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Evaluating work-related drivers of Generation Y: A case of a multinational financial organisation

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Abstract

There has been a growing body of research into generational differences within the work environment. While overall differences between generations and lately between Generation Y, in this study defined as those born between 1982 and 2000, and their predecessors are acknowledged, the extent and consistency of these differences remains unclear. To date, most research has been conducted in Anglo-Saxon countries, namely Canada, the US and the UK focussing low-income industries such as nursing, tourism, and retail.

This study aims to address the gap in terms of geographical and industry focus by conducting research within a global financial institution in Germany. Taking a constructivist stance and utilising a multi-method approach, a monthly survey, running from March 2020 to February 2021, as well as semi-structured interviews have been used to capture the responses of the Generation Y participants on critical incidents affecting their work motivation, career satisfaction, and loyalty.

The study confirms the current literature in terms of the decrease in work centrality and a stronger focus on the private life as well as the increased urge for continuous feedback, while adding a different perspective on remuneration. Simultaneously, this research discovers the importance of the team and its influence on the three drivers, work motivation, career satisfaction, and loyalty.

The survey has been impacted by the coinciding start of the COVID-19 pandemic, which acts as a catalyst for the profound use of mobile working. Strongly changing the overall working context, the increased flexibility supports the importance of the private life for Generation Y leading to the concept of blending business and private tasks into daily routines.

The first important contribution of this study is the development of a Generation Y dynamic interaction model at Triangle Germany visualising the dependencies between the themes and work-related drivers. Secondly, the study is contributing a new perspective on Generation Y working in the financial industry in Germany, which differs from previous literature. For policy and practice, the study critically assesses the increased feedback need of Generation Y, which has been found to be a driver of self-affirmation. Utilising the concept of work-life-blending, organisations can improve the co-existence of work and private life to better manage their workforce.

Keywords: Generation Y, work motivation, career satisfaction, loyalty, self-determination theory, work-life blending, self-affirmation

Declaration

I declare that the work in this thesis was carried out in accordance with the regulations of the University of Gloucestershire and is original except, where indicated, by a specific reference in the text. No part of this thesis has been submitted as part of any other academic award. The thesis has not been presented to any other educational institution in the United Kingdom or overseas.

Any views expressed in this thesis are those of the author and in no way represent those of the University of Gloucestershire.

Signed

[redacted]

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Completing this thesis has been a journey that has taken me not only longer than expected but has also challenged me to a level, I have not dared to dream about. At the same time, it was a fantastic experience as it has enabled me to deal with topics close to my heart in a much deeper way than it is possible in professional life, where fast progress and success prevail.

For this, I am very grateful to my former colleagues at work and in the industry, who have participated to this study and have shaped with their open feedback the discussion and result. I therefore dedicate this study to you as many of you are now yourself in people management positions dealing with similar questions I did when starting my research.

However, I am equally thankful to my two supervisors, Dr. Keith Donne and Dr. Douglas Yourston, without whom, I would not have been able to complete this journey as they have made me feel to be a member of a team from the beginning, which has helped me in times I did not see progress but also motivated me when jointly celebrating reaching milestones on the way to the goal. With their rigorous questioning and constructive feedback, they have shaped my academic thinking and writing.

Privately, I would like to thank my wife, Alice, who has supported me all the way through by taking over many tasks to allow me to concentrate on my writing and who, by this, has foregone a lot of precious time together.

Finally, I would like to thank my father, who has unintentionally triggered me to start this journey, initially in a competitive way, before the thesis has become a true project of my own.

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List of abbreviations

CIT	Critical Incident Technique developed by Flanagan (1954)
COVID 19	Coronavirus disease 2019
DE Survey	Version of the monthly survey distributed in German to the participants
DIM	Dynamic Interaction Model developed at Triangle Germany
EN Survey	Version of the monthly survey distributed in English to the participants
EOY	End-of-Year
EUR	Euro
EVL	Exit/Voice/Loyalty, model developed by Hirschman (1970)
EVLN	Exit/Voice/Loyalty/Neglect, model developed by Rusbult and Zembroth (1983)
GmbH	Gesellschaft mit beschränkter Haftung, German corporate, equivalent to Ltd
HR	Human Resources
Inc.	Incorporation, US corporate, equivalent to English Plc
IT	Information Technology
OIT	Organic Integration Theory
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
SDT	Self-Determination Theory developed by Deci and Ryan (1985)
UK	United Kingdom
US	United States of America

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PART 1

Chapter 1 – Introduction

This chapter provides the background to this study and its aims. Following this, the approach taken in this research is explained and the research questions related to the three work-related drivers chosen for evaluation are being stated. Next, the organisation researched in this context is being described as well as the personal motivation to conduct this research. After having highlighted my personality as a researcher, the chapter concludes with a short outline of the study.

1.1. Background

This study aims to evaluate the work-related drivers of Generation Y, namely motivation, career satisfaction and loyalty within Triangle Germany, a financial institution operating in Germany. In this research, Generation Y is defined as employees born between 1982 and 2000. Having surpassed Generation X - in this study defined as those employees born between 1961 and 1981 - as the largest generation in the US in 2015 (Fry, 2015), Generation Y, born between 1982 and 2000, has been the subject of both non-academic and academic publications. In Germany, Generation Y has nearly surpassed Generation X as the largest generation in the population at the end of 2023 (Statista, 2024), already representing nearly one third of the German workforce in 2023. However, findings from these studies in terms of the behaviour and motivation of this generation and its potential differences compared to previous generations vary broadly. While authors such as Eisner (2005) stress the importance of relevant feedback and social integration from Generation Y's viewpoint, others (Frye, Kang, Huh, & Lee, 2020; Herbison & Boseman, 2009; Mhatre & Conger, 2011) see the increased sense for achievement and related drive for fast career development and monetary compensation as a differentiator compared to previous generations. This lack of consistency is critical for organisations dependent on attracting and retaining employees for their future success as outlined by Cogin (2012) as well as Smith and Galbraith (2012). Against this background, a critical contribution to the existing body of knowledge will be made by conducting multi-method research using the Generation Y employee base of Triangle Germany to evaluate their work motivation, loyalty, and career aspirations.

1.2. Statement of problem

There are three key gaps that have been identified in the literature. Firstly, the majority of the research has been conducted in the US, Canada, the UK, and several other Anglo-Saxon countries (Marais, 2023; Prakash & Tiwari, 2021) due to background of the authors dominating the research.

While having created a wealth of insights into the generational aspects in these countries, it is questioned that these findings can be translated into other countries due to cultural differences (Frye et al., 2020; Hofstede, 1991; Trompenaars, 1993; Weber & Urick, 2023). Consequently, to understand the characteristics of Generation Y in other countries, it is necessary to conduct equivalent research in these countries, such as Germany in the context of this study.

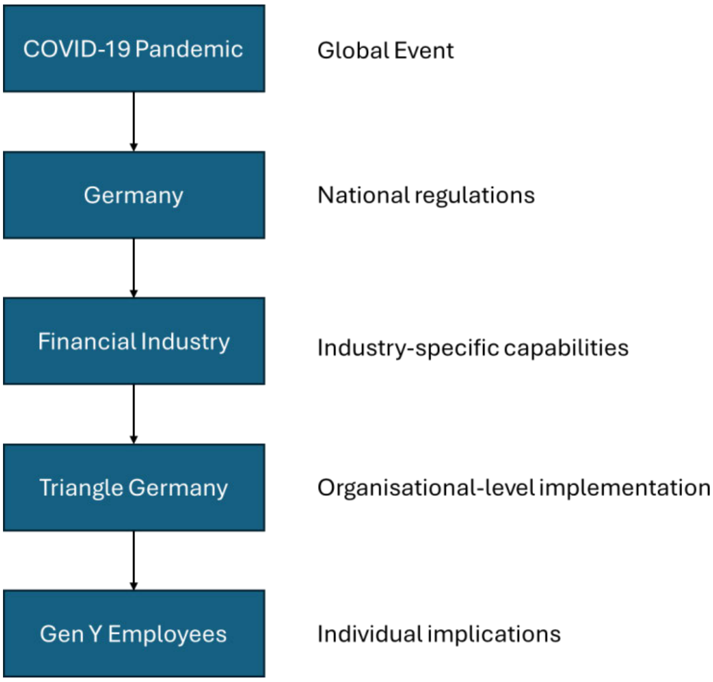
Secondly, most research on generational differences and in particular Generation Y is based on studies focussing on industries such as the hospitality industry (Frye et al., 2020; Törn-Laapio & Ekonen, 2021), retail (Broadbridge, 2003a, 2003b; Broadbridge, Maxwell, & Ogden, 2007), and healthcare with a particular focus on nurses (Ebrahimi, Jafarjalal, Lotfolahzadeh, & Kharghani Moghadam, 2021; Gordon, 2017; Higgins, 2022). All of them have in common that they represent a low-income environment with long and often enduring working hours that can have an important impact on the work-life-balance, something Generation Y is no longer willing to bear in contrast to the previous generations (Çera, Ndreca, Çera, Asamoah, & Matošková, 2024; McCloskey, 2016). At the same time, there has been very few research conducted within the financial industry (Elian, Paramitha, Gunawan, & Maharani, 2020; Sondari Gadzali, 2023), which is very much different in its structures, therefore raising the question whether the current literature is adequate to draw conclusions for this sector (Broadbridge, Maxwell, & Ogden, 2007; Lyons & Kuron, 2013; Tourangeau, Wong, Saari, & Patterson, 2015). Similarly to the geographical gap identified, the industry sector gap needs to be addressed as this study will critically evaluate the characteristics of Generation Y in the financial industry.

And lastly as Twenge (2010) points out, with few exceptions (Kowske, Rasch, & Wiley, 2010; Smola & Sutton, 2002), most studies have been conducted as cross-sectional studies providing a snapshot in time (Standifer & Lester, 2019). This approach is prone for potential errors such as the age effect when comparing the findings for Generation Y with those of other generations within the same study. For this purpose, there is the call for longitudinal studies overcoming this shortfall. (Eisner, 2005; Standifer & Lester, 2019)

Drawing on these three points, there is a gap in the current literature in terms of research on Generation Y in Germany as well as within the financial industry. The current study aims to address these two points. In terms of the call for longitudinal studies, this study represents a type of panel study covering a period of 12 months. However, as part of the inductive research approach, it was decided to concentrate on gathering in-depth data instead of focussing on the changes emerging over the research period. Therefore, the study is rather providing an expanded snapshot with additional findings derived due to its multi-method approach than meeting the requirements of a longitudinal study.

Coinciding with the start of COVID-19 pandemic, the research has been influenced by this event and its influences on the work and private life practices. This includes the change in working conditions from office to home and the subsequent shift from direct interaction to video conferencing, which needs to be considered when analysing the findings as Figure 1 indicates.

Figure 1: Implications of COVID-19 Pandemic on the study



Although recent discussions and actions from larger organizations such as Apple and Deutsche Bank demonstrate a potential reversal of this trend, the reactions from employees indicate that a return to working conditions prior the COVID-19 pandemic is unlikely (Thier, 2023; Uwimana, 2024). For this study, the macroeconomic context has been included where it was reported by the participants and where it directly influenced the themes identified in the study. To fully understand the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the overall working environment, further research is being advocated.

1.3. Aim and objective of the study

The aim of the study is to evaluate the three work-related drivers, work motivation, career satisfaction, and loyalty towards the organization in relation to employees of Generation Y. This is being done within the context of Triangle, a multinational financial institution operating in Germany.

Based on this aim, the objective of this study is to develop a theoretical model that visualises and explains the interaction between these three work-related drivers. The model will make contributions to the academic field and equally to the professional world.

Within the academic literature it will enable the critical evaluation of existing findings, gained predominantly in lower-income sectors as well as in the cultural sphere of Anglo-Saxon countries, compared to the themes identified within the context of the financial industry in Germany, therefore broadening the foundation of generational research. While the change of two fundamental dimensions, country/culture and industry/sector does not create the ability to compare these findings directly with the existing literature, the current study aims to raise the understanding for these differences and the awareness about the limited ability to generalise. At the same time, the theoretical model will support further research into these work-related drivers and their application to future generations across different industries.

Secondly, the model has been developed with the intention to contribute to the professional world by providing a guiding framework and recommendations for human resources (HR) but also for managers with staff responsibilities that are faced with a younger generation dubbed to be different. Utilising the model will support the understanding of these real or perceived differences to ensure the future growth of organisations that continue to rely heavily on its educated and trained workforce. To reach the objective, a set of seven research questions, described in Section 1.5., has been formulated.

1.4. Approach

The study was conducted with a constructivist perspective aiming to understand the drivers of the work-related attitudes of Generation Y, i.e. those employees born between 1982 and 2000. As motivation, loyalty and career are abstract words that can mean different things to people, there has been the urge to dive deeper than a mere categorisation of findings and their statistical validation. Using the self-determination theory of Deci and Ryan (1985) as the theoretical underpinning for the strongest theme, motivation, the terms autonomy, competence, and relatedness need to be understood in detail.

This study employs a qualitative approach that is based on a 12-month survey using a recurring set of questions posed to the participant group. Focussing on the key themes identified from survey, a set of semi-structured interviews was conducted with participants of the survey as well as an external reference group.

1.5. Research Questions

To develop a deep understanding of the three work-related drivers, their interaction as well as their influence on the work behaviour of the participating employees, the study aims at uncovering the roots of these work behaviours and the trigger points that lead to an increase or decrease in work motivation, career satisfaction and loyalty towards the organisation. For this purpose, the critical incident technique (Bott & Tourish, 2016; Flanagan, 1954; Gremler, 2004) has been employed as it provides an academically proven and tested approach to identifying causes triggering human behaviour.

On this basis, the primary research tool used the following three questions repeatedly monthly:

1) Which critical incidents impact work motivation?
2) Which critical incidents impact career satisfaction?
3) Which critical incidents impact work loyalty?

This approach ensures that each of the three drivers is critically assessed separately but in a consistent manner with the others. Allowing for free-text responses, the answers of the participants help to identify themes triggering a change in these three work-related drivers, aiding to understand each of the drivers as well as identify any potential relationship between them, which has led to a fourth research question:

4) Is there a relationship between the three drivers and what are trigger points?

Within the existing literature, some studies highlight that work motivation acts as a foundation for career satisfaction and loyalty (Cattermole, 2018; Onyishi, Enwereuzor, Ogbonna, Ugwu, & Amazue, 2019), hence a stronger focus has been placed on the driver work motivation. To develop a deeper understanding of the themes affecting work motivation, the secondary research tool, semi-structured interviews, was used to further analyse work motivation. Building on research question number one and informed by the existing literature, three key themes identified were further probed:

1) To what extent has the workload impacted the motivation?
2) To what extent has the COVID-19 pandemic impacted the motivation?
3) To what extent have the co-workers and the team impacted the motivation?

The first question has been derived from the nurse-based research in the literature as the negative impact of a high and demanding workload has been a key theme in this industry. The same applies to the third question, where the existing literature has identified the importance of collaboration and team-centric working practices for Generation Y.

The second question, drawing on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has emerged from the fact that the outbreak coincided with the start of the research. Acknowledging the profound impact the pandemic had on working routines, i.e. the move from the office to working from home and the subsequent change in communication methods, the question was added to analyse the responses from the participants more deeply therefore enhancing the understanding the impact of this global event on work motivation.

1.6. Research in Triangle Germany

The organisation, called “Triangle Germany”, in which the research has been conducted, is the German subsidiary of a multi-national financial institution, called “Triangle Inc”. Its culture has been shaped by its US-roots, where the still family-owned business has been founded more than 75 years ago. The German branch, “Triangle Germany”, belonging to the international part of Triangle Inc. has been set up more than 30 years ago and has developed from a small sales office into a full local operation with currently more than 300 staff based in Germany. Due to an acquisition completed 15 years ago, the German business consists of two distinct parts, the traditional asset management business as well as the acquired and integrated banking organisation. While integration efforts have been intensified over the past years, the two parts are still visibly separate, not only due to its operational setup and purpose but also in terms of people, since hardly any transfer of staff has happened between the two entities over this prolonged period. Coupled with a low turnover rate in the banking part, there are still many employees that have been with the bank long before the time of the acquisition, surfacing occasionally in cultural differences.

Consequently, Generation X, (1961-1981), and some Baby Boomers, employees born between 1943 and 1960, have remained the most dominant generations, both in terms of numbers and positions in management. Within Triangle Germany, the percentage of Generation Y (1982-2000) among the workforce has been growing due the overall growth in the business as well as the replacement of retiring Baby Boomers. At the time of the study being conducted, Generation Y represented approx. 30% of the entire workforce, which is in line with the overall representation within the German workforce (Statista, 2024).

Triangle Germany is a part of the wider international organisation with a strong interaction between the various local entities. The interaction is particularly strong on the asset management side. This is also represented by the fact that reporting lines often run across countries with superiors being responsible for teams located in multiple sites. In the banking part, until recently, most staff were less exposed to other parts of the organisation as, due to historic setup as well as regulatory requirements, most reporting lines were locally, with only the senior management being part of the matrix organisation and therefore also reporting to superiors outside Germany.

Operating from a single site near Frankfurt, the financial capital of Germany, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the personal exchange at local level and within the respective business units has been intense. Although for most staff, mobile working had been possible from a technical point of view beforehand, this was only used and accepted on an exceptional basis. With the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, a governmental decree forced most companies in Germany literally over night to move employees into working from home. At Triangle Germany, this worked seamlessly due to the technical infrastructure in place. Apart from a few roles required on site, such as postal services and technical security, all other roles were transitioned to work remotely within a few days. This was enforced by a strict organisational policy managing attendance in the office over the following year.

1.7. My Positionality as a Researcher

Reflecting on the own Positionality, a term introduced by Merton (1972), is an essential exercise for a researcher. It not only influences the choice of the research topic, the epistemological stance taken and the methodology chosen (Secules et al., 2021) but sharpens the lens of the researcher to understand in which light his contribution will be seen and how this shapes the relationship with the participants.

1.7.1. Analysing my personal background

According to Darwin Holmes (2020), the personal background consists of predispositions, such as gender, age, nationality, and race as well as a set of variables including political positions, personal life history, and personal values and beliefs. Stating the predispositions, I am a white male of German nationality and due to my age firmly positioned as a member of Generation X. While most of these points cannot be contended, the term nationality is less clear from my perspective as I have lived and worked in multiple countries, predominantly in Europe. This has altered my cultural beliefs to a point that I would describe myself rather as a European than a German national given that I have developed a critical, albeit benign stance towards my original cultural background. One consequence of this has been my choice to opt for a UK university instead of pursuing my studies in Germany.

My personal life history has further been shaped by the fact that I have spent nearly my entire career working within the financial industry. This has enabled me to gain a deep understanding of this industry, not only in Germany but across several countries. During this period, I was employed from 1997 to 2021 by Triangle Inc. and its subsidiaries, mostly holding management positions.

Since 2010, I was working for Triangle in Germany and most recently in the management board of the banking subsidiary. Due to the number of different roles across the organisation, I have been a member in both parts of the German organisation of Triangle.

1.7.2. Personal importance of the topic

While working as a manager with staff responsibility, I have realised that people are the real and most valuable assets within this sector. Regardless of the business segment or specific tasks at hand, dealing with regulatory requirements, executing technical projects, and equally importantly completing client-facing interactions is dependent on well-educated and dedicated employees, whose contribution is critical for success. Consequently, the attraction and retention of suitable staff is a constant requirement from my point of view, especially considering the competition the financial sector creates not only in the Frankfurt area but generally within the respective financial hubs.

Despite this, the role of HR in organisations, and Triangle Inc. is no exception to this, is often reduced to pure administrative tasks, leaving talent acquisition and even more importantly retention behind. This is aggravated by the fact that often leaders have been put in charge of teams without proper training and qualifications. Having gone through the ranks in Triangle myself, two factors have helped me predominantly to grow from position to position. First, I benefited from a handful of experienced leaders that shared their thoughts therefore providing guidance. This also supported the second point, my intrinsic desire to learn, which has led to a continuous learning experience on the job but equally outside work. As I have experienced at work but have also learned from running long-distance races in my leisure time, a high level of motivation is crucial for a good performance as well as for staying the course. Both is important from an organisational perspective as it increases the value provided by employees while increasing the chances for a longer tenure. However, intrinsic motivation is also beneficial from an employee's perspective therefore strengthening the resilience and ability to weather adverse conditions.

This experience in leadership over many years and the conviction gained that people are the primary asset in the financial industry enabling the development and growth of an organisation (Al Kurdi, Alshurideh, & Al afaishat, 2020; Elian, Paramitha, Gunawan, & Maharani, 2020), has raised my curiosity to understand the drivers that motivate the next generation at work.

1.7.3. Choice of epistemological stance

As Secules et al. (2021) and Darwin Holmes (2020) state, the positionality of the researcher also affects the epistemological position, which will be covered in detail in the research approach in Section 5.2. Due to the many changes in my life in terms of living locations and work positions within Triangle, I have developed the strong understanding that we are able to shape the outcome of our activities via the social interaction with other participants of our life, be it at personal or professional level. Especially, when entering new fields, such as moving to a different country or taking up a new position in a business unit, in which I had to start literally from scratch, it is important to realise that it takes both the self as well as the social environment to construct the lived experience as Schwandt (1998) postulates. On this basis, the choice of Constructivism as the research paradigm, as explained later in Section 5.2., represents best my own position and worldview. With this view, conducting research is a process that is shaped by both, the identity of the researcher as well those of the participants with the intention to deepen our understanding of how the people researched act as they do (Lin, 2015; Bourke, 2014).

1.7.4. My Position towards the participants

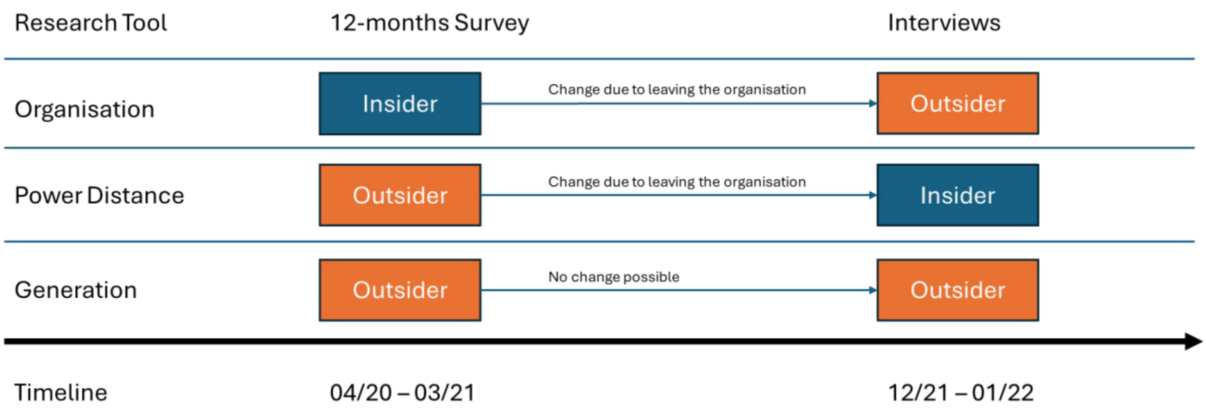
Conducting research within the own organisation - where researcher and participants are colleagues - offers advantages and disadvantages at the same time as Darwin Holmes (2020) eludes. While it can provide an easier access, imply a level of trust and avoid cultural misunderstandings by speaking the same cultural language, the closeness with the participants can also expose sensitivity issues, restrict the ability to ask provocative questions or lead to a bias by inserting tacit knowledge into the research. Moreover, the debate focussing on the status of the researcher being an insider or outsider, which was initiated by Merton (1972), is useful to reflect on the position of the researcher as according to Herod (1999), insiders and outsiders produce different accounts.

When reflecting on my own position towards the participants, I discovered that I was holding different positions at the same time, depending on the standpoint, which concurs with the view of Darwin Holmes (2020) that a researcher can have different positions simultaneously. Clearly, I was an insider from an organisational point of view at the time of the research, belonging to Triangle as the participants did. At the same time, I was an outsider on two accounts. Firstly, as I belong to Generation X, while the research participants were actively selected members of Generation Y, my views are shaped by my generational experiences, which are differing from those of other generations as the literature research in Section Two highlights. Secondly, having been a member of the senior management team, I can be considered an outsider to the participants in hierarchical terms as the participants were employees at lower ranks within Triangle. Additionally, this raises the topic of power distance, which is covered under ethical issues in Section 5.7. Last, when considering the position of being an insider or outsider, Bourke (2014) remarks that the position of the researcher can be perceived differently by the participants, i.e. it is unclear and can differ across the participants, which view prevails.

1.7.5. Change of my positionality during the research

Lastly, when reflecting on the positionality of the researcher, Herod (1999) states that the position of the researcher can change during the research process due to the relationship formed between the researcher and the participants. Reflecting on my research, this is an important point to consider as the research was not focussed on a single point of time but a duration of twelve months for the survey, extended by a period during which the interviews were conducted. As stated in the previous Section 1.7.4., I started the research as an insider from an organisational point of view. This facilitated the physical access to the organisation and to my Generation Y colleagues, whom I had selected as research participants. At the same time, as highlighted before, I was an outsider to the participants as I belong to Generation X, a position that remained constant, while also being an outsider on the account of hierarchy due to my management position within the organisation, resulting in a power difference between me and the participants. When I left the organisation shortly after completion of the 12-months survey, I became an outsider from this perspective as I no longer belonged to the same organisation as the participants. This change made it more difficult in getting the physical access but conversely, made it easier to gain the trust for the semi-structured interviews as the power difference had disappeared therefore making it easier to gain the trust of the participants to conduct the interviews. To promote this element of trust, anonymity given by using aliases during the survey was no longer given during the interviews.

Figure 2: Change in Positionality



These reflections on my positionality have enabled me first to understand for myself my initial position and ambition to conduct this research. During the research process, it has also acted as a guidance reminding me of various and potentially changing positions I could hold in this continuum in the views of the participants, which has been reflected in more detail in Section 10.10.

1.8. Structure of the study

The study has been divided into four parts. Part One contains the introductory chapter highlighting the purpose, structure, and design of the study.

Part Two comprises the literature review. Consisting of three chapters, the literature review consolidates the findings from the existing literature on generational theories in Chapter Two as well as on Generation Y in Chapter Three, who is the subject of this thesis. With this, the reader is being informed about the current body of knowledge the gaps identified. Focussing on motivation as one of the most important work-related drivers, two main motivational theories, the two-factor-theory from Herzberg, Mausner, and Snyderman (2010) and the Self-Determination Theory from Deci and Ryan (1985) are described and analysed in Chapter Four. With the two-factor theory splitting the needs into hygiene factors and motivators, a differentiation is made between factors enhancing motivation when being present and those decreasing motivation when being absent. In contrast to that, Deci and Ryan (1985) have identified three core attributes, namely autonomy, competence and relatedness as the core characteristics of motivation. Coupled with their view of motivation as a continuum ranging from intrinsic to extrinsic factors affecting motivation, this model, despite some limitations has been applied as a foundation for this study.

Part Three, covers the methodological approach adopted in this study in Chapter Five. Starting from a constructivist viewpoint a mixed-method design provided the appropriate flexibility to capture the complexity of the subject. The design included a main survey, which was tested using a pilot study upfront, which then informed a set of semi-structured interviews conducted with participants of the main survey as well as an external reference group. The data derived from the survey and the semi-structured interviews has been structured and analysed, sorting the critical incidents described by the participants into sets of themes.

Part Four contains the findings and conclusion of the research, which is presented in three chapters. As the focus of the study has been on the work-related driver motivation, the themes associated with motivation are presented in Chapter Eight, while those related to career satisfaction and loyalty are presented in Chapter Nine. The part and the overall thesis end on a conclusion and a contribution to the academic literature as well as the business in Chapter Ten.

PART 2

This part, consisting of three chapters contains the literature review which forms the theoretical basis for the study. Chapter Two discusses various methods of grouping a workforce before selecting the generational theory as the preferred approach for this study. In Chapter Three, the key characteristics of Generation Y, which is the focus of this study, are being portrayed, first as consumers, then as students and finally as employees when entering the workforce. Chapter Four reviews the theories behind the three work-related drivers. Among the motivational theories, the two-factor theory and the self-determination theory are being contrasted. This is followed by a critical assessment of the theoretical foundation for career satisfaction and loyalty.

Chapter 2 – Generational Theory

2.1. Introduction

Chapter Two presents the workforce as being a diverse group of people comprising different cultures, sexes, hierarchies and age groups. To study the workforce, different forms of segmentation along the aforementioned criteria are available. Having evaluated some of the available options, the concept of the generational theory and the use of cohorts has been selected for this study.

2.2. Increased diversification and change within the workforce

According to Morgan (2014), there are five trends shaping the future of work, namely new behaviours, technologies, the Millennial workforce, mobility and globalisation. While the latter, globalisation, is currently being questioned following the COVID-19 pandemic and its aftermath as well as the increase in global conflicts, new technologies, mobility and therefore, new behaviours are still increasing as the ability to work from home has recently been proven literally overnight. Also, in terms of the advent of the next generation at work, Generation Y, the Pew Research Centre cites that the Millennial Generation, also called Generation Y, has become the largest population in the US work force already in 2016 (Fry, 2018). This trend is also mirrored in other countries where Generation Y has become the majority group within the workforce. Morgan (2014) claims that new work attitudes, expectations as well as a new set of values cumulating in new work behaviours are brought to work having a considerable influence on the way work is being organised. In addition, the workforce is also predicted to grow older as Alley and Crimmins (2009) found out which also affects the composition and requirements of the workforce. This is supported by Cheung-Judge and Holbeche (2015, p. 369) who state, with a view on the UK, that "*it is clear that with changing workforce demographics and dynamics, a more educated workforce and different motivators by* *generational group, there is no 'one size fits all'* when it comes to attracting, engaging and retaining people." This concept as such is not new. Rhodes (1983) already researched age-related differences in work-attitudes when Generation X entered the market just before Generation Y had been born. The influence of age on work values, attitudes and behaviours remains an area of research but picked up with the advent of Generation Y in the workplace (Inceoglu, Segers, & Bartram, 2012; Ng & Feldman, 2010; Spieler, Scheibe, & Roßnagel, 2018). As a consequence the traditional concept of career representing the form of a 'ladder' or "*a fixed sequence of steps*" (Savickas et al., 2009, p. 240) tends to be replaced or at least complemented by new career types forced, among other factors, by a decrease in job security and organisational loyalty (Becton, Walker, & Jones-Farmer, 2014) and fuelled by the options mobility and technology (Morgan, 2014).

With a redefinition of the social contract, i.e., employees less trusting the organisation and organisations in turn not providing job security due to increased economic instability, the focus of employees has shifted to become less work centred as seen in previous generations. With that the importance of work-life balance and flexible work arrangements has become more of an importance for organisation when recruiting and retaining employees (Twenge, 2010). This trend can be linked to an increased individualism, often referred to when describing Generation Y, which is supported by Lyons and Kuron (2013, p. 149) who state that "*the trends point to greater extroversion and conscientiousness and self-esteem, but also greater neuroticism and narcissism caution.*" While the importance of these findings could not be supported in other studies (Howe & Strauss, 2000, Raišienė et al., 2021) and with a generalisation of findings across generations, industries and cultures being questionable, there is still a need for organisation to better understand their workforce in terms of their attitudes and values that need to be matched with the structure of the company to ensure the organisation's long-term success.

2.3. The need for grouping of individuals

Understanding the workforce is critical to success as an engaged workforce is beneficial to an organisation based on a higher level of commitment and higher work outcomes (Geldenhuys, Łaba, & Venter, 2014). Given the heterogeneity of the workforce in most organisation, a grouping of the workforce is deemed to be important therefore allowing a tailoring of the organisational measures towards their employees. Using the concept of segmentation, derived from marketing when targeting their client groups, a grouping of the workforce can be conducted in several different ways, e.g. by location, hierarchical rank or industry unit, as Thatcher (2006) lists.

One way of grouping the labour market is based on the segmentation theory, co-authored by Piore (1983) who early on postulated the dual labour market dividing the market based on wage levels into a primary and secondary market. Having taken up the argument, Apostle, Clairmont, and Osberg

(1985) have further applied the theory at organisational level by studying a North-American organisation. While these authors acknowledged that a generalization of results might prove difficult due to the limited size and geographical focus of their study, Apostle, Clairmont, and Osberg (1985) still expected similar results in other studies. In another study, which was only conducted twice in 2014 and 2016, Eichhorst and Kendzia (2016) analysed the German labour market and confirmed the applicability of the theory for the German market as well as a rising importance within the service industry. With a view on the organisation in scope of this study, the concept could be used in general but would potentially lead to a distorted view given that most work contracts are directly with the organisation therefore representing the primary market and only operational and client service functions making use of temporary contracts on a larger scale.

2.3.1. Grouping by national culture

Within larger and internationally distributed organisation such as the organisation in scope for this research, employees could also be grouped by cultural groups. Culture in this respect can be defined as "*a shared system of meanings. It dictates what we pay attention to, how we act and what we value*" (Trompenaars, 1993, p. 13). This is supported by Geertz (1993, p. 50) who states that "*our ideas, our values, our acts, even our emotions, are, like our nervous system itself, cultural products – products manufactured, indeed, out of tendencies, capacities, and dispositions with which we were born, but manufactured nonetheless.*" Reflecting Geertz (1993), people from the same cultural background are perceived to have a common view and interpretation of their surrounding world which results in common behaviours and shared values. As people have shared different experiences in different countries to a certain extent, it can be concluded that these different backgrounds have also manifested themselves in their view of the world, which in turn will affect their working life. Even in multinational organisations such differences become visible in the management style and decision-making processes that can be at least partially explained with the findings of Hofstede (1991), who identified different levels of power-distance and uncertainty-avoidance across the various cultures analysed.

While the classification based on culture provides certain benefits in terms of better understanding the rationale of people from different cultures, criticism has been voiced on a number of points including the interchangeable use of nation and culture (Baskerville, 2003) and the operationalisation of his model (Chiang, 2005). Given the merits of the cultural studies conducted by Hofstede (1991), Trompenaars (1993) and Geertz (1993), the notion of culture and its implied differences should be considered. Instead of using culture as a way of grouping within the research, it is suggested to use culture as an exclusion criterion by focussing on one cultural group only. This group is expected to have common set of values based on their shared experiences. However, a comparison of findings across different cultures is to be treated with care for the same reasons. While not relying on this, this study will focus on one country, Germany, with the participants predominantly being German nationals, therefore becoming a homogenous cultural group.

2.3.2. Grouping by organisational hierarchy

A further potential grouping within an organisation is the subdivision of employees by hierarchical level. With most organisations displaying 3-7 different layers, a grouping, e.g. into junior ranks, middle and senior management would be seen as a viable approach which is commonly used by HR departments according to Durham and Charman (2012). Employees at similar hierarchical levels within an organisation, e.g. managerial levels usually perform similar tasks such as people management, budget control and taking ownership for reaching set goals. Similarly, junior ranks are most often tasked with execution of given sets of work, performed by themselves. Consequently, it can be expected that employees within such a grouping share comparable experiences resulting in shared values and behaviours at work. From an organisational point of view, such grouping has the advantage that e.g. trainings, benefits and talent development can be tailored to the group therefore increasing the value of the communication as Durham and Charman (2012) and Cantrall (2007) have pointed out. When solely relying on hierarchical levels, factors such as age, duration within current position as well as business unit can also influence the behaviour of members of these groupings.

Applied to the organisation used for this research, the grouping by hierarchical level could be considered as an option but would also be distorted by the factors mentioned beforehand as the company consists of five relatively distinct business units of considerably different size and structure. Whereas the largest business unit displays the typical hierarchical structure as described, the other four units are much smaller in size and contain several specialist functions that do not fit into the same categories except for the senior management layer.

2.3.3. Grouping by age

Lastly, a grouping found commonly in the literature is the grouping by age. Derived from the concept of generations, employees are grouped by their year of birth which has its merits from an organisational point of view according to Parry and Urwin (2011). With a strong foundation in sociological theory, the concept of generation can be traced back to Mannheim (1952) and Ryder (1965), having been advanced by Kupperschmidt (2000), Lyons, Schweitzer, Urick, and Kuron (2018) and others.

A generation can be defined as "*an identifiable group (cohorts) that shares birth years, age location, and significant life events at critical developmental stages divided by 5-7 years into first wave, core group, and last wave*" (Kupperschmidt, 2000, p. 66). In this definition, Kupperschmidt consolidates a few different aspects that will be discussed in more detail to grasp this term appropriately. Starting with the term "cohort", which is often used interchangeable within the literature, it merits to separate the two terms. Using the definition of Ryder (1965, p. 853) the term "*generation should be used solely in its original and unambiguous meaning as the temporal unit of kinship structure*". This is supported by Pilcher (1994) who agrees that "generation" should be reserved to members of a family representing a "biological generation" whereas people grouped by their year of birth are rather to be called a "social generation" or "cohort". With reference to the work of Mannheim (1952), Pilcher sees his theory also based on "cohorts" despite the widespread use of the term "generation". To avoid any confusion, the term "cohort", as clarified before, will be used in the following discussion.

2.4. Definition of a cohort

Reflecting on Kupperschmidt's (2000) definition, the cohort represents an identifiable group which therefore can be differentiated from other groups. Carlsson and Karlsson (1970, p. 170) suggest that "*cohort stands for a set of individuals who pass some crucial stage at approximately the same time, like marriage, first employment, and especially birth*" which can be classified as important events in the life of people. While any of these events could and actually are being used for defining the boundaries of a cohort, in most cases, the birth year has been as the defining starting point of a cohort as proposed by Ryder (1965). This is mirrored by Rosow (1978) and Elder (1975, p. 170), who agree that "*age locates individuals in the social structure and in a specific cohort, ..*". However, defining the boundaries of a cohort can be difficult (Gilleard, 2004; Rudolph, Rauvola, Costanza, & Zacher, 2020) and according to Eyerman and Turner (1998), a cohort can be defined arbitrarily in terms of their years of their origin. This is mainly because there is not always consensus on what defines such common experiences that have shaped the transitional phase of a cohort from adolescence to adulthood (Gilleard, 2004). As a consequence, criticism on this concept has been raised (Rudolph et al., 2020), which Noble and Schewe (2003, p. 979) already commented:

> *"The notion of cohorts is becoming increasingly popular among trade journals and is even cited in undergraduate marketing textbooks as a segmentation technique; however, little empirical evidence exists to support the validity of the concept".*

Although Schewe and Meredith (2004) have not been able to find full support for the concept of cohorts in their study, they acknowledged that social events experienced by people during their adolescence can shape their values which then remain constant throughout their life. Drawing on the work from Ryder (1965), Schewe and Meredith (2004, p. 52) find that these influences are most profound when experienced during the age of "*approximately 17-23 Years*", a view supported by Lyons et al. (2018). As all individuals will pass through these stages in their development, these events are not shaped by the individuals alone but largely by their social environment. As a consequence of these experiences during the formation years of a person, values and behaviours are being developed that can lead to social changes "*to the extent that successive cohorts follow different life course patterns*" (Elder, 1975, p. 179). This view supports the theory of Mannheim (1952) that this process is essential for the development of a society and its culture. He proposes that it requires the younger cohorts to introduce their standpoint to society so that the older cohorts will be confronted with these changes. Depending on the nature and size of the change, conflicts may arise but over time the older cohorts become more open to the influences, therefore adopting new behaviours. At the same time, Mannheim (1952) points out, that this change is dynamic and not happening statically with the advent of a new cohort as sub-groups exist. This is later confirmed by Becker (2008) and Edmunds and Turner (2005) who see only a minor part of a cohort playing a leading role in change which according to them is a common feature of social changes led by classes or cohorts. Weber and Urick (2023) concur to the point that age cohorts are one approach of segmenting the society although other elements such as culture and geography need to be considered as well.

Taking the definition of Howe and Strauss (1993), one of the early examples of the popular literature that has strongly promoted the use of cohorts as a way to analyse and interpret these social differences between the different age groups, there are currently three cohorts dominating the workforce. Reference for these categories note the "Baby Boomers", born between 1943 and 1960, "13th" or "Generation X" as more widely used, born between 1961 and 1981 and the "Millennials" also known as "Generation Y", born after 1982. In more recent works, the dates have been set slightly differently supporting the view of Gilleard (2004) and Eyerman and Turner (1998) about the ambiguity of the dates being used. Despite this, the lifespan of a cohort can be defined as being somewhere between 17 and 23 years when also counting in the older cohorts prior to the Baby Boomers. This is broadly in line with the view from Meredith and Schewe (1994) who described the length of a cohort with 20 to 25 years, which Schewe et al. (2013) later adjust to 20 to 30 years. Combining this with the findings from another study of Schewe and Meredith (2004), Table 1 lists the events that can be attributed to the various cohorts, and which occurred in the respective defining and forming years of each cohort.

Table 1: Cohorts and corresponding defining events

Cohorts	**Birth Years**	**Defining Years**	**Defining Events**
Baby Boomers	1943 – 1960	1960 – 1983	Redefinition of gender roles, Vietnam war, COVID-19 pandemic
Generation X	1961 – 1981	1978 – 2004	Diverse family constellations, advent of the PC, Gulf war, 9/11, COVID-19 pandemic
Generation Y	1982 – 2000	1999 – 2022	9/11, Advent of internet, financial crisis, COVID-19 pandemic
Generation Z	2000 – 202?	2016 – 204?	COVID-19 pandemic

Based on Howe and Strauss (1993), Schewe and Meredith (2004), Nobel and Schewe (2003), Kupperschmidt (2000) and Lowe et al (2020)

As Table 1 highlights, there is a noticeable spread within each of these cohorts as well as an overlap between the late phase of one cohort and the early phase of the next cohort therefore supporting the statements on the ambiguity of the starting dates. This also underlines the comment of Ryder (1965) that cohorts can be heterogeneous. This is in line with the original concept of Mannheim (1952), who calls these "generational units". In his view, there can be more than one unit within the same cohort representing the polar points of this cohort. This depends on the fact whether there is sufficient social change to create a visible difference to the previous cohort which is being discussed in the literature as potential sources for inter-generational conflicts. This is supported by Eyerman and Turner (1998, p. 98), who remark that "*as labour markets and lifestyles have become more flexible and fragmented, it may the that generational experiences become markedly different*". On the other hand, some writers, including Baltes (1968, p. 167) suggest that "*it might well be that the effects of generation differences, for instance, are very small or even absent in a specific case*" which concurs with Mannheim (1952) and Becker (2008), who states that not every cohort is able to create new impulse.

To be recognised as a cohort, the shared experiences of the group need to be profound so that they create a separate and distinct value (Parry & Urwin, 2011) that also leads to the establishment of a cohort identify (Weber & Urick, 2023), which Ryder (1965) describes as a peer group phenomenon. This phenomenon of cohort identification can also be multiplied by mass media (Eyerman & Turner, 1998; Rudolph et al., 2020) and used in Marketing. When this identification is being reached, this bond will remain intact over the years although it may become less precise over time. In the view of Rosow (1978, p. 70)

> "*…people are socialized to the reality of these objective conditions …. As the youth of a period mature, their experiences foster patterns and beliefs typical of their generation*".

2.5. Defining social events

As shown in Table 1, a range of different social events can be linked to the creation of a cohort identity. These social events can include events of historical magnitude (Eyerman & Turner, 1998; Lowe, Barry, & Grunberg, 2020), supporting the statement of Ryder (1965, p. 851) that "*traumatic episodes like war and revolution become the foci of crystallization of the mentality of a cohort*". When analysing the different cohorts, this is most recognizable with the Post-war cohort, still born during World War II and the Baby Boomers, born just after the end of the war. While the first ones experienced a period of economic expansion during their youth, the latter were influenced by the student revolts in the late 1960s fuelled by civil right issues and the Vietnam war (Lowe et al., 2020; Schewe & Meredith, 2004). Reviewing the later cohorts, the critical events for Generation X were the changes at family level due to unemployment and divorces. Similarly, for Generation Y the defining events were the technological advancements brought by the internet. Although they look less traumatic than wartime experiences at first glance, they still had a defining influence on these cohorts.

While the latter clearly has become a global phenomenon as technological innovations spread to most countries within a short time, other social events are less wide-spread or perceived differently across countries. Taking the example of the Vietnam war, the war has resulted in student revolts in many countries but was probably most felt in the US due to the direct involvement in the war resulting in dead or returning traumatised soldiers. Equally, the Gulf war or the Kosovo conflict in the 1990s, while being followed by people around the globe did not have such a lasting impact on the cohort Generation X as the implications where not felt in most countries (Noble & Schewe, 2003). However, as with unclear boundaries of the cohorts, there is also no common agreement on which events have had a global reach, and which can be considered as having had a more local influence as the example of the Gulf war shows. This clearly raises the question whether cohorts can be generalised across countries or if even all countries do have cohorts, as being defined in the US, forming the basis for most of the cohort research (Schewe & Meredith, 2004; Weber & Urick, 2023; Zabel, Biermeier-Hanson, Baltes, Early, & Shepard, 2016). Following their examples based on Russian and Brazilian cohorts, it becomes apparent that the formation of cohorts in these two countries has followed along more local themes, including political, economic, and military events that have not been experienced largely outside these countries or at least not to a level that has triggered visible social changes. On the other hand, a key event in many countries such as World War II has been described by Schewe and Meredith (2004) as having been of minor importance in Brazil, whereas the corresponding cohort in time was influenced by local politics shaped by Getulio Vargas. This is contrasted by Edmunds and Turner (2005) who make the call for global cohorts based on two main developments. Firstly, they agree that the increase of electronic communication is helping to spread news and therefore events globally. Secondly, mobility of people, whether being expressed as tourists, students or employees is increasing the likelihood that social events are no longer contained at local level but can spread out. This is contrasted by Weber and Urick (2023), who advocate that country and culture do have a strong influence not to be neglected. This is supported by Prakash and Tiwari (2021), adding that the dominance of research conducted in Anglo-Saxon countries such as the US, UK, Canada and Australia has led to the perception of a global generalisation.

2.6. Separating age, cohort, period, and systematic effects

When dealing with the concept of cohorts and the development of behaviours and values not only in an organisational context, a number of different effects such as age, cohort, period and systematic effects need to be differentiated (Hajdu & Sik, 2018; Rhodes, 1983; Weber & Urick, 2023). In her work on age-related differences in work attitudes and behaviour, Rhodes (1983) primarily draws on the work of Schaie (1965), Baltes (1968) and Palmore (1978), who have researched the influence of study designs on their ability to differentiate the various effects when dealing with age-related developments. This is critically appraised by Urick (2020), who states that several research is leading, due to its design, to age-based stereotypes.

In this context, Palmore (1978, p. 282) highlights that the "*problem of separating age effects from period and cohort effects is often ignored, which leads to highly dubious, if not clearly fallacious, conclusions.*" To define cohort effects, these "are the result of successive cohorts bearing the stamp of their childhood environment", whereas age effects are linked to the biological age and changes in values and behaviours that occur over the lifetime of a person (Lowe et al., 2020; Urick, 2020). Among those three effects, the period effect is deemed to be the least prominent one according to Twenge (2010) in her review of work values given that values remain fairly constant once being formed during the early years of a person.

For the purpose of studying age-related effects and differences, Palmore (1978) separates three different levels of analysis, cross-sectional, longitudinal and time-lag studies, each of which is able to define one of the three effects. According to him, cross-sectional studies including two cohorts can account for period effects but are not able to differentiate between age and cohort effects, a standpoint also taken by Lowe et al. (2020). On the other hand, longitudinal studies following one or more cohorts over several study points in time can define cohort effects while not separating age from period effects. Lastly, a time-lag study based on at least one cohort being studied at two points in time with a considerable gap will define age effects but remain open on period and cohort effects. With this defined, he suggests applying more one than one study design to separate the various effects. Commenting on the work of Palmore (1978) and Rhodes (1983), Smola and Sutton (2002, p. 380) highlight that:

> "*Longitudinal studies are valuable in helping us to better understand trends and changes in our subject matter. However, they are usually difficult to accomplish, particularly in a mobile society and a work world where employees jump from company to company*."

This view is contrasted by Twenge (2010, p. 202), suggesting that:

> *"The best design for determining generational differences is a time-lag study, which examines people of the same age at different points in time. With age held constant, any differences are due to either generation (enduring differences based on birth cohort) or time period (change over time that affects all generations)."*

However, when analysing age-related research, the most related study design has been the cross-sectional method. Based on the research from Twenge (2010), only three studies at that point of time were conducted as time-lag studies, a point that has not changed considerably since then, with the remainder being largely cross-sectional studies. While there are good reasons for choosing a cross-sectional study design, namely the ability to conduct and finish the research at one point of time, the implication remains that age differences between cohorts or the points of measurement will prevail thus limiting the research (Lowe et al., 2020; Schaie, 1965).

The limitations of a cross-sectional design and its ability to describe age or cohort-related effects have been recognised during this study. To partially mitigate this, the survey has been repeated over a period of 12 months, therefore providing an expanded snapshot.

2.7. Cohorts within an organisational context

Following the definition of cohorts and the benefits and limitations of its use in age-related studies, the usefulness of the concept within an organisational context needs to be revisited. According to Joshi, Dencker, and Franz (2011), there has been limited application of cohort studies within organisational research at the time of their writing when compared to the overall number of articles covering generational research. This point merits a discussion at it has also been acknowledged by Lyons and Kuron (2013) in their call for more qualitative research into cohorts as a social force within organisations. Building on the earlier research of Joshi, Dencker, Franz, and Martocchio (2010). Joshi et al. (2011) differentiate between the chronological passing of groups of new entrants into an organisation and the transmission of values and skills from older to younger workers therefore resembling a generational or kinship structure. This point is being expanded by Arras-Djabi, Cottard, and Shimada (2024), who state that this is providing an alternative perspective on social identities in the workplace beyond the age-related, generational approach. Instead of purely evaluating potential differences between different cohorts co-inhabiting the workspace, the question is raised to what extent the belonging to an organisational setting with its rules and values is influencing the cohort's values and behaviours and vice-versa. Like the experiences a birth cohort has gained during its formative years, a tenure cohort can also be formed by training as well as organisational and social events creating a cohort identity (Urick, 2020). This could be economic events such as the banking crisis in 2010, the COVID-19 pandemic or single organisational events such as lay-offs and significant management changes.

Therefore, while age and its correspondence with a first entry into the workplace and into one organisation is seen as key element supporting the cohort approach, tenure and experience are also seen as factors influencing potential research (North & Shakeri, 2019; Urick, 2020). This view is supported by Lyons and Kuron (2013) who see this as a useful extension of the purely cohort based research.

2.8. Chapter Summary

To conclude, the use of cohort theory as a means of grouping employees has been discussed since more than fifty years with many writers supporting its use to analyse differences between values, behaviours and attitudes (Joshi et al., 2011; Magni & Manzoni, 2020; North & Shakeri, 2019; Urick, 2020). However, more influences on the behaviour and values of employees exist that need to be separated or at least acknowledged. Furthermore, the early works of Palmore (1978) and Rhodes (1983) have shown that age, period and cohort effects can impact the research. The research design chosen for this study has acknowledged this partially due to the repetition of the survey over twelve consecutive months.

Chapter 3 – Generation Y

3.1. Introduction

Chapter Three is based on the generational theory and focusses on members of Generation Y, which are also called "Millennials". After a brief definition of this generation and the perceived differences compared to other generations as identified in the literature, the chapter concentrates on the role of Generation Y as part of the workforce. Giving an international perspective, the literature is then reviewed by highlighting the behaviour and needs of this generation in nursing, hospitality & tourism as well as the finance sector given that the research in the latter sector, which is the focus of this research, has been found rather limited. Against this background, the key work-related drivers of this generation are summarised as well as the lack of research within the financial industry which has been the trigger for this study.

3.2. Definition of terminology

As stated before, the definition of the term „generation" can be traced back to the work of Mannheim (1928) and Becker (2008) who use the term like class and gender as a means to structure history. Within this classification, the definition of cohort generation, i.e. a section of the society born within a defined range of years has been further developed by authors such as Ryder (1965), Eyerman and Turner (1998), Edmunds and Turner (2005) and Lyons, Schweitzer, Urick, and Kuron (2018). Generation is often interchangeably used with the term "cohort". In their original work, Howe and Strauss (2000) provide a classification of different generations that has become the most commonly cited definition across the generational literature since 2000. Within this context, the focus of this thesis will be on Generation Y, representing the largest group in the US workforce since 2015 (Fry, 2015) and now even the largest generation living in the US (Fry, 2020).

