An Investigation into Generation Y: Job Expectations and Career Anchors in Post-Brexit Ireland

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Abstract

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By Aoife Keaney

This study seeks to investigate the career expectations of Generation Y. The paper also sets out to investigate whether Generation Y consider career anchors when evaluating their career choices.

A cross-sectional study was conducted for this research and responses were gathered using a qualitative approach. Semi-structured interviews and a focus group was chosen in order to generate rich quality data and to have a deeper understanding of the topic while allowing participants to provide their opinions openly.

Further, a thematic analysis was followed to let existing and new themes emerge from the data. The respondents chosen for the study were Generation Y, some of whom are working full-time and others who are just qualified entering the world of work. Participants were selected via convenience sampling.

Following the analysis, a number of significant findings were discovered. In relation to the job expectations of Generation Y, career progression opportunities, training and development, and employee benefits were of high importance. In terms of career anchors, the most considered anchors were autonomy/independence and security/stability. Organisational career management (OCM) practices were found to be a positive feature for Generation Y. Participants disclosed that the implementation of such practices may help retain talented individuals in the workplace.

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Abbreviations

National College of Ireland	**NCI**
United Kingdom	**UK**
European Union	**EU**
Non Profit Loans	**NPL's**
Generation Y	**Gen Y**
Generation X	**Gen X**
Central Statistics Office	**CSO**
Gross National Product	**GNP**
Gross Domestic Product	**GDP**
National Governmental Organisations	**NGO's**
Generation Z	**Gen Z**
Generation C	**Gen C**
United States	**U.S**
Information Technology	**I.T**
Organisational Career Management	**OCM**
Face-to-face	**F2F**
Online Focus Group	**OFG**
Training and Development	**T&D**

Chapter 1. Introduction

Background to the study

Generation Y (Gen Y) also known as Millennials will soon be the largest share of the global labour force as they join the pre-existing workforce of Baby Boomers born (1946 – 1964) and Generation X (Gen X) born (1965 – 1980). There has been constant debates about the exact age group of Gen Y (Mhatre and Conger, 2011), however for the purpose of this study, Gen Y are the cohort of those born between 1981 and 2000 (Campione, 2014; Cheeseman & Downey, 2012).

The growth of Gen Y has had an effect on the global workforce. In Ireland over 95,000 enrolled in full-time education in Irish universities in 2014 and 2015. According to Irish Universities Association (2017), Gen Y were considered as the most highly educated generation to date. Gen Y are experts when it comes to digital knowledge, they easily adapt to change, unlike previous cohorts in the workplace. They accept cultural differences easily (Krishnan et al., 2012). As traditional values fade, family is not a priority for this cohort. Many of Gen Y are already present in the labour market, they are well educated with their Bachelor and Master degrees and they work alongside members of the Gen X cohort. Gen Y possess unique ideas about their future positions. Gen Y are characterised by 'multi-tasking', the multi-sided and shared attention as outlined by Schäffer (2015). In 2018, the 'war for talent' continues and companies are increasingly competitive in the methods they use for attracting the best talent into their organisations, especially among the Millennial cohort (Michaels, Handfield – Jones & Axelrod, 2001).

Tari (2010) conveys that Gen Y's top priorities are success, career and money as they believe it is the only thing that can develop them in a consumer society (Bencsik et al., 2016). Communication generally occurs online with the modern technological devices that are familiar to us today. As work is always a highpoint for Gen Y, they are mostly motivated by advancing and reaching success, while family remains in the background (Bencsik et al., 2016).

Generation Y and the Irish Economy

The 'Celtic Tiger' occurred in Ireland during the mid-1990s. Fahey et al., (2007) defines the Celtic Tiger as a period of economic growth, which proposed a vast amount of employment prospects. Ireland became a net trader as many new migrants entered the country. At this time, employment was plentiful, emigration was at an all-time low and many individuals had the ability to change jobs at their convenience (Bencsik et al., 2016).

An economic downturn occurred in 2007. Employees and organisations were affected globally by one of the worst economic recessions due to the global financial crisis in September 2007 (Briscoe, Henegan, Burton and Murphy, 2012). Ireland, in particular was severely impacted with the collapse of the construction sector, a fiscal crisis and a severe rise in unemployment (Honohan 2009; Roche, Teague, Coughlan and Fahy, 2011). The Recession in Ireland has been more severe and persistent than anywhere else as the Gross National Product (GNP) decreased by 2.8% in 2008 and again by 11.3% in 2009. The most prominent consequence of the Recession has been the high rate of unemployment,

with the average rate of unemployment rising from 4.6% in 2007 to a staggering 13.1% in 2009 (Barrett and Kelly, 2011).

The youngest employee generation (Gen Y) appear to have been most affected by the economic crisis, with over one quarter of those unemployed during this period (Central Statistics Office (CSO), 2009). Younger employees have grown up in the era of Ireland's Celtic Tiger which has influenced their opinions regarding Protean and 'Boundaryless' careers (Cennamo and Gardner, 2008). They value developmental opportunities and opportunities to take initiative in their jobs as well as engaging in job hopping (McDonald and Hite, 2008).

The Irish Economy and Brexit

Brexit refers to the potential departure of the United Kingdom (UK) from the European Union (EU) (Oliver, 2013). This will have an effect on Ireland's Economy. According to Murray (2018), the Irish Economy will be negatively affected, even in the best-case scenario. The Irish Economy will grow by 7% less which is less than it would have without Brexit in the worst-case scenario and by 2.8% less in the best-case scenario (Murray, 2018).

Taylor (2018) illustrates how Ireland is not quite back to pre-crisis highs, but not far off. The total number of people at work reached an all-time high of just under 2.17 million in the first quarter of 2007, collapsed to 1.825 million in early 2012 and was 2.06 million in

the middle of last year (Taylor, 2018). It will have risen a bit more since. However, Brexit poses major threat as outlined by the Central Bank (2018). The Irish economy is projected to grow in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by 4.8% this year and 4.2% in 2019 (O'Donoghue, 2018). While Brexit is 'a key risk to the Irish economy, there is also a concern that as the economy approaches full employment, upward pressure on wages and skills shortages, as well as infrastructure deficiencies could threaten competitiveness' (Ryan, 2018).

If Brexit does go ahead, it poses a number of risks for the Irish economy. Such risks include; domestic businesses and households to postpone investment decisions until the future trading relationship with the UK becomes clear. Further, a potential rise in Non Profit Loans (NPLs) due to a Brexit-related showdown between the UK and Irish economic growth affecting Irish bank loan portfolios. There may also be new operational challenges for Irish banks looking to issue debt through the UK. Moreover, UK insurance firms may potentially lose the right to do business in Ireland, affecting competition and product availability (Ryan, 2018).

This research will seek to determine the job expectations of Gen Y, and the Career Anchors they are most likely to consider when evaluating their career choices.

Structure

The purpose of this qualitative study explores the principal research question: "Generation Y: Job Expectations and Career Anchors in Post-Brexit Ireland". The characteristics of Gen Y, Generational Theory and Career Anchors are the primary theoretical frameworks for this study.

Chapter 2 forms the basis of this study. After evaluating the literature, the researcher summarised previous research on these theories and the characteristics of Gen Y, focusing on their most desired job expectations which will ultimately retain them within a business for longer.

Chapter 3 provides detailed information about this study, including the ethical precautions. It contains the population and the participants of the study, identifying and justifying the research method and design. This section concludes with a description of the data instruments, including how the data was collected, organised and analysed.

Chapter 4 details the findings that were established in this study.

Chapter 5 discusses the themes which emerged from the analysis of the findings. It concludes with limitations which were identified during this research process.

Finally, chapter 6 provides a summary of the research findings and offers recommendations which may be of use to employers.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

Introduction

Quinlan (2015) describes literature as research that has already been conducted and published by other authors or composers. Such literature is accessible in peer reviewed journal articles, books, theses, government reports, the reports of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO's), conference reports, online and in the media. The author must be able to comprehend the viewpoints of previous research and to critically examine it in order to identify gaps (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson 2008).

This chapter aims to review the current literature available which is relevant to the research objectives of this study. By taking a look at and understanding Gen Y or Millennials, and the current expectations this generation anticipate, one can begin to comprehend who Gen Y are. The review begins by outlining the concept of Gen Y or Millennials, who they are, what they expect from today's employers, their characteristics etc. Thereafter, Gen Y's job expectations and aspirations will be explained and their impact on the organisation will be explored. Following this, the next section discusses the main possible factors to retain Gen Y in the workplace as they are sometimes labelled as 'job hoppers' (Budd, 2008). This review investigates the meaning of career anchors in terms of Gen Y today. These topics will be examined within other countries as there has not been research conducted on this topic in Ireland as of yet. The literature analysed is taken from multiple sources, however, peer reviewed journals form the basis of this study.

Generation Y / Millennials

Generational theory

Strauss and Howe (1991) discovered that there has been 4 generational cycles which have repeated themselves for almost 80 years. Strauss and Howe (1991) convey that generational characteristics have been moulded by significant events that occur at a given time. They have identified that 4 turning periods take place every 20 years, each controlled by a global pattern. These episodes are classified into the Artist, the Prophet, the Nomad and the Hero. Each archetype experience a distinct social change. Researchers believe that generational theory has the ability to predict job expectations of Millennials throughout the development of their careers (Fenich, Scott – Halsell and Hashimoto, 2011; Strauss and Howe, 2000). Gen X are referred to as the Nomads and Millennials are referred to as the Heroes. According to Cekada (2012), the positivism of Gen Y has contributed to their openness to diversity, and respecting the opinions of others.

What is meant by generation?

There are 2 perspectives of generations, a social perspective and a cohort perspective. Firstly, we will look at the social perspective. Mannheim (1952) describes this type of generation as a group of individuals born within the same historical and socio-cultural context. These people experience the same or similar determinative practises which result in the development of unifying commonalities. Furthermore, a cohort perspective refers to a group of people born within the same time period (Lyons and Kuron 2014). According to Cole, Smith and Lucas (2002), a generation may be defined as a blend of

both the cohort and social viewpoints, for example, an individual may be within a similar age cohort as well as share similar values and beliefs.

Lyons and Kuron (2014) convey that there has been 4 generations;

- Traditionalists/ The Matures (previous to World War II)

- Baby Boomers (1945-1960)

- Generation X (Gen X) (1960-1980)

- Generation Y/ Millennials (1980-2000)

Conversely, Wasserman (2007) argued that today's workplace consists of 5 different generations working together; adding Generation Z (Gen Z), also known as Generation C (Gen C). This generation is set to emerge after Gen Y (born 1996 and after). The differences among these generations poses many challengers for managers and supervisors, however, these differences can also bring them together.

Brosdahl and Carpenter (2011) oppose this statement by suggesting that Gen Y are those born between 1891-1990 and Gen Z are those born from 1991 and after. Brosdahl and Carpenter conclude that Gen Z are experiencing a strong 'virtual bonding' that helps the youth of today to break free from emotional and psychological struggles they may face offline. Although there has been constant debates about the exact age group of the Gen Y (Mhatre and Conger, 2011), Gen Y will be considered as the cohort born in the period

between 1980- 2000 for the purposes of this study (Cole et al., 2002; Polevoi, 2012; PWC, 2011).

General characteristics of Gen Y

Who are Generation Y?

James Rowell clarifies everyone's curiosity regarding why the Y is in 'Generation Y'. He believes not only does it stand for youth, but, this generation always ask 'WHY!!!' which plays a significance in its title (Allen, 2011). Gen Y/ Millennials are those born between 1980-2000. Their parents are generally Baby Boomers. They can also be referred to as 'Generation Me' 'Generation Next' 'Nexters' and 'Echo Boomers' (Costanza Badger, Fraser, Severt, and Gade, 2012). Gen Y make up the best-educated and are the youngest generation in the United States (U.S) workforce (Fry, 2015; The Council of Economic Advisers, 2014). Due to unique historic and traditional events, Millennials have developed distinctive characteristics that set them apart from other generations in the workplace.

Sinek (2016) identified labels connected to the Gen Y population. Such labels include laziness, narcissistic and impatient with impractical expectations. This statement is challenged by Ross and Rouse (2015) who suggest that Millennials have very substantial interpretations. There is no doubt that Millennials are highly transparent when it comes to 'what they want' from their employer. Characterised as the 'technically savvy' generation, Gen Y are considered to be the most educated and ethnically diverse group of

people to enter the workforce (Eisner, 2005). There is no surprise that they have had a huge effect regarding how organisations manage their employees.

Gen Y are 'digital natives'

Millennials may be classified as 'digital natives' as they grew up in the era of advanced Information Technology (IT). This cohort embrace change as they have a great penetration for technology (Bencsik, Horvath-Csikos, and Juhasz 2016). Sinek (2016) conveys that 24% of Millennials believe that technology is an essential characteristic of their generation. Krishen, Berezan, Agarwal, and Kachroo (2016) suggest that Gen Y have created a 'brain gap' from Gen X, who are sometimes referred to as 'digital immigrants'. Millennials anticipate free and sufficient information resources, push for speed of communication devices such as WhatsApp, Instant Messenger and Facebook. Millennials do not require formal meetings because of their comfort with technology. They prefer communicating through laptops, smart phones, e-mails, and blogging (Cekada, 2012). Gen Y also use social networking for communicating, 96% of this generation belongs to a social network (Gibson and Sodeman, 2014). Millennials share their work and experiences through their social networks such as blogs, instant messenger, or websites for example, Facebook, Twitter and MySpace (Ennis, 2011; Gibson and Sodeman, 2014). However, Sinek (2016) stresses the risk of social media addiction, he believes that superficial relationships among Gen Y have formed due to the lack of face to face presence at meetings. He believes that this lack of attendance may indicate a lack of effort being made by both parties. He highlights the transition from traditional forms of communication to virtual methods. For example, he mentions that

this extensive use of social media may reduce team building opportunities as well as active listening exercises.

Gen Y like multi-tasking and are enthusiastic to share their own experiences with their social networks. Baby Boomers are generally the parents of Gen Y and they have high expectations for their children as they invest heavily on their education. The Council of Economic Advisors (2014) discovered that more young people completed higher education in 2010 and a high percentage of them were able to concentrate on second level schooling and higher education without seeking work to pay for their education.

Furthermore, when the first of the Millennials started preschool, the Government began to put a strong emphasis on the importance of education, establishing a report titled 'A Nation at Risk' (The National Commission of Excellence in Education, 1983). Thereafter, a protective system was built based on policies and funds which aimed to enrich the welfare and education of the Millennials as well as generations to follow. This supportive social environment played a role in today's expectations of Gen Y as it helped produce a generation of authorisation and entitlement. Gen Y enter the workforce today expecting the organisation to provide them with resources for their higher achievement (Fishman, 2016). Managers are facing many challenges as Gen Y continue to grow within the workforce. Managers have the responsibility to reach the high expectations and demands of this cohort in return for employee retention and top talent (Lancaster and Stillman, 2010).

Gen Y are collaborators

Ferri-Reed (2014) found that collaboration in the workplace can occur worldwide due to the vast internet accessibility available to us today. Millennials are categorised as masters of collaboration because of their productive supportive capabilities (Shurman, 2015). Millennials are no strangers to group work and teamwork, their technological skills comfort them which makes communication easier. Millennials desire feedback on a regular basis and they are also open to constructive criticism, thus resulting in the constant self-development of employees. Srinivasan (2012) found that collaboration in the workplace gives organisations the opportunity to encourage innovation, advancement and is crucial for growth. Asghar (2014) carried out research based on Millennials' preferences regarding a collaborative working environment versus a competitive working environment. He revealed that 84% of Gen Y employees actually prefer working in an atmosphere that support effective collaboration among colleagues. Due to these high statistics, many organisations have adapted for a more open planned office to enforce a collaborative working environment. This has in turn, encouraged employees to partake in impulse conversation with one another (Cutler, 2014). Roberts, Newman and Schwartzstain (2012) suggests that leaders/supervisors could use technology mediums such as webinars, blogs and podcasts to help colleagues learn difficult topics.

Are Gen Y 'job hoppers'?

Naim and Lenka (2017) convey that employers are finding it challenging to retain talented employees due to 'job hopping'. This occurs when an employee leaves a job within a 2 year period. Millennials are becoming the largest generation to participate in job hopping

in today's modern workforce. This has impacted employers resulting in high turnover levels, therefore it is important for employers to reach the demands set out by Gen Y by incorporating their desires into their organisations, such as work life balance, flexibility, career progression etc (Schawbel, 2013). Gallup (2016b) revealed that only 50% of Gen Y employees tend to stay with their current employer throughout 2017 which leaves the other 50% leaving the organisation carrying their new skills and experience elsewhere. Twenge et al (2009) highlights the importance of employee engagement in the workplace, thus, suggesting for employers to create a culture of communication where constructive feedback is offered frequently. This enables employees to connect not only psychologically with the organisation, but also emotionally, which in turn will decrease turnover levels.

A study conducted by CNBC (2017) challenges the examination set out by Gallup as they discovered that 39% of Gen Y employees tend to remain with their current employer if they receive a salary rise and efforts made toward their career progression. Several research reports support this statement which suggest that pay, employee engagement and career progression are some of the crucial factors for the retention of employees. According to Meister (2012), a Gen Y employee will stay with a company for 4.4 years, however Zimmerman (2016) defies this by suggesting that the average time a millennial will stay with a company is 2 years.

Other researchers challenge the job hopping accusation associated with Gen Y conveying that they are just as loyal to a firm as Gen X. Kowske, Rasch, and Wiley (2010) claims that millennials are being stereotyped for this stigma, when really it is specific to a person's particular situation rather than a generational characteristic. Twenge (2010) believes that a Gen Y employee, like any other cohort will stay with an organisation long-term unless they become dissatisfied, only in that circumstance will they seek other opportunities. Deloitte (2016) supports this statement as they believe that job hopping occurs among all generations. The study summaries that as Gen Y matures, the desire to job hop decreases. PEW (2017) agrees with this theory as they reveal that Gen X employees engaged in the same amount of job hopping in 2000, which was at the same point in their career, after they had completed 3rd level education.

