

# **Cover Page**

## **MA Human Resource Management**

### **Dissertation**

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Masters in Human Resource Management

At:

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## **Title of Research**

To explore and understand the possible differences between Generation X and Generation Y in terms of job attraction and engagement of employees.

**By Niamh Maher**

**A Dissertation for the Award of MA in Human Resource Management**

**Submitted to the National College of Ireland, August 2017**

## **Abstract**

Generational differences are prevalent in today's work force. The main two generations working today are Generation X and Generation Y. Job attraction and engagement are areas of interest both with and without generational terms. This research aimed to establish if generational differences were present for job attraction and engagement levels for Generation X and Generation Y.

The study used an online survey using two validated scales one job attraction and one engagement. Participants were recruited through convenience sampling from both Generation X and Y. result found that of the two hypotheses in the study only one could be kept. The hypothesis of Generation X having a higher level of engagement to that of Generation Y was proven to have significant difference. Whereas the hypothesis of Generation Y having significant differences in job attraction was rejected as not proven.

# Declaration

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## Table of Contents

<b>COVER PAGE.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>TITLE OF RESEARCH.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>ABSTRACT.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>DECLARATION.....</b>	<b>4</b>
.....	4
<b>LIBRARY SUBMISSION FORM .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>LIST OF TABLES .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>LIST OF FIGURES.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>LIST OF APPENDICES .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>1. CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>11</b>
1.1. CONTEXT OF RESEARCH.....	11
1.2. JUSTIFICATION AND AIMS FOR CURRENT RESEARCH .....	12
1.3. CONCLUSION AND OUTLINE OF STUDY .....	13
<b>2. CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW .....</b>	<b>15</b>
2.1. GENERATION X AND Y.....	15
2.2. ATTRACTION AND EMPLOYER ATTRACTIVENESS.....	16
2.3. RETENTION AND ENGAGEMENT .....	18
2.4. RESEARCH QUESTION.....	23
<b>3. CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY.....</b>	<b>24</b>
3.1. INTRODUCTION AND RESEARCH PHILOSOPHIES .....	24
3.2. RESEARCH DESIGN.....	25
3.3. PILOT STUDY .....	26
3.4. SAMPLING.....	27
3.5. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS .....	27
3.6. LIMITATIONS OF METHODOLOGY .....	28
<b>4. CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS AND ANALYSIS.....</b>	<b>29</b>
4.1. INTRODUCTION .....	29
4.2. DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS .....	29
4.3. EMPLOYER ATTRACTIVENESS SCALE TESTING .....	31
4.3.1 Normality testing.....	31
4.3.2 Age.....	33
4.3.3 Gender.....	34
4.3.4 Nationality.....	34
4.3.5 Education.....	35

4.3.6 Industry .....	35
4.3.7 Length of service current .....	36
4.3.8 Length of service overall.....	36
4.3.9 Further Mann-Whitney Testing.....	37
<b>4.4. WORK ENGAGEMENT SCALE TESTING.....</b>	<b>38</b>
4.4.1 Normality testing .....	38
4.4.2 Age.....	40
4.4.3 Gender .....	41
4.4.4 Nationality.....	41
4.4.5 Education.....	42
4.4.6 Industry .....	42
4.4.7 Length of service current .....	43
4.4.8 Length of service overall.....	43
4.4.9 Further Mann-Whitney Tests .....	44
<b>5. CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION.....</b>	<b>45</b>
5.1 EMPLOYER ATTRACTIVENESS.....	45
5.2 ENGAGEMENT.....	46
5.3 STUDY LIMITATIONS .....	46
<b>6. CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....</b>	<b>48</b>
6.1 CONCLUSIONS .....	48
6.2 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH .....	48
6.3 IMPLICATIONS OF FINDINGS .....	48
6.4 CIPD PERSONAL LEARNING REFLECTION .....	49
<b>REFERENCES .....</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>APPENDICES.....</b>	<b>55</b>

## **List of Tables**

- Table 1: Tests of Reliability (Cronbach Alpha)
- Table 2: Exploratory Descriptive Statistics
- Table 3a: Employer Attractiveness Normality
- Table 3b: Employer Attractiveness Normality
- Table 4: Employer Attractiveness Mann-Whitney U-Test of Variables
- Table 5: Employer Attractiveness Kruskal-Wallis Test of Variables
- Table 6: Job Attractiveness Mann-Whitney U-Test of Variables
- Table 7a: Work Engagement Normality (Shapiro-Wilk Test)
- Table 7b: Work Engagement Normality (Shapiro-Wilk Test)
- Table 8: Work Engagement Mann-Whitney U-Test of Variables
- Table 9: Work Engagement Kruskal-Wallis Test of Variables
- Table 10: Work Engagement Mann-Whitney U-Test of Variables

## **List of Figures**

- Fig 1: Irish Company Recruitment Methods
- Fig 2: Hierarchy of Engagement pyramid model
- Fig 3: IES model of employee engagement

## **List of Appendices**

- Appendix A: Employer Attractiveness Scale
- Appendix B: Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES)
- Appendix C: Survey as administered
- Appendix D: SPSS results

## **List of Abbreviations**

CIPD Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development

IES Institute for Employment Studies

VUCA Vulnerable, Uncertain, Complex and Ambiguous

# **1. Chapter One: Introduction**

## **1.1. Context of Research**

The current research conducted a study focusing on the possible generational differences between Generation X and Generation Y. These possible differences of the study being that of job attraction and engagement levels of entry and mid-level employees and those seeking employment within the current Irish workforce. The study of generational differences is present in past and current research with significant interest in the area. As new generations are born and form they each show their own characteristics. The attitudes and opinions of each generation are largely formed based on their experiences and influences during a specific time frame (Kupperschmidt 2000; Parry and Urwin 2009).

Research in the area of generations typically will focus on one generation over the others. Most recently research in the area has been carried out on Generation Y. Such research includes that of Kong, Wang and Fu (2015) who's study focused on enhancing Generations Ys job satisfaction rather than any other generation. Another study which focuses on one generation only is that of Soulez and Guillot-Soulex (2011), who's study looks at Generation Ys recruitment marketing and how best to recruit the younger generation. With generational differences prevalent in today's work force what has been noted by research is that generations differ on some aspects of the working environment. For instance, what they look for in a job or employer and whether or not the younger generations are committed to their job and/or engaged in their job (Kerslake, 2005).

Job attraction and work engagement are also prevalent areas of research in recent years. Branding and engaged workers have become a must for companies such as google and Accenture as Generation Y look for desirable aspects for employment according to Kerslake (2005). For a business to be competitive and stay afloat it takes among other aspects engaged workers with the company's interest at heart. Different generations require different needs to be fulfilled in order to feel engaged,

with some studies suggesting Generation Y are not engaged at all, described by Twenge, Campbell, Hoffman and Lance (2010) as having little loyalty.

The current research aims to take the two main prevalent generations actively working today's work force being Generations X and Y and look for differences between them. For the current research, a focus was put on studying both Generations X and Y in terms of job attraction and work engagement. Do the two generations differ in their levels of what attracts them to jobs and how engaged they are in work. In order to do so, the study used the quantitative method of data collection. The reason for choosing quantitative methods was in order to collect data on generational differences on a larger scale and as a statically analysis was what was desired (Smyth, 2008). Using a larger scale may offer insights different from other studies to get an average score of the variables of job attraction and work engagement.

The research design was cross-sectional using convenience sampling. The data collection method for the current research was conducted through an online survey. The research aimed to recruit an equal number of both Generation X and Y in order to get an accurate sampling of a sample of 100, 50 from Generation X and 50 Generation Y. The sample was sought through contacts and received consent forms and full instructions on the procedure and confidentiality along with the ability to not participate and/or withdraw at any time if they so wish.

## **1.2. Justification and Aims for Current Research**

The main objectives and reasoning for studying generational differences and job attraction and engagement were as follows. Recent years has shown a number of studies in the area of generational differences, attraction of employees and engagement of employees. Reis and Braga (2016) found that to attract Generation X, it might be necessary to emphasize development opportunities, while also offering opportunities to work in a stimulating and creative workplace and have good relationships at work. When attracting people from Generation Y, it seems

clearer that the rewards package is very relevant, as well as the development opportunities and a positive workplace (Reis and Braga, 2016).

The recent studies were mostly carried out internationally with a gap in research for generational differences in attraction and engagement of employees within an Irish setting. Workforces used in the existing studies were from countries such as India, China, Canada and Europe (Hernaus and Vokic, 2014; Aruna and Anitha, 2015; Hoole & Bonnema, 2015; Kong, Wang and Fu 2015). The researcher looked to replicate findings from previous studies to see if individuals in an Irish context differ. The area of generational difference is still a valid area of study due to the ever-expanding new generations coming into the workforce. Existing studies used a mix of both quantitative or qualitative data collection methods and results varying on these methods (Meriac, Woehr and Banister, 2010; Ito, Brotheridge and McFarland 2013; Hernaus and Vokic, 2014; Hoole & Bonnema, 2015; Kong, Wang and Fu 2015).

