An Exploration of the possible effects of the attributes of employee engagement in the retention of Generation Y employees.

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Table of Contents

List of Appendices

- ## Appendix 1- Interview Questions

- ## Appendix 2- Transcribed Interviews

Abstract

The research explores the concept of employee engagement of Generation Y which ultimately leads to employee retention. Previous researchers have defined the Generation Y cohort as highly disengaged as a workforce. The generation is known to have high expectations from self and the employer and are focus mainly on career progression. This research outlines the various attributes of employee engagement described by previous researchers and makes attempt to find out the possible relationship of these attributes with employee retention of the Generation Y.

The research study took into consideration the International Masters students in Ireland who have worked or are working in various private and public sectors. The study looked at students belonging to various countries such as India, Malaysia, China, Nigeria and Canada. The study included unstructured interviews followed by thematic analysis.

The research found that in general the attributes outlined for employee engagement lead to employee retention of the Generation Y, taking into consideration that the work culture embodies the said attributes. The study has suggested that being a highly personalised cohort, the Generation Y from developing countries have varied expectations from their employers and show appreciably distinct qualities when compared to developed countries owing to the noted thriving cultural differences.

Although, employee engagement and employee retention of the Generation Y has been addressed before, the possible relationship between the two rarely had been documented and researched. This was a humble attempt to understand the relationship which could be beneficial for employer to understand the various generalised requirements when dealing with Generation Y employees.

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Introduction

There has been phenomenal interest in the generational differences that exist in the organizations. The differences are pronounced in the recent workforce as the employees are from various generational cohorts and thereby, have varied strengths and weaknesses. For this purpose, the generations have been defined as the Silent Generation, the Baby Boomers, the Generation X and Generation Y (Schullery , 2013). Every generation has varied values, requirements, and shared life-defining experiences. This in turn defines their extrinsic and intrinsic values which form their work culture (Smith and Clurman, 1998). Thus, differences have crept in the workforce making it fragmented depending on the age differences. This has also highly affected the employee retention policies in various organizations with renewed interest in the subject among many researchers.

The difference among the various generations has had an impeccable effect on the people strategies and management of the organisations. The management strategies in recent years have tried to deal with multiple interventions and requirements of the co-existence of multiple generations in the workforce. The organizations have tried to meet these differences to successfully build an engaged workforce. Engaged employees have shown emotional attachment to the employers (Markos and Sridevi, 2010). Employee engagement has been directly related to service, quality, safety, retention, sales, profit and total shareholder returns (Kruse, 2012). Markos and Sridevi (2010) have argued that engaged employees are a competitive advantage to the employers in any particular sector.

The rise of interest in Generation Y, also called Echo Boomers is mainly due to the unique wants and requirements as they have entered the workforce. The Generation Y individuals have been under a barrage of scrutiny in recent years. They have been termed as 'delusional', 'arrogant', 'entitled', 'not special', 'focused on career advancement', 'keen on mentoring', 'and adamant about work life balance'. They are sometimes referred to as 'GenMe' (Twenge et al., 2010). Amble (2003) has pointed towards the limited loyalty and single-mindedness in career persuasion of the Echo Boomers. Existing literature has pointed out towards the rising career expectations leading to the continuous job hopping (Budd, 2008).

Extant research suggests that the unique characteristics of the Generation Y have led to accommodating employee engagement techniques. But almost none of the previously reviewed literary works of researchers explain the possible relationship between the attributes of employee engagement and employee retention which can be used to retain the Generation Y employees. The research tries to explain this relationship and suggest possible recommendations which could provide line of action to the various employers.

Literature Review

Introduction

The literature review will examine the concept of Generation Y and employee engagement in organisations. Firstly the concept of the various generations will be explored and the strengths, weaknesses and various values of the Generation Y will be closely examined. The Generation Y or the Generation Y are the young graduates born during the last decade of the 1990s (Deloitte, 2011) who have become an appreciable proportion of the workforce. Following this, the aspect of employee engagement, the catalysts of employee engagement and the effect of engaged workforce in an organization is explored. Employee engagement has been defined as a strategic value implemented by the employer in an organisation to build a 'partnership' between the organization and the employees such that the organizational goals and individualistic ambitions are mutually respected (Sirsetti, 2012). Thirdly, the generational cohort and the changes in the employee engagement is examined and a co-relation between the two is established.

The literature review will be divided in the following parts:

- Who are the Millennial?-This section helps establishes the various generations in the present workplace and explores the traits of the Generation Y in the workplace.
- Values of the Generation Y- This section highlights the characteristics of the Generation Y as individuals and how they behave
- Generation Y as International Graduates- This section defines the characteristics of the Generation Y as students and constructively identifies the trends of career in present graduates.
- Generation Y as Employees- This section outlines the employee behaviour of the Generation Y in the organization. As employees, the characteristics of the Generation are focused in this part of the review.
- Employee engagement- The section culminates the various literature which defines the concept of employee engagement and reviews the extant literature on the idea of engagement.

- Catalysts of Employee Engagement- The section emphasizes on the features of employee engagement in a productive workforce.
- Employee Engagement in Today's Workforce- This section describes the employee engagement in the workplace. It clearly outlines the engagement advancements made by the employers in the recent years.
- Generations in workplace and employee engagement- This section co-relates the advancements of employee engagement with the changing values of the generations.
- Conclusion-

Who are the Millennial?

A generational cohort is identifiable as a group of individuals born during the same time span and share defining events at critical life development stages (Kupperschimdt, 2000 p.66). According to Egri and Ralston (2004), a generation is a subculture with shared priorities and values. In other words, a generation presumably shares birth year experiences and life experiences during the making years of life (Smith and Clurman, 1998). Existing literature suggests that the individuals belonging to the same generation would have similar beliefs, values, thought process, organizing and information skills (Balda and Mora, 2011).

Schullery (2013) has described four generations which have parallel existence in today's workforce: Silent Generation or traditionalists born in between 1925 to 1945, Baby boomers born in between 1946 to 1964, Generation X or Generation X born in between 1965 to 1981 and the Millennial or Generation Y born in between 1981 and 1999. Although there has been much debate regarding the adopted birth years for generations , slight changes in the quoted years do not create much difference as people born within adjacent years are known to share defined life experiences (Parry and Urwin, 2010) which in turn modify their attributes towards work and life (Schullery, 2013). Howe and Strauss (2000) have discussed it further stating that macro level changes in the environment influence the personal characteristics born in a specific span of time, having considerable effect on consumption behaviour.

Generation Y or Generation Y also called Echo Boomers, Gen Next (Alsop, 2008)and Digital Natives (Schullery,2013) are described as the self-entitled individuals who are future oriented, opportunity driven and fundamentally different from other generations (Deloitte, 2011). They

are born during the last two decades of the 1900s, particularly between 1982 and 1995 (Deloitte, 2011). Also known as the Entitled Generation, they are reportedly short term focused but equally committed to work and life like Generation X (Forbes, 2013). They are identified by their desire of meaningful job content from Day 1 in the organization and are a sharp contrast to the 'job for life' pattern of the previous generations such as Baby Boomers and Generation X. This behaviour pattern is specific to the Generation Y which has unique effects on employee engagement towards employers, unlike the previous generations.

Tulgan and Martin (2001) described the generation as the one of the most educated, tolerant and confident generations in the history of mankind. Cekada (2012), Kilber (2014) and Gurau (2012) explain the Generation Y to be multi-tasking individuals who are ambitious and excellent team players. The Generation features itself as a tech savvy one making them the most socially conscious generation ever (Tulgan and Martin, 2001).

Values of the Generation Y

According to Rokeach (1973) values can be defined as 'persisting belief or thought that a certain code of conduct towards a particular situation is personally or socially ideal or preferable in comparison with the opposite state.' According to Lyons et al (2009), values are persisting and permanent as they formed during the introductory or formative years of an individual's life. The introductory years of the Generation Y are regarded to be shaped by major leaps in technology and increased globalisation (Howe & Strauss, 2000). According to Barzilai-Nahon and Mason (2010), during the formative years the cohort has been surrounded by technological advancements and digital tools which was instrumental in enhancing the connectivity and communication in the world.The formative years of Generation Y are characterised by economic prosperity, increased gender equality and women participation as well as women empowerment in corporate and political world, social unrest and unity, increase in life expectancy (Lim, 2012).

According to Shehan (2015), the Generation Y is unimaginably individualistic and the key to management of the Generation Y in the workforce is embracing the fact that each individual has a personalized outlook towards the world. Tulgan (2009; 2) notes Generation Y to be more difficult to recruit, retain, motivate and manage than any previous generation, however if

managed correctly they have the potential to be the highest performing generation in history. This helps us to conclude that the Generation Y has been influential in the recently adopted managerial patterns. But the question remains as to what attributes affect the employee participation among the Generation Y and how would it affect the management in recent years.

Dinnel (2006) summarised the values and attributes of the Generation Y based on their work practices-

- Opportunity and scope of development in professional and personal growth.
- High level of social interaction with colleagues.
- Collective leadership and meaningful input in the organization.
- Reconciliation of self-interest with job prospects.
- Variation in the daily job chore with challenge, change and interaction being a crucial factor in the working hours.
- Reward and recognition for the job done in the organization.
- Desire for responsibility from day one.

These had considerable impact on the characteristics of the generation. Generation Y has values towards work which differ considerably from previous generations (Twenge et al., 2010). Schullery (2013) has pointed out that Generation Y as a group are more like-minded than any other generation. At the same time, Generation Y has pre-defined working styles of meaningful work, multitasking, job autonomy, responsibility, freedom, flexibility, problem-solving skills and collaborating terms (Aruna and Anitha, 2015). This proves that the 'trophy kids' are a generation of excellent capabilities and if harnessed, can turn out to be one of the most productive workforce in history.

Boyd (2010, pg. 465) mentions though Generation Y as individuals reveal a short sighted tendency of self-fulfilment, the cause of social betterment and social welfare is an important concept. Literature suggests Generation Y to be self-absorbed, tech savvy and optimistic compared to previous generations (Generation X and the Boomers) (Lyons et al., 2007).

A study conducted by Twenge et al. (2010) significantly proved the changing values of Generation Y at work. According to the study, the Generation Y are proven to attach considerable importance to extrinsic rewards and surprisingly to intrinsic values with financial

income being the only value with no linear change compared to other generation. The results of the study proved Generation Y to pursue an attitude of entitlement valuing leisure highly at work. The highly rated intrinsic value (Schullery, 2013) points towards meaningful job content which strongly correlates to employee engagement (Fairlie, 2011). This directs us to the fact that Generation Y is engaged and particularly participative as employees compared to other generations. According to Lichy (2012) Generation Y are considered 'multi-taskers', 'confident' and 'team players.'

According to Clarke (2015), freedom is a core work value of the Generation Y. Generation Y have also been known to value leisure, flexibility, autonomy and an intrinsic work life balance (Cennamo and Gardner, 2008). Lim (2012) has identified the main characteristics of the generation as –natives of technology and digitalisation, strong national identity, work and family oriented with considerable work-life balance goals in corporate life, financially smart and pressurised. Generation Y are considered to be highly receptive and comfortable towards change (Smola & Sutton, 2002) along with being fiercely independent and highly innovative (Tapscott, 1998).

However it would be advantageous to bear in mind that the generation is not a homogenous group undergoing the same castigatory and reproving circumstances together at the same period of time and place which have been instrumental in defining the attributes of these people (Lim, 2012). One should keep in mind regional sand cultural differences as well as individual mind set of the generation which plays a pivotal role in shaping the values and characteristics of a person.

During the last decades, associations with various NGOs, non-profit organizations and charity functions has evolved from being a short-term sales technique to a compulsory marketing strategy (Cui et al, 2003). One has to understand that this helps the corporate identity of the employer to be linked with significant social concerns and cooperative marketing (Varadarajan and Menon, 1988).

Existing literature has indicated the role of Generation Y in corporate social responsibility. It has been suggested that Generation Y as a generation is concerned about the social issues taking

place around them. As a result, cause-related marketing appeals to Generation Y as customers and employees than any other generation.

According to Cui et al (2003), there is positive attitude of the Generation Y towards cause related marketing. The present generation is known to support corporate social responsibility of the employers to a great extent. Previous research such as Keating (2000) also concluded that the cohort was supportive and collaborative towards the social issues and would voice social concerns more than previous generations. Studies suggest that female students were more supportive towards corporate social responsibility than compared to males among the Generation Y (Cui et al, 2003, Ross et al 1992). Arlow (1991) also suggest that business students are more cynical about this than non-business students. Various studies have also suggested that Generation Y is socially responsible deriving this from their frequent donation habits to non-profit organizations (USA Today, 2000).