Gen Y are achievement orientated

As discussed previously, Baby Boomers want the best for their children which is why they invest heavily on their education. Millennials receive the best opportunities. By the time they enter the workforce, they are assertive and motivated. They have a complete different perspective of hierarchy and are much more content with a flat organisational structure as this enables access to senior leadership roles (Hershatter and Epstein, 2010). Millennials desire extensive support and guidance through frequent feedback (Ondeck, 2002). Consistent and honest feedback are the foundations needed to create robust amid managers (Gibson, Greenwood, and Murphy, 2009). A key indicator of disengagement is lack of adequate feedback, 19% of Gen Y have reported that they have not received consistent or sufficient feedback. Adkins and Rigoni (2016) illustrate that managers are

familiar working with employees who dislike constant feedback, which resulted in a less directive management technique. This alteration in managerial style will be challenging for all managers across the globe. Gen Y focus on results, their high level of self-esteem encourage them that anything is possible (Kaifi, Nafei, Khanfar, and Kaifi 2012). Millennials are seen to make strategic career decisions, they exploit employment developments so that they can realise their long-term goals. According to Gallup (2016), Gen Y are more committed to their job roles when they have prioritised accountabilities and responsibilities. Gallup (2016) reveals that only 29% of the Gen Y cohort are engaged at work. The study also identifies that 50% of U.S millennial employees are thinking of changing jobs within the next 12 months. Millennials reveal that arranging tasks and setting performance goals are of equal significance. Gallup (2016) also conveys an important note about keeping Gen Y employees engaged, employers must be aware of their job expectations, they also need to be aware of the order in which they want their goals to be accomplished. This highlights the importance of employee engagement at work.

Millennials display determination and ambition to achieve when they are passionate about something, they will sacrifice their personal time to achieve various objectives and goals. Zhu and Graf-Lambsdorff (2017) highlight their determination and drive by suggesting that Gen Y work extra hours and work their lunch breaks in order to achieve goals and reach targets which will benefit the business. Millennials parents' have valued their opinions all through their lives, therefore increasing their confidence to openly express their thoughts and opinions in the workplace, even placing demands on more matured colleagues (Levenson, 2010). Myers et al (2010) illustrates that sometimes Gen X

misinterpret Gen Y's difference of opinion and perceive it as conceit rather than legitimate concerns to support the business. Zhu and Graf-Lambsdorff (2017) convey that Millennials tend to multitask and take on extra responsibilities to create a sense of enthusiasm and changeability in their lives. Millennials work well in environments that encourage multitasking as they grew up juggling work, school and activities. Therefore, they expect to multitask in the workplace too (Kilber, Barclay and Ohmer, 2014). Carmichael (2016) associates the term 'workaholics' with Gen Y based on a study carried called 'Project: Time Off'. Furthermore, 48% of Millennials wanted their managers/supervisors to view them as workaholics, whereas 35% were satisfied for this label to extend to their colleagues (Project Time Off, 2016).

Based on previous research, McDonald and Hite (2008) support the idea that Millennials associate their career development with achievement as they are prioritising their careers over other life occurrences and they perceive a direct link between career success and advancement. Ferri-Reed (2013) suggest that employers should invest towards building assessment tools as this will aid them to plan the career development of this unique cohort.

The 2017 Deloitte Millennial Survey revealed that 76% of Gen Y desire a social aspect to an organisation. Millennials believe that a social facet will create a positive domino effect among employees which will result in a sense of empowerment (Deloitte, 2017). It has been unveiled that organisations who incorporate a social impact within their company have better employment retention and the staff experience a sense of meaning throughout their working day which results in job satisfaction (Deloitte, 2017).

Job Expectations of Gen Y

Work-life balance

Trees (2015) illustrate that communication tools such as emails, cloud computing, Yammer, Skype and virtual discussion rooms give employees the opportunity to work from home, which creates more opportunities for work life balance. CIPD (2015) articulated that Millennials become unsatisfied by not having access to current technologies in their workplace, restricting their capacity to connect and collaborate with key stakeholders.

Thompson and Gregory (2012) define work as a thing you do rather than a place you go. The concept of work life balance was initiated in the era of Gen X and the Millennials took the opportunity to enlarge it (PEW, 2010). Unlike Gen X, Millennials find a work uniform irrelevant as well as the place of work, the important thing is the standard of work performed as outlined by Thompson et al., (2012). Ernst and Young (2015) conducted a survey among 10,000 workers in 8 different countries including all generations. One third of all generations conveyed difficulties juggling demands from their private life and work life. Millennials were the most affected by this and proposed they would delay marriage and starting a family as a result of their inability to find a balance.

Millennials believe working from home may solve the imbalance issue of personal life and work life. However, Baby Boomers have a different viewpoint of the workplace and they don't trust that the work will get completed to a high standard if the employee is not

in a working environment. Gen Y love flexibility and authority, they like to dictate when, where and how they complete their work. Millennials have no obligation to stay with an employer if they are experiencing an unreasonable attitude toward flexibility. Millennials are very passionate about both their private lives and their careers, and if an employer doesn't compromise a flexible work-life balance, Millennials will view this as non-negotiable and will have no problem leaving the organisation (Buist, 2016). Demerouti, Peeters and Van Der Heijden (2012) concluded that employees who are satisfied, and have received optimal balance, are those who are more gratified in their family and work lives.

The Deloitte Millennial Survey (2016) reveals the factors Gen Y anticipate when evaluating job opportunities. Work-life balance ranks the second highest on their criteria with 16.8%, after salary is taken into consideration. Gen Y believe that a good work life balance will result in a more productive day at work, it will add value and contribute to the company's success. Gen Y value flexibility as it is a crucial factor to work-life balance.

Flexibility

Technology has played an important role in the mobilisation of the office (Costas, 2013; Davis, 2002; Olson & Olson, 2014). It allows employees to work from home and to have a flexible start and finish time. The modern organisation views work-life balance as a top priority, however the reality of incorporating it is a little more complex (Project: Time Off, 2016). Gen Y are more likely to forfeit their unused holidays than Gen X or Baby

Boomers as they have the notion that "no one else can do my role while I'm away" and "I feel guilty for using all my annual leave". This project also indicates that Gen Y are never disconnected from work due to technological-flexibility as they are constantly linked to work through their mobile phones, WIFI connections and portable laptops. Gen Y need a work environment that allows for flexibility, they want to feel they have job security and opportunities to progress. Millennials desire to work with others and have social networking as part of their environment (Ferri-Reed. 2014).

Career development

"Career development is concerned with shaping the progression of individuals within an organisation in order to provide those with promise a sequence of experience and learning activities that will equip them for whatever level of responsibility they have the ability to reach" (Armstrong and Taylor, 2017, p. 275).

In contrast to Gen X and Baby Boomers, Gen Y are prioritising their career development and progression (Adkins and Rigoni, 2016). They associate career progression with achievement. Therefore, putting extra pressure on managers to ensure each employee gets the opportunity for advancement. As previously mentioned by Kaifi et al., (2012), Gen Y believe there is nothing they cannot do once they put their mind to it. Armstrong and Taylor (2017) recommend that organisations should introduce defined career paths, personal development plans and multidiscipline project teams. According to Beardwell and Thompson (2014), managers would benefit from offering a life-long learning development programme for employees. Furthermore, Ware (2014) argues that career

development would combat the issue of high turnover levels as Gen Y employees do not need to be highly dissatisfied with their current job to make a change.

The PWC (2011) report outlines that Gen Y are attracted to those employers who deliver good training and development opportunities as they want to continuously develop their skills and abilities. The report also revealed that Gen Y want to work closely with inspirational mentors and coaches and those who work at senior management level. The report also identifies that Gen Y would benefit from a combination of various training programmes such as self-study, classroom instruction, group learning and coaching. Ware (2014) outlines that these programmes should incorporate clear defined structures and objectives reflecting what is to be achieved. Ware (2014) also establishes that Gen Y's most ideal employer is one who appeals and cooperates to their career demands of development and their ambitions.

A report set out by Kwan, Neveras, Schwartz, Pelster, Erickson, and Szpaichler (2011) discovered that promotion and job progression are one of the top three factors to retain Gen Y in the workplace. Manpower Group (2016) illustrates that a staggering 62% of Millennials believe that they won't have a problem finding new work if they were to lose their current jobs, which stems from their broad skillset and capabilities.

Psychological Contract

The psychological contract between an employer and an employee is not a written, legally binding document, it is implied (Conway and Briner, 2002). It consists of the shared opinions and informal responsibilities between the employer and employee. The content includes anything that the employee feels they deserve in return for their hard work, faithfulness, willingness to go the extra mile and flexibility. The psychological contract includes two measurements, the transactional and rational (Zagneczyk, Gibney, Few and Scott, 2011). The transactional measurement entails the prospect of pay and working conditions and the rational aspect contains characteristics of training, development, independence, trust, career progression, job security and fair treatment. While these expectations are only implied, Gen Y are confident in the provisional promise of incentive regarding rapid career growth and pay rises in return for hard work (Zagneczyk et al., 2011).

New Careers and Career Anchors

Traditional Careers versus 'New Careers'

In order to understand Gen Y, it is critical to understand that careers have been evolving since the 1990s. Moreover, it is equally as important to study the role of career anchors when looking at Gen Y's different career paths. Schein (1990) established the term career anchor, he defines it as the principles that determine professional motivation and preferences.

The shift from traditional careers to 'new careers' are evident among Millennials. The new career is characterised by increased individual agency, flexibility of career paths and greater mobility across professions and organisations (Arthur and Rousseau, 1996). The traditional career is linear focused with employees progressing upwards within the one organisation by means of an increased status, responsibility and pay (Baruch, 2004). Capelli (1999) illustrates that the traditional career views the employer as the main provider of stability and opportunities in return for an employees' effort and long term commitment.

Due to rapid technological advancements and globalisation, many researchers have proclaimed that these changes have encouraged workforce diversity, put an emphasis on knowledge work, outsourcing and the contingent workforce which resulted in the 'new careers' (Sullivan and Baruch, 2009). Organisations are now more flat, they have flexible opportunities in the new economy which has created less opportunities for individuals to engage in long-term upward mobile careers within the one organisation (Baruch and Bozionelos, 2011). According to Baruch (2004), individuals are now expected to gather skills and competencies to improve their employability in exchange for short-term commitment of effort.

The 'new careers' which came into light toward the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century are said to be 'Boundaryless' (Arthur and Rousseau, 1996) and 'Protean' (Hall, Briscoe, Dickmann, and Mayrhofer 2012). These professional terms refer to one's ability to adjust to continuous change, those who look beyond

organisational margins in search of new knowledge or network development (Sullivan and Baruch, 2009). Employees are acquired to have portable skills and experience that will be transferrable to other organisations (Sullivan, 1999). An important aspect of the 'new career' is the increased mobility. Feldman and Ng (2007) define career mobility as the ability of one to incorporate changes such as work responsibilities, hierarchical level or title within an organisation. Such organisational changes may be one's employer or occupation changes for example, changes that require new skills, routines, work environments, training and education. Inkson, Gunz, Ganesh, and Roper (2012) conveys that career literature accepts that higher mobility has become the 'new normal' and desirable (Chudzikowski, 2012). Although, the existence of this career type in organisations today is still a topic of debate (Inkson et al., (2012).

Generational cohorts and shifting careers

Twenge (2010) and many other researchers have highlighted the importance to distinguish the individual effects of age and generation in terms of shifting careers. However, Lyons and Kuron (2013) argued that it is important to examine these effects concurrently. The theory of generations conveys that the above trends would affect members of various cohorts differently because they were at different career stages when such changes occurred (Howe and Strauss, 2007). Research conducted by Lyons, Schweitzer, Ng, and Kuron (2012) examined the careers of 4 Canadian cohorts – the Mature Generation/ Traditionalists, the Baby Boomers, Generation X and Millennials/ Generation Y throughout 5 year career stages.

Traditionalists entered the workforce after the War period during a time of prolonged economic growth. Traditionalists were members of a relatively small cohort in contrast to other generations, therefore their opportunities for promotion were plentiful (Lancaster and Stillman, 2002). Moses (1997) claimed that Traditionalists were loyal to one single organisation and valued long-term employment with an expectation of career progression and job security. Two studies provide evidence of variances in the career patterns of Traditionalists in comparison to any previous cohorts. Lyons et al (2012) found that Traditionalists displayed a pattern of lower job and organisational mobility than younger cohorts. They also identified that traditionalists experienced less upward, downward and occupational transitions.

Baby Boomers benefited from the post-war economy as they had abundant employment conditions in their early careers. They experienced the post-war economy and low unemployment rates (Moses, 1997). Boomers are associated with building 'stellar careers' that reflects their privileged place in history says Lancaster and Stillman (2002). The Boomers were comprised of a very large cohort which created intense competition for advancements at greater hierarchical levels. This stress resulted in many Boomers hitting career highpoints earlier than previous cohorts, many individuals had no other choice but to change employers in order to progress. The Recessions of the 1980s and 1990s combined with corporate downsizing caused Boomers to get more involved with their own career management than previous cohorts (Lancaster and Stillman, 2002). Although Boomers were well-educated, they did face challenges toward the middle of their careers as technological advancements condensed their skills and work practices (Moses, 1997).

Gower (1992) illustrated than unemployment rates almost doubled by the time Gen X started to enter the workforce. Gen X also faced increasing 'credentialism' as second level education started to increase (Lancaster and Stillman, 2002). Gen X entered the workforce at the advent of the 'post-corporate career', thus focusing more on their employability than the rate of progression within one organisation (Lancaster and Stillman, 2002). They have been coined with the 'job hoppers' label as they frequently moved jobs to gain new skills and competencies. Lyons et al (2012) study reveals that Gen X had more job and organisational mobility than previous generations, especially those aged between 25-44.

Millennials/ Gen Y began starting their careers in the late 1990s and early 2000s. Millennials are entering a labour market that is extremely competitive, with an increasing number of individuals holding level 8 and level 9 degrees. Millennials are more mobile than any previous cohort, they expect great change and variety in their job roles (Lancaster and Stillman, 2002). Some may say they are impatient when it comes to advancement opportunities (Ng, Schweitzer, and Lyons, 2010). As noted previously, Millennials favour work-life balance and base decisions on lifestyle and leisure over upward career progression (Ng et al., 2010). Becton, Walker, and Jones-Farmer (2014) report of job applications reveals that Millennials detained more jobs in the 5 years prior than that of Gen X and also worked less time in their longest held job.

Career Anchors

Edgar Schein (1978) introduced the concept of career anchors. According to Schein, the early stages of a career expose individuals to a variety of job challenges. Such challenges will eventually enable an individual to develop a career self-concept, the alleged career anchor. Schein proclaims that there are 3 components of a career anchor; the self-perceived talents and abilities, the self-perceived motives and needs, and the self-perceived attitudes and values.

Within its first few years of definition, Schein (1986; 1993; 1996) describes a career anchor as people's careers, as well as the specific factors they won't give up when considering difficult career decisions. Schein (1993) has created 8 career anchors which has been supported by a legion of research. Such anchors include, technical-functional competence, general managerial competence, autonomy/independence, security/stability, entrepreneurial creativity, service or dedication to a cause, pure challenge and lifestyle (Schein 1996). Rodrigues Guest, and Budjanovcanin (2013) illustrates that a career anchor is a constant and permanent factor that influences an individual's career decisions.

Dutra (2010) demonstrates the importance of career anchors as they impact life choices, they affect decisions regarding specific tasks or job change. They influence the choice of precise occupations and affects individuals' responses towards work. Silver, Trevisan, Rosa Veloso, Souza Dutra (2016) describe the 8 career anchors as follows;

Technical/functional (TF) Competency

Within this anchor, the individual requires a sense of identity through the use of his/her technical abilities. The individual is motivated to develop and use their specialised skills. In order to reach achievement in this area, the individual must face their challenges.

General Management (GM) Competency

The individual in this anchor is motivated by opportunities to make strategic decisions and to outline guidelines in modern organisations. This individual likes organising and leading people to accomplish common goals. This individual views career success by having the power to influence others. He/she seeks a high position in an organisational hierarchy.

Autonomy/Independence (AI)

This anchor includes individuals who have a reduced level of patience towards rules and regulations established by other individuals. Such procedures may limit his/her autonomy. This individual likes to set his/her own work schedule and goals.

Security/Stability (SS)

Within this anchor, individuals dislike the feeling of well-being which stems from low career instability. The individual who is anchored here will base his/her decisions on security and stability. He/she likes the idea of long-term attachment to one organisation.

Entrepreneurial Creativity (EC)

This group of individuals are focused on creating new organisations, services and products. Individuals who are anchored here are motivated by the need to create and grow something that is entirely their own project.

Service/Dedication to one Cause (SD)

Within this anchor, there is no resignation under any theory regarding consistent tasks and the individual's personal values. Individuals here seek an alignment between work and personal values and services to others.

Pure Challenge (PC)

The never-ending search for overpowering impossible situations and the resolution of inexplicable difficulties define success for the individuals anchored in this group. These individuals are motivated to overcome major obstacles.

Lifestyle (LS)

The individuals who are anchored here try to find ways to integrate personal and family needs with their career demands. Individuals here seek work that fits well with their non-work life.

As Millennials tend to be flexible and content within their protean careers, they require self-progression and a strong aspiration to gain authority of their individual careers. Career anchors strengthens an individual's internal principles, assists to improve self-integrity and offers strategies for decision-making under ambiguity. Chang, Jiang, Klein, and Chen (2012) conveys a significant correlation among career anchors, individual job satisfaction and turnover target. Millennials are obsessed with their need for progression. They desire to constantly improve their technical/practical capability, entrepreneurial inventiveness and to meet pure challenges, which result in competitive high performers.

Organisational Career Management (OCM) practices

An exception to the study of turnover intention by Guan, Wen, Chen, Liu, Si, and Liu (2014), there has been very little research on the relationship between career anchors and how individuals execute their careers. However, there are a wide range of OCM practices available to organisations (Arnold, 1977). Gubler, Biemann, Tschopp, and Grote (2015) observed links between current career anchor scores and past career paths. He found some correlations with the management competence anchor, hierarchical level and number of subordinates. Arnold, Coombs and Gubler (2017) broke new ground in career anchor research by examining how anchors relate to preferred organisational career management (OCM). Baruch and Peiperl (2000) explored 17 OCM practices reported by Human Resource (HR) managers in 194 UK companies. From their analysis, Baruch and Peiperl then established a system of 5 groups of OCM practices including; basic active planning, active management, formal and multi-directional. Lewis and Arnold (2012) approved Baruch's and Peiperl's typology, creating a more recent list of 20 OCM methods at 41

retail companies. In the Information Technology (IT) literature, Agarwal and Ferratt (2002) attempted to set recruitment and retention practices for IT professionals across 32 US companies. They developed 11 IT retention practices, 6 of them focusing on OCM practices, which included employability, training and skill development, longer-term business and leadership development, opportunities for advancement, performance measurement, sense of community and work arrangements. Considering all 3 studies, a link was established between career anchors and preferred OCM practices.

