"An Investigation Which Explores the Differences Among Generations X, Y and Z with Regards to Job Attraction and Employee Engagement in the Irish Pharmaceutical Industry"

Nicole Steeples

X18136869

Mater of Arts in Human Resource Management

National College of Ireland

Abstract

This research focuses on generational differences. In particular, the differences in job attraction and engagement levels between generations X, Y and Z. The research undertaken was in respect of the Irish Pharmaceutical Industry as there is a gap for such research in this area. Previous research has concluded that there are differences between generational cohorts which employers should pay attention to. Although, previous studies also state that there is limited empirical research to back up such assumptions. Therefore, this study will attempt to use an Irish company to explore whether these differences exist among generations X, Y and Z. Individuals who participate in this quantitative study will be participating in an online survey which will compromise of demographic questions as well as questions from two previously validated scales. Results from a Kruskal-Wallis test revealed that there was no significant difference in why employees from different generations are attracted to an employer. The same test also revealed that there is no significant difference between the engagement levels of employees who come from different generational cohorts.

Keywords: Generations X, Y and Z, Employee Engagement, Job Attraction, Pharmaceutical Industry, Employer

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Chapter 1.0 Introduction:

Understanding the differences among generations is a key factor in the success of an organisation. Each generation of individuals has different needs and wants from an employer. Therefore, these differences should be understood when employers are looking to attract potential employees as well as retaining the ones currently employed. The research being conducted here in focuses on the different and similar characteristics between generations with regards to the Irish Pharmaceutical Industry. There are five main generational cohorts born at different stages of life so far. Various academic journals including Puiu (2017) outlined a timeframe for these cohorts:

- Traditionalists are people born between 1925-1945
- Baby-Boomers are people born between1946-1964
- Generation X are people born between 1965-1977
- Generation Y / Millennials are people born between 1978-1989
- Generation Z are people born between 1990-1999

This topic is of great interest especially in recent years due to the 'War for Talent' which is concerned with retaining top talent (Beechler and Woodward 2009). Global and technological changes or advances have affected the differences in generational preferences (Lub, Bal, Blomme and Schalk 2015). Generations Y and Z grew up with technology in everyday life as opposed to generation X. Organisations are also integrating technologically which may affect some individuals especially from generation X who will have to adapt to such systems. This is because people are living longer and in turn are working longer and therefore there are in most cases three generations working alongside each other today (Cekada 2012). As a result, the generations of interest for this research are generations X, Y and Z. They are currently the three-main generational cohorts that are working with each other in organisations today.

As well as being able to distinguish the needs and wants of generations for job attraction reasons they are also important for retaining and engagement reasons. When looking at the ways to retain employees from different generations it is also important to look at their engagement levels. This is because the more engaged an individual is the more likely they are to remain with their employer (Kennedy and Daim 2010), as a result, increasing the retention levels of the organisation. For the purpose of this research there will be a focus on what engages and affects the retention of generations X. Y and Z. This will help to identify the similarities and difference among the three generations with regards to retention strategies and methods of engagement from an employer.

In order to conduct this study a quantitative method of data collection was taken. This way a larger sample size can be taken from generations X, Y and Z to obtain a more accurate result. For data collection purposes an equal number of participants from each generation was taken. The total sample size was 180 participants which consisted of 60 participants from generation X, 60 from generation Y and 60 from generation Z with the hope of receiving a response of 50 from each generation. An online survey was conducted in the Irish Pharmaceutical Industry as there is little to no research for this topic in the field. Each participant was given full details of the survey and consented to their participation in same.

1.1 Purpose of Research Being Undertaken:

Generational differences in work attraction and engagement / retention are of great interest in recent years to employers in particular. Since there are different generations working together the needs and wants of each cohort can vary as a result. Therefore, one purpose of this research is to explore what these main differences are for generations X, Y and Z. This research project will

look at aspects such as development and training opportunities, financial incentives and how important recognition is to a group of people.

Although, since research has been emerging in recent years regarding what attracts, retains and engages individuals from different generational cohorts, little to no research has been conducted in Ireland. Most research conducted has been international and therefore has led to this gap in the Irish market and more particular the Irish Pharmaceutical Industry. Previous studied have been carried out using both quantitative and qualitative measures across countries such as South Africa, India and the Maldives (Close and Martina 2015; Biwas and Suar 2013 2013; Mansoor and Hassanb 2016). As a result, conducting such research in Ireland would allow the researcher to determine any differences to existing literature or any new findings that may arise. Continuous research for this area is desired due to the constant changes or demands of society as well as new generations emerging. There is also no current quantitative research conducted which has used generations X, Y and Z in the one study. As a result of these three generations currently working in organisations together it is something that needs to be looked at especially from an employer's perspective.

The research being conducted is concerned with exploring the factors that attract and retain individuals from generations X, Y and Z from an organisational perspective. This is because as individuals are living longer, they are also working longer which results in a number of generational cohorts being in the workforce at the same time. Studies have shown that expectations of one generational cohort may be different to another and is usually a result of the way they were brought up or what they have experienced (Kelan 2014).

There is little to no evidence of a study being conducted that analyses the current workforce of generations X, Y and Z with regards to what attracts them to an organisation and what retains

them. As well as this most generational studies that have been conducted are international. From

this, a focus on the Irish market is needed and this is what this research project revolves around.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Pharmaceutical Industry in Ireland

The Pharmaceutical Industry discovers, develops and manufactures drugs and pharmaceuticals by both private and public organisations (Encyclopaedia Britannica 2019). The main activities the industry engages in are research and development, global business service centres, high value manufacturing and supply chain centres (Enterprise Europe Network 2010).

The Irish Pharmaceutical Industry is a major contributor to the Irish Economy. In 2010 this sector was worth €50.8 billion and contributed over €1 billion in corporation tax as a result (Enterprse Europe Network 2010). This industry was Ireland's seventh largest global exporter of products in 2014 (McGee 2014).

In Ireland employment rates are greatly affected by the Pharmaceutical Industry. In 2010 Enterprise Europe Network reported that 25,300 individuals were employed in the Irish Pharmaceutical sector which represented a significant increase from 5,200 in 1988. This figure continuous to increase and in mid 2018 it was reported that over 30'000 individuals were employed within the pharmaceutical sector in Ireland as well as a further 8'000 jobs expected by 2021 (Ernst & Young 2018).

In the future, the Irish Pharmaceutical Industry will continue to grow due to the continuous investment from other countries into the industry. Looking at the above figures and facts it is clear that this industry is hugely important for Ireland in many ways such as financial performance and employment opportunities.

2.2 What is a generational cohort?

A generation or a generational cohort refers to individuals that are grouped together by characteristics including when they were born, where they are from and also shared experiences they would have had throughout their life, (Kelan 2014). This has led to different generational cohorts being identified as having similar needs in an organisation and why it is important for employers to know how to manage them. There are various generational theories which look at different factors which they feel determine what a cohort is, below are examples of this.

Strauss-Howe Generational Theory-

This theory states that characteristics of the next generation can be predicted. According to Strauss and Howe (1991) this is because *"every generation either has a prophet, nomad, hero or artist which is repeated sequentially which implies that the characteristics of the next generation can be predicted" (Hoover 2009).* Although, a factor that hinders the reliability of this theory is that it does not recognise historical events. Historical events can and do impact the actions of individuals and therefore this can be a limitation of this particular model (Paper and Padayachee 2018).

Mannheim's Generational Theory-

Mannheim's generational theory states that a generation is influenced by a kind of identity or location (Paper and Padayachee 2017). Unlike Strauss and Howe's generational theory Mannheim takes the historical element into consideration. It looks at aspects such as people being born at same time which therefore leads them to experience the same events and location (Paper and Padayachee 2018).

It is vital to understand this concept in order to proceed to talk about the specific generations of interest.

2.3 Generations of Interest

Who is Generation X?

The timeframe for generation X varies between different literature (Washburn 2000; Jenkins 2008; Cekada 2012; Johnson 2015; Stanton 2017) although the most common one which research has been carried out on is from people that were born between 1965 and 1977. Washburn also refers to this generation as the thirteenth generation (Washburn 2000). Generation X grew up at a time where there was an economic downturn seeing their parents and others unemployed which has caused them to be less loyal to an organisation (Smith 2009). Although Lub et al. (2015) also recognised that generation X was challenged to launch a career and to achieve opportunities of growth due to the previous generation 'Baby Boomers' having such a high population which compromised most of the workforce. Generation X are said to be currently serving the mid-level and senior positions of an organisation (Ohmer, Barclay and Merkel 2018). Generation X were described as 'good soldiers' as it was mostly top-down communication. This meant that they followed demands given by superior employees (Trapero, Castano, Parra and Garcia 2017).

Who is Generation Y?