Previous studies had not used an Irish sample while the current research wishes to see if the results differ in the Irish workforce context. Another reason for the use of quantitative methods, as the main method of data collection and analysis, is that existing studies that have used either method have not always used both Generation X and Y, in some cases one or the other was used to conduct research into the area of generational difference. The current research wants to use both generations under an Irish context. Previous research has also not studied both attraction and retention (Reis and Braga, 2016). The current research aims to do so along with both generations.

### **1.3. Conclusion and Outline of Study**

The current research aimed to research whether or not there are possible differences between Generation X and Generation Y in terms of job attraction and engagement of employees in the Irish work force. As previous studies are not based on the current Irish work force along with either using one aspect of job attraction and engagement or using a qualitative method. Within job attraction and engagement,

brand must be studied also. The current research aimed to use a quantitative survey based design to research the research questions and sub objectives outlined in the following chapter.

## **2. Chapter Two: Literature Review**

### **2.1. Generation X and Y**

For the current research, it is important to first define what is meant by the terms Generation X and Generation Y then the terms of job attraction and engagement. Of which will constitute the core focus of this research. The term generation is defined by Kupperschmidt as “an identifiable group, which shares years of birth and hence significant life events at critical stages of development” (Kupperschmidt, 2000). Which is also supported by Joshi, Dencker and Franz (2011) who state that a generation is used to describe a genealogical kinship. It has been noted in research that some studies refer to generation as a generational cohort. Lyons and Kuron (2013) suggest the reasoning for two different terms being used to describe a generation comes from two different perspectives of research. The social perspective and the cohort perspective. The social perspective views generation as a multi-dimensional social group formed by the history of the time it belongs to (Lyons and Kuron, 2013). The cohort perspective views generation as the group of people born within a certain time frame. Also, being a group of individuals sharing the same life stages and experiences during the same historical time (Dowse, Rasch and Wiley, 2010). In terms of the research mostly used for this study and this being a social perspective study the term generation is referred to rather than generation cohort and therefore will be the term used throughout the current study.

When discussing definitions of generation X and Y there is a need to determine an exact time frame for both terms and generations, which will be used in this research for the purposes of. Literature in the area varies in what exact years these time frames are (Meriac, Woehr and Banister, 2010; Parry and Urwin, 2011; Hernaus and Vokic, 2014; Hoole & Bonnema, 2015). However, for the current research time frames will be defined as discussed in Hoole and Bonnema (2015). As these years seem to be the most common in research looked into. Hoole and Bonnema (2015) determine that generation X are the people in the population born between the years 1965 and 1980. For generation Y this refers to people in the population born between the years 1981 and 1999. People born in the years mentioned are

generation X and Y whether they are currently a part of the working workforce or not. For the purposes of the current research, the population is generations X and Y members of which are currently in the Irish workforce or actively seeking employment.

Theory suggests that generation Y being the younger generation have different attributes over generation X. The younger generation comes from a generation of parents who were dedicated and hard workers showing them to be mindful and highly educated in what hard work is in terms of finding employment and being employed (Kong, Wang and Fu, 2013). Another theory by Ito, Brotheridge and McFarland (2013) suggests that having grown up in the Celtic tiger generation Y may behave as though they are concerned with flexibility than job security and not that a job is for life meaning they often move around employment in order to fit their needs and wants. While generation X come from a generation where a job was for life and may not move around as much meaning they may be more reliable and able to retain than generation Y (Hoole and Bonnema, 2015). The current research wants to attempt to find out if this is so for generation X and Y in Irish employment.

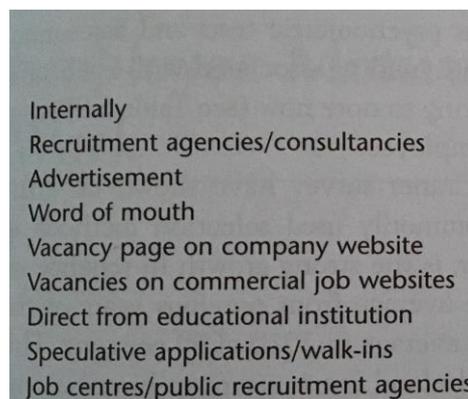
## **2.2. Attraction and Employer Attractiveness**

Attraction of employees is the process by which a company brings employees on board, of how the company attracts potential talent (Armstrong and Taylor, 2014). It is a part of the recruitment and selection process, which occurs in every company. Recruitment refers to the activities an organisation engages with in order to gain a pool of potential employees (Jones and George, 2013). According to CIPD (2017) having a good method of attracting employees through recruitment is crucial to successful day-to-day running of the organisation. To get the best staff for an organisation the organisation must attract the best staff.

According to a national Irish survey carried out by Cranet (2010) and the University of Limerick, the effects of the recession on organisations is apparent. The survey was carried out in order to look at the recruitment and selection methods of organisations in Ireland and how they filled vacancies. The survey reported that

individual's employee counts in the past number of years had decreased due to the recession (Cranet, 2010). With lower numbers of positions available the attraction and recruitment of the right individuals is vital. The methods by which the companies recruited are displayed in the table below (Table 2.1)

Fig 1: Irish Company Recruitment Methods



Internally
Recruitment agencies/consultancies
Advertisement
Word of mouth
Vacancy page on company website
Vacancies on commercial job websites
Direct from educational institution
Speculative applications/walk-ins
Job centres/public recruitment agencies

Source: Cranet (2010).

The Cranet (2010) survey results, as shown above, show there are a wide variety of methods for recruitment and selection of staff and what they are. These methods include that of internally sourcing employees from within the companies own organization from other roles this would normally not be advertised outside of the company memos or notice boards. Advertisements both through recruitment companies and job websites is a main way to recruit employees today, Cranet (2010). Word of mouth still remains today an easy and cost-effective way to recruit employees. Gunnigle, Heraty and Morley (2011) state that Internet based methods such as jobs websites of recruiting are becoming more used in the current Irish context. However, these methods do not show indications of becoming more important than traditional methods such as internal and word of mouth methods based on surveys such as Cranet (2010).

The attraction of employees is important according to Twenge (2009) as the younger Generation Y were brought up with social media and expectations. If something looks good and has a brand or name they will more than likely look towards this for potential employment. For an organisation to attract the best staff, regardless of generation, they first must be attractive to work for or offer attractive

jobs. As what is attractive about a job or organisation is individual, with individuals shaped by generation (Twenge, 2009) this research looks to see if the different generations X and Y hold different values of what is attractive about a job or company.

Attraction to a job or company can come in a number of ways; the job itself and what it offers, the brand or the company (whether this is important to employees and which employees this is important to), what the company offers in terms of training or benefits and also how the jobs are advertised in order to bring in the potential employees (Reis and Braga, 2016). Reis and Braga (2016) state that generation X and Y differ in the expectations they want of employment. Also in the way they view the brand of the company generation Y favoured brand and had more expectations of brand in this case. Possibly the generations seek employment in different ways. The current research wants to find out what generation Y is attracted to in employment and how they seek employment as compared to generation X to see if this is the case in an Irish work force.

As mentioned previously both attraction and retention of employees is of importance to businesses. Companies need to attract talent that can be an asset to the company while also retaining the valuable talent already within the company. According to Ito, Brotheridge and McFarland (2013), the attractiveness of an organisation is important to the recruitment and retention of staff. With this comes brand if the company brand is seen as favourable it may enhance the pool of potential employees.

### **2.3. Retention and Engagement**

The retention of employees is the process in which a company tries to keep its employees and best assets from leaving the company (Aruna and Anitha, 2015). Armstrong and Taylor (2014) state that the turnover of key employees can have vast implications on an organisation with a job for life approach to thinking now not the norm for today workforce. Organisations must take action in order to retain talented employees. Aruna and Anitha (2015) state that it is the responsibility of the

employer to retain employees in order to not lose the star talents in the organisation. Armstrong and Taylor (2014) suggest that in order to retain employees it is necessary to try to obtain contributions from the company's existing talent. This can be done through engagement of employees and having high levels of engaged employees. To do so a company must have in place an engagement policy.

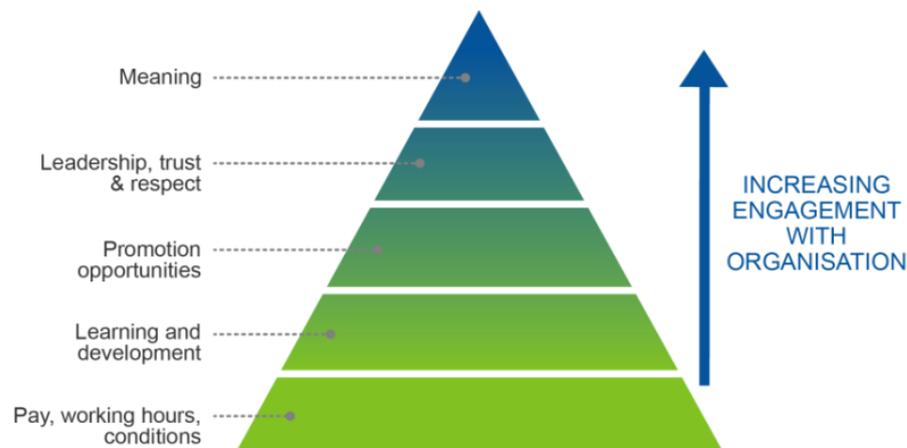
Engagement refers to employees who are committed to both the work they do and the organisation they work for (Armstrong and Taylor, 2014). Alfes, Truss, Soane, Rees and Gatenby (2010) suggest engagement has three facets: intellectual engagement (thinking of the job and how to do it better), affective engagement (positivity to do a good job) and social engagement (having conversations about improving work related activities). Saks (2006) described engagement as social exchange theory, which argues that an obligation to be engaged comes from the interactions between the employer and employee. Which is supported by that of Robinson, Perryman and Hayday (2004) who described engagement as a two-way exchange.

