

Differences in Motivational Forces Regarding
Intention to Quit

Erin McMullen
Kara Harrington
Julia Hickey
Adam Ehrentraut
Thomas Zuliniak
Ilana Wosnick
Amine Saidani

Introduction

In the upcoming years the vast majority of individuals entering the workforce will be part of Generation Y, as the Generation X move later into their careers and Baby Boomers phase out into retirement. Not only will the new technologies and innovations be in the hands of Generation Y, the priorities of these individuals will change as well. Due to this, these workers have somewhat of a competitive advantage over other generations and may feel more inclined to find a job that fits their particular needs, rather than a job that they need to adjust to. With a growing mix of generations in the workforce, the challenge of retaining workers has become more difficult. The current issue is that Generation Y is accused of being disloyal resulting in high turnover rates. According to McCrindle, 2006, those aged 20-24 are three times more likely to change jobs in a year than those aged 40-45 and 1 in 4 of those aged 20-24 change jobs in any given year. Generation Y is the workforce of the future and therefore, managers must retain employees of this generation by reducing voluntary turnover. Research regarding generational differences in their intention to quit will be crucial in the assistance for employers to decrease voluntary turnover. Analyzing factors such as workplace values, person-organizational fit, work preferences, motivational forces towards intention to quit, etc. and the differences of these factors between generations can help guide employers in their managerial decisions. Therefore, this study focuses on the motivational forces that drive Generation Y workers to work harder and commit to an organization compared to current generations in the workforce (Baby Boomers and Generation X). A survey was sent out to all generations that examined them on eight different motivational forces. This study will help managers to decipher the specific external forces that influence the

priorities of these workers, therefore gathering a rich understanding as to why there is turnover. This information will allow for employers to redefine their recruitment and retention strategies when dealing with high turnover. In the long run this will save businesses time and money with their training programs. Having an engaged and satisfied workforce will lead to high quality work and more importantly lead to higher job satisfaction.

Literature Review

A literature review was done to research and analyze the possibility of present factors that determine the differences that influence an individual's intention to quit. Based on the following findings, it is clear that differences for intention to quit between generations are present. Factors such as job preferences, person-organizational fit, and work values are varied between generations; but more interestingly, motivational forces that lead to these differences may be even more important to determine reasons for differences.

Randal and Ranft (2007) examined the relationship between individual motivations to maintain social ties with co workers, information exchange with others outside the firm, and turnover intentions. Two motivational forces were analyzed; *relationship motivation*: motivations to maintain social ties that enhance ones personal friendships and social support with others in the workplace (consummatory motivation: originate from norms that are internalized as a result of past or current experiences) and *job facilitation motivation*: motivations to maintain social ties that help improve one's success of the job, (instrumental motivation: based on the expectations of reciprocity where employees who are motivated to maintain social ties may not know exactly when or how they will be repaid for their efforts). The results found that job facilitation

motivation and relationship motivation are both positively correlated with workspace social inclusion. Individuals with job facilitation motivation for maintaining social ties with co-workers engage in more inter-organizational information exchange than those with relationship motivation. When individuals decide to quit a job, "the relationship between job facilitation motivation and inter-organizational information exchange becomes stronger." (Randal and Ranft 2007.)

There are many different definitions of turnover such as *Organizational Turnover* which indicates an individual did not remain with the same organization because of turnover; normally this is a suggestion that the individual has not voluntarily left an organization (Terborg & Lee, 2001). *Job-Hopping* is a frequent change of employers as an accepted practice among both white- and blue-collar employees in all sectors (Amaram, 2005). In certain organizations, such as information technology corporations, employment is frequently changed to gain in pay or benefits and to avoid dead-end jobs (Amaram, 2005). *Job Turnover* is a change in the scope of a job performed for the same employer (Kirschenbaum & Weisberg, 2002). However, the main focus is on *Voluntary Turnover* which is defined as a self-arrived decision of an individual to end their current employment (Terborg & Lee, 2001). This is the main focus because it gives us insight on the variables that increased individuals intent to quit. This will also give insight to managers as to how to manage employees and reduce the effects of certain variables.

Members of the Generation Y cohort (1979-1994) are focused on making a contribution to something worthwhile, to have their input recognized from the start, and are not willing to put in years of service in order to gain any significant reward from their employer (Martin, 2005). In the workplace, they seek constant feedback, even on a daily

basis (Glass, 2007; Martin, 2005). On the whole, they dislike menial and repetitive work and seek new challenges regularly (Martin, 2005). In one human resources line of enquiry, empirical research concerning Gen Y has focused on the career expectations of Gen Y students after graduation. A qualitative study of Gen Y's experiences and perceptions of careers in hospitality management found that there is potential for conflict between Gen Y's described work-related preferences, attitudes and expectations and the reality of the contemporary industry (Barron et al., 2007). Another study surveyed Gen Y students' expectations of retail employment and found that their major expectation was to enjoy their job, combined with concerns for fairness, tolerance and equity in the workplace (Solnet, 2008).

