feel as though that’s as dynamic as it should be”.

The managerial staff member in charge of production took a more positive view on the merits of EIP and considered himself one of the originators of what passed as a policy. He did not see this as a “clearly defined policy” but more of a “psychology” and as such had not needed to persuade anyone to adopt this way of working. His motivation for promoting this way of working was simply the need in a high tech. engineering environment to capture the skills and experience that the shop floor employees possessed, and which higher levels in the hierarchy of the business did not, and “mould” them into something that allows the Company to create the products which their future depends on. To do this he engages and empowers the shop floor employees to give them a sense of responsibility and ownership for the activities that they are doing. As he put it, “it’s a psychology you’ve got to adopt”.

As expected, the SME company structure was simpler than that of the multinational company. There was only one person carrying out the role of supervising the shop floor team leaders, which were working team leaders, and reporting to the senior person with overall responsibility for the production function; whereas in the multinational company, this role was performed by three supervisory staff covering the production functions similar to those of the SME Company. He also took a more positive view on the concept of voice than the CEO. However he did not consider himself an originator of the informal participatory policy, it was already operating when he joined the Company, but was familiar with the concept from previous employments and “all I’ve done is pick it up and run with it”. He considered “it was a way of working” involving everybody from directors to the shop floor. He had found no need to persuade anyone of the advantages of EIP and some of his own ideas to improve and encourage employee involvement had been accepted by the management. One such proposal involved reforming the responsibilities of the shop floor team leaders,

who were 'working team leaders', to place more emphasis on their supervisory and leadership roles. This had meant that they were expected to devote some of their time "off the tools" and the management had agreed to this.

THE MULTINATIONAL COMPANY'S VOICE POLICY:

Unlike the SME Company, the multinational company did have a human resource (HR) department staffed with HR professionals. In fact, the department covered some HR aspects for other subsidiaries of the multinational company as well as the one being studied. Within the department, there was one member of staff dedicated to deal with HR within the production function of the study company.

Although the multinational company was familiar with the principles of voice/engagement and indeed its practices, the HR staff member said that they did not have "anything as specific" as a formal written down policy on the concept but they operated an 'Engage To Excel' programme which formed part of the business strategy of the Company and news on the programme was displayed on notice boards throughout the plant. His impression was that he "wouldn't really call it a policy as such, it's more of an objective". However, the Company was placing considerable emphasis on EIP involving changing employee's roles and their ways of working as well as surveying all employees biannually with a questionnaire to see how engaged they were. In fact this was carried out throughout the entire multinational organisation world-wide. The results from the survey were given to all managers so that they can see how well their efforts in engaging their teams were progressing. In addition, at team level, managers and team leaders were charged with achieving objectives by running what was called "Engagement Action Planning" with a view to improving voice/engagement within their "spheres of influence" by means of encouraging feedback from the team members and acting on their suggestions and criticisms. He added that every shop floor employee was also encouraged to take part in "Enterprise Excellence" projects which are a form of continuous improvement aimed at improving product quality and with it customer satisfaction.

The only external influences brought to bear on the participatory practices at plant level originated from the multinational's parent company which organised the biannual engagement survey and expected all subsidiaries to follow this business strategy, possibly with some interpretation to make it appropriate for local circumstances. The consultancy which carried out the biannual survey throughout the enterprise also offered advice on the level of voice/engagement at the plant and what target would be sensible for them to aim at as they strove for optimum engagement. Basically this amounted to having three very

engaged people for every disengaged person, but he admitted that they were some way short of this at the moment with their programme of work to encourage voice/engagement still being “very much in the infancy of it”.

When asked what had motivated the multinational enterprise to embark on its voice/engagement programme, the member of staff responsible for HR activities of the production function in the plant explained that it had been found to be necessary because of the very fast growth rate of the enterprise world-wide which they considered had resulted in its infrastructure for, and investment in, voice/engagement being inadequate. The Company hoped by following this strategy and therefore by having more engaged employees, productivity rates and Company performance generally would increase. When asked about the ‘softer’ advantages of EIP such as employee satisfaction, he was less effusive; indicating that the main objective was seen in terms of operational outcomes. To keep these Company operational objectives in the forefront of the minds of employees, monthly reminders and updates on them at team/cell level were sent to all employees, partly to create a little internal competition, rather than waiting for annual Performance Reviews.

The CEO of the multinational company was also reluctant to call their voice/engagement initiatives a policy and saw it all “under the banner of ‘Engage To Excel’” and thought it perfectly adequate. He also was quite happy with its availability to all employees, being on the Company intranet. He also confirmed that the ‘policy’ originated from their parent company and thought it was what “you’d see in other big corporations”. When asked how he felt the Company encouraged its employees to get involved in the running of their workplaces and the Company in general, he put forward the daily ‘Welcome to Work’ meetings that are held at the start of each working day by the team leaders in order for “the guys to understand what priorities are of the day”. Again operational outcomes came to the fore. The CEO was also asked if the Company tried to influence the participatory practices of their suppliers such as the SME study company, but although he was aware that they do have audit check lists this mainly covered the supplier’s quality processes and procedures and he was not certain if “it’s got employee engagement in there”.

The member of the managerial team at the multinational company responsible for the production function also was unsure whether their participatory endeavours could be termed a policy. He, like others, saw it is more as a strategy with ‘Engage To Excel’ monthly meetings being pivotal to improving voice/engagement. He was not involved in the inception of the strategy; he had joined the Company later. He had though been involved since joining in promoting the strategy in particular in promoting the concept of ‘Communication Champions’ who were key people identified as being suitable to be members of a team

spearheading the promotion of the strategy. He was especially keen to point out that the parent company had been very supportive and enthusiastic in promoting voice/engagement in the Company including sending a “top guy” from corporate headquarters, who was very passionate about the concept, to brief Company staff. The message put over being;

“...when we have an engaged workforce, we have a workforce that is gaining a sense of action, as they’re loyal, they go that extra mile”.

Three production supervisors were interviewed from the multinational company, and to maintain their anonymity, they will be referred to as Supervisor A, Supervisor B and Supervisor C. All three supervised similar product sections, each with a number of working team leaders. Each section used similar manufacturing processes and equipment to that used by the teams surveyed at the SME Company and therefore employed employees with similar backgrounds and skill levels.

Supervisor A felt that their ‘policy’ on EIP was basically imposed on the Company by their parent company but with laudable motivation, namely to “improve the business” by recognising that “people are the resource” that will “make the change”. He took a similar view to those of HR staff at both study companies that there were people on the shop floor who had the kind of knowledge and experience to make this happen and may well know better ways of doing something, but some may “see that as management’s job, so they say nothing”. However, he felt that now as the voice/engagement process was developing, “some very experienced men” who were holding back “are now opening up with their knowledge” and “some of them are quite passionate about it”. He saw this as a way of empowering the workforce to examine and improve their ways of working and generally their work experience which could well result in outcomes such as higher levels of product quality and productivity.

Supervisor B, like Supervisor A, was supportive of the Company’s efforts to promote EIP but had been encouraging his teams to participate before the official Company ‘policy’ was brought into effect and was continuing to do so. Before the introduction of the Company programme he was working with the employees who wanted to be involved, rather than the workforce as a whole and with Company support. He did not consider this in any way revolutionary, “it just sort of came naturally”.

“When the guys came up with an idea, then I recognised it as a good idea, then we used it. If I was in a position where I could promote that idea, I would do”.

When questioned about the Company's motivation behind the participatory programme, like Supervisor A, he saw this as a way for the Company to tap into the valuable resource of shop floor experience and try to engage with those in the workforce who "keep their mouths shut, do the work, and how you told them to do it and collect the money", of which there were many. He used the term 'buyin', frequently used by staff in the Company, to describe the aim of the programme, which is "getting that buyin from the people that do, so it's a switched on workforce".

Supervisor C confirmed that the 'fairly formal' policy was not a written policy but that several Company emails had been issued on the subject and was part of their cultural values and code of working. He also confirmed that he was not an originator of the 'policy' which was imposed on him and others. The motivation behind the imposed 'policy' he seemed to see principally as operational outcomes such as productivity rather than 'softer' objectives such as job satisfaction by expressing the view, "engaged workforce means higher productivity" and that therefore "everyone should be doing well". That is what he saw as the primary aim of the Company voice/engagement programme, but qualified this by saying that "a happy workforce" will "give results", "you should get more orders and a better future" and that EIP meant that the employees were "not just a cog in the wheel", "not just a number", "they're involved".

5.2.3. COMPARING THE PERSONAL VIEWS OF LEVELS OF MANAGEMENT AND SUPERVISION IN BOTH STUDY COMPANIES

CEO'S PERSONAL VIEWS:

When the chief executives of both companies were asked for their own personal views on voice, there was a marked divergence of opinion. The chief executive of the SME company felt that the younger shop floor employees, "with one or two exceptions", were interested in participating whereas the older, and what he described as the "traditional ones", were not. He generally also found the monthly paid office staff more receptive to the concept of EIP and engagement. In contrast, the chief executive of the multinational company was extremely enthusiastic on the concept of EIP, seeing it as a vehicle for enhanced employee motivation, with the employees "buying-in" to the objectives of the organisation resulting in enhanced productivity and product quality. He described it as a "win-win situation".

When questioned about the possible disadvantages that could accrue from employee participation practices, the chief executive of the SME Company could not bring to mind any specific problem other than a frequent feeling of disappointment at the outcome when

participatory initiatives had been tried. This he had concluded was due to a parochial viewpoint held by employees who did not grasp the bigger picture for the organisation, concentrating more on the effect on their own team or cell or them personally. He instanced a time when he had gathered all the shop floor teams together to brief them on the future large workload and what the company had in mind to cope with this. The response from the work force was to only query the effect on their rate per hour wages. The chief executive of the multinational company could not identify any specific disadvantage in pursuing a policy of EIP and engagement but had found it to be a very time-consuming process. He thought it relevant to explain that their voice/engagement programme was a fairly recent development, having been initiated in the last couple of years and thus likely to demand a high degree of managerial attention at this stage. The key criterion was whether the programme could be “translated into real business improvement or results”.

Each of the chief executives was asked if they saw their companies as supportive, sceptical, or just neutral regarding EIP. The chief executive of the SME Company, who is virtually the owner manager of the company, pondered before replying and qualified his answer by admitting that the Company's position was really his own personal view, but that in principle he would consider himself supportive. When the chief executive of the multinational company was asked the same question, his immediate answer was, “very...very supportive I think”. He went on to detail the work that the Company had been doing as part of their voice/engagement programme. This included a comprehensive training programme for employees, promoting better two way communication, leadership skills, and encouragement for the employees to put forward improvement suggestions. As part of this he emphasised that he clears his diary for an hour and a half per day to walk round the plant to be a clearly visible presence.

Finally, each chief executive was asked if he had recognised any tangible advantages emanating from EIP practices. The chief executive of the SME Company was quite dismissive repeating his view that “I think more disappointment than anything with the wider employee participation”. The chief executive of the multinational company was more effusive. He cited benefits in productivity, quality and “cross-functional teamwork” without any quantification, but also the benefit of bringing people together to work in a cross-functional manner which avoids problems/solutions being missed because they fall between two functions. He also mentioned their ongoing ‘Engage To Excel’ programme, which he advocated as a good way of promoting voice/engagement.

PRODUCTION DIRECTOR OR MANAGER'S PERSONAL VIEWS:

When the managerial staff members in charge of the production activities at both companies were asked for their own personal views on EIP, in contrast to the opposing views of their chief executives, overall they took a similar view on the efficacy of EIP/engagement.

At the SME Company, the member of the management team in charge of production thought that EIP promoted a feeling of ownership with employees but initially seemed unsure about what was meant by the term and asked for a definition and what constituted participation practices before responding. It appeared that the term participation or engagement was not part of everyday parlance in the SME Company. Nevertheless, he felt that such practices promoted a sense of responsibility in employees and enhanced morale. In fact he admitted that morale was "on the low side" and that he dreaded "to think what it would be like if we didn't have an element of employee participation". When asked if he could identify any tangible benefits for production at the SME that could be traced back to participatory practices, he immediately cited feedback from the shop floor which had often included suggested improved working practices which had been implemented and that this was the way to give ownership to employees. He stressed the necessity to give feedback to employees following any suggestions from them, even if their suggestion was not taken up, including the reasons why. Elaborating, he painted a picture of most working practices at the SME being the result of collaboration with the shop floor workforce. However, knowing that the study involved a comparison with a multinational organisation, he conceded that this was "maybe a little bit easier for us in smaller organisation to get the benefit of that than it is in a larger organisation". This was illustrated by some ideas which the SME had suggested to the multinational company as one of their suppliers, that had "crashed and burnt" due to the tortuous path it had to take through the various departments in the large organisation, each stage of which could be a costly process, eliminating the potential cost saving in the process. In their own company, the SME had an alternative "let's just do it" attitude.

The only disadvantage the member of the managerial team responsible for production at the SME saw with formal EIP/engagement was prevarication due to the time taken to properly assess everyone's opinion, which went against a typical SME's philosophy of "let's just do it". He saw this as a leadership issue when a point is reached and there is a need to pronounce;

"Well I've heard your side of the story, I've heard his side of the story as well and I've heard that other fellow's side of the story and this is the way we're going to do it",

On another positive note he emphasised that health and safety was paramount at the SME and employee involvement through their health and safety committee, which included shop floor representatives, had been a success story.

The counterpart at the multinational company also held a positive view on the merits of voice/engagement and was most definite that it had a beneficial effect on morale, or as he put it, “when the guys are engaged, then morale goes up”. In fact he was hoping that morale would be further enhanced in the future due to more and more successful outcomes emanating from employee suggestions/ideas being recognised by the workforce as well as the management. He used the same phrase as his chief executive to describe the beneficial effect on employees as, “they buy in to it”. This view was reinforced by such additional phrases as;

“...they’re involved”, “they’re committed to it”, “we’re more likely to get better productivity”, “going that extra mile”, “rather than clock watching”, “do what needs to be done”.

He also expressed the view that employees still feel involved in difficult times as well as in good times;

“I think they then enjoy, you know, the benefits and the Company successes but also, you know when it’s....there is not a success, they feel a little bit that pain as well and then hopefully that spurs them too and they work and clear whatever issue it was that caused that pain”.

He illustrated this with the example when a delivery date is in jeopardy, via two way discussions with engaged shop floor personnel, they work on past the end of their shift to get the job finished, or the problem solved.

However he did accept that there were some disadvantages emanating from active voice/engagement. Principally this was the time involved in listening to all the various views of employees before a decision is made, which was of course more pronounced in large organisations. This again was a feature identified by his chief executive.

When asked to give his view as to whether the multinational company was supportive, sceptical or just neutral with regard to voice/engagement, without hesitation he replied that “I think we’re very supportive of it”. He went on to back this up evidentially by; “we have a lot of internal surveys”, to emphasise the importance the Company places on the concept and cited their ‘Engage To Excel’ programme and from these and other ways he did recognise

that the workforce comprised the engaged, not engaged and actively disengaged. From this data the Company was seeking to influence the attitude of the latter two factions, but like the chief executive of the SME company, he recognised that the approach was different for office-based employees to that of the shop floor where being a unionised company, it was necessary to work through the trade unions; whereas with office staff this could be done on an individual basis. Although the chief executive of the SME also identified the sharp difference between dealing with office and shop floor staff; the SME was not unionised. The number of 'actively disengaged' in the multinational company was described as "not a huge amount" but by being responsible for production, he was able to charge the production supervisors with the duty to engage with them to try to establish any reasons, or what frustrations, may be behind their attitudes. He felt that a lot of frustration was due to the views of these disengaged personnel not been listened to in the past.

In summary, while responsible for the production function at the multinational company and striving to improve the participatory practices within the production activities of the Company, like his chief executive, he accepted that it was still early days and that,

"...we're probably still in our infancy in terms of embedding it in our culture".

PRODUCTION SUPERVISOR'S VIEWS:

The personal views of the member of staff supervising the production teams in the SME company on voice were generally positive and similar to those of the management responsible for production at both study companies but felt that he had not been with the Company long enough to give a view as to whether it had been beneficial in terms of employee morale. He saw the goal of employee participatory practices to garner the differing "insights" of employees "into what you're trying to do". Through this process he felt that combining the ideas of many people and allowing one contribution to offer a further improvement to another was the way to arrive consensually at optimum solutions to problems. As he put it:

"Different people have different ideas of how to do it and you come up with the best, you know, the one idea might not be great, but coupled with somebody else's idea might be what you're looking for".

This also involved discussions with shop floor team members along with their team leaders and often was carried out on the actual shop floor where problems and potential solutions could be more easily envisaged. He did however admit that there were also some shop floor

personnel who saw this process the function of management with comments such as, “so why are they coming to me for, all I want to do is weld”.

When asked if he considered the SME company to be supportive, sceptical or just neutral of EIP, the clear answer was “very supportive” when dealing with both the shop floor and staff and could not bring to mind any disadvantages which he had witnessed in the SME company during his tenure supervising the production teams.

The three production supervisors in the multinational company, referred to as Supervisors A, B and C to maintain their anonymity, had fairly similar views on the merits of voice/engagement but differing views on its effect on employee morale. Supervisor A not only thought that it did not benefit the morale of employees, his view was that it had the opposite effect and was treated “like a joke” when he discussed engagement with his teams who felt “nothing will come from it”. Supervisor B thought voice/engagement did have an overall benefit to morale “to some extent”, but that morale was mainly governed by other factors such as the commercial success of the Company and Supervisor C’s view was that the voice/engagement programme had not been operating long enough to show what effect it was having on morale. Supervisor A, when asked what he saw as the possible advantages in adopting participatory practices, immediately used the phrase “buy-in” when he replied;

“You get their buy-in from whatever it is. If they’ve got a percentage input into the changes, or what’s going on....it’s more robust”

It appears that this phrase had been used throughout the multinational company as the voice/engagement programme was introduced. He, like his counterpart in the SME Company, took a positive view on the concept of EIP. He elaborated on this in terms of employee involvement by saying;

“You gain their input, if you’re just telling them to do something, then it’s less likely to stick. If you get them involved and....they come forward with their ideas why there is an issue and how we can fix it and it’s more robust to fix something. If they haven’t got an involvement in there, it doesn’t stick.”

He stressed that involvement included the shop floor team members, not just the team leaders, which was achieved by holding weekly meetings with them, but conceded that this was a relatively new venture that had only been running for a couple of months. At this stage no major possible benefits had been identified.

When questioned about any possible disadvantages that might result from the voice/engagement programme, he described experiences where the expectations of employees were unrealistic with regard to the speed of implementation. He felt they did not understand, or accept, that being a high tech. engineering company, changes in procedures had to be considered by a multitude of different disciplines internally and even probably externally by statutory bodies and even clients. This had led to negative attitudes to the concept and contrasts with the “let’s just do it” philosophy identified by the member of the managerial team in the SME company which actually operates in the same engineering sector, but is able to function in a less bureaucratic way due to its size.

When asked if he felt the multinational company was supportive, sceptical or just neutral with regard to voice/engagement, his response was guarded. He felt that some people only paid lip service to it and that in particular the older long serving shop floor employees were sceptical. However, he did feel that in the company as a whole they “are for engagement and team meetings”.

The multinational company’s Supervisor B, was also positive when asked what he saw as the possible advantages in adopting participatory/engagement practice. He felt that it enabled employees to gain a sense of ownership “because they’ve had something put into it” and “felt part of it”, that is “part of the decision making process”. He saw the advantage for production units was that as the shop floor became engaged, their long experience of manufacturing processes was then available to the organisation. When asked about any disadvantages of employees being involved substantially in decision making in the production area, he could only say, “...if you don’t ask them, then you’re losing out on a lot of experience”. The attitude on the shop floor when problems arose was often, “you didn’t ask us so why should we say anything”. He also was emphatic that when suggestions are made by the shop floor, but could not be implemented, it was important that the reason(s) were explained; without such an explanation relations with the shop floor would suffer and in effect this would be a disadvantage of having an voice/engagement programme.

When this supervisor was asked if he considered the Company was supportive, sceptical or just neutral in its attitude to the concept of voice/engagement, his opinion was that “on the whole I think it’s supportive”, which was not a ringing endorsement. He explained that he took this view because the programme was still developing and some production teams were more advanced in the process than others; partly because of the nature of their work, but also how they had been led. The nature of the work may inhibit change or at least make it a more laborious procedure; an example of which could be changes to welding methods

requiring the approval of a number of departments internally and even external approval, whereas changes to machining practice would not.

The multinational company's Supervisor C was also fairly positive when asked what he saw as the possible advantages in adopting participatory/engagement practice which he described as "quite substantial". The phrase "buy in" was once again used, which must have featured in the initial launch training programme for EIP and engagement at the multinational company when he responded with;

"It's good to get the buy-in from your staff. Not that they should make all the decisions but it's nice for them to get involved because they've got experience. It's from that experience you get buy-in as they are committed to whatever you're trying to achieve. I think it's invaluable".

He went on to denigrate the opposite approach of simply giving instructions without consultation which he forecast would result in responses such as, "If he tells me to do it that way, that's what I'm going to do, even if I know a better way".

With regard to any specific advantages that had occurred due to the introduction of the voice/engagement programme, he cited problem solving by getting the team leaders and their teams involved, which had also led to a more enthusiastic implementation of solutions. When asked if he had identified any specific disadvantages which had accrued from the introduction of the programme, he foresaw the possibility of individuals resisting change since they perceived it disadvantageous for their team or them personally. In these circumstances he would revert back to instructive behaviour. Asked if he felt that team leaders may feel that their role was diminished due to the enhanced involvement of the shop floor, he did not think so, due to the procedural nature of their work which restricted operational change.

When asked to give an opinion as to whether the multinational company was supportive, sceptical or just neutral on EIP; initially he described their posture as only "quite supportive" but was keen to point out that the programme had been "driven from the top" with senior management from their parent company visiting the plant and a lot of time and effort had been spent by several levels of management on the shop floor promoting the concept. Having said that, later he voiced the opinion "Yeah, it is supportive".

5.2.4. INFLUENCERS ON THE PERSONAL VIEWS ON VOICE

After the chief executives, production director/managers and supervisors had given their personal views on voice/engagement, they were asked to identify anyone or anybody who had influenced the views that they currently held.

INFLUENCERS ON THE CEO'S PERSONAL VIEWS:

The chief executive of the SME Company accepted that there were external influences, principally clients, which had influenced the way the Company had developed and was now operating. This included the multinational company which formed part of the research project, being a major client. However, whilst the more structured approach seen in larger companies had influenced the way in which the SME had evolved as it grew, and his own managerial stance, this did not include any insights into participatory practices in larger client organisations. Whilst his fellow directors had not advocated the use of any specific participatory practices to him, they had encouraged the introduction and development of an appraisal system, but its format did not really lend itself to voice. In fact he conceded that he had never had a discussion with his management team on the subject of EIP other than the degree of involvement they themselves aspired to. Nor had he had any suggestions or requests from employees generally to increase the opportunities for them to be involved and participate in decision making. He felt that the shop floor employees were only interested in rates of pay rather than, "what are the things we can do to move the Company forward".

As the SME Company was not unionised, the question of representation as a vehicle for EIP was raised in the interview. The Company does not have a Works Committee and the chief executive explained that the nearest body to that is their SHEF (safety, health, environment and fire) committee, but employee involvement and similar concepts had not been discussed, not been considered relevant to SHEF. When asked if he had ever "actually had any discussions with anyone else, group or individuals, in the Company about giving the employees more....chance to participate in decision making", he replied, "Certainly not as individuals" but did mention that they had monthly Management Reviews, but it was established that this only involved senior and middle management with the rest of the employees not represented. Even then, employee involvement had never been brought up and he admitted that the timing of discussion was strictly controlled with a guillotine in operation.

A number of other interviewees at the SME had expressed the view that as the Company was growing quite rapidly, it's managerial and organisational structure was not developing

adequately to cope with this. When asked for his view, the chief executive replied that “I don’t think it rings true” and gave the impression of being ‘in denial’.

The chief executive was also asked if his views were being influenced by a fear of loss of control or personal authority due to the introduction or extension of voice. His reply showed a reluctance to loosen his control over events but recognition that this was inevitable in a growing organisation when he said;

“It’s hard to detach your personal feelings from the Company feelings in my case. I mean in terms of more participation from others, I would....I would encourage it, I would want to. You know I feel at times I’m still the boss”.

Nevertheless, in his own words he conceded he was actually delegating authority and control of ways of working by saying;

“...the problem can be, you’ve got to distinguish between the right way of doing things and your way of doing things”.

He summarised his attitude after the discussion, and apparently reflection during it, by saying he had always welcomed influences from outside the organisation from people with wider experiences and then about being concerned about EIP, “no I don’t think I am because I recognise that’s the only way that it’s going forward”.

The chief executive of the multinational company was strongly influenced by external bodies, principally their parent company; in effect he was subject to an edict from them to introduce and develop an employee voice/engagement programme under their direction and in the corporate format. However he did comment that the corporate material provided was on a “one size fits all” format, which with the many different types, sizes and nationalities of subsidiary companies in the organisation, meant that it was not always appropriate. His company had in fact had to adapt it to suit the local situation. Voice/engagement formed part of the “Core Values” of the organisation which were published and issued world-wide and furthermore were issued to the workforce, including the shop floor, at the Company. He described the corporate material supplied as “quite prescriptive” and all subsidiary companies were audited biannually using an internet based world-wide survey rating each on its level of employee engagement achieved. Apart from the influence of the parent company, the chief executive also accepted that he had been influenced by personal experiences at previous large employers with EIP programmes and also by attending conferences at academic institutions.

When questioned, he could not recall any suggestions from his managerial team that had affected his views on EIP, except for some ideas which came from sessions organised within the procurement department, which had been “read across” to other areas in the Company. He did feel that some of his management team were reticent in applying new participatory techniques of a sensitive nature throughout the Company for fear of adverse reactions, but that was mainly to do with how best to communicate them.

With regard to the responses from the shop floor workforce to the engagement process, he recognised that whilst there were many who, with a wealth of knowledge of ways to improve their work and who were happy to work with others to implement them; there were others who “know there’s a better way of doing something, but they sit on their hands because they don’t have the right encouragement and atmosphere”. This was clearly stoking his determination to make voice/engagement work and why he was a strong advocate of the ‘Engage To Excel’ process. He was however, resigned to the fact that there will always be some permanently disengaged employees in any organisation who will remain so in spite of efforts to motivate them. From such people, which he called “cynics”, he had experienced responses such as “we’ve done this before”, “we’ve heard this before”, “what’s different this time”, which he saw as a process of disengagement and which he was trying to avoid being infectious.

The multinational company is unionised, so the chief executive was asked if he had been encouraged by, or had any problems with, the trade union reps. to promote voice. He described their attitude as;

“...if it’s something of, you know, a serious matter, then they will sit on the fence, they won’t make any decisions and effectively I’ve got to engage with the whole workforce”

Basically he did not see them as effective employee representatives.

When asked if he had been in discussion with other people in the Company regarding voice, he immediately singled out the Human Resources (HR) staff. He saw HR as pivotal to the success of the programme, saying;

“HR plays a huge part in it, yeah. In fact, the corporate messages and the corporate direction around the ‘Engage To Excel’ are all filtered through the HR organisation”.

His reaction to a possibly perceived loss of control or authority due to the EIP programme brought the response that due to the strict technical procedures necessarily enforced in the

Company, this would not happen because any voice/engagement would have to be within this framework. He felt what you have to strive for is “engagement on that platform”;

“it’s never becomes engagement to a point where you have almost a free for all, chaos of the guys please themselves what they doing on an hour by hour basis; that, that doesn’t happen”.

INFLUENCERS ON PRODUCTION DIRECTOR/MANAGER’S PERSONAL VIEWS:

The managerial staff member in charge of the production activities at the SME Company, when asked if he had received support from his fellow senior managers in his efforts to promote EIP, responded with an emphatic “YES”. He also had the same reaction when asked about the support he had received from team leaders and supervisors. However, when asked about the degree of support he had received from shop floor employees, he was less emphatic. He explained that the view on the shop floor on involving themselves in the development of the Company was mixed. As he put it;

“...there are one or two individuals who....who’d like to make themselves heard, but it does diminish once you get below team leader level”.

“...there’s one or two examples where I would say “Yes”, but there is a certain....definitely a fall off”.

As the SME Company was not unionised, the managerial staff member responsible for production obviously had not been influenced by trade union reps. or officials. The question of who, representing the views of the shop floor employees, could have influenced him was raised. His view was that the team leaders fulfilled that role as the “voice” of the workforce. Their views could be aired each morning when they had a daily meeting with the staff member supervising the shop floor team leaders and their teams. He was confident that participatory matters would be discussed there and anything relevant would be relayed up to him.

The staff member in charge of production at the SME Company had already said that his fellow senior managers were supportive of his efforts to promote participatory practices as were the team leaders and supervisory staff. His view was that although the senior management and production supervision showed no reluctance to embrace the involvement of employees, the team leaders “need a little bit more persuasion to actively engage in participation from their team”. He did not think the team leaders were sceptical about the

process or reluctant to adopt it, but rather found it very time consuming in a busy work schedule. Generally he thought there was;

“...more encouragement of participation from above down over than is from beneath up over”.

When it came to discuss the reasons behind the differing attitudes of the shop floor, the staff member in charge of production did not categorise the less supportive people as 'reluctant' but really just 'resistant to change' generally, especially when it involved altering long established work practices. Inevitably the time would come when he had to say, “...right all said and done, this is what we're going to do”.

Finally the question of how any perceived loss of control or authority due to encouraging employee involvement might have influenced his view of the process was discussed. He was adamant that this was not so in his case, but he accepted that it was a difficult thing to accept at times. When he saw something done in a way contrary to how he felt it should be done, he would resist ordering a change and instead would discuss the pros and cons of each method with the appropriate people at whatever level was appropriate. He felt that the production supervisory staff member also held that view and would operate in a similar manner.

The managerial staff member in charge of the production activities at the multinational company, when asked if he had been encouraged by his fellow senior managers in his efforts to promote voice/engagement, replied that he had been but “I think I would have done that anyway”; a comment consistent with his personal views expressed earlier. However, when asked if he had been encouraged by his production supervisors, he replied “probably not”. He did though offer an explanation for this surprising comment, which was basically that encouragement was not seen as appropriate or necessary from them because they were working so closely together with him in promoting voice/engagement; or as he put it, “I do a lot of it with my team anyway”.

With regard to encouragement from trade union reps. he had received encouragement for more EIP and engagement, but on specific issues, principally the shift pattern which was a bone of contention in the Company. The trade unions were always saying to him, “Communicate more with us” and he felt that was what he was doing.

When questioned if he had experienced any reluctance from senior management colleagues to support his participatory efforts in the Company, his response was that, “I've not had a need to, there'sthere's not been a point where I've relied on other senior managers to do

that". Working with his supervisors he did not feel that they were reluctant to support his efforts nor that he had to convert them to the concept, but he had needed to stress the importance of it and "raise it on their priority list" as it competed for their time in their busy schedules. He put this down to the fact that "we're in our infancy in terms of bedding it in as a culture" but to support their efforts he had allowed machines to stand idle at times to ensure that the supervisors could bring their teams together to discuss and organise participatory measures.

