Employee Experiences and Perceptions of Training in the Retail Industry

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Abstract

The purpose of this research is to find out "experiences and perceptions of training in the retail industry" in New Zealand. Training has become important for employees in any industry or workplace. It encourages the employees to upskill and gain confidence to build the knowledge required for efficiency and career development (Khan et al., 2011), and also aims to identify the training types, benefits, and opportunities the employees are getting in the retail supermarket. This thesis topic is derived from my personal experience of working in retail where I witnessed how important training and development are to the employees. This thesis used a qualitative methodology in a form of narrative inquiry to explore the participants' experiences around their working life and their experience of training (Gray, 2018). Data was collected from eight participants aged 18 to 65, using in-depth semi-structured interviews. This research study aims to explore the experiences and perceptions of training that the employees encountered during their working lives, and what their perceptions are.

The main findings of this thesis were about what employees mostly experienced on-the-job training in the retail sector, specifically in supermarkets. Employees also experienced that jobs in retail are practical, and training gives more knowledge and builds skills in the industry.

There is limited research done on retiring employees and their perceptions. The findings of this thesis help to understand the type of employees getting trained and the issues that arise. The university students in this research were given little to no training and their perception was different from that in the academic research. Also, the findings give rise to future research opportunities related to the topic.

Acknowledgment

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Attestation of Authorship

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

Swashni Narayan

1.0 Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Training and development have become a very important and integral part of any company to compete in today's business environment to remain sustainable. Therefore, it is undoubtedly essential to further develop and upskill employees' knowledge and skills, which in turn will boost performance (Amir Elnaga & Imran, 2013). Training has been described as a programme by the company where employees are trained on the job to increase their knowledge and skills, and instill a focused and competent behaviour to perform better in day-to-day activities (Amir Elnaga & Imran, 2013). Successful training inspires and makes an employee commit to the job. Employees are seen to gain new knowledge through training and development (Jehanzeb & Bashir, 2013; Noe & Kodwani, 2018). This thesis focuses on the training and development of supermarket employees in the FMCG (Fast Moving Consumer Goods) retail sector in New Zealand.

The topic of this thesis came about because I am a long-time employee of a supermarket as a supervisor and a union delegate; issues were raised concerning the criteria for giving further training to the employees who need skills to perform better and to progress in their job role. It was noticed that training is given to those employees who had worked for longer, worked extra hours and who give their best performance to progress. There are employees who have been working in the supermarket for a long time and dissatisfied with the job role because there is no training given to them for progression. Being a union delegate, this came up as an issue, raising questions of why those employees were not getting trained, and the experiences and perceptions of those who were getting trained in the supermarket retail industry. These observations from my own work in supermarkets, led me to focus on supermarkets specifically within the FMCG sector to find out employees' experiences and perceptions of training. Being a worker in one of these supermarkets made it easier to do research because of proximity and contact with the participants. The purpose of this research is to find out the employees' experiences and what perceptions they have about training opportunities and programmes with their own employers. It aims to highlight the experiences and perspectives of how they are getting trained and the benefits and impacts it has on employees in retail supermarkets. It also aims to highlight whether the employees are satisfied with the training methods or programmes that are given to them. The supermarket retail sector employs everyone, from students to retired employees, either

on a part-time, casual, or full-time basis. The research was conducted on every type of job role except managerial positions in the supermarket retail sector.

The next sections will describe how big the retail industry is in general, the number of employees being hired, and the composition of the workforce. Further, it will define what Training and Development is, and how employers and employees benefit from it. Then it will be followed by the aims and scope, and structure of the thesis.

1.2 Background of the Retail Industry in New Zealand

Overall, the retail industry plays a key role in New Zealand's national economy. It makes a substantial level of annual sales of around $50 billion, supporting approximately 20% of the nation's employment (Voges & Pulakanam, 2011) compared to the statistics in the New Zealand Herald, it accounts for 10% of New Zealand's workforce (Shaw, 2018). Retail sales overall across New Zealand have grown at a faster rate than Australia's since 2013. By comparison to Australian supermarkets, New Zealand has done better than every Australian territory. New Zealand's retail industry is now worth $92.3 billion a year (Shaw, 2018).

Moreover, the retail sector in New Zealand has been expanding due to demand with a growing population. There has been a significant increase in the number of new stores over the past five years (Chime, 2016). Organisations are fast-tracking their management programmes, which are tailored towards the competency development of both the graduates already in the job without the right skills, and equipping fresh graduates with practical knowledge (Chime, 2016). Owens Jr. and Patrick (2006) argued that employers are ignorant of how much resource is wasted through lack of skills and incompetency; therefore, more awareness programmes of training and development should be created.

In addition, retail employees can always fall back on support organisations for training, like the union in their industry. A union is an organisation formed for employees to help its members' interests concerning wages, benefits, hours of work and other conditions of employment (Sommerville, 2007). In New Zealand, the retail sector works with First Union. Retail employees get a chance to join the union and the opportunity is also given to them to become a union delegate. Delegate training is paid for by the retail sector to an employee to represent a union member if in need (First Union, 2022). The training is given to upskill their knowledge and subsequently for them to keep practising it. Cascio (2019) stated that skills and knowledge decay if you do not continue to use them or do

not practise them. Employees join the union when they feel that management is not supportive or responsive to the issues they have raised relating to their job satisfaction. These include unfair treatment by their superiors, an unfavourable physical work environment and the failure of the company to offer a career path (Sommerville, 2007). They view the Union as a safety net for them. Sommerville (2007) stated that employees usually will not join a union if the employer creates a positive environment by:

- Providing ongoing training for all the employees to ensure professional development and growth.
- Training workers and managers to enable them to achieve expected levels of performance.
- Evaluating and rewarding behaviour based on actual job performance.
- Designing jobs that are satisfying to the employees.

Moreover, the retail sector both in Australia and New Zealand is feminised, with women comprising 69.9% of the total workforce. They engage to a greater extent in casual work in Australia than in New Zealand (Campbell & Chalmers, 2008; Martinuzzi et al., 2011). The workforce is supplemented by women aged between 25 to 31 and 32 to 39 (11.4%) and older women (5.1%). However, the part time workforce consists of young female workers aged between 15 to 24 years. The retail sector consists of 47.1% of the part-time workforce. This is made up of full-time students from secondary schools and tertiary institutions (Campbell & Chalmers, 2008). The Australian retail sector has a high incidence of part-time jobs, as mentioned above. Working conditions are dominated by irregular, uncontrolled and inconvenient working hours, and short and split shifts (Martinuzzi et al., 2011). The retail sector is more flexible in deciding the hours for an employee and it is a negative influence on job satisfaction. Stress due to reduction of staffing levels is also a part of the negative influence in job satisfaction. Retail wages are 70% to 80% below average compared to the private sector (Campbell & Chalmers, 2008).

Most of the research done internationally and especially in Australia focuses on work conditions in retail, and not training and development.

1.3 The Workforce in New Zealand

There were approximately 259,000 people employed in the retail sector in the year 2012. By 2017, the retail sector employment had risen to 275,000 (Service IQ, 2014). It

contributed $16,039 million to New Zealand's gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2012. This amounted to 8% of the national GDP. The number of relatively low-skilled, part-time jobs in the retail sector is attractive to young workers who can fit their jobs around their studies. Research in 2013 shows that there are more part-time, 29.4% (less than 30 hours) employed in the retail sector (Service IQ, 2014). It is higher than the equivalent rate of 21.1% in the national economy. There are international students who are considered to be migrant employees joining the workforce in retail overall. Migrant students work in any type of employment due to requirements for the student visa. They are allowed to work only 20 hours per week. They experience workplace marginalisation but due to the visa requirements, the students' intention is to try securing their permanent residency related to their studies. Sometimes student work lives are dominated by challenging working conditions with little opportunity for progression (Anderson et al., 2011).

In 2010 the total number of employees in the retail industry was just over 195,000 (New Zealand Statistics, 2020), showing an increase in 2019 with a total of 219,400 salary or wage earners. Although 47% of the workers in the national economy are females, there are nearly 54% females in the retail sector in general. Over the past seven years, the number of female workers has slightly declined (Service IQ, 2014).

1.4 Brief Definition of Training and Development

There is a diverse range of definitions around training and development as described in the academic journals by several authors. Training is defined in broad terms as a "planned process to change employees' attitude and improve their knowledge and skills through learning experiences to achieve effective performance in an activity" (Abdullah, 2009, p.487). Noe and Kodwani (2018), described 'development' as an employee's growth in job experiences, relationships, formal education, skill, and abilities that help them prepare for future jobs or positions. This definition explained that training and development are a necessity for employees, because without them they would not be able to have a firm grasp on their roles and responsibilities at work. Meighan (2000) stated that training benefits the employees by enabling them to make fewer mistakes and ensuring all jobs are done accurately, and also to make better decisions (Falola et al., 2014). Training also helps in encouraging and achieving self-development, self-confidence and increases job satisfaction (Falola et al., 2014). It makes the employees more innovative, and gives higher motivation and morale (Saleem et al., 2011). Training not only benefits the employees but it also benefits the employers by staying competitive

in the market place (Wagner, 2000). Additionally, it leads to improved profitability and aids in organisational development and employee adjustment (Sommerville, 2007).

1.5 Training and Development in Retail

The previous section discussed how training benefits the employees' and the employers. Ahmad et al. (2014) stated that the organisation invests in their employees and is responsible for their development, which not only benefits the employees but also the business. It directly or indirectly affects employees' performance which leads to growing business activities. After employees get trained, they attain job performance confidence. They feel that they are part of the company which naturally gives them satisfaction. They are now aware of the ways of working for better productivity and efficiency, thus increasing their confidence in the business environment. Attaining this knowledge also increases their skills and innovation. Undoubtedly this increases the overall business activities (Ahmad et al., 2014).

However, employers may think it is a waste of time to organise training sessions for their employees and does not want to spend money on their development (Hameed & Waheed, 2011). The whole business is affected when there is little innovation, skills, or other qualities in its employees (Ahmad et al., 2014; Hameed & Waheed, 2011). This proves to be counterproductive to any business because it reduces efficiency and its performance rate, thus reducing not only employee morale but also the company's productivity.

Hameed and Waheed (2011) argue that development depends on how much the employees are willing to learn. If an employee is not willing to learn, he would not learn no matter how many resources are provided. When an employee is motivated to learn, then the organisation needs to provide the necessary culture and resources that empowers him to learn (Dachner et al., 2021). Enhancing their current skills and acquiring new ones as required by the current job demands, is the responsibility of the employee. These are sustainable for their employability and being prepared for leadership opportunities (Dachner et al., 2021; Molloy & Noe, 2009).

In terms of giving training to the retail employees, Service IQ provides retail programmes which makes it easy to upskill with on-job training programmes for FMCG retail (Service IQ, 2014). It provides short courses like the New Zealand Certificate (NZQA) in Retail.

This highlights that the employee is ready to compete in the retail sector and for themselves to progress in their career.

1.6 Aims and Scope

This thesis aims to explore the *experiences* and *perceptions* of the employees about **training** and **development** in the supermarket retail industry. The research question is**:** ***What are the experiences and perceptions of employees of the role and purpose of training and development in the supermarket retail industry?***

These employees were chosen from the three retail supermarkets. The three supermarkets represent the largest employers in the supermarket FMCG sector. The current research seeks to address the gap by exploring both part-time and full-time employee's training and development. The participants worked in various roles and departments, excluding managerial positions.

This thesis will focus on the supermarket employees within FMCG. It aims to understand the experiences employees had from their training and what their perceptions are at their workplace. This thesis describes the retail industry in general due to less research having been done in supermarket retail in New Zealand, but the supermarket employees were chosen specifically for this research to understand the experiences and perceptions they have of training in the supermarket.

1.7 Structure of the Thesis

This thesis is structured in the following way: Chapter 1 introduces the background of the retail industry, giving a brief definition of training and development and their importance and benefits to the employers' and employees in the retail sector, and finally the aims and scope of the research topic.

Chapter 2 is a literature review representing definitions of training and development. It further explains the importance, benefits, and the impact of training and development on the employees as well as the employers; the perception of employees working in the retail industry; the training and development in the retail sector in the New Zealand context; and training and development in the human resource development context.

Chapter 3 will discuss the methodology which includes an explanation for the qualitative research approach. This approach will be used in the form of narrative inquiry. This is because the participants will be able to tell their stories about their training and development experiences at work. The chapter discusses the methods applied in collecting and analysing the data, the selection criteria of participants, and the ethical

issues that have been taken into consideration during the data collection which also discusses the stages of data analysis.

Chapter 4 will discuss the findings that come from the data analysis. The discussion will link the literature (Chapter 2) to the thesis topic.

Chapter 5 concludes the thesis by answering the research question. This chapter will discuss the contribution and limitations of the research which includes that training does not follow the best practise at supermarkets, especially for part-time workers and their career. Also, pre-retiring employees wanted more training, but the employer did not provide enough. The findings contribute to the thesis that retail workers perception of training should have separate departments for new and existing employees to avoid confusion of their job roles. The limitations of the research are also discussed, with the thesis including only eight participants out of an anticipated twelve due to the COVID-19 lockdown in Auckland from August 2021. Finally future research is also discussed, such as retired employees' working life and whether they should be given training in the retail sector.

2.0 Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

It is almost an undeniable fact that the biggest asset of a company is its employees (Cascio, 2019; Nassazi, 2013). Therefore, it is imperative that to attain a sustainable growth and success in business, investing in the talents of the employees is essential (Jehanzeb & Bashir, 2013). The retail sector in New Zealand plays a key role in its national economy, generating a substantial level of annual sales of around $50 billion, and supports approximately 20% of the nation's employment (Voges & Pulakanam, 2011). Critical to a company's financial performance is its employee engagement. Noe & Kodwani (2018) stated that employee engagement is fostered by dedicated training and development.

A company's competitiveness is its ability to gain and maintain its market share. Training and development are essential contributors to this. Taking the right steps to attracting, motivating and retaining their workforce is a big challenge to them in this fast-changing environment of new technologies, globalisation of businesses and rapid development of knowledge and e-commerce (Noe & Kodwani, 2018). The overall goal of training and development is learning. Here the employees acquire additional knowledge, skills, competencies, attitudes, or behaviours that contribute towards better performance (Noe & Kodwani, 2018; Rodriguez & Walters, 2017).

This chapter focuses on the research that is relevant to the thesis topic: "Employee experiences and perceptions of training and development in the retail industry." It focuses on the key aspects of retail industry, particularly on supermarket employees training experiences and their perception about them. Due to a lack of existing research on employee training and development in supermarkets, the retail industry in general was discussed in relation to employees working lives and experiences in training. The researcher would like to find out from the supermarket employees' perspectives about training and development to ascertain the types of training they get; opportunities they get in the sector they work in and how beneficial it is to them. This chapter will begin by defining *training and development* and then it will review the academic literature on the topic. It will further talk about training and development in the human resource development context; the importance and benefits of training and development; the

impact it has on employees; the perceptions of the employees working in retail industry and training and development in the retail sector. There was limited research available that focuses on the supermarket retail industry and the perception of employees in New Zealand. The next section will define the training and development of employees.

2.2 Training and Development – Definition

In achieving the organisational goals in any business, training and development of its employees is very important. This is because it helps uplift or boost the employees' morale and performance. This is normally achieved using programmes developed by the employer for its employees to get trained on the job to improve the knowledge, skills, and behaviour to perform better on day-to-day activities (Dowling et al., 2013). The term *training and development* is defined differently by various authors. There is no definition that can stand on its own, as every definition seems to complement one another (Obi-Anike & Ekwe, 2014). Training is a planned effort by a company to facilitate learning of job-related competencies, knowledge, skills, and behaviours by employees (Nda & Fard, 2013; Noe & Kodwani, 2018). By contrast, Abdullah (2009) defines training as a "planned process to modify attitude, knowledge, or skills through learning experiences to achieve effective performance in an activity or range of activities. It develops the abilities of the individual to satisfy the current and future needs of the organisation" in the work situation (p. 487).

Obi-Anike and Ekwe (2014) support the above definitions. They defined training as the systematic development of knowledge and skills required to adequately perform a task. They agree that development is the most important activity in an organisation. This is because the success of an industry is directly affected by the calibre of its management in determining their development needs and relevant training. Moreover, training as well as formal education are what development is all about. It provides job experiences, relationships, skills, and abilities. These help employees prepare for future jobs or positions (Noe & Kodwani, 2018). By contrast, Abdullah (2019) defines development as "the growth or realisation of a person's ability through conscious or unconscious learning, which usually includes elements of planned study and experience, supported by coaching and counselling" (p. 487). This is because development is one's own learning growth which is not always related to a specific job, be it present or future.

Furthermore, as mentioned previously, training and development directly correlates with the training and development programmes that are developed by a company.

Employees are required to attend these programmes either online or face-to-face (Noe & Kodwani, 2018). The planned programmes of organisations are designed to improve and bring about a relatively permanent change in employees' knowledge (e.g., familiarity with all the items in a particular product line); skills (e.g., ability to deal diplomatically with customers); attitudes (e.g., satisfaction with training which leads the employees to seek out further training) and behaviour, that is, the acceptable performance of the job for which training was provided (Cascio, 2019). The need for training and development arises when there is a gap between the desired and actual performance of the employees (Timsal et al., 2016).