Generation Y also known as millennials again have different variations on their time frame. Although different literature gives various time frames the one which is most common refers to individuals born between 1978 and 1989 (Puiu 2017). Unlike generation X, generation Y grew up at a time where technology began to advance into everyday lives, when there was low

unemployment and also an increase in global terrorism (Lub et al., 2016; Naim and Lenka 2018). Generation Y also grew up at a time where everyone was considered a winner and as a result have no patience to wait for opportunities such as promotion (Trapero et al., 2017). They expect this to be almost instant (Trapero et al., 2017). From this it can be seen that both generations will have different values and expectations because of the different experiences they had growing up. Generation Y tend to expect a competitive work environment, are open to change which can include change of workplace, and are demanding when seeking information. This could have emerged from being able to get answers on the internet immediately, (Civelek, Cemberci, Asci and Oz 2017). As a result, generation Y are said to prefer electronic communication rather than face-to-face because of the technological advancements they have experienced (Ohmer et al., 2018). Appreciation is needed to engage generation Y and promotes them to be innovative which can lead to the organisation gaining a competitive advantage (Ohmer et al., 2018). Ohmer et al (2018) states that a key way to engage generation Y is through focus groups. Focus groups can be both in person or online using web-cams for example (Kellmereit 2015). Focus groups allow generation Y to keep up-to-date with the situation of the company both current and future. Although, for the purpose of conducting research focus groups are more suited to qualitative research rather than quantitative. This is because focus groups are usually used to conduct behavioral analysis (Kellmereit 2015). Unlike generation X, generation Y have more loyalty to their friends, family and social life rather than they do to corporations and expect their employer to understand and accommodate this (Trapero et al., 2017).

Who is Generation Z?

The next and most recent generation that will be focused on is generation Z. Desai and Lele (2017) describe generation Z as being demographically distinct from all previous generations.

This is due to aspects such as being born into smaller families, being born to older mothers which are deemed to be different from other generational cohorts. Although Puiu (2016) identifies that generation Z have similarities to generation Y including being brought up with the use of technology which previous generations did not have Lanier (2017) describes this generation as being the first genuine digital natives. Lanier (2017) also looks at elements that are important to be recognised by management of a company with regards to the characteristics and expectations of generation Z. Their need for job security, safety and having a stable career results from growing up through the global recession. Career advancement and development opportunities are said to be more appealing to generation Z than 'perks' such as financial rewards (Lanier, 2017). According to the results of a study conducted by Millennial Branding Generation Z are said to be more entrepreneurial than generation Y (Schawbel 2014). This can and will lead to organisations changing and being able to adapt to meet the needs of generation Z by not micromanaging employees of this generation and allowing more responsibility. An interesting contradiction recognised during a study conducted by Schawbel (2014) was that out of the total number of generation Z-ers that participated in the study 51% said they prefer in person communication as opposed to digital communication.

2.4 Psychological Contract

A psychological contract describes the expectations an individual has about the relationship between the employer and employee (Schermerhorn and Bachrach 2015). The psychological contract consists of many elements such as time, creativity, loyalty, commitment and energy (Schermerhorn and Bachrach 2015). A balance of these elements between what employees contribute to an organisation and what an organisation provides to its employees will differ depending on the individual or in this case each generational cohort. Schroth (2019) focuses

more on the idea that the psychological contract focuses on the expectations of training, development opportunities and pay. In particular where an employer offers training, development and promotion opportunities, pays a good salary and treats employees with respect the employee should in return work harder to be more productive, develop new skills and have respect for all staff including the employer (Schroth 2019). With this balance, an organisation is more likely to be successful compared to a company that does not try to create such a balance. Therefore, it is clear that an employer must have a good understanding of what the expectations of current and future employees are in order to attract, retain and engage them.

2.5 Attracting these generations to an organisation: Is there a difference?

It is fair to say, based on their past experiences of growing up, all three generations will be attracted to organisations for both similar and different reasons. Analysing literature shows both consistent and inconsistent points about these generations. To attract potential employees, it describes the process of how an employer makes their organisation one which people want to work for and the potential benefits they receive by doing so (Pingle and Sharma 2013). Amankwah, Amoah and Derah (2011) also outline how to compete for individuals with skills that are scarce in the market at that point in time. The aim is to understand what these expectations are for each generation from different literature sources. This section will analyse elements such a work-life balance, financial stability and ethical standards across all three generations of interest.

2.5.1 Recruiting Employees from Gen X, Y and Z:

The ways of attracting employees also comes from the way that an organisation advertises their job vacancies. At the time of generation X traditional mediums were used to recruit individuals

from this generation. Generation X did not grow up where social media was a part of their everyday lives which therefore meant jobs needed to be advertised in newspapers etc. Also, job advertisements that are both creative and descriptive are said to be a way of attracting these individuals (Recruitmentrevolution.com 2015). The idea of online recruitment started to appear during the time of generation Y. Since social media began to become a part of everyday lives and more frequent for this generation. During this time, social media such as Facebook, Twitter and many more were formed and could be used to advertise jobs on an individual's home page (Recruitmentrevolution.com 2015). For generation Z although social medial platforms are used to attract them other methods of recruiting such as completely new mediums may need to be used to engage individuals from generation Z. Such advertisement methods should be used depending on which generation you are trying to target. As a result, the ways in which jobs are advertised plays a role in ensuring an effective and efficient way of attracting employees.

2.5.2 Factors that Attract Gen X, Y and Z-

Financial Stability-

Firstly, the focus of the study will be on what attracts generation X to an organisation. A major factor that influences and attracts an individual from generation X relates to their need for financial stability (Boyd 2010). Their need for financial stability comes from wanting to have income protection for both present and future financial concerns (Friedrich 2016). Other generations such as Y and Z do not have this same primary focus and this puts into perspective what would attract them to an organisation.

Work-life Balance-

While having a work life balance is extremely topical today for generations Y and Z (Coates 2017) due to the fact that they want to prioritise both their work and personal lives instead of just one of these, it is evident that generation X also wants this balance (Firfiray and Mayo 2017). This suggests that the demand of a work life balance from generation Y may have developed from seeing their parents or others wanting/receiving this balance. Klun (2008) describes how allowing employees to have a work-life balance helps in being able to retain the so-called high performers of a business.

Meeting Ethical Standards-

Unlike generation X, generation Y emphasises the fact that they want to work for an employer that complies with ethical standards (Stankiewicz and Lychmus 2017). An organisation operating under ethical standards simply means the fairness of their actions (Cullen 2018) and who it effects from an organisational point of view. A recent survey conducted by Deloitte in 2018 for millennials reported that nearly 50% of respondents rejected working on a project due to it conflicting with their ethical beliefs / values (Deloitte 2016). Boyd (2010) recognises that generation X is not as concerned with the effects on society as they are with themselves.

Other Ways of Attracting Generations-

Saeed, Muslim, Rahim and Rasli (2018) identified ways to attract millennials such as flexible working hours and further study opportunities. Generation Z are becoming a generation that employers are greatly interested in since they are the newest generation that are entering the workforce and the most recent generation that are being recruited. Therefore, the way employers attempt to attract individuals from generation Z is vital to the future success of the organisation

but it is important that other generation of employees are not forgotten about due to the fact they are currently still in the workforce.

From the above literature, it is clear that generation X are attracted to organisations that focus primarily on financial performance, offer flexible working hours and who do not rely as much on team work. Generation Y on the other hand are attracted to organisations who offer a work-life balance similar to generation X, comply with their ethical values / standards and have a greater emphasis on society rather than the overall financial performance of the company. Generation Z are attracted to an organisation that offers flexible and remote working and development opportunities as an option in the long run.

Therefore, it is clear that there are both similarities and differences when it comes to the reasons why each generation is attracted to an employer. While these are aspects that would attract generations X, Y and Z to an organisation it is important to identify whether there is a difference in why generations are engaged in their work which will be discussed next.

2.6 Engaging / Retaining Gen X, Y and Z in the 21st century-

Retaining employees refers to the process of making sure current employees stay with an organisation for a long length of time (Balakrishnan and Vijayalashmi 2014). Generations X, Y and Z have both similar and different reasons for staying with an organisation. The importance of the employer and management of an organisation knowing what it is that influences an employee's decision to stay with their current company can work to their advantage. Less time will be spent on factors that do not affect retention and there will be more focus on factors that do affect the retention of employees. In this section, a clear link between engagement levels and retention of employees will be made.