Linking Career Anchors and preferences for OCM Practices

Back in the mid-20th century, a career was referred to a process of self-concept formation followed by implementation (Super, 1953). The notion of 'Protean' and 'Boundaryless' careers place emphasis on self-expression, ability to learn, develop and change in response to changing conditions. Career anchors are an expression of key parts of an individual's self-concept as they consist of work-related values, needs and skills. Schein (1978) further conveys that career anchors are a driving force for career choices, goals and actions. Furthermore, career anchors are associated with both traditional and contemporary careers. The 'managerial competence' and 'job security' anchors parallel well with the traditional career, whereas the 'service/dedication', 'pure challenge', 'autonomy/independence' and 'lifestyle' correspond well with the 'new careers' perspective. Therefore, it may be argued that the concept of career anchors goes beyond the 'traditional' versus 'contemporary' dispute. Moreover, it may be suggested that the career anchor is a powerful tool for linking the contradiction of explaining individual

career behaviour and the suggested organisational action in managing careers (Arnold, Coombs and Gubler, 2017).

A process occurs when individuals decide to develop their careers. This process includes the formation of goals, specification of a strategy in order to achieve those goals, and the implementation of this strategy (Greenhouse, Callanan, and Godshalk 2009). Individuals may use OCM practices to help them achieve their goals. OCM practices enables individuals to learn more about potential job opportunities, they may identify roles that fit with one's career anchors, crafting a suitable role (Wrzesniewski and Dutton, 2001). OCM practices also enables individuals to make themselves visible to people who are in a position to influence their career, to develop new skills and to learn how to operate in a specific organisation (Baruch, 2004).

Although there is still a vast amount of empirical studies examining the relationship between career anchors and OCM practices, Schein and Van Maanen (2016) have many theories about how various anchors may be perceived by organisations in times of rapid technological, labour market and organisational change. For example, Giles and West's (1995) study revealed how individuals with high scores on the security/stability (SS) anchor showed lower levels of dedicated career planning than those with low scores on this anchor. Although there is a lack of sufficient evidence, wider related research provides indication that a number of connotations will be found between anchor scores and preferences for OCM practices.

Due to the rapid technological changes, one may suggest that high scores on the technical functional anchor (TF) will expect a preference for OCM practices that provide opportunities to progress and maintain technical skills that are vital for IT jobs today and in the future (Chang et al., 2012). Furthermore, IT workers who score high on job security/stability may also value these OCM practices as they help to keep them employable (Mgaya, Uzoka, Kitindi, and Shemi 2009). Contrary to this, individuals who score high on the managerial competence anchor view their early technical positions as a stepping stone to managerial positions (Chang et al., 2012). Therefore, one may suggest that these individuals may choose OCM practices that help them strengthen their position within an organisation (Gubler et al., 2014). Moreover, professionals who score high on autonomy/independence (AI) may be sceptical about OCM practices as this may result in frequent performance reviews and these individuals will be prohibited from 'doing their own thing', such as informal networks (Feldman and Bolino, 1996).

Schein (1993) states if an individual is anchored to security/stability, they are motivated to maintain the status quo. If employees take a training programme in order to secure their job, they will do so without seeking opportunities to use what has been learned at the programme to their advantage. Likewise, a career anchor involving lifestyle indicates commitment to a career on the condition that one's personal life is respected by the organisation (Schein, 1993).

All Millennials have an enthusiastic outlook on innovation. Gen Y's unique characteristics of being tech-savvy and highly educated sets them at an advantage in how a role should be defined. For Millennials who are anchored on technical/functional competence, they may find it more practical with the same anchor to expand the role of responsibility to include more tasks to their specific technical expertise. Gen Y employees who desire to progress their general/managerial competence may convert their role connection with their digital social network to access their mentors.

Based on various research, there is a relationship between career anchors and values in the view of various generations. Any individual is capable of choosing his/her desired career path, however these choices depend on two variables. Such factors include opportunities and restrictions in an individual's social and cultural structure. According to Kilimnik, Sant'anna, Oliveira, and Barros (2008) hierarchies will change over time based on career anchor predictions and Schwartz model of values (Reis, Antonio, Laizo, and Marinho 2010). Therefore, both views support the understanding about different situations associated with career anchors (Pereira, 2016).

Aim of research

The aim of this study is to investigate the various job expectations and career anchors of Generation Y within Post-Brexit Ireland. Young people today are now known as Gen Y/ Millennials. Brosdahl and Carpenter (2011) define Generation Y as those born between 1981 and 1999. They were born into an era of advanced IT which characterised them, they are well-educated. Twenge (2010) conveys that Generation Y want it all and want it now, in terms of work, pay and benefits (Gallup, 2016). When they enter a job, they seek career advancement, work/life balance, they desire a challenge, and they want to contribute to society (Twenge, 2010).

The objectives of the research are as follows:

1. To develop an in-depth understanding of Gen Y in Post-Brexit Ireland

2. To discover the desired job expectations of Gen Y.

3. To explore the career anchors of Gen Y and the extent to which they consider their career anchors when evaluating their career choices.

4. To investigate whether Gen Y put their career development before work-life balance.

5. To explore the meaning of a career in the opinion of Gen Y individuals.

6. To determine what practices organisations need to adapt in order to retain Gen Y in the workplace such as recruitment, selection, retention practices.

7. To examine whether Gen Y feel Organisational Career Management (OCM) practices will support their career choices.

Chapter 3. Research Methodology

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to outline the main research design and methodology used for this study. In order to achieve the objectives listed below, the research will refer to the "Research Onion" (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2012). The Research Onion will provide a guideline of the essential decisions, methods and approaches for this study. The Research Onion contains essential guidelines such as research philosophy, approaches, strategies, choices, time horizon and data collection. Furthermore, a rationale is provided for the chosen research approach and the principle data collection techniques are acknowledged and justified. Thereafter, the chapter concludes with an overview of the ethical issues addressed.

Why do research?

Research is a process that occurs to enhance the knowledge of the researcher/author (Saunders et al., 2012). The author believes that the process must be followed in a systematic way. Furthermore, research is conducted to understand the topic under investigation or to enhance ones' knowledge of the phenomena. Saunders et al. (2012) highlight the importance to distinguish between research methods and research methodology. Research methods are used to gather and analyse data, whereas, research methodology is the science of philosophy behind the research.

Research Question: the main research objective for this study is to understand the characteristics of Generation Y in Ireland. This objective was formulated as the author herself is a member of the Gen Y cohort and as mentioned in the previous chapter, Gen Y are the future of the workforce. Therefore, it is critical to understand their behaviours, job expectations, career paths and career anchors.

Research objective 1: to develop an in-depth understanding of Gen Y in Post-Brexit Ireland.

From conducting an extensive literature review, many different perspectives of Gen Y were discovered. Some researchers illustrate how hardworking and achievement-orientated they are, conversely, other researches describe them as lazy (Sinek, 2016). Therefore, this study aims to develop a deeper understanding of the tech savvy cohort.

Research objective 2: To discover the desired job expectations of Gen Y

As Gen Y are the future of the workforce, it is critical to understand their desired job expectations. Gen Y are more intelligent than ever, they have a complete different perspective of hierarchy and are more content with a flat organisational structure as this enables access to senior leadership roles (Hershatter and Epstein, 2010). Research indicates that Gen Y seek work-life balance, flexibility and career development, however the author wants to investigate whether or not Gen Y individuals seek more than that. Perhaps some individuals seek tuition reimbursement.

Research objective 3: To explore Gen Y's preferred career anchors when evaluating their career choices.

The author has deliberated some research on career anchors, however, there hasn't been much recent research conducted in this area. Career anchors are self-perceived attributes that every individual has regarding their career choices. Edgar Schein (1978) developed 8 career anchors many years ago. This study will investigate which anchors are most preferred by Gen Y individuals in the 21st century.

Research objective 4: To investigate whether Gen Y put their career progression before work-life balance.

According to the literature review, some researchers claim to believe that Gen Y employees over work themselves as they don't feel anyone else in the workforce will complete the work to their high standard (Zhu and Graf-Lambsdorff 2017). In contrast to this, Buist (2016) illustrates that Gen Y put their lifestyle and leisure before their career development. Thus, this study aims to gather first-hand information regarding the experiences and opinions of Gen Y individuals.

Research objective 5: To explore the meaning of a career in the opinion of Gen Y individuals.

Some jobs, particularly in the hotel industry offer a hierarchical/ bureaucracy structure where management allow employees to achieve career development by climbing up the ladder. This can be a very attractive feature for some Gen Y employees. However other

Gen Y employees prefer a flat structure where status doesn't matter, where employees can progress based on their skills and competencies. Furthermore, Protean and Boundaryless careers are becoming the new norm, this study aims to investigate whether or not a traditional career still occurs among this unique cohort. (Hitt, Black and Porter, 2014).

Research objective 6: To determine what practices organisations need to adapt in order to retain Gen Y in the workplace such as recruitment, selection, retention practices.

As outlined in the literature review, Naim and Lenka (2017) convey that employers are finding it challenging to retain talented employees due to 'job hopping' (Budd, 2008). Gen Y are becoming the largest cohort to engage in job hopping in today's modern workforce. Thus, it is critical for managers to become aware of the necessary practices needed to retain Gen Y in a given organisation.

Research objective 7: To examine whether Gen Y feel Organisational Career Management (OCM) practices will support their career choices.

OCM practises are becoming more and more popular in today's workforce as companies try gain a competitive advantage in order to retain top talent. There has been limited research conducted linking OCM practices to career anchors, therefore the researcher seeks to investigate whether or not there is a link among the Gen Y cohort. Moreover, this study aims to investigate whether Gen Y employees would like to work for an organisation who have such practices in place.

The Research Onion
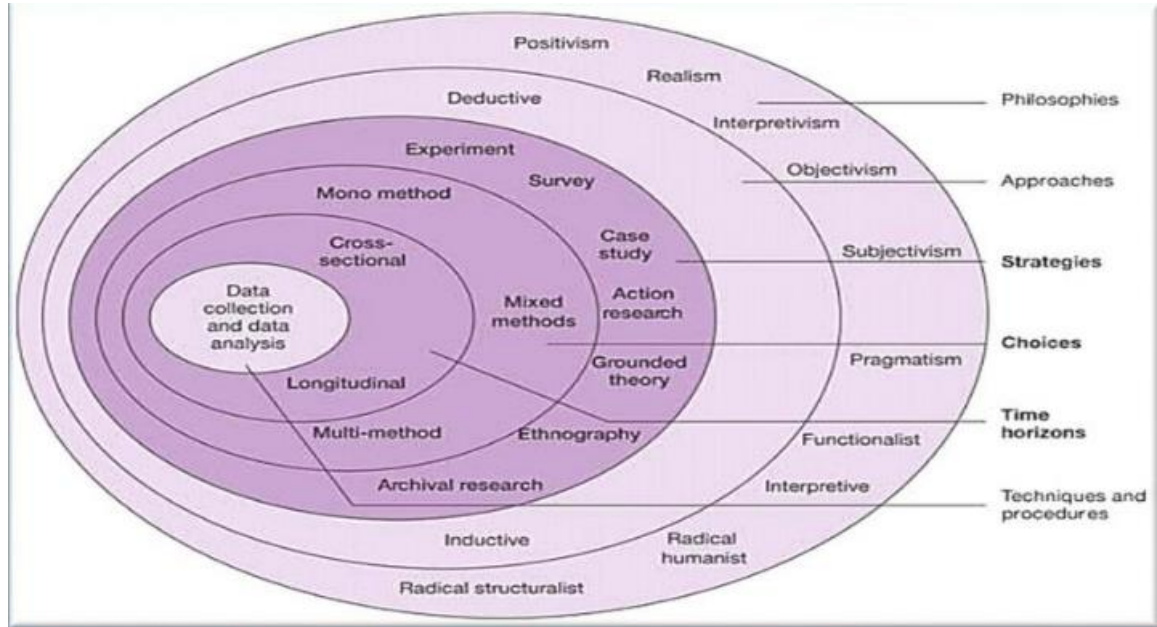
Figure 1. Research Onion Source: *(Saunders et al, 2016)*

As outlined by Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2016), the 2 external layers of the Research Onion include the research philosophies and approaches. The next 3 inner layers consist of the research strategies choices and the time horizon while the centre of the Research Onion represents the data collection and analysis. The research onion will guide the reader through the methodology chapter step by step.

Research Philosophy

Research Philosophy "relates to the development of knowledge and the nature of that knowledge" (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009). Thomas (2004) describes philosophy as the basic questions about knowledge, reality and existence. The research philosophy

chosen may differ from person to person depending on their individual aims, objectives and method (Goddard and Melville (2004). Quinlan et al. (2015) outlines 11 different philosophical frameworks, 5 of these are echoed by Saunders et al. (2016), which will be discussed briefly in this chapter. Prior to exploring each of these philosophies, it is important to familiarise oneself with the 3 different research assumptions; ontology, epistemology and axiology. Saunders et al. (2016) explains these terms as follows:

Ontology

Ontology "refers to assumptions about the nature of reality" (Saunders et al., 2016, p. 127).

Epistemology

Epistemology "concerns assumptions about knowledge", knowledge that is valued, legitimate and validated by new knowledge (Saunders et al., 2016, p. 127).

Axiology

Axiology "refers to the role of values and ethics" of both the researcher and participants during the research process (Saunders et al., 2016, p. 128).

Positivism

Quinlan et al. (2015) outlines that positivism research is conducted in an objective 'singular' manner. Within positivism research, the researcher is neutral and remains detached from the study, positivists pursue their goals based on human actions that have already occurred and are explained by real causes. Both the researcher and participants have no influence with each other during the process, therefore, a structured methodology approach would be most appropriate (Hudson and Ozanne, 1988). Positivism research is therefore more suited to a quantitative study (Saunders et al., 2016).

Interpretivism

Interpretivists, on the other hand, believe in multiple and relative realities (Hudson and Ozanne, 1988). Interpretivism is the opposite of positivism as interpretivists tend to be more flexible and personal with the research structures as they tend to gain meaning from human interactions (Black, 2006). The information gathered is socially constructed rather than being determined by hypothesis and objectives. Within interpretivism research, the researcher is open to new knowledge, opinions and ideas throughout the process. Interpretivist's aim to gain a deep understanding and interpretation of the phenomena from human interactions by observing the behaviours rather than predicting the causes and effects (Neuman, 2000).

For the purpose of this study, the author will focus on the philosophy of interpretivist ontology. Studying the research topic in the natural environment is imperative under this research philosophy. Within the area of interpretivism, Phenomenology is defined as the study of a livid experience from the first-person point of view. It is a study of experience or perception. Phenomenology is one of the most qualitative methodologies within the social sciences (Quinlan et al., 2015). The aim of this study is to gain a deeper understanding of the job expectations and career anchors in Post-Brexit Ireland. A phenomenological approach will enable the author to examine the experiences of the selected population.

Research Approach

The research onion illustrates 2 main types of research approaches, a deductive and inductive approaches.

Deductive approach

A deductive approach constructs a hypothesis to examine pre-existing theories and research (Silverman, 2013). A deductive approach is used when the conclusion is derived from a set of assumptions (Saunders et al., 2012). This approach may be chosen to investigate whether the selected phenomena fits the expectations derived from previous research (Wiles et al., 2011). It may be suggested that a deductive approach is most appropriate to positivist research, allowing researchers to create hypotheses to test the probability of the expected results. Therefore, this approach may be more applicable to a quantitative study.

Inductive approach

In contrast, an inductive approach allows the researcher to submerge into the details and specifics of the data collected to determine patterns, inter-relationships and to develop possible themes. An inductive approach allows the researcher to observe the data before coming to a generalisation. Such observation reveals patterns which helps the researcher to develop a general theory (Adams, Khan and Raeside, 2014). This approach is best suited to a qualitative study.

This study is about understanding the perception of Gen Y individuals, therefore, an inductive approach is more suitable than a deductive approach as data is first gathered and is then formed into theory. Information was gathered through primary and secondary data. The author established patterns and themes from the data collected. This approach was best suited due to the time limitation, and it helped the author to establish the aims and objectives set out in this study.

This study has an exploratory element as it focuses on the experiences of individuals. An exploratory research design was chosen based on the intention to explore the research questions by observing the behaviours and mannerisms of individuals rather than finding a solution for existing problems (Saunders et al., 2012). An explorative research design allowed the author to investigate Ireland's Gen Y's job expectations and career anchors. Burns and Grove (2009) portrays that qualitative research is subjective and systematic as it allows the researcher to examine the life experiences of individuals. Therefore, this is considered to be a more suitable method for this study.

Research Methods

There are various types of research methodologies, however, they are generally split into two categories, qualitative and quantitative. Qualitative research methods are research techniques that are usually conducted using interviews and focus groups (Quinlan, 2015). Qualitative research explores the differing attitudes, experiences and behaviour regarding a specific topic (Dawson, 2009). Qualitative research methods are inductive and subjective. They may also be constructive and or interpretive (Quinlan et al., 2015). On the contrary, quantitative research methods involves the use of numerical data focusing on facts and patterns of a given population. The validations of knowledge are the prime focus in quantitative research methods and are conducted using surveys (Rugg and Petre, 2006). Quantitative research is deductive, objective and situated within a framework of positivism (Quinlan et al., 2015). When conducting research, the author must consider both categories before deciding which method best fits their study (Quinlan et al, 2015).

Research Choices

The research onion outlines 3 research choices; mono method, mixed method and multi-method (Saunders et al., 2016). A mono method was selected for this study. A mono method refers to using only one type of method, either qualitative or quantitative (Azorin and Cameron, 2010).

Methodological justification

After considering both types of methodology, a qualitative method was chosen. This method was selected as it best fits the nature of the study. With this approach, the author was able to keep an open interest about the phenomena and allow knowledge to emerge from the data. As the purpose of this study was to comprehend multiple experiences and meanings of job expectations of Gen Y individuals, a quantitative method was not appropriate (Rudestam and Newton, 2015; Savage-Austin and Honeycutt, 2011). By selecting a qualitative approach, the author had the opportunity to gain an insight into the lives of young Gen Y individuals in Post-Brexit Ireland. The data collected contained words to describe the reflections (Rudestam and Newton, 2015). The participants had the opportunity to express their opinions freely which helped in the emergence of new themes.

The author chose to use in-depth semi-structured interviews and focus groups in order to get an in-depth insight into the individual experiences of Gen Y workers in Post-Brexit Ireland.

Time Horizon

The Time horizon delivers a framework that shows the proposed time for the project's completion (Saunders et al., 2012). The research onion outlines 2 types of time horizon, cross-sectional and longitudinal. Longitudinal research occurs over a long period of time, perhaps 5-10 years, depending on the size of the rapport, whereas cross-sectional research is gathered at a specific point (Flick, 2014). For the purpose of this investigation, cross-sectional research was chosen due to the time frame of the overall dissertation process.

Data Collection

The process of data collection contributes to the overall reliability and validity of the study (Saunders et al., 2012). However, some researchers have argued that reliability and validity are associated with a quantitative methodology due to a positivist viewpoint, as positivists believe that there is no difference between the natural and social world (Quinlan et al., 2015).