The term "Generation Y" was coined in 1993 to describe the latest cohort of consumers born after 1980 (Anonymous, 1993). The name was chosen to label the successors of "Generation X" or the thirteenth generation as stated by Howe and Strauss (1993) with a view on the sequence of American generations. Several other names were proposed for this generation such as "Millennials", "Generation Next", "Generation 2000" or "Echo Boom" (Howe & Strauss, 2000) naming a few but the terms "Generation Y" and even more "Millennials" were the most prominent names to be used. Within the academic literature, the usage of these two terms can be equally found as the term "Millennials" is used by key authors such as Twenge and Campbell (2012), Lyons et al. (2018) or Weber and Urick (2023), while Parry and Urwin (2011), Sakdiyakorn, Golubovskaya, and Solnet (2021) and Marais (2023) utilize the term "Generation Y". For this text, "Generation Y" will be used throughout as this provides a more transparent description placing this generation between Generation X as their predecessors and Generation Z as the succeeding generation. Utilising this term, Generation Y, acknowledges that this label represents a Western standpoint (Rudolph, Rauvola, Costanza, & Zacher, 2020) as most of the research on generational differences has been contributed by authors from the US, Australia, UK and Canada (Prakash & Tiwari, 2021).

As for the variety of names given to this generation, the literature, as shown in Table 2, provides several ranges of birth years for Generation Y, which separate this generation from the previous Generation X. The differing views on the exact starting point for Generation Y are a continuation of the debate from previous generations given that the start date for the Baby Boomer generation is set between 1940 and 1946 and the starting date for Generation X is set to be in the early 1960s (Smola & Sutton, 2002). Analysing the existing literature, the earliest start date proposed for Generation Y is 1977 as posited by Broadbridge et al. (2007); Chen and Choi (2008) and Singh, Bhandarker, and Rai (2012). Neuborne and Kerwin (1999) and Smola and Sutton (2002) state 1979 as the start date while Alsop (2008); Lipkin and Perrymore (2009) and Ng et al. (2010) use 1980 as the first year for the new generation. The majority of authors has set the starting date for Generation Y in 1982 (Glass, 2007; Kowske, Rasch, & Wiley, 2010; Twenge, 2010; Yourston, 2016) all of which more or less reference back to Howe and Strauss (2000). More recently, Clements (2023) and Marais (2023) have used 1981 as the starting date for Generation Y thus offering a further alternative albeit within the same range.

For the end date, the range provided is similarly diverse, ranging from 1996 (Fry, 2020) to 2004 (Accius & Yeh, 2016). Given the variety of dates offered in the literature as can be seen in Table 2 and lacking concise arguments for any of these proposed ranges (Clements, 2023; Eisner, 2005), the definition of Howe and Strauss (2000) will be used therefore placing Generation Y between 1982 and 2000, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Selected ranges attributed to Generation Y

Author	Year	Gen Y Range
Howe & Strauss	2000	1982 - 2000
Smola & Sutton	2002	1979-1994
Parry & Urwin	2011	1982 -
Breitsohl & Ruhle	2016	1980 - 1999
Tulgan	2018	1978 - 2000
Naim & Lenka	2018	1981 - 2000
Fry	2020	1981 - 1996
Lowe et al.	2020	1981 - 2000
Törn-Laapio & Ekonen	2021	1980 - 1998
Nguyen	2022	1982 - 1999
Twenge	2023	1980 - 1994
Richmond	2023	1980 - 1996
Marais	2023	1981 - 1994
Easton & Steyn	2023	1980 - 2000
Abrams Kaplan	2024	1981 - 1996
Cera et al.	2024	1980 - 1995

However, as a generation can be split into three stages of approximately five to seven years each, which have been tagged as "*first wave, core group and last wave*" (Kupperschmidt, 2000, p. 66), this approach can be equally adopted for Generation Y. Applied to the selected range of birth dates for Generation Y, a sub-segmentation would see the first wave being born between 1982 and 1987, the core group between 1988 and 1993 and the last wave between 1994 and 2000. When reviewing the literature on Generation Y, this concept as well as the varying start dates need to be critically assessed to ensure comparability of the results. While the first stage of participants in the study of Broadbridge et al. (2007) would be the first wave of Generation Y in that study, it can simultaneously be seen as the last wave of Generation X when utilising the start date of Howe and Strauss (2000). Equally, the last wave of Generation Y can be classified as the first wave of the following generation.

3.3. Generation Y as consumers

Literature on Generation Y has now been available for more than twenty years with first articles referring to this generation around the new millennium by Neuborne and Kerwin (1999), Howe and Strauss (2000) and Tsui (2001). Given the time of their publication and the age of members of Generation Y ranging from 5 to 20 years, these articles provided a first focus on the new generation as consumers as this was the first role Generation Y held prior to becoming students and employees. Within this thesis, the focus is on Generation Y as employees in an organisational context, therefore the review of the research on Gen Y consumers has been limited to the early articles to inform the reader on the initial characteristics associated with this generation.

From a marketing perspective, understanding Generation Y is critical given its size of 60 million members in the US represents three times the size of Generation X (Neuborne & Kerwin, 1999). Additionally, the buying behaviour of this generation is seen to be different from its predecessors as the change in brand preferences has indicated. According to Neuborne and Kerwin (1999) the different values of this group can be attributed to a number of social factors such as increased racial diversity, higher rate of single-parent households and a subsequent early involvement in family finances making them more pragmatic. The latter point is further strengthened through the media saturation and technological savviness, a statement also supported by Tsui (2001). With the help of the internet, the level of knowledge on products among this consumer group has risen dramatically while also offering the opportunity to meet the increased trend towards individualism as the success of campaigns such as "*make them your own*" from Levi's has demonstrated (Tsui, 2001, p. 2). While differences in behaviour often lead to resistance and misunderstanding from older generations, Howe and Strauss (2000) paint a very positive picture of this generation describing them as collaborative despite their individualistic tendencies, adhering to rules and being generally obedient to authority. At the same time, they are seen as much more positive in their overall view on life when compared to Generation X which is widely described as being sarcastic (Howe & Strauss, 2000; Tsui, 2001) This can be attributed to their protective upbringing described by Alsop (2008) as "Trophy Kids" as well as the fact that they were "*raised in a time of economic expansion and prosperity*" which has influenced their attitude consequently (Eisner, 2005, p. 3). In contrast to that, Generation X was raised in a time of political and military difficulties in the US as well global downsizing and job losses in the economy (Arsenault, 2004).

3.4. Generation Y emerging from school to work

The original work from Eisner (2005) is deemed one of the first academic texts with a full focus on Generation Y. Based on an extensive literature review, the focus in her article shifted from this generation as a new type of consumers to their potential influence as employees, which at the time of her writing was uncharted territory. Given that actually only few members of this generation had fully entered the workforce by that time, research was focussed on students in the US (Eisner, 2005; Twenge, 2010), Canada (Ng et al., 2010) and the UK (Broadbridge et al., 2007; Terjesen, Vinnicombe, & Freeman, 2007). Fuelled by observations of different learning behaviours and attitudes of this generation at university (Stewart, 2009), these differences were transferred onto the work space. With Generation Y due to entering the workforce, key questions concerned their perception of jobs, their expectations towards hiring organisations and potential challenges in managing the new workers. For organisations the focus was therefore on attracting Generation Y to join their workforce. Due to a lack of own extensive work experience, the perception and expectations of members of this generation are mainly based on existing part-time experiences (Broadbridge, 2003a, 2003b; Broadbridge et al., 2007) and online research or information from peers (Ng et al., 2010). Based on this, the desire for an interesting and rewarding job with opportunities for rapid advancement allowing for sufficient flexibility to balance work and life is a common theme identified in these studies and therefore a key element for Generation Y to be attracted to an organisation or industry sector. Taking the example of retailing as described by Broadbridge (2003a) and Broadbridge et al. (2007), the existence of certain attributes such as long-working hours and repetitive and boring which is associated with the job experiences gained in this industry leads to an overall negative image as hygiene factors after Herzberg et al. (2010) are not fulfilled.

Other factors, such as the importance of salary and the expectations on career are more complex as the various findings indicate. While there is some agreement that the level of pay is not as relevant for Generation Y than it has been for Generation X (Ng et al., 2010), the finding from Eisner (2005) that this generation does not strive to make a lot of money is contradicted by Terjesen et al. (2007) who report a significance on high starting salaries in their research focussing on work in management consultancy, investment banking and media and in particular for male members of their surveys. The importance of pay is also underlined by the research from Broadbridge et al. (2007) given that low pay in the retail industry is seen as a detractor decreasing the attractiveness to commence work in this sector. However, the stark differences between the industry sectors reviewed in these two studies somehow limits the comparability of findings. It can be concluded, however, that salary is important as a hygiene factor and could also be seen as a form of instant reward as Ng et al. (2010) have postulated in their study. From their study, it can be derived that Generation Y expects more than a salary as the need for immediate and continued feedback is a trait characterising this generation (Eisner, 2005).

In terms of career expectations, there is agreement that Generation Y is keen to advance quickly. While Broadbridge et al. (2007) state that participants in their study are willing to work hard for this initially but would expect to return to their overall work-life-balance aspirations once a desired level has been reached, this is not mirrored in other texts. Twenge (2010) reports a decline in work ethics resulting in a reduced interest in working hard or working overtime. As an explanation she cites that work is less central to life for this generation compared to previous generations but points out that this is against an apparent trend in the US to work more. Agreeing on the significance of work-life-balance, Ng et al. (2010, p. 282) suggest that

> "*…given their higher levels of education, Millennials are more likely to negotiate the terms under which they work, and demand work/life balance at every stage of their careers*."

Drawing conclusions from their research on student members of Generation Y, these authors predict challenges for organisations in general and specifically for people manager, particularly when attracting Generation Y to join their workforce and subsequently retaining them. With their voiced demand for training and development within a dynamic environment (Terjesen et al., 2007), members of this organisation need to be convinced before starting to work for a particular company. Following the joiner process, potential difficulties for managers when dealing with this generation can be foreseen. Characterised as being technological savvy (Broadbridge et al., 2007), Eisner (2005) report a lack of technological knowledge among older managers that is criticised by the younger generation while Twenge (2010) predicts potential confrontations due to the higher level of narcissism and individualism coupled with the strong sense of entitlement ad need for feedback for which most managers of older generations are not yet prepared.

3.5. Generation Y as employees

While studies based on students representing Generation Y continued with the important articles of Ng et al. (2010) and Twenge (2010), at the same time, first studies including Generation Y in employment were published (Cennamo & Gardner, 2008; Chen & Choi, 2008; Gursoy, Maier, & Chi, 2008; Kowske et al., 2010). With the first members of Generation Y having entered the workforce, these initial studies concentrate on the analysis of general values, and work values in particular, work attitudes and characteristics of Generation Y. With the exception of the research from Cennamo and Gardner (2008), who researched employees across a range of organisations in New Zealand, most of the early studies are based on US employees, a fact that has not changed as Marais (2023) as well as Prakash and Tiwari (2021) confirm with their literature review. In terms of design, cross-sectional studies based on a single sector or organisation dominate as only Kowske et al. (2010) applied a time-lag method based on survey data collected over 18 Years. This dominance of cross-sectional studies is confirmed by Twenge (2010) who only recorded three time-lag studies until the time of her writing. The downside of the cross-sectional design is confirmed by her and others, including Lyons and Kuron (2013, p. 142) who state that: "*Cross-sectional studies are arguably the weakest form of evidence as they control for neither age nor cohort effects and hold constant only the period effect*.", a point supported by Lowe et al. (2020) The limitations of this approach need to be considered when comparing the results of the different studies.

With the strong focus on US employees, these articles utilise the underlying classification of Kupperschmidt (2000) and ultimately Howe and Strauss (2000); Strauss and Howe (1990) for the segmentation of the key generations in the workplace, namely Baby Boomers, Generation X and Generation Y. Rudolph et al. (2020) critically agrees to this point as the utilisation of these labels represents a US/Western view on generations that limits the application of these findings beyond the

US, to which Frye et al. (2020) concur. In this context, Kowske et al. (2010) also refer to the seven traits of Generation Y as listed by Howe and Strauss (2000) and earlier works of Twenge. Among these seven traits, the sheltered upbringing, the confidence and optimism and their sense of achievement are stated setting them apart from the previous generations, stereotypes that can be found throughout the literature such as in the research of Arras-Djabi et al. (2024). At the same time, they are described as being team-player and despite their perceived differences as opposed to previous generations rather conventional than rebellious. The latter is a point to note as it suggests a degree of cooperation which, coupled with the overall more positive view on life as compared to Generation X, paints an overall positive picture of this generation.

As Kowske et al. (2010) review the existing literature, they point out that empirical research on potential differences in work attitudes between generations is rather limited despite publications in the wider press. Defining work attitudes as "*evaluative (cognitive) or emotional (affective) reactions to various aspects of work*" (Kowske et al., 2010, p. 267), the authors focus on aspects including job satisfaction, turnover, pay, recognition, career development and advancement. This view is in line with the definition of work attitudes cited by Judge, Weiss, Kammeyer-Mueller, and Hulin (2017, p. 362): "*For the humanist perspective, job attitudes result when each individual's needs for growth, development, and meaning are met by the conditions of work*". In contrast to this, Cennamo and Gardner (2008) and Gursoy et al. (2008) centre their research on differences in work values. This fits with the definition of Chu (2008, p. 320):

> *"Values are of vital importance in determining human behaviour. They direct the way an individual believes, thinks, and acts. In management literature, ''work value'' is important, since the degree to which employees value their jobs influences their work attitude toward job satisfaction, commitment, and loyalty."*

From this definition it can be derived that there is a difference between work attitudes and work values although the connection between the two is also visible which corresponds with Elizur (1984) who sees work values as a subset of work attitudes. However, Lowe et al. (2020) critically remark that while core values are defined during adolescence, work values are rather secondary values that are acquired later and which can be revised individually.

In their research, Kowske et al. (2010) draw on data from a survey having run over 18 years including data from more than 115k US employees spread across five generations. Having analysed the data against the subcategories of work attitudes listed before, the authors found differences in three of the categories which were statistically significant but overall negligible. These categories comprise the satisfaction with the job overall as well as with pay and lastly turnover intentions. However, given the low variance, the authors argue that it would be fair to consider this as generational similarities rather than differences. As an explanation they propose that the basic contract between an employer and an employee has remained unchanged across generations. Similarly, for the four other values, the differences are small so that again generational similarities cannot be discarded. With a view on their research methodology, Kowske et al. (2010) propose that the result has been limited by a number of factors, namely a potential voluntary bias across the survey participants as well as the limited work experience of Generation Y at the time of the research. Considering the view of Lowe et al. (2020) as stated earlier that work values are secondary values acquired later, the influence of the work place at the time of study should be noted as a potential influence of similar importance for employees across all generations. In contrast to these findings, Gursoy et al. (2008) report differences in a number aspects in their study. Based on focus groups with 150 hospitality employees from a US-hotel chain, the study compares three different generations. Among their findings, the most striking differences include the attitude towards leadership as well as the overall perception of the importance of work within the lives of the participants.

On the notion of leadership, a point picked up in more detail in Section 3.6.2., the authors detect a general difference among the three generations surveyed given that each of the generations voices critics regarding the leadership of the other generations which are based on several characteristics such as lack of skills, respect, or overall attitude towards work. Not surprisingly, the attitude towards work is a central theme confirming the findings from Eisner (2005) and Ng et al. (2010) that work has lost its importance when comparing Baby Boomers, Generation X and Generation Y. While Baby Boomers followed the traditional "*live to work*" approach, Generation X is characterised as "*work to live*" while Generation Y is said to have their priorities outside work (Gursoy et al., 2008, p. 451). This finding is confirmed by the study of Cennamo and Gardner (2008) who report higher values for freedom, i.e. work-life-balance for Generation Y. Based on the responses from more than 500 New Zealand-based participants across different industries, the authors found some but less than expected differences between the four generations researched. One of the other differences identified was the stronger focus on status by Generation Y. While the authors suggest that this could be due to the fact that older generations have already reached positions of status and therefore see their need for status as satisfied, Gursoy et al. (2008) report that the biggest issue of Generation Y is their perceived lack of received respect as a result of their young age which would confirm their aspiration for status.

Concluding from their research, the authors do believe that the identified differences among the generations can lead to conflicts at work given that the changes in work values have implications on leadership and the overall structure and organisation of work. From their point of view, Generation Y will not react well to rigid structures and challenge conventional structures which is somewhat contradicting the traits quoted by Kowske et al. (2010).

From these early studies, the research from Cennamo and Gardner (2008) suggests that the predominant US and UK findings can be applied to some extent to other countries such as New Zealand in this particular case, a position that is more and more questioned by later authors (Frye et al., 2020; Rudolph et al., 2020; Weber & Urick, 2023), strengthening the case for local research to understand the characteristics of Generation Y in other countries as well.

3.6. Real and perceived generational differences at work

While these articles follow an academic approach by analysing Generation Y as employees inside organisations, an initial host of articles from 2009 and 2010 concentrates on the implications of the perceived and real differences in work values of this generation on leadership and organisational settings, with later studies expanding the field (Lester, Standifer, Schultz, & Windsor, 2012; Standifer & Lester, 2019) . Although some articles draw on surveying US students (Hewlett, Sherbin, & Sumberg, 2009; Hind, 2016) or online surveys of Generation Y members (Meier & Crocker, 2010), others are solely based on literature research (Deal, Altman, & Rogelberg, 2010; Hershatter & Epstein, 2010) or are written based on experiences with Generation Y in an organisational context such as the articles from Herbison and Boseman (2009), Tulgan (2009b), and Jones, Murray, and Tapp (2018). Despite positive characteristics attributed to Generation Y, the general tone of voice remains critical as working with this generation is regarded as challenging for managers (Herbison & Boseman, 2009; Hershatter & Epstein, 2010; Meier & Crocker, 2010) and Generation X in particular (Hewlett et al., 2009). Across the articles, the key challenge for managers when dealing with Generation Y is derived from the fact that this generation is seen as high maintenance due to their high demand for feedback and their strong sense of entitlement. The level of feedback expected by Generation Y puts increased pressure on managers given that Generation Y expects good leadership to be motivated (Herbison & Boseman, 2009), which is supported by Maier, Tavanti, Bombard, Gentile, and Bradford (2015) and Urick (2020). As a possible explanation, Stewart (2009), drawing on his experience in teaching Generation Y at university, suggests that this generation has got low self-expectations. From his class surveys, the self-description of his students was considerably negative in terms of being competent, self-sufficient, and dependable. Although this looks like a contrast to their reported sense of entitlement, the latter is ascribed to their high degree of education making them the most educated generation to enter the workforce (Herbison & Boseman, 2009). As the authors conclude, education and more specifically the college debts amassed by most students in the US, could be responsible for the strong focus on high salaries, which is an important work component according to Meier and Crocker (2010).

A further challenge for organisations stems from the fact that Generation Y seems to require varied and challenging tasks to be motivated on the one hand (Jones et al., 2018; Meier & Crocker, 2010), while longing for clear responsibilities and roles on the other hand (Hershatter & Epstein, 2010). This apparent avoidance of ambiguity, potentially another explanation for the increased need for feedback, could be because they have been overprotected by their parents until the end of their studies. This view, also coined as helicopter parenting in numerous publications (Evans & Karl, 2021; Hind, 2016; Matthews, 2008; Peluchette, Kovanic, & Partridge, 2013) is also supported by Glass (2007) who states that parents have been more dedicated and involved in the upbringing of their children due to the availability of increased resources and fewer children per family. As a result of this upbringing a number of organisation question the ability of Generation Y in terms of risk-taking as Alsop (2008) cites in his book that members of Generation Y have probably never taken a decision themselves when leaving university. Hind (2016) concurs by stating that parents of this generation are said to even attend job fairs and interviews together with their children.

Despite this range of negative or challenging characteristics, positive traits are being highlighted as well. First and foremost, there is praise for their ability to teamwork (Hewlett et al., 2009; Ulupinar, 2023) while other research confirms their strong technical abilities as mentioned in previous articles that makes them quick in gathering new information (Deal, Altman, & Rogelberg, 2010; Hershatter & Epstein, 2010; Standifer & Lester, 2019). Tulgan (2009a) also highlights their strong customer focus, which can be turned into an organisational advantage if managed properly. Overall, Tulgan (2009b) advocates to change the management approach towards this generation to turn the mentioned negative attitudes into strengths that will motivate Generation Y to work within organisations.

With the majority of these articles trying to provide advice to managers dealing with Generation Y as staff, Hershatter and Epstein (2010) regard the basis for these findings as extensive based on a vast amount of data available on values and behaviours, a view contradicted by Deal et al. (2010). These authors caution that the quoted attitudes and values are not supported by empirical work which according to their research is rather confusing or contradictory. Consequently, they claim that perceptions and realities of generational differences are substantially different. As a reference they quote that this is consistent with previous views of older generation on younger generations entering the workforce. Also, Deal et al. (2010, p. 194) point out that:

> *"When thinking about generational differences, it is important to remember that individual behaviour is a result of an interaction between an individual's predispositions and what behaviour the environment encourages and discourages".*

Considering the time of their writing, this refers to the economic crisis which had been caused by the financial crisis of 2008 to 2010. With culture having an undeniable influence on the formation of each generation, the authors question whether a global view on generations is possible. They support their view by stating that cultural milestones are different between the various cultures and that birth rates defining the start and end of a generation also differ between countries. Edmunds and Turner (2005) however, support the view of an emergence of global generations based on two main themes, namely the increase of global communication as well as increased travel and mobility across countries. With both points being relevant, this clearly represents a wider debate.

3.6.1. The importance of feedback to Generation Y

Existing literature has established that Generation Y is placing more importance on feedback than previous generations (Herbison & Boseman, 2009; Mitsakis & Galanakis, 2022; Twenge, 2010). However, the concept of feedback is not new as "*feedback surrounds us every day: It originates from other people, tasks, and comparisons*" (Hepper & Carnelley, 2012, p. 505). According to Hepper and Carnelley (2010, p. 450):

> *"Feedback provides vital information about strengths and weaknesses, and people often go out of their way to seek it. Seeking feedback influences the information one receives in return, contributing to self-concept maintenance and change."*

To develop a deeper understanding of the importance of feedback for human beings in general, and for employees of Generation Y in the context of this study, it merits to draw on the concept of the attachment theory (Bowlby, 2011; Thompson, Simpson, & Berlin, 2022). Initially developed with a focus on attachments developed in early childhood, it has been expanded into other fields including adulthood and adult relationships (Robledo, Cross, Boada-Bayona, & Demogeot, 2022). Doherty and Feeney (2004) state that attachment theory is applicable throughout the lifespan of a person as adults seek relationships covering their needs for proximity, safety and security among others. Utilising this understanding from the literature, an application to a work context within this thesis is deemed appropriate. As Bowlby (1982, p. 668) states:

> *„Attachment behaviour is any form of behaviour that results in a person attaining or maintaining proximity to some other clearly identified individual who is conceived as better able to cope with the world ".*

Bowlby (1982, 2011) contents that this behaviour is a natural part of each human and is also present beyond the childhood. Due to this, he regards the behaviour of attachment as one of the fundamental sources of motivation. Based on this theoretical foundation, Hepper and Carnelley (2010) formulate that due to childhood experiences, adults can display either high or low attachment avoidance or anxiety, depending on the respective experiences made in younger years. Adults with high attachment avoidance and anxiety have most likely experienced negative or inconsistent attention from their primary reference person, which in turn often leads to a low self-esteem. Linking this back to Generation Y, it can be suggested that due to their protected upbringing, this generation is characterised by a low attachment avoidance and anxiety displayed by their apparent high self-esteem. This is supported by Hepper and Carnelley (2010, p. 449), who claim that "*people are* *motivated to seek positive feedback in order to attain positive self-views*". Adding on to this, they theorise that there is a direct linkage between the feedback a person is seeking and the feedback someone is receiving, i.e., people with higher self-esteem are more likely to seek and receive positive feedback supporting their view of themselves rather than someone with lower self-esteem, who feels confirmed in his own view via negative feedback.

When evaluating the provision of feedback within a working environment, two potential limitations can be observed that may negatively affect the quest of Generation Y for feedback. Firstly, as pointed out by Gioia and Catalano (2011) as well as Herbison and Boseman (2009), managers of elder generations are not used to provide feedback on a continuous basis as demanded by Generation Y. Consequently, this can lead to a perceived lack of feedback, which in turn could decrease work motivation following the theory of Bowlby (2011). It could also lead to a negative perception by Generation Y of their manager as their expectations are not met.

Secondly, the style of feedback could have a negative effect on Generation Y as performance feedback, whether provided in a structured year-end review or ad hoc is often delivered by the manager as a one-way communication rather than a dialogue. For Kluger and Lehmann (2018) this process is not suited to facilitate a discussion between equals as the situation rather resembles a parent talking to their child:

> *"Like a child subjected to a caregiver's monologue, a subordinate subjected to a supervisor's monologue (feedback) is likely to feel objectified and constrained, experiencing a loss of autonomy and a reduced sense of security with the person carrying out the monologue" (Kluger & Lehmann, 2018, p. 346).*

Kluger and Lehmann (2018), contend that feedback on performance is therefore often rather seen as a threat to the autonomy of the employee rather than a positive message despite its positive intentions. To overcome this issue, Qian et al. (2017) suggest that managers should adopt a conversational style that is creating a supportive environment for feedback. Given the importance of positive feedback for Generation Y but also as a driver for work motivation, further research into this subject is deemed to be useful to better understand how this can be best utilised in a working context. With Generation Y being seen low on attachment avoidance according to US studies, this should predict that employees of this generation are open to receive feedback on competence and interpersonal skills. This willingness to obtain feedback represents a solid foundation for utilizing feedback as a source of motivation and hence merits further research, which should also include other geographical regions than the US to broaden the insights.

3.6.2. The importance of leadership to Generation Y

Within an organisational context, leadership and reporting lines represent an integral part of the conventional structure of organisations. In an early article, Kowske et al. (2010) posited that Generation Y however tends to dislike rigid structures and hierarchies, which calls for an adaptation of the management and leadership style (Qian et al., 2017; Urick, 2020). With this view, Generation Y is not totally different from other generations as Baby Boomers are also critical of authoritarian leadership and Generation X challenging authority more specifically (Raišienė, Rapuano, & Varkulevičiūtė, 2021). Gursoy et al. (2008) summarise this by stating that each generation is critical of the other generations as leaders, which seems to be the natural flow when a younger generation enters the workplace where older generations have earned or fought their way to the top. This is also supported by Raišienė et al. (2021), who attribute this to different work values and ethics associated with each generation. To be effective, people manager must adopt an appropriate leadership style according to their workforce, which requires learning and mastering the appropriate leadership style or styles (González-Cruz, Botella-Carrubi, & Martínez-Fuentes, 2019).

Building on the work of Bass and Steidlmeier (1999), Pearce et al. (2003) have identified four main leadership styles, which they have labelled as directive, transactional, transformational and empowering. According to Qian et al. (2017) and Tian et al. (2020), Generation Y prefers a transformational leadership style creating an environment in which feedback is being sought and given. While Urick (2020) concurs with this position, Easton and Steyn (2022) identify a slight tendency towards transformational and transactional leadership styles among Generation Y employees, which differs from previous generations. In this context, Easton and Steyn (2023, p. 2) define that:

> *"Transactional leadership refers to the behaviours that establish the parameters of the exchange relationship between the leader and the follower.", while "Transformational leadership refers to those leader behaviours that encourage vision, produce inspiration from their followers and motivate change."*

Herbison and Boseman (2009) and Meier and Crocker (2010), content that Generation Y expects their managers to be motivated in order to fuel their own motivation. These high expectations expand to include the provision of instant recognition of their contribution by providing praise and recognition (Easton & Steyn, 2023). Concurring with this view, Qian et al. (2017) cite that this perceived support provided by the manager as a representation of the organisation signals to Generation Y that their contribution is being recognised and valued. To foster this belief, supporting training are sought by this generation. Naim and Lenka (2018) expand on this to claim that Generation Y is keen to contribute to the success of the organisation, even in larger and more complex situations but at the same time expects clear directions from their managers on what they expect of their employees.

Agreeing with this, Qian et al. (2017) stated that managers need to come across as authentic in order to display transparency and openness, coinciding with trust and respect for their respective employees. This was also shared by Easton and Steyn (2022), who found that communication, respect, influence and providing vision are essential leadership trades. However, they also found out that teamwork was rated highest among the leadership skills. While this supports the preferences for more interactive leadership styles where manager and subordinates engage in a two-way communication, it also opens the debate on the importance of relationships at work in general. Beyond the classic manager-subordinate relationship, the relationship with colleagues at the same level seems to have increased in importance as the research from Raišienė et al. (2021, p. 12) suggests:

> *"In other words, the study revealed that attitudes towards personal relationships with managers and co-workers change depending on the generation. The older generation attached more importance to managers and the organisation management characteristics, while the younger generation perceived the organisation as a combination of co-workers."*

Whether this shifts the entire view on the organisational structure and the inner-organisational relationships would need further research to support such view; however, it at least indicates that directional leadership approaches might prove to be less effective with Generation Y as employees and even more unlikely with Generation Y as managers themselves.

3.7. International comparison of Generation Y in the workplace

To compare the findings on Generation Y employees internationally, Lyons, Schweitzer, Ng, and Kuron (2012) have compiled articles on Generation Y in the workforce from several countries including the US, Australia, Canada, Turkey, Belgium and Germany. While this raises the illusion of a broad geographical representation, Prakash and Tiwari (2021) highlight with their research that the majority of articles stems from four Anglo-Saxon countries, namely the US, Australia, the UK and Canada. In one of the few studies, and the latest ones found in the literature offering a German perspective, Breitsohl and Ruhle (2012, 2016) firstly point out that most studies are US-focussed, cross-sectional and student-based (see Eisner (2005); Twenge et al. (2010)), as confirmed by Prakash and Tiwari (2021). Having based their study on the German Socio-Economic Panel, a representation of household data, their focus is on general and work values. Comparing Generation X and Y in terms of job satisfaction, job security and gender differences, the authors state that research on generational aspects at work is still in its infancy in Germany. Compared to that, Twenge and Campbell (2012) draw on a wealth of previous studies based on US-students therefore supporting the initial finding of Breitsohl and Ruhle (2012, 2016). Overall, they report that German Generation Y is more satisfied at work compared to Generation X. In the context of the study, job satisfaction is measured as satisfaction with salary and leisure time. While for Generation Y, male responses in the panel were even more positive than female responses, the authors do not report a change in gender differences over generations. More importantly, they identified differences at a geographical level between households in the western part of Germany and the eastern federal states who joined after the reunification. Such national cultural influences pose an additional issue apart from gender aspects for researchers as they point out. A similar point is raised by De Cooman and Dries (2012) who research work values in Belgium. With a focus on students in their final year at university, they concentrated on students from the Flemish part but state that strong cultural differences exist in Belgium among the two main communities, the Flemish and the French-speaking population which comprise jointly 99% of the entire Belgian population. Their main findings correspond with Cennamo and Gardner (2008) in terms of Generation's Y urge for stimulating and varied work as well as the importance of the social surroundings at work. However, in terms of job security, De Cooman and Dries (2012) found that Belgian participants displayed a stronger need for job security than the participants from New Zealand. This result is in line with the uncertainty avoidance index found by Hofstede (1991, p. 113), which places Belgium as one of the countries with the highest uncertainty avoidance and significantly higher than New Zealand, the focus of Cennamo and Gardner (2008). Similarly, Breitsohl and Ruhle (2012, 2016) found no strong focus of neither Generation X nor Y on job security which is line with the mid-field ranking of Germany in the Hofstede index. Similarly, Schewe et al. (2013) come to the same conclusion when analysing Generation Y employees in the US, New Zealand and Sweden. As these aspects show, cultural differences can influence findings when integrating research from outside the core Anglo-American literature, a point picked up by Lyons and Kuron (2013) and later confirmed by Prakash and Tiwari (2021) and Frye, Kang, Huh, and Lee (2020). In their literature review on generational differences, Lyons and Kuron (2013) advocate, among other points, to take a closer look at the context in which the research is being conducted. Weber and Urick (2023) agree to this when pointing out that geographical and cultural differences outweigh age-related differences, highlighting the magnitude of the cultural influence on the findings. In particular, the studies have pointed out challenges when comparing research across various countries as the findings cannot be compared like-by-like as single-organisation research is not designed with the intention for generalisation as this research documents.

Already Lyons et al. (2012) identified in their research among Generation Y nurses in Canada a higher mobility and willingness to change jobs within the first three years, which they explained with a change in personal traits towards a higher self-esteem, a lower need for social approval and a change in the psychological contract but also with a change in the social and economic conditions. The latter comprises elements such as the move towards flatter hierarchies or organisational restructuring, both factors contributing to people changing jobs. The increased mobility, culminating in a higher turnover rate has been a key theme across various industries and countries as research from Frye et al. (2020) among Generation Y in the US hospitality industry or the study from Elian, Paramitha, Gunawan, and Maharani (2020) among Generation Y bank employees in Indonesia highlights.

3.8. Generation Y in nursing

Given the limited research found on Generation Y working in the financial sector, the literature on Generation Y employees in other service industries such as nursing is being reviewed and evaluated. Attracting as well as retaining employees is a key issue in several industries as the worldwide shortage of nurses demonstrates (Chung & Fitzsimons, 2013; Lavoie-Tremblay, Leclerc, Marchionni, & Drevniok, 2010; Perreira et al., 2018). As these authors highlight, the shortage is a consequence of members of the Baby Boomer generation leaving the profession, a limitation on admission for new joiners coupled with a high turnover among new nurses. This theme is consistent throughout the literature dealing with Generation Y entering this profession as retention is critical in this industry (Higgins, 2022; Perreira, Berta, & Herbert, 2018). To understand the reasons for young nurses leaving their job, Lavoie-Tremblay et al. (2010) have interviewed nurses representing Generation Y in Canada in terms of their expectations concerning improvements related to their job. The results show that a lack of recognition, both in terms of monetary as well as non-monetary incentives such as peer recognition was identified as the most demotivating element. Ulupinar (2023) concurs with this point that the salary in this profession is seen as being inadequate, based on a study conducted in Turkey. At the same time, changes to their work environment such as flexible working, improved supervision and development opportunities were cited as being incidents supporting retention of nursing staff (Higgins, 2022). These findings correspond with the US-based literature review conducted by Chung and Fitzsimons (2013) who find that nurses belonging to Generation Y seek a safe while flexible work environment which is equally challenging and motivating. As the authors describe, members of this generation require constant stimuli and are easily bored with repetitive tasks, a phenomenon also detected by Meier and Crocker (2010) in their study of young professionals. Tourangeau, Thomson, Cummings, and Cranley (2013) identify that leadership, mentoring, and educational opportunities are three out of seven key factors to retain nurses in the profession, which is supported by Moyo (2019). Linked to this, the strong preference for teamwork as cited by Higgins (2022) also reflects in the strong focus on communication and the importance of good working relationships, a point supported by Tourangeau et al. (2015) as well as Jamieson, Kirk, Wright, and Andrew (2015). Applying Herzberg's Two-factor theory of motivation, Jamieson et al. (2015) found out that good working relationships are seen as a hygiene factor rather than a motivator, i.e. the absence of a good social environment at work leads to dissatisfaction and in turn increases the leaver rate. In this respect, Tourangeau et al. (2015) cite that bullying from colleagues is a major source of dissatisfaction which could be down to potential intergenerational frictions given that older generations might lack an openness for accepting and respecting Generation Y at work (Hutchinson, Brown, & Longworth, 2012). This matches with the results of Lavoie-Tremblay et al. (2010) who identified peer recognition as a need, while monetary concerns were seen as the key motivator. Monetary compensation overall is a key element across most research on the nursing profession which can be explained with overall low levels of pay compared to the highly demanding job environment comprising a high workload, shift work and an unfavourable patient-nurse ratio (Tourangeau et al., 2013; Ulupinar, 2023). While low pay in this industry can be described as a global phenomenon as the references from various countries show, Jamieson et al. (2015) add that it is at least in New Zealand also costly to register as a nurse making the career choice even less attractive. Although this applies equally to all generations in this profession, Tourangeau et al. (2013) find that improved monetary compensation ranked highest for Generation Y in their survey when compared to Generation X and the Baby Boomer generation

With strong economic factors supporting the demand for higher pay, a number of surveys also revealed that this generation is not prepared to work the long hours that their parents regarded as an integral part of their working life (Hutchinson et al., 2012; Jamieson et al., 2015). The findings from this industry therefore match earlier studies from Gursoy et al. (2008) and Twenge (2010) who find an overall decline of work centrality. Coming to a similar conclusion, Chung and Fitzsimons (2013, p. 4) state that "*Generation Y may have a new idea of career success more concerned with lifestyle than job satisfaction*". With work-life-balance and a strong preference for change and variety being among the key attitudes of Generation Y (McCrindle, 2006), the retention of Generation Y in this profession will most likely remain a challenge. If at the same time, the extrinsic motivation factors such as a healthy work environment and an improvement in pay (Chung & Fitzsimons, 2013) are not met, attraction of new staff will also continue to cause problems enforcing the growing shortage of qualified staff in this industry.

3.9. Generation Y in hospitality and tourism

Like the nursing profession, the hospitality and tourism industry is characterised by a working environment comprising a few unfavourable factors such as low pay, shift work as well as long hours. Consequently, employee turnover represents a continuous challenge in this industry (Brown, Thomas, & Bosselman, 2015; Frye et al., 2020; Törn-Laapio & Ekonen, 2021). In this context, motivation to stay is largely influenced by positive relationships at work (Törn-Laapio & Ekonen, 2021) as well as job satisfaction (Frye et al., 2020) while the high job demand and emotional exhaustion lead to a decline in work motivation. Among the main reasons quoted by participants for staying in their job and within the industry, the work with other people, the ability to serve others as well as overall excitement ranked highest. This was contrasted by the lack of work-life-balance due to long hours, the overall working conditions, and inadequate pay as the main reasons why participants had left the industry or would leave. These findings were generally confirmed by Wong, Wan, and Gao (2017) in their research on career choices of Generation Y students finishing tourism courses. In their analysis of motivational factors affecting Generation Y in tourism, they draw on the work of Chalofsky (2003); Chalofsky and Krishna (2009) and Bailey, Yeoman, Madden, Thompson, and Kerridge (2018) and their description of factors influencing the meaning of work. Referring to the three elements, sense of self, work itself and sense of balance, they describe a general framework into which the identified elements of motivation and demotivation fit. As Wong et al. (2017) point out, this generation wants to enjoy work but does not want the work to dominate their life which corresponds with the statement of Chung and Fitzsimons (2013) concerning the behaviour of Generation Y within the nursing profession.

A further point of concern leading to frictions in the work environment and more specifically between the different generations at work seems to be the lack of respect shown by older colleagues to Generation Y (Gursoy, Maier, & Chi, 2008). Concurring with this, Frye et al. (2020) add that that recognition is highly important to this generation, which highlights similar results to the findings of research within the nursing profession (Hutchinson et al., 2012; Tourangeau et al., 2015).

3.10. Generation Y in finance

In contrast to the previous industries described, literature covering the change Generation Y imposes on the financial sector and banks seems to be limited overall, according to the research conducted and more specifically within the Anglo-Saxon sphere, which otherwise dominates the research on Generation Y (Prakash & Tiwari, 2021). However, since 2010, several articles have been published, and more than often from non-Western countries such as Indonesia (Elian, Paramitha, Gunawan, & Maharani, 2020; Sondari Gadzali, 2023) or Jordan (Al Kurdi, Alshurideh, & Al afaishat, 2020). This relatively late addition of texts could be because the financial sector, unlike other industries such as hospitality and nursing, has not experienced similar issues such as talent shortages or high turnover. For example, despite a negative image following the financial crisis in 2010, the rate of applicants for training programmes of merchant banks in the UK was still twice as high as in other industries (Hoyle, 2017).

However, this is changing as a good salary and benefits are still important but no longer sufficient (Jekielek, 2015; Sondari Gadzali, 2023). According to Jekielek (2015), Generation Y is increasingly seeking purposeful work allowing them to make a difference, which is mirroring earlier descriptions of the characteristics of this generation. Jekielek (2015) therefore, postulates to provide these employees with more information on the organisation’s goals and strategy coupled with clear development options to inspire this generation to be part of the respective organisation.

At the same time, the impact of high turnover of staff is having a negative effect on the bottom line of an organisation as one of the earliest studies focussing on banks demonstrates (Gioia & Catalano, 2011), a point to which Al Kurdi et al. (2020) and Elian et al. (2020) concur. Based on the case study of an American bank, Gioia and Catalano (2011) highlight the cost of turnover due to recruitment efforts as well as the indirect costs in terms of rising dissatisfaction among remaining staff. Using an improved process of exit interviews, the main reasons for leaving where found in a lack of managerial training concerning the provision of constructive feedback. While the requirement for constant feedback has been highlighted in the literature, the generalizations from this case study might be questionable. Joyce and Barry (2016) discuss another negative aspect of a high turnover for financial advisors which is the impact on client trust and the ability to build long-term relationships with the clients. Being a service-oriented industry covering a sensible subject, i.e. the management of other people's money., trust is of essence for the success of companies. To reduce turnover, the authors suggest a range of measures, such as the provision of growth opportunities, focussing on work-life-balance or adding fun to the work, to improve recruitment and retention of Generation Y employees. These measures are largely in agreement with the general literature on Generation Y, as well as some articles referring to Generation Y working in banks, as the focus is on the provision of work-life-balance (Sondari Gadzali, 2023), the definition of job and growth opportunities (Elian et al., 2020) as well as the creation of a diverse and enjoyable work environment (Tews, Michel, Xu, & Drost, 2015). Adding fun to the workplace is also recommended by Tews, Michel, Xu, and Drost (2015) who suggest that initiatives to increase fun in the workplace enhance job embeddedness, which is seen as key factor to reduce turnover.

Those articles covering the financial industry, written by practitioners, focus on the resolution of specific problems via dedicated interventions. An example of this is the case study of a large multinational bank, which is described by Herbert (2016). While the attraction and retention of talent via a structured mobility programme is the outcome, the driver seemed to be rather the costs and lack of transparency of the old system in place.

While there is a slowly growing body of articles covering Generation Y working in banks, the limited ability to generalise across countries highlights a gap in the literature, which this research will fill.

3.11. Increased focus on career characteristics of Generation Y

There is a continued flow of new articles on generational differences in the workplace and Generation Y (Jones et al., 2018; Standifer & Lester, 2019; Ulupinar, 2023). As this Generation has firmly arrived in the workplace and the oldest members of the cohort having passed 40 Years of age, one of the key subjects concerns the definition of career. In this context, Clarke (2015) has analysed the increasing trend of dual career among couples where both partners are pursuing their own aspirations. Instead of having one partner pushing his career while the other supports his growth, career among members of Generation Y is rather seen as matching their needs, values, and professional aspirations. Consequently, the author has identified a stronger sense of give-and-take allowing both partners to advance in their own field. Other authors, e.g. Ismael (2016) and Abessolo, Hirschi, and Rossier (2017) highlight the increased mobility of this generation compared to their predecessors. Based on a change of work values, the concept of a boundaryless career across organisations is described as the consequence. As Abessolo et al. (2017) describe, this career type is strongly linked to a desire for variety and autonomy, which are characteristics attributed to Generation Y. While Lyons, Schweitzer, and Ng (2015) also agree on the higher mobility of Generation Y, at the time of their research, they do not identify any important change in the overall career patterns across generations. This is confirmed by Akkermans and Kubasch (2017) in their analysis of trends in career topics. As they researched, success is still the main driver when pursuing a career, a driver that is consistent for all generations.

Linked with the topic “career” is the term “leadership” as the typical career is characterised by a sequence of promotions including the take-up of leadership positions. While Tourangeau et al. (2015) questioned the willingness of Generation Y to take up leadership positions, Easterby-Smith et al. (2008) did not find statistically significant changes between the preferences of Generation Y and its predecessors in terms of their management style. Combined with the findings of Akkermans and Kubasch (2017), this confirms that the general career definitions are still applicable to Generation Y. However, while the overall definition of a career still holds true, Generation Y tends to expect a faster progression compared to previous generations (Higgins, 2022; Ulupinar, 2023), which is prone to cause frictions with older generations as expectations on the appropriate speed of advancement might differ. One reason for this difference might be the stronger focus on personal development, which is well developed within Generation Y (Törn-Laapio & Ekonen, 2021).

3.12. Chapter Summary

The literature review has shown how the analysis of Generation Y has evolved from this generation being consumers to becoming students, then employees and finally leaders. While there are still considerably different views on their characteristics, values and behaviours, there is a consensus that the work environment is changing. Overall, there is a shift towards a reduced work-centrality and a stronger focus on work-life-balance surfacing, although the latter has equally attributed to Generation X at the time, they entered the workforce.

In terms of the research, a dominance of US and UK studies has been found, followed by articles from other Anglo-Saxon countries such as Canada, Australia and New Zealand. Over time, there is a growing body of texts from non-Western countries, e.g. Indonesia and Jordan complementing the existing research. While this is potentially a consequence of the research in English language, it also questions the ability to generalize the findings across different cultures (Weber & Urick, 2023), which has a profound effect on this study covering Generation Y in Germany. For this purpose, the work of Breitsohl and Ruhle (2012, 2016) and others will provide a good source for comparison.

With the intended focus on the financial industry, there is a gap, which this study will fill given that other industries such as hospitality, tourism and nursing have received a much higher attention to date due to their more pressing needs of attracting and retaining employees.

With the increasing number of Generation Y members still entering the workforce and their advancement in hierarchical terms, the recruitment and retention of this generation remains a topic attracting increased attention. Given the higher rate of turnover experienced with Generation Y due to their mobility and willingness to change jobs based on their personal preferences, organisations need to adapt their HR strategies (Diskiene, Stankeviciene, & Jurgaityte, 2017) to main attractive for the younger generations.

Chapter 4 – Theoretical foundation of work-related drivers

4.1. Introduction

The chapter provides a theoretical background on the three work-related drivers chosen for evaluation in this study, namely motivation, career satisfaction, and loyalty. First, the importance of needs is being discussed before critically assessing two further motivational theories, the two-factor theory of Herzberg et al. (2010) and the self-determination theory ("SDT") of Deci and Ryan (1985). For both, applications have been found in the literature. While the theory of Herzberg has been applied more recently by writers within the context of Generation Y, preference will be given to SDT as this is regarded as a good fit within an organisational context.

When analysing career satisfaction, reference is being made to the career patterns identified by Super (1975) and the findings of Savickas et al. (2009), Rudolph and Lavigne (2017) and Fasbender, Wöhrmann, Wang, and Klehe (2019). This is expanded with research from Broadbridge et al. (2007) as well as Coetzee and Stoltz (2015), who have examined career expectations of Generation Y.

The concept of loyalty has been defined by Hirschman (1970) as well as Porter and Steers (1973). Following the views of Whitney and Cooper (1989) that loyalty is an attitude rather than a behavioural response, the themes affecting loyalty are reviewed using the works of McClean et al. (2013) and Masakure (2016).

Lastly, given the growing importance of non-work activities, the concept of work-life balance and based on this, work-life blending is explored. While each person might have a different approach to balancing work and private life (Nippert-Eng, 1996), the work from Clark (2000) is highlighting that the environment is also shaping the individuals and their dealing with the boundaries. Although Bellmann and Hübler (2020) have not yet identified a major impact of mobile working on the balance between private and professional life, the COVID-19 pandemic has made a further evaluation of this theme an integral part of this thesis.

4.2. Work-related driver: Motivation

4.2.1. Satisfaction of needs

Evaluating employees and their approach to work, Vansteenkiste et al. (2007) highlight that there is no uniform way employees view their work as their focus can vary strongly from earning their living to having influence and recognition to making a meaningful contribution with their work. Underlying these various behaviours are different types and levels of motivation that drive employees within a working context. Beyond this, motivation at work shapes not only the view employees develop towards their work but also the way in which they develop their skills themselves and how they approach work in terms of their efforts employed to conduct their job. As a consequence, Kanfer, Frese, and Johnson (2017, p. 338) state that "*Work motivation is a topic of crucial importance to the success of organisations and societies and the well-being of individuals*".

Motivation in general terms has been widely researched and a variety of explanations and theories have been developed from these discussions. However, as Herzberg (1987, p. 109) state, "*the psychology of motivation is tremendously complex, and what has been unravelled with any degree of assurance is small indeed*". One of the earliest theories developed in this field is based on the work of Maslow (1943, 1951, 1954, 1963, 2013), who was one of the first to advocate that motivation theory should be centred on humans rather than animals. Moving away from previously identified lists of drives, he initially identified five categories of needs that were ordered in a hierarchical structure of predominance. Locke (1983, p. 1303), points out that people have needs without being aware of them:

> *"It must be stressed that needs are objective requirements of an organism's survival and well-being. They exist (that is, are required) whether the organism has knowledge of them or not. They exist whether the organism consciously desires these conditions (and the actions required to attain them) or not."*

Needs in this context are to be differentiated from drives. While needs, which can be subdivided into acquired or inborn needs, are linked to the psychological frame of a person, drives are physiology-related (Deci, 1992a). The initial five needs defined by Maslow (1943, 1954), physiological, safety, love, esteem and self-actualization are generally ranked in ascending order as a general concept based on a sequential satisfaction of these needs from bottom to top. However, Maslow (2013), explicitly stated that the theory allows some overlap, parallel existence or even reversal of these needs under specific circumstances. Additionally, Maslow (1951, 1963) evolved and expanded the theory over his lifetime to include further levels such as the need for information and the need for understanding a frame of reference for values. Guest (2014) contends this was necessary as Maslow (2013) regards his prior work as incomplete as it was missing the cognitive needs added thereafter.

While acknowledging himself a number of deficiencies such as the influence of inter-personal relations and cultural influences, the main criticism of his work stems from the lack or limited empirical support for his theory (Kanfer et al., 2017). Having tested the theory in a study focussing on private and public banks in Bangladesh, Rahman and Nurullah (2014) confirm that the theory can be applied and that it works cross-culturally, at least in their area of research. However, following their conclusion, this might be different in a European context given the higher standards of living which are expected to provide noticeably different results with a stronger focus on the higher-level needs esteem and self-actualisation. This view is shared and the usefulness of its application as a framework for this study is questioned, which is supported by Barling (1977) and Herzberg et al. (2010), who also questions its use from an organisational point of view.

Despite the criticism, other authors such as Alderfer (1969) have used Maslow's work to further refine the model. While Alderfer condenses the initial five levels of Maslow into three basic needs, existence, relatedness and growth, this does not represent an important step forward (Campbell & Pritchard, 1983) apart from the fact that in Alderfer's view a need still exists even if it is satisfied but the centre of attention shifts to higher needs. Applying the work of Alderfer to the current study, the idea of shifting needs as well as the stronger focus on the need for relatedness is appealing at first sight given the high importance placed on good collaboration as source of motivation. On the other hand, the relative high earning level within the financial industry, even at entry levels, leads to an underrepresentation of the need for existence while the need for growth is still only loosely defined by Alderfer hence does not provide sufficient guidance for explaining the responses of the participants.

More appropriately are two further motivational theories that are based on stronger empirical foundations and that have both found numerous applications within organisational settings. The first one is the Two-Factor-Theory of Herzberg et al. (2010) while the second one is the Self-Determination-Theory ("SDT") developed by Deci and Ryan (1985). With both theories having their merit, a comparison now be conducted to assess their respective application to the current study.

4.2.2. Two-factor theory

Developed in 1959 by Herzberg et al. (2010), the key concept behind this theory is also based on needs. Before addressing the different level of needs, Herzberg (1987, p. 118) distinguishes between movement and motivation with movement being "*a function of fear of punishment or failure to get extrinsic rewards*" whereas

> "*motivation is a function of growth from getting intrinsic rewards out of interesting and challenging work. Motivation is based on growth needs. It is an internal engine, and its benefits show up over a long period of time. Because the ultimate reward in motivation is personal growth, people don't need to be rewarded incrementally*".

Placing the focus on motivation as a consequence of growth needs, unlike the previously discussed motivational theories, Herzberg (1987) further differentiates between two types of needs. Firstly, a set of basic needs that include the learned drives and secondly the need for achievement and growth that he describes as unique to humans. On this basis, he argued that the basic needs are hygiene factors that seek fulfilment to avoid dissatisfaction while the achievement needs are the motivators driving satisfaction. With these two sets being described as distinct rather than being opposite ends to each other, the view on needs received a new dimension with far-reaching consequences for the analysis of motivation at work. Based on their findings on a review of the available literature as well as their own study, Campbell and Pritchard (1983) contend that Herzberg et al. (2010) found respondents predominantly citing job-related factors, when describing their satisfaction and context-related factors concerning dissatisfaction. Having used the critical incident technique (Bott & Tourish, 2016; Butterfield et al., 2005; Flanagan, 1954), the responses of the participants were coded and aggregated to a list of 16 factors (Herzberg, 1987; Herzberg et al., 2010), which were then ranked according to their contribution to job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction.

