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10-1-2010

Retaining Gen Y in the Workplace

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by

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A Professional Project submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School,
Marquette University,
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree of Master of Leadership Studies

Milwaukee, Wisconsin

December, 2010

ABSTRACT
RETAINING GEN Y IN THE WORKPLACE

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The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to gain an understanding of the factors which contribute to retaining Gen Y in the workplace. The participants were part of the Gen Y cohort born between 1980 and 2000. They are college educated and have experience working in full time positions in their chosen field of work. The findings of the study mirrored much of the current literature on this topic. The participants of this study expect their employer to provide an opportunity for social interaction, interesting and challenging work, a work life balance, learning opportunities, and they want to do good work for a morally responsible employer. Money was also a top priority. The participants of this study placed a higher priority on money than on work place benefits. The information from this study continues to support other research on Gen Y and provides employers with recommendations on how to work with this highly educated and talented work group.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Retaining Gen Y in the Workplace

Against the backdrop of gender, race, and ethnicity, organizations need to also look to manage *age diversity* amongst their employees (Lowe, Levitt, & Wilson, 2008). There are currently four generations in the work force which are described in more detail in chapter two of this study. The four generations are known as Traditionalists, Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Generation Y. Generation Y is the youngest generation in the workplace today (Eisner, 2005). They are the basis for this study.

Regeneration Y is also labeled with other names such as Gen Y, Millennial, Echo Boomers, Net Y, Next Digital, and Nexters. Referred to as Gen Y in this study, they are one of the largest populations in history next to the Baby Boomers (Howe & Strauss, 2000). The exact age of Gen Y is defined differently depending on the researcher; the various birth years designated are between 1979 and 2001 (Dries, Pepermans, & DeKerpel, 2008; Smola & Sutton, 2002, Strauss & Howe, 1991). This qualitative phenomenological research study will look at the motivational factors which keep Gen Y employees on the job by interviewing members of the cohort.

Statement and Significance of the Problem

As Gen Y enters the workforce a great need to understand them is impending. Managers need to rethink how they manage the existing multi generational workforce. Each generation is motivated by different personal, professional, and organizational standards (Eisner, 2005). An employer who understands them can improve their satisfaction and commitment to stay on the job (Frank, Finnegan, & Taylor, 2004). Goals for most companies include retaining employees so they can be developed as future

leaders (Lowe et al., 2008). Managers and leaders should be focused on retention of Gen Y employees by offering creative approaches to meet their needs, such as part time work, job sharing, or even a virtual office (Zemke, Raines, & Flipczak, 2000).

The needs of Gen Y in the work force appear to be different than other generations. The differences are highlighted by the heavy work focus of Baby Boomers and Traditionalists, with work being the anchor in their lives. Generation X employees enjoy work but consider work life balance very important. While Gen Y, the internet generation, depends on technology perhaps at the expense of basic reading, writing, and math skills (Smith, 2005). Of all the generations, Gen Y, demands the most of their work environment and they are ready to leave an organization if they are dissatisfied (Lowe et al., 2008).

Additional research on the topic of generational differences is essential for organizations so they can equip themselves with the knowledge to make the necessary decisions for creating environments that people want to become part of and stay in. Failure to address these issues may cause "misunderstandings, miscommunications, and send mixed signals" (Smola & Sutton, 2002, p.363). It is important for employers to understand and acknowledge the differences of this generation for the overall success of the organization (Smola & Sutton, 2002). Failure to embrace the differences may result in having limited talent required for success or employees that are not as engaged in the work environment as they could be (Lowe et al., 2008).

Of major concern is the retirement of the Baby Boomers. It is predicted that more people will retire than will enter the workforce within the next several years leading up to 2014 (Frank et al., 2004). As Baby Boomers retire and jobs turn over, it is projected

there will not be enough talent to fill their roles (PrincetonOne, 2010). According to

PrincetonOne (2010), a recruitment specialist company, "only 37% of Gen Y employees

will stay on the job for more than two years." The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reports

the cost to replace an employee at a minimum is 25% of the employee's salary (Hobart &

Sendek, 2009, p.16). With costs being as high as 25 % of the employee's salary and Gen

Y employees staying on the job for less than two years, an organization could face major

financial impact as the Baby Boomers retire. Companies will want to retain their talent

more than ever (Lowe et al., 2008).

More than 32 million Gen Y workers are currently in the workforce which is

about 40 percent of the 79 million in the cohort (Josiam et al., 2009; U.S. Bureau of

Labor Statistics, 2010). Understanding Gen Y's personal needs and aligning them with

corporate needs could be a way to attract and retain these workers (Eisner, 2005; Raines

& Armsberger, 2010). Organizations presently lack the knowledge to develop an

environment which understands and meets the needs of Gen Y employees

(Kupperschmidt, 2000).

The purpose of this qualitative study is to identify and understand the factors that

motivate Gen Y employees to stay on the job. To identify and understand these factors,

seven Gen Y participants were interviewed on this topic. The findings of this study will

be useful for employers to understand retention factors for Gen Y employees.

Research Questions

Research questions used for the interviews conducted can be found in chapter three.

The questions were grouped into the following areas of interest:

- Demographic information on year born and choice of college education as it pertains to career goals.

- Obtain an understanding of the participant's current employer; what attracted them to the job and why they remain on the job.

- Obtain an overall understanding of job and retention motivators.

Definition of Terms

Baby Boomers. Individuals born between 1945 and 1964 (Josiam et al., 2009).

Generation X. Individuals born between 1965 and 1979 (Josiam et al., 2009).

Generation Y. Individuals born between 1980 and 2000 (Josiam, et al., 2009).

Generational cohort. A group of individuals born and raised within the same historical and social context (Mannheim, 1952).

Generational theory. Generational theory maintains that a unique set of values, beliefs, and attitudes are imprinted for life by defining historical events that occur as people mature (Strauss & Howe, 1991).

Hygiene factors. Hygiene factors are extrinsic or external sources of job satisfaction. Job satisfaction does not come from the activity itself; it comes from an external source or reward (Herzberg, 1968).

Motivation. Is defined as what makes people act or behave in the way they do (Herzberg, 1959; Kaliprasad, 2006; Maslow, 1943).

Motivator factors. Relate to the work itself and include achievement, recognition for achievement, responsibility, growth and advancement (Herzberg, 1968).

Retention. The effort by an employer to keep desirable workers (Frank et al., 2004).

Turnover. The unplanned loss of workers who voluntarily leave and who employers would prefer to keep (Frank et al., 2004).

Traditionalists. Individuals born before 1945 (Josiam et al., 2009).

Highlights of the Methodology

Chapter three covers the full methodology used for this study. This section provides a highlight of the methods used. A qualitative phenomenological approach was the best choice to find the described meaning and the lived or real life experiences as told by members of the Gen Y cohort. This type of research provides an opportunity for the researcher to understand how participants are influenced and affected by their experience of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2007). Moustakas (1994) believes that phenomenological research examines an issue from various viewpoints until an image of the experience is realized and the essence of the experience is portrayed.

Moustakas' (1994) systematic approach to conducting research was used for this study. He provides specific steps to follow which begin with discovering the question and then moving on to doing a "comprehensive review of the professional research literature" (p. 103). Upon completion of the literature review, next steps include a structure for preparing the interviews with participants. The interviews begin with establishing a set of criteria for selecting participants, providing instructions prior to the interview, developing a set of questions, conducting, and recording the interview. Upon completion of the research the systematic approach includes how to organize and synthesize the data into meaningful information.

The interviews were intended to uncover job retention motivators from the participants. The interviews were conducted with volunteer participants from the Gen Y

cohort that are now or were previously employed full time. The information from the interviews was recorded, transcribed, and then analyzed. Specific themes emerged from the data analysis.

The findings from the research can be found in more detail in chapter four. Seven themes emerged from the analysis. The themes identified and defined factors which motivate the participants to remain on the job. The findings are in concurrence with the literature on the topic, with few differences.

Summary

Chapter one has provided the statement and significance of the problem, definition of terms, and highlight of the methodology used. This chapter defined the problem and the need for the study. Chapter two includes a review of the literature; chapter three will describe the methodology used to collect information and to do a data analysis; chapter four describes the findings of the research; and, chapter five provides a summary, further discussion on the findings, and recommendations for this and future research.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

A literature review was completed by reviewing four specific areas related to retaining Gen Y employees in the workforce. The four areas reviewed are (a) generational theory, (b) four generations defined, (c) job motivation, and (d) Gen Y and the workplace.

Generational Theory

One of the earliest authors on the theory of generations was Mannheim (1952), who defined generation as a group of individuals born and raised within the same historical and social context. This group would need to be exposed to the "same phase of the collective process…to experience the same events and participation in the common destiny of this historical and social unit" (p. 292). Mannheim (1952), refers to this phenomenon as the *sociological problem* of generational boundaries when "significant historical events and periods of social change occurred making the formative experiences of those born after the change different from those born before the change" (p.292). Mannheim (1952), argued being born in the same year and in the same location does not in itself create a generational group. It is the different formative contexts that affect members of different groups to different modes of thought and action keeping with the times in which they were raised (pp. 292-303).

Howe and Strauss (2000) define generational theory as a "cohort group of about twenty years which defines itself against a backdrop of contemporary trends and events shaped by history, culture, and the environment surrounding them" (p. 46). Generational theory maintains that a unique set of values, beliefs, and attitudes are imprinted for life by

defining historical events which occur as people mature (Strauss & Howe, 1991). Growing up at about the same time and experiencing historical events at about the same point in one's development leads to similar values, opinions, and life experiences of people within the cohort (Kupperschmidt, 2000; Lyons, Duxbury, & Higgins, 2005; Smola & Sutton, 2002; Strauss & Howe, 1991). For example, some of the events or societal influences affecting Gen Y include Columbine, September 11th, Katrina, round the clock media coverage, and economic uncertainties (Lowe et al., 2008).

Smola and Sutton (2002) did a study on generational differences and work values with 450 MBA students and compared the results to a 1974 study done by Cherrington (as cited by Smola & Sutton, 2002) on work ethic and attitudes. They found societal events in which a generation develops does impact their personality, feelings towards authority, values and beliefs about organizations, work ethic, why and how they work, and goals and aspirations for their work life. Kupperschmidt (2000) found concurrence with multiple generations in the workforce; each generation is likely to develop distinct preferences that distinguish their feelings toward authority and organizations and what they desire from work.

Because of the increasing interest in how to manage and lead employees from different generations, Cennamo and Gardner (2008) conducted a study on generational differences in work values and person to organizational fit. Their study found Gen Y and Generation X placed more importance on status and freedom than Traditionalists. Baby Boomers reported better organizational fit with extrinsic values of status and compensation. While there were differences amongst the generations, the practical

implications of their study found organizational fit is important to all generations and should not be over generalized.

Some authors and researchers have found weak support for generational theory described in current literature and in the media. Wong, Gardiner, Lang and Coulon (2008) found in their study on personality and motivation in the workplace, generational differences are based more on current age and maturity than generational boundaries. Generational boundaries are defined as the birth years a group shares; such as Baby Boomers born between the years of 1945 and 1964 (Kupperschmidt, 2000).

Cennamo and Gardner (2008) could not validate whether differences between groups was linked to career stage, life stage, or true generational differences. They believe true generational differences can only be identified by studying groups over a long period of time. They recommend organizations continue to examine the differences among employees of different ages but also acknowledge the commonalities.

Jorgensen (2003) rejects the idea of generational theory and the need for organizations to adapt to the differences in the workforce. Instead his review of current literature and research finds organizations should focus on and create an environment which includes work life balance, autonomy in the workplace, care for the individual, enjoyable work, flexibility, openness, and employee participation. This should be done by paying attention to current technical, economic, political, and social trends which he believes is more substantial than the data written on generations. He states the data on generations is subjective and makes reference to one point in time during formative development.