A planned and enduring activity that involves the growth of an individual and impacts upon his feelings, thinking ability and behaviour is how training can be described (Forgacs, 2009). Forgacs (2009) further stated, that skills can also be learned through workplace collaboration, not only through formal training. In making decisions regarding career choices, it is vital for an employee to consider his job training and development prospects.

Moreover, Chime (2016) stated that training is a logical improvement of the knowledge, skills and attitudes that are essential to an employees' efficacy in his workplace. The researcher further argues that training is a required activity within organisations whereby trainees may differ in age, educational background and years of experience and training needs (Chime, 2016). Organisations use training as a practical education to develop skills and knowledge to achieve organisational goals (Forgacs, 2009).

There are different types of training methods. They are induction training, on-the-job and off-the-job training. Coaching and mentoring are also a form of training (Training and Development, 2015). Mentoring is where more experienced employee works with recent recruits.

On-the-job training is practical, for example learning specific tasks and by understudying an experienced worker and learning from him (Jehanzeb & Bashir, 2013). This may consist of teaching or coaching by more experienced people or trainers (Nassazi, 2013). According to Bhushan & Thomas (2019), managers can coach their employees if they are slower learners. Coaching has developed leadership skills and improved human performance. Positive managerial perceptions and attitudes are major factors that contribute towards the employees training and development (Pérez Pérez et al., 2003). It is done by someone who may not know the job but uses his or her skills to draw out of the employee what the problem might be and discuss solutions. The employee will know

about the job and the coach will try to steer them in a better direction. In other words, coaching is said to be the best way to develop an employee (Training and Development, 2015).

Off-the-job training is learning general information about the job. Induction training is for new recruits, which involves teaching them about the organisation. They always have someone to refer to and have experience in every department (Jehanzeb & Bashir, 2013; Obi-Anike & Ekwe, 2014; Rodriguez & Walters, 2017). It is easy recruiting, coaching, and providing mentoring programmes for newly employed and freshly graduated individuals with training (Chime, 2016). They have the qualities but need experience and practical knowledge through training. Feedback from managers is the most effective method for improving employee skills (Noe, 2010).

As a final note on defining training and development, and different types of training methods, the research further stated that it is a function within human resource management used to fulfill the gaps between current and expected performance (Amir Elnaga & Imran, 2013; Nassazi, 2013) an employee has to offer of accumulated skill, experience and aptitudes and that which is demanded by the job (Obi-Anike & Ekwe, 2014). The next section will discuss training and development initiatives in the human resources context.

2.3 Training and Development in the Human Resource Development (HRD) Context

Human resource development is important to businesses because it consists of employees whose development should be a key task for the organisation (Swart et al., 2012). Training is the only way of developing employees' competencies (Dowling et al., 2013). Organisations need to design human resource development programmes for their employees to succeed. Werner and DeSimone (2012) defined human resource development as a set of organised and planned activities designed by an organisation to provide its employees with the opportunities to learn necessary skills to successfully meet the current and future job demands. It seeks to develop people's knowledge, expertise, productivity, and satisfaction, be it for personal or group/team gain or for the benefit of an organisation (Dowling et al., 2013).

There is a need to understand the importance of human resource development by both the employer and the employee (Werner & DeSimone, 2012). Here, the authors stated

that it is important for the employer because the company's job is not only to introduce new technology but it needs workers to show a willingness to learn new technologies as well (Werner & DeSimone, 2012). HRD is important for the employees because it has become quite clear that the notion of a job for life is now an obsolete and unsustainable proposition (Swart et al., 2012). The central focus of HRD within an organisation is on training, development and learning for individuals to achieve business strategies and organisational competence (Gourlay, 2001).

Werner and DeSimone (2012) discussed the functions of human resource development. They are discussed in the following chapters.

2.3.1 Organisation Development

Organisational development is the process of enhancing the effectiveness of an organisation and the well-being of its members (Werner & DeSimone, 2012). This highlights both macro and micro organisational changes: macro changes are intended to ultimately improve the effectiveness of the organisation as a whole, whereas micro changes are directed to individuals, small groups and team (Abdullah, 2009).

2.3.2 Career Development

An ongoing process in which individuals progress through a series of stages, for example, issues, themes, and tasks (Abdullah, 2009). It involves two distinct processes, which are: i) *Career Planning:* this involves activities performed by an individual, often with the assistance of counsellors and others to assess his or her skills and abilities in order to establish a realistic career plan; ii) *Career Management:* involves taking those steps to achieve the plan and focus more on what the organisation can do to foster employee career development (Werner & DeSimone, 2012).

According to the authors (Abdullah, 2009; Gourlay, 2001; Swart et al., 2012), the primary focus of human resource development is *Training and Development* or *Organisation Development.* However, training and development and organisation development, are both connected and interrelated. From this perspective, employees are expected to be provided with this or learning activities to improve performance which leads to organisational effectiveness (Abdullah, 2009). On the contrary, it has been argued that when training and development is provided, other than for organisational effectiveness, it helps to develop key competencies, which enables individuals to improve their current

job performance and enhance future performance for career development (Gourlay, 2001). Hence, it has been stated that the purpose of human resource development is to develop an individual's career progression, rather than to encourage training and development and organisational development (Abdullah, 2009). Career plans can be implemented through an organisation's training programmes. Training and development falls under HRD function which has been argued to be an important function of Human Resource Management (Nassazi, 2013).

However, in most organisations, training or human resource development is part of the larger human resource management function. According to Werner and DeSimone (2012) Human Resource Management is defined as the effective selection and utilisation of employees to best achieve the goals and strategies of an organisation as well as the goals and needs of employees.

Karthikeyan et al. (2010) stated that organisations that have training programmes, that their human resource management helps employees' effectiveness, self-reliance, and satisfaction. This is achieved by a good and efficient human resource strategy, for example, investing in well-designed training aimed at meeting the needs of the employees. Managers then become very enthusiastic in investing in training programmes tailored to improving employee skills, achieving organisational goals, and increasing the number of competent employees as well as creating an excellent employer brand for the organisation (Karthikeyan et al., 2010).

2.4 Importance, Benefits and the Impact of Training and Development

Having defined training and development, this subtopic will talk about the benefits, importance, and impact it has on employees. Training and development of staff should be an integral part of the operation of any successful organisation. Organisations should ensure that all staff are committed to any training that is on offer. It means employees have to undergo any training to improve performance, when it is offered by management (Meighan, 2000). It is a signal the employer gives that shows they care about the employees' personal and professional development (Cascio, 2019). According to the research, companies view their employees as one of the top tools to attract, retain, and then reward the best in their organisations. However, at times those same employees, in return complain that their companies are not developing their or their leaders' skills fast enough (Cascio, 2019).

In their research, Singh and Mohanty (2012) explained that training is an important tool for the purpose of enhancing workforce performance. This will ultimately increase the worth of an organisation, but the organisation ought to bring a balance between the 'worth of the training' and the 'amount being spent for the training' (Singh & Mohanty, 2012). Besides, employee training is important for the organisation to develop the performance of the employees and evaluate the training programme as per the objectives and missions. Enhancement of training skills should relate to a particular job; its development concerns, the growth and personal development of the employee (Karim et al., 2019). The training programme needs to be checked to see whether it adds to organisational performance and employee capability to determine if it should continue to receive funding, or whether a trainer should retain his or her position (Owens & Patrick, 2006).

Businesses waste a large sum of money on the wrong kind of training when it comes to training decisions. That is why they need to apply a training needs analysis and monitor the results. Progressive organisations see themselves as "learning organisations" (Amir Elnaga & Imran, 2013). Training is part of a broader concept of workforce planning which also includes recruitment. It makes sure the workforce has the skills to deliver the organisation's objectives (Jehanzeb & Bashir, 2013; Nassazi, 2013; Rodriguez & Walters, 2017).

Furthermore, training helps employees make better decisions and be more effective in problem solving. Training can assist in encouraging and achieving self-development and self-confidence. Also, it helps an employee handle work stress, tension, frustration, and conflict. This increases job satisfaction and recognition at work and motivates the person to achieve their personal goals and improve interaction skills (Falola et al., 2014). Employees who are well-trained often have higher motivation and higher morale because they feel that the company has invested in their ability and development. They feel recognised. Trained employees often work better as teams because everyone is aware of their expectations which can be achieved only by working together. In addition, employees who receive regular training are more likely to accept change and come up with new ideas (Saleem et al., 2011).

Employee development is important because it improves the company's quality, meets the challenges of global competition and social change, and incorporates technological advances and changes in work design. Development is also important for talent management, particularly for senior managers and employees with leadership potential (Noe, 2010). The development activities can also help companies reduce turnover in two

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ways: i) by showing employees that the company is investing in the employees' skill development, and ii) by developing managers who can create a positive work environment that makes employees want to come to work and contribute to the company goals.

Training benefits both the employees and the organisation. An employee becomes very productive and efficient after training (Amir Elnaga & Imran, 2013; Chime, 2016; Rodriguez & Walters, 2017). The benefits from employee training are increased job satisfaction and morale, increased motivation, increased efficiency, financial gain, and reduced employee turnover (Rodriguez & Walters, 2017). Job satisfaction is only achieved when employees are given importance by giving them the required training and by making them well equipped for the current demands. From an employee's viewpoint, training adds knowledge and increases competency, and empowers them to do their job with confidence (Amir Elnaga & Imran, 2013; Chime, 2016). Job satisfaction and productivity is high when the managers conduct regular meetings with their employees to find out their problems and solve them at the same time (Amir Elnaga & Imran, 2013; Khan et al., 2016). These meetings are good communication links that can be used by the employers to find out where and what skills employees lack or need and what training they are to be given. It is evident that training is more likely to have a positive effect on employee satisfaction where employers develop formal, structured approaches to training that links skill formation to job tenure, career progression, recognition, and reward (Choo & Bowley, 2007).

The three categories of identifying employee training and development needs are: resolving problems that are focused on individuals' performance, continuous improvement of working practices regardless of individual's performance issues and renewing the organisation through innovations and strategic changes (Nassazi, 2013; Rodriguez & Walters, 2017). In comparison to Rodriguez and Walter's (2017) research, leaders (managers) should also be thinking about the need to create, develop, maintain, and improve any system relevant to the job and required skills, in addition to the methods that will be used to implement training and development programmes.

Furthermore, Khan et al. (2016) argue that sometimes the existing or old employees are unable to cope with the changes at work, for example, technological change. They are so used to the old ways that they do not welcome change. In such cases, managers encourage them to partake in training and development programmes to be on par with the current technological changes and requirements. On the other hand, Aguinis & Kraiger (2009) suggested that it must be ensured that employees are ready and

motivated to get trained. Training readiness can be enhanced by lowering trainees'
anxiety about it by demonstrating the value of it before training begins and making sure
employees are highly involved and engaged with their jobs (Aguinis & Kraiger, 2009).

The table below is a comparison of training benefits for employees, management, and
the organisation.

Training Benefits for the Employee	Training Benefits for Management	Training Benefits for the Organisation
Increases job satisfaction and recognition.	Improves communication between managers and employees. Example: training builds relationships between the management and employee where one or the other will take time to listen and be considerate of each other's views. Training keeps them in the loop, gets them connected with each other.	Leads to improved profitability. Assists organisations in staying competitive in the marketplace.
Moves employee closer to personal goals. Helps in learning the soft, functional and technical skills to perform their jobs.	Improves morale and builds cohesiveness and collaboration between managers and employees.	Reduces accidents and safety violations. Receives positive results from the individuals that use the Training and Development Programmes. Increased output.
Encourages self-development, self-esteem, and self-confidence.	Aids in evaluating employee performance.	Helps create a positive corporate image. Improving their appearance as best employer in the job market; increased competency.
Helps the employee become an effective problem solver. Proactively seeks opportunities to acquire innovative skills to experience diverse roles and responsibilities.	Makes policies and procedures viable.	Aids in organisational development and employee adjustment. Retains talent, differentiating themselves against other organisations.
Allows employees to become productive more quickly.	Aids in sustaining systems and standards.	Assists in developing employees for internal promotions. Increasing the overall organisational effectiveness and efficiency.
Sustains a positive attitude toward customer service.	Helps to identify employees for promotions or transfers.	Reduces costly employee turnover.

Individuals' loyalty tends to increase sustainability; they invest more of their time and effort in achieving the bottom line for the organisation.		

Figure 1: The benefits of employee training (Sommerville, 2007)

To summarise, Jehanzeb and Bashir (2013) stated that there are several benefits that employee training and development programmes offer to individuals and organisations. These are:

Individual Benefits: Training and development programmes help "individuals to learn the soft, functional, and technical skills necessary to perform their jobs. They achieve higher level of job satisfaction because they feel they are investing in their own future and can work for the organisation longer. They feel that their role within the organisation has a real purpose. Since the individuals' loyalty tends to increase significantly, they invest more of their time and effort in achieving the bottom line for the organisation. Individuals tend to proactively seek opportunities to acquire innovative skills, to experience diverse roles and responsibilities, and to look for additional personal and professional development. Such tendencies increase their confidence, self-esteem, and job satisfaction" (p.246).

Organisational Benefits: Relevant and suitable training and development programmes assist any organisation to remain competitive and sustainable (Wagner, 2000). Employee training and development programmes not only increase the profit of organisations but also provide difference within their native market (Jehanzeb & Bashir, 2013).

Employers do not invest in employee training because it is expensive, even though it benefits the organisation (Kleiman, 2000). Recent developments in technology have increased job opportunities that have led to the needs of training and development in the workplace (Kraimer et al., 2011). Research highlighted that the leading retailers had invested in training their skilled employees which enabled them to work positively (Omoikhudu, 2017). The researcher stated that it is necessary for the employers to invest in training and development of their employees to build a workforce that enables them to carry out the daily routine smoothly.

Studies suggested that skilled employees are like an asset to the business which enables them to behave positively in their roles (Khan et al., 2016). Employee skills make the

work effective towards the achievement of the organisational goals. James and Mathew (2012) agreed with the above statement, that training and development is essential to achieve organisational goals. Having effective management within an organisation helps ensure improvement of its capability and employee performance (James & Mathew, 2012).

Employees should attempt to go through training and development when it is organised. This helps them acquire efficient performance in either single or multiple activities (Khan et al., 2016). Employees who refuse or do not participate in these programmes due to over-confidence, have done themselves a disservice (James & Mathew, 2012; Khan et al., 2016). This is because some of them think they do not need further skills because they are experienced and that their existing skills will help them in future. They feel irritated getting trained repeatedly but ultimately the loss is theirs –, training and development could improve their current skills. When the employees are trained well, they do not face as many difficulties. There are less issues in performing tasks or jobs assigned to them by management compared to employees who do not have sufficient training (James & Mathew, 2012; Khan et al., 2016; Omoikhudu, 2017). The newer and older employees particularly fall into this category. Thus, this research will discover if there were any studies on the experiences/perceptions of older and younger workers in retail.

2.5   Training and Development in the Retail Sector

Retail programmes are provided by the Service IQ which makes employees upskill on job training programmes for FMCG retail (Service IQ, 2014). Training mostly takes place at workplaces where employees learn at their own pace.

The benefit of the training and development programme results in increased sales opportunities within the retail sector (Jain & Sharma, 2019). In regards the employees' perception on getting trained formally and informally in the retail industry provided by the organisation, they maintain that it developed their skills and enabled them to work better (Guan & Frenkel, 2019).

Research was conducted in the UK retail sector which comprises the largest sector of the private economy and is identified as an important sector contributing to the local economy. This research indicated that a very high percentage of part-time workers are employed by the retail sector. With its high staff turnover and not having a very favourable image it does not attract well-qualified employees. This has somewhat tagged retailing

as a low skilled and low paid job (Hart et al., 2007). By comparison, some research was conducted in India's retail sector which accounts for over 10% of the country's GDP and around 8% of the employment (Kumar & Patro, 2018). The researcher found out that there is a need for qualified and trainable employees who are recognised as an important factor to compete in the global market. It is good for the organisation to give their employees on-the-job training so that they can learn in a practical way (Baum & Devine, 2007). Organisations who give training to their employees gain the overall goals of the organisation in a better way (Houger, 2006). Although it is costly, in the long run it is useful to the organisation and the employee. Every organisation should develop its employees according to their need so that they can compete with other retail sectors (Falola et al., 2014). Some research was conducted about technology-based retail in Ireland (Woods et al., 2021). The researchers stated that retailers need to prepare for the future, since technology is going to play an increasingly important role. Any investment in technology is likely to involve investing in training employees as well. The employees must upskill/reskill based on the technology that is going to be used in retail. Only then can technology be fully understood and utilised (Woods et al., 2021). To develop an effective strategy for skills training and development in the retail sector, employers will have to determine how much talent is required internally and what skills need to be sourced externally. In addition, Owens Jr. and Patrick (2006) argue that many employers are ignorant of how much waste is experienced through lack of skills and incompetency. To educate society in general, it is important to create more awareness to have the right skills for a particular job role. One of the main reasons for employees to leave a job is because they are uncomfortable with the working environment created by their manager (Noe & Winkler, 2009).