Table 3: Motivators and Hygiene Factors of Two-factor Theory

Content-related factors (motivators)	**Context-related factors (hygiene factors)**
Achievement	Company policy and administration
Recognition	Supervision
Work itself	Relationship with supervisor
Responsibility	Work conditions
Advancement	Salary
Growth	Relationship with peers
	Personal life
	Relationship with subordinates
	Status
	Security

While all factors showed a contribution to both sets of characteristics, for most of these, a clear tendency to either satisfaction or dissatisfaction was established. Notable exceptions are the relationship to peers and subordinates where both effects were of nearly equal appearance. However, combined with the relationship with the supervisor, more clearly trending towards causing dissatisfaction, work relationships overall are regarded as hygiene factors according to this theory. This point needs to be critically reviewed as the findings from Atchinson and Lefferts (1972) disagree with this view. Similarly, Bundtzen (2020) finds that teamwork is a motivator, which would also contradict the classification of peer relations as a hygiene factor. Equally, the influence of salary, placed as a context-related factor among the hygiene factors merits a further analysis given that Herzberg et al. (2010) have already pointed out the different characteristics of pay. When seen as part of the company administration and overall ranking of employees within the organisational system, it is more often seen as dissatisfying given that feelings of unfairness or inadequate rewards are being cited. This also corresponds with findings from the literature review conducted that highlight a strong dissatisfaction with pay in studies conducted among nurses or the hospitality industry (Brown et al., 2015; Tourangeau et al., 2013). In those studies, it was noted that pay was not in line with the expertise and experience of the participants nor with the working conditions described. Salary on the other hand had a positive connotation, hence being satisfying, when being described as a monetary expression of growth and advancement, two strongly content-related factors with a notable potential for satisfaction. Considering this thesis, this point needs to be reviewed as there has been little mentioning of salary overall except for the annual bonus payment received by participants during the survey. While Kanfer et al. (2017) acknowledges the pioneering work of Herzberg and his colleagues by uncovering internal factors driving work satisfaction, they also criticised the limited empirical support for this theory.

Contrary to this point, a larger number of studies has tested and reconfirmed the two-factor theory since its development. Having retested the original Herzberg research, Atchinson and Lefferts (1972) reconfirm most of the original findings with their results while evaluating the effect of motivation on turnover. In this context, they state that extrinsic, i.e. work-context related factors are stronger related to turnover which is in line with the findings from Herzberg et al. (2010) who describe these factors as hygiene factors being responsible for dissatisfaction. Within their own study, Bassett-Jones and Lloyd (2005) search for reasons why employees contribute ideas via suggestion schemes using the two-factor theory as an underlying theoretical construct. With this approach, they confirm the dominance of motivators over hygiene factors as characteristics increasing the submission of ideas. In this context, the relationship of the employee to the manager was also established as a hygiene factor rather than a motivator therefore providing further support for the theory of Herzberg. This point has also been found in the literature review (Mitsakis & Galanakis, 2022).

An early critique of the two-factor-theory was raised by Lindsay, Marks, and Gorlow (1967). Besides pointing out methodological inconsistencies between the chosen variables, a criticism also raised by other writer (Golshan, Kaswuri, Aghashahi, Amin, & Wan Ismael, 2011; House & Wigdor, 1967), their key criticism questions the independence of the motivators and hygiene factors as postulated by Herzberg and his colleagues. Following their own research, Lindsay et al. (1967) conclude that both sets of factors contribute to satisfaction, despite motivators having a larger impact than hygiene factors. As they point out, a strong sense of achievement can override inappropriate hygiene factors without causing dissatisfaction, while conversely a lack of achievement can see employees being dissatisfied despite favourable context-related factors. This motivation has even been seen as overcoming dissatisfaction derived from the work itself, a factor generally associated with motivation.

A separate point of criticism is raised by Behling, Labovitz, and Kosmo (1968). In their work they find a considerable number of studies supporting the two-factor-theory, while also identifying a similar number of studies disagreeing with the theory, with the latter having in common that the research was not using the critical incident theory applied by Herzberg. This point is confirmed by Bassett-Jones and Lloyd (2005), who state that studies using the critical incident technique mostly provided support while studies using other research techniques also offered different results. Despite advocating themselves the useability of the Herzberg theory, Behling et al. (1968) highlight that the theory is not appropriate to produce a single measure of job satisfaction as this term itself is highly diverse lacking a clear definition therefore meaning different things to different researchers. On this point, Whitsett and Winslow (1967) clarify that the Herzberg theory never attempted to define overall job satisfaction hence it should not be criticised on this point given that most critics have not properly applied the theory in their respective research. From their point of view, the theory provides sufficient resolving and explanatory power to be applied, to which Mitsakis and Galanakis (2022) concur.

Relevant to this study, Wilkerson (2016) uses the Herzberg theory as a foundation for reviewing factors leading to turnover among Generation Y employees. Based on a set of qualitative interviews, the research identifies six trigger points based on the motivators and hygiene factors derived from Herzberg which have the most prominent effect on employees changing their jobs. Given that four of the factors, achievement, growth, advancement and work itself belong to the motivators and only two, pay and values are hygiene factors, work-intrinsic factors seem to dominate the decision whether to stay in a job or to change the employer. Also, the majority of participants in the study from Wilkerson (2016) cite good working relationships with their peers.

The theory of Herzberg et al. (2010) causes a lot of controversial discussions with one camp criticising the methodological boundaries, faulty research foundations and inconsistencies with previous studies (Bundtzen, 2020; Golshan et al., 2011; House & Wigdor, 1967; Lindsay, Marks, & Gorlow, 1967), others find support for the theory and its clarity when being used appropriately (Bassett-Jones & Lloyd, 2005; Behling, Labovitz, & Kosmo, 1968; Mitsakis & Galanakis, 2022; Whitsett & Winslow, 1967). Despite its age, the theory has been applied more recently to explore turnover (Atchinson & Lefferts, 1972; Wilkerson, 2016) and job satisfaction (Smerek & Peterson, 2006; Volkwein & Parmley, 2000; Volkwein & Zhou, 2003) in different work contexts. As these studies also show, the theory can be used successfully as a foundation but it needs to be noted that no individual differences are reflected given that any factor can lead to job satisfaction for one employee and job dissatisfaction for another one (Golshan et al., 2011; House & Wigdor, 1967; Kalleberg, 1977). Also, all these studies are cross-sectional studies, hence limiting their application beyond the context of the original study itself.

4.2.3. Self-determination theory

Self-determination theory ("SDT") belongs to the content-based motivation theories which "*specify the psychological traits, motives, tendencies and orientations that instigate motivational and volitional processes*" (Kanfer et al., 2017, p. 340). With its focus on the inner resources and their impact on the self-regulation of behaviour, it is based on empirical methods as well as an organismic metatheory (Ryan & Deci, 2000b). Developed by Deci and Ryan (1985), the theory draws on three psychological needs, namely autonomy, competence and relatedness (Deci, 1992b). As Ryan and Deci (2020) point out, autonomy is driven by an inherent interest in one's action leading to own initiative and a sense of ownership. In contrast to that, the need for autonomy is limited by external controls in any form. Competence is characterised by the ability to grow and progress as well as the receipt of supportive feedback. The third basic need, relatedness, drawing on the work of Alderfer (1969), describes the need for connection with other people and the belonging to a group or team which is also characterised by a respectful and caring interaction, which is also strongly visible in the answers provided by participants of this study.

When comparing the underlying needs of SDT with the dual-factor theory of Herzberg, autonomy and competence could be classified as motivators, while relatedness would fall into the category of the hygiene factors. However, instead of rating the first two as needs increasing satisfaction and relatedness as being responsible for dissatisfaction, Ryan and Deci (2020) state that any limitation of any of the three will limit the motivation and wellbeing of a person. As described in their earlier work, "*needs specify innate psychological nutriments that are essential for ongoing psychological growth, integrity, and well-being*" (Deci & Ryan, 2000, p. 229).

Instead of concentrating on the strength of these needs, the theory focusses on the impact of these psychological needs on motivation by differentiating between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. As Ryan and Deci (2000a, p. 55) postulate:

> *"The most basic distinction is between intrinsic motivation, which refers to doing something because it is inherently interesting or enjoyable, and extrinsic motivation, which refers to doing something because it leads to a separable outcome."*

For intrinsic motivation, which draws on the earlier work of Porter and Lawler (1968) and (Deci, 1975), people act out of their own interest without being driven by their environment. However, Gagné and Deci (2005) point out, within organisations, it is not always possible to create roles that are intrinsically motivating. Furthermore, given that most people need to work in order to earn money (Gagné, 2018), salary and pay remain an external and context-related factor with a high impact on motivation and performance. As Ryan and Deci (2000a) state, the majority of activities performed by adults are rather extrinsically motivated due to social requirements such as education, work, and other obligations. To separate extrinsic from intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation can therefore be defined as "*a construct that pertains whenever an activity is done in order to attain some separable outcome*" (Ryan & Deci, 2000a, p. 60).

However, extrinsic motivation is not regarded as a single state as opposed to someone being intrinsically motivated or amotivated, i.e. not motivated at all but it is rather to be seen as a continuum of different stages. Described as "Organismic Integration Theory" ("OIT"), Deci and Ryan (1985) defined the different forms extrinsic motivation can take depending on the contextual factors that influence the degree to which someone is internalising a specific activity. In this context, "*Internalization is defined as people taking in values, attitudes, or regulatory structures, such that the external regulation of a behaviour is transformed into an internal regulation and therefore no longer requires the presence of an external contingency*" (Gagné & Deci, 2005, p. 334). Following this view, extrinsic motivation can be sub-divided into four different forms ranging from external regulation, introjection, identification to internalisation therefore describing the different levels of integration of externally initiated activities into someone's own values and goals. Of these, external regulation and introjection are still to be categorized as controlled motivation (Gagné, 2018) given that the action is predominantly driven by avoidance of punishment and negative feedback or attainment of positive feedback. At the stage of identification and internalisation, the action, while being initiated externally, is being aligned with one's own interest and values and the action becomes self-determined. However, the difference between intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation, which has been internalised, remains given that in the latter case, the interest is not in the activity itself but in the outcome of the activity for one's goals (Gagné & Deci, 2005).

With most empirical support for the SDT being derived from laboratory tests and research within an educational context, Gagné and Deci (2005) themselves call for more studies to test the theory within an organisational context. With a number of studies having used SDT to assess work satisfaction, Van den Broeck, Vansteenkiste, De Witte, Soenens, and Lens (2010) have confirmed in their study the basic hypotheses underlying SDT within a working context. When analysing the effect of extrinsic and intrinsic rewards on employee engagement, Victor and Hoole (2017) identify a visible effect of rewards, and in particular extrinsic rewards, on employee engagement. However, at the same time, they acknowledge that extrinsic rewards such as pay, and bonus do have a short-term effect, which in consequence stresses the importance of intrinsic rewards as longer-term measures to create and maintain trust and loyalty in the workplace. On the other hand, the study from Heyns and Kerr (2018) neither finds strong support for any differences between the different generations among the participants nor between extrinsic and intrinsic factors influencing work motivation. Godinho-Bitencourt, Pauli, and Costenaro-Maciel (2019), however, find a strong relationship between the organisational support and the intrinsic motivation of their participants, a group of Generation-Y workers in Brazil. Findings from the same study also show the moderating effect a manager can have on employees therefore supporting the importance of autonomy as one of the needs on which SDT is being based.

Godinho-Bitencourt et al. (2019, p. 396) further conclude that:

> *"Future prospects, pleasure obtained from work, self-development, enjoying what one does and the need to feel competent and part of the work environment is crucial to the motivation of Generation Y".*

With reference to this study, a generalisation of these findings needs to be critically reviewed as all these studies were conducted as cross-sectional studies with a quantitative approach within different cultural environments, namely South Africa and Brazil.

The importance of the need "relatedness" seems to be undervalued in the empirical research, although Deci (1992a, p. 24) acknowledges that *".. social forces can be extremely strong in shaping a person's behaviour,..*" (Deci, 1992a, p. 24) which corresponds with the view of Maslow (2013, p. 6) who states that "*while behaviour is almost always motivated, it is also almost always biologically, culturally and situationally determined as well*". Concurring with these views, the importance of the interaction of employees not only with their manager but also among each other within their team or within the wider organisation needs to be stressed as a source of motivation. Relating this back to the theory of Herzberg et al. (2010), who treat the interpersonal relationships as a hygiene factor, the importance of the interaction of employees at work and the corresponding effect on motivation and satisfaction rather than dissatisfaction is better represented with the SDT. Furthermore, the rather binary differentiation of factors into motivators and hygiene factors within the Herzberg theory is seen as too simplistic and rigid. Similarly, the working conditions are regarded as a hygiene factor by Herzberg et al. (2010), which is regarded critically (Lindsay et al., 1967).

In a direct comparison between the two theories, SDT, despite the limitations highlighted, is deemed to be a useful framework for the analysis of this research as the qualitative comments have been matched to the three underlying needs, autonomy, competence, and relatedness.

4.3. Work-related driver: Career Satisfaction

Within the organisational context, the topics of career, career development and career satisfaction are highly interrelated with the interaction between employees and the employer. From an employee perspective, Super (1975, p. 27), contends that "a career is operationally defined as the pre-occupational, occupational, and post-occupational positions which constitute the bulk of a life history". Theories associated with career have a long history dating back to Bühler (1935). In her research, Bühler (1935, p. 406) finds a correlation between the life curve and the development at work, which initially sees a rising curve in terms of career development, followed by a peak point and gradual decline:

> *"The events, experiences, and attainments show, first, a period of expansion, of stability and of restriction parallel to the biological curve. In other words, in the first part of their lives, all human beings are concerned with the enlargement of their opportunities in life, their position, their activities as well as with the increase of their knowledge, abilities, pleasures and diversions, and so forth."*

Based on the review of approximately 300 biographies of various professions such as politicians, artists, business people, athletes etc., this concept was confirmed with the only difference found among sportsmen, which, due to the physical nature of their activities display their greatest achievements earlier in their life than e.g. academics (Bühler, 1935). From these early models, the concept of a life-long career has developed, in which employees progress within their profession and, quite often, within one organisation. This is supported by Savickas et al. (2009, p. 240) who state that the traditional models of career development are based on stability within the organisations as well as the concept of career being a sequence of steps:

> *"The core concepts of 20th century career theories and vocational guidance techniques must be reformulated to fit the postmodern economy. Current approaches are insufficient."*

Even before the geopolitical environment has been becoming highly volatile, due to the COVID-19 pandemic as well as increased military confrontations, the concept of a life-long career within one profession or even within one organisation has been becoming less and less the norm. At the same time, organisations do not guarantee a life-long employment any longer nor do employees feel attached to one organisation for their entire life. This has brought up the question, what is driving employees throughout their career. An early answer is given by Argyris (1957, pp. 22-23), who sees negative incidents triggering an employee to change his position:

> *"Employees tend to adapt to the frustration, failure, short-time perspective, and conflict involved in their work situations by any one or a combination of the following acts:*
>
> *(1) Leaving the organisation.*
>
> *(2) Climbing the organisational ladder.*
>
> *(3) Manifesting defence reactions such as daydreaming, aggression, ambivalence, regression, projection, and so forth.*
>
> *(4) Becoming apathetic and disinterested toward the organisation, its make-up, and its goals."*

While this view is centred around the different options available to employees and their responses, Super and Hall (1978, p. 367) concentrate on the question of what constitutes a positive development in the career and what it is that people try to get out of it:

> *"…, what is development in the work career? Is it occupational success? Satisfaction? Growth and development of skills? Successful movement through various life stages?"*

The common thread to all these aspects is the notion of growth, may it be in terms of financial rewards, recognition from others or increase of skills, which enhances the employee's value of oneself. To a certain extent, this is driven by the society as Super (1984, p. 75) states:

> *"In a society that values work, not to have work is a stigma and a loss of purpose and of meaning. This is so whether work is a means of self-fulfilment, source of social support, a way of structuring the time of the worker, a role and therefore as a source of self-esteem, or really a means of living."*

This is shared by Tiedeman and Miller-Tiedeman (1985, p. 244), who critically remark that:

> *"… our Western societies do not acknowledge that life is career developing, that career is an ever changing and moving formation in the kaleidoscope of life throughout universe."*

From these comments it can be concluded that the importance of work has been high within the Western world and therefore work has traditionally been at the forefront of everyone. While initially driven by monetary reasons to earn a living, more and more the other characteristics of growth and self-fulfilment are dominating, especially when it comes to the more recent generation having entered the workforce, Generation Y. Some research cites that Generation Y expects from a professional activity that it provides opportunities to advance, has a meaningful content, is sufficiently remunerated and fits within the work-life balance (Broadbridge et al., 2007; Frye et al., 2020; Sondari Gadzali, 2023). The findings are largely confirmed by Coetzee and Stoltz (2015) in a South-African study, where perceived career opportunities, the option for growing through trainings and professional developments coupled with a fit with personal life have been found instrumental for employees to be satisfied with their career. At the same time, these studies on Generation Y also show a shift in importance away from work to private life. With the increased focus on the personal life, expectations on what constitutes a career and what drives satisfaction with a career might have changed, which is meriting future research.

4.4. Work-related driver: Loyalty

One of the earliest research on loyalty has been produced by Hirschman (1970, p. 77), who broadly defines loyalty as a "*considerable attachment to a product or organisation*". In his model "Exit/Voice/Loyalty" ("EVL"), Hirschman (1970) describes dissatisfaction as the root course for two behavioural reactions displayed by employees, which are either "voice", i.e. speaking up or "exit", i.e. an employee leaving the organisation. According to Hirschman (1970, p. 33), "*the voice option is the only way in which dissatisfied customers or members can react whenever the exit option is unavailable.*" Voice in this context is seen as the attempt to alter a dissatisfying situation and can therefore be either a substitute for exit when the latter is not possible or a complement pre-empting the exit in case the situation cannot be changed.

In this context, Hirschman (1970, p. 78) adds:

> *"Loyalty holds exit at bay and activates voice. It is true that, in the face of discontent, an individual member can remain loyal without being influential himself, but hardly without the expectation that someone will act, or something will happen to improve matters."*

When taking this perspective, Leck and Saunders (1992) argue that loyalty represents a behavioural response, which stands as an alternative to speaking up or exiting, and should therefore rather be labelled as patience. This view corresponds with the stance of Rusbult and Farrell (1983), who developed the EVL-model of Hirschman (1970) further by adding a forth likely response called "neglect". In their EVLN-model, Rusbult and Zembrodt (1983) distinguish the behavioural responses to dissatisfaction along two axes. First, they differentiate between active and passive behaviour with voice and exit being the active responses and neglect and loyalty being the passive ones. On the other axis, the differentiator is whether the behaviour is constructive, represented by voice and loyalty or destructive, to which exit, and neglect correspond.

While Hirschman (1970) and Rusbult and Zembrodt (1983) use the term loyalty to describe a behavioural response, Whitney and Cooper (1989) treat loyalty as an attitude, which is regarded as being positive and constructive. According to their view, loyalty is therefore promoting the behavioural responses of voice and patience, the latter being their equivalent to the term loyalty used by Hirschman (1970).

In contrast to Hirschman (1970), who focusses on the potential responses to dissatisfaction, Porter and Steers (1973) place their attention on the factors influencing or causing dissatisfaction. In their research, they find that there are four main groupings into which these factors can be categorised, namely organisation-wide factors, Immediate work-environment factors, job-content factors and personal factors. Within the organisation-wide factors, two important characteristics are pay and promotion, while immediate work-environment factors include the management style and the relationship to the peer group. Although some of these factors tend to have an overall greater importance on a general level, the exact triggers for each employee are seen to be different on a case-by-case basis given that each employee has different expectations of what to get in return for his work:

> *"The major turnover findings of this review, when taken together, point to the centrality of the concept of met expectations in the withdrawal decision. Under such a conceptualization, each individual is seen as bringing to the employment situation his own unique set of expectations for his job*." (Porter & Steers, 1973, p. 170)

This view offers an explanation why different employees view the same environment differently and might vary in their degrees of satisfaction or dissatisfaction. As Aburumman, Salleh, Omar, and Abadi

(2020) contend, there has not been a visible expansion of the existing theories within the recent years, leaving theories such as the one from Porter and Steers (1973) still relevant.

Hom and Griffeth (1991) also content with the view that dissatisfaction leads to thoughts of quitting and therefore undermines the loyalty of an employee towards its organisation, to this, Elizur (1996) adds another dimension to the discussion by differentiating between moral and calculative commitment. According to his point of view, an employee can feel morally attached to an organisation, e.g. due to good relationships with his peers or manager therefore creating a personal attachment. Alternatively, an employee could have made a calculative decision to stay with the organisation for monetary or other reasons in the belief that the current option is better than others currently available to him. This view matches with the findings from Mobley, Griffeth, Hand, and Meglino (1979), who advocate that future research should not only consider the work environment but look beyond to include other values and interests an employee might have outside work.

Back in the main line of research on loyalty, Boswell, Boudreau, and Tichy (2005) agree that the decrease in loyalty and the decision to leave an organisation can be attributed to a set of individual factors. In their longitudinal research, they analyse the level of satisfaction of employees over the entire life cycle from entering to leaving an organisation. Based on their findings they state that satisfaction or dissatisfaction is not only dependent on job- or organisation-related factors but, instead, each employee has a preset level of satisfaction to which they will return following positive or negative events. Boswell et al. (2005) state that the level of job satisfaction can also be tied to the length of service as the satisfaction tends to be higher when having taken over a new role; afterwards it tends to decrease over time.

Building on the research from Diener and Diener (1996), who identify a general positive subjective well-being in their research and a general tendency for people to attain a positive state of mind, Boswell et al. (2005) argue that employees will initially go through a kind of honeymoon phase, in which the initial view on a new job is highly positive. Over time, this will potentially decline due to situational factors but might rise again following the exit of one organisation and the start in a new one. Having analysed this trend for employees changing organisations, they theorise that this might also apply to employees changing jobs within an organisation, suggesting further research into this topic.

More recently, McClean, Burris, and Detert (2013), have expanded the research from Porter and Steers (1973) evaluating factors causing dissatisfaction by focussing on the causality between voice and exit. In their research, they identify that there is a higher likelihood for employees to leave the organisation after having voiced their criticism when there is a weak management or managers with limited ability to change the dissatisfying circumstances. In contrast, McClean et al. (2013) state that managers can improve the morale when responding to the comments of the employees.

Similarly, Masakure (2016) looks into relationship between loyalty and pay. Although he finds that pay can be a strong motivator for some employees leading to a calculative commitment (Elizur, 1996), he recognises the importance of non-financial characteristics leading to an intrinsic motivation:

> *"The non-pecuniary benefits they derive from their work include feelings of meaning, pride, and purpose in their tasks; identification as part of a work-related community; alignment of their values with those of the organisation; and increased satisfaction in their personal lives because of their work."* (Masakure, 2016, p. 275)

Johns and Gorrick (2016) partly disagree with this view as they found communication, promotion and pay the main reasons stated in their analysis of exit interviews conducted in an organisation in Australia. While acknowledging the potential distortion contained in exit interviews, participants in their research continuously stressed remuneration as a source of dissatisfaction. This is supported by Buchko, Buscher, and Buchko (2017, p. 733), who point out that pay can impact the decision of employees at all levels to stay with an organisation as it forms the economic basis for people to finance their living.

When researching why good employees stay in abusive organisations, they find that employees often stay on due to risk aversion, i.e. rating the costs and effort linked to changing jobs or because being a member of their organisation is regarded as being prestigious and therefore compensating for the dissatisfaction experienced in the working environment.

With a view on the most recent generation having entered the workforce, Rodriguez, Boyer, Fleming, and Cohen (2019, p. 45) predict that this might not be true any longer as Generation Y and Z are much more likely to change jobs when they are dissatisfied with the conditions found at work:

> *"Whether we agree or disagree with these descriptions, the reality is that turnover is a bigger problem today than it was 20 years ago and its potentially about to grow with the introduction of Gen Z in the employment mix."*

According to their view, this generation is placing great emphasis on personal development and progression, which will lead them to faster changes of jobs than their predecessors.

Summarising the research on loyalty, loyalty can be defined as a behavioural response or an attitude, with the latter being the more prominent view in more recent research. While loyalty is generally described as being correlated with work satisfaction, the reasons for dissatisfaction have been widely discussed with differing views on the most important ones. Although work-related factors clearly play a role, more emphasis should be placed on the individual predisposition of employees as pointed out by Boswell et al. (2005) as well as the interdependence between work and private life, which Masakure (2016) highlights in his research.

4.5. Work Life Balance

While the topic of aligning work and nonwork time can be traced back to the 19th century (Khateeb, 2021), the theoretical discussions and development of theories commenced in the 1960s and intensified since the 1990s (Cowan & Hoffman, 2007). With different terms, e.g. work and family (Clark, 2000; Kanter, 1979), work and nonwork (Kirchmeyer, 1995), the term work-life-balance has been established most widely in the public as it also includes other roles taken up by an individual, e.g. in the community, during leisure or within a social or religious context (Khateeb, 2021).

With the industrialisation, a separation of work and nonwork time has started, that saw the two areas being divided not only in terms of time and physical location but also reflected in the traditional gender roles with men predominantly working, and women managing the family and household. On this basis, early theories such as segmentation theory, compensation theory (Staines, 1980) and (Edwards & Rothbard, 2000) as well as conflict theory (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985); Greenhaus and Powell (2006) are based on the view that these two areas stand separate and are in conflict with each other. Following the logic of the compensation theory, Staines (1980) formulates that deficits from one area are being compensated by the other area. Based on the view that positive as well as negative associations between work and nonwork exist, individuals are deemed to choose family and leisure activities that will enable them to seek and find what they did not get at work, i.e., opposing or counter-acting activities in case of negative associations or similar activities in case of positive associations between the two.

Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) see three types of conflict between work and nonwork which they describe as the basis of their conflict theory. These are time-based, stress-based, and behaviour-based conflicts, which compete for the attention of the individual. In the category of time-based issues, they see long-working hours as well as irregular shifts that impact the flexibility and scope of the nonwork time. Among the stress-based factors, burnout, fatigue, and other psychological pressures are cited that force individuals to seek alternatives in their nonwork time. Finally, behaviour-based factors relate to the point that individuals play different roles in different situations, e.g. the role a person in a managerial role might have in a business context may differ strongly from the role and behaviour displayed in a family or leisure context.

This latter point has been picked up by Nippert-Eng (1996, p. 569) in the formulation of the boundary as she posits that the concept of self-identity allows for a person to have different roles in different contexts:

> *"We expect ourselves to separate out different aspects of self-identity and assign them to specific places, times, and groups of people. This results in each of us making some sort of distinction between who we are when we are 'at work' and 'at home'. This distinction may be quite remarkable for some (currently segmenting) people, hardly noticeable for other (extremely integrating) ones.*"

Furthermore, while cultural boundaries within one country or one organisation provide a framework for the formation of identities and roles, personal boundaries exist alongside each other providing a variety of more individualized ones on top. Building on the concept of separators and integrators formulated by Kanter (1979) and expanded by other authors, e.g. Bulger, Matthews, and Hoffman (2007), Nippert-Eng (1996) postulates that individuals take different approaches, boundary practices, towards the concept of boundaries as some will clearly separate work and nonwork while other prefer to integrate the two. Using the example of a calendar, she describes that some individuals block specific time slots off for dedicated tasks while others integrate their activities more fluidly. Following with a further example, she states that, similarly, individuals manage their keys either in an integrative or separating way between home and work.

While these options are viewed from an employee's perspective, Brumley (2014); Bulger et al. (2007); Kirchmeyer (1995) add an organisational perspective, which can promote either the separation or integration of the two domains. In addition, Kirchmeyer (1995) offers the view that from an organisational perspective, a third approach is possible as an organisation can simply respect and honour the nonwork domain while keeping work and nonwork relatively separately.

Besides the quoted individual traits of integrating or separating work and nonwork, there are also external factors influencing the balance of work and nonwork. Clark (2000) describes that individuals not only construct their environment but that these individuals are determined by their surroundings as well. Furthermore, Clark (2000) points out that the interaction between work and private life is complex when analysing work and non-work topics.

These external influences can have several features, e.g., the nature of the work can affect the individual. Outside work, the family composition, whether someone has young children, is caring for an elderly person or living alone, can also shape an individual.

For Clark (2000), the environment can also affect the individual in form of other people, which she calls border-keepers:

> "*Border-keepers such as supervisors and spouses have definitions of what constitutes 'work' and 'family' based on their own limited experience, and many carefully guard the domains and the borders to such a degree that border-crossers do not have the flexibility to deal with conflicting demands*". (Clark, 2000, p. 762)

Linking back to Nippert-Eng (1996), the latter can also be seen as part of cultural borders or boundaries, which might vary across cultures, given that the concepts of work, family or society can differ noticeably. Regardless of this, borders exist and are essential to differentiate one from the other. Clark (2000, p. 756) defines borders as "*lines of demarcation between domains, defining the point at which domain-relevant behaviour begins or ends*". As stated, borders in this context can be physical when considering the place where work and nonwork takes place, temporal in terms of the time spent with one or the other and finally psychological when referring to the roles an individual can play in each of the domains. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the ability for mobile working, i.e. working from home or other places than physically being in the office has been possible in some companies, e.g. within the IT sector, in order to attract employees (Mangipudic, Vaidyab, & Prasada, 2020). However, when the COVID-19 pandemic hit and governments forcing businesses to shut down offices demanding to send their employees into home office, many companies were neither digitally nor operationally ready to accommodate this move (Mora Cortez & Johnston, 2020; Urick, 2020). As a result, the new situation created disruptions and unease for both organisations and their employees alike with organisations being forced to rethink processes and procedures and employees providing part of the work infrastructure themselves at home. Referencing to the latter, with the increase of mobile work due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the physical border between work and nonwork has been blurred for many employees as working from home has brought work and their family life physically close.

Consequently, the clear-cut between the two has also abolished the travel time between the two places so that the temporal split between work and nonwork has quite often become a neat transition. The saving of time and other benefits are positively regarded by employees to which Cowan and Hoffman (2007) state would provide value as to its flexibility. This is supported by Rodriguez-Modrono and Lopez-Igual (2021), who agree that employees gain autonomy from working mobile instead of the traditional office.

When assessing the weakening of the physical and temporal borders, it becomes more difficult to separate the two from each other as the borders have become permeable therefore allowing switching from one to another without much effort. Clark (2000, p. 757) calls this blending:

> "*When a great deal of permeability and flexibility occurs around the border, 'blending' occurs. The area around the presupposed border is no longer exclusive of one domain or the other, but blends both work and family, creating a borderland which cannot be exclusively called either domain*".

Depending on the type of person, this blending, or work-life integration, offers some employees the ability to shape their optimal combination of work and non-work activities (Wepfer, Allen, Brauchli, Jenny, & Bauer, 2017, p. 727):

> *"Some welcome this flexibility because it gives them the freedom to integrate work and nonwork life in a way that suits their needs and lets them craft the work-life balance they want".*

While the term blending, alternatively called integration, has to be seen as a sub-type of the overall work-life-balancing topic, it can be theoretically linked back to the concept of separators and integrators when it comes to balancing between work and nonwork (Kanter, 1979; Nippert-Eng, 1996; Wepfer et al., 2017; Wood et al., 2020). Although initially restricted to the borders of both domains, with mobile work a seamless switch between the two has been made possible, e.g. dealing with personal tasks in the household while working or within short breaks before returning to work with full attention. This is helped further with long working hours as these can obscure the balance between work and family domains according to Chandran and Abukhalifeh (2021). This is confirmed by Lestari and Margaretha (2021), who state that employees strive to fulfil their duties at work and within their families, which becomes difficult with long working hours.

However, applying the concept of blending the two domains, the approach offers the flexibility for employees and organisations alike and is hence adopted by some organisations as the new way of structuring the work. Although this might not suit everyone as flexibility means different things to different generations (Illingworth, 2004), this is seen as fundamental in particular by Generation Y (Lestari & Margaretha, 2021).

Allowing employees to choose not only their place of work but also their working times, within a generous framework of flexi-place and flexi-time, will therefore increase the autonomy of employees (Khateeb, 2021). Viewing this through the lens of the self-determination-theory of Deci and Ryan (1985), autonomy is one of the three factors increasing intrinsic motivation therefore having an expected positive effect on work motivation.

This is partly confirmed by Palumbo et al. (2021, p. 82), who identify a positive influence of mobile work on work motivation in their study, however, they also witness negative effects of mobile work at the same time:

> "*However, the study evidence suggests that teleworking may negatively affect the employees' effectiveness to address family and work-related concerns evenly. Blurring the boundaries between daily social life and working duties, teleworking engenders work intensification and work–life conflicts, impairing the employees' well-being*."

This is mirrored by Bellmann and Hübler (2020), who do not see a clear effect on job satisfaction in their study results. With a view on the mixed results identified so far and the growing utilisation of mobile work since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is worthwhile to explore the potential relationship between autonomy over place and time and a linkage to work motivation further. This is of particular interest to organisations as work motivation on the one hand has a strong effect on job satisfaction and turnover intentions. On the other hand, this flexibility and autonomy is highly valued by Generation Y, which by now has become the largest generation in the workforce. Combining these two points, addressing this topic will be crucial for organisations to attract and retain individuals for their workforce.

Finally, based on the limited number of articles, work-life blending remains a sub-category of work-life balance within the existing literature. However, work-life-blending offers a new perspective on the modern working environment that could help both, employees and organisations do redefine their social contract to the benefits of both parties. On this basis, work-life-blending has the potential to increase in importance to offer the flexibility for younger generations such as Generation Y to combine work with their private life.

4.6. Chapter Summary

The chapter highlighted the theoretical foundation employed for the evaluation of the three work-related drivers used in this thesis. Based on the view that needs and their satisfaction form the basis for motivation, two popular theories on motivation, the two-factor theory of Herzberg et al. (2010) and the self-determination theory of Deci and Ryan (1985) have been critically evaluated.

Although having been used recently in several studies, the two-factor theory is seen as less applicable given that some hygiene factors are regarded as more important and able to increase motivation as well. On the contrary, SDT is regarded as the better fit when addressing the themes affecting work-motivation of Generation Y.

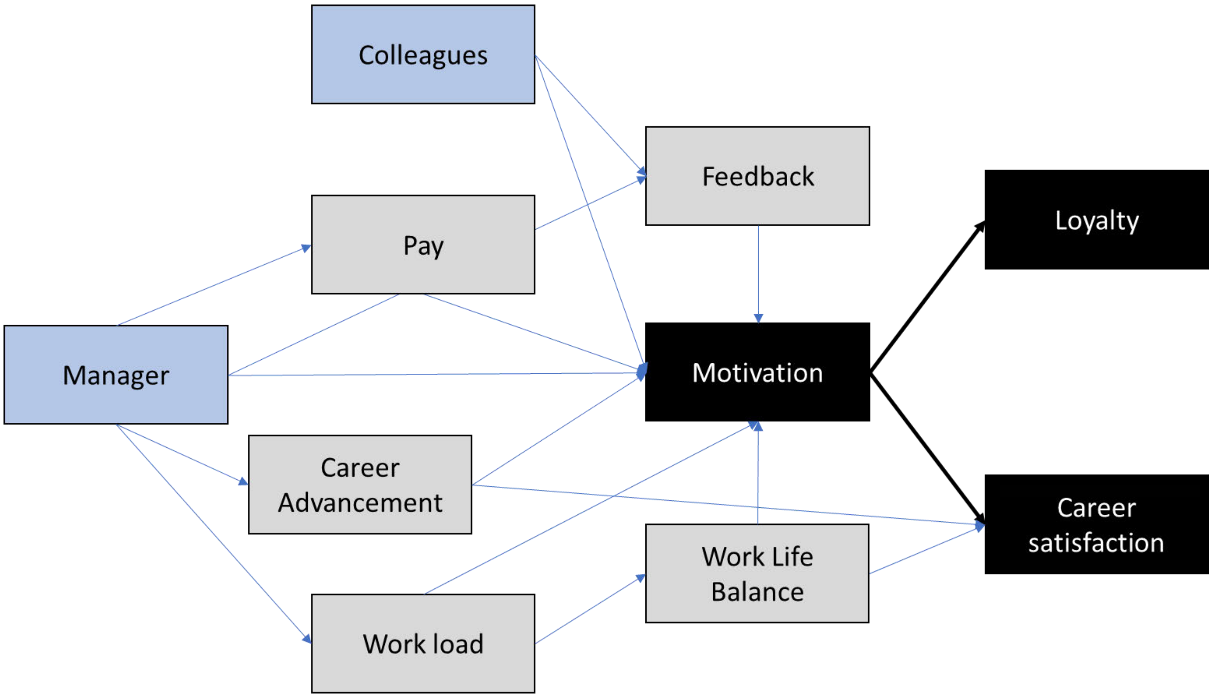
Next, the terms career and career satisfaction were reviewed. Although Savickas et al. (2009) have found that the traditional career patterns are still applicable, research on Generation Y is showing a changing pattern as research from Broadbridge et al. (2007) as well as Coetzee and Stoltz (2015) shows.

When describing the work-related driver loyalty, the work of Hirschman (1970) as well as Porter and Steers (1973) is used as a foundation. With focus on Porter and Steers (1973) and their work on causes of dissatisfaction rather than the responses to dissatisfaction, loyalty is defined as an attitude rather than a behavioural response (Whitney & Cooper, 1989). Although work-related factors have been identified as influencing loyalty (McClean et al., 2013), Boswell et al. (2005) highlight that loyalty is also based on individual predispositions as well as the interdependence between work and private life, which is also confirmed by Masakure (2016).

Leading over to the split between work and private life, the concept of work-life balance, and based on this, work-life blending has been discussed. Besides the stronger focus of Generation Y on private life when compared to previous generations, the COVID-19 pandemic has been a catalyst for the wide-spread introduction of mobile working therefore profoundly changing the traditional split between work and non-work. With the boundaries becoming blurred, Clark (2000) points out that employees are shaped by their environment, which in turn is affecting the handling of the two domains, work and non-work, resulting in a new definition of its co-existence.

To depict the key themes derived from the literature research, a model has been developed as shown in Figure 3. From the research, the importance of the manager in those industries has become visible as the behaviour of the manager influences themes such as pay, career advancement, feedback, and workload, which in turn affect work motivation. Additionally, the importance of colleagues on motivation has been noted. A further theme is the demand for more work-life balance, which has already been attributed to Generation X in earlier studies (Rhodes, 1983). Among the three work-related drivers, work motivation is seen as the central one, having received most attention as it seems to influence career satisfaction and loyalty to the organisation most.

Figure 3: Literature based model of Generation Y themes



PART 3

Introduction

Part Three consists of three chapters and provides a detailed plan of the methodology chosen, the research tools selected, and the analysis of the data. In Chapter Five, the methodological approach adopted in this study is being explained. Following a comparison of the theoretical perspectives, positivism and interpretivism, a constructivist/interpretivist viewpoint has been chosen for this study as the appropriate framework to evaluate the three work-related drivers in detail. In Chapter Six, the research tools are being described and the choice of a mixed method approach explained. Chapter Seven discusses the data analysis strategy.

Chapter 5 – Methodology

5.1. Introduction

The study evaluated the work-related drivers of Generation Y in the financial industry. Having used Triangle Germany, in which I was employed myself, as an anonymized case study, the focus was on three work-related drivers of the employees in scope, namely their work motivation, career satisfaction and loyalty towards the organisation. Research within an organisation is one of the forms of social research, which can be conducted with different aims. Sarantakos (1998) stated that the exploration of social reality, the explanation of social life, the development and test of theories and the understanding of human behaviour and action can be potential aims pursued by the researcher. In this study, the notion of "understanding" the above listed behaviours of motivation, loyalty and career aspiration has been at centre of attention.

5.2. Research Approach

To conduct any kind of social research implies a theoretical framework which at the one hand shows the perception of reality held by the researcher and on the other hand dictates the methodology and methods that can be used by the researcher (Sarantakos, 1998). This view is supported by Crotty (1998), who adds that laying out one's understanding of what constitutes reality and how knowledge is being generated informs the reader about the position of the researcher. Such "*frame of reference, mode of theorising and modus operandi of the social theorists*" (Burrell & Morgan, 2000, p. 23) has been called a paradigm. The term coined by Kuhn (2012) is a "*basic belief system or worldview that guides the investigator*" (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 105). A starting point for the positioning of this research was the definition of the appropriate paradigm that best fitted the research intended in this thesis. Based on the work from Guba and Lincoln (1998), four major paradigms were differentiated, positivism, post-positivism, critical theory, and constructivism. Each of the paradigms consists of an ontological, epistemological and a methodological dimension (Crotty, 1998; Scotland, 2012), which inform each other respectively therefore forming a logical order (Guba & Lincoln, 1998).

Following the definitions of Guba and Lincoln (1998) the four paradigms can be differentiated at the three dimensions. While positivism is based on the ontological argument that the world is real and generalisable, post-positivism takes a similar stance but is more critically examining the elements making up reality. Critical theory, which comprises a few paradigms of similar dimension such as feminism and materialism, on the other hand, is based on a "*virtual reality shaped by social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic, and gender values*" (Guba & Lincoln, 1998, p. 203). In contrast to that, constructivism is founded on a relativist view which is described by Schwandt (1998, p. 221) as:

> *"the world of lived reality and situation-specific meanings that constitute the general object of investigation is thought to be constructed by social actors".*

At an epistemological level, positivism and post-positivism are both driven by objectivist stance, where the investigator and the object are detached. Contrary to this, critical theory acknowledges a close link between the investigator and the object (Burrell & Morgan, 2000), which is similar to the standpoint of constructivism. At the methodological level, positivism and post-positivism are favouring an experimental approach based on empirical data, while critical theory and constructivism tend to view the relationship between the investigator and the object as more transactional and therefore taking a dialectical approach (Guba & Lincoln, 1998).

To select an appropriate approach for this study, the research aim and the research questions are taken as a guidance for the selection of the ontological, epistemological, and methodological framework, concurring with Crotty (1998, p. 2), who states:

> *"The answer … lies with the purposes of our research – in other words, with the research question that our piece of inquiry is seeking to answer".*

5.2.1. Ontology and Epistemology

Starting with the ontological assumptions, the focus of this research is on work-related drivers, i.e. aspects influencing the behaviour of employees related to motivation, career satisfaction and loyalty. Depending on the theoretical perspective, the social world, which includes the workplace, can be regarded as hard facts such as the natural work therefore classifying as realism (Burrell & Morgan, 2000) or rather as mental constructions that only become meaningful therefore representing a nominalist or relativist perspective (Guba & Lincoln, 1998). While there are hard facts such as the structure of the organisation, the offices, in which the work is conducted as well as the work products, most themes brought up in the academic review tend to be softer elements such as leadership, team composition and customer services that are heavily influenced by the relationship of the interacting people. Favouring the latter standpoint, the definition of Guba and Lincoln (1998, p. 206) describing the ontological position of constructivism is deemed to be fitting for this research:

> *"Realities are apprehendable in the form of multiple, intangible mental constructions, socially and experimentally based, local and specific in nature (although elements are often shared among many individuals and even across cultures), and dependent for their form and content on the individual persons or groups holding the constructions."*

This definition offers a broad foundation as it highlights the individual perspective each employee might have towards these work-related drivers as well as leaving room for potential similarities a group of employees might share within an organisation or even across industries or cultures, therefore enabling a comparison of the findings of this study with findings derived from the existing literature.

Adding the epistemological perspective, the question centers around the relationship between the investigator or researcher and the researched subject (Guba & Lincoln, 1998). In this respect, the epistemological stance of positivism and post-positivism, viewing both separated, does neither fit the ontological standpoint described previously, nor does it resonate with this research given that I as the researcher and Triangle Germany as the researched organisation have shared a long history. This concurs with the view that the constellation in this research would not qualify for the position of a detached observer (Blaikie, 2000; Weenink & Bridgman, 2016).

Additionally, focussing on the research aim, an evaluation of the work-related drivers is seeing the employees as the researched subjects and their behaviour related to these drivers as intertwined and inseparable. This position fits well with constructivism, concurring with Crotty (1998, p. 42), who states:

> *"It is the view that all knowledge, and therefore all meaningful reality as such, is contingent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world, and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context."*

Based on the previous discussion, the theoretical position for this research has been defined as constructivism. However, before moving to the third element, the methodological stance, the term constructivism needs to be clarified. While Schwandt (1998) uses the term broadly interchangeable with interpretivism due to their common foundation, Crotty (1998) sees constructivism as the higher order term representing the epistemological stance and interpretivism as one of the theoretical perspectives being linked to constructivism. Given that Crotty (1998) does not separate ontology and epistemology, but adds the term "theoretical perspective" this hierarchy will be applied to this thesis as it presents a logical relationship providing a sound framework.

5.2.2. Theoretical perspective – Interpretivism

Interpretivism is a "*product of the German idealist tradition of social thought*" with its roots in the work of Kant (Burrell & Morgan, 2000, p. 31). It has further been linked to the work of Max Weber, who developed the concept of understanding, "Verstehen" in German, which is opposite to the notion of explaining causal relationships as found in positivism (Crotty, 1998). Interpretivism and its linkage to human sciences therefore offers a contrasting view to the natural science (Schwandt, 2003). To this point, interpretivism is based on the paradigm of constructivism, which takes the view that meaning is not inherent in any object but is constructed by human beings interacting with these objects (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). For Guba and Lincoln (1994), this stance leads to the disappearance of a distinction between epistemology and ontology. Crotty (1998) concurs with this view, which will also be adopted for this thesis. Deviating from the position of positivism that knowledge is gained from observable facts, Raadschelders (2011) notes that interpretivism accepts that knowledge is being gained via understanding and intuitions which is adding softer and less measurable elements to the research. Therefore, the focus of the research shifts from generalisations and definition of laws to interpretations within a specific cultural or historical context (Burrell & Morgan, 2000; Crotty, 1998). This also implies that research is not value-free as the researcher intends to make sense of the world by adding subjective characteristics based on own perceptions when viewing the world (Weber, 2004). For Weber (2004), the researcher and the reality are therefore becoming inseparable, which adds subjectivity that has been reflected upon and accepted as part of my positionality in Section 1.7.

5.2.3. Research Methodology

Crotty (1998) contented, there are different methodologies linked to interpretivism such as ethnography, the methodology preferred by symbolic interactionism or hermeneutics and phenomenological research, the methodologies of the respective theoretical perspectives. Having followed his line of thought, the differentiation between qualitative and quantitative methodologies as commonly found in the literature (Sarantakos, 1998) has not been treated with priority for this research as the focus has been set on selecting the methodology that is most suitable for answering the research questions. However, within a constructivist framework, a qualitative approach has been selected as the underlying foundation of the research conducted for this study.

Denzin and Lincoln (1998) lend support to this view as qualitative research does not prioritize any methodology above others as it is rather to be seen as a range of interpretive practices. Denzin and Lincoln (1998) highlight that for the qualitative researcher, who has a close relationship with the object being studied, reality represents a social construction, in which the situation is shaping the inquiry.

Taking this stance was also supported by the literature research which has produced several comparable results, while also highlighting differences in the behaviour of Generation Y across the different countries and industry sectors analysed, due to the numerous social factors influencing the results. Instead, following the ideas represented first by Berger and Luckmann (1966, p. 189) that "*the sociology of knowledge understands human reality as socially constructed reality*" seemed to be more appropriate. Applying this to the world of organisation, Burrell and Morgan (2000, p. 273) added that "*Organisations, therefore, are seen, from a phenomenological perspective, as social constructs; an organisation stands as a concept which means different things to different people*". This is supported by Easterby-Smith et al. (2008, p. 59) who posit that "*human action arises from the sense that people make of different situations, rather than as a direct response to external stimuli*". Within social constructionism, Cunliffe (2008) further differentiates between subjective and intersubjective realities with the latter representing ad hoc realities created out of situations as opposed to objective realities. Considering behaviours and in particular motivation, adopting the view of intersubjective realities represented a promising position for starting the research.

Similarly to the work-related driver motivation, it was felt that by taking a constructivist approach towards understanding the career aspirations of the participants, a new dimension will be added. While the classic career theories are predominantly personality-based theories developed in the US, it will enrich the academic discussion by adding a German perspective with this thesis.

5.3. Research Design

A research design is the overall plan without which social research cannot be controlled effectively (Blaikie, 2000) or as Yin (1989, p. 27) has postulated: "[a] *research design is the logic that links the data to be collected (and the conclusions to be drawn) to the initial questions of a study*".

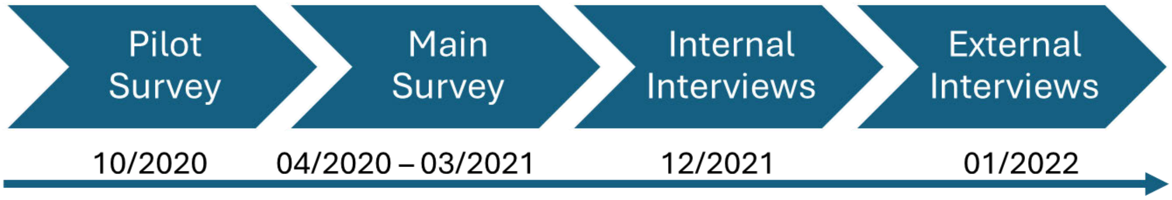
While this seems to be more obvious in quantitative studies, Sarantakos (1998) advocates that the same applies to qualitative studies, a point supported by Schwandt (2001). To accommodate for the openness and flexibility of such research, the research design in qualitative studies needs to be equally planned but does not have to be as prescriptive (Sarantakos, 1998). Adding the view of a constructionist-based research to this debate, Easterby-Smith et al. (2008, p. 93) point out "… *that there is no absolute truth, and the job of the researcher should be to establish how various claims for truth and reality become constructed in everyday life*". From this standpoint, I have favoured an inductive research approach in contrast to a deductive approach, which is more linked with the natural sciences (Saunders et al., 2003), where a hypothesis is tested and either rejected or validated. With the data collected, I will use an inductive approach to analyse the data trying to formulate a theory on that basis.

5.4. Research Methods

Methods are the specific techniques and activities used to gather data and which are derived from the chosen methodology (Crotty, 1998). Within the social sciences, Cunliffe (2008, p. 128) states: "*Research methods are often based on asking participants to reflect on their experience*". For this purpose, several methods have been listed by Saunders et al. (2003) such as surveys, case studies, grounded theory, ethnography, and action research.

For this study, a mixed methods approach was chosen. Following the use of pilot survey to test the validity of the concept, an online survey was employed in conjunction with two sets of semi-structured interviews as shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4: Sequential use of research tools



Using a mixed methods approach can have additional advantages in social research as it combines different methods and disciplines thus adding flexibility to the research (De Kock, 2015). As the primary research tool, a survey was chosen. While this tool is often linked to a deductive approach (Saunders et al., 2003), the main reason in this instance, for the choice of a survey with predominantly open-text questions, as described in more detail in Chapter Six, has been the intention to gather an extensive and in-depth knowledge on incidents at work. With this, the root causes behind the three drivers defined in the research questions were answered on a consistent basis with the same set of questions. Following this approach, the survey was designed to enable participants to state those incidents that were most influential from their point of view on their work motivation, loyalty, and career aspirations. With the adaptation of the critical incident theory (Flanagan, 1954), participants were focussed on the most critical situations that affected the three work-related drivers. However, in order to increase the rigour of the research, the concept of triangulation was adopted by applying different methods (Denzin, 1970).

With the main survey being at the core of this research, several themes have been identified that are dominating the motivating and demotivating situations. To better understand these motivators and demotivators by obtaining even richer data on the emerging themes, an additional research tool, semi-structured interviews, was employed as shown in Figure Four.

By using different methods and perspectives (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998), the findings of the main survey were evaluated and key themes identified, which drove each of the three work-related driver. Following an inductive approach, three key themes found impacting work motivation were followed up in more detail therefore enabling a clarification and deeper understanding of the responses received from the participants. For this purpose and as shown in Figure Four, five semi-structured interviews were conducted with participants, willing to engage further with me by exploring three key themes identified in the survey in more detail as will be described in Section 6.4. Using the same interview design, additional four interviews were conducted with an external reference group derived from the pilot participants as outlined in Section 6.5. However, as Huberman and Miles (1998) point out, using different methods does not always lead to convergence of findings but can result in conflicting results. This is supported by Hammersley and Atkinson (2007, p. 184) who acknowledge that "*even if the results tally, this provides no guarantee that the inferences involved are correct. It may be that all the inferences are invalid, that, because of systematic or even random error the lead to the same, incorrect, conclusion*". Blaikie (2000) on the other hand goes even further in his criticism by largely rejecting any triangulation using different methods, referring to the original meaning of triangulation as a means of fixing one's position. For this purpose, he is only supportive of the use of triangulation within one method, i.e., using different questions in a questionnaire to test and review a position.

