A Qualitative Investigation into the Implications on Human Resource Management Retention Strategies as Generation Z Enter the Workplace.

by
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Abstract

The aim of this research was to investigate suitable Generation Z retention strategies and initiatives for Company A. Generation Z are approximately twenty-four years old and are beginning to hold entry level positions in organisations. Due to their relatively new entry to the workforce limited studies have been completed with regards to gaining an in-depth understanding on how this generation will impact organisational retention strategies and initiatives.

A single descriptive case study was used for this study with research conducted through qualitative methods. Data were collected using seven semi-structured interviews with employees of Company A. Interview participants were born in 1995 or 1996. These have been identified as the Generation Z cohort in the organisation. The researcher posed questions which were flexible and open-ended with the aim of gaining a comprehensive insight into Generation Z and their attitudes, expectations, beliefs and opinions on the workplace with the aim of Company A adapting and implementing HRM retention initiatives.

Interview data were analysed through the use of thematic analysis which permits new and existing themes to surface from the qualitative data. Analysis identified a number of key themes such as the importance of goal setting among this generation, high intrinsic motivation, desire to travel and the paramountcy of managerial support in the workplace. Themes were expressed and analysed with reference to the primary and secondary data gathered as part of this research study.

The researcher provided recommendations for Company A on altering and/or implementing retention initiatives for Generation Z. It is anticipated that the evidence accumulated will help guide and shape HRM techniques and strategies used by Company A when working with Generation Z presently and in the future. By understanding Generation Z further, new retention initiatives can be designed and implemented to help reduce this generation's turnover rate. This study is limited by the use of a single case study and sample size. However, this research study supplies the foundation for further research into Generation Z and their impact on HRM retention initiatives.

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List of Abbreviations;

HRM – Human Resource Management

HR – Human Resources

CSR – Corporate Social Responsibility

JCM – Job Characteristics Model

EAP – Employee Assistance Programme

Chapter One - Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Academics are recognising that businesses may be facing a multigenerational issue with four different generations of employees active in the workplace (Iorgulescu, 2016). As new generations enter the workforce they are typically accompanied by comparisons to previous generations, including expectations and generalisations of how this new generation may disrupt the workforce. Born from 1995 to 2015 (Panwar and Mehta, 2019) Generation Z have recently completed their college education. Presently the oldest members of Generation Z are approximately twenty-four years old and are beginning to hold entry level positions in industry or business.

Due to Generation Z's new entry to the workforce limited research has been completed on the impact this generation will have on organisational retention strategies and initiatives. Research completed to date has mainly been quantitative in nature, typically illustrating numerical statistics (Kick, Contacos-Sawyer and Thomas, 2015). Notably a large amount of the research previously completed surrounds the relationship of Generation Z with social media usage rather than the impact they have on the workplace. The phenomenon of the retention of a generation, particularly among Generation Z, requires exploring due its growing relevance within organisations.

1.2 Background and Context to Study

This aim of this research study is to develop an understanding of Generation Z with the primary focus on the retention of this generation in the workplace. The organisation which is the focus of this research study will be named Company A for the purpose of this research. Company A has offices across the globe employing over 2,700 people. This research will focus specifically on employees in Company A born in 1995 or 1996. These have been identified as the Generation Z cohort in the organisation. Company A has traditionally struggled

to retain the millennial generation over the last five years and are beginning to see a number of employees from Generation Z disengage and resign from their roles. As this generation are only beginning to enter the workforce there are limited studies on retaining Generation Z. However, research completed to date is displaying an unsettling scenario for employers in which it is indicated that Generation Z have no long term career plan, not only with one employer but even in one sector (Jones, Chauhan and Torabian, 2019) and research has found that 27 percent of this generation believe that they should only stay with their first employer for one year (Addeco, 2015). These findings illustrate the importance of employers becoming proactive in their approach to Generation Z retention by altering and/or implementing retention initiatives such as the type training provided, effective performance management and efficient career progression.

This research will be unique in the fact that it will use qualitative methods, rather than the quantitative methods typically used, to enable a comprehensive understanding of Generation Z's experience in the workplace. Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with Generation Z employees in Company A. To date no study has explicitly endeavoured to investigate the implications on HRM retention strategies as Generation Z enter the workplace. This research is tasked with discovering the factors which encourage and motivates Generation Z to remain in an organisation in order for the leaders of the company to develop retention strategies which will aid the organisation in recruiting, developing and retaining employees of the future.

1.3 Overview of the Research Project Structure

This research study will contain seven chapters.

Chapter One: Introduces the topic of the research and provides an outline of the background and context of the study. It briefly outlines the objectives of the study and provides rationale for the research.
Chapter Two: Provides an in-depth analysis of recent literature including academic articles, books, podcasts, journals and reports on Generation Z. This

chapter will discuss important characteristics of Generation Z and how they affect the retention of this generation in the workplace.

Chapter Three: Provides a breakdown of the research question and the aims and objectives of this research study.

Chapter Four: Discusses the methodological approach undertaken by the researcher in order to collect the research data.

Chapter Five: The findings of this research study are outlined in this chapter.

Chapter Six: Provides a discussion of the findings presented in chapter five in the context of the broader literature.

Chapter Seven: This chapter comprises of the conclusions to this study and provides recommendations to Company A in relation to implementing and altering retention strategies for Generation Z.
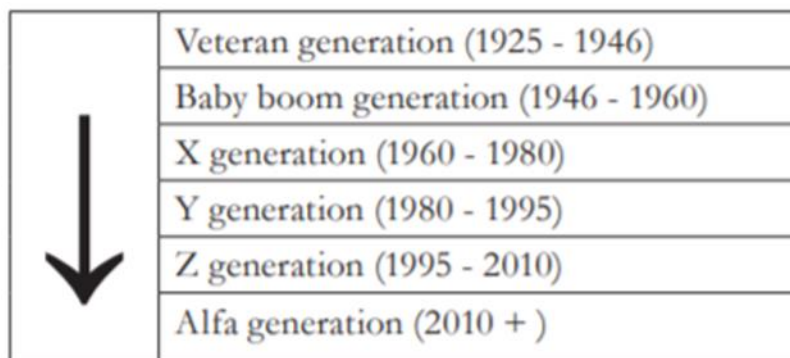
1.4 Rationale for Research from a HRM Perspective

The requirements which exist when a new generation enters the workforce change traditional HRM activities and practices wholly (Bencsik, Horvath-Csikos and Juhasz, 2016). Organisations are recognising that generation gaps can contribute to conflicts and communication barriers. Not recognising the impact generation gaps can have on a business may cause the organisation to have a delayed response to new trends and opportunities (Desai and Lele, 2017). Naim and Lenka (2018) discuss the importance of organisations becoming responsive to generational characteristics which exist in the workplace and to develop generation-specific approaches to managing talent. Organisations will likely need to alter their management styles, performance review methods, aspects of their organisational culture and other elements in a bid to retain Generation Z. This research aims to add to the body of literature by producing a qualitative insight into Generation Z employees. The outcomes of this research will help Company A with regards to informing and/or adjusting their approach to retaining Generation Z in the workplace.

Chapter Two - Literature Review

2.1 Generations in the Workplace

Academics have recognised that businesses are facing a problem that they have not faced before as four different generations of employees are currently active on the labour market (Iorgulescu, 2016). These generations include Baby Boomers, Generation X, Generation Y and now Generation Z and can be seen in Figure 1.

↓	Veteran generation (1925 - 1946)
	Baby boom generation (1946 - 1960)
	X generation (1960 - 1980)
	Y generation (1980 - 1995)
	Z generation (1995 - 2010)
	Alfa generation (2010 +)

Figure 1. Timeline of generations (Bencsik *et al.,* 2016)

The concept of generation can be defined as a group that experiences pivotal events at the same birth year and shares the critical developments which occur within these experiences (Kupperschmidt, 2006). Literature can often use differing names for describing the grouping of generations and their time-categorisation may be also defined in a different manner (Bencsik *et al.,* 2016). There are different viewpoints as to when Generation Z is said to be formed. Bencsik, Juhasz and Machova (2017) state that members of this generation were born after 1996. However, there are authors who suggest the year 2000 as the beginning point for Generation Z (Iorgulescu, 2016). Panwar and Mehta (2019) describe Generation Z as being born between 1995 and 2015. For the purpose of this study Generation Z will be defined as being born from 1995 due to generational experts generally indicting the start year of Generation Z at 1995 (KPMG, 2018).

There are criticisms of generational research. The span of years which incorporate any one generation is still a significant source of discord among authors and researchers (Desai and Lele, 2017). Researchers have established issues with the large time spans that are associated with generational groups and talks regarding shortening the time spans occur (Parry and Urwin, 2011). Lyons and Kuron (2014) found that while their research unveiled generation differences in certain aspects such as career expectations, work values, attitudes and leadership, evidence for other variables has been weak and inconsistent.

In a review of arguments for and against generational research Rudolph and Zacher (2018) discuss how critics frequently propose that the fixation on generational differences is more emblematic of a "management fad" rather than an empirical phenomenon. Furthermore, there are major disparities with regards to the methodologies used and how findings are reported in generational research, often making it challenging to reach clear and decisive conclusions from the research (Lyons and Kuron, 2014).

Arguments in favour of generational differences in the workplace regularly speak of the observation that both employees and the workplace are changing at a swift pace, which critics find difficult to refute (Rudolph and Zacher, 2018). Twenge (2010) discovered generational differences in a number of work values such as work ethic. Lyons, Schweitzer and Ng (2015) found generational differences in career mobility habits, finding that younger generations have greater job and organisational mobility. Advocates of generational differences have spoken about how generational categories are helpful when attempting to understand how sociocultural phenomena manifest as associated age differences which can influence behaviours at a personal level (Rudolph and Zacher, 2018). Desai and Lele (2017) discuss how the majority of authors tend to agree that within any given generation that there will be a significant deal of variance regarding the differentiating characteristics which exist.

2.2 Generational Retention

The retention of employees can be encapsulated as the means through which employees are encouraged to stay with a company for as long as possible (Bussin, 2018). Research indicates that employee's typically leave an organisation for reasons such as friction with colleagues, unsatisfactory remuneration, lack of career development, absence of motivation, family requirements and lack of employee engagement (Bussin, 2018). Turnover can be costly for organisations. A significant number of these costs relate to administering the resignation, covering of the role throughout the period of the vacancy, induction training for new hire, recruitment and selection costs, the relative productivity of the new hire during their initial first weeks and/or months along with that of resignees productivity during their notice period (CIPD, 2019).

Employee motivations for remaining with an organisation for a significant period have changed throughout the years. This may be related to the developing trends of preferences and expectations which are altered as both culture and worker demands transform (Lanier, 2017). The Veteran Generation generally worked to gain tenure in their respective organisations and endeavoured to construct legacies for themselves (Lancaster and Stillman, 2002). The Baby Boom Generation's career path can be viewed as more diverse than that of the Mature Generation. The Baby Boom Generation worked towards the aim of creating "stellar careers" capitalising on the expansion of the economy (Lancaster and Stillman, 2002). Generation X amassed the reputation as "job-hoppers", switching employers regularly with the aim of gaining new skills in an attempt to pursue new opportunities (Lancaster and Stillman, 2002). Lyons *et al*. (2015) found in a study on Millennials that they had approximately twice as many job moves per year in comparison to Generation X, approximately three times as many as the Baby Boom generation and 4.5 times as many moves as the Veteran Generation. Research conducted by Hoffman (2018) provided a number of key reasons as to why Millennials leave their current employment such as the absence of flexibility, substandard company atmosphere, dearth of meaningful work and insufficient learning and development opportunities.