According to the research of Costen and Salazar (2011), there was a change in the retail sector in New Zealand a few years ago. This was done through the implementation of 'on-the-job training' and awareness programmes. Improved skills, enhanced brand image and an increase in the number of professionals are evident of these. Organisations are encouraged to create awareness and invest in 'on-the-job training.' Despite this, many organisations still do not take it seriously because less skilled workers means they need to pay less for staff wages (Costen & Salazar, 2011).

However, the employee turnover in retailing continues to grow because young workers are usually employed part-time only. They are mostly students getting work experience (Hurst & Good, 2009). These researchers also mentioned that students who have retail work experience are unlikely to choose retail as a future career after their graduation

(Hurst & Good, 2009). It is evident that the retail sector is an employer for young and less-educated workers. For example, one-fifth of all the retail sector employees currently employed are aged between 16 to 24 years old (Bensnes & Strøm, 2019). Those working part-time are treated as 'casual' employees because they are just there to 'fill in' and are only called in whenever the need arises. Therefore, they are not given training like full-time employees (McLaughlin & Rasmussen, 1998). The research further states that employees working for the retail sector do not have any choice over the hours and days they work.

According to McLaughlin & Rasmussen (1998), employees in this sector experience a lot of work pressure in their roles, including night/evening shifts (McLaughlin & Rasmussen, 1998). Devins et al. (2014) argue that there is flexibility working in the retail sector which attracts employees. Young employees like students and people who return to work are advantaged because the work schedule fits around their study, family, and lifestyle commitments. Normally they are part-time employees (Devins et al., 2014). The physical nature of such types of jobs make it less attractive to the older workers with 15% of the workforce being of retirement age in the retail sector compared to almost 20% for all industries (Service IQ, 2014). The flexibility in deciding the hours for an employee (Devins et al., 2014; Martinuzzi et al., 2011b; McLaughlin & Rasmussen, 1998) by the retail employer has a negative influence on job satisfaction (Martinuzzi et al., 2011). Many employees are transitional. They do the job only until they find another one more suitable to their requirements, therefore for them stability is not an issue until they have to find another job (Martinuzzi et al., 2011).

Nearly 54% of the workers are predominantly female in the retail sector and they account for 47% of workers in the national economy (A Profile of the Retail Sector in New Zealand. Service IQ., 2014) Part-time and casual hours of work offer flexibility for employees who have family commitments.

Noe & Winkler (2009) argued that ageing of the labour force also contributes to diversity. This means that an ageing population is likely to have a growing share of older workers in employment. Older people want to work, and many employees said that they plan a working retirement, meaning they are also willing and eager to learn new technology (Noe & Winkler, 2009). An emerging trend is for qualified older employees to ask to work part-time or for only a few months at a time as a means to transition to retirement (Noe & Winkler, 2009). To support the above argument, New Zealanders are increasingly saying no to retirement because they find having a job is fulfilling and sociable. A

Neighbourly survey often found people over the age of 70 still working in retail (Tokalau & Piper, 2021).

2.6 Perception of Employees Working and Training in the Retail Industry

Very little research has been conducted into the perceptions of retailing from older employees but there was some research conducted on younger employees. This was done in the UK of generation Y's experiences, perceptions, and expectations of retail employment. Generation Y is the term used for those who are born between 1977 and 1994 (Merchandiser, 2003). Retailing has been a youthful industry and many managers can reach senior positions at a relatively young age. This sector employs many students who combine their studies with part-time opportunities offered (Broadbridge, 2003). According to Broadbridge's (2003) research, retailing was not viewed as a particularly attractive career. About 10% of the youth regard retailing as a very appealing career opportunity, while a further 26% consider it somewhat appealing. The authors stated that most of the young employees see retail as a career not just a job, but older employees see that as a normal job, working for family or just for salary (Broadbridge, 2003; Broadbridge et al., 2007a, 2007b; Merchandiser, 2003).

When asked in an open-ended question to state their preferred career choice, just 2.6% of students stated they wanted to be in the retail industry (Broadbridge et al., 2007a, 2007b). They said after completing their courses in retail they saw retailing as a more dynamic and challenging industry with opportunities for career advancement. Student opinions of working in retailing are varied. Some find it interesting, challenging and well reimbursed. Others say it is boring, routine and lacking in prestige. It is perceived that advancement opportunities are limited and it has poor salary and working hours (Broadbridge et al., 2007). According to Kathman and Kathman's (2000) research, students are given little or no training, and they are not valued. This is because of the nature of the work they do like replacements for full-time personnel. They argued that senior employees like supervisors are reluctant to take time to train student employees. This happens because student employees are perceived to be not as committed to their job. Curtis and Lucas (2001) argued that the students' dislike of the work is centred on the nature of the work itself. The most frequently cited attributes associated with a career in retailing are consumer and people-oriented, poor salary, limited advancement and poor working hours (Curtis & Lucas, 2001). These did not compare favourably to those associated with the students' preferred career expectation. They expected it to be

interesting, having opportunities for advancement, challenging, rewarding and satisfying (Broadbridge, 2003; Merchandiser, 2003).

What attracts and engages younger employees to their jobs is quite different from that of older generations. There are three sources of work motivation: they are the job; the outcomes of the job (rewards and sanctions); and the organisational system (policies, practices and culture) (Amar, 2004). Kumar & Patro (2018) conducted a study in India's retail organisation, and they found out that their overall employee perception was positive. They conducted a study on all the employees and felt that their training faculty was good but could be improved further. Employees felt that their feedback should always be taken after training, and corrective measures be adapted. However, they were satisfied working for the retail organisation.

Later, this research will investigate the perception of older employees about training and development in the retail industry and what they think about working for retail since the research above has a gap explaining about older employees.

2.7 Conclusion

This literature review discussed and defined what training and development is, followed by several researchers' views. It also discussed the importance of training and development in the retail sector and how it benefitted the employees as well as the employers. Furthermore, it considered the impact it had on employees after getting trained, and the responsibilities of the employer to train them. In other contributions to this literature, several researchers have focused on the importance and benefits of the training and development for employees in the organisation. It focused on the advantages of training and development, which are: advantages like an increase in productivity and building skills, employee satisfaction, reduction of mistakes by employees, reduction of employee turnover rates, and helps in setting clear goals or expectations. There were also disadvantages like: organisations finding it expensive to train their employees, creating resentment among employees and the ability of different people learning best in different ways. It also discussed about how older/existing employees and student employees perceived training and development in the retail sector. Finally, this literature review also explained how human resource development and its functions fit in training and development of the employees and the organisation. Due to a lack of research in employee training in supermarkets, the literature review discussed the retail industry in general using international research. However, the

findings on the retail industry in general relates to the supermarket because the line of work and the responsibilities of the employers/employees are the same. Most importantly the types of training given, which is 'on-the-job training,' are the same. Furthermore, the general literature on the retail industry also relates to supermarket employees because the employees work on a part-time, casual and full-time basis; students are also employed. The supermarket student employees and older (pre-retired) employees are given minimal training.

The aim of this thesis is therefore to explore the employee experiences and perceptions of training in the retail industry, focusing on supermarket employees only. It will do this through narrative inquiry in the next chapter.

3.0 Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter mentioned that there is a lack of research on training supermarket employees in the retail industry, particularly the training experiences and perceptions of employees in New Zealand. Furthermore, there was also limited research on international training experiences and perceptions of employees in the retail sector, especially when supermarket retail is the focus of the research. Thus, this thesis will fill these gaps by researching employee experiences and perceptions of training in supermarkets in New Zealand.

Chapter 3 outlines the research methodology. The purpose of this study was to find out the experiences and perceptions of supermarket employees about training and development in the retail sector in New Zealand. A question over the types of training given in the retail sector and if employees were benefitting from those was given importance. The research question is: "What are the experiences and perceptions of employees of the role and purpose of training in the retail industry?"

To answer the research question, qualitative research methods were used to conduct this thesis. Qualitative research was used to highlight the experiences and knowledge of the participants who were not 'heard'. It aimed to understand people's 'social reality' which means employees' input would be translated into words, descriptions and phrases that are meaningful (McLeod, 2019). Qualitative data was more appropriate for this thesis because it is an inductive view of the relationship between theory and research which applied to this research question (Bell & Bryman, 2007).

This chapter describes the choices made regarding the research design including the methodology and methods. It discusses the philosophical background, which includes the interpretivist research paradigm relativism ontology, and constructivist epistemology. This chapter then further discusses semi-structured in-depth interviews as the data collection method and the type of data analysis used in this research. Moreover, it shows how this research recruits its participants followed by the thematic analysis used to analyse the data following the six principles (Braun et al., 2019).

Finally, this thesis gives a background of the interviewees and outlines the Ethics protocol for the participants and the researcher.

The following section outlines the philosophical background and research design used for data collection and analysis to answer the research question.

3.2 Philosophical Background

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the purpose of this research is to explore the "employee experiences and perceptions of training in the retail industry." To find out the answers or to explore the perception of individual employees in depth, a qualitative research approach was the appropriate way since it is more concerned with words and meanings rather than numbers for data collection (Bell & Bryman, 2007).

Qualitative research is defined as an approach that allows a researcher to examine people's experiences in detail by using a specific set of research methods such as in-depth interviews, as this thesis used for its participants (Jackson et al., 2007). It is concerned with the participants' experience about training in the supermarket and what they think about that training and development. Qualitative research mainly answers how and why things happen. It will understand the in-depth thinking of information on the research topic chosen for this thesis or the experiences the participants have; explaining things and the processes they went through if there was any training given to them. The benefits to this type of research are that it constructs or gives the detailed description of the participants emotions, opinions, and experiences which interprets the meanings of their actions (Rahman, 2020).

Secondly, in this kind of research the participants can speak their mind, and this gives a voice to the ones who are not heard. It is a research which is an interactive process, where the persons who are studied, narrate to the researcher about their lives (McLeod, 2019; Rahman, 2020). This consolidates that qualitative research is the right approach for my research. It will give an in-depth understanding of my participants and I will be able to get an in-depth picture of their feelings and emotions while working in the sector, whether they are being trained or not and their experiences of that. Also, the chosen participants will be able to talk freely about the issues they are facing in the company, if any exists. Therefore, these chosen participants opinions will be heard. Follow-up questions can be asked helping the researcher to see things from the employees' perspective and consequently make decisions and judgements. It aims to understand people's social reality and not try to make assumptions about 'truth' and fact.

Eriksson and Kovalainen (2015) stated that a qualitative research approach is concerned with interpretation and understanding, whereas, the quantitative approach deals with

explanation, testing of hypothesis and statistical analysis. In the qualitative approach, the collection of data and their analysis are sensitive to the social and cultural context aiming at a holistic understanding of the issues studied. Qualitative research is used when the concepts are able to be expressed in words and it is not suitable to be translated into numbers (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2015). This will have a meaningful bearing in this research because it will only be done through interviews that concerns word expressions and answers given by employees.

3.3 Ontology

Ontology is the "study of existence and the fundamental reality or being." It is concerned with the relationship between people and society. The fundamental questions related to ontology include: what exists, what is true and what is real. There are two main categories of Ontology, and they are Realism and Relativism. Realism is defined as one true reality. This means that it is a fact, and it does not change. Relativism has many realities and they are not permanent (Gray, 2013).

The central ontological assumption in this research is that reality is a form of subjectivism. Reality is created and understood in many ways. It is based on an individual's perceptions and experiences which may change in different times and places (Antwi & Hamza, 2015).

The most appropriate branch of ontology used for this research is Relativism. The aim of this research is to find out the experiences and perceptions of employees who are not getting trained or the way they are getting trained and the benefits they gain from that. The perception of each individual employee is not the same, so the reality is not permanent (Gray, 2013). There are multiple realities and ways of accessing them by taking interviews. As mentioned before, this research will explore the realities of employee experiences and perceptions of training in the retail industry. This thesis will explore into employees' perceptions by generating questions and getting feedback on their experiences of training opportunities and programmes. These realities could be recounted by the employees in the interview. Here, the researcher can build up more questions to find out the truth. For example, is it because of the employees attitudes that they did not get trained or is it the lack of a quality work outcome. "Relativism arises from the acknowledgement of the existence of differences in attitudes and beliefs" (Baghramian & Coliva, 2019).

For this research, an ontological perspective is to explore trainees' perceptions and experience of the training given by the employer and how it contributed towards their

career and any consequent change of behaviour. This research will also explore the in-depth background and the first-hand information attained from the employees in the retail sector. Participants in this research will talk about their working life experience and how their lives changed after being trained in the retail sector. If they have not been trained, they would point out the reasons and issues that contributed to this situation in the industry. From attaining this information, the researcher will be able to find out where the issues lie. The researcher would be enabled to think from the participants perspective. Ontological issues are to do with the view that the social world is regarded as something external to social actors or as something that people are in the process of forming (Antwi & Hamza, 2015).

3.4 Epistemology

The epistemology for this research is Constructivism which is found in Relativist ontology. Constructivism is a theory about knowledge and new learning. The meaning of constructivism is created through interaction with the object (Fosnot, 2013). It is important to gain knowledge about the study a researcher would be conducting. The researcher would only find out the answers to the research question if the participant and the researcher communicated and interacted well.

According to Killam (2013), we do not find knowledge, we construct it by interacting with the object or participants. As the research would be based on perceptions, it is therefore possible to have multiple, socially constructed realities that are all considered correct. Therefore, constructivists reject the notion that an objective really exists. The epistemological approach considers the researcher and participant as co-creators of the findings which involves interaction between the researcher and participants. The methodologies used in constructivist research are therefore based on interactions between and among the researcher and participants; therefore, a consensus can be sought within the findings. Qualitative methods such as in-depth interviews are used, and the context is well described (Fosnot, 2013; Killam, 2013).

3.5 Paradigm

The paradigm used in this research is Interpretivism. Ryan (2018) stated that interpretivism has a 'relativist' ontological perspective. It argues that being subjective, truth and knowledge are also culturally and historically situated, being based on people's experiences and their understanding of them. Relativists suggest that reality is only knowable through socially constructed meanings and that there is no single shared reality. The selected employee in the retail sector would have his or her own perspective

and experience of the training provided by management. They would be able to clarify the reasons behind being trained or the types of training programmes provided. This reflects the proposition that there are multiple realities (Ryan, 2018).

Moreover, the interpretivist paradigm states that "reality is socially constructed" (Thanh & Thanh, 2015). "It is accepting and seeking multiple perspectives. It is rather relational and subjective, produced during the research process. The researcher is not assumed to be value-neutral and objective, but rather an active participant, along with the research subjects" (p.25). In this thesis, it is better to hear about different people's perspectives regarding the job they are doing and their diverse social background. Individuals have their own interpretation of the reality constructed through social interaction. Employees will be able to talk about themselves and the other staff in the retail industry, as they are the ones who can explain the real reasons for them getting or not getting trained (Thanh & Thanh, 2015).

Thus, this research uses a qualitative approach and interpretive paradigm where there are multiple faces of reality and subjectivity is influenced by the research context (Crossan, 2003). Different people with different cultures under different circumstances and at a different time make different meanings to create and experience different social realities. The purpose of this interpretivist research is to create new, richer understanding and interpretations of social worlds and context (Saunders et al., 2019). For example, experiences are different between participants from different companies.

The interpretative paradigm is based on the idea that the participants in this research will construct their reality based on their understanding of social interactions of people and their reactions to the environment, which is currently the retail industry (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2015). The assumption of this approach is that there are many possible interpretations of these social interactions and the data generated (Creswell & Poth, 2016; Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2015).

3.6 Methodology

This thesis used narrative inquiry to explore participants' stories about their training and development experiences at work (Creswell & Poth, 2016; Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2015). Narrative inquiry is explained as an approach that focuses on the use of stories as data. Here, the employees' stories were collected, then understanding their experiences as lived and told through both the research and literature (Savin-Baden & Niekerk, 2007). It was meaningful for the supermarket employees to talk about their experiences around

their training and their perceptions, so in-depth interviews were used to gather their stories. Narrative inquiry goes beyond capturing a snapshot or cross-section of events showing how and why things happen. According to Gray (2019), this aligns the ontological and epistemological assumptions that frame the research design; that reality is recognised in the form of subjectivism.

This type of methodology helped in observing participants' behaviour and the emotions they carried while narrating their stories. It was the best methodology for my thesis as it took a snapshot of the detailed experiences of the participants. Experience is the stories that people live; people live their stories and in the telling of them reaffirm them, modify them, and create new ones (Savin-Baden & Niekerk, 2007).

