Comparative empirical analysis of motivational differences of various generational cohorts in the Irish workplace.

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of Dublin Business School for the degree of M.B.A. in Human Resource Management

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May 2014
Declaration:

I Katarzyna Raganowicz - Gargasz declare that all the work in this dissertation is entirely my own unless the words have been placed in inverted commas and referenced with the original source.
Furthermore, texts cited are referenced and placed in the reference section. A full reference section is included within this thesis.

__________________________

20\textsuperscript{th} of May 2014
To my family.

Especially to my parents whose willing sacrifice and ongoing support made it all possible, for which I am forever grateful.
“An idea is always a generalization, and generalization is a property of thinking. To generalize means to think” – Georg Wilhelm Hegel.

“All generalizations are false, including this one” – Mark Twain.

Abstract

Building on previous research on inter-generational differences, this study seeks to examine whether differences in motivational factors truly exist in the Irish workplace across various generations. Using the data gathered through Motivational Factors Questionnaire as measures of motivational drivers, the study examined cross-sectional differences in three groups of working population in Ireland: Baby Boomers, Generation X and Generation Y. Results are not entirely supportive of generational stereotypes that have been present in the popular and management literature and media. This analysis found some radical differences between various drivers of different generations, however, these might be attributed to the age rather than generational difference overall. Even though, statistically differences were quite significant, in practice they might not pose such difficulty in overall management approach. Furthermore, analysis of current literature available on the subject has revealed some discrepancies and showed that present research did not have the same results on some occasions. In order to get a better understanding of the profiles and factors that motivate Baby Boomers, Generation X and Generation Y, all three age groups were tested against five motivational drivers: compensation, free-time, advancement potential, work environment and more responsibilities. Differences found, although statistically significant, are not considerably impactful on the workplace and may be because of the various life stages presented by the age group. However, it does not remove the fact that each age group does think differently because of the specific environment one was growing up in and various situations it was exposed to in their life-time. It may mean that although they are different as people, in the work setting they will be similar. Present analysis has many limitations and further research in the field is recommended. Overall, organizations need to foster the environment for respect and mindfulness to create the bridge linking all age groups to build and maintain a productive workforce.

Key words: Generation, Motivation, Generation X, Generation Y, Baby Boomers, Human Resource.

Word count:

Thesis - 19,866.

Reflection on learning and development - 1,728
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Chapter 1
Introduction

Generational diversity has been a topic of much discussion, exploration, and debate among organisational scholars and researchers (Mhatre & Conger, 2011). Many studies have been undertaken in order to understand and make sense of differences between different generations which cannot be ignored. It is not a current concept, many generations have been working together in the past, but today we are able to see and study the differences between them. In today’s work and social organizations, it is quite common to find individuals who were born during different times, circumstances, and situations (Erickson, 2009).

Most commonly there have three generations currently present in the workplace: Generation Baby Boomers, Generation X and most currently Generation Y, also known as Millennials. As these various generations work side-by-side in the workplace, organizational behavior has changed to adapt to each generation. Managers are dealing with the generations that have a unique work ethic when compared with each other (Kaifi, Nafei, Khabfar & Kaifi, 2012). What’s more exciting is that, “organizations and researches are now beginning to address issues related to generational differences that might have significant impact on leadership and success of an organization” (Salahuddin, 2010, p.1). With such understanding it becomes imperative to research and study generational differences in any workplace.

Personality of an individual is formed by the events experienced at their growth stage. Therefore it is common that the communication style, values and expectations of the work cohorts will differ between generations (Glass, 2007). These differences showed the need for variety of needs and demands, which shaped organizational behavior and reward systems.

In today’s demanding and ever changing environment, organizations are realizing the importance of satisfied and well educated workforce. Human resources became one of the key strategic functions in organizations, where key employee retention is an important factor. Therefore, organizations must study and apply different motivational techniques tailored to needs of each generation in order to retain and attract best talent available.
**Background of the topic**

Crumpacker & Crumparker (2007) highlighted that today’s workforce comprises of various age groups, ranging from twenties to sixties. Because of that diversity, understanding of such varied workforce has become a priority for organisations in order to understand the challenges and opportunities created (Crumpacker & Crumpacker, 2007). The success of any organization largely depends on its employees. Taylor 111 et al., (2006), points out that employee satisfaction is a closely related predictor of turnover, together with major categories of predictor variables, “one emphasizing job attitudes of satisfaction is perceived alternatives and job search behavior” (Mitchell et al., 2001).

Bhatnagar (2008) explains that it is important for organizations to take an active role in identifying and cultivating their own people who have the capabilities and potential to become an effective leaders and “the most powerful talent management practices respond to an organization’s unique business and human capital context” (Franks et al., 2004).

Employees job satisfaction promises to maintain low employee turnover therefore it is very important for the leaders of the organisations to address the subject and develop suitable motivational techniques.

This study will analyze three generations: Baby Boomers, Generation Y and Generation X and enquire for motivational differences and for levels of importance of these motivational factors, in an effort to determine which motivational factors are valued the most by each generation.

Knowledge of various importance levels assigned to each factor will allow for alteration of managerial techniques used to motivate employees in today’s Irish work environment making them more effective to all three generations.

Many Irish organizations are exposed to troublesome economy and human resources have become a major strategic component in keeping them afloat. Therefore right motivational techniques, based on needs of each generation, will help to minimize staff turnover and help to retain best talent.

Gunnigle, Heraty & Morley (2011, p.137) explain that if motivational needs are met and satisfied, employees will be encouraged to work at high-performance levels. High-performance levels are what can bring competitive advantage to an organization; it is the one factor that can make a difference between long-term success and a short-term victory or even failure.
Background of the researcher

The researcher is a graduate in Business Management with specialization in Human Resource Management and currently completing her Master’s degree in Business and Administration with specialization in Human Resources.

During her professional career, the researcher noticed that various groups of employees act and react differently to various managerial and motivational techniques posed by their peers. Researcher herself belongs to generation Y and was trying to understand the way her managers, who belong to generation X, think, and noted reaction to same practice would differ between herself and her managers. Whilst completing her MBA, researcher explored various differences between generations in the workplace in detail. That knowledge brought an understanding to the topic and desire to make her own research on Irish population.

Researcher decided to present her findings in the form of dissertation. Overall, it can be observed that researcher is very much interested in the topic, is qualified and psychologically prepared for conducting a research on the chosen topic.
Learning style

Kolb’s theory suggests learning is a circular process, whereby experience is followed by attempts to make sense of that experience through reflection and conceptualisation, followed by experimentation with the thoughts so developed, followed by further experience, reflection, and so on, as shown in fig. 1.

Moreover, Honey and Mumford (1986) said that all individuals prefer to learn in different ways and those special ways of learning are largely related to Kolb’s four phases. Learning style assessment survey of Honey and Mumford (1986), cited in Cameron (2008), suggest the researcher is an ‘Activist’.

Activists engage themselves completely and without bias in new experiences. They enjoy the here and now, and are happy to be dominated by instant experiences. They tend to be open-minded, not skeptical, and this tends to make them excited about anything new. Their way of life is: "I'll try anything once". They tend to take action first and consider the consequences afterwards. Their days are usually filled with activity. Activists enjoy tackling problems by brainstorming and as soon as the excitement from one activity has dies down they are keen to find another one. They tend to flourish having the challenge of new experiences but are bored with long term consolidation and implementation. Honey, P. & Mumford, A. (1982)
Research question

Saunders et al., (2009) explain that primary success factor of any research is based on a clear set of conclusions drawn from the data collected. They stated that the clarity, relevance and the accuracy of the research question is a determinant of success (Saunders et al., 2009).

“It is often a useful starting point in the writing of research questions to begin with one general focus research question that flows from your research idea. This may lead to several more detailed questions or the definition of research objectives” (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 33).

Furthermore, Clough & Nutbrown (2002) compare the research question design process to the Russian doll principle: it means starting from one general question and refine it until the essence and the heart of the question can be articulated (Clough & Nutbrown, 2002, cited in Saunders et al., 2009).

The primary question for this research is:

*How do Baby Boomers, Generation X and Generation Y differ in responding to the five motivational factors of compensation, work environment, advancement potential, responsibilities and free time? What importance do all three generations place on these factors?*

Research objectives

Saunders et al., (2009) defines “research objectives as clear, specific statements that identify what the researcher wishes to accomplish as a result of doing the research”. Objectives are more suited to the research community as an evidence and proof of understanding of the researcher’s clear sense of purpose and direction (Saunders et al., 2009).

The following objectives have been identified in this research exercise:

- To analyze the key differences between motivational drivers of Baby Boomers, Generation X and Generation Y,
- To examine the key differences between the ratings of importance factors by each generation,
- To create a comprehensive comparison of motivational and importance factors between each generation.
**Research Hypothesis**

Hypotheses are testable propositions about the connection between two or more variables in a specified population. The hypothesis translates the problem and purpose of the research into a clear explanation or prediction of the expected results or outcomes of the study (Saunders *et al.*, 2009).

Based on the research question and the research objectives the following research hypothesis has been put forward, with the aim of being validated by this research.

*There are key differences in the motivational drivers and importance factors between Baby Boomers, Generation X and Generation Y in the Irish workforce.*

**Responsibilities** - meaning bigger work obligation and decision making power.

**Compensation** - total compensation offered by employer including salary, pension, health plan etc.

**Work environment** - meaning job location, people working in the location and physical work environment.

**Advancement potential** - opportunity to progress in the current role and the whole organisation

**Free time** – amount of free time from work (holidays, flexible hours and special occasions)

**Thesis disposition**

The disposition of this dissertation is given in the following manner:

*Chapter 1. Introduction:* Focuses on the background of the subject and of the researcher; formulation of the research objectives, research questions and hypothesis of the research.

*Chapter 2. Literature Review:* Focuses on a comprehensive overview of the generational characteristics; defines generation gap and motivation; analyzes previous studies and findings on the topic.

*Chapter 3. Research Methodology:* Describes the research design, philosophy, strategy, time horizon, data collection method and appropriate use of primary research method – quantitative (questionnaire) for exploratory research.
Chapter 4. Data analysis and findings: Chapter focuses on analysis of the data collected and reports on findings. Findings will showcase main discoveries and draw a comparison between the information gathered from the primary research with the existing theories, concepts and studies.

Chapter 5. Conclusions and Recommendations: Discusses and draws up conclusions on findings and a link with the formulated hypothesis; description of limitation of the research and recommendations for future studies.

Chapter 6. Self Reflection on Own Learning and Performance: Outlines the researcher’s learning experience throughout the process of the dissertation study and explains the major skills the researcher gained during completion of this research.

Recipients of the research

1. Dublin Business School - where the researcher is a full-time student.
2. Liverpool John Moores University - the awarding body.
3. Claire Devlin - the researcher’s supervisor.
Chapter 2

Literature review

Foreword

There has been a lot of activity in the popular press about the big clash between Generations. For example, BusinessWeek has posted stories such as “The reasons why Gen X are unhappy at work,” which suggest that Baby Boomer managers do not recognize what motivates their Gen X employees (Erickson, 2005). Fortune magazine has explored the subject of how Gen X feel when they cannot get ahead because of the “grey ceiling” created by Baby Boomers who do not plan to retire anytime soon (Fisher & Bonamici, 2006). Time magazine has gone further and featured a cover story about Gen X with the tagline “they just won’t grow up” (Grossman, L., 2005) while also demonstrating that the generation gap is not just a western incident with its story on “China’s me generation” (Simon, 2007). Similar generalizations on how the generation gap between Baby Boomers and Gen X have caused conflict in the workplace have been highlighted by the Society for Human Resource Management (2004), news channels such as ABC (Johnson, 2007), and numerous popular literature books such as When Generations Collide (Lancaster & Stillman, 2002), Boomers, Xers and Other Strangers (Hicks & Hicks, 1999), and Motivating the “What’s In It For Me” Workforce (Marston, 2007).

Callanan & Greenhaus’ (2008) highlighted that studying generational differences is critical because of the potential implications it may have on the organizational human resource planning. Studies that observe a single Generation, contribute vastly to the knowledge base in general by providing detailed insights into that particular group and present a rich foundation for future research on the matter (Broadbridge et al., 2007; Feyerherm & Vick, 2005; McDonald & Hite, 2008; Terjesen et al., 2007). However this thesis will analyse and test all three Generations present in the workplace today.

In recent years generational differences have been studies in a context of the organisations. Literature appears to confirm that generational differences indeed exist in a workplace, however very little research attention has been given to verify various work attitudes which shape organisational behaviour, thus have major impact on organisational performance overall.
Current study therefore seeks to examine the degree to which five given motivational factors have an impact on Irish employees today.

Complexity of increasing workforce diversity is becoming a major advantage to the workplace but it is also challenging the traditional view on unified motivational practices at the workplace.

Employees of different age groups, ranging from twenties to sixties (Crumpacker & Crumpacker, 2007), are working together, and never before there were so many differences between generations. It is very important for any organization to understand, manage and address the challenges and opportunities created by such diversity (Macon & Artley, 2009).

How organizations will deal with those challenges will decide about their ability to attract, motivate, develop and retain valuable employees. “Organizations that are able to manage these challenges will be able to ensure they have a workforce that is efficient, competitive, and sustainable.” (Macon & Artley, 2009).