Smola and Sutton (2002) designed their study to answer the question, "Is it generational or do we change over time with maturity?" In their findings they indicate, in addition to generational differences, values do change over time as a result of societal influence, and to a lesser degree, the maturation process. While there is an overabundance of research validating generational differences there is little research to dispute this topic (Cennamo & Gardner, 2008).

Four Generations Defined

The four generations defined in this literature review are: Traditionalists, Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Gen Y. While this research is mainly focused on Gen Y, understanding all of the generations in the workplace will bring into context a foundational understanding of how they compare to Gen Y and how managers and leaders could adjust their style to meet their needs. A manager in an organization should consider the differences, such as, Gen Y appears to be more optimistic and idealistic than Generation X and more realistic than Baby Boomers (Baldonado & Spangenburg, 2009).

According to Eisner (2005) for the first time in history there are four generations in the workforce. The makeup of today's workforce begins with Traditionalists. They account for about 75 million born before 1945 with 5% or less in the workforce. Baby Boomers account for around 81 million born between 1945 and 1964 with about 31% in the workforce. Generation X accounts for about 46 million born between 1965 and 1979 with about 30% in the workforce. Generation Y has about 79 million born after 1979 with about 40% in the workforce (Josiam et al., 2009; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2010). This creates an aspect of age diversity which should or must be considered by employers for human resource and management purposes (Josiam et al., 2009).

The precise label or name used and specific years used to define generational

boundaries can vary and be inconsistent depending on the author or researcher (Dries, et

al., 2008; Smola & Sutton, 2002). For example, Strauss and Howe (1991) define Gen Y

as being born after 1982 and Josiam et al., (2009) define them as being born after 1980, a

difference of two years. Generational names can be drawn from historical events, social

or demographic change, and others are formed from a big turn in the calendar. Gen Y is

the first generation to come of age in the new millennium; therefore they are also known

as Millennials (Pew Research Center, 2010). While the label or name of the generational

cohort can be different and the year of birth boundaries are slightly ambiguous, neither

alters the historical events occurring for the generation, which have influenced their

formative years (Mannheim, 1952; Howe & Strauss, 2000).

Traditionalists. As discussed, with each generation depending on the author, the

label or name can vary, such as with Traditionalists. Traditionalists are also known as the

Silent Generation, GI Generation, Veterans, and Matures, born before 1945 (Dries et al.,

2008; Marston, 2007; Strauss & Howe, 1991). Ronald Reagan called them the Greatest

Generation with over 50% of the males participating actively in World War II (Pew

Research Center, 2010). They also experienced the Korean War, Pearl Harbor, The Great

Depression, and nuclear awakening. Some of the well known people born in this

generation are John F. Kennedy, Walt Disney, Bob Hope, Billy Graham, Lee Iacocca,

Ronald Reagan, Jimmy Carter, and Martin Luther King, Jr. (Strauss & Howe, 1991).

Traditionalists are in the workplace today with the youngest members being about

70 years old. Lipkin and Perrymore (2009) define the work ethic of the traditionalist with

the following traits; work comes first, follow the rules no matter what, the boss deserves

respect, seniority equals promotion, work is based on hours, preference for face-to-face contact, and dress the part. Other qualities used to describe Traditionalist employees include hard work, frugality, and loyalty to the organization and managers. Many have stayed with one company for their entire career (Eisner, 2005; Kupperschmidt, 2000; PrincetonOne, 2010).

Traditionalists respect authority, accept executive decision making and the command and control model of management (Dries et al., 2008). They believe long term employment security is based on the length of years they have given to their employer (Kupperschmidt, 2000). Their credo is, "We must pay our dues and work hard" (Dries et al., 2008).

Baby Boomers. Unlike the other generations Baby Boomers are called Baby Boomers in almost all scholarly research; they rarely go by another name. While this generation's name has stuck they have been referred to as Hippies, Flower Children, and Yuppies (Strauss & Howe, 1991). Baby Boomers were named because of the high birth rate experienced after World War II (Lyons et al., 2005). This generation has 81 million members born between 1946 and 1964 (Dries et al., 2008; Marston, 2007; Strauss & Howe, 1991; U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). Some of the experiences defining this generation are the Vietnam War, Woodstock, Watergate, the assassinations of John F. Kennedy, Robert Kennedy, and Martin Luther King, Jr., Apollo moon landing, boom of television, Kent State massacre, and gender equality (Smola & Sutton, 2002; Strauss & Howe, 1991; Wesner & Miller, 2008). Some of the well-known people born in this generation are Oprah Winfrey, Bill Gates, Hillary Clinton, Michael Jackson, and Barrack Obama (Strauss & Howe, 1991).

Baby Boomers are in the workplace today with the youngest members being about 46 years old. Baby Boomers are known as workaholics, strong willed employees, who value promotions, titles, offices with a door, and reserved parking spaces, and they like to spend money (Dries et al., 2008; Kupperschmidt, 2000; PrincetonOne, 2010). They are also known to be innovative, loyal, optimistic employees who like consensus building, are excellent mentors, and can affect positive change (Kupperschmidt, 2000; Wong et al., 2008). Baby Boomers value job security and a stable work environment, they are loyal to their companies, and respect title and rank in organizations (Kupperschmidt, 2000; PrincetonOne, 2010). They believe they have a psychological contract with their employer where they will be loyal, work hard and then be rewarded with job security and gradual pay increases (D'Amato & Herzfeldt, 2008). They are economically optimistic believing downturns are cyclical and temporary (Dries et al., 2008; Zemke et al., 2000).

On the job they are competitive and they want it all, the status, compensation, and interesting work. Their credo is, "If you have it flash it" and "Work hard to play hard" (Dries et al., 2008; Zemke et al., 2000). This generation is beginning to retire which has drawn concern over a future talent shortage and loss of *tribal knowledge*. Tribal knowledge is a term used to describe knowledge which is handed down from generation to generation without documentation (PrincetonOne, 2010).

Generation X. This generation is known as Latchkey Children, X-ers, and the 13th Generation. They were born between 1965 and 1979 (Strauss & Howe, 1991). They experienced the onset of Aids, birth control pills, Roe v. Wade, Challenger explosion, rock lyrics censored, MTV, the Gulf War, downsizings, globalization, a technology

boom, and high divorce rates (Dries et al., 2008; Strauss & Howe, 1991). Some of the

well known people born in this generation are Michael Jordan, Michael J. Fox, Tom

Cruise, Lady Di, Bret Favre, and Tiger Woods (Strauss & Howe, 1991). No president at

this point is from this generation. This generation is much smaller in size than the

previous and next generations, with only 46 million people which contributes to the

concern and fear of a talent shortage and knowledge loss (Josiam et al., 2009;

PrincetonOne, 2010; U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). They were raised in an environment

with diverse races, diverse family configurations due to divorce, remarriage, and alternate

life styles, and diverse technology, such as microwave ovens and personal computers

(Kupperschmidt, 2000).

Generation X is in the workplace today with the youngest members being about

31 years old. Generation X employees are great at multitasking and parallel thinking and

they look for this type of environment from their employer (Kupperschmidt, 2000). They

are happy to take risks with a freewheeling entrepreneurial spirit (Dries et al., 2008;

Lyons et al., 2005). They are typically characterized as cynical, pessimistic, and

individualistic (Kupperschmidt, 2000; Smola & Sutton, 2002).

Unlike Baby Boomers and Traditionalists, Generation X employees do not have

job security expectations (PrincetonOne, 2010); they are resourceful, independent and

look for jobs that give them a flexible work life balance (Kupperschmidt, 2000). Unlike

their parents and grandparents who were loyal to the company, this generation tends to

jump from one job to another with loyalty to people relationships as opposed to the

company (Pooley, 2006; Zemke et al., 2000). They are comfortable with change and

therefore will easily move to another job based on salary or improved benefits (Wong et

al., 2008). They are the first generation to embrace change in the workplace, to feel comfortable about the change and to adapt quickly. They expect change to happen. Their credo is, "Whatever" (Dries et al., 2008).

Gen Y: Gen Y are referred to by many different labels or names; they are called Generation Y, Nexters, Millennials, Echo Boomers, Net Y, Gamer Generation, GenMe, and Next Digital (Dries et al., 2008; Marston, 2007; Smith, 2005; Strauss & Howe, 1991; Twenge & Campbell, 2008). For this research study they will be called Gen Y born between 1980 and 2000. They have experienced the Oklahoma City bombing, Columbine, terrorist attacks, Hurricane Katrina, the Iraq War, the internet, IPod, Facebook, text messaging, YouTube, global awareness, and corporate greed (Eisner, 2005; Lipkin & Perrymore, 2009; Raines & Armsperger, 2010; Zemke et al, 2000). Some of the well known people born in this generation are Prince William, Britney Spears, Chelsea Clinton, Tara Lipinski, and Justin Bieber (Zemke et al., 2000).

This generation has been noted to be the first generation of *winners* because they were not allowed to lose (Lipkin & Perrymore, 2009). They were told by their helicopter (hovering) parents from a very young age that they could do anything (Lowe et al., 2008; Lipkin & Perrymore, 2009). Gen Y was raised by what is termed *helicopter parents.* The good intentions of protecting and encouraging their children resulted in stunting their independent growth (Lipkin & Perrymore, 2009). They are the most watched after generation, with structured supervised days with parents, grandparents, coaches, chaperones, babysitters, nannies, teachers, and even surveillance cameras (Howe & Strauss, 2000).

Gen Y has mastered technology not knowing a world without cell phones, computers, instant messaging, and access to the World Wide Web. They use technology to connect socially using Facebook, My Space, Twitter and other social networks (Eisner & O'Grady-Harvey, 2009). They are more comfortable in the virtual world spending an average six hours a day online, than in face to face communication (Eisner, 2005). They are connected 24/7 to friends, parents, and up to the minute news and entertainment (Raines & Armsperger, 2010).

Gen Y has a strong sense of morality and patriotism. They are altruistic and willing to fight for freedom. They value home, family, and volunteerism. They are socially responsible and believe in taking care of the environment. They want to make their communities better places to live (Eisner, 2005; Lowe et al., 2008). They tend to be less focused on money-making ventures and more on making a difference in the world (Rawlings, Indvik, & Johnson, 2008). Their credo is, "Let's make this world a better place" (Dries et al., 2008).

Gen Y is achievement oriented and able to work on parallel tasks. They value intelligence and education. Gen Y brings advanced degrees, technical savvy, an appreciation for a global view, ambition, and confidence to the workplace (PrincetonOne, 2010). Due to their advanced education they have a high level of self-esteem and confidence in who they are and what they want in the workplace (Howe & Strauss, 2000; Yeaton, 2008). They are comfortable with change, value the opportunity change brings to their skill development, and enjoy the challenge of a new opportunity (Wong et al., 2008).

Job Motivation

Motivational theories were researched and included in this literature review to bring perspective on human motivation and motivation on the job as these theories apply to Gen Y. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943) and Herzberg's Two-Factor theory (1959) are both often reviewed for motivational factors relating to the workplace. Motivation is defined as what makes people act or behave in the way they do (Herzberg, 1959; Kaliprasad, 2006; Maslow, 1943).

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1968) is depicted visually in a pyramid format in Figure 1. Maslow's theory was one of the earliest motivational theories. The top two needs are identified as esteem and self-actualization termed as the higher order needs. Whereas the bottom three needs are physiological, safety, and belonging and represent the lower order needs. As each need on the pyramid is satisfied the next need presents itself. Maslow argues human beings are motivated by unsatisfied needs.