3.7 Data Collection

3.7.1 Semi-Structured Interviews

This research used semi-structured interviews to collect data. This type of interview is the most common of all the qualitative research methods. According to Longhurst (2003), the semi-structured interview can be used for a range of research, and are reasonable, informal or conversational in nature and also flexible. To get a better understanding of the views of the interviewees, a semi-structured interview is helpful. It explores an issue or a topic for more information other than what is known or evident. It involves asking similar questions to be put in different ways. A question which is not in the schedule can be asked to get more ideas from the information given by the interviewee. This type of interview works well with narrative inquiry because the participants in the research can give a lot of extra information that can be added to the verbal answer related to the research question. The participants' answers were more spontaneous (Opdenakker, 2006). Open-ended questions were asked of the participants so that they could have a say and be heard, as stated earlier. This kind of interview would make the participants more expressive and be easier for the researcher to gather in-depth data.

The eight participants interviewed for this thesis were experienced and had been in the sector for more than two years. Their stories were recorded using the 'otter app' and a semi-structured style was used to help the participants talk openly about their experiences and perceptions in relation to the research question. This type of methodology in research gave the chance for participants to share the knowledge of their experience.

According to Qu and Dumay (2011), this type of interview is a more convenient means of gathering information because it is flexible and accessible. More importantly, it effectively discloses hidden truths of humans and their organisational behaviour. This means the participants will be able to give information regarding the training experience they had in the supermarket and how management trains them. In this type of interview, open-ended questions were asked. The researcher asked a question that gave the participant the space and time to really understand the question and then respond; for example, "Tell me if you were sent for any training to progress in the company and how did you feel about it?" Close-ended questions were asked at the beginning only as warm-up questions for the interviewee; for example, "What is your name and how long have you worked in FMCG retail sector?"

Sometimes different wordings of the responses by the participants may lead to a different interpretation by the researcher (Qu & Dumay, 2011). This is the disadvantage to this type of interview, as it is either the question that is not clear, or the participant does not understand the question. Both the participant's fear of the unknown and their lack of clarity can be minimised by effective communication and a pre-session to explain the motives for the training. In this case, the interviewer must be a good listener and communicator.

3.7.2 Recruiting Participants and Sample collection

This researcher collected the sample of employees from any department who had been in a retail sector (supermarkets) for two years or more, either on a casual basis, part-time or full-time. The participants were chosen from the following criteria: participants were chosen from the selected supermarkets who had been working for two years and more and with experience in any department and non-managerial positions. Eight out of twelve participants were selected from FMCG (Fast Moving Consumer Goods) industry, their ages ranging from 18 to 65 years.

First Union was used to send out messages to volunteer or take part in this research through union newsletters, as they represent most employees on site. The researcher is a Union delegate, therefore did not interview any member who had been previously represented by them. Newsletters are a good formal means of communication. The research used union and non-union members as participants, because from personal experience as a union delegate, the union members have a lot to say. While they cannot be expressive at work, it was easier for them to respond more openly during the interview because of confidentiality. These newsletters were meant to indicate whether the

participants volunteered or were genuinely interested to participate. The interested participants then contacted the researcher on the contact number provided in the newsletter. Detailed information and a consent form were sent with the participant information sheet, which was subsequently sent to participants via e-mail. Once the consent form was signed by the selected or interested participants, the interview time was arranged by telephone call. A follow up e-mail was sent to the participants to confirm the time and date for the interview and to the ones who did not respond to the invitation. Due to the lockdown, participant recruitment was difficult. Also, those on migrant visas appeared to be reluctant to speak out openly. They were hesitant to elaborate and were not clear on their explanations to some of the questions asked. Due to a hard days' work, people get tired, so therefore, they were hesitant to talk much and engage in long discussions or responses. However, I am thankful to their participation and very much appreciate their contribution.

Due to the COVID-19 lockdown in 2021, the researcher was not able to interview face-to-face, therefore the interviews were conducted via telephone. There were eight participants in total. Twelve were recruited but four of them backed out just before the interview due to concerns about speaking up, as well as supermarket employees experiencing a huge amount of stress during the August 2021 lockdown in Auckland.

The interview duration was about 40minutes because of the participants' busy schedule.

3.8 Data Analysis

3.8.1 Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis was used because it is a flexible approach and suitable for this research (Braun et al., 2019). It involves identifying, organising, analysing and interpreting patterns across a data set (Braun et al., 2019). Here, the data is repeatedly read by the researcher to outline the keywords, the frequent trends and the themes that are essential to answer the research question (Guest et al., 2011). Participants then narrated their training and development stories with the researcher. The researcher identified the keywords from the stories relayed/told by the participants. Then, from those keywords this research created a theme and sub-themes to answer the research question. After the themes and sub-themes were outlined then the researcher analysed what the participants had said and analysed it from their perspective. The analysis started while listening to the interviews.

This research used Reflexive Thematic Data Analysis to interpret the data in the content and to build up the meaning given by the retail sector employees. Each source in this research was recorded and analysed. The participants were asked questions around their training and development in the retail sector; they were the providers of the sources of information. These employees who worked in the retail sector for more than two years were asked how and what their management were doing to develop their career or if they had any ambitions of career progress.

Reflexivity means understanding what the participants are saying and why they are saying it. According to Haynes (2012), reflexivity is more complex, thinking about the experiences and questioning our ways of doing things. It draws on social constructionist assumptions to highlight subjective, multiple constructed realities (Haynes, 2012). In this example, reflexivity discovers the different perceptions of different employees in different departments regarding their training opportunities. I have been employed with one of the main supermarket chains for more than nine years now. From my personal experience as a retailer, I have a different perception of working. I am an experienced employee working for two departments in a supervisory role and never been identified for career progress although I know my job very well. Management never supported in my advancement. This made me think whether I had been doing enough to fulfill the expectations of management to give me the opportunity to progress further in my career path. If this was not the case, then what is it that hinders my career progress? I have been told different excuses or stories whenever I approached management for further training and found the experience stressful. Therefore, I decided to stop requesting training, continued working and started studying further to join a workforce somewhere else where I could get full training and develop to upskill myself.

The researcher followed the six steps in this research stipulated in Braun and Clarkes' Thematic Analysis which are described henceforth (Braun et al., 2019).

Step1: Familiarising of the data

Here, the researcher would know who the participants are. She would listen and understand what the participants are saying. Then note down the important points about each source which a researcher thinks are reliable and relates to the research question. For example, why the researcher chose the sources who are employed from two years and how the data would be familiarised. The data collected would be about how training and development benefits the employees followed by the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats by the sector.

Steps 2 and 3: Generating initial codes and searching for themes

According to Guest, MacQueen and Namey (2011), the familiarisation of data in step 1 will be sorted into codes which reflect recurring trends, for example, listening and re-reading from the participants answers given in the interview. It will be more detailed and systematically engaged with the data provided. This data will be organised around similar meanings and the context which is reduced into collated chunks of the text.

In step 3, common themes are grouped together; a theme is a particular pattern or label noticed. The data collected has a shared meaning of situation and the sources of experiences talked about. This enables building a meaning at the conclusion. Themes are searched in the content and the most appropriate theme derived from it. After the interview, participants views/answers will be reviewed to pick out the common things they have reported. All eight interviews will be compared and commonalities identified.

Step 4: Reviewing themes

The researcher reviewed the themes in step 3 and established if it met the requirement of answering the research question. The content, the extent and how the themes are selected for the purpose of the research question was noted (Guest et al., 2011). The researcher must see if the theme is useful or if it tells something useful about the data and answers the research question. They would see the boundaries of the theme to see what to include or exclude. Moreover, it is noted if there is enough data or whether it is meaningful to support this theme.

Step 5: Defining and Naming Theme

Here the researcher saw what each theme was about. She saw the uniqueness of the selected participant's answers towards the training and development questions being asked. The initial codes would be refined and explained. The researcher must be careful that themes are not repetitive. The extracts selected to quote and analyse provides the structure of the analysis.

Step 6: Producing the Report

A convincing story is built up, derived from the analysis of the available data and a report is subsequently written (Braun et al., 2019). Here, the research question was discussed in the findings/report.

3.9 Ethical Consideration

An application for ethical approval to the AUT Ethics Committee was made because data collected would be from Retail Sector Employees. This ensures the privacy of the employees being interviewed. Ethics approval was granted from the Ethics Committee on the 23rd of July 2021, reference number 21/215. The ethical procedures were followed in this research, together with the ethical approval forms which are attached in the Appendix section (Chapter 8).

The ethics application was sent to the AUT Ethics Committee (AUTEC) to ensure the participants' rights and privacy are not breached but protected and respected. According to Bell (2002) and Payne (2000), ethical considerations are important to qualitative research and makes both the participant and the researcher feel safe. Hennink et al. (2020) stated that qualitative research is conducted to hear the voices of the people. Therefore, to achieve this, a trust relationship is established with the participants. Consent forms with sufficient information about the research would be sent to the participants. It would be comprehensible to them, and voluntary decisions would be made to participate in this research study (Hennink et al., 2020). This ethics application was to ensure there would be a minimisation of harm. Also, anonymity and confidentiality would be considered.

To avoid harm includes physical harm such as being present in unsafe places or using harmful tools. Participants would be asked where they could meet for the research interview and the researcher would also suggest some suitable locations. For example, the researcher aims to meet on AUT campus, if they cannot then meet via zoom calls due to COVID 19 restrictions. Supermarkets have training rooms available as well; employees can choose that for their safety if wanted. Also, participants would be able to select a time for the interview based on their availability (Bell, 2002; Savin-Baden & Niekerk, 2007).

The principle of informed consent means that sufficient information was given to the research participants to understand what they would be involved in to facilitate making an informed decision. Participants were given enough time to think if they still wanted to continue with the interview. The information about the researcher and the research would be sent to the eligible participants via e-mail. It is very important to allow the participants to respond openly and effectively, establishing a trust between the participant and the

researcher. As such, it is the right of the participants to know and understand the purpose of the research and how their information will be handled (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2015).

Furthermore, the principle of the participants' privacy was also considered in this research by guaranteeing confidentiality; that is, if they do not wish their names to be recorded it would not be used in this research (Creswell & Poth, 2016; Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2015; Payne, 2000)

The last principle is to avoid deception. This implies being honest as to the purpose of the research and using the participants' words honestly and checking with them what they meant after transcription to ensure that their words would be used accurately (Creswell & Poth, 2016; Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2015).

Participants were given an opportunity to review the transcription of their interview and change or delete anything they were uncomfortable with or clarify what they said.

3.10 Conclusion

This chapter discussed the research aims and the philosophical background of what ontological, epistemological and paradigm would be used for the research question. Also, it stated the methodology used to link to the ontology, epistemology, and paradigm. Moreover, this chapter discussed how the data was collected and analysed using thematic analysis in this thesis. There were eight participants in this research study and the process of data collection involved seven steps to ensure that all ethical considerations had been taken and met. The interviewee selections were based on specific criteria to ensure effective participation. The supermarket participants were chosen during the COVID-19, 2021 lockdown period. Following privacy and confidentiality protocols was highly important to the participants and the supermarkets they work for; therefore, the names of the supermarkets has been made confidential. Finally, this chapter outlined the stages of data analysis and the challenges faced while conducting each step. The next chapter discusses the themes and the findings in relation to the research questions.

4.0 Chapter 4: Findings

4.1 Introduction

The methodology chapter (Chapter 3) outlines that the semi-structured interviews were carried out for this research. Participants were recruited via the First Union Newsletter. Only the participants who volunteered or showed interest were recruited for the research. This chapter will present the findings from the interviews carried out with the eight participants. The research is entitled: *"Employee experiences and perceptions of training and development in the retail industry."* The data was collected using semi-structured interviews with eight non-managerial employees from the retail sector. Interviewees came from three different sectors within the retail industry. Also, this chapter tries to establish the different opinions of how the training programmes should be structured, whether it benefits them or not and if they learnt anything from the training given to them. It will further discuss in detail about their experiences and perceptions.

This chapter will start with eight participants' background. They are not named to avoid personal identification. Therefore, code names will be used such as P1, P2…. The chapter then presents the main themes emerging from the data.

4.2 Participants Profile

This section is about the participants' background. There were eight participants aged between 18 and 65 years old, including two students who are part-time employees, and six other adults who are full-time employees. Altogether, they were three males and five females. These participants work for departments such as the checkout, fresh food, and grocery. They come from three different retail sectors. The researcher does not indicate which supermarkets the eight participants work for.

P1: She is an immigrant and has a Postgraduate Degree. She has been in New Zealand for four years and is between 30 to 40 years of age. After moving to New Zealand, she completed a Diploma in Marketing in order to gain a New Zealand qualification. She lives with her husband, and they are financially stable. The participant said she was keen to have a job, so a friend recommended her to join a retail supermarket and she got hired as a checkout operator on a casual basis. Slowly she got hired as a supervisor in the same department and now it has been three and a half years, she is with the retail

supermarket as a full-time employee. Now she works for two departments – checkout and in the cash office to gain payroll knowledge. She is an experienced retail employee currently on a work visa and waiting for her permanent residency, after which she is intending to look for another job.

P2: He is an immigrant and employed with the retail sector ever since he arrived in New Zealand. He has been in New Zealand for 7 years now. He has only worked in New Zealand in the supermarket he currently works at. He calls the place he works his 'second home' and says retail is a great place to work because it is a good, friendly environment. He works for a fresh foods department and is trying to learn another job in the same department to upskill. Previously, he had a goal to work for a high-tech company but started enjoying retail and knows he has future potential in the industry. The participant said that the retail sector gives a good pay rate, and he has got 7 years of experience in retail; he believes it is easy to gain experience in this sector. He is between 30 to 40 years of age.

P3: He is between 30 to 40 years of age and came to New Zealand in 2014 as a student. He is an immigrant with an undergraduate degree from his home country. He pursued further studies in New Zealand, attaining level 7 Business Studies from a tertiary institute in Auckland. He joined a retail supermarket in 2015 and has 6 years of experience in the sector. He started working part-time as a student because he is on a student and work visa. After finishing studies, he got hired as a night fill assistant, full-time. Later, he started working in a different department for a change but went back to night fill and applied to be a supervisor.

P4: A retired New Zealander, aged between 66 to 76 years of age. She has been in the retail sector for the last 16 years. Her first job was in a fast-food company and when she saw an opportunity in the retail sector nearby, she changed her employer. She said working for a fast-food company and then for the retail industry is a big change. She has been enjoying work but sometimes there are issues in the department; every day has different challenges, she says. There are issues arising within the team and the store. Also, she had worked for another supermarket before joining the current one. It was a good experience, the only difference was that the departments were bigger than the current retail store. She helps her husband in paying the mortgage so that is why she is still working full-time.

P5: A woman aged between 38 to 48, who got married at a very early age after finishing school. She is from a very traditional background where girls were meant to get married

at the age of 18. She has been in New Zealand for the past 16 years. Her husband is the key earner in the family, so she works principally for her children's' and her own expenses. She works 33 hours and can't do more than that due to family commitments. Her first job was in a potato packing company based in South of Auckland. Now she works for a large retail employer in the frontline as a self-service assistant and has been in retail for 15 years now. She enjoys talking to customers and explains that many of the customers are rude but some are very nice and polite which makes her day and keeps her motivated. Coming from a very traditional background, she says working is always fun for her because she hardly spoke to anybody back home after getting married, but after coming to New Zealand, retail is a place where she gets to meet new people every day. She is experienced in dealing with rude customers.

P6: She is a university student studying Health Science and is between 19 to 25 years of age. She is a New Zealander and works part-time. Since lockdown, she is doing full-time hours. Her family owns a restaurant but after lockdown business has not been doing so well and she chooses to work elsewhere, not in her family business. She started working for retail when she was in high school and joined because her friends started working, and they encouraged her to work too. The current job is her first and she earns to save money. She says the retail sector is a very flexible place to work and she can fit shifts around her studies.

P7: She is between 18 to 28 years of age and works part-time in a customer service role because she is a student. She says she is not comfortable working in front of and talking to people because it is not really her preferred type of work. She works in retail because she thinks it is a challenge to work because it gives an opportunity to open-up when meeting new and different types of people. She said she wants to experience different situations and deal with them which will help her in the future. For example, she wants to be a pharmacist where she will have to deal with customers. So, it is a great way of starting work in retail to learn and adapt to people. She has seen both angry and happy customers as well. This will help her to know how to treat different people when she joins the workforce in her chosen career. She enjoys working but when she gets difficult customers it is hard to find balance. This job is her first and she has been an employee in retail for 2 years now.

P8: He is between 24 to 34 years of age and an immigrant. He moved to New Zealand when he was 18 years old and came on a student visa, when he subsequently joined retail, working part-time. After finishing studies, he joined the same supermarket as a grocery supervisor and is still part-time due to his visa conditions. After getting a work

visa he started working full-time in the same role. To gain a New Zealand qualification he did a diploma in business studies level 5 and 6. He chose to do business studies but when he got this job in retail, he thought to grow himself there.

Listed above are the eight participants' backgrounds. Out of eight participants, four were on migrant visas. The interviewees have skills and knowledge that contribute to the retail sector. These participants work for retail because of the flexibility of the job, for money and to gain retail experience.

The next section will identify and discuss the key themes and sub-themes derived from the participant's interviews. Participants' quotes are written in italics to support the findings. There are five themes, and they are:

1. Experience of Training.

2. Purpose of the Training.

    i)   People Skills.

    ii)   Time Management.

    iii)   Health and Safety.

    iv)   Stress Management.