Studies on the level of Generation Z turnover in organisations are not yet existent as this generation have only been active in the workplace for a limited number of years, for some it is their first year in full time employment post-graduation. Future predictors of Generation Z's length of time with a single organisation are painting a problematic picture for business leaders. Generation Z are said to have no solid notion of a long term career plan with one employer or even in one sector (Jones *et al.,* 2019). Addeco (2015) found that Generation Z intend to stay three years (or less) in their first employment with 27 percent of those surveyed voicing that they should remain with their first employer for one year only. Findings from this study also uncovered that 92 percent of Generation Z surveyed believed they would likely have between one and four jobs throughout their career.

Lyons *et al.* (2012) found that employers should particularly focus retention efforts on employees aged between 20 and 24 along with ages 30 and 34. Rather than speculate that these employees are pursuing long-term efforts with an organisation, employers should instead consider these ages brackets as "high risk" and adjust engagement and satisfaction programmes as such to prevent turnover and maximise productivity (Lyons *et al.,* 2012). In order to adjust engagement and satisfaction programmes to accommodate Generation Z it is critical to develop an understanding of this generations traits, attitudes, behaviours, use of technology and tools used in everyday life and in work.

2.3 Understanding Generation Z

2.3.1 Technology

For Generation Z, technology is not a transformational phenomenon, instead it is a routine and intrinsic part of everyday life (Pearson, 2018). Generation Z is also recognised by academics as "generation me" and "net generation or digital natives" (Iorgulescu, 2016). Generation Z are not wary of continuous change, with the internet used to solve problems (Bencsik *et al.,* 2017). Researchers recently concluded that Generation Z college students have a heavy reliance on social media sites to retain previously existing relationships that were originally

created offline, although the majority of their time on these sites is spent reading updates which friends post, with minimal two-way interaction (Kick *et al.,* 2015). There are positive and negative aspects of the internet which help to shape this generations way of thinking. For Generation Z the internet has enabled them to become immersed in social issues, encouraging engagement and interest regarding topics such as climate change and other worldwide issues. On the darker side of the internet issues such as identity theft, online bullying and privacy concerns have encouraged this generation to treat information security as a focal point (Grow and Yang, 2018).

2.3.2 Communication Skills

Results from a survey on Irish Generation Z college-aged students found that they are apprehensive about their capability to communicate in person and in developing functional off-line relationships (Crowley-Henry, Coogan and Domijan, 2020). This survey also highlighted that this generation desire to communicate face to face as they are aware it is needed for the workplace, however, they are unsure how to do it effectively. Many employers are noticing that newer generations to the workforce are more inclined to and comfortable in sending emails instead of communicating via the telephone or face to face (Kick *et al.,* 2015). However, Jones *et al.* (2019) found that for matters of importance many Generation Z employees prefer face-to-face interactions rather than online.

Irish educators and business leaders have raised concerns in relation to Generation Z's shortage of resilience and conversational skills along with other cognitive and social skills. An example Crowley-Henry *et al.* (2020) provided was that of break times, traditionally these were used for social interactions which help to build team unity and share tacit knowledge but now they are used as opportunities to check digital devices.

2.3.3 Working Style

Generation Z appreciate a conversation, disliked being lectured and are innate collaborators (Desai and Lele, 2017). A study found that despite the workplace

growing increasingly digital, over 90 percent of Generation Z would choose to have a human component to their teams (EY, 2018). This generation dislike acute formalities and workplace commitment (Bencsik *et al.,* 2017). Generation Z are money-conscious, individualistic and entrepreneurial entry hires (Jones *et al.,* 2019). This generation were born and lived through the Recession as children. Due to this they developed financially-focused and entrepreneurial attitudes (Miller, 2018).

Jones *et al.* (2019) observed a sample of employees from different generations in order to acquire an understanding into the differing attitudes that exist towards workplace behaviour. From discussion with the management participants (mainly baby boomers) they found that the management participants held the view that Generation Z employees time management and prioritisation skills are lacking as they did not view them making any to-do lists and believed that they were continually distracted by not only their phones but by their smart watches.

2.4 Strategies for Generation Z Retention

2.4.1 Intrinsic, Extrinsic and Achievement Motivation

Employee motivation is central to the current and future success of a business. It is important to consider the affect that both monetary and non-monetary factors have on the motivations of Generation Z in the workplace. There has been extensive organisational research regarding the positive work outcomes associated with experiencing meaningfulness at work. Some of the most prominent research appears from the Job Characteristics Model (Weeks and Schaffert, 2019). Hackman and Oldham (1976) designed the JCM which promotes the idea that it is actually the task itself which is central to motivating employees. A monotonous job will not encourage employee motivation, whereas an exigent role will heighten motivation. The model forecasts that the five foundation job characteristics which are task identity, task significance, skill variety, feedback and autonomy influence three critical psychological states. High levels of motivation are linked with experiencing three critical psychological states which are the meaningfulness of the work, the level of

experienced responsibility for the end result of the work, and the knowledge of the outcome of the work completed (Hackman and Oldham, 1976). In turn these critical psychological states influence a quantity of individual and work outcomes such as general job satisfaction, personal work motivation and decrease in turnover (DeVaro, Li and Brookshire, 2007).

Motivation can stem from intrinsic or extrinsic origins. Intrinsic motivation comes from doing the work itself. Roles that are challenging and interesting tend to lead to intrinsic motivation as they successfully make use of an individual's abilities and skills (Locke and Schattke, 2019). Motivation which is intrinsic in nature values personal growth, purposeful relationships and contributing inputs, as these generate an increased level of contentment (Mahmoud *et al.,* 2020). In the workplace this may include enjoying a specific task or certain kinds of work, for example analysing or problem solving (Locke and Schattke, 2019). While research on Generation Z is still growing, early reports indicate that this generation are intrinsically motivated. A survey of over 400 college-aged Generation Z students found that this generation want to work. In fact, eighty percent stated they would choose to work even if they had sufficient money and means to live as they would choose for the reminder of their lives. This suggests that the motivation to work is not primarily extrinsically based, but intrinsically based (Crowley-Henry *et al.,* 2020). Locke and Schattke (2019) define extrinsic motivation as a means-end relationship which encompasses taking action to get future value or to avoid receiving future disvalue. While studies on this generation are showing that they are mainly intrinsically motivated this may not be the case when searching for a role. Mondres (2019) discuss how Generation Z principally place importance on a role that pays well (72 percent), motivates them (64 percent) and comes with good benefits (62 percent).

Along with the widely recognised intrinsic and extrinsic realms of motivation, Locke and Schattke (2019) argue that a third form of motivation called achievement motivation should be added to the discussion. Achievement motivation was pioneered by McClelland in the 1950's (McClelland, Atkinson, Clark, & Lowell, 1953). It means wanting to do well. Locke and Schattke (2019) discuss how achievement motivation may be conceptualised on differing levels.

They highlight how achievement motivation is not the participating in or the gratification of the activity performed in particular but rather it means doing well and/or improved performance than previously. It may be conceptualised on different levels as if improvement occurs it may be gratifying, however, the activity which brings about improvement may or may not be enjoyed (Locke and Schattke, 2019). Organisations can encourage achievement motivation and entrepreneurial spirit by providing opportunities to foster innovation and take project ownership. Generation Z crave assorted and entrepreneurial opportunities along with the assurance of stable employment (Gomez *et al.,* 2019).

2.4.1.1 Two-Factor Theory

Herzberg, Mausner and Snyderman (1959) published the two-factor theory and influenced by Maslow's hierarchy of needs they developed the motivation-hygiene theory. This theory can be viewed as one of the bases for retention theory as it discusses how there are two factors which organisations can alter to change motivation in the workplace.

Herzberg *et al.* (1959) argued that satisfaction and dissatisfaction are not part of the same dimension. Rather, Herzberg contended that the opposite of satisfaction is no satisfaction, not dissatisfaction. Similarly, the opposite of dissatisfaction is no dissatisfaction, rather than no satisfaction. Based on this theory, a set of factors which are connected to the feeling of satisfaction are referred to as motivators. In addition to this, another set of factors, referred to as hygiene factors are connected to the feeling of dissatisfaction (Hur, 2018). Motivators are associated with the work itself such as responsibility, achievement and development opportunities. Hygiene factors are connected to the working environment such as salary, benefits and organisational policies (Herzberg *et al.,* 1959). Central to this theory is what differentiates motivation and hygiene factors. Herzberg spoke of how motivation factors are intrinsic to the job and described hygiene factors as extrinsic. Motivational factors work to increase and enhance job satisfaction and hygiene factors attempt to reduce job dissatisfaction.

Herzberg (1987) reviewed the factors which are associated with causing job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction. Samples of 1,685 employees illustrates how motivators may be the dominant cause of satisfaction with hygiene factors being the primary factors which cause unhappiness on the job.
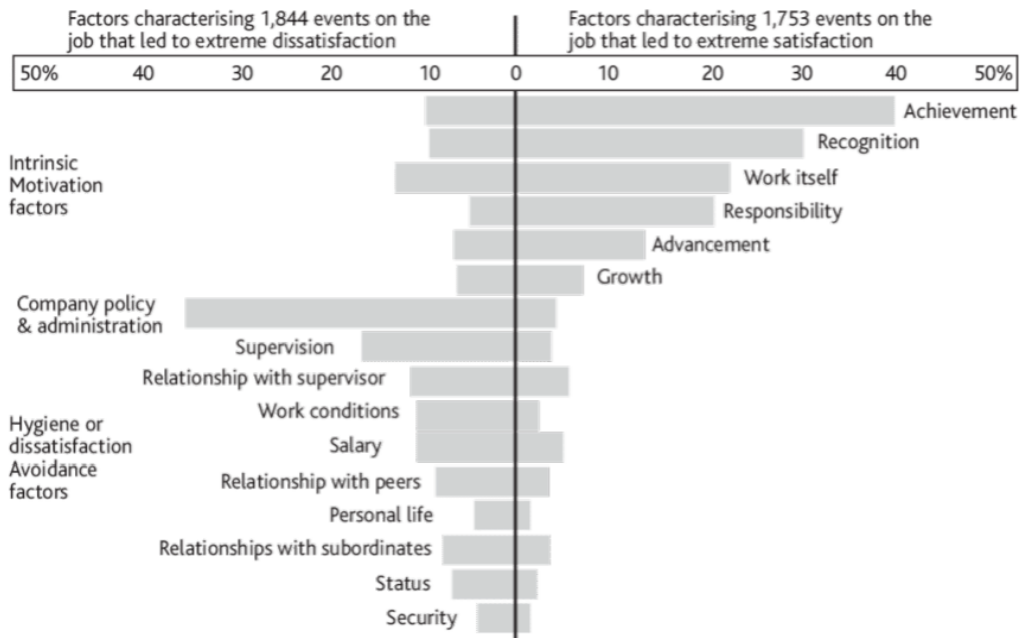
Figure 2. Factors affecting job attributes as reported in 12 investigations (Herzberg, 1987)

It became a highly debated area of management theory, mainly due to the insistence of a frail link between job satisfaction and financial rewards (Bassett-Jones and Llyod, 2005). Critics have argued that money can motivate and that Herzberg's results could be associated with a range of factors. Furnham, Ford and Ferrari (1999) contend that employees will have differing motivators which stem from their personality and found that extroverts in comparison to other personality types will place heavier importance on motivators such as recognition and achievement at work.

Bassett-Jones and Llyod (2005) conducted a study which revisited the work of Herzberg *et al.* (1959). The aim of this study was to examine the validity of Herzberg *et al.* (1959) research when applied present-day organisational

situations. Findings from Bassett-Jones and Lloyd (2005) research indicates that motivators linked to intrinsic drivers eclipse those related to financial stimulus. For example, if a Generation Z employee is employed by a company which has outdated policies, at the same time also working in a negative environment, as opposed to what many may think; merely providing the employee with an increase in pay will not abruptly motivate them.

This theory indicates that in order for organisations to motivate employees it is vital that intrinsic factors such as growth, recognition, achievement and responsibility are implemented. Understanding this model is important when attempting to motivate Generation Z employees in an organisation. As mentioned previously, the growing research on Generation Z is reflecting that they are intrinsically motivated and therefore it is imperative that HRM display an understanding of workplace motivators for Generation Z and create a work environment which addresses those needs.