Instead, qualitative researchers are more concerned with the credibility, honesty and truthfulness of their research. They focus on gathering a "thick description" of the experiences of the social world (Geertz, 1973). Guba and Lincoln (1994) claim that this thick description allows for opinions to be expressed in relation to whether or not the findings of the research are transferable to other contexts. The work of the qualitative researcher is to create credible research, for example, research that is truthful and authentic reports based on human experiences (Quinlan et al., 2015).

The term reliability relates to the dependability of the research, to the degree to which the research can be repeated while obtaining consistent results. This is in contrast to the reliability in a quantitative context (Riege, 2003).

In order to help establish the dependability of the research, Guba and Lincoln (1994) recommend qualitative researchers to adopt an audit approach where every decision made is documented, explained and justified. An alternative method to auditing can be using a

research diary. A qualitative researcher can use the research diary to record an audit trail. The researcher may use this audit trail to help establish the dependability of the research project (Quinlan et al., 2015).

Secondary Data

As part of the secondary research for this study, the author conducted a literature review. The literature review enabled the author to develop an in-depth knowledge of all the previous research conducted in this area.
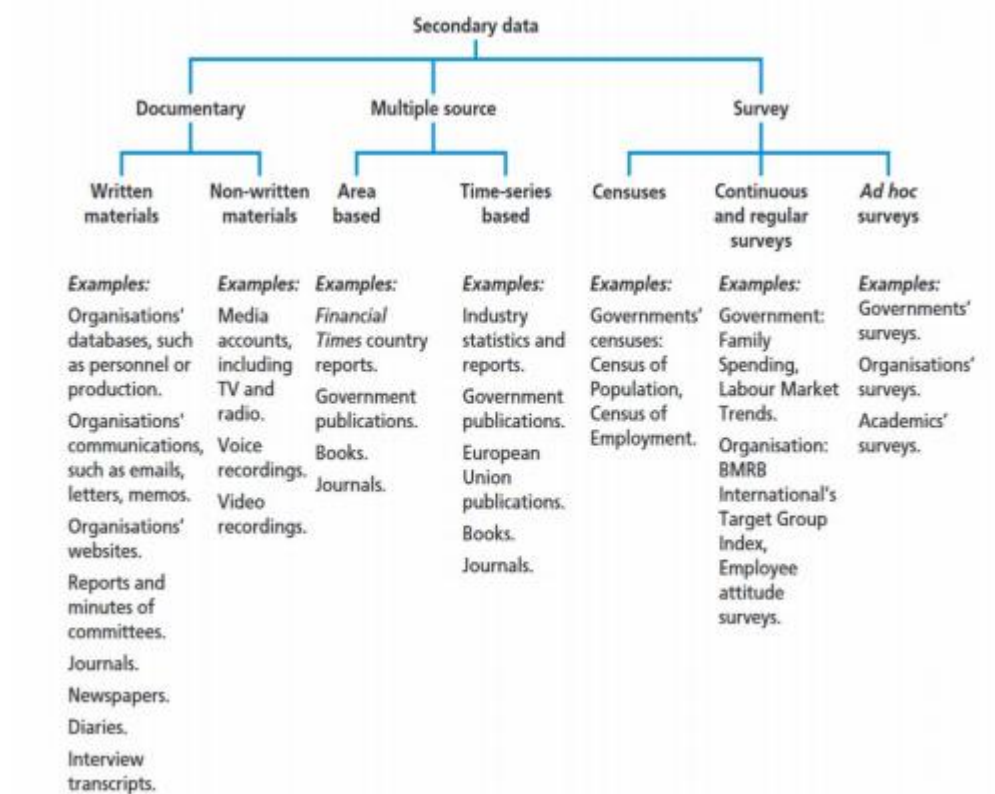

Figure 2. Secondary Data Source: *(Saunders et al., 2009)*

Literature Review

According to Cooper and Schindler (2014), secondary research is the researcher's interpretation of others' primary data. The literature review examined dissertations, reports, journal articles and texts to familiarise oneself with the important themes to carry out this study. The main themes explored were Gen Y, New Careers and Career Anchors. The author needed to complete an extensive literature review in order to achieve objectives 1 and 2.

There are many advantages associated with secondary data, for example, it saves money and time for the researcher, it can be accessed immediately and can provide a higher quality of data compared to the researchers own data (Ghauri and Grønhaug, 2005). This enables the researcher to produce a finding within a general context (Saunders et al., 2009).

Secondary data also has some disadvantages. Sometimes, the secondary data collected may be irrelevant to the study in question. Some data may be difficult to access, it sometimes requires payment for access. Also, data may be of lower quality if the data wasn't evaluated properly (Saunders et al., 2009). For this study, the sources used to gather secondary data were mainly from the Electronic Academic Database of National College of Ireland.

Primary Data

Primary data refers to information collected from first hand sources, for example through surveys and interviews (Bryman, 2012). The author has chosen to use semi-structured interviews and focus groups for this study.

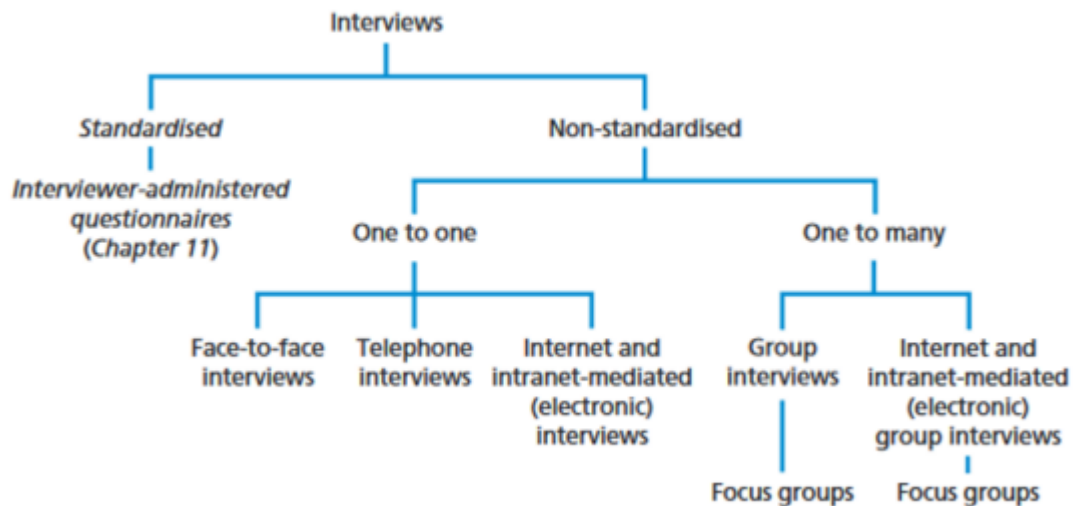Figure 3. Primary Data Source: *(Saunders et al., 2009)*

Face-to-face semi-structured interviews (F2F)

A research interview refers to a conversation between 2 or more people where the interviewer asks questions for a particular purpose to which the interviewee is willing to respond. Furthermore, interviews provide valid and reliable data which is relevant to the research (Saunders et al., 2012).

Conducting semi-structured interviews enables the researcher to develop a comfortable relationship with the interviewees. The interviewer can help participants to have a better understanding of the questions asked. The interviewer is certain who is answering the questions. One-to-one interviews provide opportunities to observe the interviewees, to identify the interviewee's manner and tone of voice when asked certain questions. The interviewee becomes the sole focus, allowing the interviewer to gather as much detail as possible in order to answer each research question (Quinlan et al., 2015). Conducting interviews also provide opportunities to probe the interviewee's responses, gaining a deeper knowledge of the topic under investigation. Although one-to-one interviews are a rich source of data collection, they are also very time-consuming, therefore, sticking to a time line is critical when conducting research (Quinlan et al., 2015).

For the purpose of this study, 7 semi-structured interviews were employed as Quinlan et al. (2015) indicated that this quantity would suffice. All interviewees were born between 1989 and 1995, thus, all participants were members of the Gen Y cohort. The interview schedule was informed by an extensive literature review and the main research topic. After receiving permission to record the interviews, each interview was audio-recorded using the "Voice Memo" app on a mobile phone. Each session was later transcribed in full text format into a research diary. Interviews took place at the participant's home. There were 7 interview questions in total. Each interview lasted between 20-30 minutes. Prior to the interviews, each interviewee was provided with an information sheet via email, see Appendix A for illustration. Before the interviews commenced, each participant was provided with a consent form to examine and sign. Refer to Appendix B for further illustration.

Interviews

Job Expectations and Career Anchors among Gen Y individuals

Interview schedule: the interview was broken into 2 sections; an employee's perspective and an organisational perspective.

From an employee's perspective:

1. What are the key job-related factors/expectations that would affect your decision to work for a company?

2. Do you consider career anchors when evaluating your career choices? Which career anchors are you most likely to consider? And why? (A separate sheet containing all 8 career anchors and their meaning was brought to each interview, see Appendix C)

3. What does work-life balance mean to you? Is career development important to you? Which are you most likely to put first?

4. What is your perception of a career?

From an organisational perspective

5. What practices do you think organisations need to adapt in order to retain top talent?

6. Do you feel like Organisational Career Management (OCM) practices may help you explore you're career in a given company? (A separate sheet highlighting the meaning of OCM Practices was brought to each interview, see Appendix D)

Focus Groups

A focus group was also chosen to generate high quality data. Focus groups range in size from 4-8 persons who are in some way expert to the topic under investigation (Quinlan et al., 2015). Some researchers articulate that the interpersonal and interactive nature of focus groups enables participants to produce information that may not be gathered in a single one-to-one interview (Greenbaum, 2003; Kaplowitz and Hoehn, 2001). Focus groups can be unstructured, structured and semi-structured and they can be face-to-face (F2F) or online (OFG). For the purpose of this study, the focus group was conducted face-to-face and was semi-structured (Quinlan et al., 2015). The researcher facilitated the focus group focusing on the subject under consideration in the hope of finding new insights about the topic (Quinlan et al., 2015).

The focus group took place in a conference room at the Cavan Crystal Hotel, where the author works part-time. This location suited all participants as it was a central location. The focus group consisted of 3 females and 3 males, all born between 1989 and 1996, all participants were therefore members of the Gen Y cohort. 6 participants were chosen as Quinlan et al. (2015) conveys that it is an acceptable number for a focus group discussion. Participants were selected via convenience sampling which was an appropriate technique as the author knew how many participants to include (Quinlan et al., 2015).

The focus group participants were asked to express their opinion in response to a number of open-ended questions, the questions used were the same as the semi-structured interview questions. An intragroup interaction among group members was established. The focus group was audio-recorded using the "Voice Memo" app on a mobile phone and the data collected was later transcribed in full text format into a research diary. The observations of the participants were also noted in the diary. Prior to the focus group discussion, participants were emailed an information sheet outlining the nature of the study. Refer to Appendix A for illustration. On the day of the focus group, each participant was provided with a consent form to examine and sign. Refer to Appendix B for further illustration.

Conducting a focus group allows an initial decrease of data produced to 'manageable proportions', leading to the exposure of key themes which corresponds with topical content analysis in human resource management research (Anderson 2004, 169). Afterwards, the main themes were identified by counting the most frequently used terms and expressions in the collected data (Maxwell and Broadbridge, 2017). Easterby-Smith, Thorpe, and Lowe (2002, 117) label this approach, 'going by numbers', as a valid and reliable way of identifying the inherent themes within the qualitative empirical data.

Focus Group Schedule

Job Expectations and Career Anchors among Gen Y individuals

Date 14th/07/18 **Venue** Cavan Crystal Hotel **No. of Participants** 6

1. Introduction
2. The aim of the focus group
3. Focus group schedule – the conduct of the focus group, one speaker at a time, balanced discussion, views of all participants, recording mechanisms

Issues for discussion

4. Job Expectations
5. Career Anchors
6. Work-life-balance V's Career Development
7. What is a career?
8. Retaining Gen Y
9. OCM Practices
10. Summing up
11. Thanks and feedback

(2 separate sheets containing the meaning of Career Anchors and OCM Practices were brought to the Focus Group discussion. See Appendix C and D)

Qualitative Research Method Approach

A qualitative research approach aims to develop an in-depth understanding of a study through gathering information from individuals (Cooper and Schindler, 2014). Brennen (1992) indicates that a qualitative approach is associated with analytic induction, meaning its focus is based on a narrower scope of study. Qualitative research is associated with a smaller sample size, however, it results in an in-depth understanding from the smaller sample size. The researcher plays an important role in a qualitative study as it is their role to create themes and patterns and to take as much meaning from the study as possible (Cooper and Schindler, 2014).

Analysing Qualitative Data

For the analysing of data to take place, the researcher must prepare the data first. Regarding both the interviews and the focus group, both studies had to be audio-recorded and later transcribed. Both interviews and focus groups were analysed in the same way.

Transcribing refers to reproducing the interview session as a written account of the actual words. The tone and action of the participants should also be noted (Saunders et al., 2009). As previously mentioned, an inductive approach was used for this study. An inductive approach refers to exploring the collected data to identify patterns and themes.

As with both quantitative and qualitative research, the analysis begins with coding (Bryman and Bell, 2007). Open coding refers to the data being divided into conceptual units. Once the coding is complete, the thematic analysis follows. The thematic analysis extracts meanings and concepts from the data and accumulates themes that arise. Furthermore, it is said that themes and codes are used interchangeably, however, themes are actually an outcome of coding (Javadi and Zarea, 2016). The author formalised the data into themes which are presented in chapter 5.

Ethical Considerations

Ethics refers to the standards of behaviour that guides ones conduct in the research process (Saunders et al., 2012). Both quantitative and qualitative research must follow an ethics procedure (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008). Ethical responsibility should be deliberated from the beginning - the selection of the topic. One must be aware of the differences between legal and ethical considerations. Not everything that is legal, is ethical. The next most sensitive relationship is between the researcher and the participants. Ghauri and Grønhaug (2005) argue that participants should be fully informed about the research and should not be coerced to take part.

Furthermore, as this is a qualitative study, it contains many ethical considerations. The interview and focus group questions could not be too personal. The questions had to be asked with caution, as the author didn't want to come across as blunt or overpowering. The author had to ensure complete confidentiality and anonymity of the information

provided by the participants. The most important ethical consideration is the informed consent of the interviewees and participants (Mason, 2006).

For the purpose of this study, the author contacted each potential interviewee via email. Additionally, the author explained why the research is being conducted as it is important to catch the attention of the impending interviewee, therefore a brief description of the topic under investigation was explained as well as an interview schedule. To make things clear, the amount of time each interview will take was stated. Furthermore, the author asked for permission to record the interview assuring them it will be completely confidential. Moreover, contact details were exchanged and the interviewee was asked politely to indicate a time that he/she would be available to sit an interview within the following two weeks. Finally, the author designed a consent form providing information on ethical risk, confidentiality and data protection (Rowley, 2012).

Chapter 4. Findings and Analysis

Introduction

In this chapter, the findings that emerged from the interviews will be presented, followed by the findings that were established from the focus group discussion. This will be done by following a thematic analysis to answer the research questions.

Aim of research

The overall aim of this study is to investigate the various job expectations of Gen Y, and the career anchors considered by this cohort, when evaluating their career choices. Bolten et al., (2013) outlines that Gen Y were born into an era of advanced IT which had a significant impact on how they live, they were becoming more educated. Twenge (2010) conveys that Gen Y want it all and want it now, in terms of work, pay and benefits. When they enter a job, they seek career advancement, work/life balance, they desire a challenge, and they want to contribute to society (Twenge, 2010). Based on the overall aim of this research, 7 objectives were established.

Research Objectives

1. To develop an in-depth understanding of Gen Y in Post-Brexit Ireland.

2. To discover the desired job expectations of Gen Y.

3. To explore the career anchors of Gen Y and the extent to which they consider their career anchors when evaluating their career choices.

4. To investigate whether Gen Y put their career development before work-life balance.

5. To explore the meaning of a career in the opinion of Gen Y individuals.

6. To determine what practices organisations need to adapt in order to retain Gen Y in the workplace such as recruitment, selection, and retention practices.

7. To examine whether Gen Y feel Organisational Career Management (OCM) practices will support their career choices.

Data Analysis

This study used a thematic analysis (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008). A thematic analysis is one of the most common qualitative data analysis methods used in the social sciences (Guest, 2013). The thematic analysis was used to identify and develop the main themes and sub-categories which emerged from the semi-structured interviews and focus group. Furthermore, a thematic analysis facilitated a flexible approach to the exploration and interpretation of the data, which resulted in many themes which will be discussed below.

Each interview and focus group transcript was analysed, precise sections that resembled various categories were selected with interviewee details and were put into a qualitative table. 7 professionals were recorded for the interviews and 6 for the focus group. The coded categories were examined for their relationships with one another for patterns, and emerging themes to ensure that all categories were identified in the data.

Many similarities were identified comparing the responses across each of the participants. Many participants had the same view regarding specific questions. Although some interviewees had years of experience working in different firms and other participants were just starting their careers, they both had similar expectations and viewpoints.

Findings

A summary of the thematic analysis is presented in Appendix E. The analysis of the findings suggested that there are 5 solid expectations of Gen Y entering the workforce. The 5 expectations include; career progression, flexibility, pay/contract types, reputation of company and benefits. The analysis displayed an overlap of career anchors identified by members of Gen Y, such as security/stability, autonomy/independence, lifestyle integration, technical functional, service/dedication and pure challenge. Many participants had the same or similar views of work-life balance and career development. With regards to prioritising either or, more participants chose career development to be more important. The thematic analysis revealed that the most popular practices suggested by participants to retain Gen Y in the workplace are training and development, clear progression paths, competitive salaries, performance reviews and talent management. Most participants believe organisational career management (OCM) practices will help

them achieve their career goals, some suggesting specific practices in particular for example, mentoring and career development programmes.

