



LEVEL 7 ASSESSMENT SPECIFICATION

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Topic: Exploring the Job Mobility and Job
Motivation of Middle Managers and evaluate if
they vary in different generations: a qualitative
study

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Part 1: Critical Review

“A grounded theory approach to developing a career change model in hospitality” (McGinley et al. 2014)

(1) Abstract

In this qualitative research article, McGinley used grounded theory approach to explore what made young hotel manager change careers. Participants in this study were hotel managers that had left the industry. The findings showed that job satisfaction and professional identity were no longer the key factors to drive career change. Instead, dissatisfaction on career progression and work to life conflict became the determinants of the career change model in this grounded theory article.

(2) Background

In 2011, hotel industry recorded a high turnover rate of 62%. The high turnover in hotel sector was mainly from young professionals whereas it was the norm in hotel industry that managers in entry level didn't need any managerial experience. The characteristic of hotel industry was fast paced, on “shift” working hours, weekend and holidays on-duty, low paid and team based and in high turnover culture. In this study, two research questions were raised: why did entry-level hotel managers change careers? What did the process that these managers go through to change careers? The aim of this study was to understand more about the high turnover rate in hotel managers and to develop a more comprehensive theoretical model.

(3) Literature Review

A large number of studies have investigated the high turnover issues in hospitality and find ways to prevent it from deteriorating. Studies in job satisfaction, job motivation, and generational difference are commonly used as the research frameworks in turnover topics. Literatures about the reasons for employees leaving the hotel industry have been done in many countries such as Yang in Taiwan, Brown in US, Kandasamy in India, Cheng & Brown in Australia and Singapore and Wahyuningtyas in Indonesia (Yang et al. 2012; Brown & Thomas, 2015; Kandasamy & Ancheri, 2009; Cheng & Brown, 1998; Wahyuningtyas et al. 2015). These are all qualitative research articles to explain what caused the employees to leave and how to retain them. In this research, McGinley referenced career change model by Rhodes and Doering's study focusing on job dissatisfaction and career change intention while McGinley's model was a more comprehensive one including other factors such as work stress, job security, professional identity and social pressure in hotel industry. McGinley used a grounded theory approach for further in-depth investigation on this topic.

(4) Philosophical background

First comes first, it is important to understand the philosophical background of an article before discussing the context and outcomes. Smith posited that the beauty of philosophy was to encourage in-depth thinking through the indirect way of questioning about the nature while it created confusion about one's belief and perception. Yet, this gave chances for people to question about the nature and the reality (Smith, 1998). In qualitative research, post-positivist philosophy would be applied. Proctor claimed that the consistency in purpose of the research, research questions, methodology and researchers' personal philosophy were principal foundation of any research (Proctor 1998). Other than positivism from quantitative studies, post-positivism was the choice for qualitative researchers. A post-positivist research should have a view that reality was not a rigid thing while its composition was influenced by its context and other possibilities (Hughes, 1994). Among various factors in reality, construction, culture, gender and cultural beliefs were the most influential ones. Proctor valued the relationship between individual behavior, attitudes, external structures and socio-cultural issues (Proctor, 1998).

The interrelationship between ontology (the nature of reality), epistemology (the relationship between the researcher and the research), axiology (the role of value about the researcher), and the methodology (the process of the research) could be further explored by researchers after adapting philosophical way of thinking in their studies (Proctor, 1998).

In this research, interactive relationship between researcher and interviewees was established. To pursue the understanding of the truth and uncover the reality in order to find out determining reasons for career change of hotel young managers, grounded theory research was adopted for an in-depth study. Through the interview with open-ended questions, interviewees could freely express their views while researchers could use probe questions to further comprehend the rationale behind the phenomenon. With back and forth assessing and connecting the codes and categories by flexible grounded theory methodology, reality and truth would be identified by researchers' subjective views. Nevertheless, some limitations are found in qualitative study. First, subjective ideas and researchers' biases would incorporate into the result of the research. Second, the reproducibility is difficult due to different research settings and researchers' questioning skill. Third, since qualitative research method relies heavily on understanding the situation and finding the meaning of the situation, together with a small sample, it is difficult to facilitate the generalization of the study.

(5) Theoretical background

This article deployed grounded theory to be the methodology of the research. Grounded Theory is a qualitative research method and was first introduced by Glaser and Strauss in 1967. The major difference between grounded theory and other qualitative research methods is that grounded theory puts more emphasis upon theory development and data collection process. In the data collection process, the fieldwork of data collection and data analysis are doing simultaneously while other qualitative research would separate data collection and analysis process one by one (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). On the analysis pathway, the researcher would interpret the data from participants incorporating his own perspective. As such, researchers involve heavily on the construction of the theory by demonstrating personal and professional experiences in collecting and analyzing the data. The interplay between emergent theory and the whole process require researchers to have theoretical sensitivity to discover the relationship between categories to form a grounded theory (Strauss and Corbin, 1990).

The aim of this article was to build a theory (career change theory) by real data. The researcher needed to investigate and to get in in-depth understanding of the most determining reasons of young managers in career change in hotel industry. In analyzing data, the researcher would start in micro levels to generate codes. Then, he proceeded to analyzing the data and connecting the links that were inside the data to hypothesize the relationship with the phenomenon (Omar, 2010). Corbin explained that qualitative data was analyzed and coded during the whole process. Data was analyzed, conceptualized and brought together in fresh and alternative ways. That was the essence of coding process (Corbin, 1990). Three coding stages would be done inductively. Open coding involved breaking down the data into discrete parts while similarities and variations were closely examined to understand the underlying reasons for career change. Then, similar related data would be grouped into categories. Axial coding was the second stage that helped to rebuild the data by establishing the relationship between categories and subcategories. In the last stage of selective coding, researchers integrated and refined the theory which required the validation of relationship among categories and concepts (Darke et al. 1998).

Theoretical sampling is the process of data collection for theory generation. The researcher will jointly collect, code and analyze data to decide what kind of data would collect next. According to Glaser, theoretical sampling was mainly for checking on the emerging conceptual framework rather than verification of preconceived hypothesis. By constant comparative method to compare the data and to create the relationship of categories, the integrated data would come to the point where no more new themes or evidence discovered. Then, it came to the final stage of the process which was called saturation. Along the whole process, memoing was practiced to label and to reflect the codes and

categories for theoretical sorting (Glaser, 1978). In this article, grounded theory method had been comprehensively applied effectively.

(6) Data collection method

In this study, semi-structured interviews with ex-hotel managers had been carried out to form a model to illustrate what factors induced young managers to change careers. Inductive method was used to develop the theoretical themes. In general, McGinley designed the whole process skillfully. In sampling process, initially, he picked 4 participants from his networks. Then, by theoretical sampling, more participants were participated and recruited via LinkedIn and hotel company alumni. Finally, 12 participants aged between 26-32 years old worked for diverse sets of hotels and in different states across USA joined the research. The interviews were in face-to-face, Skype or telephone format. During the coding mechanism, work life conflict and dissatisfaction with career progress were identified because of the high frequency appeared in interviews. After several rounds of coding process, some more factors that nurtured career change actions appeared. These included the training in hotel industry enabling them to find jobs easily and their concern about the future imbalance of work affecting their social life. All these factors led to five key themes emerged. They were job satisfaction, work-life conflict, career progression, social support and other career opportunities. After the first order analysis, McGinley continued the second order analysis to further interpret the relationship among these themes. At last, he came up with a integrated model of career change process in hotel industry that initiated by two push factors which were high work to life conflict and dissatisfaction with career progression. Lack of strong anchor factors to tie the hotel managers to work in hospitality industry also catalyze career change process.

(7) Critique on the method

The article has demonstrated grounded theory effectively in some ways. However, some processes in grounded theory were not mentioned in this research paper. In qualitative research, especially in grounded theory, the attention to procedures and details in order to develop systematically about the phenomena being studied are crucial. The research should show the evidence that the process was adhered to the methodology. In this paper, McGinley didn't share the information of interview questions, coding tree, and trustworthiness issues. In data analysis procedure, saturation and ethnic procedures were not mentioned. Yet, a comprehensive recommendation was a good point to enrich the outcome of this study.