Generation Y as Employees

Generation Y have been projected as the largest workforce among all the generations by the United States in 2015 (Schawbel and Bisharat, 2015). The Generation Y are presently a considerable proportion of the workforce which enables them to reshape the various rules at the workplace (Twenge and Campbell, 2008). As a part of the workforce, these employees are optimistic, confident, success driven and entrepreneurial (Forbes, 2013). Various studies have noted the high expectations of the Generation Y from the employers based on work-life balance (Smola and Sutton, 2002), freedom related work (Cennamo and Gardner, 2008), social involvement (Cennamo and Gardner, 2008), cooperative workplace (Wong et al., 2008), career advancement (Wong et al, 2008), mentoring (Sturges et al., 2002), job content (Rawlins et al.,2008), job satisfaction (Dries et al., 2008) and financial rewards (Dries et al., 2008). This points out that the Generation Y has pronounced effects on the workplace environment and strategies of any organisation they are part of.

A new generation or like-minded employees are said to arrive in the workforce every twenty years (Howe and Strauss, 2007). According to Gelbart & Komninos (2012), the managerial pattern tends to change to accommodate the varying nature of the workforce, thereby adjusting

the management techniques to obtain the best results from the existing conditions (Tapscott, 2009). There are three generations in the present workforce: 'The Baby boomers', 'The Generation X' and 'The Generation Y'. The Generation Y has been defined as the 'are the largest cohort, numbering around 88 million' (Cahill & Sedrak, 2012). Meinster (2012) has claimed Generation Y to constitute three-fourth of the workforce by 2030.

In a workplace, the Generation Y look for high-quality colleagues with extensive knowledge sharing capabilities, flexibility in the working arrangements (mobility, home offices), motivation in the form of prospects for advancement in the organisation, recognition and appreciation, a steady rate of advancement and promotion, engagement in new experiences and challenges (Hewlett, Sherbin and Sumberg, 2009).

With these generations working together in various organizations, there have been crucial challenges in the human resources management leading to uncovered perspectives and discrepancies (Özçelik, 2015). The Generation Y is noted to be radically different to the previous cohort of the workforce (Solnet and Hood, 2008). This is mainly because the older generations worked with the 'job-for-life' style which is no longer the case nowadays. According to Yamamura (2007), the values and objectives of the employees of the new generation (i.e. Generation Y) can create a drift in communication which in turn could have adverse effects on employee engagement, motivation and productivity. The Generation Y has been instrumental in posing threatening challenges to corporations in terms of involving themselves in decision making, striving for work-life balance, participating in meaningful social interaction, valuing volunteerism and challenging management decisions (Aruna and Anitha, 2015). Generation Y are always on the lookout for frequent updates in any workplace. The Generation Y are characterised by the need to feel informed and plugged in along with sharing knowledge with increased speed and frequency (Reynolds, Bush and Geist, 2008). The need for transparent communication i.e. adopting an open and honest style of communication (Armour, 2005) is one of the most crucial needs in an organization for this generation. These employee also look out for feedback mechanisms thereby stressing on two way communication rather than a forced authoritative communication from the upper strata of the organization (Reynolds, Bush and Geist, 2008). This focuses on the collaboration which the Generation Y offers to an organization with efficient communication system.

As employees, Generation Y prefers transparent and open communication (Myers and Sadaghiani, 2010). McGuire et al (2007) suggests that Generation Y affects the relationship with various generational cohorts as well as organizational performance. According to McGuire et al (2007), "'Millennials' characteristics may complicate, and potentially disrupt, workplace interactions with members of other generations, thus negatively affecting co-workers and organizational processes."

Generation Y feels more connected to flatter organization while they can substantially contribute with diverse worldviews and work with collective team spirit (Reynolds, Bush and Geist, 2008). The phenomenon of 'collective leadership' has emerged with the withering way of a top-to-bottom approach of the authoritative style of management. According to Kaplan, the Generation Y would not respond to the traditionalist managerial style following the top-to-bottom approach in any organization. The employees are keen to lend ideas and exchange knowledge with truly engaging experience in an organization with a speak-your-mind philosophy (Hewlett, Sherbin and Sumberg, 2009).

According to Lyons (2004), the defining characteristic of the Generation Y is the growth and connection of the Generation Y with Internet and technology. According to Schawbel and Bisharat (2015), these employee take it as their professional responsibility to understand and learn the upcoming technologies. According to Armour (2005), the Generation Y have been noted to work faster than previous generations with high expectations on self. They usually aim for working faster and more efficiently than the Baby Boomers and the Generation X. Armour (2005) also brought the value of self-fulfilment in the picture of the working employees. The Generation Y prioritizes and accommodates their working life along with their family and personal life (Twenge et al, 2010). Dries et al. (2008) says Generation Y regard work as less central to their lives as compared to the Bombers and the Generation X. Being goal-oriented along with efficient work culture, the Generation Y with their distinctive values and approaches to work have been instrumental in clearly defining the people-strategies of the organisations in recent years (Cennamo and Gardner, 2008).

Employee Engagement

Employee engagement has been defined as a strategic value implemented by the employer in an organisation to build a 'partnership' between the organization and the employees such that the

organizational goals and individualistic ambitions are mutually respected (Sirsetti, 2012). Alberht (2010, p.5) defined employee engagement as a "positive work-related psychological state characterised by a genuine willingness to contribute to organizational success." It is a state of intellectual and emotional commitment of an employee to the organisation (Richman, 2006) such that the job content and workload are meaningful and manageable for the individual (Nelson and Simmons, 2003). Kahn (1990) identified the three basic psychological conditions mandatory for effective personal engagement: meaningfulness, safety and availability. He further described engagement in the workforce as "harnessing organizational members to their work roles."

Rathbard (2001) argued engagement to be a 'psychological presence' harnessed by attention and absorption. Marlach et al., (2001) described the basic characteristics of employee engagement as energy, involvement and efficacy, directly opposing the burnout dimensions of exhaustion, cynicism and inefficacy (Saks, 2006). Extant literature has various terminologies such as 'Work Engagement' (Schaufelli and Bakker, 2010) and 'Organisational Engagement' (Saks, 2006) suggesting the varying level of engagement of the employees towards their work and the organization.

Existing literature regarding employee engagement fail to make it clear that whether employee engagement is a particular attitude or a set of behaviour i.e. there is no clear definition with provides evidence about engagement in today's workforce being a more of a way to act or a set of manner or disposition among the employees. Robinson et al (2005) described employee engagement as the satisfaction, involvement and the enthusiasm towards one's role in an organization being an attitude whereas the desire to improve things in an organization as a set of behaviour.

Recognising the various aspects of employee engagement, the employers have identified the workforce to be the source of intellectual knowledge and innovation who are individually instrumental in materialising the values of the company philosophy (Kumar and Pansari, 2015). Howard Schurtz, the CEO of Starbucks has labelled employees as ambassadors of the brand and noted them to be the primary element of customer service (Kumar and Pansari, 2015). The employers have ceased to identify employees as 'cost' and relate them to 'internal resources' of the organization. Lately, there has numerous examples of increasing employee engagement and

participation through various innovative strategies, 'workforce of one' being very popular. The theory of 'workforce of one' decentralises an organization and is characterized by customised work practices (Nolan, 2011).This points us at the increasing significance of the individualism of the employees in the organizations and helps us understand how crucial employee participation has become to the employees.

Kumar and Pansari (2015) measured the employee engagement statuses of 75 organizations in India, US, China, Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands and Austria implementing a score card for each of the companies and comparing the scores obtained in terms of employee engagement. The research suggested that the organizations need to allocate the resources according the needs of employee employees and thereby, enhancing employee values in terms of employee satisfaction, commitment, loyalty, performance and identification.

According to Konrad (2006), employee engagement has a cognitive, emotional as well as a behavioural aspect in an employee's life. The cognitive feature of employee engagement deals with the beliefs of employees regarding the organization, the working conditions and the leaders in the organization. The emotional aspect of employee engagement deals with the positivity or the negativity which the employee exhibits while dealing with the organization and the leader. The behavioural aspect consists of the discretionary factor which the employee enforces into the organization such as added initiative to work, extra time and added energy to the job role. Kahn (1990) suggests the meaning of engagement in terms of psychological and physical presence of an employee while performing for the organization. Shaw (2005) defined employee engagement as an emotional as well as cognitive allegiance with the organization.

Although an academic concept, employee engagement has been marketed as a practical marketing idea in existing literature. Existing research replicas the idea of employee engagement as a concept of competitive advantage which would be difficult for fellow companies to imitate (Sundaray, 2011). The concept is pictured in literature as an attractive result-oriented approach in the organizations which is instrumental in increasing the productivity and efficiency of the workforce (Buchanan, 2004; Fleming and Asplund, 2007; Wagner and Harter, 2006) thereby, making it a priority to corporate world (Ketter, 2008).

Catalysts of Employee Engagement

The basic objective of employee engagement is creating an enthusiastic organisational culture which increases employee commitment and alignment with organisational values (Sirishetti, 2012). The dimensions of employee engagement have been defined by Kumar and Pansari (2015) as employee satisfaction, employee identification, employee commitment, and employee performance with employee loyalty. According to Sujan et al (1994), employee engagement and employee performance is based on the idea of goal-setting.

Development Dimensions International (2005) defines the main factors which are instrumental in creating a highly engaged workforce as-

- Aligning the efforts of the workforce with the strategy of the organisation.
- Empowering the employees in the organization.
- Promoting team spirit and collaboration among the employees.
- Helping people grow and develop.
- Providing support to the people and creating an environment promoting learning.
- Providing recognition and encouragement to the employees.

According to Seijts and Crim (2006), employee engagement can be incorporated in today's workforce by various leadership qualities. Firstly, the leaders should connect with the employees and exhibit how valuable the employees are to the organization. Employee focused relationship from the company focusing on knowledge sharing, profit sharing and implementing work life balance is important. Secondly, the employees should be provided with meaningful work from the leaders in which they feel engaged in their roles. Aspects of job rotation and accountability should be established. Thirdly, effective and clear communication is one of the most crucial features of effective leadership. The vision and mission of the organisation coupled up with goal-oriented approach should be well communicated to build an engaged workforce. The leaders should facilitate achievements of goals through establishment of various frameworks and help people to master the important tasks. Seijts and Crim (2006) further states that demonstration of high level of organization and increasing brand value can be readily effective towards engaging the workforce in an organization.
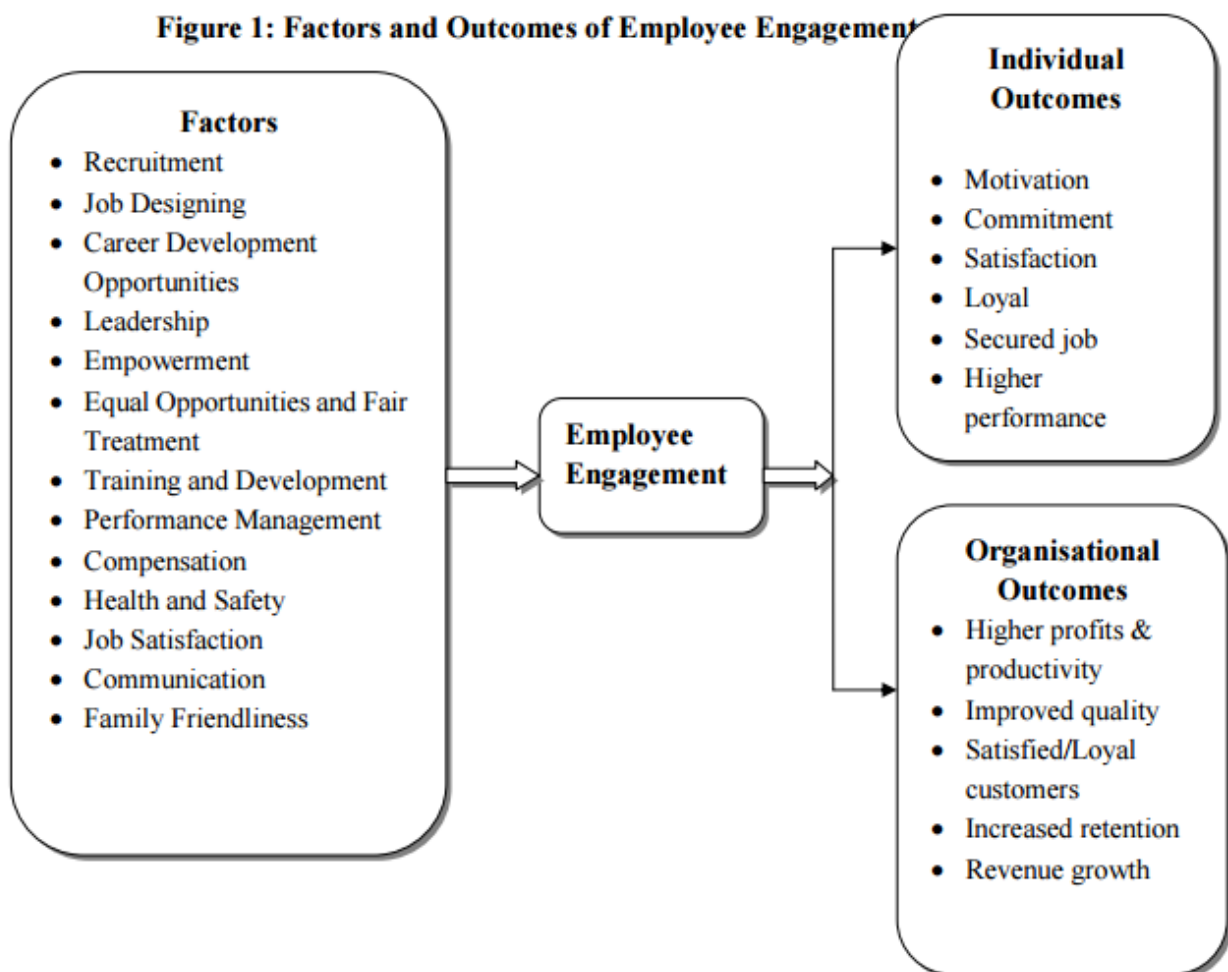
Sundaray (2011) states the various factors which lead to employee engagement in any organisation-

- ➢ Recruitment- The identification and recruitment of required talent in an organization is crucial to the success of the same. The message conveyed during the recruitment process is crucial to the enhancement of engagement and commitment of employees pertaining to the structure of the organization.