Markos and Sridevi (2010) describe engaged employees as emotionally attached to the company they work for, enthusiastic and more productive about the work they do (Seijts and Crim, 2006). Engaged employees are those who can deal well with the demands of the job they do (Schaufeli and Bakker, 2006). In recent years labour has become more skilled which means employers need to recruit employees with specific skills and training (Markos and Sridevi, 2010). Gallup (2012) stated that there are three types of employees in the workforce: engaged employees, disengaged employees, and actively disengaged employees.

Gallup (2012) describes engaged employees as enthusiastic and committed. Disengaged employees as checked out while showing up but having little or no concern about customers, productivity, and profitability. Actively disengaged as damaging to the company, take up manager's time. When it comes to what affects employee engagement, there are a number of factors. Anitha (2014) suggested that these factors can be; compensation, team-work and co-workers, workplace well-being, work environment, training and career development, leadership, and organisation policies.

In researching for the current study two models of engagement were looked into. Both will be discussed below. Firstly, the Penna (2007) Hierarchy of Engagement pyramid model (Table 2.2). The pyramid is set out with most basic needs first then up to desirable needs. Bottom of the pyramid as shown is needs such as pay and working conditions. This is similar to Maslow’s Hierarchy of needs so that once a basic need has been met the employee’s engagement level moves to the next part of the pyramid., The higher up the employee gets the more engaged they are or likely to be engaged they will become.

Fig 2: Hierarchy of Engagement pyramid model



Source: Penna (2007).

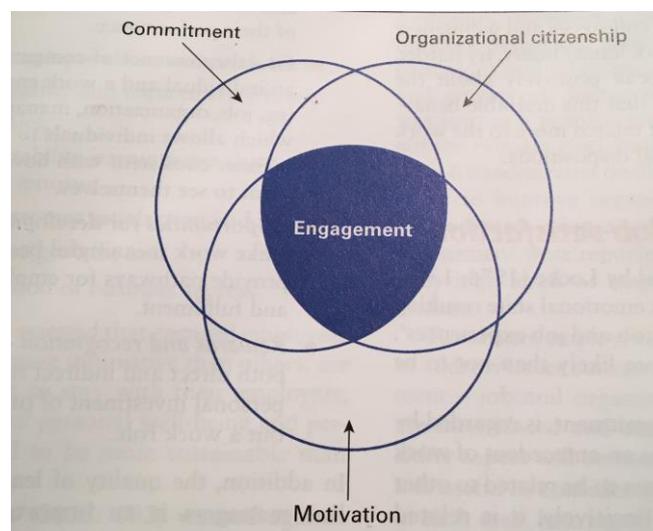
When it comes to engagement in Ireland information there are few studies carried out in an Irish context. However, two studies which have been carried out in an Irish context are that of IBEC and HRM Recruit. IBEC (2011), suggested from its findings that even with the recession in the last number of year’s engagement levels in Ireland have increased. IBEC (2011) also reported that individuals wanted to see the company they worked for succeed so, therefore, would put in extra work effort if needed. A negative finding in the report suggested that not all the engagement may be willing as well-being levels among respondents was low (IBEC, 2011). HRM Recruit (2015) also conducted a report of engagement levels in Ireland. This report found that the most important way to keep respondents engaged were if the management listened to them and any opinions made in decision making. What was found to be the least important to respondents was the opportunity of travel within their work (HRM Recruit, 2015).

For Generation Y characteristics in literature are mostly negative in nature. Some descriptions of Generation Y are that they are self-centered, demanding, limited loyalty, job hop easily and expect immediate reward and recognition (Kerslake, 2005). These characteristics would suggest that this shows unrealistic work expectations and entitlement. Kerslake (2005) suggests the career goals and expectations among Generation Y are supersized, unrealistic, and disconnected between reward and performance.

Irish context research into Generation Y is limited however Deloitte (2011) carried out a survey in which they found Generation Y were planning for their future. With this research, GradIreland also carried out a survey on Generation Y they found that salary was an important factor when it came to choosing a company (Grad Ireland, 2012). There is a distinct lack of literature that focuses on career expectation of Generations Y in the workforce also with a lack of information available about engagement among employees in Ireland.

Engagement can be described as having three overlapping components: motivation, commitment and organisational citizenship. To illustrate this a model of engagement shown below (Table 2.3) was produced by the Institute for Employment Studies (IES) (Armstrong and Taylor, 2014).

Fig 3: IES model of employee engagement



Source: Armstrong and Taylor (2014).

Aruna and Anitha (2015) also state that Generation Y tends to be not loyal to organisations however they would be loyal to a job. This suggests that Generation Y are not easily retainable. The authors suggest that the retention of Generation Y is a process to do in a current VUCA (vulnerable, uncertain, complex and ambiguous) situation.

Ito, Brotheridge and McFarland (2013) state intention to quit (ITQ) is important when it comes to career stage and the retention of employees. This is due to the current younger generation staff may not have the same values of brand or engagement as potential incoming younger generation talent. The study based in Canada that looked for differences in entry and exit priorities found that generation Y had no significant difference to generation X. Younger employees planned to stay a shorter time period than generation X which is an issue for retaining staff. What do the generations want and need in terms of retention? The current research aims to find out what the generations want and need for retention along with if this differs for the generations X and Y.

For retention of employees, employee engagement is a factor. Employee engagement can be defined as being psychologically as well as physically present when occupying and performing an organisational role (Kular, Gatenby, Rees, Soane and Truss, 2008).

Engagement research carried out by previous studies such as Hoole and Bonnema (2015) looked to find differences in generation cohorts in terms of meaningful work and engagement levels of which there was no difference in X and Y. the current research would look to find a difference.

In terms of overall attraction and retention of generational staff research suggests that generational difference in work attitude is present and that generation Y rated higher on good attitude toward such things and training and development which the current research would try to see if these findings related to an Irish context (Solnet, Kralj and Kandampully, 2012).

## 2.4. Research Question

Title: To explore and understand the possible differences between Generation X and Generation Y in terms of job attraction and engagement of employees.

Research Question: Does the job attraction and engagement of employees differ between Generation X and Generation Y?

Sub Objective One: Is there a difference in the attraction of a company/brand or job for Generation Y compared to Generation X?

Null Hypothesis: There will be no significant difference in job attraction for Generation Y compared to Generation X.

Alternative Hypothesis: There will be a significant difference in job attraction for Generation Y compared to Generation X.

Sub Objective Two: Is there a difference in the engagement levels of Generation X compared to Generation Y?

Null Hypothesis: There will be no significant difference in engagement levels of Generation X compared to Generation Y.

Alternative Hypothesis: There will be a significant difference in engagement levels of Generation X compared to Generation Y.

### **3. Chapter Three: Methodology**

#### **3.1. Introduction and Research Philosophies**

The purpose of the Methodology chapter is to demonstrate how the current research study was designed and the reasoning behind how it was designed. Research is ‘the systematic investigation into and study of materials and sources in order to establish facts and reach new conclusions’ (Oxford Dictionary, 2017). There are many types of research methods however can mainly be split into two categories, which are qualitative and quantitative. In designing a study both must be considered to see which best fits the requirements needing to be met.

There are two types of methods when it comes to research, these being qualitative and quantitative methods. Qualitative research methods are what are referred to as research that explores attitudes, experiences and behaviour usually conducted through interviews and focus groups (Dawson, 2009). The methodology the research proposes to use is that of quantitative methods rather than qualitative. The reasoning for this method being used is previous studies have used qualitative methods for this type of study or the quantitative methods used only tested one sub objective of the current research. Quantitative methods involve the use of numerical data and collection methods in order to realise the research question focusing on facts and patterns of the population (Rugg and Petre, 2007).

For the data collection method for the research, a survey was the chosen method which was used. The survey was administered online to the intended population sample. The survey consisted of a mixture of two previously validated questionnaires in the areas of job attraction and engagement of employees in order to collect data for both job attraction and engagement information proposes. These questionnaires being the Employer Attractiveness Scale developed by Berthon, Ewing and Hah (2005) and the Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzalez-Roma and Bakker (2001) designed Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES).