Employee Engagement-

It is important to realise that by having employees who are engaged will directly affect the retention levels of an organisation. More importantly, employee engagement will help the retention of talented employees which benefits both the employee and employer (Mercy and Choudhary 2019). Employee engagement describes the sense of purpose an individual has which is displayed to others and describes that individual's mind-set while at work (Johnson and Pike 2018). Mercy and Choudhary (2019) add to this by identifying that employee engagement is the dedication and absorption an individual possesses with regards to their organisation while Schermerhorn and Bachrach (2015) describe employee engagement as the strong positive feeling an individual has about their job and the organisation in which they work for. Engaging employees can be complex and will vary depending on what generational cohort employees belong to. Although, employers also have to be careful of employee disengagement. Employee disengagement refers to when an employee is unmotivated, not productive, has a negative attitude towards the work they are doing and the organisation they are working for (Schermerhorn and Bachrach 2015). Conkright (2015) states that employee engagement can be sustained by the way management of an organisation leads, controls, organises and plans. Therefore, catering ways of engagement between different generational cohorts may not be necessary.

Research conducted by the Gallup organisation among 55,000 American workers suggested that the profits of an organisation were higher when there were higher levels of engaged employees. Within this research a breakdown of what contributed the most to having an engaged employee was revealed. Opportunities for an employee's voice to be heard, being able to work their best and the feeling of what an employee does has a direct effect on the mission of the organisation

were all major factors in reasons for why employees would be engaged in this particular study (Schermerhorn and Bachrach 2015). Below, is a model Mansoor and Hassan (2016) used to describe the elements that are involved with being an engaged employee.

Figure 1: Employee Engagement Model
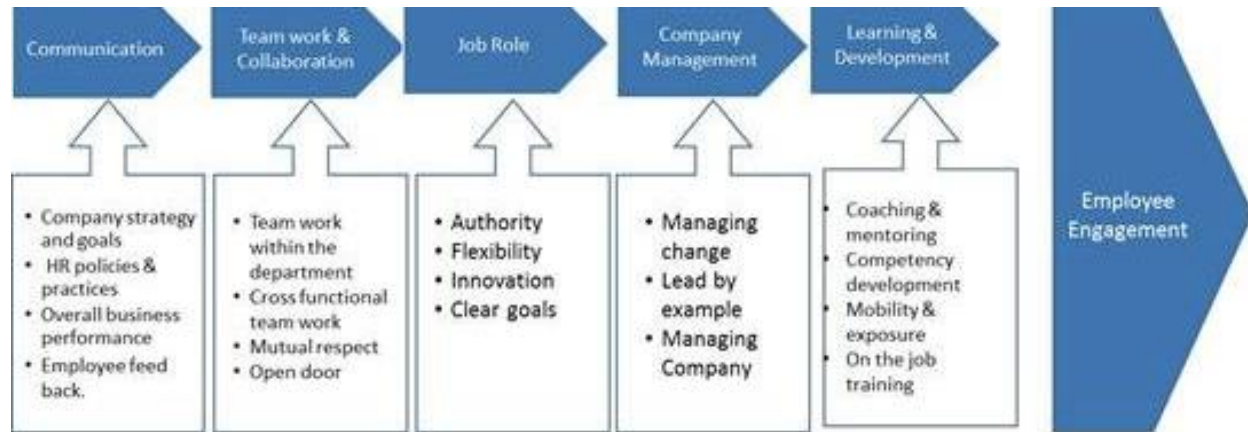
(Mansoor and Hassan 2016)

Communication is needed between all levels of employees for an organisation to succeed. Upward communication is desired in order for employees to express their ideas or how they feel (Armstrong 2016). If there is neither downward or upward communication organisational goals cannot be met if employees are unsure of the objective they are working towards. Team work and having a clear job role allows cross functional work to take place and promotes employees to work together. Without team-work communication breaks down and organisational goals do not get met or do not get met in the most efficient / effective manner (Armstrong 2016). The management of a company plays a big role in employee engagement. Managers have the ability to act as role models for employees and therefore lead by an example. Lastly, learning and development opportunities are essential for employee engagement (Armstrong 2016). They allow coaching and mentoring to take place along with on the job training for employees which

benefits the success of the organisation but also the performance of that individual (Armstrong 2016). Mansoor and Hassan (2016) identified their perception of the factors that affect whether an employee is engaged or not in their organisation. Organisations that promote the above in their opinion will have a greater chance of having engaged employees than those who do not implement such a model.

Recognition-

The feeling of recognition is important to generation X and they prefer to be treated as a partner in the business which enables them to exert power in daily activities (Rajput, Bali and Kesarwani 2013). Close and Martins (2015) outline how a salary and materialistic items are less important to generation X than they are to generation Y. This contradicts other literature sources who have identified that Generation X is more concerned with financial gain. Generation X is motivated more to the extent of performing to gain some sort of reward which is also known as extrinsic motivation, (Close and Martins 2015). While recognition is important for generation Y (Rajput et al., 2013) they want the importance to be on avoiding micromanagement in an organisation and want responsibility as this has an influence on how employees feel about their organisation (Coates 2017). Kilber, Barclay and Ohmer (2014) place an emphasis on the negative impact micromanagement has on generation Y and how managers should act as coaches or mentors which can fulfil the feeling of support for employees without the feeling of control. Generation Z prefers their entrepreneurial mindset to be recognised by employers (Schawbel 2014). A company that allows employees from generation Z to share their ideas and innovate will retain more employees than those who do not. Therefore, recognition plays a role in the retention of employees but distinguishing how in different generations is what is key to the success of any organisation.

Development and Training Opportunities-

A key way of engaging employees and therefore retaining them in an organisation is through offering development and training opportunities (Ismail, Rahim, Lee and Thahrir 2016). This helps the retention levels for a business mainly because of the fact it shows that you as an employer are investing in your key resources, the employees. Generations X, Y and Z are attracted to work in organisations where career development is offered (Ismail et al., 2016) while Kilber, Baklay and Ohmer (2014) state that generation Y want a work environment that promotes career development as they have commitment to continuously learn in an organisation. Although, a recent study identified that having a work-life balance is more important to generation Y than career progression which contradicts previous authors (Pregnolato, Bussin and Schlechter 2017). When it comes to generation Z training and development opportunities are essential to keep this talent pool in an organisation. Consequences of not providing this to generation Z will result in them moving companies since they are more concerned with their own career progression instead of their loyalty to one organisation. From this, it is clear that offering training and development opportunities play a crucial role in retaining employees.

It is evident that there are similarities and differences between generations X, Y and Z in what engages or retains them to an organisation. Generations X, Y and Z all value a work-life balance although the extent to which each generation does varies. Generation X did value a work-life balance but having a permanent job is what will keep them with an organisation. Generation Y values work-life balance more than generation X because they want time for their social life outside of work and do not value organisational loyalty to the extent that generation X does. Lastly, generation Z have an expectation that every organisation will offer a work-life balance and those that do not will not retain employees from generation Z and therefore these employees

will not be engaged as their needs are not being met. Although, it is clear that recognition plays a vital role in engaging employees across all three generations but in different ways. Generation X is focused mainly on financial rewards as a form of recognition despite some contradictions from literature. Generation Y wants management to recognise that they can take responsibility and as a result want to avoid micromanagement. For generation Z, they want to be given the opportunity to be innovative and entrepreneurial. Sharing their ideas and contributing to projects at work allows generation Z to feel valued and is a key way of retaining employees of this cohort. The last main finding for retaining employees comes from offering training and development opportunities. Generation X is concerned with such opportunities but it more concerned with keeping a permanent position in an organisation while generation Y want to continuously learn which they feel can be done by being given training and development opportunities. For generation Z training and development opportunities are essential for retention. Employers who do not offer these opportunities will find it very hard to retain employees of generation Z. Although, Costanza and Finkelstein (2015) have suggested that the need for such focus on generational differences is not needed. This is because overall there is not enough empirical evidence to support such reason that generational differences even exist among individuals in the workplace.

This section has identified the different generational cohorts, the ways of attracting employees from different cohorts as well as how to engage / retain them as well as contradictions of these differences also being mentioned. Although there is much more literature to be discussed in depth for the purpose of this review the main points have been outlined. The next chapter of this research project will revolve around the research questions that are of interest from analysing past and current literature.

Chapter 3 Methodology

3.1 Research Philosophy

The aim of this methodology section is to outline the different types of methodologies while justifying the most suitable one for the current research being conducted as well as providing, further information on suitable candidates taking part in the research. The reliability and validity of the study will be discussed and lastly, any ethical implications with regards to this study will be outlined. In other words, this chapter provides the who, what, where and when of the research.

This research is an investigation into the different factors that attract and engage individuals from generations X, Y and Z to an organisation. It looks at sub-objectives such as employee engagement with regards to its importance for retaining employees, training and development, recognition and others that were mentioned previously. In particular the research that is being conducted here is in relation to the Irish Pharmaceutical Industry. In previous chapters the reasoning for such research was outlined, such as the majority of current research being international and also the lack of evidence for research in the Pharmaceutical Industry.