While this criticism has been acknowledged as an integral part of the research, like the differing feedback received from the survey, careful consideration has been given to the fact to what extent results could have been influenced by me and the research tool. In this instance, the use of semi-structured interviews led to a closer relationship between me and the participants than the survey distributed online. Also, the use of the external interview partners needed to be evaluated bearing in mind that these participants, while sharing the same cohort, geographical location, and industry, were attached to different organisations with differing structures and social relationships.

5.5. Main research tool

For the main research, the focus was to collect in-depth information on themes that influenced the three work-related drivers, work motivation, career satisfaction, and loyalty towards the organisation. For this purpose, a survey was chosen as the primary research tool. To allow for the depth of information, an online survey was developed that consisted of a mixture of open-ended and closed-ended questions based on the concept of critical incidents. The critical incident technique was introduced by Flanagan (1954) in the context of investigations into the experiences of military fighter pilots. This represented a qualitative approach to interviewing that focusses on important occurrences such as events, incidents or processes and the outcome of these from a participant's perspective (Gremler, 2004). According to Gremler (2004), the technique has been accepted within service research as the literature review has shown. As Edvardsson and Roos (2001) point out, one area in this context is the analysis of customer satisfaction based on positive and negative incidents as perceived by the customer. In the context of their study critical incidents were defined as situations which are well remembered by customers as being either positive or negative when asked about them. Having applied this concept to the behaviour of employees in terms of motivation, career satisfaction, and loyalty, the main research of this study was to ask employees on their recall of situations which might have had an impact on their work motivation, career satisfaction, or loyalty. From the responses of the participants, these situations should have revealed themes that are relevant for positively or negatively influencing these three drivers. Informed by the literature, as well as my own experience, some themes have been identified already that can have an impact on the three work-related drivers. Among these, items such as promotion, praise, salary increase, bonus, goal setting, meetings with the manager and organisational changes had been listed. On this basis, it was initially intended to use these themes as critical incidents by asking participants to which extent these themes impact the work-related drivers. However, given that the literature has produced a wide range of themes, derived from different industries and geographies, it was questioned whether the pre-selected themes would fit to the specific context of this study or whether other themes might exist which will be discussed in Section 5.6.3.3.

To test the concept of the critical incidents as well as the literature-derived themes, a pilot study as described in Section 5.6. was conducted. Additionally, the pilot served the purpose of testing the robustness of the research instrument. Having evaluated different research instruments and techniques suitable for the main research, SurveyMonkey was chosen as a reliable and trusted method of gaining feedback from participants. The advantages of this instrument were seen in its widespread use which was regarded to be of importance when establishing trust given that most people already had participated in studies conducted using SurveyMonkey before. Additionally, the instrument offered the option to provide answers anonymously which was considered a highly critical point when conducting research within my own organisation. As Jones (2014) points out, researchers are expected to keep data confidential and ensure anonymity of the participants in order to protect them from any adverse reactions. Further advantages of SurveyMonkey included the ability to enable participants to take part via a link to the survey that was sent to their corporate email address, which made SurveyMonkey a cost-effective tool. In terms of data analysis, SurveyMonkey offered its own analysis options as well as allowing the download of the results into other, potentially more powerful analysis tools. The pilot was therefore also used to provide insights into these capabilities, therefore informing me on the setup for the main survey.

5.5.1. Profile of the pilot study

For the pilot study, a decision needed to be taken, whether to use employees of Triangle Germany, who might then also be potential participants to the main survey or whether to utilise an external group of participants. In terms of accessibility, the use of Triangle employees was regarded as being better aligned to the main study participants than searching for external participants given that access to the internal group already existed. Additionally, as the pilot participants should also be representatives of Generation Y, a confirmation of the age would be possible with the help of HR data. A further benefit of using the internal group was that the responses of the pilot would inform the development of the survey as organisation-specific aspects were already expected to show in the pilot.

In contrast to that, there were several negative aspects in using potential participants for the main survey already in the pilot. First, the participation in the pilot might influence the future responses in the main survey. This risk was seen in several ways as an interaction between me and the participants during the pilot phase was more likely than with external participants given the daily interaction within the organisation. Also, the pilot bore the risk of generating an unwanted framing therefore influencing the later survey participants. Furthermore, the participation or declined participation in the pilot might reduce the chances of the participants to agree to their participation in the main survey in case the pilot was regarded as being of limited interest or ill-designed.

On this basis, the decision was taken to use an external group instead of a sub-set of the participant group of the main survey. While using participants from the organisation would have been easier in terms of access and the conformity of the group between pilot and main study, the negative aspects as outlined, prevailed. Among those, the risk of a potential influence that the questions of the pilot could have on those participants during the main study were regarded as critical.

This was also highlighted by Bryman and Bell (2003), who advocate the use of a separate group of participants for the pilot than used in the main study to avoid an interference with the group used in the main survey.

As Layder (1998, p. 45) contends, "*choosing a sample of people to interview or events to observe is a key feature of any research project*". According to Layder (1998) and Saunders et al. (2003), two main forms of data sampling are being used in social research, namely probability or random sampling and non-probability sampling. Non-probability sampling can be further segmented into convenience, snowball, and quota sampling (Bryman & Bell, 2003; Saunders et al., 2003). The first two sample types described by Bryman and Bell (2003) are like the extent that both samples use the concept of availability and accessibility of participants with the addition that snowball sampling extends this from the initial group to further participants which are being suggested by the initial group of participants.

Layder (1998) suggests that there are no rules in terms of size for a non-probability sample which is mostly used in qualitative research, hence the sample was selected on the availability of a suitable target group. In terms of suitability, the following criteria were defined in descending order:

- Industry fit
- Generational fit
- Geographical fit

In terms of industry-fit, the focus was solely on the financial industry in line with the main study. This requirement was controlled with a high degree of certainty as this information was known for the initial group of direct contacts. Given that the initial group of contacts was most likely to forward this to their colleagues as highlighted in the contact email, the industry-focus also applied to those as well. In addition, a question was introduced asking the respondents to state the type of financial institution for which they worked, which provided a further confirmation as those survey responses not stating an answer for that field were excluded.

For the main study, participants were required to belong to Generation Y which had been defined in this study as people being born between 1982 and 2000. This was a central point as the overall topic of the thesis was focussed on this age group. As within the pilot study, it proved more difficult to pre-select participants from Generation Y prior to the distribution of the survey. To ensure only answers from Generation Y were selected for confirming the pilot, an additional question was added that requested participants to state their age within pre-given brackets. A separation of the responses by age group was conducted by me afterwards rather than having applied this as a burden on the participants and particularly those who helped distributing the survey further.

Lastly, the focus was on participants working within the wider Frankfurt-area therefore geographically matching the participants of the main research. Given that Frankfurt is the main financial centre of Germany, this area provided the highest chances of finding participants and the effort to expand this to other areas was not seen as a necessary step when assessing efforts vs. gain of additional insights.

5.5.2. Profile of the main study

For the main study, the online survey, the target population consisted of all Generation Y employees working for Triangle Germany, i.e. those born between 1982 and 2000. To obtain the full list of eligible employees, the initial list was drawn up based on my knowledge of Triangle Germany. With the support of the HR department that list was then complemented to finally containing 94 employees matching the set age criteria. After deduction of employees on maternity or parental leave and those that were not approachable for other reasons, a list of 68 names was identified. With a view on the number of eligible employees, it was considered manageable to approach the entire population instead of taking a sample of the population (Saunders et al., 2003). For this purpose, an introductory letter was prepared, see Appendix 3, in conjunction with a letter of recommendation from the University, see Appendix 1, which was then sent to each eligible employee individually with a covering email, containing a personal note as well as the invitation to obtain more information on the background of the study by contacting me directly, an offer taken up by several of the colleagues. Using a personalised approach in combination with offering full transparency on the study helped to gain the trust of the colleagues to participate in the study. From the questions and subsequent discussions, it was felt that the topic raised the interest of several colleagues leaving them intrigued to participate. Upon having received their consent to participate, they were then contacted monthly with an email containing the link to the survey in German and English according to their preference. At all times, participants had the chance to opt out or omit one of the monthly surveys, which the majority used as can been seen from the number of participations shown in Appendix 4.

5.6. Pilot study

5.6.1. Data collection

Drawing on existing contacts working in the financial industry in the Frankfurt area, one of the main groups consisted of the participants of a banking management course at the Frankfurt School of Finance which graduated in 2016. Of that group most participants belonged to Generation Y except for three participants as was found out later during the analysis of the results. Having been a participant of that group, I sent the survey as a link via a personalised email to this group.

The pilot survey was distributed electronically in two waves within a few days with answers being received back within three weeks. The survey was finally closed when no additional responses were expected. In total, 62 potential participants were contacted which led to 54 clicks on the survey link and 35 participants fully completing the survey. 19 people clicked on the link but abandoned the survey after the first question with no further data being provided. Having received 35 full completions, representing a response rate of more than 50% was deemed sufficient to test the pilot survey.

Table 4: Media usage pilot study

Media used	1st wave	2nd wave
Email	16	0
LinkedIn	0	2
WhatsApp	0	4
Xing	0	38
Facebook	0	2
Total	**16**	**46**

(Source: Own notes)

The initial wave was distributed via email to a group of 14 financial services employees working for different employers, however all of them had completed a banking degree course at the Frankfurt School of Finance and Management in 2016. In addition, two further emails were sent on the same day to other members of the financial community in Frankfurt. With all of them personally known to me, a direct and personal communication was established asking the recipients of the email not only to fill out the survey but also to forward the survey to other colleagues thus using a snowballing technique. During the first two days, 18 people activated the link, of which 14 participants completed the survey. This number demonstrated that the survey was forwarded to a small number of colleagues.

The second wave of the survey distribution was based on an individual approach to contacts via different social media. With the majority of the 46 contacts being made via Xing, the German equivalent to LinkedIn (38 contacts), contacts were also made via WhatsApp, LinkedIn and Facebook (Pereira, Perry, & Johnson, 2015). As no separate collector was used within the survey, the overall responses from this contact group could not be clearly separated from the other group. However, based on the response dates, a general indication was obtained as the following table indicates:

Table 5: Response rates pilot study

Contacts	Clicks	Responses	% Clicks / Contacts	% Responses / Contacts	% Responses to Clicks
16	18	14	112,5%	87,5%	77,8%
46	36	21	78,3%	45,7%	58,3%
62	54	35	87,1%	56,5%	64,8%

Source: SurveyMonkey Pilot Study

The click and response rate between the first group and the second group differed significantly. While the first group consisted of participants having shared a common experience during the banking degree course, as well as participants to which the former fellow students had referred the pilot survey, the second group was less connected to me. This result was particularly visible for the ratio between actual responses and contacts made. The result was also encouraging for the main study as the advantages of being seen as an insider, as stated in Section 1.7, were regarded as a positive sign for the main survey, where the connection between me and the participants was even closer with both social actors being members of Triangle.

As participants were asked whether they would be willing to participate in further studies, a positive response to this question was seen as test of the "attractiveness" of the research topic, an important indicator for the main study. In this respect, feedback was received from five respondents indicating their willingness to participate further. The number of positive responses received generated the idea to use a further group as a reference point alongside the main study.

5.6.2. Results of the pilot study

In preparation of the analysis of the data received from the pilot survey, all data were downloaded from SurveyMonkey into Microsoft Excel. Via a filter, the non-completed surveys were separated from the completed responses, therefore receiving the 35 responses for further analysis. Of these, twenty participants belonged to Generation Y, while fifteen were members of Generation X. Of these two groups, only the twenty responses of participants belonging to Generation Y were selected as relevant for the main study.

Following the translation back from German into English, all answers were tagged with key words to enable a grouping of answers. As a result of this data sorting, which was applied to motivating and demotivating factors alike, five themes emerged for motivating factors and four themes for demotivating factors. For both types of incidents, a group "other" was used to capture those incidents that did not fit any of main themes.

5.6.3. Outcome of the pilot study

5.6.3.1. Checking the internal consistency of the research tool

One of the key goals of the pilot was the test and confirmation of the research tool and the structure of the questions used. With a view on the instrument itself, the use of SurveyMonkey had proved to be successful. The distribution of the link to the survey via different social media was technically successful as well widely accepted by the recipients as the large number of participants has shown. In terms of the number of questions, participants required an average thirteen to fourteen minutes to complete the survey, which seemed to be acceptable as nearly all incomplete responses were abandoned within the first 30 seconds, which rather indicated that the recipient did not read beyond the introductory text. When reviewing the structure of the questions, it was recognised that for the question regarding loyalty, predominantly negative responses were received as the question "What incident impacted your loyalty" was interpreted by the participants as a question asking for an event decreasing their loyalty. This answer increased the awareness that the question should have been better phrased by highlighting the ability to mention both positive and negative changes to loyalty.

5.6.3.2. Checking the application of the critical incident technique

Since the development of the method by Flanagan (1954), the concept of critical incidents has since been applied not only to quantitative studies within a positivist paradigm but also to qualitative research under an interpretivist paradigm (Bott & Tourish, 2016). Confirming the concept of critical incidents, the main part of the pilot study contained eleven questions asking the participants to state those incidents which they thought to be resulting in an increase or decrease in their work motivation. Without any pre-given incidents, participants were therefore asked to name the most critical incidents first increasing their motivation and then decreasing their motivation. For both aspects, participants were prompted to first name the most critical incident, and then those of lower importance. The free-text set-up was used as a test whether the incidents envisaged by me were consistent with those seen by the participants. This was further refined by a list of eight critical incidents, which the participants were asked to rank in order of importance.

Participants completed the first two free-text questions on motivating factors without exception. For the demotivating factors, all respondents answered the first question on the most demotivating incidents while all but two also answered the second question. The third question of both, the motivating and demotivating factors was left blank by most participants. From these results, it was concluded that the concept of critical incidents was understood by participants and worked as a reference point.

5.6.3.3. Checking the relevance of themes

The pilot also served the purpose of identifying any themes deemed relevant for inclusion in the main survey. This could be either themes identified from the existing literature as being of key importance in relation to Generation Y or themes not yet identified therefore enabling new insights. In terms of the themes identified, the strong focus on recognition as the leading motivating incident and lack of recognition as second most important source of demotivation was no surprise when comparing this with previous studies. Within the financial industry, Gioia and Catalano (2011) had observed the need for continuous feedback for Generation Y and similarly, Lavoie-Tremblay, Leclerc, Marchionni, and Drevniok (2010) reported a lack of recognition as a demotivating factor therefore highlighting the dual importance of recognition both in a positive and negative sense. The discovery of the positive aspects of intentional work also matched the findings of Jekielek (2015), who found out in their research within the financial industry that purposeful work and development options are more important than pay for Generation Y.

Similarly, the importance of management of Generation Y was observed by Herbison and Boseman (2009), while Hewlett et al. (2009) highlighted the importance of teamwork to this generation. Additionally, Tourangeau et al. (2013) reported the need for development options as a key factor of importance to Generation Y at work, which was decided to be covered via a specific question on career satisfaction within the main survey. Representing a new insight, the theme of "success" has not been widely observed within the literature. Success in terms of the pilot study was interpreted not only as success in career terms which included the two factors salary and promotion but also as success in fulfilling the actual role as represented by having success with clients.

Given the variety of answers received from participants via the free-text questions, it was decided to alter the design of the main study by only using the three work-related drivers, motivation, career satisfaction, and loyalty as a framework. Within this framework, the idea of free-text fields was adopted from the pilot allowing participants to select the most critical incidents for each of the three drivers without any pre-given event as initially envisaged. While subjectivity due to my positionality as a researcher was generally accepted within this research, it was mitigated in this case to avoid any bias in the selection of the themes. In addition, the move away from pre-defined incidents selected by me had a strong influence on the overall design of the main survey although the length of the survey period was intended to remain at 12 months.

5.6.4. Considerations regarding the use of language

While the preparation of the pilot study had been conducted in English, a translation into German was regarded as a necessity given that the audience consisted of German-speaking participants. Using an English version alone would have had advantages in terms of data analysis, however, to increase the chances of participants answering the questions, the survey was distributed with links to an English as well as a German version. This step was taken as English is still not commonly used in all parts of the Financial Industry in Germany and particularly within Savings Banks and Cooperative Banks.

The use of German language has proven to be successful as the participation rate had shown. However, this process involved the additional effort of re-translating the survey results from German into English. Besides the time efforts of this additional translation, the risks of misunderstanding and missing out information were transferred from the participants onto me.

Based on my fully bi-lingual skills, this main survey was developed and distributed to participants in both English and German therefore allowing the participants to choose their preferred language. In this context, a set of key words was defined to design the two versions of the survey as well as to ensure consistency within the translation process for the participant responses. Here, a translation programme, DEEPL, was used for the first translation before a manual review was employed to adapt the translation and avoid any mistranslations by the programme. Utilising these measures, the accuracy of the data derived from two language sets was ensured.

5.7. Ethical Issues

When undertaking research with human beings, the researcher must ensure that the participants do not experience any harm. For this, Olson (2003, p. 126) postulates for "*the researcher to behave towards each participant as a person within an ethical relationship of caring concern grounded in the researcher 's personal values*". To maintain a consistent standard, the current study is adhering to Principles and Procedures framework of the University of Gloucestershire (University of Gloucestershire, 2021).

Although there was no danger for physical harm in this social study, the confidentiality of the data submitted by the participants as well as their privacy needed to be protected. Considering my positionality as a researcher, as described in Section 1.7, being simultaneously an insider and an outsider, this was reflected and addressed. In this context, focus was placed on the existing power difference between me, being part of the senior management, and the participants as it existed at the time when the survey was conducted.

To ensure transparency, the participants of the pilot and later the main survey, were informed in advance about the project, the scope of the data capturing and the usage of the data. Consent was obtained online while ensuring that participants also had the opportunity to decline their participation.

Confidentiality was maintained in the pilot as responses were obtained anonymously via SurveyMonkey. Avoiding any unnecessary data, statistical data was reduced to a single question regarding the age, for which age brackets were provided to allocate responses to the relevant generational groups.

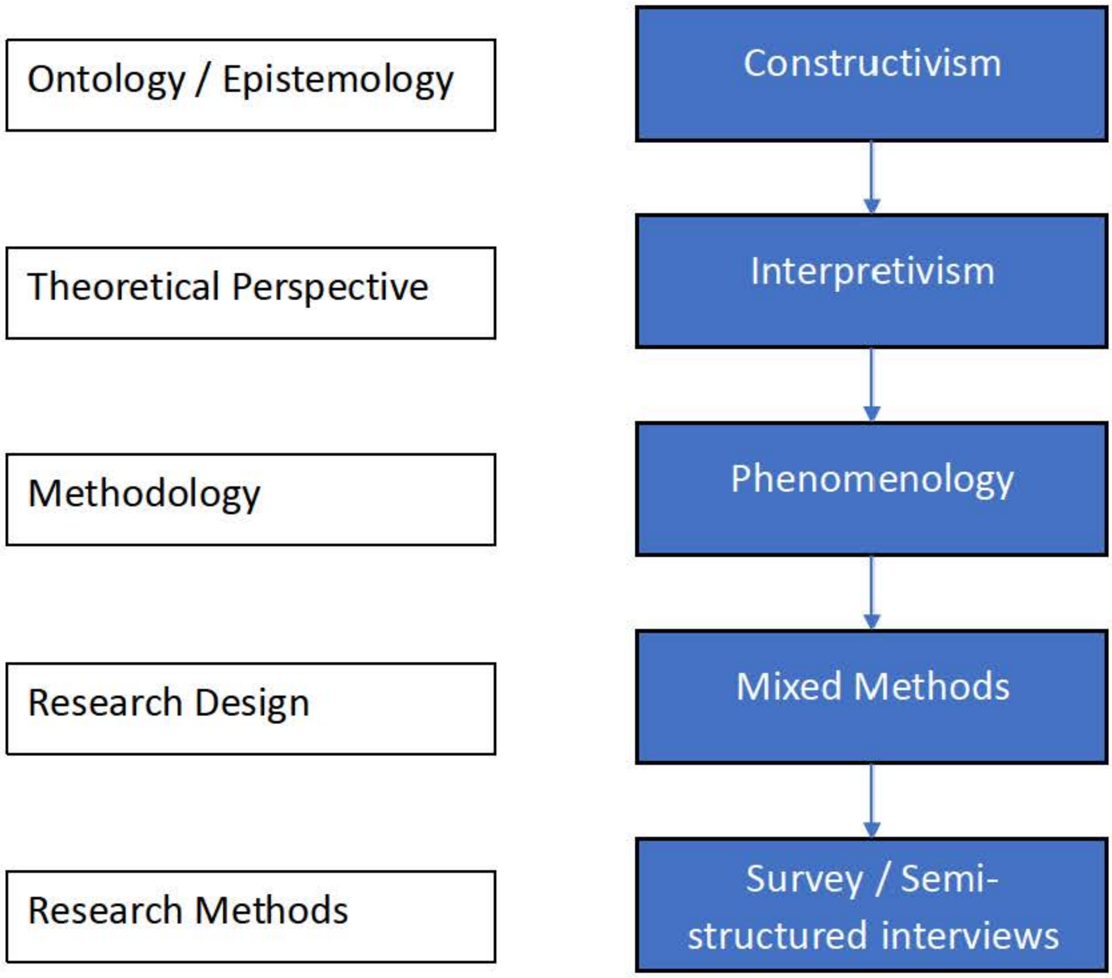
Within the main survey, confidentiality was of utmost importance as participants were providing detailed insights into work-related situations that could lead to a negative effect on their status and career, if leaked or traced back to them. For this purpose, participants were asked to use an alias or a blank instead of their name, which was subsequently used in the thesis.

Lastly, the semi-structured interviews were handled similarly, with abbreviations used when quoting in the thesis. In this situation, it was unavoidable that I was aware of the responses of the participants. This situation was addressed twofold. First, I had, unintentionally, left the organisation at that stage therefore changing my positionality becoming an outsider from an organisational and hierarchical standpoint. Consequently, the power difference, which had existed beforehand was eliminated. Additionally, the transcript of the interview was sent to the participant for approval before utilising the answers within the research.

5.8. Chapter Summary

The chapter discussed the research aim, which in turn was used as the foundation for selecting the appropriate methodology. The selected methodology has been visualised in the following graph (Figure 5):

Figure 5: Structure of the selected methodology



Starting with the ontological and epistemological position, constructivism was chosen as the appropriate framework given that the focus of the research is on work-related drivers and behavioural aspects of the participants within a work context. Additionally, my position as a researcher and my view of the world as a social construction created by the human actors supported this selection. Utilising the theoretical perspective of interpretivism, this research evaluates the incidents described by the participants of the survey and the semi-structured interviews, the two research tools chosen, which will be covered in detail in Chapter Six.

Chapter 6: Research Tools

6.1. Introduction

In this chapter, the research tools introduced in the previous chapter, and visualised in Figure 4, are being explained in detail. First, the structure of the main survey is being highlighted, which took place at Triangle Germany. To conduct the survey, SurveyMonkey, an online instrument, was utilised.

Secondly, based on the themes emerging from the main survey, three key subjects were used as the basis for five semi-structured interviews conducted with participants of the main survey. As the interviews were conducted via video call, the interviews were recorded with the consent of the participants, and transcribed using an online software, Amberscript.

Lastly, four semi-structured interviews were conducted with participants from the pilot study therefore forming an external reference group. Given that these participants worked for other financial organisation within the same region, the answers provided a contrasting view to some of the answers from those within Triangle Germany.

6.2. Treatment of confidentiality

A major concern within this research, as already highlighted in Section 1.7., discussing my positionality as a researcher and in Section 5.7. when dealing with the ethical aspects, was the assurance of the confidentiality of the participants. In the survey, as highlighted in Section 6.3., participants did not have to provide any personal details but were able to use an alias of their own choice making it hardly possible to link any comments to the respective participant. This was regarded as a key for gaining access and the approval of the participants for their participation given that I was part of the senior management team at the time of the survey therefore being in a power position, which could have been perceived by the participants as an outsider position from a hierarchical point of view.

When conducting the interviews, the situation changed as the participants were clearly identifiable and linkable to the respective interview; in addition, the interviews were recorded with the permission of the participants. However, while the participants of interviews were obviously known to me, contrary to the survey, confidentiality was reassured as per the handbook of procedures and process (University of Gloucestershire, 2021). Within this process, participants provided their explicit consent prior to conducting the interviews not only for the interviewing itself but also to the recording and subsequent use of the data within this study. In this respect, Patton (1980, p. 107) points out that “while people will not be identified specifically in a report, it may be possible to identify them from descriptions of what they have done or quotations of what they have said". To accommodate for this point, the interviews were anonymised by deleting any name references and listing participants only as numbers. Additionally, any references used as quotations in the thesis were upfront reviewed whether they could unmask a particular participant. Furthermore, the situation had changed insofar, as the power position had been removed due to me having left the company between the final survey and the start of the first interviews.

6.3. Main survey

Saunders et al. (2003) differentiate between physical access into an organisation and the cognitive access to the participants with the latter representing the level of trust required for participants to share their thoughts and opinion with me. Similarly, Easterby-Smith et al. (2008) differentiate between formal access as an approval from management to conduct the research and informal access, which again matches the cognitive access stated by Saunders et al. (2003).

6.3.1. Setup of the main survey

In this case, the physical access to the organisation was granted, because I was also a member of the same organisation. Similarly, the formal access was received from the HR department when the project was presented to them. Although some time had elapsed between the approval and the actual start of the survey, no re-approval was sought as the Head of HR in Germany had left in the meantime which would have led to a further delay of the start. To mitigate risks, the situation was discussed with another representative of HR who was present at the initial approval, and it was concluded that the study could go ahead.

To gain access to the eligible employees, a list with all employees born in 1982 or thereafter was prepared by me, which was then complemented with the support of HR. Of the 94 eligible employees, 26 employees were excluded due to several reasons such as maternity leave, expected separation from the company or inability to reach these employees. All remaining 68 employees were individually emailed with information on the study and the request to participate on a voluntary basis (Appendix 3). With this mailing, a cover letter from the University of Gloucestershire (Appendix 1) was attached as well as the anonymity of the participants confirmed. Especially the latter was deemed to be of high importance to ensure the receipt of open and comprehensive answers that would not be used for any other than the academic purpose stated in the introductory letter. Of these 68 employees, 52 responded to the Email with 51 explicitly providing their consent to receive the monthly survey emails. The one employee not wishing to participate stated that she would soon leave the company, a fact not public at the time.

With 51 employees having provided their consent, the next step consisted in the setup of an Email distribution list that was established in the Email programme used at Triangle Germany. Using this distribution list within the blind copy field when sending out the monthly emails with the survey links was seen as a further attempt to keep the participants protected, although it was deemed to be highly likely that the participants among each other might exchange conversation on the survey participation.

When signing up to participate to the survey, a few participants used the opportunity to contact me to learn more about my study. Out of these conversations, a high degree of interest was visible which led to in-depth discussions that were later used as the foundation for additional interviews.

6.3.2. Design of the main survey

With the learnings derived from the pilot study (Appendix 2), the structure of the main study was changed in three main points. First, to shorten the time filling out the survey, the number of questions asking for motivating or demotivating incidents were reduced to one per positive and one per negative incidents, which participants were free to enter based on their own individual experiences. To capture further incidents, an additional question was added enabling participants to add further comments beyond the main aspect highlighted. The reduction of questions was aimed at focussing the participants on the main event that had the largest impact on them. Secondly, the statistical questions were dropped completely, because in using a qualitative approach, the collection of statistical data was unnecessary as potential information on length of service, position within the company and exact age was not regarded as adding any benefits that could enhance the findings from the qualitative questions. Furthermore, omitting statistical questions aimed at the collection of personal data was seen as a necessity to maintain the anonymity of the participants as any such data, considering the small population, would have increased the ability to identify individuals. This was regarded as a threat to building trust between the participants and me as the researcher, given that the power differential between me and the participants still existed throughout the duration of the survey. The only important point was the ability to compare answers from the same participant across the monthly surveys. For this purpose, the option of using an Alias, as shown in Section 6.2., was introduced which provided participants with the option to use a nickname consistent across the monthly surveys, which enabled me to link answers of participants from month to month.

In addition to the qualitative open-ended questions, three quantitative questions were added to the survey. These questions, one each to relating one of three work-related drivers were intended to measure the monthly level of motivation, career satisfaction, and loyalty as experienced by the participants. The benefit of these quantitative questions was two-fold. First, the self-reported level of motivation, career satisfaction, and loyalty added a further perspective on the researched topics, therefore complementing the qualitative descriptions by the participants. Secondly, these questions were used to provide the participants with some information monthly on the progress of the survey. For this purpose, a Likert scale has been used, which is widely used in social science (Louangrath & Sutanapong, 2018). Among the various numeric rating scales available, a 11-point Likert scale, ranging from 0 to 10 was selected as this represents the most commonly used numeric rating scale in social science (Chen & Fang, 2022). When assessing the benefits of the various scales, a scale with 11 points was chosen as it was expected to generate a more nuanced result than a scale with fewer points. Furthermore, the choice of this scale offered the additional benefit that participants from Triangle Germany are used to this type of scale as it is used within the organisation for measurements such as employee satisfaction.

Finally, the same set of questions was used throughout the duration of the entire survey so that participants received the same questions monthly. To enable the separation of the monthly responses, a new link was created each month which was then distributed to the group, while at the same time the link from the previous month was closed. Together with the restriction that each user was only able to complete the survey once per month, this setup captured the responses in a consistent and traceable manner.

The survey was designed to capture the participants' views and reactions to important situations throughout a period of 12 months within an organisational setting. Using the same questions in each of the monthly surveys, the instrument can be classified as a type of *panel survey*. The design allowed to capture a wider range of incidents than a single survey could have done. The focus of this approach was on generating thick data to better understand the themes behind the three work-related drivers. The utilisation of the same set of questions each month helped to overcome potential period effects a single cross-sectional survey would have prone to. This was essential as the coinciding start of the COVID-19 pandemic impacted the initial responses on several themes. The design also provided the basis for a longitudinal study as initially intended to follow the call from Twenge (2010) for longitudinal studies to overcome the potential conflict between age/career and generation-driven behaviour. However, for this to be fully achieved and to qualify as longitudinal study, the focus would have to be shifted to detect changes over the survey period at the level of each participant (Steel & McLaren, 2008). For this purpose, the responses of the participants would have to be filtered by alias. This strategy was used to protect the identity of the participants, and then evaluate changes over time related to the themes. Following an inductive approach, this focus was neglected for the benefit of obtaining in-depth information on the themes impacting the key work-related driver, motivation, by using semi-structured interviews as an additional research tool as outlined in Section 6.4.

6.3.3. Distribution of the survey

Based on the distribution list set up following the confirmation of participation, a monthly email was sent to the entire group starting at the beginning of April 2020 that initially provided some introductory comments besides the two links to the German and the English version of the survey. As of the second month, a summary of the quantitative questions was added to the email, which was converted into a one-page pdf as of the third month (Appendix 9). Since then, some highlights from the qualitative questions were added to maintain the interest of the survey group while strongly avoiding any details that could expose any individual or leak non-public information to the group.

6.3.4. Preparation of data coding

With answers from the survey being provided in German and English, all answers were consolidated in English in a separate survey within SurveyMonkey. For this purpose, the English responses were copied over into the Master survey document, whereas the German answers were translated into English first using a table of key words to maintain a consistent approach. During the transfer of data, the data entry utilised different links per month as well as per the original language used by the participants, therefore enabling the tracking of responses equivalent to the two original survey forms.

6.4. Semi-structured internal interviews

6.4.1. The use of semi-structured interviews in phase two of the research

According to Sarantakos (1998, p. 246), interviews are "one of the most popular techniques of social research". When being used in social research as a means of data collection, interviews are systematically planned and executed, controlled for their interviewer bias as well as specific to the research question (Sarantakos, 1998). In terms of their structure, interviews can be categorised in different ways. A common form is their categorisation into structured, semi-structured and unstructured interviews (Fontana & Frey, 1998; Saunders et al., 2003). While quantitative research favours the more structured type, qualitative methods employ procedures that are more flexible and open (Blaikie, 2000; Schwandt, 2001). The use of semi-structured or unstructured interviews has been regarded as the best fit for this research. While unstructured interviews provide the greater flexibility by giving the respondent an unrestricted way to answer the question, using a semi-structured approach contains several questions as a guideline for the interview. With neither the sequence of questions nor the number of follow-up questions being limited, this approach was favoured for this research. This approach is supported by Jones (2014) who states that semi-structured interviews are well suited in cases when the researcher has a fairly clear focus. In this case, the focus stemmed from the key themes identified from the monthly surveys which have been selected for further in-depth analysis in the interviews. A further supportive argument brought by Jones (2014) deals with the use semi-structured interviews in combination with the use of the critical incident technique which allowed to focus on individual incidents that varied from respondent to respondent (Flanagan, 1954). Having applied this method, it allowed to focus on the main motivators and demotivators with sufficient flexibility to probe further into details when the respondent identified himself with this specific critical incident. As a result, a deeper understanding was obtained by asking additional questions therefore "*discovering their socially constructed reality*" (Blaikie, 2000, p. 251).

6.4.2. Selection of the survey participant target group

Utilising a sequential research strategy, with the interviews having been conducted after completion of the survey phase (Collins & Onwuegbuzie, 2013), the focus for the interview phase was on selecting participants that were "*likely to generate rich, dense, focused information on the research question*" (Cleary, Horsfall, & Hayter, 2014, p. 473). As a starting point, for the interviews, the population comprised all participants of the survey. Of these 51 participants, who had opted in to take part in the survey, an unknown and varying number had participated in the survey. As it would have been impracticable to interview all these participants agreeing to be interviewed, a sample needed to be selected (Saunders et al., 2003). When selecting a sample, one can choose between different sampling techniques that can be broadly distinguished into probability or random and non-probability sampling (Layder, 1998). With the first one enabling a generalisation from the sample to the entire population, the latter is a selective choice made by the researcher. Among the non-probability sampling methods, convenience sampling and purposive sampling can be distinguished. While the first one, also called accidental sampling (Sarantakos, 1998) is purely driven by the availability of participants, purposive sampling in its various sub-forms represents an informed choice of the researcher selecting those participants that are most knowledgeable or experienced. At the same time their availability and willingness to take part in the research needs to be considered (Palinkas et al., 2015). This is confirmed by Campbell et al. (2020, p. 658) who state:

> "*However, all of them, although purposive, have a convenience element to them given the voluntary nature of all consent processes, where the researcher is at the mercy of the pool of potential participants*".

Having taken the categorisation of purposive sampling strategies suggested by Palinkas et al. (2015), three sub-categories were deemed to be a fit for this research, namely, "Criterion-i", "Critical case" and "Confirming and disconfirming case" strategies. Of these, the "Confirming and disconfirming case" strategy was regarded as the best fit for this study given that it was based on the already collected data from the monthly surveys which provided some emerging themes that were enhanced by the information gathered from the interviews. While the "critical case" strategy would have been better suited for a generalisation of the data obtained beyond this research, this was not relevant for the purpose of this study. Instead, Teddlie and Yu (2007, p. 83) state that "*Purposive sampling leads to greater depth of information from a smaller number of carefully selected cases*".

With this approach, no formal sample size was defined as the sampling was guided by flexibility and aim to gather sufficient information for answering the research questions. This concept, called saturation is defined by Sarantakos (1998, p. 204): "*It means that analysis, comparisons, etc., will continue until all available information has been obtained. This is demonstrated by the extent to which new information can achieve a change in the existing data*".

Given that it was neither known, which members of the entire population participated in the survey nor who of the participants provided which type and quality of answer, the selection of information-rich cases as suggested by Layder (1998) proved to be more difficult than initially anticipated.

In this case the intimate knowledge of the organisation and the good rapport being built up with several of the participants helped to overcome the issue, which confirmed the view of Strauss and Corbin (1988, p. 47):

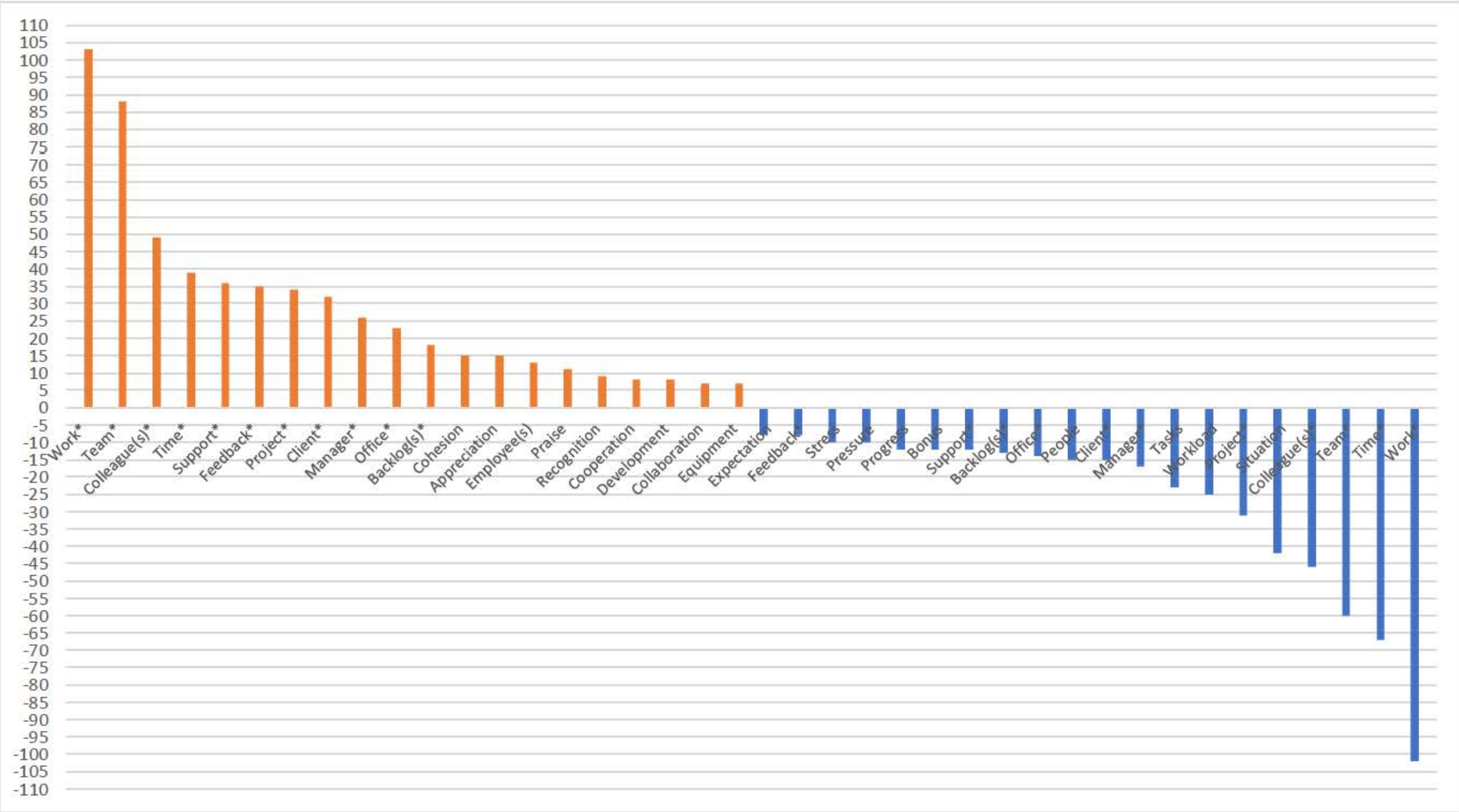
> *"…professional experience is another potential source of sensitivity. Although it can easily block perception, it can also enable the researcher to move into an area more quickly because he or she does not have to spend time gaining familiarity with surroundings or events."*

Although not knowing their individual contributions due to the anonymity maintained, as outlined in Section 6.2., some participants had voluntarily revealed to me that they had contributed to the survey. By having an intimate knowledge of the organisation, I knew which part of the organisation had experienced the most work over the period of the survey, however, no attempt was made to actively identify the specific survey answers of these participants during the analysis phase to maintain anonymity. Given that participants who stated "high workload" had also mentioned "relatedness" as the key motivating incident, the knowledge of Triangle Germany enabled me to focus on the key motivating and demotivating incidents.

6.4.3. Thematic questions for the interview

Following an initial coding of the survey responses, several key themes emerged from the data (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2016) for the motivating as well as the demotivating incidents. In addition, a few comments were received in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic which received a separate code, as it has been regarded as an additional item of interest given its profound effect on the overall working situation, coinciding with the start of the survey in March 2020. As stated in the following chapter "Coding and Analysis" in more detail, the key words were ranked according to the number of their appearances as shown in Figure 6.

Figure 6: Positive and negative ranking of themes derived from survey



Absolute ranking, i.e. those key words linked both to positive and negative incidents (marked with *) have been displayed twice to appear on both sides.

Derived from these key words, themes were identified that showed a positive or negative influence on the work motivation of the participants. Focussing on the two main themes, workload, and team, it was decided to explore these themes in more detail to gain a deeper understanding of these topics. Additionally, the topic of the COVID-19 pandemic was added as this theme was mentioned in several comments of the survey. This led to the formulation of the following three prompting questions:

Question 1: Tell me, how have you experienced the workload during the time of the survey?

On this open question, participants were able to report on any aspects that came to their mind whether these were positive or negative. With a view on the findings from the survey, additional questions were introduced into the discussion to probe deeper into the initial findings allowing a better understanding of these points.

Question 2: When you think about the COVID-19 pandemic, how has this influenced your work motivation during the time of the survey?

As with the first question, participants were able to pick up on any topic that reminded them when thinking about the COVID-19 pandemic, e.g. home-office, the contribution of the employer in terms of financial support, the “loss” of the colleagues to name a few of the topics raised during the survey.

Question 3: Think about your team and closest co-workers, how would you describe their impact on your work motivation during the time of the survey?

Leading over from the previous question on new ways of working, this question allowed the participants to reflect on the role and importance of their team and co-workers as the team was cited as one of the most positive influences on motivation.

6.4.4. Interview approach

The interview was started with a short summary of the status of the research to establish rapport as well as a confirmation that additional information on the findings would be shared at the end of the interview to avoid any unwanted influences in the interview process.

Then, each of the main questions was posed with a view to get a broad and unrestricted answer capturing the views of the participants. Depending on the comprehensiveness of the answer, additional questions were asked in a conversational manner unless the content had already been covered in the main question.

Following the three areas of interest, a final question was asked without any restrictions to allow the participants to add any subject that had been of importance to them. This approach allowed to capture further insights from the responses of the participants.

6.4.5. Location of interviews

When conducting interviews, the face-to-face method has been long regarded as the gold standard according to Krouwel, Jolly, and Greenfield (2019). With the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the utilisation of video-technology has rapidly increased (de Villiers, Farooq, & Molinari, 2021), representing an extension of the traditional face-to-face method (Lobe & Morgan, 2020). Due to COVID-19 pandemic, the opportunity to conducting face-to-face interviews had been drastically reduced as the participants were working from home at the time of the interviews. Consequently, it was opted to use video interviews using Microsoft Teams, a tool well known to the participants therefore avoiding any concerns, a crucial point as participants need to feel comfortable with the interview method (Lobe & Morgan, 2020). When conducting the interviews, these were scheduled using the work E-mail of the participants at times convenient to the participants.

6.4.6. Transcribing the interviews

The interviews were transcribed capturing the motivators and demotivators experienced by the participants in full detail. While Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) point out that there are well-defined rules when transcribing interviews, they caution that a decision must be taken whether a full transcription is deemed to be necessary or whether the transcription of the relevant parts of the interview will be sufficient. This is supported by Lofland and Lofland (1984) who advocate to only summarise those sections and answers that simply occurred as this helps to focus on the key information provided by the respondent.

However, when evaluating the results of the survey as well as well as the interviews, it was clear that a full transcription of the interviews would benefit the analysis of the results, especially as the context provided by the participants was deemed of importance for fully developing an understanding of the answers.

To assist this process, a software, Amberscript, was used to convert the interviews from voice to text. Although, the quality of the software transcription was acceptable, a manual rework was necessary as some words were consistently misinterpreted and needed correction. Additionally, the quality was heavily dependent on the clarity of the speech, a point in which the participants varied strongly. A last point of correction concerned the readability of the text as repetitions and filling words were removed without altering the context and content.

6.4.7. Translation of the interviews

With all but one interview being conducted in German, the interview transcripts were all translated into English. Again, this was achieved by using the software DEEPL, which provided a solid translation of the texts. Although the attempt was made with the first interview, to manually check and correct this automated translation, the attempt was discarded as being too time-consuming without adding any value. Instead, the German original transcripts were used for the analysis and when necessary for summarising or quoting, the corresponding English passages were used and reviewed in detail. This process proved to be much more efficient without jeopardising the quality of the analysis.

6.5. Semi-structured external interviews

Following the notion of triangulation as proposed earlier, additional interviews were conducted with participants outside the organisation. For this purpose, participants of the pilot study were contacted, who had indicated their willingness to participate in further parts of the study. On this basis, five participants were approached via E-Mail, of which four replied and agreed to the additional interview.

6.5.1. Structure of the interviews

The interviews were conducted in the same way as the interviews with the participants of the main survey therefore using a semi-structured interview with open questions on the three prioritized themes. The interviews were held online using Microsoft Teams with a recording of the interview using a mobile phone. All participants used the German language, so that, following the transcript with the software Amberscript, the transcriptions were translated using DEEPL for later reference.

Unlike the participants of the main survey, these participants all came from different financial institutions so that variations in the handling of the COVID-19 pandemic became visible. Given that this was known, the differences were intentionally accepted.

6.6. Checking for saturation

While the initial number of interviews was determined for logistical reasons, no definite number of interviews was planned as the approach was guided by the concept of saturation. Hence, the answers obtained via the interviews were summarised first for each interview and then consolidated for the two groups of interviews, the participants of the main survey as well as separately the external participants. The results were compared and evaluated, and interviews scheduled until the results did not provide new insights.

6.7. Chapter Summary

The study is using a 12-months survey in conjunction with semi-structured interviews as research tools. In the first phase of the research, the survey, which was delivered online to the participants within the organisation, was based on identifying critical incidents impacting the three work-related drivers. From the feedback of the survey participants, several themes emerged showing a strong effect on these drivers. Evaluating three themes, namely the workload, the team and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on work motivation in more detail, semi-structured interviews were employed. For this purpose, five participants of the survey were selected as well as four participants from the pilot study representing an external reference group, which was used to compare the findings from the internal group.

Chapter 7: Data reduction and analysis

7.1. Introduction

When conducting qualitative research, one of the key tasks for the researcher is to structure, in a senseful manner, the large amount of data gathered (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008). To deal with this task, a systematic process is helpful for which Saunders et al. (2003) suggest building a theoretical foundation. For this purpose, the process can be further split into the elements of data reduction and data analysis. While most of this work will be conducted after the data has been collected, Blaikie (2000) advised that the data reduction and analysis should not be left to the end but rather be integrated as a constant task while collecting the data, a view which is supported by Lofland and Lofland (1984). Yin (1989, p. 105) stated that "… *data analysis consists of examining, categorizing, tabulating, or otherwise recombining the evidence, to address the initial proposition of a study*", whereas data reduction is defined as "*the process of manipulating, integrating, transforming, and highlighting the data while they are being presented. Summarising, coding, and categorising are some ways of doing this*". (Sarantakos, 1998, p. 315)

Within this research, data analysis has been commenced during the collection of the monthly surveys by reviewing the answers received from the participants in terms of the motivating and demotivating incidents. While the primary intention had been to provide generalised monthly feedback to the participants by returning some information to them in exchange for their time given to the survey, it also allowed a first insight into the general feelings and topics raised by the participants. From this first review, three topics emerged, that superseded all other responses based on the number of times mentioned by the participants. In terms of demotivating incidents, the high workload experienced in many parts of the organisation dominated while the notion of teamwork, team cohesion and effort were mentioned most among the motivating incidents. Additionally, the fundamental changes experienced due to the COVID-19 pandemic were also impacting motivation, both negatively and positively as stated by the participants.

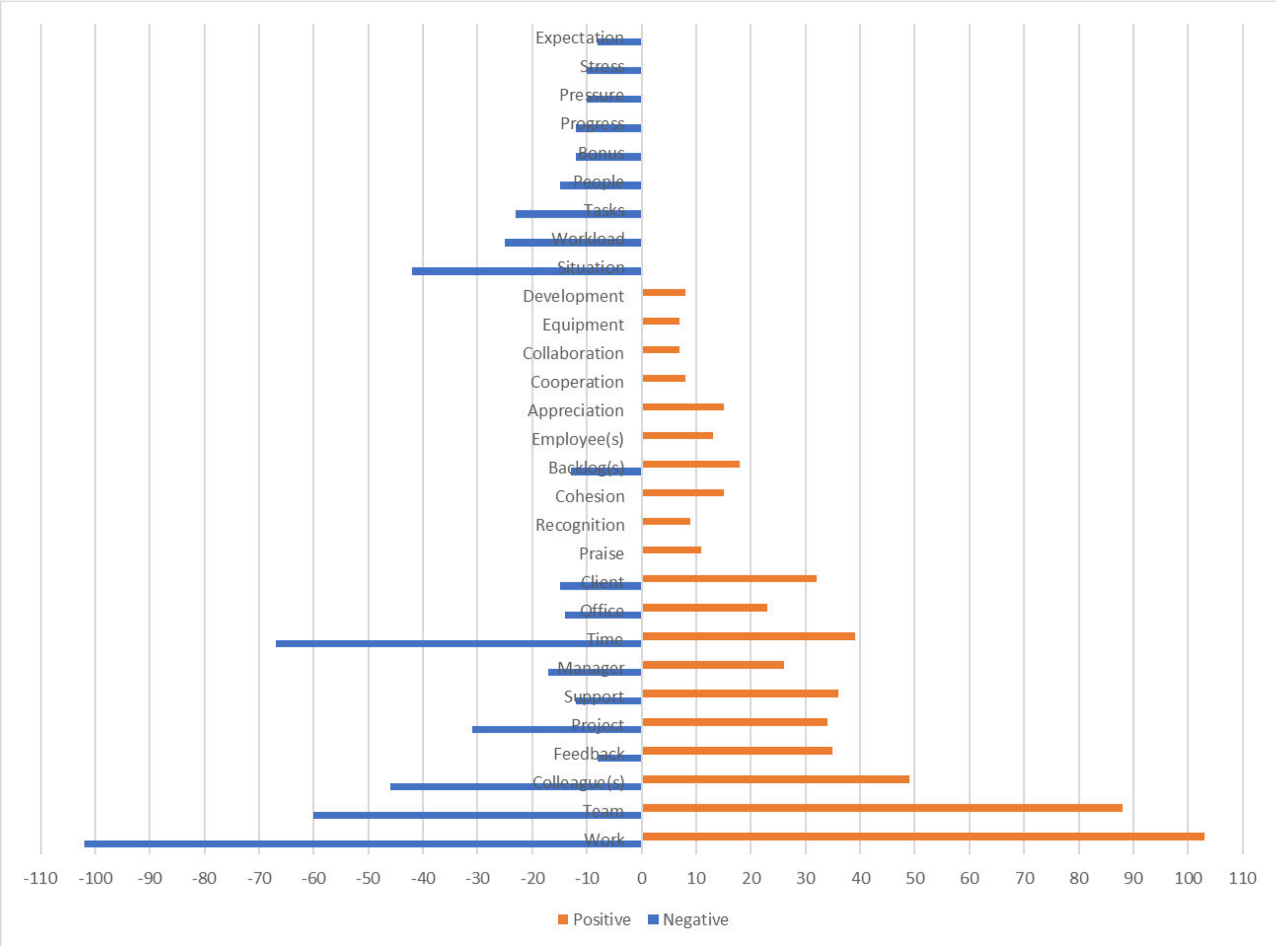
7.2. Coding

To make sense of the amount of data collected from the surveys, as well as to plan the structure and content of the interviews, the process of coding was employed. Although coding is used both for quantitative and qualitative research, "*coding is the starting point for most forms of qualitative data analysis*" (Bryman & Bell, 2003, p. 435). The process of coding is rather analytical as data is broken down and segmented to allow conceptualising therefore enabling the formation of theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1988). In this process, labels or keywords are being used to capture the content and meaning of the responses representing the first stage of the process (Blaikie, 2000), which Strauss and Corbin (1988) define as the open coding stage. As they point out, the naming of the codes selected can be freely chosen and will vary from researcher to researcher, however, as Blaikie (2000, p. 240) states, "*classification is not a neutral process; the researcher will have a purpose in mind that will provide direction and boundaries*". To provide some guidance, Strauss and Corbin (1988) suggest that the naming of the categories can either come from the data itself or from literature and should be recognizable and distinct in its shared characteristics.