(a) Questions

Firstly, interview questions were not indicated in the research paper. In a grounded theory research method, interview question was a critical factor that led to different data provided for coding and emergent themes. The study should depict how the questions were derived. McGinley didn't post any interview questions which would hinder the transferability of the paper.

(b) Saturation

In this article, McGinley expanded the interviewee pool from 4 to 12 people but very little mention about how to reach the saturation during the data analysis process. Open, axial and selective coding procedures were clearly depicted. Nevertheless, the author didn't mention about the saturation process and how it came up to the end of coding process. Saturation is an essential stage for grounded theory research. It includes theoretical saturation when the analysis result shows recurring information and sampling saturation when the participants are providing similar types of answers and no new information appeared. (Omar et al. 2010).

(c) Coding Tree

Although the author stated five emergent themes after the data analysis, very few information about the codes that collected and how they evolved to the themes. It was also the researcher's role to provide sufficient detail to enable readers to judge whether the outcome of the research was rooted in the data generated by the steps of coding and data analysis. The development process could be further illustrated to help researchers to further under the workflow of the research.

(d) Use of Memo

There was no indication about memoing or transcription in the procedure. Memoing is the write up of ideas about codes and the relationships with the analyst while coding (Glaser, 1978). It is a tool to abstract ideas throughout the process. One of the steps in developing emergent themes is to detect the emergencies of concepts via memoing. As such, the use of memo should include in part of the development process.

(e) Ethnical Procedure

The author didn't mention about the procedure of providing consent letter and protecting confidentiality. At the initial stage, the participant should receive an informed consent form to understand their rights in withdrawal procedure, the protection in confidentiality and the purpose of the study. They are required to sign the form for record while their identities would remain anonymous and the content would remain undisclosed.

(f) Verification Process

No verification process was presented in the study. In order to ensure the researcher was translating the data correctly, expert panel or member checking by participants could be deployed to support the credibility of the research.

(g) Trustworthiness

Lincoln and Guba posited that trustworthiness was the way that researchers used to prove their research findings were acceptable and reliable for practical use and for future research purposes. They suggested that the concept of trustworthiness could be supported by introducing credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Lincoln, 2007). These criteria could help providing a more scientific and systematic approaches to assess a qualitative study which was parallel to the validity and reliability of quantitative research.

(i) Credibility

Credibility refers to the consistency between the participants' views and the researcher's interpretation of their opinion. It could be enhanced by triangulation, persistent observation, and member checking. Triangulation refers to the use of multiple methods or data sources in qualitative research to develop a comprehensive understanding of phenomena (Patton, 1999). However, in this article, the use of triangulation was not obviously stated. The author did not mention about any member checking procedure which would affect the creditability of the study.

(ii) Transferability

Transferability refers to the generalizability and applicability of the research to studies that are not in the context of the study. This can be enhanced by providing thick description of findings so that those who would like to transfer could decide the transferability (Lincoln, 2007). As mentioned earlier, some of the coding and data analysis procedures were not clearly depicted in the paper. The transferability needed to be further evaluated

(iii) Dependability

The research process needed to be logical, traceable and clearly documented in order to achieve dependability (Tobin & Begley, 2004). The dependability could be evaluated only if the research process is clearly listed out and demonstrated. Since the coding tree was missing which could not provide solid tracks for readers to follow the coding process, the dependability of this study was not fully fulfilled.

(iv) Confirmability

According to Koch, confirmability would be resulted when credibility, transferability and dependability were in place (Koch, 1994). Confirmability is about the capability of researchers' interpretation of the data. To achieve this, it is essential for McGinley to fully demonstrate the rationale and the flow of his interpretation.

(8) Recommendation

One of the purposes of conducting research, especially in business related topics, is to put the knowledge created through the research into practice. In this study, McGinley had done a precise and fruitful recommendations for further exploration both in academic and practical aspects. McGinley suggested to have a longitudinal design to further explore job satisfaction and the relationship with career progression. Apart from it, the perception of fit to the job was another aspect that future studies could focus on. Some suggestions for real world practice such as holiday rotation, job preview, and special compensation programs were measure that hospitality industry could deploy to retain serious turnover.

(9) Conclusion

The article successful identified an integrated model to explain the career change process in hospitality industry. Nevertheless, the coding and data analysis procedure are needed to be further fine-tuned in order to fulfill the rigor procedural requirement of grounded theory.

Part 2: Research Proposal

Topic: Exploring the job mobility and job motivation of middle managers and evaluate if they vary in different generations: a qualitative study

(1) Abstract

It is the first time that there are five generations working in the workforce with time interval of 60 years between the oldest and youngest workers (Glass, 2007). The generations leaving the workplace will be different from the newest generation entering in terms of work traits. Leaders and companies who can recognize the uniqueness of every cohort and find ways to leverage the diverse strengths will win the talent war. The purpose of this research is to explore how to retain and motivate middle managers in workforce, concurrently, evaluate whether these factors vary in different generations. Qualitative research method from Glaser and Strauss's grounded theory is applied. Baby Boomers, Gen X and Millennials that work side by side will be studied in this research. The result showed that the factors lead to job satisfaction, job dissatisfaction and job motivators are similar in three generations in middle management level. To further explore this topic, a larger sample pool with global geographical coverage and Gen Z inclusive would make this study more comprehensive and applicable.

(2) Background

Nowadays, organizations are finding it challenging to retain and motivate middle managers, especially in the era of generation diversity in workplace. Middle level managers play an important position in organization hierarchy as they serve as the interface between top management and operational level employees. Since generation differences impact how work is performed, an important issue is to understand how to accommodate different work approaches (O'Bannon, 2001; Ruch, 2000). The central research question is: in today's competitive commercial landscape, how to motivate and retain middle management of multi-generations? The core objective of this research is to understand the data collected from middle level managers of three generations to explain under what circumstances will they decide to leave or to stay in a company, and how to motivate them to devote their best to the organization. Four purposes are needed to fulfill in order to achieve the core objective of this qualitative research.

- a) To identify different reasons that make the middle managers decide to quit a job
- b) To uncover under what scenarios would middle managers stop job mobility but prefer staying in the same company

- c) What are the job motivators of middle management?
- d) To explore ways to retain and to motivate middle managers of multi-generations

(3) Literature Review

The theories of job satisfaction, motivation and generation differences serve as the foundation of this study in forming questions and context. There has been significant number of articles published regarding job motivation, generation difference, middle managers, and high employee turnover. Studies include generation and motivation (Wong et al 2008, Yusoff & Kian, 2013, Twenge & Campbell 2008), middle managers (Brubakk & Wilkinson, 1996; Nurdalia et al, 2014; Carpenter, 1989; Kominis et al, 2007), and employee turnover (Benson & Brown, 2011; Rani & Samuel, 2016). Nonetheless, very limited articles are focused on middle managers of multi-generations in qualitative research. For instance, Jansen & Samuel in 2014 had written about middle managers and motivation. Wong also published research on generational difference and motivation. Yet, no research, as far as my best understanding, was found regarding middle managers, generational difference and motivation in qualitative perspective, especially in Hong Kong.

(a) Middle level Mangers

Middle level managers are important to an organization due to their special role in motivating employees, removing obstacles, clarifying paths to goal and reward staff (Dobson, 1993). According to a Society for Human Resources Management study, the cost that used for replacing and hiring a new staff may be as high as 60% of the staff's annual income (SHRM, 2011).

(b) Motivation

According to Pinder, work motivation is “a set of energetic forces that originate both within as well as beyond an individual's being, to initiate work-related behavior” (Pinder, 1998, p.11). There are abundance of motivation theories (Bandura, 1986; Deci & Ryan, 1985; Hackman & Oldham, 1980; Herzberg, 1959; Locke, 1991; Maslow, 1970; Vroom, 21964; Weiner, 1986, Miner, 1978) on leadership, management and organizational behaviors. Salahuddin also suggested that the failure to recognize issues and complication related to generational difference may cause considerable impact on leadership and long term success of an organization (Salahuddin, 2010). There remains a gap to integrate generation differences and motivation in a qualitative research. Classical Two-Factor Theory and generational theory would be included in this study for further elaboration.