### 3.2. Research Design

The research design used was chosen in order to best fit the time frame of the research along with the area of research and the resources at hand to the researcher. For the study, a quantitative approach was used with an online survey being the quantitative method chosen. The reason for deciding on this approach was so that a large group of participants could be researched in order to get a vast amount of results in the time frame available. Surveys allow for a large sample size and low likelihood of distortion of a participant's answer (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2003). Other reasoning for using a survey being that participants and results would be easily reachable. Easily reachable in terms of a fast way to provide results by using the survey, which takes approximately 10 to 15 minutes to complete.

The survey used and designed in Google Forms, combines descriptive questions such as gender, education and industry along with two in full validated questionnaires in order to get results needed on the research questions. The questionnaires used were the 25 item Employer Attractiveness Scale (Appendix A) developed by Berthon, Ewing and Hah (2005) along with the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) (Appendix B), which is a 17-item scale by Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzalez-Roma and Bakker (2001). The scales used were both validated scales. In the original article for the Employer Attractiveness Scale scored it scored a Cronbach of 0.96 (Berthon, Ewing and Hah, 2005). The Utrecht Work Engagement Scale scored a Cronbach of 0.94 when used by Schaufeli et al. (2001).

Previous research in the area of generational differences, job attraction and engagement have used a number of methods in order to complete studies. Both qualitative and quantitative methods have been used more so qualitative. There is a gap in the research done in so far as quantitative. Most previous studies used interviews in order to collect data, therefore, a gap in the research for survey scales was identified. Previous research tests either one generation or one subjective of job attraction and engagement. For the current research, the researcher wanted to add to the literature in the case of both generations and job attraction and engagement. Previous research by Reis and Braga (2016) which used the Employer

Attractiveness Scale used quantitative methods. The study which used the Employer Attractiveness Scale, found that generally the higher the age the more people tend to appreciate the work itself and the less value is assigned to extrinsic rewards.

Tests of reliability were carried out on both of the scales used in the study, the Employer Attractiveness Scale and Utrecht Work Engagement Scale. The Employer Attractiveness Scale had a total of 127 valid responses for the 25-item scale. The results of the scale showed overall each individuals attractiveness to an employer or job. The Cronbach score for the scale was 0.967 as shown in Table 1 below. The Utrecht Work Engagement Scale had a total of 127 valid responses for the 17-item scale. The results of the scale showed overall each individuals engagement to work. The Cronbach score for the scale was .948 as shown in Table 1 below.

**Table 1: Tests of Reliability (Cronbach Alpha)**

<b>Scale</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Items</b>	<b>Cronbach Alpha</b>
Employer Attractiveness	127	25	0.967
Work Engagement	127	17	0.948

### **3.3. Pilot study**

As part of the research, a pilot study was conducted on the intended sample population. Ten individual were used to pilot the study, five Generation X and five Generation Y. The reason a pilot study was used was to clear up any problems with the survey before it was sent out to participants on a larger scale and risk not getting responses. There were some concerns with the survey in so far that pilot participants wanted more work industry fields as they could not fit themselves into one already there. Also expressed was the phrasing of some questions. The researcher took on board all concerns and amended the survey.

### **3.4. Sampling**

The sample of a research study is the selection of a subset of people from a population. For the current research, the population was that of individuals who are employed or actively seeking employment in the current entry to mid-level Irish workforce. Participants were recruited through a means of convenience sampling. Participants were recruited with an email inviting them to take part in an online survey. The intended sample size for the research was to be made up of 100 participants who fell into the Generations X and Y between the ages of 18 and 52 in the year 2017. Other than belonging to the two generations the only requirement for participation being each participant needed to be either employed or seeking employment within the current entry to mid-level Irish workforce. The aim was to get 50 from Generation X and 50 from generation Y. What was achieved was 45 from Generation X and 82 from Generation Y.

### **3.5. Ethical Considerations**

The ethical considerations of the current research ensured that all participants of the study were briefed on the process that is involved in participation. Participants were sent an email inviting them to take part in the survey online. Included in the email was an information sheet explaining the research and survey, within this information sheet was a consent form and the contact details of the researcher if needed by participants. The information sheet and consent form gave the participants all the information on what the research is, why and by who the research is being completed and the participants right to withdraw from the research or not participate in the research at any stage if they so wish. The research did not use any vulnerable groups in the course of the data collection along with not asking any vulnerable or unethical questions. Any data collected was kept confidential, anonymous and stored securely by the researcher.

### **3.6. Limitations of Methodology**

The limitations of the methodology were that the surveys used contained closed multiple choice questions. This limits to an extent the participants understanding of the questions with a possibility of misunderstanding the questions.

## **4. Chapter Four: Results and Analysis**

### **4.1. Introduction**

The results of the study have been broken down into three categories. The first showing the descriptive statistics which were carried out on the data collected. The second category showing the test results of the Employer Attractiveness Scale. The second category showing the test results of the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale. Both categories show the results from the parametric and non-parametric explorations of scales in relation to the variables and hypotheses as stated in the literature review. For both categories of the results, the individual variables will be presented along with the results of the statistical tests ran on these variables.

### **4.2. Descriptive Statistics**

Exploratory descriptive testing was carried out on the data collected in the study. Frequency (N) data mean (M) and percentage (%) has been summarized in Table 2 below.

**Table 2: Exploratory Descriptive Statistics**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>
Age		1.35	0.478
18-36	83		
37-52	44		
Gender		1.60	0.508
Male	52		
Female	74		
Rather not say	1		
Nationality		1.1575	0.36570
Irish	107		
Non-Irish	20		
Education		2.3228	0.88085
Leaving Cert/Equivalent	23		
College Degree/Diploma	52		
Masters/PHD	40		
Professional Qualification	12		
Industry		2.5118	1.33848
Admin/Customer Service	40		
Education	23		
Professional Services	39		
Healthcare	9		
Engineering/Construction	16		
LOS-C		2.39	1.114
Less than 1 year	31		
1-5 years	47		
6-9 years	17		
More than 10 years	32		
LOS-O		2.82	0.995
Less than 1 year	9		
1-5 years	49		
6-9 years	25		
More than 10 years	44		

### 4.3. Employer Attractiveness Scale Testing

#### 4.3.1 Normality testing

In order to ascertain whether parametric or non-parametric tests were to be carried, normality tests were undertaken on the variables in terms of the Employer Attractiveness Scale. The results of these normality tests are outlined in Table 3a and b below for each variable. As the results of the normality testing shows a deviation from normality in most of the variables it is required to run nonparametric tests on all the data. These tests will be outlined below and shown in Table 4 below.

**Table 3a: Employer Attractiveness Normality**

Variable	W	DF	P-Value	Normality
Age				
18-36	0.929	83	0.000	Deviated
37-52	0.908	44	0.002	Deviated
Gender				
Male	0.945	52	0.018	Deviated
Female	0.923	74	0.000	Deviated
Nationality				
Irish	0.927	107	0.000	Deviated
Non-Irish	0.849	20	0.005	Deviated

**Table 3b: Employer Attractiveness Normality**

Variable	W	DF	P-Value	Normality
<b>Education</b>				
Leaving Cert/Equivalent	0.752	23	0.000	Deviated
College Degree/Diploma	0.863	52	0.000	Deviated
Masters/PHD	0.983	40	0.792	Normal
Professional Qualification	0.950	12	0.636	Normal
<b>Industry</b>				
Admin/Customer Service	0.896	40	0.001	Deviated
Education	0.918	23	0.059	Normal
Professional Services	0.973	39	0.455	Normal
Healthcare	0.873	9	0.134	Normal
Engineering/Construction	0.859	16	0.019	Deviated
<b>Length of service current</b>				
Under 1 year	0.979	31	0.772	Normal
1-5 years	0.896	47	0.001	Deviated
6-9 years	0.864	17	0.018	Deviated
10 or more years	0.903	32	0.007	Deviated
<b>Length of service overall</b>				
Under 1 year	0.945	9	0.636	Normal
1-5 years	0.891	49	0.000	Deviated
6-9 years	0.944	25	0.179	Normal
10 or more years	0.908	44	0.002	Deviated

**Table 4: Employer Attractiveness Mann-Whitney U-Test of Variables**

Demographic Variables	N	U	Z	Median	Sig
Age		1736.500	-0.454		0.650
18-36	83			5.2000	
37-52	44			5.3200	
Gender		1367.000	-2.761		0.006
Male	52			4.8400	
Female	74			5.4600	
Nationality		846.500	-1.480		0.139
Irish	107			5.2800	
Non-Irish	20			4.6400	

**Table 5: Employer Attractiveness Kruskal-Wallis Test of Variables**

<b>Demographic Variables</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>x<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Median</b>	<b>Sig</b>
Education		22.151	3		0.000
Leaving Cert/Equivalent	23			6.0800	
College Degree/Diploma	52			5.3000	
Masters/PHD	40			5.1200	
Professional Qualification	12			4.3200	
Industry		4.821	4		0.306
Administration/Customer Service	40			5.6000	
Education	23			5.0400	
Professional Services	39			5.2400	
Healthcare	9			5.1200	
Engineering/Construction	16			5.1400	
Length of Service Current		1.785	3		0.618
Under 1 year	31			5.2000	
1-5 years	47			5.2000	
6-9 years	17			5.8800	
10 or more years	32			5.1400	
Length of Service Overall		9.726	3		0.021
Under 1 year	9			5.6000	
1-5 years	49			5.2800	
6-9 years	25			4.4400	
10 or more years	44			5.400	