2.4.2 Performance Management and Rewards

Efficient performance management and reward strategies for Generation Z can aid in developing and motivating this generation thus improving retention. Cascio (2014) describes performance management as an unceasing processes of identifying, evaluating, and developing employees and the aligning of their performance with the strategic goals set by the organisation. Reward strategies which are effective will have a positive outcome on employee behaviour as they incorporate extrinsic and intrinsic motivation (Bussin, 2018).

The focal point of both traditional and some contemporary methods of performance appraisals are on assessing the previous performance of the employee. Organisations such as Deloitte and IBM have discarded older methods such as the bell curve approach in favour of new performance management systems which focus on the positive development of their employees (Chillakuri, 2020). Employee development should be moved from development as an afterthought to development being central to the performance management process (Cascio, 2014).

It is important that management of Generation Z employees comprehend their need for continued feedback about their performance, however, they must ensure that micromanaging does not occur (Jones *et al.,* 2019). Generation Z are accustomed to receiving immediate feedback (Miller, 2018). Sixty percent of Generation Z would like their manager to check in with them multiple times a week and of those 40 percent would like the interaction with their manager or supervisor to be daily (The Centre for Generational Kinetics, 2018). EY (2018) found that 97 percent of Generation Z surveyed, are interested in getting feedback on a frequent basis or on completion of a large task. This generation are exceptional multitaskers, however, they can be readily distracted (Jones *et al.,* 2019). Due to their shorter attention span at work, they need bite-sized prompt feedback from their employer/supervisor. Challenges with appraising this generation may include their own limits not be recognised internally and the fact that their values and self-image are distorted (Bencsik *et al.,* 2016).

Locke and Schattke (2019) discuss how it is imperative that there are clear standards of performance which are transparent. Organisations should provide satisfactory means to attainment and provide support to the employee's skill development. Evidence from literature shows that it is individuals who provide the organisation with a sustainable competitive advantage and therefore it is imperative that the organisation invests in its employees through appropriate guidance and coaching (Chillakuri, 2020). Although intrinsic motivation is high among this generation, they seek financial rewards and value employers who are explicit with policies and procedures regarding salary increases and bonuses (Adecco, 2015). Crowley-Henry *et al.* (2020) found that this generation value both extrinsic and intrinsic rewards equally. Extrinsic rewards may include salary or benefits while intrinsic rewards may include interesting work opportunities.

2.4.3 Learning and Training

Along with performance management, an important aspect of developing employees can be seen through the learning and training opportunities provided by the organisation. Learning and development for organisations is concerned

with being aware of the current and future capability needs of the business, along with creating a learning culture which helps to drive engagement with continuous professional development (CIPD, 2020). Bussin (2018) notes that providing training and developmental opportunities typically aids with the retention of high potential employees.

For Generation Z the focus is on informal and interest based learning (Bencsik *et al.,* 2016). Generation Z are not passive learners. A report from Barnes & Noble College (2018) indicates how Generation Z principally learn by doing and have a preference for environments in which active learning can occur. Organisations should capitalise on this by combining traditional learning methods with enhanced digital opportunities. It is vital to ascertain that digital opportunities enhance the learning experience and do not slow the process. Three out of five Generation Z note that they would not use an application or website which is difficult to navigate or loads at a slow rate (Mondres, 2019). They place an emphasis on speed over accuracy, which can be linked to them growing up in a rapidly changing society (Desai and Lele, 2017).

This generation are keen to personalise their own learning experiences and in order to do so they incorporate information from a range of different materials and resources. With regards to learning new skills, 85 percent of Generation Z disclose that they frequently watch YouTube to acquire a new skill (Mondres, 2019). Generation Z respondents rated YouTube and video as their favoured methods for learning, substantially more than Generation Y (Pearsons, 2018).

Iorgulescu (2016) discusses how social media and abbreviation of language can negatively influence Generation Z. This generation will likely require different training than previous generations and graduate programmes devised by organisations should include a focus on soft skills training. Grow and Yang (2018) found in their research among Generation Z students that they believed soft skills are a necessary strength and important quality in the workplace which they will focus on. Generation Z expect training programmes to be collaborative, flexible and to provide them with the opportunity to practice what they have learned.

2.4.4 Career Progression & Leadership

It is vitally important that organisations create an environment which encourages the growth of individuals as leaders and also an environment in which senior leaders lead by example. Personal career development is vital for employee engagement and retention and should be interconnected to the objectives of the business (CIPD, 2020). Due to the lack of corporate exposure, Generation Z typically draws upon college education for acquiring leadership skills (Panwar & Mehta, 2019).

For Generation Z opportunities for advancement in an organisation are a critical component when assessing job opportunities. Two-thirds of Generation Z state that their goal in life is to hold a top position in relation to their profession (Pearson, 2018). Adecco (2015) found that Generation Z candidates are more inclined to remain with an organisation for a lengthier period if they can clearly see room for growth. Studies have suggested that the career behaviours of younger generations maintains an appetite for conventional upward mobility, but at a more rapid pace than generations previously (Lyons *et al.,* 2015). Unlike Millennials, Generation Z are more inclined to try a different role within the same organisation before looking for external opportunities (KPMG, 2018). Organisations should add additional condensed steps into the traditional career progression in an effort to appear as more desirable to younger generations as they may perceive they are progressing in the organisation at a faster rate (Lyons *et al.,* 2015). They are eager to follow a number of different career paths at one time and tend to move around within one organisations that has multiple established opportunities (KPMG, 2018).

2.4.5 Intergenerational Management

The merging of generations in the workforce has increased the need for intergenerational management to become part of current management systems (Bencsik *et al.,* 2017). Increases in the retirement age leads to three to four generations having to collaborate and work together. Generations working

together successfully will aid Generation Z in becoming more easily integrated into the business, and may lead to increased job satisfaction and thus improving retention. How generations interact, delegate work, are motivated and what expectations they hold vary across differing age groups (Jones *et al.,* 2019). Iorgulescu (2016) explains how a good mentorship programme led by more experienced generations could help consolidate this generation into the business. The concept of reverse mentoring whereby employees from Generation Z can share their knowledge and skills with more senior employees could also help to increase engagement for all generations (Iorgulescu, 2016).

The most profitable and innovative organisations of recent times have used the talent of younger generations to their advantage. Traditional industries who rely more on experience and age have found it difficult to cope with changing dynamics of the time and have had to re-evaluate and re-align their culture, mission and vision in order to meet the industries future requirements (Jones *et al.,* 2019). Management must acquire the necessary tools in order to reduce any generational differences which may exist. They must find methods which support and showcase the different strengths that exist between individuals in the workplace (Bencsik *et al.,* 2017). Jiří (2016) discusses how the rules for overcoming the generational gap include being flexible with communication systems, understanding the individual employee and encouraging positive relationships

2.5 Organisational Culture

Generation Z are the first global, most socially and technologically enabled generation to exist to date (Desai and Lele, 2017). With this comes the differing expectations that Generation Z will have when compared to previous generations with regards to how an organisations culture should be shaped.

Work life balance and workplace stability are central career goals of Generation Z (Bencsik *et al.,* 2017). In Ireland, Generation Z ideal career tends to be centred on "Lifestyle" with a focus on work-life balance which is then followed by stability and security (Crowley-Henry *et al.,* 2020). Mondres (2019) found that

47 percent of Generation Z want to be employed by a company which has a fun work environment and a work arrangement which is flexible. Tulgan (2020) found that in a survey of over 4000 individuals from Generation Z that two of the most important factors to take into account when considering a role is that of supportive leadership and positive relationships in the workplace.

A diverse and inclusive workplace is an expectation of Generation Z. The use of technology and social media has provided this generation with a wider connection to people from other cultures, different circumstances and backgrounds. Pearson (2018) found that 75 percent of Generation Z reported that they have friends that come from diverse backgrounds, beliefs and races, in comparison to 63 percent of Millennials. For Generation Z diversity is important through numerous dimensions, it is not just confined to gender and race, but also linked to orientation and identity (Gomez *et al.,* 2019). EY (2018) found that 63 percent of Generation Z believe that when working in a team it is critical to work with individuals with differing educational and skill levels, with an additional 20 percent advocating that having people on a team from different ethnicity and origins is the most vital factor. Lanier (2017) describes Generation Z as being motivated by a cultural ethos of social justice. Opinions and views on organisations are not merely based on the quality of their services or products but rather on the organisations ethics and social impact (Gomez *et al.,* 2019). This generation is altruistic with 60 percent of respondents willing to help people who are less fortunate (Pearson, 2018).

Organisations which have a learning and knowledge sharing culture benefit the new generations entering the workforce. Sarkees and Hulland (2008) describe the characteristics of the culture of a learning company. These characteristics are: trust, individual and common purposes, systems view, teamwork, creativity, self-control, innovative atmosphere, independence and continuous learning. Bencsik *et al.* (2016) discuss the importance of establishing trust in order for a more flexible form of knowledge sharing to follow. In generational research the concept of trust and knowledge sharing is important as it feeds directly into the culture of an organisation. Trust is a multi-level occurrence tied to the beliefs, norms and values of a company (Bencsik and Machova, 2016). Each generation

will have their own values and it is vital that management discover how to combine knowledge from different generations as to benefit the employees and organisation. How willing and ready individuals are to share knowledge can change in line with culture changes, characteristics of specific age group and the effects of the environment surrounding individuals (Bencsik and Machova, 2016). HR plays a fundamental role in aiding the organisation in creating a successful culture, sharing knowledge and building trust.

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the major elements of interest for this study; motivations, expectations, behaviours, attitudes and retention strategies for Generation Z. Ultimately the introduction of Generation Z to the workforce will rewrite traditional HR activities such as performance management, leadership, career development and training. HR policies and procedures will shift as Generation Z enter the workforce. Retention rates will differ among generations which will require alternative benchmarking and retention strategies for different generations (Lyons *et al.,* 2015). In conjunction with a review of the literature the next chapters will aid organisations with regards to adjusting their retention strategies for Generation Z.

Chapter Three - Research Question, Aims and Objectives

3.1 Rationale for Research

Demographics are shifting from Baby Boomers to Generation X and Millennials and now to Generation Z, whole business circumstances are altering (Panwar and Mehta, 2019). As new generations arrive into the workforce, traditional HR activities such as performance evaluations and career management systems are required to be reworked (Bencsik *et al.,* 2016). Generation Z will arrive into the workforce with unique expectations (Desai and Lele, 2017). Handling differences in generational expectations is a major challenge for management as they are required to use new motivational tools in order to retain younger generations (Bencsik *et al.,* 2016).

While there has been plentiful research on Millennials in the workplace, there has been limited research on Generation Z, particularly on how to retain them. Research on Generation Z is still growing and due to this there is a notable absence of consistent arguments and characteristics. Research is typically conducted from a marketing viewpoint with the concern on the shopping preferences of individuals which fall into the Generation Z bracket (Stankiewicz-Mróz, 2020) or it relates to social media usages (Kick *et al.,* 2015). There is a shortage of academic literature surrounding Generation Z in an organisational context and there is demand for understanding how organisational leaders should utilise this new workplace generation. No study has explicitly endeavoured to investigate the implications on HRM retention strategies as Generation Z enter the workplace. Providing employers with knowledge regarding the strategies and initiatives which can altered and/or implemented to improve the retention of this generation in the workplace is not only important for organisations in this present time but in the future. To that end, this study will explore Generation Z's motivations, attitudes, values and beliefs surrounding a number of organisational processes and procedures and thus develop recommendations for organisational retention strategies and initiatives.

3.2 Research Aims and Objectives

The primary aim of this research paper is to discover the implications on HRM retention strategies as Generation Z enter the workplace. This research will focus specifically on Generation Z employees which have joined Company A. Findings from this research can be used to develop HRM strategies which will enable the company to better recruit, develop and retain Generation Z employees.