- ➢ Job structure- Job structure which pertains to psychological meaningfulness with considerable levels of autonomy and variety are essential for employee engagement in an organization.

- ➢ Career Development Opportunities- Any organization with considerable level of employee engagement is known to provide the employees with opportunities for career development. This is helpful in personal growth, development and employee retention.

- ➢ Leadership- Employees in order to be engaged and committed should have a clear idea of the mission and values of the organization they are working for. The ethical standards of any organization plays an important role in maintaining the employee engagement level.

- ➢ Equality in the workplace- Fair treatment and equal opportunities for growth and progression in the company to all employees is crucial to promote employee engagement in any organization.

- ➢ Training and Development- Learning and development is known to trigger renewed interest in existing employees as well as develop interest in new employees. The training sessions are helpful for employees in the organization in acquiring knowledge and required skills which enhances efficiency in the company structure.

- ➢ Performance Management- The process of performance management is suggestive of employee engagement. The procedure encourages managers to involve and engage employee in the structure of the organization along with the goal-setting process.

- ➢ Compensation- Compensation has been noted to have considerable effect on employment relationship. This includes both financial and non-financial perks which would be instrumental in motivating the employees in the structure of the organization.

- ➢ Job satisfaction- The organization should make sure that the career goals for every individual employee is replicated in the job being carried out. If and when the employee

likes the job undertaken, the individual with show commitment and efficiency as expected.

➢ Health and safety- Extant literature indicates the importance of security in maintaining the engagement levels of employees in an organization. Appropriate health policies and safe environment is essential for employee engagement.

➢ Communication- Use of effective and appropriate communication in an organization with a commendable feedback policy is essential for employee engagement. Once an employee is a part of the decision making process in the company and has a considerable say in the organization, the engagement level would be appreciable.

➢ Work-life balance- The recognition of the needs and requirements of personal and family life leads to engagement of employees in an organization. . This helps to build an emotional attachment with the employer and colleagues resulting in higher levels of engagement.

Figure 1: Factors and Outcomes of Employee Engagement

Factors
- Recruitment
- Job Designing
- Career Development Opportunities
- Leadership
- Empowerment
- Equal Opportunities and Fair Treatment
- Training and Development
- Performance Management
- Compensation
- Health and Safety
- Job Satisfaction
- Communication
- Family Friendliness

Employee Engagement

Individual Outcomes
- Motivation
- Commitment
- Satisfaction
- Loyal
- Secured job
- Higher performance

Organisational Outcomes
- Higher profits & productivity
- Improved quality
- Satisfied/Loyal customers
- Increased retention
- Revenue growth

Employee Engagement in Today's Workforce

Employee engagement has been directly related with productivity, profitability and credibility of the workforce. An engaged employee is one with passion for the job and connection with the organization as well as the employees (Endres and Mancheno-Smoak, 2008). An engaged employee is one who is motivated in the workplace, is positive about work (Kumar and Pansari, 2015), committed to the job and the organization and lastly, finds personal engagement in the role (Sirsetti, 2012).

Lockwood (2005) states the characteristics of engaged group of employees as employees who speak positively about the organisation to the co-workers and potential customers. The employees also showcase a desire to retain themselves in the organization showing employer-loyalty. An engaged employee exhibits extra effort of his part for the work and the job role as well as spends added energy and time. Belonging to the engaged group of employees, the individual believes that he can make a difference or at least initiate one in the organization which can be instrumental in success of the organization (Macey, 2006). They are mostly confident about the skills and the knowledge possessed which in turn defines the behavioural aspect and following performances (Seijts and Crim, 2006).

Extant literature suggests that an engaged employee is one who works in a team to improve on-the-job performance for the benefit of the organization. Such an employee is aware of the business context with an intensive customer-oriented approach (Devi, 2009). Macey (2006) suggests an engaged employee is one who extends oneself to meet the required needs of the organization. Staying focused and vigilant is found to be one of the main characteristics of such employees in a workforce (Seijts and Crim, 2006).

Thus an engaged employee is an asset to the workforce who is instrumental in increase of motivation and personification of organizational values. Gallup (2003) states these employee to be driving forces of innovation and progression in an organization. However, extant literature does not provide any evidence which says as to whether employee engagement is an individualist behaviour a group approach in the workforce.

According to Endres and Mancheno-Smoak (2008), employee engagement in today's workforce has certain important dimensions:

1. The employee should have a clear idea with regard to the role of the organization and the strategy of the organization. This enhances the focus of the employee toward his role and the part that he is playing in the organization.
2. The employee should understand the connection of the role in the company and be intellectually committed to the organization.

According to Seijts and Crim (2006), employee engagement is instrumental in outperforming the merely good organizations and establishing the organization with a competitive advantage. According to Journal of Applied Psychology employee engagement and satisfaction are one of the most crucial factors which can be related to the vital outcomes of business in the organization thereby creating a strong hold in the particular industry.

Various literature works provide evidence regarding the better performance of an engaged employee in a workforce (Devi, 2009). According to Rama Devi (2009), employee engagement enhances employee retention and meaningful contribution. Sundaray (2011) states employment engagement to be directly related to employee results, success of the organization and financial performance (Richman 2006). The impact of the engagement levels of the employees is directly related to retention, culture of the organization, customer satisfaction, productivity and organisationla performance (Bates 2004).

Conclusion

Thus, it is clear that there is considerable gap in the research of Generation Y and employee engagement. Extant literature has talked about the changing management techniques which could trigger employee engagement in the Generation Y (Barclay and Ohmer, 2014; Gilley et al., 2015; Özçelik, 2015) and the unique values of the Generation Y which have catalysed these changes. The Generation Y have been regarded as 'one of the most productive and educated workforces in history'. Certain values of the present graduates have been cited to trigger employee engagement in the workforce too. The recent trend of individualisation among the employees of the organisation is an effect of these values of the Generation Y employees. The intrinsic values which directly relates to the employee engagement help us understand the evolving management techniques based on their unique wants.

But none of the articles have clearly defined the attributes of the Generation Y which if harnessed could trigger the employee retention in the organisations and thereby, build a productive employee workforce with less employee turnover. The articles give us a clear idea of the direct relationship between the changing values of the workforce and similarly changing people strategies. But existing literature has never defined clearly the exact attributes which if promoted would initiate employee participation and retention, considering the frequent job-hopping nature of the employees.

Research Objectives

The main aim of the research is to explore the effect of attributes of employee engagement on retention of Generation Y which if harnessed can lead to retention of the talent pool. This would help the employers to build a productive and engaged workforce which stays, to personify the values of the organisation and thereby, give them competitive advantage in the relevant sector.

The sub objectives would be-

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Research Methodology

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to specify the research methods incorporated during the study and the critical reasons which indicated the chosen methods. It is the responsibility of the researcher to identify and understand the most credible method of research which is suited for the study one has undertaken in the given time frame and the available resources. In this section, the selected research methods of selection of sample, research design and collection of data will be explained.

Research Philosophies

The term 'research philosophy' demonstrates the "development of knowledge in a particular field" (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009). This occurrence may be a humble objective of answering a specific question or a significant event of devising a new motivational theory. Each research philosophy is based on certain assumptions denoting the way the world is viewed termed as "philosophical framework" (Quinlan, 2011). The philosophical frameworks which are commonly used in social science research are functionalism, symbolic interactionalism, feminism, critical inquiry and postmodernism (Quinlan, 2011). According to Johnson and Clark (2006), particularly business researchers should be made aware of undertaking philosophical commitments as these entitle a significant impact on the procedure and understanding of the investigation. Every investigation procedure thus, undertakes a number of techniques which should critically fit the objective of the research. In other words, the researcher should related to the influence of particular relationships (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009) and justify the undertaken philosophical framework with the main purpose of the research (Quinlan, 2011).

While researching, it is important to consider the 'acceptable' knowledge in the field of study (Bryman and Bell, 2015). This helps us to demonstrate the validity of the generated knowledge in the research (Quinlan, 2011) often termed as epistemological considerations. According to Quinlan (2011), "knowledge is created within the research project through the researcher's

exploration of the phenomenon under investigation, by the means of methodology and methods, which must be adequate for the research project." In the process of generating the acceptable knowledge, the question arises as to whether the social world could be or should be researched in line with principles and processes termed as natural sciences. According to Bryman and Bell (2015), the situation which affirms the significance of putting into use the natural sciences is associated with the doctrine of positivism. The philosophy of positivism deals with observable social reality in the process of research and generating credible (numerical) data (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009). Pugh (1983) denotes that the main task is to collect data based on which general propositions of existing research can be tested. The limitations of positivism comes into play at this very context of application of generalised natural scientific model for the study of society (Bryman and Bell, 2015).

The processes of data collection and data analysis are differentiated predominantly into numerical or quantitative approach or non-numerical or qualitative approach (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009). Quantitative approach can be broadly described as the collection of numerical data in a deductive, positivist and objectivist framework (Bryman and Bell, 2015). Deductive theory denotes a process of explaining the phenomenon according to the laws, predicting the occurrence and permitting them to be controlled (Collis and Hussey, 2003). Quantitative research makes note of distinctive characteristics of measurement, causality, generalisation and replication (Bryman and Bell, 2015). This can be explained as:

- Measurement of the quantitative approach addresses the issues of reliability and validation.
- A criterion for good quantitative research is the confidence in the casual inferences. This denotes the credibility of experimental designs over cross-sectional designs.
- Generalisation leads to development of law-like principles predicting human behaviour in certain situations.
- Replication denotes the possibility of generating possible conclusions based on previously conducted research.

Qualitative research methods are in sharp contrast to the traditional quantitative approaches (Bogdan and Biklen, 1992). According to Campbell (1997), qualitative research can be defined as a method of data collection in the process of research in which the researcher and the process

is of utmost importance. Peshkin (1993) described qualitative approach of research assumed complex variables in a socially constructed realistic world. The findings of this particular research methodology are descriptive, first person accounts seeking the insider's view of the problem involved (Campbell, 1997). According to Marshall (1996), the main objective of quantitative research is producing results which are generalised. These research provide answers to the 'what' questions.

Qualitative approach puts emphasis on 'words' rather than numerical data (Bryman and Bell, 2011). The subjectivity of qualitative research (Bryman and Bell, 2015) uses an inductive approach (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009). Inductive approach does not particularly focus on framing a hypothesis owing to the limited access of data (Easterby-Smith et al, 2008). This denotes collection of data to establish different views on the phenomenon. Qualitative research is rooted in interpretivism which acknowledges the difference between people and objects (Bryman and Bell, 2011).Participant observation, unstructured interviews are regarded as qualitative research (Bryman, 1988). Marshall (1996) regarded this form of research as one of the best ways to answer the humanistic questions of 'why' and 'how'. According to Gibson et al (2004), qualitative analysis focuses on a humanitarian approach leading to generation of non-numerical data. Pathak et al (2013) pointed out that qualitative research is experimentally incongruent and is generally used to comprehend the beliefs, expectations, behaviour, attitude and their interaction with the surroundings. They also noted that this type of

According to Pope et al (1996), qualitative research exists in three categories such as observational studies, interview studies and textual analysis of past records. Gibson et al (2004) noted that this particular kind of research gives voice to the participants which is instrumental in comprehending the human behaviour. The participants have a particularly empowering participation in the research process where individual experiences and benefits can be shared in an informal way. Pathak et al (2013) reminds that the research bias should be well dealt with in the qualitative research which has a considerable impact on the results. Parker et al (1998, pg. 158) describes the findings of the qualitative research as illustrative rather than representative.

The main aim of the research is to generalise the findings in the Generation Y population in Ireland to help employers understand the requirements of the age group in general. Considering

the competing research approaches, the researcher has decided the quantitative approach of research fits in the main aim of the research as has been the trend in previous researches.

Previous Research

Various research have been taking place to comprehend the definition of employee engagement to the Generation Y and to precisely outline the effects of the term in their corporate life.

Various quantitative research scales based on employee engagement have been currently devised.