Engaging the shop floor personnel in active EIP, he saw as in its infancy and really the main emphasis had been in involving supervisors and their team leaders. At this point in time he felt that the shop floor were "still a bit sceptical about it all" and "some still had the mindset, 'I just come to work to sit on a machine and do my job and go home'". His opinion was that there was still more work to do in fully engaging the shop floor but he did not see them as actually disengaged. Similarly, the trade union reps. were not reluctant to accept engagement and EIP but were waiting to see what beneficial outcomes could accrue, in particular in the form of enhanced communication.

When asked if he, or in his opinion other's in production, were concerned that participatory practice would diminish their authority or control of events, his reply was a clear "No" backed up by the question never having been aired in all the discussions he had, and was having, with production staff.

INFLUENCERS ON PRODUCTION SUPERVISOR'S:

The encouragement that the member of staff supervising the production teams in the SME Company had received from various quarters was mixed. He was definitely positive about the degree of encouragement he had received from the senior management of the Company, but did not feel that he had been encouraged in his efforts to promote participation of the shop floor teams by the team leaders; yet he had been encouraged by the team members on the shop floor. As the SME Company was not unionised, he was asked if any other body representing the employees had offered support and encouragement, but he was not aware of any such body and did not mention the SHEF committee which had been identified as an employee representative body by the CEO.

He appeared very comfortable with support he was receiving and had not had any occasion to have to persuade the senior management to back any participatory initiative he was proposing, nor the team leaders, even though they had not voiced any specific support for the concept. He had deliberately used the team leaders as a vehicle to communicate his

ideas for employee participation in decision making to the shop floor to ensure that they felt involved and did not feel bypassed in any way. He had not had any “adverse feedback“ from them.

He had not felt any regret or resentment when he had delegated tasks to the team leaders which previously he would have undertaken himself due to a feeling of loss of control or authority. In a similar vein, he also had not detected any resentment from the team leaders when they in turn had encouraged the shop floor to take on tasks which previously had been their province. He put this all down to genuine team working, where the team as a whole gets involved.

Supervisor A in the multinational company had similar experiences to the supervisor in the SME Company. He also was very positive about the degree of encouragement he had received from the senior management of the Company, but did not feel that he had been encouraged by other supervisors. Neither had he been encouraged by team leaders or the members of their teams on the shop floor. Likewise he had not received any encouragement from the trade union reps. in his work to enhance voice/engagement.

He had not had to persuade any of the senior management to overcome any reluctance to support his participatory practice work, but had on occasion to apply persuasive tactics to reluctant team leaders. When it came down to persuading the shop floor of the merits of their voice/engagement, he had often experienced a non-committal attitude. Some employees came to meetings to discuss the concept reluctantly, basically because attendance wasn't voluntary. He estimated that around half of the attendees at such meetings were in this category, but the other half were keen to embrace the change and unfortunately tended to “hog the conversation”. His aim was to bring round some of the doubters so that the majority would then influence the others. The attendees at these meetings included trade union reps. but he had not found them reluctant to support his efforts.

When asked if he had ever resented some loss of control or authority as a result of his team leaders or teams taking over part of his role due to EIP, his reply was that he believed “there should be some involvement from those guys”. As far as team leaders feeling a similar loss for the same reason, when they allowed their team members to take control of some aspect of their work, Supervisor A explained that the voice/engagement programme had not “got to that stage” yet, but could well do so in the future. However, he did stress that if he felt after due discussion about what the team leaders or teams were advocating was definitely the wrong course of action to take; he would use his authority and say “no, we're doing it my way”.

Supervisor B's experiences and influencers in the multinational company were in some ways different to that of Supervisor A. When asked if he had received encouragement from senior management, his reply was "Yes, most definitely" and he also felt encouraged by his team leaders. He did at the same time point out that voice/engagement was something "I'd like to think I would have done anyway". He considered himself quite receptive to people's ideas and his philosophy was that;

"...as a group, I think you're always going to solve the problem quicker than the individual".

He was less effusive about the encouragement he had received from team members on the shop floor, expressed as being "not a hundred percent". He saw them as still "a little bit sceptical" but that their attitude and involvement was improving and some good outcomes had been achieved through their participation.

When asked about any encouragement from the trade union reps., he could only say that he had very little to do with them and only had one rep. in his teams who he had a good relationship with and regular dialogue. He told how he made use of this relationship;

"I'm quite willing to bounce ideas off him just to clarify the situation on what he thinks the guys will be, you know, what the team expected"

He had not encountered any reluctance on the part of senior management to support his participatory work, nor had he had to persuade his team leaders to be supportive. He had however had to use his persuasive powers on one or two shop floor team members but others had been "really good" at putting their ideas over. Generally he was pleased with the reception he was receiving from the shop floor although he regretted that some were happy to go with other's suggestions and ideas but did not put forward any of their own. When questioned, he put this down to personality and shyness rather than any particular age group, length of employment or trade union affiliation.

Supervisor B did not feel that he was losing control or authority by his team leaders taking on tasks which used to be carried by him due to increased voice/engagement, nor did he feel his team leaders showed any sign of resentment. He put this down to effective team working so that they all felt that any success was a success for the whole team. He always termed this "reflective glory" to the teams. He explained that the creation of team leaders was a relatively recent event and that they had been deliberately selected for having the "right attitude" which then "we foster and encourage".

Supervisor C's responses when questioned about what might have influenced his views on voice/engagement were more akin to those of Supervisor B than Supervisor A. He also felt that he had received encouragement from his senior management but no encouragement from his team leaders or the shop floor team members. Likewise, he did not feel that he had received any encouragement from trade union reps.

As with Supervisor B, he had not experienced any reluctance from senior management or his team leaders to support his work in promoting further voice/engagement by the shop floor employees. His team leaders also were supportive and he described their attitude as "quite good actually". He did stress though that the voice/engagement programme was "driven downwards really" which could account for the lack of encouragement, yet support for the programme. He felt that he was getting "quite a good response" from the team leaders although participatory initiatives were not being originated at their level.

The team members were a different matter. He was having to put in a considerable effort to try to persuade them to embrace EIP. He was holding monthly meetings with the teams where they discussed problems and potential problems, however small, with a view to getting suggestions for possible solutions from the shop floor teams. Although the meetings were amicable, or as Supervisor C put it, "We get on well together", but there were one or two individuals who he had identified as pessimistic about the concept, yet good at their job. On the whole he felt it was working quite well. He did however recognise that he still had work to do to persuade the teams as an entity of the virtues of their participation and engagement. The two individuals in his teams who were also trade union reps. he saw as supportive of his efforts and the fact that they were union officials was immaterial; as he put it, "it doesn't come into it really".

Like Supervisor B, Supervisor C had no sense of loss of authority due to his team leaders undertaking tasks previously carried out by him. This was partly due to the nature of the work which had to be closely controlled procedurally. This restricted the freedom of action of both him and his team leaders in terms of initiating change to responsibilities and practices. Nevertheless he did hold short daily meetings with team leaders and the teams to identify any problems, even though their ideas for possible solutions would need to be referred to specialists, again due to the nature of their work. Likewise, he had not detected any resentment from his team leaders due to loss of their authority, once more put down to the nature of the work.

5.2.5. THE ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OR PROBLEMS WITH VOICE FOR THE ORGANISATION AND THE VARIOUS PARTIES IN THE STUDY COMPANIES

ADVANTAGES ACCRUING FROM THE PARTICIPATION OF EMPLOYEES FOR THE COMPANY:

In the SME Company, the HR personnel saw the advantage of voice mechanisms as a means of driving the organisation;

”...towards a harmonised team all working for the same ends, rather than potentially pulling against each other along the way” and thus benefiting from valuable involvement from all levels.

The CEO was also of the same view just so long as the participation was genuine and not a result of an employee’s “personal agenda”.

The senior manager and supervisor responsible for production took a more operational viewpoint, seeing participatory practice as a tool for “getting the most out of the guys” and while admitting this sounded like the view from a “Victorian Mill Owner”, it was nevertheless to the benefit of all. But the senior manager did appreciate that success for such an organisation as their own depended in large measure on the efforts of the shop floor when he said;

“...we need to recognise there’s always room for improvement and more often than not, that improvement comes from the people who are actually doing those tasks”.

The supervisory staff member also stressed the advantages that can accrue from the variety of experience and views present on the shop floor.

The staff in the multinational company broadly held similar views. The HR staff member responsible for production saw voice/engagement as a way of solving production problems without having to rely on supervisory staff to come up with solutions; making use of the vast experience on the shop floor. The CEO also held the view that EIP was a way of improving “business performance” but he saw its advantage for the Company in allowing the adoption of a “flatter structure” and more “self management”. He believed that the flatter structure with fewer layers of bureaucracy ensured better communication, and with it, better involvement and accountability by employees with people taking responsibility for “their own actions and development”. The member of the managerial team responsible for production also thought that participation by employees leads to “better performance” but also higher staff retention levels due to it producing a “better environment to work in”. The three production supervisors in the multinational company all shared a positive viewpoint. Supervisor A looked to EIP to

get the shop floor engaged in “working through their problems”. Supervisor B thought it could affect many operational issues for the good, such as health and safety, productivity and product quality. Supervisor C also considered productivity as a beneficiary of voice/engagement and also, like his senior manager, staff retention which he considered of paramount importance for the Company due to the high skills required for the shop floor operations.

ADVANTAGES AVAILABLE FOR ADVANCEMENT AND JOB SATISFACTION TO THE EMPLOYEE THROUGH VOICE:

In the SME Company, the HR personnel felt that the reaction to participation by employees was very variable. There was one type of person who basically came to work for “the pay packet” and so got nothing out of any participatory programme, but there were others who “like to feel they are important to the business” and are “valued by the business”. The latter seem to gain a “warm feeling” by getting involved and being part of the organisation going forward. In doing so these employees expose themselves as people who’ve “got more about them than was previously recognised” and that can lead to “opportunities for personal advancement”. The CEO voiced similar opinions. The senior manager responsible for production initially considered that the advantage for employees was financial through a profit sharing scheme and bonuses, where any contribution they made eventually was reflected in commercial success of the business. When asked to consider any non-financial benefits for the employee, he started by pointing out the varying attitudes to involvement in the workforce, but for those inclined to get involved he saw them acquiring a sense of “belonging”, “worth”, “ownership” and “responsibility” along with better job satisfaction. The staff member supervising the production teams took a different view entirely seeing the advantages for the shop floor employees wholly in terms of them gaining a sense of involvement through their suggestions along with the satisfaction that brings, and above all, making them feel “part of the team”.

In the multinational company the HR staff member responsible for production saw the advantage for employees from employee voice/engagement solely in terms of job satisfaction. The CEO took a similar stance, seeing the advantages again as job satisfaction and “feeling part of the solution” as well as a motivator for employees. The managerial team member responsible for production felt that better two way communication due to participatory practice offered advantages to employees by them being well aware of the overall situation in the Company which can create a more “pleasant environment” in the workplace. With good open communication channels employees are more likely to talk to others about any outstanding problems they might have and expressed this by saying;

“...when there’s an engaged workforce, there’s more of an open workforce, so it benefits the individual and that way we can deal with any issues”.

He considered this aspect particularly important when, as was the case in the multinational company, products move from work station to another and it is imperative that problems are not passed down the line to the detriment of the subsequent station; in essence that the whole workforce work as a team. He summed this up by a phrase he often uses;

“We only succeed when we all succeed”.

Supervisor A in the multinational company saw the advantage for the employee from voice/engagement as “feeling more of a team” and being able to “get off the machines“ from time to time. Supervisor B agreed with this seeing employees being able to move away from just operating machines under instruction and thus gaining some sense of “ownership” by making their experience available to others in the team and in the wider organisation. Supervisor C however saw the advantage for employees as more security and therefore “less chance of redundancies”. He didn’t see much opportunity for his workforce to participate/engage by making suggestions due to the very prescriptive nature of their work leaving little room for change.

Generally speaking both study companies believed that EIP offered employees the opportunity to make their work more meaningful and satisfying. However the senior management in the SME Company were more circumspect in that they felt that a proportion of their workforce had a permanent cynical attitude and would never respond to encouragement to be involved in the running of their company. However the middle manager supervising production did not voice this view.

DISADVANTAGES AND PROBLEMS FOR THE COMPANY DUE TO THE INTRODUCTION OF VOICE:

The senior manager responsible for HR in the SME Company showed a sense of disappointment with the Company’s efforts to engage with the workforce even “with the best amount of communication” when they were met with suspicion and reactions such “Well where’s the catch”. His view was that there were some in the workforce who could not understand why the Company should want to engage with them and that the management were not capable of doing anything “other than something subversive”. The middle manager involved with HR in the Company could not recall any problems associated with efforts to engage with the workforce, nor could the CEO. The senior manager responsible for production had not experienced any disadvantages from the SME Company’s activities to engage with the workforce but had found it difficult to ensure that communication was

effective and indeed accurate through the various levels in the organisation, even in a small company. This was partly due to pressure of work not leaving sufficient time to communicate properly with the employees and he felt that their opinions and suggestions may have been lost with some of the workforce having “no idea that I think the way I think about their opinion”. The middle manager supervising production was not aware of any disadvantages or problems associated with EIP.

In the multinational company the HR staff member responsible for production thought that the problem with their voice/engagement programme was that initiatives were often not completed or discarded due to frequent managerial changes with new people arriving with different ideas. This has resulted in comments from the shop floor such as, “Oh well we’ve done that before and it didn’t work”. The CEO in the multinational company only mentioned one problem, which was minor and really only a disappointment, which was the lack of enthusiasm for his idea of visual planning boards which he had used with a previous employer, but which the shop floor didn’t take to. None of the managerial and supervisory staff could recall any problems or disadvantages that the Company had experienced due to the promotion of voice/engagement.

POSSIBLE DISADVANTAGES AND PROBLEMS FOR THE EMPLOYEE DUE TO A PERCEIVED LOSS OF AUTHORITY AND POCKETS OF RELUCTANCE:

In the SME Company the senior manager responsible for HR was not aware of any problems emanating from the voice activities in the Company including any resentment felt by the team leaders due to a loss of authority over their teams being given freedom to contribute to decision making. He thought that this was not really relevant at the stage of development the Company was in since in his view the team leaders were only “notional” team leaders “in name” only and “not in action” and he saw this as a problem for the Company which needed them to be “actual team leaders”. The middle manager assisting him had not heard of any feelings of resentment, and took the view that with genuine team working it should not happen; the team as a whole being the decisive body. The CEO had not experienced any resentment by team leaders or supervision generally due to a sense of loss of authority but was aware of some criticism due to inadequate communication from management down to the actual shop floor. The production management did not identify any problems associated with EIP currently, but the senior manager, who had been with Company longer than the middle manager, did remember that resentment due to loss of authority had been a problem in the past with the more autocratic supervisory staff but over the years had been overcome as they “had to learn not to be”.

The HR staff member responsible for production in the multinational company could not identify any specific operational problems there to do with EIP, but accepted that there were some people on the shop floor, primarily those “who see themselves a bit long in the tooth for it”, who “don’t want to be involved in participating”, and others who may have made suggestions on the past which were not taken up by the Company, who were less than enthusiastic. He was aware that there were still actively disengaged employees in the Company which can cause apathy amongst their more engaged colleagues. He did not however recognise any resentment felt by managerial or supervisory staff through a perceived loss of control or authority due to the voice/engagement programme, but believed this could be because the programme was still in its infancy and any self management techniques were yet to be introduced. Likewise the CEO and the senior manager responsible for production had not detected any such resentment. Supervisor A could not recall any problems due to voice/engagement in his area nor felt he was losing any authority or control; he felt he still had the authority. He had not heard any team leaders resenting a loss of control but qualified this, as others in the Company had, by saying that the voice/engagement programme was still in its infancy. Supervisor B held the same views as Supervisor A but attributed the lack of any resentment in his area to the team working ethic which he promotes and saw himself very much in “a supportive role”. Supervisor C’s views were that as a supervisor he has “always been in control” and in his area the team leaders, as with all team leaders in the Company, were working team leaders, looked upon as respected “senior figures” to consult on problems, but not figures of authority or control.

THE POWER OF VOICE/ENGAGEMENT TO CONTEST ‘THEM AND US’ ATTITUDES:

There was universal agreement from the respondents that EIP and engagement by employees helped in overcoming any ‘Them And Us’ tendencies in both study companies. However, there were often caveats attached to their views.

The senior manager responsible for HR in the SME Company was quite definite that the more an organisation promoted EIP, “the less you have ‘Them and Us’”. His junior colleague also thought this would be the case although had not seen any actual evidence. The opinion of the CEO was more guarded. Although he held the view that participation by employees should be a means of “reducing” the ‘Them And Us’ attitude, he was aware that there were some who did not want to be engaged and never would be, but they were in the minority. The senior manager looking after production held a similar view, also being of the opinion that the concept of EIP helped to reduce this attitude but stressed that it would not eliminate it, again due to the presence of a minority of hard-core disengaged employees. He also stressed that the demographic structure of the disengaged portion of the workforce showed

this was not age-related. The staff member supervising the production teams had not experienced a 'Them And Us' attitude in the Company and put this down to the level of employee involvement which operated.

The staff member responsible for HR in the production function at the multinational company was not entirely convinced that voice/engagement by employees always inevitably led to a reduction in 'Them And Us' attitudes'; his view was that "it can do". His qualification was that to be successful the Company must ensure that all suggestions or ideas from the workforce are followed up properly, and seen to be followed up, whatever the eventual outcome, otherwise the reverse effect occurs "making those barriers even thicker". The CEO was positive, but not markedly so, about the beneficial effect of EIP saying "I think it does" and was speaking from personal experience from previous employers as well as the multinational study company. The senior manager responsible for production had a similar viewpoint but added that in a unionised environment he was of the view that "you automatically have a 'Them And Us' mindset. All three supervisors thought that voice/engagement did help to reduce the tendency for a 'Them And Us' attitude, and in the case of Supervisor C, "most definitely".

5.2.6. OPERATIONAL OUTCOMES THAT CAN BE LINKED TO VOICE

Ultimately, the goal of any organisation promoting the involvement of employees in the running of its business will be operational advantage. Three such contributory outcomes to this are considered here, productivity, product quality and health and safety performance; acknowledging that 'softer' outcomes such as job satisfaction will in time also add value to these three outcomes.

PRODUCTIVITY:

However defined numerically, productivity is the result of the effective use of labour and equipment. This can be forthcoming from ideas and suggestions from the shop floor workforce as well as managerial or professional industrial engineering initiatives. To establish what level of contribution employee involvement has played in the productivity of the two study companies, the views of their HR staff and specialist staff concerned with productivity measurement were sought. The senior manager responsible for HR in the SME company was adamant that with "our current way of doing it", EIP was "absolutely not" contributing to improvements in productivity, but that although they had no formal system they were now in the process of demonstrating that they would be listening to any productivity improvement suggestions from the workforce. Even the Compliance Manager in

the SME Company, ostensibly charged with record keeping although no productivity records were being kept, could not say if participatory practices had resulted in productivity improvements; his response was, "I don't know". He didn't think the employees were "particularly interested in productivity and get particularly involved". His experience was that their attitude was "I'll just mention something and then that's it" and that improvements, which tended to involve the acquisition of new plant and equipment, had really been envisaged and initiated by the company directors and occasionally by a team leader but without any shop floor employee participation. However, when he was later asked for his views on the possible benefits for product quality, he mentioned that staff had been sent on a Business Improvement Techniques course, but did not seem to realise that this was just as relevant for productivity as quality performance, and for that matter, health and safety issues. The HR staff member responsible for HR in the production sector in the multinational company was also somewhat wary of voice/engagement being seen as a short term solution to productivity improvement. His opinion was that although the Company realises that it needs an engaged workforce to improve productivity which was currently "quite low", his expectation was that it is likely to be five years or more before the benefits come to fruition. This was borne out by the fact that their voice/engagement programme had only been running for eighteen months and he had seen no direct evidence of productivity gains due to the programme, but conceded that he personally was not aware of the level of employee suggestions that had been received, nor whether suggestions for productivity improvement were properly logged and responded to. The staff member leading the Six Sigma system in the multinational company was able to give more detail on the Company's productivity improvements procedures including the measurement methods employed which were based on monitoring operations against standard times; the workforce logging in and out of each operation to provide the measures. However, he also was sceptical about the impact that EIP was having on productivity improvement; his "gut feeling" being "very minimal". He was positive that should any improvement suggestion come from a team member or team leader through the Company Enterprise Excellence Scheme, it would be properly recorded, responded to and recognised, possibly with a voucher as a form of financial reward, but otherwise he doubted that the suggestion would be "captured". Again, as with the SME Company, the majority of productivity improvements came from investment in new plant and machinery and as such were managerial, possibly even parent company, initiatives and he doubted that the workforce would have been consulted on the equipment's features. He was much more positive about the contribution that the Company's Continuous Improvement programme had made to productivity improvement especially the contribution of the shop floor, which he saw as the essence of an effective programme. He found the shop floor

workforce was always looking for better methods of doing their work without any formal recognition, which they considered was simply part of their job.

PRODUCT QUALITY:

Accepting that product quality is synonymous with productivity in that defective product does not form part of productive output; the effect that EIP has on quality is likely to mirror that on productivity. Indeed the senior manager responsible for HR in the SME Company was even more negative about how EIP had resulted in product quality improvements, his response being; "I think it probably has a detrimental effect at the moment", but he did not elaborate on this viewpoint. The Compliance Manager in the SME Company was more aware of quality performance in the Company than he had been on productivity and did think that EIP had helped to improve product quality. He again cited an external Business Improvement Techniques course, which staff had attended, including some of the shop floor team membership, and that he felt this had resulted in improvements to product quality, although mainly on quality documentation, admittedly something of paramount importance in the engineering sector they belonged to. Nevertheless he was aware of some suggestions that had come from individuals, rather than a team, informally and that had proved useful for both quality and indirectly productivity, but due to the informality, had never been accredited to any particular person. Other suggestions to improve quality also came from monthly Management Review meetings attended by senior and middle management, including the Compliance Manager, but he was critical of its indecisiveness. Here he would table quality problems which needed to be addressed, mainly emanating from Non-Compliance Reports (NCRs) from internal and external inspectorates. In effect, most quality improvements came from the rectification of faults, which he was finding an increasing problem as the Company grew and lines of responsibility became "very blurred". Although he was enjoying an enthusiastic response to quality improvement from the Company quality personnel, he was clearly disappointed at the dismissive response from most of the growing workforce and he at one time had even suggested that some monetary reward system be introduced for improvement suggestions. To encourage involvement he had let it be known that he was willing to accept suggestions in any form including verbally, either directly or through a team leader, even though everyone had access to the Company email system to offer suggestions. He did not however give a formal response to individual's suggestions; he just raised it at the Management Review Meeting. In the multinational company the HR staff member responsible for HR in the production sector made similar comments to those he made regarding productivity in that he felt it was too early to judge the effectiveness of voice/engagement on product quality improvement. He also reported that as well as

productivity being “quite low”, the current level of rework was “quite high” and again was not sure whether suggestions for quality improvement were properly logged and responded to. The staff member leading the Six Sigma system in the multinational company was able to give much more detail on the Company’s quality improvement procedures since Six Sigma is fundamentally a quality improvement system. Again he was wary about giving participation/engagement the credit for improvements in quality, as he put it;

“...in terms of pure quality, I would say no, but in terms of process improvement, yes”.

This once more illustrates the connection between quality and productivity, since any process improvement is likely to result in higher productivity. In this connection he described a ‘Projects and Suggestions Scheme’ currently running under the auspices of Six Sigma where anyone in the business can submit an idea or suggestion for improvement which is then ranked, recorded, and fed back to the individual after which, if accepted, they are involved in its implementation. To monitor the success of the scheme and quality levels generally, measurements such as ‘rework as a percentage of clocked hours’ and the associated reworking costs are collated. In addition he described a team approach to quality improvement called ‘zero defects’ where project teams are formed to tackle quality problems drawn from the shop floor and quality professionals in the Company. So overall on that basis he did accept that voice/engagement had helped to improve product quality levels in the Company. Any shop floor employee, whether a team member or team leader, wishing to make a suggestion, either verbally or in writing, for quality improvement was expected to do so through one of these formal mechanisms or the Company’s Continuous Improvement programme, which he had saw as a major contributor to quality improvement. Some managers also had offered suggestions but he was not aware of any input from the parent company or other external sources. He also repeated that as part of the Company’s Continuous Improvement programme, contrary to custom at the SME Company, monetary rewards were available for improvement suggestions in the form of £50 vouchers for individuals or all members of a team. He was particularly keen to stress again that wherever scheme suggestions come from, the originator always received a formal response in a timely manner, including the reasons for not proceeding if the idea was not used.

HEALTH AND SAFETY PERFORMANCE:

Although both study companies employed staff dedicated to establishing and monitoring health and safety programmes, HR staff were also interviewed for their views on the effect of EIP on the subject in an effort to gain a more company-wide viewpoint rather than just that of specialists. The senior manager responsible for HR in the SME company,

when asked if he thought employee involvement had a beneficial effect on health and safety issues, was more positive than when questioned about the effect on productivity or product quality; his response was “I would probably say yes”. Although he was not able to give any specific instances, he did recall that most suggestions came from team leaders but in turn these may have originated from shop floor team members. In the case of health and safety suggestions he felt “more than likely” that they would have been logged, responded to, and investigated. His middle manager colleague was able to offer more detail as to how employee involvement was facilitated, principally by the monthly SHEF (safety, health, environment and fire) meeting that took place, which she minuted. Although she concurred that most suggestions came from the attending team leaders, in fact shop floor team members may be invited to attend or even request to attend. In addition she explained that not only were all suggestions logged and responded to, even if the response was negative, but that in addition the meeting minutes with action points were displayed on notice boards throughout the Company and on the Company intranet for all to see. The Compliance Manager, whose prime responsibility was to monitor and maintain health and safety standards in the Company, was also more positive about the benefits that EIP had brought to the improvement of health and safety in the Company than for productivity or product quality. When asked if it had helped, his reply was “completely”. He cited improvements in plant and equipment, proper reporting of minor incidents for the first time and collation of statistics and specific improvements as well as outcomes emanating from SHEF meetings. He also had found that most safety improvement suggestions had come from team leaders, possibly emanating from named individual shop floor team member’s verbal suggestions, except for those manning the “more closely knit” permanent night shifts where suggestions had come from the team as a whole using emails via the Company intranet. Employee suggestions, whether in writing or verbal, were assessed by him but no monetary reward was available. There was also an opportunity for individual employees to report a “general fault”, which might have safety as well as productivity or product quality implications, using a written form which always got a written response and there were plans to make the system electronic. He was however hesitant to comment on the role of management in this connection, he had found their role “negative” in that it mainly took the form of complaints of bad practice observed. He had however found audits from external sources such as clients and national and international standards authorities useful, all of which inevitably included health and safety matters which could also impinge on productivity and product quality issues. In the multinational company the HR staff member responsible for HR in the production sector, like the interviewees in the SME Company, was much more positive about the role of employee involvement in health and safety matters in the Company than he was for productivity or product quality. His view was that they had a “very good reputation safety-

wise” and that their “Observation System“ was the cornerstone of safety participation. In the observation system, shop floor employees, team leaders and indeed managers were expected to raise a set number of safety observations per month on-line, either positive or negative ones, in an effort to try and stop potential hazardous incidents occurring and each observation got a formal response from the appropriate person. It was clear that he was very proud of the Company’s safety record as he said;

“...it’s about having that proactive participation and we’re very good at it in fairness”.

The staff member leading the Six Sigma system in the multinational company was also of the view that voice/engagement had helped to generate improvements in health and safety in the Company, although somewhat resentfully as he said “yes, I’ve got to say yes on that”. His resentment came from the precedence given to all health and safety matters to the detriment of product quality issues. He saw health and safety as the “best communicated thing” in the Company using measures such as “Total Incident Rate” (TIR) and “Days Away From Work” which were corporate measures demanded by the parent company. He illustrated this predominance by;

“...to take an example, every quarter we give a presentation to the Vice-President and there’s probably a fifty or sixty slide presentation, nearly half of that is health and safety, and really it doesn’t need to be. You know it’s, yes, it’s an industry in itself”.

He did though see the observation system as a good way of involving individual employees and ensuring that by proper responses they see their efforts being taken seriously and acted upon. It also allows for observations to be made from a team, possibly coming from discussion at a team meeting when health and safety inevitably features; then all members will receive individual responses but no monetary reward as was available for productivity and quality suggestions. There was however the possibility of gaining a special award for individuals who had both made an observation and implemented a solution. As he did for product quality, he most definitely saw the Company’s Continuous Improvement programme as a very effective vehicle in supporting EIP in the improvement of safe working practice; in fact he saw health and safety as “the underpinning, strategic point for everything....that comes first”. The multinational company also employed a health and safety specialist whose sole role was to develop, maintain and monitor the health and safety activities in the Company and was able to add more detail on the effect employee involvement was having on working safely in the Company, especially in avoiding dangerous operational shortcuts. He also was of the opinion that voice/engagement did help to generate safety improvements,

and saw the observation system which had been operating for nearly ten years, as employee engagement even though some of the observations were really complaints. He summed this up by saying;

“without the engagement of the people on the coalface, the system doesn’t work” and that “I feel from a safety point, engagement gets us a little bit closer to where we need to be”.

The health and safety specialist estimated the level of on-line observations, from individuals rather than collectively from teams, as around a thousand per month or one per employee and half of these from shop floor employees, even without any monetary reward being available which he would be very much against having. This seems to reinforce the view of his Six Sigma colleague that health and safety considerations were all pervading at the Company. To maintain this level of engagement, even with a built in ‘compulsory’ element with managers and supervisors being given target numbers of observations to meet, he considered it essential to give quick responses, even negative responses, including action taken, to the named observers lest “the system loses its credibility and people stop using it”. Even so, he felt that there were still some on the shop floor who did not “participate as they should”. Apart from these observations, when instituting compliance assessments, he stressed the need to interact with the shop floor employees as well as team leaders, union reps and anyone else with relevant experience. Like his colleague from the Six Sigma operation, he agreed that the Company Continuous Improvement programme was also contributing to safer working practice but most came through observations. Although the system is thoroughly audited by the parent company every three years, he stressed that the system was designed in-house to take account of local conditions and sensitivities, but included key features required by the parent company. Overall he conceded that health and safety received more prominence than product quality and to some extent productivity but did not believe that was due to the legalities involved and that in any case improvements in health and safety could indirectly offer enhanced productivity or quality.

When asked for his opinion on how well the word ‘engagement’ was understood in the Company, he responded, “probably not very, if I’m brutally honest”. Although he felt “the management understand it now”, he was “not sure the shop floor understand it, if I’m critical”.