2.1. Definitions

To get a full understanding of Generational work based motivations and attitudes, two key ideas need to be addressed:

a) Working definition of each generation in question,

b) An understanding of previous generations’ motivations and attitudes.

2.1.1. Generation

Several prevalent definitions of “generation” exist. Kupperschmidt (2000) defines generation as an identifiable group, or cohort, which shares birth years, age, location, and significant life events at critical development stages (Barford & Hester, 2011). Palese, Pantali, & Saiani (2006) categorize generations as those born within the same historical timeframe and culture (Barford & Hester, 2011). Crumpacker & Crumpacker (2007) add that birth rate, along with historical events, defines each generation. These groups develop a unique pattern of behaviours based on these common experiences (Kupperschmidt, 2000; Barford & Hester, 2011).
When the birth rate rises and remains stable, that indicates the beginning of the new generation. When the birth rate of a newly formed generation begins to decline, that marks the end of a generation (Crumpacker & Crumpacker, 2007). Each generation has its own set of significant life events. Each generation shares the same experiences, or is aware of them, as they advance and develop through different stages of life – although not every person in a generation personally experiences these defining events (Crumpacker & Crumpacker, 2007). Thoughtful caution is given to the stereotyping individuals based on generational values and characteristics (Weingarten, 2009).

2.1.2. Generation Gap

A “generation gap” is a term which describes failure of one generation group to communicate well with another. In most of the parent-child relationships, although admittedly not all, communication tends to improve noticeably when teenagers grow into adults and both parties discover common levels for their everyday communication. Some generational differences may remain but in most cases, these dissimilarities do not continue to damage the ongoing relationship. This process is to some extent mirrored in the workplace.

This assumption is based on the notion that the basic differences are present in the idea of work values and beliefs of employees of different generations. Failure to recognise and act upon these differences can lead to conflict in the workplace, misunderstanding and miscommunication, lower productivity, poor employee wellbeing and reduced citizenship behaviour (Jurkiewicz, 2000; Smola & Suton, 2002 and Yu & Miller 2003). Brown, 1976; Barrick, Stewart & Piotrowski, 2002; Tett & Burnett, 2003 and Dash & Pandey, 2009 argue that each generation has distinct attitudes, behaviours, expectations, habits and motivational buttons. Therefore, learning how to communicate with different generations can eliminate many major confrontations and misunderstandings in the workplace and in the world of business.
2.2. Baby boomers – characteristics

The oldest of the current working generations, referred to as the Baby Boomers, were born between the years 1946 and 1964 (Egri & Ralston, 2004; Smola & Sutton, 2002; Westerman & Yamamura, 2007; Dries, Pepermans, & DeKerpel, 2008; Crumpacker & Crumpacker, 2007). Their fathers were the breadwinners and their mothers were housewives. Baby Boomers experienced major life events that shaped their values, including the social revolution of the 1960s, President John F. Kennedy/Martin Luther King Jr./Senator Robert F. Kennedy assassinations, the women’s movement, U.S. landing on the moon, the substantial role of television within society, the Vietnam War and high inflation of the 1980s (Dries et al., 2008; Crumpacker & Crumpacker, 2007; Weingarten, 2009). Towards the end of their teens, they were confronted with the Watergate Scandal and Nixon’s resignation which led them to become suspicious of authority and idealistic about their role in the future world. In addition, Boomers grew up for competing between each other and from early age understood the value of hard work and what it takes to stand out. They are willing to make sacrifices for their careers, believe that one should be devoted to the organisation and that “values” are related to work hours, promotion, size of the office and free parking (Kupperschmidt, 2000).

Baby Boomers are thought to be team oriented, optimistic (Hess & Jepsen, 2009), and expecting the best from life (Smola & Sutton, 2002). Prior to the 1980s, this age group knew of prosperity and fortunate outcomes (Kupperschmidt, 2000) being in the centre of their parents’ world (Crumpacker & Crumpacker, 2007), similar to the prosperity that Generation Y is being accustomed to (Shih & Allen, 2007). During the recession in the 1980s, businesses downsized and reorganized, which suggested to the Baby Boomers that a lifetime career with one organization might not be a certainty (Mirvis & Hall, 1994). Because of this, Baby Boomers were characterized as free agents in the workplace (Kupperschmidt, 2000), described by Crumpacker & Crumpacker (2007) as highly competitive micromanagers, irritated by lazy employees, with a positive demeanour towards professional growth. Because of their emphasis on hard work and achievement, they value loyalty and dedication to the workplace. On the other hand, however, they find it hard to balance their private lives and their work obligations.
2.3. **Generation X – characteristics**

Generation X was born between the years 1965 and 1979 (Egri & Ralston, 2004; Smola & Sutton, 2002; Crumpacker & Crumpacker, 2007).

For this generation, the life events that had a profound impact were the Iranian hostage crisis, Iran Contrascandal, introduction of HIV/AIDS as a pandemic, oral contraceptive pills, the 1973 oil crisis, the impeachment of President Richard M. Nixon, introduction of computers and the Internet, and the Cold War (Dries *et al*., 2008; Crumpacker & Crumpacker, 2007; Weingarten, 2009). Generation X matured with technology (Cennamo & Gardner, 2008). This generation grew up with both parents in the workforce becoming independent at a young age (Crumpacker & Crumpacker, 2007; Weingarten, 2009). Smola & Sutton (2002) describe this generation as experiencing social insecurity, rapidly changing surroundings, and a lack of solid traditions (Barford & Hester, 2011). Neil (2010) notes that this generation was first to be exposed to the mass media and technology breakthroughs. He claims that as both parents were working, producing the concept of so called “latchkey kids”, in result Generation X is self confident, independent and dislikes supervision. Nevertheless, they have accepted to provide immediate feedback. At work they seem to look for self-satisfaction and are capable of working in multinational environment, having practical approach to problem solving and achieving results.

Generation X carried the trend of distancing themselves from companies just as the Baby Boomers did (Dries *et al*., 2008), making them distrustful of organizations (Westerman & Yamamura, 2007). This is because they have embarked the labour market when the economy was at a very low point, and grew up observing parents who suffered job loss or experienced occupational insecurity. Those experiences have dramatically shaped generations’ X attitude towards work redefining the concept of “work loyalty”. Instead of being loyal to their jobs they are loyal to their colleagues and people they work with and for, taking career seriously but not committed to one organisation. The commonly-held observation in the management literature is that the idea of ‘hard work pays dividends’ does not apply to Generation X because they lacked devotion to their organisations due to the fact that they saw their parents being let go despite years of loyalty to their job (Adams, 2000; Huntley, 2006). This view has been supported by Twenge, *et al.*, (2004). Hornblower (1997) posited that majority of Generation X employees trust that progress can be achieved through hard work. Generation X entered the workplace facing competition with the Baby Boomers for jobs during the 1980s’ recession, which in result made many of these individuals distrustful towards the older generation (Crumpacker & Crumpacker, 2007).
2.4. **Gen Y – characteristics**

The newest generation called Generation Y or Millennials was born between the years 1980 and 2000 (Weingarten, 2009; Cennamo & Gardner, 2008; Sayers, 2007). Although authors differ as to when Generation Y either begins or ends (Smola & Sutton, 2002; Kupperschmidt, 2000; Hess & Jepsen, 2009; Westerman & Yamamura, 2006; Crumpacker & Crumpacker, 2007; Broadbridge, Maxwell, & Ogden, 2007; Sayers, 2007), common literature agrees on Generation Y beginning in 1980 (Smola & Sutton, 2002; Weingarten, 2009; Crumpacker & Crumpacker, 2007; Essinger, 2006) and ending in 2000 (Clark, 2007). Other terms related with Generation Y are “Net Generation” (Shaw & Fairhurst, 2008), and “Generation Next” (Loughlin & Barling, 2001; Zemke, Raines, & Filipczak, 2000; Martin, 2005). The significant events that Generation Y experienced were the fall of the Berlin Wall, the introduction of music television (MTV) into society, Columbine High School shootings, 9/11 terrorist attacks, more frequent natural disasters, and the obesity epidemic (Dries et al., 2008; Crumpacker & Crumpacker, 2007). Sujansky (2002) writes that this generation has seen more important life-changing events early on than preceding cohorts. Possibly the most significant dissimilarity this generation possesses over previous ones is the assimilation of technology into their daily lives and the omnipresence of how technology has always been in their world (Oblinger, 2003; Martin, 2005; Weingarten, 2009). Martin (2005) describes Millennials as independent, confident, and self-reliant. This may be due to the extensive protection and praise given to them throughout their formative years (Crumpacker & Crumpacker, 2007; Barford & Hester, 2011).

In business and every-day work life, Generation Y exhibits the tendency for working in teams while being collaborative, results-oriented individuals, and enjoying working under pressure (Shih & Allen, 2007). Unfortunately, Generation Y followed their two previous generations and has detached itself away from organizations (Dries et al., 2008), realising that lifetime employment at an organisation is very unlikely. Generation Y prefers to change jobs often during their working career (Morton, 2002; Kim, Knight, & Crutsinger, 2009), especially if their talents are not utilised to the satisfactory level (Kim et al., 2009; Weingarten, 2009). Generation Y expects lifelong learning (Alch, 2000), anticipate on-the-job training (Morton, 2002) to stay marketable (Sayers, 2007; Holden & Harte, 2004; King, 2003), and eagerly plan their own careers and professional development (Westerman & Yamamura, 2007; Kim et al., 2009; Zemke et al., 2000). Millennials seek work/life balance (Crumpacker & Crumpacker, 2007; Zemke et al., 2000) to achieve professional fulfilment and personal freedom (Sayers, 2007). Generation Y is almost mechanical at multitasking with technology as if it’s an addition to their being (Freifield, 2007; Kofman &
Eckler, 2005; Rowh, 2007; Loughlin & Barling, 2001), and may change a job task considerably to create a more interesting outcome (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). They usually seek clear directions and management assistance for tasks, looking for passionate leaders, rather than “managers”, and all while expecting freedom to get the job done (Martin, 2005) via empowerment (Morton, 2002). However, this group despises micromanagement, becomes irritated with laziness, and dislikes slowness, especially in technology (Weingarten, 2009). To some, Generation Y’s work values and attributes will give impression of being high maintenance (Hira, 2007). Twenge, Zhang, & Im (2004) describe Millenials as having a “high external locus of control,” which further exemplifies their confidence inside and outside of the workplace. However, Crumpacker & Crumpacker (2007) note the need for constant approval highlights Generation Y’s emotionally needy personality.

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<td>Means to self-fulfillment&lt;sup&gt;k&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<td>Meaningful and purposeful work&lt;sup&gt;k&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Fact of life&lt;sup&gt;l&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Intense users of high technology&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<td>Self-fulfillment&lt;sup&gt;k&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<td>Thrive on challenging work&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<td>Expect consensus&lt;sup&gt;k&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Value less on corporate loyalty&lt;sup&gt;l&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<td>Expect participation&lt;sup&gt;k&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Learning opportunity to enhance marketability&lt;sup&gt;l&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Skeptical of corporate loyalty&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<td>View rewards and recognition in terms of deserving&lt;sup&gt;k&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Flexibility&lt;sup&gt;k&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Want to make impact immediately&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<td>Meaningful and purposeful work&lt;sup&gt;k&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Freedom&lt;sup&gt;k&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<td>Self-fulfillment&lt;sup&gt;k&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Competence&lt;sup&gt;k&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Expect rapid promotion and development&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<td>Shared leadership and involvement&lt;sup&gt;k&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<td>Balance work with fun&lt;sup&gt;k&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>High expectations of employers&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<td>Expect casual, friendly work relationships&lt;sup&gt;k&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Question authority&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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Sources: *Adams (2000); ¹Armour (2005); ²Kupperschmidt (2000); ³Martin (2005)

Figure 2 Comparison of three generations’ characteristics and views of work.
2.5. Theoretical background of motivation

2.5.1. Motivation - definitions

The relationship between people and their work has been a subject of research for psychologists and other behavioral scientists for few generations. Since human resources are considered as the primary source of value, growth, and sustained competitive advantage, the Human Resource field has been strongly interested in knowing what factors are responsible for stimulating employees’ ability to work. (Kouloubandi, Jofreh & Mahdavi, 2012)

Undoubtedly, motivation is one of the main factors influencing work performance. (Viorel, 2009) Cogin (2012) suggests that organizations that do not understand the similarities and differences between various generations could expose themselves to loss of valuable employees by not knowing how to motivate and inspire their employees. But what does motivation really stand for?

Contemporary research on human motivation lays out three dimensional concepts of motivation:

- Motivation is inferred from a systematic analysis of how personal, task and environmental characteristics influence behaviour and job performance.
- Motivation is not a fixed trait. It refers to a dynamic internal state resulting from the influence of personal and situational factors. As such, motivation may change with changes in personal, social or other factors.
- Motivation affects behaviour, rather than performance (Nicholson, 1995). Initiatives designed to enhance job performance by increasing employee motivation may not be successful if there is a weak link between job performance and an employee’s efforts.