### 4.3.2 Age

An assessment of the differences between Generation X job attractiveness levels and those of Generation Y participant job attractiveness levels was undertaken. Both Generation X and Generation Y distributions were assessed for normality. The results of a Shapiro-Wilks test of normality indicating that both distributions deviated significantly from a normal distribution, in particular, Generation X ( $W=0.908$ ,  $DF=44$ ,  $P=0.000$ ) and Generation Y ( $W=0.929$ ,  $DF=83$ ,  $P=0.002$ ). Due to deviations in normality, a non-parametric Mann-Whitney U-Test was undertaken to ascertain if differences between Generation X median job attractiveness levels and those of Generation Y participant job attractiveness levels exist. The results of the Mann-Whitney U-Test indicating that there was no evidence to suggest that Generation X median job attractiveness levels ( $Mdn=5.20$ ) were different to those

of Generation Y (Mdn=5.32), at the 5% level of significance level ( $U= 1736.500$ ,  $z = -0.454$ ,  $p = 0.650$ ).

### **4.3.3 Gender**

An assessment of the differences between male job attractiveness levels and those of female participant job attractiveness levels was undertaken. Both male and female distributions were assessed for normality. The results of a Shapiro-Wilks test of normality indicating that both distributions deviated significantly from a normal distribution, in particular, male ( $W=0.945$ ,  $DF=52$ ,  $P=0.018$ ) and Generation Y ( $W=0.923$ ,  $DF=74$ ,  $P=0.000$ ). Due to deviations in normality a non-parametric Mann-Whitney U-Test was undertaken to ascertain if differences between male median job attractiveness levels and those of female participant job attractiveness levels exist. The results of the Mann-Whitney U-Test indicating that there was evidence to suggest that male median job attractiveness levels (Mdn=4.84) were different to those of female (Mdn=5.46), at the 5% level of significance level ( $U=1367.000$ ,  $z= -2.761$ ,  $p= 0.006$ ).

### **4.3.4 Nationality**

An assessment of the differences between Irish job attractiveness levels and those of Non-Irish participant job attractiveness levels was undertaken. Both Irish and Non-Irish distributions were assessed for normality. The results of a Shapiro-Wilks test of normality indicating that both distributions deviated significantly from a normal distribution, in particular, Irish ( $W=0.927$ ,  $DF=107$ ,  $P=0.000$ ) and Non-Irish ( $W=0.849$ ,  $DF=20$ ,  $P=0.005$ ). Due to deviations in normality a non-parametric Mann-Whitney U-Test was undertaken to ascertain if differences between Irish median job attractiveness levels and those of Non-Irish participant job attractiveness levels exist. The results of the Mann-Whitney U-Test indicating that there was no evidence to suggest that Irish median job attractiveness levels (Mdn=5.28) were different to those of Non-Irish (Mdn=4.64), at the 5% level of significance level ( $U=846.500$ ,  $z= -1.480$ ,  $p= 0.139$ ).

#### **4.3.5 Education**

An assessment of the differences between education levels on job attractiveness levels was undertaken. All four categories of education distributions were assessed for normality (Leaving Cert/Equivalent, College Degree/Diploma, Masters/PhD and Professional Qualification). The results of a Shapiro-Wilks test of normality indicating the distributions deviated significantly from a normal distribution, in particular, Leaving Cert/Equivalent ( $W=0.752$ ,  $DF=23$ ,  $P=0.000$ ), College Degree/Diploma ( $W=0.863$ ,  $DF=52$ ,  $P=0.000$ ), Masters/PHD ( $W=0.983$ ,  $DF=40$ ,  $P=0.792$ ) and Professional Qualification ( $W=0.950$ ,  $DF=12$ ,  $P=0.636$ ). Due to deviations in normality a non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis Test was undertaken to ascertain if differences between education distributions median job attractiveness levels exist. The results of the Kruskal-Wallis Test indicating that there was evidence to suggest differences were present in education distributions job attractiveness median levels (Leaving Cert/Equivalent  $Mdn=6.0800$ , College Degree/Diploma  $Mdn=5.3000$ , Master/PhD  $Mdn=5.1200$ , Professional Qualification  $Mdn=4.3200$ ), at the 5% level of significance level ( $X^2=22.151$ ,  $DF=3$ ,  $p=0.000$ ).

#### **4.3.6 Industry**

An assessment of the differences between industry levels on job attractiveness levels was undertaken. All five categories of industry distributions were assessed for normality (Administration/Customer Service, Education, Professional Services, Healthcare and Engineering/Construction). The results of a Shapiro-Wilks test of normality indicating the distributions deviated significantly from a normal distribution, in particular, Administration/Customer Service ( $W=0.896$ ,  $DF=40$ ,  $P=0.001$ ), Education ( $W=0.918$ ,  $DF=23$ ,  $P=0.059$ ), Professional Services ( $W=0.973$ ,  $DF=39$ ,  $P=0.455$ ), Healthcare ( $W=0.873$ ,  $DF=9$ ,  $P=0.134$ ) and Engineering/Construction ( $W=0.859$ ,  $DF=16$ ,  $P=0.019$ ). Due to deviations in normality, a non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis Test was undertaken to ascertain if differences between industry distributions median job attractiveness levels exist. The results of the Kruskal-Wallis Test indicating that there was no evidence to suggest differences were present in industry distributions job attractiveness median levels (Administration/Customer Service  $Mdn=5.6000$ , Education  $Mdn=5.0400$ ,

Professional Services Mdn=5.2400, Healthcare Mdn=5.1200, Engineering/Construction Mdn=5.1400), at the 5% level of significance level ( $X^2=4.821$ ,  $DF= 4$ ,  $p= 0.306$ ).

#### **4.3.7 Length of service current**

An assessment of the differences between current length of service levels on job attractiveness levels was undertaken. All four categories of current length of service distributions were assessed for normality (Under 1 year, 1 to 5 years, 6 to 9 years, and 10 or more years). The results of a Shapiro-Wilks test of normality indicating the distributions deviated significantly from a normal distribution, in particular, Under 1 year ( $W=0.979$ ,  $DF=31$ ,  $P=0.772$ ), 1 to 5 years ( $W=0.896$ ,  $DF=47$ ,  $P=0.001$ ), 6 to 9 years ( $W=0.864$ ,  $DF=17$ ,  $P=0.018$ ), and 10 or more years ( $W=0.903$ ,  $DF=32$ ,  $P=0.007$ ). Due to deviations in normality, a non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis Test was undertaken to ascertain if differences between current length of service distributions median job attractiveness levels exist. The results of the Kruskal-Wallis Test indicating that there was no evidence to suggest differences were present in current length of service distributions job attractiveness median levels (Under 1 year Mdn=5.2000, 1 to 5 years Mdn=5.2000, 6 to 9 years Mdn=5.8800, 10 or more years Mdn=5.1400), at the 5% level of significance level ( $X^2=1.785$ ,  $DF= 3$ ,  $p= 0.618$ ).

#### **4.3.8 Length of service overall**

An assessment of the differences between overall length of service levels on job attractiveness levels was undertaken. All four categories of current length of service distributions were assessed for normality (Under 1 year, 1 to 5 years, 6 to 9 years, and 10 or more years). The results of a Shapiro-Wilks test of normality indicating the distributions deviated significantly from a normal distribution, in particular, Under 1 year ( $W=0.945$ ,  $DF=9$ ,  $P=0.636$ ), 1 to 5 years ( $W=0.891$ ,  $DF=49$ ,  $P=0.000$ ), 6 to 9 years ( $W=0.944$ ,  $DF=25$ ,  $P=0.179$ ), and 10 or more years ( $W=0.908$ ,  $DF=44$ ,  $P=0.002$ ). Due to deviations in normality, a non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis Test was undertaken to ascertain if differences between overall length of service distributions median job attractiveness levels exist. The results of

the Kruskal-Wallis Test indicating that there was evidence to suggest differences were present in current length of service distributions job attractiveness median levels (Under 1 year Mdn=5.6000, 1 to 5 years Mdn=5.2800 , 6 to 9 years Mdn=4.4400, 10 or more years Mdn=5.400), at the 5% level of significance level ( $X^2=9.726$ ,  $DF= 3$ ,  $p= 0.021$ ).

#### 4.3.9 Further Mann-Whitney Testing

As the variable of education and overall length of service showed levels of significant difference further Mann-Whitney testing was undertaken to try and establish which groups within these variables caused the significance as shown in Table 6 below. The results of these will be explained in details in the following chapter.