In relation to the methodology section there are two main types of methods that can be used, qualitative and quantitative. The method chosen will depend on the research an individual is doing and the most appropriate way of collecting such data and also a major factor which is the timing given to complete the research. Both data methods are equally as good, one is not better than the other and the method chosen purely depends on the type of research being conducted (Dawson 2009).

Qualitative data is data that is non-numerical and can be represented by the way you feel and your considerations (Quinlan 2011). Dawson (2009) describes this research as a method that

explores your attitudes, behavior and experiences. Qualitative examples of types of data that may be used are interviews, observation studies and focus groups (Quinlan 2011). In other words, it wants to explore the opinions of individuals by giving them a voice to a greater extent than a quantitative data method would (Gibson, Greenwood and Murphy 2009). Although, this can also outline a negative effect of qualitative research. By having a smaller number of participants results may be less reliable than they are with quantitative (Bassett 2004).

Quantitative data is data that is represented numerically and for example uses large scale surveys or questionnaires (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2009; Dawson 2009). Bryman and Bell (2015) adds to this by stating that quantitative data makes distinctive characteristics of replication and measurement. By using a quantitative method, you generally reach more participants than in qualitative although, the amount of time spent with individuals is much less (Dawson 2009). Although, it is argued that quantitative research is more reliable which relates to having a larger number of participants. It also tests theories or what are known as hypothesis (Bassett 2004). Bassett (2004) also outlines how quantitative research is vital particularly in the healthcare industry such as determining what the side effects there are on various new drugs before being brought to market. Quantitative research can be a more inexpensive way of gathering research using a larger number of people than qualitative would (Bassett 2004).

Figure 2: Quantitative vs Qualitative Paradigm

Quantitative research paradigm	Qualitative research paradigm
cause and effect generalizable masculine measurement statistics observable phenomena deduction surveys systematic mechanistic deterministic causal relationships hard operational definitions hypothesis testing experiment universal laws numerical testing theory positivism reductionist scientific natural sciences randomized control trial (RCT)	intuitive subjective interviews inductive generating theory participant observation soft heuristic hermeneutics pluralism particular diaries phenomenology interpretive naturalistic grounded theory journals humanistic narratives social sciences critical theory ethnography critical social theory feminine

(Bassett 2004)

The above outlines a summary of the main differences between a quantitative research method and a qualitative research method. For quantitative this summary describes it as being a method that is hard, is more numerical because of hypothesis testing, uses theories and also is used for scientific research. However, qualitative data is more particular, looks to interpret results in greater detail and is particular. As a result, it is clear that there are major differences between each approach and an individual must think long and clear before deciding to choose a certain one.

3.2 Research design

The design of the research will have to be chosen depending on your objective and method. As mentioned above, qualitative looks more at methods such as interviews while quantitative would use things like surveys or questionnaires.

This research being investigated strives to look at whether generations X, Y and Z are attracted to an organisation for the same reasons and whether they are engaged for the same reasons and as a result of testing the above variables the most appropriate type of methodology to be used is deemed to be a quantitative research method. A quantitative method should be used due to the number of people required to gather the most accurate result. By looking at three generations a large sample of individuals is needed to conduct the research. Also, by using quantitative data it allows me to use a large sample size which allows the data to be more accurate (Szopinska, Gresse, Van de Marel, Boekhorst, Lukovac, Van Swam, Franke, Timmerman, Arias Vasquez 2018). Another reason for choosing a quantitative approach over a qualitative approach is because research in the same or similar area also used quantitative data (Deloitte 2018). Therefore, it proves that this method is reliable. Lastly, quantitative research is the most appropriate method because of the time limit imposed. Since time is limited on this research project a quantitative method allows me to collect a larger number of responses than qualitative would in a short period of time.

The quantitative technique which will be used to gather primary data is a survey. By using a survey, it allows me to get defined answers and it can also be used among a large sample size. Cluster sampling will be used to look at three specific groups, generation X, Y and Z. In other terms, the survey will include three groups; Group 1 (Gen Z) which will be employees between the ages of 20 and 29; Group 2 (Gen Y) will be employees between the ages of 30 and 41; and

Group 3 (Gen X) will be employees between the ages of 42 and 54. Cluster Sampling involves dividing the population into sub-groups of interest before the sampling occurs (Saunders et al., 2009). The sample size that is expected to be used will include 150 participants, which will allow for 50 employees from generation X, 50 employees from generation Y and 50 employees from generation Z. By having equal numbers from each group allows for an unbiased collection of data. These age groups/generational cohorts will be used because they are the focus of the entire study and therefore using other groups would not be sufficient in answering the research questions proposed. It is important to look at aspects of how you are going to choose participants for your sample which will be outlined next.

The survey used for this research was formulated using Survey Monkey which allowed me to format it in the most appropriate way. The survey incorporated demographic questions such as gender and age. As well as the demographic questions two validated scales were also used, the Employer Attractiveness Scale and the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale. Using validated scales allowed the researcher to look at past studies which had also used the scales mentioned above as a comparison to the current research.

Within this research the researcher used 'the research onion' which was developed by Saunders et al., (2009) as a guide throughout the study. This model helps to ensure the researcher used the most effective methodology by looking at aspects such as the research approach, the research strategy and the time horizon for example.

3.3 Sampling

Sampling refers to the process which determines the subjects or individuals who will be chosen to participate in a research project (Newell and Burnard 2011). The sampling of a survey is vital,

and the sample chosen will depend on the aim of the research being conducted (Newell and Burnard 2011). For the current research, participants were selected at random and given the option of whether they wanted to take part in the study. As individuals from generations X, Y and Z are the priority they will be the only employees considered for this research. Ideally for this research 50 employees from each generation was expected. Reasoning for choosing specific generations was explained to participants and others so that no form of bias is felt from any other employees. This avoided gathering unnecessary data from employees who were not needed to participate in the survey. Employees were informed about the purpose of the study and who will have access to it and where it will be published. Participants in the survey were also given full clarity of how it is an anonymous survey and any answers given cannot be traced back to them by the employer. This was important to outline in order to get honest responses from employees. After the survey was completed a statistical analysis of the results was taken which identified the key themes that occurred. From this, results were drawn and related back to the research questions that have been asked.

3.4 Sample questions and Research Objectives

As stated previously, the main aim of this research is to identify if there are any major differences between generations X, Y and Z. In particular, are there any differences when it comes to why they are attracted to an organization and how engaged they are.

The objectives of this research are:

1. To investigate if there are any major differences between generations X, Y and Z when it comes to why they are attracted to an employer and

2. To explore the differences (if any) of engagement levels among generations X, Y and Z.

In order to ensure the most effective response it was important to present questions which related well to the topic and questions that would help with the aim of the research. Firstly, in order to understand which cohort is answering the questions in the survey the first set were revolved around demographic questions. Using demographics outlined what generation the employee is from which is crucial in the interpretation of results since the research revolves around generational differences. As well as this details of gender and length of service were asked in order to derive further results.

Organisational attractiveness sample questions-

- Are you attracted to an employer who offers an above average salary?
- Is recognition important to you when determining whether you are attracted to an employer?

These are the types of questions that would be asked in the survey given to participant and would help to gain answers to the type of employer that generations X, Y and Z are attracted to.

Retention/Engagement sample questions-

- Are you proud of the work you do?
- When you get up in the morning do you feel like going to work?

Similar to the question for employer attractiveness from a generational point of view the questions above would also give an insight to reasons why an employee would stay with their employer as a result of being engaged.

3.5 Surveys / Scales Being Used

1. Employer Attractiveness survey:

The first survey that was used is the employer attractiveness survey developed by Berthon, Ewing and Hah (2005) which revolves around 5 key principles, the interest value, social value, economic value, development value and application value and compromises of 25 questions (Appendix A). This is a published and validated survey and has a Cronbach score of 0.96 which is used to measure consistency of a survey and states that any value >.70 is acceptable (DeVellis 2003; Berthon, Ewing and Hah 2005). This survey will help to understand why generations X, Y and Z are attracted to organisations and allow for identification in differences between them or introduce new similarities that have not been found in the literature at this point.

2. Work Engagement scale:

The survey that will be used to measure the engagement levels of employees is the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) designed by Schaufeli, Salvona, Gonzalez-Roma and Bakker (2001). As the engagement levels of an employee are closely linked with retention this was an ideal scale to use. This scale is comprised of 17 statements about your work from which you will decide how engaged you are by choosing an option of 1-5 with 1 being no engagement and 5 being completely engaged (Appendix B). The Cronbach score for the work engagement scale when used by Schaufeli et al., (2001) was 0.94 which indicates a high level of reliability. Using this scale will allow for an understanding of the way people feel at work.