For the coding process, a decision was made to start with a word count to identify the words most often used by the participants when answering the survey. This follows the suggestion of Ryan and Bernard (2016, p. 89) who states that "*repetition is one of the easiest ways to identify themes.*" For this purpose, the data was transferred from Microsoft Excel into Microsoft Word and a free online Word Count Tool was employed. To increase the benefit of this approach, all words with less than four characters were excluded as well as so-called stop words that can be found in any language. With this approach, the most used words where identified, both for the motivating and separately for the demotivating incidents. To further limit the list, all words that appeared less than seven times in the total number of answers were also excluded as the focus was put on those words appearing most. With this approach 20 key words were identified both for the motivating as well as demotivating incidents.

Comparing the key words, a total of eleven of these words were used both for describing negative as well as positive incidents. However, with the notable exception of the word "work", which was unsurprisingly used most at equal terms, most words display a tendency into either the positive or negative direction.

Figure 7: Positive and negative ranking of aggregated themes from survey



Following the first key word search based on the number count, the key words were further analysed in a second step creating an additional sub level of coding. For this purpose, all comments were filtered by key word and then read line-by-line to identify themes associated with the key word.

The overall process of this coding was guided by the structure advocated by Strauss and Corbin (1988) in general. However, this study followed a more pragmatic approach as suggested by Layder (1998) in such a sense that the focus was not on the creation of as many codes as possible but primarily on capturing the main themes. While not restricting the number of codes, the aim was to find an appropriate level of aggregation given that too many codes can be counterproductive as Miles and Huberman (1994) point out.

Having applied this process, 88 themes were identified for the positive incidents while 129 themes emerged from demotivating incidents. Although it was too early at this stage to draw any conclusions, the finding confirmed the initial feeling that the reasons for the negative incidents displayed a higher degree of individual tendencies when compared to the positive incidents.

With the number of themes identified, a more granular picture emerged, providing more insights into the key words. With this, key words used by participants both for positive as well as negative incidents now became more differentiated showing a broader spectrum of the key words. Having reviewed the themes, it was still felt that a further level of detail was required given that e.g., the positive theme "Working Time" was not meaningful when compared to the negative theme "Working Hour". This step was deemed necessary prior to moving from the open coding stage was followed by the axial coding stage which seeks to find relationships between the groups identified therefore putting the data back again, although in a new way (Blaikie, 2000; Easterby-Smith et al., 2008). Following a further line-by-line review of the comments, a third level was added as sub-themes for most of the themes. With this additional information, it was felt that the open coding phase was sufficiently completed enabling the re-grouping of themes using the process of axial coding.

Axial coding is "*the process of relating categories to their subcategories, termed 'axial' because coding occurs around the axis of a category, linking categories at the level of properties and dimensions*" (Strauss & Corbin, 1988, p. 123). It is a process of rebuilding data that was taken apart during the phase of open coding. According to them, this process takes place at a conceptual rather than descriptive level. This is supported by Blaikie (2000), who states that a thin description is not more than a reproduction of facts. In contrast to that a thick description is providing additionally the social context. The inclusion of the context is important as Bryman and Bell (2003) and Miles and

Huberman (1994) point out given that there is a risk from losing the context due to the fragmentation of the data into simple descriptive codes.

7.3. The use of software for coding

When dealing with large amounts of data, the use of software programmes is often a time-saving option. Although statistical programmes are already commonly used within quantitative research, the use of software for qualitative analysis has long been debated (Richards & Richards, 1998). As Richards (1999, p. 415) pointed out, "*data reduction without sacrificing richness is always a central goal*" in qualitative research, however, the loss of richness in data as a price for employing software for coding has proven to be a trade-off in the past. With the advancement of software programmes such as NVivo, the software can add value to the researcher as Easterby-Smith et al. (2008, p. 187) state: "*One of the advantages of using software tools such as NVivo is that it handles the creative messiness of this process extremely well, allowing the researcher to merge, delete or rename nodes as the analysis progresses*". While Leech and Onwuegbuzie (2011) agree, they caution that programmes can help the researcher sorting the information, but they cannot analyse the data given that the researcher remains the main tool.

Besides the issue of maintaining data richness, the other key aspects to be evaluated for use in qualitative research is the time-benefit assessment, i.e., the time required to learn and properly use the programme versus the time saved when analysing the results. According to Auld et al. (2007), there is a lot of training time required at start, especially for untrained researchers, so that the use of the software only makes sense for larger amounts of data. Establishing a threshold as of which the use of software is beneficial from a time-benefit point alone seems to be difficult, however, Zapata-Sepúlveda, López-Sánchez, and Sánchez-Gómez (2011) explain the use of NVivo within a PhD-study analysing 60 in-depth interviews. With a view on this research, the amount of data alone did not justify the use of NVivo as such given the modest size of the survey data as well as the limited number of interviews conducted. Additionally, the arguments about the centrality of the researcher as a research tool in the process underlined the decision to conduct the analysis without additional software. This decision was seen a more important as it aligned with my positionality as explained in Section 1.7.5.

PART 4

Part 4 contains the findings related to the three drivers, work motivation, career satisfaction, and loyalty derived from the survey as well as the interviews. In Chapter Eight, the findings on work-motivation are being presented. In contrast to the other two drivers, career satisfaction and loyalty, the feedback on work motivation is not only based on the findings from the survey but also the interviews, which delved even deeper into three aspects identified from the survey. Arranged in descending order of importance, as measured by the number of incidents mentioned in the survey, the themes are evaluated against the existing literature and on this basis analysed in terms of their effect on work motivation.

In Chapter Nine, themes identified in conjunction with the two further work-related drivers, career satisfaction and loyalty, are being reviewed considering the literature and then, in line with the approach of Chapter Eight, analysed regarding their contribution to respective drivers.

In the last chapter, the aim of the research and the structure of the study are being restated, leading to a discussion of the results gained from the research. On this basis, a model is being presented, which has been developed incorporating the three drivers and the key themes identified. From this model contributions to the literature, as well as recommendations for future research are being derived. Additionally, implications for policy and practice in the service sector are being presented. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the limitations of this research as well as personal reflections.

Chapter 8: Findings on work motivation

8.1. Introduction

The chapter analyses the feedback received from the participants in this research on the work-related driver motivation. For this purpose, the incidents mentioned by survey participants were used to capture the characteristics associated with motivation. On this basis, the three main characteristics identified, the workload, the move to mobile working and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic were further researched by using semi-structured interviews with several internal and external participants. In addition, two additional characteristics, the importance of feedback as well as the role of the manager were discussed based on the survey results alone. The chapter concludes by highlighting the limitations of the findings in terms of generalisation.

8.2. Workload and its influence on motivation

Work, and related to it, workload and work-life-balance are aspects that have been widely discussed in the literature (Broadbridge et al., 2007; Hutchinson et al., 2012; Jamieson et al., 2015). These studies contend that members of Generation Y place a high focus on work-life balance and are often not prepared to work long hours as this would take time away from their leisure time, which in turn is valued higher than time spent at work. As pointed out by many participants in the survey, Triangle Germany was experiencing high volumes in nearly all business areas at the time of the survey, which was down to several facts. While in one area, the volumes were high due to a recent acquisition of a client book of business, overall, the start of the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in higher client activities. Additionally, organisational factors and management deficiencies as well as a lack of people, e.g., due to sickness were cited. As participants pointed out, the workload was not manageable within normal working hours.

Consequently, many survey participants cited these critical incidents as negatively influencing work motivation. Unexpectedly, other participants of the survey experienced the high workload as motivating incidents. In those positive cases, participants described themselves as being dedicated to their job as well as to their colleagues or their clients, not wanting to let them down. To further explore this theme, a question regarding the high workload was added to the semi-structured interviews to better understand this phenomenon, which is offering a new perspective on work motivation.

The higher workload during the start of the COVID-19 pandemic and throughout most of the time of the survey was acknowledged by all internal and external participants except for participants “INT1” and “INT5”, of whom the latter did not notice a visible change in the actual workload, although his working time in total had increased. When being asked about the view on the high workload, participant "INT2" quoted:

> *"I found the workload very heavy. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the flood of orders we received, I felt that it was an enormous amount. I think, we could have worked 24/7. On top of that, of course, I had to take care of my child as the day-care centres were closed*" ("INT2").

This was mirrored by participant "INT4", who added:

> "*It was demotivating when no progress was made at the end of the week, i.e., when the whole week was full of energy, when you actually worked more than usual, in total, as a team. On the other hand, it was also good that there was so much to do, because that took away a bit of the existential fear that was there at the beginning of the pandemic*" ("INT4").

Besides the increased customer demand having resulted in larger trading activities as pointed out by participant "INT1", participant "EXT2" explained:

> "*In addition, the technology had to be changed over and because of that, in my view, the workload was much higher than it was in January or February*" ("EXT2").

Taking these perspectives together, the picture emerges that, like in other industries such as nursing (Ebrahimi, Jafarjalal, Lotfolahzadeh, & Kharghani Moghadam, 2021), the COVID-19 pandemic has led to an increase in the daily workload in the financial industry, due to an uptake in client activities as well as the necessity to transform its processes therefore enabling remote working and virtual interaction with clients. While the increased work in the healthcare sector had received wide media attention and research has been dedicated to this subject (Goktas, Gezginci, & Kartal, 2022), a link between the COVID-19 pandemic and rising work volumes in the finance sector has not been identified or analysed in the literature. Although, the findings from the internal participants of Triangle Germany as such did not qualify for a generalisation across the entire industry, given that some organisation-specific factors such as a recent onboarding of several thousand new clients needed to be factored in, the picture was matched by the responses from the external participants, who worked in other financial institutions within the same geographic area. On this basis, the increase was regarded as being tentatively indicative for the wider financial industry in Germany.

Reviewing the reasons, why this increase has been regarded as being more motivating than demotivating by participants, a key theme mentioned by the participants was their underlying willingness to work hard as they like the work they do and are therefore committed to their respective organisations. This was supported by participant "INT1", who stated:

> "*What can I say, I love my job, I do everything for it. Yes, that is motivation for me. I do what I wanted to do. For me, it is also crucial that I am trusted to do new things*" ("INT1").

This was also shared by participant "INT2":

> "*Yes, the higher workload and the more intense phase did indeed fuel my motivation at first, to quite an extent, so that I approached the new position full of verve and I was fired up*" ("INT2").

Two of the external participants, "EXT2" and "EXT3", even went further and committed that they always liked to work hard:

> "*Well, I am someone who likes to work, and I like to work under stress and under pressure. So, this was not an obstacle in terms of motivation. It was more motivating. So, I thought well, this will bring the bank forward, this will bring me forward. So, I found it rather positive. Positive stress, I would call it*" ("EXT2")

> "*Now, to be fair, I have always been a workhorse and have always been very committed to the company. I am single and loose, I would say, so no one was waiting for me at home. But I would say that it has definitely been at the expense of my private life*". ("EXT3")

These self-descriptions represent a noticeable contrast to the overall perception of Generation Y as portrayed by the literature (Jamieson et al., 2015; Tourangeau et al., 2015), given that Generation Y has generally been viewed as being conscious of their work-life-balance. On the other /hand, it must be acknowledged that hard work, although in a restricted context of normal working hours has been identified as a work value of Generation Y.

Drawing on the motivational theory of Herzberg et al. (2010), "work itself" has been defined as one of the motivational factors, which would fit in with the descriptions of the participants. In this case, the participants enjoy their roles and activities associated with these within their respective organisations. This is also supported by feedback on demotivating events in the survey, describing work, which did not bring any progress as senseless and therefore demotivating. On the other hand, a factor, which provides work with "sense" is working for clients, which was quoted by several participants:

> "*The client relationship. The positive feedback from clients was very motivating*" ("DM1")

> "*One client has provided positive feedback directly at the phone, that is always good motivation*." ("Fuentes1")

> "*During the last month, I found the positive feedback of a client motivating*." ("SAM")

This perspective corresponds with the findings from Tulgan (2009a), who pointed out that Generation Y has a strong customer focus caring about them and their well-being. There is a second element to the work with customers that can be derived from the survey feedback, which is the notion of feedback and recognition, another key element driving motivation of Generation Y. Based on this, this generation is sometimes regarded as high maintenance requiring instant recognition (Gursoy, Chi, & Karadag, 2013). Linking this back to the survey responses, participants described the praise and recognition of clients as enhancing motivation, which in turn has become a driver to neutralise the otherwise negative aspects of the higher workload.

Taking these findings together, it has emerged that the work-content related attributes were the primary cause for motivation. Tying this to the work of Deci and Ryan (1985) and their differentiation between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, it can be debated whether the work itself and the ability to serve clients, a drive attributed to Generation Y (Brown et al., 2015), represents intrinsic motivation, e.g. motivation derived from oneself rather than from the circumstances or whether the recognition received is a sign of extrinsic motivation or, taking a view on the motivation continuum, a form of internalised motivation. When referring to the comments from the survey, the work environment, i.e. external factors such as processes as well as the manager, are often seen as a source of demotivation as the following comment from participant "LPdC" suggest:

> "*Being asked to deliver on something which I believed was a waste of resource and inefficient. The particularly demotivating part was that the outcome of this decision was based not on arguments and the benefits but rather an autonomous decision of the superior that I could not identify with*." ("LPdC")

Similarly, participant "Sunset" commented on the demotivational aspects of perceived political influences as members of the management seemed to put own interest above the organisations' interest therefore leading to inefficiencies:

> "*The constant political wars at senior level transfer on to employees. Some people at management level only focus on their own interests and pursue them - as a result less important topics and people get lost from time to time. This caused demotivation, a feeling of disrespect, disinterest, indifference, unimportance, and the feeling of not being taken seriously*." ("Sunset")

Referring to the provision of feedback, participant "Louise" added that feedback needs to be fair and well placed to motivate while leading to the contrary when deemed to be misplaced:

> "*The straw that has truly broken the camel's back this month is that our country head managed to hold a townhall, thanked loads of people for their great work and mentioned another team for a great piece of work he is pleased with rather than the people who were actually involved (amongst others me). It just highlights the toxicity of this place and frankly is such a great example of bad leadership*." ("Louise")

On the other hand, motivating examples have been based on situations, in which the participants were able to show their expertise and were trusted to perform tasks independently and beyond their original remit therefore being challenging and varied, which are important points for this generation (Meier & Crocker, 2010).

For participant “56039”, this has been a particular situation, in which he was given the opportunity to handle a case on his own, i.e. taking full responsibility for the resolution of a situation:

> “*The successful outcome of a case the handling of which I had been entrusted in whole*.” (“56039”)

This is mirrored by participant “MNS2415”, who also thrived on additional responsibilities given to him as this was seen as a positive development compared to the previous year:

> “*I now have more responsibility as I am able to support a change request independently. In addition, I was allocated more tasks for this year which I personally find very motivating*.” (“MNS2415”)

For participant “Sonja123”, the added responsibility, which was seen as motivating, derived from being promoted to be the point of contact for the team towards other teams:

> “*It is motivating that I am seen as a point of contact for certain topics outside my own team and that I am recognised for this. So that I have slowly gained a position within Triangle in which I am getting perceived*.” (“Sonja123”)

Working autonomously and displaying their competence are two elements of the SDT of Ryan and Deci (2000b), which underpin the argument that motivation is rather intrinsically build when these factors are present.

In summary, the findings from the survey have shown that a high workload is generally regarded as demotivating as it affects the work-life-balance of the participants. However, if the participants feel a sense in what they are doing and progress is being made, the high workload can also have a positive effect on motivation as it has been stated as rewarding when servicing clients or when the participants were able to work autonomously while feeling competent in their work. These findings were supported by the internal as well as the external interviews, highlighting that the findings are not only applicable to Triangle Germany but at least correspond with the view from participants in other financial companies within the same region in Germany.

8.3. Mobile working and its influence on motivation

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the ability for mobile working, i.e. working from home or other places than physically being in the office was limited, either due to technical hurdles or by organisational strategy. As outlined in Section 4.5. exceptions existed in some sectors such as IT to attract and retain employees (Mangipudic, Vaidyab, & Prasada, 2020). With the COVID-19 pandemic changing the scene, many companies were neither digitally nor operationally ready to accommodate this move (Mora Cortez & Johnston, 2020; Urick, 2020). As a result, the new situation created disruptions and unease at the one hand but also offered new opportunities on the other hand.

8.3.1. The COVID-19 pandemic as a catalyst for mobile work

In Germany, a similar, governmental decree also impacted Triangle Germany, which previously hardly used or supported mobile working as participant "INT3" described his experiences when having started with the company:

> "*I knew the company, I got to know it with 100 percent being on site in the office. There wasn't much thought of home office at the beginning. Then, at the beginning of March 2020, the announcement came from the very top, sorry, now there is an office ban*" ("INT3").

Critically reviewing the results of the survey, the initial feedback of the participants on the organisation's handling of the COVID-19 crisis was very positive as a lot of focus was placed on the support of the employees.

> "*I find it motivating how much Triangle has cared for their employees during COVID-19. The communication is timely, as accurate as possible and it seems obvious that the health of their employees is priority number one for the organisation*." ("Louise")

The support, appreciated by the participants expanded beyond the physical and health support to also cover the economic fears and the wish for security.

> "*Positive: Strong support of the company during COVID. Reassurance of job security despite pandemic and market volatility. Negative: Many old issues in IT which will haunt and hold us back*." ("TowerBridge")

While the previous comments derived from the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic, the company support was positively commented on a few months later, indicating that the efforts of the organisation were not seen as a one off but a continuous backing of the workforce:

> "*Impressive efforts by the company/management to provide continuous support to employees in respect of COVID-19 related practical challenges*." ("56039")

According to Litvin (2020) and Goktas et al. (2022) this support was essential to support employees during this challenging phase as many employees felt more vulnerable at work given the high degree of uncertainty and change experienced. With a view on the comments of the participants, the importance of this support can be acknowledged within this study.

In terms of the shift itself, i.e., working from home instead of the office, the participants did not provide a homogeneous view but were very mixed in their responses.

In one example, this ranged from complete opposition of mobile working at the beginning to full adoption in the end as participant "INT4" highlighted in the interview:

> "*Prior to the pandemic, at least for me, home-office was always such a difficult topic. Personally, I never wanted it either. That was down to me. Now, I can hardly imagine it any other way*" ("INT4").

Other participants in the study, for example participant "INT1", embraced the mobile working right from the beginning as it provided them with more flexibility and an improved work-life-balance, which is supported by Cowan and Hoffman (2007). Probing deeper, further interviews revealed several individualistic points. In the case of participant "INT1", the mobile working created a level playing field when dealing with the rest of the team that was previously jointly based in a different geographical location:

> "*So, suddenly everyone was in a similar position, situation, in terms of all on the screen whereas before there were like five or six people huddled around the table and I was the only one who was joining via video conference*" ("INT1").

This was experienced as very positive given that the participant previously felt singled-out due to the geographic split of the team, whereas now, it did not matter any longer, where the members of the team were located.

Another point, which was highlighted by Baldus, Franz, and Thomasius (2022) in their German study, was the impact on employees with children, as the parallel closure of nurseries and schools led to an increased level of economic, mental and parental stress. This was mirrored by participant "INT2", who stated her experiences of living again with her parents to get help with the child:

> "*I was ok, because I had my parents. Well, it was a bit difficult at first, you move back home as a child, so to speak. You had to get used to this again but then it worked*" ("INT2").

Participant "INT4" agreed to this and commented on the challenge of balancing work and private life.

> "*The switch from office to home office, then in my particular case actually the loss of childcare while being two working parents at the same time. That was a challenge at the beginning, trying to balance childcare and work at a level that you are happy with*" ("INT4").

In both cases, flexible arrangements were found according to the participants, but the adoption caused severe stress initially. In the first case of participant "INT2", the transition to mobile working resulted even in a geographical move, which underlines the point that certain roles can be performed without any office presence from any position, if the technical infrastructure is available. This matches with the findings from the literature, which characterises Generation Y as technical experienced to handle such situation (Raišienė et al., 2021).

Despite the multiple positive comments on mobile working, a key concern was raised by several survey participants concerning the lack of personal communication and interaction with colleagues. While participant "TowerBridge" reported at the beginning of the survey:

"*The feeling of being connected has risen significantly due to COVID and the related actions taken by the employer (caring, trust, freedom, support, work-life balance),"*

the disconnect from the colleagues started to negatively affect motivation over time as the comments from participant "Bibi Blocksberg", participant "AS" and participant "56039" showed. This was also stated by participant "Seven":

"*Continued COVID-19 situation in combination with the fact that you cannot meet with colleagues in person in order to discuss topics*."

As these comments highlight, the benefits of the flexibility associated with mobile working were less and less appreciated with the continued restrictions due to COVID-19 starting to have a negative effect on motivation. The temporal inability to return to the office and subsequent confinement to working from home was no longer seen as a flexible way of working. This was aggravated by several factors. Firstly, the ability to meet other people was limited by governmental restrictions, which led employees without families into isolation (Urick, 2020). Employees with families on the other hand were struggling to combine work with childcare. Secondly, the workspace and equipment at home played a major role as the permanent use of the home as a base for working increased the requirements in terms of hardware, furniture, and space. To improve the conditions for mobile working, the organisation provided financial assistance, which was regarded as motivating by participants as the comment from participant "Bibi Blocksberg" showed:

"*Positive: The company has already announced in July that it will support the home office with a further 330 EUR and I have received the money a few days after having submitted the claim in early August. Claiming the reimbursement was easy. Negative: The contribution is by far not sufficient to equip the home office in such a way as I am used to from the office. If the pandemic continues to last and the company is saving money from having outsourced the employees into home office, it would be nice to receive a further contribution*."

The comment reveals several characteristics of mobile working. On the one hand, the state of the technical equipment at home indicates that mobile working, despite the organisational ability to work from abroad, was not used extensively, if at all, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. On the other hand, the participants postulated a clear request for organisational support as the benefits of mobile working were highlighted from a company's perspective rather than from the perspective of the employee, who in turn saved money and travel time to the office. Seeing this through the lens of Herzberg et al. (2010), the contribution of the company was rather seen as a hygiene factor than a motivator, which aligns with the role of monetary contributions in general.

Again, this view was not shared by all participants as some were technically fully equipped and embraced the new situation, as can be seen in the comment of participant "INT3":

> *"To this day, I prefer to be at home in my home office rather than in the office, even though the exchange with colleagues on site is of course also something. For me personally, because I'm a younger generation, it's also easy to adapt to video conferences. For me personally, not much is lost that an exchange on site could offer on top"* ("INT3").

8.3.2. The experience of mobile working on the work-life balance at Triangle Germany

One of the key attributes associated with Generation Y in the literature has been the increased focus on work-life balance given that the importance of work has decreased and has become less central (Lestari & Margaretha, 2021; Ng et al., 2010). Whether this can be attributed to a decrease in work ethics (Twenge, 2010), a higher value placed on freedom (Cennamo & Gardner, 2008) or simply more outside work priorities (Gursoy et al., 2008), the life outside work has reportedly gained in importance compared to previous generations (Lyons & Kuron, 2013).

Using the definition of Lestari and Margaretha (2021, p. 165), *„work-life-balance (WLB) is defined as the capacity of employees to work and fulfil their responsibilities toward family and others outside of work*." This is supported by Heffernan (2019), who added that work-life balance does not have to be an equilibrium between the two aspects as it can mean different things to different generations and cultures. This is a crucial aspect for this study as it aids to put the responses of the participants into the appropriate context.

First and foremost, working conditions and work volume have a strong effect on the work-life balance, which vary between countries and industry sectors. Within the literature, one of the most heavily researched sectors has been nursing, where working conditions are demanding due to shift work and long hours and in consequence the demand for an increased work-life balance has been strongly documented. Linking this to the finance sector, in focus in this study, therefore highlights the difficulty for comparison given the noticeable differences in the work environment. One exception is the common theme of workload and long working hours influencing the work-life balance, as negatively commented in the survey across the entire duration of the survey ("Kratos83"; "SAM"; "13579"; "Doradini").

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the usage of mobile working was limited or non-existing as previously stated hence most industry sectors were based on the provision of workplaces and offices where employees could come to work each day. With the COVID-19 pandemic, sectors such as nursing did not see a large degree of change given that mobile working practically does not work within this context, while the financial sector, and Triangle Germany in particular, were able to shift most of their staff out of the offices using mobile work. This is in line with an overall exponential shift towards mobile working as detected by Rodriguez-Modrono and Lopez-Igual (2021). Within the survey, this move to mobile working was regarded positively, especially due to the swift change considering the COVID-19 pandemic as participant “Yes” told:

> “*It is a motivation when the company was able to switch to home-office during non-trivial situation while other companies were not. It shows quality*.” (“Yes”)

For participant “Colourful”, the shift to working from home was also new and experienced as a challenge changing the established way of working:

> “*Considered as a new challenge, I could say that this was motivating to find a new way to work and live every day at home*.” (“Colourful”)

Part of this new way of working included a certain degree of freedom in terms of the working hours and when work had to be conducted as an anonymous participant pointed out:

> “*That the employer has enabled the home office and that you are allowed to plan your working times flexible*.” (“No Alias given”)

For participant “Kratos83”, who agreed on the flexibility of the working time, the additional benefit of saving time that was previously spent commuting to the office:

> “*Home office: Motivating as it saves commuting time, I can start work earlier and the stress of driving has been removed*.” (“Kratos83”)

Importantly, in this case, the saved time was used to start work earlier, although it remains unclear, whether this was used to finish earlier, i.e., whether the mobile working led to working more or to simply a shift of working hours. This point, closely linked to the concept of work-life balance was identified as a critical point and later researched in more detail with the help of the interviews.

Given that mobile working has established itself practically overnight due to the COVID-19 pandemic as the new way of working, it has obscured the traditional split between working hours and private interests (Chandran & Abukhalifeh, 2021). This has caused a shift in working patterns with some of the participants, supporting the assumption from the survey that employees initially shifted more of their time towards work:

> “*Only to realise that you have to consciously set certain limits after the work in the home-office, because this let the boundaries between work and private life disappear as you didn’t just deal with work during your lunch break but also again after dinner. Accordingly, I had to realise that at times it was clearly more work which then returned to normality to a certain extent*.” (“INT5”)

This experience was mirrored by participant “INT1”, who explained,

> “*Like my husband always says to me, and that's very true, if you start at 9:00, you'll probably finish at nine. If you start at seven, you'll still also finish at nine. So, we've just decided, we're going to start at nine and then have the morning to us*.” (“INT1”)

Both comments suggest that the participants have found their own way to reinstall their personal equilibrium to preserve their balance. Taking time for nonwork activities can also have a positive effect on productivity as work-life balance, according to Heffernan (2019) consists of having the flexibility over the working hours, achievement and enjoyment. In line with this, participant "INT4" claims that his reduction of working hours coupled with mobile working has made him happier and much more productive:

> "*For me, I have to say, that I am more productive at work than I was when working full-time and the work-life-balance is much better, because you can get the work done and also achieve a good performance while things like sport and family and hobbies still fit in well*." ("INT4")

Along these lines, participant "INT3" has raised an important point concerning the balance in life, which has only been possible due to mobile working. As also stated by participant "INT1", the increased work from home has made it possible to get a pet, which the participant argues would have a positive effect on him:

> "*These are things that at some point may not influence work behaviour as such but help to carry the workload better. The balance, the positive aspects of pets, especially dogs, on the mind during more stressful phases*." ("INT3")

With a view on the feedback from the participants of the survey as well as the interviews, most comments have been positive on mobile working and were experienced as enhancing their work-life balance and consequently their work motivation. Linking this to the theory of Deci and Ryan (1985), the new flexibility of planning their working hours as well as saving travel time has increased the autonomy of the participants, which is one of the key characteristics of intrinsic motivation. This in turn has the potential to increase loyalty to the organisation for allowing this autonomy, job satisfaction and productivity, three attributes associated with work-life balance according to Lestari and Margaretha (2021, p. 165).

8.3.3. The adoption of mobile work outside Triangle Germany

With the comments from the survey and the internal interviews, a detailed insight into the development and acceptance of mobile working within this organisation has been gained. To fully comprehend these findings and relate them to the experiences in other organisations, a comparison with the feedback from the external interviews has been conducted. Adding an outside perspective to views of the participants of Triangle Germany is helping to assess whether the experiences within Triangle Germany are unique to the specific social environment or whether the findings are equally applicable in other organisations as this is a crucial point for future research and recommendations to policy and practice.

Compared with the internal interviews within Triangle Germany, the interviews with the external participants painted a different picture of the handling of mobile working. Given that the financial institutions, for which the external participants worked, had a larger proportion of face-to-face clients in branches, the policy towards mobile working differed compared to the process at Triangle Germany. With a need to service their clients in the branches, many staff were required to come to the office despite the COVID-19 pandemic. In the case of participant "EXT2", the mobile working policy was highly restrictive, even preventing the participant to work from home despite his request:

> "*No, I didn't have any home office, not a single day. I did apply for one day of home office a week, but it was rejected*." ("EXT2")

The experience of participants "EXT1" and "EXT3" was nearly the opposite as both had the opportunity to work from home but preferred to come to the office. For participant "EXT3", the main reason was the interaction with the colleagues:

> "*I didn't notice that in my working life, as I understood it, everything was always the same. The three of us continued to sit in the office, as we did before*." ("EXT3")

The same applied to participant "EXT1", who also preferred to have the exchange with the colleagues but also cited the limited space at home and the fact that his wife was also working from home, which would have caused issues, if both would have had to work in the same flat:

> "*For me it would have been nothing for two reasons. Firstly, because of the exchange with colleagues and secondly, I would have sat at home at the kitchen table or dining room table. My wife was definitely also in the home office at the time because she works at school and that wouldn't have worked at all-in-one room. We didn't have the conditions at all*". ("EXT1")

Surprisingly, the conditions for mobile working were not cited by any of the participants from Triangle Germany, although similar aspects could have been assumed. It remains therefore unclear, why this issue was not raised there. One potential explanation could have been the support, and particularly the financial aid, provided by Triangle Germany to all staff. When being questioned in this respect, the external participants confirmed that their respective organisations did not provide any financial support, although they overall appraised the efforts of their employers in terms of personal support during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Differing from the others, participant "EXT4" was more like the internal participants and confirmed their views that working from home enabled him to balance his family life well with his work:

> "*But of course, you notice that the more you use the home office, the more you actually work at home than when I'm at work, when I finish work, I finish work. And so, it does happen that I tend to work more overtime. But I have to say clearly that I was able to balance family and work very well because I simply took a break in which I could take care of my family, and then I went back to work in the evening*." ("EXT4")

While the overall picture provided by the four external participants is highly diverse and therefore cannot be generalised, not only due to the limited number of participants, it also highlights that there is no universal answer to the question, whether mobile working is supporting work-life balance as it seems to depend very much on the individual and its circumstances. In the case of participant "EXT4", the desire to work from home and the option to do so matched up as it matched for participants "EXT1" and "EXT3" to continue working from the office despite the option to work from home, only leaving participant "EXT2" with a mismatch of not being able to work from home. Considering the private situation, participants "EXT2" and "EXT4" are married with children and do live in larger accommodations while participants "EXT1" and "EXT3" are married but without kids or single. It can therefore be argued that the personal circumstances influenced the work preference of the participants.

8.4. The importance of the team on motivation

8.4.1. Survey results

Based on the survey responses, the term "team" was mentioned both within comments describing motivating as well as demotivating situations, ranking 2nd, and 3rd respectively. Combined with the term "colleague", ranking 4th mentioned in motivating situations, and 6th in demotivating situations, it was found that co-workers played an important role in terms of motivation. Evaluating the literature, this is not surprising. While Twenge (2010) attested the generation a high degree of narcissism and individualism, already Howe and Strauss (2000) had identified "team player" as one of the seven traits of Generation Y. This was confirmed by Hewlett et al. (2009) and Tourangeau et al. (2013). One explanation for this is the importance Generation Y places on good working relationships (Brown et al., 2015; Jamieson et al., 2015). Based on their research within the financial sector, Tews et al. (2015) added that this also includes to have fun at work.

When the survey was started shortly after the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, several of the participants cited their team as a source of motivation. For participant "AS", the loyalty to the employer and notably the team was sufficient to turn down an external offer despite limited career perspectives internally.

The importance of the team was also mirrored by participant "MNS2415", who stated:

> "*Currently, I feel well with what I am doing. The team is fantastic, and I get supported"*. ("MNS2415")

For participant "SAM", this was not a given as the pressure and demands due to the difficult overall situation apparently made a different team behaviour more likely:

> "*I found the complete support within the team very motivating. It is nice to see that the team shows a strong cohesion even in demanding times*." ("SAM")

Participant "Apollo 13" concluded with this view and added that the team strength was motivating, although the move from the office into home office could have led to a different result:

> "*The cooperation and cohesion of my team despite the home office situation was motivating for me. Also, the support of the managing directors and IT was phenomenal. The work itself was, despite the amount of work, very relaxing due to the understanding for the family situation*." ("Apollo 13")

Describing the work with and as a team with words such as "cooperation" and "cohesion" indicates a strong bond between the various team members, which exercises more influence on the well-being of the individuals than the negative aspects of restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic or work-related drives such as high volumes or lack of career progress. According to participants "Sunshine4416" and "Yvonne", this was mainly achieved via daily phone calls, which not only demonstrated the respect and care for each other but also led to better work results, as the team pulled in the same direction:

> "*The phone calls with the team and the team leader during one-to-ones. When I realise that we work together as a team to achieve the best possible result and that we support each other despite this extra-ordinary situation and that there is always someone who is listening to me*." ("Sunshine4416")
>
> "*Motivating for me are my team and my team leader. We do have a Telco each day so that we do not totally loose the contact with the colleagues. We also use video chat to exchange Information, e.g., work-related or to discuss private matters*." ("Yvonne")

As the feedback from participant "Yvonne" shows, the exchange among the team members went beyond business topics and, probably more important, also covered private issues, where support from the team helped to overcome personal problems, i.e. dealing with the new situation of the COVID-19 pandemic and forced transition into working from home. The level of this support was compared to a family situation by participant "Apollo 13":

> "*The excellent cooperation within my team. The fantastic feedback. We are simply like a family*." ("Apollo 13")

Comparing the team at work with the construct of a family demonstrates strong interpersonal relationships, which, according to Gonzalez and de Melo (2019) is a sign of cohesive teams that share the same values and behaviours. Clark and Schwerha (2020) agree and add that Generation Y likes to see their co-workers as friends, which is part of their integrated view of work and life. Out of this intense collaboration, work motivation can arise as team members influence each other, which in turn fuels their motivation (Prabhu, Pai, Rao, & Pai, 2019). This view is supported by the comments from participant "56039":

> “*Strong team spirit/smooth relations within the team (motivating)”* (“56039”)

Participant “13579” voiced his view similarly by extending the good relationship beyond the team across the entire unit:

> “*The motivation and the team spirit within the team and the bank.*” (“13579”)

While there has been a very strong focus on the team during the first survey, which can be explained with the new work-from-home situation at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the focus on the motivational aspects of the teamwork continued throughout the survey. Apart from the support from the team, positively noted considering the heavy work-burden shared (“SAM”), praise from the peers for good work (“91913”) helped to raise motivation. With the continued mobile work during the COVID-19 pandemic, the personal elements and interaction were also highlighted:

> “*When I came back from holidays, my colleagues were happy and some of them have contacted me individually after our team meeting and provided updates on topics I am involved in. In addition, the areas, to which I was assigned were cleaned up. I am simply motivated to work in fantastic team even when we are currently in home office as I can feel the cohesion which is great*.” (“Fuentes1”)

This has culminated in the personal interaction, which was made possible in the last quarter of 2020, albeit on a restricted and voluntary basis:

> “*We have held a team offsite in the office in team A and team B split. It was the first time that I have seen many colleagues in over six months in person. I found it great that we have held the event despite a rising number of infections. It was obviously voluntarily. One could have joined via Zoom*.” (“Aurelius”)

Not surprisingly, participants also cited negative aspects in relation to teamwork, however, these were nearly unanimously linked to situations, in which teamwork did not work out as expected:

> “*Not all team members have contributed to the same extent in the above team effort. The work was therefore distributed among the hard-working colleagues*.” (“TowerBridge”)

This was mirrored by an unknown participant, who had also expected the team to better collaborate:

> “*I perceived it as demotivating that not all from team pulled in the same direction and hope that we can work on this again over time*.” (“Unknown”)

Another participant also criticised the unproductive behaviour of some team members but at the same time expanded his criticism towards the management of the company, which, in his opinion, should correct this instance:

> “*Demotivating: The company does not act against people who obviously do not help a team to progress and who have a negative impact on the whole team*.” (“Seven”)

Further to that, a separate key issue in teamwork has been the lack of communication within a team leading to an unclear situation:

> "*Lack of transparency and communication across the team*." ("Charly")

For participant "Teilnehmer1", this was even more difficult as he was directly caught in between two opposing parts of the same team. While being forced to negotiate between the two contrary sides, this had a negative impact on motivation:

> "*Sandwich position between two parts of the team who complain about each other and where I need to negotiate*." ("Teilnehmer1")

Citing a different characteristic that indicates the strong bond between team members, participant "Yvonne" expressed her worries about a restructuring that would result in a split of the team. This is an important point as it demonstrates the importance of the direct team given that the effect of changes would not lead to anyone leaving the organisation but solely to be distributed differently within the same department.

While the support of team members is highly valued and appreciated, there is also a notion that this is expected to a certain extent. As the comments from participant "Rainbow" suggest, there is also an explicit expectation towards the team to live up to certain standards as otherwise a negative impact on motivation can evolve:

> "*When I came back from holiday and realised that the work provided by my team colleagues did not fully meet my expectations*." ("Rainbow")

8.4.2. Interviews with survey participants

To further probe into the importance of the team on work motivation, the topic was specifically addressed in the interviews conducted with survey participants and external participants, who had been selected from the pilot study. Given that the interviews conducted within Triangle Germany were drawing on the themes identified from the survey, the evaluation of the two sets of interviews has been kept separately on purpose. Although the high importance attached to the team was not only due COVID-19 pandemic and its consequence of mobile working, but it also became apparent that the key themes, support from the team and the social interaction were triggered or at least enforced by the change in working conditions. However, the start of the COVID-19 pandemic marked a change in the working relation with the immediate colleagues, which was viewed differently by the participants.

As virtual meetings replaced meetings in person on business-related topics, efforts were made to expand this factual exchange also to private and social aspects as comment from participant "INT3" indicates:

> "*Of course. I have actually arranged such meetings from time to time quite deliberately and we have been able to use them to make progress in terms of work, but also to simply have a relaxed exchange on a human level between the various colleagues*." ("INT3")

The approach of maintaining the team relationship as close to the previous normal interaction in the office seemed to work for other participants as well. This compensated for the loss of other colleagues being present in person:

> "*So, for us, it wasn't bad or did not have any effect, because we see each other, if only virtually and we can communicate with each other. No one is in a quiet room just for themselves. I find this solution absolutely great*." ("INT2")

However, this loss of presence was taken more serious by participant "INT4", who described this as a severe change in the working relationship:

> "*It was a different team spirit. You were trained one-to-one. You sat next to your colleagues, you got to know all your colleagues, you spent your lunch breaks together, you got to know each other privately and also made friends. And that has changed with the home-office*." ("INT4")

For this participant, the change from the office to mobile working had a profound impact that was not compensated when working virtually with the colleagues. Furthermore, the idea of using video-telephony for non-business exchange was rather strongly rejected:

> "*If I, to put it bluntly, make an appointment with someone to meet for a coffee, that feels forced and highly unnatural, I don't think it helps much in terms of improving personal interaction*." ("INT4")

This was mirrored by participant "INT5", who added a kind of screen-fatigue as a possible explanation for this:

> "*That is again to a certain extent due to this new virtual form of working, after all, it is really tiring in the long run not to have any social interaction with your colleagues that is beyond the Zoom meetings*." ("INT5")

Relying solely on the computer screen for all types of interaction at work can be seen as an important change to working in the office, where in-person meetings or breaks from the actual work were frequently being used to interrupt the work at the computer. In particular, the so-called coffee or cigarette breaks at work, which form an essential part of the social exchange in several office environments went missing with the rise in mobile working.

The second topic that was brought to light in the interviews, concerned the support of the team for the individual. One the one hand, there is the joined effort, that, according to participants helps to reach goals better than an individual could do on their own. On the other hand, participant "INT4" explained that there are more than the pure business achievements as the team support is also vital as a mental support:

> "*It is more fun to progress as a team than being on your own. And I think you achieve more as a team. The team supports you when you have a bad day and simply cannot perform, then the team is there to help you out*." ("INT4")

Participant “INT2” supports this view, describing the cohesion as “togetherness” helping the individual in a literally dark moment:

> “*And there you also have a higher motivation, you have a team spirit, a togetherness, you are not a lone fighter running somewhere all alone in a tunnel*.” (“INT2”)

Concluding, the internal interviews underlined the comments derived from the survey and painted a consistent picture of the team importance, both at business as well as private level.

8.4.3. Interviews with participants outside the researched organisation

Drawing on the feedback from the participants, who worked outside Triangle Germany in other financial institutions and who were drawn from the pilot study, the importance of the team was consistently confirmed. Here, the work atmosphere was very much linked to the relationship with the team. Getting along well with the team members was seen as fundamental for being able to work effectively as participant “EXT4” explained:

> “*Very important. I always need a homogeneous team that also works with me. I am not so much a lone fighter, but rather someone who lives from the team idea in such a way that I benefit from it*.” (“EXT4”)

From this comment, it can be derived that the colleagues in the team are not only making the work more effective for the participant, but it also shows that there is a preference to work in a group over working alone, which supports the literature that Generation Y is very much team-focussed from their intrinsic position. This view is confirmed by participant “EXT1”, who links his own resource level at work to his interaction with his colleagues.

> “*And I'm simply the type who needs the exchange with the people around me. That's actually where I draw a lot of my strength for my daily work. And a mobile office would have been difficult for me, I would have come back as a dried-up plant after six or eight weeks*.” (“EXT1”)

This is a vital point, as this interaction is apparently required to be in person as the reference to the home office suggests. As described in the previous section on mobile working, this participant actively chose working in the office over mobile working, although the latter would have been available to him. One explanation for this preference is given by the participant “EXT1” himself as describes that the in-person exchange was very important during the COVID-19 pandemic as it allowed him to see and talk to other people rather than only his partner or family. On the other hand, the interaction with his colleagues created an emotional base that was expressed as a team spirit demonstrating cohesion with the other team members. Participant “EXT3” confirmed this view and stated a negative experience when the collaboration with the team was not harmonic.

> “*In the past I have worked with colleagues, which was, I don't want to say bad, but it was not a pleasant atmosphere. And now I just have colleagues with whom I get along great*.” (“EXT3”)

Drilling deeper into the exchange between the colleagues at work, unsurprisingly, there is an exchange at business and private level among colleagues. While it is this mix, which increases the work motivation as participant "EXT1" explained, the business interaction is also valued highly as the comment from participant "EXT3" highlights:

> "*My colleague is a walking encyclopaedia, and he has an incredible general and specialist knowledge. That is of course extremely pleasant for me. On the other hand, we can also just fool around, do nonsense, just make a joke*." ("EXT3")

Among the external interviews, a consistent view on the importance of the team was formed as all participants stated the benefits from their interactions within the team. While agreeing to this, participant "EXT2" adds a further point that was not brought up by other participants, neither internal nor external. The voiced concern relates to the definition of goals. While team goals are designed to have the different members of the group working together, goals set at individual level can counteract the team approach in the view of participant "EXT2":

> "*We do have team goals that are overriding, but nevertheless everyone is measured by their own numbers somewhere and then the team idea takes a back seat*." ("EXT2")

Whether the goal-setting process is designed differently in the other organisations or simply less important to the participants remains unclear but, in this case, the monetary aspects linked to reaching these goals seem to highlight the limitations of the team spirit.

8.4.4. Linkage to motivational theories

The reference to the team as a source of motivation has been a common theme across the survey and both, internal and external interviews. In this context, a good relationship with the colleagues at work has been cited repeatedly as a critical incident enhancing motivation. Among the various relationships at work the positive cooperation with the members of the immediate team has been cited most, whereas the relationship to the manager or potential subordinates has received visibly less attention. At the same time, while a positive interaction among the team members has been described as motivating, examples of conflicts with the team were recalled by the participants as demotivating incidents. Similarly, although less prominent, the interaction with the manager or management in general, has resulted in positive and negative incidents.

Drawing on the Dual-Factor-Theory of Herzberg et al. (2010) as a potential explanation, the sources of motivation and demotivation have been segmented in motivators and hygiene factors. Underlying this split of factors are two key assumptions. Firstly, the motivational factors are derived from growth needs, which are an internal source of power that is long-term oriented and self-generating without continuous external stimuli. Secondly, the motivational factors create job satisfaction, whereas the absence of hygiene factors do not lead to dissatisfaction but to no satisfaction (Herzberg, 1987).

Referencing this to the role of good teamwork as described by the participants of the survey and interviews, teamwork would be classified as a hygiene factor falling under the category of interpersonal relationships, which has been subcategorized into relationships with the supervisor, peers, and subordinates. Among these, the relationship to the team can be considered as the relationship to the closest peers.

As hygiene factors have been described by Herzberg (1987) as leading to no satisfaction rather than dissatisfaction, this does not seem to correspond with the feedback of the survey participants, who expressed negative incidents within their teams as demotivating ("Teilnehmer 1"; "Rainbow"). According to their description, issues within the team such as miscommunication or conflicting positions undermine the overall motivation to work as it not only distracts from reaching joint goals but also psychologically affects the participants. Similarly, in the case of participant "Rainbow", a strong dissatisfaction and disappointment with the behaviour of the team members was voiced that seemed to have influenced the participant at a personal level, indicating that the importance placed on collaboration and cohesion of the team is seen beyond a pure hygiene factor of the environment. As supported by existing research such as from Brown et al. (2015), Generation Y is much more team-oriented than the older generations so that this could indicate a shift in the factors. However, already the research conducted by Volkwein and Zhou (2003), focussing on employees in higher education has demonstrated that those employees experiencing more teamwork have shown a higher degree of intrinsic motivation, which according to Herzberg et al. (2010) would have been the expected outcome related to the motivating factors.

Considering the current research and the positive incidents described in raising motivation, this supports the findings of Volkwein and Zhou (2003) that good teamwork can be a true source of motivation for employees, although this partly disagrees with the findings of Herzberg et al. (2010). While also being inconclusive with the Dual-Factor-Theory, Smerek and Peterson (2006) do not come to the same conclusion on the importance of teamwork as seen in this research as a motivator but agree that other hygiene factors have an impact on motivation contrary to the model of the original theory. Exploring the comments on the motivating aspects of good teamwork, the comment from participant "Apollo 13" is probably the most striking one when comparing the team at work with a family. With this expression, the collaboration with the colleagues seems to be moved to a different level beyond the pure business of jointly reaching commercial goals. Based on the attributes linked to the teamwork, these range from the provision of feedback ("Apollo 13") to support on bad days ("INT4") or the discussion of private matters beyond work ("Yvonne"). According to Gonzalez and de Melo (2019) and Clark and Schwerha (2020), this is a sign that work and private life have moved closer with sometimes blurred boundaries so that elements from one side merge into the other terrain. In this case, it could be questioned whether the clear model of Herzberg et al. (2010) is still useful in circumstances as identified in this study where work and private life seem to have evolved into a co-existence with private values being imported into the working environment.

Assessing the findings from this research in the context of the Self-Determination Theory ("SDT") of Deci and Ryan (1985), there the importance of relationships is merited as one of the three innate needs elementary for the development of humans and ultimately motivation. According to their definition, the three needs, competence, autonomy, and relatedness are universally relevant to all humans. (Gagné & Deci, 2005). Agreeing with this position, it is critical for individuals to satisfy these needs as their fulfilment will not only increase the wellbeing, but a lack of fulfilment can lead to negative implications. With a focus on the relationship with peers, this view represents a stark contrast to the definition of a hygiene factors by Herzberg et al. (2010), under which the relationships at work have been classified but more resembles the feedback of the participants in this study. Building on this point of view, the support for these three needs can be seen as an enabler of personal growth and development as well as integration (Ryan, 1995). When reviewing the three needs in more detail, relatedness has been described as not only the connection with others but also the feeling of care and protection derived from this relationship (Ryan & Deci, 2008). This is supported by the feedback from participant "INT4", who highlighted the support of the team members when feeling low. On a similar note, participant "INT2" stressed the importance of the team by rejecting the view of being a lone warrior when approaching challenges at work.

Before further exploring the high importance placed on teamwork and collaboration within this study, it is important to evaluate the interaction of the three needs, autonomy, competence, and relatedness as in particular autonomy and relatedness look like incompatible needs at first sight. However, in the sense of this theory, autonomy is rather the ability of volitional decision-making rather than the separation from others at work. Deci and Ryan (2000) agree with this perceived incompatibility but Ryan (1995) points out that autonomy is rather a feeling of being able to act autonomously rather than the act of detaching oneself from others.

Relating this back to the study, the strong focus on the team and the overwhelmingly positive comments related to benefits of collaboration and support by colleagues suggests that the participants have a strong need for good working relationships. Drawing a lot of motivation from this close relationship, participant "Apollo 13" has even compared this to a family-like bond. Ryan and Deci (2000a) contended that this is part of the internalisation of initially externally triggered behaviours. Applying this to the current study, the actual work, characterised by a high workload was enforced upon the participants. Contrary to expectations, the high workload did not decrease motivation as the collaboration with the team largely seemed to have offset potential negative aspects. By pursuing the same goals as a group, participants felt supported on the one hand and responsible for helping others and not letting them down. While Generation Y has been described as more team-oriented than previous generations, it needs to be noted that the SDT was formulated and tested at a time when Generation Y was just born and not yet present in the workforce. Consequently, the needs underlying the theory seem to be universally applicable and deviations in the strength of the need for relatedness might also be down to individuals having experienced a lack of relatedness in younger years that is now seeking a higher degree of compensation in the workplace.

Concluding, the findings of this study strongly support the concept of the SDT and its underlying theoretical assumptions, which provides a meaningful explanation for the strong team-orientation of the participants.

8.5. The importance of the manager on motivation

Compared to the mentioning of the term “team”, the term “manager” or “management” in general has been cited less often but still accounted for many quotes. In line with most other terms, the term *‘manager’* has been associated with positive as well as negative comments although the positive comments slightly outnumber the negative ones. While the term is being used for a variety of management roles affecting the participants, e.g., the line manager, a project manager or senior management in more general, most quotes refer to the direct line manager, which has traditionally the most interaction with the respective participant. From this variety of management roles accumulated in the term *‘manager’*, it can be derived that the distinction made in parts of the literature between a manager and a leader, with the manager administering and controlling and the leader empowering and creating a mission (Doh, 2003) cannot be separated clearly in the context of this study. Consequently, the term *‘manager’* will be used throughout for both, while the behaviour when leading others will be defined as a ‘leadership style’ that can be adopted by the manager.

When evaluating the topics raised in relation to the manager, three key trends have been identified, namely support on current activities and the work conducted by the participants, praise, and recognition for achievements and, finally, discussions on career development and personal growth. All of these were identified both in motivational as well as demotivating situations. In this context, it is vital to highlight, that participants regularly reported both positive and negative encounters with their manager within the same month indicating a dynamic interaction between management and employees.