**Table 6: Job Attractiveness Mann-Whitney U-Test of Variables**

<b>Demographic Variables</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>Z</b>	<b>Sig</b>
<b>Education</b>			
Leaving Cert VS College Degree	299.500	-3.3431	0.001
Leaving Cert VS Masters/PHD	234.500	-3.221	0.001
Leaving Cert VS Professional Q	42.500	-3.324	0.001
College Degree VS Masters	1023.000	-0.134	0.893
College Degree VS Professional Q	161.000	-2.598	0.009
Masters VS Professional Q	95.500	-3.140	0.002
<b>Length of Service Overall</b>			
Under 1 year VS 1-5 years	169.500	-1.096	0.273
Under 1 year VS 6-9 years	52.000	-2.363	0.018
Under 1 year VS 10 or more years	169.500	-0.676	0.499
1-5 years VS 6-9 years	365.500	-2.824	0.005
1-5 years VS 10 or more years	1065.500	-0.100	0.920
6-9 years VS 10 or more years	366.000	-2.298	0.022

## 4.4. Work Engagement Scale Testing

### 4.4.1 Normality testing

In order to ascertain whether parametric or non-parametric tests were to be carried out on the data collected normality tests were carried out on the variables in terms of the Work Engagement Scale. The results of these normality tests are outlined in Table 7a and b below in terms of each variable. As the results of the normality testing shows a deviation from normality it is required to run nonparametric tests on all the data.

**Table 7a: Work Engagement Normality (Shapiro-Wilk Test)**

Variable	W	DF	P-Value	Normality
Age				
18-36	0.978	83	0.164	Normal
37-52	0.913	44	0.003	Deviated
Gender				
Male	0.932	52	0.006	Deviated
Female	0.956	74	0.011	Normal
Nationality				
Irish	0.961	107	0.003	Deviated
Non-Irish	0.948	20	0.341	Normal

**Table 7b: Work Engagement Normality (Shapiro-Wilk Test)**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>DF</b>	<b>P-Value</b>	<b>Normality</b>
<b>Education</b>				
Leaving Cert/Equivalent	0.766	23	0.000	Deviated
College Degree/Diploma	0.962	52	0.098	Normal
Masters/PHD	0.973	40	0.458	Normal
Professional Qualification	0.939	12	0.485	Normal
<b>Industry</b>				
Admin/Customer Service	0.957	40	0.136	Normal
Education	0.947	23	0.256	Normal
Professional Services	0.972	39	0.437	Normal
Healthcare	0.973	9	0.922	Normal
Engineering/Construction	0.748	16	0.001	Deviated
<b>Length of Service Current</b>				
Under 1 year	0.965	31	0.401	Normal
1-5 years	0.983	47	0.722	Normal
6-9 years	0.863	17	0.017	Deviated
10 or more years	0.915	32	0.015	Deviated
<b>Length of Service Overall</b>				
Under 1 year	0.958	9	0.775	Normal
1-5 years	0.976	49	0.399	Normal
6-9 years	0.976	25	0.793	Normal
10 or more years	0.918	44	0.004	Deviated

**Table 8: Work Engagement Mann-Whitney U-Test of Variables**

<b>Demographic Variables</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>Z</b>	<b>Median</b>	<b>Sig</b>
Age		1320.00	-2.564		0.010
18-36	83			4.8556	
37-52	44			5.6500	
Gender		1717.500	-1.023		0.306
Male	52			5.1556	
Female	74			5.1444	
Nationality		916.500	-1.016		0.310
Irish	107			5.2444	
Non-Irish	20			4.4833	

**Table 9: Work Engagement Kruskal-Wallis Test of Variables**

<b>Demographic Variables</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>x<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Median Sig</b>
Education		12.853	3	0.005
Leaving Cert/Equivalent	23			6.3000
College Degree/Diploma	52			4.9611
Masters/PHD	40			4.9389
Professional Qualification	12			4.6778
Industry		4.940	4	0.293
Administration/Customer Service	40			5.2222
Education	23			5.2333
Professional Services	39			4.8444
Healthcare	9			5.5000
Engineering/Construction	16			6.2222
Length of Service Current		8.465	3	0.037
Under 1 year	31			4.9778
1-5 years	47			4.8556
6-9 years	17			5.9222
10 or more years	32			5.0944
Length of Service Overall		0.632	3	0.889
Under 1 year	9			5.2444
1-5 years	49			5.1333
6-9 years	25			4.8889
10 or more years	44			5.3444

#### 4.4.2 Age

An assessment of the differences between Generation X job attractiveness levels and those of Generation Y participant job attractiveness levels was undertaken. Both Generation X and Generation Y distributions were assessed for normality. The results of a Shapiro-Wilks test of normality indicating that both distributions deviated significantly from a normal distribution, in particular, Generation X ( $W=0.908$ ,  $DF=44$ ,  $P=0.000$ ) and Generation Y ( $W=0.929$ ,  $DF=83$ ,  $P=0.002$ ). Due to deviations in normality a non-parametric Mann-Whitney U-Test was undertaken to ascertain if differences between Generation X median job attractiveness levels and those of Generation Y participant job attractiveness levels exist. The results of the Mann-Whitney U-Test indicating that there was no evidence to suggest that Generation X median job attractiveness levels ( $Mdn=5.20$ ) were different to those

of Generation Y (Mdn=5.32), at the 5% level of significance level ( $U= 1736.500$ ,  $z = -0.454$ ,  $p = 0.650$ ).

#### **4.4.3 Gender**

An assessment of the differences between male job attractiveness levels and those of female participant job attractiveness levels was undertaken. Both male and female distributions were assessed for normality. The results of a Shapiro-Wilks test of normality indicating that both distributions deviated significantly from a normal distribution, in particular, male ( $W=0.945$ ,  $DF=52$ ,  $P=0.018$ ) and Generation Y ( $W=0.923$ ,  $DF=74$ ,  $P=0.000$ ). Due to deviations in normality a non-parametric Mann-Whitney U-Test was undertaken to ascertain if differences between male median job attractiveness levels and those of female participant job attractiveness levels exist. The results of the Mann-Whitney U-Test indicating that there was evidence to suggest that male median job attractiveness levels (Mdn=4.84) were different to those of female (Mdn=5.46), at the 5% level of significance level ( $U=1367.000$ ,  $z= -2.761$ ,  $p= 0.006$ ).

#### **4.4.4 Nationality**

An assessment of the differences between Irish job attractiveness levels and those of Non-Irish participant job attractiveness levels was undertaken. Both Irish and Non-Irish distributions were assessed for normality. The results of a Shapiro-Wilks test of normality indicating that both distributions deviated significantly from a normal distribution, in particular, Irish ( $W=0.961$ ,  $DF=107$ ,  $P=0.003$ ) and Non Irish ( $W=0.948$ ,  $DF=20$ ,  $P=0.341$ ). Due to deviations in normality a non-parametric Mann-Whitney U-Test was undertaken to ascertain if differences between Irish median job attractiveness levels and those of Non Irish participant job attractiveness levels exist. The results of the Mann-Whitney U-Test indicating that there was no evidence to suggest that Irish median job attractiveness levels (Mdn=5.28) were different to those of Non Irish (Mdn=4.64), at the 5% level of significance level ( $U=846.500$ ,  $z= -1.480$ ,  $p= 0.139$ ).

#### **4.4.5 Education**

An assessment of the differences between education levels on job attractiveness levels was undertaken. All four categories of education distributions were assessed for normality (Leaving Cert/Equivalent, College Degree/Diploma, Masters/PHD and Professional Qualification). The results of a Shapiro-Wilks test of normality indicating the distributions deviated significantly from a normal distribution, in particular, Leaving Cert/Equivalent ( $W=0.766$ ,  $DF=23$ ,  $P=0.000$ ), College Degree/Diploma ( $W=0.962$ ,  $DF=52$ ,  $P=0.098$ ), Masters/PHD ( $W=0.973$ ,  $DF=40$ ,  $P=0.973$ ) and Professional Qualification ( $W=0.939$ ,  $DF=12$ ,  $P=0.485$ ). Due to deviations in normality a non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis Test was undertaken to ascertain if differences between education distributions median job attractiveness levels exist. The results of the Kruskal-Wallis Test indicating that there was evidence to suggest differences were present in education distributions job attractiveness median levels (Leaving Cert/Equivalent  $Mdn=6.3000$ , College Degree/Diploma  $Mdn=4.9611$ , Master/PHD  $Mdn=4.9389$ , Professional Qualification  $Mdn=4.6778$ ), at the 5% level of significance level ( $X^2=22.151$ ,  $DF=3$ ,  $p=0.000$ ).