As well as using both of these scales, the need to ask questions such as the sample ones in the sample question section is important to identify the specific needs of each generation which prevails as a gap in the current literature.

The delivery of the survey was online using (www.surveymonkey.com). An online survey was the most appropriate approach due to the fact of wanting a large sample size. This online survey was created and distributed to employees via email. A deadline of 10 days was given to complete the survey. An online survey has many benefits including cost effectiveness of not having to print using paper for 150 participants which is also better for the environment (Regmi, Waitaka, Paudyal, Simkhada, Teijilingen 2016).

3.6 Pilot study

A pilot study was conducted for this research. The purpose of a pilot study is to help in the process of planning and making any changes that may be needed to the main study (In 2017). In the case of this research project it was used to validate the survey which would have been improved if needed. A total of 5 employees from each generation X, Y and Z completed the survey first to ensure it was easy to understand and identify any changes that needed to be made. After completion of the survey by these employees it was clear that no major changes needed to be made besides the phrasing of one or two questions. Followed by this the survey was then distributed to 180 participants in hope of receiving 150 responses.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

As part of this research project the ethical concerns of participants had to be taken into account. All employees who were chosen at random received an online email which invited them to take part in the survey. Within this email employees were briefed on the process of the survey and what it would involve, why such research was being conducted and who would have access to the research. Anyone that had any concerns before completing the survey were able to contact

me as contact details were provided. The survey information and link was sent to their work email in order to prevent breaking any GDPR regulations by sending to their personal email.

The main ethical consideration was privacy. A consent form was given to clarify that each participant understands what the survey is about. Using the three generations of interest prevented any extra information from being given. The data that is collected from participants is confidential and anonymous. As employees often feel limited to express their opinion in case their employer found out who was replying it was important to ensure that employees knew it was not possible for any responses to be traced back to them.

3.8 Methodology Limitations

Methodology limitations arise when there are factors that may hinder your results. In the case of the current research the main limitation was using a survey. By using a survey, participants were unable to explain the reasoning for answers they have chosen. Also, using a survey does not state whether individuals understood the questions being asked and whether answers were genuine. The time limit of collecting data was also a limitation to this research project. If more time was given to conducting such research a qualitative approach may have been a more appropriate approach. This way more in-depth answers could have been gathered over a longer period of time. Not having the budget to print and distribute all 180 surveys meant the researcher relied on individuals completing the survey online instead of giving employees the option to fill out a hard copy survey.

Chapter 4: Results and Findings:

4.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the results and key findings which have been obtained through the survey presented to individuals. It looks at the descriptive and inferential results which were achieved by inputting results into SPSS (Statistical Packages for Social Sciences). Firstly, this chapter will begin by looking at the demographics that were of interest. From this the reliability and validity of both the Employer Attractiveness Scale and the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale are presented which is a result of the Cronbach Alpha Score they received. Lastly, the results from the statistical tests ran will be presented based on the variables of interest from both scales that were used.

By conducting statistical analysis of the data collected it allows me to answer my research questions/objectives which are:

1. To investigate if there are any major differences between generations X, Y and Z when it comes to why they are attracted to an employer.
2. To explore the differences (if any) of engagement levels among generations X, Y and Z.

## 4.2 Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics provide an insight to the basics of the data sample as well as anything that may contribute to the overall results of the statistical analysis. A total of 180 employees were chosen at random to complete the survey. From this the researcher received 117 responses with none of the responses being incomplete and therefore a response rate of 78% was achieved.

4.2.1 Demographics

The demographic questions allowed the researcher to gather general information about participants that may become of interest for analysing the data. Firstly, looking at gender allowed the researcher to see the divide of male and females who took part in the survey. This showed that 68% of participants are female while the other 32% are male. This higher female population is due to the fact that 33 employees selected did not take part in the survey and as a result this may be a reason why the number of male responses are lower.

Figure 3: Gender
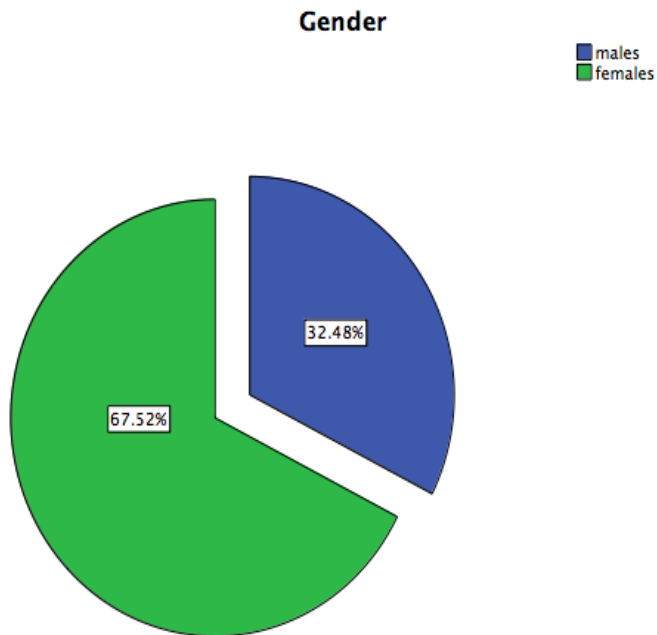
 The next demographic the researcher looked at was the age group of participants. This identifies the generation participants belonged to and therefore is a key piece of information for the researcher. Results showed that 41% of individuals were in the age group of 20-29 (Generation

Z), 42% of individuals between the ages of 30-41 (Generation Y) and only 17% of individuals

were in between the ages of 42-54 (Generation X). Generations Y and Z have a similar response

rate while generation X has a much lower rate. There is no direct reason which could explain this

lower rate of responses from generation X this since an equal number of people in each

generation was selected to participate in the survey. Of the three demographic questions asked

age was the most important. This was because without knowing the age of an individual

participating in the survey the aims of the research would be impossible to investigate as the

focus is on specific generations.

Figure 4: Age (Generation)

Age

- 20–29 years
- 30–41 years
- 42–54 years

17.09%

41.03%

41.88%
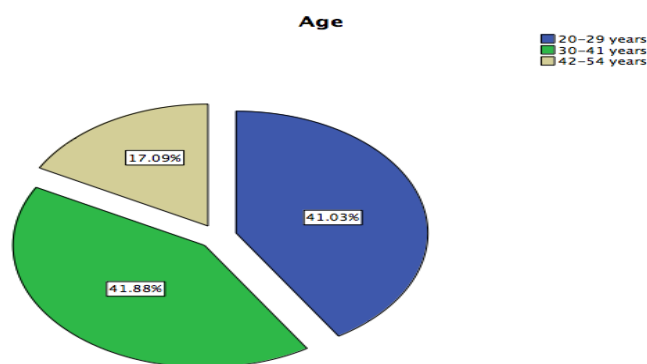
 Lastly, the length of service was the final demographic question. Results of this showed that

17% of participants are with their employer less than one year, 39% are between 1-5 years, 21%

are between 6-10 years and lastly 23% of participants having 10+ years of service. This shows

that within the survey responses a variation of employees was chosen which allows results to be

more representative.

Figure 5: Length of Service
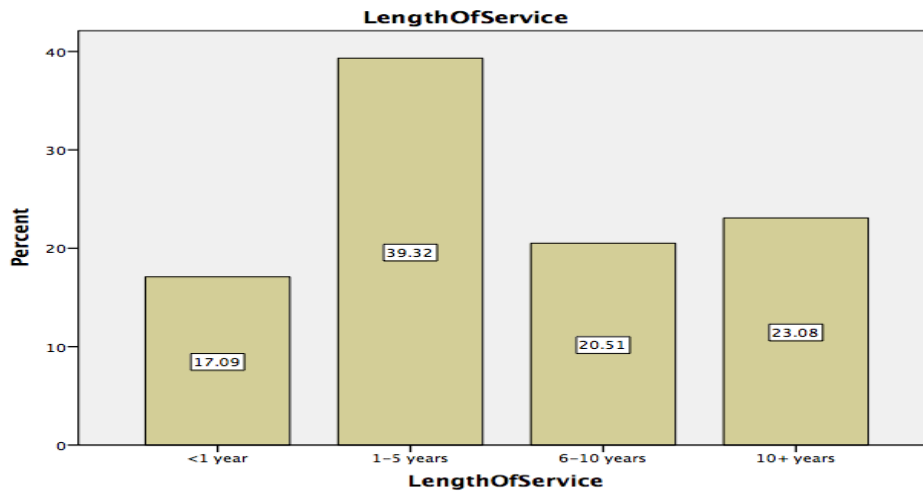
4.2.2 Descriptive Statistics

 Table 1 below provides the statistics with regards to Employer Attraction and Employee

Engagement in the Irish Pharmaceutical Industry.