A research conducted by Broadbridge, Maxwell and Ogden (2007) tried to explore the

Research Strategy
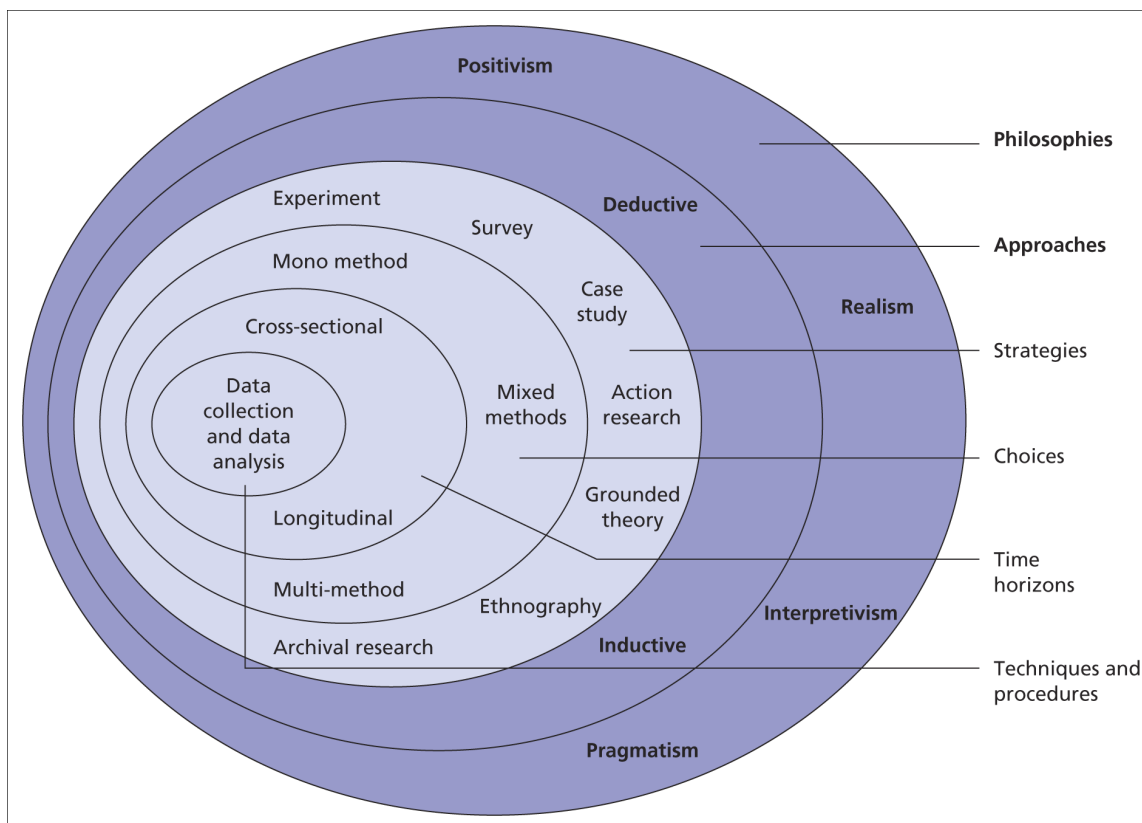
According to Creswell (2003), a qualitative research is apt for exploratory research where the main subject is to be comprehended. With the aim of generating rich and fruitful data, structured interviews were selected as a medium of data capture.

The research questions were drawn from the literature review and the questions were based on particular lines of enquiry. The questions were instrumental in comprehending the effect various pre-defined attributes of employee engagement among the Generation Y. Firstly, the questions were based on the employment experience pertaining to the current or the last employer such as the period of employment, the internal growth opportunities, the inter-company communication and the work-life balance. Secondly, the questions drifted to the individual considerations and expectations such as team work, workplace culture and productivity and corporate social responsibility. Thirdly, the questions were drafted to understand the individualistic attributes of engagement and their effect on employee retainment. The questions were open-ended and the responses were not prompted but probed to avoid research bias (Flick, 2002).

Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted prior to the main survey and structured interviews. The pilot study lead to the major modifications in the formulation and sequencing of the set of questions asked.

Sampling

Sampling relates to the 'subset of individuals chosen from the population'. The population is the cohort of international students belonging to Generation Y in a particular Irish University called the National College of Ireland. Taking into consideration the available resources and the time frame, convenience sampling was considered. Convenience sampling is a statistical method of collecting data by selecting people due to their availability and easy access. The advantages of this particular sampling is the quickness with which data can be gathered. The disadvantages of convenience sampling is the biased representation of the population in the research. According to Robson (1999, pg. 35) judgement is intrinsic to sampling. Judgement pertains to the generality of the solution implied from a particular situation at a particular time (Robson, 1999). Further to this, Anderson (2004, pg. 11) judgement and justification is essential for sample size and selection due to the absence of typical rules.

Primary data was gathered from the self-selected final year graduate students from an Irish university (National College of Ireland) who were employed or are currently employed. These students belonged to various nationalities such as India, Ireland, Nigeria, Canada, Malaysia and China. The Graduates belong to the Generation Y and were all pursuing Masters in various fields such as Human Resource Management, Finance and Data Analytics.

Ethical considerations

Qualitative research is known to pose ethical and moral challenges which are unique and tend to make the inquiry uncertain towards the research objective (Eide and Kahan, 2008). The study is entitled towards a 'mutual standpoint' between the researcher and the participant and is focused on the human responses to various situations during their life passage. This shows that qualitative research is largely dependent on the quality of interpersonal relations between the interpersonal relations between them (Guillemin and Heggen, 2009).

According to Ghauri and Gronhaug (2005, pg. 20), researchers are morally obliged to find honest and accurate answers to their queries. The interpersonal relationship between the researcher and the participant is very sensitive and has many ethical dimensions to it. Robley (1995) says with the progression of interview over time, the vulnerability between the researcher and the participant increases. Nunkoosing (2005) suggests that the researcher must build a rapport with the participant which would help the person to gain access to the critical life experiences. The relationship between the researcher and the participant can be affected by-

- Any issues relating to the anonymity of the participant.
- Questions which have or might have an effect on the self-interest of the participants or may lead to mental stress.
- Any issues relating to deception to collect data.

According to Frank (2005), in interviews the researcher and the participant is engaged in a dialog process which creates room for greatest human issues to be raised. It should be kept in mind that the results obtained should not be deformed or disfigured in a way to suit the purpose of the research. Anything which is misinterpreted does not reflect the reality and is ethically wrong (Ghauri and Gronhaug, 2005). The results should also be presented in a way that is not harmful, unrealistic, disturbing or favourable for any of the participants or target group.

Limitations of Study

The limitations of the study are based on the limited number of responses and the sample was not random. The study was based on convenience sampling which made it impossible to sample the entire population of international students pursuing Masters in Ireland who are employed or have been so. Also, convenience sampling establishes the fact the findings cannot be generalised for the entire population. It is acknowledged that the number of research informants is modest but taking into consideration the exploratory nature of the research, the participation rate is satisfactory.

Research Analysis

Findings

The findings are discussed according to the following sections-

- The period of employment.
- The traits which enhance employee engagement according to existing literature.
- The most engaging factor regarding work.

Further the traits of Generation Y as noted by existing literature is explored in the following order-

- Internal growth opportunities and career progression.
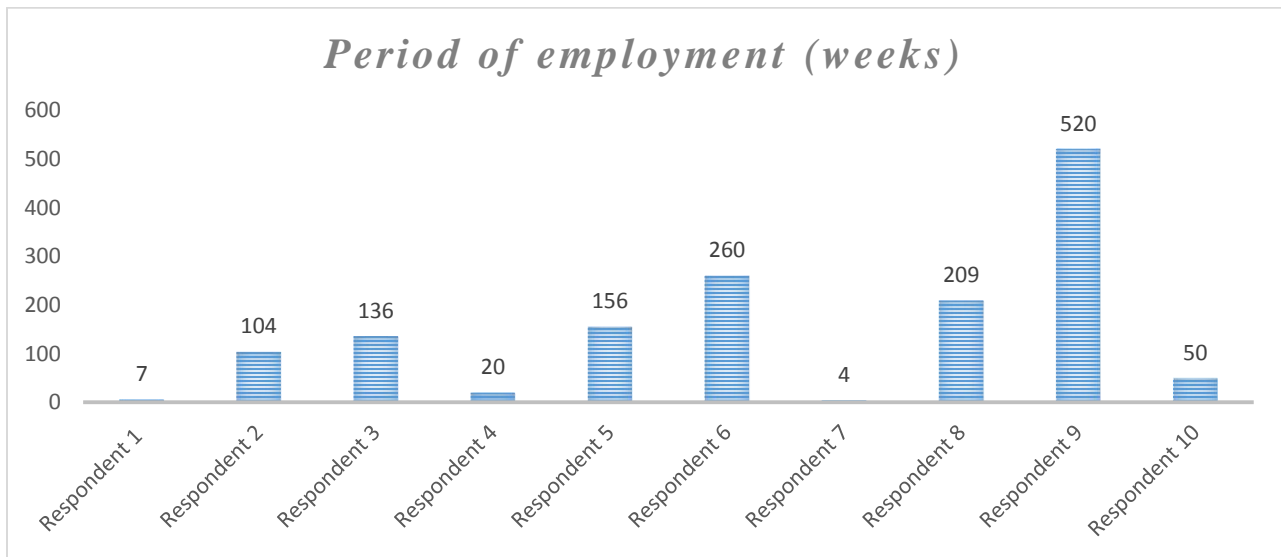- Open and fair communication.
- Work-life balance.

- Team work.

- Workplace culture.

- Corporate social responsibility.

The Period of Employment

According to existing literature, Generation Y is regarded as a cohort which believes in job-hopping due to rise in career expectations (Budd, 2008) and to work in an environment with 'a range of new experiences and challenges' (Hewlett, Sherbin and Sumberg). In examining the period of employment, the factors of age and gender were taken into consideration.

The average working period of respondents is 146.6 weeks which is approximately close to 2 years 9 months. Only 40% of the respondents have worked for 2 years and 9 months or more. 75% of these respondents are more than 25 years of age hailing from the sector of IT, Nursing and Human resources.

Whereas, 60% of the respondents were below the average working weeks. The work experience ranged from 4 weeks to 2 years 7 months. 67% of the respondents are below the age of 25 with an average working period of 1 year 4 months. It should be noted that almost 33% of the respondents are male.

Period of employment (weeks)

Respondent	Weeks
Respondent 1	7
Respondent 2	104
Respondent 3	136
Respondent 4	20
Respondent 5	156
Respondent 6	260
Respondent 7	4
Respondent 8	209
Respondent 9	520
Respondent 10	50

Internal growth opportunities and career progression.

Almost, all the respondents have reported internal growth and career progression as vital to them as employees as it 'influences retention' and 'indicates progression.'

Respondents from countries with growing economies cite internal growth in companies as an indicator of progression. This directs to the fact that the company 'values contribution and achievement' of the employees.

71% of the female respondents and 66% of male respondents in the study have labelled internal growth opportunities as indicators of progression in the company which ultimately leads to personal learning and improvements.
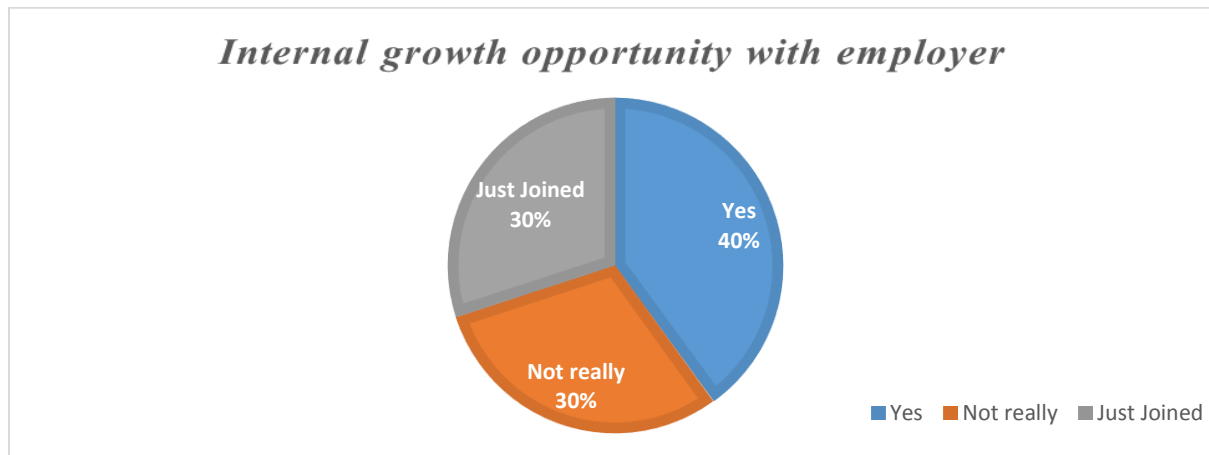
Among the respondents, almost half of them are found to have come across internal growth opportunities. These respondents have worked for a period of 2 years or more with the same employer in various sectors such as banking, IT and nursing. One of the respondents who has worked for 5 years has reported internal growth as one of the main reasons for working in the organization.