Figure 1 – Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Self-actualisation
(Achieving individual potential)

Esteem
(self-esteem and esteem from others)

Belonging
(Love, affection, being a part of groups)

Safety
(Shelter, removal from danger)

Physiological
(Health, food, sleep)
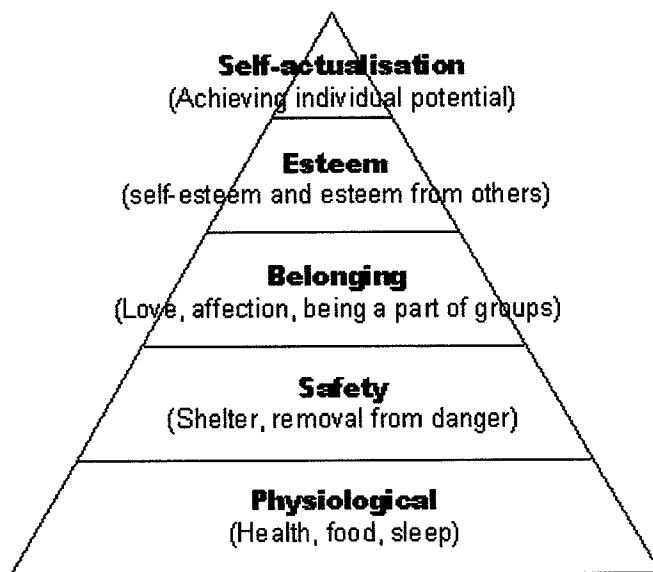
Figure 1 depicts Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs as he described in words in his paper titled *Theory of Human Motivation,* found in Psychological Review (1943). The three lower order needs are described by Maslow to include: physiological or health, food and sleep; safety is defined as having a safe place to live without danger and being part of a group, feeling loved. Once these needs are met, the next need presents itself. Esteem and self actualization are the two higher order needs and lead to achieving full human potential which is individualized to each person (Maslow, 1943).

Herzberg (1968) developed the two-factor theory or motivator-hygiene theory by surveying 200 engineers and accountants as to what motivated them on the job. This theory found different factors as primary causes of job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction. Hygiene factors are extrinsic or external sources of job dissatisfaction while motivator factors are intrinsic or internal sources of job satisfaction. Intrinsic sources include motivation which involves work activity that is interesting and derives immediate satisfaction from the activity itself. Extrinsic factors are those that include tangible or verbal reward, therefore satisfaction does not come from the activity itself; rather it comes from an external source (Gagne & Deco, 2005).

Hygiene factors are those factors associated with the job context or work setting related to supervision, company policy, interpersonal relationships, working conditions, salary, status, and security that ensure an employee does not become dissatisfied. The motivator factors relate to the work itself and include achievement, recognition for achievement, the work itself, responsibility, growth, and advancement. Motivator factors are needed to motivate an employee into higher performance. Removing hygiene factors does not motivate employees more; the only thing which motivates employees is *more* motivator factors (Herzberg, 1968, pp.113-114). This suggests job roles should be designed to increase recognition, responsibility, achievement, and advancement leading to overall job satisfaction (Baldonado & Spangenburg, 2009).

Baldonado and Spangenburg's (2009) studied the two-factor theory and Gen Y workers. Using Herzberg's two-factor theory as a basis, the researchers created a qualitative survey on the motivational needs of Gen Y and their impact in the workplace. They found Gen Y to have distinct motivation and hygiene needs. The highest ranking need was for work life balance and the lowest ranking need was company policy and administration.

Nohria (2008), in a more contemporary view of motivation, argues there are four drives for motivation: acquire, to obtain scarce goods, bond, to form connections with people, comprehend, to satisfy one's curiosity of the world around us, and protect, to retain what is ours. Nohria (2008) wrote, "These drives underlie everything we do and they are hard wired into our brains which affects our emotions and behavior" (p. 80). For example, an organization can encourage employees to connect with each other by nurturing mutual reliance and friendships among coworkers, valuing collaboration and

teamwork, and encouraging sharing of best practices. The motivation of collaboration and teamwork is how Gen Y was raised. Bonding with coworkers is a desired priority in their workplace (Yeaton, 2008).

Hackman and Oldham (1980) argue that the most effective means of motivating individuals in the workplace is through how the job is designed. They proposed a theory of job characteristic, by means of increasing intrinsic work motivation by designing jobs that (1) provide variety and have a positive impact on the lives of others, (2) afford freedom and discretion to the employee, and (3) provide meaningful performance feedback to the employee. Their theory is if the job characteristics are met, then employees would experience meaningful work, responsibility for the work they do, and knowledge of the actual results of their work activities. This theory connects with Gen Y's desire on the job to include more autonomy and freedom to create their rules and job responsibilities (Hobart & Sendek, 2009).

Another interesting motivational theory is autonomous extrinsic motivation which is not yet accepted by organizational psychologists or management theorists (Gagne & Deci, 2005). Gagne and Deci, 2005, define this as intrinsic motivation integrated with extrinsic motivation. Autonomous work motivation occurs when jobs are interesting, challenging, and allow choice of work within an environment where employees desire autonomy; such as with Gen Y employees. Gen Y wants the opportunity to design their jobs or at least have a *say* in what they will do each day (Kim, Knight & Crutsinger, 2009). Work environments that foster autonomy allow employers an opportunity to listen to employees, provide greater choice of work, and encourage self-initiation (Gagne & Deci, 2005).

Gen Y and the Workplace

Gen Y has entered the workplace and they bring along with them different attitudes and expectations than previous generations. Regarding their attitudes toward work, Josiam et al., (2009) did a study with 400 Gen Y students in the hospitality and merchandising industry. The study found Gen Y students have a positive attitude toward going to work and as they get older this attitude is enhanced. The study also found a high correlation between work ethic and positive attitude. Gen Y was also observed to be aggressive, positive, and less cynical in their professional life than Generation X. Most seek enjoyment while on the job.

Oliver (2006) did a similar study as Josiam et al., (2009) on work attitudes of Gen Y with findings that underscore a positive attitude towards work. However, Gen Y is clear with their expectations while on the job; they are not interested in a job for life. They are much more interested in workplace flexibility, career development, overseas travel, and real work life balance (Oliver, 2006; Wong et al., 2008; Zemke et al., 2000). Gen Y does not see their individual worth as the result of their job (Smola & Sutton, 2002).

Howe and Strauss (2000) wrote, "Millennials see work as an extension of school without the tests and teachers. Work is like paid recess" (p.313). Lipkin and Perrymore (2009) define the work ethic of Gen Y with the following traits; life comes first, work and personal life integrate, follow the rules only if they work, respect is earned, talent equals promotion, flexibility with the work clock, digital contact preferred, informal dress, and they expect the organization will change to meet their needs.

Gen Y's view of work has been influenced by what their parents experienced, which included a downturn and restructuring of the economy in the 1980's and long hours in the office and layoffs in the 1990's. The experience of growing up with workaholic parents has reinforced a *working to live* attitude that above all inspires them to achieve a balance in their life activities. They watched as their parents stress turned into increased divorce rates and financial turbulence during their formative years. They are the first generation to live in more one parent families than ever experienced in modern history (Howe & Strauss, 2000). In turn they now want more time with their family (Deery, 2008).

According to Rawlings et al. (2008), Gen Y has a need for flexible work hours and sick days which can be used as personal leave days. This is almost a non-negotiable on what a Gen Y *must have* to accept a job. Terjesen, Vinnicombe, and Freeman (2007) found the same type of results with 50% of respondents not willing to work more than 40 hours per week. Employers need to provide a benefit package that includes work schedule flexibility, ability to minimize excessive overtime and travel, family leave policies, and childcare or eldercare programs (Baldonado & Spangenberg, 2009). Gen Y has proven they can get work done within a flexible schedule not necessarily fitting into the traditional *9 to 5* work schedule.

Work life balance is the balance between one's work life and personal life and has been studied by Deery (2008). Deery (2008) found work life balance issues included turnover for employers and job stress for employees. Job stress was based on working too many hours away from the family. The findings to relieve the issue of working too many hours away from the family include flexible work hours with starting and finishing

times, job sharing, working from home, training conducted during work hours, adequate

staffing models so that no one person is overworked, breaks during the day, allowing

leaves and time out sabbaticals, functions that include families, and health and wellness

activities.

In correlation to work life balance Tulgan (2009) did a study on, "What young job

seekers want in a job?" One of the findings was significant and emphasized Gen Y's

desire to work where they live. Sixty-five percent of 1000 respondents based on their

desire to live closer to family and friends said they preferred "to look for a job in the

place where I would like to live rather than look for the best job I can find wherever it is

located" (p.106).

Baldonado and Spangenburg (2009), confirm in their study a key motivator to

retain Gen Y on the job begins with support of work life balance or work life integration.

Work life integration means work becomes part of one's personal life. Work becomes

fun and meaningful, a place to socialize with friends and mentors and is not seen as a

separate entity (Baldonado & Spangenberg, 2009; Lipkin & Perrymore, 2009). Time

with family is a top priority among employees of this generation and work life balance is

a key issue that employers will be expected to accommodate (Smith, 2005).

Gen Y is a social group that wants to connect their personal life with their work

life. They are connecting with family and friends throughout the day and they place these

groups as being more important than the workplace group (Terjesen et al., 2007).

Banning emails, texting, and phone calls during the day could backfire for employers

wanting to retain talent. This generation is accustomed to communicating electronically

with family and friends throughout the work day, at will (Pooley, 2006). If there are

rules in an organization that do not allow this type of communication, then Gen Y needs to know clearly up front; what is acceptable and what is unacceptable on the job (Yeaton, 2008).

Gen Y is comfortable with multitasking using their cell phones and computers to connect with people and gain information from all over the world and within the organization (Lipkin & Perrymore, 2009). This is an acceptable means of communication for them and can benefit their employer because of the diverse network they create at their fingertips. Creating networking opportunities within the organization for them is another key way to engage them in the organization. They want to get to know all levels in the organization (Raines & Armsperger, 2010). They want to be treated as valued members of the organizations rather than disposable assets (Smola & Sutton, 2002).

Gen Y employees look for an organization which will value their ideas and encourage creativity. They want to receive positive feedback on their performance and they like to receive it often (Hobart & Sendek, 2009; Josiam et al., 2009). They want their managers to recognize their talent and acknowledge them for good work through formal and informal recognition. If a company does not reward and praise Gen Y employees on a regular basis they become disappointed, which can lead to low productivity or even job dissatisfaction (Hobart & Sendek, 2009; Lipkin & Perrymore, 2009). This group received constant feedback from their parents, coaches, and other adults in the many activities they were involved with growing up; they want the same type and amount of communication from their employer (Lipkin & Perrymore, 2009;

Raines & Armsperger, 2010). Gen Y does not want to wait for an annual performance review to gain praise. They would like praise more often and on a regular basis.

Important findings from Baldonado and Spangenburg (2009) include providing Gen Y workers with reward, recognition, and increased responsibilities that include a fair salary/compensation package. Gen Y has a strong need for external motivation, such as bonuses, praise, recognition, salary increases, work from home days, special privileges, gifts, and added benefits for their work. They are not motivated by working overtime for no pay or no recognition or doing it just because the work needs to get done (Terjesen et al., 2007). Throckmorton and Gravett (2007) asked 500 Gen Y survey participants why they accepted their current positions. One of the top three responses was salary, in addition to a friendly casual work environment and growth and development opportunities.