8.5.1. Management support

As Qian et al. (2017) cited, support from the manager is deemed to be very important by members of Generation Y as it signals to them that they and their work are being valued. This is being mirrored by participant "SAM", who experienced the support as motivating considering the exceptionally high workload, which was recognised by the manager:

> "*In particular, I found the support of the direct manager as very motivating. As we were very badly resourced due to holidays and sickness, this support was urgently needed, however, this was not to be taken for granted in my view*". ("SAM")

This is crucial, as the participant did not take this support as granted, which does not entirely mirror the high expectations often associated with this generation as stated in the literature (Meier & Crocker, 2010). In line with the comments of participant "SAM", participant "Niklas" and participant "Louise" both agreed that support from the manager or the wider management team was regarded as motivating. In the case of participant "Niklas", the praise from his management was appreciated after a having worked several "*nightshifts*" on an important project. For Louise, the positive feedback related to a special project was experienced as "*great support*". Participant "Fuentes1" provides a similar comment while also praising the capabilities of the line manager:

> "*The one-to-one with Anke is always fantastic. She really does know a lot and is able to help me in particular with my projects*." ("Fuentes1")

This is supported by the findings from Naim and Lenka (2018), who found that Generation Y is eager to add their contribution towards the goal of their organisation. Being able to detect their contribution and to reflect upon their work activities, in conjunction with the manager further underlines the argument as the comment from participant "Colourful" suggests:

> "*A face-to-face meeting with my line manager. Thanks to this discussion we had, I was able to identify topics and actions, that motivate me. This meeting helped me to remotivate myself*." ("Colourful")

The wish to contribute to the success is not limited to the current tasks being performed but expands to taking over additional responsibilities, which is regarded as motivating as the comment from participant "Charly" indicates:

> "*A monthly update call with my line manager where I've been given the prospect of additional responsibilities.*" ("Charly")

This was mirrored by another participant, "Sonja123", who stated that she had received a lot of support from her manager when taking over additional responsibilities:

> *"I have taken over responsibilities in September as part of a new role and have received much support from my line manager. This has motivated me in my work."*

As these examples indicate, most feedback described support from the line manager directly linked to current work activities. The main exception to these ad-hoc feedback were the end-of-year appraisal discussions, representing a formalised communication between manager and employee. With a view on the data from the survey, these occasions were cited several times as positive and motivating, providing the employee with feedback on their work during the ending calendar year:

> "*Last month I had my EOY conversation with my manager and I received again very good feedback from him and also from my stakeholders I requested feedback from. It is good to know that my manager and stakeholders are satisfied with the work I'm doing - which is motivating in some parts*." ("AS")

Similarly, participant "TowerBridge" reported a highly motivational event due to the good exchange with the manager during the year-end meeting. While the support from the manager was praised on the one hand therefore increasing motivation, this was balanced by criticism on the other hand complaining about a lack of support as the comment from participant "Seven" highlights:

> "*Working together with my superior. The lack of support from my boss was demotivating"*. ("Seven")

Whether the lack of support was rather unintentional cannot be established in this situation but the feedback from participant "Sonja123" suggests, that the frustration is growing even higher when it is apparent that the manager is not providing support to his team member:

> "*I had asked for more guidance and structure from my line manager, but he did not see this point and has instead reassured himself a hundred times and asked again and again. I perceived this as demotivating as it could have been much easier*". ("Sonja123")

8.5.2. Importance of praise and recognition

According to Hepper and Carnelley (2010), there is a general tendency for people to seek positive feedback in order to support their positive image of themselves. When comparing this with other generations, Generation Y is no exception to this, but instead, as Herbison and Boseman (2009) have highlighted in their research, this generation expects even more feedback than previous generations.

Within the survey, participant "Motivation" described this broadly as unmet expectations while at the same time positively remarking that a regular contact with his manager was seen as supporting motivation.

For participant "AS", these conversations with the manager have got an element of self-confirmation given that these exchanges help to create an alignment between the employee and the manager:

> "*I had a really good and honest conversation with my boss. For me it is motivating to see that we are on the same page*". ("AS")

However, feedback does not only need to take the form of conversations but can also be shown in gestures such as well-selected token of appreciation as the feedback from participant “Aurelius” suggests:

> “*Equally, a small greeting from our boss into home office, with a greeting card, sweets and a mug for breaks has motivated. A beautiful gesture*”. (“Aurelius”)

The importance of feedback is even better recognisable when including situations, where participants would have expected feedback, and this expectation was not met. At the same time, the comment of participant “Louise”, while highlighting the feelings about a lack of appreciation, shows, that it takes more than a single occasion to lead to this feeling:

> “*Continuously the lack of acknowledgement, the lack of recognition and the lack of caring from management. As long as you deliver, everything else seems to be not important*”. (“Louise”)

Evaluating this statement, the participant has been feeling ignored over a longer period, which leads to thinking that only the work output counts to the organisation but not the employee itself.

8.5.3. Importance of career discussions

There is a link between the appreciation of the work contribution on the one hand and the discussion of career prospects on the other hand as both represent a form of recognition by an organisation towards its employees. According to Akkermans and Kubasch (2017), success, and its recognition is a key driver for career development and despite its stronger focus on outside work activities, this also holds true for Generation Y. Mhatre and Conger (2011) even identified in their research that Generation Y is keen on a fast career and advancement. Although the number of comments provided by participants was limited overall, there is unsurprisingly a strong relationship between career discussions and the mentioning of the line manager given the general importance of the direct superior on career advancements within an organisation.

Among the participant comments received, participant “56039” supports the statement that career advances and promotion are important for this generation. This was underlined by the comment from participant “Teilnehmer1”, who states:

> “*In a meeting with the line manager the future career path was discussed and which options for development exist. It was motivating that opportunities were shown and that there is development potential*”. (“Teilnehmer1”)

Apart from the exchange with line manager beyond daily business, the discussion shows the emphasis placed on the employee and his expectations therefore valuing the person as such.

Focussing on the aspirations of the employee represents a strong support for their personal growth, which has a direct influence on their motivation as the comment from participant "Charly" mirrors:

> "*I had a frank discussion about where I'd like to see myself in the next few years and thereafter and what challenges I'd like to tackle with both my line manager and her manage. Both were very supportive which was encouraging*". ("Charly")

The comments received from the participants indicate a positive implication on work motivation. However, as the feedback has been limited, further research into this subject is being advocated to support the finding.

8.5.4. Influence of the leadership style

Among the four leadership styles, directional, transactional, transformational and empowering (Pearce et al., 2003), Generation Y tends to have a preference for the transformational leadership style (Bodenhausen & Curtis, 2016; Qian et al., 2017). Unlike the other three, the transformational style is not unfolding its influence within the organisational culture but rather aims at understanding the culture in order to modify and realign it (Bass & Avolio, 1999). This corresponds with the findings of Kowske et al. (2010) and Raišienė et al. (2021), who identified a dislike among Generation Y for rigid structures and hierarchies, which in turn bear elements of the directional style. The results of this study confirm the dislike of Generation Y for directional leadership as participants considered a controlling management behaviour as being less motivating:

> *"Missing trust of my superior and the feeling of strong and detailed control*." ("Unknown")

On the contrary, a manager leaving more autonomy to the participants was regarded as being more motivating:

> "*Involvement in additional projects and the fact that my line manager isn't micromanaging this."* ("Charly")

When analysing the characteristics of transformational leadership in more detail, Bass and Avolio (1999) describe four elements that are characteristically named as the 4 I's, "idealised influence", "inspirational motivation", "intellectual stimulation", and "individualised consideration". Bass (2010) stated that the first two, idealised influence and inspirational motivation / leadership become visible when the respective leader not only sets and describes a vision but also follows through by setting an example himself on how to reach the goals as this is inspiring people to follow.

Matching this with the feedback of the participants, activities of the manager, which go beyond pure transactional and task-related feedback and exchange would be considered falling into this category. This is at the heart of motivational leadership when employees feel motivated and positively charged based on the interaction with their manager or management in general. The involvement in meaningful discussions is an example of such positive interaction as described by participants. In the case of participant “Niklas”, the motivational element stemmed from the fact that he was included in strategic considerations, leaving him feeling honoured and elevated by the fact that he was the lowest-ranking participant in an apparent important group of senior colleagues according to his own description:

> “*Participation in discussions with my manager at global level focussing on strategic thoughts. I was motivated by the openness that I was allowed to participate as the smallest*.” (“Niklas”)

Similarly, having a discussion played an important role in the description of participant “Aurelius”. Although the nature of these discussions was not disclosed, the verbal interaction with his manager was felt to be positive and supportive as it fostered the relationship with the manager, therefore compensating for the lack of face-to-face interactions because of the COVID-19 pandemic and the shift to mobile working:

> “*In times of mass redundancies and economic decline this is a nice sign and motivating to continue to give my best. These discussions should happen more often, especially in light of the lacking presence in the office*.” (“Aurelius”)

On the opposite, communication and behaviour of the manager was equally experienced as demotivating. While participant “Teilnehmer 1” only mentioned demotivating behaviour, participant “Seven” provided more details. At the bottom of the critique regarding unmet promises is the lack of trust and respect that undermines the relationship between manager and employee:

> “*Bad leader. When something that has been agreed upfront is not being kept as promised*.” (“Seven”)

Similarly, participant “Aurelius” provides two more examples of demotivating manager behaviour that indicate missing respect and little empathy for the emotional needs of the employee.

Although the action of the manager itself does not have to bear any negative intentions, the timeliness of the action as well as the missing context resulted in a negative perception on the side of the participant:

> “*I find it unfortunate when people manager at senior level distribute trade press articles to their team in which it is written about other asset manager reduce headcount or that the crisis is rendering some jobs obsolete. This is known to everyone but with the history of Triangle I perceive this as a warning. Providing a sense of security, which is important for everyone especially in a crisis, is different. Behind every employee there is a human being, sometimes even more (family, kids…). This has not motivated me.”* (“Aurelius”)

In the second instance described by the same participant, the delivery or rather non-delivery of critical feedback led to a decline in motivation.

Despite having provided full details on the event, the clear demand for motivational support via the manager is typical for this generation and the preference for a transformational leadership style (Easton & Steyn, 2022):

> "*From my line manager, I would have expected to be addressed in a motivational manner (this was missing, we would have also expected of you, ...) but nothing like this has happened. Total leadership failure*." ("Aurelius")

A similar experience was also reported by participant "56039", as criticism by the manager was regarded as unfair. Despite the participant claiming to have objectively assessed the situation, the exact details are not disclosed, however, the key point remains that criticism seems to be difficult to convey.

Shifting the attention to another element of transformational leadership, individualised consideration, Bass (2010) explains that this is shown in the case, when a leader identifies the individual needs of the team members for development and acts subsequently to nurture their growth. Supporting this element, participant "LPdC" described a situation, in which the manager endorsed the personal growth ambitions of the participant and therefore empowered the participant to take more responsibility in her interactions within the organisation:

> "*In other words, I said I would like stop reaching out to various stakeholders who could potentially ensure I am doing the right thing always when this seems to not be necessary but overcautious. I mentioned that it would automatically entail that mistakes could happen. She was supportive. This was motivating because I felt she had my back and felt empowered*." ("LPdC")

This also confirms the findings from Naim and Lenka (2018), who stated that members of Generation Y are keen to contribute to the success of the organisation and are willing to do more by taking over new responsibilities. Supporting the growth of the employees, the contribution of the manager can also reach beyond the organisation as the example from participant "13579" shows. In a very individualised treatment, the manager is not only paying attention to a fair treatment at work in relation to the compensation for additional work but also supports the academic goals of the participant by endorsing a reduction of working hours.

> "*Currently solutions are being sought to relieve the team - my line manager has promised me two days off to reduce overtime - In addition she is asking HR whether I can reduce my working time to 80% during the time when I am writing my B.A. Thesis. This I found to be very motivating and appreciating.*" ("13579")

Summarising the positive and negative incidents described by the participants, the interaction between the manager and their employees can have a notable effect on work motivation. Although the relationship with their co-workers forms a stronger bond as the number of incidents described suggests, the relationship with the manager is nevertheless important for the personal growth. Here, elements of the transformational leadership style, as highlighted by previous research (Naim & Lenka, 2018; Qian et al., 2017), show a positive effect on the motivation of the participants. At the same time, a lack of these elements was perceived as demotivating, which underlines the expectations of the participants for these factors to be present.

When assessing the importance of the manager on motivation through the lens of the motivational theories, the dual-factor theory of Herzberg, Mausner, and Snyderman (2010) provides an ambiguous guidance. At one hand, the relationship with the manager falls in the category of the hygiene factors, which is questionable considering the impact the behaviour has on motivation according to the description of the participants. On the other hand, the motivating factors such as advancement, growth, responsibility and recognition (Herzberg, 1987; Herzberg et al., 2010) correspond strongly with the elements of the transformational leadership style, which in turn is favoured by Generation Y (Naim & Lenka, 2018; Qian et al., 2017). Concluding on this, the theory lends it support in general but leaves the previously voiced critique about the role of relationships at work unresolved.

Turning to the self-determination theory developed by Deci and Ryan (1985), the three factors, autonomy, competence, and relatedness are regarded as basic needs requiring satisfaction. Comparing the elements of the transformational leadership style with the three elements of the SDT indicates a high correlation between these factors. Even more, Ryan and Deci (2000) suggest that an absence of these elements will have negative effects on work motivation. Based on the results of the survey, the relationship between the manager and the employees can be confirmed and while not being as prominently described as the relationship between the participants and their team members, the positive effects of management attention have become apparent. At the same time, examples have been provided supporting the participants' need for autonomy and competence as for example the inclusion in strategic discussions has demonstrated.

8.6. The importance of feedback on motivation

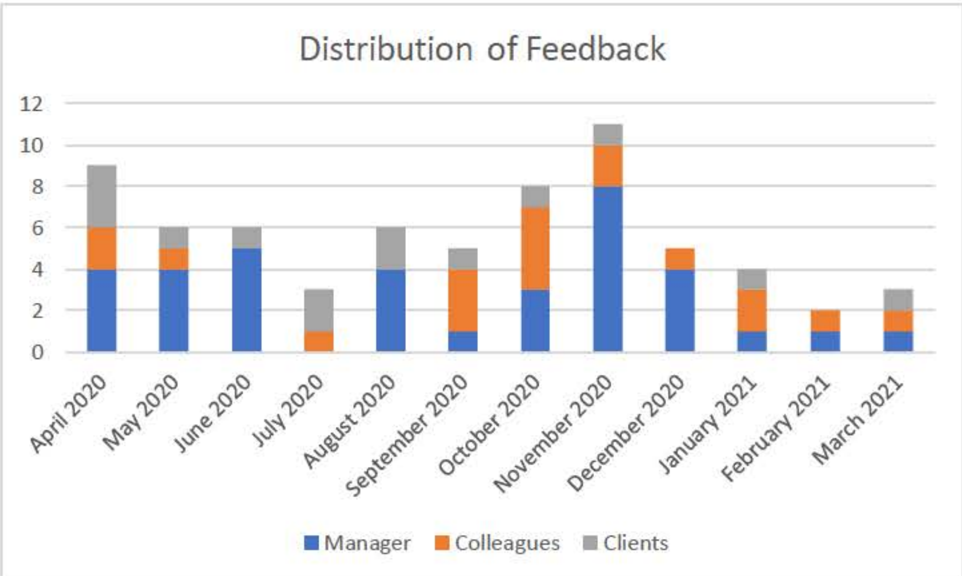
8.6.1. Sources of feedback

A review of the current literature has shown that Generation Y is demanding more feedback at work than previous generations (Eisner, 2005; Herbison & Boseman, 2009; Twenge, 2010). At the same time, Gioia and Catalano (2011) have pointed out that this quest for feedback might be critical as manager from previous generations do not place the same emphasis on feedback and are therefore less likely to provide the level of feedback to their employees as expected by Generation Y. Also, one of the most established ways in providing feedback in organisations is the regular, e.g. annual performance feedback. This is often provided in a unilateral way rather than a dialogue as Kluger and Lehmann (2018) point out, which in turn might influence the desire for autonomy of Generation Y.

According to Hepper and Carnelley (2012) it is natural to seek feedback as it provides vital information on one's strengths and weaknesses. In addition, positive feedback is likely to increase self-esteem (Hepper & Carnelley, 2010). The results of this research highlight, that the term "feedback" is one of most quoted themes, and more importantly, has a strong positive connotation as most of the situations, in which participants referred to feedback were regarded as motivating.

The sources of feedback as described by the participants can be divided into three main groups. Out of the 68 situations, in which feedback was mentioned as affecting motivation, either positively or negatively, on 36 accounts, this was related to the direct manager or the management level above. A further 18 occasions related to feedback from other colleagues, e.g. team members but also a wide range of co-workers from different functions, with whom the participants interacted. The third group providing feedback were clients, which accounted for 14 situations. This is an important finding as this group is different from the first two on two accounts. First, clients are in most cases external parties, which interact closely with an organisation given that they consume the products or services of the organisation. Due to their status, they represent an external stimulus for motivation, which complements the internal factors as visualised in the model in Chapter Ten. The second surprising finding linked to the client feedback was that this source of feedback was positive without exception, while both other categories also included a limited number of negative situations. As the research has not been able to explain this, this is a point for further research.

Figure 8: Notion of the theme feedback across the duration of the survey



8.6.2. Internal feedback

The distribution of the theme "feedback", as can be seen from the graph, is characterised by two peak periods, one ranging from April to June 2020 and the second one comprising October and November 2020. In terms of the feedback source, this can be predominantly associated with the manager. Based on the comments provided by the participants, this concentration can be explained by the fact that the first period coincides with the setting of goals, requiring an exchange between manager and employee. The second period in October / November covers the annual appraisals, again discussions between manager and employee. However, these year-end discussions also include the feedback from colleagues as a reference point for the manager in his decision making, which explains the increase in situations involving feedback from colleagues. This was regarded as motivating as the comment from participant “56039” highlights:

> “*Positive feedback received from colleagues as part of the annual performance review*”. (“56039”)

This was also supported by participants “Aurelius” and “Leo”. Participant “AS” concurred and added that it is reassuring to know that the work being done is being valued:

> “*Last month I had my EOY conversation with my manager and I received again very good feedback from him and also from my stakeholders I requested feedback from. It is good to know that my manager and stakeholders are satisfied with the work I'm doing - which is motivating in some parts*.” (“AS”)

Reviewing the comments from the survey participants, feedback from the manager is predominantly provided via structured feedback sessions twice a year. Although Kluger and Lehmann (2018) point out that these occasions are often unilateral rather than two-sided discussions, there is only one comment from participant “Teilnehmer 100”, which confirms this:

> “*Feedback discussions. In this situation, feedback was provided but very one-sided.*” (“Teilnehmer 100”)

For the remainder of the feedback, these appraisal discussions with the manager are generally regarded as positive. Whether this is due to the way feedback is provided cannot be established based on the participants’ comments. One potential explanation could be the integration of feedback from colleagues as findings from this research have highlighted the importance team members play for the motivation of the participants, an area that merits further research.

However, not all positive feedback needs to generate motivation as the comment from participant “AS” highlights. Although the verbal feedback is positive, it can be regarded as hollow, if relevant actions, in this case, a promotion, is not given:

> “*Same situation as the motivating part: In my EOY conversation I received positive feedback, but still my manager couldn't tell me more about my promotion. He is supporting my promotion for one year, but it is not going through, and he can't tell me when this could be the case or what I can do to support it. This is demotivating as I have the impression that whatever I will do, even after I have received a great performance review two times in a row, I won't get a promotion, and this feels like my performance is not valued within Triangle*.” (“AS”)

Outside the scheduled feedback periods, the situations in which feedback as a source of motivation or demotivation was mentioned, were limited. In a sharp contrast, most of negative comments on feedback stem from this ad hoc feedback or the lack of this. In the case of a participant without an alias, the content of the feedback from the manager seemed to be understandable to the participant, however, the style, in which it was delivered was experienced as inappropriate:

> "*I found it demotivating when my manager said that I should feel more responsible for what I do. In my opinion, he has chosen the wrong words, because at that time I was the holiday cover for four colleagues in addition to my job and the year end with new auditors, which also required a lot of explaining. I have understood the content of the statement, but the choice of wording was borderline*." ("No Alias given")

While style is often subjective and dependent on the individual situation, it still raises the question, whether the provision of feedback improves within a rigid structure such as year-end appraisals as managers from preceding generations are not trained or used to provide feedback to the extent expected by Generation Y as Gioia and Catalano (2011) have postulated. A similar example is provided by participant "SAM", where feedback in the form of appreciation and praise was not received by the senior management.

The case highlights again that the manager's positive reaction alone is not sufficient, if not followed up within the organisation, this time by a lack of recognition in senior management:

> "*After completion of larger projects, the recognition from further above is missing according to my view. The recognition from my own line manager is there but, in the ranks above, people often only talk about the problems and too little about the successes. This does not concern the lower bonus of missing salary increases this year. On the contrary, a simple thank you would often be required*." ("SAM")

On the other hand, other participants described positive ad hoc feedback such as the comment from participant "Doradini", which derived from a discussion with the manager on holiday cover. The description of the participant summarises perfectly the power an honest and positive feedback can set free. At the same time, it is stated that feedback does not have a long-term effect unless it is renewed and continuously provided as expected by Generation Y:

> "*The feedback was motivating: "I can go relaxed on holidays when I know that you are there." In this sentence, there is so much appreciation and recognition that it has provided me, at least short-term, with push upwards*." ("Doradini")

This is supported by participant "Aurelius", who also describes positive feedback from his manager while postulating that these feedback occasions should happen more often.

Although, reference is made to the lack of face-to-face meetings due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the wish for more exchange is clearly stated:

> "*During the last month I experienced the discussion with the head of my business unit as motivating. This made clear how satisfied the company is with my work and that he (and the company) are planning longer term with me. In times of mass redundancies and economic decline this is a nice sign and motivating to continue to give my best. These discussions should happen more often, especially in light of the lacking presence in the office*." ("Aurelius")

8.6.3. External feedback

Addressing the external source of feedback, clients, which participants described as positive without exception it is important to understand the relationship between the participants and their clients. Although the amount of information provided on this subject was rather limited, the comment from participant "Aurelius" provides some insights into the closeness and devotion that participants feel towards their clients:

> "*During the last month I was demotivated by the fact that without consultation with me my clients were reviewed and reallocated. The clients are clearly not mine but those of Triangle, but I would have been happy if some would have talked to me and not cherry-picking."* ("Aurelius")

The strong customer focus of Generation Y was already detected by Tulgan (2009a), who advocated to utilise this mind-set when working with this generation.

This is backed by the comment from participant "DK2020", who described the motivation gained from the interaction with clients:

> "*The cooperation with clients and especially the positive results of these calls*." ("DK2020")

Similarly, participant "SAM" endorsed this view. At the same time, it can be noted that the participant stressed the continuity of the feedback, which is so essential for this generation:

> "*I am motivated by getting continuously positive feedback from clients*." ("SAM")

8.6.4. Summary

Consolidating the findings on the theme "feedback", it can be argued that the results from the literature on Generation Y can be confirmed in the sense that feedback, and more importantly, continuous feedback is essential to motivate this generation at work. In addition, there is strong evidence that there is still a lack of feedback throughout the year as the previous generation seems to be still not fulfilling the expectations of Generation Y in this respect, as they themselves are less inclined to place the same importance on giving and receiving feedback. This lack of providing feedback is partly compensated by the structured feedback processes that are in place twice a year. Within these processes, the feedback tends to be positively received, which could be due to the inclusion of feedback from other colleagues, to whom the participants feel related as described earlier in this study. Given the overall importance participants place on their co-workers, this is a field for further research beyond this study.

8.7. Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the study

The current study was conducted within a single organisation in the financial industry in Germany with the aim to contribute to the academic discussion by closing the geographical and industry gap in the research. Additional interviews with selected participants from the main survey, but also with participants from other financial institutions in the same region in Germany were added for further insights. With this, the research has not only confirmed findings from the literature review but has also identified new insights. A major contributor to this has been the unforeseen start of the COVID-19 pandemic, which led to a dramatic change in the way business was conducted, as the traditional office work was replaced by mobile working from home. While this was fortunate to witness via the survey and subsequent semi-structured interviews leading to new findings on the characteristics of Generation Y, it also presented a challenge when comparing the findings of this research with the existing literature given that the interaction among colleagues as well as with management was transformed from direct to indirect via videoconferencing. Also, the uncertainty posed by the economic climate, dominated by the COVID-19 pandemic, had an impact on the attitude of the participants as their feedback has shown.

8.8. Chapter Summary

The chapter has provided a discussion of the characteristics found to be associated with the work-related driver motivation. By drawing on the feedback of the participants from the survey as well as the semi-structured interviews, five characteristics were evaluated. Surprisingly, the heavy workload, the most cited incident expected to impact motivation negatively, was nearly neutralised by another characteristic, the importance of the team. This in turn, seen through the lens of the motivational theories was regarded as supportive of the SDT (Deci & Ryan, 1985), while critically discarding the two-factor theory (Herzberg et al., 2010).

When evaluating the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the unforeseen event also changing the characteristic of mobile working highlighted several positive aspects. Despite the high economic uncertainty and the loss of personal contact brought by the pandemic, the strong organisational support experienced by the participants counteracted the uncertainty for many participants resulting in an increase in motivation and loyalty. Similarly, the increased flexibility in combining work with private life, borne out of a necessity, was appreciated by the participants as it supported the urge of Generation Y for more time for their private life.

Lastly, the importance of feedback, a key theme confirming the existing literature, and the role of the manager lead to discussions on the adaptation of the leadership style towards a more transformational approach.

Chapter 9: Findings on career satisfaction and loyalty

9.1. Introduction

The aim of the chapter is to evaluate the characteristics, derived from the participants' feedback, of the work-related drivers career satisfaction and loyalty. Although not as prominently represented as the driver motivation, which was also covered in more detail via the interviews, the survey critically informed about both topics in the context of Triangle Germany. For the topic "career satisfaction", three key characteristics were identified; the progress made in terms of career advancement and perspectives, the support gained from the manager as well as the notion of fairness associated with decisions taken by the organisation. Similarly, for the topic of loyalty, five characteristics have been identified, namely the level of organisational support provided, the role of the manager, the advancement and promotion to new roles, remuneration and the implications of exit risks. The chapter discusses the characteristics in detail before concluding in Section 9.4. with a perspective on the relationship between the two drivers.

9.2. Career satisfaction

9.2.1. Introduction

Within this study, the main survey included two questions specifically related to the topic of career development. One was a self-assessment, where participants should monthly rank their satisfaction with their career development on a scale from 0 (not satisfied at all) to 10 (highly satisfied). In addition, participants were given the opportunity to explain the reasons behind their self-assessment in a separate question within the survey. While the first question was predominantly included to provide participants with some feedback during their participation, the second question generated qualitative feedback helping to understand the characteristics of satisfaction with their career development. In addition to these two specific questions, the questions on motivation also included several comments revealing a linkage to career development. This linkage became visible as three main themes, the importance of progress, support, and fairness emerged that were seen positively influencing the career development of the participants.

9.2.2. Importance of Career Progression

Career satisfaction is strongly subjective as it reflects the personal assessment of individuals with their own career (Kim & Kim, 2022). This subjective element was also recognizable in the comments of the participants of this study given that satisfaction with the development of the career was triggered by different incidents. The most visible point was when actual progress was made, i.e. either a new position was achieved or more responsibilities were allocated that enriched the current position and therefore enhanced the visibility of the participant. However, even the aspects of being able to achieve a new position already created a perspective, which was regarded positively showing recognition and giving the participant the feeling of being seen and valued.

This is supported by the comment from participant “Unknown”, who reports a positive feeling even though an internal promotion is only a possibility and not even confirmed:

> *“My patience and my trust have paid out, as a new position for me is potentially in reachable future.”*

From this comment, it can also be seen that the announcement of the prospective progress was pre-empted by a waiting period during which the participant felt that he was giving something to the organisation for which he was now being rewarded. This “give-and-take” situation also highlights a certain expectation for this progress to happen, which underlines the importance of career development for this generation as participant “56039” confirms:

> “*My manager's initiative to launch and support a bid for my promotion. Career development potential is a crucial factor for me*.”

As with the previous participant, this instance is predominantly based on the potential of a promotion rather than the occurrence of this event therefore supporting the notion that career satisfaction is rather a subjective than an objectively measurable phenomenon. Furthermore, the comment of this participant stresses the point that the potential for development is a driver for satisfaction. This is also confirmed by participant “Teilnehmer 1”, who highlights the importance of career development plans and their influence on work motivation:

> “*In a meeting with the line manager the future career path was discussed and which options for development exist. It was motivating that opportunities were shown and that there is development potential*.”

While the above situations derived from a discussion with the respective manager and therefore implying a certain degree of career planning, even unexpected situations suggesting an advancement occurred, leading to similar results as the comment from participant “Louise” shows:

> “*I was approached by the talent team to consider applying for a high-profile role. This was very flattering, but also completely surprising, because in my last discussions over the year with my manager, I did not know that I was recognised as talent*.”

Similarly, participant “Rainbow” reported an incident, in which he was approached by another colleague, who suggested a new role to the participant in their team, which was experienced as a sign of appreciation:

> “*One situation was very positive and have generated a lot of enthusiasm, when a colleague from another department asked me if I could be interested in applying for a new job that they had just created in their team. This situation had a very positive effect on my motivation. I was more motivated, not because I could get a new job, but because my colleagues showed me their appreciation for my work. Such situation is always appreciated*.”

Apart from advancement or the prospects of advancing to a new position, also the enhancement of existing roles was deemed to be a source of satisfaction as participant “Charly” highlights:

> “*The prospect of wider coverage responsibilities following the restructuring of my team and reallocation of team roles and responsibilities*.”

In the following month, this was further described by participant “Charly” as his position was even more bolstered by adding further responsibilities to him:

> “*I've been involved in a project to assess our current strengths and weakness in a strategic focus area and help coordinate this project together with a more junior team member. This was unexpected and motivating given the high profile of the project and the amount of flexibility and leeway given in the project, we've essentially been given a free hand*.”

Again, as with participant “Louise”, there was an element of surprise involved indicating that the development was neither planned nor expected, leading to the question, whether there is a clear expectation on career progression. A further incident was reported by participant “LPdC”, which covers a potential sideway move in form of a geographical relocation:

> “*I have been given the opportunity to be relocated to Luxembourg where my team is based and truly believe this to be something of benefit for both the Firm and me*.”

The move is being described as a good match for both, the organisation and the individual, suggesting a strong connection from the participant with the organisation. While it is not certain that the earlier comment of participant “Unknown” can be matched to the same participant later during the year, the comments suggest that the prospective promotion was successful, and the perspective turned into a measurable career development. In a first step, the participant “Unknown” saw the new role materialising in form of an open position, which was again motivating:

> “*My new role was posted. I now know that it is progressing. I also found motivating that I was able to finish the financial statements so incredibly relaxed*.”

One month later, the application was successful, and the career progression confirmed, which again boosted satisfaction considerably as the highly emotional comment demonstrates:

> “*YES - still a secret but I have got my job ... whoop whoop. Will this be evaluated as such :D :D*” (“Unknown”)

The same is mirrored by participant “56039”, who earlier stated that the manager initiated a promotion, which was now successful, representing an important step for the participant:

> “*Promotion approved; career advancement opportunities are a critical factor for me*.”

Similarly, participant “Sonja123” reported in consecutive months the enhancement of the role, which gave the feeling of being noticed and valued, while at the same time being supported by the manager:

> “*It is motivating that I am seen as a point of contact for certain topics outside my own team and that I am recognised for this. So that I have slowly gained a position within Triangle in which I am getting perceived*.” (“Sonja123”)
>
> “*I have taken over responsibilities in September as part of a new role and have received much support from my line manager. This has motivated me in my work*.” (“Sonja123”)

The satisfaction described in this case can be attributed to the notion of being valued and recognised, which indicates that the participant’s wish for progression is driven by the wish for being “seen” within the organisation and the underlying quest for self-affirmation. This was also mirrored by the comment of participant “Rainbow”, who felt being recognised as he received a nomination for an internal award:

> “*I had the nice surprise of being nominated for an internal award. I was very pleased because it meant the recognition for my work*.”

While these positive examples of career progression were mentioned by participants triggering satisfaction with their situation, no progress, whether subjectively perceived or objectively measurable, on the other hand led to dissatisfaction as described by other participants. Evaluating the comment of participant “Unknown”, who earlier reported highly positive a successful promotion, it becomes apparent, how close satisfaction and dissatisfaction can be as even positive developments can turn negative when being poorly executed from the participant’s standpoint:

> “*It was especially motivating that finally my successor has started - please excuse but these slow moves regarding replacements and handovers are annoying me totally.”*

This comment also supports the literature view on Generation Y as being impatient and eager to move on. Apart from this impatience over a slow progression, the lack of progress was cited as the most negative point by several participants. As the comment from participant “AS” highlights, not progressing is seen as being in a standstill:

> “*Unfortunately, it is a similar topic I mentioned before: I'm stuck and there seems no option to progress my career within Triangle*.”

From the comment, this situation has persisted over a longer period already, so that it remains open how the participant is going to react to regain satisfaction.

The situation of not progressing with the career is even aggravated by the fact when the lack of promotion seems to be in stark contrast to the positive feedback received by the participant in terms of reaching the set goals:

> "*Not getting promoted was demotivating. Despite receiving great feedback and overachieving the goals, I was not promoted. Not having a clarity what else do I need to do to move to the next career step is very demotivating*." ("Unknown")

This discrepancy between the feedback and the missing career progress is leading to visible confusion by the participant given that there is lack of perspective on how to overcome this situation. Even more strikingly is the situation stated by participant "AS" earlier during the survey, as there is even internal support for a promotion from parts of the organisation but still other parts, apparently unknown to the participant, are blocking the progress:

> "*I'm striving for a promotion as senior manager. HR and my direct manager are supporting my promotion, and my last evaluation was outstanding, but still my promotion is getting rejected, with no valid reason. For me it is important to have a clear perspective within my job, but having no real perspective is demotivating for me.*"

This situation of receiving positive feedback and still not seeing progress in the career seems to be a topic affecting several participants within the organisation as the comment from participant "Sunset" indicates:

> "*Development discussions are held in the first year although I had specifically asked for one (which has happened). During the discussion my work was praised (positive) but I was told that a development is only discussed during the next 1-2 years (negative) and I did not receive a real development perspective (negative).*"

This is mirrored by participant "Unknown", who adds that the lack of transparency is increasing the uncertainty about the future direction of the career:

> "*Not having a clarity what else do I need to do to move to next career step. Despite performing and not receiving any improvement necessary to get me to next level, I still find myself demotivated regarding my career development at the company*."

These incidents indicate an area meriting further research as the disconnect between feedback and measurable career progression planning could become dangerous for an organisation when employees act out of their dissatisfaction and seek potential opportunities outside the organisation. How realistic this can be is described by participant "TowerBridge", whose dissatisfaction resulted in an external job interview, which could have seen the participant leaving the organisation, provided the overall offer would have been more attractive:

> *"Job offer received including phone interview with considerable worse conditions (salary, commute, tasks, work environment)."*

9.2.3. Importance of Support

Underlying any progress or recognition was the topic of support, i.e., the organisation or the manager discussing the development of the participant so that the personal aspirations were being explored. As highlighted beforehand, positive feedback alone was partly short-lived when no progress was made afterwards and then turned negatively in the case that support was given without any measurable career progression. Taking the comments provided by participant "AS", the initial feedback received from the organisation, in this case the Human Resources Department, was taken positively, despite the unsatisfactory content towards an anticipated promotion:

> "*I had a call with my contact from HR department to discuss the current (difficult) situation within my department and my possibilities for development within this given situation. The honest feedback and help offered by my HR contact motivated me, even though the current situation in my department leaves me not much opportunity to develop my career.*"

Given that the situation was experienced as being dissatisfying, this participant searched for options to grow himself while staying within the organisation. However, although there seemed to have been an agreement on the coverage of costs for an external training, the execution was delayed resulting in another dissatisfying experience for the participant:

> "*As I don't have the option to grow or develop in my current role within the team, I was looking for an option to still develop myself and my professional knowledge. Therefore, I requested Triangle to cover the costs for an online training, which will run for 6 months and end with a certificate. Triangle agreed but failed to pay the fee in time and I had to follow up a lot to get the fee paid, so that I can start my studies. Now, I am one month behind and have to catch-up with all the learning material in order to make the final exam somehow*." ("AS")

Following this situation through with the participant, there seems to be a good level of support for this participant, however, the support is not becoming measurable in terms of career progression, and linked with this career satisfaction, as despite all positive support, no promotion seems to be possible:

> "*Same situation as the motivating part: In my EOY conversation I received positive feedback, but still my manager couldn't tell me more about my promotion. He is supporting my promotion for one year, but it is not going through, and he can't tell me when this could be the case or what I can do to support it. This is demotivating as I have the impression that whatever I will do, even after I have received a great performance review two times in a row, I won't get a promotion, and this feels like my performance is not valued within Triangle*."
> ("AS")

In contrast to that, participant “Louise” experienced less support, nearly at the same time, as perceived promises made earlier to the participant were revoked and no satisfactory alternative was offered, leaving the participant in a very dissatisfied state:

> “*In my performance review, I mentioned that the job I am currently doing is not motivating, stimulating, or challenging as I have reached the end of my learning in this position. I asked about the - last year - allegedly imminent pending promotion and this has been taken off the table for good as there will be no structural changes in our team. Whereas I know it is not directly related to me - this does not help with motivation and other than "I am sorry and let us find you some more stimulating things" there was no real feedback to my - very open - comments about my role progression*.”

Participant “Aurelius” shared a similar experience as a promised promotion was not happening. While this instance alone already caused a certain level of frustration, which was shrugged off by the participant, apparently, the real issue was caused by the lack of communication between the organisation and the participant. Having expected an explanation on this missing progress, the dissatisfaction of the participant was aggravated and criticised as a lack of support and leadership:

> “*For two years, I have the prospect of being promoted. Again and again, this was reassured (as being nearly certain) by various people. Now, the promotion process is completed, and relevant promotions were communicated. I was not promoted. This alone is not crucial but a pity. However, it is much more crucial that nobody had approached me afterwards and that the topic is being silent. From my line manager, I would have expected to be addressed in a motivational manner (this was missing, we would have also expected of you, ...) but nothing like this has happened. Total leadership failure*.”

Against these examples of lacking support, some participants reported positive incidents, which highlights the positive influence, support can have on satisfaction. When this is coupled with an element of surprise, as described by participant “Apollo 13”, the announcement of financial progress in form of a salary increase can lead to a very positive reception:

> “*I received a call from my team leader telling me that I will receive a salary increase. I did not expect this and was overwhelmed and close to tears*.”

Also, regularly scheduled feedback, whether from the manager or a mentor can also support the growth ambitions as participant “Muckel” and participant “Niklas” reported. Participant “LPdC” concurred with this and described the support received by the manager related to the professional relocation as highly stimulating:

> “*Relocation to Luxembourg and the feeling that my boss transmitted to me - that she believes in me and my ability to grow and will have my back where needed*.”

Overall, participants reported more situations in which they experienced a lack of support for their professional development rather than positive situations, which participant "Mave" captured in the following statement:

> "*From individual discussions you realise quickly that the professional development is rather difficult in our company*."

While this is a subjective comment, the demand for organisational support to develop the professional careers has become transparent and merits further research.

9.2.4. Perception of fair treatment

While bearing a standstill despite good feedback was already difficult to cope with, the worst for participants was this situation, coupled with the feeling of being treated unfairly. This situation was described by some participants, if, for example, their own promotion was not approved while other colleagues in other departments were promoted. Also, the filling of desirable positions with colleagues that apparently lacked the skills, had a negative effect on the perception of their own career as the comment from participant "Aurelius" highlights:

> "*I found the handling of positions, which were newly filled/structured within the team as irritating and demotivating. When positions (apparently) are not filled based on qualification and experience but based on vitamin B and gender, this is demotivating*."

This perceived unfair treatment has also been a topic for participant "Louise" , who compared the waiting time for the own promotion with other colleagues receiving a faster promotion:

> "*To see the many people getting promoted, even within a short time period, while I am waiting a bit longer for my management to act."*

This comment also implies a certain expectation for progression, which seems to be even more triggered when watching others progressing quicker. The notion of fairness seems to have wider implications on the considerations on the own career when the unfair treatment of other colleagues is leading to a rethinking of the own situation as the basic need for security is seeing to be under threat:

> "*Again, the treatment of long-standing colleagues who were fired from one day to the other (perceived). Based on this, one questions permanently when you will be in this situation which I think is highly likely during my career at Triangle. This makes the family planning difficult as you cannot plan in the medium or long-term. Security and loyalty are precious which is here (within the entire organisation) put at risk. At this does not happen for the first, second or third time…"* ("Aurelius")

Another incident of perceived unfair treatment was mentioned by participant "Unknown", who commented on the distribution of the bonus, which in this year, due to the COVID-19 pandemic situation, was distributed evenly without taking individual performance into consideration. While this treatment was deemed equal from an organisation's point of view, it was seen as unfair from a participant's view:

> "*I see the topic bonus as negative as it is unjust and unfair to treat all employees equal. Personally, it is demotivating not to be compensated after a personally very successful year. In addition, further opportunities such as salary increase, or promotion were not offered*."

Given that monetary aspects were rarely mentioned in this survey, this comment should not be overrated but still highlights that compensation can be important when establishing career satisfaction as it is one element to be considered in this context.

9.2.5. Summary

The feedback from the participants of the survey on career satisfaction has centred on three themes influencing the development of career satisfaction, namely progress, support and fairness. With career satisfaction being a subjective evaluation of an individual of their own career development (Kim & Kim, 2022), the progression has been identified as the primary theme changing the level of career satisfaction experienced. As the research has shown, the satisfaction with the career already increases when a potential promotion is in sight, which can be attributed to the notion of feeling valued. At the same time, participants reported a decline in satisfaction when either progression stalled or discussion on development did not realise.

Closely related to the theme of progression and development was the theme of support from the organisation, and particularly the manager. The latter, representing the organisation, was regarded as crucial for the development of the career. As shown in the previous theme, the behaviour of, and the development discussions with the manager influenced the level of satisfaction by either raising the level or lowering it, depending on the level of support experienced by the participant.

The feedback received by the participant from the organisation, or the manager highlighted a third theme, fairness, which also triggered changes of the level of satisfaction. Participants see their own development within the social context of the wider organisation, hence progression of colleagues, when perceived as unfair, led to a decline in the satisfaction with the own career, a point that also affects the loyalty of the employee to the organisation as will be visualised in the model in Chapter Ten.

9.3. Loyalty

9.3.1. Introduction

The survey included two questions specifically related to the topic of loyalty. One was a self-assessment where participants should monthly rank their level of loyalty on a scale from 0 (not loyal at all) to 10 (highly loyal). In addition, participants were given the opportunity to explain the reasons behind their self-assessment in a separate question. While the first question was predominantly included to provide participants with some feedback during their participation, the second question produced qualitative feedback helping to understand the characteristics of loyalty. As with the driver "career satisfaction", the interviews did not contain any additional questions on this driver; however, the answers of the survey participants on motivation also included several comments revealing a linkage between motivation and loyalty. In terms of themes identified with loyalty, the organisational support and the role of the manager reflect the importance of the organisation and the leadership, two themes representing the social context for the employee. Two further themes, promotion and pay highlighted the interdependence between career satisfaction and loyalty, therefore offering new insights, which have also been reflected in the model in Chapter Ten. The last theme analyses the causes why employees stay with an organisation despite being unhappy.

9.3.2. Organisational support

From the questions on motivation, the key theme was the support provided by the organisation related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Most of these comments derived from the start of survey, which, as outlined in Section 1.2., coincided with the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic and the associated lockdown, but also carried throughout the survey as some themes were reiterated during later monthly survey responses. Participant "Motivation" acknowledged the organisational support at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic by describing this as a boast to his loyalty:

> "*Loyalty has increased in view of how Triangle has handled the COVID crisis.*"

For participant "Louise", the reaction of the organisation even uplifted loyalty as it apparently exceeded the expectations of the participant:

> "*To be honest, more positive due to the good handling of the situation*."

Participant "Aurelius" provided more insights by pointing out that the uncertainty of the new situation let employees to look to their organisation for guidance and security:

> "*During the last month, I have experienced a strong backing of the company in regard to the Corona crisis. It conveyed security and pragmatic actions. It has motivated me that my superior has put family and children as priority number one and that we were allowed maximum flexibility in terms of working. To conclude: the handling of the new situation and the pragmatism*."

This was supported by participant "Sonja123", who praised the positive communication of the organisation when dealing with the new situation:

> "*The very open and frequent communication and support from all sides in these unusual times have further increased my loyalty towards my employer*."

Stressing the importance of good communication is in line with the findings of Johns and Gorrick (2016), who identified communication, promotion and pay as key characteristics of loyalty in their research. The good communication also conveyed the message that the organisation is caring about its employees as the comment from participant "Louise" highlights:

> "*I find it motivating how much Triangle has cared for their employees during COVID-19. The communication is timely, as accurate as possible and it seems obvious that the health of their employees is priority number one for the organisation*."

Based on the work of Porter and Steers (1973), each employee has its own individual set of expectations and attributes associated with satisfaction at work so the tailoring of the communication and support to the specific needs of the individual employees is a critical point as the very specific case of participant "Charly" demonstrates:

> "*I appreciated the proactive support provided by the HR department via Zoom workshops on topics like managing work/life balance when working from home and dealing with bereavement. The last workshop was something that resonated a lot with me as my brother passed away last December. The stress of dealing with work and having to take care of our two toddlers at home during the height of the coronavirus crisis and lockdown meant that I have struggled to properly process his death. HR set up a zoom conference with a psychologist who gave concrete tips on how to deal with these types of situations. From the questions asked during the zoom call I also realised that other colleagues throughout Triangle offices are also dealing with similar issues. So overall I was very much touched by the thoughtfulness of the HR department in setting this up.*"

The recognition of the personal circumstances was also a key factor for participant "Unknown", who experienced support in handling work and childcare given that the kindergarten was temporarily closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic:

> "*My loyalty towards my employer has improved as my individual situation has been identified and it was reacted upon (missing Kindergarten due to Corona).*"

The ability to work from home, which was strongly supported by the organisation, also affected the private life of participant "Unknown" as the organisation also allowed more flexible working time, which facilitated the coordination of work and private life:

> "*That the employer has enabled the home office and that you are allowed to plan your working times flexible*."

Acknowledging that employees might have different preset levels of satisfaction according to Boswell, Boudreau, and Tichy (2005), participant "John Smith" tends to display a generally high level of loyalty, which was even raised when reflecting on the positive working conditions provided by the organisation:

> "*Loyalty was always there but there are sometimes moments in which you can see that Triangle is a really good employer. The options provided to the employees such as fitness centre, restaurant, park, shuttle service etc. are really great. Personally, I also like the social thinking and the projects derived from this. All these points strengthen the loyalty towards the employer*."

This is mirrored by participant "Aurelius", who welcomed the introduction of a new benefit for young parents, which he perceived as enhancing loyalty and satisfaction:

> "*Still loyal, satisfied, and proud to work for such a great company. Also, the news that you can stay home longer after the birth of a child is strengthening this*."

The same new benefit, but also other social activities, were noted by participant "Sonja123", who described this as maintaining loyalty:

> "*In total, there is no change which has led to an increase or decrease in loyalty. However, campaigns such as Race at Work and the release of the new Parental Leave have clearly shown that Triangle really cares about the employees. This supports my existing loyalty*."

Recognizing positive working conditions and a caring working environment lends support to the findings of Rodriguez, Boyer, Fleming, and Cohen (2019), who highlighted the importance of these elements for Generation Y. While most comments from participants surfaced positive incidents, in one instance, a positive effect was achieved, despite not everything being perfect, by comparing the situation with other companies, therefore fostering loyalty towards the own organisation:

> "*Not everything went smooth last week but we have the tools to operate and get things done. With some effort we can manage the same quality of work from home as in the office. This is motivating and level us above most of the companies*." ("Casper")

Similarly, participant "Unknown" accepts and excuses a lack of communication considering all the efforts taken by the organisation to create a good working environment:

> "*My loyalty towards the employer still exists. The employer attempts everything to enable us employees to work smoothly on our tasks. So far all is positive. Sometimes the communication is missing how this should go on with the home office and work in the office. However, this is understandable in such a situation*."

Among many positive comments stating the support of the organisation at the start of and during the COVID-19 pandemic, on the negative side, an inappropriate or complete lack of communication was cited, adding to the overall level of insecurity experienced in this new situation:

> "*The loyalty is decreasing. This is due to the fact how the communication as well as the behaviour among colleagues within the company has changed. Luckily not with me but I observe this with others. That makes me think*." ("Doradini")

In a later comment, participant “Doradini” further eluded that this miscommunication related to human resources issues, with promises not being kept, therefore undermining trust and loyalty. Participant “Seven” also reported a negative incident leading to a decline in loyalty, which was caused by a perceived lack of integrity of co-workers. While not stating whether these were team-members, peers or the management, participant “Louise” attributed a negative experience to the management of the organisation, which resulted in questioning the overall loyalty towards the organisation:

> “*It is just obvious that this company needs so much change - top down because that is where most of the problems lie (and continue to be protected). I do not think that I want to continue to be a part of this any longer*.”

9.3.3. Behaviour of manager

The behaviour of management, whether be it the senior management or the direct line manager is hardly separable from the organisation as these positions represent the organisation and can have a profound effect on the individual employee. In the model of Porter and Steers (1973), the manager, or more specifically the management style represents one of the factors falling into the category of work-environment factors. Reviewing the findings from the survey, the comment from participant “LPdC” highlights the connection between the manager and the organisation and their potential exchangeability when employees describe critical events:

> “*It has been even more strengthened - I read employer rather than as "my line manager" than as the Firm itself*.”

While Porter and Steers (1973) focus on the management style, the behaviour of the manager in general could also influence loyalty as the comment from participant “Teilnehmer1” suggests:

> “*A slight decrease based on the demotivating behaviour of the line manager*.”

Although the type of behaviour has not been specified by the participant, therefore leaving room for interpretation, it confirms the ability of the manager to influence the motivation or satisfaction of an employee. More specifically, participant “Aurelius” provided a positive example of a manager, who was able to motivate the employee and increase satisfaction and loyalty with it by having a good exchange with the participant:

> “*During the last month I experienced the discussion with the head of my business unit as motivating. This made clear how satisfied the company is with my work and that he (and the company) are planning longer term with me. In times of mass redundancies and economic decline this is a nice sign and motivating to continue to give my best. These discussions should happen more often, especially in light of the lacking presence in the office.*”

At the same time, inappropriate communication by the manager, whether intentionally or not, can also lead to a negative experience of the employee as an earlier comment of the same participant "Aurelius" demonstrates:

> *"I find it unfortunate when people manager at senior level distribute trade press articles to their team in which it is written about other asset manager reduce headcount or that the crisis is rendering some jobs obsolete. This is known to everyone but with the history of Triangle I perceive this as a warning. Providing a sense of security, which is important for everyone especially in a crisis, is different. Behind every employee there is a human being, sometimes even more (family, kids…). This has not motivated me*."

While it is arguable, that the manager potentially did not intend to cause any harm or negative feelings, the participant perceived this differently and saw his personal need for security, i.e. providing a financial foundation for his family, endangered, and therefore felt threatened. This behaviour supports the work of Boswell, Boudreau, and Tichy (2005), who argued that each employee has an individual set of factors influencing satisfaction and loyalty. In this case, the added insecurity caused by the COVID-19 pandemic might have exaggerated the need for security for this participant or at least shifted his focus towards a greater need in this respect.

Another example of miscommunication was described by participant "Louise", who experienced the speech of a member of the senior management as unfair, as according to the perception of the participant, the wrong people were praised:

> "*The straw that has truly broken the camel's back this month is that our country head managed to hold a townhall, thanked loads of people for their great work and mentioned another team for a great piece of work he is pleased with rather than the people who were actually involved (amongst others me). It just highlights the toxicity of this place and frankly is such a great example of bad leadership*."

The incident described seemed to have triggered the participant, as the wording of the feedback suggests, therefore enhancing an existing satisfaction when comparing this other comments of the same participant. When evaluating the feedback from participant "Sunset", the overall satisfaction, and linked to this, loyalty towards the employer, is described as high, however, the criticism of senior management matches the comments from participant "Louise":

> "*Generally, my loyalty towards my employer and my superiors is very high. Unfortunately, often other people / other situations lead to me shaking my head. Everything preached by senior management is not being implemented by these people. (My superior is a positive exception). Part of the German management succeed in suppressing loyalty, joy, enthusiasm for the organisation*." ("Sunset")

Summarising the comments from the participants, the behaviour and communication of the direct line manager or the senior management can have a profound effect on loyalty in both ways, although in this survey the negative incidents outweighed the positive.

9.3.4. Promotion

Linked to the role of the manager or management is the topic of promotion, given that these are influenced and actioned by management per definition. Within the literature, Johns and Gorrick (2016) have identified promotion and pay as two decisive factors affecting loyalty. With regard to Generation Y, Rodriguez, Boyer, Fleming, and Cohen (2019) found that progression in their careers is essential for this generation. Due to this strong focus on advancing their careers, loyalty is dependent on the organisation's ability and willingness to promote employees of this generation as they are otherwise more likely to change employer than experienced with previous generations. This behaviour is matched by comments from participants of this survey as the feedback from participant "Unknown" highlights, who states that having obtained a new position had a positive effect on loyalty. Participant "Leo" also confirmed the positive effect of the promotion on loyalty providing a perspective for personal growth:

> "*Has stabilised due to two reasons: 1) Due to the promotion I can see that I can develop myself within the organisation. 2) In comparison to other companies, this organisation seems to master the crisis well. The work from home is managed well*."