3. Benefits of the Training in the Retail Sector.

4. Challenges of Training.

5. Training Opportunities.

Each of these themes and their sub-themes are discussed below.

4.3 Experience of Training

The eight participants who were interviewed spoke about their experiences of training and development in the FMCG Sector. They described their job training the first time they joined the retail sector. All of them spoke about 'on-job training' mostly given in this sector according to the departments and supermarket they belong to. The responses were both positive and negative depending on the type of training given to them at work.

The first response from the participant below was quite negative. She believes the retail sector she works for could have done better to train the employees and the training given was very basic. She had to learn everything on her own by looking at what the

experienced employees did. She is a checkout supervisor and worked for retail before this job, when she got transferred to the branch she is working for now.

P1: *It was quite okay. I wouldn't say it's not that top notch. It was acceptable for the person who is keen to learn. They gave us training to understand the machines, how to talk to customers like interpersonal skills. Sometimes people are not good with their learning speeds so managers should focus on that the machines like, checkout or self-service scanning machines instead of teaching us how to talk to a customer. All I learnt from the training was about how to talk to a customer and how to deal with emotions. I was trained on job because my department is about customer service and it's about using your skills you already have. You really don't have to learn. Yes, learning practically on day one of your job was hard, as you need to be fully trained to start the job.*

The participants thought on-job training would be more beneficial to them. Here, they got more practical knowledge by practicing what is expected of the given job role. According to the participants, trainers, such as their team leaders, were always available if any help was needed. Therefore, they were more likely to ask questions when in doubt.

The participant [P3] said that retail work is not easy and therefore training should be done with an experienced person so that more knowledge is shared. He shared: *We don't learn things only by watching, need to have hands on job to learn things quicker.* This participant works as a night fill grocery. Night fill employees set up the store before the next trading day and according to the participant [P3], they lacked time while doing the job but according to him, the on job training was the best he had learnt. Therefore, it is hard to fit in time for their training but on-job training is considered one of the best ways to learn. Without training it would not have been possible to learn everything. Whereas the two students [P6] and [P7] are the frontline workers whose job is only to deal with customers and learn the machine work they use on checkouts. They are each from different supermarkets where their job roles are also different. Timing was not so much a factor, unlike the night fill employee who is from a different supermarket again. Thus, there are differences between the supermarkets in what they offer in training.

P3: *…. well, the training wasn't very effective or wasn't helpful. They just put me with extra staff and asked to watch them and ask questions if any doubt arises. I think on job training would be a better method to get trained for the retail employees because we work in an ongoing business where we deal with customers every day and our job is not easy when training is not given.*

Therefore, according to the participant, ongoing training is the best method for the night fill job, but more time is needed to finish the work. They were not given any training but just observed a senior team member do their job.

There were two 18-year-old students who think they were not given enough training by an experienced supervisor or manager as new recruits. They said that:

P6 *We were told if we needed help, supervisors will be available for guidance. I think they should have trained us more because we were unprepared while serving the customers, had little to no training on the job. It took time to learn. Talking to customers isn't easy, you need skills to talk to them and a bit of patience as well.*

P6 made a different statement than P1 because P6 is a part-time employee and a full-time student where she wanted to gain all the necessary skills required to learn for her job role. Whereas P1 is an experienced employee who has been in retail for a long time and thinks learning about the machines (checkout/self-service scanning) are more important than the people skills because that can be learnt while working. According to P1, learning the job and knowing the tasks are more important than interpersonal skills. P6 joined the retail sector to gain experience.

Participant 7 is a new frontline recruit who got help when doing on job training as required because that is how all employees have learnt and gained knowledge. It is her first job in retail, and she has been working for 2 years now.

P7: I *was told to start operating on checkout and that's how I will learn. I got help if I didn't know anything as there are many things to learn and that's why on-job training was important. On-job training gave me more confidence and by asking questions I gained knowledge.*

On the contrary, there were three employees who were extremely positive about the training experiences given on job. They were also sent for off-job training. Off-job training for the retail sector is highly important because they learn different sorts of theoretical techniques. Then they take this theoretical knowledge to work and apply that on the job. Participant 2 is from the fresh foods department and explains the example of having off-job training and how it helped him. After getting trained off-job, he was sent back on-job training to learn the job in store and in his department. According to this participant, he got more training because the supermarket he works for trains its employees in-depth, that is, learning both the theoretical and the practical aspects of the job. It is also their Health and Safety Policy because it is about food preparation. The difference between other employees and this one is that, not everyone at that supermarket gets off the job

training. Training is a legal requirement for the employees who are doing food preparation. Participants 1 to 4 are from the same supermarkets.

P2: *I am happy with the training given o- job because it is really helpful for my performance. The employer sent me for food safety and health and safety training. This was off-job training. We learnt about the theory we are to apply in the fresh food department. After that we were sent back to the store for on-job training where I learnt how things are carried out practically with the help of the supervisors and managers.*

It is the legal requirement of any sector to get health and safety and food safety training because they are in the food preparation department.

Participant 5 is a frontline employee who described how her off-job training was and how on-job training was effective where she gained skills and was asked to train the new recruits after learning. She was sent to do a Level 2 customer service course called The Retail National Certificate Skills IQ. She talked about the experiences she had on off-job training and if it was effective. Mostly, she stays in front of the checkouts as a supervisor now. This employee is from a different supermarket where everyone is given equal opportunity to get trained and to learn more. This participant had no knowledge about the department she worked for, but the Supermarket Management decided to get her trained on- and off-job to become experienced and gain knowledge about the sector. The difference between this participant [P5] and the two 18-year-old students [P6 and P7] is that for P5, the supermarket management decided to get her trained whereas for the other two, the management's perception was that they were students and it was not necessary to train them more. They felt unprepared for the job due to lack of training but P5 was confident after her training.

P5: *I really enjoyed going for an off-job training because you get to meet other employees from different retail sectors and learn something more from them. I also got trained on-job since I'm a frontline employee. I got trained on self-serve and now I am experienced and have been asked to train the new recruits. On-job training was more effective because you learn only by practicing every day until you know you have gained the knowledge and experience required. Feedback was always given by the managers.*

From her experience, the training given was effective because she not only got trained but was also asked to train the other new recruits afterwards. The Management does not train every employee, they only provide training when they see an employee is showing a willingness to step up. She enjoyed off-job training because she got to learn more from others in the training. After all the training, feedback was given by the managers in the 6

months employee review. They were then told if they are doing the job well and had gained enough knowledge to step up further. Taking or gaining knowledge from other retail sector employees was an advantage to her because she learnt extra and did better in her training. She did this by putting the given knowledge at work and by sharing it with the other team members.

Participant 8 described his training differences, experiencing 'soft' and 'hard' skills as a duty supervisor to become a manager. He stated that: *To become a duty manager, we are trained on-job by an experienced person. The management needed someone who had 'soft skills' already so that it is easier for them to train for 'hard skills.' My manager saw potential in me, so he offered me to become a duty manager. I was trained for forklift, and they helped me to get a manager's certificate from the City Council. For this, I had to sit for an exam, and this helped me to become a duty manager. Together with that I was sent for off-job training for a management course.*

The participant's experience is different from other participants because he is getting trained as a manager for a supervisory role of his department. Being trained as a manager there is more to learn, and the training runs for a longer period. Employees who are trained as managers or supervisors are given different types of training. One example is learning computers (soft skills) and getting a forklift license (hard skill). After performing well, he was given an opportunity to step up and get trained. He has been in the company for more than three years and been working different shifts and roles. After being noticed, he got the opportunity to get trained as a manager.

Participant 4 has a different perception of training out of all the participants. She was trained on her first day on-job and never got asked to do any other training. She is a retired lady who has been working to pay off her mortgage. Her employer did not think it was important for her to learn other work in the department, only because they have a perception that she will not be able to work there in a permanent capacity. The participant was told about this by her department manager that it is not worth getting trained because she would be leaving. The findings shows that this kind of preconceived view leads an employee to work without motivation or dedication, thus reducing the employee's performance.

P4: W*ell, I was trained on the first day of my job like every other employee. My job is mostly in the bakery. I was trained on-job, and I slowly learnt everything. The only thing I don't know is baking, for which you need skills and physical strength. Whatever I learnt on-job training was great. However, I still don't know how to bake because I wasn't*

taught. This department is the largest of all the departments in the store, so having all the skills are necessary.

P4 (above), is also into food preparation but did not go for off-job training like P2 because P4 is a department assistant and P2 is a department supervisor, and his job role is to learn in-depth, whereas P4 got to learn everything except going for off-job training to learn in-depth.

According to all the employee's experiences and perceptions, on-job training was positive as well as negative. It was positive because retailing jobs are practical and getting hands on-job training gives knowledge. It was negative because she (P4) thought she was not given enough training to progress in the way she wanted. Every employee gets trained on job when they start work with retail. For example, Participant 4 said, "Retail work involves more physical effort as well as dealing with people every day."

Few participants were sent to off-job training for the theoretical knowledge. These participants were those whose job roles and departments were different – for example, the fresh foods department and grocery. As Participant 2 said, "...off-job training gave general information about the department and made us learn how to be productive after the training."

Participant 2 has been working in the supermarket longer. So, he was offered training for step-up roles. For example, he got offered to get trained because the management noticed him working with enthusiasm, efficiency, and interest. The management thought he would suit a senior role. Also, he works for fresh foods department where health and safety are important and knowing everything in detail is an advantage. According to him, he has been doing well in his job role and thinks it is a good supermarket company to work for and progressing in a supermarket is always beneficial. He was trained for at least a month, and he receives ongoing training about health and safety and about food handling, in part to remain current with changing food safety regulations.

These participants are from non-managerial roles. The negative views about the on-job training came from the participants because they expected training to be different and not just observing how the job is done. Comparatively, Participant 4 did not get further training because it was a basic assumption of the supermarket that she may leave soon, but it did not happen. These two participants work for the same supermarket but different departments, although their sections come under the label of fresh foods. Here, one was offered further training due to his hard work and who is willing to stay with the company for longer, but the other is not considered because of the retirement age. Although, they

both work in fresh foods for the same supermarket company, they are at different supermarkets, and it is in different departments.

Thus, the main finding is that employees' perceptions of on-job training seems to be the best method because they always have someone to ask for help if any queries arise. Although, they did not find it very important, on-job training is the best practise so they know what they are doing. More experienced workers are required to give help to the new recruits. It is certainly about practical knowledge and learning interpersonal skills. There were participants who wanted to go get trained off-job but did not get a chance. The participants who were in the supervisory and management roles were given different training from the normal employees. This is because the supervisory roles have more to learn than those of normal employees. The training given to the supervisors is very similar to the other three sectors. Those who were offered off-site training were from all three different sectors and were trained at a single location. These employees were not only the supervisors but also the normal employees, thus providing an equal opportunity for the off-job training.

The next theme will discuss the purpose of the training the retail employees get.

4.4 Purpose of the Training

This section will analyse the purpose of training in the retail sector. The employees of three supermarket chains, where all the participants work have a very similar purpose for the training they have been getting at work. The employees gave their perceptions and experiences they had after getting trained; whether the purpose of the training in the retail sector had helped them in decision-making, or whether it made them confident and encouraged self-development. The most important thing would be if the employees learnt their responsibilities from the training. The sub-themes which came out from the main theme were people skills, stress management, time management and health and safety.

People skills:

Participant 1, who was in charge of two departments, spoke from her experience of training that working for retail is a place where they meet lots of people, which is why interpersonal skills are important there. The participant gave evidence of what it means to be a frontline employee and what is important and how you use the skills to work with confidence. Participant 1 discussed how the training gave meaning to a frontline employee who is an introvert and where retail is about communicating with many people. It encourages self-development and gives confidence after the training. She said:

…Well, somebody who joins the retail market, has to adapt to lots of things like who is not good at interpersonal or a group discussion, is an introvert and will not succeed in retail. Purpose for all these is to make a person to be able to communicate well with the customers. co-workers and management. Retail is a place where you must open up to gain confidence and to self-motivate every day.

This above participant was working for one department and after some time she got offered to become trained in a different department due to her commitment at work. Now, she works for two departments and said that training gave her confidence to get into another role. She got more responsibility which means she knows what she is doing in her job roles and can multitask. She is a supervisor in a frontline role where communication is important.

Participant 8 described that training gave him more confidence and motivation every day, and how training made him efficient using those skills.

The training made me very knowledgeable and efficient and helped me to get into the company as a junior manager where I can grow my career. Undoubtedly, this had improved my performance later. (P8)

Participants 1 and 8 are from two different supermarkets but their purpose of the training is very similar. P1 is a supervisor for her department and P8 is getting trained as a manager for his department. Both get trained to gain interpersonal skills and everyday routine work, although getting trained as a manager means there are other things to learn. Therefore, gaining confidence and motivation is essential for the supermarkets to communicate, not only with the customers but the retail employees as well.

4.4.1 Time Management:

Furthermore, employees stated the importance of the training concerning time management skills, because one had to be fast and efficient in the retail sector, in any job role. While getting trained, employees were required to work with an experienced member of the team. After the training, senior management would monitor continuously, checking if the employee had learnt the job well or needed further training. Employees said that the retail job is about time management skills. Each job role is allocated a time within which it is to be completed. For example, the main purpose of the night fill job is to set up the store for the next trading day. They are to fill the shelves, cut boxes and wait for the products to get delivered at a certain time. This is different around festive seasons as the store gets very busy and it is hard to manage time then, but efficiency is

always expected. This was made evident by Participant 3 because he is from the night fill team, and he said it was hard while getting trained and after the training but that is what training was about.

Retail is about time management. Retail work is fast, and it demands you to be able to manage your time. Senior management would like to see how efficient you have become after the training. So, they train you on how to follow the time wisely but sometimes we are unable to follow this due to heavy load. (P3)

Training in time management is a useful skill to learn.

4.4.2 Health and Safety:

Management gives most importance to Health and Safety in retail. Every employee is important to them and that is why they send their employees for training which applies to every department, but Participant 2 below from only one of the departments stated:

Another reason for training is to avoid/minimise injuries at work, especially work which is physical and those that are done with/on machines, and training in health & safety matters to avoid accidents. To be able to work in the department successfully without any harm or risk, this is essential (P2).

This participant was from a fresh food department. He pointed out why training was useful for the company, and the department. He talked about health and safety as well as food and safety at work. The company looks out for its employee's safety first. He said the company looks after them so well. This participant was very positive about the training which aim was for him was to avoid all the risks at work.

4.4.3 Stress Management

Moreover, there was one university and a school student who both joined retail for part-time work because they can manage it around their studies. These participants are from checkouts, and they deal with customers every day. They said dealing with customers is not an easy job and employees need training to keep them positive as they get frustrated dealing with customers every day. The training they got from retail taught them how to be patient, handle stress or any conflict – however, they thought they should have been given more training which would have been useful. Stress in the workplace encourages

staff resignations. These students found the purpose of training to be very positive for their behaviour. They said:

Talking isn't easy with customers, especially with the rude ones. You need a little bit of patience. If I didn't get the training on how to greet and talk with my customers, I would have replied to them rudely just like they are. I was frustrated and almost ended up in conflict with my customer. I had to control my anger and keep cool. I recalled the rules that apply on checkouts while serving them. (P6).

The purpose of the training for me was to avoid mistakes made in front of the customers. I had to keep positive all the time. (P7)

Furthermore, there is always a reason when the management has a purpose to send an employee on-job and off-job training. On-job training is to gain the skills practically and off-job is about the general theoretical information an employee gets. These skills are needed when the employee lacks confidence, motivation and has doubts if he or she will be able to work. According to the participant, she would have panicked when making mistakes, but due to her training she avoided making mistakes by being positive and patient.

Participant 5, for example, had no skills or knowledge about retail when she was recruited. The manager then sent her to get the National Retail Certificate. She was both trained on- and off-job to know the job role in depth. The purpose for that training was that she could use that certificate anywhere in the retail companies. She said:

...I had no knowledge about retail, so I was sent to do a certificate in retail where I learnt what it is about and how retail operates. After gaining the knowledge about the whole retail sector, I came back to work and was asked to put that knowledge into practice. I learnt everything on-job and off-job. The purpose was to make me successful and confident. Now I can train my staff. It was a quick way to get success.

Whereas Participant 4 said:

The training had surely given me some importance of my department and how it works but nothing in detail.

The employees gave their perception about time management and stress management before and after the training. Participant 3 is a night fill supervisor whose job is about managing time and getting work done within certain hours before the next trading day. According to him, one had to be efficient while doing the night fill job which is not easy because one had to follow the time given and due to a heavy workload, sometimes it is

Impossible to finish work on time. During the training he learnt how to manage time by taking on extra help. In comparison with Participant 3, the two students who are from a different supermarket, are part-time and front-line employees. They were taught how to handle stress, whereas Participant 3 was the one who was meant to learn how to handle stress. From my analysis, the training was a success for the participants and they were able to further do their work.