A disconnect can occur if criticism is included in the feedback Gen Y is given on the job. They are unlikely to accept it gracefully. An employer could expect a meltdown during a difficult conversation (Baldonado & Spangenburg, 2009; Lipkin & Perrymore, 2009). Gen Y was raised as winners and failure was not an option or was not even recognized as a possibility (Lipkin & Perrymore, 2009). Due to the influence Gen Y's parents have on them, one of the side effects of helicopter parenting has been the inability of Gen Y to deal with criticism, workplace problems, and life stressors.

Gen Y did not have the opportunity to develop coping skills to deal with criticism, especially on the job. Managers and leaders of different generations become shocked at the reaction they receive when giving Gen Y constructive feedback (Lipkin & Perrymore, 2009). Gen Y's reaction to criticism is a loss of confidence, performance slows down,

and reduced energy levels (Marston, 2007). Some of the effective methods of dealing

with this is to always talk with the individual, always tell the how valuable he is to the

organization, let him know what went wrong in a neutral voice , and then work on a plan

together to move forward (Lipkin & Perrymore, 2009; Marston, 2007).

While Gen Y wants an employer that recognizes and cares for them, they do not

expect an employer to take care of them by offering security and stability. They seek out

employers that will offer challenging jobs and sufficient knowledge and training so they

can gain employability in the job market, thus acquiring career security instead of job

security (Baldonado & Spangenberg, 2009; Eisner, 2005; Kupperschmidt, 2000). A well

structured training program would be a retention and motivational factor for Gen Y

employees. They will leave an organization if their jobs do not utilize their talent or if

they do not receive training to develop professionally (Josiam et al., 2009).

For Gen Y learning is a top priority (Lowe et al., 2008). Training and

development must be part of the organizational culture, and be viewed as a long term

commitment in order to retain these employees. They expect their employer to give them

the opportunity to learn through formal or on the job training opportunities that enhance

personal and professional growth (Raines & Armsperger, 2010; Zemke et al., 2000). Gen

Y deserves the ability to keep learning and advancing their skill set through

organizational training (Lowe et al., 2008).

Gen Y is the first generation to know more about technology than their parents

and they are teaching and coaching their parents as fast as possible (Zemke et al., 2000).

Companies should embrace their desire for technology and continue to grow their skills

and knowledge which will lead to productive and satisfied workers (Lowe et al., 2008);

Rawlings et al., 2008; Yeaton, 2008). Technology is one of the most distinguishing

factors of this generation (Raines & Armsperger, 2010). Gen Y embraces technology and

they are unafraid of working with it, they have been using technology almost since birth.

Gen Y wants to work with and have access to the latest and greatest in technology which

will keep them interested and challenged on the job (Josiam et al., 2009; Raines &

Armsperger, 2010).

As stated earlier, another factor for Gen Y employees includes allowing them to

define or have input in to what they will do on the job. They are "active job crafters

rather than passive recipients" (Kim et al., 2008). Cennamo and Gardner (2008) found

Gen Y want work opportunities offering creative freedom and autonomy. Giving Gen Y

flexibility to set some of their own rules and goals may go a long way for employee

retention (Pooley, 2006). They want work to be challenging and focused on their

strengths. Placing Gen Y employees in situations they have never been in before is just

the type of challenge they prefer because it is an opportunity for them to learn (Hobart &

Sendek, 2009). The ability for organizations to design meaningful and interesting jobs

that challenge employees is a key job retention motivator for Gen Y (Nohria et al., 2008).

Challenging work means providing variety, more responsibility, and achievement with

growth being one of the highest ranked motivational factors (Terjesen et al., 2007; Wong

et al., 2008,).

Another motivational factor for Gen Y is their desire to work with teams and

groups. They are much more prepared to be collaborative than previous generations.

They enjoy working on teams and with groups (Josiam et al., 2009; Oliver, 2006; Smith,

2005). Gen Y was socialized at an early age and placed into group activities (Lipkin &

Perrymore, 2009). As students, Gen Y was exposed to group projects in high school and college. They have developed their group skills (Lowe et al., 2008). They are accustom to and comfortable with accomplishing tasks while working within teams and groups (Yeaton, 2008). They like being part of a team because the result is a better product based on the collaboration a team environment brings to the assignment (Hobart & Sendek, 2009).

Organizations should encourage and promote teamwork, collaboration, open communication, friendship, and a social working environment (Lipkin & Perrymore, 2009; Marston, 2007; Nohria et al., 2008,). Wong et al., (2008) found in their study few differences between the generations but did conclude that the younger generations do want a more connected and cooperative workplace. Employers should encourage collaboration and innovative approaches to projects (Yeaton, 2008).

Equally important and seen as a motivator for Gen Y is the ability for an organization to attract good strong talent to be part of the workplace team (Buckingham & Vosburg, 2001; Lowe et al., 2008). Attracting the right kind of talent to fit an organization and to fit a specific job remains a major focus for Human Resource professionals and CEO's (Frank et al., 2004; Kaliprasad, 2006). Among all the factors influencing an organization's success, talent attraction and more importantly retention are key strategic components (Buckingham & Vosburg, 2001). This is just as important for Gen Y employees because they want to work with the best and the brightest. They want their employer to be on the lookout for highly educated and talented people they can connect with during and after work hours. They view others talent as another way for

them to learn and they value the opportunity to keep learning and advancing their skills (Zemke et al., 2000).

Another important factor for Gen Y employees is to be proud of their employer. They want their employer to be widely regarded as a prestigious employer (Terjesen et al., 2007). They want their employer to be socially responsible, environmentally sensitive, ethical, and have values which align with theirs (Pooley, 2005; Rawlings et al., 2008). This generation has a strong sense of morality and they want their work to have significance. They want to make a difference in the world and find solutions to some of the problems society has found to be broken for a long time, such as health care (Kupperschmidt, 2000). Their managers and leaders will need to explain the importance of the tasks and functions they carry out on their job and how they make a difference to the success of the organization and to the greater community (Yeaton, 2008).

Different than the generations before them, this is the first generation not as concerned with gender equality issues according to findings in Eisner and O'Grady-Harvey's (2009) study on Gen Y and gender issues. The female Gen Y participants do not believe their business success will come at a cost to their personal life. Gender equality has moved slightly in the new millennium; however the attitude of Gen Y women towards work is what has changed. They do not believe men have more talent. They have played and excelled in sports throughout their childhood just as equally as boys. They are as tech savvy if not more savvy than their male counterparts (Zemke et al., 2000). Both genders were found to believe men still have an advantage in the business world over women. Gen Y men are much more satisfied with career

advancement opportunities and compensation than the women in the survey (Eisner & O'Grady-Harvey, 2009).

Wesner and Miller (2008) reviewed commonalities shared by the different generations as it pertains to the workplace. Baby Boomers and Gen Y do share common characteristics, such as education and meaningful work. Education is a shared characteristic because like Baby Boomers, Gen Y is entering the workforce as the most educated generation of their time in history; even though Gen Y will outpace Baby Boomers with number of advanced degrees. Meaningful work is a shared characteristic because Baby Boomers want to work for organizations which are socially responsible so their work is meaningful and interesting. Gen Y are continuously searching for meaningful work and fulfillment in their careers as well as work they believe will impact the world and make a difference (Wesner & Miller, 2008). They want to know why they are doing the work and how it contributes to organizational goals (Hobart & Sendek, 2009).

Other commonalities found by Wesner and Miller (2008) includes technology. Baby Boomers experienced the onset of television and its influence on societal values. At the onset television was considered a tool for learning. Generation X and Gen Y experienced the onset of computers and they too found a tool for learning; as a result they are unafraid of technology. By the time Gen Y enters college they would have spent 10,000 hours playing video games, 10,000 hours on their cell phones, and 20,000 hours watching television (Prensky, 2006 as cited by Wesner & Miller, 2008).

Gen Y at times is misunderstood in the workplace especially by those who are raising them at home, likely Generation X or Baby Boomers (PrincetonOne, 2010). A

few examples of these differences are in studies done by Arhin (2009) and Smith (2005).

In Arhin's (2009) study on nursing students and academic dishonesty Gen Y students

viewed dishonest behavior on sharing information differently than faculty members. Gen

Y students found those behaviors to be inventive, resourceful, and peer dependent, while

faculty members struggled with ethical and moral issues of students sharing information.

In Smith's (2005) article Gen Y is called Generation Gamer, which refers to the

gap between Baby Boomers and Generation Gamer, who can be from both Generation X

and Gen Y. Baby Boomers see games as diversions or toys. Gen Y sees games as a way

to solve problems, interact with others, and gain new skills.

Gen Y has specifically been unfairly stereotyped and misunderstood by the media.

There are five consistent myths or themes developed over time about Gen Y. They are

found to be lazy, disloyal, selfish, spoiled, and desire a constant need for instant

gratification (Hobart & Sendek, 2009; Marston, 2007; PrincetonOne, 2010). Some of

these myths can be dispelled. For example, Gen Y is not lazy; they chose their top

quality to be hard working in the PrincetonOne (2010) generational survey. The

misunderstanding on being lazy is perceived because Gen Y highly values work life

balance, which is interpreted as lazy by other generations (Hobart & Sendek, 2009;

PrincetonOne, 2010). Gen Y employees in 2002 worked just as many hours at their age

as their counterparts did in 1977 (Families and Work Institute Study, 2002).

Zemke et al. (2000), in their book titled *Generations at Work,* found each

generation complaining about the next generation. This complaining sounds like; "They

have no work ethic" or "He's been here six months and he wants a promotion!" or "If I

hear we did that in '87 again I will hurl in his old wrinkly face" (p.11). Hobart and

Sendek (2009) wrote how each generation bemoans the next generation saying, "Why can't they be more like we were? (p.147)"

In 2002, a National Study of the Changing Workforce was conducted by the U.S. Department of Labor (Families and Work Institute). They chose to test assumptions being made of the current generations in the workforce. They used data gained from surveys done with large companies such as Abbott Laboratories, Deloitte & Touché, Exxon Mobil, General Electric, and IBM. The study is called *Generation & Gender in the Workplace*. While the findings are interesting they were also done during a time when the oldest Gen Y employee was 22 years old. A more current report would be beneficial. Some of the significant findings include the following:

- Twenty-two percent of Baby Boomers are *work centric* as compared to 12 to 13 percent of Generation X or Gen Y. Work centric means placing a higher priority on work than family. Generation X and Gen Y are 52% family *centric* compared to 41% of the Baby Boomers. Family centric means placing a higher priority on family as opposed to work.
  - o Employees who are family centric show better mental health, life and job satisfaction than those who are work centric.
- Eighty-two percent of Gen Y employees agree that a mother who works outside the home can have just as good of a relationship with their children as a mother choosing to stay home versus 60% of Traditionalists.
- Eighty percent of college educated employees would like to work fewer paid and unpaid hours than they currently do. This result is based on all generations.

- In 2002, married men spent more time on workdays, about 1.9 hours, doing household chores than married men did 25 years ago spending 1.2 hours. While married women spend 2.7 hours doing household chores down from 3.3 hours 25 years ago.

- In 1977, fifty-eight percent of the Baby Boomer male population thought it best if women stayed home to take care of the family while they brought home the money for the family. In 2002, 63% of Gen Y employees thought it best if the male earned the money and the woman took care of the home and the family, compared with 49% of the Traditionalists.

Summary

Chapter two is a review of the literature available on Gen Y, which pertains to their attitudes and motivation toward work. The four areas reviewed are (a) generational theory, (b) four generations defined, (c) job motivation, and (d) Gen Y and the workplace. The Gen Y cohort was born between 1980 and the year 2000 with about 79 million members.

According to the literature reviewed Gen Y is motivated by work environments that are flexible, with jobs designed to meet the talent they bring to the organization, offerings of developmental and educational opportunities, access to the latest technologies, and leadership that is open, honest, and ethical. They also want to socialize at work and have their work integrate with their personal life. If these needs are not met, it appears they would easily leave their jobs and move to another company that will meet their needs.