Table 1: Employer Attraction and Employee Engagement Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive Statistics										
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis		
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
TOTALEA	117	47	100	76.78	1.235	13.363	-.698	.224	-.388	.444
Valid N (listwise)	117									
TOTALEE	117	18	97	60.92	1.758	19.018	-.267	.224	-.974	.444
Valid N (listwise)	117									

While looking at the findings from the Employer Attraction in Table 1 it is evident that the average attraction level from employees for the Pharmaceutical organisation being researched is (M=76.78). As a result, on a scale of 0-125 (A 5 option scale multiplied by 25 questions) the average attraction level score is 76.78 which implies an average attraction level of 61% from participants towards their pharmaceutical employer. The standard deviation for the Employer Attraction received a result of (SD= 1.235). The mean result from the Employee Engagement survey is (M=60.92). This suggests that on a scale that goes from 0-119 (A 7 option scale multiplied by the 17 questions in the scale) the average employee engagement score is 60.92 which implies an average attraction level of 51% from employees. The standard deviation for the Employee Engagement scale is (SD= 1.758).

4.3 Reliability and Validity

Determining the reliability and validity of a scale is crucial prior to running tests with the scale of interest. As a measure, it allows a view of the level of consistency the researchers scale provides. The Cronbach Alpha coefficient is the most common indicator of how reliable a scale is. If a scale is reliable according to Cronbach Alpha the coefficient should be great than 0.70 (DeVillis 2012). In this study, the researcher used two scales and used SPSS to provide the Cronbach Alpha scores which are shown in tables 2 and 3 below.

Table 2: Employer Attraction Scale- Cronbach Alpha Score

Reliability Statistics		
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.947	.948	25

The Employer Attraction Scale received a Cronbach Alpha score of .947 which suggests that it is a highly reliable scale for the researcher to use.

Table 3- Employee Engagement Scale- Cronbach Alpha Score

Reliability Statistics		
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.941	.942	17

The Employee Engagement Scale received a Cronbach Alpha Score of .941. This also suggests that it is a highly reliable scale for the researcher to use. Therefore, both scales have highly reliable questions and are appropriate to use for the researcher's particular sample.

4.4 Tests of Normality and Inferential Statistics

In order to preform inferential statistic tests the data being used needed to be converted from scale like values such e.g. very unattracted to numerical values which represented a scale value. For example, very unattracted would be coded by the numerical value of 0 in SPSS. Using tests

of normality allowed the researcher to determine the tests that needed to be conducted in SPSS for example parametric or non-parametric.

4.4.1 Hypothesis 1

Null-hypothesis (Ho)- This hypothesis predicts that there will not be a difference in factors of job attraction for generations X, Y and Z.

Alternative hypothesis (Ha)- This hypothesis predicts that there will be a difference in factors of job attraction for generations X, Y and Z.

Table 4: Employer Attraction Scale Normality Results

Tests of Normality	Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
TOTALEA	.139	117	.000	.921	117	.000
a. Lilliefors Significance Correction						

Figure 6: Employer Attraction Distribution

Histogram

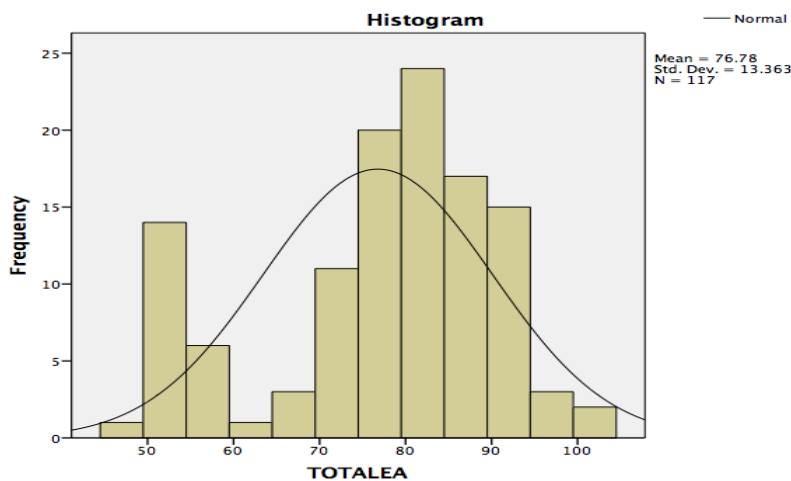Mean = 76.78
Std. Dev. = 13.363
N = 117

Table 4 and Figure 6 above provide results of normality tests conducted by the researcher on

Employer Attraction. Visually in Figure 6 it is clear that this data is not normally distributed,

although results from Table 4 confirm such an assumption. Due to the sample size of the survey

the researcher focused on the Shapiro-Wilk results. As the significant value is greater than 0.05,

we can conclude that Employer Attraction is not normally distributed. From this, a non-

parametric Kruskal-Wallis test was most appropriate.

Table 5: EA Hypothesis Summary

Hypothesis Test Summary				
	Null Hypothesis	**Test**	**Sig.**	**Decision**
1	The distribution of TOTALEA is the same across categories of Generation.	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	.314	Retain the null hypothesis.
Asymptotic significances are displayed. The significance level is .05.				

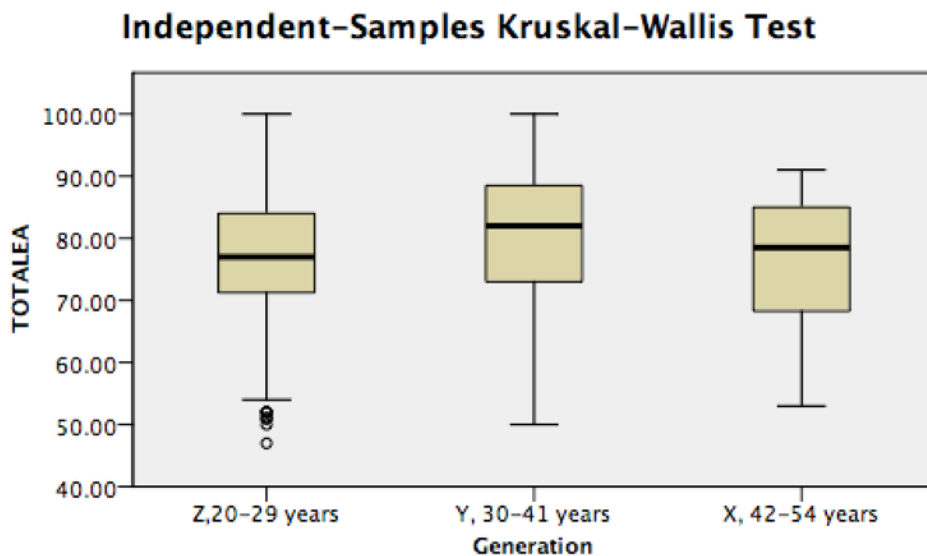*Figure 7: EA Independent- Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test*

Table 5 presents a quick summary of the results of the test. In this case the significance or p-value is 0.314. This is not less than .05 and is not significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis of equal distributions across all categories of generation has been accepted. As a result, a Kruskal-Wallis test showed that there were no significant differences for the reasons of employer attraction among Generations X, Y and Z. This is also evident in figure 7 where it shows the mean values for each generation.

4.4.2 Hypothesis 2

Null Hypothesis (Ho)- This hypothesis predicts that there will not be a difference in engagement levels among generations X, Y and Z.

Alternative Hypothesis (Ha)- This hypothesis predicts that there will be a difference in engagement levels among generations X, Y and Z.