5.2.7. LOOKING AHEAD TO THE FUTURE OF EIP IN BOTH STUDY COMPANIES

THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE:

The CEOs in both study companies were asked for their views as to how they envisaged EIP was likely to develop in the short term in their organisations. The CEO of the SME Company clearly had not considered the future of participatory practice in his company because he frankly admitted that “this is the first time it’s been discussed”. Nor had he been pressurised or encouraged by any external bodies such as clients to embrace the concept. The only time clients had brought their influence to bear was on subjects such as management structures and health and safety issues.

The CEO of the multinational company did not feel he was being persuaded by anyone to embrace EIP more fully in the future but rather that he knew the “expectation” of others was there, due to it being in the “DNA” of the Company and “that we engage with people”. Furthermore he was not being pressurised externally by any other people or organisations such as his parent company to expand on their existing participatory programme since in his view what the Company was already doing was “probably best practice” and “was leading edge”.

ANTICIPATED FUTURE PROBLEMS:

The managerial and supervisory staff at both study companies were asked to consider what might occur if and when they extended the scope of EIP, in particular, what new problems may arise.

The CEO in the SME Company did not really envisage any problems should participatory practice be expanded either due to staff at any level feeling that their authority was being undermined nor that employees would feel that they were now being asked to do the work of what had been the job of management. However he was cautious about how far employee involvement might go and could see problems arising should this include topics such as setting pay scales and reviewing the company accounts. The senior manager responsible for production also did not expect to incur any problems from resentment due to perceived loss of authority by managerial and supervisory staff as EIP was expanded because his philosophy was that he’d “like to think that nobody feels as though they’re controlling somebody” and that rather than using instruction to undertake a task, his view was that “it’s by mutual agreement, as opposed to control”. He also saw this philosophy as the way to avoid any potential problems due to employees being asked to undertake tasks previously carried out by supervisory or managerial staff, although he conceded that there will be some

personalities who see their job to merely do as instructed. Similar views were held by the middle manager supervising the production team leaders and their teams, but he could see that there was a possibility in the future of adverse reactions by employees when being asked to perform tasks previously carried out by supervisory or managerial staff.

The CEO in the multinational study company although being a stronger advocate of voice/engagement than his opposite number in the SME company, did anticipate that as participation was extended in the Company, problems could arise when employees felt they were being asked to undertake tasks or duties previously done by managers or supervisors but saw the solution in optimising communication by the use of a dedicated group of employees who meet regularly and then 'spread the word' into their departments. However he did have some concern that even members of this group themselves, depending on the type of message they were expected to convey, could feel that it was really the job of management to communicate with their "peer group". He also confirmed that even as the concept of EIP was extended, he did not expect to encounter any resentment due to some feeling that their authority was being eroded, nor any resistance from trade union reps. who usually adopted a "neutral" posture. The senior manager responsible for production in the multinational company, basically held the same views as the CEO regarding resentment due to loss of authority but knew of a few of the longer serving employees who would balk at being expected to cover tasks, which before EIP was expanded, were carried out by managers or supervisors, seeing their job in purely traditional operational trade terms. However, he saw one of the objectives of the voice/engagement program as it progresses was to encourage the longer serving employees to pass on their experience to the younger employees which was of particular importance in the Company due to the preponderance of older shop floor employees. Like the CEO, he did not expect any resistance from trade union reps' as voice/engagement was enhanced. Supervisor A in the multinational company, like the production management, was not expecting to encounter any resentment due to a feeling of loss of authority by himself or his team leaders as EIP was extended, but had already experienced problems due to team leaders or shop floor employees being asked to do tasks which had been the province of managers or supervisors. One of his objectives as EIP was expanded was to eradicate this attitude. Since he had not experienced any resistance from trade union reps' up to now, he did not expect any in the future as the concept was extended. Supervisor B took the same view as Supervisor A with respect to any envisaged problems due to loss of authority or control by himself or team leaders. He did not expect any problems due to team leaders or the shop floor being asked to undertake tasks previously carried out by managers or supervisors because he didn't think it would happen. He saw the role of management/supervision to plan ahead beyond the work for the week

and with regard to the shop floor staff “I wouldn’t have thought sat at a machine, they’d be able to look at that”. Like Supervisor A he did not expect any problems with the trade union reps. as EIP progresses because they were well aware of what the Company was trying to achieve which amounted to “everybody to have their say”. Supervisor C had a more authoritarian viewpoint than Supervisors A and B and did not expect that future participation by employees would cause problems due to he and others losing their authority and control because he didn’t think it would ever happen. As he said;

“I don’t think we’ll ever get to the point where we’re not in control”. “I think the overall responsibility is still going to with your....set by the supervisor of that area”.

He was very adamant that in an area governed tightly by technical restrictions enhanced participation would never result in employees being allowed some latitude in their ways of working. This opinion was crystallised as he said “I mean we’ve got set rules”. Furthermore he saw no problem with employees being asked to undertake tasks which before had been done by management because for the same reason he could not see it happening. Like the other supervisors he did not expect the trade union reps. to be resistant to expanded participatory practices. His views on enhanced EIP were that it really involves getting people “buying in” and “a bit of a two way street” but with “managers always in control” asking people if they have problems, ensuring they are happy in their work and with high productivity as the objective. However he would not hesitate to engage with experienced members in his teams to devise new operating procedures or methods for the manufacture of new products.

EXTENDING VOICE/ENGAGEMENT TOWARDS EMPLOYEE SELF-MANAGEMENT:

Before evaluating the views held in each study company on the possibility of extending their participatory practices into some degree of employee self-management, the HR personnel in each company were questioned to establish their current level of self-management, if any. In the SME Company the senior manager responsible for HR explained their existing position purely in terms of operational tasks. His view was that in some teams where they could basically complete operations without having to pass part finished products over to other cells or teams to complete, there was a measure of self-management in that each team member could be given a product to manufacture and be left to undertake the work. However in other areas where production involved passing part finished products from cell to cell or team to team, this had to be organised by production management because the “notional” working team leaders, as he called them, lacked the leadership skills to co-ordinate these operations. He did however admit that the Company had not really

encouraged the teams to be more self-sufficient but had instituted a supervisory training programme for the team leaders so that they in turn could promote self-sufficiency within their teams and better co-ordination between teams and which the team leaders were taking advantage of. However, when asked if he felt the Company recognised sufficiently well any successes that the teams as teams achieved, his reply was “probably not”. The middle manager in the SME Company who also had HR responsibilities understood that before the teams ever embarked on any change to existing practice they always had to “communicate and speak to the management to get their approval” but now that they had fairly recently appointed a middle manager to take responsibility for the production teams and their team leaders, the teams now had a more accessible person to contact regarding any change of ways of working. Nevertheless, the middle manager (HR) held the view that the team members were not taking advantage of these opportunities to make their teams as effective as possible and gave the impression that “they come to work, do the job and that’s it”. The middle manager (HR) was even more definite than the senior manager that the Company did not recognise team achievements adequately.

In the multinational company, the HR staff member for the production function was quite clear and precise about the degree of self-management currently being practiced in the production teams. He described the extent to which teams were allowed to manage themselves as “relatively limited”, it’s boundaries undefined, and he did not feel able to comment on how much self-management was encouraged in the Company and thought that the operational staff would be in a better position to comment. Similarly he did not feel qualified to give a view as to whether the production teams were taking advantage of opportunities to improve their own effectiveness and admitted that surveys had found that recognition by the Company of team successes was “an area that we didn’t do particularly well in” but some trade union reps. had noted “that has started to improve”.

From a HR perspective it appeared that the present level of employee self-management was extremely limited at both study companies and that any insight into how it might develop as, and if, EIP was extended would come from ascertaining the views of senior and operational management as well as the production supervision.

To establish the management’s perception on, if and when EIP should develop further, it might lead to a heightened degree of employee self-management in their respective organisations; the CEOs in each were first asked for their views. The CEO of the SME Company did agree that employees should be consulted before workplace decisions are taken and could be given control over such matters as workplace layout and material flows in the future as measures leading to a degree of self-management, but not “broader policy

aspects". However, he did not think that the employees were taking full advantage of the opportunities already available to them to get involved. He also agreed that in principle employees should be rewarded for greater involvement and participation and for the extra responsibilities that he felt would accrue. Ultimately he saw self-management by employees as an ideal and one he would support in principle whatever economic conditions prevailed, but he could not envisage employees having total control over their ways of working due to their dependence on managerial and technical expertise from outside their immediate workplace. Nevertheless he did feel in principle that a higher degree of self-management was desirable.

The CEO of the multinational study company shared the same views as the CEO of the SME Company but more emphatically. He also thought that employees should be consulted on any workplace decisions and "absolutely" should have control over their work activities but conceded that there may be technical issues where external instructions needed to be followed. Like in the SME Company, he felt that all employees did not take advantage of the existing opportunities to get involved in decision making within their workplaces but there were "islands of good practice". He was dubious about rewarding employees for greater involvement as voice/engagement develops because he saw "being engaged to me is not enough just to have a reward, because we would expect that of people", but conceded that some kind of bonus for business success might be appropriate and that people should certainly have some reward for taking on more responsibility. He did not however think that greater voice/engagement necessarily meant more responsibilities for employees; it could just boil down to more effective communication with them to improve their ways of working and them being accountable for their workplace duties. Unlike the CEO of the SME Company he did feel that the promotion of voice/engagement does change "in a big way" with the work load and economic conditions an organisation finds itself in. Unlike the CEO in the SME study company, he saw employee self-management more than just an ideal, and felt that, allowing for certain technical restrictions, it was possible and desirable "without a doubt" that employees could take on total control of their work conditions and working methods because "I've seen it".

The next group of people to be questioned about their views and ideas as to how a greater degree of self-management might be introduced by the further development of EIP was the senior production management in both companies. In the SME Company the senior manager responsible for production was quite clear in his view that employees should be consulted in the formulation of decisions affecting their workplaces but when it came to control over their ways of working, his views were entirely centred on the practicalities of

control over operational working practices. His view was that for many, due to the technical nature of their work, there was no opportunity to divert from laid down operational procedures. He did not seem able to contemplate employees having control over matters such as the layout of their workplace and the division of labour within their team. With a slightly more positive view than his CEO, he took the view that whilst some employees did take advantage of the opportunities to be involved in the decision making processes within the Company as a whole, other personalities did not and were unlikely to do so in the future. He also thought that this applied to decision making within each team and matters affecting more than one team, such as communication and cooperation as product moves from one team to another. Whilst he thought employees should be rewarded for taking on additional responsibilities, unlike this CEO, he did not think this should apply for being more participative and engaged because he considered that being engaged was part of the duty of all employees. When asked if he thought employees ultimately should have total control over their working conditions or whether he considered this only as an ideal, he again did not seem to grasp the concept being discussed when he said;

“Ultimately they’ve got total control, because, I mean, because they’re here by choice aren’t they, so if they didn’t like it, they don’t have to be here”

and when asked if he thought teams could be considered as self-managed profit centres in the future, his reply was that it would be “almost impossible to measure” in their Company.

The senior manager responsible for production in the multinational company when asked if he thought employees should be consulted in the formation of workplace decisions, reflected for a moment then affirmed “I think yes”, but warned that after due discussion, if agreement was not reached, the supervisors would impose a decision that was “right for the business”. At the same time he was well aware of what the concept of self-management entails and stressed that the Company does consult with the shop floor workforce on matters outside day to day operational issues such as the implications of introducing new products, but he did admit that the Company could do more of this sort of consultation and that they were “probably in our infancy with that”. When it came to the question of how much actual control the shop floor employees should have, like his counterpart in the SME company, he was more reticent, mainly because of the technical nature of the production operation which demanded close control of the methods being employed, but thought they should be involved in such matters as tooling and plant layout. His reaction to whether the employees were taking full advantage of the chances open to them to be involved in decision making within the Company was identical to that of his opposite number on the SME company in that it was mixed. As he explained “we have some who are very good, very actively involved,

and we have others....who just want to come to work". He did however feel that engagement was more prevalent at team level than with company-wide issues where team members "feel more comfortable about voicing their opinions" and that this was also applied very effectively to 'inter-team' matters, contrary to the position at the SME Company. In some way similarly to the senior production manager at the SME Company, he had doubts about the correctness of rewarding employees for being more engaged, again because engagement should be considered part of normal duties and not necessarily involving extra responsibilities but as he put it "my mind's not made up". Like the senior production manager in the SME Company, he did think that taking on extra responsibilities should be rewarded. When asked if he thought it would eventually be possible for employees to have total control of their work conditions and ways of working he thought this could be possible with the exception of some technical restrictions covered by operational procedures. He summarised his views as;

"I think there'll be some things that are set, which you can't really manipulate. I think they can be involved in the early design stage. I think how they execute that and their workspace and environment; I think they can control all of that".

He considered the concept of self-management as a desirable ideal and that "we have a plan to get us to that point" which he accepted will be a step by step process. Generally he was more in tune with the concept of employee self-management than the senior manager responsible for production in the SME Company who really did not seem to grasp what the concept entailed, other than at operational task level.

To reach the views in each study company about employee self management held by staff with some managerial responsibility and working more intimately with the shop floor employees, those directly supervising the team leaders and their teams were questioned in a similar matter to their senior production management. In the SME Company the middle manager supervising production, when asked if he felt that, were EIP to be expanded, should employees be consulted in the formulation of workplace decisions, was of the opinion that it depended on the type of decision to be taken or problem to be resolved. He felt financial matters should not be discussed nor who should be recruited/appointed to their team, since he saw these as management's prerogative, but that the shop floor should be consulted on any problem which was "shop floor originated" so that their experience could be brought to bear. He was quite dismissive of the concept of employees having control over their own work and ways of working due to the technical nature of their work which demanded adherence to prescriptive operating procedures. He did concede that some changes might be possible within these operational restrictions, but they would have to be

agreed making the process one of consultation rather in control. Because his communication with the shop floor was most of the time one way and downwards, he felt that the employees were not taking full advantage of the opportunities open them to be involved in decisions affecting the Company as a whole. However, when it came to matters affecting their own teams, such as plant layout, the shop floor were more receptive to getting involved and discussions on such issues were regularly held, but at the end of the day. Unless a clear consensus was arrived at, it would be his decision and he would pronounce, "We'll do it this way". The employee involvement "probably wasn't there" for issues affecting more than one team especially when different trade disciplines were concerned and such matters were more likely to be dealt with by managers and team leaders rather than shop floor employees. His opinion on whether employees should be rewarded for being more participative was non-committal, he saw "arguments for and against", but he did believe that they should be rewarded for taking on more responsibilities that were "over and above their role" and that making improvement suggestions was an "extension of their role". However, at the same time, he did not consider being participative necessarily meant extra responsibilities. In the context of extending EIP into self-management, he saw no possibility of employees ever having total control over work conditions and working methods, irrespective of the technical restrictions which applied in the Company, nor that it was a desirable ideal.

In the multinational company the supervisors had varying views on the likelihood of further voice/engagement by employees leading to greater degrees of self-management. Supervisor A, who was the most senior of the three supervisors, firmly believed that shop floor employees should always be consulted before decisions such as the features any new plant or equipment should have as did supervisor B so that their experience could be taken advantage of before workplace decisions are taken, but supervisor C wasn't sure what sort of decisions would be appropriate for the involvement of shop floor employees. In discussion he could only give a view as to what shouldn't be discussed, that being "strategic management and things like that" and he thought that discussing issues such as a shortfall in the forthcoming workload could have a negative effect resulting in lower productivity. The sort of consultation he envisaged with employee groupings was "how do we get more productivity out". When it came to their opinions as to whether employees should have control over their work and ways of working leading to self-management, Supervisor A was again very clear that "they should" making due allowance for any technical restrictions that might apply, but in this case Supervisor B took a different and operational view. He felt that in a field where priorities were always changing, management and supervision need to keep a strict control over the order that work tasks are being undertaken and did not seem to consider other issues such as workplace organisation. Supervisor C, whose area was

subject to particularly strict technical restrictions, saw 'control' as the shop floor employees being able to suggest improvements in ways of working which would be taken seriously by team leaders and himself and be assessed by technical professionals; then implemented if found credible. All three supervisors were asked if they thought employees were taking full advantage of the existing opportunities open to them to be involved in decisions affecting the Company as a whole. Supervisor A did not believe they did and Supervisor B agreed but in their defence said he thought it was difficult for them because "they can only really influence where they are and that's their speciality" and Supervisor C was of a similar opinion. However, although Supervisor A thought that team members were not taking full advantage of the chances of being involved even within their own teams, he was hoping to improve on the situation. The other two supervisors disagreed and Supervisor B thought "they were doing well with that". All three maintained the same views with regard to involvement in issues affecting more than one team or shift. Supervisor A had a definite view as to whether employees should be rewarded for voice/engagement which was that although vouchers were given out as part of the Company's Enterprise Excellence scheme for improvement suggestions/ideas, he was of the opinion that employees saw voice/engagement "as their job" in any case. The other two supervisors had no clear opinion as to rewards for voice/engagement, but both did agree that voice/engagement should be considered as part of an employee's expected role. Supervisor A thought that employees should be rewarded for taking on more responsibilities, as did Supervisor C if the extra responsibilities were significant, but Supervisor B disagreed because he thought that extra responsibilities would in fact only be taken on by a few but all would benefit. Each supervisor was asked if he thought in due course employees could take total control of their ways of working accepting that there may well be technical restrictions to this in high tech. engineering companies such as theirs. Supervisor A only saw this relevant in the initial stages of setting up methods for a new product, but once established operating procedures would in fact be the control mechanism; nevertheless he considered it a desirable aim for organisations to foster employee self- management "as far as it can be done". Supervisor B was of like mind seeing the concept as a desirable ideal but took the view that "because of the technicalities of the business, I don't think it will ever happen". Supervisor C also saw the concept as idealistic and his final response was "I think you always need a bit of control".

5.3. QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE DATA

Of the 152 shop floor personnel invited to complete a questionnaire, 119 agreed to do so and duly returned the completed document. The response rate details were as follows:

Company	Role	No. Invited to Respond	No. Completed	Response Rate
Multinational	Team Leader	15	15	100%
Multinational	Team Member	89	62	70%
SME	Team Leader	8	8	100%
SME	Team Member	40	34	85%

There was a small number who left the entries concerning their personal details on their age and experience blank, possibly with a view to anonymity maintenance. The last section on each questionnaire was an invitation to the respondent to meet with the researcher confidentially and anonymously to discuss more fully their feelings on any issue covered in their questionnaire. One team leader from the SME Company and one team member from the multinational company took the opportunity to do so. Both were experienced, respected, long serving employees.

The data from all completed questionnaires was input on to SPSS software for analysis. This was done by creating two datasets, one containing the data from team leaders at both study companies and a second containing the data from team members at both companies.

5.3.1. THE CHOSEN VARIABLES

The variables for each dataset were chosen to relate to each section and question in the two questionnaires. Ninety such independent variables were entered on to the team leader dataset and forty on to the team member dataset. The variable 'Company' was also entered on to each dataset to act as a dependent and dichotomous variable, the two possible value labels being 'SME' or 'MNE'. Using recoding where necessary to comply with SPSS requirements, care was taken to ensure that higher values derived from the Likert scales used in the questionnaires always reflected the more participative or positive response, where the format on the actual questionnaire deliberately did not suggest this. This was designed to avoid any suggestion as to what would be expected and any built-in bias. Some composite variables were also created in order to integrate data from within sections of the questionnaires with specific likert scale responses. These composite variables were used to provide a measure as to the overall level of participation attained by both team leaders and team members in both companies and the level of self-management.

5.3.2. EXPLORATORY DATA ANALYSIS AND DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

The first phase of the statistical analysis of the data comprised generating frequency tables with cross tabulation between the 'Company' variables for each section of both questionnaires shown in Appendix 2. The raw data derived from these is shown in Appendix

3 in tabular form; Table 1 for the Team Leader questionnaire and Table 2 for the Team Member questionnaire. Responses from each question in each section of each questionnaire are tabled separately. Missing values have been left blank and the percentages are those from completed responses.

Whilst it is recognised that expressing the level of positive or negative responses to questions posed in questionnaires simply as percentages of the number of respondents, rather than recognising the actual numbers involved, could have a tendency to inflate the significance of variations between two study companies; in this case, because of the very significant differences between the size of the populations of both team leaders and team members in the two company as shown in section 5.3., it was deemed that the percentage of respondents was a feasible measure to illustrate variations, but to qualify this by also showing the population size (n) of respondents from which the percentage came from alongside the statistical value.

5.3.2.1. RESPONSES FROM TEAM LEADERS

THEIR ROLE AS A TEAM LEADER:
(see Appendix 3, Table 1, Section 1)

When asked to rate the importance of the various roles that a team leader may be expected to fulfil in the Company's organisation, most team leaders in the SME Company considered their role as a coach and leader more important than that as a supervisor or authority figure. Similarly, the team leaders in the MNE Company saw these as their most important roles with 40%(n=15) seeing their role as a supervisor of minor importance and none seeing themselves most importantly as an authority figure.

THE TRAINING TEAM LEADERS HAD RECEIVED:
(see Appendix 3, Table 1, Section 2)

In the previous three years, 37.5%(n=8) of the SME team leaders had received training in supervisory practice and 25%(n=8) in team working, both from an external training source but the majority had received no training whatsoever. In the MNE Company, only 8.3%(n=15) of the team leaders had received internal training in supervisory practice, but the majority (57.1% where n=15) had received training from an external source, and all had received training in team working from an external source.

TEAM LEADER'S FREEDOM ON HOW TO LEAD THEIR TEAMS:
(see Appendix 3, Table 1, Section 3)

The amount of freedom team leaders had to lead their teams in their way and the philosophy they actually adopted varied in each company. The majority (62.5% where n=8)

of the SME team leaders felt that they had sufficient independence to manage and organise their teams in their own way and none felt that the management totally dictated how their teams should be led. However, only 13.3%(n=15) of the MNE team leaders felt that they were allowed to act independently in terms of how they led their teams and 35.7%(n=15) thought that the management totally dictated how they should run their teams. Even so, only a minority (37.5% where n=8) of team leaders in the SME Company felt personally responsible for the success or failure of their teams and an even lower proportion (20% where n=15) in the MNE Company. There was a general acceptance, to differing degrees, with both sets of team leaders that they were also active members of their teams as well as their leader and that outcomes were credited to the team as a whole. A higher proportion of the SME leaders (37.5% where n=8) felt themselves mainly as a team member rather than a leader, compared with their MNE counterparts (13.3% where n=15).

COMMUNICATION WITHIN THE TEAM LEADER'S TEAMS:

(see Appendix 3, Table 1, Section 4)

The amount of time the team leaders in each company spend communicating, working alongside and holding meetings with their teams, was significantly different. The team leaders in both companies were working team leaders but it was those in the SME Company who spent the most time working and communicating alongside their team members with 37.5%(n=8) of them spending over 75% of their time doing so. In contrast, the highest level of working and communicating together in the MNE was 40%(n=15) of them spending 50% of their time with their teams.

Another measure of how well the team leaders communicate with their teams evaluated was how often they held team meetings. Whereas all the team leaders in the MNE Company convened team meetings, only 50%(n=8) of the SME team leaders had ever held a team meeting. Only 37.5%(n=8) of the SME team leaders had been instructed and encouraged to hold meetings at least once a month, but 66.7%(n=15) had been so instructed and 53.3%(n=15) encouraged to do so in the MNE Company, but in fact in both companies, 80% or more who held meetings did so only when there was a specific topic or problem to discuss.

HOW THE TEAM LEADERS ORGANISE AND MONITOR THE WORK OF THEIR TEAMS:

(see Appendix 3, Table 1, Section 5)

In the SME Company half of the team leaders allocated tasks to the team most of the time but in the MNE Company, this happened less frequently with only 6.7%(n=15) of the team leaders allocating tasks most of the time. This could be due to the larger workforce in the MNE with team members being trained for, and specialising, in specific tasks, whereas in

the SME Company the team members are expected and able to tackle a range of tasks. In the SME Company 37.5%(n=8) of the teams collectively contributed to the decisions on who should do particular tasks, but an equal number never had team members making such a contribution. Again possibly due to specialisation, in the MNE Company the vast majority of teams (86.7% where n=15) either never, or only occasionally, made a contribution as to who should undertake particular tasks. In half of the SME teams the members may make a collective team decision in allocating work some or most of the time, but in the MNE Company this happened much less frequently with only 6.7%(n=15) of the teams sometimes making collective decisions and 33.3%(n=15) only occasionally.

TO WHAT EXTENT MEMBERS OF THE TEAM LEADER'S TEAMS WILLINGLY SHARE THEIR SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE WITHIN THE TEAM AND MORE WIDELY THROUGHOUT THEIR COMPANIES:
(see *Appendix 3, Table 1, Section 6*)

The level of multi-skilling in the teams in both companies was questioned by asking how well the team leaders felt their teams solved problems by working together as a team. When a team member experienced a work related problem, team leaders felt that most of the time they were more likely to first try to solve it themselves in the SME Company teams (50% where n=8) than in the MNE Company teams (26.7% where n=15) but in the MNE Company most of the time teams were then more likely to ask fellow team members for help (26.7% where n=15) than in the SME Company (12.5% where n=8). However, if that failed, most of the time a greater proportion of teams in the MNE company were likely to turn to their team leader for help (60% where n=15) than in the SME Company (37.5% where n=8) and indeed (53.3%(n=15) in the MNE Company said most of the time the members of their teams would go straight to the team leader as soon as the problem arose, whereas fewer in the SME Company (25% where n=8) would do so. This could be considered as an indication that confidence by the teams in their team leaders in the SME Company was not as high as in the MNE Company, or that they have more freedom to act in the SME Company.

In terms of team members sharing their knowledge with other members of their team, there was little to separate the views of the team leaders in both study companies with 62.5%(n=8) of the teams willing to share in the SME Company and 60%(n=15) in the MNE Company. There was however a marked difference when it came to sharing their experience widely throughout the Company with only 12.5%(n=8) willing to do so most of the time in the SME Company but 33.3%(n=15) being willing in the MNE Company. This may be an illustration that individual loyalties are centred on the team rather than the organisation as a whole and markedly so in the SME Company.

THE TEAM LEADER' KNOWLEDGE OF COMPANY POLICY:
(see Appendix 3, Table 1, Section 7)

Team leaders in both companies showed a marked lack of awareness of their company's plans and policies and commercial position. Around half of the team leaders in both companies stated that they were not aware at all of the long term plans of their companies (50% where n=8 in the SME and 46.7% where n=15 in the MNE), nor were they at all aware of the current profitability of their companies (62.5% where n=8 in the SME and 46.7% where n=15 in the MNE). Half of all the team leaders in the SME Company had no awareness of the competitiveness of their company but most (79.9% where n=15) of team leaders in the MNE Company had some awareness with 13.3%(n=15) feeling they were fully aware. When it came to the awareness of company policy for dealing with employees, 25%(n=8) of the team leaders in the SME Company expressed no awareness at all although another 25%(n=8) felt fully aware, but in the MNE Company no team leaders felt unaware although only 6.7%(n=15) felt fully aware. This could be a reflection on the differing degrees of managerial communication in both study companies and in the case of the SME Company, the difference between long serving employees and relatively new starters.

WHO THE TEAM LEADERS SEE AS THE DECISION MAKERS IN THE COMPANY:
(see Appendix 3, Table 1, Section 8)

Team leaders in both companies saw decision making as the prerogative of management. Half of the team leaders in both companies thought that the views of their team members had no influence at all in decision making within the company (50% where n=8 in the SME and 46.7% where n=15 in the MNE). Many of the team leaders themselves in the SME Company did not feel that they had much influence in decision making with 37%(n=8) feeling that they had none at all but 25%(n=8) did feel that they had 'much' influence. In the MNE Company only 13.7%(n=15) of the team leaders felt that they had no influence on decision making and 40%(n=15) felt that they had a moderate influence. However team leaders in both companies saw middle managers as having 'moderate' or 'much' influence on decision making (75% where n=8 in the SME and 93.3% where n=15 in the MNE) but overwhelmingly they saw the decision making process in the hands of senior management with 87.5%(n=8) in the SME and 60%(n=15) in the MNE seeing them as having 'very much' influence. This lower figure for senior management in the MNE Company could be due to team leaders considering that the parent company might also be an influencer.

HOW WELL TEAM LEADERS FELT THEY WERE BEING KEPT INFORMED:
(see Appendix 3, Table 1, Section 9)

In the SME Company, half of the team leaders felt that they were kept well informed on Company matters whereas only 6.7%(n=15) felt well informed in the MNE Company. Additionally, 67%(n=8) of the team leaders in the SME Company agreed being properly informed would make employees more likely to accept decisions made by the Company but only 26.7%(n=15) of the team leaders in the MNE Company felt the same way.

When it came to how team leaders were kept informed, in both study companies, more cited their immediate superiors rather than middle or senior management as their source of information. Only 37.5%(n=8) of the team leaders in the SME Company cited team briefings as a source of information but 66.7%(n=15) in the MNE Company did so, which is probably due to briefings being more prevalent in the MNE Company. Company memoranda were mentioned by half in the SME Company but less so (26.7% where n=15) in the MNE Company where circulars were cited by 40%(n=15). However, half or more of the team leaders in both companies chose fellow team leaders as a source of information (50% where n=8 in the SME and 66.7% where n=15 in the MNE).

Overall, whilst 75%(n=8) of team leaders in the SME Company considered the current channels of information reasonable or adequate, only 46.7%(n=15) did so in the MNE Company even with their more formal systems of communication.

TEAM LEADER'S AND THEIR TEAM'S INVOLVEMENT IN RUNNING THE COMPANY:
(see Appendix 3, Table 1, Section 10)

More team leaders in the SME Company (62.3% where n=8) reported that they occasionally were involved in the decision making process in their Company than those in the MNE Company (46.7% where n=15) and fewer in the SME Company (37.5% where n=8) admitted that they never were involved than in the MNE Company (46.7% where n=15). Only a small percentage in either company received information concerning the running of their company on a regular basis (12.5 % where n=8 in the SME and 13.3% where n=15 in the MNE) and both sets of team leaders felt that they were not consulted on a regular basis before decisions were taken but were occasionally (62.5% where n=8 in the SME and 60% where n=15 in the MNE). Nor did either group feel that their views were taken into account on a regular basis with 62.5%(n=8) in the SME Company feeling that their views were never taken into account as did a third of the MNE team leaders. Even when it came to the Company making decisions affecting the running of their own teams, half or more of the leaders in both study companies never were involved (50% where n=8 in the SME and 60% where n=15 in the MNE). However, on matters which solely affected their own teams,

37.5%(n=8) of team leaders in the SME Company regularly made the decision by themselves, but this never happened regularly in the MNE Company and 46.7%(n=15) of their team leaders stated that they had never made decisions alone affecting their own particular teams. In the case of the MNE leaders this could be due to the more procedural environment in the Company.

Although their freedom of action was limited in both companies, similar numbers of team leaders had a sense of pride in being members of their teams (75% where n=8 in the SME and 80% where n=15 in the MNE) but more SME leaders (50% where n=8) felt that they had a stake in the future of the Company than in the MNE (20% where n=15). In both cases most saw their relationship with who they report to as good and accepted that it was in their team's interest to work for productivity and efficiency improvements within the Company (75% where n=8 in the SME and 86.7% where n=15 in the MNE) but there was some divergence on how well their suggestions for better working methods were being listened to by their Company with half of leaders in the SME Company agreeing that the management did indeed listen to them but only 20%(n=15) of leaders in the MNE Company took a similar view.