''I would rate career progression in the organization quite high and that is one of the reasons why I worked that long in the organization because I felt I was getting the improvement I needed.''

The respondents who have worked for one year or less with the same employer reported little or no internal growth opportunities in the company. Female respondents have also cited that personal situations such as pregnancy act as hindrances to internal growth which ultimately lead to disengagement with the role and the organization. According to Siegel (1985), pregnancy discrimination exhibits sexual division of productive labour and confirms the ''second class status of women at work''.

> 'I actually felt I am not going to work for the company again and I am just going to finish my contract. But I am just annoyed about the whole situation. It is because I feel if I was not pregnant they would have offered me the position rather than offer it to the public.'

Respondents who have completed 7 weeks or less with the employer have cited their desire to look for promotional opportunities with the employer, if possible.

Internal growth opportunity with employer

Just Joined 30%

Yes 40%

Not really 30%

■ Yes ■ Not really ■ Just Joined

Open and fair communication.

The study shows that 60 % of the respondents agree that the organization they work for have fair and open communication among their colleagues and the management positions. These respondents are from various sectors such as Public, Nursing, IT and Finance.

Almost 75% of the IT respondents regard the communication as ''quite informal and much more transparent as well as open''. This en

66 % of the male respondents and 57% of the female respondents have noted fair communication and transparency in the organization. Previous studies also noted the lower levels of transparency experienced by female employees as compared to their male colleagues (Belenky et al., 1997; West & Zimmerman, 2002; Simpson, R. and Lewis, P., 2005). According to West & Zimmerman (2002), women always have faced difficulty in voicing their own opinion in the public. They suggest that men have greater success in highlighting their opinion as compared to women which makes women feel unheard and unattended when voicing important matters.

On the contrary, 40% of the respondents believe that there is little transparency in the organization. The respondents have quite a few suggestions regarding the inadequate transparency in the organization:

- Hierarchy-75% of these respondents believe that most of the time even the managers couldn't have helped much because they were supposed to <u>follow a code of practice</u> and <u>decisions were made in the top levels of the organization.</u>

'We all had a procedure to follow. If you don't want to follow that procedure most of the time you would have to follow your boss.'

'They would do as they are told and it was the same work basically.'

'Also, the managers had to follow the orders coming from the senior levels and would have to stick to the deadlines. They didn't really have much say about it because it was all handled in the top levels.'

- Company's best interest- 50% of the respondents believe that the companies' have their best interest in their mind. Interestingly, 66% of the female respondents who have complained about lack of fair communication report being unheard and working according to the preferences of the employer.

'I feel like management is always scheming. They are kind of like against the employees and they want whatever is best for them basically. So I don't think they are particularly fair and the needs of the organization always triumph than….'

'They would do as they are told and it was the same work basically. It was mostly about what was expected of them.'

Open Communication

Yes 60%
No 40%

■ Yes ■ No ■
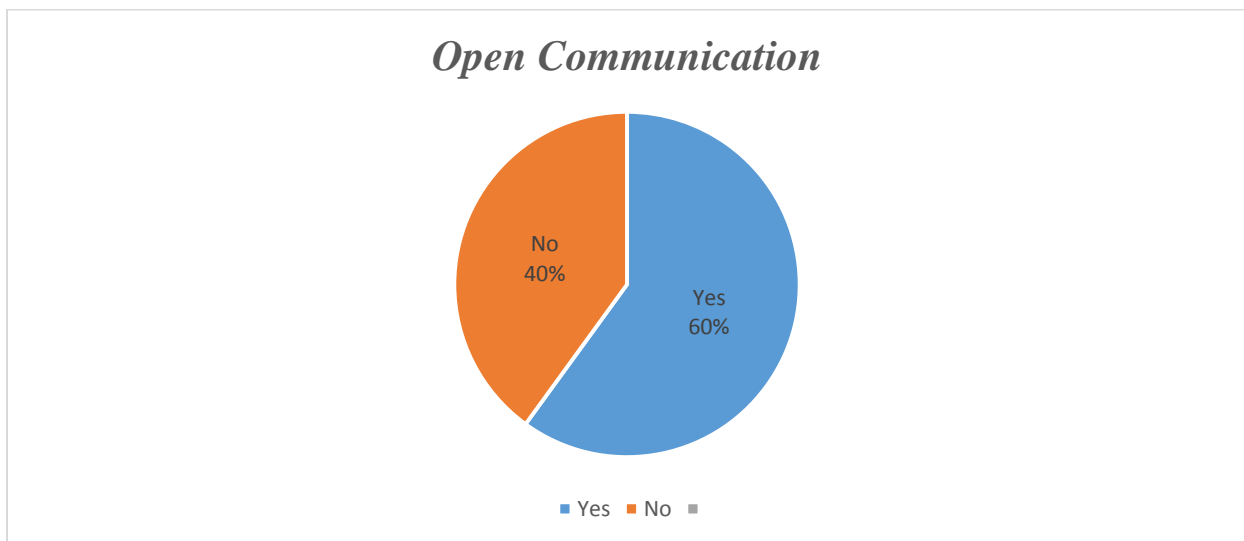
Work-life balance

The findings show that almost 70 % of the respondents believe that work-life balance is very important to them whereas 30% suggest otherwise.
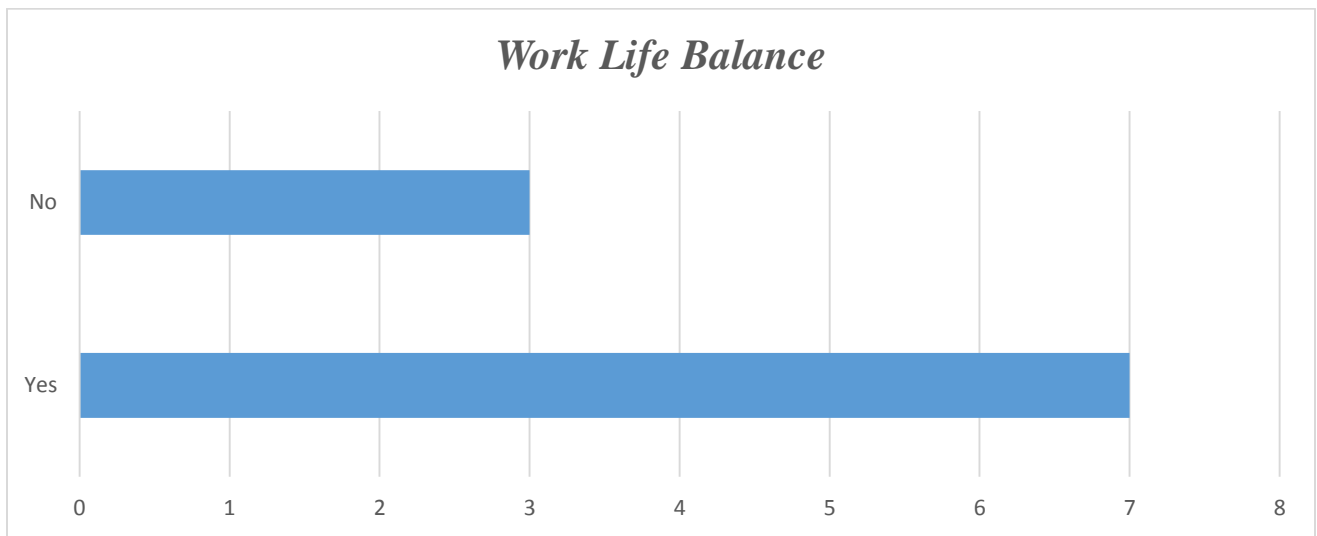

Team work

Among the respondents, 30 % of the respondents would like to act as 'leaders' in a team. 67% of these respondents are below the age of 25 who have worked for a period of 2 years or less. Majority of men (66.6 % of the male respondents) would like to act as leader and believe that they have leadership skills which could work well in a team.

20% of the respondents would like to play the role of a team player in a team. These respondents are above the age of 25 and have worked for a particular sector for more than 3 years.

Interestingly, half of the respondents would like to state themselves as both a leader and team player. According to these respondents, these qualities are dependent upon the situation.

Team Work

Team Player
20%

Leader
30%

Both
50%
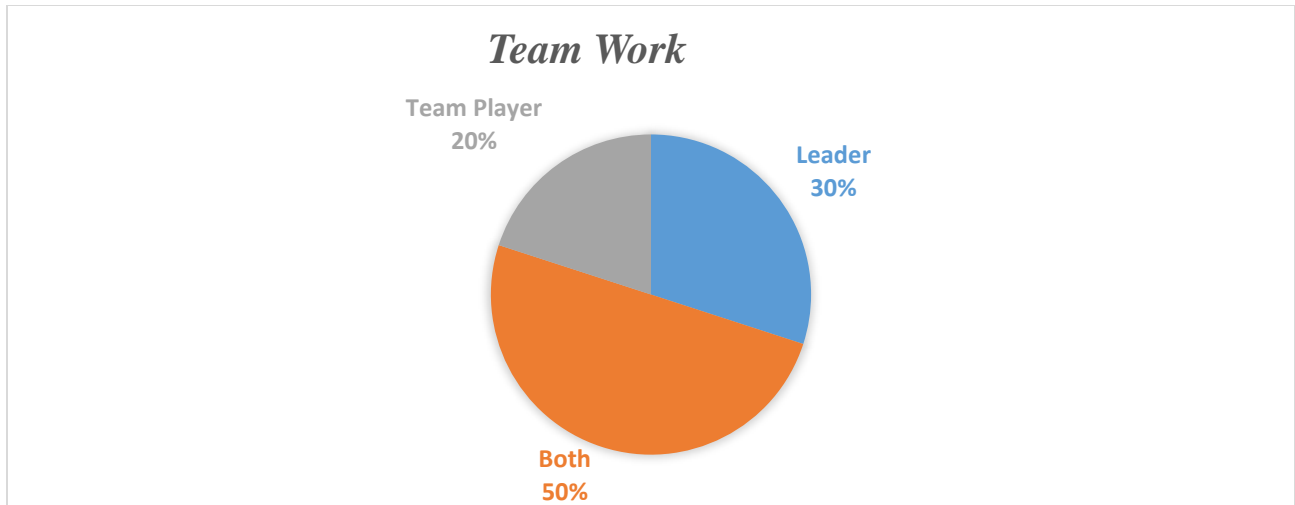
Workplace culture.

The keywords used by the respondents were:

'Team Spirit', 'Friendly and Caring', 'Transparent', 'Collaborative', 'Innovative', 'Flexible' and 'Watched Over'.

22% of the respondents have reported their workplace culture to be intellectually stimulating. These respondents describe their job as a learning experience out of their comfort zone. 57% of these respondents are above the age of 25 and 71% have worked for 2 years or more in the same sector. Interestingly, 71% of the female respondents and 66% of the male respondents value the learning in the workplace environment and have regarded as an important factor of it.
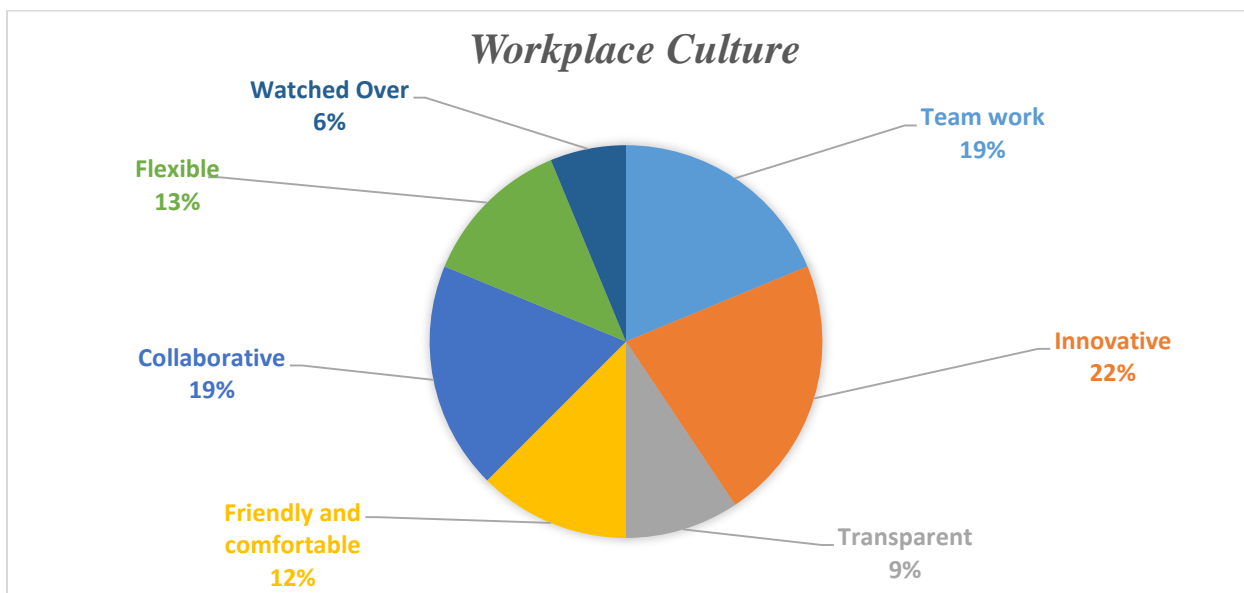
19% of the respondents have reported team spirit in the workplace. According to these respondents, the workplace culture is based on team work. Incidentally, 75 % of the respondents are above the age of 25 who have worked for a period of 5 months or more among whom 66% of them belong to the IT sector. Also, 50 % of the respondents have worked for 3 years or more in the same sector.