While these are the current attitudes in the literature reviewed, it will be interesting to see how Gen Y reacts to the current economic conditions experienced in the United States over the last two years. Current economic conditions include limited access to jobs. In addition, the literature reviewed was written by Generation X and Baby Boomer authors. Gen Y will begin to research and write on their generation and their voice may provide different insights. The next chapter reviews the methods used to do qualitative research with members of the Gen Y cohort using information obtained from the literature reviewed in this chapter and their *lived* or real life experience in the workplace.

Chapter Three: Research Method

This chapter describes the method used to collect data and address the research

question. The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study is to describe retention

factors for Gen Y workers. This chapter includes the qualitative research, phenomenological

research, interview strategy, and data collection and analysis methods used for this research

study.

Qualitative Research

Qualitative research methods were used to address the question in this study on

retaining Gen Y in the workplace. A qualitative approach provides an exploration of the

phenomenon or problem with a broad view (Creswell, 2007). Creswell (2007) describes

qualitative research as:

> ...the assumptions, a worldview, the possible use of a theoretical lens, and the study
> of research problems inquiring into the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a
> social or human problem. To study this problem, qualitative researchers use an
> emerging qualitative approach to inquiry, the collection of data in a natural setting
> sensitive to the people and places under study, and data analysis that is inductive and
> establishes patterns or themes. The final written report or presentation includes the
> voices of participants, the reflexivity of the researcher and a complex description and
> interpretation of the problem and it extends the literature or signals a call for action
> (p. 37).

According to Taylor and Bogdan (1998) qualitative research is "research that

produces descriptive data in people's own written or spoken words and observable behavior"

(p. 7). Denzin and Lincoln (2000) describe qualitative research as "a situated activity that

locates the observer in the world...studying things in their natural settings trying to make

sense of or interpret phenomena" (p. 3). These researchers define qualitative research as

observing and studying individuals in their natural setting, analyzing and interpreting a problem or phenomenon.

Qualitative research is the best choice to research and study retention factors for the Gen Y cohort in the workplace. Creswell (2007) describes the reasons for choosing qualitative research as a need to talk directly with individuals about the problem or phenomena. Talking directly with participants minimizes anxiety and the power in a relationship that often occurs during a research study.

Creswell (2007) indicates qualitative research is the best method for study when the topic requires a detailed understanding that can only be established by talking directly with people asking broad open ended questions. Creswell (2007) identifies five different qualitative research approaches to designing a study (1) *narrative*, researches the life of a single individual, (2) *phenomenological* research describes the meaning of lived experiences of several individuals, (3) *grounded theory* generates or discovers a schema of a process, that is practiced and tested by participants, (4) *ethnography* focuses on an entire cultural group and their shared patterns of interaction, actions or processes used, and (5) *case study* researches an issue explored through one or more cases within a bounded system.

Phenomenological Research

For this research a phenomenological approach was used to find the described meaning of the lived experiences as told by members of the Gen Y cohort. Phenomenological research allows the researcher an opportunity to understand how participants are influenced and affected by their experience of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2007). This type of research also provides a disciplined and systematic approach to setting aside any prejudgments regarding the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994).

According to Creswell (2007) phenomenological research describes the meaning a group would give to their lived experiences of a concept or a phenomenon and it involves analyzing major statements, creating themes, and developing a narrative of the overall experience. Moustakas (1994) wrote phenomenological research involves examining an issue from various viewpoints until a cohesive image of the experience is realized. Phenomenological research is when the researcher obtains "comprehensive descriptions that provide the basis for a reflective structural analysis that portray the essences of the experience" (p. 13).

To portray the essence of the experience a researcher collects data from participants that have experienced the phenomenon and then develops a description of the experience (Moustakas, 1994). Van Manen (1990) agrees the purpose of phenomenological research is to study individual experiences and then describe the essence of the phenomenon and the description needs to be a *universal* view of the experience. For example in this research, interviewing participants from the Gen Y cohort may provide a universal meaning to their experience which can be used to better lead and retain them in the workplace.

Preconceived beliefs and bias of the phenomenon need to be set aside for this type of research. The researcher needs to be completely open to receive information from research participants as they explain their experience (Moustakas, 1994). The researcher's role is to gain an honest understanding of how participants view their experience and then report on their findings without bias. Moustakas (1994) wrote that the researcher needs to use the approach of Husserl (1931, as cited in Moustakas, 1994) called *epoche or bracketing.* Epoche or bracketing is an alert or reminder for the researcher to set aside, as much as possible, any preconceived experiences to best understand the experiences of the participants

in the study. Bias needs to be avoided at all costs. However it is almost impossible for a researcher not to have a view point on the phenomenon being studied (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998).

Moustakas (1994) recommends the use of systematic steps when conducting phenomenological research. These steps bring order to the way the research is conducted and supports putting aside any prejudgments regarding the phenomenon. The following steps were used to conduct this research (p. 103):

1. Discovering a topic and question rooted in autobiographical meanings and values, as well as involving social meanings and significance;

2. Conducting a comprehensive review of the professional and research literature;

3. Constructing a set of criteria to locate appropriate co-researchers;

4. Providing co-researchers with instructions on the nature and purpose of the investigation, and developing an agreement that includes obtaining informed consent, insuring confidentiality, and delineating the responsibilities of the primary researcher and research participant, consistent with ethical principles of research;

5. Developing a set of questions or topics to guide the interview process;

6. Conducting and recording a lengthy person-to-person interview that focuses on a bracketed topic and question. A follow up interview may be needed;

7. Organizing and analyzing the data to facilitate development of individual textural and structural descriptions, a composite textural description, a composite structural description, and a synthesis of textural and structural meaning and essences.

Interview Strategy (Data Collection)

For this research seven face to face interviews were conducted with members of the Gen Y cohort, born after 1980 (Josiam et al., 2009), to gain an understanding of their experience in the work place as it pertains to what initially attracted them to the job and what became the motivation for them to stay on the job. The sample size was decided based on Creswell's (2007) recommendation to limit the number of participants from three to ten and to use criterion sampling when choosing participants. Criterion sampling is used when the research requires all individuals studied represent people who have experienced the same phenomenon (Creswell, 2007). For this study all participants were members of the Gen Y cohort. In addition, it was desired that each participant be employed full time and have an undergraduate degree. Both females and males were represented in the study, with four females.

Each participant was known to the researcher and a relationship already existed. The participants were contacted by text message, to volunteer and be part of this study. Upon mutual agreement, a time and place to meet for the interview was confirmed. Before the interview each participant received a brief description of the study, a copy of the interview questions, and an informed consent form (Appendix A) via email. Interview questions were shared with the participants so they could "become on equal footing with the researcher" (Fraelich, 1989 as cited by Moustakas, 1994, p. 108). In addition, Fraelich (1989) hoped that by giving participants information prior to the interview they would come prepared to bring a rich set of experiences into the interview.

The informed consent form includes information for the participant on the central purpose of this study, confidentiality, known risks associated with this study, the benefits for

the study, and the right of the participant to withdraw at any point by contacting the researcher (Creswell, 2007). The informed consent form includes a place for the participant and researcher's signature. A copy of the informed consent form was given to each participant and the original copy is held by the researcher. The informed consent form required for research study at Marquette University includes all of the above mentioned criteria.

Interviews were conducted using questions created prior to the interview. Interviews were audio taped and then transcribed verbatim by the researcher. Questions used were descriptive and open ended, which invited participants to not only answer the question but to *talk* about the question (Rubin & Rubin, 2005; Taylor & Bogdan, 1998). Open ended questions encouraged participants to talk and helped establish rapport between the researcher and interviewee. Moustakas (1994) recommends questions be used as a guide and need to be carefully constructed so participants are able to see, reflect, and know how to answer the questions. Questions should be designed based on the current literature reviewed for the research (Creswell, 2007; Moustakas, 1994). The interview questions used for this study were created based on a review of the current literature of Gen Y in the workplace. The interview questions used for this research are as follows:

- Tell me the year you were born?

- Tell me about your education, what did you study and why? What was your end goal as it pertains to a career?

- I'd like to know about your job. Tell me how you got your job? How long have you been in your current position? Tell me about your current position. What are you responsible for?

- Tell me what attracted you to this job? Was it the job or the company?

- Tell me what employee benefits where most important to you? What employee benefit was the least important to you?

- Tell me what your boss should know about you to keep you happy, so that you stay on the job?

- Tell me what keeps you challenged on the job? And why?

- Tell me what is a motivator for you on the job? And why?

- Tell me what is the most frustrating part of your job? And why?

- How important is compensation for you to stay on the job?

- Can you describe your dream job? What type of work would you be doing? What type of boss would you have? What benefits would you have? If you could create this dream job, what would it be?

The interviews were structured using the *Responsive Interviewing Model* described by Rubin and Rubin (2005, p. 36). The Responsive Interviewing Model affects how the questions link to the study and is in line with a phenomenological approach. The model includes the following five steps:

1. Obtaining the interviewees' interpretation of their experiences and their understanding of the world in which they live and work.

2. Because the interviewer contributes actively to the conversations, he or she must be aware of his or her own opinions, cultural definitions, and prejudices.

3. The interviewer is imposing on the time, energy, and emotion of the interviewee and owes loyalty and protection in return for the interview.

4. Interviewers should not impose their views on interviewees. The questions should be broad enough to avoid limiting what interviewees can answer.

5. Because the interviewer must listen intently and provide follow-up insights and new points during the interview, the interviewer must be able to change course based on what he or she learns.

To gain the truest experience of the participants, heuristic inquiry technique was used during the interviews. Heuristic inquiry (Moustakas, 1994) is aimed at "understanding the human experience by having participants tell their stories, while they gain a deeper insight into the meaning of their experience (p.19)." This is also referred to as an illumination or "aha moment (p.19)." It is a process of discovery for the participant as well as the researcher. Moustakas (1994) suggests interviewing should attempt to describe the experience of the participant as opposed to interpreting or analyzing the experience. The description needs to retain original meaning as best as possible. The intent of the interview is to bring clarity and capture the essence of the phenomenon from the individual and then universally from all participants (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998; Van Manen, 1990).

During the interview participants were told the interview would take about one hour of their time. However they were permitted to answer the questions until they were satisfied. Participants were asked to be open and honest, to answer the questions to the best of their ability, and to reflect on their own experience in the workplace. Participants of the study were told there is no correct answer; the questions are open ended and meant to capture their experience.

Data Analysis

Data analysis in qualitative research is preparing and organizing the data collected. Several data analysis processes were reviewed for this study (Creswell, 2007; Moustakas, 1994; Rubin & Rubin, 2005; Taylor & Bogdan, 1998; Van Manen, 1990). A combination of several approaches was used. Described below (in steps) are the methods used to analyze the data collected for the research on retaining Gen Y in the workplace.

1. Collect the data (Creswell, 2007; Moustakas, 1994; Rubin & Rubin, 2005; Taylor & Bogdan, 1998; Van Manen, 1990). The data for this research was collected through interviews and a comprehensive review of current literature on generational theory and phenomenon.

2. Reading through transcribed interviews and the literature reviewed, initial coding was done. Coding is described as assigning a symbol or number to a category of data (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998). Coding allows the researcher to quickly locate excerpts, themes, events or other notes while analyzing the data (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). Open coding was used to begin the coding process. Open coding is unrestricted coding of the information (Strauss, 1987). Selective coding was then used to become more focused in creating themes and categories of information (Strauss, 1987).