A second factor mentioned by participant "Leo", the organisational strength during the COVID-19 pandemic, represented by the swift transition of work into home office, is rather supporting the research of Elizur (1996), who differentiated between morale and calculative commitment. Comparing the strength of the own organisation with other companies is probably derived from the need for security but also includes a calculative element when weighing up the stability of the organisation against outside options.

In line with the two participants ("Unknown"; "Leo"), participant "Niklas" confirmed that his loyalty remained at a high level as he saw good opportunities for his personal growth. Contrary to this position, participant "AS" confirmed loyalty to the organisation as well as the team despite an unclear perspective, which suggests that a lack of promotion does not have to have negative impact on loyalty.

> "*Our department is facing a difficult time and I see low development perspective for me. But still I turned down an attractive job offer, as I'm still loyal to my employer and my team.*"

Also, this statement is contrary to the findings of Rodriguez, Boyer, Fleming, and Cohen (2019), who see Generation Y more willing to change jobs than previous generations when lacking perspectives for growth.

Another topic on loyalty is being brought up by participant "Aurelius", who questions whether loyalty is valued by the organisation itself:

> "*The filling of positions and the treatment of long-serving successful and respected colleagues is irritating for me, and it does not reflect positively on my loyalty. One begins to question whether loyalty (also in difficult times) is being appreciated. At the moment, I do have the feeling that loyalty does not count for the company. In general, however, I am very loyal, and I work happily for the company and would like to do this for many more years*."

Although his own loyalty is still existing, the way promotions are being handled within the organisation has triggered his reflection on loyalty as this seemed to have created a mismatch with his own perception in this situation. This is an important finding as it highlights that it takes two parties to create loyalty. It is not only the organisation providing benefits to the employees, who in return remain loyal with organisation but it is rather an attitude, as postulated by Whitney and Cooper (1989), which needs to be adopted by both the organisation and the employee.

9.3.5. Pay

The importance of pay on loyalty was researched and confirmed by Masakure (2016) as well as Johns and Gorrick (2016), although other, non-financial factors were also identified as being of importance. Matching this with the stronger focus on pay as attributed by Meier and Crocker (2010) for Generation Y when compared to other generations, the financial aspects would be expected to play a major role in the findings of this research as well. Putting this expectation into context, it has to be acknowledged that most of the research on Generation Y found remuneration a key factor in traditionally lower-paid professions such as nursing (Tourangeau et al.; 2013) or hospitality (Brown, Thomas, and Bosselman; 2015). However, Jekielek (2015) confirmed this also in his research within the banking environment but at the same time highlighted that financial awards alone were insufficient to motivate employees at work.

Within this research, as highlighted beforehand, the number of incidents quoted by the participants that are related to financial aspects have been surprisingly limited. This has also been the case when participants were asked in the specific questions about incidents impacting their loyalty. While financial aspects are linked to promotions as well, two other incidents were reported that had a financial impact for all staff.

The first one related to the financial contribution of the organisation supporting the move into home office, which was unanimously experienced as very positive as the comment from participant "Bibi Blocksberg" underlines:

> "*We received the info at the beginning of March that Triangle is providing a further contribution to home office equipment as of 1st April. I was very happy about this as I had to spend a much larger amount for my equipment exceeding the first 580 EUR sponsored by Triangle. I see this as a very nice appreciation, and it has motivated me to continue to complete the monthly Pulse Surveys and write into the open text fields what concerns me as I can be sure now that all comments are being read properly. There are a lot of considerations how the employees feel and how they can be supported.*"

Apart from the positive effect on satisfaction, the feedback from this participant emphasizes, that beyond the financial support, the action taken by the organisation alone had a much wider implication as it conveyed the feeling that employees are being cared about. Moreover, in this case, the participant felt further encouraged to openly voice concerns in a constructive manner rather than as an alternative to exit as postulated by Hirschman (1970). Similarly, the feedback from participant "Mr X", although stemming from a negative incident, also supports the importance of pay on motivation and loyalty, given that the announced changes to the payment of the annual bonus were incomprehensible for this participant:

> "*The bonus-situation is still nagging on my motivation, especially if you hear from competitors that there are partially no changes in their bonus process*."

This view was shared by another participant "Unknown", who voiced dissatisfaction with the organisation even clearer culminating in the openness to leave the employer:

> "*As described the sudden change in bonus assessment decreased my motivation as well as my loyalty. I was very surprised to receive this communication after 10 months of hard work and did not expect this to be frank. I will definitely consider other opportunities going forward, which was not the case before*." ("Unknown")

Although there were limited situations described by the participants related to financial aspects, those mentioned confirmed the importance of remuneration not only on motivation but also on loyalty. When analysing these examples, it is apparent that financial aspects cannot be considered stand-alone as they are embedded in communication by the company and other actions taken, so that it would require further research to identify the pure impact of financial aspects alone as it might often be the combination of different factors contributing to a specific outcome.

9.3.6. Fear of Leaving

Remuneration does not only provide a form of reward acknowledging the own performance but also represents the source of income that employees require to finance their private life. As such, Buchko, Buscher, and Buchko (2017) find that even good employees may stay with their organisation when they see a higher risk in maintaining their standard of living when changing the employer. At the time of the survey, the overall market situation was experienced by the participants as highly insecure, and staying with the organisation was seen as a safer option than looking for potentially better alternatives outside as the comment from participant "Charly" implies:

> *"Given the economic environment I've certainly become more loyal to the company as this is not an ideal environment to be looking for other opportunities, but I'd qualify this more as loyalty due to a lack of alternatives."* ("Charly")

When internal insecurity is increasing, as a shift of roles from Germany to an offshore location can generate, and external threats are decreasing, as the latter developed over the course of the survey in line with the adaptation to the COVID-19 pandemic, this view of participants changed as the comment of participant "TowerBridge" highlights:

> *"Due to the continuing shift of areas of activity to India/China the own future within the company is uncertain. In comparison to the previous month, I am more open to a change of employer*."

This is supported by the comment from participant "Aurelius", who previously ignored external offers but now states:

> "*I question my loyalty towards my employer. Many (even very good) offers have been turned down in the past as you believe in the values and solutions of the company and as you like to be on the road for the company*."

However, within the survey, the topic of potential risks, when changing the organisation, were not mentioned often compared to the other factors influencing loyalty. So, it can be concluded that this factor did not have the same weight for participants as the other factors.

9.3.7. Summary

The questions on loyalty, solely derived from the survey feedback, have triggered several responses highlighting the themes identified with this driver. While some characteristics, such as the organisational support, which, according to Rodriguez, Boyer, Fleming, and Cohen (2019) falls into the category of work environment factors have been mentioned more often than other factors, most and foremost the survey confirmed the view of Boswell, Boudreau, and Tichy (2005), who state that each employee has an individual level of satisfaction. Taking this as the fundamental assumption helps to explain, why some participants commented on negative incidents without seeing their overall loyalty questioned, while others remained more critical and distanced throughout the survey. An example of a participant with a strong loyalty is participant "SurveyMonkey" who remains unchanged loyal to the organisation as it would require a material incident to change this status:

> "*My loyalty has not changed during the last month. In order to change my loyalty, it would need a drastic event. Such an event, I did not have at Triangle yet*."

At the same time, participant “Louise” is much more distanced, and while acknowledging the organisation to be a good employer, emphasizes that this is no guarantee for staying on as the work content and perspectives are missing:

> “*Unchanged. It is apparent that nothing is being done for me in this area. Triangle is a good employer; the work is fun even if this does not develop or challenge me. However, I am not married with the organisation*.”

As with feedback of the participants on motivation and career satisfaction, the role and importance of the manager, or management in more general, was confirmed, which is in line with the findings of Porter and Steers (1973). This is also unsurprisingly, when evaluating the close relationship between the manager and their employees with their ability to progress within the organisation given that promotions and the creation of perspectives are inseparably linked with the direct manager in most cases. In the case of promotion and career perspectives, a direct linkage between a positive career development and outlook at the one hand, and a more positive view on loyalty on the other hand, has been identified so that loyalty could be defined as a function or outcome of career satisfaction.

The results from this research acknowledge the work from Jekielek (2015), who finds remuneration an important factor in the financial industry; however, further research is needed as the theme remuneration was less prominent among the feedback from the survey compared to other themes such as organisational and managerial support. At the same time, it was found that remuneration cannot be separated from other factors such as promotion or communication so that the full importance of pay would need further research to be correctly established.

A last point concerned the question, whether loyalty represents a moral or rather a calculative commitment as Elizur (1996) differentiated. This separation was confirmed with examples for both cases being found. The calculative commitment was particularly triggered by the uncertainty caused due to the COVID-19 pandemic, as participant “Charly” voiced clearly:

> “*As mentioned in previous replies loyalty rises when the market environment is much more volatile or in a recession, it makes little sense to jump ship in this environment. Nevertheless, I feel like Triangle is taking appropriate care of its employees in the current difficult environment*.”

This also confirms the research from Buchko, Buscher, and Buchko (2017), who found that good employees sometimes stay with an organisation despite obvious downsides as the risk of changing jobs is considered higher than staying on.

However, the response from participant "Aurelius" highlights that those internal negative incidents, such as insecurity created at organisational level, e.g. through lack of support or relocation of jobs to another location can open employees up for external offers:

> "*I think no major change. However, I am thinking. Missing security increases the danger to weaken when being approached with competitive offers to find increased security at another employer. I am loyal and not open for offers; however, I am thinking about this topic."*

On the other hand, loyalty based on moral commitment, has also been detected as the feedback from participant "Bibi Blocksberg" at the end of the survey, when the COVID-19 pandemic had already been established as the new normal, shows:

> "*This month I had a call from a head-hunter because several months ago I had updated my resume in an online profile and added my new employer. Without listening to what job, they could offer me, I ended the conversation after a short explanation that the update should not mean that I am looking for a new job and told them that there was nothing they could offer me to make me leave my current employer.*"

9.4. Chapter Summary

The chapter evaluated the responses received from the participants of this research on the two work-related drivers career satisfaction and loyalty. Unlike the work-related driver motivation, the responses to these two drivers were solely derived from the survey as the interviews were designed to only focus on further insights into work motivation. As shown in Table 6., three themes have been identified for the driver "career satisfaction", while for the driver "loyalty", five themes surfaced as being of importance.

Table 6: List of themes on career satisfaction and loyalty

Career Satisfaction	**Loyalty**
Importance of progress	Organisational Support
Importance of support	Role of the manager
Importance of fairness	Promotion
	Pay
	Fear of leaving

When comparing the themes, derived from the participants' feedback, similarities can be detected as the themes support and progress / promotion are influencing both drivers. While for career satisfaction, the importance of progress was mentioned more often when compared to the other two themes, the organisational and managerial support ranked higher than promotion in terms of impact on loyalty. However, the comments of the participants for each of these themes highlight the importance of the social context, i.e. the organisational frame and its representation via the manager. Despite individually differing viewpoints and levels of satisfaction and loyalty, the dependence of the participants on the support from the manager is paramount.

Drawing on the findings of the survey, loyalty is rather an attitude than a behaviour, which can be based on morale or calculative commitment, and which is dependent on a range of themes that will vary at individual level, such as the organisational support, the role of the manager, and linked to this, the ability to progress. Given their correspondence with the themes of the driver career satisfaction, loyalty can be defined as a function of career satisfaction, which again reaches beyond the organisational progress into the planning of the private life outside work.

9.5. Summary of themes identified across all three work-related drivers

Combining the themes identified for all three work-related drivers, the similarities highlighted in this chapter between the themes driving career satisfaction and loyalty towards the organisation can be partly expanded to also include work motivation. On this basis, two themes, with slight variations run across the three drivers, namely the importance / role of the manager and linked to this, the importance of support as well as the theme of feedback linked to the importance of progress and promotion.

Table 7: List of themes across all three work-related drivers

Work motivation	**Career Satisfaction**	**Loyalty**
Workload	Importance of progress	Organisational Support
Mobile Work / WLB	Importance of support	Role of the manager
Importance of team	Importance of fairness	Promotion
Importance of manager		Pay
Importance of feedback		Fear of leaving
		Career satisfaction*

** Note: Included to highlight that loyalty can be defined as a function of career satisfaction*

Unsurprisingly, the manager is seen as a representative of the organisation and his activities can have a visible influence on the employees within his unit. Based on the comments of the participants, this theme has been identified and critically assessed for work motivation and loyalty towards the organisation. Given that one outcome of the managerial actions can be the support of the employee, the theme of support, as identified and reviewed for career satisfaction and loyalty, is linked to the organisation and its representative, the manager. Considering the criticality of this theme, recommendations for policy and practice within organisations are being made in the next chapter.

The second theme running across all three work-related driver is the combination of feedback, progress and promotion. Although feedback can have several sources, e.g. from colleagues or clients as uncovered in this research, it is often associated with the manager and organisation, who are also the catalyst for promotion and progress. As shown in the model in the next chapter, the provision of a perspective and opportunities for advancement is fuelling motivation, as well as satisfaction with the career, which in turn is fostering the loyalty of the employee towards the organisation. Utilising these findings, further recommendations for policy and practice are being formulated in the upcoming chapter.

Chapter 10: Conclusion and Contributions

10.1. Introduction

Based on the themes affecting motivation described in Chapter Eight as well as career satisfaction and loyalty in Chapter Nine, the current chapter presents in Section 10.5. a Generation Y dynamic interaction model – referred to as “DIM” – at Triangle Germany, visualising the relationship between the most impactful themes and the three work-related drivers. Centred on the Generation Y DIM at Triangle Germany, Section 10.6. discusses the contribution of this study to the academic debate, while also making recommendations for future research in Section 10.7., and Policy and Practice in Section 10.8. The chapter concludes with identified limitations of the study and a reflection of the research conducted.

10.2. Aim and objective of the research

The aim of the study is to evaluate the three work-related drivers, work motivation, career satisfaction, and loyalty towards the organization in relation to employees of Generation Y. This is being done within the context of Triangle Germany, a multinational financial institution operating in Germany. Based on this aim, the objective of this study is to develop a theoretical model that visualises and explains the interaction between these three work-related drivers. Within the academic literature it will enable the critical evaluation of existing findings, gained in other sectors and other cultural spheres, therefore broadening the foundation of generational research. While not intended to create the ability to compare these findings directly with the existing literature, the study aims to raise the understanding for these differences, with the theoretical model supporting further research into these work-related drivers and their application to future generations across different industries.

Secondly, the model will be providing a guiding framework and recommendations for Human Resources (HR) and people manager in the professional world to support the understanding of real or perceived differences associated with Generation Y, on which the future growth of organisations relies. To reach the objective, a set of seven research questions, described in Section 1.5., has been formulated.

10.3. Structure of the study

The main research consisted of an online survey distributed over a 12-month period to members of Triangle Germany. To obtain participants for the study, Human Resources had supplied a list of all employees born between 1982 and 2000, the range defined for Generation Y. From this group, 51 employees consented to participate. To maintain anonymity, participants were offered to use aliases as listed in appendix 5. Overall, 313 responses were received. From the survey feedback, it was decided to focus on the three most cited characteristics impacting work motivation. To explore these subjects in more detail, a semi-structured interview, conducted via video call, was used with five of the survey participants, who volunteered to be interviewed. In addition, four participants from the pilot study, working for other financial institutions in the region of Frankfurt, Germany, were also interviewed using the same semi-structured interview.

10.4. Primary discoveries from the study

This section highlights how the research questions, used to evaluate the three work-related drivers, motivation, career satisfaction and loyalty have been addressed. Drawing on the critical incident technique (Bott & Tourish, 2016; Butterfield et al., 2005; Flanagan, 1954), one question for each work-related driver has been formulated:

1) Which critical incidents impact work motivation?
2) Which critical incidents impact career satisfaction?
3) Which critical incidents impact work loyalty?

While demonstrating this, it is described how the research aim, the critical appraisal of these drivers among members of Generation Y within Triangle Germany, has been reached.

10.4.1. Motivation

With a view on the partly inconclusive findings from the literature as well as the question over the possibility to generalise these findings across countries and industries, the survey raised the question, which critical incidents impacted work motivation, either positively or negatively. Using this approach, a list of themes was derived from the survey, of which the top three cited themes were further explored utilising the semi-structured interviews:

1) To what extent has the workload impacted the motivation?
2) To what extent has the COVID-19 pandemic impacted the motivation?
3) To what extent have the co-workers and the team impacted the motivation?

Of these themes, the most cited one was the high workload. Many comments centred around the negative aspects of a high workload and its influence on the private life. Critically appraising the existing literature (Brown et al., 2015; Gursoy, Chi, & Karadag, 2013; Gursoy et al., 2008), this confirms, that a life outside work is important for Generation Y. However, an equal number of participants made positive comments about the amount of work, which is contrary to the existing literature (Campbell & Patrician, 2020; Sondari Gadzali, 2023). In order to be regarded as positive, the work and the associated high workload must be meaningful, which again matches previous research findings, as e.g. Naim and Lenka (2018) found that Generation Y is keen to contribute to success. In this instance, successful events included work with clients, completion of projects or the joint reduction of backlogs together with the team.

The latter led to a second, often cited theme, the importance of the team. While Howe and Strauss (2000) already attested Generation Y to be good team players, the research from Raišienė et al. (2021) coined the view that Generation Y sees an organisation as a combination of co-workers, a statement this thesis is supporting. The team has been found to be of central importance for motivation, not only when coping with large volumes of work. Being described by some participants as family-like, the team and the interaction with the team can exceed the importance of the work content as such, so that the support of the team becomes more important than the actual work conducted. At the same time, supporting the findings from Tourangeau et al. (2015), negative feedback from the team can be a demotivating factor. Overall, the relationship with the team as a factor impacting work motivation was found to be contrary to the views postulated by Herzberg et al. (2010) given that any kind of relationship at work was seen as hygiene factor rather than a motivator. Instead, the self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985) explains this more appropriately as "relatedness", one of the central themes of the theory, describing best the intense relation with the colleagues and the direct team in particular.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, a new theme, mobile working, emerged in this study. As many industries and organisations did not utilise this at a larger scale beforehand, the importance of this theme was not fully noted in the prior literature. The same applied to Triangle Germany, which, as cited in Section 1.6, literally "overnight" moved nearly the entire workforce into home-office, given that this was imposed on organisations by banning work in the office. As with other themes, the participants described both motivating as well as demotivating events, however, the majority were positive given that the ability to work from home provided greater flexibility and facilitated the parallel handling of work and private obligations during the COVID-19 pandemic. Some participants positively cited that the time gained from not having to commute could be used for private matters. While taking care of children or other family members is rather a necessity, the comments supported the strong focus on work-life-balance, which Gursoy et al. (2008) have already attributed to Generation Y. Importantly, the ability to work from home was also used to do more work, as described in some instances, given that it became easier to blend in work and private life with boundaries between the two becoming blurred. For this phenomenon, the term "work-life-blending", going back to the work from Kanter (1979) and Nippert-Eng (1996), is a better description than the more common "work-life-balance", as attributed to Generation Y in the existing literature. Seeing this through the lens of the self-determination theory from Deci and Ryan (1985), mobile working can be seen as enhancing the autonomy of employees to better adjust work to their private life. As Joyce and Barry (2016) concluded in one of the few studies conducted in the financial industry, this focus on the outside work requirements of employees is instrumental to attract and retain employees. The findings from this research suggest that the model for analysing work motivation needs to include factors outside the pure work environment to fully evaluate the drivers affecting Generation Y at work.

A further, often-cited theme was the importance of the management, a fact already acknowledged by Tourangeau et al. (2013) and the effect on motivation. Mostly referring to the direct line management, the role of the manager is central since it cannot only impact directly the work in terms of content and volume but is often instrumental in providing perspectives, therefore influencing the career and career satisfaction. Early research already indicated that Generation Y is expecting a good leadership and is therefore dubbed to require higher maintenance as previous generations (Herbison & Boseman, 2009). In this respect, Tulgan (2009b) already advocated that the leadership style needs to be adapted to this generation. This research concurs with this view and confirms the findings of Qian et al. (2017), who advocates the use of a more transformational leadership style, which is based on a strong interaction with the employees, e.g. including them already into the planning of tasks rather than delegating pre-set activities to them.

Closely linked to the previous themes of the relationships with the team and the manager is the overarching topic of feedback. Early research (Eisner, 2005; Twenge, 2010) has attributed a constant need for feedback to Generation Y, which was confirmed by Qian et al. (2017) when describing a suitable leadership style for this generation. In line with the findings of Easton and Steyn (2023), this research also confirmed the importance of feedback, not only from the manager but equally important from peers and the immediate team. As such, positive feedback is helping employees to feel valued, which in turn has been identified as being a key input parameter affecting work motivation. Ultimately, this Is culminating in the concept of self-affirmation, which in turn has been found to also drive career satisfaction and loyalty.

10.4.2. Career satisfaction

The second work-related driver being evaluated in this research is the topic of career and more specifically, the satisfaction with the career. In line with the research question on work motivation, participants were asked, which critical incidents impact career satisfaction, either positively or negatively. Due to the stronger focus on work motivation being the dominant driver as identified from the literature; the semi-structured interviews did not contain additional questions on career satisfaction. Within the literature, Broadbridge et al. (2007) have found that Generation Y is keen to advance in their jobs while at the same time being conscious of maintaining a good work-life-balance, supporting the view that this generation is placing less emphasis on work than their predecessors. Coetzee and Stoltz (2015) concur as they also viewed Generation Y as seeking opportunities at work without neglecting their private life. A second aspect identified with the career of Generation Y has been their increased need for mobility (Ismael, 2016), coupled with a stronger sense of being autonomous (Abessolo et al., 2017). Despite these specific notions, Lyons et al. (2015) concluded that there has not been a sustained change in the definition of careers yet, which is supported by Akkermans and Kubasch (2017), who still see having success as the main characteristic associated with a career.

Within this research, three characteristics associated with career satisfaction have been identified, namely progress, support, and fairness. The first point mentioned by participants leading to an increased satisfaction with their career has been progress, i.e. an advancement or promotion. While clearly reaching a higher level had the most direct impact, therefore confirming the views of Savickas (2008), as well as Tiedeman and Miller-Tiedeman (1985) on a typical western career. Within the same context, also a side-move into another department, replacing the 'career ladder' with the 'career lattice', was described as enhancing satisfaction with the career. Even more crucial, the satisfaction with career already increased when a potential move was in sight as this created the perspective for advancement, supporting the work of Broadbridge et al. (2007), who identified the need for advancement as being important for Generation Y. At the same time, it was found that when a perspective did not materialize within a certain period, the level of satisfaction dropped considerably.

In summary, the importance of the manager towards work motivation has been the second aspect found affecting career satisfaction, namely the support provided by the manager in terms of supporting the career of the employee. This finding underlines the centrality of the role of the manager and the leadership style, that needs to be learned and adopted, on motivation as well as career satisfaction (González-Cruz et al., 2019). Linking managerial support to the feeling of being satisfied with the own career is supporting the existing research on Generation Y, as this is combining the need for praise and feedback (Easton & Steyn, 2023) as well as the expectation of a transformational leadership style (Qian et al., 2017). While the degree of influence of a manager below the senior level on career and other strategic decisions within a larger organisation can be debated, it also highlights the expectation of this generation that others will support them on their career path as they might have been used to from their sheltered upbringing (Evans & Karl, 2021; Hind, 2016).

A last point mentioned by participants was the notion of fairness. Although focussing on their own career perspectives and advancement, any progress or standstill was compared with promotions happening within their closer environment. By seeing the world with a constructivist mindset through their own subjective lens, decisions hindering their own progression were partly aggravated by a perceived sense of injustice when others were promoted that have been believed not due for promotion. To better evaluate the extent to which unfair treatment, whether real or perceived by the participants, is affecting career satisfaction, further research is recommended as a deeper understanding of this theme will benefit the expansion of the theoretical framework.

10.4.3. Loyalty towards the organisation

The third work-related driver being addressed with this research has been the subject of loyalty. Based on the literature, loyalty can either be seen as a behavioural response (Hirschman, 1970, Johns & Gorrick, 2016) or as an attitude (Whitney & Cooper, 1989). Taking the stance that loyalty is a positive and constructive attitude, this research aimed to close the gap in the literature by focussing on the German financial industry therefore providing additional insights to the predominant Anglo-Saxon focus of the existing research.

From this research, five characteristics influencing loyalty towards the employer have been detected, providing new important insights, particularly in relation to work motivation and career satisfaction as the model in the next section will highlight. The first characteristic identified in this research has been the level of organisational support, a topic closely linked to the current economic climate and framed by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Among this uncertainty, Triangle Germany filled the void via a mix of communication, financial, and work-condition measures therefore creating a strong bond with the employees. Although, each employee has got a specific set of expectations (Porter & Steers, 1973), work conditions can have a strong effect on loyalty in both directions (Rodriguez et al., 2019).

The next two topics impacting loyalty are the behaviour of the manager, represented by the quality of communication and the leadership style, and the topic of promotion and advancement. These two factors are synonymous with the characteristics described regarding career satisfaction, which lead to the conclusion that loyalty can been seen as an output of the level of career satisfaction. The importance of the behaviour of the manager underlines that a weak management raises the chances of negatively affecting loyalty and increase turnover (McClean et al., 2013; Rodriguez et al., 2019).

While the importance of pay has not been strongly associated with career satisfaction in this research, in the literature it was found to be a factor impacting loyalty (Johns & Gorrick, 2016), and more specifically in lower paid industries (Masakure, 2016, Meier & Crocker, 2010). However, this research has shown that pay is nevertheless also important within the financial sector but not sufficient on its own to create or maintain loyalty (Jekielek, 2015).

The last characteristic identified from the responses in this research concerns the fear of leaving, a behaviour displayed by employees, who stay with an organisation despite being unhappy, again seeing loyalty being the outcome of this decision. This phenomenon is not limited to lower paid industries but can specifically be found among higher-paid employees (Buchko et al., 2017) therefore fuelling the discussion raised by Elizur (1996), whether loyalty can be seen as a calculative or moral commitment. Comparing the findings of this research related to loyalty, it can be said that a calculative element exists but so does a moral commitment when evaluating the factors driving work motivation, and most notably the relationship with the team but also with the manager. Critically appraising the comments of participants, this point merits further research as it is of importance to the academia and the HR practice alike.

10.5. Development of the Generation Y DIM at Triangle Germany

The feedback of the survey and interview participants has helped to critically appraise the three work-related drivers, motivation, career satisfaction, and loyalty of Generation Y at Triangle Germany. Using the critical incident technique, key events have been identified influencing these three drivers. In this context, the most critical themes have been split into organisational themes, i.e. those present within Triangle and external factors with implications on the working context. Moreover, the responses of the Generation Y participants have also helped to understand the relationship between the three factors and how they interact with each other, leading to the identification of the central role of self-affirmation. To visualise the flows and dependencies, a Generation Y dynamic interaction model – referred to as "DIM" – at Triangle Germany has been developed.

10.5.1. Concept of the Generation Y DIM at Triangle Germany

First of all, the review of the literature has shown that work is less central in the life of Generation Y and that balance of work and outside life is now a constant requirement throughout every phase of the working career (Joyce & Barry, 2016; Ng, Schweitzer, and Lyons, 2010). Secondly, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, mobile working has become a much wider phenomenon, therefore further blurring the boundaries between work and private life as working from home enables the move from work-life balance to work-life blending by integrating the two rather than managing two distinct time blocks.

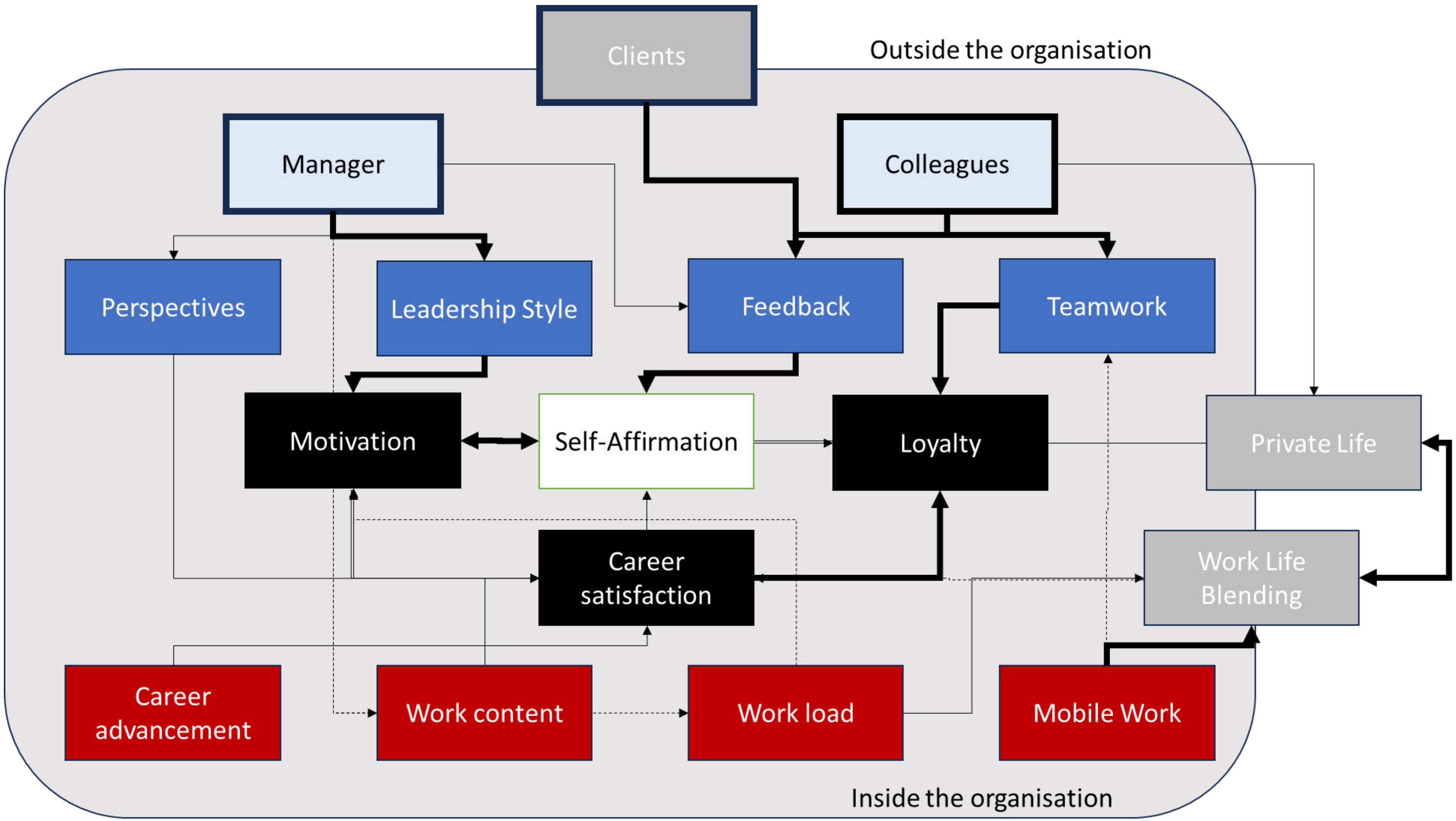
Incorporating the existing literature on Generation Y, the model is based on the themes having emerged from the participants' responses to the survey as well as the semi-structured interviews. By analysing the themes associated with each of the three work-related drivers, it was discovered from the participants' feedback that any model depicting work motivation, career satisfaction, and loyalty does have to include not only organisational themes, i.e. aspects inside the organisation but also factors outside the boundaries of the organisation. Within Triangle Germany, the model emphasises the importance of relationships at work. Most notably, these are the relationships with the colleagues of the immediate team but also with the manager given that Raišienė et al. (2021) have found that Generation Y is seeing an organisation as a combination of co-workers. Taking this view offers a critical appraisal of the two-factor theory of Herzberg et al. (2010), while advocating the self-determination theory of Deci and Ryan (1985), which places a greater emphasis on the importance of relatedness as represented in work relationships.

A final point highlighted within the model is the importance of self-affirmation. Having described Generation Y as being in constant need for praise and recognition (Easterbrook et al., 2021; Easton & Steyn, 2023), it has surfaced that work, despite its reduced centrality in life is a means of continuing the affirmation of the own person, this generation is used to due to its sheltered upbringing (Howe & Strauss, 2000).

Taking these points together, the Generation Y DIM at Triangle Germany is a visualisation of the different organisational themes and external factors impacting the three-work-related drivers, motivation, career satisfaction, and loyalty of Generation Y employees at Triangle, while showing their interaction and dependencies. Using colour coding, the three work-related drivers are depicted as black squares. Among the organisational themes, the relationship layer, represented by colleagues and manager, have been highlighted in light blue with a black frame. Themes belonging to the behavioural layer have been shown below the relationship layer in blue, while those themes regarded as work content-related are depicted in red at the bottom within the organisational boundaries. Within the organisation, the concept of self-affirmation has been emphasised by using a white box. Complementing the themes within the organisation are the external factors, clients, work-life blending, and the private life, which are shown in grey. These factors are driven from the outside but can have internal elements and therefore sit on the boundary of the organisation. In terms of flows, showing the dependencies between the themes and the drivers, the thick black as well as the normal lines have been used to indicate the most and lesser important flows respectively, affecting the themes and the drivers. The dotted black lines show flows that can have positive as well as negative implications on the themes and drivers. While the model might suggest a hierarchical order by having placed the relationships at the top and the work content related themes at the bottom, this is unintentionally as the focus has been on transparency by structuring and grouping the various themes. In this context, it needs to be acknowledged that the actors at relationship level, as depicted in Figure 10, drive via their behaviour the content-related themes, which reflects the constructivist point of view taken in this study. Nevertheless, this does not constitute that themes placed higher in the model represent a higher importance compared to themes shown at the bottom of the model.

This theoretical model offers a new starting point for further research by identifying the themes influencing work motivation, career satisfaction and loyalty for Generation Y at Triangle as well as relationships between them. The model therefore needs to be refined via further research into different organisational contexts, so that it can be used as a HR policy roadmap for organisations to adapt their people strategy to further attract and retain a motivated and loyal workforce.

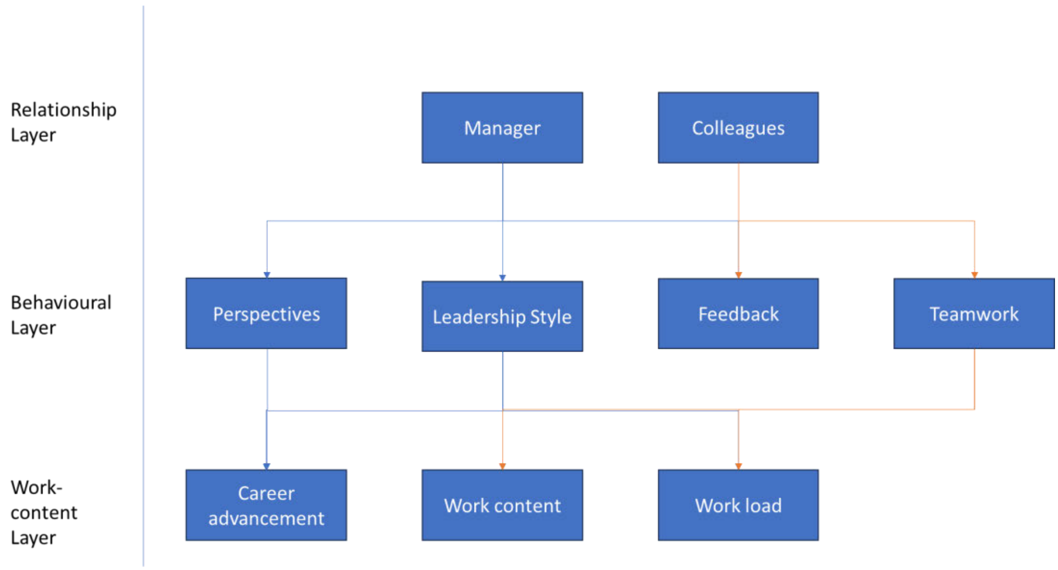
Figure 9: Generation Y DIM at Triangle Germany



10.5.2. Organisational themes

The themes and interactions of the model have been deconstructed to review each of the themes in more detail with a view to identify a model of work-related themes that can have positive and negative influences on other themes and the work-related drivers, which, when applied, can provide a framework for good practice. In this context, the organisational themes, i.e. those within the organisation itself, have been split for transparency reasons by the responsible actor, representing the relationship level, into those themes attributed to the behavioural level and those linked to the work-content. This separation has been visualised in form of three distinct layers, which each of the layers being of equal importance to understand the interaction of these at Triangle Germany.

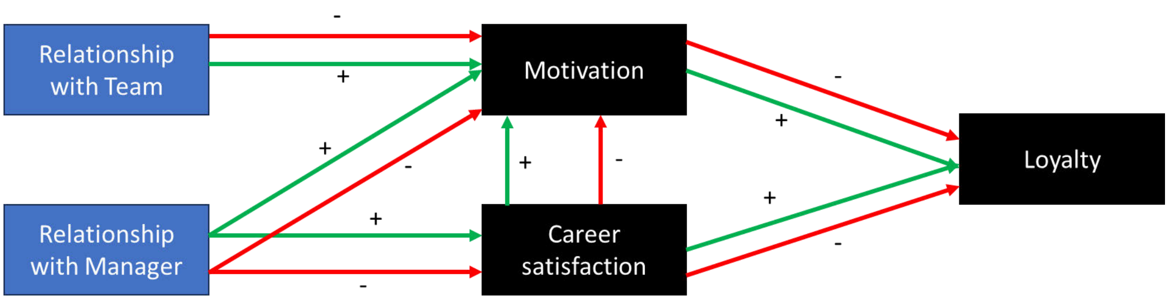
Figure 10: Layers of organisational themes



A crucial theme is the relationship, displayed by a set of behaviours, to colleagues and specifically to the immediate team as well as to the manager, both of which can affect one or more of the three work-related drivers via the identified themes.

Disagreeing with the view of Herzberg et al. (2010) that relationships are hygiene factors, this research has shown that the relationships can have a positive but also a negative effect on work motivation and in the case of the managerial relationship also on career satisfaction, which has been visualised in Figure 11.

Figure 11: Positive and negative effect on work relationships



Positive and negative impact of work relationships

For Generation Y, work relationships are less formal compared to their predecessors, as this generation dislikes hierarchies and structures within organisations (Kowske et al., 2010), instead viewing organisational settings as a social interaction of co-workers (Raišienė et al., 2021). As this research has shown, especially the relationship with the team can take a *'family'*-like appearance therefore creating a loyalty to the team within the organisation while also reaching via friendships into the private life.

Based on this research and as shown in Figure 11, a relationship is characterised by a set of behaviours. The central behavioural response is the feedback, which is more essential for Generation Y as the literature has shown (Easton & Steyn, 2023). Internally, within the organisation, the feedback from the team is driving motivation but can also demotivate as Tourangeau et al. (2015) have already stated in their research. Positive feedback from the team is also affecting the level of co-operation and the willingness to work as a team. This is supported by the findings from Naim and Lenka (2018), who concluded that Generation Y is keen to contribute to the success of their organisation. With a view on good practice, it is worthwhile to place a greater emphasis on the inclusion of feedback into the management process.

Due to its role and behaviour, the manager at Triangle Germany is an essential reference point for the Generation Y employees. Being responsible for defining the work scope and content as well as influencing and setting the development of the employee, the role – as defined for this study in Section 8.5. – encompasses elements, both of a manager and a leader (Doh, 2003). Within this remit, the behaviour of the manager can be seen as a guideline for the employee as the interpretation of manager role will either provide more room for the employee to develop or less when analysing the leadership style and personal relationship with the employee. Similarly, to the team, the feedback of the manager is central to the motivation of the employee. Kluger and Lehmann (2018) contended that management feedback has had a negative connotation given that it is mostly given in the context of performance appraisals. As this research has shown, non-communication can also be form of feedback that is negatively perceived, which is why the adoption of a transformational leadership style is essential for providing a motivating framework. Considering aspects beyond motivation, a more open communication, as associated with a transformational leadership style described by Pearce et al. (2003). This also provides a basis for creating perspectives for the employee, increasing the satisfaction of the employee with his career and due to this again raising the work motivation.

At the work content level itself, aspects such as work content, workload and measurable advancement are outcomes driven by the manager. While these can also drive motivation and career satisfaction, they need to be seen within the context of the relationships and the corresponding behaviours. Other characteristics can mitigate positive as well as negative outcomes, e.g. the perception of an unfair treatment can limit the positive aspects of a bonus or the strong bond with the team can cover a high workload.

10.5.3. External factors

Contrary to the internal factors within the organisation, which have been well covered within the literature, this research in the context of Generation Y at Triangle has shown that a set of external factors merits considering when evaluating work-related drivers such as motivation. Among these, the role of external clients' needs to be reviewed as they can not only impact internal processes but are also critical for the financial success of the organisation. Beyond this, this research has shown that a driver for work motivation can stem from positive client feedback. Being attributed with a strong customer focus (Tulgan, 2009a), Generation Y is also keen to contribute to success (Naim & Lenka, 2018), hence the work with clients seems a natural occupation. Coupling this with the need for positive feedback, the external feedback can fuel motivation or compensate for internal shortfalls and is therefore a potentially underrated characteristic.

The other external factor, the importance of the private life, and linked to this, the theme of work-life blending, has received a new perspective due to the COVID-19 pandemic. While a desire for work-life balance has been well documented for Generation Y before the COVID-19 pandemic (Joyce & Barry, 2016; Ng et al., 2010) as well as the increased need for mobility (Abessolo et al., 2017; Ismael, 2016), it has only been since the COVID-19 pandemic that mobile work has reached unprecedented levels. As this research has surfaced, the boundaries between work and private life have blurred given that work has entered the private home at the one hand but has also enabled on the other hand a degree of flexibility allowing to blend work and private life. While mobile working has physically shifted the traditional boundaries, this research has also shown that work relationships have also altered within the researched organisation as structures at work are described as *'family'*-like, which leads to a strong attachment with the colleagues within the organisation. Although this is different to being loyal with the employer, this attachment can be similarly strong and therefore affects motivation and loyalty positively as well as negatively; a fact that could be actively used by an organisation.

At the same time, Clarke (2015) has stated that there is a trend towards a dual income career, which is not altering the overall career concept but at least reduces the economic dependency on a single income earner. Consequently, this generation has more options to decide on their job and the decision to join or to stay within an organisation is driven by personal preferences and less by financial aspects alone as the relatively low focus on remuneration in this research has shown.

All in all, this added flexibility is putting the traditional career into a different perspective. Whether this will lead to a more content generation at work (Breitsohl & Ruhle, 2012, 2016) or adds additional constraints on organisations to attract and retain the workforce will merit further research.

Additionally, the entire model is embedded into a macro-economic context, at the time of the study shaped by the COVID-19 pandemic, which also influences, as an external factor, the themes identified. For transparency and clarity, this has been omitted in the model as the evaluation of its impact on the individual themes will require further research.

10.5.4. The need for self-affirmation

Although Herbison and Boseman (2009) contested a higher demand for feedback for Generation Y compared to their predecessors, seeking positive feedback can be attributed to nearly every human being (Hepper & Carnelley, 2010). This study has confirmed that positive feedback and praise is of high importance to this generation (Easton & Steyn, 2023), and due to this criticality, it is crucial to look deeper into this subject as praise and admiration need to be seen in light of the personal and cultural values (Cohen & Sherman, 2014).

Drawing on the self-affirmation theory (Easterbrook et al., 2021; Steele, 1988; Steele et al., 1993), developing and maintaining self-integrity is critical to fence off threats and to increase one's own resilience. While studies have been conducted with students (Critcher & Dunning, 2015), the findings can be equally applied to the working context as the desire to be seen as worthy and competent continues to exist (Jiang, 2018). Whether Generation Y is now seeking more feedback than other generations due to their sheltered childhood (Evans & Karl, 2021; Hind, 2016) or due the increased social and economic threats as being posed by the COVID-19 pandemic at the time of this research, the implications of the need for self-affirmation have emerged in this study when evaluating the work-related drivers motivation, career satisfaction, and loyalty. From the responses of the participants, it has been established that it requires the combination of several ingredients to positively affect these work-related drivers, as it takes the foundation of the relationships at work together with the behaviours displayed by these groups, i.e. the team and the manager, to affirm the values of the employees, therefore enabling them to develop at work resulting in personal growth and fulfilment. Assessing this through the lens of the self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985), the three elements of this theory, autonomy, competence, and relatedness are reflected in the concept of self-affirmation. Being able to make independent choices, obtaining feedback for mastering a task, while feeling integrated into a group positively affects and affirms the self.

10.5.5. Conclusion drawn from the Generation Y DIM at Triangle Germany

The model has been drawn to visualise the inter-related themes and factors identified in this research among Generation Y at Triangle, which affect, positively or negatively the three work-related drivers, motivation, career satisfaction, and loyalty. To capture these elements, the model has distinguished between internal and external factors at Triangle Germany to demonstrate that the decreasing centrality of work needs to be recognised when evaluating the behaviour of individuals within organisations. Inside the organisation, the importance of the relationships to the team and the manager have been highlighted, therefore critically questioning the two-factor theory of Herzberg et al. (2010). Instead, the self-determination theory of Deci and Ryan (1985) is better positioned to explain the findings. Finally, the need for feedback, as postulated in the literature, has been confirmed and expanded by highlighting the need for self-affirmation as an important point when dealing with individuals in an organisational context.

10.6. Contribution to theoretical knowledge

The contributions of this research to the theoretical body of knowledge are manyfold. Apart from the important development of the Generation Y DIM at Triangle Germany, the study has addressed a geographical/cultural as well as an industry gap by being placed in the financial industry in Germany.

10.6.1. Generation Y DIM at Triangle Germany

Based on the evaluation of the three work-related drivers, work motivation, career satisfaction, and loyalty of Generation Y employees towards Triangle Germany, the main contribution of this research is the development of the Generation Y DIM at Triangle Germany. Highlighting the interaction of the themes identified from the research, the model visualises how the themes impact the three work-related drivers and provides a new and different perspective of the dynamics affecting these three drivers. By incorporating internal organisational themes and external factors such as clients of the organisation and the private life of the employees, the model acknowledges that work centrality has been decreasing and that organisations need to consider external factors more than ever when managing their workforce. Additionally, the importance of relationships, most notably externally to clients and internally with the team and the manager represent a dynamic interaction constructing the organisational reality. This theoretical framework is expanded by activities such as teamwork, feedback and career advancement, complementing the work intrinsic themes of workload and content, ultimately affecting the three work-related drivers. Critically assessing the organisational interactions based on this model merits the academic discussion when researching Generation Y and future generations entering the workforce.

10.6.2. Addressing gaps in the existing literature

Based on the review of the existing literature on Generation Y, three gaps had been identified. Firstly, the strong focus on Anglo-Saxon countries has questioned the ability to generalise and utilise these findings in other countries. Secondly, there has been a strong focus on lower-paid industries such as nursing, hospitality, and tourism, which in turn poses a limitation as economic and work-content related factors were expected to dominate the discussion. Thirdly, from a methodological perspective, most studies were cross-sectional studies, which are easier to conduct than longitudinal studies, but at the expense that they only provide a snapshot in time.

This study has fully addressed the first two gaps by having conducted the research within Triangle Germany. With this, the limited body of research within the financial industry has been critically expanded and new important insights into the influence of work relationships and the effect of non-work themes on the work-related drivers have been developed. Having focussed on Generation Y employees in Germany has added a new cultural element to the generational debate, critically questioning the ability to draw on findings derived from research conducted in other cultural environments. On the third point, the study has utilised a multi-method approach including a 12-months survey, which has provided a series of snapshots over the extended period of one year. Given the unforeseen start of the COVID-19 pandemic, which coincided with the start of the survey, this has provided a unique insight into an organisation adapting to a dramatically changing environment, as introduced in Figure 1 in Section 1.2., while portraying the responses of the employees along.

On this basis, several arguments, already identified in the literature and depicted in the literature-based model have been confirmed, such as the lower work centrality, shown as the quest for work-life balance, feedback, career advancement, and the importance of the behaviour of the manager, while others, such as pay, and workload have been critically questioned. Due to the in-depth nature of this study additional important themes, e.g. the importance of the team, were discovered, calling for further research.

10.6.3. Contrasting themes with existing literature

The existing literature on Generation Y, which has evolved from analysing Generation Y, initially in their role as consumers to becoming students, before finally entering the workforce has portrayed this generation at first negatively. Based on the finding that work is less central (Twenge, 2010) and that work-life balance is regarded a must-have at every stage of the career (Ng et al., 2010), the willingness to work could be questioned for this generation. Added to this, the constant need of feedback (Easton & Steyn, 2023) as well as their expectations for fast advancement as described by Broadbridge et al. (2007) and confirmed by Coetzee and Stoltz (2015) have led other authors to the statement that Generation Y is very much focussed on status (Cennamo & Gardner, 2008) and therefore seen as high-maintenance (Herbison & Boseman, 2009).

This study of Generation Y employees at Triangle Germany has produced similar results in terms of the themes constant feedback, fast advancement and the decline of work centrality, as visualised in the literature-based model in Section 4.6., but paints with the Generation Y DIM at Triangle Germany a much more comprehensive and nuanced picture of Generation Y by highlighting the complexity of interactions between the themes and the work-related drivers.

Firstly, the avoidance of work or unwillingness to work hard was not mirrored by the responses of the participants. On the contrary, the participants described time periods of high workloads, which were considered as stressful and sometimes depressing but with the help and out of respect for their team, this was managed well with a surprisingly high level of motivation. At the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, some participants even reported that they worked more than normal from home as the new-gained flexibility allowed to continue work after private themes had been completed.

Secondly, the topic of pay was hardly mentioned, which might be because this research took place in the financial industry, which is traditionally better paid as the industries researched in several existing papers such as nursing, hospitality and tourism.

Thirdly, the constant search for feedback was confirmed, not only from the manager but also from the team, the latter had been picked up little in the literature.

10.6.4. Towards a new Understanding of Generation Y Employees

There are three new themes this study has discovered, which contribute to the knowledge on Generation Y as employees while also aiding in policy and practice when dealing with the changes in the workplace.

The first theme is centred around the importance of work relationships, which, crucially the previous literature has hardly mentioned. Although Howe and Strauss (2000) described among the seven traits of Generation Y that this is a generation of team players, the findings of this survey went deeper by surfacing family-like bonds with colleagues of the immediate team that not only positively impact motivation but also increase loyalty for the team. In this respect, the application of the two-factor theory from Herzberg et al. (2010) has been critically questioned and instead the self-determination theory of Deci and Ryan (1985) suggested as a better foundation given that this includes the notion of relatedness as one of its three pillars. Given the importance of this subject, future research into this subject is being strongly recommended.

The second theme, propelled by the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic, coinciding with the start of the survey, has been the change of working conditions from working in an office to mobile working. Although this has been possible beforehand for a selected number of professions, the COVID-19 pandemic has made this an option for most traditional office jobs. With this added flexibility, the management of the private life has become easier and while the literature has attested a strong focus on work-life balance for Generation Y (Joyce & Barry, 2016, Ng et al., 2010), this concept seems to have shifted to work-life blending, i.e. a more fluid integration of the work and non-work areas matched to the individual requirements. Reflecting the current debates in larger organisations to reintroduce more time in the office, further studies are suggested to evaluate the benefits and downsides of this approach in a post-pandemic era.

The third important contribution, having developed out of the strong preference for feedback has been the need for self-affirmation, which has been identified as being a potential driver affecting not only work motivation but the overall behaviour and positioning of the individual within the organisation. While being seen in the context of Generation Y in this study, it merits further research into the next generation of employees.

10.7. Recommendations for future research

This research, based on Generation Y employees at Triangle in a world pandemic context, has surfaced new characteristics of the relationship between the three work-related drivers, motivation, career satisfaction, and loyalty. As the findings have highlighted, Generation Y displays a number of characteristics that deviate from their predecessors but probably less notable than in the early literature proclaimed or expected (Howe & Strauss, 2000, Tulgan, 2009b). Despite this, the decreasing centrality of work (Twenge, 2010) has developed towards a sustained focus on the inclusion of the private life when viewing work-related topics (Joyce & Barry, 2016). This trend, coupled with the higher level of mobility (Abessolo et al., 2017) has received a strong catalyst by the COVID-19 pandemic, having changed the traditional office work. Although many companies have since then limited or even reversed this trend, it remains questionable whether this reversal will be accepted by Generation Y and their successors. On this basis, further research is needed to evaluate these work-related drivers further to better understand the characteristics shaping the next generation in the workforce. Two main areas of importance for future research are the influence of work relationships, i.e. between employees, their team and their manager internally within the organisation and externally with clients, as well as the concept of self-affirmation building on the notion of continuous feedback attributed to Generation Y.