In order to determine that there are indeed differences between generations was the first step for our research project to developing meaningful research for management strategies to reduce turnover. Wong, Gardiner, Lang, and Coulon (2008), it was defined personality as the individual's preferred or typical way of behaving, thinking, and feeling. They focused on work values, achieving, being affiliative, optimistic, variety seeking, independent minded, and conscientiousness. They also used motivational drivers to refer to the factors that energize, direct, and sustain the behavior of the individual. This included affiliation, power, and progression. They were able to find the following results; significant differences were found between generations for achieving in the workplace. Baby boomers were found to be the most optimistic. Generation Y's were found to be the most conscientious and were also the most affiliative, with Baby Boomers being the least. Generation X and Y are more motivated by progression than baby boomers. Generation X was highest in affiliation with Y's in second and baby boomers last. Also, generation X

was highest in power. Generation Y is a very important group because they will be taking over the workplace, and in order to allow for businesses to thrive, they need to know how to retain these employees. Understanding them will reduce high costs of turnover. It is important to know that by understanding and meeting needs and motivating through relevant rewards and recognition strategies, retention can be heightened (McCrinkle, 2006).

Further research has shown that work-related variables have also been different within these cohorts. Sutton and Smolai (2002), also found generational differences in work values; which were defined as "what people believe to be fundamentally right or wrong. The evaluative standards relating to work or the work environment by which individuals discern what is "right" or assess the importance of preferences." In this study they divided the generations into three groups: Baby boomers (1940-1964), Generation X (1960-1982), and Generation Y (1979-1994). Furthermore, in the article entitled, "The Supervisor and Generational Differences" by Crampton and Hodge (2006), the four generations (Traditionalists, Baby boomers, Gen X, and Gen Y) are individually analyzed to highlight the uniqueness of each group. Results were mainly focused on the differences of management strategies needed for each group, and suggests that additional research is needed in this area. Clearly from the past research on generational differences there is no doubt that there are indeed differences; exploring these differences in a workplace setting (particularly regarding intention to quit) is much needed at this time. Overall, Generation Y is known to be different with respect to work-related variables.

The differences between each generation's intentions to quit have been researched and their findings are worth noting. Ferres and Travaglione (2001) investigated the

differences in levels of trust, commitment, procedural justice, and turnover intentions between Generation X and Baby Boomer employees. They defined turnover intention as a person's desire to discontinue working at an organization and noted that this has been studied widely as a behavioral correlate of commitment. The literature has generally revealed an inverse relationship between commitment and turnover intention (Ferres & Travaglione, 2001). This relationship is strongest at points in time closest to actual turnover. Qualitative and quantitative methods such as open-ended questions circulated to all employees in a survey. Results showed that between Generation X employees and Baby Boomers that Generation X had lower levels of commitment, higher intentions of turnover, and lower scores of perceptions of procedural justice. There was no difference between the affective commitment and trust.

Cennamo and Gardener (2008) investigated the differences between three generational groups currently in the workforce (Baby Boomers, Generation X and Generation Y) in work values, job satisfaction, affective organizational commitment, and intentions to leave. They further examined generational differences in person-organization fit values. They found that the youngest groups placed more importance on status and freedom work values than the oldest group. Baby Boomers reported better person-organization values fit with extrinsic values and status values than Generation X and Generation Y but there were no other generational differences in fit. Where individual and organizational values showed poor fit there were reduced job satisfaction and organizational commitment, and increased intentions to turnover across all three generational groups (Cennamo 2008).

There has been very little research on generational differences for motivational

forces, which lead to employee intention to quit. "Eight Motivational Forces and Voluntary Turnover: A Theoretical Synthesis with implications for research" (Maertz and Griffeth 2004), provides a framework that can be utilized by turnover researchers as *clarification of reported reasons for turnover, as causal mediators of turnover predictors, and as factors related to the type of turnover decision process*. The eight motivational forces include; *Affective, Calculative, Contractual, Behavioural, Alternative, Normative, Moral/ethical, and Constituent*. These forces are a valuable research resource because they are relatable to past research constructs (job preferences, job values, person-organization fit). By using these eight motivational forces as guidelines for research, the formation of a model between motivational forces and intention to quit can be developed. Then, using that model differences, if any, between generations can be found. With those results, researchers can provide a better understanding of how to manage different generations in the workplace. More specifically, the research intended for this study is to analyze our research question: Is there a difference in motivational factors between specific generations that influence the decision that will lead to the intention to quit?

Methodology

Sample

150 individuals were analyzed for this study. Of the 150 sample, 85 individuals were from Generation Y, 18 from Generation X and 47 were Baby Boomers.