Thus, the primary objectives of this research study are to:

Objective One: Explore Generation Z expectations, motivations, attitudes and behaviours in the workplace
Sub Objective One: Explore how Generation Z believe they are viewed by other generations in the workplace
Objective Two**:** Identify suitable Generation Z retention strategies and initiatives for Company A
Sub Objective Two: Identify the factors which attract Generation Z to join an organisation

The next chapter will discuss the plans on how these objectives and the overall research question will be achieved

Chapter Four - Methodology

4.1 Research Philosophy

Research philosophy refers to the system of assumptions and beliefs regarding the enhancement of knowledge (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2015). Individuals make assumptions throughout the research process. These assumptions ultimately form the research strategy, the methodology used and the research questions asked (Hathaway, 1995). According to Saunders *et al.* (2015) the assumptions made consist of assumptions regarding human knowledge (epistemological assumptions), realities which you experience in your research (ontological assumptions) and assumptions concerning the manner and extent in which your personal values imprint upon the research process (axiological assumptions).

There are five leading research philosophies in in management and business: critical realism, positivism, interpretivism, pragmatism and postmodernism (Saunders *et al.,* 2015). This research will undertake an interpretative approach as it involves viewing the organisation from the perspective of distinctive groups of employees. With interpretivism, researchers are aware that they, in conjunction with their research participants create together findings which are socially situated but could also be transferable to alike contexts (Allen, 2017). Interpretivism is distinctly subjectivist. An axiological inference of this is that interpretivist researchers identify that their perceptions of research data and therefore their personal beliefs and values, represent a critical role throughout the research process (Saunders *et al.,* 2015). Leitch, Hill and Harrison (2010) describe interpretative research as one which recognises that there may be many different interpretations which can fluctuate depending on the context and time.

There are challenges with the interpretivist approach. Often interpretivist researchers grapple with major decisions concerning the qualitative measures of reliability, validity and ethical challenges (Allen, 2017). A difficulty the interpretivist researcher may encounter includes that of the ability to access the

social environment of the research participants and gain an understanding of their world from their perspective (Saunders *et al.,* 2015). By adopting an interpretative approach the researcher will gain a greater understanding and insight behind the meaning of an individual's experience, their dealings with their social world and what this means to them. Saunders *et al.* (2015) discuss how it is argued that the interpretivist perspective is decidedly suitable in cases of business research, due to the fact that business situations may be complex and often are unique.

The rationale behind the decision to use an interpretivist approach is due to the fact this research project will investigate feelings, thoughts, expectations and beliefs regarding the phenomenon of Generation Z retention which is being explored.

4.2 Research Approach

The research approach undertaken is influenced by the underlying area of the research and the chosen philosophy discussed previously. There are two primary research approaches: inductive and deductive. With a deductive approach the theories "are developed and refined through a process of testing established generalisations" (Anderson, 2009, p.145). Saunders *et al.* (2015) assert that a deductive approach stipulates that the researcher establish a conceptual or theoretical framework which is thereafter tested using data, whereas, with an inductive approach data is ascertained and theories constructed which thenceforth relate to the literature discussed.

For the purpose of this research an inductive approach will be undertaken. Inductive research will permit data to be collected and meanings will emerge which will formulate relationships and patterns. The theory is constructed around accumulated data. The reasoning behind the decision to use an inductive approach was to acquire an extensive understanding of Generation Z and to uncover the how Company A can adjust their retention initiatives and strategies to retain this generation.

4.3 Research Methods

For the purpose of this study the researcher selected a qualitative approach after careful deliberation of each method. The rationale behind the elimination of quantitative and mixed methods research and the eventual selection of qualitative research is outlined below.

Quantitative research typically refers to data collection methods such as questionnaires or data analysis procedures such as graphs which produces or applies numerical data (Saunders *et al.,* 2015). The foundational philosophy which underlies quantitative research is positivism, which is formulated on the scientific method of research (Salkind, 2010). Quinlan (2011) describes quantitative research as deductive and is viewed as objectivist and typically is situated within the framework of positivism. Advantages of using quantitative research includes that of the research typically focusing on a narrow problem affecting the sample population chosen. By exploring a more narrow aspect of a problem this is turn allows for it to become more straightforward to gain answers regarding factors which impact each other (Allen, 2017).

Quantitative research was not suitable for this research study due to the fact that in order to develop a thorough understanding of Generation Z in the workplace the researcher was required to explore the personal experiences and views of this generation. Quantitative research does not offer the in-depth volume of information and personal experience which qualitative research offers.

Qualitative research generally refers to data collection methods such as interviews or data analysis procedures such as the categorisation of data which produces or leads to the use of non-numerical data (Saunders *et al.,* 2015). Qualitative methods such as interviews and focus groups are typically used in research with an interpretive philosophical framework (Quinlan, 2011). Qualitative researchers tend to believe that individual's behaviours and beliefs, regardless of the extent which they may differ from their own, are understandable and comprehendible in the context in which they exist (Given, 2008). Qualitative data enables the researcher to view pieces of information which provide an

understanding into elements such as the qualities of meanings, social interactions and communication (Allen, 2017).

Anderson (2009) discussed how qualitative data is beneficial when HR research focuses on addressing organisational issues. Qualitative research will be the preferred method of research due to the nature and study of this research topic. Qualitative research permits a more exhaustive comprehension of an individual's experiences as participants have the ability to be more expressive with their opinions and views.

Mixed methods research incorporates the use of both quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques and procedures. Allen (2017) discusses how research may benefit from a mixed methodologies approach by employing quantitative research to gain an understanding about how variables impact one another, in conjunction with using questions to investigate thematic areas comprehensively. With regards to approach to theory development, mixed methods researchers can use a deductive, inductive or abductive approach (Saunders *et al.,* 2015).

The semi-structured interview has been identified as the chosen and most pertinent method of data collection for this particular research study. Interviews are considered the linchpin of qualitative research, an interview compromises of a researcher speaking with another individual with the aim of gathering data about the phenomenon at hand (Allen, 2017). Interviews can aid the researcher in gathering valid and reliable data which is relevant to the chosen research question and objectives (Saunders *et al.,* 2015). With semi-structured interviews the researcher can adjust the schedule of questions and themes which are contingent on the stream of the conversation topic. The researcher devised an interview topic guide which consisted of eighteen questions, illustrated in Appendix C. Interview questions were derived from findings in the literature review with the aim of providing an insight into Generation Z and the retention initiatives Company A should alter and/or implement. The interview questions were open ended which enables the research participants to speak of their personal opinions and experiences, allowing them to express themselves. Closed ended questions would have a negative impact on the participants' ability to

freely express their opinions on the topics at hand. The flexibility of a semi structured interview enables the researcher to probe deeper into the replies of the participants. An inconvenience of semi-structured interviews is that they may be time consuming as speaking of different topics in depth may take time (Allen, 2017).

4.4 Research Participants

For the purpose of this research study seven semi-structured interviews were conducted. All interview participants are employed by Company A and are born either in 1995 or 1996, due to participants born in these years being identified as the only Generation Z cohort in Company A at present.

Participant	Participant Code	Age	Male/Female/Other	Length of Service with Company A	Company A = first full-time employment since graduating college
Participant 1	P1	24	Female	10 months	Yes
Participant 2	P2	24	Female	1 year 2 months	Yes
Participant 3	P3	23	Male	10 months	Yes
Participant 4	P4	24	Female	11 months	Yes
Participant 5	P5	25	Female	1 year 9 months	Yes
Participant 6	P6	24	Male	8 months	No
Participant 7	P7	25	Female	1 year 7 months	Yes

Purposive sampling was applied when selecting participants to partake in the semi-structured interviews. According to Salkind (2010) with purposive sampling it is the nature of the research questions which requires that particular criteria be undertaken to dictate who or what is included in the sample. Purposive sampling is frequently used when working with limited sample sizes such as with case study research (Neuman, 2005, as cited in Saunders *et al.,* 2015).
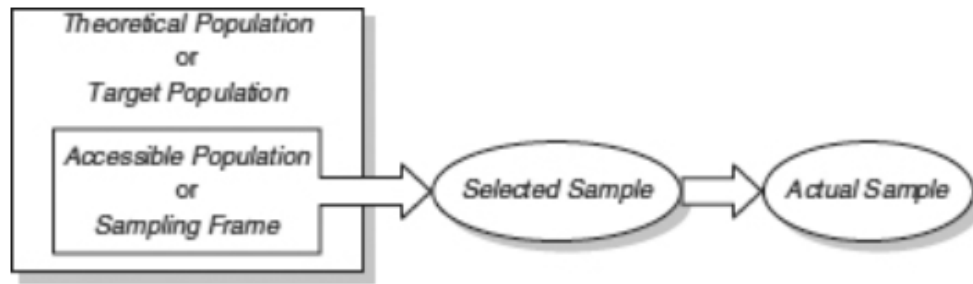
Figure 3. Sampling Process Diagram (Salkind, 2010)

4.5 Procedure

Seven semi-structured interviews were completed. Interviewees worked across different departments in Company A ranging from technical to non-technical roles. Interviewees were invited to take part in the research via a phone call from the researcher. Subsequent to the researcher confirming the list of participants who had agreed to partake in the research study each participant was sent an information sheet via email, see Appendix A, detailing the research topic and the confidentiality of the interviews. Prior to the commencement of the interviews each participant was sent via email a consent form to review and sign, see Appendix B for illustration.

On commencement of each interview the researcher informed the interview participants that they were under no obligation to answer any question/s if they chose not to, reaffirmed that the interview participants would remain anonymous and asked each interviewee to confirm their age and gender. The interviews took place from the 10th to the 19th June 2020. Each interview lasted 25 to 45 minutes and were conducted and recorded on Microsoft Teams. The semi structured interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed by the researcher. Prior to the first interview taking place a pilot study was undertaken by the researcher.

4.5.1 Pilot Study

A pilot study was carried out prior to the interviewing of the participants to ascertain if the interview questions were relevant and clearly phrased. A pilot study can be referred to as a trial run of a research study. Salkind (2010)

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discusses how pilot studies are notably beneficial where there is limited information regarding the research topic.

When conducting pilot studies it is preferable that participants are comparable to the participants which will be used in the main study. The researcher administered two pilot interviews, both participants are members of Generation Z. The first participant is an employee of Company A and the second participant is employed full time at a different organisation. On completion of the pilot studies the researcher rephrased questions which were not immediately understood by the participants. There was also slight repetition in questions which was rectified before the main study commenced. A full list of the research questions asked is illustrated in Appendix C.

4.6 Ethical Considerations

Ethics are standards or principles for appropriate moral behaviour (Allen, 2017). Ethical considerations will be carefully considered when conducting this research. All participants were aware of the aims and objectivities of the research study. Participants were provided with information on how their data will be stored with signed consent forms and original audio recordings being contained in a secure, password protected folder on the computer of the researcher. Interview participants were informed that their interview transcript in which all identifying information is removed will be retained for a further two years after this. Participants were notified that under freedom of information legalisation they are entitled to access the information they have provided at any time. All information provided will be kept strictly confidential in accordance to National College of Ireland Ethics Committee requirements.

Individuals participating in this study will remain anonymous. A detailed consent form was sent to each participant to review and sign prior to the interview. Throughout the interview transcripts and research findings participant's names will be replaced with a pseudonym. The pseudonym will range from "P1" to "P7". Participants at the beginning of each interview were advised that they did not have to answer a question if they choose not to and that they could withdraw

from the interview at any stage without any penalties. The organisations name will also be anonymous.

The researcher identified prior to the interviews that potentially research participants may not be comfortable with providing opinions and answering questions regarding their workplace. To overcome this, the researcher assured participants in the information sheet and prior to the interview that the interview data will not be identifiable and all results will be analysed at a group level. Additionally, interview participants were informed that they did not have to take part in the interview and could retract their participation at any stage without any penalties.