Table 6: Employee Engagement Scale Normality Results

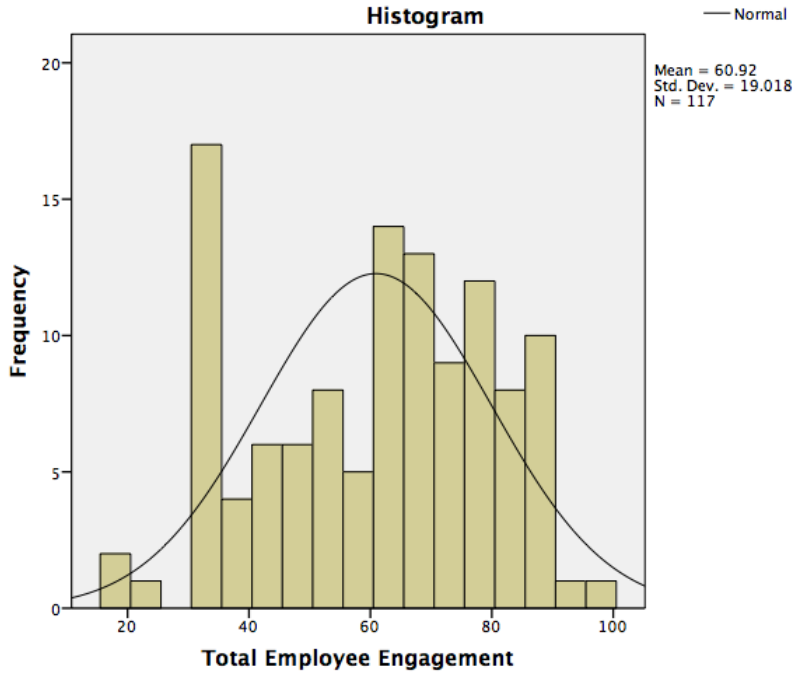| Tests of Normality	Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Total Employee Engagement	.093	117	.015	.953	117	.000
a. Lilliefors Significance Correction						

Figure 8: Employee Engagement Distribution

Table 6 and Figure 8 above provide results of normality tests conducted by the researcher on

Employee Engagement. Visually in Figure 8 it is clear that this data is not normally distributed,

although results from Table 6 confirm such an assumption. As this hypothesis wants to compare

variables like in the first hypothesis the researcher continued with a focus on the Shapiro-Wilk

results. As the significant value is greater than 0.05, we can conclude that Employer Attraction is

not normally distributed. From this, a non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis test was also most

appropriate.

Table 7: EE Hypothesis Summary

	Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig.	Decision
Hypothesis Test Summary				
1	The distribution of Total Employee Engagement is the same across categories of Generation.	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	.596	Retain the null hypothesis.
Asymptotic significances are displayed. The significance level is .05.				

Figure 9: EE Independent Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test
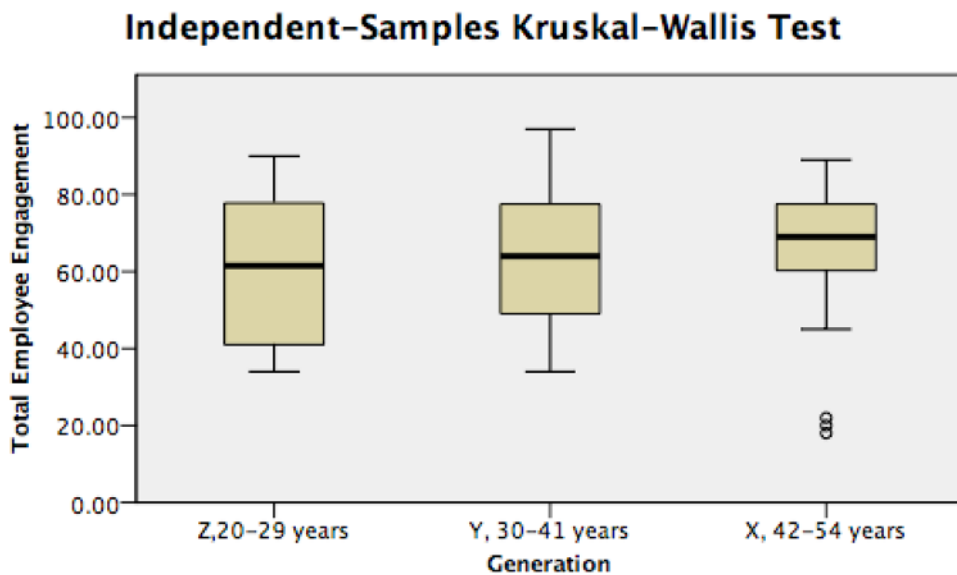

Table 7 presents a quick summary of the results of the test. In this case the significance or p-value is 0.596. This is not less than .05 and is not significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis of equal distributions across all categories of generations has been accepted. As a result, a Kruskal-Wallis test showed that there were no significant differences for the reasons of employer

attraction among Generations X, Y and Z. This is also evident in figure 9 where it shows the mean values for each generation.

Chapter 5: Discussion

This chapter focuses on the results gathered from conducting primary research which will then be compared to aspects of literature that the researcher previously discussed in chapter 2. Within this chapter both differences and similarities between the primary investigation and secondary research will also be discussed. Any new insights to generational differences will be shown with evidence from the primary investigation. The structure of this chapter will begin with looking at each hypothesis individually, using references to literature and the results that were derived from statistical analysis in chapter 4.

5.1 Hypothesis One

The first hypothesis revolved around whether there are differences in why individuals from generations X, Y and Z are attracted to work for a particular organisation.

Null Hypothesis (Ho): This hypothesis predicts that there will not be a difference in factors of job attraction for generations X, Y and Z.

A non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis test was used. This was because the distribution of employer attraction scale was not normal. This aim of this test was to establish if the distribution of employer attractiveness was the same across all three generations. This was an important aspect to look at due to inconsistency with current literature, with some stating that there are differences between why individuals are attracted to an employer and some stating there are no differences. Using the significance value (p-value) was an indicator on whether the null hypothesis should be

rejected or accepted. As the significance value of .314 was greater than 0.05 the null hypothesis was accepted. This meant that there was no significant difference in why individuals from different generations are attracted to an employer.

The non-significant findings of this hypothesis conflicted with previous research in which it was found that there were differences when it came to why different generations were attracted to an employer (Boyd 2010; Stankiewicz and Lychmus 2017; Deloitte 2016). Boyd (2010) recognised that generation X depended on the aspect of financial stability to a greater extent than any other generation. Although, within the primary investigation there was no significant difference between generations X, Y and Z with regards to having any financial incentive. Stankiewicz and Lychmus (2017) identify how important working for an employer who stands by ethical standards is to generation Y. Generation X is more concerned with themselves than ethical standards while a recent study by Deloitte revealed that 50% of millennials rejected working on a project due to it conflicting with their ethical beliefs (Deloitte 2016). In contrast, the insignificant results relate and are supported by various elements of previous research (Coates 2017 and Frifiray and Mayo 2017). Coates (2017) and Frifiray and Mayo (2017) recognise how all three generations X, Y and Z are attracted to an employer who offers a work-life balance. Receiving an insignificant result from the first hypothesis does not have a negative impact on this research. As stated by Costanza and Finkelstein (2015) generations are integrating more and more every day especially through the use of technology in organisations and the assumption that there are major differences among generations does not have strong empirical evidence. From this the amount of time spent by organisations in determining different ways of attracting a particular generation may not be necessary.

5.2 Hypothesis Two

The second hypothesis of this research project revolved around the engagement levels of employees from different generations, while looking to see any differences between them. Null Hypothesis (Ho)- This hypothesis predicts that there will not be a difference in engagement levels among generations X, Y and Z.

With regards to the first hypothesis the same method of a non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis test was used in this hypothesis. This is due to not having a normal distribution across employee engagement. The aim of this test was to establish if the distribution of employee engagement was the same across all three generations. Establishing whether there is a difference in engagement levels of individuals from a generational cohort is an important aspect of research for today's workforce. Engagement is a major focus for organisations today especially because of its link to retention, continuous and new research is needed to understand whether there is a difference in how to engage employees. As a result, there is a gap in the literature. As with the previous hypothesis, the significant value was also used to determine whether to accept or reject the null hypothesis. Since the significance value of .596 was greater than 0.05 the null hypothesis is accepted. From this significance value and acceptance of the null hypothesis it meant that the reasons for employees being engaged were the same across all three generations X, Y and Z.

Due to the insignificant findings of this hypothesis past research was conflicted with but also supported as a result. (Conkright 2015) recognises that engagement among employees of all generations does not differ majorly because of the generation they belong to. In particular, the methods of engaging employees do not have to be different due to the generational cohort an individual belongs to. Engagement can be sustained through management carefully planning, leading, controlling and organizing (Conkright 2015). Mansoor and Hassan (2016) used an

engagement model which incorporates specific factors in engaging all employees, not one specific generation. Factors like communication, team-work, job role, management and giving learning and development opportunities are all aspects that hinder whether an employee is engaged or not. Therefore, the hypothesis tested would support Mansoor and Hassan's (2016) model of engagement. Although, Close and Martins (2015) recognised that each generation is engaged for a particular reason which are distinct from each other. In order to engage generation X, Close and Martins (2015) pay attention to the fact that this generation are happy to perform work once they are rewarded. As a result, they are not necessarily engaged in the job itself but what they will gain from doing this particular job. On the other hand, generation Y are said to be more concerned with recognition and being less micro-managed. Lastly, generation Z need to feel valued by an employer. Receiving an insignificant result from the hypothesis tested does not create a negative response to the research. It supports some literature while not supporting others. For this reason, it shows the importance of continuously conducting such research on employee engagement.