(c) 2 Factor Theory

2 factory theory was developed by Herzberg in 1959. It supports that job satisfaction related positively to job performance levels. Job satisfaction is derived from motivational factors such as

recognition, advancement, challenging work responsibility and achievement. On the flip side, job dissatisfaction can be developed through hygiene factors such as company policies, administrative practices, supervision, interpersonal relationships (supervisors, peers and subordinates) , working conditions, job security, fringe benefits and salary. Hygiene factors may help eliminate dissatisfaction but do not generation positive job feeling nor upgrading job performance. Management should focus on motivational factors to maximize overall organization productivity (Herzberg et al., 1959, 1993).

(d) Generational Theory

Generation is defined as people that are grouped within a certain range of ages, location they live, and historical events that they experienced. The society creates shared value system among people in each historical context between generations (Yusuf, Kian, 2013). Furnham believed that their experience in different ages, life situation, number of years spent working full time in job would also affect different work behaviors (Furnham et al, 2009). Different work traits in three generations are shown in Table 1.

(4) Research Philosophy

A research philosophy or paradigm is a philosophical framework that influences how research could be manage. There are two main types of research paradigm's which are Positivism and Interpretivism. Positivism assumes that social phenomenon is measurable, and it is mainly associated with quantitative method. On the other side, Interpretivism depicts that reality is in human's mind and is subjective in interpreting data with researcher's history and experience. Philosophical assumptions would apply to interpretive frameworks which include ontology, epistemology, axiology and methodology. These assumptions would become part of the paradigms or beliefs that researchers bring into the studies. Ontology refers to the nature of reality which is relativism in qualitative studies. It is subjective yet it allows reality can be seen through in various perspectives. Realities are constructed depends on what the researcher wants to see. Epistemology is about the interactive relationship between researcher and the research. EMIC expresses the subject viewpoints and firsthand experience obtained from within the social group. Human culture, words, perception and beliefs are main sources of information for interpretation. Axiology is about the role of values that researcher put on the study. The research is value-laden, and researchers might have human interest upon research. Methodology refers to the process of research. In this study, inductive approach, constructivist ground theory is used for data analysis. Constructivism is similar to Interpretivism with emphasis on participants' subjective views of the topics (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

(5) Methodology:

The qualitative research method uses flexible design and subjective ways to generate new insights, deep comprehension, and theoretically rich observations (Rubin, 2008). A grounded theory, introduced by Glaser and Strauss in 1967, is a systematic procedure for the researcher to analyze the situation, think critically, recognize bias, be open-minded and attentive to participants' words and actions. The application of grounded theory is a complex process that involves the sequence of interactions among people and events by addressing appropriate questions (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). In-depth interviews with semi-structured open-ended questions, followed by probing questions, are applied to collect the data for the research. The purpose of the interviews in this study was to understand the reason why middle managers intended to leave a job, what made them stay and how to motivate them to contribute their utmost to the organization. Glaser stressed that theory must come from data but not other knowledge (Glaser, 1978). The procedures in grounded theory was supposed to help researchers to develop theories, ironically, it turned out to divert attention from data toward the operational steps (Schatzman, 1991).

(a) Sampling and Data Collection

This study took place in Hong Kong. The participants included middle managers in the fields of marketing, finance, retail operation and others. They all possessed managerial experience for more than 5 years. Purposive sampling was applied to ensure participants were under the criteria that are going to study. They were asked to join individual face-to-face interviews which carried out either in their offices or in coffee shops. For ethical procedure, consent forms were signed before the interviews for their informant rights about the purpose of the study, usage of the data, the withdrawal procedures and the confidentiality in interview content and their identities. This would minimize and avoid issues of deception and disempowering (Creswell, 2009). The interview material would be kept for 3 years upon completion of the research study and destroyed afterwards.

Semi-structured set of open-ended questions were used for interviews. The interviews were audio recorded and transcribed. Each interview lasted about one hour. Due to time constraint, pilot study was omitted in the research.

(b) Data Analysis Plan

Regarding data analysis, the first level of grounded theory is 'open coding'. Data are grouped based on themes or categories. The researcher needs to have enough knowledge and understanding of the subject being studied. In the second level, 'axial coding' will be done. The researcher needs to connect the themes, applied knowledge, experience and belief and make good

sense of it. The repeat process of coding between theoretical sampling and constant comparative analysis of data among and within emergent categories. The data would then be consolidated through “selective coding”. Data collection process stops when the data is saturated. Data can be saturated when participants are providing recurring type of information (Lawrence & Tar, 2013). The researchers will then weave the categories together to form emergent theory.

(6) Preliminary Findings

(a) Demographic Characteristics

Table 2 contained the demographics of the 11 interview participants who ranged in age from 35-57. They were middle managers from different industries and gained more than 5 years of managerial experience. Among 11 of them, 3 of them were Baby Boomers, 4 were Gen X and 4 were Millennials. The classification of generation is as follows: (Strauss & Howe, 1991)

Baby Boomer: born between 1946-1964

Generation X: born between 1965-1980

Millennial: born between 1981-1996

(b) Data Collection

To break the ice, a warm-up question was used to start the conversation: how do you like your job? After that, three main types of question were asked to understand why they needed to change the job, what made them stay in a job and how could they be motivated (Appendix 2). All the questions were rooted in job satisfaction, dissatisfaction and job motivation. Each interview lasted for around one hour. 5 out of 11 participants felt good after the interviews as they thought that it was a right timing for them to reflect if they should continue their current job.

(c) Data Analysis

The analysis procedure for this grounded theory included open, axial and selective coding.

(i) Open Coding

Data analysis began with first completed transcription of the initial interview and continued through the remaining 10 interviews. After the first interview, initial coding process started by reviewing transcript line by line. The constant comparative method was deployed to identify the similarities and differences after the second interviews. The whole process yielded more than 200 codes.

(ii) Axial Coding

By systematic analysis and constant comparison, the codes were reduced, and relationship was formed among categories. In this stage, axial coding allowed researchers to determine the relevance of initial codes. The process of initial coding and axial coding could be intertwined due to the reason that coding was not entirely in linear process (Charmaz, 2014). In this study, axial codes such as “*lack of support from supervisor*” was formed by data such as – “my boss doesn’t have any idea or direction. It’s wasting my time.” (P7); “she always demotivates us by rejecting our idea in front of other colleagues” (P1). Then, all codes were grouped by intrinsic, extrinsic (activities), and extrinsic (human interaction) factors for segmentation (Appendix 4).

(iii) Selective Coding

Since there were a lot of categories appeared, selective coding was formed to interrelate them and aimed at delivering emergent themes. Through memoing, continuous constant comparative analysis and theoretical sampling, codes and categories were reduced and rebuilt to emerge 8 sub-themes.

Intrinsic

- Support and recognition by supervisor and management
- Meaningful job with learning opportunity
- Coaching and career planning to manage expectation

Extrinsic (activity)

- Competitive remuneration to retain and to motivate
- Open and transparent appraisal system
- Respect work life balance by providing sufficient resources

Extrinsic (human interaction)

- Team building and company culture
- People management capability of senior management and supervisors of middle managers

(iv) Saturation

Saturation occurs when the new data yields no more new properties (Charmaz, 2014). No new themes emerged between the eighth and the final interview which indicated the reaching of saturation.

(v) Memo Writing

Memo writing, journaling and note taking were used through the entire data collection and data analysis process. Memo writing enabled researcher to review the essence of the dialogues, the observations, thoughts and ideas that have recorded while these directly helped developing emergent themes during the process.