#### **4.4.6 Industry**

An assessment of the differences between industry levels on job attractiveness levels was undertaken. All five categories of industry distributions were assessed for normality (Administration/Customer Service, Education, Professional Services, Healthcare and Engineering/Construction). The results of a Shapiro-Wilks test of normality indicating the distributions deviated significantly from a normal distribution, in particular, Administration/Customer Service ( $W=0.957$ ,  $DF=40$ ,  $P=0.136$ ), Education ( $W=0.947$ ,  $DF=23$ ,  $P=0.256$ ), Professional Services ( $W=0.972$ ,  $DF=39$ ,  $P=0.437$ ), Healthcare ( $W=0.973$ ,  $DF=9$ ,  $P=0.922$ ) and Engineering/Construction ( $W=0.748$ ,  $DF=16$ ,  $P=0.001$ ). Due to deviations in normality, a non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis Test was undertaken to ascertain if differences between industry distributions median job attractiveness levels exist. The results of the Kruskal-Wallis Test indicating that there was no evidence to suggest differences were present in industry distributions job attractiveness median

levels (Administration/Customer Service Mdn=5.2222, Education Mdn=5.2333, Professional Services Mdn=4.8444, Healthcare Mdn=5.5000, Engineering/Construction Mdn=6.2222), at the 5% level of significance level ( $X^2=4.821$ , DF= 4,  $p= 0.306$ ).

#### **4.4.7 Length of service current**

An assessment of the differences between current length of service levels on job attractiveness levels was undertaken. All four categories of current length of service distributions were assessed for normality (Under 1 year, 1 to 5 years, 6 to 9 years, and 10 or more years). The results of a Shapiro-Wilks test of normality indicating the distributions deviated significantly from a normal distribution, in particular, Under 1 year ( $W=0.965$ , DF=31,  $P=0.401$ ), 1 to 5 years ( $W=0.983$ , DF=47,  $P=0.722$ ), 6 to 9 years ( $W=0.863$ , DF=17,  $P=0.017$ ), and 10 or more years ( $W=0.915$ , DF=32,  $P=0.015$ ). Due to deviations in normality, a non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis Test was undertaken to ascertain if differences between current length of service distributions median job attractiveness levels exist. The results of the Kruskal-Wallis Test indicating that there was no evidence to suggest differences were present in current length of service distributions job attractiveness median levels (Under 1 year Mdn=4.9778, 1 to 5 years Mdn=4.8556 , 6 to 9 years Mdn=5.9222, 10 or more years Mdn=5.0944), at the 5% level of significance level ( $X^2=1.785$ , DF= 3,  $p= 0.618$ ).

#### **4.4.8 Length of service overall**

An assessment of the differences between overall length of service levels on job attractiveness levels was undertaken. All four categories of current length of service distributions were assessed for normality (Under 1 year, 1 to 5 years, 6 to 9 years, and 10 or more years). The results of a Shapiro-Wilks test of normality indicating the distributions deviated significantly from a normal distribution, in particular, Under 1 year ( $W=0.958$ , DF=9,  $P=0.775$ ), 1 to 5 years ( $W=0.976$ , DF=49,  $P=0.399$ ), 6 to 9 years ( $W=0.976$ , DF=25,  $P=0.793$ ), and 10 or more years

( $W=0.918$ ,  $DF=44$ ,  $P=0.004$ ). Due to deviations in normality, a non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis Test was undertaken to ascertain if differences between overall length of service distributions median job attractiveness levels exist. The results of the Kruskal-Wallis Test indicating that there was evidence to suggest differences were present in current length of service distributions job attractiveness median levels (Under 1 year  $Mdn=5.2444$ , 1 to 5 years  $Mdn=5.1333$ , 6 to 9 years  $Mdn=4.8889$ , 10 or more years  $Mdn=5.3444$ ), at the 5% level of significance level ( $X^2=9.726$ ,  $DF= 3$ ,  $p= 0.021$ ).

#### 4.4.9 Further Mann-Whitney Tests

As the variable of education and overall length of service showed levels of significant difference further Mann-Whitney testing was undertaken to try and establish which groups within these variables caused the significance as shown in Table 10 below. The results of these will be explained in details in the following chapter.

**Table 10: Work Engagement Mann-Whitney U-Test of Variables**

Demographic Variables	U	Z	Sig
Education			
Leaving Cert VS College Degree	3.04.000	-3.379	0.001
Leaving Cert VS Masters/PHD	248.000	-3.027	0.002
Leaving Cert VS Professional Q	72.500	-2.280	0.023
College Degree VS Masters	998.000	-0.331	0.741
College Degree VS Professional Q	308.500	-0.060	0.952
Masters VS Professional Q	234.000	-0.130	0.896
Length of Service Current			
Under 1 year VS 1-5 years	196.000	-0.526	0.599
Under 1 year VS 6-9 years	104.500	-3.312	0.002
Under 1 year VS 10 or more years	180.500	-2.415	0.083
1-5 years VS 6-9 years	580.500	-3.366	0.001
1-5 years VS 10 or more years	1029.500	-0.373	0.709
6-9 years VS 10 or more years	495.500	-0.681	0.496

## **5. Chapter Five: Discussion**

### **5.1 Employer Attractiveness**

The results gained from the data collected in terms of job attractiveness would suggest that there are some significant differences when it comes to generations and job attractiveness. The differences were not with generation in this case but with gender, education and length of service overall. However, for the sub objective hypothesis this research is keeping the Null Hypothesis which was this were no significant differences in the job attraction for Generation Y compared to Generation X. However as there showed to be differences in other variables aside from generation it is important to look at these differences. Gender showed in this study that females as shown in the tables in the previous chapter had a higher level of job attraction to males. Females views a job as attractive to them as a higher quality needed.

For education and length of service overall differences it was required to do further testing. Education showed that participants with an education level of leaving certificate of equivalent had a significant difference to those with higher level of education when it came to job attractiveness. While length of service overall as a variable showed that participants with a service length of 6-9 years had a significant difference in job attraction levels to any other time frame. It would be advisable to explore this more with a regression to see how and why however given the time frame this was not possible for the current study. Overall the Hypothesis was not proven in this case that Generation Y had a significant difference in job attraction to Generation X.

## **5.2 Engagement**

The results gained from the data collected in terms of engagement would suggest that there are some significant differences when it comes to generations and engagement. The differences in this case did come from generation and also with education and length of current service. However, for the sub objective hypothesis this research is rejecting the Null Hypothesis which was this were no significant differences in the job attraction for Generation Y compared to Generation X. The differences in generation as shown in the above chapter show that Generation X appear to have a higher level of engagement than those of Generation Y.

As there showed to be differences in other variables aside from generation it is important to look at these differences. For education and length of service overall differences it was required to do further testing. Education showed that participants with an education level of leaving certificate of equivalent had a significant difference to those with higher level of education when it came to engagement. While length of service current as a variable showed that participants with a service length of 6-9 years had a significant difference in engagement levels to any other time frame. It would be advisable to explore this more with a regression to see how and why however given the time frame this was not possible for the current study. Overall the Hypothesis was proven in this case there was a significant difference in engagement levels of Generation X compared to Generation Y.

## **5.3 Study Limitations**

For the current study, there are a number of limitations. While limitations do not discount a study or its findings they do give a way to move forward with future research. The limitations of this study include the following. While extensive non-parametric testing was undertaken on the variables had there had been more time a regression could have been carried put on the data collected. This regression may have given a further insight into generational differences and provided the study with a different outcome. Another limitation of the study was an unequal proportion of Generation X and Generation Y. Generation X this not respond as much to the

survey as Generation Y had this been an equal of both generations there is the possibility of the result shaving been different to what was found in this study. This could have been rectified by administering the survey both online and in paper format as not all Generation X use online surveys if this was done there may have been more equal numbers gained. It may have been another option to include some open-ended questions to ask participants what their understanding of job attraction and engagement was.

## **6. Chapter Six: Conclusion and Recommendations**

### **6.1 Conclusions**

To conclude from the research and results gained from this study it is clear that a difference in generations is apparent for engagement levels. Generation X appear more engaged than Generation Y which is apparent in the literature in the area also. This research did expect to find that Generation Y viewed job attractiveness as more important the Generation X however in this case it was not apparent. This study showed that one hypothesis was proven and the other rejected. Had further statistical testing been carried out thus study may have found more detailed reasoning for the differences or why the differences did not exist.

### **6.2 Recommendations for Further Research**

For future research into generational differences of job attraction and engagement it is recommended to do the following. Where possible try to achieve equal numbers of both or all generations being studied. If surveys are the methods administer them both online and in paper format. It may gain further insights to carry out some interviews on a few members of each generation. This would give the researcher a better understanding of what the differences really mean also what the terms job attraction and engagement mean. As the survey questions were closed there is no way to determine the meanings therefore future research could include some open-ended questions to gain more insight. Also studies similar to the current one should run a regression on the data collected to see if it would give different results.

### **6.3 Implications of Findings**

In order to carry out the recommendations of further research it would be advisable to start at the very beginning of the time frame allowed. This would allow for both interviews and survey administration while also allowing for the regression statistic

to be undertaken. Where possible it would be advisable to extend the time frame which was available to the current study. Costs for further study as recommended would need to be considered in so far as the printing cost of administering a paper version of the survey and how many paper versions should be administered. It would be advisable to allow up to one hundred euro for printing costs. Also, to allow costs for holding any interviews which may take place, how are they recorded and where are they to be held it would be advisable to allow up to 150 euro for recording equipment and hiring of a room if none are available to the researcher.