Job Expectations

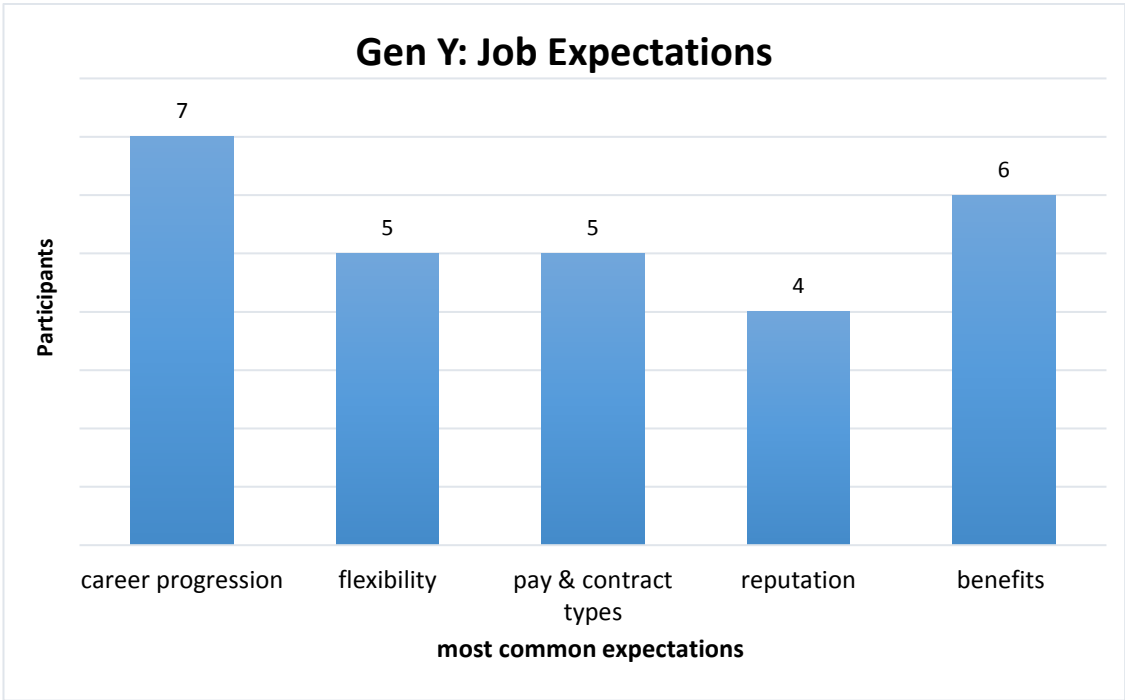Figure 4. Generation Y Job Expectations (Interview analysis)

A number of participants discussed career progression to be their highest priority when seeking employment. They said they were more likely to take a pay cut knowing they would be trained and developed in order to move up the ladder. Other participants talk about being able to take on extra duties within a company in order to progress and get promoted.

"Career progression is very important to me, I want to get the opportunity to develop and grow within a company. I want to experience different types of training in order to move up the ladder" (P3)

As most participants illustrated the importance of career progression, flexibility was also of great interest. Many participants discussed how flexibility is key to a successful work-life balance. Participants talked about having flexible start/finish times and having the option to work from home on certain days.

"I feel I am more valued as an employee when my supervisor/manager allows me to pick and choose my start and finish times" (P3)

Many participants who are looking towards the future, and adopting a more financially stable approach, emphasise the importance of pay and contract types. Participants talk about salary and salary increases each year, as well as having a stable contract swaying towards permanency. Other participants discuss how they would prefer to work on a salary basis rather than a commission base because the income is consistent each month. Other participants discuss bonuses relative to the job role.

"I would look out for a good salary and salary increase each year. For me, having a stable contract swaying more towards permanency or the progression to permanency is very important as I live in Dublin and as you know, accommodation is very pricey, therefore having a secure contract means a lot to me" (P3)

The reputation of the company was a popular topic discussed by many participants. Some exacerbated how a successful company is more appealing as they are more likely to have the funds to provide continuous training and development for their staff. Also, most participants highlighted the importance of former employee reviews and surveys. Other participants discussed how a company must be well established and performing well to make them feel at ease. Employees' may feel anxious worrying about the risk they have of losing their job if a company was unsuccessful and had to close down.

> "A more successful growing company may have more opportunities for promotion as they may have more money to spend on staff training. If the company has a good reputation for employee development and provides adequate support to assist employee development, I would be more inclined to join that company" (P5)

Although many participants are at different stages in their careers, each one of them felt very strongly about benefits. Because Gen Y are so well qualified, they can pick and choose what company they want, therefore it is essential for organisations to provide a variety of attractive benefits. Participants talk briefly about health insurance, flexi-time, gym membership, pension packages, and dental insurance. Participants discuss how such benefits will improve the morale of the company.

> "For me, I would always look at the benefits provided by the company. Health insurance, maternity leave, flexi-time, gym memberships, travel opportunities, and bonuses relative to the role type. I feel like an organisation's morale will be a lot better with these benefits" (P7)

Career Anchors
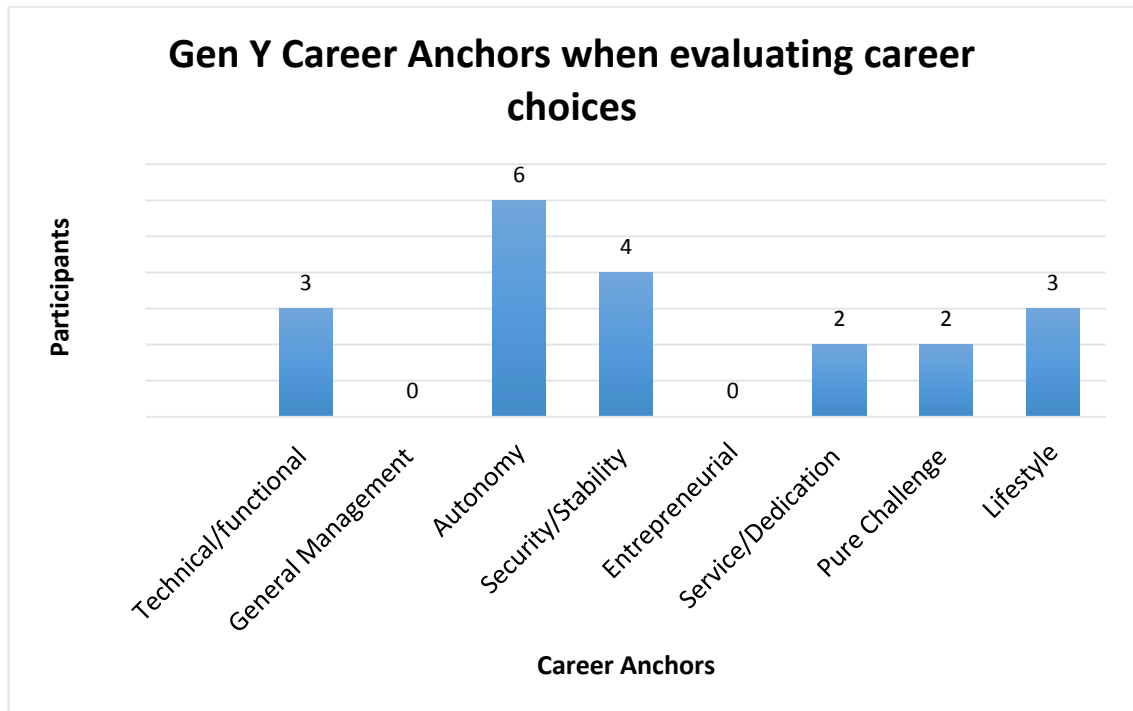
Figure 5. Career Anchors

Participants were very familiar with their career anchors. For the majority of the interviewees, stability/security and autonomy was most popular. Participants chose security/stability based on their future prospects, they look for permanent positions over temporary positions, others stress the cost of living in Dublin and convey how a stable salary is critical when evaluating career choices. Many chose autonomy/independence because they don't like being micro-managed, they like to have the freedom to get involved in other projects in order to find their way of doing things.

> "Living in Dublin with the high rent prices means that you need to have a comfortable and stable salary in order to survive, therefore having a secure contract and salary means a lot when choosing a career/job" (P2)

65

"I don't like being micromanaged, I like to prioritise my own tasks myself and manage my own workload. I also like having the opportunity to get involved in other projects and find my own way of doing things which may make a process better and simpler for the team as a whole" (P3)

Lifestyle integration and technical/functional were also priority anchors considered by interviewees. Participants who value the lifestyle integration anchor seek a well-balanced lifestyle. They talk about flexible working hours being important to them. Participants who chose technical/functional base it on their level of expertise. They have been to college for a number of years, they worked very hard and now want to be recognised as a professional in their field.

"The title of the job would affect my decision as I want to be recognised as an expert after studying for years to get my title. I want to be able to use the skills and knowledge I gained throughout study and be recognised as a professional" (P6)

Other participants highlighted the importance of service/dedication and pure challenge when seeking employment. Individuals who chose the service/dedication anchor get job satisfaction from helping others. These participants like to make a difference. While, individuals who discussed the pure challenge anchor like to overcome difficult obstacles. Participants spoke about how they like receiving challenging work because they get a sense of achievement from it and they like to solve problems.

"I like a job where I feel I can make a difference. I get job satisfaction by achieving results and making a difference in my job. In my current job, my primary concern is to help farmers become more profitable and I get great satisfaction when I achieve this" (P6)

"I am a competitive person, I thrive on challenges and I don't give up easily. I enjoy solving problems, if my future job didn't allow me to be challenged, I would get bored easily and be dissatisfied" (P5)

Neither general management nor entrepreneurial career anchors were considered by any of the 7 participants.

Work-life balance and Career Development

The meaning of work-life balance and career development was discussed by all participants. Participants had similar perceptions of work-life balance. They all had the idea of 'you work to live, not live to work'. Participants associate work-life balance with a healthy lifestyle.

"I don't work over my scheduled time as I am a firm believer that if you can't get the work done in your working day then something is not right and there is no prioritisation" (P4)

Based on job expectations illustrated above, career development emerged as a key theme among all participants. All interviewees perceived career development very similarly. Participants described career development to be very important to them, they view it as the next step from where they currently are. They are always thinking about what they

want to do next, whether it be training courses to help improve their skills and knowledge. Participants talk about how important it is to be up front with management, to ensure they know that you want to progress and that you are willing to take on any extra tasks or opportunities to help with that progression.

"I set out achievable targets every 6 months that will help guide me to develop my career" (P3)

Work-Life Balance Versus Career development

- Work-Life Balance
- Career Development
- W/L = CD

28%
43%
29%

W/L = CD: both work-life balance and career development are equally as important.
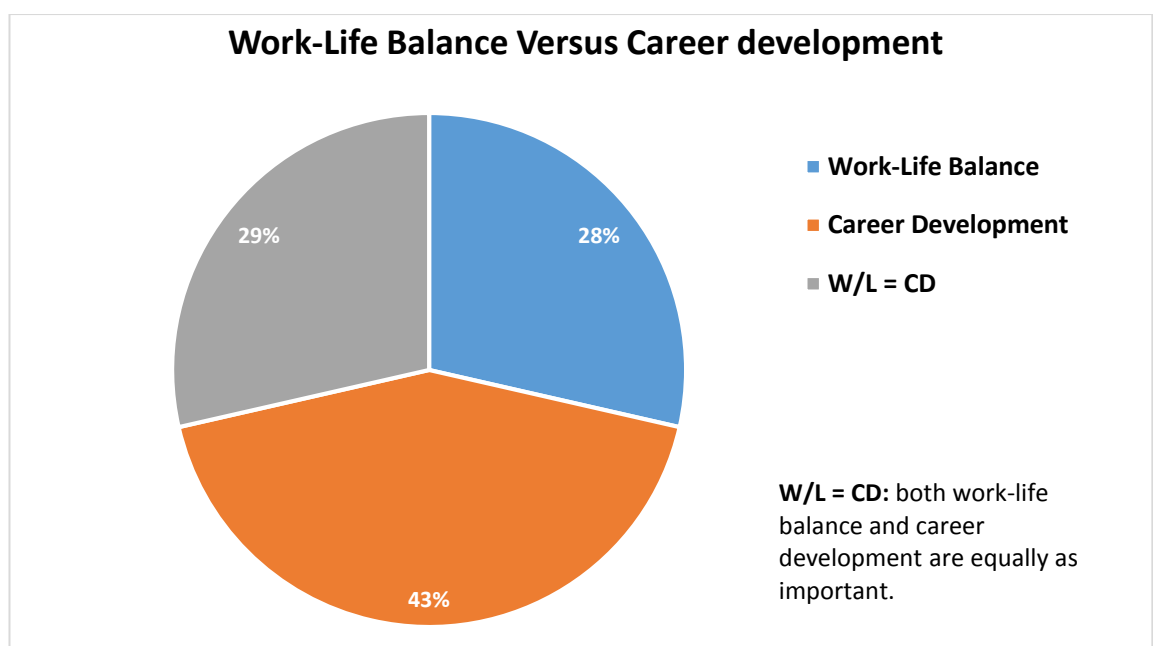
Figure 6. Work-life balance Versus Career Development

Although, career development is a high priority for most participants, some participants suggested that career development wouldn't occur successfully without a good work-life balance. The thematic analysis revealed that more participants prioritised career development over work-life balance.

"If I put in the effort to develop my career now while I'm young, it will open many managerial opportunities for me in the future and that is where my goal is at. I feel

this ties back in with the security/stability anchor; if I work hard and progress within the company I'm working for, it will result in a stable career which will allow me time to then plan my W/L balance" (P3)

What is a career?

The thematic analysis discovered that Gen Y perceive a career to be something they enjoy, something they work hard for, perhaps they spend many years in college training for, and something they have a deep interest in. All 7 participants perceive a career in a similar context. Each perception holds characteristics from the 'boundaryless' and protean careers.

"It is a future plan after education where one has progressed from the bottom to the top of the career ladder and did so by the work and contribution rather than just 'talk the talk' in promotion interviews. For me, a career would be more or less in the same industry but may include multiple different roles in multiple companies" (P7)

Retaining Gen Y
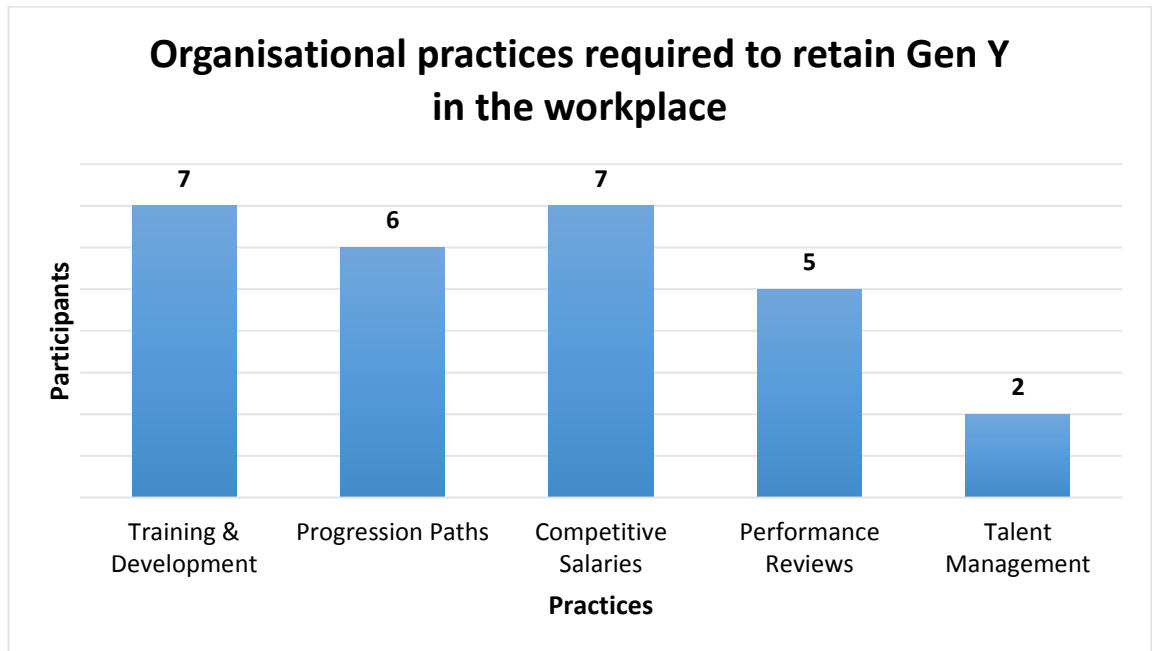
Figure 7. Organisational Practices

After conducting an extensive thematic analysis, it was identified that organisations may successfully retain Gen Y long-term in the workplace by incorporating specific practices. When interviewees were asked what practices they believe would resolve the turnover issues, they came up with 5 definite practices which included training and development, clear progression paths, competitive salaries, performance reviews and talent management. Training and development along with competitive salaries were suggested by all participants. Participants illustrate how training and development will improve an employee's knowledge and skills, investing in an employee shows that they are valued by the organisation and it also reduces stress levels.

> "When taking on graduates, offer them part-time diplomas in Professional
> Competence as this will improve employees' knowledge and education which will

also make the employee feel valued and motivate them to work hard in order to progress up the ladder" (P1)

Furthermore, clear progression paths and performance reviews were also suggested by the majority of the participants. Participants advised that they would take a pay cut if they were guaranteed career progression. It is a high priority for all participants. If an employer offers career development plans to employees, they will feel like an asset to the organisation, which will have a positive effect on the employee as he/she will feel motivated and valued. Others mention that managers need to be trained on how to progress their employees within the business and how they can promote their employees development. Participants discuss how performance reviews will keep them motivated within an organisation as they will want to continuously set themselves targets. Performance reviews will ensure continuous improvement and development for employees.

> "I work in e-recruitment so I know the current market. It's an employee/candidate market. Experienced people now have their pick of jobs. Give them opportunities, allow them to upskill" (P3)

> "If employees meet targets and deadlines, it is important to reward them and to show appreciation with small bonuses or even announcing it at the next sales meeting. By doing so, it makes the employee feel valued and motivates them to work hard to progress up the ladder" (P2)

Gen Y have many qualifications, they have a wide range of skills and abilities than previous generations in today's workplace, and therefore, it is up to the organisation to make the job as attractive as possible. This may include various benefits. The thematic

analysis identified competitive salaries as a popular topic of discussion particularly among experienced Gen Y individuals. Such individuals have experience working in a variety of organisations. Participants discuss competitive salaries of other companies that they may be interested in working for. Participants spoke about specific benefits that should be incorporated into the job such as pension packages, flexi-time, health and dental insurance etc.

> "Companies need to match salaries of other similar companies including benefits. My company provides the best benefits, for example most companies offer 28 days Annual Leave, however I get unlimited time off. I also get free food at snacks and work and we have happy hour every Friday from 5-7" (P2)

Some participants also mentioned Talent Management as a method to retain Gen Y in the workplace. Talent management practices would ensure that the right person is selected for the job. Participants believe that psychometric testing is not a fair way of judging a person's suitability for a job.