Adair (2006) states that the motivation of a person symbolizes all the reasons because of which they choose to act in a certain manner. Armstrong (2006, p.252) argues that “motive is a reason for doing something. Motivation is concerned with factors that influence people to behave in certain ways”. The Society for Human Resource Management (2010, p.1) describes motivation as the psychological forces that decide on the direction of a person’s level of effort, as well as a one's persistence when faced with obstacles.
The way a person is going to behave refers to the many possible actions that one could engage in, while persistence is an attitude which determines when faced with obstacles, an individual will keep trying or would give up. In a light of people being motivated by many different things, studies reveal employees can be motivated in different ways. These consist of but are not restricted to pay, rewards and other intrinsic and extrinsic factors (Beardwell & Claydon, 2007). By elaborating and fulfilling employee’ motivation, Human Resource field can develop motivational strategies that help organizations to achieve their goals. If various skills are required for completion of different work and tasks, different employees require different approach in motivational factors (Kouloubandi, Jofreh & Mahdavi, 2012).

Understanding of work motivation in this light “draws attention to the fact that it will probably vary from individual to individual and over time”(Beardwell & Claydon, 2007, p. 491). Moreover, because it is based on ever-changing individual needs and motives, as well as interaction with the environment, this dynamic process is dependent on ongoing reconfiguration (Kouloubandi, Jofreh & Mahdavi, 2012).

The different views on work-life among employees and the call for an increase in productivity and efficiency in the work environment has led to growing academic awareness about the area of motivation. In today’s competitive economic climate, where companies are faced with major global challenges and seek a competitive edge, employee motivation is the key for talent retention and performance (Favero & Health, 2012).

The Society for Human Resource Management (2010, p. 2) affirms that “no matter the economic environment, the goal is to create a workplace that is engaging and motivating, where employees want to stay, grow and contribute their knowledge, experience and expertise”.

2.5.2. What motivates employees?

Exploration of the attitudes that employees hold concerning factors that motivate them to work is vital to creating a setting that fosters and encourages employee motivation. Past studies focusing on topic of motivation have discovered what employees say motivates them to perform better at work. These studies date back to the 1940s and tried to determine “Why do workers work?” Once company knows what drives their employees to work, it is in a better position to stimulate and encourage them to perform well (Kovach, 1987, p. 58).
In most cases, employee performance is determined by three key areas:

- Their ability to perform required task;
- Their work environment; and
- Their motivation (Griffin, 1990, p. 437).

When faced with employee’s lack of ability, appropriate training can be applied. If work environment is causing a crisis, simple altering to the surroundings will promote higher performance. However, when faced with lack of motivation, the solution will be more complex and more challenging.

In order to gain information about motivational drivers, it is always best to seek information from the employee. Employees should be asked on a regular basis what drives them and helps them to sustain their desire to work. Their responses may lead to job redesign, increase in pay, change the working environment, or give more recognition for work done. Nevertheless, managers should avoid the assumption that what motivates them as managers, would apply and motivate their employees as well (Wessler, 1984, p. 29).

2.6. Review of existing studies

A review of the existing literature related to this study reveals that while some studies have examined differences in work values across generations (Smola & Sutton, 2002; Yu & Miller, 2003), the studies on generational differences in character and motivational drivers in the workplace are insufficient.

Some organizational scholars have suggested that there are key differences in the characteristics, values, attitudes, and behaviors between the generations of Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Generation Y present in the workplace today (Appelbaum, Serena, & Shapiro, 2004; Smola & Sutton, 2002). They have argued that organizations must identify these differences (Egri & Ralston, 2004; Jurkiewicz & Brown, 1998; Kupperschmidt, 2000; Yang & Guy, 2006) and advised that failure to do so will damage communication with employees and have an impact lowering levels of employee engagement and loyalty (Lancaster & Stillman, 2002; Zemke, Raines, & Filipczak, 2000).
In an attempt to help organizations to avoid the clear negative impact of generational differences, researchers have illustrated generational differences in various work-related factors such as work values (Smola & Sutton, 2002), job satisfaction (Kowske, Rasch, & Wiley, 2010), organizational commitment (Trimble, 2006), development and learning (Gentry, Griggs, Deal, & Mondore, 2009), attitudes toward change (Deal, 2004), leadership (Sessa, Deal, Kabacoff, & Brown, 2007), personality (Wong, Gardiner, Lang, & Coulon, 2008), and attitudes toward leisure (Twenge, Campbell, Hoffman, & Lance, 2010).

So far, research suggests limited attention has been paid to generational differences in motivation for work (e.g., Cennamo & Gardner, 2008; Jurkiewicz, 2000), even though members of younger generations such as Generation Y are often described as lacking motivation (Hira, 2007; Myers & Sadaghiani, 2010).

One of the most recent studies found a link in age-related differences in motivation (Kooij, De Lange, Jansen, Kanfer, & Differs, 2011) but focussed on a life span rather than a generational explanation instead. This lack of attention to generational differences in work motivation is mostly surprising when importance of such motivation has a profound effect on employee performance (e.g., Gagné & Deci, 2005; Kanfer, Chen, & Pritchard, 2008; Locke & Latham, 2004).

This study aims to address these issues by examining whether there are generational differences in work motivation by testing for generational differences in response to five motivational factors.

Review of the available literature suggests a very few studies inspected the differences in personality traits and motivational drivers across generations (Twenge, 2000 & 2004). These studies have focused on broad differences rather than exploring implications on the workplace. The importance of understanding personality differences across generations in the workplace and how individual differences in personality traits affect job performance are highlighted in the studies of Barrick, Stewart & Piotrowski (2002) and Tett & Burnett (2003) and job satisfaction in the study of Avery, Bouchard, Segal & Abraham (1989). (Dash M. K., Panda A.K., 2010)

These studies imply that in order to maintain a high-performing and satisfied employee base organisations need to understand the key generational differences across the personality preferences.
Scholars and their past research have suggested that each generation’s unique experiences during the time of development lead to similarities in the characteristics, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors of its members and ultimately create differences among the generations (Jurkiewicz & Brown, 1998; Kupperschmidt, 2000; Mannheim, 1972; Smola & Sutton, 2002; Strauss & Howe, 1991; Thau & Heflin, 1997). These dissimilarities between the generations are presumed to include variations in work attitudes and behavior (Strauss & Howe, 1991).

Various studies have reported substantial intergenerational differences in attitudes and values related to motivation between Generation X, Generation Y and Baby Boomers. For example, research by Smola & Sutton (2002) found that Baby Boomers think of work as being more central to their life than do Generation X. Greenhaus, Callanan, & Godshalk (2000) suggests that Generation X tend to be less focused on occupational status than Baby Boomers. On the contrary Cennamo and Gardner (2008) established that Generation X expressed higher levels of status-oriented values than did Baby Boomers. Beutell & Wittig-Berman (2008) found that Boomers have higher life and job satisfaction, whereas Generation X showed to have higher marital satisfaction. At the same time, other studies have exposed large similarities amongst the generations. Kowske et al., (2010) collected data for 30 years in order to compare each generation’s responses at the same age and found that Baby Boomers, Generation X and Generation Y were not significantly different in their levels of job satisfaction or their intention to turnover. Within the information technology industry, Davis, Pawlowski, & Houston, (2006) research implies Generation X and Baby Boomers are similar in their thoughts on work involvement, work attachment, commitment to the organization, and commitment to the profession. Gentry et al., (2009) found that Baby Boomers and Generation X were very similar in their expectations and desires for development. Furthermore, Gentry, Griggs, Deal, Mondore, and Cox (2011) established that Baby Boomer and Generation X managers have more similarities than differences in the leadership competencies they believed are necessary to succeed in their organizations. Similarly, Deal (2007) found that Baby Boomers and Generation X were substantially similar in their work attitudes, expectations of leadership, and desire for learning. None of these studies addressed the issue of generational differences in motivation towards set motivational factors.

Interestingly, existing empirical research on the topic does not support the stereotypes about generational differences at all. For example, research by Montana & Lenaghan (1999) outlined a comparison of all four generational groups and found that Generations X and Y were identical in scorings of their top six work motivators, as were the Baby Boomers.
Montana’s & Lenaghan’s research was a continuation of a study done between 1960s and 1970s by Leslie This and Gordon Lippitt which composed of examination of 6,000 managers and 500 representatives of different companies and government agencies which were asked to rank 6 of 25 motivational factors that allowed them to do their best work (Montana & Lenaghan, 1999). The results from Montana’s and Lenaghan’s investigation indicate that Generation X and Generation Y value similar motivational factors suggest that there are little differences between the two generations (Bunton & Brewer, 2012). In 2007 Patrick Montana expanded on this research with Francis Petit, and discovered that Generation X and Generation Y did not share the exact same motivational factors (Montana & Petit, 2008). Their study suggests that Generation Y ranks the following six factors as their principal motivators, “respect for me as a person”, “good pay”, “getting along well with others on the job”, “chance for promotion”, “opportunity to do interesting work”, and “opportunity for self-development and improvement” (Montana & Petit, 2008). “Although the rankings by Generation X and Y were markedly different from earlier generations, they were close to each other”, only varying in Generation X preferring “feeling my job is important” over “getting along well with others on the job” (Montana & Petit, 2008, p. 37.)

In a complete Australian study (Hart et al., 2003), discovered the pattern across of relationships which linked leadership, organisational climate and work attitudes such as commitment and found them to be similar across Generation X and Baby Boomers employees. In addition to that, another Australasian study (Levy et al., 2005) also found little difference in attitudes toward leadership of Generation X and Y followers. Finally, the one study that did in fact report generational differences (Jurkiewicz, 2000) found these to be opposite to present stereotypes on generational differences.

Appelbaum, Serena & Shapiro (2005) argued that the lack of motivation to work hard has been attributed to every other age cohort at the same point in their life stage. “They compared common motivational factors among Baby Boomers and Generation X and found that four out of the five motivational factors selected to be most important were identical for both cohorts (including a stable and secure future, a high salary, a chance to learn new things, and variety in work assignments) which is contrary to common perceptions.” (Dash & Panda, 2010). Following exploratory study suggests that inter-generational differences in motivational drivers may not be as momentous as suggested in other studies.
In contrast, Jorgensen (2008) questioned whether the combination of various generations, for example Generation X and Generation Y have the capacity to disturb common workforce strategies, consume resources and contribute to the wearing away of ‘generational cohesion’ in the place of work. (Dash & Panda, 2010) Instead, he pointed out that present facts around generational characteristics have mainly arose from the qualitative experiences of the researchers, with findings lacking the essential empirical rigour needed to base workplace strategies and practices on their conclusions alone. Dash & Pandey (2009) pointed out that in contrast with the domestic environment, the workplace ‘generation gap’ often results in day to day communication failures and these may have negative impact upon a wide range of important business factors including retention, morale and perceptions of fairness and equity.

Jurkiewicz (2000) analysed the relationship between two generations and job attribute preferences, which were described as motivational factors. Investigating a cross-sectional sample of 278 public sector employees, Jurkiewicz found that Generation X differed from Baby Boomers on the desire to learn new things and to work with little supervision but alike in the desire to benefit society and earn higher salary (among others).

Cennamo & Gardner (2008) used a cross-sectional survey to investigate the link between generational differences and diverse work motivations. They found that Baby Boomers are inclined more towards lower levels of status motivations than did Generation X and also that Baby Boomers and Generation X reported equivalent levels of freedom factor of motivation. Their findings also suggested that Baby Boomers perceived greater association between their own work motivations and their organizations’ reward systems than did Generation X.

In a study by of 23,413 millennial undergraduate students from across Canada, Eddy Ng, Linda Schweitzer, and Sean Lyons explored motivational factors of the Generation Y further (Ng, Schweitzer, & Lyons, 2010). Their research focused mainly on career expectations, advancement expectations, pay expectations, and work attributes. Work attributes were composed of 16 items such as job security, good people to report to, work-life balance, challenging work, etc. (Ng, et al., 2010). Their investigation showed that “Millennials rated opportunities for advancement as the most desirable work-related attribute” (Ng, et al., 2010, p. 286). Further down the line, other important factors were good people to work with, good people to report to, good training opportunities/developing new skills, and work-life balance (Ng, et al., 2010). Good starting salary was positioned at number nine (Ng, et al., 2010).
In another study, Ian Barford and Patrick Hester discuss the results from a small survey of 18 government employees, six each from Generation Y, X, and Baby Boomers (Barford & Hester, 2011). Their findings provide that “Generation Y views responsibilities as much less important than Generation X and Baby Boomers and least important of all the motivational factors; Generation Y ranked compensation as less important than Generation X and Baby Boomers; Generation Y ranked advancement potential higher than Generation X and Baby Boomers; Generation Y ranked free time higher than Generation X and Baby Boomers” (Barford & Hester, 2011). Further analysis showed that Generation Y regard advancement potential and free time as very important, and they are content with their levels of both motivational factors (Barford & Hester, 2011). These results signify that there might be motivational differences that exist between generations after all and that Generation X and Generation Y are not motivated by the same factors (Bunton & Brewer, 2012).