Both sets of leaders were asked if they thought that their teams were more likely to offer suggestions for workplace improvements if there was the possibility of financial gain for them. 75%(n=8) of the leaders in the SME Company thought they would, but only 46.7%(n=15) did in the MNE Company. However, all of the leaders in the SME Company and virtually all in the MNE company (86.7% where n=15) thought that their members would offer suggestions in any case without any financial incentive.

WHETHER THE VOICE OF THE TEAM LEADER WAS BEING HEARD:
(see *Appendix 3, Table 1, Section 11*)

In the SME Company 87.5%(n=8) of the team leaders had offered their views on workplace issues without being asked, at least occasionally, and 25%(n=8) of them 'all of the time'. In the MNE Company only 13.3%(n=15) of the leaders said they offered their views 'all the time' but all at least occasionally and all had been encouraged to do so, but only 75%(n=8) of the leaders in the SME Company felt that they had received any encouragement. 87.5%(n=8) of the leaders in the SME Company felt that to varying degrees their views had been listened to but only 62.5%(n=8) felt that they had received adequate feedback from whoever they had offered their views to; whereas in the MNE Company, although less (80% where n=15) of the leaders felt they had been listened to, all of these had also received adequate feedback.

THE ROLE OF TEAM LEADERS IN CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT:
(see Appendix 3, Table 1, Section 12)

In the SME Company, 25%(n=8) of the team leaders had never served on a Project or Problem Solving Team, but all of the leaders in the MNE Company had. 12.5%(n=8) of the leaders in the SME Company had never made an improvement suggestion on an individual basis but all had in the MNE Company. 37.5%(n=8) of the leaders in the SME Company had made suggestions on a regular basis, either as part of a team or on an individual basis, but by a lower proportion (26.7% where n=15) had done so in the MNE Company.

87.5%(n=8) of the team leaders in the SME Company and all in the MNE Company had made suggestions to improve productivity in their companies and 75%(n=8) of the SME leaders and again all in the MNE Company had made suggestions associated with product quality improvement. Similar numbers had made suggestions to do with health and safety matters (75% where n=8 in the SME and 93.3% where n=15 in the MNE). Encouragingly, the leaders in both study companies said that they would continue to make suggestions in the future (87.5% where n= 8 in the SME and 93.3% where n=15 in the MNE) even though fewer felt that their suggestions had received proper consideration (50% where n=8 in the SME and 35.7% where n=15 in the MNE) and only a minority had received feedback (25% where n=8 in the SME and 46.7% where n=15 in the MNE) and felt that their suggestions had received due recognition (25% where n=8 in the SME and 26.7% where n=15 in the MNE). Nevertheless, as stated, 87.5%(n=8) of the leaders in the SME Company who had made suggestions said they would still do so in the future and 93.3%(n=15) in the MNE Company felt likewise.

Although most team leaders in both study companies did not feel that they had received proper appreciation from their Company; few considered improvement activities to be the responsibility of the management (25% where n=8 in the SME and 26.7% where n=15 in the MNE), but rather everyone's responsibility in their Company (87.5% where n=8 in the SME and all in the MNE).

THE DEMOGRAPHIC MAKEUP OF TEAM LEADERS:
(see Appendix 3, Table 1, Section 12)

The age of the leaders in both study companies tended towards the older range with 50%(n=8) of the leaders in the SME Company being over forty and the other half over fifty and was very marked in the MNE Company where 80%(n=15) of the leaders were over fifty. This, as would be expected, was coupled with extensive work experience with 87.5%(n=8) of the leaders in the SME Company having more than ten years experience in the engineering industry and all having that level of experience in the MNE Company although not

necessarily with their current employer. The level of retention was also high with 62.5%(n=8) having been with the SME Company for over ten years and 66.7%(n=15) with the MNE Company. The amount of experience as team leaders differed in some ways in the two companies. 25%(n=8) of the leaders in the SME Company had less than one years experience in the position, which could be accounted for by recent rapid growth in the Company, but none in the MNE Company were as inexperienced. Apart from that however, both companies had similar levels of very experienced team leaders with 25%(n=8) of the leaders in the SME Company and 26.7%(n=15) in the MNE Company with over ten years experience in the role, although only roughly half of this had been gained in the study companies. 12.5%(n=8) of the leaders in the SME Company had been team leaders there for over ten years and 13.3%(n=15) of the leaders in the MNE Company had over ten years service there as team leaders.

Proportionally, the educational attainment level for team leaders was slightly lower in the MNE study Company than the SME Company. 12.5%(n=8) of the leaders in the SME Company had reached NVQ level 5 or equivalent, but none of the MNE Company team leaders had. Proportionally more of the leaders in the SME Company (25% where n=8) had also achieved NVQ level 4 than in the MNE Company (20% where n=15) and there was a similar picture even at level 2, essentially craft level, with all of the SME leaders holding that qualification as against 80%(n=15) in the MNE Company. This illustrates that the technical expertise in the SME Company could at least match that of the MNE Company with its greater resource pool.

5.3.2.2. RESPONSES FROM TEAM MEMBERS

Their Knowledge of their Company's Plans for the Future and its Decision Makers:
(see *Appendix 3, Table 2, Section 1*)

Team members were asked how aware they were of the long term plans of each company and the degree of influence they felt that they and their team leaders had on Company decision-making. A greater proportion of the team members in the SME Company (23.5% where n=34) felt that they were fully aware of the long term plans of their Company than those in the MNE Company where very few (3.2% where n=62) felt fully aware and 29%(n=62) said they were not aware at all as against 11.8%(n=34) in the SME Company. This was supported by differing views as to the amount of influence they felt they had on decision making in their companies with 11.8%(n=34) of team members feeling that they had 'much' influence in the SME Company but only 1.6%(n=62) feeling likewise in the MNE Company, but they both had similar views on the influence their team leaders had with 24.1%(n=34) seeing them as having 'much' influence in the SME Company and

18.3%(n=62) in the MNE Company. However, in the SME Company 17.6%(n=34) of members thought that they had no influence at all and 10.3%(n=34) felt that their team leaders also had no influence and this view was held even stronger in the MNE Company with 29%(n=62) of members feeling they had no influence and 6.7%(n=62) that neither had their leaders.

HOW WELL TEAM MEMBERS FELT THEY WERE BEING KEPT INFORMED:
(see *Appendix 3, Table 2, Section 2*)

Overall a greater proportion of the team members in the SME Company (44.1% where n=34) generally felt that they were well informed about Company matters than those in the MNE Company (33.9% where n=62) but a large proportion in each company, and particularly in the MNE Company, strongly disagreed with this view (29.4% where n=34 in the SME and 48.4% where n=62 in the MNE).

When it came to specific issues team members felt more aware of the situation, especially in the MNE Company. 67.6%(n=34) of members in the SME Company reported that they were made aware of the productivity within their team and 91.9%(n=62) in the MNE Company. Similarly, 64.7%(n=34) of SME members reported being aware of the product quality levels in their team and 90.2%(n=62) in the MNE Company. A similar pattern was found with health and safety issues where 76.5%(n=34) of members in the SME Company reported being aware of the safety levels attained in their teams and 98.4%(n=62) in the MNE Company. The difference between the levels in the two study companies could be attributed to the more procedural attitude to communication within the MNE Company.

TEAM MEMBERS FEELING OF INVOLVEMENT IN THE RUNNING OF THEIR COMPANY:
(see *Appendix 3, Table 2, Section 3*)

There were some team members in both study companies who stated that they did not wish to be involved in the running of their Company (31% where n=34 in the SME and 35.8% where n=62 in the MNE) and the majority were content just to be informed (67% where n=34 in the SME and 69% where n=62 in the MNE), but most wished to be consulted before decisions were taken by others (76.7% where n=34 in the SME and 81.8% where n=62 in the MNE); a similar picture in both study companies.

Even so most members in both companies had a sense of pride in being members of their teams (69.7% where n=34 in the SME and 70.9% where n=62 in the MNE) but a lesser proportion felt involved in the running of their teams (48.5% where n=34 in the SME and 37.1% where n=62 in the MNE). Only 33.3%(n=34) of team members in the SME Company felt that they had a stake in the future of their team, and then not strongly, and 33.9%(n=62)

felt similarly in the MNE Company. 45.4%(n=34) of members in the SME Company believed that their Company listened properly to suggestions from employees about better working methods but only 25.8%(n=62) in the MNE Company did, even with the Company's stated commitment to effective communication.

THE JOB KNOWLEDGE OF TEAM MEMBERS:
(see Appendix 3, Table 2, Section 4)

Team members were asked how experienced they felt in their job and how freely they were able to make use of this as well as how much help they had received from their company to train to further enhance their skills. In both companies most, and a similar proportion, were satisfied that they were aware of the best and latest ways of doing their job (79.4% where n=34 in the SME and 77.5% where n=62 in the MNE). Virtually the same proportion in the SME Company said they were allowed to do their job in the way they thought best but fewer were of this opinion in the MNE Company (74.4% where n=34 in the SME and 53.2% where n=62 in the MNE). Although both companies had to follow stringent operating procedures due to the nature of their products, this may reflect the more procedural approach adopted in the MNE Company. This could also account for 53%(n=34) of the team members in the SME Company stating that the way they did their job was dictated by others and a larger proportion (69.4% where n=62) in the MNE Company; the 'dictation' presumably being from the Company Operating Procedures. However, around half of the team members in each company thought they had been given every opportunity to learn the best and latest ways of doing their job (53% where n=34 in the SME and 51.6% where n=62 in the MNE); in fact over half in both companies had been offered job related training in the past five years (58.8% where n=34 in the SME and 69.4% where n=62 in the MNE) and only around 10% had ever been refused permission to attend any training course during working hours (9.4% where n=34 in the SME and 11.3% where n=62 in the MNE).

TEAM MEMBER'S IMPROVEMENT SUGGESTIONS AND PROBLEM SOLVING ACTIVITIES:
(see Appendix 3, Table 2, Section 5)

88.2%(n=34) of team members in the SME Company had made improvement suggestions as part of their team effort and 86.9%(n=62) of members in the MNE Company had done likewise. 91.1%(n=34) of members in the SME Company had also made suggestions as individuals and 87%(n=62) of members in the MNE Company had also made suggestions as individuals.

63.6%(n=34) of members in the SME Company and 77%(n=62) in the MNE Company had made suggestions to improve productivity and the same number had made quality improvement suggestions. Fairly similar numbers had made suggestions to improve safe

working practice (75.8% where n=34 in the SME and 67.2% where n=62 in the MNE), except in this case the higher proportion was in the SME Company.

A high proportion of those who had made suggestions said that they would continue to do so (78.1% where n=34 in the SME and 74.6% where n=62 in the MNE). Only 33.3%(n=34) of team members in the SME Company and 34.4%(n=62) in the MNE Company considered improvement activities the responsibility of management but 93.9%(n=34) in the SME Company and 98.4%(n=62) in the MNE Company saw this as the responsibility of everyone in the Company.

THE DEMOGRAPHIC MAKEUP OF TEAM MEMBERS:
(see Appendix 3, Table 2, Section 6)

There was a marked difference in the age range of team members in the two study companies with the MNE Company having a much older workforce with over half (50.8% where n=62) being over fifty in contrast to the SME Company where only 29.4%(n=34) were in that age bracket. The SME Company also had a higher proportion (47.1% where n=34) of members thirty years old and under than the MNE Company with only 32.2%(n=62) in that age range. However, although this discrepancy was understood as a significant problem for the future in the MNE Company, it did show itself advantageously in terms of the experience available on the shop floor. 67.8%(n=62) of members in the MNE Company had over ten years experience in the engineering industry; a higher proportion than in the SME Company with 52.9%(n=34) having that level of experience. There was a much more significant difference when it came to the level of experience attained in their present Company with 57.6%(n=62) of members in the MNE Company having worked there for over ten years but only 3%(n=34) in the SME Company, probably due to the recent rapid expansion in the SME Company.

The shop floor team members in the MNE Company on the whole had higher educational qualifications than in the SME Company. 70.6%(n=62) of those in the MNE Company had attained a level 3 qualification against only 53.4%(n=34) in the SME Company and furthermore 31%(n=62) had gone on to achieve a level 4 qualification, but only 5.9%(n=34) had done so in the SME Company. 20.7%(n=62) of members in the MNE Company had even reached level 5 compared with only 2.9%(n=34) in the SME Company.

5.3.2.3. MEASURES OF THE LEVEL OF EIP ATTAINED IN BOTH STUDY COMPANIES USING VOICE MECHANISMS AND THEIR IMPACT ON PRODUCTIVITY, PRODUCT QUALITY AND SAFETY ISSUES

In order to gain some insight into the comparative levels of EIP achieved through the use of 'voice mechanisms' (as defined in section 2.1.1.) exhibited in both companies, some selected variables in the form of relevant questions posed in the Team Leader and Team Member questionnaires were merged into single composite variables. Three such variables were computed using the SPSS software for each questionnaire to illustrate three differing 'voice' levels of actual employee voice and attitudes to employee voice, i.e. termed Levels 1, 2 and 3, and the number of employees that had progressed from low to higher levels; Level 3 being the highest category and the technique having some resemblance to Guttman scaling. In addition, the level of employee voice appertaining specifically to productivity, product quality and health and safety improvements were computed. The questions and required responses were selected taking into account the basic principles on the degree, level, form and range of EIP and his "Escalator" set out by Marchington in (Marchington, 1992) and the "scale of participation" covered by Armstrong in (Armstrong, 2001), (see section 2.4.1. in the Literature Review), along with some personal experience. It must be stressed that there is no suggestion that these values should be interpreted in absolute terms, their function being merely to afford a common source of comparison between the two case study companies. Table 3 in Appendix 4 shows the questions selected and their responses categorised into Levels 1, 2 and 3 from particular sections of the Team Leader questionnaire used to compute the variables. It should be noted that some questions have more than one valid indicator for a particular level. Table 4, also in Appendix 4, shows the resultant descriptive statistics after analysis, again using frequency tables with cross tabulation between them and the 'Company' variable. Tables 5 and 6, also in Appendix 4, follow the same procedures and reasoning except for being based on the Team Member questionnaire.

Table 4 suggests that at the first and lowest level of voice in percentage terms, more of the team leaders in the MNE Company (93.3% where n=15) were participative than those in the SME Company (75% where n=8). At the higher second level, the degree of voice appeared very similar in the companies, (53.3% and 50% where n=15 and 8 respectively). At the highest third level, the results suggested the opposite to that at Level 1 with voice being higher with the SME team leaders (37.5% where n=8) than for the MNE team leaders (26.7% where n=15). These comparative results were also broadly borne out when participation specifically towards improvements in productivity, product quality and health

and safety issues were taken into account, although at the lowest level of voice (Level 1) the results suggest that fewer team leaders in the SME Company participated in quality and safety improvements than in productivity improvements.

Table 6 suggests that at all three levels of voice, the percentage of team members actually participating was significantly lower than for their team leaders in both study companies. There were more team members in percentage terms at the SME Company who fulfilled the Level 3 criteria for voice (8.8% where n=34) than in the MNE Company (1.6% where n=62), as was the case with their team leaders. This was also the case for voice at Level 2 with more SME members attaining the requirements (20.6% where n=34) than MNE members (9.8% where n=62), contrary to the results for their team leaders, where there was virtually no difference. At the lowest level of voice, Level 1, there was little difference between the members at each company, whereas with the team leaders more at the MNE Company appeared participative than at those at the SME Company. The participation of team members in improvements to productivity followed the same pattern as for the overall level of voice at Level 3 and Level 2 but was lower in both companies at the lowest level of voice; Level 1. The participation of team members in quality improvements was the same as the overall level of voice at Level 3 in both companies but slightly lower at level 2 in the SME Company. At Level 1, participation in quality improvements was slightly lower than for productivity improvements, and lower than the overall level of voice at both companies. The level of participation in health and safety improvements was lower than that of the overall levels of voice except for participation at the highest level, Level 3, at the MNE Company. In the SME company, participation in health and safety improvements was lower than for productivity and quality improvements at Levels 3 and 2 but higher at Level 1; the lowest level. In the MNE Company, participation in health and safety improvements were very similar to those for productivity and quality improvement at Levels 3 and 2 but lower at Level 1.

5.3.2.4. MEASURES OF THE LEVEL OF SELF-MANAGEMENT ATTAINED IN BOTH STUDY COMPANIES

To add to the appreciation of views held at both companies on the question of self-management garnered from the interviews held with their management and supervisory staff, selected variables in the form of questions relevant to self-management posed in the Team Leader questionnaire were merged into single composite variables using similar principles to those used to create the composite variables for employee voice. As with the computed variables used to evaluate the overall level of voice in both companies, three such variables were computed using the SPSS software to illustrate three differing levels of self-management, i.e. Levels 1, 2 and 3; Level 3 being the highest category. The Team Member

questionnaire was not used since questions appertaining to self-management had not been deemed essential or appropriate for this shorter questionnaire and any degree of self-management adopted would most likely be operated by team leaders, now or in the future. As with the computed variables used for assessing the levels of voice, it must be stressed that there is no suggestion that the values obtained for levels of self-management should be interpreted in absolute terms, their function being merely to afford a common source of comparison between the two case study companies. Table 7 in Appendix 4 shows the questions selected and their responses categorised into Levels 1, 2 and 3 from particular sections of the Team Leader questionnaire used to compute the variables. Table 8, shown below and also in Appendix 4, shows the resultant descriptive statistics after analysis, again using frequency tables with cross tabulation between them and the 'Company' variable.

TABLE 8 - TEAM LEADER LEVELS OF SELF-MANAGEMENT ATTAINED				
	SME		MNE	
LEVEL OF SELF-MANAGEMENT	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
LEVEL 3	2	25.0%	0	0.0%
LEVEL 2	3	37.5%	2	13.3%
LEVEL 1	6	75.0%	7	46.7%

Table 8 clearly suggests that in proportional terms the team leaders in the SME Company consistently practice more self-management practices than their opposite numbers in the MNE Company at all three levels. Furthermore, as would be expected, the values attained were higher at the lowest level, (Level 1), and decreased progressively through levels 2 and 3 as the criteria for self-management becomes more onerous. However, any interpretation of these results should take into account that the majority of team leaders in the MNE Company are not assigned permanently to a particular team due to the intricacies of their shift rotation system. This means that the team that they lead changes shift by shift.

5.3.3. TESTING FOR DATA ASSOCIATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO STUDY COMPANIES USING LOGISTIC REGRESSION ANALYSIS

The second phase of the statistical analysis of the data was concerned with evaluating the statistical significance of the associations between the various independent variables indicating the levels of voice and self-management by employees, that is, the questionnaire data, and their employing company. As the project is a comparative case study between two companies, logistic regression was deemed an obvious candidate for the methodology to be adopted with the 'Company' variable acting as the dependent and dichotomous variable. Logistic regression was used to predict the probability that one of the two study companies was statistically significantly more participative using voice mechanisms in a variety of senses than the other and also in doing so help to establish the

truth or otherwise of some of the various hypotheses being put forward. The significance level 0.05 will be used throughout and its interpretation will take into account that insignificant values shown for groups of independent variables could in fact be significant when the variables are considered singularly. Logistic regression does not require a linear relationship between the dependent variable and the independent variables, nor multivariate normality or homoscedasticity (variables possessing similar variances) and can handle ordinal and nominal data as independent variables. However as normality does yield a more stable result, normality checks were conducted using both the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests. These showed that of the 74 independent variables in the Team Leader questionnaire, 15 were significant (≥ 0.05) and therefore showed normality using the K-S test and 13 using the S-W test which is usually considered more accurate as a test for normality. None of the 28 independent variables in the Team Member questionnaire were significant and therefore were not from a normal distribution. These results will be taken into account when the regression results are interpreted. One definite requirement of logistic regression is that there is little or no multicollinearity between the independent variables; that is that they should be independent from each other. To ensure that this was the case, each regression was tested for multicollinearity using the criteria 'Tolerance' being >0.1 and the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) being <10 . Additionally, an indication of the sensitivity, but not a definite value, of each model created was produced by computing a Receiver Operating Characteristic (ROC) curve with its associated statistics including the 'Area under the Curve' (AUL) on the basis that the higher the AUL, the greater the sensitivity and predictive power of the independent variable(s). The level of sensitivity and predictive power of each regression was assessed using the following widely accepted criteria:

- AUL 0.90-1.00 = excellent predictive power
- AUL 0.80-0.90 = good predictive power
- AUL 0.70-0.80 = fair predictive power
- AUL 0.60-0.70 = poor predictive power
- AUL <0.60 = worthless in terms of predictive power

5.3.3.1. THE REGRESSIONS

Each of the composite variables created to indicate levels of employee voice by team leaders and team members and levels of self-management by team leaders in both companies as defined in section 5.3.2.3. and already used to generate descriptive statistics were used as independent variables in logistic regressions with the variable 'Company', their employing study company, being the dichotomous dependent variable; a total of nine regressions.

Appendix 4 shows the principle outputs from these regressions along with AUL values from generated ROC curves and statistics for collinearity and normality, all in tabular form. Table 9 shows the results for levels of voice, participation in productivity, quality, health and safety improvements and self-management by team leaders and Table 10 shows the results for levels of voice and participation in productivity, quality and health and safety improvements by team members.

For completeness, two separate sets of regressions were performed, one with the multinational company (MNE) coded with the name label "1" and the small supplier company coded with the name label "0", followed by a second set with the small supplier company (SME) coded with the name label "1" and the multinational company (MNE) coded with the name label "0". Tables 9 and 10 are outputs from regressions where the multinational large company was coded as "1" and the small supplier company coded as "0".

5.3.3.2. INTERPRETATION OF THE OUTPUTS

STATISTICAL SIGNIFICANCE (Sig):

Employing a $p < 0.05$ criterion for statistical significance, none of the composite variables of levels of voice or self-management showed significant association with the employing study company. However, 'Sig' values for level 1 voice by team leaders (0.068) and team members (0.087) in product quality improvement approached significance as did level 1 participation in productivity improvement by team members (0.062) but regressions then carried out on their individual constituent variables showed none to be statistically significant confirming that the significance of an individual constituent had not been masked in the composite result. As expected, the results were the same irrespective of which name label the dependent variable 'Company' was given.

AREA UNDER THE CURVE (AUL):

The three levels of self-management by team leaders show values of AUL between 0.60-0.70 which then only indicates poor predictive power. Participation in productivity, product quality and safety improvement by team members at the lowest level (level 1) show similar poor predictive power with overall voice virtually within the range (AUL=0.592). All other values of AUL are below 0.60 indicating the composite variables being worthless in terms of predictive power.

MULTICOLLINEARITY:

As all values of Tolerance are greater than 0.1 and all values of VIF are less than 10 there is no collinearity problem with the data. As expected, the results were identical irrespective of which name label the dependent variable 'Company' was given.

NORMALITY:

Both significance (Sig) values for the Kolmogorov-Smirnov (K-S) and Shapiro-Wilk (S-W) tests are identical, irrespective of which name label was used for the dependent variable 'Company', and was reported at 0.000 which being less than 0.05 indicates that all composite variables deviate from normality, i.e. are not part of a normal distribution and therefore only non-parametric tests must be applied, which includes logistic regression.

THE OUTCOME:

The results of the analysis indicate that there is no statistical association between the three levels of actual employee voice, participation in operational outcomes, or self-management and the employing study company at a 5% significance level.

5.3.4. USING TWO INDEPENDENT SAMPLE TESTS TO EVALUATE THE HYPOTHESES

Alongside the logistic regressions carried out to determine if there was any general association between levels of voice, participation in operational outcomes, or self-management and the employing company, tests were also undertaken to determine if either of the study company's employees were statistically more participative than those of the other company, beyond the evidence already ascertained by basic descriptive statistics. This again involved the use of the composite variables used in the logistic regressions and the two companies as the two independent samples.

5.3.4.1. SELECTION OF THE STATISTICAL TEST

The first statistical test considered was the independent t-test. However the problem with this test is that it is a parametric test and traditionally, as such, it is said to assume a normal distribution of the data, which as has already been established, the composite variables used for logistic regression did not possess, (see section 5.3.3.2.). Efforts to correct this by transformation/computation in SPSS using the Log_{10} , Log_n and SQRT functions only provided minimal beneficial effects and certainly did not transform the data into normal distributions. However, reverting to probability theory, the central limit theorem suggests that given a sufficiently large sample or population their arithmetic mean tends

towards a normal distribution. Although the size of the population of team members (96) may meet this criterion, that of the team leaders (23) was considered insufficient to rely on the theorem to guarantee normality. Therefore a non-parametric test had to be used.

The non-parametric test selected was the Mann-Whitney test even though it is considered less powerful than the parametric independent t-test. This test also had a requirement which could have been problematic for the composite variables used in the datasets in that the test requires the variables to be ordinal whereas the composite variables used in the logistic regressions are all nominal and levels of voice, participation in operational outcomes, or self-management which are either met or not. This problem did not in fact arise because the intention was to judge which study company was the more participative or self-managed overall in line with the prescribed hypotheses. To achieve this, new composite variables were computed in SPSS, labelled 'LEVEL', by adding together the three levels of voice and participation in operational outcomes for team leaders and likewise for team members as well as the three levels of self-management by team leaders. As the original composite variables assumed that all employees attaining level 3 would have also firstly attained levels 1 and 2 (see Tables 3, 5, 7 in Appendix 4) this resulted in the 'value' for level 3 employees in the composite variable 'LEVEL' being "3", "2" for level 2 employees, "1" for level 1 employees and "0" for those not even attaining level 1. This applied for both levels of voice, participation in operational outcomes and self-management. Thus the new composite variables 'LEVEL' achieved an ordinal 'measure'.

5.3.4.2. THE MANN-WHITNEY TESTS

Each of the ordinal composite variables created to indicate the overall level of voice, participation in operational outcomes by team leaders and team members, and the overall level of self-management by team leaders in both study companies, by means described in section 5.3.4.1., were used as Test Variables in a series of Mann-Whitney tests with the variable 'Company' used as the Grouping variable. This amounted to nine tests which included testing for the overall level of participation in productivity, product quality and safety improvements.

Appendix 4 shows the principal outputs from these tests in tabular form. Table 11 shows the results for levels of voice, participation in operational outcomes, and self-management by team leaders and Table 12 shows the results for levels of voice and participation in operational outcomes by team members.

5.3.4.3. INTERPRETATION OF THE OUTPUTS.

All of the results from the Mann-Whitney Tests on all of the ordinal composite variables shown in Tables 11 and 12 were not statistically significant at the $p < 0.05$ level. Furthermore, with one exception, there was little difference when the rank positions of the team leaders from each employing company were compared, and the same was true for the team members from each company. These minor differences ranged from only 1% to 11% with five tests in which the MNE Company was ranked slightly higher and three tests in which the SME Company was ranked slightly higher. These eight tests therefore cannot be interpreted as showing any difference between the overall levels of voice and operational participation in the MNE and SME companies. The exception to this is the results from the Mann-Whitney test on the ordinal composite variable for self-management by team leaders in both employing companies, shown in Table 11 and below, where it is worth commenting on the considerable difference between the rank positions in self management by team leaders in both study companies; the SME team leader's ranking being 43% higher than that of the MNE team leaders.

TEAM LEADER RANKING IN OVERALL SELF-MANAGEMENT			
SME Mean Rank	14.94	Statistical Significance (Exact 2 –tailed Sig.)	0.131
MNE Mean Rank	10.43		

This can be interpreted as showing that the level of self-management in the two study companies is not equal and must be qualified by the fact that the results are not statistically significant at a 5% significance level, although bordering on significance, (Exact 1-tailed Sig. = 0.07). This Mann-Whitney result supports the findings from the descriptive statistics concerning team leader's degree of self-management in section 5.3.2.4. and Table 8 in Appendix 4, in which a clear distinction between the two study companies was observed with the SME Company exhibiting much more self-management by its team leaders than in the MNE Company.

CHAPTER 6 DISCUSSION

The discussion contained in this chapter takes the form of evaluating the results obtained from the analysis of the project data and what it reveals regarding if and how voice had been encouraged and developed in the two contrasted study companies along with what, if any, operational benefits had resulted from voice practices.

6.1. Organisational Structure and the Development of Voice/Engagement in the Two Study Companies

One of the more significant differences seen between the two study companies is that the SME Company has an informal structure whereas the MNE Company has a formal organisational structure. The informal structure in the SME is due to them, like most SMEs, starting as an owner manager company where everyone knew what everyone else was doing and starting in a single workshop. There was no need for formal procedures except for those designed to ensure that the product was to specification. As the Company grew the need for some formality became evident but other priorities meant they didn't react to the need until there was an influx of new professional middle and senior management who recognised the need. As the Company expanded the long serving employees must have found the old management becoming more remote as layers of supervision and management came into being which would explain why they became reticent in speaking their mind and getting involved in offering improvement suggestions. As the size of the SME Company increased and became more structured, it instituted team working with team leaders responsible for specific operations. These were chosen from the long standing employees with extensive technical experience but mostly with no man management experience. Unfortunately, in a very technically demanding engineering sector with frequent technical innovations having to be catered for, training in man management was not deemed a priority and duly neglected. That is why the newer senior management did not see them as 'real' team leaders and why what improvement suggestions did surface came directly, and informally, from the shop floor employees rather than through the team and its leader. The terms employee involvement and participation (EIP) or engagement were virtually unused in the Company except by the new professional managerial intake. The fact that the CEO admitted that he had never had a discussion with his managerial colleagues on the subject, nor had received any requests for more involvement from the employees, illustrates either the lack of awareness of potential opportunities for the organisation or an ambivalent workforce, or both. There was also a divergence of opinion in the management on the merits of introducing some form of voice/engagement policy, ranging from the CEO being at best sceptical, to the newer management wishing to adopt formal participatory procedures (a feature observed by Kotey and Slade (2005) - section 2.3.3.) and the longer serving managerial staff, including the CEO, seeing that this could be simply achieved by continuing with the basic informal way of working but with the management spending more time on the shop floor. There was no evidence to suggest that they were being pressurised by their client, the multinational study company, to promote more formal participatory/engagement practices although they were regularly audited by them.

In the case of the MNE Company, they operated a well publicised voice/engagement programme and other similar initiatives designed to encourage employee involvement and were audited biennially on their level of voice/engagement achieved by their parent company. Prior to its introduction, they did have a fully formed formal operating system, with written operating procedures covering all aspects of their work, so the addition of formal voice/engagement procedures would not have been seen as revolutionary. This could also have ameliorated any sense of loss of control by supervisory staff due to enhanced involvement by their team members. Although it was their parent company who had introduced the concept, there seemed to be no resentment of a system forced upon them, but neither was there any evidence of any innovative suggestions from middle and junior management as to how to implement the concept, possible due to being nervous of any adverse reactions from the workforce. At supervisory level there was certainly an overwhelming emphasis on seeking operational improvements rather than the 'softer' outcomes such as employee satisfaction. Even their HR function, charged with promoting employee involvement, did accept that the outcome from voice/engagement meetings attended by the teams, their leaders, supervision and management were not always productive and the senior executive in overall charge of the MNE also felt that the programme was not a total success even though they went to the length of arranging for the shop floor teams to be constituted such that the 'engaged' members were always in the majority compared with the 'disengaged'.