## **6.4 CIPD Personal Learning Reflection**

When I decided to complete my Masters in Human Resource Management I did not truly understand the time and effort which would be involved. The process to complete my Masters has taught me a lot. When I started the Masters, I was not working full time by the time of starting the dissertation part I was working full time. I found it a huge change and challenge while working full time. The most important lesson I learned during the process was how important it is to have good time-management skills. While it became consuming it is worth it now having completed the Masters.

The hardest part of the dissertation itself for me was to make sure my writing was academic the whole way through, as previously I struggled with this. I also underestimated how difficult it can be to interrupt results from an SPSS output it took a lot of time and starting over again to make sense of my results. If I was to complete this dissertation again, I would also complete a regression on the data collected, as I found I didn't have enough time at the end to do so. It would be interesting to see what these results would have shown.

Although I did not get to complete all the statistics I could have with my data I am proud of what I have done and the experience of completing a research study on this level will stand with me both in and out of work life.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A: Employer Attractiveness Scale

Attraction is measured through a seven point Likert scale (1 – Not at all or unsure to 7 – to a very great extent).

Read the questions and for each question please give an indication as to its importance to you.

1. Recognition/appreciation from management
2. A fun working environment
3. A springboard for future employment
4. Feeling good about yourself as a result of working for a particular organisation
5. Feeling more self-confident as a result of working for a particular organisation
6. Gaining career-enhancing experience
7. Having a good relationship with your superiors
8. Having a good relationship with your colleagues
9. Supportive and encouraging colleagues
10. Working in an exciting environment
11. Innovative employer – novel work practices/forward-thinking
12. The organisation both values and makes use of your creativity
13. The organisation produces high-quality products and services
14. The organisation produces innovative products and services
15. Good promotion opportunities within the organisation
16. Humanitarian organisation – gives back to society
17. Opportunity to *apply* what was learned at a tertiary institution
18. Opportunity to teach others what you have learned
19. Acceptance and belonging
20. The organisation is customer-orientated
21. Job security within the organisation
22. Hands-on inter-departmental experience
23. Happy work environment
24. An above average basic salary
25. An attractive *overall* compensation package

## **Appendix B: Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES)**

**Engagement is measured through a seven point Likert scale (1 – Never to 7 – Always).**

**Read the questions and for each question please give an indication as to how engaged you are.**

1. When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work.
2. At my work, I feel bursting with energy.
3. At my work I always persevere, even when things do not go well.
4. I can continue working for very long periods at a time.
5. At my job, I am very resilient, mentally.
6. At my job I feel strong and vigorous.
  
7. To me, my job is challenging.
  
8. My job inspires me.
  
9. I am enthusiastic about my job.
10. I am proud on the work that I do.
11. I find the work that I do full of meaning and purpose
  
12. When I am working, I forget everything else around me.
  
13. Time flies when I am working.
14. I get carried away when I am working.
15. It is difficult to detach myself from my job.
16. I am immersed in my work.
17. I feel happy when I am working intensely.

## Appendix C: Survey as administered

### Generational Differences - An exploration of attraction and retention of Generation X and Y employees

Dear Participant,

I would like to invite you to participate in the following survey. I am currently completing my thesis in Human Resource Management in National College of Ireland.

The purpose of this survey is to collect data from people within the Irish workforce in the Generations X and Y (aged between 32 and 48 in 2017). As part of my study, I am collecting data from participants through the use of an online survey. The study will focus on the possible generational differences between Generation X and Y looking at attraction and engagement of entry and mid-level employees and those seeking employment within the current Irish workforce.

All data will be kept confidential and anonymous. Your responses will only be used for the purpose of my thesis. No individual responses will be used only aggregated results. The purpose and use of all data collected is academic only. Your participation in this survey is completely voluntary, you do not have to take part if you do not wish to do so and you are free to withdraw at any time.

Questions asked in the survey will focus on your views of the importance of an attractive workplace and employee engagement.

If you have any questions regarding the research or if you require any other information about my thesis or study you can contact me at this email address: [niambermaher@gmail.com](mailto:niambermaher@gmail.com).

It should take you approximately 10 minutes to complete the entire survey.

Please complete the survey as soon as possible.

Thank you for your participation.

**\*Required**

**Do you give your consent to participate in this survey? If yes please indicate below \***

Yes

No

Page 1 of 6

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## Generational Differences - An exploration of attraction and retention of Generation X and Y employees

\*Required

### Part One - About you

The first part of this survey is to gather some descriptive information about you. All information given is confidential.

#### What is your gender? \*

- Male
- Female
- I'd rather not say

#### What is your age? \*

- 37-52 (Generation X)
- 18-36 (Generation Y)

#### What is your nationality? \*

Your answer

#### Which industry do you work in? \*

- Administration/Clerical/Customer Service
- Human Resources
- Marketing/PR
- IT Services/Computer Science
- Finance/Insurance
- Retail/Wholesale/Real Estate
- Restaurant/Hospitality
- Construction/Manufacturing/Engineering
- Education/Sciences
- Healthcare/Social care
- Professional Services
- Defence Forces
- Transportation/Warehousing
- Utility Maintenance
- Agriculture/Forestry/Fishing/Marine
- Arts/Entertainment
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

#### How long have you been in your current or most recent employment? \*

- Under 1 year
- 1-5 years
- 6-9 years
- 10 or more years

#### In your employment history, what has been your longest term of employment? \*

- Under 1 year
- 1-5 years
- 6-9 years
- 10 or more years

#### What is your highest level of education? \*

- Intermediate Cert or equivalent
- Leaving Certificate or equivalent
- Post leaving certificate or diploma
- College degree or post graduate diploma
- Masters or PhD
- Professional qualification or trade
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

BACK

NEXT

Page 2 of 6

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## Generational Differences - An exploration of attraction and retention of Generation X and Y employees

\*Required

### Part Two - Workplace Attraction

This second part of the survey looks at your attraction to a job or company. What you as an employee or potential employee, look for in an employer or company. Please read the questions below on this topic, and for each question, indicate its importance to you given the options available.

How important are the following to you when considering potential employers? \*

	Not at all	To a very little extent	To a little extent	To a moderate extent	To a fairly great extent	To a great extent	To a very great extent
Recognition/appreciation from management	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A fun working environment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A springboard for future employment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Feeling good about yourself as a result of working for a particular organisation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Feeling more self-confident as a result of working for a particular organisation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Gaining career-enhancing experience	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Having a good relationship with your superiors	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Having a good relationship with your colleagues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Supportive and encouraging colleagues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Working in an exciting environment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Innovative employer – novel work practices/forward-thinking	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The organisation both values and makes use of your creativity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The organisation produces high-quality products and services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The organisation produces innovative products and services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Good promotion opportunities within the organisation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Humanitarian organisation – gives back to society	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Opportunity to apply what was learned at a tertiary institution	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Opportunity to teach others what you have learned	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Acceptance and belonging	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The organisation is customer-orientated	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Job security within the organisation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Hands-on inter-departmental experience	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Happy work environment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
An above average basic salary	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
An attractive overall compensation package	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

BACK

NEXT

Page 3 of 6

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## Generational Differences - An exploration of attraction and retention of Generation X and Y employees

\*Required

### Part Three - Employee Engagement

This third part of the survey looks at employee engagement. How you as an employee or previous employee rate yourself as engaged.

Please read the questions below on this topic, and for each question, indicate its importance to you given the options available.

	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Sometimes	Frequently	Usually	Always
When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work.	<input type="radio"/>						
At my work, I feel bursting with energy.	<input type="radio"/>						
At my work, I always persevere, even when things do not go well.	<input type="radio"/>						
I can continue working for very long periods at a time.	<input type="radio"/>						
At my job, I am very resilient, mentally.	<input type="radio"/>						
At my job, I feel strong and vigorous.	<input type="radio"/>						
To me, my job is challenging.	<input type="radio"/>						
My job inspires me.	<input type="radio"/>						
I am enthusiastic about my job.	<input type="radio"/>						
I am proud of the work that I do.	<input type="radio"/>						
I find the work that I do full of meaning and purpose.	<input type="radio"/>						
When I am working, I forget everything else around me.	<input type="radio"/>						
Time flies when I am working.	<input type="radio"/>						
I get carried away when I am working.	<input type="radio"/>						
It is difficult to detach myself from my job.	<input type="radio"/>						
I am immersed in my work.	<input type="radio"/>						
I feel happy when I am working intensely.	<input type="radio"/>						

BACK

NEXT

Page 4 of 6

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\*Required

### Part Four - Overall Conclusions

For the last part of this survey please give an overall indication for the below two questions.

On the scale below can you indicate overall how important it is for the company you work for to be an attractive place to work? (Either in your current job if employed or in your previous job if unemployed) \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Not at all important            Very important

On the scale below can you indicate overall how engaged you feel you are? (Either in your current job if employed or in your previous job if unemployed) \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Not at all engaged           Very engaged

BACK

NEXT

Page 5 of 6

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I would like to thank you for participating in my survey. As outlined previously all information provided is confidential. Please click below to submit your responses.

BACK

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Page 6 of 6

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