Study on occupational and motivational differences of different generations conducted by Dash & Panda (2010) showed that Baby Boomers were the least focused on career advancement; this result was somewhat surprising, as this age group was expected to be highly achieving. Their findings are in conformity with the findings of Appelbaum et.al., (2004) who suggested younger generation are more likely to seek advancement in their careers. This notion has been confirmed by research on generational differences in personality and motivation by Wong Gardiner Lang & Coulon (2008) which found Generation Y “tended to be more motivated by career progression and advancement than the other generation cohorts; Baby Boomers are likely to be coming towards the end of their career and therefore opportunities for advancement no longer act as a motivator for them”.

In one of the first, large scale studies to observe generational differences in organizations, Smola & Sutton (2002) looked to compare the work values of Baby Boomers and Generation X. They distributed twenty significance tests and out of these, only three resulted in significant generational differences. Along the lines of the idea that Baby Boomers work to live whereas Generation X say they live to work, Baby Boomers were considerably more likely to agree that work should play of the most important roles of a person’s life. Similarly, sustaining the idea that Generation X tend to favor merit over seniority for performance decisions, Generation X were notably more likely to desire to be promoted quickly.

Sullivan, Forret, Carraher & Mainiero (2009) point out that contrary to the belief that Generation X are slackers, they were significantly more likely to agree that working hard creates a better person.
Most surprising, however, was the fact that Smola & Sutton (2002) failed to prove a level of significant generational differences found on most work values, including: being of service to others, feeling more worthwhile for working hard, enjoying work, feeling a sense of pride in one’s work, being respected for one’s work, getting more money, getting more fringe benefits, being complimented by one’s supervisor, and having leisure and free time (Sullivan, Forret, Carraher & Mainiero, 2009).

Similar to Smola & Sutton, other organizational and academic researchers have found fairly few of the generational differences which were suggested by previous research (e.g. Biggs, 2007). Davis et al., (2006) examined nine variables against Generation X and Baby Boomers. Only three (job involvement, normative organization commitment, and continuance professional commitment) were proven to be statistically significant, but just one relationship went in the expected direction. While continuance professional commitment was noted considerably higher for Boomers than Generation X as predicted, contrary to what was expected, job involvement and normative organization commitment were noted significantly higher for Generation X. In the same time there were no generational differences on factors such as work involvement, work group attachment, affective organization commitment, continuance organization commitment, affective professional commitment, and normative professional commitment (Sullivan, Forret, Carraher & Mainiero, 2009).

Similarly, Gentry et al., (2009) after studying attitudes toward learning and development reported no significant generational differences in Baby Boomers and Generation X attitudes. Regardless of suggestions that Generation X are more adjustable (Hall, 1976, 1996, 2004) in their beliefs about learning and taking ownership of their own career development, report showed no major differences between Generation X and Baby Boomers in their beliefs about the importance of on-the-job learning as well as their belief that organizations develop them as employees.

Sirias et al., (2007) reported mixed results in their analysis of generational differences on individualism and collectivism. They found that Generation X had radically higher scores on self-reliance, competitiveness and solitary work preferences than Baby Boomers. However, they found no significant differences among Generation X and Baby Boomers on their willingness to sacrifice personal pursuits for the good of the team or in the supremacy of group goals over self-interests (Karp et al., 2002; Sullivan, Forret, Carraher & Mainiero, 2009).
Westerman & Yamamura (2007) used the framework of person-environment fit, and also reported mixed results. They stated that when Generation X and Y felt there is a good fit between their personal goals and organizational goals, they were significantly more inclined towards remaining with the firm and reported to be more satisfied. However, when tested, baby Boomers showed no effect on goal fit, work satisfaction and intention to remain. Relationship fit such as social interaction and work friendships had a considerable effect on the satisfaction of Baby Boomers but had no effect on Baby Boomers’ intention to remain. When tested Generation X and Y, they found relationship fit had no influence on intent to remain or satisfaction. Because Westerman & Yamamura combined Generation X and Y into one group, unfortunately differences between these two generations were not measured.

The foundation of theoretical principle underpinning generational differences is not without criticism. Not only there are, for example, issues with determining the exact chronological point at which to separate the various generations (various studies suggested different periods, although the default option has been set to be the Strauss & Howe [1991] typology). Also, assumption that all members of any given generation will experience the same main socio-cultural or socio-economic events in the same way (Giancola, 2006); that is, regardless of social class, gender, ethnicity, or national culture, for example seems to be troublesome.

Furthermore, Rhodes (1983) in his study identified a key momentum which applies to all studies carried out on the topic. He suggested that it is difficult to separate out differences attributed to generational cohort from what may be just differences arising from age (maturity), career stage or individual life-cycle. Associated with age are organizational employment differences giving rise to variable organizational experiences.

Previous findings that have been completed have produced conflicting results, being somewhat contradicting, concluding in a lack of consensus about whether generational differences really do impact work attitudes, behaviors or employee motivation. This lack of agreement is major cause for concern given the growing number of practitioner articles, books and growing general misconceptions about generations that encourage managers to lead and motivate members of diverse generations much differently.
Depending on the subject of the study, researcher has found that the literature reveals that each generation differs from each other in terms of values, behaviors, motivational factors and work attitudes. However, these findings seem to vary in the result, as well as being different from the popular assumptions held by society. Lack of agreement on the matter has resulted in scholars not being able to provide clear recommendations to organizational leaders on how to best manage the increasingly varied workforce. Some studies reviewed by the researcher have analysed various relationships between Generation X and Y, others between generation Baby Boomers and Generation X, but hardly three all together.

As a result, this paper will focus on validation of proposed hypothesis that indeed there are key differences between Generation Baby Boomers, Gen X and Gen Y in their approach to five motivational factors in Ireland.
Chapter 3

Research methodology

3. Introduction

This chapter will outline and discuss the chosen research philosophies, approaches, methods, data collection, analysis and sampling size. Each section will contain a rationale behind chosen method or approach. This chapter also talks about limitations of the research, time horizons and ethical considerations.

3.1. Definitions

3.1.1 Research

The word ‘research’ originates from the Latin word whose meaning is ‘to know’. It is a regular and a replicable process of identifying and defining problems within specific boundaries. It employs well designed method to collect the data and analyse the results. Findings are then published and contribute to generalize-able knowledge. (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 5)

Research may also be defined as a “review of existing knowledge in a particular area together with the creation of a new angle on this knowledge” (Riley et al., 2000, p. 7). “Researchers should be clear about what is the essence of their enquiry, and should express this as an ‘intellectual puzzle’ with a clearly formulated set of research question.” (Mason, 2005, p.13)

Saunders et al., (2009) defines research as “something that people undertake in order to find things in a systematic way, thereby increasing their knowledge.”

Additionally, Wisker (2001) explains that “research is about asking and beginning to answer questions, seeking knowledge and understanding of the world and its processes.”
She listed the following as stages of the research process:

- Problem/experience/observation
- Formulation of a hypothesis
- Investigation and experimentation to test the hypothesis
- Data gathering
- Data analysis and interpretation
- Confirmation or disapproval of the hypothesis


### 3.1.2. Methodology

Collis and Hussey (2003) define methodology as referring the overall approach to the research process and the theoretical underpinning to the collection and analysis of data.

Ghauri (2005) defines research methodology as all the matters regarding the structure and design of the research study, dealing with topics such as required information type, the research design, data collection method, source of information (also known as sampling).

The aim of a research methodology according to Fisher (2004) is to assist the researcher in getting an answer to their research question thanks to the gathering of relevant information pertaining to their research topic. (Fisher, 2004, pp. 33-34)

Various techniques exist in which a researcher can carry out their research, the quality of the research, however, depends mostly on the identified method in use and the fit of the chosen method to the research (Saunders et al., 2009, pp. 154-155).

The purpose of this research is to explore responses of Irish professionals belonging to three generational groups in questions to proposed five motivational factors and to investigate if there are differences between generational attitudes towards same motivational factors.

The researcher hopes that the outcome of this study would give some guidelines to employers in developing future coaching and various motivation programs which will be appropriate and effective to
all three generations. Furthermore, this research hopes to help and inspire not only HR managers but also leaders in administrating and retaining talents from all age groups, drawing the company to accumulate the competitiveness in the marketplace and hopefully draw better understanding between generations resulting in more effective collaboration towards common goal.

3.2. Research Design

Successful completion of research relies on the way data is collected to answer research question. Data collection requires design of questionnaires which demands for basic understanding of the issues involved for the research problem area. Saunders et al., (2009) compared the different levels of the research process is being similar to the layers of an onion. Each of the five layers is integral to the successful research. (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 106).

They are:

- Research Philosophy;
- Research Approach;
- Research Strategy;
- Time Horizon;
- Data Collection & Data Analysis

3.3. Chosen methodology

The research adopted the positivism philosophy within a deductive approach, with collection of quantitative data, using the mono-method (survey). Using the research „onion” it will be explained the reasons of each one of the choices.
Saunders’ *et al.* (2009) research „onion” outlines the order and the content for the research process. The first layer is the research philosophy which holds important ways in which researcher can view the world and these assumptions will be the base of the research process, having an impact and influencing the whole process of the research development. The next layer is the research approach, which will shape the way for the overall research approach. Followed by research strategy, giving way to the options for data gathering; research choices, time horizon and lastly, data collection techniques and procedures.

3.4. **The Research Philosophy – positivism.**

Pathirage, Amaratunga & Haigh, (2008) outline the research philosophy consists of epistemological, ontological and axiological assumptions and tasks that guide an inquiry in a research study, implicitly or explicitly. They explain that „epistemology describes ‘how’ researcher knows about the reality and assumptions about how knowledge should be acquired and accepted. The ontology explains ‘what’ knowledge is and assumptions about reality. Axiology reveals the assumptions about the value system. These epistemological undertakings, ontological assumptions and axiological purposes about the nature of the world complement the formulation of research philosophy, thereby influencing the selection of appropriate research approach and methods“. (Cited from Pathirage, Amaratunga & Haigh, 2008, p. 5)
Positivism research is the most suitable research philosophy which allows to observe social reality that will lead to credible data to answering to the gathering of facts that “provide the basis for subsequent hypothesis testing” (Mark, Philip, & Adrian, 2009). Also, because of the need of data sampling from empirical end user population, it will lead to credible data to answering to the congregation of facts that provide the basis for subsequent hypothesis testing (Mark, et al., 2009). Since the observer and the phenomena are different entities, the observer can study the phenomenon without influencing it (Brauers & Weber, 2006). Interpretations of the findings will be quantified and generalised using statistical analysis (Saunders, et al., 2010).

3.5. The research approach: Deductive Approach: Testing theory

The process of deductive research is often associated with quantitative research and involves starting out with a theory (Mark, Philip, & Adrian, 2009). The deductive research is based on analysis of existing theories in order to construct the hypothesis. When hypothesis is formed, it is tested by collection of primary data to answer formulated research question. Outcomes of the testing of the hypothesis allow the researcher to modify theory based on the findings. In contrast, inductive approach, described by Gill & Johnson, (2002), states that “the logical ordering of induction is the reverse of deduction as it involves moving from the ‘plane’ of observation of the empirical world to the construction of explanations and theories about what has been observed.”

Deduction: (called also testing theory) is based on developing conclusions founded on logic. Deduction is not supported by experience or observation. Robson (2002), listed five stages through which a deductive research can be carried out:

- Deducing a hypothesis
- Expressing the hypothesis in operational terms which connect two ideas or variables
- Testing the operational hypothesis
- Examining the specific outcome of the inquiry
- Modifying the concept if necessary according to the findings. Robson (2002, cited in Saunders et al., 2009, p.124)

The present study puts emphasises on the main beliefs, formulation of a hypothesis, the collection of quantitative data, testing of the hypothesis with the help of collected data, and to generalise the concept. It’s a highly structured process and thus deductive approach is appropriate for the purpose of
this research. Another reason to opt for deductive approach is the time constraint; deductive approach is best suited for cross-sectional study as required in the present scenario of a MBA achievement.

3.6. Research Strategy: Survey

“The choice of the research strategy is often guided by the research questions and objectives”. Saunders et al., (2009) identify seven research strategies: experiment, survey, case study, action research, grounded theory, ethnography and archival research.

For this study, the researcher decided to use a survey. Surveys will serve as a right vehicle to collect quantitative data on a large scale to represent the data driven from the target population. The technique chosen by the researcher is consistent and relevant as the research approach is to be mainly exploratory and descriptive. Saunders et al., (2009) stated: “It [the survey] therefore tends to be used for exploratory and descriptive research” (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 144).

Surveys are often obtained by the use of questionnaires being given to a sample; the data are easily standardized which allows for easy comparison. A number of collection methods can be used to collect the data from surveys, for example by e-mail, post, telephone and in person, therefore, allowing a degree of flexibility for the researcher. This method is commonly used and generally easily understood. The survey technique, as many others, has benefits and drawbacks. Data collected will allow for an easy comparison and analysis, however, on the other hand, the analysis of data afterwards is time consuming and the progress of the research is dependent on other’s contribution (Saunders et al., 2009). The survey strategy is usually associated with the deductive approach; therefore it is a frequent strategy in business and management research. It is most often used to answer who, what, where, how much and how many questions (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 144).

The advantage of using a survey strategy is that it gives more control over the research progression and when sampling is used, it is possible to produce findings that are representative of the whole population at a lower cost.