In addition, Participant 2 is from the same retail chain as Participant 1. The purpose of training for Participants 2 and 3 was the same except Participant 2 was from a fresh foods department where health and safety training is important. He got trained in health and safety and the purpose is to learn how to avoid any type of risks at work. He gained more knowledge about his department which was useful.

Moreover, there were two participants from one supermarket who were sent to get a National Retail Certificate. The purpose of this is that the participants can work in any retail company after getting qualified. Before getting this certificate, participants were trained to gain skills and knowledge about the retail industry.

The employee perception and the experience they got from the training was more confidence in their job role, the ability to make decisions, increased job satisfaction to most of them and more self-development. According to the participants, the company invests in their employees if they see any future potential in them, and for the growth and efficiency of their business. Most of the employees had said that the purpose of the training made them clearly understand what their job was about and what was expected. Now they fully understand the theoretical and the practical side of the training and development.

The next theme will discuss how the training and development benefitted the employees and what their perceptions are.

4.5 The Benefits of Training in the Retail Sector

The retail sector employees who were interviewed described whether training benefitted them or not. It was evident that the participants were mostly positive about the training they did get. The training had a positive effect on employee satisfaction. From the participants' perception, training had added knowledge and competency as well as empowering them to do their job confidently. The training was mostly done by someone with more experience, like a manager. Participant 2 said in his interview that he was sent

to get off-job training to gain the knowledge in theory and on-job for the practical. That was not the end however, he was also asked to explain what he understood. The company always want to see if the training was beneficial for the employee. He said:

P2: The training was quite good; it was a good experience. The person whoever have got enough training experience would tell me how to do things around the department and ask questions later to find out if I understood properly. My job performance has improved. I am satisfied after the training, and I think I will stay in retail a little longer to grow my career in fresh foods. The training helped me to achieve the goals by working on- and off-job. Also, I have become more productive after the training and gained self-confidence. Previously, I was nervous and scared, thinking whether I will be able to do the job or not. Now, this training has encouraged and motivated me to learn more about the retail environment.

Participant 2 above, was positive because he got to know everything in detail about his job role or what is to be expected from him after getting trained on/off job training. He came out confidently and said that having both types of training is always beneficial because that is what the company expects, and it makes an employee satisfied with his job.

Similarly, there was another participant who was satisfied with the training but here she learnt only by watching an experienced person how things are done in her department. She comes from checkout which is the largest department of all and is a supervisor.

P1: *When I started the job, I gained skills and knowledge by watching another experienced person. Now I'm able to train any new staff because I have that knowledge and skills. However, I think it will be good if they send me to another branch to learn their way of doing things. This might help me further develop my experience, skills, and knowledge base. Every branch works differently because it depends on the type of training the management gives.*

P1 is in a supervisory role and having a role like that needs training in-depth to learn more (compared to the normal employees) and how to run the activities on the floor. According to her, the training was slightly different from the normal employees because the management sent her off-job to learn about how other stores work. Different stores may have different ways of doing things. The participants perception from her experience would be to adapt the better idea that would work in her store.

An employee from a different sector supported the above evidence about training and development and how it would benefit him in the short and long term. He stated:

P8: I like business, so training can help me. If I want to open a small business and become a manager, the training I got from this retail sector will help me in future to grow in the industry or any other retail. My employer sent me for different types of training and to different branches to see how other stores operate and the type of customers I am to face in future. Now, I have a choice whether I should open my own business or progress in the same company for longer.

The participant gained so much confidence and learnt everything required for his job as a duty supervisor. He stated that now he could apply for a manager's position anywhere.

By contrast, there were three participants who had a different view about the benefits of training in the retail sector; they claimed they didn't get enough training and the employees are expected to learn only by watching other experienced employees. These participants had different expectations from the training. It is because the students were young and part-time employees compared to other participants like P8 (above) who was not a student.

It would have been beneficial if they gave us more examples like how exactly we can manage time while working or what they want us to do. Time is so important, and I really don't know how to manage time when we have lots of work to finish. Night fill is a hard job.

There were two students, one at university and another in school. They were negative about the training given because they didn't get any training in any other department except the one they are currently working in. They expected to get trained everywhere in the store to get experience. Therefore, after the COVID-19 lockdown they are thinking to leave the retail sector and find another job part-time until they are students.

In comparison, the second statement highlighted about two students working part-time. As students, they wanted to explore every department to see how it works but they were disappointed. Thus, the findings about students in retail suggests they are mostly part-time employees who only join to explore retail life. After finishing school and university, they leave.

Many participants felt that training and development had certainly benefitted them. According to the employees from fresh foods departments, they gained more knowledge about product and learned about the development of department planning. They felt it was good training because it was very beneficial. Employees such as the students, were more negative. They expected to go into every department to learn new things which

may have helped them in their career path decision. For other employees they gained knowledge, confidence, and more interpersonal skills and when and where to use them.

4.6 Challenges of Training

After gaining knowledge from training either on- or off-job, employers expect their employees to contribute positively to the company through what they have learnt. Before they started any task, employees were to share the knowledge they have learnt in the training. The challenge started when employees went back to start the job and were to do what the management required them to do. Some participants found that after having completed additional training, their employers expected them to take on more work or more responsibilities. This meant that, if they completed the training, they could face more stress and pressure at work. For example, P1 said:

P1: After *getting trained in one department, I got trained in another. Real challenge was when I got asked to do night shifts in one department and early morning shifts in another. I felt overworked because there was no break in between. Despite this, I took the challenge for a month. It was quite tough.*

Another participant felt language was a problem or a barrier for progress. He could hardly understand English, let alone speak the language. He knew that to progress, he had to do something about it. So, he started learning and speaking in English and this was a real challenge for him. Being of different ethnicity, progressing into senior roles could be difficult because of the language barrier. According to the participant, there is a growth in the retail sector he works for, but nobody will help if you do not help yourself.

P8: *Growth here is a challenge. I have been here for the past five years, and language was the main challenge for me. Before my training, and to understand, I had to speak and read in English. You can't get into training unless you understand the whole theory work. After reading theory work, those skills are needed to put at work for the managers to assess what you've learnt.*

Employee perception about challenges to the training was very similar with ll of the participants. The interviewees indicated that to know if they are willing to stay in the company longer, they are to know if the job suits them, thus their expectation of suitable training. The employee perception was that the employers should have effective training for the employees so that they feel it is challenging, thus making them do the job and learn more about it.

4.7 Training Opportunities

After getting trained, the participants felt that there could be other ways to train the employees in the retail sector. This will boost performance and would make them stay longer in the retail sector they work for. This theme will discuss the eight participants' perception of the training programmes. This is where the employees from the three sectors (Countdown Supermarkets, New World and Pak 'n Save) gave their perceptions about the training programmes they should have in the retail sector and how it should be done.

There were two participants who had similar views of how the training programme should have been in the retail sector they work for. Both work for different sectors and said that their sectors have similar training programmes. According to them, there should be a separate department for training and all the new recruits or anyone who is getting trained should be in that department with the available trainer all the time. According to P1, it is a waste of time training employees while working because the new employees may get confused and can panic when they get customers. At times, customers are told there is a new employee and that they are to be patient, but some get frustrated and leave the premises. P1 is a supervisor, and it made her adopt that opinion because she saw that the normal employees and the new recruits were working together. The new recruits should become experienced before coming to start the job. Therefore, having a separate department for training may be very handy and fully recommended. She stated that:

P1: *I think there should be an appointed and experienced person who is always available for employee training. There should be a proper sector for the training so that it is called a training department where all training would be done. Example, if someone is hired for the checkout, he should get trained separately for a week or two and be shown how to do it instead of wasting time by operating on a regular checkout and holding up the customers. This should happen in the respective departments as well.*

P1 formed this opinion because according to her, a supervisor should know what her job role is and how it is different from the normal employees.

Similarly, P6 had the view that training programmes should be made separately and for the specific job roles, for example a supervisor should be trained only as a supervisor and the normal employees should be trained what they are required to do so that there is no confusion between the job roles. She stated that:

P6: Training programmes should be made separately for the supervisors and the normal employees, so that when we work as a supervisor, we are aware what is expected of that particular role.

P1 and P6 are from two different supermarkets. The types of training in their supermarkets are much like each other.

Participant 8 had a concern about training all the staff in the retail sector instead of hiring new ones. These employees could be from any of the departments. All department employees should know each other's job well (multi-tasked) so that if a department needs extra staff, anyone could volunteer to fill in. She stated that most of the time the departments are struggling to get someone to do the job when there is a heavy workload. If the management makes a training programme for everyone who would volunteer to learn something new, they can certainly go and learn about the new role. It is an opportunity for the employees in the sector to learn more. She said that:

P8: All employees should go through a Training and Development programme for their respective departments. There should be more training given to our workplace employees because half of the time we are short staffed. This happens because we don't have enough trained workers. So, all the new employees should undertake two to three weeks training and the existing staff should be given an opportunity to step up.

This was the perception from P8 because she felt that if all the employees are trained, then they can be of help in any department in need of it, at any time. Sometimes, existing staff take an interest and that is the time to prove themselves that they can work and are ready to step up.

Participant 7 had something different to say. She said that previously, the retail sector used to have a training programme called a "leadership programme" which is not happening anymore due to COVID-19. It was a programme made for the employees who had been in retail longer and who were ready to step up as a leader. It was an off-job training giving many employees more opportunities. It was a programme made for employees to show their talents to prove they can be a good leader. This programme was for the entire sector and will be available again after COVID-19 restrictions cease. Unfortunately, there is only on-job training available currently, and this has made it tough for the employees to speed up their career path. She further stated that:

P7: Due to lockdown, we are not given any extra training. Previously, we were sent for off-job training but now it must be done on-job. Training was given to the employees who wanted to build up a career in retail, like the introduction of the "Leadership Programme"

which has been suspended because of lockdown. Now we don't have that opportunity, so we have to work hard in the store and commit ourselves to progress in our careers.

A retired participant talked about the training programme which should be made for the 'older' employees at work, without any discrimination or bias (retired employees are allowed to work in the retail sector). This programme could be made for employees who cannot go for off-job training so that it is readily available for them to do these courses online. It makes it easier for the employees who cannot travel or have difficulties in learning outside of work time. Programmes like this will make them achieve the goals they want and can contribute towards the organisation's achievement success. A retired participant said that:

P4: *I am retired, and I think we should also be given an opportunity to get trained. A suitable programme should be made for all employees, not just for the young generation. If we can't go to attend the seminars or lectures, then there should be online courses for older employees to prove that we can still work and extend our learning in our departments.*

Participant 4 felt that due to a lack of training, she could not reach her goals. If there were online courses for people like her, it would have been better for her career.

Two employees of the retail sector sounded positive and were happy with the on-job training given to them. According to them they learnt a lot at work and now they are training all the new employees. They found training on computers easy. They said:

P5: *On job training has always been useful because by learning practically, I have got knowledge and skills I required for the job. We have different methods here like training on computers to get skills and knowledge of making daily rosters for the staff, allocating duties, filling product order forms and the quantity of product that is to be ordered. I also learnt interpersonal skills at work.*

Participant 5 felt that her job role is easy because she learns everything on job and there are a few things that must be done on a computer, like, ordering products, making rosters and how to do the stocktake.

P2: *My job is mostly on the shop floor because I am from the fresh food department. I use computers and I train new staff. My existing staff are experienced, and I allow them to train any new employee hired in my absence. I give training on computers early in the morning. I train new employees for two weeks and when they are over 50% trained for*

the job, I get them to start work on the floor with me and learn the rest. Basically, I have set a time limit for each work.

Participant 2 felt that his job role is mostly important in the morning. He mentioned that when he cannot make it to work, there should be an app built for them on the phone to do work from home, if there is no-one to do his "computer stuff" job.

It is very important for the organisation to develop a programme to enhance performance and productivity for their employees so that they stay positive and are happy in the environment they work in. The training and development programmes that embrace these, therefore, enables the employees to work more skillfully and with confidence. It is necessary to have the training and development programmes to build a workforce that allows the employees to carry out the daily routine more proficiently. Thus, the findings in this research were that most of the employees prefer relevant types of training programmes which are easily accessible for them to learn and better their skills, knowledge, and performance. On-job training and off-job training are to be used while relevant. In some jobs, many find one type of training more beneficial then the other.

4.8 Conclusion

The employees' perceptions of the training and development they got were both positive and negative. The positive view was that they learnt what they were required to and from which they benefitted. The negative aspect was that the training was not much to their expectations. They did not find it challenging like the two students stated about their experiences. The employees look forward to training which is challenging for them. If it is challenging, there is an eagerness to learn more, which makes them stay longer in the company. Otherwise, employees will prepare to leave once they find another job, just like the two students. They are willing to leave once the lockdown is over and look for something which is challenging and more exciting to learn. Students would very much like to enjoy their job and keep a positive attitude. After finding out about the purposes and the benefits of training, the participants spoke about the challenges they faced in their respective departments. It is very important that the correct training method is adopted for better outcomes. The overall difference for this chapter was that the supermarket sector does not train employees who are getting close to retirement age because of their perception that those employees will leave the company once retired. Another difference was that the industry does not give training to the students who are working part-time. According to the student employees, they would very much like to

learn and see if they can progress in the company. Unfortunately, they were not given a chance. Management is under the impression that they will not return after their studies.

Chapter 5: Discussion

5.1 Introduction

The aim of this research was to explore the topic: "Employee experiences and perceptions of training and development in the retail industry." The research was carried out in Auckland, New Zealand. There were five themes in the findings, but Chapter 5 will focus on three major themes, and they are: Experiences of Training, the purpose of the Training and Development; and the Training Opportunities. The findings will be compared to the Literature Review in Chapter 2. Similarities and differences will also be discussed and identified with retail industry in general since there was very limited research on supermarket retail industry.

5.2 Experiences of Training

5.2.1 On-the-Job Training

Many of the supermarket participants perceived most of the training employees receive is on-the-job training. The findings highlight that employees mostly learn the job by watching their senior employees; that is, mainly the supervisors. Similarly, the literature stated that there is always a coach or mentor available all the time for training the new recruits or existing employees (Chime, 2016; Jehanzeb & Bashir, 2013; Obi-Anike & Ekwe, 2014; Rodriguez & Walters, 2017). The findings illustrate that training on-job is practical because it gives more knowledge, and because the retail job is mostly practical. According to the research, employee learning is done at work and while performing their actual job (Timsal et al., 2016). On-job training is not always about giving knowledge or gaining skills, but it also motivates and triggers the ability of an employee to progress in their career. In the findings, one participant was asked to step up and start training the new recruits after her own learning. This was different because the participant was sent for both off-job and on-job training. In off-job training, she met other employees from different retail sectors and learnt something different from the supermarket she works for. Timsal et al. (2016) stated that off-the-job training is learning general information about the job. The off-job training was given to the participant because she was in a supervisory role. All the participants in supervisory and managerial roles were given different training from the normal employees. This is because the supervisory roles demand more to be learnt than those of normal employees. Those who were offered off-

site training were from all three different supermarkets and were trained at a single location.

This contrasts with the findings highlighted about students joining the retail sector. The literature stated that the retail sector employs many students who combine their studies with the part-time opportunities offered (Broadbridge, 2003). Critically, the research argued that only a small proportion of these students go on to seek a career in retail (Huddleston, 2011). The most frequent characteristics related to a career in retailing are consumer oriented, people oriented, have poor salary, limited advancement and poor working hours, as found by Broadbridge (2003), and did not compare favourably to those associated with their preferred career (interesting, opportunities for advancement, challenging, rewarding, satisfying (Merchandiser, 2003). Research argues that the motivation that attracts, retains, and engages younger employees is quite different from that of older generations.

There are three sources of work motivation, and they are: the job; the outcomes of the job (i.e., rewards and sanctions) and the organisational system (including policies, practices, culture, image position in its market and industry (Amar, 2004). Similarly, in the findings, students join mostly as part-timers and would like to explore the whole retail job. Hence, they see retail job as a good opportunity to learn. They leave when the job level is below their expectation and when not enough training is given; they plan to stay only until their study finishes. Students want to learn and build experience but since they are not permanently employed by the company, they do not get much training. When students join the retail sector, they intend to grow their career or stay longer in the supermarket to learn. In this finding, the two students who joined retail were negative about on-job training. This is because they were asked to serve their customers without any training given before they started. According to them, dealing with customers is not easy. They were not given more training because management assumed as they are students they would leave once their studies are over. Similarly, the research stated that students who have retail work experience are unlikely to choose retail as a future career after their graduation (Hurst & Good, 2009). On the other hand, students wanted more training to explore the supermarket they did work for. They learnt just by watching. There was similar research done on part-time employees from a different retail industry which stated that the student employees are given little or no training because they are not perceived as a valuable resource. Supervisors are reluctant to take time away from other duties to train student employees (Kathman & Kathman, 2000).