19% of the respondents have reported collaborative spirit in the workplace. These respondents hail from the sector of IT, Finance and Government sectors with 75 % having a work experience of 2 years or more. Interestingly, 75% of the respondents are female and only 25% of the respondents are male who have an experience of 7 weeks or less.

13% of the respondents have reported flexibility as a feature of their workplace. 66% of theses respondents are from the IT sector with a working period of 5 months or more. The remaining are from the Public sector with a working period of 7 weeks or less.

12% of the respondents have reported friendly and comfortable workplace. The respondents hail from the Banking and Finance sector with a work experience of 2 years or more. Interestingly, the respondents are females below the age of 25 hailing from developing countries like India.

9% of the respondents have reported transparent environment in the workplace. Whereas, only 6% of the respondents have reported being watched over.


Workplace Culture

Watched Over 6%
Flexible 13%
Collaborative 19%
Friendly and comfortable 12%
Team work 19%
Innovative 22%
Transparent 9%

Corporate social responsibility.

Current literature suggests Generation Y to be socially inclined and active as a generation (Cui et al, 2003, Ross et al 1988 and Keating, 2000). Research findings suggest that 60% of the Generation Y who have worked previously or are working believe corporate social responsibility as an important trait of the organization they are working for or would have worked for.

Whereas, 40% of the respondents would not regard this to be an important attribute of their ideal employer.

Respondents belonging mostly from the countries with growing economy consider this as a marketing strategy which 'depends on what area or the nature of business organisations is'.

Putting stress upon 'personal thoughts', the findings suggest that the respondents would neither consider it an important feature of the company nor a responsibility of themselves as employees.

Corporate Social Responsibility

No Yes

No 40%

Yes 60%
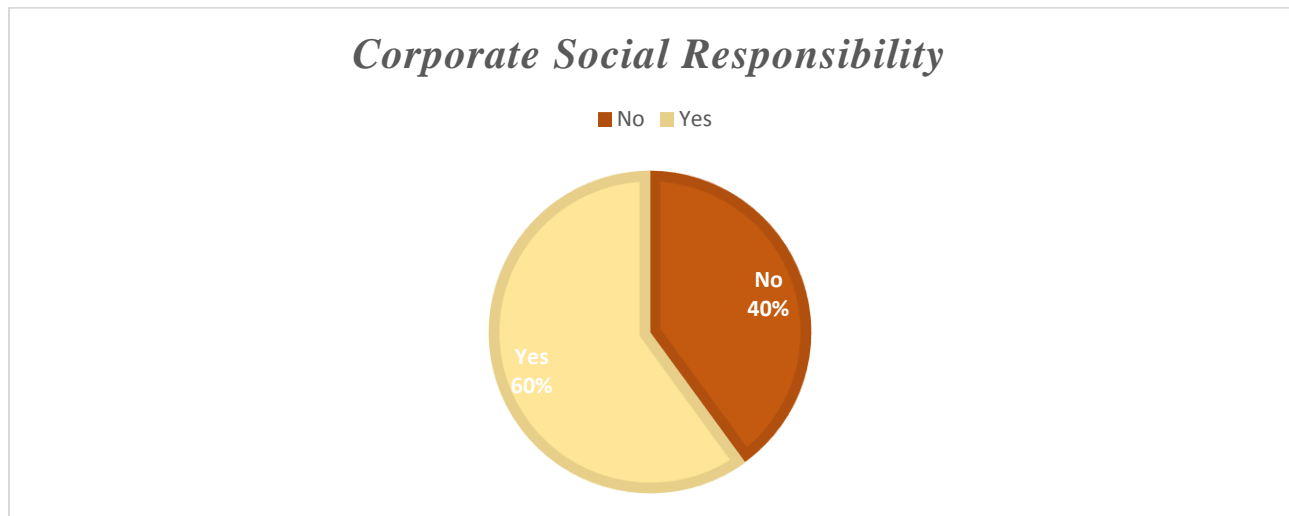
The Most Engaging Factor Regarding Work.

The keywords used by the respondents were-

'Flexibility', 'autonomy to manage my own work schedule', 'work environment', 'had to interact with customers every day', 'learn new things', 'job description' and 'reward items'.

It must be noted that the respondents did not voice a unanimous opinion about the factors leading to engagement with their respective employer. This also gives us an insight about the individualistic nature of the Generation Y.

29% of the respondents have regarded learning new skills as the best thing about their job which plays an important part in engaging them with the employer. Interestingly, almost 80% of these respondents have a work experience of more than 2 years in their corresponding fields. It must also be interesting to note that 80% of the respondents belong to the developing countries such as India and Nigeria. The rest 20% of the respondents belong to the first world countries of the West such as Canada. Among these respondents, 80% of them are female.

'….along with the facilities for improvement and learn new things in the company helped me engage with the role.'

17% of the respondents who were female reported <u>customer interaction</u> as an engaging factor. Interaction with people during work helped them gain motivation which ultimately lead to engagement with the employer.

> 'I think the best that happened to me with that job was the opportunity of meeting people. I met a lot of people that were a part of my life, who encouraged me to move on. I looked onto them for a lot of things. It gave me a lot of motivation…'

12% of the respondents worked out <u>meaningful job description</u> as the factor which helped them engage with their current/previous employer. It should be noted that these respondents have a work experience of 2 years or less.

'There some kind of responsibilities which makes me feel that I am doing something fruitful and gives me an important aura in the organization…'

12% of the respondents reported <u>workplace environment</u> as an engaging factor. Interestingly, these respondents are all female who have a work experience of 2 years or less in the Finance and the IT industry. The friendliness and the transparency are the pivotal factors in this aspect.

'My work environment was the best thing about my job. It was completely transparent. People were very approachable despite the roles they were playing in the organization. This helped me engaged with the role and more with the company…'

12% of the respondents reported '<u>flexibility'</u> and '<u>autonomous work culture'</u> as important factors which increased their engagement levels. It should be noted that these respondents have an experience of 5 months or less with the employer.

Only 6% of the respondents reported reward items such as financial perks as important engaging factors.

The Most Engaging Factor Regarding Work
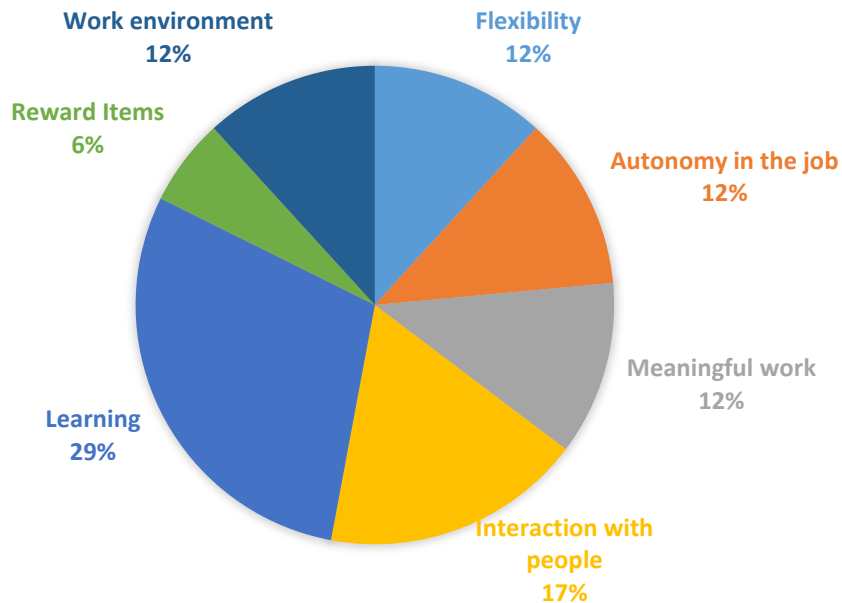
70% of the respondents would come back to the organization they have worked for. Incidentally, 57% of the respondents are below 25 years of age hailing from various sectors such as Public sector, IT, Finance, Banking.

Interestingly, all the male respondents feel that would like to go back to their previous organizations or would like to stay back with the current one provided they get 'promotional opportunities' or 'incremented financial rewards.'

30% of the respondents would not consider going back to the same employer. This might be due to 'change in career path', 'previous experiences with the managers' and 'going back to their homeland.' Interestingly, 66 % of the respondents have worked with the employer for 1 year or less.

Discussion

According to Cennamo and Gardner's (2008), GENERATION Y has a greater tendency to leave an organization than compared to the previous generations. Contrary to previous researches, this research suggests an average period of 2 years 9 months with the maximum period being 5 years and the minimum being 1 month with the respondents belonging to various countries such as

India, Malaysia, Nigeria, Canada and China. According to Twenge et al (2010), people below 23 years were more likely to leave than compared to Generation X. This study shows the average working period below the age of 25 years is 1 year 4 months.

Talking about promotional opportunities, all the respondents have labelled it as very important to them. This is basically because the respondents believe it to 'influence retention' and 'indicate progression.' According to Treuren and Anderson (2010), Generation Y value career progression in the organisation with leads to internal growth opportunities. According to previous researchers, extraneous elements such as employment status, job stability, salary, incidental perks, employment conditions, financial security, and leisure in the are not completely mandatory to an employee and would not inspire the person ut the absence can lead to disappointment and disengagement (Treunren and Anderson, 2010; Dose, 1997).

Communication in an open and transparent form has been labelled as an important engaging factor of the Generation Y. According to Myers and Sadaghiani (2010), Generation Y "favour open and frequent communication with their supervisors, and are at ease with communication technologies." The findings of the research suggest the same as well. Almost three-fifth of the respondents report open and transparent communication across various sectors. Whereas, 40% of the respondents do not have a transparent communication system which leads to a feeling of being unheard and unattended. Interestingly, results show that female respondents have a noted problem voicing their feelings, in sync with previous researchers such as Belenky et al. (1997) West & Zimmerman (2002) Simpson, R. and Lewis, P. (2005).

According to the study, innovation is the most engaging factor of the Generation Y. Innovative methods and learning has been cited as an important feature of the Generation Y workforce.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

The aim of this research was to find out how the attributes of employee engagement affects employee retention of Generation Y. The study shows us how the attributes of employee engagement affects the employee retention of the Generation Y in various organization across various sectors in noted countries.

The study concludes that there exists a daunting relationship between employee engagement and employee retention which if evenly looked after would result in retention of the Generation Y talent pool. Various factors such as cultural differences, age, sex, background, individualistic values also play an important role in the retention levels of the organizations. The organizations must also take into consideration cultural differences between developing and developed countries and individual perceptions of the employees owing to their background, perceptions and values, which hold considerable importance to an employee and inadvertently affects the engagement levels of the employees. For example, respondents from China believed that work-life balance was not of prime importance to them which was in contrast to respondents from Canada who valued 'work-life balance' to a greater extend.

One of the greatest weaknesses of the research is the unequal distribution of male and female respondents. Taking into consideration the unequal distribution of male and female respondents, the study would be unable to give a clearer picture of the expectations of the employees. Further considerations must be made regarding the number of respondents which would be helpful in documenting a more generalised picture.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on the personal understanding of the author on the key findings of the study-

In terms of priority, the first action for Generation Y retention should be to increase innovation and meaningful work. The study shows us that Generation Y employee value innovation in the workplace and has labelled it as the most engaging factor. This suggests that policies which enhance innovation in the workplace should be considered such as exploring the agility for learning in the employees, risk-taking as well as quality maintenance from the grass-root level,

individualised working schedules and so on. One should keep in mind that it is very important to retain the innovation in the workplace rather than just incorporating paper-based policies.

Secondly, study shows that employees who would like go back to the same organization or continue with the same organization would be looking at career progression or better opportunities with the employer. This could be enhanced by increasing the shelf life of knowledge obtained by employees through various talent development programs, inspire mentoring of the employees by self and undertake the learning programs whole-heartedly and building transparency and trust among the employees in the organizational system.

Lastly, individualistic and cultural differences of the employees should be given special attention. Wanted or unwanted discrimination can lead to disengagement among the employee and as well, affect the fellow employees who would cite that as the unsaid company policy.

Further research

The result of the research suggest that few areas would require further investigation. These include:

- Further research into identifying attributes which lead to simultaneous employee engagement and employee retention of the female Generation Y.
- Further research into the employee engagement of the Generation Y in the top levels of various organizations.
- Countries with growing economies, precisely developing countries have not renewed or changed their localised workplace culture in regard to the requirements of their employees and the globalised culture. This certainly results in increasing disengagement levels and loss of valuable workforce. What could be done regarding this and how could employees be engaged in their roles?
- Conducting research into the work culture and environment of students who work as part-time employees in various restaurants, local shops and bars.