(d) Emerging Substantive Themes

After constant comparison along the inductive reasoning, substantive themes emerged (Appendix 5). Based on 11 interviews and more than 20 follow-up phone calls and interviews, 6 themes were resulted. The emergent themes were as follows:

- Give empowerment and grant ownership to middle managers for self-actualization
- Devise clear development pathway align with company objectives to manage expectation, especially for Gen X and Millennials
- Focus on work overload and resources support to mitigate resignation intention, especially in Baby Boomers
- Competitive and strategic salary scheme for retention and motivation
- Comprehensive people management and leadership training program for senior management
- Promote fairness and transparency in company culture

(e) Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness consists of four criteria which are credibility (the consistency between participants' views and the research), transferability (replicability of the research), dependability (reliability of the study), and confirmability (consistency of the findings and the data). They are used to evaluate the rigor which shows the plausibility, credibility and integrity of the qualitative research process (Coughlan et al. 2007). In this study, triangulation has been done by reviewing other sources such as related literature, confirmation questions and follow-up interviews. Upon completion of transcribing, a copy was sent to each participant for their endorsement to ensure the understanding of their perspectives were correct. Besides, a detailed research design plan was documented in detail for replication and transparency. Upon completion of these procedures, confirmability would be achieved.

(7) Discussion & Implication from Findings

The findings of 6 themes were formed to answer the research question of “in today’s competitive commercial landscape, how to motivate and retain middle management of multi-generations?” From

the interviews, it showed that the data collected from different generations were more or less similar to each other except few attributes (Table 3). As such, the emergent substantive theory was in general applicable to different generations. Some generation specific attributes were also incorporated into the themes. First, it was essential to understand why middle managers were leaving the job, then how to retain them and last but not least, how to motivate them was also crucial for the sustainability of the organization. In order to fulfill the requirement of different generations, 6 themes needed to implement together to ensure the effectiveness of the theory. Employees who intended to leave the company might stay and being motivated when strategies were implemented.

(a) Two-Factor Theory

As the research setting was related to job motivation and satisfaction, Two-Factor theory was deployed to reference the emergent themes. In Two Factor theory, motivators are mainly derived from Maslow's self-actualization. In middle management, it turned out that intrinsic motivators were far more significant than extrinsic factors in motivating. Yet, some findings in this study were deviated from Herzberg's theory. Firstly, the findings showed that lack of job achievement was the dominant factor to cause managers leaving a job. Yet, in Two Factor Theory, motivators symbolized the psychological needs which were perceived as the additional benefits instead of the cause of dissatisfaction. Secondly, salary was considered as hygiene factory which meant that paying employees more would not cause motivation. In this study, salary was the dominant motivator in Gen X. Thirdly, Two Factor theory did not consider different generations had their unique work values and motivation factors. Fourthly, supervisor and team relationship were hygiene factors in Two Factor theory whereas they played significant roles in retaining and motivating employees. The absence of them was not only causing dissatisfaction but also leading to demotivation. To sum up, as Herzberg's theory was developed in 1959, it is worth to reconsider if the theory could fully apply to today's business world.

(b) Generational theory

From the study, the unique generation attributes were par with the generation traits in generational theory. Findings such as Baby Boomers were less focus on tangible return yet more concerned about work values were similar with the theory. while they were more loyal to the company. Gen X's priority was on work compensation and job achievement with their independent personal traits. For Millennials, they would mainly motivate by learning and growth opportunities by changing jobs to achieve. Nevertheless, since the age range of the samples is mainly concentrated between 35 to 55 with similar educational background and in similar positions in the organization, ostensibly, some of

the core values within middle managers were similar. This was also the reason why most of the job satisfaction and dissatisfaction factors were in common.

(c) Emergent Substantive Theory

Six substantive themes that emerged from grounded theory could help improving the retention rate while at the same time motivating the middle managers. Firstly, job achievement, decision making involvement and sometimes even salary discontentment and supervisor relationship could be answered by providing an environment with fairness and empowerment culture. Recognizing value could be founded in company with culture emphasis on fairness. As such, job ownership and transparency culture were emerged. 360-degree appraisal system would be a choice to create a fair and transparent environment. Secondly, growth opportunity, recognition and job nature concerns could be managed by strategies like providing clear career path. Nowadays, many companies are involving middle managers to participate in change decision, formulation and implementation in company's new strategic initiatives. It helps them to feel to be valued and have a clear indication that they would become part of the senior management teams. This would help retaining and motivating Gen X and Millennials once they realize their contribution are being recognized by giving chance to involve in strategic planning. Thirdly, through leadership and people management training, senior management would understand more and provide different solutions to retain and motivation middle managers. Today's senior management are devoting more energy on strategy formulation, this kind of trainings would divert their focus back to staff motivation and development whereas middle level managers are the tier to translate their strategies into actions for company success. Finally, answering extrinsic factors of salary and work overload, competitive and strategic salary schemes based on fairness, coupling with additional resources provided to settle workload issues, help resolving the helpless and distressed situation in workplace. Apart from a competitive salary range, other compensation schemes could be implemented. These include additional holiday, flexible work hours, education opportunity, additional incentives for outstanding contribution, free family trips etc. these are most welcome by employees, especially Gen X and Millennials. For Baby Boomers, intangible compensation such as more resources provided to settle company issues and involvement in company strategies would help retaining and motivating them.

(8) Limitation

The limitation of the study includes the subjective biases of the researchers. This would affect every entity of the study (Creswell, 2009). The small numbers of samples and narrow age range spectrum in each generation might affect the outcome of the assessment.

(9) Conclusion

The objective in this study was to explore the job mobility and job motivation of middle managers and evaluate if it varies in different generations. Qualitative grounded theory research method was used. The outcome with six substantive theories were emerged. Further research could compare age related difference rather than generation difference, include participants from different countries and invite Gen Z to join to make the research more comprehensive.

Appendix 1 - Reflection

Reflection

After completing the whole process of grounded theory development, the first word came to my mind was “interesting”. For managing the coding and constant comparative method were very exhausting and time consuming, nevertheless, the process was meaningful to enable the researcher to think thoroughly before coming up a conclusion. Researcher’s theoretical sensitivity was very important in this kind of methodology. The questioning skillset as a listener and facilitator was important in interviews. In this study, couple trial and error in coding and streamlining. 3 to 4 follow up questions by phone was not unusual. Researcher needs to have confidence in every step due to the flexible characteristics of grounded theory. Overall, grounded theory is practical, useful and challenging. The skill learnt from developing grounded theory would be useful in my further doctorate studies.

Appendix 2 – Interview Questions

Questions:

Initial Questions:

How do you like your job?

For those who answer happy with current job:

Follow up questions:

What are you happy about your job? And why?

What would have changed that you might think about leaving existing company?

Can you explain if above "happy" factors motivate you to devote the best to your current job?

If not, what are your job motivators? And why?

What makes you leave your previous job? And why?

What would have done so that you would change your mind and stay in your previous job?

For those who answer that they are planning to quit the current job:

Follow up questions:

What makes you decide to quit current job? And why?

What would have changed so that you will change your decision and stay in this company

What are the factors that would make you work enthusiastically in your job and devote the best to it?

Appendix 3 – Consent Form

Consent Form

Consent to take part in research

I..... voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.

I understand that even if I agree to participate now, I can withdraw at any time or refuse to answer any question without any consequences of any kind.

I understand that I can withdraw permission to use data from my interview within two weeks after the interview, in which case the material will be deleted.

I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me in writing and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.

I understand that participation involves face to face interview.

I understand that I will not benefit directly from participating in this research.

I agree to my interview being audio-recorded.

I understand that all information I provide for this study will be treated confidentially.

I understand that in any report on the results of this research my identity will remain anonymous. This will be done by changing my name and disguising any details of my interview which may reveal my identity or the identity of people I speak about.

I understand that disguised extracts from my interview may be quoted in the assignment of Qualitative Research for UWTSD DBA program.

I understand that signed consent forms and original audio recordings will be retained in [specify location, security arrangements and who has access to data] until [specific relevant period – for students this will be until the exam board confirms the results of their dissertation].

I understand that a transcript of my interview in which all identifying information has been removed will be retained for six months.

I understand that under freedom of information legalization I am entitled to access the information I have provided at any time while it is in storage as specified above.

I understand that I am free to contact any of the people involved in the research to seek further clarification and information.

Names, degrees, affiliations and contact details of researchers (and academic supervisors when relevant).