Saunders et al., (2009) emphasize that the choice of the type of questionnaire is related to a variety of factors such as: ‘the characteristics of the respondents from whom the researcher wish to collect data’ (Saunders et al., 2009, p.363). Therefore, as the main target of the researcher are various industry
professionals, who work full time, the questionnaire technique seems to be consistent and easiest to distribute in order to collect data needed for this dissertation.

Internet-mediated questionnaires have the benefits of saving time, money and providing means for easy distribution reaching a large number of people and facilitating the data analysis. The researcher will use built in tool in SurveyMonkey to design its questionnaire. Following that, answers will be downloaded into a SPSS software or full data analysis and statistical break-down and classification. However, Saunders et al., (2009) describes questionnaires to have a lot of disadvantages; for example respondents may sometimes deliberately guess at the answer, give an answer which will make them look good, or may discuss their answers with others which lead to a bias.

In relation to the questions design, Bourque & Clark (1994) believe that researchers generally use one of three methods: implement questions used in other questionnaires, adopt questions used previously in other questionnaires or develop their own questions (Bourque and Clark, 1994, cited in Saunders et al., 2009, p.374). Saunders et al., (2009) categorize several types of questions: open questions, list questions, category questions, ranking questions, rating questions, quantity questions and matrix questions (Saunders et al., 2009).

The survey is designed to the way of cross selectional method to determine five motivational factors and their attractiveness to each Generation and level of importance of each motivational factor. Each of the participants will be asked to answer set of questions measuring levels of motivation towards factors such as work responsibilities, compensation, work environment, advancement potential and free time. Development and application of same set of questions addressed to both age groups will allow respondents to give unbiased and clear answers to set of questions giving researcher a clear and controlled set of data to analise and draw conclusions from.

In this study, the researcher will use a ranking question and more specifically ‘Likert-style rating scale’ on a five-point rating scale using terms “most important” and “least important”. Malhotra & Birks et al., (2006) describe the Likert scale as a “measurement scale with five response categories rating from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree” that requires respondents to indicate a degree of agreement or disagreement with each of a series of statements related to the stimulus objects” (Malhotra & Birks et al., 2006, p. 348). Malhotra & Birks et al., (2006) support this idea explaining that Likert-scale is
particularly suitable for Internet use as it is easy to construct and administer also ensuring that respondents intuitively know how to use the scale (Malhotra & Birks et al., 2006, p. 349)

3.7. The research choice: Quantitative mono-method approach

Research choice is defined as the way the researcher chooses to combine quantitative and qualitative techniques and other approaches (Saunders et al., 2009).

Hollensen (2010), explains quantitative and qualitative research as follows:
• “Quantitative research is a data analysis based on questionnaires from a large group of respondents”
• “Qualitative research provides a holistic view of a research problem by integrating a larger number of variables but asking only a few respondents” (Hollensen, 2010, p.181).

Bryman & Bell (2007) briefly summaries some of the features of quantitative research by explaining that it entails a deductive approach to the link between theory and research, in which the emphasis is placed on testing theories. Moreover, it has incorporated the norms of the natural scientific model and of positivism in particular; it represents a view of social reality as an external body of reality (Bryman & Bell, 2007, p.154).

However, Quantitative research can be viewed as a research strategy that emphasises quantification in the collection and analysis of data” (Bryman, & Bell, 2007, p.154).
Marchington & Wilkinson (2005), among others, explain that quantitative research refers to studies dealing with the measurement and quantification of data to get an answer to the research questions. They believe that in order for data to be practical and valid, it needs to be analysed and interpreted using quantitative analysis techniques (Marchington & Wilkinson, 2005).

Saunders et al., (2009), state that “individual quantitative and qualitative techniques and procedures do not exist in isolation” (Saunders et al., 2009, p.151).
In choosing the research methods, the researcher can either use a single data collection technique and corresponding analysis procedures (mono method) or use more than one data collection technique and analysis procedures to answer the research question (multiple methods) (Saunders et al., 2009).
According to Saunders et al., (2009) questionnaire type method is the most commonly used data collection technique within the survey strategy. Each respondent is asked to answer to the same set of questions which provide an effective way of collecting responses from a large sample prior to quantitative analysis (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 361). Malhotra & Birks et al., (2006) underline, that any questionnaire has three precise objectives. Firstly, it must turn the information sought after into a set of specific questions that the respondent can and will answer. Secondly, a questionnaire must persuade the respondent to become involved, to cooperate, and to complete the task. Thirdly, a questionnaire should reduce response error (Malhotra & Birks et al., 2006, p. 371).

Questionnaires give an opportunity to gather information in an easy way which can be simply analysed, the format is familiar to everyone, it is easy to distribute to a large population within a limited budget. The information collected is standardized and can also seek the answers to the sensitive topics, which might be had to be cover using other methods. (http://www.evalued.bcu.ac.uk/tutorial/4a.htm)

The researcher will use a quantitative research method in order to answer the research questions and meet the objective of this research project. She believes that a mono method of quantitative approach is the best approach in order to get accurate results from the required sample, without bias and within very tight time constraints.
The researcher will start by distributing survey via electronic channel of SurveyMonkey among various industry professionals from selected companies, targeting required age groups research is to be based on. After data has been collected, the researcher will begin to analyse data and draw up a comparative conclusion. This process will be explained in more detail in the Data Collection subchapter.

3.8. Time Horizon: Cross-Sectional

The time horizon of the research design can be designed in cross-sectional or longitudinal way. Malhotra & Birks et al., (2006), claim that cross-sectional designs are commonly used for marketing research and they involve the collection of information once, from a sample of population (Malhotra & Birks et al., 2006, p. 74). According to Easterby-Smith et al., (2008), a cross-sectional approach is the study of a particular observable fact at a particular time. It often employs the survey strategy (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008; Robson 2002, cited in Saunders et al., 2009).

On the other hand, longitudinal studies require much more time for research. The main advantage of longitudinal research is the possibility for the researcher to discover and measure change and development over time. It is possible to describe the incidence of a phenomenon or to explain how factors are related in different organizations for example (Saunders et al., 2009). Malhotra & Birks et al., (2006), argue that the sample in longitudinal research in contrast to cross-sectional designs, remain may the same over time. In other words, the same sample of people is studied over a long period of time which might not detect any change at all. Moreover, and from a critical perspective, Malhotra & Birks et al., (2006), argue that the major disadvantage of using cross-sectional design is that they do not allow detecting changes (Malhotra & Birks et al., 2006, p. 76), but in the same time longitudinal research method does not guarantee discovery of a change pattern.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation criteria</th>
<th>Cross-sectional design</th>
<th>Longitudinal design</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Detecting change</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Larga amount of data collection</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accuracy</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Representative sampling</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response bias</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: A + indicates a relative advantage over the other design, whereas a – indicates a relative disadvantage.

Figure 5 Relative advantages and disadvantages of longitudinal and cross-sectional designs (Malhotra & Birks et al., 2006, p. 77)
The key purpose of this study is to complete MBA degree which is bounded in a time limit, therefore cross-sectional time horizon is the only option on hand. The major advantage of a cross-sectional research is that data can be collected on quite large and various sample in a relatively short-period of time. The main disadvantage of carrying out a cross-sectional research is that it is difficult to maintain time order and accurately lay out activities necessary for completion.

3.9. Respondents: Population & Sample

3.9.1. Population

Various industry professionals from different companies and from various age groups based in Ireland between April and December 2013. Due to the fact that research question is focusing on generational differences, researcher is interested in an Irish working population representing addressed three main age groups.

Malhotra & Birks (2006) explain that sampling is a main component of any research design. In keeping with Malhotra & Birks (2006), the purpose of majority of marketing research projects is to gather information about the characteristics of a population. This information may be collected by a means of a census or a sample (Malhotra & Birks, 2006, p. 405). Malhotra & Birks (2006) define a census as “a complete enumeration of the elements of a population or study objects”. Whereas the sample is a “a subgroup of the elements of the population selected for participation in the study” (Malhotra & Birks, 2006, p. 405).

3.9.2. Sample

Sampling is the selection of a fairly small number of individuals from which the research obtains data in order to be able to generalise about a large group. (Gray, et al., 2007). Sampling techniques are used in the research work where it is not possible to survey the entire population due to time constraints or limited resources (Bryman & Bell, 2007, p. 182). The basic idea is to selects a part of the population by which the researcher can draw conclusions about the entire population.
The key question in relation to population sampling is ‘what size of sample does the researcher need?’
The answer is influenced by various factors (Saunders et al., 2009, p.212) which are:

- Impractical to survey entire population
- Budget Constraints
- Resource Constraints
- Time Constraints


Henry (1990, as cited Saunders et al., 2009), suggests that use of sampling might give higher overall accuracy than a sample of entire population. This is because the smaller number of case means that time can be spent more efficiently designing and piloting the means of collecting data. Collecting data from smaller number of cases also means that the collected information is more detailed or accurate (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 212-213).

However, Fowler (2009) highlights the sampling errors are a result of variation caused between the data collected from samples and the true value from the population as a whole. In case of this research, collecting data from the entire population was impossible and impractical (Fowler, 2009, p.13).


Consequently, the target population should be classified in relation to: elements, sampling units, extent and time.

As a result, the researcher has set her target population as follows:

- Elements: representatives of Generation Y, Generation X and Baby Boomers
- Sampling units: various industry professionals belonging to main three age groups in question
- Extent: Ireland
- Time: April – December 2013

The samples of 150 respondents were generated for the purpose of this study. All samples derived from the survey. These samples were selected from the population of the employees working in different
Irish companies. In order to collect the quantitative data, the researcher asked for the respondents to complete questionnaire which was sent to them via SurveyMonkey software and also requested to pass the survey to their friends and co-workers from different age groups, in order to gather a large number of responses.

3.10. Data analysis

Saunders et al., (2009) outline various software packages available for quantitative analysis which can capture or collate data as well as allow manual data entry and statistical analysis of data. This study will be conducted using SPSS software in order to statistically analyse data.

Furthermore, collected data will be measured and presented in various forms. Once data is collected, it will be categorized, scaled and analysed in percentages.

3.11. Data Collection, Editing & Coding

After definition of the research problem of the dissertation has been laid out, and selection of the methods to be adopted, now the evaluation process, used for this research, will be explained. The evaluation process consists of data collection, editing and coding of the collected data to develop the outcome of the prospective research.

3.11.1. Data Collection

Data collection is an important part of the research and it can be divided into two types, namely primary data and secondary data. (Saunders et al., 2009). The researcher has used both primary and secondary data collection methods to obtain necessary data for her research.

Secondary data

Cooper & Schindler, (2008) explain that, secondary data sources are interpretations of primary data. Encyclopaedias, textbooks, handbooks, magazines and newspaper articles, annual reports, sales analysis
summaries of organisations are all considered secondary information sources (Cooper and Schindler, 2008, p. 104).

However, secondary data have some limitations too, e.g. the researcher may find it difficult to use the secondary data directly in her research, because it could be out-of-date or may have been taken for some other purposes. (Zikmund, 2003, p. 63)

Secondary data is sometimes describes as a research desk. It’s the process of reanalyzing information that have already been collected for other purposes (Kotler & Armonstrong, 2010). Saunders et al., (2009), suggest that sources of secondary data should be exhausted before conducting primary research to help the researcher to grasp a full understanding and insight into previous studies and rising trends which are relevant to the area of research (Saunders et al., 2009).

Saunders et al., (2009) groups secondary data in the following way:

![Figure 6 Types of secondary data. (Saunders et al., 2009, p.259)](figure6.jpg)
As suggested by the best practice methods, the secondary data will be collected mainly from:

- Written materials: journals, newspapers.
- Area based: books, journals, government publications.
- Time series based: books, journals, industry statistics and reports.
- Ad hoc surveys: Organisations’ surveys, Academics’ surveys.

The researcher will source her secondary data collection from the materials available in the Dublin Business School libraries and also from the generous amount of electronic academic databases offered by the DBS intranet.

**Primary data**

According to Zikmund (2003), primary data refers to data that are gathered and assembled specifically for the purpose of the research project at hand (Zikmund, 2003, p. 740).

Primary data in the present study will be collected using the exploratory research method. Quantitative data will be gathered by survey technique through questionnaire from Irish workforce sample for basic understanding.

**3.11.2. Data editing**

Malhotra & Birks (2006) explain that completed questionnaires often may have some small errors that sometimes may turn out to be costly for the researcher. Therefore, Malhotra & Birks (2006) define editing as “the review of the questionnaires with the objective of increasing accuracy and precision. It consists of screening questionnaires to identify illegible, incomplete, inconsistent or ambiguous responses” (Malhotra & Birks, 2006, p. 477).

Kumar (2005) describes two ways of editing data:

- Examining answers of one question or variable at a time
- Examining answers of all questions at the same time which is, examining all the responses given by the respondents.
In this study, the researcher will examine answers one by one.

3.11.3. Data coding

Malhotra & Birks (2006) describes coding as the process of assigning a code, usually a number, to each answer in each question. For example, a question on the gender of the respondents may be allocated a code number of 1 for males and 2 for females (Malhotra & Birks, 2006, p. 479).