One would expect that the key to successful engagement by shop floor employees could well lie in the effective leadership of the shop floor teams for which the team leaders in the MNE company had received training; a view also held by their HR staff member. Although the majority of the team leaders in the SME Company had not received any formal training in leadership, they did have virtually complete freedom to manage their teams as they saw fit, free from any instruction, procedures, or dicta from the management. In fact they had more opportunities to demonstrate their man management skills and develop team autonomy and spirit than those in the MNE because they had permanent teams to lead which was not the case with most of the MNE team leaders who would be allocated different teams shift by shift due to the complexities of their shift rotation. This organisational contrast between the two study companies could well account for the inferential statistical finding using Mann-Whitney testing that the SME team leader's ranking for the level of self-management was much higher than for the team leaders in the MNE Company. It was accepted in the Company that the MNE team leaders were seen as senior employees there to be consulted when problems arise and not there representing control and authority, as shown by the shop floor employees considering them the first port of call when problems arise. This also applied

in the SME Company to some extent, where their team leaders saw themselves as coaches and leaders rather than authority figures. Because of this transient nature of team leadership in the MNE Company, team meetings as such were not convened and in their place meetings between supervisors and team leaders were held. Similar meetings were in fact now held in the SME Company in the absence of team meetings.

6.2. THE GENERAL AMBIANCE AND SHOP FLOOR ATMOSPHERE PREVAILING IN THE TWO STUDY COMPANIES AS GLEANED FROM INFORMAL DIALOGUE WITH RESPONDENTS

As emphasised in section 3.1., the Design Process, every opportunity was taken during data collection to engage in informal dialogue with respondents at all levels in both companies. Through this medium an indication of the type of atmosphere appertaining on the shop floor in each company was arrived at. This was considered crucial in gaining some understanding of how attitudes to participatory practices such as voice had been formed by employees following the viewpoint of Taylor (2001) that the effectiveness of EIP is governed more by the mindsets of people and the culture in which they work, rather than the mechanisms involved. Dialogue was encouraged with all shop floor employees, whether in supervisory, leadership, or team membership roles, since to create an ambiance conducive to EIP, such an environment or culture must exist throughout the whole of the organisation (Marchington, Wilkinson and Dundon, 2001). In many ways both organisations operated as both what Handy (1993) would consider “task cultures” and at the same time what Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2003) called “family cultures” (see section 2.3.3.3.) in that the shop floor saw their imperative was to ‘get the job done’ and contribute as best they can irrespective of their official role, where technical and expertise allowed. This “family culture” with everyone pulling together as the ‘big team’ to solve an urgent problem was particularly prevalent in the SME, where their size and possibly their non-union status was an aid in this respect. Here, the researcher often observed a variety of employees stepping out of their role with supervisors driving fork lift trucks (licence permitting) and cranes as well as skilled trades carrying out essentially menial labouring tasks. A further symbol of “family culture” identified by Sagiv and Schwartz (2007) was that both companies issued identical uniforms to all the shop floor staff with the Company name shown, but with no indication of rank or status.

However, the starkest difference between the two companies was the level of proceduralism. Talking to a very senior, long serving and well-respected shop floor team member at the MNE, who had asked to speak to the researcher, brought this to the fore, when he described the “whole setup as too procedural and systemised”. He felt the company was “over-managed” and too much paperwork was required from anyone wishing to contribute to the

operation of the company, especially on health and safety matters. In particular he was quite scathing about the health and safety observations procedures. In fact he admitted that he had become “apathetic and no longer voiced opinions”. In contrast, speaking to a similarly long serving, experienced and respected employee at the SME, in this case the most senior team leader, his “frustration”, as he termed it, was that using their informal, verbal, and non-procedural ways of making operational suggestions direct to the management on the shop floor had not brought any reactions other than “Oh we’ll think about it” or “we’ll come back to you”. Furthermore, his view was that “other people feel the same” at the SME. When asked if he thought his suggestions would have had more sway if they had been put in writing, his reaction was that he didn’t have the time and in any case “I’ve never had any training in that...I wouldn’t know how to begin”. He also contrasted the stress put on health and safety issues, rather than other operational issues and took the view that this was because “legally they have to do it”. Whilst the conclusion that some form of procedure, if need be to record his suggestions on his behalf thus requiring some formal response, would be an obvious solution to his problem; there was an antipathy against proceduralism generally in the SME. In particular this came from the new intake brought in to cope with an earlier increased demand, recruited from larger organisations, who, citing their own experience, were vehemently opposed to the proposed introduction of non-participative and management driven procedural systems, with 6 sigma specifically being mentioned (see section 2.5.2.). Whilst the intense proceduralism at the MNE was very apparent, one possible less than obvious reason for it was put forward by one of their very experienced team leaders who took the view that a contributory factor was the high turnover of managerial staff many of whom were inexperienced in “their type of production” and in turn they “tended to recruit similar people equally inexperienced” and that they therefore had to rely on written procedures. He felt that this had “produced a lack of confidence in the employees and was dragging the firm down”.

In fairness, it must be pointed out that these informal dialogues took place when rumours of impending redundancies were rife in both companies and the atmosphere was often described as “tense” by most respondents which could have contributed to the criticism of the management in both organisations.

6.3. SUPPORT FOR VOICE/ENGAGEMENT IN THE TWO STUDY COMPANIES

Clearly the success of any participatory initiative in an organisation depends on the degree of support and commitment offered by all levels of the management and its employees and there were obvious dissimilarities between the two study companies most starkly at the top of the organisations. The CEO of the SME company, although on reflection

did say he was supportive of the concept of employees participating in the decision making process, seemed to liken himself to his older long serving employees who he felt harkened back to the days when he spent most of his time on the shop floor and 'participation' took the form of conversations and indeed arguments between him and them on how the job should be done; nevertheless, an informal mode of communication still considered an effective part of participatory practice by Russ (2008). His observation was that these employees would be less likely to offer their views when it became procedural rather than an informal and conversational matter, whereas the newer, younger generation would not. In fact a similar distinction was reported in the MNE Company. These differing attitudes could well be the result of the younger generation having the benefit of a more recent vocational education generating expectations that more formal ways of involvement were to be expected. The CEO of the MNE Company held a diametrically different view being very enthusiastic about their voice/engagement programmes although he found it very time consuming but considered it time well spent. He did however acknowledge that there were disengaged employees on the shop floor and that this could be due to the "atmosphere" pertaining in the company; a possible admission that the very formal and procedural ambience was the cause. Unlike his opposite number in the SME Company, he had been employed by other large multinationals in the past in a managerial role and his educational background had included managerial practice; a subject he consciously endeavoured to keep up to date with.

In contrast, the senior managers in charge of production at both companies were strong supporters of voice/engagement. However, they differed in their approach to realising this. The senior manager in the SME Company saw this still as a process of him having conversations with individuals when he was on the shop floor in the main on purely technical matters, but his opposite number in the MNE Company saw this as a process of encouraging employees to offer views and suggestions at meetings with team leaders and supervisors which would then be passed up the hierarchy for assessment. These contrasting attitudes could be put down to the fact that the SME manager was long serving and had a purely technical background and no formal training in management; his viewpoint being very similar to that of his CEO. The manager with the corresponding role in the MNE Company however, although he also had a technical background, had also gained considerable experience and received training in man management at previous employers. Whilst the view of the senior manager in the SME Company may seem out of place in a growing organisation, it was clearly coloured by an experience when he had suggested a proven operational improvement to the MNE Company which he saw never being implemented simply because, as he saw it, it got bogged down in the procedural approval processes at the MNE Company.

At supervisory level, the staff in both companies was supportive of the concept of EIP and actually operated in a similar fashion. The Production Manager in the SME Company of his own volition had introduced daily meetings with his team leaders to gain their involvement although still believing and practicing the SME Company's informal way of communicating by having plentiful dialogue with the actual shop floor team members including getting their views on how improvements might be made but found that there were some employees who saw instigating improvements as the job of management and their role simply to do their job. On the whole he had received encouragement from the shop floor employees but not really by their team leaders. Nevertheless he was using them as a communication conduit to the shop floor teams to stimulate their sense of involvement. This lack of encouragement by the team leaders could well be the result of insufficient priority being given to their management skills. All three supervisory staff in the MNE Company felt encouraged in their participatory efforts by their senior management but only one felt encouraged by his team leaders, possibly due to the transient nature of their allocation to teams, and none reported encouragement from the team members. However, the supervisory staff in the MNE Company, as in the SME Company, held regular meetings as part of their voice/engagement programme but in their case this included team members as well as team leaders. They also encountered some negative attitudes from the shop floor employees similar to those at the SME Company where they saw the improvement process the job of management. However, one has to take into account that the voice/engagement programme at the MNE Company had only been operating for a few months.

Again the distinction between operating participatory practices in a very procedural as against a more informal environment came to the fore with negative attitudes by employees reported in the MNE Company due to the time taken to evaluate their proposals. Although this was put down to the high tech. nature of their work requiring an exhaustive approval process, this was not seen as a problem in the SME Company manufacturing the same products to the same standards and is more likely to be a product of large company bureaucracy compared with the "let's do it" attitude of the smaller organisation. There was however evidence in the MNE Company that they were realising the problems and possible lost opportunities associated with a highly procedural operating system. Their CEO was of the opinion that a flatter organisational structure would be beneficial to communication within the Company; in effect being less procedural. This opinion could well be borne out by half of the team leaders in the SME Company reporting that they felt well informed but only a small minority of their opposite numbers in the MNE Company felt likewise and three quarters of them were satisfied with communications within their Company against only half of the team leaders in the MNE Company even with their formal and procedural systems of

communication. This trend also extended to team members with approximately a quarter of those in the SME Company feeling fully aware of the Company's plans for the future but virtually none in the MNE Company and although over a quarter of team members in the informally structured SME Company did not feel well informed generally, this rose to virtually half of members in the procedural MNE Company.

However well managed, the effectiveness of any EIP programme hinges on just how well the shop floor staff with all their tacit operational experience, not found in specifications and training manuals, are involved and in particular how committed and supportive team leaders, or first line supervision, are to the principle (Lave and Wenger, 1991). In this regard the question of just how much freedom of action the team leaders in each company have, or felt that they had; is a very relevant factor. There was a distinct difference between the two companies with all those in the SME Company stating they made decisions on solely team matters on a regular basis but no leaders in the MNE Company were able to say this and half of them admitted that they had never made such a decision. This contrast could well be another result of the 'transient' nature of the allocation of team leaders to teams in the MNE Company. Of course another factor could be how well the leaders in both companies felt any suggestions they had made in the past had been received by their management or supervisors. There was a significantly lower proportion of leaders in the MNE Company who considered that their suggestions in the past had been properly listened to than in the SME Company and this could have been behind their reticence to make team decisions. Again this could suggest that the informal nature of the SME Company approach to employee involvement was having some positive impact whereas the more procedural and bureaucratic approach in the MNE Company could be having some negative effect. The question then arises as to whether these differing ways of working also influence the attitude of the members of teams in the companies. In many ways the attitude to involvement in both companies was similar with approximately the same proportion, a minority, of team members not wanting to be involved and the majority content just to be consulted prior to decisions affecting them being taken but there was a difference when it came to how well they thought their views and suggestions were listened to by their managements with twice the number of the SME Company employees believing they were listened to properly than in the MNE Company, even though the Company placed good communications as vital to their success. Nevertheless only around a third of employees in both companies considered improvement activities purely the domain of the management and there was virtually unanimity that it was the responsibility of everyone in the organisation. Conjecture could be that the goodwill of employees is there but the appropriate means of facilitating involvement is not.

Notwithstanding the aforementioned operational systems distinguishing the two study companies, the inferential statistics obtained from logistic regression and Mann-Whitney testing showed that the voice levels pertaining in the two companies were statistically not significantly associated or different. Descriptive statistical data showed them to have in the main similar voice values when using the Level 1, 2 and 3 criteria computed specifically for the research project, with that for team members being much lower than for team leaders. The inference can be drawn that although the level of voice was fairly similar in both companies, the reasons behind the levels were different. These can be summarised principally as voice being held back by over-procedural bureaucratic systems in the MNE Company and a lack of any encouragement or procedures to be aware of in the SME Company. Coupled with this was no requirement or encouragement for team leaders in the SME Company to hold team meetings, rather than the meetings held with them and the production supervisor, and no opportunity for team leaders at the MNE Company to hold meetings, since most did not have a permanent team to lead.

6.4. OPERATIONAL OUTCOMES, CURRENT AND FORESEEN, FROM VOICE/ENGAGEMENT IN THE TWO STUDY COMPANIES

Fundamentally, organisations have to ask, “Why encourage participation?” and employees have to ask, “Why participate?”. Clearly the ultimate objective in both study companies was to gain operational benefits, but philosophies in each company and at different levels in their hierarchies on how to varied. The senior manager responsible for production in the SME Company saw the involvement of employees purely as a means of extracting the knowledge and experience of the employees, where they were willing to contribute, to gain operational advantage; a viewpoint that he admitted would seem to many as outdated. On the other hand, the production supervisor in the SME Company saw sympathetic man management engendering such ‘soft’ objectives as job satisfaction as vehicles to indirectly support EIP and so ensuring that the employees felt valued as members of their team and indeed the ‘Big Team’, i.e. the Company. This differing attitude could simply be due to the supervisor being in more intimate contact with the shop floor employees; a conclusion exploited by Toyota by insisting that their QC circles consist exclusively of shop floor employees and their supervisor (Monden, 1998). There was no difference of opinion on the merits of voice/engagement in the MNE Company. All levels of management and supervision saw the concept as beneficial and took a similar viewpoint to that of the production supervisor in the SME Company, emphasising the need to generate an atmosphere conducive to employees feeling fulfilled leading to their involvement and indeed retention.

One measure of how effective employee voice/engagement is in an organisation is how prevalent is the “Them and Us” attitude. Although there was universal agreement by the management and supervisors in both companies that EIP helped to reduce this mindset, the managerial staff felt that there would always be a minority of shop floor team members, not connected to a particular age group or length of service, who would always be disengaged and incapable of being ‘converted’ and who Purcell (2014) would describe as ‘Actively Disengaged’. In contrast, the supervisory staff at both companies refuted this based on their own experience. It would seem those whose role involved them continually working alongside the shop floor found engagement with the team members, be it informal and unrecorded, automatic as part of a team working environment. One cannot avoid wondering if the “Them and Us” syndrome is really between the management and the shop floor including their supervision which could be the result in the SME Company of the differing attitudes of their relatively new production supervisor and the management, and in the case of the MNE Company, a lack of awareness of work going on outside their procedural bureaucracy.

Both study companies were quite clear as to what should be the ultimate objective of any EIP initiative, be it a formal programme or an informal ‘understanding’; that being operational advantage. In an engineering company, and in particular the specialist sector that both study companies belonged to, with demanding production schedules and complex products designed to operate in harsh and dangerous environments, the key performance indicators would be associated with productivity, quality and health and safety issues.

Although due to the high tech. nature of the engineering work being carried out at both study companies, it is inevitable that the most significant improvements in productivity were likely to come from capital investments in the latest equipment, which could also result in consequential improvements in product quality and safer working practice. Even so there remains the possibility of the workforce making its contribution by being involved in the selection and suggesting design features of any new plant and equipment. However this was considered unlikely in the MNE Company, other than occasionally by team leaders, possibly due them being a large organisation having a professional industrial engineering function. A major problem in assessing the contribution that employees were making to productivity improvement was that its measurement in both companies was hardly comprehensive. In fact the SME Company made no effort to measure it, merely relying on the achievement of due delivery dates as the criterion, and the MNE Company’s measurement was purely the comparison between booked machine time against their standard times. There was also a view expressed directly and indirectly at both companies that many minor improvements in

productivity went unrecorded as employees looked for better ways to do their work which they saw as part of their job in any case. The general view of staff in managerial and supervisory roles in the MNE Company was that their EIP programme was at the moment having little impact on productivity improvement, but most added the caveat that it had not been operating for very long. Yet at the same time there were positive comments about other programmes such as their Continuous Improvement programme, without any apparent realisation that it also forms part of any EIP initiative. This was borne out by every team leader in the MNE Company having served on a problem solving team at some time, whereas in the SME Company, who did not have a formal Continuous Improvement programme, a quarter had never done so, possibly demonstrating the benefit of having some degree of formality and procedural approach. Nevertheless the vast majority of team leaders in the SME Company reported that they had made suggestions to improve productivity and all had in the MNE Company, even though roughly only half of them in the SME Company felt that their suggestions had been properly listened to and only around a quarter in the MNE Company. The majority of team members in both companies had also put forward suggestions for productivity improvement and over three quarters of them said they would continue to do so. One possibility for the MNE Company's management and supervision's pessimistic view on the impact of voice on productivity improvement could be due to the number of suggestions that were found not to be viable in a very technically stringent environment. However, there should be cause for optimism at the level of engagement by team leaders and especially team members in both companies at the degree of voice, whether via an informal or formal procedural system, whatever the operational outcomes.

The technical sophistication of the products seems to have impacted on the level of involvement in quality matters at the SME Company where their new starters in particular, probably inexperienced in the quality standards appertaining, were wary of involvement. No similar reluctance was reported in the MNE Company even though they had a formal continuous improvement procedure to be adopted, but they had reduced the formality by accepting verbal suggestions as well as written proposals and employee involvement was seen as a major contributor to quality improvement. Of course this could simply be due to the differences in age range and length of service at both companies with the MNE Company having a much older and longer serving workforce than the SME Company, mainly due to the SME Company's recent rate of growth. Notwithstanding these factors, the levels of participation in quality improvement work in each company, both for team leaders and team members, was very similar to that for productivity; but possibly for different reasons.

When it came to health and safety issues, there was unanimity between the managerial and professional support staff in both companies that it was given precedence over considerations on productivity and product quality and there was some evidence of resentment amongst staff involved in the latter two topics. Although strongly denied by the health and safety specialist in the MNE Company, the conclusion could be drawn that this was due to the possible legal ramifications involved, something not happening for quality and productivity issues although both have potential commercial penalties. Even so in the SME Company, the only regular company-wide meeting between the management and employees was the SHEP meeting, primarily concerned with health and safety issues. The health and safety observations system in the MNE Company represented the epitome of the procedural nature of their ways of operating where it was virtually compulsory for employees to input a specified number of observations over a set period. Whilst this certainly was designed to ensure a high level of involvement, it in practice was ridiculed by many on the shop floor and resulted in spurious and totally trivial observations being entered damaging the reputation of the voice concept. In the event, fewer shop floor team members said they had made health and safety suggestions than productivity or product quality suggestions; possibly a reaction against this imposed very procedural process. This was in contrast to those in the SME Company who proportionally had made more health and safety suggestions than for the other two topics and more than their opposite numbers at the MNE Company. Apart from the obvious inference that employees were interested in their own safety when at work, it could be that the small procedural measure of regular meetings on the subject at the SME Company had invoked greater enthusiasm for involvement by the shop floor. The level of health and safety suggestions made by the team leaders in each of the companies remained very similar to that for productivity and product quality, which might reflect their greater acceptance of procedural systems due to their status.

The composite variables created to provide some measure of the overall level of voice of both team leaders and team members in each company showed little difference between the two companies except that team members were much less participative than their team leaders, especially when the two higher levels of voice are considered. This could be expected since in both companies the team leaders would have been selected for their work experience and dedication to excellence in their work. However, the team leaders appear not to have persuaded their members to follow suit possibly due to the lack of emphasis on man management and their exclusion from any of the meetings between supervision and team leaders in the SME Company and resistance to the formal procedures required in the MNE Company. Surprisingly, there was some evidence at both companies of fewer team members making suggestions on health and safety issues than on productivity or product

quality matters. The opposite could have been expected at the SME Company due to their emphasis on health and safety exemplified by the regular SHEF meetings held but this could possibly be due to team members or their representatives not normally attending. Likewise, at the MNE Company higher levels of participation in safety improvement would have been expected from their observation system but this might signify that many of the observations were in fact complaints rather than suggestions to do with health and safety.

Inferential statistics obtained from logistic regression, whilst in the main not reporting levels of participation in improving productivity, product quality or safe working practice in the two companies to be associated significantly, did however report association in the lowest computed level of participation in product quality improvement (Level 1) nearing statistical significance for both team leaders and team members. Likewise, association between the computed lowest level of participation in productivity improvement by team members also neared statistical significance. In both cases, descriptive statistics showed participation levels in the MNE Company to be higher than in the SME Company. However, Mann-Whitney tests did not report any statistically significant differences between the various levels of participation in improvements in productivity, product quality or safe working practice between the two study companies. In effect, any distinction between the two companies shown by descriptive statistics discussed above, although factual, was reported as not being statistically significant.

There was little evidence to suggest that either company had given much thought to the future development of voice in their organisations. In the case of the SME Company with no formal policy on the subject and the admission by their CEO that “this is the first time it’s been discussed”, one can only hope that having volunteered to take part in this research the experience will be a stimulus for them to consider their position. Although his opposite number in the MNE Company did not seem to have given much thought at the time to the extension of voice/engagement by his employees, that could well be due to the MNE Company’s programme still being in its early stages. However, he and the other management at both companies foresaw possible problems arising if further development involved the shop floor employees being asked to undertake tasks previously undertaken by supervisors. They foresaw this as resistance from the shop floor employees, but did not envisage the possible resistance from supervisors which was very apparent in the MNE Company with two of the three supervisors very resistant to the possibility and considering it impossible in their high tech. environment.

Views on the feasibility of voice/engagement leading to enhanced degrees of self-management varied dependent on the respondent’s hierarchical level in the organisation

and their technical orientation. The CEOs in both companies agreed with the principle, the CEO in the MNE Company being the most enthusiastic based on past experience, taking the view that employees should have control over their work activities as far as was possible, but both recognised that there would have to be restrictions on some of the technical aspects of their work due to the engineering sector they operated in. Furthermore they both recognised that this would have to be introduced gradually since they were of the opinion that currently their employees were not taking full advantage of the current opportunities open to them to be involved in the running of their workplaces. Conversely, the supervisor of the shop floor team leaders at the SME Company and two of the supervisory staff at the MNE Company were very sceptical of self-management with their teams, not just because of technical aspects but also due to a perceived loss of control. The third supervisor in the MNE Company, who had seniority and more of a managerial role than the other two supervisors, took a similar view to the CEOs. It would appear that the nearer to the actual shop floor, the greater was the reticence to the ideal of self-management, which could be interpreted as a greater awareness of impending difficulties or simply a fear of losing their role or status. Another observation was that the staff with a more technical role were more sceptical of the concept and this was particularly so with the Production Director at the SME Company who had a highly technical background and considered self-management a danger to product integrity. He seemed incapable of understanding that self-management embraces a multitude of features unconnected with technical control. This viewpoint could be the outcome from a lack of emphasis on man management over the years at the SME Company. The composite variables created to provide some measure of the level of self-management by team leaders in both companies showed that this was consistently higher in the SME Company than in the MNE company and was supported by Mann-Whitney tests although these were not quite statistically significant. Two reasons can be suggested for the lower level at the MNE Company; the already mentioned transient nature of their allocation to production teams but also the prescriptive nature of their operating standards as part of their overall procedural ways of working. Whilst team leaders in the SME Company still have to abide with similar prescriptive technical standards, 62.5%(n=8) in the SME reported that they still fully agreed that they had sufficient independence to run their team as they wished compared with only 13.3%(n=15) of team leaders in the MNE.

CHAPTER 7 CONCLUSIONS

In this final chapter, the outcomes from the case study into voice in two companies substantially different in size are evaluated against the research questions posed and key conclusions emanating from the project's empirical work are drawn. In addition, what

contribution to academic knowledge derived from the research is considered along with an assessment of the strength and weaknesses in the study identifying knowledge gaps leading to suggested further research that might provide a better understanding of the factors which might be governing any difference in levels of voice in large and small enterprises. Finally, to fulfil one of the research objectives, suggestions are made, based on the key findings from the study, as to how an enterprise's policy and practice in employee involvement and engagement might be enhanced and/or rejuvenated to the benefit of both management and employees and their representatives.

7.1. RESEARCH QUESTIONS – RESPONSES DERIVED FROM THE CASE STUDY

Here conclusions are drawn mainly of a general nature, since a detailed analysis of the research data obtained is shown in chapter 5 (Data Analysis and Results), but where appropriate, illustrated by some specific instances.

Four research questions were posed in section 3.1 to form the core of the research strategy of the study; the first being:

Q1:- Do the employee voice mechanisms used differ between large companies and small to medium sized companies in the engineering industry?

This question crystallises the essence of the study in that it queries the influence that size of the employing organisation can have on the level of voice taking place. The effect of size on EIP (Employee Involvement and Participation) has been the subject of previous studies but rather than a consensus, some contradictory results have been reported. In the case of Godard (1997) he found that larger sized enterprises were more likely to exhibit participatory practice than smaller organisations (p215, p218), whereas Bayo-Moriones and Meriono-Diaz de Cerio (2004) found the opposite to be true (p128); admittedly the former study was carried out in Canada and the latter in Spain so geographical issues may have played a part. Nevertheless, the suspicion must be that 'secondary' factors associated with size played a part in the differing outcomes; size in isolation not being the sole controlling variable. It is these secondary factors that this study has investigated.

The overriding factor which has come to light is the differing ambiance in the two companies. Rainnie (1989) associated small companies with a traditional authoritarian style of management as did Bayo-Moriones and Meriono-Diaz de Cerio (2004) along with a lack of organisational mechanisms which could impair managerial interest in EIP. Although there is evidence that some more entrepreneurial SMEs operate with coexisting formal and informal styles (Marlow, Taylor and Thompson, 2010), this was not the case in the SME study company. Godard (1997) considered large organisations likely to have more progressive HR

policies and the MNE Company certainly had formal HR policies although not necessarily considered progressive by all the shop floor employees. However, as recounted in section 6.2 of chapter 6 (Discussion), additional dialogue with a long-serving, experienced and well respected member of the workforce at the MNE Company, revealed that this was not the case in his view which was that the organisational structure was far too procedural.

The attitude of shop floor employees to EIP in the SME Company appeared to vary dependent on whether the employee was long-serving and had been with the Company before its relatively recent growth spurt, or was one of the new intake. The older employees were used to discussing problems and ideas with the management informally and conversationally on the shop floor where managers were frequently in evidence, but as the Company grew managers were less frequently to be seen on the shop floor and this direct contact was lost which risked their valuable experience being lost to the Company; a situation reminiscent of the learning processes in small enterprises described by Anderson and Boocock (2002). As Kotey and Slade (2005) suggest, newer younger recruits are more likely to have expected a more formal approach to be available to air their suggestions, or for that matter complaints, but this was not available. In addition they probably felt left out of the informal 'family' atmosphere, which had prevailed since the inception of the Company such as when they saw the long-serving team members undertaking tasks totally unconnected with their normal roles in order to move production on. However, informal dialogue, referred to in section 6.2, with some relatively new recruits did expose their resistance to intense proceduralism which they had experienced in the past when working in larger organisations.

Yet although the form and process of EIP was fundamentally different in both study companies, that in the SME being at best described as informal, and in contrast, very formal in the MNE company, the result was that the level of voice by both team leaders and team members in both companies was not markedly different and low by the way levels of voice were measured in the study (see Tables 4 and 6 in appendix 4). The conclusion has to be drawn that these low levels of voice were not due directly to the size of the companies but the 'secondary' factors such as the degree of formality in the MNE Company and the lack of emphasis on man management in the SME Company with the resultant informal approach to EIP. Although it could be said that one would expect a more formal approach to operational management in a large MNE Company than in a SME Company, it appears that the controlling factors were the degree of formality in the MNE Company and the lack of interest and means to encourage EIP in the SME Company. Generally, in the SME Company, when contact was made between the management and shop floor employees, including team leaders, the emphasis was on technical and delivery matters with man management and

operational improvement suggestions given little consideration. The singular lack of commitment over the years to leadership training for the SME Company's team leaders, even resulting in the relatively new Production Director not considering them "real team leaders", cannot but be considered profound reasons for any lack of interest in their involvement in operational improvement matters, nor the management's neglect in encouraging them to voice their involvement. This was clearly a source of frustration for the most senior team leader in the SME Company who in extensive dialogue with the researcher, referred to in section 6.2., detailed many operational improvement suggestions he had made verbally and informally to management, only to receive no feedback or in his view mere verbal paltry excuses as to why no action was taken. He also strongly felt that he was not alone with his frustration, but was the one willing to voice them. Whilst it would seem reasonable to suggest that some level of proceduralism would benefit voice in the SME Company and counteract the frustration of their senior team leader and others, conversely in the MNE Company, in another of the confidential dialogues referred to in section 6.2., a long-serving, experienced and well respected member of the workforce was scathing about the over-procedural and bureaucratic nature of their ways of working reinforcing the conclusion that voice was being retarded by 'secondary' factors in each company, rather than size, but by different circumstances.

The second research question queries how much, if at all, the level of EIP in the SME supplier company was due to the influence, directives, or encouragement by the MNE client company, namely:

Q2:- Is the level of employee voice in the supplier company influenced by the practices of their larger client company?

When questioned during his interview as to whether any influence the MNE Company might have over their suppliers extended to their EIP practices, their CEO did not think that this subject arose when their vendor assessment personnel audited suppliers; unlike Toyota when they audited their suppliers. As he explained;

"We have a supplier quality function that goes out and visits all the vendors and they have an audit check list that encourages those guys to move their business forward. I'm not certain it's got employee engagement in there, but certainly in terms of their quality processes and procedures."

In addition, he personally made a point of visiting at least one supplier each month and this had included the SME study company where he was clear that the voice/engagement

activities of the SME Company had not been raised. This was also confirmed by the CEO of the SME study company when he was interviewed by the researcher but added that health and safety procedures also featured prominently during audits and visits by the MNE CEO, but with regard to EIP being discussed, “....in terms of that specific topic, ‘No’.”

However, the current EIP practices in the SME study company may well have been influenced indirectly by the practice in the MNE study company when the Production Director in the SME Company proposed technical improvements which required the approval of the MNE Company. He found that;

“...the whole communication throughout the organisation via, let’s say the Purchasing Department through to Industrial Engineering, through to Product Engineering, through to Design Engineering....it’s so tortuous to go through that whole cycle that a good idea crashed and burnt.”

Understandably, this had made him sceptical of large company procedural systems and reluctant to move away from the current informality prevailing in the SME Company, even to embrace any semblance of such systems as the Company grew.

The third research question shown below was designed to examine the effectiveness of communication corridors between the shop floor operatives to the senior levels of management in the study companies and so account for any divergence of view on the state of voice/engagement.

Q3:- What accounts for the differing perceptions of the degree of employee involvement and participation (EIP) voice in force between the management and that of the job level employees?