Signature of research participant

Signature of participant

Date

Signature of researcher

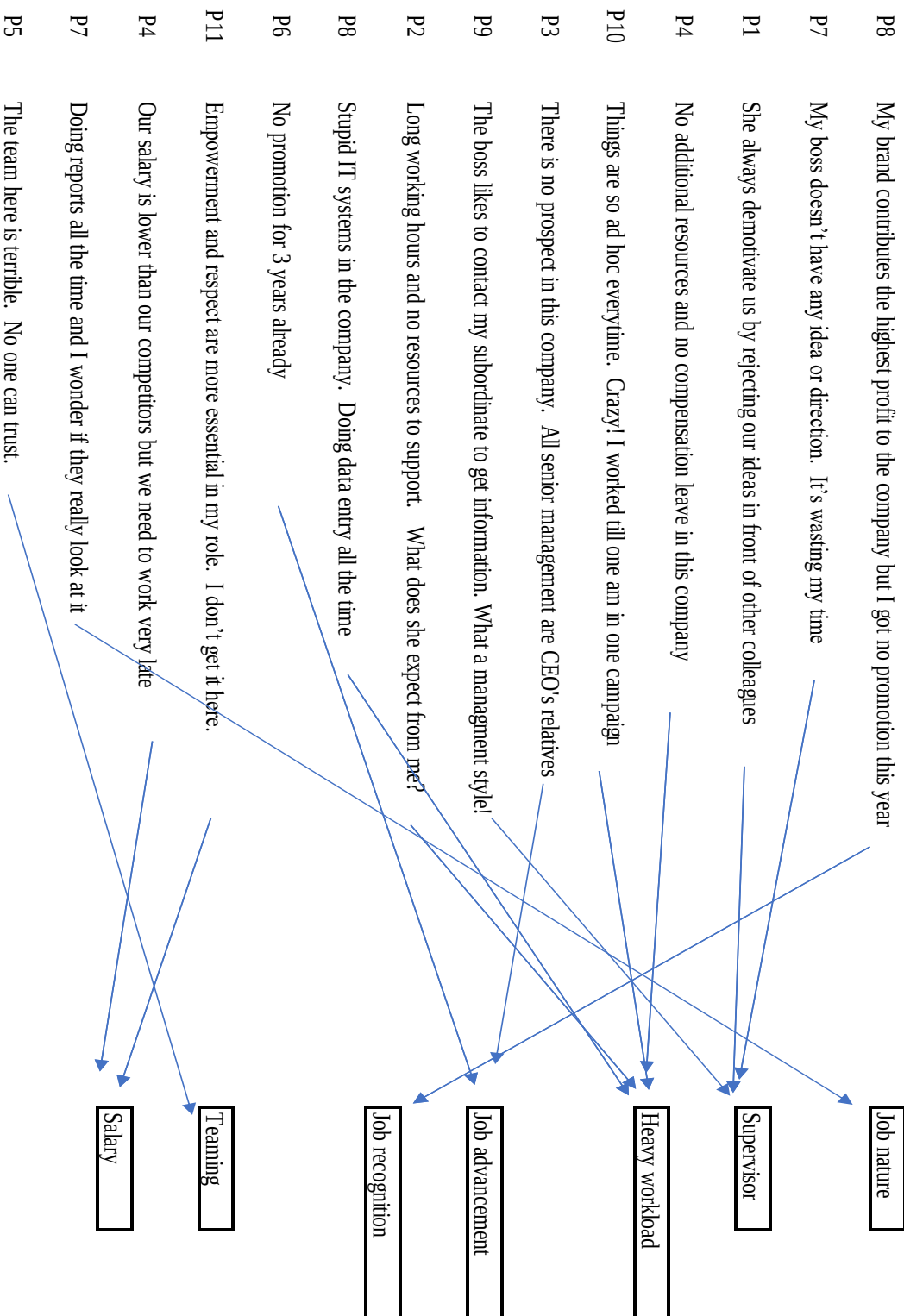
I believe the participant is giving informed consent to participate in this study

Signature of researcher

Date

Question: What makes you decide to quit current job? And why?

Participants Data (Reason for leaving the company)



Appendix 4 – Data Process

Opening Coding

Feedback by Generation: Baby Boomer (BB), Gen X (GX), Millennial (ML)

	BB	GX	ML	Frequency
company culture	1	2	3	
job achievement	2	4	2	8
supervisor	1	2	2	5
job nature	1	1	2	2
growth opportunity	1	2	2	5
job security	1	1	1	2
company policy	1	1	2	2
company resources	3	1	1	4
salary	3	3	3	3
work pressure	1	1	1	1
teaming	1	3	2	6
heavy work load	2	1	3	3
company direction	2			2

(U)
Leaving or
intention
to leave

(R)
Staying or
retaining in
same job

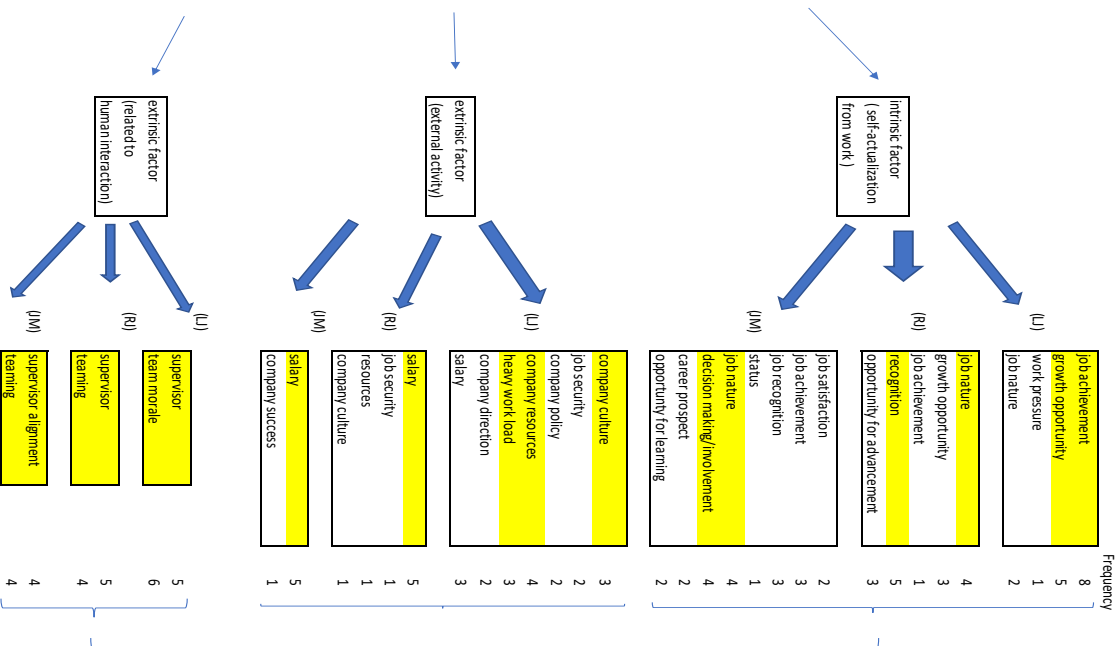
salary	3	2	5
job nature	2	2	4
opportunity for advancement	3		3
job security	1	3	1
growth opportunity	2	2	1
supervisor	2	1	5
resources	1	2	5
recognition	1	2	5
teaming	1	2	4
company culture	1	1	1
job achievement			1

(JM)
Motivators

job satisfaction	2	1	2	2
job achievement	4	1	5	3
salary	1	2	1	4
teaming	1	1	1	3
job recognition	1	1	1	1
company success	1	1	1	1
status	1	2	1	4
job nature	1	1	2	4
decision making/involvement	1	1	2	4
career prospect	1	1	2	2
supervisor alignment	2	2	4	4
opportunity for learning	1	1	2	2

= highest frequency

Axial Coding



Selective Coding

- Intrinsic**
 - Support and endorsement by supervisor and management
 - Meaningful job with learning opportunity
 - Coaching and career planning to manage expectation
- Extrinsic (activity)**
 - competitive remuneration to retain and to motivate
 - open and transparent appraisal system
 - respect work/life balance by providing sufficient resources
- Extrinsic (human interaction)**
 - team building and company culture
 - people management capability of senior management and supervisors of middle managers