3. Themes are described as the experiential structures that make up the experience and are a way of capturing the meaning of the phenomenon (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998; Van Manen, 1990). Concepts, ideas based on quotes, behaviors and language used are identified as themes (Creswell, 2007; Taylor & Bogdan, 1998; Van Manen, 1990). To gain an even deeper understanding of the phenomenon the researcher needs to continually return to the data to ensure correct meanings and

themes have been depicted in the research analysis (Moustakas, 1994; Taylor & Bogdan, 1998). The themes identified in this research were categorized around the central phenomenon of motivational and retention factors for Gen Y in the workplace.

4. Describe the essence of the phenomenon and develop significant statements and group the statements into meaningful units (Creswell, 2007; Taylor & Bogdan, 1998). To describe the essence write a textural description of *what* participants experienced with the phenomenon. A textural description includes what happened during the experience, which is explained verbatim. The structural description is *how* participants describe the setting of where they experienced the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). The essence is captured using both the textural and structural descriptions to culminate into a universal understanding (Moustakas, 1994). For example one of the participants described a work experience that included both a textural and structural description. "I like the intensity of the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) where I'm always learning new things." This example provides a description that includes the textural experience "of learning new things" and the structural experience of learning new things in the "ICU." The essence as described by Van Manen (1990) is "...the process of reflectively appropriating, of clarifying, and of making explicit the structure of meaning of the lived experience (p. 77).

5. Collect additional data if necessary to develop the themes discovered during analysis (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998).

6. Confirm, discard, refine, and elaborate on the theme, concept or idea (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998).

7. Present narration of the essence of the experience, in tables, figures, or discussion. Placing information into tables, charts, diagrams and figures highlights the patterns found within the data (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998). Using tables or figures allows the researcher to present data in a visual image (Creswell, 2007).

Summary

This chapter described the method used to collect and analyze the data to address the question of retaining Gen Y in the workplace. Moustakas' (1994) systematic steps were used to collect the data. Rubin and Rubin's (2005) Responsive Interview Model was used to create the questions and conduct the interviews. Heuristic inquiry (Moustakas, 1994) was used to capture the essence of the interviewee's experience. Data analysis was done using the combined methods of several authors to develop a framework for the analysis of this data. Seven interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim for this study. The interview transcription was sent to the interviewees to ensure proper meaning was conveyed during the interviews and follow-up changes were made to the transcribed interviews. The next chapter will describe the findings of the interviews, which include the themes and how they relate to the current literature.

Chapter Four: Findings

The information in this chapter describes the findings of the real life experiences and perceptions of the seven participants interviewed for this study. The purpose of this phenomenological study is to explore and describe retention factors of Gen Y workers. The interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim. The interview process used is detailed in chapter three.

The interview data was reviewed continuously throughout this analysis for interpretation and identification of themes. The specific steps used are outlined in chapter three (Creswell, 2007; Moustakas, 1994; Rubin & Rubin, 2005; Taylor & Bogdan, 1998; Van Manen, 1990). The findings of the research are organized into four sections (a) bracketing, (b) participant demographics and profiles, (c) emerging themes and significant statements, and (d) summary.

Bracketing

Bracketing is an alert or reminder for the researcher to set aside, as much as possible, any preconceived experiences to best understand the experiences of the participants (Husserl, 1931, as cited in Moustakas, 1994). Even though bias needs to be avoided Taylor and Bogdan (1994) wrote it is almost impossible for a researcher not to have a view on the phenomenon being studied. Moustakas's (1994) systematic phenomenological research steps were followed to bring order to the process and to support distancing any bias or prejudgments held by the researcher.

For the researcher, experience with the Gen Y cohort is unavoidable due to interaction with family members, friends, and co-workers. Prejudgment or bias of this cohort comes in the way observing their strengths of being well educated, always

interested in learning new skills, and a fearless approach to the use of technology. Other

prejudgment comes in the way of observing how they are annoyingly connected to family

and friends 24/7, sometimes difficult to communicate with, and egotistical in their ideas.

The approach used to remove prejudgment or bias for the Gen Y participants was

achieved by adhering to a systematic approach and following the prescribed methods of

qualitative research. Total bias was difficult to eliminate (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998);

however using a systematic process aided in limiting the bias and keeping the

information true to the real life experience of the participants. The findings include

factual information and significant statements obtained during the interviews.

Demographic Information and Individual Profiles

This study included person to person interviews with seven participants

(Moustakas, 1994). They will be referred to and labeled in the findings as participant 1

through participant 7. The participant demographics are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Participant Demographic Information

Participant	Year of Birth	Gender	Years of Education	Time on the job
1	1980	Female	16	3.5 years
2	1980	Male	20.5	1.2 years
3	1984	Female	18	2 weeks*
4	1983	Male	16	Unemployed**
5	1983	Female	18	1.2 years
6	1984	Male	19	6 months
7	1984	Female	16	4 years

**Participant 3 recently took a new position she was with her previous employer for four years.
**Participant 4 recently left his position he was with his previous employer for two and one-half years.

The seven participants in the study each have a unique perspective to communicate about their work experience. The participants were known to the researcher and chosen by criterion sampling. They volunteered to be part of this study. A profile is included below with a brief description of each participant that includes their education, the influences that affected their decision of what to study and their career path.

Participant one is a twenty-nine year old married mother of a two-year old. She is a full time sales representative in the pharmaceutical industry. She is a college graduate with a major in global studies and international relations, and holds a minor in intercultural communications in Spanish. She chose those topics of study due to a passion for international travel and the Spanish language. Her goal was to obtain a corporate business position where she could travel and use her education. Due to the limited amount of open positions in her area of interest this did not occur. Participant one was influenced and introduced to pharmaceutical sales by her family. Both her mother and sister are in the field and encouraged her to seek out the industry for open positions. She found her position on the internet using Monster.com. She has been a pharmaceutical sales representative for three and one-half years for the same company. She enjoys the challenge and flexibility of this type of work.

Participant two is a twenty-nine year old married male. His undergraduate degree is in biology and premed. His graduate degree is in dentistry. He was always interested in the medical field and chose dentistry based on the influence of his brother (a dentist) and his godfather (a dentist). He is now a full time dentist. Participant two was offered

his position upon graduation from dental school. He said, "It was easy. My brother worked there and I was offered the job before I even graduated, it was a given."

Participant three is a twenty-six year old married female. Her undergraduate degree is in nursing. She is a full time nurse working in a clinical setting. A high school , teacher who awakened her interest in the science of the human body and strong influence from family members led her to study nursing. In addition to being a full time nurse she is currently earning her master's degree as a nurse practitioner. She most recently left a four year hospital position for a clinical setting. The night shift and weekend duty at the hospital did not provide the right work life balance for her. The clinic allows her more social time with her husband, family, and friends.

Participant four is a twenty-seven year old married male. His undergraduate degree is in finance and real estate. He was always interested in math; finance and real estate seemed a good choice of study. He is currently working on his Masters of Business Administration (MBA). He is looking for a full time position where he can use his previous work experience in Information Technology (IT). He is currently unemployed. He most recently quit a job of two and one-half years to live close to his family. This move also provided his wife with an opportunity to obtain a job in her chosen field. He used his previous employer as a point of reference for this interview.

Participant five is a twenty-seven year old married woman and mother to be. She studied genetics for her undergraduate degree because of a passion for science and physical medicine. After graduation she continued her education in a Physician's Assistant Program. She is currently working full time in a Physician's Assistant role. She has been in her current job for fourteen months. She was influenced to go into this

field of study and follow this career path by members of her family who also work in the medical field.

Participant six is a twenty-six year old married male. He studied history as an undergraduate due to an interest in World War II. Upon graduation his goal was to go to law school. During and after his undergraduate studies he worked in his father's law firm. He graduated in May, 2010 from law school. He is now a practicing lawyer in his father's firm. Both of his parents are lawyers and he was encouraged from an early age to study law. While he has been a full time lawyer for only six months, he has worked in his father's law firm in various positions for eight years.

Participant seven is a twenty-six year old married female. She is currently a full time nurse working in a pediatric intensive care unit. She was influenced from an early age by several aunts, cousins, and two sisters to become a nurse. Their influence led her to study nursing as an undergraduate and follow her goal of working in a hospital setting with children. Working in the intensive care unit with premature babies is just the right challenge she looked for in a job.

Emerging Themes

One of the questions asked during the interview process was in reference to education. The purpose of the question was to gain general demographic information about the participants. A theme about family influences emerged from this question. Family members seemed to highly influence the participant's field of study and eventually the career paths chosen by six of the seven participants. Future research in this area may be of interest to university recruitment departments in their effort to attract Gen Y students.

Themes are described as the experiential structures that make up an experience and are a way of capturing meaning of a phenomenon (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998; Van Manen, 1990). Themes emerge from concepts, ideas based on quotes, and the language used by those interviewed (Creswell, 2007; Taylor & Bogdan, 1998; Van Manen, 1990). Several themes began to emerge by the continuous review of the transcribed interviews, and the use of open and selective coding of the information (Strauss, 1987).

Themes initially emerged by categorizing responses of the interview questions (see Table 2). The categories used for the questions were (a) choice of education, as it pertains to career goals, (b) job attraction, (c) job motivation, as it pertains to staying on the job, and (d) job frustrations. Seven themes emerged from the question categorization. Many of them were concurrent with what was found in the literature review.

Table 2

Interview Categorization

Participant	Reason for Education	Job Attraction	Job Motivation	Job Frustration
1	• Desire for international travel • Interest in learning to speak Spanish • Interest in obtaining international role in a corporate business.	• Need for full time work • Good salary • Health insurance • Interesting work • Limited offers in current job market.	• Money • Social interaction • Interesting and challenging work • Flexibility with time • Autonomy • Doing good work • Recognition • Good boss • Learning on the job	• Uncontrollable issues • Micro manager
2	• Interest in sciences • Influence of brother and godfather	• Brother employed there made it easy • Good salary • Able to practice dentistry	• Money • Social interaction • Interesting and challenging work • Work life balance • Autonomy • Doing good work • Recognition • Learning on the job • Feeling of security	• Uncontrollable issues • Patients question his ability due to age • Patients ignore his recommendations
3	• Interest in study of human • Family members in the field	• Flexible hours, no holidays or weekends • Good salary • Able to practice in a clinic setting • Flexible work schedule	• Money • Social interaction • Interesting and challenging work • Work life balance • Autonomy • Doing good work	• Poor leadership • Boss insincere

Participant	Reason for Education	Job Attraction	Job Motivation	Job Frustration
4	• Interest in math • No particular goal for career	• Needed full time work • Employer was hiring • Limited job offerings • Good compensation package • Health insurance • Good bonus program • Fellow Gen Y employees	• Recognition • Learning on the job	• Unprofessional dress policy • Not following through on promises
5	• Interest in studying medicine • Family influence	• Need for work • Good salary • Close to home • Hours 8-5 • No weekends or holidays	• Money • Social interaction • Interesting and challenging work • Work life balance • Doing good work • Recognition • Learning on the job • Good communication by boss • Good technical support	• Uncontrollable issues
6	• Interested in the study of law • Influenced by parents, both lawyers	• Father's firm • Happy to have a job	• Money • Interesting and challenging work • Work life balance • Doing good work	• Uncontrollable issues
7	• Interested in medicine • Influenced by family members	• Job offer in hospital of choice • Type of area she wanted to work in the NICU	• Money • Social interaction • Interesting and challenging work • Work life balance • Doing good work • Learning on the job	• Uncontrollable issues • No recognition • No on site boss • Flexibility with time off

The universal themes which emerged from the research are social interaction, money, work life balance, doing good work, learning opportunities, interesting and challenging work, and the frustration of uncontrollable issues in the workplace. These themes were found based on the experiences expressed during the interview. The experiences were described in both a textural and structural way to provide the researcher with an understanding and essence of the experience (Moustakas, 1994).