In the course of the study several examples came to light illustrating differing awareness of the real views on the state of voice/engagement held by management and shop floor team members in both study companies. A prime example was that no member of the senior management or supervision in the MNE Company mentioned the aversion by the shop floor to the over-procedural nature of organisational systems retarding involvement by the shop floor employees, whilst this was quite apparent in informal discussions on the shop floor as the questionnaires were issued and indeed was strongly voiced during additional dialogue at the MNE Company with a team leader and well-respected team member, who both felt they were speaking for others as well (see section 6.2.). However, the six sigma specialist at the MNE Company, functioning nearer to the shop floor, had recognised this by now accepting verbal suggestions for their Continuous Improvement programme. A similar situation was

recognised at the SME Company, where the Compliance Manager in an effort to boost the number of suggestions emanating from the shop floor had decided to accept verbal as well as written suggestions. These examples suggest that the means of communication at both companies with the shop floor members was inadequate resulting in their views not being heard, understood and communicated to the management; a situation exemplified in the dialogue between the researcher and the senior team leader in the SME Company. The common factor at both companies appears to be a lack of genuine teamworking, in particular the absence of team meetings, but for different reasons. At the MNE Company this was due to the transient nature of the allocation of team leaders to the teams brought about by the shift patterns and at the SME Company by the management judging that the existing team leaders were not up to the task of holding team meetings due to a long standing lack of management training. In both study companies meetings between team leaders and their supervision was used in lieu of team meetings. The absence of such meetings held with the teams and their team leaders results in missed opportunities for shop floor operatives to air and debate their views and improvement suggestions in a 'comfort zone' along with their peers and then their team leader being able to communicate team messages and views upwards to supervision and management and for that matter to other teams who could benefit from what was discussed.

As would be expected from any commercial business its ultimate objective is to survive by maintaining its profitability through being competitive in its chosen market and the two study companies were no exception to this. Their attitude to the involvement and voice/engagement of employees was coloured by this overall objective and so was seen as a means of harnessing the expertise and dedication of their workforce resulting in enhanced operational outcomes and not solely as an altruistic means of improving the work experience and job satisfaction of its employees, although these may indirectly result in commercial gain by improvements in such factors as productivity, product quality and safety.

The fourth and final research question was derived to evaluate how effective EIP was in contributing positively to these key performance indicators, which was:

Q4:- To what extent does the degree of employee involvement and participation (EIP) voice in an engineering organization influence operational outcomes such as productivity, product quality and safety levels?

When interviewing specialists in both study companies who dealt with data on these three operational outcomes, it soon became apparent that no collated scalar statistics were then available as measures of productivity, quality or safety which would allow levels of EIP to be

compared with them. This has restricted how this question could be addressed to collating and comparing the level of EIP in both study companies connected with employee involvement in improvements in these three operational outcomes but not comparing levels of EIP and measured levels of these outcomes directly.

Notwithstanding this shortcoming, some indication can be gained as to the possible contribution that EIP has made to improving productivity, product quality and safe working practice from the number of suggestions made and involvement in improvement teams by shop floor employees. The descriptive statistics produced from the study show that 78%(n=119) of all shop floor employees in both study companies had at some time proffered a suggestion to improve at least one of the three performance indicators and that over 75%(n=119) said that they would do so again, even though there was no formal procedure for doing so in the SME Company as highlighted by the dialogue with their senior team leader. In fact these levels in reality are probably low since staff in both companies were aware that shop floor employees frequently made unrecorded improvements themselves which they saw as part of their job in any case. Although admirable, this risked other employees, and certainly other teams, being denied knowledge of the improvement. Another positive statistic on how voice was playing a role in the improvement process was the fact that every team leader in the MNE Company had served on a problem solving project team at some time or other and even in the SME Company, who did not have any form of continuous improvement programme, 75%(n=8) had done so. However, a necessary cautionary comment on these statistics is that these amounted to only individual or team suggestions and would not necessarily have resulted in an actual measureable improvement.

7.2. HYPOTHESES – ACCEPTED OR DISPROVED

Alongside the inductive evaluation of the research questions, six hypotheses were subjected to quantitative analysis using statistical tests. Whilst this by its nature was essentially a deductive process, because of previously published contradictory evidence (see section 7.1 in this chapter) regarding the effect of employing company size on levels of EIP, rather than theorising that one company is likely to be more participative than the other because of its size, the five one-tailed attributive hypotheses listed in section 3.2 were put forward for evaluation. These six hypotheses were:

H1: The level of employee involvement and participation (EIP) voice in the MNE company is greater than that enjoyed in the SME supplier company.

H2: The level of employee involvement and participation (EIP) voice in the SME supplier company is greater than that enjoyed in the MNE company.

H3: The degree of self-management in employee groups is higher in the MNE company than in the SME supplier company.

H4: The degree of self-management in employee groups is higher in the SME supplier company than in the MNE Company.

H5: The level of employee involvement and participation (EIP) voice in efforts to improve operational outcomes such as productivity, product quality and safe working practices is greater in the MNE company than in the SME supplier company.

H6: The level of employee involvement and participation (EIP) voice in efforts to improve operational outcomes such as productivity, product quality and safe working practices is greater in the SME supplier company than in the MNE company.

By creating composite variables measuring the overall levels of voice by team leaders and team members in both study companies and then using them in logistic regressions to report on any statistical association between voice and the study company in which they worked, it was shown that there was no association at a 5% significance level. Again creating other composite variables measuring similar levels of voice, and using them in Mann-Whitney tests to report on any differences in the levels of voice between the two study companies, showed that these were not statistically significant at the a 5% significance level. This statistical data therefore shows that the null hypotheses for the attributive hypotheses H1 and H2 cannot be rejected.

Similar procedures were carried out to evaluate hypotheses H3, H4, H5 and H6 all with the same result due to logistic regressions reporting no statistical significant association between self-management and participation in improving productivity, product quality or safe working practice and Mann-Whitney Tests also showing no statistical differences in these between the two study companies. In this case these regressions and statistical tests show that the null hypotheses for the attributive hypotheses H3, H4, H5 and H6 cannot be rejected.

Collectively, the evaluation of the six hypotheses demonstrate that there is no statistically significant difference between the level of voice/engagement and self-management practiced in the MNE study company and the SME study company, using the voice, participation in operational outcomes and self-management levels defined in the research study. However,

although levels of voice may not be significantly different between the MNE study company and the SME study company, there were crucial differences between them as to how they each operated which clearly had a major effect on the scale of EIP being practiced, principally the very procedural systems on the MNE Company, the scarcity of formal encouragement in the SME Company and the lack of effective team leadership in both companies, although for different reasons.

7.3. STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The researcher was very fortunate in finding two companies so similar with the exception of their size and status, one being a branch of a large multinational and the other an SME supplier company to the multinational, thus allowing so many control variables to be discounted. The comparative integrity of the case study was further protected by using exactly the same interview schedules and questionnaires for employees with essentially identical roles in both study companies without any restriction placed on who could be approached as potential, but voluntary, respondents. Furthermore, populations rather than samples were able to be surveyed eliminating the possibility of sampling errors and very acceptable response rates were achieved from both the managerial and shop floor staff, possibly aided by the efforts made to emphasise the anonymity of both the identity of the study companies and the respondents. Another considered strength of the study was the time taken by the researcher to meet informally with respondents prior to interview or questionnaire issue explaining the purpose of the study and promote his neutrality on the pros and cons of EIP coupled with an effort to avoid leading questions in subsequent interviews and questionnaire design to ensure responses were genuine unfettered views. Likewise, the additional dialogue referred to in the previous section (section 7.1) of this chapter is considered a further strength which served to reveal views on the atmosphere prevailing in the study companies and attitudes as to how the companies were managed. Lastly, in the event, the mixed method approach was vindicated by the limitations of the inferential statistical findings being compensated by the scope of the qualitative results.

Perhaps the major limitation of the study is that it is basically exploratory and has not fundamentally examined causality such as how formality/informality affects levels of voice/engagement. No doubt with the benefit of the study findings, any repeat or extension of the research would require the interview schedule and questionnaire design to cover this. Another limitation of the data collected is that it is all basically self-reporting with no observational work. This was partly due to time restraints but also because of the lack of shop floor team meetings at both study companies which would have been ideal forums from which to observe participatory behaviour. Although levels of voice were measured, these

measures, as has been accepted, cannot be considered anymore than measures specifically concocted for the study, mainly due to a scarcity of academically accepted measures; as against commercially available measures such as used by the MNE parent company in its biennial Gallup Polls. However, the levels used could be used again in any later longitudinal form of the study. A self-evident limitation of the study is that its findings can only be considered relevant to the UK engineering industry, indeed to its highly skilled high tech. sector and in fact specifically to the two anonymous companies of the case study. Any extrapolation to other cases would be fictitious because of such factors as the gender makeup of the workforce; the shop floor workforce surveyed in the two study companies being exclusively male. The study found that both companies were at best at the early stages of implementing voice/engagement programmes and therefore this cross-sectional study is in many ways of a preliminary nature, requiring a further longitudinal study before definitive conclusions on how and why employee voice/engagement differs between this large multinational and its SME supplier company. Finally, only quantitative statistical data was collected from shop floor personnel derived from questionnaires which at the time seemed appropriate as the opportunity was also offered for them to meet with the researcher to discuss any relevant issues. In view of the findings, discussions with a randomly selected sample, of hopefully unbiased, shop floor volunteers may have provided more evidence to substantiate some of the findings especially concerning the effects of procedural levels and formality.

7.4. CONTRIBUTION TO ACADEMIC KNOWLEDGE

The most significant contribution of the study to academic research is to add to knowledge that the nature of the organisational structure of an organisation, specifically the formality and procedural nature of its communication system, can be a major determinant in how eager employees are to participate in the running of their employing company and that this can be linked to the differing sizes of the two study companies. It confirms earlier, mainly American, studies which have shown that the size of companies has a major influence in levels of involvement and subsequent job satisfaction (O'Toole and Lawler III, 2006) and the study shows this can apply also in the UK by comparing EIP in a multinational with an SME organisation. Whilst O'Toole and Lawler III (2006) argue that EIP is likely to be more prevalent in an SME company than in larger organisations this has not been supported by this particular study where the levels of involvement by the shop floor in the two companies were not found to be statistically significantly different. The overriding factor affecting EIP appears to be resistance to proceduralism in the large organisation and the lack of it in the smaller one. The conjecture of SMEs being more participative is based on the assumption

that they are likely to be un-bureaucratic in nature and operating as a “family”, but other researchers hold the alternative view that SMEs can have an undercurrent of conflict with authoritarian management retarding any notion of employees anxious to get involved (Wilkinson, 1999). From formal and informal dialogue with shop floor staff in the SME Company there was evidence of both of these scenarios operating to some degree which may well have been another contributing factor softening any distinction between the two study companies. Relevant to this study, Wilkinson (1999) warned of instances where the introduction of more formal procedures in a SME had an adverse effect on EIP and other researchers, Bacon, et al. (1996), reported that although SMEs were moving towards more procedural ways of operating, larger organisations were drifting away from over-procedural systems and embracing informality.

The study also reveals the effect that the demographic structure of an organisation can have on the attitudes to involvement in the workplace. There was clear evidence in both study companies that whilst younger employees accepted and expected formal procedural systems promoting EIP, the older long serving shop floor employees were resistant to the concept ; a situation also encountered by Kotey and Slade (2005).

Another feature, common to both study companies was the need to have prescriptive operating procedures and tight codes of practice due to the nature of the products they manufacture. This was often given as a reason for employees not to offer suggestions for alternative ways of working due to the fear of breaching some regulation and confirms the findings of Greasley, et al. (2005) when researching in the construction industry which also operates with similar stringent procedures.

Whilst evidence was found that employees in both companies were making improvement suggestions covering productivity, product quality and safety, neither company was making meaningful and verifiable measures of the actual outcomes, yet alone if they could be attributed to EIP. Even when Forde, Slater and Spencer (2006) conducted a survey of EIP and workplace productivity, their measures of productivity were very crude, presumably because no better measures were available to them; a situation also experienced by the researcher in this study. In effect this is a negative contribution to academic knowledge in that it confirms a knowledge gap which can only be filled when measurable data on these operational outcomes are generated and made available over a significant period of time to allow trend analysis to be made.

7.5. MAJOR IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY AND PRACTICE

The findings of the study warrant careful consideration, not only by the two study companies in question, but also by industry in general, in particular with respect to the formality and procedural nature of their operating systems. To this end both companies have been offered the opportunity to be briefed on the findings of the study relevant to their company. There is clear evidence that a too procedural system can stifle initiative in employees wishing to be more involved in the running of their employing company and even cause them to be criticised by management due to some breach of procedure when they try to offer good advice or improvement suggestions. On the other hand without some form of formality to encourage involvement, especially a known uncomplicated path to communicate their ideas and suggestions, employees are less likely to involve themselves especially if this results in them not receiving due recognition for their contribution. The balance must be to have procedures encouraging, convenient, and helpful for the employees, but above all, with the minimum of bureaucracy. In fact earlier research has found that SME companies are tending to introduce more formality into their procedures and large organisations are deliberately reducing their formalisation who have much to learn from the informal nature of small businesses (Bacon, et al., 1996). Later studies have confirmed this (Kotey and Slade, 2005). This study suggests that this is the way forward with organisations having 'softer' procedural systems designed to make it as convenient as possible for employees to get involved and become engaged. Indeed Marchington and Suter (2013) found that the informal elements of an organisation's participatory structure can effectively combine with its more formal parts to enhance the overall effectiveness of the system.

The study found that involvement by team members in both study companies was lower than that by team leaders. Whilst this could be expected since in both company's team leaders were selected for their job knowledge and experience, it was also the case that their team members often engineered unrecorded improvements informally themselves, seeing this as simply part of their job but not necessarily sharing this with the rest of the workforce. The common factor in both companies which could account for these lost opportunities was the absence of teamworking with regular team meetings, be it for different reasons. It is suggested that such meetings are the way to encourage voice/engagement by providing a venue with fellow employees where they can informally air and exchange their views and observations verbally in their 'comfort zone' with their team leader taking on the role of communicator to those whose assessment or approval was required and who would, where appropriate, ensure any improvement was recorded and publicised widely.

Finally, bearing in mind that fundamentally managements will judge EIP by its contribution to improved operational outcomes such as productivity, it is essential, unlike the two study companies, to have appropriate measures available to be used consistently during the run of any EIP programme and some mechanism to attribute any improvement to EIP or not, as the case may be. Furthermore as pointed out by the HR staff member in the MNE Study Company, organisations have to be aware that it may take some time for EIP to result in positive measurable changes to outcomes such as productivity, product quality and safer working practices.

7.6. IMPLICATIONS AND AVENUES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

As already conceded, a major limitation of this study is that its findings can only be assumed relevant to the particular two companies selected for this comparative case study. However, the analysis carried out in the study could usefully be replicated with another two organisations of dissimilar size but with different control variables such as their industrial sector and so address this limitation. For instance, further studies could include companies from a different social environment such as where their workforce was predominantly female in contrast to this study's responding workforces which were exclusively male, and many other variables. A comprehensive understanding and a more universal acceptance as to what effect company size has on EIP would then evolve to counter some of the current contradictory evidence.

Another limitation of the study that could be addressed is that it was a cross-sectional study and so was only a 'snapshot' of the extent of EIP in the two different sized study companies over a short period of time. As levels of employee voice/engagement are likely to be progressive, or at least not static, the effect that organisation size has on EIP over time requires some form of longitudinal study. Should such studies include what effect EIP has in large and small organisations on productivity and other operational outcomes, measures of such outcomes (not available in this study) and measures of EIP would need to be agreed first and how improvements in these outcomes would be attributed to EIP, or not.

7.7. CONCLUDING EXPECTATION

It is hoped that this study will help to stimulate interest in applying EIP in both large and small enterprises and that each can learn from the experiences and problems recounted by both categories in this thesis.

APPENDIX 1. INTERVIEW SCHEDULES

1. Interview Schedule for CEO/Owner Manager
2. Interview Schedule for HR Manager (or whoever is in charge of HR)
3. Interview Schedule for Production Management
4. Interview Schedules for whoever is in charge of productivity, quality or health & safety records

1. INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR CEO/MD/OWNER

YOUR PERSONAL VIEWS ON EMPLOYEE PARTICIPATION:

1. In principle, what do you see as the possible advantages of employee participation?
2. In principle, what do you see as the possible disadvantages of employee participation?
3. Would you say this company is supportive or sceptical of employee participation or just neutral?
4. Have you recognised any tangible advantages from employee participation for the company?
5. Have you recognised any disadvantages/problems emanating from employee participation for the company?

WHAT MIGHT HAVE INFLUENCED YOUR VIEWS ON EMPLOYEE PARTICIPATION

1. Have you had any edict or encouragement to adopt participatory practices from your parent company? (*not relevant SME company*)
2. Have you had any warnings from your parent company about adopting employee participation practices? (*not relevant SME company*)
3. Have you been influenced from any outside organisations other than your parent company to encourage participation?
4. Have you had any suggestions or encouragement from your managerial colleagues to promote employee participation?
5. Have you had any warnings from your managerial colleagues about promoting employee participation?
6. Have you had any suggestions or encouragement from the company employees to promote employee participation?
7. Have you had any warnings from the company employees about promoting employee participation?
8. Have you had any suggestions or encouragement from trade union representatives to promote employee participation? (*not relevant SME company*)
9. Have you had any warnings from trade union representatives about promoting employee participation? (*not relevant SME company*)
10. Have you had discussions with others in the company regarding participation?
11. If so, what type of people?
12. If so, what was the role of these people?
13. Do you, or have you, feared a loss of control or authority due to the introduction, or possible introduction, of employee participation practices?

THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE

1. Are you currently being persuaded to embrace, or embrace more fully, the concept of employee participation?
2. If so, by what type of person?
3. If so, have you been pressurised from outside to embrace, or embrace more fully, employee participation?
4. If so, was this a source outside your parent company? (*still relevant SME company*)
5. If so, was this an external consultant?
6. If so, was this an academic source?

PARTICIPATION POLICY OF THE COMPANY:

1. Do you have a formal or informal participation policy for the company?
2. If not, do you think you should have?
3. If not, are you intending to formulate a policy in the near future?
4. Is any formal policy you may have, made available to all employees in some form?
5. Does the policy originate from outside the company?
6. What has motivated the company to adopt its current policy on employee participation?
7. What do you see as the main aims of your policy stance on participation?
8. How do you encourage employees to get involved in the running of their workplace and the Company in general?
9. Do you apply any influence to your suppliers to adopt employee involvement practices or other participatory measures? (*still relevant SME company*)

ADVANTAGES OF PARTICIPATION AS YOU SEE IT:

1. What do you see as the potential advantages emanating from employee participation for the Company?
2. What do you see as the advantages emanating from employee participation for the employees?
3. Do you feel that the opportunity for employees to participate in decision-making reduces or would reduce any tendency for a 'them and us' attitude in the Company?

POSSIBLE DISADVANTAGES OF PARTICIPATION:

1. Has the Company experienced any problems emanating from employee participation?
2. Have employees, including supervisory and managerial staff experienced any problems emanating from employee participation?
3. Have supervisors or managerial staff demonstrated any resentment due to the perceived loss of authority with the adoption of participatory practices, especially degrees of self-management by employees?

ANTICIPATED FUTURE PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH ADOPTING/EXTENDING EMPLOYEE PARTICIPATION:

1. Would you foresee problems from managerial and supervisory staff due to perceived loss of authority and control?
2. Have you experienced this within the Company?
3. Would you expect problems from employees who feel that they are being asked to, or at least encouraged to, do the work of the management?
4. Have you experienced this within the Company?
5. Would you expect any resistance from trade union representatives? (*not relevant SME company*)
6. Have you experienced this within the Company? (*not relevant SME company*)

YOUR VIEWS IN EXTENDING EMPLOYEE PARTICIPATION TOWARDS EMPLOYEE SELF-MANAGEMENT:

1. Do you think employees should be consulted in the formulation of workplace decisions?
2. Do you think employees should have control over their work? If your answer is 'YES', how much control?
3. Do you feel that employees are taking full advantage of the opportunities available to them to be involved in decision-making within the Company?
4. Do you think employees should have more rewards for being more participative?
5. Do you think employees should have more rewards for having more responsibilities?
6. Do you equate participation with having more responsibilities?
7. Do you think participation and involvement of employees changes with economic conditions?
8. Do you think it is possible for employees to have total control over work conditions, or is this only an ideal?
9. Do you think this ideal is desirable?

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT:

1. Do you have an ongoing continuous improvement programme?
2. If so, do you feel the employees feel that they are an integral part of the programme?
3. If so, how do you encourage them to get involved?

FINAL QUESTION:

Are there any points you would like to make, or questions you would like to ask, relevant to employee participation, which we have not covered in our conversation?

2. INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR HR MANAGER (or whoever is in charge of HR)

PARTICIPATION POLICY OF THE COMPANY:

1. Do you have a formal policy on Employee Participation?
2. If not, do you feel you should have a policy?
3. If so, would you be willing to lend me a copy, which would be treated confidentially?
4. Is any formal policy published and made available to all employees?
5. How is any participation policy communicated to employees?
6. Does the policy originate from outside the company?
7. Have you been influenced from any outside organisations to encourage participation?
8. What has motivated the company to adopt its participation policy?
9. What do you see as the main aims of your participation policy?
10. How do you encourage employees to get involved in the running of their workplace and the Company in general?

ADVANTAGES OF PARTICIPATION:

1. What do you see as the advantages emanating from employee participation for the Company?
2. What do you see as the advantages emanating from employee participation for the employees?
3. Do you feel that the opportunity for employees to participate in decision-making reduces any tendency for a 'them and us' attitude in the Company?

DISADVANTAGES OF PARTICIPATION:

1. Has the Company experienced any problems emanating from employee participation?
2. Have employees, including supervisory and managerial staff experienced any problems emanating from employee participation?
3. Have supervisors or managerial staff demonstrated any resentment due to perceived loss of authority with the adoption of participatory practices especially self-management by employees?

DEGREE OF PARTICIPATION:

1. Do you feel that employees are taking full advantage of the opportunities available to them to be involved in decision-making within the Company?

MOTIVATION:

1. In your view what motivates your employees to become involved in the organisation of their immediate place of work and the Company in general?
2. In your opinion, do employees feel that it is their responsibility to get involved in the organisation of their immediate place of work and the Company in general?
3. Do you get the impression that some employees simply feel that it is the job of management to run the company?
4. If so, is there a particular group or type of employee with this view?

COMMUNICATION WITHIN THE COMPANY:

1. In matters which should be of mutual interest to employees and the management of the Company, do you feel that communication is genuinely two-way?
2. What are the channels of communication?
3. In terms of involving employees, do you feel that communication is predominately from the management to the employees?
4. To what degree do you feel that responses from employees to communication from the management are productive?
5. Do you feel that communication between teams occurs and is productive?
6. If not, why not?
7. Do you feel that communication within the Teams is effective?
8. If not, why not?

SELF-MANAGEMENT OF TEAMS:

1. To what extent do you allow your teams to manage themselves?
2. Are the limits of self-management clearly defined?
3. To what extent do you encourage your teams to take responsibility for their own success?
4. Do you feel your teams take advantage of the opportunities open to them to make their teams as effective as possible?
5. Do you feel your teams are recognised sufficiently for the success they achieve?

TRADE UNIONS: *(not relevant SME company)*

1. To what extent, if at all, are Trade Union Representatives involved in employee participation within the Company?
2. If not involved, do you feel that they should be?
3. If they are involved, do you think their contribution is useful?

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE:

1. Do you have a formally issued Organizational Structure?
2. If so, how are employees made aware of this?
3. Do you have Standard Operating Procedures?
4. If so, how are employees made aware of these?
5. Do you consider the Company has an ambiance of Formality or Informality?

CONTROL AND SURVEILLANCE:

1. How do you control the overall effectiveness of the company, whilst promoting reasonable autonomy in the teams?
2. Do you impose or suggest systems of control within each team or leave it to the Team Leader and Members?

EMPLOYEE INVOLVEMENT:

1. Do you encourage employees to get involved in the decision making processes within the company?
2. Do you encourage direct individual employee involvement or do you expect their involvement to be through the Teams?
3. Do you have a formal mechanism for inviting employees to get involved?

EMPLOYEE VOICE:

1. Are employees encouraged to air their views on workplace matters to the management?
2. If so, is there a formal mechanism for this to happen?
3. How is the procedure communicated to the employees?
4. Does the procedure insist that the views of team members are first aired at team level and then transmitted up through the Team Leader?

EMPLOYEE EMPOWERMENT:

1. Are employees ever encouraged to investigate their own ideas on an individual basis?
2. Could this involve them being excused some or all of their normal duties?
3. Is it preferred that employee involvement is done through the team, so involving the views and experience of all team members?

FINANCIAL PARTICIPATION:

1. Is there any system within the company for employees to reap financial benefit from the success of the Company?
2. If so, is this directly linked to the overall profitability of the Company?
3. If so, is this linked to the profitability of individual teams, sections or departments?
4. Are employees informed in a non-technical way of the company's financial performance to substantiate any or no financial payout?

EFFECT ON PRODUCTIVITY:

1. Do you feel that your participation policy has resulted in improved productivity?
2. If so, is there evidence to support this within the Company?
3. Are all suggestions from employees to improve productivity formally logged, considered and the employee properly informed of any decision?

EFFECT ON QUALITY:

1. Do you feel that your participation policy has resulted in improved product quality?
2. If so, is there evidence to support this within the Company?
3. Are all suggestions from employees to improve product quality formally logged, considered, and the employee properly informed of any decision?

EFFECT ON HEALTH AND SAFETY MATTERS:

1. Do you feel that your participation policy has resulted in improved safe working practices?
2. If so, is there evidence to support this within the Company?
3. Are all suggestions from employees to improve safety formally logged, considered, and the employee properly informed of any decision?

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT:

1. Do you have an ongoing continuous improvement programme?
2. Do you feel the employees feel that they are an integral part of the programme?
3. How do you encourage them to get involved?

TRAINING:

1. Do you have a Training Needs Analysis System (TNA) or similar?
2. Do you keep a Training Log for each Employee?
3. If so, would you be willing to let me study a copy, which would be treated confidentially?

TRAINING FOR PARTICIPATION:

1. Was a training initiative undertaken before the formal employee participation programme was introduced?
2. Who designed and delivered the programme?
3. Who attended the programme?
4. Was attendance voluntary?
5. Were trade union representatives consulted before the training began? (*not relevant SME company*)
6. Is employee participation part of the induction programme for new starters?

FINAL QUESTION:

Are there any points you would like to make, or questions you would like to ask, relevant to employee participation, which we have not covered in our conversation?

3. INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR PRODUCTION MANAGEMENT

YOUR PERSONAL VIEWS ON EMPLOYEE PARTICIPATION:

1. In principle, what do you see as the possible advantages of employees being involved substantially in decision-making in the production process?
2. Have you recognised any tangible advantages for production?
3. In principle, what do you see as the possible disadvantages of employees being involved substantially in decision-making in the production process?
4. Have you recognised any tangible disadvantages for production?
5. Would you say this company is supportive or sceptical of employee participation or just neutral?

WHAT MIGHT HAVE INFLUENCED YOUR VIEWS ON EMPLOYEE PARTICIPATION

1. Have you been encouraged by your senior management to promote employee participation?
2. Have you been encouraged by your Team Leaders/Supervisors to promote employee participation?
3. Have you been encouraged by the production employees/Team Members to promote employee participation?
4. Have you been encouraged by trade union representatives to promote employee participation? *(not relevant SME company)*
5. Have you had to persuade reluctant senior management in the company to support any efforts you have made to promote employee participation in the production process?
6. Have you had to persuade your reluctant production Team Leaders/Supervisors to support any efforts you have made to promote employee participation in the production process?
7. Have you had to persuade your reluctant production employees/Team Members to support any efforts you have made to promote employee participation in the production process?
8. Have you had to persuade reluctant Trade Union representatives within the production teams to support any efforts you have made to promote employee participation in the production process? *(not relevant SME company)*
9. Do you, or have you, resented a loss of control or authority due to the introduction of employee participation practices?
10. Do you think your production Supervisors/Team Leaders used to, or still do, resent a loss of control or authority due to the introduction of any employee participation practices?

PARTICIPATION POLICY OF THE COMPANY:

1. Was the policy, (formal or informal), (written or just understood), of the Company regarding employee participation imposed on you or were you one of the originators of the policy?
2. If you were one of the originators, who did you have to persuade?
3. What do you think motivated the company to take its stance on employee participation?
4. What do you see as the main aims of the company's participation policy?

ADVANTAGES OF PARTICIPATION:

1. What do you see as the advantages emanating from employee participation for the Company?
2. What do you see as the advantages emanating from employee participation for the employees?
3. Do you feel that the opportunity for employees to participate in decision-making reduces any tendency for a 'them and us' attitude in the Company?

DISADVANTAGES OF, AND PROBLEMS WITH, EMPLOYEE PARTICIPATION:

1. Has the Company experienced any problems emanating from employee participation?
2. Have employees, including supervisory staff experienced any problems emanating from employee participation?
3. Have supervisors found it difficult to change from supervisors working with authority and control, to Team Leaders relying on leadership to produce results from the teams?

ANTICIPATED PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH EMPLOYEE PARTICIPATION:

1. Would you expect problems from managerial and supervisory staff due to perceived loss of authority and control?
2. If so, have you experienced this within the Company?
3. Would you expect problems from employees who feel that they are being asked to, or at least encouraged to, do the work of the management?
4. Would you expect any resistance from trade union representatives? (*not relevant SME company*)

YOUR VIEWS IN EXTENDING EMPLOYEE PARTICIPATION TOWARDS EMPLOYEE SELF-MANAGEMENT:

1. Do you think employees should be consulted in the formulation of workplace decisions?
2. Do you think employees should have control over their work? If your answer is 'YES', how much control?
3. Do you feel that employees are taking full advantage of the opportunities available to them to be involved in decision-making within the Company in general?
4. Do you feel that employees are taking full advantage of the opportunities available to them to be involved in decision-making within their own Team's workplace?
5. Do you feel that employees are taking full advantage of the opportunities available to them to be involved in decision-making affecting more than just their own team, i.e. inter-team co-operation?
6. Do you think employees should have more rewards for being more participative?
7. Do you think employees should have more rewards for having more responsibilities?
8. Do you equate participation with having more responsibilities?
9. Do you think it is possible for employees to have total control over work conditions, or is this only an ideal?
10. Do you think this ideal is desirable?

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT:

1. Do you have an ongoing continuous improvement programme?
2. Do you feel the employees feel that they are an integral part of the programme?
3. How do you encourage them to get involved?
4. Do you feel this has contributed to increased productivity?
5. Do you instigate the formation of Project Teams to tackle production problems and investigate potential improvements in the production process?
6. Do you encourage the formation of Project Teams with members from more than one Team?