3.12. Ethical issues in the research

Ethics in research refers to a code of conduct or expected societal norm of behavior while conducting research. Ethical behavior expected from the researcher, applies to the organizations and individuals taking part in the dissertation (Saunders et al., 2009).

Saunders et al., (2009), distinguish two main philosophical views of ethics in any research: the deontological view and the teleological view. The deontological view believes that “the ends served by the research can never justify the use of research which is unethical”. On the other hand, the teleological view states that “the ends served by the research justify the means” (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 188).

The researcher certifies that she will carry out this research in a responsible and ethical manner. The researcher confirms that she will:

- Maintain the privacy of all participants while collecting, analyzing and reporting data.
- Use correct referencing system to cite others’ researchers work.

In order to promote a less influenced response and to maintain respondent confidentiality, the researcher has decided to leave the questionnaires anonymous.
3.13. The limitations of the research

To begin with, this type of study is based under strict time constraints, therefore the scope of the research is limited in order for data to be gathered and analysed within time limit. Time constraint has affected the question design.

This research is concentrating on given set of motivational factors. Because of the nature of quantitative method and closed questions of survey in hand, sampled population can only give answers expected and suggested by the researcher. In order to fully analyse motivational issues and opportunities in an Irish based workplace it would require to cover much broader set of questions, assumptions and theories using a wider range of research methods.

Another limitation posed is a sample size. Researcher has a limited means of distribution and reaching wider audience, therefore large differences expected between Generations might not be drawn as dramatically because of limited sample size. That might lead to lack of reliability. Saunders et al., (2009) suggests that reliability refers to the extent to which data collection and analysis procedures will present consistent findings.


The credibility of research findings is most important in any research. Saunders et al., (2009) suggests two variables to which attention must be paid in order to reduce the possibility of getting the wrong answers – they are: reliability and validity.

Easterby-Smith et al., (2008) argue that reliability refers to the extent to which data collection and analysis procedures will produce consistent and accurate findings. Robson (2002) explains four threats to reliability: participant error, participant bias, observer error and observer bias (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008; Robson, 2002, cited in Saunders et al., 2009). Additionally, “validity is concerned with whether the findings are really about what they appear to be about” (Saunders et al., 2009, p.157).

Therefore, to ensure validity and reliability of the data collected, researcher will follow the steps suggested by Malhotra & Birks et al., (2006).
1. Prepare preliminary plan of data analysis,
2. Check questionnaire,
3. Edit,
4. Code,
5. Transcribe,
6. Clean data,
7. Statistically adjust the data,
8. Select data analysis strategy (Based on data preparation process model (Malhotra & Birks et al., 2006, p. 476)).
Chapter 4

Data analysis and findings

This chapter will present the quantitative data findings from the survey administered to the sample Irish population.

4. Quantitative research through Surveys

Quantitative data, before being processed and analyzed, it’s in a raw form and have little meaning. Therefore, it is important to develop these data into graphs, charts and statistics to make them useful and turn them into information that describe, present and examine relationships and trends (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 414).

Researcher has distributed surveys (Appendix 2) to various Irish professionals via email, with a cover letter (Appendix 1) outlining the research purpose and also informed them that the research is anonymous.

Researcher has also asked the respondents to distribute the questionnaire to their co-workers, friends and family from various age groups in order to get as many responses as possible. Survey has been answered by 179 respondents. 150 responses were randomly selected by the researcher for equal number of responses to be present from each age group. Data from the questionnaire were coded and analysed using MS Excel software and SPSS statistics software.

Findings from each question will be analyzed and data will be presented in various tables and graphs, where applicable. Large proportion of data will be cross referenced with each other for analysis and comparison of each age group.

Researcher is going to analyze findings as they are and then use findings to draw a comparison between her findings and existing literature and other academic results available for further analysis.
4.1. Respondents profile

4.1.1. Question 1: Out of the following three time periods, which one were you born in?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Generation</th>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baby Boomers</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generation X</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generation Y</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 Number of respondents classified by generation.

Number of 150 respondents were analysed in this study. All three generational groups were divided into equal number of 50 each.

4.1.2. Question 2: What is your gender?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Generation</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baby Boomers</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generation X</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generation Y</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 Classification of respondents’ generation and gender.

Figure 7 Respondents Gender by generation.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Generation</th>
<th>gender</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baby Boomers</td>
<td>% within generation</td>
<td>56.0%</td>
<td>44.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generation X</td>
<td>% within generation</td>
<td>70.0%</td>
<td>30.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generation Y</td>
<td>% within generation</td>
<td>54.0%</td>
<td>46.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>% within generation</td>
<td>60.0%</td>
<td>40.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>60</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 Generational breakdown of gender by percentage.

Result of the survey revealed that 56% of Baby Boomers are male; 70% belong to Generation X and 54% comprise of female. There seems to be a large difference in gender numbers in Generation X, where only 30% of respondents are female. However, within Generation Baby Boomers and Generation Y that difference is not significant.

Influenced by diversity in business world, globalization, change in attitude and other factors on women’s approach, growing numbers of female workers between Generation X and Generation Y indicate change from family driven attitude to self-awareness and career focus, resulting in their increase in workforce.
4.1.3. **Question 3:** What is your job classification?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Generation</th>
<th>Managerial</th>
<th>Non-managerial</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baby Boomers</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generation X</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generation Y</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>60</strong></td>
<td><strong>90</strong></td>
<td><strong>150</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 4 Breakdown of job classification per generation.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Generation</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Managerial</th>
<th>Non-managerial</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baby Boomers</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within generation</td>
<td>40.0%</td>
<td>60.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generation X</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within generation</td>
<td>46.0%</td>
<td>54.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generation Y</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within generation</td>
<td>34.0%</td>
<td>66.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 5 Percentage of job classification per generation.*

*Figure 8 Job classification per generation.*
Analysed sample of respondents showed 40% of Baby Boomers holding a managerial position; Generation X 46% and Generation Y 34%. It shows that majority of older generation is currently a manager; where within younger Generation Y 66% of respondents hold a non-managerial role. Close comparison of the numbers shows however, that there are no major differences in the numbers between generations, where Baby Boomers account of 60% of non-managerial roles; Generation X for 54% and Generation Y 66%. This result might indicate against common assumption that managerial roles and level of responsibilities closely correspond with an age of an employee.

4.1.4. Question 4: What is the highest level of education you have completed?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Generation</th>
<th>Highest level of education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Junior Certificate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baby Boomers</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generation X</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generation Y</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6 Highest education achieved by generation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Generation</th>
<th>Highest level of education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Junior Certificate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baby Boomers</td>
<td>Count</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% within generation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generation X</td>
<td>Count</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% within generation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generation Y</td>
<td>Count</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% within generation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7 Highest education achieved by generation in percentage.
Analysis of educational levels revealed quite severe dissimilarities between generations. 74% of generation Baby Boomers tested do not have a higher education in comparison with 66% of Generation X and substantial 80% of Generation Y. It might be due to the fact that education was not perceived to be such important in time when Baby Boomers were growing up; tendency of learning on the job or via apprenticeships seemed to lessen the value of further education. Growing numbers of Generation X and Generation Y who does indeed value further education indicate ambitions and a drive of these Generations to stand out and move their careers forward. In comparison, younger generations do compete on the educational level, whereas Generation Baby Boomers compete with the level of experience and knowledge on the job. Growing numbers of educated younger generation might also come from the fact that education is much more widely available today, with online and part time courses; also financial burden of further education can be spread and easier to bear for a student who can continue to work full-time whilst completing 3rd degree education. Another factor adding to the equation is the actual awareness of the value of the education passed down from the older generations, namely Baby Boomers for example. Not having a chance to complete their own educational ambitions, they might put more pressure on their Generation Y offspring’s to carry on and advance their career with further education.
4.1.5. **Question 5: Which one of the following would make you feel most motivated at work?**

Respondents were asked to choose one from five options of motivational factors available. Breakdown by percentage and below graph are showing few interesting variations between generations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Generation</th>
<th>Main motivation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Higher compensation/reward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baby Boomers</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generation X</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generation Y</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8 Main motivational factors breakdown by generation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Generation</th>
<th>Main motivation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Higher compensation/reward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baby Boomers</td>
<td>Count</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% within generation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generation X</td>
<td>Count</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% within generation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generation Y</td>
<td>Count</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% within generation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Count</td>
<td>Overall % among generations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9 Main motivational factors breakdown by generation in percentage.
Baby Boomers:

Higher compensation/reward scored to be the most motivating factor for 28% of respondents. More responsibilities were voted to be most encouraging by 38% and is the highest score from all. Followed by advancement potential which was rated at 16%, flexible time at 12% and better work environment at 6%. It is very interesting to see that more responsibilities scored the highest as we could assume that holding a senior position would allow for plenty of responsibilities available; however it may correspond with the fact that only 40% of respondents held a managerial role, which might indicate a desire to move forward. Also, judging by the view of older generation, who would be very much interested to get hand on (no time waste for further education), this may explain why seeking more responsibilities might be a highly motivating factor for this age group. Interestingly advancement potential was a most motivational factor for 16% only, which may indicate that advancement is not expected per say but it should be earned by, for example, handling more responsibilities.

Figure 10 Main motivation generational breakdown.
Higher compensation/reward scored second highest, which again might indicate a desire to move up the company ladder and earn higher remuneration by holding a more senior position or having more responsibilities overall.

*Generation X:*

Higher compensation reward was voted most motivating for 24% of respondents whilst more responsibilities were chosen to be most inspiring by 18%. Advancement potential was voted the highest for this age group at 36%, which is slightly more than a third of respondents. Flexible time was chosen to be most motivating for 16%, whilst better work environment was most encouraging for only a 6% of respondents. High score for advancement potential of this age group suggest there is a very high desire to be promoted and move up in company’s ranks; however this does not have to be earned through handling more responsibilities, which only motivates 18% of respondents. It may be expected, that whilst Gen X respondents were second most educated age group, that educated employee may seek to be rewarded for academic background and proving assumption they do have the expertise required to hold a more senior position within a company. Higher compensation/reward scored second highest at 24%, which again, might correspond with expectancy to earn more while holding a more senior position; or for the remaining 22% which voted free time and better work environment to be most motivating factor, higher compensation may be just a nice bonus to have.

*Generation Y:*

Higher compensation/reward was voted to be most motivational for major 40% of respondents. Second highest score was taken by better work environment with 28% of respondents, followed by advancement potential which was most motivating for 24% respondents; more responsibilities scored mere 8% and very interestingly more free time was not important at all to Gen Y, being voted by 0% of a respondents as a motivating factor. Higher compensation was chosen to be the most motivating factor for Gen Y, which may be due to the fact that although 34% of respondents hold managerial positions already, 66% is aspiring to move up the company ladder and quickly with 24% being motivated by advancement potential. Better work environment was voted second most encouraging, with 28% of respondents, which is the highest from all three age groups.
It may be due to the fact that younger generations spend a lot of time at work and go to work not only to do their job but they expect to enjoy themselves whilst at it. It is also driven by major blue chip companies like Google who invest heavily into work environment, making it fun, creative and empowering employee communication.

More responsibilities scored to be second least motivating for Gen Y, which is somewhat worrying, in comparison with better work environment motivation. More free time hasn’t been chosen by any of the Gen Y respondents, which may be due to the fact that majority of younger employees do not have their own families or other responsibilities which come with age, therefore free time is not as important.

**Statistical summary:**

Higher compensation reward was voted most motivational by Generation Y, more responsibilities by Baby Boomers, advancement potential scored highest with Generation X, more free time was voted highest by Generation X and better work environment by Generation Y.

Baby Boomers scored more responsibilities significantly higher than Generation X and Y. Higher compensation scored to be second most motivating factor for this age group. Similarly Generation X scored compensation as second important, with very insignificant difference between the two age groups. Generation X scored advancement potential much higher than Baby Boomers and Generation Y with this factor being most motivating. Generation Y scored compensation highest with major statistical difference between other two age groups. Better work environment was scored second highest for Generation Y, with very significant difference in comparison with Baby Boomers and Generation X. More free time results were comparable between Baby Boomers and Generation X but very different to Generation Y.

Overall, higher compensation reward was most motivational to all generations, scoring a mean of 30.7%. Advancement potential takes the second place with generational mean of 25.3%. More responsibilities were chosen by 21.3% of all respondents. Better work environment averaged at 13.3% of all generations and more free time was voted least favorite by all generations, being chosen by 9.3%.
4.1.6. Question 6: Please rank below factors according to importance for you in the workplace with 5 being the most important, and 1 being least important.