> **"**The practices I believe to resolve the issue of turnover is talent management. I believe this practice is best as it will ensure the most suitable person is selected for the job, which will lead to better productivity" (P7)

OCM Practices

The majority of participants were very enthusiastic about OCM practices. Participants felt that OCM practices would definitely aid them in achieving their career goals and objectives. The most popular practice mentioned by Gen Y is in-house training programs as this would ensure growth and development for employees. Mentoring and career development were also discussed as they would enable employees to progress and move within a company, and experience different departments within. Annual performance reviews were also mentioned, this involves the employee and manager having a conversation about how to develop the employee and what steps to take for the progression to occur. The employer gets involved and encourages the employee to be the best that they can be by guiding them in the right direction. However, one participant was hesitant about OCM practices, stating it wouldn't appeal to her if the OCM practices designed by the organisation didn't align with her career goals.

> "Mentoring and career development are key as they allow you to know that there is hope to progress and move within a company. Tuition reimbursement is also very important but many companies will only reimburse if the course is related and will benefit the company which I feel is sometimes not so fair as what one person thinks is relatable might not be the same as another" (P6)

> "First of all, I would have to ensure my goals were aligned with those of the organisation. If it was to develop new skills and take on roles I was interested in then I would feel that OCM practices were of value. However, I would be concerned that the organisation was pushing me out of my career path" (P7)

The focus Group

A summary of the thematic analysis is presented in Appendix F. The analysis of the findings suggested that there are 4 solid expectations of Gen Y entering the workforce. The 4 expectations include; career progression, training and development, benefits, and recognition. The analysis displayed an overlap of career anchors identified by members of Gen Y, such as security/stability, autonomy/independence, service/dedication and technical functional. Participants talked about work-life balance and career development in a similar way. With regards to prioritising either or, more participants chose career development to be most important. The thematic analysis revealed that the most popular practices suggested by participants to retain Gen Y in the workplace are training and development, recognition, fair recruitment processes and team bonding exercises. All participants believe OCM practices will help them achieve their career goals, some suggesting specific practices in particular such as mentoring and adequate training programmes.

Job Expectations
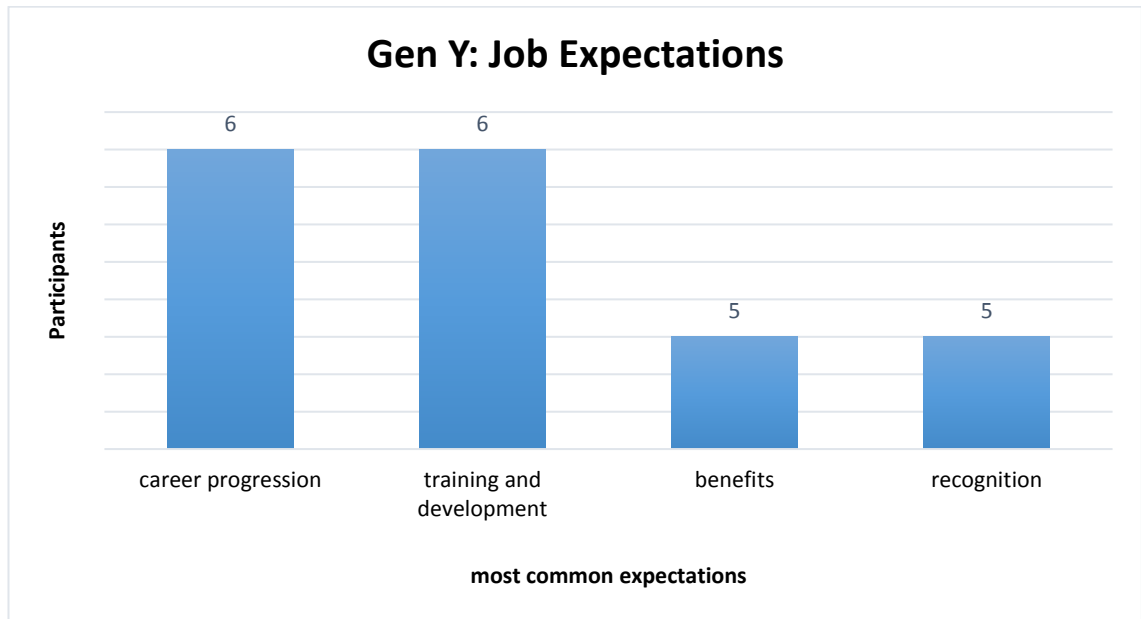
Figure 8. Generation Y Job Expectations (Focus Group Analysis)

Participants spoke dominantly about career progression, adequate training and development, benefits, career progression opportunities and remuneration. Participants seek to work somewhere that provides progression opportunities, they want to continue to grow and develop in their chosen profession. Interviewees expect a training programme to be set up when they start a new job, they expect future prospects and upskilling through continuous training and development. They expect their benefits to be in line with competitive companies. Furthermore, they want to be recognised and rewarded for their contribution. They expect pay rises, bonuses, and acknowledgment.

"The most important factor would probably be opportunities for progression and growth within a company"

"Benefits such as a competitive salary and working sociable hours would draw me to a company initially, and promotion and autonomy would make me stay"

Career Anchors
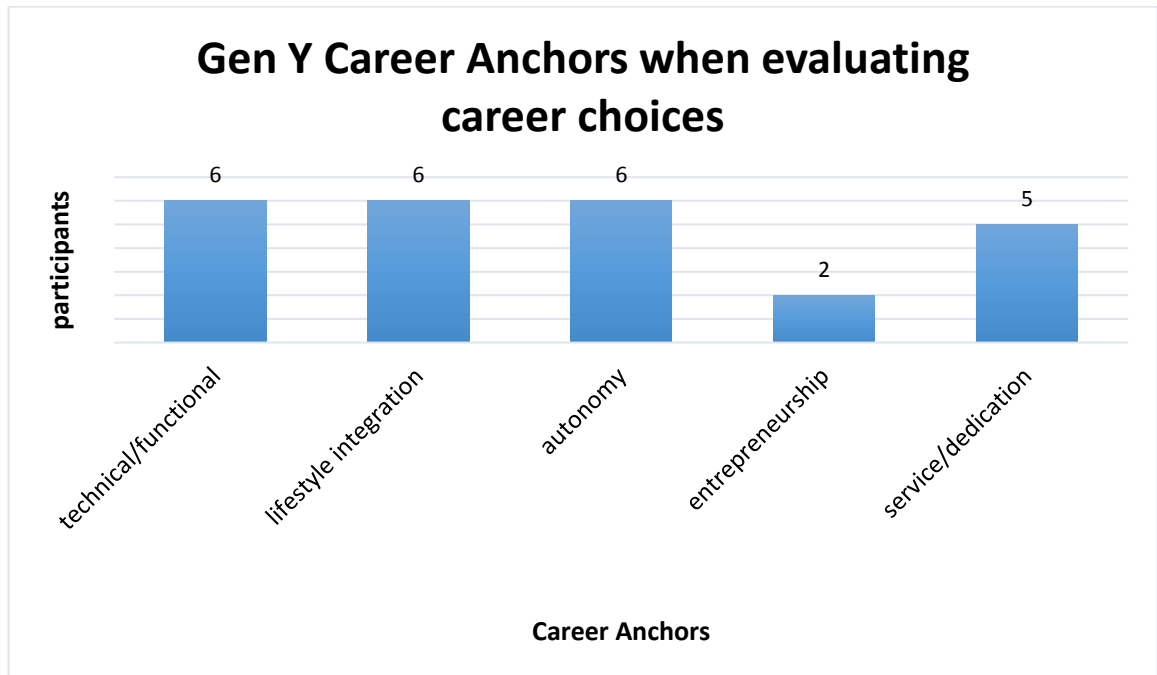
Figure 9. Career Anchors

After some conversation, participants decided that technical/functional, lifestyle integration, autonomy and service/dedication where the most applicable anchors to them. Some participants also considered entrepreneurship. They have studied and trained hard for their title, and therefore want to be recognised and acknowledged for this. Autonomy was discussed quite a lot among participants, they are a generation of innovation and ideas, and they want to be able to work on their own initiative and to share ideas with their team/colleagues, which ties in with the entrepreneurship anchor. Participants talk about how they enjoy getting involved in different projects/groups where they feel they can make a difference.

"I like to be trusted to make my own decisions and to complete more challenging and complex tasks. This makes me feel trusted, respected and valued and it shows that the work I am doing is worthwhile and valuable"

"I thrive off being able to apply my set of skills to a situation to improve outcomes and to be recognised for it"

Work-life balance

Participants described work-life balance as allowing time for family, friends and activities outside work. It means not taking work home with you in the evenings. Work-life balance is when you switch off from your work duties and focus solely on your personal life. To achieve an optimal work-life balance, participants agreed that one must work hard during work hours to ensure that work does not spill into their personal life. There are enough hours in the day to fit everything in, it's a matter of prioritising and staying organised. 2 participants discussed how they had to leave jobs because they weren't receiving the right work-life balance. It got to the point where they suffered negative health effects due to the large amount of stress they were put under. They would be working late and coming in early because of the stress and pressure. Further, they realised it simply wasn't worth it because they were sacrificing too much personal time with friends and family, and that's when they realised the role wasn't sustainable.

"Work-life balance is key to your own success, over working causes stress and is not an achievable way to succeed or develop within any role within a company"
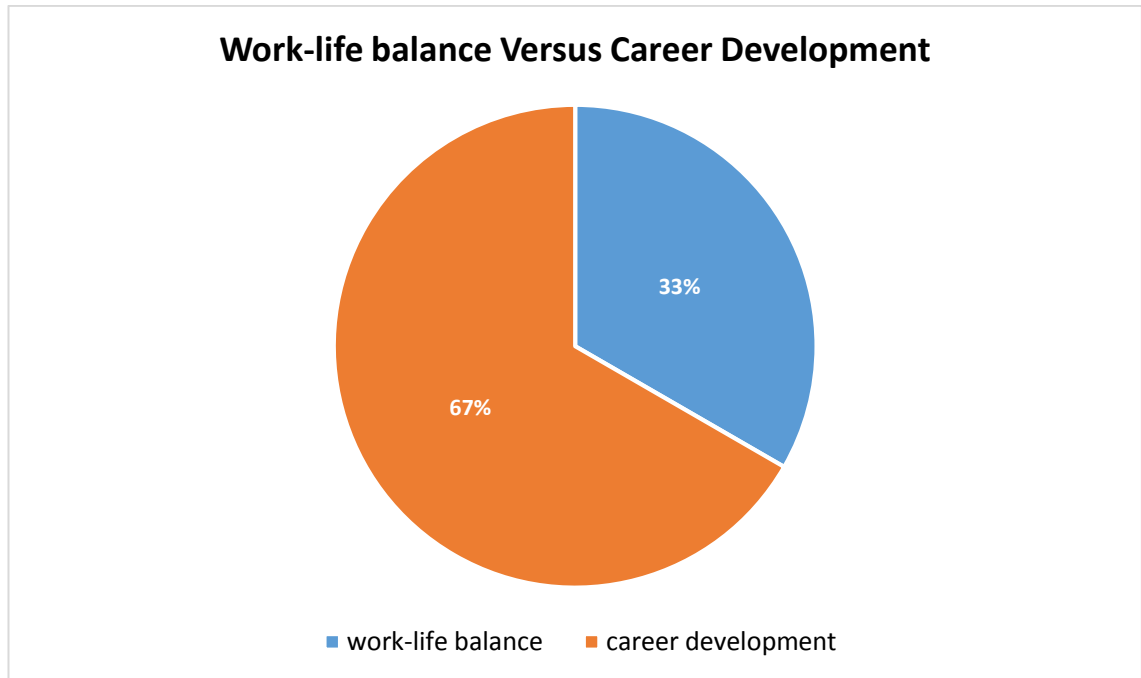
Figure 10. Work-life balance Versus Career Development

Career development

As with the one-to-one interviews, career progression was also the highest priority for participants. They are motivated and determined to be the best they can be. If that means doing additional work after work hours, they are more than willing to do so in order to achieve their goals. Some participants are newly qualified and therefore, more likely to put their career development ahead of work-life balance until they secure more senior positions. Participants spoke about how important they feel about working their way up the ladder whilst they are young, they are driven and determined to be the best they can be. However, they do highlight work-life balance as key to a successful career development journey.

> "Because I am young I am willing to sacrifice some of my social life in order to climb the ladder but I think as I get older I will definitely value work life balance more"

What is a career?

Participants discussed how they view a career as something they enjoy, they feel valued and needed within. It is an area of work a person has an interest in and wishes to learn more about while progressing in that area. It is a job where you can better yourself, feel a sense of achievement and accomplishment. A career is a life-long ladder in which you continuously climb. A career should give you enjoyment and a good quality of life. It becomes a chore and something you resent if you don't' enjoy it. Participants discuss how a career is finding that job in life that allows you to make best use of the skills you have.

> "A career is a life-long ladder in which you continuously climb in which your duties and responsibilities continuously change until you reach your highest level of expertise"

Retaining Gen Y
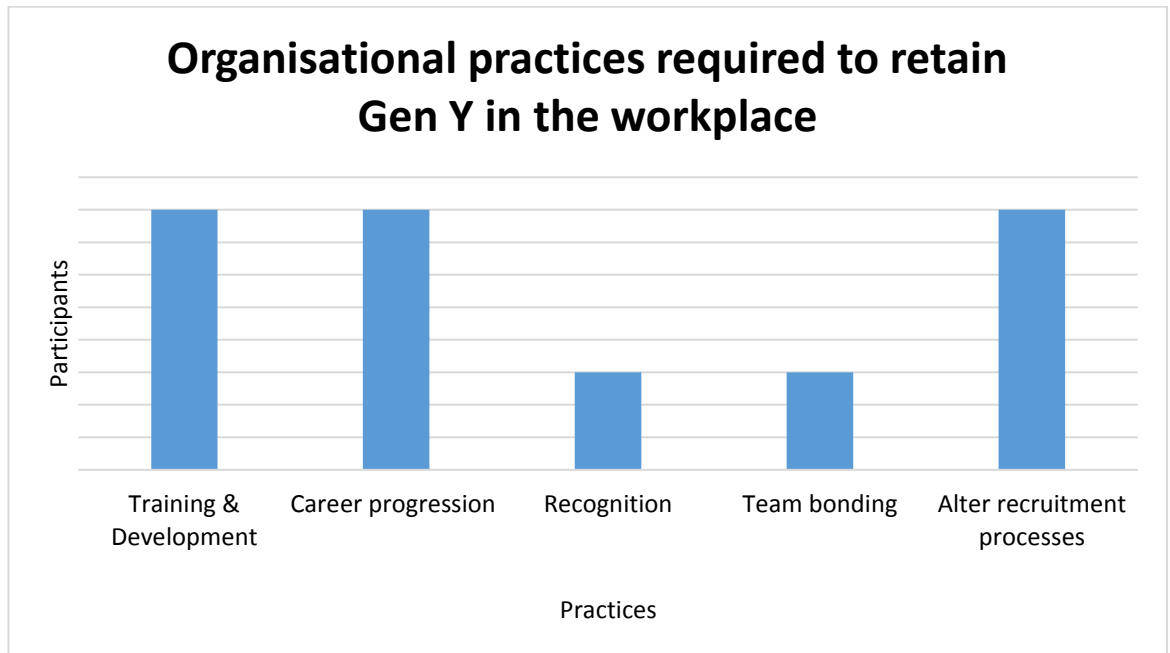
Figure 11. Organisational Practices

Participants talked about today's recruitment processes being too time-consuming. Participants agreed that psychometric testing is not the fairest method to judge someone's suitability to a job. Further, they suggested for more accurate descriptions of jobs as this would help candidates decide whether the job is suitable for them. They suggested training courses to be implemented where employees can develop their skills which would ultimately benefit the company as employees become more efficient at their jobs. Participants emphasise the importance of career development programmes as this would ultimately lead to promotion and boost the overall productivity within an organisation. Team bonding events will encourage co-workers to get on and get to know each other and showing recognition will also have an effect on employee retention. Participants spoke about how crucial it is to have 1-2-1's with employers so that they know what it is they want for their career, and the next steps toward that progression can be established. The

more accurately these motivators are identified, the more chance employers have of retaining top talent in an organisation.

> "I think organisations definitely need to invest in training for their staff in order to help them grow. I think they need to do this because if they spend their resources on you, you will feel valued. As a result you are more willing to give back to an organisation where you don't just feel like a number"

> "It is crucial in 1-2-1's with employees to identify what their career progression is and what it is they want for their career, I believe the more accurately you are able to identify what these motivators are, the more chance you have of keeping the top talent in an organisation"

OCM Practices

Onsite training and development programmes, and mentoring were discussed among participants. They believe such practices would definitely help them explore their career choices within a company. They feel that such practices will help them continue developing within a company. OCM practices may also help retain staff for longer as investing in career management practices to help progress their employees will make them feel more valued. Training may give employees an idea of what managers do. Tuition reimbursement would certainly help to take financial pressure off. It would also make an employee feel valued for the time they have spent enriching their skills and knowledge which would also benefit the company through improved employee performance. Participants felt positively about OCM practices, saying they would be of great benefit for people to be able to fully understand whether a company will be able to full help them achieve their career goals. Job assignments would also allow employees to take on new challenges and continuously learn.

"I left my previous role as I felt I had gained everything I could from that job in terms of experience and there were no further opportunities for me to develop. I was provided with training but ultimately due to feeling less appreciated, financially in terms of salary and acknowledgement of good work carried out"

"These practices will be of great benefit for people to be able to fully understand whether a company will be able to help them achieve their career goals or will they ultimately be wasting time trying to achieve career goals in an organisation that they have no realistic chance of achieving"

Chapter 5. Discussion

Introduction

This chapter will discuss the findings and equate them to existing literature explored in the literature review to identify if there is any correlation or variances between the two.

The primary objective of this study investigates the employment expectations of Gen Y in Ireland. The main research question sets out to broadly identify the job expectations of Gen Y and to investigate what career anchors they consider when evaluating their career choices. To examine the research question stated above, a number of other objectives were established which would collectively give an insight into the mind set of Gen Y.

Overall the findings suggest that there are several common themes which define the employment expectations of Gen Y who fit the generational cohort of Millennials. 26 themes were initially discovered during the analysis of the data. The researcher then reviewed all the themes identified and categorised them down into 7 primary themes;

1. **Career Progression Opportunities**

2. **Training and Development**

3. **Mentoring**

4. **Employee Benefits**

5. **Work-life balance**

6. **Career Anchors Autonomy/Independence Security/Stability**

7. **Recruitment Processes**

1. Career Progression opportunities

For all participants, career progression was a high priority. Brown and Hesketh (2004) discovered that most Millennials' expectations are for personal achievement and career development. In their work, Gen Y desire new learning opportunities and scope for responsibility, which seem to be in line with the basic principles of the Protean, self-managed careers discussed in Chapter 2. Gen Y display determination and ambition in order to achieve when they are passionate about something, they will sacrifice their personal time to achieve various objectives and goals (Zhu and Graf-Lambsdorff, 2017).