By comparison, Huddleston (2011) stated that from the employers' viewpoint, students show commitment and employers benefit from potentially well-qualified recruits. Furthermore, the research portrayed that retail industries are keen to attract the brightest and best workers they can in an attempt to increase the number of graduates employed in managerial positions (Huddleston, 2011). Also, employers should know the career expectations of these young people and their aspirations after graduation. This is to develop policies and practices that are effective in attracting, motivating and training them (Huddleston, 2011). This thesis was different from the above author's (Huddleston, 2011) views, as this says that employers are willing to employ the brightest students whereas, in the findings, it was evident according to the students, that the employers assumed the students would leave after finishing their studies. Therefore, they were not offered to get trained in any other department.

5.3 Purpose of the Training

As Falola et al. (2014) stated in the literature, that training helps employees to make better decisions and be more effective in problem solving. The findings were different to the literature because students in retail are mostly part-time employees who only join to explore about retail life. After finishing school and university, they often leave. There were students who were unable to make decisions because according to them they were not given the expected training. Training and development assists in encouraging and achieving self-development and self-confidence. Also, it helps an employee handle work stress, tension, frustration and conflict (Falola et al., 2014). In the findings, an employee stated how he worked hard to get trained for a managerial role. He was offered to get trained on-job and off-job to further his career because the management saw future potential in him. This leads to job satisfaction and recognition at work and motivates the person to achieve his goals and improve interaction skills. His experience was different from that of the students, perhaps because management was certain that part-time students would leave the company. Whereas the other employee was offered to become trained because he had a job rotation at work which gave him flexibility to work as a manager. His interpersonal skills improved when he was trained both on-job and off-job. According to him he had much less knowledge speaking in English. He gained more knowledge as how to interact with his customers and management after the training.

Similarly, the literature in Chapter 2 pointed out some of the managements' responsibilities towards their employees. It motivates employees to achieve greater effectiveness (Nassazi, 2013). Management should also be thinking about the needs to

create, develop, maintain, and improve any system relevant to the job and required skills, in addition to the methods that will be used to implement training and development. On the other hand, the research argued that the older employees are unable to cope with changes at work (Khan et al., 2016). The findings proved this wrong as evident from the participants' view that semi-retired or older employees are willing to learn but the management is under a preconceived assumption that they will not be able to work.

In comparison, there is research that discussed job rotation in retail supermarkets in Sweden (Johansson et al., 2015). Their research was different from the findings in this study because in this retail, all the employees can work in any department in the store; there is a job rotation. The employees get equal opportunities to obtain organisational knowledge (Johansson et al., 2015). The participant's perspective was also that job rotation would improve their experience by working in every department, so one gets a more universal experience in retail. Johansson et al.'s (2015) research is different from the findings because there was not any job rotation. A checkout operator was only meant to work for her department and nowhere else.

Furthermore, the previous research had reported on the technological change in the retail sector in Ireland. The employees here asked to have access to mobile devices and be equipped with the digital skills required to use it. This is especially true for frontline customer service employees (Woods et al., 2021). This research is different from Falola et al. (2014) studies, because Woods et al. (2021) portray how retailers are turning to technology in an attempt to make store operations more efficient. Retailers are putting more importance on 'hard skills' like qualifications and work experience and soft skills like personal skills. According to the thesis many employees could be upskilled to work in their new roles. In the findings, a participant was asked to upskill by getting on- and off-job training because he wanted to progress further as a manager. Therefore, he was all ready to work for the new role as a manager.

5.4 Training Programmes

It is important to create training programmes in the retail sector. It is vital for employees to learn and develop skills to avoid facing difficulties and there would be less issues in performing tasks (Meighan, 2000). The participants' perspective in the findings was evident that the training programme like the 'on-job training' method used was always useful. This is because by learning practically, the participant got knowledge and skills

required for the job. When employees are trained well by following the procedure of the training programmes, they do not face as many difficulties.

Timsal et al's (2016) study discussed the training programme that could never be effective until the employees are motivated to attend and learn. This research is similar to the literature mentioned in Chapter 2. Aguinis and Kraiger (2009) suggested that the trainees are to be ready before the training begins, as training readiness is important. This can be enhanced by lowering new employees' anxiety about training by demonstrating the value of training and making sure they are highly involved and engaged with their jobs (Aguinis & Kraiger, 2009). In comparison to the findings in Chapter 4, the participants' perspective to the above statements were different. The participants said they were always willing to learn but never got the chance. Sometimes it was because they were part-time students or about to retire. Training programmes can be taken seriously if the employers are willing to communicate openly with the employees and tell them how important the programme is (Timsal et al., 2016).

Furthermore, the company makes their own training programmes which suits their employees. These training programmes or activities are planned programmes for organisational improvement undertaken to bring about a relatively permanent change in employees' knowledge (Cascio, 2019). Their perception is that the employees will learn according to the way the company wants, using all the materials at work either on-job or off-job training. Their purpose is to develop the performance of the employees and evaluate the training programme as per the objectives and missions. In the same way, training enhancement of skills pertaining to a particular job while in development, has its scope stretched across the growth and personal development of the employee (Karim et al., 2019).

However, there were employees' recommendations for improving training from their perspective. After getting trained, the participants felt that there could be other ways to train the employees in the retail sector. This would boost their performance and make them stay longer in the retail sector they work for. In relation to the Literature Review, research has found that employees who are trained well, keep a job longer than the ones who do not receive training (Amir Elnaga & Imran, 2013). Other research states that employers cannot make promises to their employees for new job security, but can provide them with opportunities to improve their knowledge and skills, so that they can remain sustainably in the job market (Jehanzeb & Bashir, 2013). Jehanzeb and Bashir's (2013) research is different from the above because it states that the employers train employees to improve their knowledge and skills. On the other hand, from the findings,

employees do not think it is a proper way because they think there is a better way to train. According to the literature by Jehanzeb & Bashir (2013), employee satisfaction is very important otherwise employees will not consider employment in that business.

The three retail supermarkets in this thesis have very similar training programmes for their employees. The employees of those retail sectors have a perception that there should be separate departments for training new recruits and the existing employees in different roles. For example, supervisor training should be done in a separate training department where the employee would be guided by an experienced trainer. In the literature, Woods et al. (2021) discussed about the technology-based retail sector in which they stated that supervisors are someone who should acquire new skills as they are exposed to new technologies, trends, and practices. Employees who are at the supervisory level need all the skills identified for entry-level jobs as well (Woods et al., 2021). The employee will know exactly what her/his role is about and not get confused by the different tasks. For example, in the findings a participant mentioned that a normal employee was working with the new recruits whereas they should be getting trained first and then start the job. This is because new recruits start to panic when customers show frustration. As a result, they get nervous and are demotivated and therefore, do not perform well. This is in contrast to the literature in which it says that when employees work together as a team, they often perform better because everyone is aware of their expectations (Saleem et al., 2011). In the findings, new recruits were watching and learning without experiencing the hands-on job first.

Moreover, the retail sector hires new employees when they are short-staffed but the existing employee's perception is that the management should not do that. Instead, they think the employers should train the existing employees so that if any department needs help, those existing staff could help. Employees should volunteer to learn and gain knowledge about different departments. This finding relates to Johansson et al.'s (2015) research about job rotation in Swedish retail supermarkets. These supermarkets have job rotation, which would mean if a checkout operator is busy, a grocery staff member would be able to help. These findings are different from what is known in the literature because they are the employee's perception of how it should be managed. According to the participants, the employees can get skilled by learning and gaining knowledge about other departments, and they will be more flexible to work in different roles.

In addition to the training programmes, the research stated that the employees who refuse or do not want to participate in training and development programmes due to over-confidence, have done a disservice to themselves (James & Mathew, 2012; Khan et al.,

2016). By contrast, the findings stated that employees always wanted to get trained. They only got trained when offered, but this was very rare. They often don't get the opportunity for training. The research suggested that some employees think they do not need further skills and that their existing skills would help them in the future (James & Mathew, 2012; Khan et al., 2016). They feel irritated getting trained again and ultimately the loss is theirs as training and development would have improved their current skills and knowledge. The findings stated that one participant did not have enough skills, but she could do the job. So, management sent her to do a course in retail certificate. This happens when the company is of the view that their employees have future potential with them, so stepping them up would be beneficial to the employee and the company. In relation to the literature, Amir Elnaga & Imran (2013) stated, that training and development of an employee does not only benefit them, but it is a contribution to the company's competitive advantage through improving employee performance. It has also been argued that employers do not want to invest in their employees because of the cost as it is expensive to train them (Kraimer et al., 2011). In comparison to the research, the findings stated that the employees wanted to get trained, but the management selected only a few. When the employees are trained well, they do not face as many difficulties and there are less issues in performing tasks. They are more likely to be assigned jobs by the management compared to employees who do not have sufficient training. The finding was agreed by researchers such as James & Mathew, 2012, Khan et al., 2016 and Omoikhudu, 2017. Management needs to communicate well with the team by discussing and finding out about the career advancement of their employees. By comparison, the literature stated that the leading retailers are investing in training their skilled employees which enables them to perform positively at work (Cascio, 2019). As mentioned earlier, a participant from a different supermarket was offered to be trained and develop as a manager. This shows that the company cares about their employees' professional and personal development. The research stated that employee development is important as it improves the company's quality and talent management, particularly for senior managers and employees with leadership potential (Noe & Kodwani, 2018).

This finding is similar to previous research because employees are always willing to learn and progress in the same company they work for. Also, the company invests in their employees who are capable and who have the potential to perform much better. Hence, there were few participants who stated that their employers were not investing in their training. Job satisfaction is only achieved when employees are given importance and are well equipped for the current demands. From an employees' point of view, this

empowered them to do the job with confidence, and training added more knowledge and competency as well as self-development.

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter illustrates and discusses the participants' stories in relation to the research question. The key themes, which have been identified and discussed in Chapter 4 explored the participants' experiences in the retail industry, including their perceptions of training and development. The key finding in this research was to answer the main question: "What are the experiences and perceptions of employees of the role and purpose of training in the retail industry?" However, most of the participants in this research were negative about the training and development they were given, and few were neutral. This research suggests that equal training and development should be given to the students, and the retiring employees. Management should communicate well with their employees to discuss their career advancement and look more into their professional development. For example, if the employer talks to the students about what they want or expect from work, they will get a clear perspective and would know what to do with them. Moreover, the management should ask their employees whether they are satisfied with the training given to them. This would help them decide to bring changes to the programmes or retain them. Employees must be motivated, satisfied with the job role they do and be trained the way they prefer. Employee perception of training and development is always beneficial to the company because they are the ones who make a great team to maximise achievement for the employer.

6.0 Chapter 6: Conclusion

6.1 Introduction

This chapter will highlight a summary of the research and its findings. It will begin by showing how the findings answered the research question, and also reflect on the related challenges the researcher experienced. Then it will summarise the contributions and limitations of the research. Finally, the recommendations for future practice are also discussed.

6.2 Answering the research question

The research question for this thesis was: "What are the experiences and perceptions of employees of the role and purpose of training in the retail industry?" The aim of this research was to find out what experiences and perceptions employees had from their training and development in the retail sector, specifically in the supermarkets. The employees had both negative and positive views about the training and development at their workplaces. Also, they had different opinions of how the training programmes should be structured, whether it benefitted them or not and if they learnt anything from the training given to them.

A narrative inquiry was chosen for this study to allow the researcher to explore the participants' stories more in depth. This was chosen because the participants could talk openly and willingly. Their stories portrayed their lived experiences and are re-lived by people who keep on telling them, thus reaffirming and modifying them, and creating new ones (Savin-Baden & Niekerk, 2007). In this thesis, participants shared their stories around their working life and training experience and perception of the supermarket chains.

The data was collected using semi-structured interviews with eight participants from non-managerial positions in the supermarkets. It was meant to be 10 to 12 participants, but participant recruitment coincided with a strict lockdown in August 2021 due to COVID restrictions, which lasted for several months in Auckland. This meant that it was difficult to recruit. It became difficult for the researcher to interview her participants because it was a challenge to get hold of them. They were either busy because of being essential workers, or they did not have time. Instead of face-to-face interviews, the researcher

ended up doing phone interviews which is challenging for a novice researcher. This was because some of the participants were a little hesitant to answer most of the questions and if they did, they were not full responses to the questions. A few participants who participated were migrants and the others were from New Zealand. There were four migrants and four were New Zealand citizens.

The main findings from this research are grouped into three main themes: 1) Experiences of training; 2) Purpose and benefit of training and development; and 3) Training opportunities/programmes. The research was carried out to mirror the experiences and perceptions employees had from the training and development at the three supermarket chains at which the participants worked. The employees from the three supermarkets had a very similar kind of training and development given to them. From their experiences and perceptions, most of the training was on-job because retail work is practical, and the employees stated that the training helped them learn more by practising at work. There were only a few who were sent out to off-job training because their job role is different from the others, such as the employees from the fresh food department. Those who were sent for off-job training were either a supervisor in fresh foods or from the checkout departments. They were the ones who wanted to upskill themselves in the supermarket they work for. Participants gave their perceptions about their training openly. This research explored the participants' understanding of training and development, even if they never received training the way they preferred. The research found out that there were both positive and negative responses from the employees about the type of training given and the way it was given. Furthermore, they would have liked their employers to ask them how they benefited from the training. The findings portrayed that training is very important to the employees for their self-growth and career progression. They all want to get upskilled and progress further, whether they are students, retired employees or employees that have been in the industry for longer.

The benefits they got from their training made them more knowledgeable and efficient. After the training, the participants were able to make better decisions and were more effective in problem solving. It also assisted in self-development and increased self-confidence. However, the students had different perceptions of the training given because they felt that the training was not useful for them. This is because the employer assumed they would leave the job after they complete their studies. The students were unable to make decisions about getting a job done or to stay longer in the supermarket because they were not given the expected or appropriate training. Employees attain job satisfaction after they undergo training and development (Amir Elnaga & Imran, 2013;

Chime, 2016; Falola et al., 2014). In relation to the findings, one employee was encouraged to get trained to step up as a manager. This had led to job satisfaction and recognition at work which motivates the participants to achieve their goals and improve interaction skills. In addition to this, it is management's responsibility to look after its employees' professional goals. They are to communicate with the employees to find out the skills they lack (Billett et al., 2011). These can then be improved by motivating the employees to achieve their goals.

The perception and experiences employees had from their training opportunities was positive to some because the method of training was given on-job. This is because the retail job is mostly practical, so the chosen method was appropriate for the employees. When employees follow all the given procedures of training programmes, they do not face as many difficulties. According to the findings, the perception was also negative because some employees always wanted to learn more by getting trained, but they were never given an opportunity to. These employees were either students or those who were about to retire. In relation to the findings, the employee's perception was that the training should be done the way they prefer, for example, job rotation in every department so that there is no need to hire extra staff, and if an employee cannot attend off-job training, then the employer should provide training online for them. Lastly, employees' perception was that there should be separate departments for training the new and existing recruits, avoiding confusion between the job roles – for example, a supervisor will be trained separately to a normal checkout operator.

6.3 Theoretical Contribution

This thesis identified the key elements that contribute to the employee experiences and perceptions of training and development in the retail industry. The important key elements identified were training at supermarkets does not follow best practice; that part-time workers want more training to develop their career. The workers see retail as an opportunity to learn. This was evident in the previous literature of part-timers who are mostly students. According to the research, the employers are not willing to train part-time workers because students have partial commitment to their employment (Kathman & Kathman, 2000). By contrast to the literature, part-time students find retail jobs attractive (Broadbridge et al., 2007b) and they have a perception that it is about building up their skills base and would like to learn more about retail (Huddleston, 2011). This thesis identifies the importance of part-time students in the retail supermarkets.

There was another contribution, that, retiring employees wanted more training to progress further in retail but the employers would not train them. The findings stated that retail employers were not generally willing to train retiring employees. This is because they assumed that those workers would leave the job soon. Therefore, they were not given an opportunity to get trained. According to the literature, employers have a negative attitude towards their older employees. This is because they think it will be hard for older employees to adapt to the technological change at work, are less productive, less motivated, harder to train, inflexible, of poor health and a risky investment. By contrast, the younger employees are flexible, and fast in learning (Billett et al., 2011). However, the same literature discussed that older employees are valuable. This is because, they are more experienced, reliable, are always available because they are less likely to call in sick, have strong work ethic, are knowledgeable and committed to their job (Billett et al., 2011).

Finally, the last contribution from the findings was that retail workers had a perception that training departments should be separate for training the new recruits and the existing employees. This way it is easier identifying the employee's job role, for example, supervisor training should be done separately from training other new recruits where the employee would be guided by the experienced trainer. Woods et al.'s (2021) literature stated that employees at a supervisory level need all the skills identified for an entry-level job. Hence, the employee will know exactly what his/her role is about, thereby avoiding confusion.

This thesis will enable the retail employers to better understand the perceptions employees have before and after the training in the retail supermarkets they work for.

6.4 Recommendations for Practice

Recommendations for practice are made in this section based on the findings of this thesis. Firstly, the recommendations this chapter make from the employees' perception were that training and development be made flexible and accessible for the employees who cannot go off-job training due to their personal or professional circumstances; the employer should offer 'in-department' training (i.e. within the department they work, example checkouts or grocery) so that the existing employees can get a chance to explore other roles; give students more training since they want to develop their skills and would like to grow their career in the retail industry (Huddleston, 2011).