EMPLOYEE MORALE:

1. Do you feel that employee participation has overall had a beneficial effect on employee morale?

FINAL QUESTION:

Are there any points you would like to make, or questions you would like to ask, relevant to employee participation, which we have not covered in our conversation?

4. INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR WHOEVER IS IN CHARGE OF PRODUCTIVITY RECORDS

PRODUCTIVITY MEASUREMENT:

1. How do you measure productivity levels in the Company?
2. Do you think that employee participation has helped productivity in the Company?
3. If so, have you any evidence to support this?
4. Do you keep a record of where productivity improvements have emanated from?
 - a) From individual employees
 - b) From a team
 - c) From a team leader
 - d) From the management
 - e) From external sources

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT:

1. Does the Company operate a formal Continuous Improvement Programme?
2. If so, do you feel that it has contributed towards productivity improvement?
3. Do you feel that employees are encouraged to participate/engage in Continuous Improvement?

PROCESSING EMPLOYEE SUGGESTIONS:

1. Who evaluates suggestions from the workforce?
2. Is there any monetary reward for successful suggestions?
3. Do suggestions come in writing – do they have to?
4. Do suggestions come verbally?
5. Do employees always get a formal response with reasons, even if the suggestion is rejected?

FINAL QUESTION:

Are there any points you would like to make, or questions you would like to ask, relevant to the effect of employee participation on productivity, which we have not covered in our conversation?

4. INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR WHOEVER IS IN CHARGE OF QUALITY RECORDS

MEASUREMENT OF QUALITY:

1. How do you measure product quality levels at the Company?
2. Do you think that employee participation/engagement has helped product quality levels in the company?
3. If so, have you any evidence to support this?
4. Do you keep a record of where quality improvements have emanated from?
 - a) From individual employees
 - b) From a team
 - c) From a team leader
 - d) From the management
 - e) From external sources

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT:

4. Does the Company operate a formal Continuous Improvement Programme?
5. If so, do you feel that it has contributed towards quality improvement?
6. Do you feel that employees are encouraged to participate/engage in Continuous Improvement?

PROCESSING EMPLOYEE SUGGESTIONS:

1. Who evaluates suggestions from the workforce?
2. Is there any monetary reward for successful suggestions?
3. Do suggestions come in writing – do they have to?
4. Do suggestions come verbally?
5. Do employees always get a formal response with reasons, even if the suggestion is rejected?

FINAL QUESTION:

Are there any points you would like to make, or questions you would like to ask, relevant to the effect of employee participation/engagement on product quality, which we have not covered in our conversation?

4. INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR WHOEVER IS IN CHARGE OF HEALTH AND SAFETY RECORDS

HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK MEASUREMENT:

1. How do you measure health and safety levels at the Company?
2. Do you think that employee participation/engagement has helped to generate health and safety improvements in the company?
3. If so, have you any evidence to support this?
4. Do you keep a record of where quality improvements have emanated from?
 - a) From individual employees
 - b) From a team
 - c) From a team leader
 - d) From the management
 - e) From external sources

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT:

1. Does the Company operate a formal Continuous Improvement Programme?
2. If so, do you feel that it has contributed towards improved safe working practice?
3. Do you feel that employees are encouraged to participate/engage in Continuous Improvement?

PROCESSING EMPLOYEE SUGGESTIONS:

1. Who evaluates suggestions from the workforce?
2. Is there any monetary reward for successful suggestions?
3. Do suggestions come in writing – do they have to?
4. Do suggestions come verbally?
5. Do employees always get a formal response with reasons, even if the suggestion is rejected?

FINAL QUESTION:

Are there any points you would like to make, or questions you would like to ask, relevant to the effect of employee participation/engagement on health and safety issues, which we have not covered in our conversation?

APPENDIX 2. QUESTIONNAIRES

1. Questionnaire for Team Leaders
2. Questionnaire for Team Members

1. QUESTIONNAIRE – TEAM LEADERS

Respondent Code

.....

YOUR ROLE AS A TEAM LEADER:

Rate the importance of the following roles that you as a Team Leader may be expected to fulfil in the Company's organisation.

(tick one box per line on the grid below.)

	The Most Important	An Important Role	Of Minor Importance	Not Important
1. A Supervisor	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. An Authority Figure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. A Coach	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. A Leader	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

.....

TRAINING:

Have you yourself received any formal training in the past in...

(tick ONE box per line)

	Yes In The Last 3 Years	Yes Over 3 Years Ago	No
1. Supervisory Management			
a. from an in-house trainer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. from an external trainer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Teamworking			
a. from an in-house trainer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. from an external trainer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

.....

LEADING YOUR TEAM:

(tick ONE box per line)

	Fully	Somewhat	Slightly	Not at all
1. Do you feel that you have sufficient independence to organise/manage/ /control your team in your own way?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Do you feel that the management dictate how you should run your team?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Do you feel personally responsible for the success or failure of your Team?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Do you see yourself mainly as a Member of the Team with success or failure being the whole team's responsibility?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

COMMUNICATION WITHIN THE TEAM:

(tick the appropriate box on the grid below.)

	Up to 10%	Up to 25%	Up to 50%	Up to 75%	Over 75%
1. Approximately what percentage of the working day do you spend talking/working together with Team Members?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Team Meetings:

(tick ONE box per line)

	Yes	No
1. Are you instructed to hold regular Team Meetings <u>at least</u> once a month?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Are you encouraged to hold regular Team Meetings <u>at least</u> once a month?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Do you in fact hold regular Team Meetings <u>at least</u> once a month?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Do you only hold Team Meetings when there is a specific topic or problem to discuss?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Have you ever held a Team Meeting?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

ORGANISING AND MONITORING THE WORK OF YOUR TEAM:

(tick ONE box per line)

	All of the time	Most of the time	Some of the time	Occasionally	Never
1. Do you yourself give out tasks to Team Members?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Does the Team collectively contribute in deciding who does particular tasks?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Does the Team collectively decide who does particular tasks?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

MULTI-SKILLING WITHIN YOUR TEAM:

(tick ONE box per line)

	All of the time	Most of the time	Some of the time	Occasionally	Never
1. If a Team Member finds problems in doing their job...					
a. Do they first try to solve it themselves?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Then ask other Team Members?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Then come to you as Team Leader?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Come straight to you as Team Leader?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Do Team Members willingly share their detailed work knowledge...					
a. with other Members of the Team?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. more widely throughout the Company?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF YOUR COMPANY:

Are you aware of:
(tick ONE box)

	Fully	Somewhat	Slightly	Not at all
1. Any long term plans of your Company	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. The profitability of your Company	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. The competitiveness of your Company	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. The Company's policy for dealing with employees	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

MANAGEMENT OF YOUR COMPANY:

In general, how much influence do you think the following groups have over decision-making in your Company.

(tick the appropriate boxes on the grid below.)

	None	Little	Moderate	Much	Very Much
1. Team Members (employees)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Team Leaders	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Middle Managers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Senior Managers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

KEEPING YOU INFORMED:

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements.
(tick the appropriate box.)

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. I am well informed of what is going on in the Company.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Employees accept the decisions of the Company more easily thanks to being kept informed .	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Who keeps you informed?:
(tick ALL boxes that apply)

- 1. Your immediate superior
- 2. Middle management
- 3. Senior management
- 4. Notes or memorandum
- 5. Company circular
- 6. Company magazine/newsletter
- 7. Notice board
- 8. Team Leader briefings/meetings
- 9. Fellow Team Leaders

Do you think present information channels are adequate?
(tick ONE box)

- Adequate
- Reasonable
- Inadequate



YOUR INVOLVEMENT IN THE RUNNING OF THE COMPANY:

To what extent do you get to be involved in the running of the Company?:
(tick ONE box per line)

	Regularly	Often	Occasionally	Never
1. I participate in decision-making	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. I just receive information	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. I am consulted before a decision is made	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. I have my views taken into account as the decision is made	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. I participate on an equal footing with others in the taking of a decision which affects my Team	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. I make the decisions myself on matters which affect only my Team	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements.
(tick the appropriate box.)

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. I feel proud to be a Member of my Team	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. I feel I have a stake in the future of the Company	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. My relations with my superiors are good	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. I believe it is in the Team's interest to work for productivity and efficiency improvements within the company	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. I believe the management of the Company is willing to listen properly to suggestions from Team Leaders about better working methods	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

What are your views on financial incentives to encourage employee involvement?:
(tick ONE box per line)

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
1. My Team is more likely to offer suggestions for workplace improvements if there is the possibility of financial gain	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. My Team would offer suggestions in any case (without financial incentives)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



ABOUT YOUR VOICE BEING HEARD:

(tick ONE box per line)

	All of the time	Most of the time	Some of the time	Occasionally	Never
1. Do you offer your views about workplace issues without being asked?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Do you feel that you are encouraged to give your views on workplace issues?.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Do you feel that your views are properly listened to?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Do you feel that you get adequate feedback from whoever you gave your views to?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT AND PROBLEM SOLVING IN YOUR COMPANY:

(tick ONE box per line)

- | | Regularly | Often | Occasionally | Never |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Have you ever made suggestions for improvements as part of a Project or Problem Solving Team ? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Have you ever made suggestions as an individual ? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Suggestions you have made (if applicable)

- | | Yes | No | Not Applicable |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 3. Were any suggestions you have made to do with... | | | |
| a. productivity improvement? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. improvement in product quality ? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c. safer working practices? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Would you in the future consider making improvement suggestions? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Did you consider that any suggestion(s) you have made was given proper consideration ? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. Did you receive feedback ? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. Did you receive due recognition for your suggestion? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. If you have made a suggestion in the past, would you do it again ? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9. Do you consider that improvement activities are the responsibility of the management ? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10. Do you consider that improvement responsibilities are the responsibility of everyone in the company ? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

ABOUT YOURSELF:

Your Generation

(some indication of your age would be very useful)

(tick the appropriate box below)

Less than 22 22-30 31-40 41-50 Over 50

1. What age range do you fit into?

Your Experience

(tick the appropriate boxes on the grid below.)

(only count whole years.)

Less than 1-5 6-10 More than
1 year years years 10 years

1. How long have you been working in the **Engineering** Industry?
2. How long have you been working at this **Company**?
3. How long have you worked as a **Team Leader** or **Supervisor**?
4. How long have you worked as a **Team Leader** or **Supervisor** at **this Company**?

Your Schooling and Further Education

(some indication of your schooling and the level, IF ANY, of further education you have undertaken to do with your job would be very useful)

(some typical past and current qualifications are shown as guidance)

(tick ANY appropriate boxes – to indicate roughly any levels achieved)

Tick
Here

	SECONDARY EDUCATION	CSE, GCE 'O' Level, GCSE.
	SECONDARY EDUCATION	GCE A/AS Level.
	LEVEL 1	NVQ level 1 (or SVQ), BTEC level 1, BTEC Introductory.
	LEVEL 2	City & Guilds Craft Certificate, NVQ level 2 (or SVQ), BTEC level 2, BTEC first/general certificate.
	LEVEL 3	City & Guilds Advanced Craft Certificate, ONC, NVQ level 3 (or SVQ), BTEC level 3, BTEC national certificate.
	LEVEL 4	HNC/HND (old versions), NVQ level 5 (or SVQ).
	LEVEL 5	HNC/HND (old versions) NVQ level 5 (or SVQ),
	LEVELS 6, 7&8	BTEC advanced, Degree level and above.

ANY OTHER COMMENTS:

If you feel that you would like to explain your feelings about an issue or issues covered in this questionnaire more fully, please tick the box below and arrangements will be made for you to express your views anonymously and confidentially to the researcher.

Please arrange for me to meet the researcher



2. QUESTIONNAIRE – TEAM MEMBERS

Respondent Code

YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF YOUR COMPANY AND IT'S MANAGEMENT:

Are you aware of:
(tick ONE box)

- | | Fully | Somewhat | Slightly | Not at all |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Any long term plans of your Company | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

In general, how much influence do you think the following groups have over decision-making in your Company.
(tick the appropriate boxes on the grid below.)

- | | None | Little | Moderate | Much | Very Much |
|------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Members (employees) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Team Leaders | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

KEEPING YOU INFORMED:

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements.
(tick the appropriate box.)

- | | Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | Not Sure |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. I am well informed of what is going on in the Company. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Are you made aware of the following:
(tick ONE box per line)

- | | Yes | No |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Any measure of productivity of your Team | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Any measure of the quality achieved in your Team | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Any measure of the safety record of your Team | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
-

YOUR INVOLVEMENT IN THE RUNNING OF THE COMPANY:

How would you wish to be involved in the running of the Company?:
(tick ONE box per line)

	Yes	No
1. Not to be involved at all in decision-making	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Just to receive information	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. To be consulted before a decision is made	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements.
(tick the appropriate box.)

	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. I feel proud to be a Member of my Team	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. I feel involved in the running of my Team	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. I feel I have a stake in the future of the Company	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. I believe the management of the Company is willing to listen properly to suggestions from the employees about better working methods	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF THE JOB:

(tick ONE box per line)

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. I am aware of the best and latest ways of doing my job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. I am allowed to do my job in the way I think best	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. The way I do my job is dictated by others	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. I have been given every opportunity to learn the best and latest ways of doing my job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please indicate how much training you have been offered by the Company.

	Yes	No.
5. Have you been offered training about doing your job, in the last five years?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Have you ever been refused permission to attend any training course during working hours?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



IMPROVEMENTS AND PROBLEM SOLVING IN YOUR COMPANY:

(tick ONE box per line)

	Regularly	Often	Occasionally	Never
1. Have you ever made suggestions for improvements as part of a Team ?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Have you ever made suggestions as an individual ?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Yes	No	Not Applicable
3. Were any suggestions you may have made to do with...				
a. productivity improvement?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. improvement in product quality ?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. safer working practices?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. If you have made a suggestion in the past, would you do it again ?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Do you consider that improvement activities are the responsibility of the management ?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
6. Do you consider that improvement activities are the responsibility of everyone in the Company ?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	



ABOUT YOURSELF:

Your Generation

(some indication of your age would be very useful)

(tick the appropriate box below)

Less than 22 22-30 31-40 41-50 Over 50

1. What age range do you fit into?

Your Experience

(tick the appropriate boxes on the grid below.)

(only count whole years.)

Less than 1 year 1-5 years 6-10 years More than 10 years

1. How long have you been working in the **Engineering** Industry?
2. How long have you been working at this **Company**?

Your Schooling and Further Education

(some indication of your schooling and the level, IF ANY, of further education you have undertaken to do with your job would be very useful)

(some typical past and current qualifications are shown as guidance)

(tick ANY appropriate boxes – to indicate roughly any levels achieved)

Tick Here

	SECONDARY EDUCATION	CSE, GCE 'O' Level, GCSE.
	SECONDARY EDUCATION	GCE A/AS Level.
	LEVEL 1	NVQ level 1 (or SVQ), BTEC level 1, BTEC Introductory.
	LEVEL 2	City & Guilds Craft Certificate, NVQ level 2 (or SVQ), BTEC level 2, BTEC first/general certificate.
	LEVEL 3	City & Guilds Advanced Craft Certificate, ONC, NVQ level 3 (or SVQ), BTEC level 3, BTEC national certificate.
	LEVEL 4	HNC/HND (old versions), NVQ level 5 (or SVQ).
	LEVEL 5	HNC/HND (old versions) NVQ level 5 (or SVQ),
	LEVELS 6, 7&8	BTEC advanced, Degree level and above.

ANY OTHER COMMENTS:

If you feel that you would like to explain your feelings about an issue or issues covered in this questionnaire more fully, please tick the box below and arrangements will be made for you to express your views anonymously and confidentially to the researcher.

Please arrange for me to meet researcher

.....

APPENDIX 3. QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

1. Responses from Team Leader Questionnaire
2. Responses from Team Member Questionnaire

TABLE 1 - TEAM LEADER RESPONSES					
Questionnaire Section		COMPANY			
		SME		MNE	
1.	How important do you rate the various roles you play as a Team Leader?	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
Your role as a Supervisor.	Not important	0	0.0%	2	13.3%
	Of minor importance	0	0.0%	6	40.0%
	An important role	5	62.5%	6	40.0%
	The most important	3	37.5%	1	6.7%
Your role as an Authority Figure.	Not important	1	12.5%	3	20.0%
	Of minor importance	4	50.0%	4	26.7%
	An important role	2	25.0%	8	53.3%
	The most important	1	12.5%	0	0.0%
Your role as a Coach.	Not important	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
	Of minor importance	2	25.0%	3	20.0%
	An important role	6	75.0%	5	33.3%
	The most important	0	0.0%	7	46.7%
Your role as a Leader.	Not important	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
	Of minor importance	2	25.0%	2	13.3%
	An important role	6	75.0%	3	20.0%
	The most important	0	0.0%	10	66.7%
2.	Formal training you have received.	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
Have you received any training in Supervisory Management from an in-house trainer?	No	5	83.3%	10	83.3%
	Yes. (over 3 years ago)	1	16.7%	1	8.3%
	Yes. (in the last 3 years)	0	0.0%	1	8.3%
Have you received any training in Supervisory Management from an external trainer?	No	5	62.5%	6	42.9%
	Yes. (over 3 years ago)	0	0.0%	5	35.7%
	Yes. (in the last 3 years)	3	37.5%	3	21.4%
Have you received any training in Teamworking from an in-house trainer?	No	6	100.0%	4	40.0%
	Yes. (over 3 years ago)	0	0.0%	3	30.0%
	Yes. (in the last 3 years)	0	0.0%	3	30.0%
Have you received any training in Teamworking from an external trainer?	No	6	75.0%	0	0.0%
	Yes. (over 3 years ago)	0	0.0%	9	64.3%
	Yes. (in the last 3 years)	2	25.0%	5	35.7%

TABLE 1 - TEAM LEADER RESPONSES CONTINUED

Questionnaire Section		COMPANY			
		SME		MNE	
3.	How you are allowed to lead your team?	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
Do you feel you have sufficient independence to organise/manage/control your team in your own way?	Not at all	0	0.0%	4	26.7%
	Slightly	2	25.0%	4	26.7%
	Somewhat	1	12.5%	5	33.3%
	Fully	5	62.5%	2	13.3%
Do you feel that the management dictate how you should run your team?	Not at all	2	25.0%	1	7.1%
	Slightly	2	25.0%	3	21.4%
	Somewhat	4	50.0%	5	35.7%
	Fully	0	0.0%	5	35.7%
Do you feel personally responsible for the success or failure of your team?	Not at all	1	12.5%	0	0.0%
	Slightly	0	0.0%	4	26.7%
	Somewhat	4	50.0%	8	53.3%
	Fully	3	37.5%	3	20.0%
Do you see yourself mainly as a member of the team with success or failure being the whole team's responsibility?	Not at all	0	0.0%	2	13.3%
	Slightly	2	25.0%	3	20.0%
	Somewhat	3	37.5%	8	53.3%
	Fully	3	37.5%	2	13.3%
4.	Communication within your team.	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
Approximately what percentage of the working day do you spend talking/working with Team members?	Up to 10%	1	12.5%	1	6.7%
	Up to 25%	2	25.0%	7	46.7%
	Up to 50%	1	12.5%	6	40.0%
	Up to 75%	1	12.5%	1	6.7%
	Over 75%	3	37.5%	0	0.0%
Are you instructed to hold regular Team Meetings at least once a month?	No	5	62.5%	5	33.3%
	Yes	3	37.5%	10	66.7%
Are you encouraged to hold regular Team Meetings at least once a month?	No	5	62.5%	7	46.7%
	Yes	3	37.5%	8	53.3%
Do you in fact hold regular Team Meetings at least once a month?	No	7	87.5%	8	53.3%
	Yes	1	12.5%	7	46.7%
Do you only hold Team Meetings when there is a specific topic to discuss?	No	1	12.5%	3	20.0%
	Yes	7	87.5%	12	80.0%
Have you ever held a Team Meeting?	No	4	50.0%	0	0.0%
	Yes	4	50.0%	15	100.0%

TABLE 1 - TEAM LEADER RESPONSES CONTINUED

Questionnaire Section		COMPANY			
		SME		MNE	
5.	How do you organise and monitor the work of your team?	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
Do you yourself give out tasks to members of your team?	Never	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
	Occasionally	1	12.5%	6	40.0%
	Some of the time	1	12.5%	7	46.7%
	Most of the time	4	50.0%	1	6.7%
	All of the time	2	25.0%	1	6.7%
Does your team collectively contribute in deciding who does particular tasks?	Never	3	37.5%	7	46.7%
	Occasionally	1	12.5%	6	40.0%
	Some of the time	1	12.5%	2	13.3%
	Most of the time	3	37.5%	0	0.0%
	All of the time	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Does your team collectively decide who does particular tasks?	Never	4	50.0%	9	60.0%
	Occasionally	0	0.0%	5	33.3%
	Some of the time	3	37.5%	1	6.7%
	Most of the time	1	12.5%	0	0.0%
	All of the time	0	0.0%	0	0.0%

TABLE 1 - TEAM LEADER RESPONSES CONTINUED

Questionnaire Section		COMPANY			
		SME		MNE	
6.	How much multi-skilling operates within your team?	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
If one of the members of your team finds a problem, do they first try to solve it themselves?	Never	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
	Occasionally	3	37.5%	0	0.0%
	Some of the time	1	12.5%	10	66.7%
	Most of the time	4	50.0%	4	26.7%
	All of the time	0	0.0%	1	6.7%
If unsuccessful, would they then ask other members of your team for help and advice?	Never	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
	Occasionally	3	37.5%	2	13.3%
	Some of the time	3	37.5%	9	60.0%
	Most of the time	1	12.5%	4	26.7%
	All of the time	1	12.5%	0	0.0%
If still unsuccessful, would they then come to you as Team leader for assistance?	Never	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
	Occasionally	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
	Some of the time	3	37.5%	2	13.3%
	Most of the time	3	37.5%	9	60.0%
	All of the time	2	25.0%	4	26.7%
Alternatively, would they come straight to you for assistance?	Never	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
	Occasionally	1	12.5%	2	13.3%
	Some of the time	4	50.0%	2	13.3%
	Most of the time	2	25.0%	8	53.3%
	All of the time	1	12.5%	3	20.0%
Do members of your team willingly share their detailed work knowledge with other members of your team?	Never	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
	Occasionally	1	12.5%	0	0.0%
	Some of the time	0	0.0%	4	26.7%
	Most of the time	5	62.5%	9	60.0%
	All of the time	2	25.0%	2	13.3%
Do members of your team willingly share their detailed work knowledge more widely throughout the Company?	Never	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
	Occasionally	2	25.0%	4	26.7%
	Some of the time	4	50.0%	6	40.0%
	Most of the time	1	12.5%	5	33.3%
	All of the time	1	12.5%	0	0.0%

TABLE 1 - TEAM LEADER RESPONSES CONTINUED

Questionnaire Section		COMPANY			
		SME		MNE	
7.	Your knowledge of your Company.	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
Are you aware of any long term plans of your Company?	Not at all	4	50.0%	7	46.7%
	Slightly	1	12.5%	2	13.3%
	Somewhat	2	25.0%	5	33.3%
	Fully	1	12.5%	1	6.7%
Are you aware of the profitability of your Company?	Not at all	5	62.5%	7	46.7%
	Slightly	0	0.0%	4	26.7%
	Somewhat	2	25.0%	3	20.0%
	Fully	1	12.5%	1	6.7%
Are you aware of the competitiveness of your Company?	Not at all	4	50.0%	3	20.0%
	Slightly	0	0.0%	5	33.3%
	Somewhat	2	25.0%	5	33.3%
	Fully	2	25.0%	2	13.3%
Are you aware of your Company's policy for dealing with employees?	Not at all	2	25.0%	0	0.0%
	Slightly	3	37.5%	7	46.7%
	Somewhat	1	12.5%	7	46.7%
	Fully	2	25.0%	1	6.7%
8.	Influencers on the management of your Company.	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
How much influence do you think Team Members have over decision-making in your Company?	None	4	50.0%	7	46.7%
	Little	2	25.0%	6	40.0%
	Moderate	2	25.0%	2	13.3%
	Much	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
	Very much	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
How much influence do you think Team Leaders have over decision-making in your Company?	None	3	37.5%	2	13.3%
	Little	2	25.0%	7	46.7%
	Moderate	1	12.5%	6	40.0%
	Much	2	25.0%	0	0.0%
	Very much	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
How much influence do you think Middle Managers have over decision-making in your Company?	None	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
	Little	1	12.5%	1	6.7%
	Moderate	2	25.0%	8	53.3%
	Much	4	50.0%	6	40.0%
	Very much	1	12.5%	0	0.0%
How much influence do you think Senior Managers have over decision-making in your Company?	None	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
	Little	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
	Moderate	0	0.0%	1	6.7%
	Much	1	12.5%	5	33.3%
	Very much	7	87.5%	9	60.0%

TABLE 1 - TEAM LEADER RESPONSES CONTINUED

Questionnaire Section		COMPANY			
		SME		MNE	
9.	How well, and who, keeps you informed?	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
I am well informed of what is going on in the Company.	Strongly Disagree	1	12.5%	0	0.0%
	Disagree	2	25.0%	8	53.3%
	Not sure	1	12.5%	6	40.0%
	Agree	3	37.5%	1	6.7%
	Strongly agree	1	12.5%	0	0.0%
I believe employees accept the decisions of the Company more easily thanks to being kept informed.	Strongly Disagree	1	12.5%	2	13.3%
	Disagree	1	12.5%	6	40.0%
	Not sure	1	12.5%	3	20.0%
	Agree	5	62.5%	4	26.7%
	Strongly agree	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Does your immediate superior keep you informed?	No	2	25.0%	3	20.0%
	Yes	6	75.0%	12	80.0%
Does middle management keep you informed?	No	6	75.0%	8	53.3%
	Yes	2	25.0%	7	46.7%
Does senior management keep you informed?	No	4	50.0%	11	73.3%
	Yes	4	50.0%	4	26.7%
Do notes and memoranda keep you informed?	No	4	50.0%	11	73.3%
	Yes	4	50.0%	4	26.7%
Do company circulars keep you informed?	No	8	100.0%	9	60.0%
	Yes	0	0.0%	6	40.0%
Do company magazines or newsletters keep you informed?	No	8	100.0%	9	60.0%
	Yes	0	0.0%	6	40.0%
Do company notice boards keep you informed?	No	3	37.5%	10	66.7%
	Yes	5	62.5%	5	33.3%
Do team leader briefings/meetings keep you informed?	No	5	62.5%	5	33.3%
	Yes	3	37.5%	10	66.7%
Do fellow team leaders keep you informed?	No	4	50.0%	5	33.3%
	Yes	4	50.0%	10	66.7%
Do you think the present information channels are adequate?	Inadequate	2	25.0%	8	53.3%
	Reasonable	3	37.5%	4	26.7%
	Adequate	3	37.5%	3	20.0%

TABLE 1 - TEAM LEADER RESPONSES CONTINUED

Questionnaire Section		COMPANY			
		SME		MNE	
10.	To what extent are you involved in the running of your company?	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
I participate in decision-making.	Never	3	37.5%	7	46.7%
	Occasionally	5	62.5%	7	46.7%
	Often	0	0.0%	1	6.7%
	Regularly	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
I just receive information.	Never	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
	Occasionally	4	50.0%	6	40.0%
	Often	3	37.5%	7	46.7%
	Regularly	1	12.5%	2	13.3%
I am consulted before a decision is made.	Never	3	37.5%	5	33.3%
	Occasionally	5	62.5%	9	60.0%
	Often	0	0.0%	1	6.7%
	Regularly	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
I have my views taken into account as the decision is made.	Never	5	62.5%	5	33.3%
	Occasionally	2	25.0%	10	66.7%
	Often	1	12.5%	0	0.0%
	Regularly	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
I participate on an equal footing with others in the taking of a decision which affects my team.	Never	4	50.0%	9	60.0%
	Occasionally	2	25.0%	5	33.3%
	Often	1	12.5%	1	6.7%
	Regularly	1	12.5%	0	0.0%
I make decisions myself on matters which affect only my team	Never	1	12.5%	7	46.7%
	Occasionally	3	37.5%	6	40.0%
	Often	1	12.5%	2	13.3%
	Regularly	3	37.5%	0	0.0%
I feel proud to be a member of my team.	Strongly Disagree	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
	Disagree	0	0.0%	1	6.7%
	Not Sure	2	25.0%	2	13.3%
	Agree	2	25.0%	9	60.0%
	Strongly Agree	4	50.0%	3	20.0%
I feel I have a stake in the future of the Company.	Strongly Disagree	1	12.5%	2	13.3%
	Disagree	1	12.5%	3	20.0%
	Not Sure	2	25.0%	7	46.7%
	Agree	2	25.0%	3	20.0%
	Strongly Agree	2	25.0%	0	0.0%
My relations with my superiors are good.	Strongly Disagree	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
	Disagree	0	0.0%	2	13.3%
	Not Sure	2	25.0%	0	0.0%
	Agree	4	50.0%	13	86.7%
	Strongly Agree	2	25.0%	0	0.0%

TABLE 1 - TEAM LEADER RESPONSES CONTINUED

Questionnaire Section		COMPANY			
		SME		MNE	
10.	To what extent are you involved in the running of your company?	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
I believe it is in the team's interest to work for productivity and efficiency improvements within the Company.	Strongly Disagree	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
	Disagree	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
	Not Sure	1	12.5%	1	6.7%
	Agree	4	50.0%	10	66.7%
	Strongly Agree	3	37.5%	4	26.7%
I believe the management of the Company is willing to listen properly to suggestions from team leaders about better working methods..	Strongly Disagree	0	0.0%	3	20.0%
	Disagree	2	25.0%	5	33.3%
	Not Sure	2	25.0%	4	26.7%
	Agree	2	25.0%	3	20.0%
	Strongly Agree	2	25.0%	0	0.0%
My team is more likely to offer suggestions for workplace improvements if there is the possibility of financial gain.	Strongly Disagree	1	12.5%	0	0.0%
	Disagree	1	12.5%	6	40.0%
	Don't Know	0	0.0%	2	13.3%
	Agree	3	37.5%	6	40.0%
	Strongly Agree	3	37.5%	1	6.7%
My team would offer suggestions in any case (without financial incentives).	Strongly Disagree	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
	Disagree	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
	Don't Know	0	0.0%	2	13.3%
	Agree	7	87.5%	12	80.0%
	Strongly Agree	1	12.5%	1	6.7%
11.	About your voice being heard.	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
Do you offer your views about workplace issues without being asked?	Never	1	12.5%	0	0.0%
	Occasionally	1	12.5%	0	0.0%
	Some of the time	2	25.0%	5	33.3%
	Most of the time	2	25.0%	8	53.3%
	All of the time	2	25.0%	2	13.3%
Do you feel that you are being encouraged to give your views on workplace issues?	Never	2	25.0%	0	0.0%
	Occasionally	2	25.0%	4	26.7%
	Some of the time	1	12.5%	7	46.7%
	Most of the time	1	12.5%	2	13.3%
	All of the time	2	25.0%	2	13.3%
Do you feel that your views are properly listened to?	Never	1	12.5%	3	20.0%
	Occasionally	3	37.5%	5	33.3%
	Some of the time	2	25.0%	6	40.0%
	Most of the time	2	25.0%	0	0.0%
	All of the time	0	0.0%	1	6.7%