"If career development was guaranteed, then I would be happy to take a pay cut"

Howe et al (2003) supports such statements as he conveys that Millennials' are achievement orientated and McDonald et al (2008) believe that Millennials highlight the importance of career progression. Participants reported that career opportunities within an organisation had a direct influence on their decision to stay within the organisation.

"A competitive salary and sociable hours are definitely an advantage. They would probably be the things that would draw me to a job initially. Career progression and autonomy would make me stay"

Objective 2 seeks to discover the desired job expectations of Gen Y. The literature review revealed that the most anticipated job expectations are career development, work-life balance and flexibility. The analysis echoed the above expectations, however added various expectations such as training and development, benefits, salary and contract types.

> "I wouldn't work in a position/company where there was minimal opportunities to advance"

Objective 4 sets out to investigate whether Gen Y put their career development before work-life balance. As discussed in the literature review, Zhu and Graf-Lambsdorff (2017) highlight Gen Y's determination and drive by suggesting that they work extra hours and work their lunch breaks in order to achieve goals and reach targets which will benefit the business. It would appear that career importance depends on the age and priorities of individuals. The majority of participants suggest that at a younger age they may not have many priorities and that may be the right time to make a career for themselves, whereas later in life, they may have different priorities such as a family and their focus may shift from their career. This aspect was not found in the literature and so was an interesting thought. Though this theory cannot be applied to all participants or the cohort as a whole as each individual may have their own take on this. But, this finding should be noted by the employers.

> "When I first came out of college, career development was certainly the most important thing for me as I have had to immigrate to Australia and England to further progress my career. I have worked very hard and sacrificed a lot to develop my skills and experience that I have today. At this stage in my career I still work diligently but appreciate the importance of a healthy work life balance,

particularly working in a busy city like London. Career development is still important to me but it would not be at the cost of not spending time with my family and friends"

Objective 6 set out to determine what practices organisations could adapt in order to retain Gen Y in the workplace. Participants highlighted the importance of progression opportunities. Pfeffer (1994) outlines the importance of internal career opportunities. Organisations who avail of this, recruit individuals internally for various positions rather than externally. This process encourages the development of employees within organisations, and the chances of promotion are higher which acts as an incentive for individuals to perform better.

Organisations who adopt this practice tend to have higher levels of commitment amongst employees (Guest, 1997). Further, employees tend to be more motivated as they know that they have progression opportunities within that company. Moreover, such practices also creates stability for employees (Guest, 1997). Additionally, Noe et al. (2006) convey that internal career opportunities promote fairness within organisations.

2. Training and development

T&D is another key theme that emerged from the analysis. T&D is a Human Resources Management (HRM) function which fulfils the gaps between current and expected performance within an organisation (Elnaga & Imran, 2013; Nassazi, 2013).

T&D was a topic of discussion for Objective 2; the most desired expectations of Gen Y and Objective 6; practices organisations should adapt in order to retain Gen Y in the workplace. In Chapter 2, it was documented that Millennials are seen to make strategic career decisions, therefore they tend to exploit employment development opportunities where possible so that they can realise their long-term goals (Kaifi, Nafei, Khanfar, and Kaifi 2012).

> "I'd expect a training programme to be in place for when I start, I'd also expect potential exposure to different parts of the business"

> "Organisations should provide employees with courses/training e.g. excel, to help them develop their skills which would ultimately benefit the company as employees would become more efficient at their job"

Employee T&D is an excellent motivator for individuals to achieve the employee's and the organisation's short-term and long-term goals. As documented in Chapter 2, Ferri-Reed (2013) suggests that employers should invest towards building assessment tools as this will aid them to plan the career development of this unique cohort which has many individual and organisational benefits. Nassazi (2013) outlines many benefits associated with T&D;

- Employees' morale, confidence, and motivations are increased

- T&D promotes a sense of security which lowers turnover and absenteeism rates.

- Employees get more involved in the change process as T&D provide the required competencies to adapt to challenging situations.

- T&D leads to opportunities for recognition, higher pay, and promotion.

- T&D improves the quality of staff, therefore, individuals become more productive (Bapna, Langer, Mehra, Gopal, & Gupta, 2013).

- Many organisations offer tuition reimbursement for employees to attend T&D programs (Jehanzeb & Bashir, 2013).

3. Mentoring

Mentoring was discussed a lot during the semi-structured interviews with regards to Objectives 6; what practices organisations need to adapt in order to retain Gen Y in the workplace and Objective 7; whether Gen Y feel Organisational Career Management (OCM) practices will support their career choices.

> "Also development programmes/mentoring would help give employees an idea of the work managers do"

Mentoring is described as the "deliberate pairing of a more skilled or experienced person with a lesser skilled or experienced one, with the agreed upon goal of having the lesser skilled person grow and develop specific competencies" (Murray, 1991, p. xi).

Mentoring has been defined as a relationship between a more experienced person (mentor) who is generally older, who helps and assists career development of a less experienced person (protégé), usually younger. Both persons may or may not be employed in the same organisation (Levinson et al., 1978; Kram, 1985; Noe, Greenberger, & Wang, 2002; Ragins, 1999, Wanberg, Welsh, & Hezlett, 2003; Ragins & Kram, 2007). Organisations who offer mentoring programmes experience the benefits of enhancing a person's protégé's competencies (Aryee & Chay, 1994) and personal learning (Lankau & Scandura, 2002).

Mentoring can be used as a tool for the professional development of an employee, it can be viewed as a training mechanism. The work of Ondeck (2002) supports the idea of mentoring as Gen Y desire extensive support and guidance through frequent feedback. Organisations today primarily use mentoring as a tool for talent development, retention and attraction (Robinson, 2007). However, workplace mentoring relationships produce great benefits such as higher levels of compensation, advancements, career progression, enhanced career mobility, and career satisfaction (Kram & Isabella, 1985; Ragins, 1997). Furthermore, mentoring contributes to the overall competence development of employees by offering challenging work assignments and coaching for skill upgradation (Kram & Isabella, 1985).

Furthermore, irrespective of the situation in the global economy, organisations have also comprehended that mentoring programmes not only train employees to do their job effectively, but, also shapes their career path in the right direction. Moreover, workplace mentoring also facilitates employee counselling to strengthen employees for overcoming challenges related to professional and personal development. In this way, workplace mentoring has an important role for enhancing the resilience of employees.

4. Employee Benefits

A new and important theme that emerged from the analysis of the findings was employee benefits. Vroom (1964) argues that employees will perform better in their jobs if organisations provide them with the rewards they expect and desire. This is one of the most important HR practices as it helps to make employees feel satisfied and perform better within their organisations. Employers use monetary incentives as a tool to retain top talent within an organisation and reward employees for a job well done (Nelson, 2003). Monetary incentive is used to describe incentive-payment plans which ties incentives directly or indirectly to productivity standard (Ubeku, 1975; Alaba & Owodunni, 2007).

Incentives and rewards include, promotions, pay increases, showing appreciation for good efforts, valuable fringe benefits, interesting and challenging work, friendly and supportive colleagues, job security and prestige of work (Pattanayak, 2005; Darwish, 2013).

Employers need to know how employees are motivated and what will encourage them to have the right attitude to work which will ultimately improve employee performance and organizational productivity (Olubusayo, 2016). According to Maslow (1954), employees are motivated to satisfy five levels of needs which include physiological needs, security needs, the need for belongingness, self-esteem and self-actualization. These needs may be satisfied by having an adequate salary and an attractive incentive package.

> "Most companies offer 28 days Annual Leave, however I get unlimited time off. I also get free food, snacks at work and we have happy hour every Friday from 5-7. Other factors would be the benefits such as health/dental insurance, free lunch and free snacks along with pension"

5. Work-life Balance

Work-life balance is a key theme in this study. This theme came into discussion during Objective 2, desired job expectations of Gen Y, Objective 4, meaning of work-life balance and Objective 5, practices organisations should adapt in order to retain Gen Y in the workplace. Although Gen Y prioritise career development at this stage in their lives, they know as long as they secure more senior positions they will then appreciate a well-balanced lifestyle between work and leisure.

> "Work-life balance is key to your own success, over working causes stress and is not an achievable way to succeed or develop within any role in a company"

It was established in the literature review that Gen Y rank work-life balance as the second highest priority in their job expectation criteria with 16.8%, after salary is taken into consideration. Gen Y believe that a good work-life balance will result in a more

productive day at work, it will add value and contribute to the company's success. (The Deloitte Millennial Survey, 2016).

According to Nam (2014), work-life balance is an 'individual's relative perception of the relationship between work and private life'. A prolonged lack of work-life balance can ultimately result in a higher staff turnover within an organisation (Niemistö et al, 2017). To achieve an optimal work-life balance, employees must actively participate in social roles within their work life and their non-work life. Commitment to multiple roles facilitates high performance producing satisfaction that spills over across life domains (Sirgy and Lee, 2017).

6. Career Anchors: Autonomy/Independence and Security/Stability

Career anchors are motivators that impact career choices and career satisfaction, they are specific factors individuals consider when evaluating difficult career decisions (Schein, 1986; 1993; 1996).

Merchant Jr. (2010) indicated that Gen Y are very career conscious, who thrive on personal growth and career development. Career consciousness refers to being aware of one's skills, abilities and goals which will have an impact on their career (Merchant Jr, 2010). Interestingly, it was quite evident in the interviews and the focus group that this theme seemed very prevalent.

Based on the literature review, there wasn't plentiful information available on Gen Y and career anchors however, Schein (1978) conveys that career anchors are a driving force for career choices, goals and actions. Furthermore, career anchors are associated with both traditional and contemporary careers. The 'managerial competence' and 'job security' anchors parallel well with the traditional career, whereas the 'service/dedication', 'pure challenge', 'autonomy/independence' and 'lifestyle' correspond well with the 'new careers' viewpoint.

Hall (1996) describes the traditional career by vertical success, climbing the corporate pyramid and monetary rewards. Progression was also based on frequent upward moves entailing geographical mobility (Edwards, Robinson, Welchman and Woodall, 1999), hard work and loyalty rewarded with increased seniority (Reitman and Schneer, 2003). The stability/security career anchor parallels with the characteristics of a traditional career (Schein, 1978). More recently, careers are thought to be more internally-oriented, flexible and mobile with goals defined by individual workers (Sullivan, 1999). Such careers are referred to as Protein and Boundaryless careers (Arnold and Cohen, 2008).

The analysis of the findings suggested that the majority of individuals who participated in both the semi-structured interviews and focus group consider the autonomy/independence career anchor when evaluating their career choices for many reasons. They don't like being micro-managed, and they like to have the freedom to get involved in other projects in order to find their way of doing things. Furthermore, they like to have the opportunity to take on extra duties in order to progress and get promoted

within the company. Moreover, they mentioned how they like to prioritise their tasks and manage their own workload.

> "It is very important to me to work on my own initiative as well as in a team. I find it can be quite hard being micro managed and this would be off-putting as an employee"

Participants also considered security/stability for many reasons. Today, the price of rent is very steep, individuals talk about how they need to have a comfortable and stable salary in order to survive. They convey how they would look for a permanent position over a temporary position in order to secure stability for their future. Having a stable salary may give individuals more time to focus and develop their skills and abilities within a role, it enables individuals to plan ahead for their future.

> "By having a permanent job and a set salary puts my mind at ease and having this stability in my career gives me more time to focus and develop my skills and abilities in my job. It allows me to plan ahead into the future and predict cash flow budgets and savings"

Therefore, Gen Y adapt characteristics from both the traditional career and the contemporary career as the autonomy/independence anchor parallels with the Protean contemporary career and the security/stability anchor parallels with characteristics of a traditional career.

7. Recruitment Process

Recruitment processes was a topical theme discussed during the focus group. This is an important theme and I feel it should be addressed by employers. Participants discussed how unfair psychometric testing is. They feel that it is not the most suitable method to test someone's suitability for a job.

> "I think the recruitment process has become too time consuming now and would turn me off applying for many positions. I don't think psychometric tests are a fair way of judging a person's suitability for a job. More accurate descriptions of what the job would entail would help candidates know whether the job is suitable for them"

Many companies use psychometric testing as a means of selecting the most talented individuals for a position, but in reality, such testing will not define how an individual may carry out the job.

Jacobs (2018) convey that psychometrics should never be used to make a decision. They should only be used to help with decision-making. It was also illustrated that psychometric testing should only be context dependent, furthermore, no single tool should be used in isolation. Jacobs (2018) articulates "it's not about either/or. It's over and above". An individual who is undertaking a psychometric test is under pressure and so this will trigger them to respond differently to specific questions. To make the chances of this happening slim, Jacobs suggests for a broader set of recruitment tools to be used (Jacobs, 2018).

Research by Jacobs (2018) reveals that an over-reliance on psychometric testing results in discrimination against neuro-diverse people or individuals with certain mental health conditions.

Limitations

It is important to highlight the limitations of this research and recommend areas that could be investigated further in future research.

1. Many researchers argue the pros and cons of both qualitative and quantitative research (Saunders, 2016; Quinlan, 2015; Patton, 1990). Cooper and Schindler (2014) detail the view of senior managers regarding qualitative research, and they think the process can be too subjective and exposed to human error. They also convey the risk of bias when collecting and interpreting data. Horsburgh (2003) echoed this statement by outlining the deficiency of "scientific rigour and credibility".

2. The topic of Gen Y is broad and research is emerging on the subject, therefore, a broad range of open-ended questions were used to gain insight from the participants. Semi-structured interview questions were appropriate when asking a large number of open-ended questions (Saunders, 2016). Each interview lasted between 30-45 minutes. The interviewer observed that some participants were tired by the end of the interview process, having discussed complex issues based on their personal perceptions of career expectations and career anchors. The

detailed answers from the high volume of questions required a lot of time to collect and organise the data effectively.

3. Although the focus group produced some excellent data, the inexperience of the researcher in the role of mediator resulted in questions not being probed further. Focus Groups can be difficult to encourage a range of people to participate, the researcher identified that some participants may have found the focus group situation intimidating as participants may have felt under pressure to agree with the dominant view (Saunders, 2016).

4. It was vital for the interviewer to remain impartial, and to ensure that the questions asked were non-biased (Saunders, 2016). Jankowicz (2000) argues that this can only be achieved by taking control from the beginning, preparing questions that are only relevant to the topic under examination.

To conclude, the above discussion illustrates that various existing and new themes emerged from this study. These can be of significant importance to employers as they can analyse what Gen Y are looking for from their employers and employment. The above-mentioned points have also been critically analysed by the author and some practical implications mentioned. Further, in the next chapter the overall meaning and contribution of this research will be discussed.

Chapter 6. Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

The purpose of this research was to gather an in-depth understanding of Gen Y's job expectations, while gaining an insight as to whether or not they consider their career anchors when evaluating their career choices. This research has presented data that Millennials have different priorities to preceding generations and this has had an effect on how managers manage this youthful cohort.

The insights gathered from the qualitative research revealed 7 key themes including: career progression, training and development, mentoring, employee benefits, work-life balance, career anchors autonomy/independence and security/stability and recruitment processes. The analysis of the findings initially displayed a total of 26 themes, but after a critical analysis, the 7 themes mentioned above were the most consistent.

The author selected a qualitative method for this research as it best fits the nature of the study. Unlike a quantitative approach, the author was able to keep an open interest about the phenomena and allow knowledge to emerge from the data. A quantitative method wouldn't allow the researcher to collect such informative data or to achieve all 7 objectives. Further, a qualitative approach enabled the author to gain an insight into the lives of young Gen Y individuals. The data collected contained words to describe the reflections (Rudestam and Newton, 2015).

A surprising finding which emerged is the importance of career development opportunities. It would appear from the findings that this concept depends on the age and priorities of individuals. The majority of participants suggest that at a younger age they may not have many priorities and perhaps, that would be the right time to make a career for themselves, whereas, later in life, they may have different priorities such as a family and their focus may shift from their career. Some participants disclosed that they had to emigrate in order to progress in their career after they qualified. However, now, a few years on, they would no longer sacrifice family and friends over career progression. This aspect was not found in the literature and was an interesting thought. Though this theory does not apply to all participants or the cohort as a whole, as each individual may have their own take on this. Nevertheless, this finding should be noted by employers.

Recommendations

The findings of this study allow clear insight into what Gen Y expect from their employer. These insights will enable a business to understand what motivates Gen Y, and reduce the risk of losing talented employees. Gen Y are familiar with career anchors and based on the analysis, the most preferred anchors are autonomy/independence and security/stability. Employers may use this information to their advantage when hiring new employees.

The following recommendations have been made following the data collected and analysed:

The data revealed that Gen Y are very ambitious and career focused. A structured career path would enable this cohort to map out a planned career journey making achievable goals that they can aim towards throughout their career. This will combat the issue of 'job hopping', satisfy their need for structure as well as retain top talented employees.

Managers should attend training courses to update their skills and knowledge regarding the Millennial cohort. This will strengthen their approach towards engaging with this generation and they will be able to adjust organisational practices that were suitable for Gen X and Baby boomers to suit this young emerging generation. Further, managers will be able to build on Gen Y's strengths such as technology and social media. Moreover, managers will be able to manage Gen Y's expectations effectively and understand how to deliver constructive feedback.

Company managers may use these findings to become an employer of choice for Gen Y. Such findings have the potential to increase productivity, reduce staff turnover and develop individuals through continuous training and development. Employers could specify certain OCM practices on the job specification as this will further attract the most suited candidates for the job.

Participants discussed the unfairness of psychometric testing when selecting potential candidates for a job. Jacobs (2018) convey that psychometrics should never be used to make a decision, they should only be used to help with decision-making. It was also illustrated that psychometric testing should only be context dependent, furthermore, no single tool should be used in isolation. Research by Jacobs (2018) reveals that an over-reliance on psychometric testing results in discrimination against neuro-diverse people or individuals with certain mental health conditions.

Employers could alter their recruitment process to include the view of career anchors when advertising jobs. Therefore, Gen Y will know at an early stage whether the company is suitable for them. This will clarify what the actual job consists of and what the company is about, as in whether it'll help potential candidates achieve their career goals. I feel like this recommendation would be of great benefit to employers based on the findings of analysis discussed in Chapter 5.

Implication of Findings

The financial implications of this study would be moderate. Organisations would have to invest money into training and development for employees. If OCM practices were implemented, this would require capitol but this investment in return will decrease turnover levels and improve the overall performance within an organisation. Furthermore, there would be minimal financial implications to the alteration of recruitment processes.

Personal Learning Statement

This piece of research is in partial fulfilment of the MAHRM course. I have thoroughly enjoyed this challenging experience, and I am glad I was provided with this opportunity. It has acquainted me with the importance of research, time management, planning and implementation. Completing this dissertation was a self-directed learning process, therefore, I had the autonomy to choose a topic I had an interest in. I felt that by choosing this topic, it would help with my career prospects, as I have gained a great deal of knowledge on this important topic that I can later bring to an organisation.