Emergent Substantive Theory

- Intrinsic:**
 - a) Give empowerment and grant ownership to middle managers for self-actualization
 - b) Devise clear development pathway align with company objective to manage expectation, especially for Gen X and Millennials
- Extrinsic:**
 - a) Focus on work overload and resources support to mitigate resignation/intention, especially for Baby Boomers
 - b) Competitive and strategic salary scheme for retention and motivation
- Extrinsic (human interaction)**
 - a) Comprehensive people management and leadership training programs for senior management
 - b) Promote fairness and transparency in company culture

Table 1 – Generation Traits

Work Traits by Generation

Boomers	Gen X	Millennials
1946-1964 Key Events and Development TV, MoonLanding	1965-1980 Key Events and Development Nintendo, PCs	1981-1996 Key Events and Development Natural disasters, Mobile Technology
Work behaviour: optimistic workaholics	Work behaviour: entrepreneurial work autonomy	Work behaviour: value meaning and diversity tech-savvy
Work Aspiration: Job security and promotion	Work Aspiration: Work life balance Independence	Work Aspiration: Freedom and flexibility
Changing Jobs: Loyal to employer, Connecting to values	Changing Jobs: Just for compensation	Changing Jobs: Expected
Career Paths: Upward mobility	Career Paths: Need to know options now	Career Paths: Switch frequently and fast
Seek For: motivated by status and position contribution to the company	Seek For: flexible work life balance	Seek For: feedback and mentoring challenging work environment seek opportunity to contribute and grow

(Strauss & Howe, 1991; Twenge & Campbell, 2011)

Table 2 – Demographic

Participant	Gender	Age	Generation	Working Experience	Education Level	Managerial Level
P1	F	48	Gen X	25	Tertiary	HR Manager
P2	F	48	Gen X	25	Tertiary	Retail Manager
P3	M	38	Millennial	15	Tertiary	Product Manager
P4	F	39	Millennial	14	Tertiary	Marketing Manager
P5	F	37	Millennial	14	Tertiary	Marketing Supervisor
P6	F	37	Millennial	14	Tertiary	Assistant Product Manager
P7	M	56	Baby Boomer	33	Tertiary	Brand Manager
P8	F	55	Baby Boomer	32	Tertiary	Marketing Manager
P9	M	51	Gen X	28	Tertiary	Sales Manager
P10	F	49	Gen X	26	Tertiary	Accounting Manager
P11	F	57	Baby Boomer	34	Tertiary	Supervisor

Table 3 – Unique dominant factors by generation

Unique dominant factors by generation

	Boomers	Gen X	Millennials
Reason for leaving	lack of resources unclear company	no job achievement low salary poor teaming	
Reason for staying		salary job advancement	growth opportunity
Motivators		salary	

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7002 Qualitative Research Proposal

1

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UWTSD

Student Number: 1812884

Abstract & Background

Abstract

- The purpose of this research is to examine how to retain and motivate middle managers in workforce, concurrently, evaluate whether these factors vary in different generations. Qualitative research method with grounded theory is applied. Baby boomers, Gen X and Millennials will be researched in this study. The result shows that the factors lead to job satisfaction, job dissatisfaction and job motivators are similar in 3 generations in middle management level, except few unique generation traits in Baby boomers and Gen X. To further explore this topic, a larger sample pool and longer lead time are needed.

Background

- Middle Managers –Serve as interface between top management and bottom-level employees. They motivate operational employees and direct their efforts to achieve predetermined organizational goals.
- Today's organizations are characterized by workforce diversity. Each generation cohort has its own generation traits and work values. In order to retain and motivate middle management, a leader needs to understand the needs and preferences of each generation

Background

Middle management

- Middle level managers serve as interface between top management and bottom-level employees. They motivate operational employees and direct their efforts to achieve predetermined organizational goals.
- Frequent voluntary turnover has a negative impact on employee morale, productivity and company revenue.
- Recruiting and training a new employee requires staff time and money. Some studies (such as SHRM) predict that every time a business replaces a salaried employee, it costs 6 to 9 months' salary on average.

Multi-Generation

- Today's organizations are characterized by workforce diversity. Each generation cohort has its own generation traits and work values. In order to retain and motivate middle management, a leader needs to understand the needs and preferences of each generation

Research Topic, Statement & Questions

4

Research Topic:

- Exploring the job mobility and job motivation of middle managers and evaluate if it varies in different generations: a qualitative study

Research Question:

- In today's competitive commercial landscape, how to motivate and retain middle management of multi-generations?

To use grounded theory to understand the data collected from middle managers of different generations to explain under what circumstance do they decide to leave and to stay in a company, and how to motivate them to devote the best.

- a. To identify different reasons that make the middle managers decide to quit a job
- b. To uncover under what circumstance would they prefer staying in the same company without changing the job
- c. What are the job motivators of middle managers
- d. To explore ways to retain and to motivate middle managers of different generations

Research Philosophy

Ontology

- Nature of reality: Relativism
- Subjective: need to interact with people what truth means to them

Epistemology

EMIC

- Researchers belief about reality while it will dictate the kind of relationship the researchers should have on the study

Axiology

- Interpretivist Stance:
- Deep truth reasoning view
- Inductive
- Qualitative Research Method

Methodology

- Constructivist Ground Theory (3 characteristics)
 - a. Holistic View
 - b. Philosophy of naturalistic inquiry
 - c. Inductive approach to data analysis

Literature Review and Conceptual Framework

Literature Review

Achievement of Organizational Goals & Motivation of Middle level Managers within the context of the Two-Factor Theory (Jansen & Samuel, 2014) – Quantitative

Generational differences in personality and motivation (Wong et al. 2008) – Quantitative

Motivation at Work: Which matters more , Generation or Managerial Level? (Deal and Stawiski et al. 2013) - Quantitative

Gap in the literature

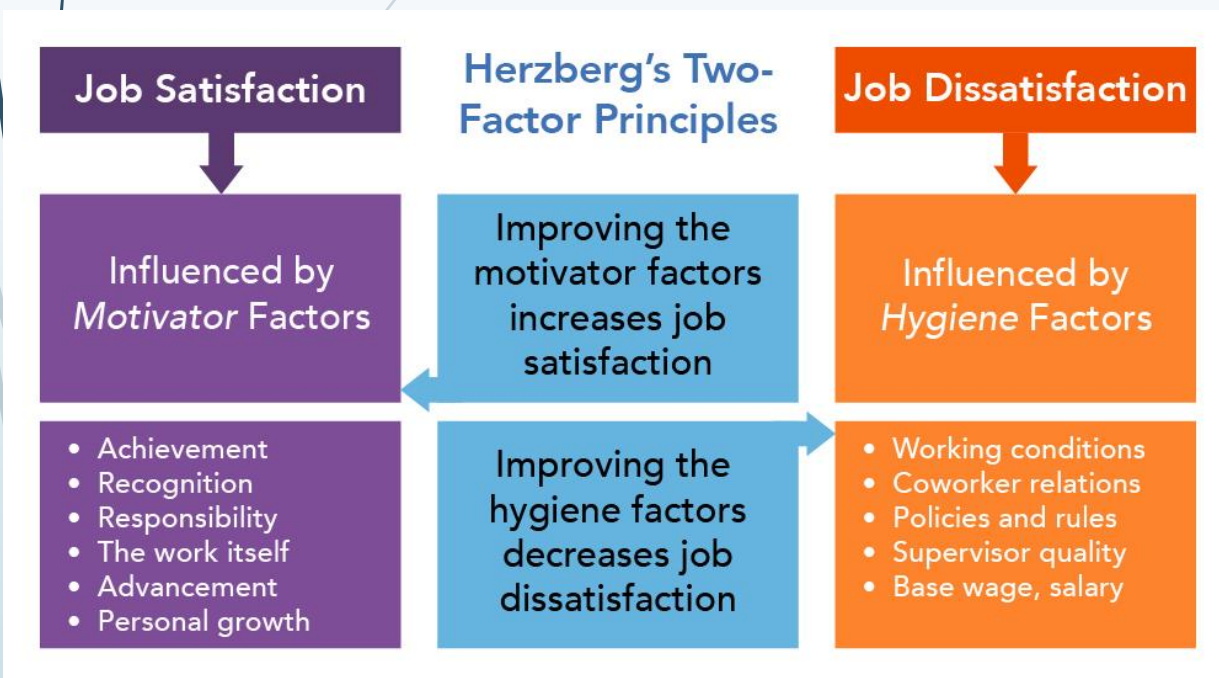
- There has been a significant amount of research conducted on retaining and motivating employees in quantities approach while very limited are targeted to middle managers of multi-generations in qualitative research