TABLE 1 - TEAM LEADER RESPONSES CONTINUED

Questionnaire Section		COMPANY			
		SME		MNE	
11.	About your voice being heard.	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
Do you feel that you get adequate feedback from whoever you gave your views to?	Never	3	37.5%	3	20.0%
	Occasionally	1	12.5%	6	40.0%
	Some of the time	1	12.5%	5	33.3%
	Most of the time	2	25.0%	1	6.7%
	All of the time	1	12.5%	0	0.0%
12.	Continuous Improvement and Problem Solving in your Company.	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
Have you ever made suggestions for improvements as part of a Project or Problem Solving Team?	Never	2	25.0%	0	0.0%
	Occasionally	2	25.0%	5	33.3%
	Often	1	12.5%	6	40.0%
	Regularly	3	37.5%	4	26.7%
Have you ever made suggestions as an individual?	Never	1	12.5%	0	0.0%
	Occasionally	3	37.5%	6	40.0%
	Often	1	12.5%	5	33.3%
	Regularly	3	37.5%	4	26.7%
Were any suggestions you have made to do with productivity improvement?	No	1	14.3%	0	0.0%
	Yes	6	85.7%	15	100.0%
	Not applicable	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Were any suggestions you have made to do with improvement in product quality?	No	1	12.5%	0	0.0%
	Yes	6	75.0%	15	100.0%
	Not applicable	1	12.5%	0	0.0%
Were any suggestions you have made to do with safer working practices?	No	1	12.5%	1	6.7%
	Yes	6	75.0%	14	93.3%
	Not applicable	1	12.5%	0	0.0%
Would you in future consider making improvement suggestions?	No	1	12.5%	1	6.7%
	Yes	7	87.5%	14	93.3%
	Not applicable	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Did you consider that any suggestion(s) you have made was given proper consideration?	No	4	50.0%	9	64.3%
	Yes	4	50.0%	5	35.7%
	Not applicable	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Did you receive feedback?	No	6	75.0%	8	53.3%
	Yes	2	25.0%	7	46.7%
	Not applicable	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Did you receive due recognition for your suggestion?	No	6	75.0%	10	66.7%
	Yes	2	25.0%	4	26.7%
	Not applicable	0	0.0%	1	6.7%
If you have made a suggestion in the past, would you do it again?	No	1	12.5%	1	6.7%
	Yes	7	87.5%	14	93.3%
	Not applicable	0	0.0%	0	0.0%

TABLE 1 - TEAM LEADER RESPONSES CONTINUED					
Questionnaire Section		COMPANY			
		SME		MNE	
12.	Continuous Improvement and Problem Solving in your Company.	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
Do you consider that improvement activities are the responsibility of the management?	No	6	75.0%	11	73.3%
	Yes	2	25.0%	4	26.7%
	Not applicable	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Do you consider that improvement activities are the responsibility of everyone in the Company?	No	1	12.5%	0	0.0%
	Yes	7	87.5%	15	100.0%
	Not applicable	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
13.	About yourself	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
Your age range?	Less than 22	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
	22-30	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
	31-40	0	0.0%	2	13.3%
	41-50	4	50.0%	1	6.7%
	Over 50	4	50.0%	12	80.0%
How long have you been working in the Engineering Industry?	< 1 year	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
	1-5 years	1	12.5%	0	0.0%
	6-10 years	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
	> 10 years	7	87.5%	15	100.0%
How long have you been working at this Company?	< 1 year	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
	1-5 years	2	25.0%	0	0.0%
	6-10 years	1	12.5%	5	33.3%
	> 10 years	5	62.5%	10	66.7%
How long have you worked as a Team Leader or Supervisor?	< 1 year	2	25.0%	0	0.0%
	1-5 years	1	12.5%	7	46.7%
	6-10 years	3	37.5%	4	26.7%
	> 10 years	2	25.0%	4	26.7%
How long have you worked as a Team Leader or Supervisor at this Company?	< 1 year	3	37.5%	0	0.0%
	1-5 years	3	37.5%	10	66.7%
	6-10 years	1	12.5%	3	20.0%
	> 10 years	1	12.5%	2	13.3%
Your Schooling and Further Education attainments or equivalents.	GCSE Level	7	87.5%	13	86.5%
	A/AS level	3	37.5%	2	13.3%
	NVQ Level 1	4	50.0%	5	33.3%
	NVQ Level 2	8	100.0%	12	80.0%
	NVQ Level 3	5	62.5%	10	66.7%
	NVQ Level 4	2	25.0%	3	20.0%
	NVQ Level 5	1	12.5%	0	0.0%
NVQ Levels 6-8	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	

TABLE 2 - TEAM MEMBER RESPONSES

TABLE 2 - TEAM MEMBER RESPONSES					
Questionnaire Section		COMPANY			
		SME		MNE	
1.	Knowledge of your Company and its Management	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
How aware are you of long term plans?	Not at all	4	11.8%	18	29.0%
	Slightly	7	20.6%	26	41.9%
	Somewhat	15	44.1%	16	25.8%
	Fully	8	23.5%	2	3.2%
How much influence do Team Members have over decision-making?	None	6	17.6%	18	29.0%
	Little	12	35.3%	32	51.6%
	Moderate	12	35.3%	11	17.7%
	Much	4	11.8%	1	1.6%
	Very much	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
How much influence do Team Leaders have over decision-making?	None	3	10.3%	4	6.7%
	Little	4	13.8%	20	33.3%
	Moderate	13	44.8%	25	41.7%
	Much	7	24.1%	11	18.3%
	Very much	2	6.9%	0	0.0%
2.	How well informed are you on what is going on in the Company?	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
I am well informed	Not sure	3	8.8%	3	4.8%
	Strongly Disagree	3	8.8%	7	11.3%
	Disagree	10	29.4%	30	48.4%
	Agree	15	44.1%	21	33.9%
	Strongly agree	3	8.8%	1	1.6%
Are you aware of your team's productivity?	No	11	32.4%	5	8.1%
	Yes	23	67.6%	57	91.9%
Are you aware of the quality level achieved in your team?	No	12	35.3%	6	9.8%
	Yes	22	64.7%	55	90.2%
Are you aware of the safety record of your team?	No	8	23.5%	1	1.6%
	Yes	26	76.5%	60	98.4%
3.	How involved do you want to be in the running of your company?	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
Not to be involved	No	20	69.0%	34	64.2%
	Yes	9	31.0%	19	35.8%
Just receive information	No	10	32.3%	18	31.0%
	Yes	21	67.7%	40	69.0%
To be consulted before a decision is taken	No	7	23.3%	10	18.2%
	Yes	23	76.7%	45	81.8%
Do you feel proud to be a member of your team?	Strongly Disagree	0	0.0%	1	1.6%
	Disagree	0	0.0%	5	8.1%
	No Opinion	11	33.3%	11	17.7%
	Agree	12	36.4%	33	53.2%
	Strongly Agree	10	30.3%	12	19.4%

TABLE 2 - TEAM MEMBER RESPONSES (CONTINUED)

Questionnaire Section		COMPANY			
		SME		MNE	
3.	How involved do you want to be in the running of your company?	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
Do you feel involved in the running of your team?	Strongly Disagree	0	0.0%	2	3.2%
	Disagree	11	33.3%	22	35.5%
	No Opinion	6	18.2%	15	24.2%
	Agree	13	39.4%	21	33.9%
	Strongly Agree	3	9.1%	2	3.2%
Do you feel you have a stake in the future of your company?	Strongly Disagree	2	6.1%	7	11.3%
	Disagree	8	24.2%	20	32.3%
	No Opinion	10	30.3%	14	22.6%
	Agree	11	33.3%	21	33.9%
	Strongly Agree	2	6.1%	0	0.0%
Do you believe the management is willing to listen properly to suggestions from employees about better working methods?	Strongly Disagree	2	6.1%	15	24.2%
	Disagree	8	24.2%	21	33.9%
	No Opinion	8	24.2%	10	16.1%
	Agree	11	33.3%	14	22.6%
	Strongly Agree	4	12.1%	2	3.2%
4.	About your knowledge of the job	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
Are you aware of the best and latest ways of doing your job?	Strongly Disagree	2	5.9%	0	0.0%
	Disagree	5	14.7%	14	22.6%
	Agree	20	58.8%	35	56.5%
	Strongly Agree	7	20.6%	13	21.0%
Are you allowed to do your job in the way you think best?	Strongly Disagree	0	0.0%	7	11.3%
	Disagree	7	20.6%	22	35.5%
	Agree	23	67.6%	26	41.9%
	Strongly Agree	4	11.8%	7	11.3%
Is the way you do your job dictated by others?	Strongly Disagree	1	2.9%	2	3.2%
	Disagree	15	44.1%	17	27.4%
	Agree	14	41.2%	29	46.8%
	Strongly Agree	4	11.8%	14	22.6%
Have you been given every opportunity to learn the best and latest ways of doing your job?	Strongly Disagree	3	8.8%	6	9.7%
	Disagree	13	38.2%	24	38.7%
	Agree	16	47.1%	29	46.8%
	Strongly Agree	2	5.9%	3	4.8%
Have you been offered job training in the last 5 years?	No	14	41.2%	19	30.6%
	Yes	20	58.8%	43	69.4%
Have you ever been refused permission to attend a job training course during working hours?	No	29	90.6%	55	88.7%
	Yes	3	9.4%	7	11.3%

TABLE 2 - TEAM MEMBER RESPONSES (CONTINUED)

Questionnaire Section		COMPANY			
		SME		MNE	
5.	Your involvement in creating improvements and problem solving in your company	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
Have you ever made suggestions as part of a team?	Never	4	11.8%	8	13.1%
	Occasionally	20	58.8%	37	60.7%
	Often	6	17.6%	13	21.3%
	Regularly	4	11.8%	3	4.9%
Have you ever made suggestions as an individual?	Never	3	8.8%	8	13.1%
	Occasionally	18	52.9%	42	68.9%
	Often	7	20.6%	9	14.8%
	Regularly	6	17.6%	2	3.3%
Were your suggestions to do with productivity?	No	6	18.2%	8	13.1%
	Yes	21	63.6%	47	77.0%
	Not applicable	6	18.2%	6	9.8%
Were your suggestions to do with improving product quality?	No	7	21.2%	7	11.5%
	Yes	21	63.6%	47	77.0%
	Not applicable	5	15.2%	7	11.5%
Were your suggestions to do with safer working practices?	No	5	15.2%	13	21.3%
	Yes	25	75.8%	41	67.2%
	Not applicable	3	9.1%	7	11.5%
If you have made a suggestion in the past, would you do it again?	No	5	15.6%	9	15.3%
	Yes	25	78.1%	44	74.6%
	Not applicable	2	6.3%	6	10.2%
Do you consider improvement activities are the responsibility of the management?	No	22	66.7%	40	65.6%
	Yes	11	33.3%	21	34.4%
Do you consider improvement activities are the responsibility of everyone in the Company?	No	2	6.1%	1	1.6%
	Yes	31	93.9%	60	98.4%

TABLE 2 - TEAM MEMBER RESPONSES (CONTINUED)

TABLE 2 - TEAM MEMBER RESPONSES (CONTINUED)					
Questionnaire Section		COMPANY			
		SME		MNE	
6.	About yourself	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
Your age range?	Less than 22	4	11.8%	5	8.5%
	22-30	12	35.3%	14	23.7%
	31-40	5	14.7%	4	6.8%
	41-50	3	8.8%	6	10.2%
	Over 50	10	29.4%	30	50.8%
How long have you been working in the Engineering Industry?	< 1 year	1	2.9%	0	0.0%
	1-5 years	10	29.4%	14	23.7%
	6-10 years	5	14.7%	5	8.5%
	> 10 years	18	52.9%	40	67.8%
How long have you been working at this Company?	< 1 year	5	15.2%	0	0.0%
	1-5 years	26	78.8%	14	23.7%
	6-10 years	1	3.0%	11	18.6%
	> 10 years	1	3.0%	34	57.6%
Your Schooling and Further Education attainments or equivalents.	GCSE Level	31	91.2%	51	87.9%
	A/AS level	7	20.6%	8	13.8%
	NVQ Level 1	18	52.9%	19	32.8%
	NVQ Level 2	28	82.4%	44	75.9%
	NVQ Level 3	24	70.6%	31	53.4%
	NVQ Level 4	2	5.9%	18	31.0%
	NVQ Level 5	1	2.9%	12	20.7%
NVQ Levels 6-8	1	2.9%	0	0.0%	

APPENDIX 4. COMPUTED VARIABLES TO ILLUSTRATE LEVELS OF EMPLOYEE VOICE AND SELF-MANAGEMENT

Table 3 Team Leader Levels of Voice Attained Indicators

Table 4 Team Leader Levels of Voice Attained

Table 5 Team Member Levels of Voice Attained Indicators

Table 6 Team Member Levels of Voice Attained

Table 7 Team Leader Levels of Self-Management Attained Indicators

Table 8 Team Leader Levels of Self-Management Attained

Table 9 Logistic Regression Outputs from Team Leader Composite Variables

Table 10 Logistic Regression Outputs from Team Member Composite Variables

Table 11 Team Leader Overall Levels of Voice and Self-Management using Mann-Whitney Tests

Table 12 Team Member Overall Levels of Voice using Mann-Whitney Tests

TABLE 3 - TEAM LEADER LEVELS OF VOICE ATTAINED INDICATORS				
Questionnaire Section		VOICE LEVEL		
12.	Your involvement in Continuous Improvement and problem solving in your company	Level 3	Level 2	Level 1
Have you ever made suggestions as part of a Project or Problem Solving Team?	Never			
	Occasionally			✓
	Often		✓	✓
	Regularly	✓	✓	✓
Have you ever made suggestions as an individual?	Never			
	Occasionally			✓
	Often		✓	✓
	Regularly	✓	✓	✓
Were your suggestions to do with productivity improvement?	No			
	Yes	*✓	*✓	*✓
	Not applicable			
Were your suggestions to do with improving product quality?	No			
	Yes	**✓	**✓	**✓
	Not applicable			
Were your suggestions to do with safer working practices?	No			
	Yes	***✓	***✓	***✓
	Not applicable			
If you have made a suggestion in the past, would you do it again?	No			
	Yes	✓	✓	✓
	Not applicable			
Do you consider improvement activities are the responsibility of everyone in the Company?	No			
	Yes	✓	✓	✓

*✓ only for participation in productivity improvement

**✓ only for participation in product quality improvement

***✓ only for participation in health and safety issues

Note:- some questions have more than one valid indicator for a particular level

TABLE 4 - TEAM LEADER LEVELS OF VOICE ATTAINED				
OVERALL LEVEL OF VOICE	SME		MNE	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
LEVEL 3	3	37.5%	4	26.7%
LEVEL 2	4	50.0%	8	53.3%
LEVEL 1	6	75.0%	14	93.3%

PARTICIPATION IN PRODUCTIVITY IMPROVEMENT	SME		MNE	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
LEVEL 3	3	37.5%	4	26.7%
LEVEL 2	4	50.0%	8	53.3%
LEVEL 1	5	71.4%	14	93.3%

PARTICIPATION IN PRODUCT QUALITY IMPROVEMENT	SME		MNE	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
LEVEL 3	3	37.5%	4	26.7%
LEVEL 2	4	50.0%	8	53.3%
LEVEL 1	5	62.5%	14	93.3%

PARTICIPATION IN SAFETY IMPROVEMENT	SME		MNE	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
LEVEL 3	3	37.5%	3	20.0%
LEVEL 2	4	50.0%	7	46.7%
LEVEL 1	5	62.5%	13	86.7%

TABLE 5 - TEAM MEMBER LEVELS OF VOICE ATTAINED INDICATORS				
Questionnaire Section		LEVELS OF VOICE		
5.	Your involvement in creating improvements and problem solving in your company	Level 3	Level 2	Level 1
Have you ever made suggestions as part of a team?	Never			
	Occasionally			✓
	Often		✓	✓
	Regularly	✓	✓	✓
Have you ever made suggestions as an individual?	Never			
	Occasionally			✓
	Often		✓	✓
	Regularly	✓	✓	✓
Were your suggestions to do with productivity?	No			
	Yes	*✓	*✓	*✓
	Not applicable			
Were your suggestions to do with improving product quality?	No			
	Yes	**✓	**✓	**✓
	Not applicable			
Were your suggestions to do with safer working practices?	No			
	Yes	***✓	***✓	***✓
	Not applicable			
If you have made a suggestion in the past, would you do it again?	No			
	Yes	✓	✓	✓
	Not applicable			
Do you consider improvement activities are the responsibility of everyone in the Company?	No			
	Yes	✓	✓	✓

*✓ only for participation in productivity improvement

**✓ only for participation in product quality improvement

***✓ only for participation in health and safety issues

Note:- some questions have more than one valid indicator for a particular level

TABLE 6 - TEAM MEMBER LEVELS OF VOICE ATTAINED				
OVERALL LEVEL OF VOICE	SME		MNE	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
LEVEL 3	3	8.8%	1	1.6%
LEVEL 2	7	20.6%	6	9.8%
LEVEL 1	22	66.7%	40	67.8%

PARTICIPATION IN PRODUCTIVITY IMPROVEMENT	SME		MNE	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
LEVEL 3	3	8.8%	1	1.6%
LEVEL 2	7	20.6%	6	9.8%
LEVEL 1	16	47.1%	36	60.0%

PARTICIPATION IN PRODUCT QUALITY IMPROVEMENT	SME		MNE	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
LEVEL 3	3	8.8%	1	1.6%
LEVEL 2	6	17.6%	6	9.8%
LEVEL 1	15	45.5%	35	58.3%

PARTICIPATION IN SAFETY IMPROVEMENT	SME		MNE	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
LEVEL 3	2	5.9%	1	1.6%
LEVEL 2	5	14.7%	5	8.2%
LEVEL 1	19	57.6%	30	50.0%

TABLE 7 - TEAM LEADER LEVELS OF SELF-MANAGEMENT ATTAINED INDICATORS				
Questionnaire Section		SELF-MANAGEMENT LEVEL		
3.	How you are allowed to lead your team?	Level 3	Level 2	Level 1
Do you feel you have sufficient independence to organise/manage/control your team in your own way?	Not at all			
	Slightly			✓
	Somewhat	✓	✓	✓
	Fully	✓	✓	✓
4.	Communication within your team.	Level 3	Level 2	Level 1
Do you in fact hold regular Team Meetings at least once a month?	No			
	Yes			
Do you only hold Team Meetings when there is a specific topic to discuss?	No			
	Yes	✓	✓	✓
5.	How do you organise and monitor the work of your team?	Level 3	Level 2	Level 1
Does your team collectively decide who does particular tasks?	Never			
	Occasionally	✓		
	Some of the time	✓		
	Most of the time	✓		
	All of the time	✓		
Does your team collectively contribute in deciding who does particular tasks?	Never			
	Occasionally	✓	✓	
	Some of the time	✓	✓	
	Most of the time	✓	✓	
	All of the time	✓	✓	
6.	How much multi-skilling operates within your team?	Level 3	Level 2	Level 1
Do members of your team willingly share their detailed knowledge with other members of your team?	Never			
	Occasionally			✓
	Some of the time		✓	✓
	Most of the time	✓	✓	✓
	All of the time	✓	✓	✓
10.	To what extent are you involved in the running of your company?	Level 3	Level 2	Level 1
I make decisions myself on matters which affect only my team.	Never			
	Occasionally			✓
	Often		✓	✓
	Regularly	✓	✓	✓

Note:- some questions have more than one valid indicator for a particular level

TABLE 8 - TEAM LEADER LEVELS OF SELF-MANAGEMENT ATTAINED				
LEVEL OF SELF-MANAGEMENT	SME		MNE	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
LEVEL 3	2	25.0%	0	0.0%
LEVEL 2	3	37.5%	2	13.3%
LEVEL 1	6	75.0%	7	46.7%

TABLE 9 - COMPOSITE VARIABLES SUBJECTED TO LOGISTIC REGRESSION								
TEAM LEADERS - OVERALL LEVELS OF VOICE								
LOGISTIC REGRESSION RESULTS				ROC CURVE	MULTICOLLINEARITY		NORMALITY	
VARIABLE	Sig	Wald	Exp (B)	AUL	Tolerance	VIF	Sig (K-S)*	Sig (S-W)**
LEVEL 3	0.417	0.658	3.000	0.554	0.599	1.670	0.000	0.000
LEVEL 2	0.835	0.043	0.750	0.517	0.536	1.865	0.000	0.000
LEVEL 1	0.224	1.482	0.167	0.592	0.836	1.196	0.000	0.000

TABLE 9 - COMPOSITE VARIABLES SUBJECTED TO LOGISTIC REGRESSION								
TEAM LEADERS - LEVELS OF PARTICIPATION IN PRODUCTIVITY IMPROVEMENT								
LOGISTIC REGRESSION RESULTS				ROC CURVE	MULTICOLLINEARITY		NORMALITY	
VARIABLE	Sig	Wald	Exp (B)	AUL	Tolerance	VIF	Sig (K-S)*	Sig (S-W)**
LEVEL 3	0.417	0.658	3.000	0.554	0.611	1.636	0.000	0.000
LEVEL 2	0.794	0.068	1.500	0.517	0.535	1.870	0.000	0.000
LEVEL 1	0.128	2.316	0.083	0.610	0.811	1.234	0.000	0.000

TABLE 9 - COMPOSITE VARIABLES SUBJECTED TO LOGISTIC REGRESSION								
TEAM LEADERS - LEVELS OF PARTICIPATION IN PRODUCT QUALITY IMPROVEMENT								
LOGISTIC REGRESSION RESULTS				ROC CURVE	MULTICOLLINEARITY		NORMALITY	
VARIABLE	Sig	Wald	Exp (B)	AUL	Tolerance	VIF	Sig (K-S)*	Sig (S-W)**
LEVEL 3	0.417	0.658	3.000	0.554	0.599	1.670	0.000	0.000
LEVEL 2	0.794	0.068	1.500	0.517	0.508	1.980	0.000	0.000
LEVEL 1	0.068	3.342	0.056	0.654	0.770	1.298	0.000	0.000

TABLE 9 - COMPOSITE VARIABLES SUBJECTED TO LOGISTIC REGRESSION								
TEAM LEADERS - LEVELS OF PARTICIPATION IN SAFETY IMPROVEMENT								
LOGISTIC REGRESSION RESULTS				ROC CURVE	MULTICOLLINEARITY		NORMALITY	
VARIABLE	Sig	Wald	Exp (B)	AUL	Tolerance	VIF	Sig (K-S)*	Sig (S-W)**
LEVEL 3	0.317	1.003	4.000	0.588	0.615	1.626	0.000	0.000
LEVEL 2	0.794	0.068	1.500	0.517	0.508	1.968	0.000	0.000
LEVEL 1	0.120	2.414	0.111	0.621	0.745	1.342	0.000	0.000

TABLE 9 - COMPOSITE VARIABLES SUBJECTED TO LOGISTIC REGRESSION								
TEAM LEADERS - LEVELS OF SELF-MANAGEMENT								
LOGISTIC REGRESSION RESULTS				ROC CURVE	MULTICOLLINEARITY		NORMALITY	
VARIABLE	Sig	Wald	Exp (B)	AUL	Tolerance	VIF	Sig (K-S)*	Sig (S-W)**
LEVEL 3	0.999	0.000	∞	0.625	0.657	1.522	0.000	0.000
LEVEL 2	0.898	0.016	0.833	0.621	0.558	1.793	0.000	0.000
LEVEL 1	0.416	0.662	2.400	0.642	0.786	1.272	0.000	0.000

(∞ = 3230948791.305) (*= Kolmogorov-Smirnov test) (**=Shapiro-Wilk test)

TABLE 10 - COMPOSITE VARIABLES SUBJECTED TO LOGISTIC REGRESSION								
TEAM MEMBERS - OVERALL LEVELS OF VOICE								
LOGISTIC REGRESSION RESULTS				ROC CURVE	MULTICOLLINEARITY		NORMALITY	
VARIABLE	Sig	Wald	Exp (B)	AUL	Tolerance	VIF	Sig (K-S)*	Sig (S-W)**
LEVEL 3	0.322	0.980	3.750	0.536	0.724	1.382	0.000	0.000
LEVEL 2	0.421	0.649	1.813	0.554	0.681	1.468	0.000	0.000
LEVEL 1	0.579	0.308	0.762	0.506	0.920	1.087	0.000	0.000

TABLE 10 - COMPOSITE VARIABLES SUBJECTED TO LOGISTIC REGRESSION								
TEAM MEMBERS - LEVELS OF PARTICIPATION IN PRODUCTIVITY IMPROVEMENT								
LOGISTIC REGRESSION RESULTS				ROC CURVE	MULTICOLLINEARITY		NORMALITY	
VARIABLE	Sig	Wald	Exp (B)	AUL	Tolerance	VIF	Sig (K-S)*	Sig (S-W)**
LEVEL 3	0.322	0.980	3.750	0.536	0.723	1.383	0.000	0.000
LEVEL 2	0.203	1.618	2.667	0.554	0.653	1.532	0.000	0.000
LEVEL 1	0.062	3.474	0.400	0.565	0.870	1.149	0.000	0.000

TABLE 10 - COMPOSITE VARIABLES SUBJECTED TO LOGISTIC REGRESSION								
TEAM MEMBERS - LEVELS OF PARTICIPATION IN PRODUCT QUALITY IMPROVEMENT								
LOGISTIC REGRESSION RESULTS				ROC CURVE	MULTICOLLINEARITY		NORMALITY	
VARIABLE	Sig	Wald	Exp (B)	AUL	Tolerance	VIF	Sig (K-S)*	Sig (S-W)**
LEVEL 3	0.239	1.388	5.000	0.536	0.697	1.435	0.000	0.000
LEVEL 2	0.424	0.640	1.933	0.539	0.632	1.581	0.000	0.000
LEVEL 1	0.087	2.937	0.431	0.564	0.873	1.146	0.000	0.000

TABLE 10 - COMPOSITE VARIABLES SUBJECTED TO LOGISTIC REGRESSION								
TEAM MEMBERS - LEVELS OF PARTICIPATION IN SAFETY IMPROVEMENT								
LOGISTIC REGRESSION RESULTS				ROC CURVE	MULTICOLLINEARITY		NORMALITY	
VARIABLE	Sig	Wald	Exp (B)	AUL	Tolerance	VIF	Sig (K-S)*	Sig (S-W)**
LEVEL 3	0.497	0.462	2.667	0.521	0.723	1.382	0.000	0.000
LEVEL 2	0.726	0.123	1.339	0.533	0.665	1.504	0.000	0.000
LEVEL 1	0.695	0.154	1.200	0.538	0.892	1.121	0.000	0.000

(* = Kolmogorov-Smirnov test) (** = Shapiro-Wilk test)

MANN-WHITNEY TEST RESULTS

TABLE 11 - TEAM LEADER RANKING IN OVERALL VOICE			
SME Mean Rank	11.63	Statistical Significance (Exact 2 –tailed Sig.)	0.875
MNE Mean Rank	12.20		

TABLE 11 - TEAM LEADER RANKING IN OVERALL PARTICIPATION IN PRODUCTIVITY IMPROVEMENT			
SME Mean Rank	11.57	Statistical Significance (Exact 2 –tailed Sig.)	1.000
MNE Mean Rank	11.47		

TABLE 11 - TEAM LEADER RANKING IN OVERALL PARTICIPATION IN PRODUCT QUALITY IMPROVEMENT			
SME Mean Rank	11.19	Statistical Significance (Exact 2 –tailed Sig.)	0.681
MNE Mean Rank	12.43		

TABLE 11 - TEAM LEADER RANKING IN OVERALL PARTICIPATION IN SAFETY IMPROVEMENT			
SME Mean Rank	11.81	Statistical Significance (Exact 2 –tailed Sig.)	0.925
MNE Mean Rank	12.10		

TABLE 11 - TEAM LEADER RANKING IN OVERALL SELF-MANAGEMENT			
SME Mean Rank	14.94	Statistical Significance (Exact 2 –tailed Sig.)	0.131
MNE Mean Rank	10.43		

MANN-WHITNEY TEST RESULTS

TABLE 12 - TEAM MEMBER RANKING IN OVERALL VOICE			
SME Mean Rank	48.58	Statistical Significance (Exact 2 –tailed Sig.)	0.536
MNE Mean Rank	45.34		

TABLE 12 - TEAM MEMBER RANKING IN OVERALL PARTICIPATION IN PRODUCTIVITY IMPROVEMENT			
SME Mean Rank	46.07	Statistical Significance (Exact 2 –tailed Sig.)	0.677
MNE Mean Rank	48.31		

TABLE 12 - TEAM MEMBER RANKING IN OVERALL PARTICIPATION IN PRODUCT QUALITY IMPROVEMENT			
SME Mean Rank	45.14	Statistical Significance (Exact 2 –tailed Sig.)	0.588
MNE Mean Rank	48.03		

TABLE 12 - TEAM MEMBER RANKING IN OVERALL PARTICIPATION IN SAFETY IMPROVEMENT			
SME Mean Rank	50.18	Statistical Significance (Exact 2 –tailed Sig.)	0.352
MNE Mean Rank	45.25		

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE TEXT

ASME - The American Society of Mechanical Engineers
AUL - Area under the Curve
CEO - Chief Executive Officer
CI - Continuous Improvement
EI - Employee Involvement
EIP - Employee Involvement and Participation
FP - Financial Participation
GVA - Gross Value Added
HPT - High Performance Team
HPWS - High Performance Work System
HR - Human Resource(s)
HRM - Human Resource Management
HSE - Health and Safety Executive
IBM - International Business Machines Corporation
IT - Information Technology
JHSC - Joint Health and Safety Committee
JIT - Just-In-Time System
KME - Kirkby Manufacturing and Engineering Company
K-S - Kolmogorov-Smirnov (test)
MD - Managing Director
MNE - Multinational Enterprise
NCR - Non-Compliance Report
NFU - National Farmers' Union
NHS - National Health Service
NUM - National Union of Mineworkers
OC - Organisational Cynicism
OECD - The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PDM - Participative decision making
PDSA - The PDSA cycle - 'Plan-Do-Study-Act'
QC - Quality Circle
QC Circle - Quality Control Circle
QI - Quality improvement
ROC - Receiver Operating Characteristic
Sig. - Statistical significance
SHEF – safety, health, environment and fire
SME – Small and Medium Sized Enterprise
SOP – Standard Operating Procedure

SPSS - Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
SRT - Safety Research Unit
STVC - Suppliers Team Volvo Cars forum
STVC-HRM - Suppliers Team Volvo Cars-HRM forum
S-W - Shapiro-Wilk (test)
SWS - Social Welfare Services
TIR - Total Incident Rate
TQM - Total Quality Management
TUC - Trades Union Congress
UK - The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
US - United States
USA – United States of America
VIF - Variance Inflation Factor
WERS - Workplace Employee Relations Survey
WERS98 - Workplace Employee Relations Survey 1998

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