4.7 Analysis of Data

Oftentimes it is the qualitative researcher who is depicted as the research instrument considering that it is their capability to understand, illustrate and interpret experiences and motivations which can be central to unlocking meaning in specific context and situations (Maguire and Delahunt, 2017). Figure four demonstrates graphically the approach which the researcher will adopt when analysing data from the case study. Figure four is centred on the iterative process of description, analysis and interpretation discussed by Wolcott (1994) of the data generated, with the aim of extracting the data to understand evolving themes.
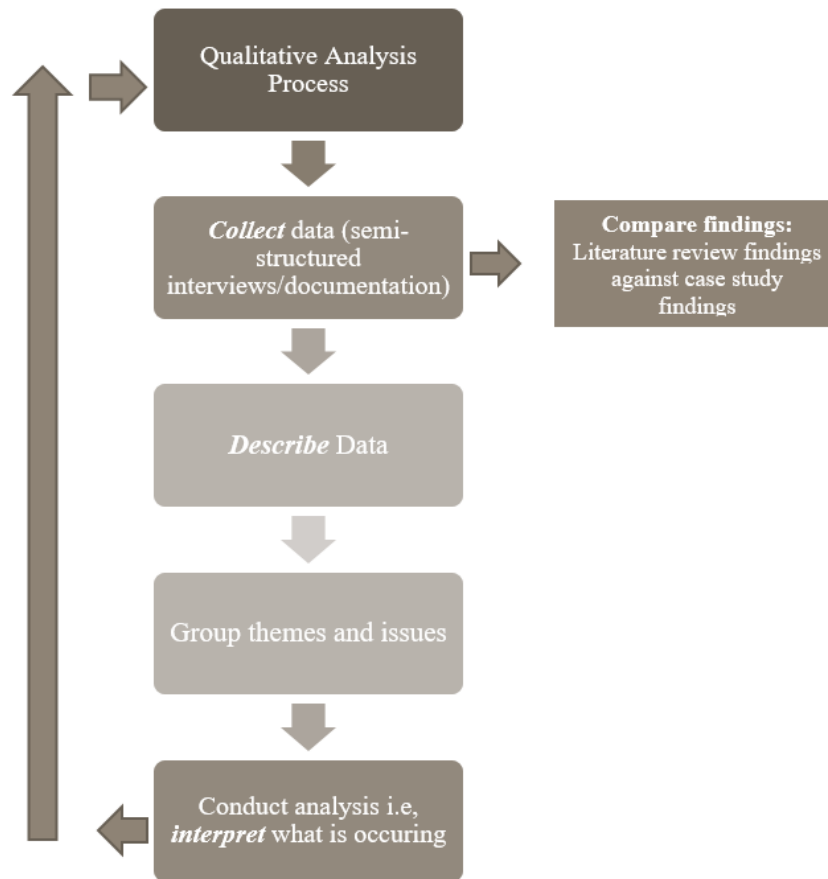
Figure 4. Qualitative data analysis process for Company A

On completion of the semi-structured interviews, the researcher then transcribed the interviews into written text as a means to visually analysis the findings. To evaluate the data collated thematic analysis was used. Thematic analysis is a data analysis method used for identifying, analysing and describing patterns contained within the data (Braun and Clarke, 2006). This model was selected due to its flexibility and its ability to capture data which is rich in description. Thematic analysis is a powerful tool which allows for the nuanced examination of phenomena in organisations which qualitative researcher strive to achieve (King and Brooks, 2018). The thematic analysis of the qualitative data will follow the six steps devised in Braun and Clarke (2006):

1. *Familiarising yourself with the data*
2. *Generalising initial codes*
3. *Searching for themes*
4. *Reviewing the themes*

5. Defining and naming the themes.

6. Producing the report

Saunders *et al.* (2015) discuss how in a realistic sense, these steps do not transpire in a straightforward linear progression. Rather they tend to be concurrent and recursive, concerning the researcher analysing data as it is collected, reviewing previous data and analysis as the researcher cultivates the way in which data is coded and categorised. Allen (2017) refers to the coding of data as the technique of transforming gathered information or observations with the aim of devising meaningful and connected categories. The researcher identified and analysed themes which are detailed in Chapter Five Findings: Description, Analysis and Synthesis.

4.8 Limitations

The main limitation of this empirical research through using a case study strategy is that the findings of this study cannot be generalised across the wider community. The research findings detail the experiences and expectations of individuals working in Company A. However, the findings generated from this research through the concept of reliability is anticipated to be of interest to organisations. The concept of reliability is postulated on the idea that the responses observed are inexact portrayals of an unobserved, hypothesized dormant variable (Salkind, 2010).

Qualitative research, particularly conducting a number of interviews is time consuming, while both the researcher and subjects were employed in demanding full-time roles often issues arose as to availability and calendar management was required. Due to this interviews were required to be kept between 25 – 45 minutes.

Due to the time constraints it was only feasible to investigate Generation Z in one geographical location of Company A, which was Dublin, Ireland. Therefore findings concluded can be for this region only. With additional time, research

into Generation Z, by using the other regions as a case study would make additional contributions to the findings.

Literature surrounding Generation Z work preferences is limited in scope, particularly literature on how to retain this generation. This ultimately hindered the researcher in sourcing an in-depth perspective on the area of research due to lack of authors who have published research on this topic.

Nonetheless, the limitations of this methodology did not surpass the effectiveness of using qualitative design, thus this is why the researcher opted to select a qualitative research method.

Chapter Five - Findings: Description, Analysis and Synthesis

5.1 Research Objectives and Related Themes

5.1.1 Objective One and Related Themes

A primary objective of the researcher was to gain a comprehensive understanding of Generation Z in the workplace, their behaviours, beliefs, attitudes, motivations and expectations. Prior to the discussion of potential retention strategies for this generation, the researcher acknowledges that it is beneficial to gain an understanding of Generation Z in the workplace. Common themes emerged from data surrounding understanding Generation Z in the workplace.
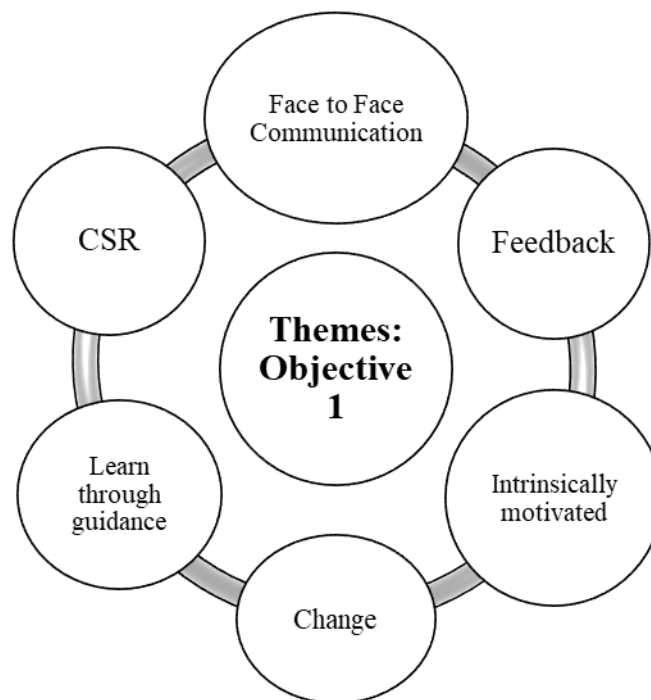
5.1.1.1 Face to Face Communication

A key finding of this research is that Generation Z have a preference for face to face communication and recognise the importance of soft skills in the workplace. This finding corresponds with research conducted by Grow and Yang (2018) in which it was found that Generation Z viewed soft skills as a necessary strength which is imperative in the workplace. Six out of the seven participants

interviewed would rather communicate face to face. P1 commented *"I find it better having a face to face conversation with someone rather than trying to catch them over the phone or through email"* and P2 notes that *"I would be quite good at getting up and going to talk to someone rather than send an email"*. On the contrary, P6's stated their ideal communication style *"I prefer to send an email and then follow up with a phone call"* which relates closely to that found by Kick *et al.* (2015) insofar that employers are noticing that younger generations are more comfortable in sending emails.

5.1.1.2 Feedback

The interviews conducted produced some interesting points regarding the frequency of feedback which Generation Z desires. Five out of the seven participant's stated that their ideal feedback level is every three to six months or at the end of project milestones with P1 commenting *"Ideally I would like it every quarter, just to kind of touch base"*, P4 *"I expect feedback maybe every four or six months"* and P3 *"Every three to six months"*. With regards to receiving feedback at end of project and significant milestones P6 commented *"At the end of every project or milestone not every week or every month"* with P4 reinforcing this *"at the end of projects"*. Two participants commented on the lack of feedback they currently receive from management with P2 mentioning *"Every month or so would be nice, I don't think it is very structured"* and P7 *"I'd like feedback more often than it is now, maybe every month or so"*.

This contradicts the desired level of feedback discussed in the literature review such as Miller (2018) stating that Generation Z are accustomed to receiving immediate feedback and Centre for Generation Kinetics (2018) who found that 60 percent of this generation would like multiple check in's with their manager a week with 40 percent preferring this to occur daily.

5.1.1.3 Intrinsically Motivated

Findings from this study indicate that in the workplace Generation Z are intrinsically motivated. The researcher questioned interviewee's on their main

motivators at work. The most frequent answers related to getting the job done and working as part of a team. P6 commented that getting to know their team is vitally important and that *"I don't like letting them down"*, P7 echoed this statement and added the fact that *"the people I am working with are very talented, therefore the quality of work we are outputting is very good, which is really motivating"*. Receiving praise and recognition was also mentioned with P7 stating that after receiving praise the next day *"you come in to work pumped to get back to it"*.

Financial rewards were only mentioned twice by interviewees and only after stating a non-financial factor as their primary motivator with P1 reflecting on financial rewards as a motivator and stating that *"it's not a sole motivator, but it helps"*. These findings differ from those found by Crowley-Henry *et al.* (2020) who found that in Ireland, Generation Z are motivated by both extrinsic and intrinsic rewards equally.

5.1.1.4 Change

The theme of change emerged rapidly from the interview data generated. When questioned on how many employers the interviewees envision themselves working for in their lifetime all responded with at least four with many not stating a particular number but envisioning that it would be a high number such as P2 who stated *"Oh loads I'd say, I'd kind of like a change even now"*. The experience gained through working with new employers was the primary reasoning provided for the expected high numbers of employers this generation will work for. P4 states *"I think it's good to gain experience by working with different types of people and then taking different pieces from all of them"* and P6 commenting *"the more experience the better, you can always come back to wherever if you make a good impression the first time"*. These findings of four or more predicted future employers are at the higher end of Addeco (2015) findings that 92 percent of Generation Z believed they would have between one to four jobs throughout their careers.

Interviewees' spoke of how there has been a change in the consensus with regards to how long individuals tend to stay with one employer with P1 commenting *"Where I am working, a lot of employees have been here since they were my age (24) who are in their forties and fifties now, I don't think that's going to be the case for my generation"* and P2 *"Our parents' generation probably got a job and stayed in it for twenty or thirty years, but that won't be the case for us"*.

Interview participants also discussed how Generation Z can help other generations in being open minded with regards to changing the way certain work processes are done. P4 commented that Generation Z is *"more open to change and new ideas developing and not being afraid of it"*. P8 discussed how Generation Z can teach other generations in the workplace *"how to do things easier"*.

5.1.1.5 Learn through Guidance

This research provided an insight into how Generation Z learn new skills in the workplace. The findings show that this generation primarily learn new skills by being guided by their supervisor, manager or a colleague. Statements from P5 *"people showing me how to do it and then I just keep trying it"*, P3 *"I'd probably learn best by observing first"* and P1 *"I definitely need to be shown something, not just told how to do it. I need to see it in action"* highlight this need for guidance. P2 commented that with regards to learning new skills they learn by *"being guided"* and do not learn *"by sitting and being told"*, this corresponds with Desai and Lele (2017) remark that Generation Z dislike being lectured.