Conceptual Framework

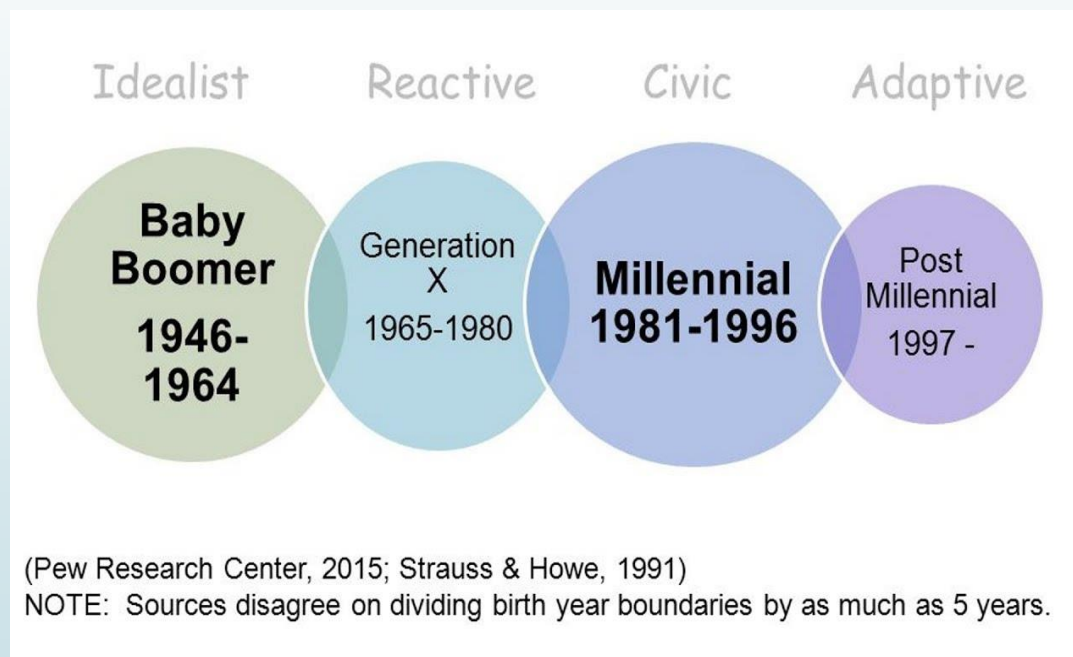
- The conceptual framework of this qualitative grounded theory research consists of two components. They are Herzberg's hygiene and motivational factors (Herzberg, 1968), and Generational theory (Mannheim, 1952).
- Generational theory helps in categorizing the unique identities of each generation which are Baby Boomers, Gen X and Millennials in this case.
- The two-factor theory addresses the job motivation and job dissatisfaction of employees in middle management

Theories

2 Factor Theory



Generational Theory



Grounded Theory

- It's a set of systematic yet flexible methodology for conducting inductive and qualitative inquiry aimed at theory construction (Charmaz, 2014)
- It's emergent and flexible characteristics are suitable for addressing open-ended questions in semi structured interviews with individual participants, analyzed with constant comparative method

Data Collection

- Small sample size (purposive sampling) of 11 middle managers are invited to join this study
- 3 in Baby Boomers (1946-1964)), 4 in Gen X(1965-1980), and 4 in Millennials (1981-1996)
- All of them has more than 5 years of experience in managerial level with 2 levels down for supervising while they are not yet in senior management level

Procedure of Grounded Theory

Procedures

- The face-to-face interviews were audio recorded, memoing and transcribed
- Start with semi-structured set of open-end questions, followed by probing questions to understand the subject and guide one-sided conversation.
- Before the interview, informed consent form were sent and signed by participants for privacy protection. Participants have the right to withdraw from the interview and decline anytime
- Trustworthiness was implemented to illuminate the rigor of qualitative research. Credibility , transferability, dependability and confirmability were applied to increase validity and reliability of the study

Demographics

Participant	Gender	Age	Generation	Working Experience	Education Level	Managerial Level
P1	F	48	Gen X	25	Tertiary	HR Manager
P2	F	48	Gen X	25	Tertiary	Retail Manager
P3	M	38	Millennial	15	Tertiary	Product Manager
P4	F	39	Millennial	14	Tertiary	Marketing Manager
P5	F	37	Millennial	14	Tertiary	Marketing Supervisor
P6	F	37	Millennial	14	Tertiary	Assistant Product Manager
P7	M	56	Baby Boomer	33	Tertiary	Brand Manager
P8	F	55	Baby Boomer	32	Tertiary	Marketing Manager
P9	M	51	Gen X	28	Tertiary	Sales Manager
P10	F	49	Gen X	26	Tertiary	Accounting Manager
P11	F	57	Baby Boomer	34	Tertiary	Supervisor

Baby Boomer

Gen X

Millennial

Data Analysis Plan

- Analysis procedure was performed by using the constant comparative method and included open, axial and selective coding
- Open Coding: Data was being categorized and subcategorized
Began word by word coding, looked for repeated words, then to analyse and discover insight about subsequent data collection
- Axial Coding: Systematically developed the links and the categories and subcategories between reasons for leaving and staying in a job while exploring motivating factors at the same time.
- Selective Coding: Integrating and refining categories to have new modes of thinking. In this case, it was applied in categorizing codes by intrinsic and extrinsic factors
- Saturation: When no new themes were emerged, it stopped. It happened until the 11th participants in this study

Opening Coding

Feedback by Generation: Baby Boomer (BB), Gen X (GX), Millennial (ML)

(LJ) Leaving or intention to leave

	BB	GX	ML	Frequency
company culture		1	2	3
job achievement	2	4	2	8
supervisor	1	2	2	5
job nature	1	1		2
growth opportunity	1	2	2	5
job security	1		1	2
company policy		1	1	2
company resources	3	1		4
salary		3		3
work pressure		1		1
teaming	1	3	2	6
heavy work load	2		1	3
company direction	2			2

(RJ) Staying or retaining in same job

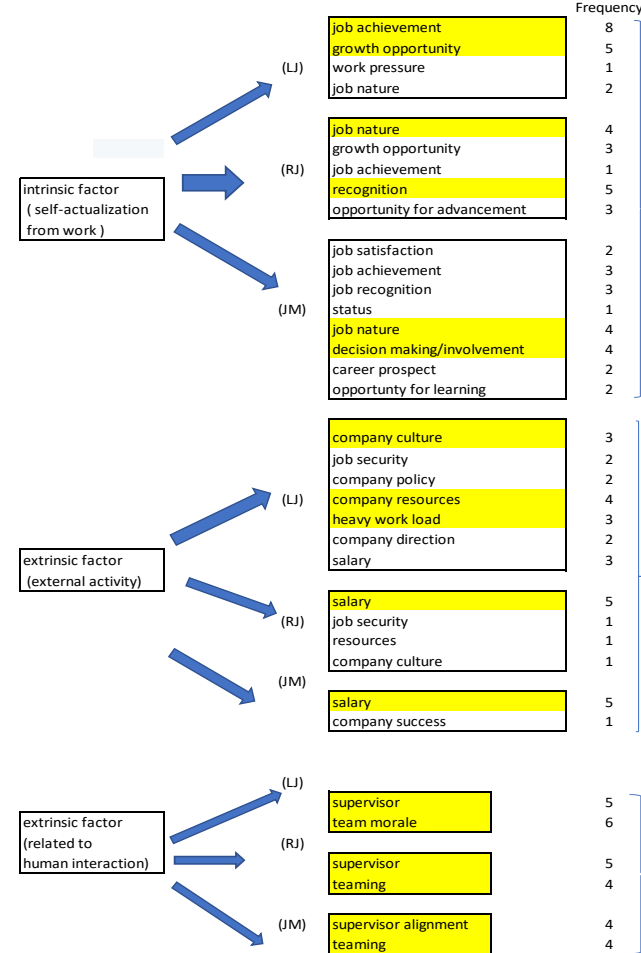
	BB	GX	ML	Frequency
salary		3	2	5
job nature		2	2	4
opportunity for advancement		3		3
job security	1			1
growth opportunity			3	3
supervisor	2	2	1	5
resources	1			1
recognition	1	2	2	5
teaming	1	2	1	4
company culture	1			1
job achievement				1