Personal learning

As part of my personal learning statement, the research gave me an opportunity to investigate the meaning and factors enhancing employee engagement for the Generation Y who are generally known as job hoppers. This area is of particular interest to me and I was interested to learn of the positive increase in concerns of employee engagement of the employers specially when dealing with Generation Y workforce. The main purpose of the research was to understand how the established attributes of employee engagement affect Generation Y retention. I found it quite interesting to note that despite the combined efforts of certain MNCs, the workplace culture in developing countries did not experience much difference when dealing with the Generation Y which ultimately led to increased Generation Y turnover.

While there has been many researchers who have written regarding the employee engagement in current workforce which employs Generation Y, it is interesting to note that the little has been published about how the attributes of employee engagement have a direct or indirect effect on retention of the Generation Y staff.

This research allowed me to hone my research skills. After completing the report I have a better understanding of the ways to research real-time experiences faced by the employees during work. Sharing almost same life experiences, these lead me to believe that the research would help me how to address the situations differently in future research. This would include trying to access a larger sample of employees which would help me to get a better overall view of the generation, interviewing the employers or people at managerial positions to understand the outlook of the employers as well which would have immensely benefited the study.

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Appendix 1- Questionnaire

Following are a set of questions asked at the structured individual interviews as a part of the Masters in Arts of Human Resource Management at the National College of Ireland. The aim of the particular questions is to comprehend the effect various pre-defined attributes of employee engagement among the Generation Y.

The interview should take approximately fifteen minutes to complete. All data will be kept strictly confidential and used for the purpose of this survey only.

Are you working or have you worked previously?

How long have you worked with the employer?

How does internal growth opportunities matter to you? Have you come across such opportunities often?

Is there open and fair communication between the employees and the managers? How does that help?

How does the work-life balance of the organization affect you? How is it enhanced?

Do you believe in team work? Would you consider yourself a leader or a team player?

If and how does the workplace culture affect you and the Company's productivity in the workplace?

Would you consider corporate social responsibility an important trait of the organisation?

What do you like the best about your job? Do you think it helps you engage with the company and the role?

Do you see yourself working in the same organization two years from now? / Do you see yourself working in the same organization again?

Appendix 2- Interviews

Respondent 1 Male

The respondent is below the age 25 and currently works in the Public sector.

1.   Are you working or have you worked previously?

Yes, I am working at the moment and I have worked on quite a few jobs as well previously in Ireland.

2.   How long have you worked with the employer?

 Well, I have just joined my new job. I have worked with my current employer for seven weeks so far.

3.   How do internal growth opportunities matter to you? Have you come across such opportunities often?

Internal growth opportunities are very important to me. Personally speaking, since they indicate that you are progressing and your employer value your contribution and achievement I feel internal growth opportunities are one of the most important things in the job.

Not too often considering my length of services. Having worked only for 7 weeks, I haven't come across any such chances till now.

4.   Is there open and fair communication between the employees and the managers? How does that help?

There is considerable amount of open and fair communication.

Regular one-to-one meetings and team meetings are in place to boost fair and open communication in the company. This is very helpful in letting them know the things which effect my work productivity. It helps me a lot in terms of passing on my queries to line managers who are there to facilitate my career progression and ensure I am constantly learning and suiting myself to the current role.

5.   How does the work-life balance of the organization affect you? How is it enhanced?

It really has limited affected on me, to be honest. It is because the majority employees who avail of work life balance schemes are family issues centred and this is currently not bothering me at the moment.

The work life balance with the employer is commendable. It is improving constantly with new policies updating employees' entitlements to let them enjoy the flexibility behind all these. Especially it is in conjunction with working time act and part time work act in the workplace.

6.   Do you believe in team work? Would you consider yourself a leader or a team player?

My workplace is basically based on teamwork and collaboration. So I surely believe it is one of the most important aspects of my job.

I would consider myself a team player.

7.   If and how does the workplace culture affect you and the Company's productivity in the workplace?

The culture in my workplace is primarily based on teamwork and collaboration among departments. This kind of spirit encourages me and many colleagues around me to improve personal productivity to keep up with the general pace of the organisation and really be involved in it with maximum contribution.

Company productivity is absolutely dependable on the individual productivity and the workplace culture is one of the main factors which has drastic effects on it.

8.   Would you consider corporate social responsibility an important trait of the organisation?

Personally, no. It really depends on what area or the nature of business organisations' perceived themselves. Social responsibilities can be a good way to sell business image as a way of public relationship building for companies like agencies or catering services. While some companies may take it as a way to increase employees' engagement and teamwork which won't necessarily bring them monetary outcome directly, but, to certain extend, indirect outcome that's beneficial to companies, such as higher level of performance, loyalty, commitment and teamwork.

9.   What do you like the best about your job? Do you think it helps you engage with the company and the role?

The flexibility and autonomy to manage my own work schedule. It really helps, of course. They are the two things I deeply concern about before joining in any organisations.

I think these help me to engage with the role and the company.

10. Do you see yourself working in the same organization two years from now? / Do you see yourself working in the same organization again?

If possible, it's a yes for sure. Although, I would be looking for promotional opportunities in the organization.

Respondent 2 Female

1. Are you working or have you worked previously?

I have worked previously and have worked in India. I have worked with ICICI Private Pulse Management.

2. How long have you worked with the employer?

I finished two years with the employer.

3. How does internal growth opportunities matter to you? Have you come across such opportunities often?

I have come across such an opportunity once during two years. I started working in tele sales for the first six months and then I shifted to service roles and financial analysis. I did see a growth in myself as well being a part of the organization and how different role carry different responsibilities. From being a tele sales executive to going on to customer service roles I saw what change it got into me and how my responsibilities increased for the company. Personally I think it is very important to me.

4. Is there open and fair communication between the employees and the managers? How does that help?

Yes. The place I worked had a very friendly environment. There was complete fair communication between the managers and the employees. Everything was open and nothing behind the books. It was all told to the employees beforehand. So we didn't really get surprises.

I completely believe that being fair in communication with employers enhances your personal work experience in the organization. It helps the employee to deliver everything at his/her best level and the expectations of the manager. This helps to know at how exactly to deal with things and do stuff. So fair communication is important.

5. How does the work-life balance of the organization affect you? How is it enhanced?

Well, my job was quite strenuous but I had a balance nonetheless. From whatever the working hours were (from 9 in the morning to half-6 in the evening) I had fixed working hours. There was a lot of things to do like taking care of the customers' portfolios, the financial schemes and all of this that.

We had strict working hours. Though we were based on customer service, after working hours no customer would contact us. So there was no interference in my personal life after the specified working hours and I was satisfied with it. We had sick leaves but we could not work from home as we were constantly dealing with the customers. Every time we required we could use the sick leaves and would get added up the next month if not used. We also looked at lot of financial perks from the organization.

6. Do you believe in team work? Would you consider yourself a leader or a team player?

I definitely believe in team work. At work I used to head the customer service team and I had additional roles as a leader. I had to deal with queries from my teammates including the administrative work. From my previous experiences, I have headed a team of 6-7 people where I would allot them the work and look at how it is being carried out.

7. If and how does the workplace culture affect you and the Company's productivity in the workplace?

I firmly believe that if as an individual you cannot deliver the company is at a loss. However minute the role may be, it does get affected. Personally I was into customer service and in case I could not service or satisfy the customer properly, the company would lose a very important customer of theirs. Obviously, the company is at a loss. Since my company had different branches throughout India and I was placed at Pune, the entire balance sheet of the place would be around 120 crores and if a customer worth 10 crores would move out of it, the organization would surely be affected.

Ideally, a friendly and transparent workplace is very important. The employees should be able to directly communicate with the authority. If this does not exist the employees cannot be happy or satisfied.

8. Would you consider corporate social responsibility an important trait of the organisation?

Personally I feel brand image is very important to the company. If the company has a brand name in the market, the people would definitely be affected by it. This also has an effect on the socially active employees. The trust factor also comes up, thinking that they are into charity. The customers would believe an organisation much more which has a big name. Since I was working with ICICI and when a customer from the organization sees a sponsored event from the company, they would relate to it much more than others.

9. What do you like the best about your job? Do you think it helps you engage with the company and the role?

My work environment was the best thing about my job. It was completely transparent. People were very approachable despite the roles they were playing in the organization. This helped me engaged with the role and more with the company. It is like you know that you can talk about everything to your manager. This gives you an added amount of trust and confidence leading the employee to give a cent percent. That is how I engage in the company even more. It also helps you take up more roles and responsibilities.

10. Do you see yourself working in the same organization again?

Yes, definitely I would like working in the same organization once more.

Respondent 3 Female

1. Are you working or have you worked previously?

   I have worked previously.

2. How long have you worked with the employer?

   I have worked for 2 years and 8 months.

3. How does internal growth opportunities matter to you? Have you come across such opportunities often?

   Well, I think it is really important for employees because you can influence the retention and you can influence the intention to stay in the bank, i.e. those who want to stay in the organization and those who want to leave the organisation. It also influence the commitment and the performance level. So it is very important to me.

   Not really. In the place I was working the growth wasn't frequent. It was slow. Although it did some internal recruitment but it was a very slow process. Some people could get promoted at a point and some would have wait for like another 4 years. So it wasn't rapid and was usually slow. This was not encouraging at all.

   Most times the mangers in the branch couldn't really do anything. The economic situation of Nigeria wasn't so good when I was working and so the managers would tell you that you should keep working and keep doing your best. We were told to try to do the best you can. Someday the employer might smile on you and probably promote you. But the managers didn't really have a big say in internal growth. It came from like the head office.

4. Is there open and fair communication between the employees and the managers? How does that help?

   No there wasn't.

   Like the place I worked, I worked in a bank. We all had a procedure to follow. If you don't want to follow that procedure most of the time you would have to follow your boss. If you have to do something to please your customer you would have to follow the procedure. If

your boss feels that you can go out of the procedure you can but you don't really have the power to do anything.

5. How does the work-life balance of the organization affect you? How is it enhanced?

Really there wasn't any work life balance in the organization. It was all just work and work and work and work. There was this saying in my company that the reward for hard work is more work. So it was like we go to work on Saturdays and sometimes we had to go to work on Sundays. There wasn't really much work life balance. There was really so much work. It was a busy place and it was a bank. Banking in Nigeria is really stressful. So you really don't have a life outside the bank. The only life you get is maybe your weekends that is if you don't go to work. And most times you just want to lie down in your room and not do anything. There wasn't really life except for the work.

It really affected the engagement level of the employees. At a point the employees had a no-challenge attitude about the job, you know. Sometimes people would break down and if your employer considered some things, you could even consider not going to work even if you are not so well. But then if you are not so well, you had to come to work. Maybe it is just that branch I don't know. The management was not so considerate.

At certain points, we understood that the management of the branch were helpless so we had to do what we were supposed to do. The customers had to be satisfied and attended to, so you have to put yourself back together and work. That was just the basic thing.

6. Do you believe in team work? Would you consider yourself a leader or a team player?

I would consider myself both. I think it depends. I think in every organization today you have to work with teams and you cannot really work alone. Like you have to get information through other people and again sometimes, you have to take the lead to do something. You cannot just sit back and say okay maybe the next person would do it when you could do it. So like I would consider myself a leader and a teamwork person as well.

7. If and how does the workplace culture affect you and the Company's productivity in the workplace?

The workplace culture was based on teamwork and it made me believe that I can achieve everything I want. Well it made me stronger though. It gave me this kind of attitude that 'having worked in this organization there is no organization I cannot work.' It gave me this feeling that there is no place I cannot work.

It is like you have to work even if you don't want to. The company was making profit. Sometimes, the company would give bonuses and financial rewards when you work extra. So like that it encouraged people to work even if you didn't like working. When you know that you are working extra and you are getting paid for it, it encourages people to work for the company.

8. Would you consider corporate social responsibility an important trait of the organisation?

Yes, I would consider that an important trait of the organization.

To an extent I think it is good to boast the image of the organization. But personally, I care if I am getting paid.

9. What do you like the best about your job? Do you think it helps you engage with the company and the role?

The fact that I had to interact with customers every day and learn new things every day. It made me stronger and gave me this attitude that there is nothing unachievable in this world if you can work in this place. It was a good learning place for me and build me in so many ways.

Yes to an extent it helped me engage. Even though the work was stressful, I think about building myself and at the same time I was building the company as well.

10. Do you see yourself working in the same organization again?

I don't think. Yes maybe but I am not sure. Even if I have to work in the same organization, it would be in a different unit. Like right now I am studying in Human Resources so it would be in Human Resources probably in the Head Office but not at the branch level. The branch level is mostly marketing, customer service and the rest. I would prefer to work in the head office that is where everything happens.

Respondent 4 Female

1. Are you working or have you worked previously?

Yes I have

2. How long have you worked with the employer?
   For quite a few years.

3. How does internal growth opportunities matter to you? Have you come across such opportunities often?
   It matters a lot. I feel it shows that you are progressing and helps you stay in the company.
   Recently with this job that I am working on, there was an opportunity for a permanent position and I felt that I was overlooked for it because I was pregnant and it really made me feel disgruntled. I actually felt I am not going to work for the company again and I am just going to finish my contract. But I am just annoyed about the whole situation. It is because I feel if I was not pregnant they would have offered me the position rather than offer it to the public.