Respondents were asked to rank five motivational factors on a 5-point Likert type scale according to their importance for them in the work setting.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>generation</th>
<th>Motivational factors</th>
<th>Importance scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baby Boomers</td>
<td>Responsibilities</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Compensation</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Work Environment</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Advancement potential</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Free time</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 10 Baby Boomers importance scale in numbers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>generation</th>
<th>Motivational factors</th>
<th>Importance scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baby Boomers</td>
<td>Responsibilities</td>
<td>18.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Compensation</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Work Environment</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Advancement potential</td>
<td>38.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Free time</td>
<td>36.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 11 Baby Boomers importance scale in percentage.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>generation</th>
<th>Motivational factors</th>
<th>Importance scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generation X</td>
<td>Responsibilities</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Compensation</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Work Environment</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Advancement potential</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Free time</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 12 Generation X importance scale in numbers.
### Motivational Factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Generation</th>
<th>Motivational factors</th>
<th>Importance scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generation X</td>
<td>Responsibilities</td>
<td>22.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Compensation</td>
<td>12.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Work Environment</td>
<td>18.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Advancement potential</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Free time</td>
<td>40.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 13 Generation X importance scale in percentage.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Generation Y</th>
<th>Motivational factors</th>
<th>Importance scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generation Y</td>
<td>Responsibilities</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Compensation</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Work Environment</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Advancement potential</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Free time</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 14 Generation Y importance scale by numbers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Generation Y</th>
<th>Motivational factors</th>
<th>Importance scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generation Y</td>
<td>Responsibilities</td>
<td>14.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Compensation</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Work Environment</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Advancement potential</td>
<td>14.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Free time</td>
<td>60.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 15 Generation Y importance scale by percentage.
Responsibilities:

Results from the survey revealed that 44% of Baby Boomers regard more responsibilities to be most important, 8% indicated this factor is quite neutral, whilst 48% indicated this factor not to be important.
This result is quite interesting; when asked 38% of Baby Boomers, which was a majority, indicated more responsibilities to be most motivating at work; however this time majority of 48% indicated it is not as important in the workplace. 26% of Generation X indicated Responsibilities to be most important at work with the highest score of 5, 16% chose a score of 4, 18% remained quite neutral and 40% indicated it is not as important. Interestingly, when asked about motivational factors, Generation X was quite decisive and firmly stated that it isn’t the most motivating factor, chosen by 18% only. But when asked about importance at work a curious parallel shows that 42% is quite positive about that factor, and a large proportion of 18% is not in favor nor against more responsibilities at work. Compared to Baby Boomers who by 48% indicated it is not important, only 40% of Generation X indicated the same. 20% of Generation Y indicated that responsibilities are most important in the workplace, followed by 20% which were scored at 4, 34% remained quite neutral and 34% indicated it is not as important. Only 8% of Generation Y respondents, when asked about most motivating factors, indicated more responsibilities to be most encouraging; hence a result of 40% who rated responsibilities at 4 and 5 is quite surprising, especially when 34% indicated their attitude is quite neutral. Out of all three generations, overall Baby boomers are most motivated by responsibilities with the score of 44% voting for it to be important, in comparison with close 42% for both Generation X and Generation Y. Interestingly, collectively there is no major difference in importance levels when respondents were tested by the likert scale in comparison with a rigid choice of one in motivational factor question.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>generation</th>
<th>Compensation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baby Boomers</td>
<td>Count</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within generation</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generation X</td>
<td>Count</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within generation</td>
<td>12.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generation Y</td>
<td>Count</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within generation</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 17 Compensation: Cross generational comparison of importance by each cohort.

**Compensation:**

Compensation factor scored to be most important for 16% of Baby Boomer respondents, 20% indicated ranked it at 4, 36% indicated compensation to be quite neutral in importance, and 28% showed it to be
not important. In comparison with compensation as a motivational factor where 28% of Baby Boomers indicated for it to be most motivating, likert scale indicates collective of 26% believe it is somewhat important to them. 28% of Generation X indicated compensation to be most important, another 28% ranked this factor at importance level of 4, followed by another 16% of 3 and 16% of 2 and 2% of 1. Collectively 56% of Generation X indicated that compensation is very important to them, in comparison with 24% who indicated compensation to be most motivating. When asked about most motivating factor Generation X indicated advancement potential is the most encouraging with 36% of respondents agreeing, but when asked about importance compensation seem to be more important for this age group. 20% of Generation Y respondents scored compensation at importance level of 5, followed by 34% of 4, 14% at neutral and 28% collectively as not important. Here results are showing as predicted, 54% of respondents believe compensation is important, in comparison with 40% who indicated it is the most motivating factor at work. Out of all three age groups, Generation X indicated compensation is most important with the score of 56% in comparison with Generation Y which 54% indicated for this factor to be important; this result is somewhat conflicting with motivational factors result, where Generation Y the one who was most motivated by bigger remuneration.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Generation</th>
<th>Baby Boomers</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% within generation</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
<td>34.0%</td>
<td>44.0%</td>
<td>14.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generation X</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% within generation</td>
<td></td>
<td>18.0%</td>
<td>18.0%</td>
<td>26.0%</td>
<td>30.0%</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generation Y</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% within generation</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.0%</td>
<td>28.0%</td>
<td>30.0%</td>
<td>18.0%</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 18 Work Environment: Cross generational comparison of importance by each cohort.

Work environment:

Work environment was voted most important for 14% of the Baby Boomers, followed by quite substantial score of 4 by 44%, 34% ranked it to be quite neutral and 8% voted for it to be not important. Again this is quite a different result in comparison with motivational factor of work environment which was only chosen by 6% of Baby Boomers in previous question.
Such variation of 58% now choosing environment to be important might show that on its’ own it matters to Baby Boomers, but only when faced with a choice of other factors, different one’s are more important in a motivational range. 8% of Generation X respondents voted work environment as most important, with following 30% saying it is quite important, 26% indicated this factor as neutral in importance, and 36% said it is not important. This corresponds with the motivational factors as only 6% of respondents indicated work environment is most motivational to them, therefore 36% of respondents voting for environment not to be important and 26% as neutral matches with the previous finding. 20% of Generation Y respondents ranked work environment at the level of 5, followed by 18% which said it is quite important, 30% referred to it as neutral and substantial 32% voted for it as not important. This finding is quite contradicting somewhat with the motivational factors of Generation Y; when asked about most stimulating factor, 28% indicated work environment, second highest score after 40% of compensation. This time, only 38% said it is quite important, with 32% indicating it does not matter. It may be due to the fact that work environment was placed as a third variable to choose from; 30% of respondents marked this factor as neutral, assuming compensation (second variable) which was scored as important by 44% will be fulfilled. Overall, surprisingly, Baby Boomers chose work environment to be quite important at 58%, in comparison with 38% of Generation X and Generation Y respondents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advancement potential</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
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<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
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<td>Count</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within generation</td>
<td>38.0%</td>
<td>26.0%</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
<td>22.0%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generation X</td>
<td>Count</td>
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<td>22.0%</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Count</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>% within generation</td>
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<td>18.0%</td>
<td>18.0%</td>
<td>18.0%</td>
<td>32.0%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 19 Advancement potential: Cross generational comparison of importance by each cohort.

**Advancement potential:**

8% of Baby Boomers ranked advancement potential as most important; followed by 22% saying it is quite important, 6% choosing it to be neutral and substantial 64% indicating it is not important. This finding confirms advancement potential is not a motivational factor of this age group; only 16% of
respondents said it is their main motivational factor which corresponds with 64% of respondents marking it as not important. 26% of Generation X indicated advancement potential is important to them, 22% gave it a rank of 4, 24% market advancement as neutral and 28% as not important. Generation X seems to be quite divided in this category, one could assume this particular age group hasn’t decided strongly if they are for or against advancement potential. In comparison with motivational factors, advancement potential did score the highest with 36% saying it is most motivating, but so did compensation with 24%, responsibilities with 18% and free time with 16%. Last three motivational factors are not far away from each other in percentage terms; therefore, it seems that all of these factors are quite motivational for this group. 32% of Generation Y chose advancement potential to be most important; followed by 18% which ranked it at level 4, 18% were neutral, and 32% said it is not important. Interestingly, a large proportion (50%) of this age group said advancement potential is somewhat important, but when asked for main motivational factor compensation and work environment was in majority, with only 24% confirming advancement potential is a motivating factor. This may be due to the fact, that yes, compensation is a major motivating factor for this group when asked straight, but when given a choice, being the youngest age group, Generation Y would like to be promoted and given an opportunity to progress; one can assume this would be closely linked with a higher remuneration. Overall, advancement potential scored to be quite important for 50% of Generation Y respondents, followed by Generation X with 48% and Baby Boomers with 30%. In comparison with motivational factors of all three generations, importance scale results are quite different, which may be due to the fact that when given a choice, what might be a motivating factor for one group does not mean other variables are not important too.
Table 20 Free time: Cross generational comparison of importance by each cohort.

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<th>Baby Boomers</th>
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<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% within generation</td>
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<td>36.0%</td>
<td>16.0%</td>
<td>16.0%</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>28.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Generation Y</td>
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<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% within generation</td>
<td></td>
<td>60.0%</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>14.0%</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Free/flexible time:**

18% of Baby Boomers indicated free/flexible time is most important to them, followed by 14% of respondents who marked it at 4; 16% as neutral and substantial 52% ranked free/flexible time as not that important. In comparison with free/flexible time as a motivational factor, only 16% of Baby Boomers said it is encouraging which corresponds with 52% of respondents indicating free/flexible time does not have an impact in their work importance factors. 12% of Generation X respondents voted free/flexible time to be most important, followed by 4% saying it’s quite important, 16% being neutral; and 68% of respondents saying it does not matter. Only 16% of respondents when not restricted to the choice, decided free/flexible time is important, with another 16% being neutral, which corresponds with 16% of Generation X respondents who indicated free/flexible time is a motivating factor for them. 8% of Generation Y respondents ranked free/flexible time as most and quite important, followed by 14% as neutral and 70% as not important, which correlates with previous question findings; here when given a choice 16% would say it is important but when restricted to only one answer, as in previous question, none of Generation Y marked free/flexible time as a motivating factor. Overall, free/flexible time was voted most important for Baby Boomers, with the score of 32%, with 16% of Generation X and Generation Y each.
Chapter 5

Summary of findings and recommendations

5.1. Conclusion

In comparison with existing studies current research has confirmed some of the previous findings and indeed showed that there are key differences in motivational factors between generations. As described by Kupperschmidt (2000), Boomers grew up for competing between each other and from early age understood the value of hard work and what it takes to stand out; their “values” are related to work hours; described by Crumpacker & Crumpacker (2007) Baby Boomers tend to be irritated by lazy employees; because of their emphasis on hard work and achievement, they value loyalty and dedication to the workplace therefore result of more responsibilities as most motivating factor is not surprising. As stated by Crumpacker & Crumpacker (2007) they find it hard to balance their private lives and their work obligations which is showed by results of the present importance scale study show that free time is quite important to Baby Boomers. According to (Crumpacker & Crumpacker, 2007) Generation X entered the workplace facing competition with the Baby Boomers for jobs during the 1980s’ recession, which in result made many of these individuals distrustful towards the older generation which would explain current results of Generation X being most motivated by advancement potential. Research by Smola and Sutton (2002) found that Baby Boomers think of work as being more central to their life than do Generation X; Greenhaus, Callanan, and Godshalk (2000) suggests that Gen X tend to be less focused on occupational status than Baby Boomers which is contradictory to the present findings where advancement potential matters to Generation X. Gentry et al., (2009) found that Baby Boomers and Generation X were very similar in their expectations and desires for development, which is opposing current findings; on both motivational factor and importance scale, Generation X is motivated by advancement potential where Baby Boomers are most driven by more responsibilities, not desire for development. Statistically, these differences were quite substantial. Jurkiewicz (2000) finding that Gen X and Baby Boomers are alike in the desire to benefit society and earn higher salary is relevant to current findings, with difference being between both age groups being insignificant; however Generation Y showed their main motivation is compensation and the difference between other age groups was very considerable.
This is confirmed in the study of Montana & Petit (2008) which showed that Generation Y ranks “good pay” as one of their main motivators. (Hart et al., 2003) discovery of organizational climate being similar across Generation X and Baby Boomers employees has been confirmed in this study, where work environment scored exactly the same across both age groups, with very significant difference towards Generation Y who ranked it second most motivating. Previous study showed Generation Y rated opportunities for advancement as the most attractive work-related attribute (Ng, et al., 2010, p. 286), this however, was somewhat confirmed in the current study with advancement potential being third most motivating factor for this age group; and most important factor on the Likert scale rating. Results of study by Barford & Hester (2011) are very similar to current findings where Generation Y views responsibilities as much less important than Generation X and Baby Boomers and second least important, after free time, of all the motivational factors; however their result of Generation Y ranking compensation as less important than Generation X and Baby Boomers is contradictory to the present study, where Generation Y showed to be most motivated by compensation out of all three age groups; (Barford & Hester, 2011).

The present study found differences between generations on importance and motivational factors levels and revealed motivating factors do not have to be the same as importance factors.

In comparison with motivational factors of all three generations, importance scale results are quite different, which may be due to the fact that when given a choice, what might be a motivating factor for one group does not mean other variables are not important too.

When given more freedom in deciding on the importance of the factors results differed from one given motivational choice, therefore further study or inquisition into the topic with much more varied responses is necessary.

Such difference in results may indicate not only that there are major limitations of this kind of research but also that most of the studies conducted in the past, may have chosen similar method of analyzing generational differences and as a results they may not portray the full spectrum of the analysis necessary, proving some studies may not be accurate due to limitations imposed.
5.2. Implications and advice for future research

The relationships between importance factors and motivational factors and outcomes would benefit from closer examination using multi-method, longitudinal research designs (also suggested by Sullivan, Forret, Carraher & Mainiero, 2009, and Cennamo & Gardner, 2008) to study generation differences. It is because judging by various previous researches, age rather than generation may be a major factor influencing these results (Cennamo & Gardner, 2008). Research designed in a way whereby data were collected few times over the life span of employees, should be able to show changes within person that developed due to the aging process in addition to personal differences due to generational attachment.