Table 3 reflects the theme of social interaction while on the job. Six of the seven participants specifically expressed a desire to work with people they liked and with whom they could become friends. They expressed the need for their work environment to include opportunities for social interaction with co-workers, customers, patients and even their boss. They expressed the desire to build collaborative relationships and friendships on the job. These relationships are an important component to why they stay on the job. Gen Y likes to work in organizations which encourage and promote teamwork, collaboration, open communication, and friendship (Lipkin & Perrymore, 2009; Nohria et al., 2008).

Table 3

Social Interaction

Participant	Significant Statement
1	"I do like the job because I like the social aspects…talking with the physicians and nurses, you really get to know them and some even become your friends."
2	"What motivates me on the job are the people I work with; I love the people, they are my friends. If I didn't like them that would not be good for me."
3	"My friends started to move to day shifts and then new nurses where coming in that I didn't know at all so it wasn't the same…they weren't like my good friends that made it so much more fun. When I graduate I'd like to work with other nurse practitioners that I could be friends with and we could bounce stuff off each other and work together."
4	"I kind of need a job where I am working with other people. I like working on teams. I like dealing with other people; that's important to me."
5	"I am usually assigned to one physician and we must have a good relationship and we need to respect each other as professionals. This is important to me and luckily we don't have much of an issue with that, but if I had an issue with my attending physician that would be difficult for me and a reason to leave."
7	"What I don't like about my job is the lack of a supervisor on the job with me, to see my work and what I am doing. I would like to have a supervisor working with me that I could get to know better and be friends with. Someone who could help me or guide me."

Table 4 reflects the theme of money or compensation and the importance expressed by the participants. Surprisingly the reaction to compensation and money was not expected to be as important due to previous research which found Gen Y not placing a high priority on money or compensation. Terjesen et al., (2007) found in their study that Gen Y is not all about the money but they want good compensation packages with opportunities for growth. This was not the reaction or experience found with five of the seven participants. The two remaining participants did not express a priority about

money. They preferred work life balance and would give up money for more flexibility

with hours worked. Their opinion is more congruent with the current research than the

other five participants.

Table 4

Money

Participant	Significant Statement
1	"I would say (money) is about 85% important…that is probably the number one thing (for me), the money's got to be there. If (the job) it pays less than what is your range than there is no sense in doing it…if I'm going to spend my time working, I am going to make as much money as I possibly can."
2	"So the real incentive is knowing the sky is the limit for how much I could earn because I get paid on production. The busier I am the better. I prefer to never see the inside of my office."
3	"If I don't take the benefits I earn more money per hour. So I did not take the benefits. I don't really care about them right now. I care more about the money."
4	"The fact that I made enough money to have a comfortable life and be comfortable was important to me. If they had frozen my salary eventually it would become a factor and I would probably leave."
7	"Money is important I would leave there (my employer) for more money. I do get a night differential and I make more per hour (in the hospital) than I would be if I worked at a clinic. It is hard to leave because the money is good."

Table 5 reflects the theme of work life balance which includes flexibility of work

hours and virtual office time at home. Work life balance is the balance between one's

work life and personal life (Deery, 2008). Six of the seven participants expressed a high

desire for a work life balance to enjoy their family, friends, and interests outside of the

workplace. Some expressed a strong conviction to leave an organization if too many

work hours were demanded. Work life balance and flexibility on the job is a major

theme in the literature found on Gen Y. Time with family is a top priority among

employees of this generation and work life balance is a key issue that employers will be

expected to accommodate (Smith, 2005).

Table 5

Work Life Balance

Participant	Significant Statement
1	"I like the flexibility of being able to come and go and everyday is different. I would not want to be stuck in a chair from 8 to 5 with an hour commute."
3	"(I quit my job because)…I wanted day shift, no weekends, that was totally screwing up my social life outside of work and seeing my family."
4	"I think one of the most important things is flexibility, because we are starting a family, having some flexibility where I don't need to be in the office from 8-5 every day…having a computer and phone and (I can) be just as productive, I think that is pretty important to me".
5	"I'm willing to give up financial compensation for work life balance. What was most important to me when I took the job was that I would not work nights, weekends, holidays, and that my job was located close to home."
6	"I wouldn't take a job solely focused on work. I wouldn't do it. I want time to be with my family. We have a dog. I like to come home and play with my dog and I like to ride my bike and stay healthy. I won't take a job that would not let me do those things. Hard to say now with this economy because you probably should take any job, but I wouldn't just take any job. I wouldn't do it."
7	"I like my job, but I don't like the hours. I would be happier in a clinic setting than a hospital setting, because I don't like the weekends, holidays, and nights. I cannot see my family as much as I would like. I will not do this forever."

Six of the seven participants commented on the importance of doing their job to

help others. They also want their employer to be morally responsible and hold a good

reputation in the community. Gen Y has a strong sense of morality. They want to make

a difference in the world by doing good work in an ethical organization while helping

others (Kupperschmidt, 2000). The message was clear that the participants would not

work in an environment that was corrupt or unethical. One participant said, "Someone

(an outside consultant) came into our clinic and wanted me to provide services to patients

when it was not needed just to add more revenue…I was shocked…and if that was

expected of me I would leave the company. At this point that is probably the only reason

I would leave, but I would leave." Table 6 reflects the theme of doing good work that

impacts others while working for a morally responsible employer.

Table 6

Doing Good Work

Participant	Significant Statement
1	"The real reason I took this job is because I like selling to pediatricians and allergists because I have allergies and asthma. When I sell something, I choose to sell something I can personally attest to and that I believe in or I won't do it."
2	"(My company) had a guy come in and he tried to get us to do some things that are unethical. I couldn't believe it. This guy said…tell people to change their fillings from silver to white. To change perfectly good filings so they could have white fillings…I would not do that ever. It was shocking."
3	"I really want to help people in their time of need. I would really like to work in a clinic with lower income population. Mostly women's health educating, giving exams, and teaching about STD's, pregnancy, all that kind of thing. I would like to make an impact on their lives."
4	"The corporate culture was strong…they went out of their way to show employees they cared and they cared about patients…they pretty much seemed to care about actually serving a greater purpose (of helping people)."
5	"When I can get to connect with patients (that gets me excited) when you meet someone that you can help, diagnose, treat, and make better. This is why anyone goes into medicine is to help people."
7	"I like working with premature babies not everyone likes it. A lot of times the parents do not come to see the babies, so I'm there for them. I pretty much bond with them. I have them for 17-20 weeks. I like that part of my job, a lot!"

Six of the seven participants expressed interest in continued learning while on the job. Learning for them included opportunities to advance, support for external education, mentoring, and technical training. Gen Y appreciates an employer who will further develop them with on the job training or pay for continuing education (Lowe et al., 2008). One of the participants expressed a high interest in learning all the new equipment on her job. This is one of the main reasons for remaining with her current employer.

Table 7

Learning Opportunities

Participant	Significant Statement
2	"My dream job would be oral surgery, but that takes six more years of school, which I would love to do. I would love to go back to school."
3	"If I get the hang of something and I'm doing it right. If I can move on to something else that is great. I like learning the new stuff and being able to show that I can do it."
4	"I like to have a career path where I know where I am going in the next five years to ten years and where I can learn on the job and have support and resources to help me get there."
5	"Every day I am learning something new and that is why I like my job, it keeps it interesting and challenging."
6	"I'm working for the two best lawyers in Wisconsin. Whether you know them or not they are two of the best and all they want to do is (mentor me) and pass their knowledge on to me. That is the best part of my job."
7	"I like the intensity of being in the ICU…always learning something new, trying new things and people are always saying the young people like to learn and are willing to try anything."

The next theme is interesting and challenging work. All seven participants have a need for their job to remain interesting and challenging. One of the participants

expressed how much she enjoyed the challenge of working on different problems, especially those she had never encountered. Gen Y considers new situations and problems just the right kind of challenge to keep them interested on the job (Hobart & Sendek, 2009). Table 8 reflects participant statements as it pertains to interesting and challenging work.

Table 8

Interesting and Challenging Work

Participant	Significant Statement
1	"I guess I would not be in sales if I did not like challenging work. I'm sure everybody's job has challenges but in sales you have specific timeframes to get things accomplished and if you do not you are not going to reap the benefits of what you have worked for…that is challenging and I really like the challenge, it motivates me to keep trying."
2	"Some people say how do you look at someone's mouth all day? I say I just do it, it is great…like little puzzles putting (them) back together if something is broke (is challenging)."
3	"I want to learn more about the population of people I work with in the clinic. They are low income from an area I am unfamiliar with, I find that interesting. I've always wanted to work with this population and help to teach them how to take care of themselves. It keeps me challenged."
4	"I feel like with some people their jobs, they go in and it is very repetitive and you go through the day and you come back and you go through another day, I would not like that. So for me it was nice to know on March 1st I would be done with one project and then I would be starting a different, maybe a more challenging project that kept it interesting and motivated me to want to continue."
5	"Another reason why I like the job is because I am busy and very challenged. Every day I see different patients, different problems. Every day I see things I've never heard about or seen before and (I have to) figure them out. It is very challenging. I love that about my job, I don't' think I could work somewhere where I did the same thing every day and nothing was different. I would not like that I like the challenge."
6	"So, the cool thing about law is everything factors (in) and the law is always changing, and you have statues that are always changing. Staying on top of all that is challenging."
7	"Technology is interesting. I'm on the research committee and we research a lot of feeding protocols and policy and all that kind of stuff. I like to change things rather than keep them all the same, that keeps (my job) interesting and challenging for me."

Six of the seven participants expressed frustration over issues which are out of

their control on the job. For some, the issues were so bothersome they could affect their

ability to stay on the job. The participants were highly frustrated with the issues

described in Table 9. They are looking for the support of their boss to resolve these

problems or to help them deal with the issue.

Table 9

Frustration of Uncontrollable Issues

Participant	Significant Statement
1	"Most frustrating in this job...the uncontrollable doing everything that you can...I know that my job is just as good as someone else ranked number one...but my market is not covered by the same health insurance plans. No matter how hard I work someone who is in a territory that has insurance that covers the drug will rank higher than me."
2	"Those first appointments with patients are tough when I tell them what they need to have done is going to cost money. They say I don't have the money. It is frustrating because I know they will come back to me with a toothache and it will cost them a lot more money at that point."
3	"What is most frustrating is disorganization. When equipment and computers are not working the way they are suppose to. If it is not working it makes it really hard to do my job."
4	"They have a dress policy that allowed people to walk around barefoot, with slippers or flip-flops. They really had no dress policy. That was frustrating to me there was no professionalism. I dressed up anyway I like to wear a polo shirt and nice pants. People would say, "Are you going to a meeting today? I couldn't believe it."
5	"I have a job that happens as it happens. I have no control over my schedule. I can't say I'm going to lunch at noon today...patients need you when they need you; you have no control of your day. I do not like that part of the job."
7	"Most frustrating is how vacations are scheduled. They are scheduled on seniority and they have hired only three people since I was hired. So I can never take summer time or a decent time off. There are nurses in their 60's, the turnover is not high. But what can I do? That is how it goes."

Summary

According to Moustakas (1994) the final step in the phenomenological research process is capturing the essence of the phenomenon through textural and structural descriptions. The analysis of the data collected for this study was intended to express the real work experience of the seven participants interviewed and capture the essence of the phenomenon. Through the process of analyzing the data from interview transcripts and open and selective coding; specific themes emerged. The seven themes were identified and described. Verbatim statements from participants are used to describe their lived experience using both textural and structural descriptions without bias.