4. Is there open and fair communication between the employees and the managers? How does that help?
   I don't think there really is open and fair communication between the managers and employees. I have a very pessimistic view about how organizations work. I feel like management is always scheming. They are kind of like against the employees and they want whatever is best for them basically. So I don't think they are particularly fair and the needs of the organization always triumph than that of the employees. In my particular situation, it has everything to do with my pregnancy and in case, I wouldn't be pregnant they would have given me the position. Even though they retracted their statement, they told they didn't know if I wanted to come back to work after I had the baby and that it might be too much for me to manage. They basically made the decision for me and now when they call me out on it, they are like why don't you apply for the job. They will have to legally make me apply for it but it is like I see the plot. They don't want me to have it

and since I am at the beginning of my career, I feel they would get someone more experienced.

5. How does the work-life balance of the organization affect you? How is it enhanced?

6. Do you believe in team work? Would you consider yourself a leader or a team player?

7. If and how does the workplace culture affect you and the Company's productivity in the workplace?

8. Would you consider corporate social responsibility an important trait of the organisation?

9. What do you like the best about your job? Do you think it helps you engage with the company and the role?

I think what I like the best about my job is I get to do what I want. I don't have somebody telling me what I have to do today. I work out my own schedule for the whole week. As I long as I complete everything I need to complete I think I can do it. Flexibility and how I undertake my job is probably the thing which I appreciate the most. Nobody even checks my job. It is the assumption that I am going to do it and that's it.

10. Do you see yourself working in the same organization two years from now?

Say things had been good and my pregnancy wasn't an issue, I would have definitely stayed there. I was happy but then it really made me annoyed that 3 managers were scheming against me and they all had kids themselves. It just made me mad and I never expected them to make that decision for me. It really blindsided me. I didn't think that would have been the outcome. I thought they would have offered me the position. So I definitely would have stayed.

Respondent 5 Male
1. Are you working or have you worked previously?
2. How long have you worked with the employer?
3. How does internal growth opportunities matter to you? Have you come across such opportunities often?

I think it matters a lot because in the software industry you have to keep updating yourself. So you have to learn lot of new things every day and I was lucky such kind of companies where the internal training were provided. At some points it was compulsory for a few employees to go for it and update their skills.

Yes, I have come across such opportunities often within the organization.

4. Is there open and fair communication between the employees and the managers? How does that help?

It actually depends from manager to manager. I worked with around 6-7 managers so I would say that 4 managers were really good. They were really transparent and used to give freedom regarding the work at hand. Other managers were really strict with the deadlines. It basically depends upon person to person. Also, the managers had to follow the orders coming from the senior levels and would have to stick to the deadlines. They didn't really have much say about it because it was all handled in the top levels.

In real life you face a lot of difficulties at work so managers is accommodating and helps you manage work, it is really helpful.

5. How does the work-life balance of the organization affect you? How is it enhanced?

6. Do you believe in team work? Would you consider yourself a leader or a team player?

7. If and how does the workplace culture affect you and the Company's productivity in the workplace?

8. Would you consider corporate social responsibility an important trait of the organisation?

No it is not an important trait according to me. Because we are there to work and we pay our taxes. We are not liable but if I am a billionaire I would surely do things to help the community. It is not my cup of tea as to how my company is helping the society.

It is good for the company though. In India a certain of percentage of the turnover has to go to the charity or any social activities. So the employees are pushed to work or contribute something. But that's just basically included in the taxes.

9. What do you like the best about your job? Do you think it helps you engage with the company and the role?

I learnt a lot of new things. I learnt how to react with and around people and in different situations. I have learnt a lot of soft skills such as anger management. It was a learning period for me.

Yes. It really helped me to engage with the role. The workplace is your second home and you spent most of the time. It is like a connection with other team players and helps you understand the place in a better way.

10. Do you see yourself working in the same organization again?

Yeah definitely.

For the money and the work culture is really appreciable. It is because of the innovation as well.

Respondent 6 Female

1. Are you working or have you worked previously?

Yes I have

2. How long have you worked with the employer?

For 5 years.

3. How does internal growth opportunities matter to you? Have you come across such opportunities often?

I would rate career progression in the organization quite high and that is one of the reasons why I worked that long in the organization because I felt I was getting the improvement I needed. Although, I think it is not often and you would have to merit it. It was career growth and some sort of skill development. But after I have stopped working and went back to college, I would say career progression opportunities do not exist because I am not working at the moment.

4. Is there open and fair communication between the employees and the managers? How does that help?

5. How does the work-life balance of the organization affect you? How is it enhanced?

6. Do you believe in team work? Would you consider yourself a leader or a team player?

7. If and how does the workplace culture affect you and the Company's productivity in the workplace?

8. Would you consider corporate social responsibility an important trait of the organisation?

9. What do you like the best about your job? Do you think it helps you engage with the company and the role?

I think the best that happened to me with that job was the opportunity of meeting people. I met a lot of people that were a part of my life, who encouraged me to move on. I looked onto them for a lot of things. It gave me a lot of motivation.

The motivation along with the facilities for improvement and learn new things in the company helped me engage with the role. There were trainings held for people and promotions based on merit. Though they were not perfect, they were ok.

10. Do you see yourself working in the same organization again?

The organization was okay but I want to change my career. For that reason, I wouldn't want to go back to the organization. It is not for any negative feelings but I really want to look for job in Human Resource sector.

Respondent 7 Male

1. Are you working or have you worked previously?

Yes I have

2. How long have you worked with the employer?

I have just started working with the employer. I have completed 4 weeks.

3. How does internal growth opportunities matter to you? Have you come across such opportunities often?

It matters a lot as an employee at the start because I have just recently started working in the company. Like you cannot define those things. It would make you love the environment you work for and help you work.

Not at the moment have I come across such opportunities. But I am on a look-out for them

4. Is there open and fair communication between the employees and the managers? How does that help?

I do believe that with some limitations there is open and fair communication in the organization. But still there are certain remarks which cannot be brought out in the open; I wouldn't go much into that. But still there is open and fair communication.

If you are

5. How does the work-life balance of the organization affect you? How is it enhanced?

6. Do you believe in team work? Would you consider yourself a leader or a team player?

7. If and how does the workplace culture affect you and the Company's productivity in the workplace?

8. Would you consider corporate social responsibility an important trait of the organisation?

9. What do you like the best about your job? Do you think it helps you engage with the company and the role?

I'd say the responsibilities of my job are diverse that means I have a lot of responsibilities, There some kind of responsibilities which makes me feel that I am doing something fruitful and gives me an important aura in the organization. So that's what helps. Once you get something which makes you think and do it, I think anyone would like it the best that being told as to what to do. The work is challenging and it is appreciated by the employees.

I feel I am satisfied with the role and the company. Till the role is put for me and intellectually I will be there.

10. Do you see yourself working in the same organization two years from now? / Do you see yourself working in the same organization again?

Yes I definitely would like to continue working. I am looking for opportunities in the organization.

Respondent 8 Female

1. Are you working or have you worked previously?

    I am currently working as an intern with Fidelity in Ireland. Prior to this I have worked for 4 years in India.

2. How long have you worked with the employer?

    I have just started working with my current employer and have worked for 1 week.

3. How does internal growth opportunities matter to you? Have you come across such opportunities often?

    Internal growth is very important to me. Being a really big company I am looking for such opportunities. I am looking to internally move up and take up a permanent role in the company. I think it is very important for personal growth.

    Since I have worked here for just a week, I really didn't come across any such opportunities till now. In India during my tenure I came across many such opportunities. Although, I had such chances but since I was moving to Ireland to pursue higher studies I could take up the role. Before this, I was doing my degree because of which I could not afford to take up more responsibilities,

4. Is there open and fair communication between the employees and the managers? How does that help?

    The communication in Ireland is much more fair and open than in India owing to the cultural differences where there is a sense of seniority and formality back home. In Ireland it is quite informal and much more transparent as well as open. It is very helpful

as it helps getting comfortable and it saves time as well. The work is done in a much easier way and with a less possibility of error. It is like you always know you have someone to go and talk to if things go wrong. Although back in India, it was quite different.

5. How does the work-life balance of the organization affect you? How is it enhanced?

I guess work-life balance is very important to any employee. This is one of the most important issues as people do have prior commitments towards their personal life as well as it affects the engagement levels of the employees.

I have a flexible work schedule here working 8 hours a day starting at 9 in the morning to 4.30 in the evening. There are options to work from home, go-to-work and sick leaves in case of an emergency or prior commitments. The employer also provides you laptop to help you work without any tech issues.

6. Do you believe in team work? Would you consider yourself a leader or a team player?

Yes, I firmly believe in team work. It builds relationship between colleagues. It is very helpful in delegating and segregating work. This helps you to learn to communicate and network with people in a company. Team work is crucial for my company.

I would consider myself both. It honestly depends according to the situation. I could take up the leadership when required and would have no problem whatsoever when someone else takes the lead. I think it is based upon the situation and the relationship that you have in the team.

7. If and how does the workplace culture affect you and the Company's productivity in the workplace?

The workplace culture has an immense effect on you and your surroundings. My current workplace is very supportive and open. Till now I haven't faced any gender perceptions which would make me uncomfortable. Also, I wouldn't feel watched over. It is like when a person is not comfortable with the environment, the person would be unable to give his/her best to the job. It affects a person psychologically and impacts the company's productivity.

8. Would you consider corporate social responsibility an important trait of the organisation?

To me, it is very important to give back to the opportunity. Basically an employer is making money and purchasing power through customers and so it is very important to give back to the community. When you have the power to make a difference you should consider doing it.

9. What do you like the best about your job? Do you think it helps you engage with the company and the role?

I think it is a learning experience for me. The work is something which I haven't done previously and so it is a lot outside my comfort zone. Basically I am learning new things and the innovation in the role keeps me engaged to it. This helps me fulfil my job and engage with the company.

10. Do you see yourself working in the same organization two years from now? / Do you see yourself working in the same organization again?

Yes I would love to work in such an organization.

Respondent 9 Female

1. Are you working or have you worked previously?

2. How long have you worked with the employer?

3. How does internal growth opportunities matter to you? Have you come across such opportunities often?

I think they are very important and every company should offer such chances to their employees. This boosts the employees' intention to stay in the company and helps in retention.

No. I haven't come across such opportunities with my employer.

4. Is there open and fair communication between the employees and the managers? How does that help?

No. In my company, open and fair communication doesn't really exist.

The managers are not very supportive about it and employees are made to do what they are supposed to mostly. Most of them are part-time students and don't really complain about it. They are just in during their shifts and wanted to get done with it. They would do as they are told and it was the same work basically. It was mostly about what was expected of them.

5. How does the work-life balance of the organization affect you? How is it enhanced?

Work is a big part of life, so it is critical to keep the balance between work and life. It can be enhanced by drawing a clear line between the both.

6. Do you believe in team work? Would you consider yourself a leader or a team player?

7. If and how does the workplace culture affect you and the Company's productivity in the workplace?

8. Would you consider corporate social responsibility an important trait of the organisation?

9. What do you like the best about your job? Do you think it helps you engage with the company and the role?

I think the best about my job would be the reward items. The financial rewards helped and encouraged me to stick to my job.

They definitely play a crucial role in engaging people and employees in the company.

10. Do you see yourself working in the same organization again?

Yes, I think I would like to work with them again.

Because of the career path and the progression it allows, it is possible for me to keep working here.

Respondent 10 Female

1. Are you working or have you worked previously?

   Yes, I have worked before. Currently, I am not working.

2. How long have you worked with the employer?
   I have worked for 10 years in China.
3. How does internal growth opportunities matter to you? Have you come across such opportunities often?

   I guess it is very important for the employer and the employee as well. It values the contribution and achievements of the employee and helps you get noticed. I feel it influence the retention of the employees as well. Once an employee feels that there is enough opportunities in the company, the person feels more engaged in the environment and tries to give his/her best.

   Yes I have across such opportunities often during my work tenure.

4. Is there open and fair communication between the employees and the managers? How does that help?

I believe it is important till a certain extend. In my company, fair communication exists till a certain extent.

The employees are encouraged to express their opinions in my company. But it would not be very helpful if there are no comments or views from employers regarding the opinions.

5. How does the work-life balance of the organization affect you? How is it enhanced?

6. Do you believe in team work? Would you consider yourself a leader or a team player?

7. If and how does the workplace culture affect you and the Company's productivity in the workplace?

8. Would you consider corporate social responsibility an important trait of the organisation?

9. What do you like the best about your job? Do you think it helps you engage with the company and the role?

The best thing about this job is the interaction with customers. There is a racial mix of customers who come in and interacting with them is the best thing that I possibly do during my shifts.

Yes, I think this helps me engage with the role. It keeps up my morale to work during my shifts which are usually stressful.

 10. Do you see yourself working in the same organization two years from now?

No I don't think so I would like working there. I just want to go back to my country.