(JM) Job Motivators

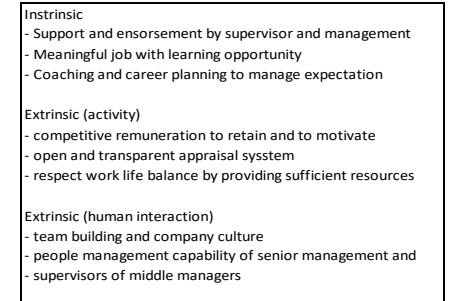
	BB	GX	ML	Frequency
job satisfaction		2		2
job achievement		1	2	3
salary		4	1	5
teaming	1	2	1	4
job recognition	1	1	1	3
company success	1			1
status	1			1
job nature	1	2	1	4
decision making/involvement	1	1	2	4
career prospect	1	1		2
supervisor alignment		2	2	4
opportunity for learning	1		1	2

= highest frequency

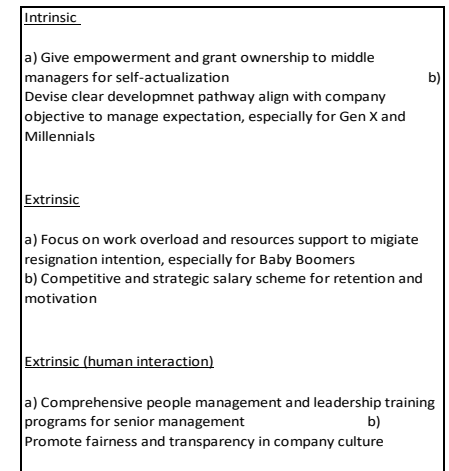
Axial Coding



Selective Coding



Emergent Substantive Theory



Analysis on Generational differences

(LJ)
Leaving
the Job



	BB	GX	ML	Frequency	
company culture			1	2	3
job achievement		2	4	2	8
supervisor		1	2	2	5
job nature		1	1		2
growth opportunity		1	2	2	5
job security		1		1	2
company policy			1	1	2
company resources		3	1		4
salary			3		3
work pressure			1		1
teaming		1	3	2	6
heavy work load		2		1	3
company prospect		2			2

(RJ)
Retaining
the Job



salary			3	2	5
job nature			2	2	4
opportunity for advancement			3		3
job security		1			1
growth opportunity				3	3
supervisor		2	2	1	5
resources		1			1
recognition		1	2	2	5
teaming		1	2	1	4
company culuture		1			1
job achievement					1

(JM)
Job
Motivators



job satisfaction			2		2
job achievement			1	2	3
salary			4	1	5
teaming		1	2	1	4
job recognition		1	1	1	3
company success		1			1
status		1			1
job nature		1	2	1	4
decision making/involvement		1	1	2	4
career prospect		1	1		2
supervisor alignment			2	2	4
opportuntiy for learning		1		1	2

Unique Attributes of Different Generations

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► Unique attributes of different generations:

1) Baby Boomers:

- Retain baby boomers by understanding their needs in resources requirement
- Align and communicate openly with them on company direction

2) Generation X:

- Provide competitive package for retention and motivation
- Give free hands and empowerment
- Communicate clear career path

3) Millennials:

- Provide systematic training and transparent career path

Emergent Substantive Theory

Ways to mitigate turnover rate, retain and motivate middle managers

- The data analysis in different generations are more or less similar to each other except few attributes. As such, the substantive theory are in general applicable to different generations.

Intrinsic

- a) Give empowerment and grant ownership to middle managers for self-actualization**
- b) Devise clear development pathway align with company objectives to manage expectation, especially for Gen X and Millennials**

Extrinsic

- a) Focus on work overload and resources support to lessen resignation intention, especially in Baby Boomers**
- b) Competitive and strategic salary scheme for retention and motivation**

Extrinsic (human interaction)

- a) Comprehensive people management and leadership training program for senior management**
- b) Promote fairness and transparency in company culture**

Conceptual Framework

a) 2 Factor Theory

Similarities:

- Intrinsic and extrinsic factors vs motivators and hygiene factors
- Motivators yield positive job satisfaction. In Herzberg's theory, motivators are mainly derived from Maslow's self actualization. For middle managers, intrinsic motivation is more important than extrinsic factors

Difference:

- The findings showed that lack of job achievement was the dominant factor to cause managers leaving a job. In Herzberg's theory, motivators symbolize the psychological needs that are perceived as the additional benefits instead of causing dissatisfaction
- Salary is considered as hygiene factor which means that paying employees more will not motivate. In this study, salary was the dominant motivator in Gen X. 2 Factor Theory did not consider different generations and their unique traits
- Supervisor and team relationship are hygiene factors in 2 Factor theory whereas they played significant roles in this findings in retaining and motivating employees. The absent of them not only cause dissatisfaction but also demotivation

Generation Theory

Findings

	Boomers	Gen X	Millennials
Reason for leaving	a) lack of resources b) unclear company direction	a) no job achievement b) salary c) teaming	
Reason for staying		a) salary b) opportunity for advancement	a) growth opportunity
Motivators		a) salary	

3 Generations at Work – Generation Traits

Boomers	Gen X	Millennial
1946-1964	1965-1980	1981-1996
Experienced TV, MoonLanding	Experienced Nintendo, PCs	Experienced Natural disasters, Mobile Technology
Work is: Expected	Work is: A difficult challenge	Work is: A means to an end
Aspiration: Job security	Aspiration: Work life balance Independence	Aspiration: Freedom and flexibility
Changing Jobs: Loyal to employer, Connecting to values	Changing Jobs: Just for compensation	Changing Jobs: Expected
Career Paths: Upward mobility	Career Paths: Need to know options now	Career Paths: Switch frequently and fast

Limitation & Recommendation

Limitation

- The small number of participants in each generation which are not quite enough for understanding the consistency for each group
- All participants are living in Hong Kong which become a geographical limitation
- Longer time is needed in order to have thorough understanding of each generations by recruiting more samples, say over 50.

Recommendation

- To deal with middle managers, it is important to provide various opportunities for career progression and professional growth in an enjoyable work environment. Work life balance and application of technology to streamline workflow are important to retain middle management. Empowerment, transparent and fair culture would add positive satisfaction to managers for retention and motivation
- It is suggested to use generation specific HR initiatives to tailor for their special needs and wants in order to retain and motivate each group strategically

Reflection

- Researcher's theoretical sensitivity is very important
- Couple trial and error in coding and stream lining data
- 3-4 follow up questions by phone after face-to-face interviews
- Involve skillset in questioning, like coaching skill
- Constant comparative method to shape and reshape the data collected and make comparison
- Researcher needs to have confidence in every step due to the flexible characteristics of Grounded Theory

Interview Questions

Initial Questions:

How do you like your job?

For those who answer happy with current job:

Follow up questions:

What are you happy about your job? And why?

What would have changed that you might think about leaving existing company?

Can you explain if above "happy" factors motivate you to devote the best to your current job?

If not, what are your job motivators? And why?

What makes you leave your previous job? And why?

What would have done so that you would change your mind and stay in your previous job?

For those who answer that they are planning to quit the current job:

Follow up questions:

What makes you decide to quit current job? And why?

What would have changed so that you will change your decision and stay in this company

What are the factors that would make you work enthusiastically in your job and devote the best to it?