Use of such designs in the future would allow scholars to determine whether other factors such as career stage and the maturation process have more influence on workplace attitudes and motivation than generational classification, and provide a more comprehensive understanding of this compound trend so that so that scholars can reach an agreement on the matter and offer a research-based recommendations to managers.

As noted by Sullivan, Forret, Carraher & Mainiero (2009) various sources are seeking an understanding of generational differences in organizations (e.g. Callanan and Greenhaus, 2008). In particular, specific questions addressing the issue have been asked: How can we best manage (Eisner, 2005), communicate (Reynolds et al., 2008), and train (Proserpio & Gioia, 2007) employees of different generations? How can we assist members of older generations to best transfer knowledge to the younger generations of workers (Carraher et al., 2008; Kapp, 2007) How can organizations most effectively use generational differences for strategic advantage (Gorman et al., 2004, Sullivan, Forret, Carraher & Mainiero, 2009)?

Present study findings offer important insights for the management of Irish workforce composed of members from different generations and imply that there are various differences between generations, therefore more study on the subject matter is indeed needed. Due to the fact that many practitioners tend to acquire information about “clashing” generations from popular press, some views of differences can be disturbed or not empirically supported.
5.3. Recommendation for managers

To sum up, Irish workforce consists of members of different generations who not only have different needs, but may put importance on and be motivated by different factors. As a result managers and human resource professionals should develop plans for the best way of motivating these diverse employees in order to recruit and retain the highest quality talent. (Sullivan, Forret, Carraher & Mainiero, 2009).

Managers may avoid disappointment and possibly conflict between their employees by discussing values and expectations to handle their workers expectations from the outset. By developing and communicating organizational values and priorities they may reduce employee turnover and recruitment costs for the company.

All generations hold their own particular points of view, are influenced by different events experienced through their formative year which shaped the way they think, their attitudes and behaviours. (Bardfor and Hester, 2011; Crumpacker and Crumpacker, 2007)

Having a clear understanding of the differences and also the similarities between generational groups, Human Resource field and managers can develop policies, which aid communication, improve satisfaction, commitment, and retention, and increase organizational knowledge management and productivity (Cennamo & Gardner, 2008). By having an enhanced understanding of generational diversities, organizational leaders will be able to better motivate their employees which in result will boost productivity and job satisfaction.
Chapter 6

Reflection on Learning and Skill Development

This chapter will focus on analysis of the learning process during the MBA programme and reflects on new skills acquired and old skills developed by the researcher.

This chapter will be divided into two parts: first detailing researcher’s background and the learning style adopted and second, highlighting how a practice of getting a postgraduate degree and writing a dissertation has added value to researcher’s skills and personal development.

6.1. Learning Style

Dunn et al., (1994), cited in Bostrom, L. & Lassen, L. M. (2006) describes learning style, as a way in which each learner begins to concentrate on, process and retain new information. However, depending on the setting, each individual is likely to use different types of learning styles.

Kolb (1984) illustrate process of learning in a circular way and explains that it happens in four stages of a learning cycle. Learning cycle starts from concrete experience, followed by reflection, observation, abstract concepts and generalisations, and ends at active experimentation, (Honey & Mumford, 1986). This cycle refers to the process in which learner begins to understand his experience and acts in a way to implement a change in his behaviour. Kolb explains that the most significant process of a learning is that the learner moves in a continuous clockwise flow through all the four phases of the learning cycle.
Based on the above model, researcher believes during this dissertation and the Master’s programme, she has gone through the flow of ‘concrete experience’, ‘reflective observation’, ‘abstract conceptualization’ and ‘active experimentation’.

Based on Kolb’s learning cycle and Honey and Mumford’s learning style, researcher believes she is an ‘activist’, however, during the process of writing her dissertation, researcher noticed her learning style has changed and she started acting more like a “reflector”.

Honey and Mumford's original definitions of learning styles are as follows (cited from Honey, P. & Mumford, A., 1982):

Learning style: Activist – “Activists involve themselves fully and without bias in new experiences. They enjoy the here and now, and are happy to be dominated by immediate experiences. They are open-minded, not sceptical, and this tends to make them enthusiastic about anything new. Their philosophy is: "I'll try anything once". They tend to act first and consider the consequences afterwards. Their days are filled with activity. They tackle problems by brainstorming. As soon as the excitement from one activity has died down they are busy looking for the next.
They tend to thrive on the challenge of new experiences but are bored with implementation and longer term consolidation. They are gregarious people constantly involving themselves with others but, in doing so, they seek to centre all activities around themselves” (Honey & Mumford, 1982).

Learning style: Theorist – “Theorists adapt and integrate observations into complex but logically sound theories. They think problems through in a vertical, step-by-step logical way. They assimilate disparate facts into coherent theories. They tend to be perfectionists who won't rest easy until things are tidy and fit into a rational scheme. They like to analyse and synthesize. They are keen on basic assumptions, principles, theories models and systems thinking. Their philosophy prizes rationality and logic. "If its logical its good." Questions they frequently ask are: "Does it make sense?" "How does this fit with that?" "What are the basic assumptions?" They tend to be detached, analytical and dedicated to rational objectivity rather than anything subjective or ambiguous. Their approach to problems is consistently logical. This is their ‘mental set' and they rigidly reject anything that doesn't fit with it. They prefer to maximise certainty and feel uncomfortable with subjective judgments, lateral thinking and anything flippant” (Honey & Mumford, 1982).

Learning style: Pragmatist – “Pragmatists are keen on trying out ideas, theories and techniques to see if they work in practice. They positively search out new ideas and take the first opportunity to experiment with applications. They are the sort of people who return from courses brimming with new ideas that they want to try out in practice. They like to get on with things and act quickly and confidently on ideas that attract them. They tend to be impatient with ruminating and open-ended discussions. They are essentially practical, down to earth people who like making practical decisions and solving problems. They respond to problems and opportunities 'as a challenge'. Their philosophy is ‘There is always a better way' and ‘if it works it's good’ “ (Honey & Mumford, 1982).

Learning style: Reflector – “Reflectors like to stand back to ponder experiences and observe them from many different perspectives. They collect data, both first hand and from others, and prefer to think about it thoroughly before coming to a conclusion. The thorough collection and analysis of data about experiences and events is what counts so they tend to postpone reaching definitive conclusions for as long as possible. Their philosophy is to be cautious. They are thoughtful people who like to consider all possible angles and implications before making a move. They prefer to take a back seat in meetings and discussions. They enjoy observing other people in action. They listen to others and get the drift of the discussion before making their own points.
They tend to adopt a low profile and have a slightly distant, tolerant unruffled air about them. When they act it is part of a wide picture which includes the past as well as the present and others' observations as well as their own” (Honey & Mumford, 1982).

The *concrete experience* learning phase consists of both academic and professional knowledge that researcher has acquired prior to the start of MBA programme and during semester one and two of the programme.

The second phase: *reflective observation* can by identified by the process of self-reflection and recognition of the research problem area and the research question to be pursued, which was identified during 1st semester of the course.

The subsequent phase of an *abstract conceptualization* consisted of comprehensive analysis of the literature and the formulation of the research hypothesis. The final stage included *active experimentation*, was mainly based around the efforts to prove or disprove the research hypothesis.

*Academic background:*

Researcher has completed her Bachelor’s Degree in the business Management with HRM, from Dublin business School, in May 2011. MBA programme started in September 2011 which consisted of 3 main subjects, namely, International Management, Integrated Marketing Communications and Financial Planning. In the 2nd semester which comprised of 3 subject areas, namely, International Business and Trade (IBT), Services Marketing, Strategic Management. The IBT module consisted of three core topics: Marketing, Accounting and Finance, and Operations Management. Researcher has successfully completed both the semesters. The second year the main subject was Human Resources Management, namely Performance and Reward Management and Strategies for Human Resources. The second semester focused on Research skills, however all of the previous modules gave the researcher tools to develop her dissertation.
6.2. **Skill and personal development**

*Research capability and academic writing*

Extensive literature review allowed researcher to not only get familiar with an academic style of writing but also helped to understand the structure, not known before, of empirical academic research. In the beginning researcher has found herself to struggle with the amount of information and different style of academic text as opposed to regular management literature. Thankfully with the time, she not only became very familiar with the new way for writing and thinking, but also, became quite fond of the academic research and reflects on the opportunity to possibly carry out her study on much larger scale and using other qualitative techniques to gather better understanding and bring a genuine contribution to the fields of Business Psychology and Human Resource.

Furthermore, during literature review stage, the researcher learned how to gather data by searching in academic articles and journals and how to take out the information needed. Additionally, the researcher also learned how to implement a critical point of view by comparison of academic opinions about a same research matter. Most importantly, during the process of completing thesis, the researcher learned how to manage large amount of data, due to the fact that she had to read, analyse, print, copy and retain dozens of text books, journals and other academic writings.

*Motivational skills*

Whilst developing this dissertation, the researcher has learnt a lot about herself and others working around her, especially due to the fact that researcher has reviewed a lot of literature on motivational factors overall and their implications on business and employee performance. The researcher is now more confident on stepping up and applying this knowledge to her practical work situations, when managing her own team. The researcher learned to identify differences in the work approach posed by various employee types, which may not be entirely connected with the age group, but researcher performed a much broader research to the topic than just about motivation to do with the age groups.
**Numeracy and quantitative skills**

For the purpose of this dissertation, the researcher had to get familiar with the SPSS software to analyze the data collected and to collect the data using the Survey Monkey software. The researcher had never used either of the programmes, therefore both of these were a new experience. The researcher found SurveyMonkey to be quite easy to operate, however SPSS software posed some difficulties at the beginning. Although, in the end the researcher managed to use it correctly to analyse the data, but it took her a long time and a lot of effort to learn it. It might be due to the fact that researcher does not have analytical mind, therefore the ability to operate it now gives the researcher a great sense of achievement.

To, conclude, the MBA programme has helped the researcher to broadly develop her general business knowledge, gain an understanding about practical implications and improve in key skill areas. The programme has challenged her in many ways and offered varied opportunities to develop both academically and as a person. She has developed extensive research capability and analytical skills, which she now enjoys. She had an opportunity to work individually and as part of a team in diverse environment and have learned different perspectives from both her lecturers and peers.

With the multiple skills improved and developed during the time of an MBA programme, as well as practical learning style and dissertation, the researcher trusts she will be a valuable asset to any organization in the future.
Appendices

Appendix 1:

Questionnaire cover letter.

Hello,

My name is Kate and I’m an MBA graduate. I’m conducting a comprehensive study on generational differences in the workplace. The findings of this study will be reviewed in my thesis for completion of my MBA.

I believe there are distinct differences between each of the generations and this study will focus on five motivational factors at work.

The purpose of this survey is to find out what motivates each individual and see if there are definite patterns between motivational drivers and those belonging to a certain age group.

Please note, this survey is absolutely anonymous and is conducted purely for academic purposes.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this short, six questions, multiple-choice questionnaire.

With kind regards,
Kate
Appendix 2:

Questionnaire for quantitative research.

Q1: Out of the following three time periods, which one were you born in?

- [ ] 1945 - 1964
- [ ] 1965 - 1979
- [ ] 1980 - 2000

Q2: What is your gender?

- [ ] Female
- [ ] Male

Q3: What is your job classification?

- [ ] Managerial
- [ ] Non-managerial
Q4  What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- Did not attend school
- Junior Certificate
- Leaving Certificate
- Bachelor's Degree
- Higher Diploma
- Master's degree
- Postgraduate diploma
- Doctorate degree
- Higher doctorate

*NB Day Vocational (Group) Certificate ("Day Cert" or "Group Cert") and the Intermediate Certificate ("Inter Cert") equals today's Junior Certificate

Q5  Which one of the following would make you feel most motivated at work?

- More responsibilities
- Higher compensation/reward
- Better work environment
- Advancement potential
- More free time/flexible time

Other (please specify)
**6. Please rank below factors according to importance for you in the workplace with 5 being the most important, and 1 being least important.**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
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<th>3</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Responsibilities - meaning bigger work obligation and decision making power</td>
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<td>Compensation - total compensation offered by employer including salary, pension, health plan etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Work environment - meaning job location, people working in the location and physical work environment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Advancement potential - opportunity to progress in the current role and the whole organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fee time - amount of free time from work (holidays, flexible hours and special occasions)</td>
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Thank you very much for completing this survey and for helping me complete my research!

Your efforts are greatly appreciated.
Appendix 3:

Gantt chart.

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<td>F</td>
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<tr>
<td>Survey</td>
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<tr>
<td>Design &amp; Collect data</td>
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<tr>
<td>Analyse data</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Review studies</td>
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<td>Examine and compare studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
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<td>Compare findings with other studies</td>
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Appendix 4:

Costs.

SurveyMonkey – design and data collection ................................................................. 25EUR

Thesis print .................................................................................................................. 150EUR

Total ............................................................................................................................ 175EUR
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