Two participants differed from the other five interviewees in that they learn new skills in a different manner with P7 commenting that although they learn well by being *"thrown in the deep end"* that there needs to be someone there *"that I can ask for support"*. P6 commented that they best learn through doing prior research and becoming *"self-taught"* as it makes *"more sense to me rather than receiving training for something I have no idea what it's about"*.

5.1.1.6 CSR

A significant finding of this research is that of how Generation Z view CSR initiatives in the workplace. Gomez *et al.* (2019) discuss how this generation place an emphasis on an organisations social impact. Findings from this research indicate that this generation do not place heavy significance on an organisational CSR initiatives.

From the seven interviews conducted all interviewees stated that they did not place value on CSR when deciding what company to apply for post-graduation. After gaining experience in the workplace and participating in some CSR initiatives three out of the seven interviewees stated if joining a new company they would consider how the new organisation approach CSR. P3 commented that with regards to CSR organisations *"should have a responsibility to engage with it"*, however, *"I wouldn't actively seek it out if I was looking for employment"*. P6 describes how *"on LinkedIn it is good seeing what the companies are doing"*. Although P1 stated that an organisations lack of CSR initiatives would not be a *"deciding factor"* in accpeting a job they would see it as an *"alarm or a bit of a red flag"*. Two interviewees spoke of how organisational CSR initiatives are not genuine with P7 describing CSR initiatives as a *"cop out"* stating that with regards to organisations they are *"putting on a face for a month and then it's back to business as usual"*. Similarly P5 spoke of how in relation to CSR that *"companies do it because they have to, I don't know how much of it is actually wanting to do it"*.

A sub-objective of understanding Generation Z in the workplace includes exploring how they believe they are viewed by other generations in the workplace. The researcher questioned interviewees on how they believe Generation Z is viewed by other generations in the workplace. The below themes emerged from the interview data.
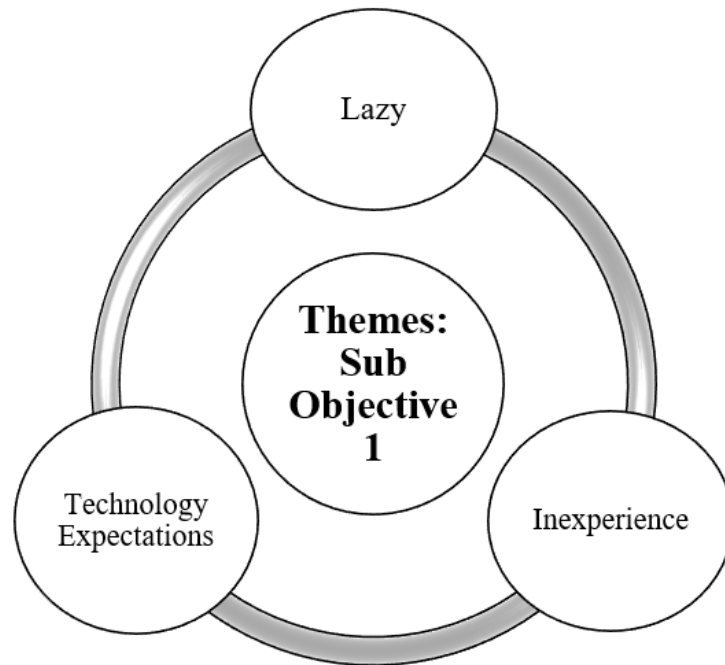
5.1.1.7 Lazy

The adjective "lazy" arose frequently in the interview data upon review to convey Generation Z interviewees' beliefs on how more senior generations in the workplace view their generation. P4 spoke of how Generation Z may be viewed as *"lazier in certain areas because we do everything so technically and digitally"* and that *"nothing is really done by hand"*. P1 commented that there is a perception of Generation Z that *"everything is handed to them"* and perhaps they are viewed as *"slightly lazy"* to which P1 refuted saying it is not a *"fair"* statement as Generation Z are *"fortunate to live in a time where there is so much technology that we can use and everything is at a touch of a button and maybe we don't have to work as hard for it as previous generations"*.

5.1.1.8 Inexperience

The theme of inexperience became transparent upon review of the interview data by the researcher. When asked how other generations in the workplace view Generation Z, P7 stated *"We are viewed like we are children, 100%"* and spoke of how the generation is often viewed as *"almost expendable"* by more senior generations in the workplace. P1 also spoke about the apparent expendability of Generation Z by noting that there *is "almost a presumption that people will*

leave, like as in graduates won't stay and people know that so sometimes this is reflected in their attitude towards them". P3 commented that in the workplace Generation Z are viewed as *"overeducated coming out of college"* and stated that *"that's the standard for everyone starting out in the workplace as a graduate"*.

5.1.1.9 Technology Expectations

A common theme which surfaced was that of expectations surrounding Generation Z and technology. P6 discussed that when it comes to technology that older generations in the workplace *"expect you to know it"* and that *"most of the time I don't!"* P5 echoed this statement by claiming *"anyone I have met has been better at computers than me"*. Within this theme of technological expectations P2 spoke of how it is expected that all Generation Z employees are innovators and that it is viewed that they *"should be coming up with innovative solutions"*. P1 noted that with technology Generation Z is often viewed by other generations as having *"little patience"* and that they *"want everything instantly"*.

5.1.2 Objective Two and Related Themes

This research is tasked with identifying suitable Generation Z retention strategies and initiatives for Company A. From review of the literature and research data six themes surfaced.
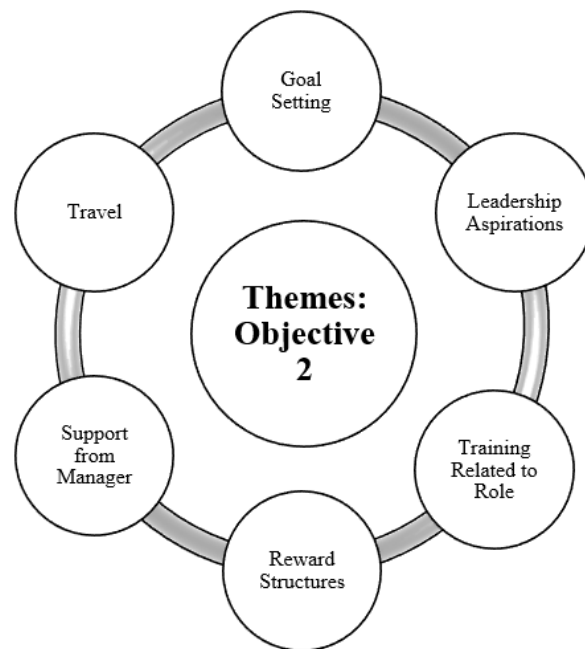
5.1.2.1 Goal Setting

A major finding from this research included importance of goal setting among Generation Z. In the performance appraisal system in Company A goals are set once a year at the formal appraisal stage. With regards to performance appraisals and goal setting P7 commented that they would like to see the appraisals become *"more informal"*. This reflects the findings by Bencsik *et al.* (2017) that Generation Z have a dislike for intense workplace formalities.

A lack of workplace goals and objectives can decrease motivation as seen with P2 who stated that they are *"unmotivated at the moment"* due to the fact that the work they are currently assigned is *"not goal driven"*. The importance of motivational factors in the workplace, such as level of responsibility, discussed by Herzberg *et al.* (1959) are critical to job satisfaction. P6 commented on how often personal goals discussed between the employee and manager are liable to be forgotten over time if they are not followed up on either quarterly or every six months between the manager and employee stating *"I've forgotten my goals for the year, I can't remember what I was supposed to do. If I can't remember mine*

how is my manager supposed to remember mine and like twenty others?" When asked about the current performance appraisal system P1 commented that it is *"kind of a funny method"* and noted that often goals set at the start of the year may not have a chance to materialise due to lack of opportunities available to meet those goals so that it is not *"necessarily a poor reflection"* on the individual.

5.1.2.2 Leadership Aspirations

Generation Z in Company A would like to hold leadership positions in the organisation in the future. Pearson (2018) discussed how two-thirds of Generation Z aim to reach the top position in relation to their profession. Findings from this research somewhat reflected this finding as it was found that four out of seven interviewees would like to make it to the top of their future profession. All participants where asked if they held leadership aspirations within Company A, which do not have to include becoming top of their profession, with 71 percent indicating they do have leadership aspirations within the company. P6 responded that *"I like the leaders in Company A, I look up to them and think I could do that someday"*. When questioned about career progression and leadership aspirations in Company A P3 responded, *"there is a framework in place where you can see what's required at each step to get to a level if you want to progress on"*. P1 spoke of how they could imagine themselves holding leadership positions in Company A, however, in order to do this efficiently they would need to *"gain experience, whether it be in another company in Ireland or across the world, I think that step away would help me in terms of if I was able to come back and move up the ladder"*.

KPMG (2018) found that Generation Z are likely to try a different role within their current organisation before looking for new roles externally. Findings from this research found that four out of seven interviewed would not try a different role in Company A before looking for a new role externally. Reasons for this include P2 stating *"I don't think there is anything else in the company which I would prefer to be doing"* and P1 commenting on the different experiences they

would gain elsewhere *"if I moved somewhere else I'd have different job titles etc."*

5.1.2.3 Training Related to Role

A theme which emerged from the interview data was that of training needing to be relevant to the role in which Generation Z are currently working. Interviewees expressed that at times they received training in areas where perhaps their skill set was already quite high, such as their required attendance at soft skills training, but failed to receive sufficient technical training related to their role.

When asked about training expectations P6 commented *"I actually expected technical training, so like training on things that I could be using on a day to day"* and P7 mentioned that they would like to see more departmental specific training which would aid in *"professional training development"*. The format in which training takes place is also an important factor with P2 speaking of a training session which had taken place the day previous *"I had training all day yesterday, and it was just like eight hours of sitting at my computer, someone talking to me with a slideshow and I could just not pay attention"*.

Findings from this research mirror that seen in the literature review regarding how Generation Z are keen to personalise their own learning experiences and incorporate this learning from different materials and sources.

5.1.2.4 Reward Structures

From analysing the interview data conflicting responses surfaced regarding the preferred way in which Company A's reward system should be structured. P7 reflected upon the reward structure in place and commented *"I think it should be multi-faceted, it should be based on more than just how many years you've been with the company and your role"* and on discussion surrounding bonuses P7 commented that during a conversation with their manger *"it was very much, well you have only been with us for six months, so this is what we think you deserve as opposed to saying, well you have shown an aptitude for X and Y etc."*

P2 observed that although it was their opinion that the system should be based on *"time you have been there"* that it is important for the organisation to take into account that often times individuals *"get lucky"* with the projects they are selected to work on with projects at times being *"put on hold"* and therefore employees may not get the chance to showcase their abilities and commented *"I probably would have been able to do as well or better, but did not have the opportunity"*. P3, P4, and P6 all reflected that their performance in the workplace should be the basis for the organisations reward structure with P1 adding that the *"overall companies' performance"* should also be taken into account.

The common consensus from the interview data is that personal performance should be the driver for how the reward management system is structured. Throughout the interview it became apparent that there is confusion surrounding Company A's approach to rewards. Adecco (2015) discussed the importance of, with regards to Generation Z, employers being explicit and clear with policies and procedures regarding salary increases and bonuses.

5.1.2.5 Support from Manager

A theme which materialised was that of interviewees placing support from their manager as the number one factor which they desire from their manager in the workplace. All seven interviewees labelled managerial support as central to the employee manager relationship. P1 commented that *"a fundamental role of a manager is that they are there to support you and help you grow to be the best employee you can be regardless of what projects you get to work on"* and also noted that a manager should support their employee *"whether it be work or potentially personal issues as well"*. All interviewees echoed this statement for example P6 commented *"support if you have any issues",* P2 *"support someone you can talk to about any problems"* and P7 reflected that *"support, is key"*.