Further, as a career oriented individual, it seemed interesting to me to study the job expectations of Gen Y as I myself hail from the Gen Y cohort and this subject is quite topical at the moment. I believe that the findings are of great importance to employers in order to increase employee retention and productivity as well as improve the overall performance within an organisation.

This research helped me view the perceptions of other fellow Gen Y individuals. It was interesting to see the similarities in thoughts but also dissimilarities in some thoughts such as their view on career development and how it was impacted by individual's age and priorities in life.

This experience has been a challenging one which required ongoing attention, perseverance and commitment. I found it difficult to come to terms with the whole process of time management. Conducting interviews and focus groups were quite challenging for me, however, I do feel like my communication and interpersonal skills have improved enormously from this experience.

Through the many challenges faced, it was all worth it in the end. I am grateful to my supervisor for his invaluable guidance, my employer for letting me take time off work and my parents and friends for their continuous support. Through conducting this research I have acquired skills which are needed for carrying out research at a high level. This experience has also increased my self-confidence and advanced my independent learning which will certainly benefit me in my future endeavours.

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Appendices

APPENDIX A

National College of Ireland

INFORMATION SHEET

Purpose of the Study

As part of the requirements for the MSc in Human Resource Management at the National College of Ireland, I have to carry out a research study. The study is concerned with investigating:

Job Expectations which effect millennials' decision to build a long career within a given company; Career Anchors considered by Gen Y when evaluating their career choices.

Millennials, also known as Gen Y, are the general cohort of those born between 1981 and 2000 (Campione, 2014; Cheeseman & Downey, 2012; Johnson & Lopez, 2008).

What will the study involve?

The interview will involve the following:

Participants will also be asked to take part in a semi-structured interview and or focus group with me to discuss their opinions and expectations of jobs in the 21st century, in Post-Brexit Ireland. These interviews and or focus group will be audio-recorded so as to be reviewed for qualitative data. Data yielded from these interviews will be anonymised, assessed thematically, critically evaluated and presented anonymously in the research.

Why have you been asked to take part?

You have been asked to take part in this study as it requires a sample of participants who share the same or similar characteristics e.g. working environment, development opportunities, work challenges and age bracket. You are considered a member of Generation Y.

Do you have to take part?

Participation in this study is voluntary. If you volunteer, and are selected, for this study you will be asked to sign a consent form (see attached). You will retain a copy of this information sheet and a signed copy of the consent form. By signing the consent form you agree to participate fully in the interview as outlined. You will have a maximum of two weeks after completion of the interview to notify me should you wish to withdraw from the study. If you do wish to withdraw at this point any identifiable data will be destroyed and not included in the study.

Will your participation in the study be kept confidential?

Yes. I will ensure that no clues to your identity appear in the thesis. Any extracts from what you say that are quoted in the thesis will be entirely anonymous.

What will happen to the information which you give?

Any personal identifiable data will be kept confidential for the duration of the study, available only to me and my research supervisor. It will be securely stored on my personal computer in a password protected file. A back-up file will be maintained on my personal external hard drive for the duration of the study. The findings and anonymised extracts from the interviews will be published as per the following point.

What will happen to the results?

The results will be presented in the thesis. They will be seen by my supervisor, a second marker and the external examiner. The thesis may be read by future students on the course. The study may be published in a research journal.

What are the possible disadvantages of taking part?

I don't envisage any negative consequences for you in taking part. As part of the interview and or focus group session, we will establish the professional boundaries of my role as an interviewer.

Any further queries? If you need any further information, you can contact me as follows:

Email: keaneyaoife@yahoo.com Mobile: 086-22028xx

If you agree to take part in the study, please sign the consent form overleaf.

APPENDIX B

National College of Ireland

CONSENT FORM

I..agree to participate in Aoife Keaney's research study entitled "Generation Y: Job Expectations and Career Anchors in Post-Brexit Ireland"

Tick to agree	
☐	- The purpose and nature of the study has been explained to me in writing.
☐	- I am participating voluntarily.
☐	I give permission for my interview with Aoife Keaney to be audio-recorded.
☐	- I understand that I can withdraw from the study, without repercussions, at any time, whether before it starts or while I am participating.
☐	I understand that I can withdraw permission to use the data within two weeks of the interview, in which case the material will be deleted.
☐	- I understand that anonymity will be ensured in the write-up by disguising my identity.
☐	- I understand that disguised extracts from my interview may be quoted in the thesis and any subsequent publications.
☐	- I understand the role and responsibilities of both Interviewer and Interviewee in the interview process.

Signed: ……………………………………. Date: _____ _____

PRINT NAME: …………………………………

APPENDIX C

Career Anchors

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1. Technical Functional	Your primary concern is to exercise your talents and skills in your particular technical or functional area. You feel most successful when you are recognized as an expert and are given challenging work rather than being given promotions and raises, although these are important.
2. Managerial	Your primary concern is to integrate the efforts of others and to be fully accountable for results and to tie together different functions in an organization. You welcome the opportunity to make decisions, to direct and coordinate work and to influence others.
3. Autonomy / Independence	Your primary concern is with freeing yourself from organizational rules and restrictions in favour of determining the nature of your work without significant direction from others. You enjoy being on your own and setting your own pace, schedule, lifestyle and work habits.
4. Security / Stability	Your primary concern is to stabilize your career so that you can feel safe and secure or that future events will be predictable. A long term career, geographic stability, good job benefits, basic job security and community involvement are very important to you.
5. Service / Dedication	Your primary concern is to achieve some value (e.g. make the world a better place to live; improve harmony among people; help others, etc.). You tend to be more oriented to the value of your work than to the actual talents or areas of competence involved.
6. Pure Challenge	Your primary concern is to solve unsolvable problems, to win out over tough opponents or to surmount difficult obstacles. The process of winning is most central to you rather than a particular field or skill area.
7. Life Style Integration	Your primary concern is to make all the major sectors of your life work together into an integrated whole. You do not want to have to choose between family, career or self-development. You want a well-balanced life style.
8. Entrepreneurship	Your primary concern is to create something new or different – product or service. You are willing to take risks without knowing the outcome. You have a desire for personal prominence in whatever is accomplished.

APPENDIX D

Some Examples of Organisational Career Management (OCM) Practices

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- In-house training and external seminars/workshops
- Counselling/career development
- Programmes - development programs discussions provided by supervisors/line managers
- Tuition reimbursement
- Counselling/career development discussions involving personnel staff Interview process (organisational potential assessment process)
- Job assignments
- Internal placement systems
- Replacement/succession planning
- Job posting
- Skills inventories/skills audits
- Mentoring systems
- Replacement/succession
- Job enrichment/job redesign
- Supervisor training in career discussions
- Assessment centre
- Other ways of identifying management potential
- Dual ladder
- Posting regarding internal job openings
- Appraisal committees
- Formal education as part of career development
- Written personal career planning for employees
- Retirement preparation programmes

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APPENDIX E

Job Expectations and Career Anchors in Post-Brexit Ireland (Interview Analysis)

Job Expectations	**Career Progression** "expand my knowledge, skills, and competencies to be the best that I can be" (P2) "opportunity to develop and grow within a company" (P3) "I want to expand my knowledge, skills, and competencies to be the best that I can be" (P4) "If career development was guaranteed then I would be happy to take a pay cut" (P1) **Flexibility** "allows me to work from home" (P5) "have the freedom to choose my start and finish times" (P1) "my relationship with my manager is stronger and it shows how we respect one another" (P7) "flexible working hours are very important to me as I think it's important to have an equal work-life balance" (P1) I feel I am more valued as an employee when my supervisor/manager allows me to pick and choose my start and finish times" (P3) **Pay/salary & contract types** "I would choose a permanent position to ensure stability for my future" (P2) "good salary and salary increase each year" (P3) "A stable contract swaying more towards permanency" (P3) **Reputation of the company** "A successful growing company may have more opportunities for promotion" (P5) "have more money to spend on staff training" (P3) "a good reputation for employee development" (P6) "provides adequate support to assist employee development" (P1) "I would always look at Great Place to Work Survey and Glassdoor reviews to see how the company is viewed from the perspective of employees and former employees" (P2) **Benefits** "gym membership, dental, health insurance, maternity, sick pay" (P4) "Health insurance, maternity leave, flexi-time, gym memberships, travel opportunities, and bonuses relative to the role type" (P7)
Career Anchors	**Security/Stability** "Job security brings financial stability and career stability" (P4) "By having a permanent job and a set salary puts my mind at ease and having this stability in my career gives me more time to focus on developing my skills and abilities in my job" (P6) "It allows me to plan ahead for my future and to predict cash flow budgets and savings" (P5) "Living in Dublin with the high rent prices means that you need to have a comfortable and stable salary in order to survive, therefore having a secure contract and salary means a lot when choosing a career/job" (P2) **Autonomy** "I don't like to be micromanaged, I like to prioritise my own tasks myself and manage my own workload" (P3) "I'm only kicking off my career now but down the line, my goal is to be and expert in my profession, leading a role of independence, working on my own terms and at my own pace" (P7) "I like having the opportunity to get involved in other projects ad find my own way of doing things" (P2) **Lifestyle Integration** "I believe it is important in order to achieve an equal work-life balance" (P4) **Technical/Functional** "The title of the job would affect my decision as I want to be recognised as an expert after studying for years to get my title. I want to be able to use the skills and knowledge I gained throughout study and be recognised as a professional" (P6) "I want to work harder and put more effort in which in turn I would hope to climb the ladder" (P1) **Service Dedication** "I get job satisfaction by achieving results and making a difference in my job" (P6) **Pure Challenge** "If my future job didn't allow me to be challenged, I would get bored easily and be dissatisfied" (P5)
Work-life balance	"I would say I work to live not live to work" (P1) "I am very focused on my work during my work hours, but once 6pm comes, I leave my work at the door and live my life" (P4) "if you can't get work done in your working day, there is no prioritisation" (P3) "If your company respects the fact that your job might not necessarily be your life, then you've got the right balance" (P6) "I believe that it is very important to have a right work-life balance. If work starts to take over your everyday life, it can have very negative effects on your health, it can put you under a lot of very undue stress and pressure which can have very significant side effects (P5)

Career Development	"I'm always thinking about the next step in my career and what I need to do to get there, whether it be shadowing that role etc."(P4) I set out achievable targets every 6 months that will help guide me to develop my career" (P3)
	If I put in the effort to develop my career now while I'm young, it will open many managerial opportunities for me in the future and that is where my goal is at. I feel this ties back in with the security/stability anchor; if I work hard and progress within the company I'm working for, it will result in a stable career which will allow me time to then plan my W/L balance" (P3) "When I first came out of college, career development was certainly the most important thing for me as I have had to immigrate to Australia and England to further progress my career. I have worked very hard and sacrificed a lot to develop my skills and experience that I have today" (P7)
	"I have worked in a global company for 4 years, I have put in every effort for career progression including a management programme, T&D for new recruits and constant on the floor training! (P6) "I always want to learn and keep progressing within a company. I seek opportunity to get extra training and courses that may help improve my skills and technical knowledge" (P2)
What is a career?	"Working in a chosen lifelong profession which was gained through studying and training hard to achieve the formal qualifications required to do the job" (P1) "getting the opportunity to grow and develop within a chosen profession and to constantly better your skills" (P5) "It is a future plan after education where one has progressed from the bottom to the top of the career ladder" (P7) "working in an area of great interest with opportunities for progression. Growing each day and enjoying the different aspects of the journey" (P4) "setting of goals for yourself and working hard to achieve those goals over a significant period of time, and while these goals might change over the course of your career, as long as you are working hard towards a goal, you still have a career" (P2)
Retaining Gen Y	**T&D** "This shows an employee that they are valued, it shows that the employer wants to see their employees thrive to do their best" (P3) "When taking on graduates, offer them part-time diplomas in Professional Competence as this will improve employees' knowledge and education which will also make the employee feel valued and motivate them to work hard in order to progress up the ladder" (P1)
	Clear promotion pathways "Employers need to invest in developing individuals in order to maintain their motivation and to make employees feel important within the organisation" (P1) "they are not just a number" (P6)
	Match benefits "Employers need to pay employees what they're worth" (P5) "give them opportunities, allow them to upskill. Google, Facebook and Twitter provide a good environment" (P3) "offer them gym membership, pool tables, free food. People love that" (P6)
	Performance Reviews and Awards "when employees meet targets and deadline, it is important to reward them and to show appreciation with small bonuses" (P2) "employers need to introduce incentives and rewards, show their employees they're valued" (P4), "show appreciation with small bonus' or even announcing it at the next sales meeting" (P5)
	Talent Management "this practice is best as it will ensure the right fit person is selected for the job, which will lead to better productivity" (P7)
OCM practices?	"In-house training and external seminars can help develop new skills and knowledge within a company" (P4) "Tuition reimbursement is also very important" (P2)
	"Mentoring and career development are key as they allow you to know that there is hope to progress and move within a company" (P6)
	"development programmes provided by line managers will provide the necessary opportunities to thrive and grow in your career within a company" (P1)

Job Expectations and Career Anchors in Post-Brexit Ireland (Focus Group Analysis)

Job Expectations	**T&D** "I'd expect a training programme to be in place" "potential exposure I would get to different aspects of the business" "adequate resources for me to carry out my duties to a high standard" **Career progression** "opportunities to progress and grow within the company" "new software and greater responsibilities" "I wouldn't work in a position/company where there was minimal opportunities to advance" "I would expect various training types to potentially move up the ladder" "I'd expect to be rewarded properly for my contributions for example pay increases" "level of autonomy" **Employee benefits** "flexi-time, gym membership, pension contributions" "a competitive salary and sociable hours" "salary, hourly, overtime" **Remuneration compare to similar companies** "is it as good as similar companies I could possibly work for" "competitive salaries" **Company reputation** "where is the company situated in the marketplace?" **Age profile** "is there a good mix, could I have a social life with work?"
Career Anchors	**Technical/functional** "happiest if I felt I was improving and progressing my work" "challenging work would give me a sense of achievement" "because this is what I trained for, I want to be recognised as an expert" "I like to be trusted to make my own decisions and to complete more challenging and complex tasks" "I thrive off being able to apply my set of skills to a situation to improve outcomes and to be recognised for it" **Lifestyle integration** "work does not consume a person's life" "there is still time for sports/activities, family and friends" **Entrepreneurship** "share my ideas, make decisions and make an impact in the industry" **Autonomy** "gives me a great sense of achievement" "this makes me feel trusted, respected and valued and that the work I am doing is valuable and worthwhile" **Service/dedication** "I'm always trying to figure out where I can add value" "I'm always looking for opportunities to get involved in projects/groups where I feel a difference can be made" "my ability to share my ideas, make decisions and make an impact in the industry without being micro-managed"
Work-life balance	"To achieve optimal work-life balance requires working hard during work hours to ensure that work doesn't spill into your personal life" "just detach completely from work and get satisfaction from other areas" "undertaking working roles during working hours, once you are home, you should not have to worry or think about work related matters" "make time for activities outside work and to have free time" "having time for family and friends" "it's just a matter of priorities, there's plenty of hours in the day to do it all if you're willing to sacrifice some sleep and stay organised" "I believe that work-life balance is the key to your own success, over working causes stress and it is not an achievable way to succeed or develop within any role"
Career Development	"I wouldn't work somewhere if there wasn't scope for growth/development" "Career development is very important to me as I aspire to become a manager in my field of work one day" "I do not feel comfortable maintaining a similar responsibility because developing my career gives me more purpose and drive to succeed" "because I am young I am willing to sacrifice some of my social life I order to climb the ladder but I think as I get older, I will definitely value work-life balance" "I am most likely to put career development ahead of my work-life balance until I secure more senior positions" "once I have advanced my career I would hope to place a greater emphasis on my family/personal life"
What is a career?	"Is the outlet we have to showcase and put specific skills we possess to good use" "finding that job in life which allows you to make best use of the skills you have and shouldn't feel like a chore day in day out" "should allow you to grow professionally, provide structure and meaning to work" "continued development" "area of work a person has an interest in and wishes to learn more about while progressing in that area" "gives you enjoyment and a good quality of life" "a job through which you can advance and better yourself and feel senses of accomplishment and achievement"

	"a life-long ladder in which you continuously climb and throughout which your duties and responsibilities continuously change until you reach your highest level of expertise"
Retaining Gen Y	**T&D** "having structured and ongoing training opportunities" "proving a company is innovative at the forefront of their field" "staff feel adequately educated to fulfil their roles" "organisations need to provide courses and training e.g. excel to help them develop their skills which would ultimately benefit the company as employees would become more efficient at their job" **Career Progression opportunities** "organisations need to provide opportunities for promotion and supervisory roles for senior staff to ensure they feel valued and have opportunities to advance their career within the organisation rather than having to change organisations in order to advance" "having structured and ongoing training opportunities in place to allow career progression" "having 1-2-1s with employees to identify what their career progression is and what it is they want for their career" **Recognition** "creating a culture of nurturing and recognising good work and effort to ensure morale remains high" **Team bonding** "organising team bonding sessions to encourage co-workers to get to know each other and get on with one another" **Unnecessary recruitment processes** "too time consuming and would turn me off applying for many positions" "psychometric tests are not a fair way of judging a person's suitability for a job" "more accurate descriptions of what the job would entail would help candidates know whether the job is suitable for them"
OCM practices?	Yes "I feel that OCM practices would make me feel like a valued and trusted member of staff and thus motivate me to work hard and remain within that organisation" "structure and defined processes make it clear what you can and can't do within your job role" "onsite training would help me learn more about my career" "development programmes/mentoring would give employees an idea of the work managers do" These practices will be of great benefit for people to be able to fully understand whether a company will be able to help them achieve their career goals or will they ultimately be wasting time trying to achieve career goals in an organisation that they have no realistic chance of achieving" "I left my previous role as I felt I had gained everything I could from that job in terms of experience and there were no further opportunities for me to develop. I was provided with training but ultimately due to feeling less appreciated, financially in terms of salary and acknowledgement of good work carried out" "career development courses would lead to a promotion which would increase productivity within a company" "tuition reimbursement would make employees feel valued for the time they have spent enriching their skills and knowledge" "tuition reimbursement takes a huge financial risk out of exploring your career" "training obviously helps you progress" "training and development is hugely important to me in helping me achieve my career goals of advancing and furthering my career and to achieve greater levels of expertise" "career development/mentoring can lead you down alternative specialised routes within your field" "Job assignments are key as if you are stuck doing similar tasks, you will never progress and therefore never 'explore'" "job assignments will enhance your ability and is a way to further grow and show your importance in a company"