5.3 Study Limitations

The current study has many limitations which must be recognised. Being able to recognise limitations in a study is important for both future research so the limitations can be considered and for current researchers to reflect on. In relation to this current study the main limitations are as follows. The sample size of this research was not equal across all generations X, Y and Z which can hinder the average results of each generation. In particular generation X had the smallest sample size. Perhaps in order to receive a larger number of responses a paper based survey should also be an option in future instead of only giving an online option. As well as this, the amount of time given to conduct this research was limited. In future, a larger time scale to

conduct research may allow a greater sample size which will give a more accurate result. Having

a greater time limit may also allow a qualitative approach to be undertaken which would allow

any researcher to gain more in-depth answers rather than a defined answer on a survey which

was used in this study.

Chapter 6: Conclusion and Recommendations

This research aimed to compare the differences between generations X, Y and Z with regards to their reasons for being attracted to an employer and also how engaged they are as an employee. In particular this research had a focus on the Irish Pharmaceutical Industry due to majority of research being international and the gap there is currently for research in this sector. In the last number of years, the interest of conducting research between different generations has become of major importance to employers, since there are at least 2 or 3 generations working in an organization at the same time, which is due to factors such as technological advancement and people living longer employers now have to pay attention to the way employees from different generational cohorts are and want to be treated. The way in which individuals are treated will determine how attracted and engaged they are and in turn affect the choice of whether they choose to stay or leave an employer. Due to the 'war for talent' explained by Beechler and Woodward (2009) it is clear that an employer needs to know how to handle both current and potential employees to avoid having trouble with the retention and attraction of employees.

 Although, from the primary investigation conducted along with a statistical analysis it is evident that there are no significant differences for either hypothesis tested to which more detail will be provided. The first hypothesis aimed to test whether employees across all three generations were attracted to an employer for similar or different reasons. The survey identified themes such as recognition and financial. Using a non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis test it was clear that there were no significant results. This meant that there were no major differences on why any of generations X, Y or Z are attracted to an organisation. The second hypothesis aimed to test whether there are any differences in engagement levels of employees who come from different generational cohorts. Similar to the first hypothesis a Kruskal-Wallis test was also used and as a result this test

also showed no significant difference between generations. As a result, the test ran showed that there were no significant differences in the engagement levels between generations X, Y and Z. The results gained from the primary investigation both conflicted and supported previous research. The researcher was in particular looking to see if there were any differences on a preference for financial gain, recognition and development opportunities because of the re-occurring themes in past research. Therefore, from running the above tests both hypotheses were accepted in this study.

6.1 Recommendations

From the results of this research it is clear that aspects of the investigation could be improved with regards to future research. Future research is required around the topic of generational differences as it is important for an employer to understand how employees like to be treated and also what their expectations are. This will help to attract, retain and engage employees as a result.

For future research the researcher would recommend conducting a more in-depth primary investigation. This would involve taking a qualitative approach and conducting interviews to get a better understanding of why there is or is no differences between generations X, Y and Z when it comes to employer attractiveness or their reasons for engagement. Although a downfall of this approach is that it is more time consuming and may be costly if a recording device is needed it would give a researcher more of an insight than a quantitative approach does.

When conducting future research using an equal number of participants from each generational cohort is advised. This is to ensure no bias is given to one generation over another as well as gaining a more accurate result with equal distribution. This will ensure results are reliable and be

helpful for an organisation. Although it can be difficult to get participants especially when looking for a larger number of individuals a reward system could be put in place for taking part in the research. An example could be a free lunch, although this may be costly it may attract more individuals to participate in the survey.

If aspects of costing are an issue for an individual conducting future research using an open-ended survey could also be something to look at. By using an open-ended questionnaire, it allows participants to give a greater explanation. Using this method may allow the researcher to gain more honest answers than he/she would if conducting face-to-face interviews. Lastly, distributing paper based surveys instead of online surveys is advised for future research. This may help to gain responses especially for an older generation like generation X. Although, this may also cause implications due to the cost of printing.

It is clear that there are a lot of factors that could be changed / implemented for future research with regards to generational differences. Research around generational differences is going to be become increasingly important for organisations. Although, issues such as timing and costing must be taken into consideration before further research can be undertaken.

Chapter 7.0 CIPD Personal Learning Reflection

Making the decision to complete my Masters in Human Resource Management at the National College of Ireland was driven from the passion I have also had for driving people to be the best that they can be. Since working for a large international retail store with many employees led me to understand how people wanted to be treated and why management influences the way employees act in the workplace and the respect they do / do not have towards their employer and the Human Resource Management course has taught me so much in such a short period of time.

Looking back, I originally underestimated the amount of time and effort that would be needed to complete this course. Completing my dissertation was probably the most challenging aspect of the course. As I started a HR placement in January of the course which meant I had to balance my college work and work-life and even more so when I increased the number of days that I worked during the summer when lectures were finished.

I found that writing the dissertation was difficult because I was trying not to over complicate the issues so that someone reading it without any detailed background knowledge of the topic area could understand it. This was especially a challenge when writing the statistical results from SPSS. Even knowing for definite what the right test to use was and which results in particular on the SPSS system you needed to pay attention to was a critical step since your findings and discussion chapter was based on the results found in SPSS. If I was to go back I would conduct a more in-depth analysis of the results from my survey.

Undertaking this course has allowed me to overcome certain areas which I would have avoided both in the workplace and my undergrad degree. I have become more confident when it comes to group work and presentations in particular. Before this course I would have doubted myself with

regards to voicing my opinion in groups and feeling overwhelmed with the thought of having to present on a topic to a number of people either large or small. Now, I feel comfortable with both of these which is down to the learning and practice I received within the National College of Ireland.

Overall this Masters has been both an extremely difficult year but also a rewarding year.

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<u>Glossary</u>

Employer Attraction: EA

Employee Engagement: EE

Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development: CIPD

Appendices

Appendix A:

Employer Attractiveness Scale

The level of attraction is measured from 1 meaning not at all attracted and 5 meaning very attracted.

Please indicate in the below questions from 1-5 what your attraction level would be towards your organisation.

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 2

4. An above average basic salary

25. An attractive overall compensation package

Appendix B:

Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES)

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 Monkey Questionnaire:

My name is Nicole Steeples and I am currently undertaking a Masters in Human Resource Management at the National College of Ireland. I would like to invite you to take part in the following survey which is needed for my research project.

The purpose of this survey is to collect data from individuals within the Irish Pharmaceutical Industry. I am collecting data from participants through the use of an online survey.
The aim of this study is to investigate if different generational cohorts are attracted to an organisation and remain in an organisation for similar or different reasons.

All data will be kept confidential and your responses will only be used for the purpose of my research project. No personal information will be gathered and the researcher will not be able to trace responses back to anyone. With accordance to college requirements data will be kept for 5 years by the researcher and stored securely.

If you have any questions regarding the research or require any other information about my thesis you can contact me at this email address: **nicolesteeples@live.ie**

It should take no longer than 10 minutes to complete the entire survey.
Please complete the survey as soon as possible.
Thank you for your participation.

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

◯ Yes

Demographic Questions:

Required

The first part of this information is to gather some information about you. All information you provide is confidential.

* Please select your gender

○ Male

○ Female

○ Prefer not to answer

* What age category do you belong to?

○ between 20 and 29 years (Gen Z)

○ between 30 and 41 (Gen Y)

○ between 42 and 54 (Gen X)

* How long have you worked for your current employer?

○ less than 1 year

○ 1-5 years

○ 6-10 years

○ 10 years +

Employer Attraction (Example of Questions)

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

Recognition or appreciation from management

Strongly unattracted	Unattracted	Neither attacted/ Nor unattracted	Attracted	Strongly Attracted
○	○	○	○	○

A fun working environment

Strongly unattracted	Unattracted	Neither attacted/ Nor unattracted	Attracted	Strongly Attracted
○	○	○	○	○

A springboard for future employment

Strongly unattracted	Unattracted	Neither attacted/ Nor unattracted	Attracted	Strongly Attracted
○	○	○	○	○

Feeling good about yourself as a result of working for a particular organisation

Strongly unattracted	Unattracted	Neither attacted/ Nor unattracted	Attracted	Strongly Attracted
○	○	○	○	○

Employee Engagement (Sample of Questions)

Please read the statements below on this topic, and for each statement, indicate its importance to you given the option available *.

When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work.

Never	Rarely	Occassionally	Sometimes	Frequently	Usually	Always
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

At my work, I feel bursting with energy.

Never	Rarely	Occassionally	Sometimes	Frequently	Usually	Always
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

At my work I always persevere, even when things do not go well.

Never	Rarely	Occassionally	Sometimes	Frequently	Usually	Always
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

I can continue working for very long periods at a time.

Never	Rarely	Occassionally	Sometimes	Frequently	Usually	Always
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

At my job, I am very resilient, mentally.

Never	Rarely	Occassionally	Sometimes	Frequently	Usually	Always
○	○	○	○	○	○	○