5.1.2.6 Travel

When it comes to the retention of Generation Z the theme of travel became apparent upon review of the interview data. P2 noted that "*I think a lot of people like me, like to go in and get a few years' experience and then go travel*" and noted that if there was the option to *"travel within the company than people will stay more".* P6 echoed this by claiming that Generation Z are *"obsessed with travelling"* and that often with travel opportunities in Company A that employees are sent to *"most remote part of a country, which is not always appealing. I think it's a big issue".*

The final sub-objective of this research is to identify the factors which attract Generation Z to join a particular organisation. By understanding these factors Company A will be better able to retain and also recruit this generational cohort. Interviewees were questioned on the factors which would entice them when joining a new organisation and three themes of type of work, pay and company culture emerged from the data.
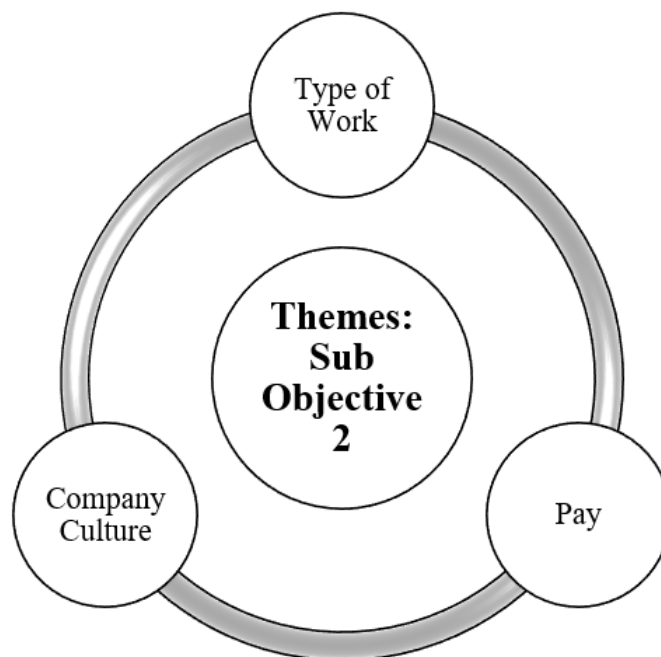
5.1.2.7 Type of Work

A central theme which arose with regards to Generation Z and their reasons for joining an organisation after starting their first job included the importance of gaining an in-depth understanding of the type of work the organisation engage in and if it is a good fit for their skill set in the workplace. P7 commented that *"the type of work they do is probably number one"* and P4 mirrored this statement by noting that they would seek to uncover *"their past work, like their portfolio, overall the type of work they do".* Prior to starting their first full time job many interviewees stated that their opinions on what their ideal job would entail have changed over time. P6 noted that in college when considering a role they wanted it to involve *"a lot of technical work"* and now they place a heavier emphasis on *"more interaction with people and maybe working on a bigger team".*

5.1.2.8 Pay

All participants mentioned the salary amount offered in their top five factors they would consider when joining a new organisation. This finding is comparable to that of Mondres (2019) in which it was found that Generation Z place high importance on a role which pays well. Although only two interviewees P1*"is it shallow that the first one is pay?"* and P2 *"level of pay, obviously"* regarded pay as the first factor they would take into account when seeking a new role, all participants mentioned pay which indicates that when seeking a new role there is a level of extrinsic motivation among this generation.

Some interviewees disclosed that they are now more aware of market rates and their value since they have begun their first full time employment with P7 commenting that when in college searching for a job that *"you don't actually know what your value is".*

5.1.2.9 Company Culture

The perceived company culture is a critical factor which entices Generation Z to apply for a role. The organisations reputation is important to Generation Z with P7 commenting that what *"other people have said about them, like what the company culture is"* is imperative to understand before applying for a role and

P5 echoed this by noting that the *"reputation for working with them"* is an important deciding factor. P1 spoke of how they would expect to work for a *"trusting employer"* with a *"reward for loyalty with incentives for you wanting to stay and wanting to continue to perform"*. As discussed in previous findings the opportunity to travel within the company arose frequently with P1 and P2 stating that *"travel within the company"* is very important.

Crowley-Henry *et al.* (2020) found that in Ireland Generation Z desire their career to be centred on "Lifestyle" with a focus on work-life balance. Surprisingly work-life balance was only mentioned by one interviewee with P3 stressing the importance of this as *"some companies might force you to work awful hours"*. The "Lifestyle" element may be related to the social aspect of work. P3 spoke of how the *"social aspect"* is an important factor when considering changing employers and P2 also expressed this view by stating they would like a potential employer to *"have a young workforce, I would value the social aspect a good bit"*.

Chapter Six – Discussion

6.1 Objective and Sub-Objective One

The first objective of this research study was to gain an in-depth understanding of Generation Z in the workplace, their behaviours, beliefs, attitudes, motivations and expectations. A sub-objective which stemmed from objective one was that of gaining an understanding about how Generation Z believe other generations view them in the workplace.

The findings from this research study present both corresponding and conflicting elements to the findings outlined in the literature review. It can be seen through literature that the concept of motivation can be difficult to deeply understand and significantly more difficult to develop for organisations. The literature review discussed the Hackman and Oldham (1976) JCM and Herzberg *et al.* (1959) Two Factor Theory in relation to Generation Z. Findings from this research study support the use of both models in the workplace. This research highlighted how this generation is not primarily motivated by extrinsic factors such as salary increases, instead they are motivated by getting the job done correctly and working as part of a team where they can showcase their skills. Praise and recognition also surfaced as important motivators. The theories discussed are relevant to organisations with regards to motivating employees as important intrinsic factors such as recognition, achievement and responsibility are paramount to achieving motivation among this generation. Simply offering a pay increase or bonus will not suffice if these factors are not met. However, Generation Z were found to have extrinsically motivated tendencies when the deciding factors for joining a new employer are under consideration. This research found that the salary offered was a significant factor which this generation considers when seeking new employment. This finding is comparable to Mondres (2019) findings of Generation Z placing a high importance on pay when considering a role and Miller (2018) discussion of how life events such as living through a recession have enabled this generation to develop financially-focused attitudes. This research found that while in work Generation Z are

intrinsically motivated, however, this research also found that as Company A is the first employer for six out of the seven interviewees that perhaps this generation were not fully aware of the market value and thus the extrinsic side of seeking rates of pay are surfacing now after some time in their first employment.

Throughout the literature review it is evident that Generation Z are assumed to be technologically adept, perhaps even superior to previous generations with regards to using technology. According to Pearson (2018) technology for Generation Z is a routine and intrinsic part of everyday life. However, contrary to popular thought the findings of this research show that Generation Z admittedly struggle with the technological expectations placed upon them by other generations in the workplace. The assumption that they acquire the necessary technological skills throughout college needed for the workplace, for example using technical software programmes such as Revit, has led Generation Z to perhaps not receiving the technical training by employers needed to effectively use software which is used throughout the organisation. Subsequently, the type of training which Generation Z receive in the workplace is critical. From review of the literature it is evident that this generation have a preference for environments in which active learning can occur (Barnes & Noble College, 2018) and they have a focus on informal and interest based learning (Bencsik *et al.,* 2016) which the findings of this research support. The findings of this research, however, do not support the intense focus in literature on YouTube being central to how this generation learn new skills. Both Mondres (2019) and Pearson (2018) emphasised the importance of YouTube as this generation's favoured method for learning. This is adjacent to the opinion of Generation Z interviewees who prefer to learn new skills by being guided through these in person, in fact only one out of seven interviewees commented that they best learn through doing prior research and becoming *"self-taught".*

A sub-objective of objective one was to gain an understanding of Generation Z perceptions, opinions and experiences of how different generations in the workplace perceive them. Through the literature discussed it is apparent that a preconceived perception of Generation Z in the workplace from different generations exists. Jones *et al.* (2019) found that from discussion with

management participants, mainly baby boomers that they believe Generation Z lacked appropriate time management and prioritisation skills and were constantly distracted by phones and smart watches. Findings from this research indicate that Generation Z do believe that there are certain perceptions surrounding them in the workplace. Comments from Generation Z interviewees include words and phrases such as *"lazy"*, *"inexperienced"*, *"little patience"* and *"overeducated"*. With regards to Jones *et al.* (2019) findings regarding the skills which senior generations believe Generation Z lack, this may be associated to the admission of Generation Z that they do not have to do as much by hand as previous generations as everything is done at a faster rate due to technological advances.

6.2 Objective and Sub-Objective Two

This research is tasked with gaining a qualitative insight into HRM retention strategies and the extent to which these will need to be altered as Generation Z enter the workplace. A sub-objective which arose is that of understanding the factors which attract Generation Z to an organisation in the first instance. Retention approaches for Generation Z which Company A can undertake arose from the findings. The research found that goal setting, ability to allow for leadership opportunities, appropriate training, clear reward structures and opportunity to travel all can contribute to decreasing turnover among Generation Z.

KPMG (2018) found that Generation Z are likely to try a different role within the same organisation before seeking external opportunities. Findings from this research indicate that this generation are not as willing, with 57 percent stating they would not move to a different role in Company A before resigning. This finding reinforces the importance of Lyons *et al.* (2015) suggestion that organisations should add additional shorter steps into traditional career progression with the attempt of enticing younger generations to remain in the organization as this can be perceived as moving up the career ladder. Generation Z are still awaiting leadership opportunities in organisations. Findings from this research illustrate that Generation Z are interested in leadership opportunities and

over half of those interviewed have a goal in reaching the top of their future profession.

A major theme which emerged throughout the interview data was that of goal setting and the lack of appropriate goal setting techniques currently used by Company A became apparent throughout the interviews conducted. It is evident from the interview data that the current performance appraisal system in Company A has created some confusion amongst the interviewees, at one point being described as a *"funny method"*. Concerns raised from this performance appraisal system include its infrequency as it relies on the traditional annual review method. Chillakuri (2020) discusses how many organisations have discarded older performance management methods with the focus now on the positive development of the employee. Due to the infrequent nature of the performance appraisal goals are forgotten, not achievable due to circumstances and thus new goals are not created leading to a decrease in motivation among Generation Z. From literature it can be seen through Herzberg *et al.* (1959) that motivational factors such as the nature of the work itself are imperative in motivating employees. Tulgan (2020) found that Generation Z rate supportive leadership as a leading factor required in the workplace. The findings in this research corresponded with this discovery with all interviewees labelling support from their manager as a key element of the manager-employee relationship.

Interviewees discussed a concern over linking financial rewards such as bonuses and pay increases to the current performance appraisal system with comments on how throughout the year the opportunity to work on major projects to showcase abilities and skills can be limited or put on hold and how this in turn it is not a true reflection of an individual's ability. Generation Z in Company A's preference for the distribution of financial rewards varies from length of time in company, personal performance to the overall performance of the company that year.

The sub-objective of exploring the factors which attract Generation Z to an organisation were investigated. All interviewees had at least eight months work experience with Company A and were asked after having this experience in the

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workplace if their personal preference has changed as to what they now expect and desire from an employer. The type of work the organisation partake in surfaced as the most common answer to this question. Generation Z crave the opportunity to display their knowledge and skills. In a review of the literature it was found that Generation Z want to work in industries which impact their personal lives, as opposed to industries which they have limited interaction with (Gomez *et al.,* 2019). This research found that the reputation of a company is incredibly important to this generation. Adecco (2015) found that Generation Z tend to use social media for professional purposes, not solely for personal purposes. Through using social media this generation can access a wider community and therefore reviews of an organisation not just in their locality but reviews from around the world. Mondres (2019) found that Generation Z are keen to be employed by a company which has a fun work environment which is supported by the findings in this research as interviewees expressed a preference for working in a company which has a strong social presence. From the interviews conducted it is evident that after gaining experience in the workplace that Generation Z will place more of an emphasis on the rate of pay offered from their next employer as they will have a more discernible outlook of market rates and how they personally value themselves with regards to work.