Secondly, it is very important for management to ask their employees what they want, as evidenced in the findings: employee perception was to change the type of training programmes the employers offer. Once the employers find out what the employees are expecting, they can design the programme accordingly. Furthermore, management should always give employees feedback about their job performance; whether they are performing to expectations or not (Campbell & Chalmers, 2008; Huddleston, 2011).

Thirdly, in addition to the recommendation for practise to the thesis, would be job rotation. The eight participants perception from the three retail supermarkets was that there is no job rotation at work. If there was job rotation, employees would get more training, thus developing themselves in every department. Employees would be more knowledgeable, and employers would not need to hire anyone from elsewhere. In argument to the international literature, it was evidenced by Johansson et al. (2015) that there is job rotation in every department in supermarkets in Sweden. The employees get equal opportunities to obtain organisational knowledge.

Finally, it is recommended that more participants should be interviewed to get better feedback and understanding about the perceptions of the workers. Training and development are a strategy for the growth in every organisation. Organisations adopt that to fill the gap between skills and future opportunities. Retail industry provides coaching to high potential employees to build their skills: example in the findings, a retail sector sent its employee for a retail training to gain a certificate she could use anywhere in the retail industry in Aotearoa. Feedback from the employer is also important for the learner and management.

6.5 Limitations

This research has useful insights. However, there were some significant limitations. The first limitation was the number of participants. The researcher was meant to recruit 12 participants, but she ended up recruiting only eight due to COVID-19 pandemic lockdown. This limited the scope for gathering information. The participants were interviewed via mobile phones. Furthermore, all the participants gained their retail experience in New Zealand, so this thesis was focussed on the New Zealand retail industry, specifically in the three supermarket chains.

The second limitation was participants on a work visa. They were a little hesitant to answer questions that were asked in the interview. This was because of their sensitivity regarding their visa, even though a confidentiality form was given to them.

Finally, the interviews did not take place the way it was planned due to COVID-19 lockdown in Auckland, in 2021. The interviews were supposed to be face-to-face, but the researcher ended up doing phone calls. However, the interviews and the number of participants met the thesis criteria for the recruitment.

6.6 Future Research

The employee experiences and perceptions of training and development in the retail industry highlights the need for more in-depth study to find out about the existing employees' grievances in this area. These are the employees who have been in the industry for a long time and some who may be thinking of staying longer. Only one participant was known to be of retirement age. Therefore, some useful information could be furnished if more employees in this category were to be interviewed.

Finally, there is no doubt that there is a need for future research on "Employee Perceptions and Experiences of Training and Development in the Retail Industry" during the COVID-19 pandemic, since COVID seems to have become somewhat normalised in our current lives.

6.7 Closing Chapter Comments

This thesis found that there was similar training given in the three supermarket chains. The training given mostly was 'on-job' because according to the employees' perception, retail work is more practical. By getting 'on-job' training it is easier because it gives more knowledge and can be practised while being trained. There were a few employees who were sent for 'off-job' training and they were from the fresh food and checkout departments because of the job role they have. Fresh food department employees must undergo Health and Safety and Food and Safety training because it is a requirement. This was necessary to learn because they handle food every day and everything in the department has a procedure to be followed. The checkout employee gave a perception that she was sent to off-job training because the employer saw future potential in her and decided she could attain a retail certificate which she can use in any sector of the retail industry. There are short courses provided by the retail services IQ for the employees who want to learn more and progress in the retail industry. After getting trained off-job she was also trained on-job as a supervisor to get a better knowledge about the retail job. After getting fully trained, she started training the new recruits in her department. On the other hand, another employee who was very hardworking, was getting trained for

a managerial position. The employer identified him to have potential to become a manager. The same participant said that he would start his own business later in the future. Therefore, he was not only thinking to become a manager, but he had a future personal goal such as starting his own business. Therefore, the training does benefit and have impact on employees.

In comparison to these participants, there were two 18-year-old students who were not given enough training because the employer assumed they are just students who would leave the job after finishing off their studies. However, the findings suggest otherwise. The students wanted to learn more about the retail sector in depth. The academic literature stated that students join retail as part-time to work until they finish their studies and would leave after that, but the findings in this thesis contradicts this. The students want to learn so that they can also progress in retail if they see any benefit. Employees would stay longer in the company if they know their responsibilities (Amir Elnaga & Imran, 2013). These students were disappointed with the training method given. According to them they were made to work only in their department. Furthermore, there was no extra training given to the pre-retired employee. According to the participants' perception, the employer should provide training to any age group who are willing to learn and can learn because the 'older' employees are always experienced and committed to the job. Training can benefit the company more. There was very limited research on 'older employees' perception in the retail industry but there was research which stated the benefits of hiring experienced (older) employees.

Moreover, this thesis also outlined the employees' perception around the training programmes the three supermarket chains provide to their employees. The employees' perception was that the employers should ask for feedback from the employees about the training programmes they give. They suggested that the retail industry should have separate departments for the training to understand the job roles better and not to get them confused. In addition, training should be given online for the employees who cannot travel or have other problems to go off-job training. The retail supermarket should give equal opportunity to all the employees and not be under the assumption that the employees cannot do the job. Also, employee's perception was that there should be job rotation. This helps the employee to understand different job roles better. Job rotation will make an employee more flexible, and it can cut the training cost and increase the impact on training. It prevents the employee from experiencing boredom on the job and will make the employee eager to learn and give self-motivation (Alipour et al., 2009).

The overall experiences and perceptions of the employees stated in this thesis was that the retail supermarkets do not follow the best practice of training. Future recommendations were also given in this chapter. Therefore, training should be given to anyone who works for the retail sector and the employers should ask each employee about what they are trying to achieve from the training given to them (Billett et al., 2011).

7.0 Chapter 7: References

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8.0 Chapter 8: Appendix

This Sections holds the following documents arranged in the given sequence:

- Appendix 1: Ethics Form
- Appendix 2: Participant Information Form
- Appendix 3: Participant Consent Form
- Appendix 4: Transcriber Confidentiality Form
- Appendix 5: Union Advertisement
- Appendix 6: Interview Questions

8.1 Appendix 1: Ethics Approval Form

Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC)

Auckland University of Technology
D-88, Private Bag 92006, Auckland 1142, NZ
T: +64 9 921 9999 ext. 8316
E: ethics@aut.ac.nz
www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics 23 July 2021

Katherine Ravenswood
Faculty of Business Economics and Law

Dear Katherine

Re Ethics Application: **21/215 Employee experiences and perceptions of training in the retail industry;**

Thank you for providing evidence as requested, which satisfies the points raised by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC).

Your ethics application has been approved for three years until 23 July 2024.

Non-Standard Conditions of Approval

1. Inclusion of the time costs of transcript review in the costs section of the Information Sheet;

2. Correct the spelling of the second supervisor's name at the end of the Information Sheet

Non-standard conditions must be completed before commencing your study. Non-standard conditions do not need to be submitted to or reviewed by AUTEC before commencing your study.

Standard Conditions of Approval

1. The research is to be undertaken in accordance with the Auckland University of Technology Code of Conduct for Research and as approved by AUTEC in this application.
2. A progress report is due annually on the anniversary of the approval date, using the EA2 form.
3. A final report is due at the expiration of the approval period, or, upon completion of project, using the EA3 form.
4. Any amendments to the project must be approved by AUTEC prior to being implemented. Amendments can be requested using the EA2 form.
5. Any serious or unexpected adverse events must be reported to AUTEC Secretariat as a matter of priority.
6. Any unforeseen events that might affect continued ethical acceptability of the project should also be reported to the AUTEC Secretariat as a matter of priority.
7. It is your responsibility to ensure that the spelling and grammar of documents being provided to participants or external organisations is of a high standard and that all the dates on the documents are updated.

AUTEC grants ethical approval only. You are responsible for obtaining management approval for access for your research from any institution or organisation at which your research is being conducted and you need to meet all ethical, legal, public health, and locality obligations or requirements for the jurisdictions in which the research is being undertaken.

Please quote the application number and title on all future correspondence related to this project.

For any enquiries please contact ethics@aut.ac.nz. The forms mentioned above are available online through http://www.aut.ac.nz/research/researchethics

(This is a computer-generated letter for which no signature is required)

The AUTEC Secretariat
Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee

Cc: swashni1684@yahoo.co.nz; Carolyn Ward

8.2 Appendix 2: Participant Information Form

Participant Information Sheet

Date Information Sheet Produced:

O4 June 2021

Project Title

Employee experiences and perceptions of training in the retail industry.

An Invitation

Dear Participant

I am a Master's Student in Management at Auckland University of technology and as a part of my course, I need to complete a final research project. The objective of my research is to find out employees' experiences and perceptions of training and development in the retail sector. This study will focus on the participants' work experiences, the impact and benefits of training and development for them in the Retail Sector.

For this, I aim to collect data on the work experiences of employees who been employed in the retail sector for two years or more. I will be conducting interviews for participants working for FMCG (Fast Moving Consumer Goods) in Auckland, New Zealand. I have chosen Woolworths (Countdown), New World and Pak n Save in Auckland. I intend to interview employees who have been working on a casual basis, part time or full-time work and any age group.

The interview will take approximately one hour, and you will be asked to share the stories of your working experience and talk about any training and development you had at work or career trajectory. Your participation in this research is voluntary and you may withdraw in two weeks prior to the interview scheduled date. However, once the findings have been produced, removal of your data may not be possible.

Your participation will add value to my research and could lead to greater understanding of Training and Development provided to employees. If you know somebody interested to speak about their working experience, please do not hesitate to forward this invite to them.

Please feel free to contact me   by email in case you have any questions (pqz7815@aut.ac.nz).

I invite you to take part in this study and share your experience.

Thanks and Regards

Swashni Narayan

8.3 Appendix 3: Participant Consent Form

What is the purpose of this research?

The purpose of this research is to interview retail industry employees and find out their experiences and what perceptions they have of training opportunities in their company.

How was I identified and why am I being invited to participate in this research?

You have been identified as a possible research participant as you meet the selection criteria working for a Supermarket (FMCG) company, have 2 or more years' of experience and you are casual, part time or a full time employee. As a potential participant, you have received an invite with this Participant Information Sheet and the contact details to ask any further questons if needed.

How do I agree to participate in this research?

Once you have reviewed the information in this document, if you agree to participate in this research, you can express your interest via Facebook message or by emailing me: pqz7815@aut.ac.nz. Once you confirm your participation in this project, I will send you the Consent Form for you to read. After that, you will have one week to go through this information and request any further clarification. You can give consent to participate by signing hard copy of the Consent Form the day of our meeting prior to the start of our interview.

Your participation in this research is voluntary (it is your choice) and whether or not you choose to participate will neither advantage nor disadvantage you. You are able to withdraw from the study at any time. If you choose to withdraw from the study, then you will be offered the choice between having any data that is identifiable as belonging to you removed or allowing it to continue to be used. However, once the findings have been produced, removal of your data may not be possible.

What will happen in this research?

As a participant, you will be asked to share the stories of working in the retail industry (Supermarket), how you feel and what do you think about working for this industry. You will be asked about 10-12 questions related to the topic of this research. This will require approximately one hour of your time. I will be recording the interview and taking note. All the information that you share will be strictly for use in this study only. After the interview, you will be given the opportunity to review and comment on the

transcript of the interview before it is used in this study. You will be given one week to review the interview transcript.

What are the discomforts and risks?

There are no discomforts and risks associated with this study. Nevertheless, if at any time you feel stressed, feel free to not answer the question or to stop the interview if preferred. You may stop the interview or delay it for another appointment, the interview will be held in the library rooms at AUT, Company premises or any public space you feel comfortable with.

What are the benefits?

The benefit of participants in this research is to give you an opportunity to provide data which has potential to increase knowledge base in the retail management. It will also assist me as it contributes towards the completion of my Thesis as part of the AUT MBus Program.

How will my privacy be protected?

The details of the interview will remain confidential. You will not be identifiable in any way. Once the transcription of the interview is ready, it will be shared with you for your review and comment.

What are the costs of participating in this research?

It will require 60 minutes of your time. There will not be any additional cost.

What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?

Once you have expressed an interest to be part of this study, you will be sent a Consent Form. Participants will be given 2 weeks to consider their participation in their research. You may accept or decline prior to this time frame.

Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?

Yes, you will have one week to review and comment on the interview transcript. Also, you can receive a summary of the findings of this study if you wish.

What do I do if I have concerns about this research?

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor, Associate *Professor Katherine Ravenswood on katherine.ravenswood@aut.ac.nz, (09)9219999 ext 5064*

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary of AUTEC, *ethics@aut.ac.nz* , (+649) 921 9999 ext 6038.

Whom do I contact for further information about this research?

Please keep this Information Sheet and a copy of the Consent Form for your future reference. You are also able to contact the research team as follows:

Researcher Contact Details:

Swashni Narayan

Pqz7815@aut.ac.nz

Project Supervisor Contact Details:

Professor Katherine Ravenswood

Katherine.ravenswood@aut.ac.nz

Dr. Caroyln Ward

Carolyn.ward@aut.ac.nz

Consent Form

Project title: **"Employee experiences and perceptions of training in the retail industry"**

Project Supervisor: **Professor Katherine Ravenswood**

Researcher: **Swashni Narayan**

○ I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated dd mmmm yyyy.

○ I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.

○ I understand that notes will be taken during the interviews and that they will also be audio-taped andtranscribed.

○ I understand that taking part in this study is voluntary (my choice) and that I may withdraw from the study at any time without being disadvantaged in any way.

○ I understand that if I withdraw from the study then I will be offered the choice between having any data that is identifiable as belonging to me removed or allowing it to continue to be used. However, once the findings have been produced, removal of my data may not be possible.

○ I agree to take part in this research.

○ I wish to receive a summary of the research findings (please tick one): Yes○   No○

Participant's signature: ………………………………………………………………………………………………

Participant's name: ………………………………………………………………………………………………

Participant's Contact Details (if appropriate):

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……………………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………. Date:

***Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on** 23/07/21 **AUTEC Reference number** 21/215*

Note: The Participant should retain a copy of this form.

8.4 Appendix 4: Transcriber Confidentiality Agreement

Confidentiality Agreement

For someone transcribing data, e.g. audio-tapes of interviews.

Project title: *Employee experiences and perceptions of training in the retail industry.*

Project Supervisor: **Associate Professor Katherine Ravenswood**

Researcher: **Swashni Narayan**

○   I understand that all the material I will be asked to transcribe is confidential.

○   I understand that the contents of the tapes or recordings can only be discussed with the researchers.

○   I will not keep any copies of the transcripts nor allow third parties access to them.

Transcriber's signature: ....

Transcriber's name: ....

Transcriber's Contact Details (if appropriate):

....

....

....

....

Date:

Project Supervisor's Contact Details (if appropriate):

....

....

....

....

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on **type the date on which the final approval was granted** *AUTEC Reference number* **21/215**

Note: The Transcriber should retain a copy of this form.

8.5 Appendix 5: Union Advertisement

Union Newsletter

An opportunity to have your say!

About the Project

The purpose of this research is to interview retail industry employees and find out their experiences and what perceptions they have about training opportunities in the FCMG sector, ow they are trained and how they benefit from the training.

Who am I looking for?

Experienced employees who have been in the FCMG sector, working in supermarkets for **two** years and more.

What does it involve?

It is an opportunity for you to express your views in an interview with the researcher

Once you confirm your participation in this project, I will send you the consent form for you to read.

If you are interested in taking part, please contact me and I will send you more information. I can be emailed on pqz7815@aut.ac.nz

Swashni Narayan (Union Delegate/Researcher)

Thanking you in anticipation.

Swashni Narayan

8.6 Appendix 6: Interview Questions

1. Tell me a little bit about yourself. How old are you/how long you been in this Company for/male or female/department you work for/how many family members you have/household situation and education background?

2. Could you tell me about your job and how you came to work here? What role are you in? How long you been in this role for?

3. Have you had any form of training since you joined the company? A) Yes b) No. What kind of training was it? Or what kind of training you are going for (if you will be getting trained soon). If no, what training would you have liked, found useful, useful in your role?

4. Can you tell me about your experiences of training at this Company? Example, how often, types of training, and purpose of training etc.

5. What are the methods of facilitation at training you have attended or going to attend? Lecture/demo/presentation/seminar/discussion? i.e self-directed/online etc.

6. Do the methods used during training have any impact on your skills? Yes, or no?

7. How relevant were the trainings you received to your work?

8. What did you think of training? How did the training help you at work and in your career?

9. What problems do you face regarding training and development within your organisation?

10. Please specify any ways you think training and development in your organisation can be improved?

11. Which method were you trained under? On the job, off the job or both?

12. How training is made available in your Company?

13. Is there anything else you would like to tell/ask that I have not?

Thank you so much for your time today. I highly appreciate your answers you gave me. It will surely help me in my research. If you would like to know the findings of my research, I will email it to you; therefore sign the form for my record so that I can send it to you.