Measures

The Generations were sectioned off by the date of the respondent's birth by indicating which of the given ranges their birth year fell into. Baby Boomers are individuals born from 1946-1964, Generation X is individuals born from 1965-1980, and

Generation Y is individuals born in 1981 or later. The recruitment process was primarily the use of social networking, using sources such as Facebook, Twitter, and e-mail forwards. Respondents that were interested in participating were able to click on a link that directed them to our survey; an online website called Survey Monkey. Respondents that agreed to the terms of the survey followed the prompts and answered 9 items that corresponded with 8 motivational forces that would lead one to the intention to quit. The 8 motivational forces were taken from Maertz Jr. and Griffeth (2007) in their article "Eight Motivational Forces and Voluntary Turnover: A Theoretical Synthesis with Implications for Research". These forces included: calculative, contractual, behavioural, alternative, normative, moral/ethical, and constituent forces. The questions asked how important the factors were to the respondents in their decision making for intention to quit. We designed our own questions that we believed to be related to each of the eight factors. The respondents answered using a Likert Scale of 1-5, with 1 being not important and 5 being very important.

Analysis Procedures

A MANOVA analysis was used to assess inter-generational differences in turnover driver results. An alpha of 0.05 was used to determine if generational differences were significant.

Results

The results of the MANOVA indicated several significant inter-generational differences in the strength of motivational forces for turnover ($p < 0.5$). Post hoc ANOVAs for each of the motivational forces indicated significant differences related to 2 of the 9 items. The two forces included, the alternative force with a sig value of 0.045 and

the normative force with a sig value of 0.011. The Alternative force was represented to the respondents by the labour market conditions item, and results concluded that it was the most important to Baby Boomers with a mean response of 3.79. Generation X resulted with a mean response of 3.25, and Generation Y resulted with a mean response of 3.00. The Normative force that was represented to the respondents by the opinion of family and friends toward your occupation item was most prominent to the Baby Boomers with a mean response of 3.21. Generation X resulted with a mean response of 2.50, and Generation Y resulted with a mean response of 2.33. The remaining 7 items proved to be insignificant with the following sig values. The positive emotions toward the workplace item that related to the affective force had a sig value of 0.074. The opportunity for advancement item that related to the calculative force had a sig value of 0.212. Feeling valued in the workplace item that related to the contractual force had a sig value of 0.956. The loyalty item that also related to the contractual force had a sig value of 0.938. The sense of pride item that related to the behavioural force had a sig value of 0.423. The importance of income and benefits item that related to the alternative force had a sig value of 0.757. The relationship between co-workers item that related to the constituent force had a sig value of 0.592.

Discussion

Based on the results from the MANOVA analysis, we can conclude that the older generations place more of an importance on motivational forces with regards to alternatives for employment and normative (opinions of others outside their workforce on their own employment), than the younger generations. This is a reasonable finding because the Baby Boomer generation has less time in their lives to participate in the

workplace. Making labour market conditions important for them while contemplating their intention to quit is understandable because if the market conditions are poor they will be less likely to find another job. The normative motivational force is also reasonable to be more important to Baby Boomers than to younger generations. As a person grows older and has been in the workforce longer, the success of that person can be expected to be greater. Therefore, Baby Boomers may be more self-conscious of what others opinions may be of them.

Limitations/ Conclusion

This study was done on a strict timeline and because of that, some of the time constraints made it difficult to perfect our study. Our main limitation in this study is believed to be our sample. With more time, we may have been able to collect more data from a variation of individuals. As our survey was presented online, it was easily accessible to anyone with a computer and internet. If we had a more flexible schedule, we may have been able to receive more individuals responding to our survey and increase our sample size. Furthermore, our main source of recruitment was through the team's Facebook account. As all of us are in the same age group with a mutual group of friends, most of our respondents reflected the same traits as our group members. More specifically, a large amount of our respondents were similar to us in demographics, such as our age, location, and maybe even our values in the workplace. As mentioned in our results, the opinions of friends and family have a distinct impact on the way we value our workplace. If most of our respondents were from our friends on Facebook, it may be plausible to suggest that the values of these individuals are impacted by their friends, and thus each one of our friends on Facebook may have similar ideas and values when

responding to the survey. More research and analysis would be needed to follow up on this limitation, as it is only a personal speculation on the trend in the responses we received. Another limitation with our survey is the age differences between the respondents. We would have liked to collect more responses from Generation X and Baby Boomers, and this could have been possible if we had the time and resources to go into the field and recruit individuals from different workplaces. As for our study, we were able to recruit enough of these generations to receive an accurate response in our study, however recruiting more of these generations would be an interesting way to see the variations in our results, with the chance that there would be more significant differences. Overall, our study proved to be an interesting representation of the four generations with respect to motivational forces that lead individuals to the intention to quit. We were able to use the results provided from the survey to analyze and distinguish variable differences between generations, most prominently represented in the alternative and normative forces. More research should be done to see how these forces affect other work values than the ones presented in this study, and to try and find any other factors or representations that would affect these factors in a negative or positive way.

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