This chapter captured themes which appear to be congruent with the literature reviewed. While the themes are similar, the experiences expressed are unique to the participants and may be considered different than what appears in the literature. Additional themes which were prominent in the literature did appear in this analysis, but were not important to the majority of participants. Those themes included receiving recognition for a job well done, autonomy, and the feeling of security. Chapter 5 will continue the discussion on the findings of the data analysis, make additional comparisons to the Gen Y literature reviewed, and make recommendations for future research on this topic

Chapter 5: Summary, Recommendations, and Conclusions

Summary

Today's workforce is diverse with age being one of the factors (Lowe et al., 2008). Gen Y employees continue to enter the workforce and are becoming an increasingly larger part of the workplace (Eisner, 2005). Leaders and managers need to develop an understanding of this generation to effectively motivate them to remain on the job (Smola & Sutton, 2002). Replacing an employee can cost up to 25% of the person's annual salary (Hobart & Sendek, 2009). The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to gain an understanding of the factors which contribute to retaining Gen Y in the workplace.

The research for this study provides specific information on the methods used to conduct the qualitative analysis and the steps followed to conduct the research. Chapter one provided an overview, defined the problem and need for the study, highlights on how the research would be conducted, and research limitations. Chapter two was a review of the current literature; chapter three described the detailed methodology used to conduct the research; and chapter four provided the findings of the research. This chapter will provide a summary, recommendations for this and future research, and conclusions.

Seven interviews with participants of the Gen Y cohort were conducted. The research questions can be found in chapter three. Seven universal themes emerged. Themes are described as the experiential structures that make up an experience and are a way of capturing meaning of a phenomenon (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998; Van Manen, 1990).

The themes do concur with much of the current literature on the topic. The seven themes are listed in no specific order:

1. Need for social interaction on the job

2. Money or compensation

3. Interesting and challenging work

4. Work life balance

5. Doing good work for a good company to better the community

6. Opportunities for learning and continued development

7. Frustrations over the *uncontrollable issues* on the job

Limitations of the Study

- The number of participants in the research was limited to seven participants. A larger sample may have discovered additional themes or differences.

- The questions used were created by the researcher based on the literature reviewed. Further validation of the questions may have produced a richer outcome of information on retaining Gen Y in the workplace.

- It is difficult to take the responses from seven interviews and generalize them into a universal message representing the Gen Y cohort. However, the interviews did validate many of the themes found in current literature.

- The current literature does not address how Gen Y is reacting to the current economic downturn. Jobs are not as plentiful in 2010 and their desires may need to be overlooked for a regular pay check.

Recommendations

The benefit of this research was that the findings mirrored what the literature states on Gen Y. The result will be an increased awareness and discussion among managers and business leaders on how to effectively retain Gen Y members in the workplace. The research provided motivational factors that are important to the participants in this study. Each of these recommendations may help employers keep their Gen Y employees on the job longer.

The following recommendations for employers may support and strengthen job retention.

1. Gen Y clearly wants to have flexibility and work life balance. Employers who understand this and make it a priority and part of the policy of their company will not only retain employees; they will attract employees (Baldonado & Spangenberg, 2009).

2. Gen Y workers want learning and development opportunities to strengthen and increase their skill set. This can be done by offering training on the job, learning opportunities outside of the work environment, and mentoring opportunities (Lowe et al., 2008; Zemke et al., 2000). A participant in this study was appreciative of a unique mentoring opportunity he was receiving. Mentoring was a definite retention factor.

3. Money was a priority for the majority of participants in this study. More focus on pay and less on a suite of benefits would attract the participants from this study to an employer. This could change over time as they mature, but currently they want more money in their paycheck. A company willing to discuss money, bonus

opportunities, and the ability to earn based on performance may be just the right

kind of motivator for this group.

4. Create a work environment that allows Gen Y employees to feel comfortable.

This will include promoting social interaction amongst employees in and out of

the workplace. Encourage and allow employees access to their cell phones. They

have become their communication tool of choice which keeps them connected to

family and friends and productive at the same time (Eisner & O'Grady-Harvey,

2009). The environment should include an opportunity for them to have a say in

the design of their job, opportunities to do good work that impacts their

community, and an informal way to voice their frustrations (Kim et al., 2009;

Yeaton, 2008).

There is no easy answer for employers. Employers are dealing with four different

generations and each has specific desires, needs, and motivators. Trying to find a

consensus of what an employer can offer on the job is limited to the resources they have

available. The first step an employer can take is to learn what motivates the youngest

generation in the workforce. There are many books, web sites, literature, and specific

training programs that address this generation and the issues that surround their entry into

the work force. An employer who takes the time to learn about Gen Y employees will

benefit with a happier more productive workforce (Baldonado & Spangenburg, 2009;

Lowe et al., 2008).

Future Research Recommendations. Continued research is recommended as

this generation ages and becomes more engrained in the workplace. It will be interesting

when Gen Y begins to author research on Gen Y. A different view may emerge. Much

of the current scholarly research has been done by Baby Boomers and Generation X authors.

Another factor to consider is most of the research was done prior to current economic times. Gen Y may have different needs and desires in light of this situation. Although the participants in this study did not show any differences in what motivates them to stay on the job. Participant motivators for this study concurred with much of the research reviewed.

Recommendations for future research could be done with Gen Y looking at gender. The research could answer the question, "Are there differences between male and female Gen Y employees and retention factors on the job?" Another question for future research could be, "Are there differences between Gen Y ethnic groups and retention factors on the job? Would one Gen Y group have different retention factors than another?" These topics should be of interest to managers and leaders. Limited research has been done specific to these differences and Gen Y.

Conclusion

Upon analyzing the themes it is clear the participants have distinct motivations for staying in their jobs. The themes are highly desired motivational factors for Gen Y employees. This cohort placed a priority on both hygiene and motivator factors (Herzberg, 1968). The motivator factors of interesting and challenging work, doing good work, learning opportunities, social interaction, and work life balance are important to the participants. Equally important is the hygiene factor of money.

Herzberg (1968) states, " removing a hygiene factor does not motivate employees more; the only thing which motivates employees is *more* motivator factors" (Herzberg, 1968, pp.113-114). In this research more of the motivator factors appeared to be important to the participant's satisfaction level on the job. To effectively manage Gen Y employees, leaders in organizations need to understand these factors (Baldonado & Spangenberg, 2009).

The hygiene factor of money was important to five of the seven participants. The participants wanted to earn as much as possible even if it meant giving up benefits or moving to a new employer. Benefits and other intangibles were not as important as money. While several expressed the importance of health insurance, they did not relate it to compensation. Compensation was totally driven by what they receive in their paycheck. The literature regarding Gen Y and money, salary, and compensation was mixed. Rawlings et al., (2008) found Gen Y to be less focused on money making ventures and more interested in making a difference in the world. Terjesen et al., (2007) and Wong et al., (2008) found Gen Y to have a strong need for external motivation to include bonuses, salary increases, gifts, and added benefits for their work. The participants from this research seem to agree with Terjesen et al., (2007) and Wong et al., (2008). They are interested in how much they earn; it is an important motivator. They would leave their job for more money and give up benefits for more money. Managers and leaders will need to creatively and fairly pay Gen Y workers so they do not become dissatisfied with the job.

The motivator factor especially important to the participants of this study is interesting and challenging work. This is desired by all participants. They expressed an

overall need to have jobs that challenged them with new and innovative technology and opportunities to advance and learn new skills. The challenge for managers and leaders is to continually provide the opportunities that fulfill these needs. The challenge for Gen Y employees will be to accept that work is not always interesting and challenging, every job has some mundane duties (Marston, 2007).

Gen Y wants a fun work culture, with casual dress days, employee recognition and rewards, and company-provided food and refreshment. In addition, their physical work space needs to be pleasant and inviting because of the amount of time spent on the job (Eisner, 2005; Lowe et al., 2008). A leader who is willing to engage Gen Y constructively and find ways to learn from them as well as leverage the differences is a benefit to everyone in the workplace (Smith, 2005). The profits of the twenty first century will go to businesses that can harness the unique traits and talents of Gen Y to their benefit and that of their company (Twenge & Campbell, 2008).

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APPENDIX A

MARQUETTE UNIVERSITY
AGREEMENT OF CONSENT FOR RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS
Retaining Generation Y in the Workplace
Rosemarie E Meagher
College of Professional Studies

You have been invited to participate in this research study. Before you agree to participate, it is important that you read and understand the following information. Participation is completely voluntary. Please ask questions about anything you do not understand before deciding whether or not to participate.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this research is to study members of Generation Y, born between years 1980-2000 to understand why employees of this cohort stay on the job. This study will attempt o answer the question of "How employers retain good talented employees of this cohort?" This information will be valuable to employers and specifically beneficial for the managers and leaders of these employees. You will be one of approximately seven participants in this research study.

PROCEDURES: I will be conducting an interview with you. I will ask you questions that pertain to this topic. You will be audio taped during the interview to ensure accuracy. For confidentiality purposes, your name will not be recorded. The tapes will later be transcribed. I will provide you with an opportunity to review the transcription of our audio taped interview. If the information is inaccurate contact me so that I can make changes to ensure correct information. I will hold the transcription of our interview on a USB drive in a locked drawer in my home office. The audio tape will be destroyed 3 years after the completion of this study

DURATION: Your participation will consist of this interview which should take about 45 minutes. Once this is complete, the only other time commitment will be for you to look over the transcribed interview and correct any inaccurate information which should take an hour to complete.

RISKS: The risks associated with participation in this study are minimal. The risks are no more than you might encounter in everyday life. There is a risk of your name being identified as a participant in this research. Every precaution will be taken to keep this information confidential.

BENEFITS: There are no specific benefits that you will experience as part of this research study. However, this research may be beneficial to employers to know and understand the factors that keep Generation Y employees on the job. This information could save organizations the high cost of replacing good talented employees.

CONFIDENTIALITY: All information you reveal in this study will be kept confidential. All your data will be assigned an arbitrary code number rather than using your name or other information that could identify you as an individual. When the results of the study are published, you will not be identified by name. Direct quotations may be used in publications, however, your name will not be associated with the quotation. The data will be destroyed by shredding paper

_____Initial

_____Date

APPENDIX A

documents and deleting electronic files 3 years after the completion of the study. I will keep an electronic copy of the transcribed interview on a USB drive kept in a locked file cabinet in my home office. There will be no identification on the USB drive that indicates the information on the drive. I will have a hard copy list of the names of participants from this research study. This list will contain your name and you will be assigned a number, such as Participant #1, Participant #2, etc. Your research records may be inspected by the Marquette University Institutional Review Board or its designees, and (as allowable by law) state and federal agencies.

VOLUNTARY NATURE OF PARTICIPATION: Participating in this study is completely voluntary and you may withdraw from the study and stop participating at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You can withdraw from the study any time. If you withdraw any data collected will be destroyed.

CONTACT INFORMATION: If you have any questions about this research project, you can contact Rosemarie Meagher at 262-844-0099 or rosemarie.meagher@mu.edu. If you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, you can contact Marquette University's Office of Research Compliance at (414) 288-7570.

I HAVE HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO READ THIS CONSENT FORM, ASK QUESTIONS ABOUT THE RESEARCH PROJECT AND AM PREPARED TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS PROJECT.

_____   _____
Participant's Signature   Date

_____
Participant's Name

_____   _____
Researcher's Signature   Date

Marquette University

This is to certify that we have examined this copy of the thesis by

Rosemarie E. Meagher

and have found that it is complete and satisfactory in all respects

The thesis has been approved by:

_____

Dr. Eileen Sherman
Professional Project Adviser, College of Professional Studies

_____

Dr. Jay Caulfield
Associate Dean, College of Professional Studies

Approved on

_____