Chapter Seven - Conclusion and Recommendations

7.1 Summary of Key Findings and Conclusions

This research first set out to discover Generation Z in the workplace by exploring their attitudes, motivations, beliefs and opinions. It is important to examine these elements prior to delving into the second research objective of exploring retention initiatives to reduce Generation Z turnover. A key finding which arose from objective one include that of Generation Z possessing a preference for face to face communication. Contrary to the literature review, findings from this research found that Generation Z desire feedback from their manager every two to four months. A principal finding includes that of intrinsic motivation being high among this generation with the main motivators for this generation in Company A including getting the job done correctly and working as part of team. Significantly, this research found that Generation Z envision themselves working for at least four different employers throughout their lifetime, with some not having a particular number in mind but assuming that it will be a high figure. Objective one also uncovered that Generation Z in Company A learn new skills by being guided through the process. From a review of the literature it would seem that Generation Z are an altruistic generation who place an enormous importance on CSR. While they may be altruistic outside of work this research indicates that this generation do not place high value on an organisations approach to CSR.

Key findings from sub-objective one which investigated how Generation Z believe they are viewed by other generations in the workplace include that of Generation Z perceiving they are viewed as lazy, like children, inexperienced and overeducated. The importance of intergenerational management for organisations cannot be understated. It is imperative that organisations find methods and strategies which support the different strengths that exist between employees of all generations.

This research study was tasked with exploring how Generation Z will impact HRM retention strategies and how Company A will need to alter and implement new retention initiatives to retain this generation. Key findings from this research include the importance of goal setting in relation to motivation for Generation Z. A major finding also included that fact that Generation Z in Company A are less likely to try a new role internally before seeking an external role with a different organisation. This research found that Generation Z desire the opportunity to travel within their organisation. Throughout literature, there is a heavy focus on Generation Z primarily requiring soft skills training when they enter the workplace. Findings from this research included that Generation Z are lacking training which is directly relevant to their role such as technical training on systems. It is important for Company A not to make assumptions regarding the training Generation Z require.

This research supported the literature in which it was found that managerial support is central to what Generation Z require and expect from their manager in the workplace. Generation Z in Company A have mixed opinions regarding how the organisations reward system should be structured with the majority of those interviewed holding the preference that rewards should be based off personal performance. Key findings from sub-objective two which was tasked with identifying factors which attract Generation Z to join a particular organisation included the type of work which the organisation engaged in, the salary offered and the company culture which Generation Z can gauge via social media sites and word of mouth reviews.

This research study has identified the monumental impact which Generation Z will have on HRM strategies and initiatives from recruitment to retention. This research has provided Company A with an increased awareness of this new generation to the workforce. Understanding the impact Generation Z have on the workplace is of critical importance as the future success of organisations will be determined by the behaviours of Generation Z employees in the long run. The successful management of a new generation in the workforce will rely upon the

preparedness and leadership style of the company and thus recommendations for Company A will be made by the researcher.

7.2 Recommendations

The researcher has established the following recommendations for Company A which have been derived from findings accumulated throughout this research study.

7.2.1 Recommendation One

Through this research study it became apparent that Generation Z value being recognised by their organisation and place an emphasis on moving up the "career ladder". It is recommended that Company A review and update their current career and competency framework and insert additional shorter steps as discussed by Lyons *et al.* (2015) in order for Generation Z to progress to new stages in the framework at a more rapid rate.

7.2.2 Recommendation Two

Through the interviews conducted by the researcher it was found that Company A's current performance appraisal system is not effective among the Generation Z cohort. Traditional performance appraisals are discussed throughout literature with many authors stating that they will not work with this new generation in the workplace. It is recommended by the researcher that Company A change from an annual performance appraisal to a six monthly appraisal for staff. This will provide Generation Z with the ability to review, action and alter goals as the year progresses.

7.2.3 Recommendation Three

The next recommendation relates to Company A and they training they provide to Generation Z. Throughout the interviews conducted it became evident that the employees interviewed did not feel they receive training which is required to excel at their role. The researcher recommends that Company A create a forum

whereby employees, in particular Generation Z, can request courses or training resources they need.

7.2.4 Recommendation Four

A final recommendation relates to the importance of travel among Generation Z. Company A are a global organisation with offices across the world. It is clear from the research data that Generation Z are keen to gain new experiences by working abroad. This does not automatically mean moving abroad indefinitely or for a significant period which may be the case for more senior generations in the workplace. It is recommended that Company A take advantage of their global operations and allow for secondments for Generation Z to their offices and sites in different countries, where possible, for up to a year. Working abroad will aid this generation in gaining new skills and experiences with working among different cultures

7.3 Implications of Findings

Through the completion of this research study the researcher has identified areas which Company A should consider when altering and/or implementing retention initiatives for Generation Z. While assessing the recommendations provided by the researcher Company A should be aware of the potential costings and timeframes associated with these. The updating of the current career and competency framework is a relatively speedy and cost effective way of reducing the career stagnation among new generations in the workplace. The implementation of more frequent performance appraisals will involve a time cost for management and employees. However, it is anticipated that the benefits of more frequent goal setting within the appraisal function will benefit the organisation in the long run. Company A will need to invest funding in training for Generation Z. However, by implementing a platform whereby employees can request training which they require to excel at their roles the organisation can save as they will not be encouraging employees to attend training which may not be of benefit to them. With regards to sending employees on secondment the initial cost for employee secondments may seem quite high, however,

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secondments can act as an investment for Company A as they are a professional development opportunity for Generation Z.

CIPD Personal Learning Reflection

The process of completing the dissertation from start to finish was immensely rewarding and I would categorise completing the dissertation as my most significant academic achievement to date. I am currently working in the field of Human Resources and by completing this dissertation it has allowed for my skills and knowledge to expand greatly which will help me throughout my career.

The main challenge I faced when completing this dissertation was that of constructing a balance between working a full time job and completing the dissertation. This became more manageable once I created a schedule and broke down the workload into manageable pieces. Completing this dissertation has significantly elevated my time management skills and will undoubtedly help me in my career going forward and should I choose to study further.

The chosen research topic of conducting a qualitative investigation into the implications Generation Z will have on HRM retention strategies was selected due to is relevance to my current role. I have an immense interest in this generation and I am keen to understand their workplace motivations, skills and opinions on a deeper level. I greatly enjoyed completing this research and throughout the research study, particularly by conducting the interviews, I have learned a great deal about Generation Z in my organisation and how HRM strategies can have a monumental impact on the retention of this generation. I hope that the findings from this research will be of benefit to my organisation.

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Appendix A: Participant Information Sheet

Dissertation Title: *A Qualitative Investigation into the Implications on Human Resource Management Retention Strategies as Generation Z enter the Workplace.*

I would like to invite you to take part in a research study. Before you decide you need to understand why the research is being done and what it would involve for you. Please take time to read the following information carefully. Ask questions if anything you read is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not to take part.

Who am I and what is the study about?

My name is Orla Collins and I am a part-time student in National College of Ireland and I am completing a Masters' in Human Resource Management. As part of this qualification I am required to complete a research project which will be submitted as my dissertation in August 2020.

For this project, I am conducting a qualitative study which will investigate how the entry of Generation Z into the workforce will impact human resource's retention strategies for Company A.

What will taking part involve?

If you decide to volunteer, you will be asked to participate in one interview, which will last approximately 30 – 40 minutes. You will be asked a series of questions. Some of these questions will be regarding working styles, training and development, performance management systems, motivation and your future expectations.

Due to the current pandemic rather than in person face to face interviews, they will take place via Microsoft Teams or Zoom. The interview will be audio recorded and prior to the interview you will be asked to sign a consent form indicating your agreement to take part.

All information provided will be kept strictly confidential in accordance to National College of Ireland Ethics Committee requirements.

Why have you been invited to take part?

You have been asked to take part in this study as you fall within the Generation Z age range and work for Company A.

Do you have to take part?

You are not obliged to take part and your participation is completely voluntary. You can withdraw at any time or refuse to answer any question without consequences.

What are the possible risks and benefits of taking part?

There will be no direct benefits to you for participating in this study, however, the research conducted may aid Company A in improving retention strategies for Generation Z employees. By participating in this research it is not anticipated to cause you any disadvantages or risks.

Will taking part be confidential?

All information collected during the course of the interview will be kept strictly confidential. Your identity and the organisations identity will be removed from all interview transcripts and the written report. This will be done by changing your name, the organisations name and disguising any details of the interview which may act as identifying factors.

When analysing and writing the findings some quotes may be included, but they will not contain any identifying information.

How will information you provided be recorded, stored and protected?

Audio recordings will be used to record the interview in order to ensure accuracy in collecting the information and to allow for the data to be transcribed accurately. If requested a transcript of the interview can be provided.

Signed consent forms and original audio recordings will be retained in a secure, password protected folder on the researcher's computer until after the degree has been conferred. A transcript of interviews in which all identifying information has been removed will be retained for a further two years after this. Under freedom of information legalisation you are entitled to access the information you have provided at any time

What will happen to the results of the study?

The results of this study will only be submitted in my dissertation to the National College of Ireland as part of my degree.

Who should you contact for further information?

Please contact the principle researcher, Orla Collins at
x18119387@student.ncirl.ie.

You can also contact my supervisor, Dr Conor Nolan at Conor.Nolan@ncirl.ie

Thank you.

Appendix B: Interview Consent Form

Consent to take part in research

• I {Insert name] voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.

• I understand that even if I agree to participate now, I can withdraw at any time or refuse to answer any question without any consequences of any kind.

• I understand that I can withdraw permission to use data from my interview within two weeks after the interview, in which case the material will be deleted.

• I understand that I will not benefit directly from participating in this research.

• I agree to my interview being audio-recorded. You will not be asked to state your name on the recording.

• I understand that all information I provide for this study will be treated confidentially.

• I understand that in any report on the results of this research my identity will remain anonymous. This will be done by changing my name and disguising any details of my interview which may reveal my identity or the identity of people I speak about.

• I understand that disguised extracts from my interview may be quoted in the dissertation.

• I understand that original audio recordings will be initially recorded on Microsoft Teams/Zoom, they will then be deleted from these platforms and will

be retained on secure Google Drive until the exam boards confirms results their dissertation.

• I understand that signed consent forms will be retained on secure Google Drive until the exam boards confirms results their dissertation.

• I understand that a transcript of my interview in which all identifying information has been removed will be retained for specific relevant period which will be two years from the date of the exam board.

• I understand that under freedom of information legalisation I am entitled to access the information I have provided at any time while it is in storage as specified above.

•I understand that I am free to contact the researcher of this study, Orla Collins, to seek further clarification and information if required.

Signature of research participant

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Signature of participant   Date

Signature of researcher

I believe the participant is giving informed consent to participate in this study

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Signature of researcher   Date

Appendix C: Interview Questions – Topic Guide

Individual

1. Is this your first full time job after completing your degree?

Training

2. What do you expect from your employer with regards to providing training?
   - Are your expectations being met currently?
3. How do you learn new skills?

Performance Management

4. How often do you expect feedback from your manager or supervisor at work?
5. How do you want your performance to be evaluated at work?
6. In your opinion, what should an organisations reward structure be based on?

Diversity/Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

7. What does an inclusive culture mean to you?
8. Do you place any value on an organisations approach to CSR?

Motivation

9. What are your main motivators in work?
10. Would you like to make it to the top of your future profession?
    - Do your leadership aspirations lay within your current company?

Future- Oriented

11. How many different employers do you see yourself working for in your lifetime?

12. Would you consider moving to a different role in the same organization before looking for an external job?

Self

13. What is your daily split between communicating in person and digitally?
14. What do you want most from your manager in the workplace?
15. What are your current top 5 factors for joining a new company?
    - Have they changed since college?
16. What challenges do you see for HR in the retention of Generation Z employees?

Generation Z

17. How do you believe Generation Z is viewed by other generations in the workplace?
18. In your opinion, are there learnings which your generation can teach other generations?