10.7.1. The importance of work relationships

Critically appraising the findings of this research, the influence of work relationships offers a greater potential for positively affecting work motivation than acknowledged in the academic literature to this point. While the two-factor theory (Herzberg et al., 2010) classified relationships to colleagues and to the superiors as hygiene factor, the self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985) already addressed this point under the topic of relatedness; however, only in the context of work motivation. Agreeing with the statement of Raišienė et al. (2021) that Generation Y is seeing an organisation as a combination of co-workers, it is recommended to conduct further research into the influence of these relationships beyond work motivation into the work-related drivers career satisfaction and loyalty. Especially the latter topic seems to be of interest as the loyalty towards an organisation might be replaced in parts by a loyalty towards co-workers or the team.

10.7.2. The need for self-affirmation

One of the key characteristics identified for Generation Y is the strong need for praise and recognition (Easton & Steyn, 2023), which has been supported by findings from this research. Based on the incidents described by the participants, feedback has been seen both positively as well as negatively impacting the motivation but also the satisfaction with the career, especially when the feedback was received from the manager. While this has already been researched with a focus on the utilisation of a transformational leadership style, as postulated by Qian et al. (2017), and its influence on managing Generation Y, the further research into the need for self-affirmation as being advocated by Cohen and Sherman (2014) could offer a new perspective on the management of future generations in the workforce.

10.7.3. Application of the Generation Y DIM at Triangle Germany

Beyond the themes, work relationships and the need for self-affirmation, representing two essential elements of the Generation Y DIM at Triangle Germany, the model itself offers a holistic perspective on the construction of an organisational setup that is including external factors. Utilising the model and the relationships and themes that constitute the model, a critical appraisal of the visualised interactions between these elements is well positioned to drive the academic debate on career satisfaction and loyalty among Generation Y. In this context, the term loyalty, traditionally defined as loyalty towards the employer or the organisation, needs to be revisited as the results of this study are suggesting that loyalty can be multi-faceted including loyalty driven by, and therefore towards the team or loyalty as a function of career satisfaction. From an organisational perspective, it is critical to understand the trigger points increasing or decreasing loyalty and what loyalty entails.

10.8. Recommendations for policy and practice in the service sector

Besides contributing to the academic discussion, one aim of the study, driven by the personal experience made within leadership roles in the financial industry; has been the practical application of the findings to the service industry. Addressing the needs of HR functions and people manager when dealing with employees of different generations, this research has shown that this generation has their own characteristics requiring an adaptation at the level of policy settings as well as practice. However, as the findings and the subsequent discussion have also surfaced, this generation should not be considered as high maintenance, provided the organisation is willing to understand the requirements of their workforce and adapt to the benefit of both, the organisation, and the individual. To establish these changes, recommendations at policy level for senior management and HR functions are suggested as well as actions for practice, designed to be implemented by people manager.

When implementing research findings into policy, it is crucial for a successful implementation that there is a two-way communication between the academic and the organisational side as the organisation needs to be open to embrace the theoretical framework while the academic research needs to be accessible and formulated in an understandable fashion (Tseng, 2012).

In the context of this research and the developed model, four basic areas for a policy review are recommended:

1) How is work being integrated with non-work activities?

2) How are career paths and professional development structured?

3) How are employees led by management?

4) How are tasks managed within teams?

10.8.1. Integrating work and non-work activities with the concept of work-life-blending

With the decrease in work centrality (Törn-Laapio & Ekonen, 2021), non-work activities are taking a more prominent place in the life of Generation Y employees as visualised in the Generation Y DIM at Triangle Germany. To attract and retain employees, organisations need to define and implement policies that create a trustful environment for both, employer and employee that governs the work boundaries and processes required so that expectations from both parties are met. With the experiences gained from the move from the traditional office to mobile working, which was witnessed first-hand within Triangle Germany, a new flexible way of working was introduced.

However, as the feedback of the participants has demonstrated, the change has shifted the boundaries of work and private life as employees had to adjust themselves to the new organisation. Since then, many organisations have policies governing the split of time between office and mobile working but often driven by a traditionalist mindset based on the same processes employed prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. To address the needs and expectations of Generation Y, and probably other parts of the workforce sharing the same beliefs, a more flexible and modular policy is suggested. Recently, there seems to be a reverse trend to more work in the office again as large organisations such as Apple, Deutsche Bank and Disney (Thier, 2023; Uwimana, 2024; Valinsky, 2023) prescribe more days in the office therefore heavily restricting the mobile work. With a view on this research and its findings, this move is deemed to be counterproductive, thus recommending the introduction of clear policies addressing the importance of the non-work activities.

At practice level, the policies will require an adaptation of the leadership style and goal setting given that traditional processes based on interactions within the office need to be replaced with virtual collaboration via video-conferencing and adequate software tools enabling the remote sharing of information. Also, the tracking of goals and progress needs to be amended to reflect that employees might adopt different working patterns, where the work-content permits, deviating from the previous nine-to-five office hours to a more asynchronous work delivery. Reflecting the need for communication and cultural alignment, communication processes need to be defined, ensuring a regulator information exchange between the organisation and its employees.

10.8.2. Defining career paths to manage growth expectations

While non-work activities have gained in importance as outlined in the previous section, it is equally important for Generation Y to obtain a perspective for their personal development as well as have options for a fast advancement (Ulupinar, 2023). As the research has shown, this was not equally well achieved based on the comments of the participants. However, those cases that were positively mentioned, included an element of well-designed and transparent communication. To reflect this at policy level, organisations are advised to spend more time on the theoretical foundations underlying modern career theories as well as integrating the preferences of this generation, therefore adapting their career framework to addressing the needs of the changing environment, characterised by an increased volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity (Bundtzen, 2020).

At practice level, the move from the traditional career *'ladder'* path to a so-called *'lattice'* career would benefit from a structured offering of assignments and projects, offered to those interested in progression and advancement. Based on employee interviews, there could be a tailored career progression path for those open to a higher degree of change.

10.8.3. Adapting the management by introducing a transformational leadership style

As already advocated in the literature (Tulgan, 2009a), the management of Generation Y requires an adaptation of the leadership style, which is not innate but can be learned (Doh, 2003; Hamdani, 2018). Addressing the needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness as stated in the self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985), a transformational leadership style is advocated (Qian et al., 2017) given that Generation Y is said to dislike hierarchies while placing a strong focus on communication. Consequently, the leadership style needs to allow for feedback, a key ingredient for this generation as well as the creation of perspectives given that this influences career satisfaction and loyalty. To implement this approach effectively, it requires a clear commitment from the top including supporting policies. To complement the implementation, help from the HR function is essential as a retraining of people manager might be necessary for them to appreciate the benefits of this change so that the transition will be successful.

To make this happen, the HR functions are advised to assess the current pool of people manager to evaluate the level of experience and leadership skills available. On that basis, the creation of a training framework for people manager supporting the adoption of a transformational leadership style is advocated. Also, it needs to be ensured that new people managers are prepared for their role and associated tasks upfront, which in practice is often, if supported at all, compensated by a training on the job. On a mid-to-long term perspective, the recruitment of new people manager might consider a stronger focus on soft skills such as communication and empathy as these are often harder to train than hard skills.

10.8.4. Redesigning work with focus on fostering team cohesion

While there is a substantial amount of management literature on the creation of perfect teams, this study has surfaced additional insights into the dynamics within teams. Moving away from seeing work relationships as hygiene factors as postulated by Herzberg et al. (2010), organisations should raise their antennas to appreciate the importance of these interactions among teams. To create an environment in which teams can be formed and nurtured, the policies supporting a change in leadership style are a prerequisite. At practice level the inclusion of the individual but also the team into the planning and decision-making process can unlock a potential not utilised yet while also stabilising the team in difficult situations such as the high workload or drastic changes of the working environment as described in this research.

10.9. Strengths and limitations of the research

As with every research, there are strengths but also limitations due to the methodology or scope chosen and this research is no exception to this. While some of the strengths and limitations have been active decisions, others have developed while conducting the research.

10.9.1. Strengths

Having chosen a single organisation within one country has provided a very defined field of research that is characterised by a high level of consistency among the participants thus allowing to drill deep into the three work-related drivers chosen for this study. When critically appraising the findings, this study contributes to the body of knowledge on Generation Y, filling a gap two-fold, by providing insights into the Generation Y as well as employees within the financial industry and in Germany. Both fields are still underrepresented compared to the coverage in Anglo-Saxon countries as a recent literature review has shown (Prakash & Tiwari, 2021).

In terms of methodology, the decision to utilise an online survey with the same questions over a period of twelve months has proven to be highly effective as the depth and quality of the responses has created rich information beyond the traditional study with the duration of twelve months having eliminated some of the temporal limitations. In combination with the consistent use of the alias by some of the participants, individual stories have evolved providing a deep understanding of the incidents impacting the three work-related drivers at individual level but also across the group of participants.

10.9.2. Limitations

When critically reviewing the research methods, the second research tool used five semi-structured interviews with internal participants, which can be attributed to the limited personal access to participants due to the COVID-19 pandemic as well as the fact that I had left Triangle unintentionally after the completion of the survey. However, this did not pose an issue as saturation was achieved with those interviews conducted, given that the core themes related to work motivation identified via the survey were covered in detail confirming the findings of the survey without surfacing any relevant additional themes. Additionally, the use of four further interviews with external candidates confirmed this view.

Having conducted the research as a member of Triangle among fellow colleagues has created an account of the views of Generation Y belonging a single organisation within the German financial industry. Reflecting on my own positionality, the research has been a co-production between myself as the researcher and the participants on the other hand, which cannot be generalised beyond Triangle Germany. Despite this, the Generation Y dynamic interaction model at Triangle Germany provides a model that can be utilised as a reference point for further research into other organisational and industry contexts.

10.10. Personal reflections

When reflecting on the development of this research, it has been an incredible journey for me characterised by some unforeseen events. Most notably, the start of the COVID-19 pandemic was a relative surprise, although it had been seen coming two to three months ahead based on the events spreading from China to Asia and finally to Europe. However, while the pandemic has brought challenges in terms of logistics and interaction with the participants, it also brought the unique chance of documenting the impact it had on Triangle Germany and part of its members. Grabbing this opportunity, the survey allowed me to discover new themes such as the influence of mobile working and, related to this, the development of a work-life balance that the literature had always associated with this generation, but which now received a completely new angle. Representing a new co-existence of work and non-work with work becoming more flexible and permeable than ever before, work-life balance changed to work-life blending or integration as described in the literature. With a view on current developments of larger organisations such as Apple, Deutsche Bank and others, the pendulum of flexibility seems to be adjusting itself. It remains to be seen whether this was just a phase of flexibility or whether there are elements of it to stay for good, therefore being a field for further research.

In terms of the research itself, the question, whether sufficient trust could have been developed between me and the participants was the key uncertainty at start. With the first responses received, the level of information shared as well as the number of answers received relieved this anxiety, which only returned when I left the organisation slightly earlier than expected just after the survey had been finished. This move put the further research temporarily at risk as the ability to contact participants for the interviews made this step more difficult than anticipated. Eventually, this also worked out but led to a lower number of interviews than originally anticipated, however, having reached saturation, this did not matter.

Finally, this research has provided me with a tremendous learning experience, both as a practitioner as well as a developing doctoral researcher. In my capacity as a manager and leader, I have benefited from the discovery of new themes and their interaction thanks to the openness of the participants in combination with the unprecedented geo-political situation. The results have been visualised in the Generation Y dynamic interaction model at Triangle Germany, which I am able to assess and test in my current role as managing director of a German subsidiary of a multinational IT company. However, the learning experience as a developing doctoral researcher has been probably one of the steepest learning curves in my entire life, which was thankfully guided by my two supervisors. The rigour and depth of the research process has been unparalleled, tracing themes back to their origins and therefore gaining a deep understanding of the underlying theories. Building on these newly acquired skills, I see this research as an important milestone on my journey as a researcher that will most likely not end here.

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Appendix

Appendix 1: Letter of recommendation

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24/02/20

To Whom It May Concern,

Gerald Rink PhD Research Project

Gerald Rink is currently enrolled at the University of Gloucestershire as a PhD researcher. His thesis investigates work-related behaviour of Generation Y in the financial industry, using an anonymised case study of his own employer organisation.

In conducting his research Gerald is required to adhere to the University's ethical research policy document *Research Ethics: A Handbook of Principles and Procedures*. This assures confidentiality and anonymity to all research participants and organisations. It also requires Gerald to ensure that research participants are fully informed about his research project and its purpose, and that their participation in the study is voluntary.

If you wish to know more about the ethical principles that Gerald's research project must follow please ask him to explain them further, or you are welcome to contact me. If you contact me I will not share your details with Gerald.

Yours sincerely,

[redacted]

Dr Keith Donne,
Head of Postgraduate Research Degrees

Appendix 2: Pilot Study responses for motivating and demotivating factors

Table: Results for motivating factors – Summarised responses

	M1			M2			M3			M1-3		
Categories	Gen Y	Gen X	All	Gen Y	Gen X	All	Gen Y	Gen X	All	Gen Y	Gen X	All
Recognition	9	3	12	6	3	9	2	7	9	17	13	30
Success	4	3	7	6	5	11	2	0	2	12	8	20
Development	2	3	5	4	1	5	1	0	1	7	4	11
Promotion/Salary	1	3	4	3	2	5	3	1	4	7	6	13
Teamwork	1	1	2	1	1	2	2	0	2	4	2	6
Other	3	2	5	0	3	3	2	4	6	5	9	14
Empty	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	3	11	8	3	11
Total	**20**	**15**	**35**	**20**	**15**	**35**	**20**	**15**	**35**	**60**	**45**	**105**

M1 = Most critical incident leading to an increase in motivation
M2 = More important incidents leading to an increase in motivation
M3 = Further important incidents leading to an increase in motivation

Table: Results for motivating factors – Responses shown as percentage

	M1			M2			M3			M1-3		
Categories	Gen Y	Gen X	All	Gen Y	Gen X	All	Gen Y	Gen X	All	Gen Y	Gen X	All
Recognition	45%	20%	34%	30%	20%	26%	10%	47%	26%	28%	29%	29%
Success	20%	20%	20%	30%	33%	31%	10%	0%	6%	20%	18%	19%
Development	10%	20%	14%	20%	7%	14%	5%	0%	3%	12%	9%	10%
Promotion/Salary	5%	20%	11%	15%	13%	14%	15%	7%	11%	12%	13%	12%
Teamwork	5%	7%	6%	5%	7%	6%	10%	0%	6%	7%	4%	6%
Other	15%	13%	14%	0%	20%	9%	10%	27%	17%	8%	20%	13%
Empty	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	40%	20%	31%	13%	7%	10%
Total	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**

M1 = Most critical incident leading to an increase in motivation
M2 = More important incidents leading to an increase in motivation
M3 = Further important incidents leading to an increase in motivation

Table: Results for demotivating factors – Summarised responses

	D1			D2			D3			D1-3		
Categories	Gen Y	Gen X	All	Gen Y	Gen X	All	Gen Y	Gen X	All	Gen Y	Gen X	All
Management issues	12	8	20	4	6	10	5	2	7	21	16	37
Lack of recognition	3	3	6	6	3	9	2	1	3	11	7	18
No adequate pay	1	0	1	0	3	3	0	2	2	1	5	6
Lack of teamwork	2	2	4	2	2	4	1	1	2	5	5	10
Other	2	2	4	6	1	7	2	6	8	10	9	19
Empty	0	0	0	2	0	2	10	3	13	12	3	15
Total	**20**	**15**	**35**	**20**	**15**	**35**	**20**	**15**	**35**	**60**	**45**	**105**

D1 = Most critical incident leading to a decrease in motivation
D2 = More important incidents leading to a decrease in motivation
D3 = Further important incidents leading to a decrease in motivation

Table: Results for demotivating factors – Responses shown as percentage

	D1			D2			D3			D1-3		
Categories	Gen Y	Gen X	All	Gen Y	Gen X	All	Gen Y	Gen X	All	Gen Y	Gen X	All
Management issues	60%	53%	57%	20%	40%	29%	25%	13%	20%	35%	36%	35%
Lack of recognition	15%	20%	17%	30%	20%	26%	10%	7%	9%	18%	16%	17%
No adequate pay	5%	0%	3%	0%	20%	9%	0%	13%	6%	2%	11%	6%
Lack of teamwork	10%	13%	11%	10%	13%	11%	5%	7%	6%	8%	11%	10%
Other	10%	13%	11%	30%	7%	20%	10%	40%	23%	17%	20%	18%
Empty	0%	0%	0%	10%	0%	6%	50%	20%	37%	20%	7%	14%
Total	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**

D1 = Most critical incident leading to a decrease in motivation
D2 = More important incidents leading to a decrease in motivation
D3 = Further important incidents leading to a decrease in motivation

Appendix 3: Letter to potential survey participants within Triangle Germany

Participants needed for my research at the University of Gloucestershire

Dear colleague,

I would like to ask for your help. Having started my PhD-studies at the University of Gloucestershire in December 2016, I am now due to commence the research study phase for my thesis. With a focus on the work-related behaviour of employees having been born in 1982 or later working in the financial industry, I am particularly interested in researching the triggers for motivation, loyalty and career development.

For this purpose, I have created a short survey with 12 questions that will be asked to participants each month over a period of 9-12 months. As I am interested in understanding the trigger points, I am eager to learn from the participants which situations during a month have increased or decreased their motivation at work and why this happened. From the results, I expect to gain insights into potential suggestions for organisations and their management on ways to increase motivation and loyalty among their employees.

To gain these insights, I am looking for volunteers among you that are willing to participate in this study. Filling out the survey will require approx. 10-15 minutes each month hence I am asking for approx. 3 hours of your time of the course of a year. All information will be treated confidentially, and you will remain as I am only collecting the data for usage within my thesis. No details will be shared with HR or other members of the organisation.

To assure your anonymity, I will not ask you any statistical details on your background or length of service as this is not relevant to my study. To start with, I will need your consent to participate and hence your work email to which I will send the monthly link inviting you to complete the survey. Within the survey, you can opt to use an alias instead of your name so that I am able to link the monthly responses to each anonymous participant as this will allow me to share some consolidated figures on the development of motivation and loyalty with you, the participant.

So, if you are born in 1982 or later and would like to support my research, please contact me either directly or via email for further details on the study and how to participate. My intention is to start the study by end of March this year.

Many thanks for your support which I highly appreciate.

Regards

Gerald

Appendix 4: Information on Alias within survrey

In total 313 responses have been received. Of these 313 responses, 291 have completed the survey to an extent that meaningful answers could be retrieved and 22 did not complete the survey.

Of the 291 completed answers, 68 answers came via the English survey link, while 223 answers were received via the German survey link.

Of the 68 English answers, 63 answers were linked to an alias while 5 answers left the alias blank. In total, 13 different aliases were given plus the blank answers.

Of the 223 German answers, 179 answers were linked to an alias while 44 answers left the alias blank. In total 40 different alias were given plus the blank answers.

From the aliases given, the following table highlights the number of monthly participations:

Number of Participations	Number of Alias	Total Responses
12	4	48
11	2	22
10	2	20
9	3	27
8	3	24
7	2	14
6	4	24
5	4	20
4	4	16
3	1	3
2	2	4
1	20	20
	51	242

The participants “Louise” and “SurveyMonkey” used both language links on different occasions hence the list above shows 51 different aliases whereas the English (13) and German (40) alias would add up to 53, if counted separately.

Of the participants, “Leo”, “Mr.X”, “Aurelius” and “SAM” completed all 12 surveys, followed by “AS” and “Louise” with 11 participations. “Doradini” and “Charly” completed 10 surveys, “13579”, “Niklas” and “56039” each 9.
8 Surveys were completed by “O3”, “TowerBridge” and “LPdC”.

The following corrections were made with the alias as it was clear that these belonged to the same participant:

13578 amended to 13579
#7 to Seven
Dora to Doradini
Don’t know Marcus to Marcus
Kratos to Kratos83
LCDP to LPdC
LP to LPdC
Lego TowerBridge to TowerBridge
Nikk to Niklas
91013 to 41013

Appendix 5: List of survey participants

Alias	No of Participations	DE Survey Link	EN Survey Link
Aurelius	12	Yes	No
Leo	12	Yes	No
Mr. X	12	Yes	No
SAM	12	Yes	No
AS	11	No	Yes
Louise	11	Yes	Yes
Charly	10	No	Yes
Doradini	10	Yes	No
13579	9	Yes	No
56039	9	No	Yes
Niklas	9	Yes	No
LPdC	8	No	Yes
O3	8	Yes	No
TowerBridge	8	Yes	No
41013	7	Yes	No
Sonja123	7	Yes	No
Bibi Blocksberg	6	Yes	No
Rainbow	6	No	Yes
Rulez	6	Yes	No
Seven	6	Yes	No
Apollo 13	5	Yes	No
Casper	5	No	Yes
Michael	5	Yes	No
Sunset	5	Yes	No
Fuentes1	4	Yes	No
Kratos83	4	Yes	No
Muckel	4	Yes	No
Yvonne	4	Yes	No
Marcus	3	Yes	No
Konfuzius	2	Yes	No
SurveyMonkey	2	Yes	Yes
82	1	Yes	No
1986	1	Yes	No
Colourful	1	No	Yes
Corinna	1	Yes	No
DK2020	1	Yes	No
DM1	1	Yes	No
Triangle	1	Yes	No
FIL1	1	No	Yes
iGude	1	Yes	No
John Smith	1	Yes	No

Alias	No of Participations	DE Survey Link	EN Survey Link
Mave	1	Yes	No
MNS2415	1	Yes	No
Motivation	1	No	Yes
Nathalie	1	Yes	No
Sofia	1	No	Yes
Sunshine4416	1	Yes	No
Teilnehmer1	1	Yes	No
Teilnehmer100	1	Yes	No
X	1	Yes	No
Yes	1	No	Yes
"No Alias Given"	49	Yes	Yes

Appendix 6: List of interview participants

Internal interview partners derived from the list of survey participants:

Participant INT1

Participant INT2

Participant INT3

Participant INT4

Participant INT5

External Interview partners derived from the list of pilot participants:

Participant EXT1

Participant EXT2

Participant EXT3

Participant EXT4

Appendix 7: Guideline for semi-structured interviews

Guideline for interviews

Aim:

It is planned to conduct 5-6 of semi-structured interviews with participants of the 12-month study. The interviews focus on the key themes identified from the survey to gain a deeper insight and understanding of these themes.

Themes identified:

Among the most cited themes emerging from the survey were the continued high workload as a negative factor and the strength of the team among the positive factors. Added to these two themes will be impact of the pandemic. While this has not been mentioned extensively with direct references, it has disrupted the traditional way of working as commentaries on home office and the support of the company have highlighted.

Interview process:

The interviews will be held via Zoom or Teams and recorded in parallel using a mobile phone (agreement of the participants required). Should the opportunity for a face-to-face interview emerge, this could also be incorporated into the process.

Interview structure:

The interview will be started with a short summary of the status of the research to establish rapport as well as a confirmation that additional information on the findings will be shared at the end of the interview to avoid any unwanted influences in the interview process.

Process:

First, the main question will be posed with a view to get a broad and unrestricted answer capturing the views of the participant. Following this comprehensive answer, the additional questions will be asked in a conversational manner unless the content has already been covered in the main question.

Following the three areas of interest, a final question will be asked without any restrictions to allow the participant to add any subject that has been of importance to him/her.

<u>1st Question: Tell me, how have you experienced the workload during the time of the survey?</u>

Following this open question, the participant will be able to report on any aspects that spring to his mind whether these are positive or negative. With a view on the findings from the survey, additional questions can be introduced into the discussion to probe deeper into the initial findings allowing a better understanding of these points.

- **What was the impact of the work / workload onto your motivation?**
  This question aims to explore the often-cited heavy workload and better understand the impact on the individual's motivation

- **Moving away from the topic of motivation, how would you describe the impact of the work on your loyalty towards your employer?**
  This question tries to improve the understanding why the loyalty towards the employer has

steadied throughout the period of the survey being little impacted by any negative events such as heavy workload etc.

- **Thinking about the workload, what part of this has impacted you most?**
  In conjunction with the previous question, this one aims at learning more about the impact of a heavy workload, i.e. whether these are the long hours, the extra hours at weekends or the content of the work.

- **If you think about your work-life-balance during the past year, how would you describe this compared to previous years?**
  The question aims to explore further the impact of the extra hours most employees had to work on their private life. With the wording being kept vague, this also leaves room for any commentaries on home office or the overall situation which could lead over to question three and the impact of the pandemic.

2nd Question: When you think about the pandemic, how has this influenced your work motivation during the time of the survey?

As with the first question, the participant can pick up on any topic that springs to his mind when thinking about the pandemic. This could be the home-office, the contribution of the employer in terms of financial support, the "loss" of the colleagues to name a few of the topics raised during the survey.

Depending on the answer, several supplementary questions can guide the conversation further into the identified themes.

- **Let us consider the way your employer has acted during the pandemic, can you describe the impact on your motivation?**
  Here, the financial support was cited as a positive aspect while negative aspects could be the split of teams into A and B therefore preventing some colleagues to meet at all or the negative announcements related to the reduced or flattened bonus.

- **Following up on the shift of work from the office into the home office, how has this impacted your overall routines and life?**
  The question aims at the theme that some employees have struggled to separate work from private life due to working from home.

- **Think about the pandemic and the necessity to work from home, can you describe whether and how this has changed your relationship with your co-workers developed during the pandemic?**
  Leading over to the third main topic, the question tries to obtain further information on the new way of working with the colleagues given that the team and co-workers were often cited as a source of motivation. On the other hand, the communication has become less direct which has also been mentioned as a negative point by other participants.

3rd Question: Think about your team and closest co-workers, how would you describe their impact on your work motivation during the time of the survey?

Leading over from the previous question of new ways of working, this question allows the participant to reflect on the role and importance of his team and co-workers as the team was cited as the one most positive impact on motivation weathering any other negative impacts.

To further understand how the team has been impacting the motivation, the following additional points will be added to the conversation.

- **If you think of your closest co-workers, in which way do they influence your motivation to work and why do you think this is the case?**
  In the survey, the bonding with team was described as a mixture of trust and responsibilities which the members shared by caring for each other.

- **Let us stay with your immediate team, can you describe what specific actions have impacted your motivation most and why?**
  Closely linked to the previous question, this one aims to get deeper into the understanding of role the team and their actions had.

- **Moving away from your team to your manager, could you describe to what extent your manager has impacted your motivation at work and can you provide some examples?**
  In comparison to the mentioning of co-workers and the team, the manager has received limited comments which were also mixed. This is slightly out of line from the expectations derived from the literature review.
-

<u>4th Question: Is there any other topic you would like to raise that has been a positive or negative contributor to your motivation?</u>

This question is more to wrap up the interview and to ensure that no other significant theme has been missed from the participant's point of view. In case more themes emerge from this question, the interview might need to be extended or a second date to be fixed resulting in an unstructured interview. Whether and how this could or would need to be included is to be assessed then.

Wrap-up and close

As initially indicated, the participant will receive some additional and general information on the findings of the survey without providing details that could lead to the identification of individual participants. For the interview, the participant will be offered to receive the transcribed interview for review. Additionally, the participant will be asked whether he is available for any additional clarification when analysing the interviews.

Appendix 8: Sample of transcribed semi-structured interview with INT1

00:00:01
Interviewer: INT1 (name deleted), thanks very much for your willingness to participate in the interview. First, the question, is it OK, if I record the interview?

00:00:12
INT1: Absolutely.

00:00:14
Interviewer: Thank you very much. Just to give you a brief overview of how the process will work. From the survey to which you participated; I've identified a number of themes which are of interest. Three of them I have picked out and to those I will ask you some questions with some corresponding questions to follow up, potentially. In the end, there is room for further questions from your side, and I'm happy to share something from the survey as well. But I would like to do this at the end, so not to interfere with any of your thoughts when I raised the first questions.

00:00:57
INT1: OK, go for it. Let's see what the questions are.

00:00:59
Interviewer: Good. Well, it's mainly obviously about motivation as you would have guessed. So tell me, how you experienced the workload during the time of the survey. So, if you think back to the 12 months from March 2020 to February 21.

00:01:19
INT1: Mm hmm. I would say probably very volatile in the sense that sometimes there was a lot to do and sometimes there really wasn't. And that's also partially due to the area that I was working in. That is quite a volatile area in terms of workload. So sometimes you tend to have peaks, where quite a few projects kind of come together and where you have to do them all at once and everyone has deadlines. And then, once all of those kind of peaks have been worked off your side, it goes back out to other stakeholders and you're waiting for that to come back and then it moves into a trough. Having moved into a different area, now I could definitely tell that's changed. Operations is way more, always volatile on the high end of volume, just by nature of the service. But yeah, it was very much peaks and troughs at the time.

00:02:10
Interviewer: And the peaks and troughs, they corresponded with your motivation at work as well.

00:02:17
INT1: No, because I think I was desperately unmotivated already. So, even the peak time kind were not really motivating, just because I wasn't happy in what I was doing any longer. So, I wouldn't say a peak or a trough time was necessarily motivating and motivating for me. I was very much unmotivated, because I didn't feel valued in my position. I didn't feel that I liked the work that I was doing any longer and I wasn't feeling challenged, which was which was probably the main factor being unmotivated or demotivated, you know.

00:02:58
Interviewer: Demotivated. Yes. OK, that's an interesting point. But moving away from motivation, how would you describe the impact of work on your loyalty towards your employer during the time of the survey?

00:03:17
INT1: I wasn't very loyal as you can tell as I changed jobs. So again, it wasn't great. So, I think the loyalty part, because I felt so undervalued and kind of not really, my team wasn't looking out for their employees. They didn't really care. It was kind of out of mind, out of sight. And I am now very much

in a team where they do care very much about their kind of team commitment and people are feeling valued and welcome. I can also tell that I was probably managed by a bunch of people who didn't, who were single mindedly focused on achieving their own goals. And that meant, unfortunately, they also had a team that they needed to work with and participate in order to fulfill them. But they weren't really about that team in the first place. So, yeah, I don't think my loyalty was very high. As such, I was looking for jobs inside and outside.

00:04:22
Interviewer: Well, loyalty obviously can be defined in different ways. But I mean, you were probably, as you said not loyal or were not motivated in your previous position, but you still stayed on with the employer. So isn't that a kind of loyalty to the employer?

00:04:40
INT1: I think that's more for personal reasons than actual loyalty towards the employer. So, from a personal perspective, it made sense not to currently change jobs necessarily. And also, don't forget that during the time that you had the survey, Covid was obviously quite strong. And so, changing jobs brings a bit of a volatile perspective that you might not want to encounter in those times, necessarily. Next to those personal reasons that probably were the main focus of me not finding it sensible to change employers.

00:05:18
Interviewer: OK, yes.

00:05:19
INT1: Well, you called this loyalty, I kind of called that more me being selfish because it was serving me more than it wasn't.

00:05:28
Interviewer: OK, we will come to the topic of the pandemic later on, because that was something, which wasn't mentioned too many times, but still it came up in bits and pieces INT1oss the different responses. But you mentioned the workload, the work being very volatile with peaks and troughs. Which part of this has impacted you most, if you think about it?

00:05:56
INT1: How do you mean?

00:05:59
Interviewer: Well, for example, let's say, if you've got a high workload, is there anything of it, which had a greater impact on you than other parts of its.

00:06:16
INT1: OK, hopefully I'll answer this question correctly, and if I'm not, please, please tell me and I'll try to adjust. So, obviously, if you have kind of peaks and you're working under high pressure, there's a big chance that you're feeling more stressed and also that there's more anxiety just in general that comes with the workload, because suddenly there's this kind of, the pressure is on. For me personally, I thrive under pressure. So, I do realize that I work a lot quicker, if I know that there are tight deadlines and things that I have to finish off in a shorter time period. So, for me, if I don't have that kind of pressure, even though that kind of increases potential anxiety levels, I personally can manage that quite well. The days just blend in, because I know, if I have one thing to do, it's just going to I'm going to wait around all day to do it. And that's just so boring because you are kind of not getting anywhere else. But then you're also not really getting that done because you're just pushing it out. This is really, really bad. From my attention perspective, is definitely the highest, if there is a lot on my to do list. So the troughs were way worse than the peaks.

00:07:43

Interviewer: Oh, that's an interesting way of seeing that. Thank you very much for that. Because that is probably not according to what some other people would think about the workload, but a good point.

00:07:57

INT1: Yeah, and definitely, do you know, Peter kind of said to me, why are you giving up a job where you kind of have a lot of the free time, so to speak, in the last job? Because even though I didn't feel valued, I apparently was still valued. You know, I'm still earning money. I wasn't doing an awful lot. And so, you know, the time was, I could still do other things, so to speak, because my workload was done. But I can tell that I'm thriving a lot more under pressure. I try to stick to my hours, but I just managed to get all that done in the hours which just means that my days are way more filled and then I'm also a lot more productive.

00:08:39

Interviewer: OK. And that brings me to a follow up question regarding the Work-Life Balance. So, if you think about the time during the survey, how has this impacted your work-life balance?

00:08:52

INT1: I have fantastic work life balance. But I always have a really good work-life balance, so, to be fair, I and I know that I mentally struggle very quickly, if I don't have a work life balance, because I get into a cycle of extreme anxiety and then I don't perform as well and work. I need to have a bit of downtime to decompress, before I go to sleep. I need my sleep. I need time to work out in the morning and to meditate. I know all of that in order to perform my best, so I try to stick to my schedule anyways. I was doing that beforehand as I'm doing it currently, even though the situation in terms of workload was very different. So happy with the exception to the rule. And obviously, if there is work that needs to be done, that's never a question. But I can also see in quite a few of my colleagues currently that they work a lot more, and that just makes them way less productive throughout the entire days because they're frustrated. The workload, and then they don't get things done, and then it gets late into the evening again. And it's a cycle. You have to know, I'm very strict about that, but I've always been strict about it. Though probably, it was better in the previous job, because obviously during the troughs, I was like buggering of a bit earlier,

00:10:07

Interviewer: OK, but so it seems that you've got a very good control system in place to keep this balance.

00:10:12

INT1: But I have to, also, so, if you know that that's not serving you, and it's also then by default, not really serving the employer, that's kind of weird. You know, you get go up at five and run for two hours. That's kind of the same principle to a certain degree.

00:10:30

Interviewer: It's therapy.

00:10:32

INT1: Exactly, it's called therapy, so everyone has to figure out what works for them. Definitely what works for me. So, I try to stick to that.

00:10:41

Interviewer: Okay. Well, thank you. As just said when you come to the topic, the subject of the pandemic. So, when you think about the pandemic, how has this influenced your work motivation, if it has influenced the motivation at all?

00:10:57

INT1: Yes, so, I mean, some things were a lot better, because beforehand I was the only one, who was in a team of people, who were sitting elsewhere. So, suddenly everyone was in a similar position, situation in terms of all on the screen whereas before there were like five or six people huddled around the table and I was the only one who was joining via video conference. So that made things, in terms of connecting, a lot easier. And I didn't feel as an outsider, which was good, and I saw a lot more of the team, because they weren't seeing each other in the office. So, they were all kind of dialling into things, which I hadn't probably, had probably been excluded from prior. Some got worse. So, especially, if the to-do list is very long. You know, it gets really, really easy to not feel motivated. And then to also procrastinate, I do find, especially when you're tired. Procrastination levels are a lot higher than they probably would be in the office, because you kind of have to pull yourself together. Here, I'd probably just lay down and do like a ten-minute sleep and then feel refreshed again and continue working. You'd probably go for coffee in the office, if I'm here. So, it probably works out on the same thing. But I've noticed when you're tired, it's very difficult to motivate yourself. And also, the screen time obviously has increased significantly. So, always kind of being on and being on the screen tends to get a bit exhausting at times.

00:12:27

Interviewer: Ok, so when you think about the employer and how the employer has acted during the pandemic, has this had an impact on your motivation or how has this felt?

00:12:39

INT1: So, it did, because I thought they were handling it quite well, and so they did ensure that we were feeling good that we were having like a good time in terms of our well-being. We were. I've noticed not a lot of employers were doing that. We were being provided money so that we could kind of, you know, assess how our desk situation was at home and that we were not out of pocket for working from home. They stayed really on talking terms of providing us with information. They ensured that our jobs were safe, for a certain period of time. I mean, they didn't say that officially. But basically, like after that period of time finished, there were some things, I kind of thought, ok, life has to kind of continue and work, I guess. So, there were a lot of things that I thought they were doing well and that were communicated well from the top, which actually made me appreciative of my employer a lot more, because I noticed that not all of my friends were being given the same treatment.

00:13:50

Interviewer: OK, but as you initially said, when we talked about this at the beginning of the interview, it has not impacted your loyalty to a great extent.

00:14:01

INT1: Maybe, it was a tad higher, but it hasn't, you know, it hasn't totally, and I wasn't like it. At the end of the day, personally, I always find you don't really leave a company. You leave your manager. And I wasn't happy with my management. And so, what the company was doing was great in terms of overall work from a pandemic perspective, but that wasn't coming from my management. You know, that was coming from the top. So, yeah, that was nice and appreciated. But it doesn't really change the management and the staff.

00:14:38

Interviewer: OK, now understood. You briefly touched already on some things for now, that the shift from the office to the Home Office has changed some things for you, obviously, with you being here today, as said, the only person not in the UK office where the rest was based. Has it otherwise changed any of your routines of your daily life?

00:15:03

INT1: It has. So, definitely it has. When the pandemic started, because again, I know that eventually these things can be quite difficult for me, and I used to be in a home office environment where we were working all hours, day and night, and I was always exhausted, and it just wasn't serving me. So, I arranged to take our neighbour's dog for a walk every lunchtime. So, I've been doing a walk for the last two years at every lunchtime, which has now transferred into having our own dog. I'm obviously walking a lot more, but I always enjoyed that. I thought at least like an hour at lunchtime to go outside, which, if when I'm now in the office, that's actually something I really miss. So, I always take a longer lunch break of around one and a half hours, which is really nice and quite refreshing in the middle of the day. Obviously, in terms of time that you have for yourself, because you're not commuting. That's a lot more so that, you know, workouts got longer, you could meditate longer. I have a business which I tend to spend an hour in the morning as well working on, so that wasn't possible prior in terms of work life balance. My husband's in a high profile job and we didn't see each other very much. We saw each other enough, don't get me wrong, but you definitely spend a lot more time together, because he was able to finish work earlier. When he finished work, he didn't have to commute for forty-five minutes or so, either. So, in terms of work life balance, that's definitely not something I would want to miss again. And it has shown us how much we think in terms of commuting and working prior, which is unnecessary. Most of the things you can actually do from home. So, it had an edge. It had a really positive impact on me, on our life, on my life.

00:16:52
Interviewer: So, if you would summarize, home office has got a more positive connotation for you?

00:16:58
INT1: It's a great place to be. Yes. I spend an hour in the sun today. It was so nice outside. I spent an hour like in our fields walking. It was beautiful. And you got some fresh air, and you wouldn't usually get that. And every time I am up to the office, I'm like, ok, this will be my rest day, because I won't have time to work out and do everything and maybe walk the dog and all of that. We're going to the office. So yeah, a lot more sitting around then.

00:17:26
Interviewer: OK. But it's probably something, what you say, for future type of work, to be considered. Because I think a lot of people appreciate the home office as there are many positive effects to this.

00:17:40
INT1: Yeah, but also, do you know that comes down to your personal self? Because I know a lot of people who will then just sit at their desk in between meetings all the time and and don't do that. That's also how you choose to spend your time when you wake up and sit down at seven a.m. Like my husband always says to me, and that's very true, if you start at 9:00, you'll probably finish at nine. If you start at seven, you'll still also finish at nine. So, we've just decided, we're going to start at nine and then have the morning to us. And at least we've already got the feeling that you've done something with yourself because you're probably going to work late into the evening.

00:18:16
Interviewer: Very true, yes. It doesn't make a difference in the evenings. When you briefly said in your previous job that your relationship with your co-workers has probably not been negatively, but potentially positively affected by the fact that you are all in home office. How is this in your current job, where everyone is or would be in the same office? How would you see it from that perspective? Now that everyone can see each other but is online?

00:18:46
INT1: So, it's not negative in the sense that we speak a lot anyway throughout the day, just by the work that we're doing. You kind of have to talk a lot all the time anyways, and we're having like group chats going on and all of that. The entire team isn't overly keen on going into the office, to be fair, so, you know, but there's no one like sitting in the office thinking, I would love to see my colleagues here because we're all kind of really enjoying home life here very much. By the way, the

commute is a bit of a bitch, if I can say that, sorry. But we've also taken the chance to, when it was possible, to kind of see each other and to do social stuff, which is then nice and sometimes go into the office. So, it'll be nice to have days in the office, but they need to be well planned because there are sometimes days where I know, I'll be in meetings from nine a.m. to five back-to-back. That doesn't make sense for me to go into the office, because, if your office isn't as well equipped any longer as my home office is. I find that doesn't really work that well. I'm constantly surrounded by people who are then also talking, which is kind of confusing that they're talking to you on camera. They're clearly seeing that you're speaking to somebody else. It doesn't really work. So, you have to find the days where you don't really have that many meetings via screen. So, it's going to be a tradeoff. But we have seen each other socially, also in terms of the bigger teams. And that actually is the most fun part because the team gets on really well and then seeing each other socially in the evenings, it's probably even nicer than seeing each other in the office.

00:20:35
Interviewer: Okay, cool. That leads nicely over to the third area, which is related to the coworkers and colleagues. And if you think about it, obviously in your previous position, about your colleagues, so the ones during the survey. How would you describe their impact on your motivation?

00:21:19
INT1: Yeah, that probably also was a big part of the timing because two of my colleagues were let go that I was closest to in our team. So, that didn't help in terms of motivation. It was communicated in a shitty way, and it just made it obvious that the management didn't really care about our well-being, necessarily. Like I said, that's so different from area to area and person to person. But it was just really disappointing the way that that had been handled. And then to a certain degree, my safety net also broke away like the people that I was closest to and that I was enjoying spending time with. I felt really, not betrayed, but you know, it leaves a really sour taste in your mouth, because you don't really know whether that's going to happen to you next. Because there wasn't an obvious reason, and the reasons they gave didn't really exist. And for whatever reason, there was a real strong need to employ at least four contractors shortly after, like in the span of six months, which doesn't really make any sense why you then have to let two people go. So that didn't help in terms of motivation at all.

00:22:50
Interviewer: OK. Yes, but that was probably as you described, if I understood correctly, it was the fact that these two colleagues were made redundant. But were there any specific actions from your colleagues that impacted your motivation? So, from the others of the team?

00:23:21
INT1: So, no, it was less about them doing anything, more about the way it was handled and obviously that the people that I trusted most weren't there any longer to be trusted, because they had been made redundant and then gone. Then the entire team, this wasn't just me, but the entire team obviously sat there and didn't really, you know, you cannot imagine how badly it was handled. It was a call, basically we were told, attend this call. Then we attended the call. Everyone was on mute. We weren't allowed to speak. They presented a slide. And it said, as a result of whatever, we're letting these two people go, bye. I think it was a one-hour meeting scheduled, five minutes and it was over. And I think they waited for two minutes to have everyone on the call. They never spoke about it again, explained it in detail as to why that had happened. It left everyone with a burning question. Do you know, what does that mean, am I going to be next? And it was just really uncomfortable and then obviously highly demotivational, because you were kind of thinking, I don't really understand what's going on. You've never explained it to me, and I don't really know what I'm standing in all of this. But that wasn't just me thinking that. I know a lot of people were confused

about this. And it was really very much, because it was handled so badly and so inefficiently, and just really poorly.

00:25:02
Interviewer: Thanks very much for going to these details. Obviously, this relates to the management and your direct manager, were there any other points in which they influenced your motivation during the time of the survey?

00:25:18
INT1: Yes, they promised me multiple times prior, but also around that time that I was going to be promoted and that never happened. Basically, they said, you know, we're close and then you didn't hear anything for months and then after six months, you kind of thought you are close, what's happening? Oh, this is changed now. What does that mean? We don't know yet. We'll let you know. And then like, three months later, you're like, can somebody please give me an update? We don't know. Maybe, maybe not. We'll see. And nothing ever came of it. And that's just, I mean, it's frustrating when you look at it and you're close to being made promises and they're not happening. I mean, when I handed in my notice, they were like, well, we could be able, we would be able to give you a position. I was like, why now? And you haven't been able to do that for the last two and a half years since we started talking about, I have shown enough patience to the point that I now actually made that position possible is so much fun. But yeah, that's just, I mean, that really doesn't help in terms of motivation.

00:26:35
Interviewer: So, is it fair to say that you lost in a way your trust in your management over this?

00:26:41
INT1: Yes, I think that's more than fair to say.

00:26:44
Interviewer: And how did they then finally react when you changed the job? I mean, you said they tried to offer you something which you didn't believe in, but where there any other reactions?

00:26:54
INT1: No, I think, I was very honest with my manager. I said to him, you know, you told me this was going to happen, isn't going to happen, and he said, I'm really sorry, but I don't know. And to a certain degree, I think my direct manager, I believe him. Unfortunately, he's just not the person, who is taking things into his own hand. He's always waiting for his manager. And that doesn't really help, if you're kind of dependent on someone and then it always gets carried into a different line management level. And I said, ok, you know, I have a stakeholder who thinks, I'd be good for a position and maybe it's time for change. And then he was super supportive. I told him about the process. I kept him up to date and then he released me pretty much immediately. So really supportive in terms of it, more support, more manager than any time prior when it came to the finish line, which was quite nice.

00:27:49
Interviewer: Hmm. OK. That's an interesting connection, I would say, but he's nice in the end.

00:27:56
INT1: Yeah, he was. He was. Yeah, I think he was just, you know, he was like, I know I can't give you what you need and it's annoying for me as well. And then like, I can at least support you moving on.

00:28:08
Interviewer: OK, fine. But this brings me to the end of the questions. So is there any other subject which you could think of or you'd like to raise, which impacted your motivation, either positive or negative during the time which we have touched upon?

00:28:24
INT1: I think we've covered it all.

00:28:26
Interviewer: OK, good. Well, then I would stop the recording and say thank you very much for your participation. As a next step, as I said, I will get a transcript after usually a re-work when you get this from a software as you get some pieces which didn't come out properly and would send it to you just for your confirmation. And if you are then fine with this, I will work with it going forward.

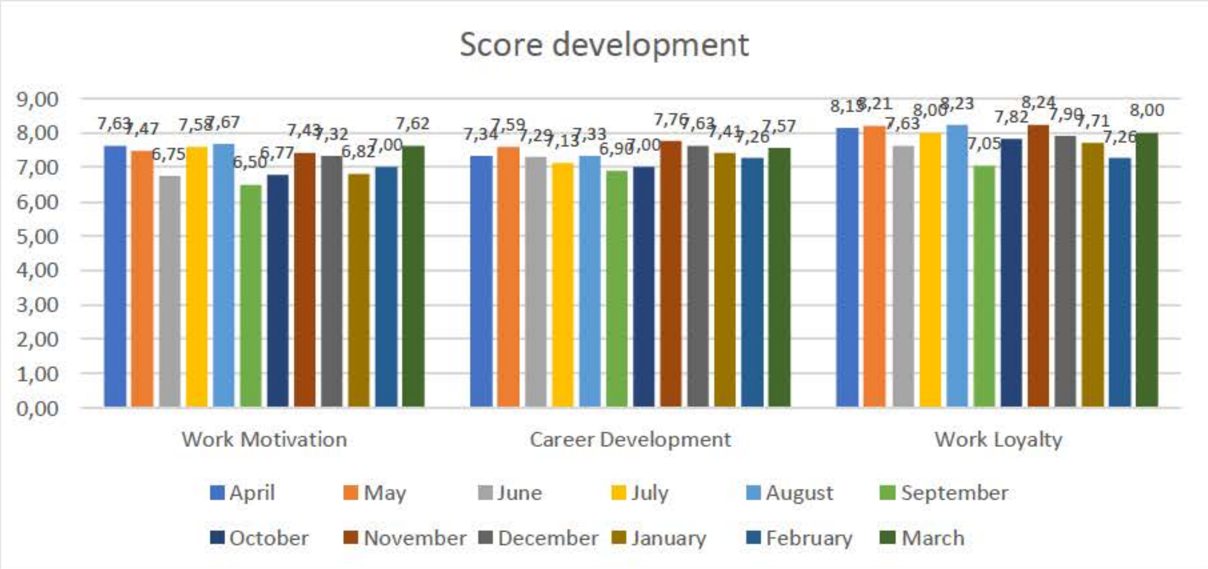
00:28:56
INT1: OK, sounds good

Appendix 9: Sample of monthly update to participants

Motivation, Karriere und Loyalität

Highlights März 2021

- Wert für alle drei Bereiche gestiegen
- Arbeitsmotivation deutlich gestiegen (Frage 6)
- Zufriedenheit mit der Karriere etwas weiter zugenommen (Frage 8)
- Starker Anstieg bei der Loyalität (Frage 11)



Motivation:

Die Arbeitsmotivation (Frage 6) ist im letzten Monat der Umfrage stark angestiegen und hat fast genau das Niveau erreicht, welches in der ersten Umfrage vor gut einem Jahr gemessen wurde. Dieser Anstieg zeigt sich auch daran, dass fast die Hälfte der Teilnehmer eine gestiegene Motivation berichtet haben. Die Gründe hierfür waren weit gestreut und reichten von persönlichen Erfolgen mit Kunden oder der Teilnahme an interessanten Projekten bis zu der erneuten finanziellen Unterstützung durch die Firma. Positiv war wiederum, als zentrales Thema der gesamten Umfrage die Zusammenarbeit mit den Kollegen im eigenen Team. Gleichzeitig wurde die mangelnde Zusammenarbeit mit anderen Kollegen aus als negativ bewertet, gerade wenn dadurch eine negative Stimmung entstanden. Hauptnegativpunkt bleibt aber weiterhin die hohe Arbeitsbelastung, die wiederum das zentrale Thema auf der Negativseite war. Auch wurde in einigen Fällen mangelnde

Perspektive ins Spiel gebracht, was sich entsprechend auf die Motivation ausgewirkt hat.

Karriere:

Parallel zum Wert für Motivation hat auch der Wert zum Thema Karriere („Career Development“, Frage 8) angezogen, was in einigen Fällen auch mit konkreten Entwicklungen verbunden war. Weiterhin wurden auch positive Entwicklungsgespräche genannt, so dass sich hier bei einigen Teilnehmern etwas getan hat. Dem stehen auch gegenteilige Kommentare entgegen, die entsprechend zu niedrigeren Werten geführt haben. Allgemein ergibt sich hier kein einheitliches Bild wie schon in den Vormonaten.

Loyalität:

Die Loyalität (Frage 11) hat ebenfalls stark zugenommen, was mit dem Anstieg der beiden anderen Werte im Einklang steht. Gerade die Teilnehmer, die sich positiv zur Karriere geäußert haben, haben auch bei Loyalität eine Steigerung, bzw. ein Verharren auf hohem Niveau angegeben. Weiterhin hat die finanzielle Unterstützung durch die Firma positiv auf die Loyalität gewirkt. Dessen ungeachtet bleibt aber festzuhalten, dass einige Teilnehmer unabhängig von der jeweiligen Motivation kaum Schwankungen bei der Loyalität angegeben haben, was die These unterstreicht, dass Loyalität ein sehr langfristiger Wert ist, der sich nicht oder nur wenig durch kurzfristige Ereignisse verändert. Auf der anderen Seite zeigt die Übersicht zu Beginn des Dokuments auch, dass gerade bei der Loyalität Schwankungen über die vergangenen Monate zu beobachten waren.

Wie geht es weiter?

Ich werde nun die Ergebnisse im Detail auswerten und mit der schon vor einiger Zeit durchgeführten Literaturrecherche abgleichen. Gerade das eben genannte Thema Loyalität wie auch das eingangs unter Motivation beschriebene Phänomen der starken Unterstützung durch das Team als motivierender Faktor sind zwei Bereiche, die eine weitere Analyse rechtfertigen.

Euch allen möchte ich aber nochmals sehr herzlich für Eure Zeit und Unterstützung danken, da ich ohne Euch mein Ziel „PhD“ nicht erreichen würde. Gerne lasse ich Euch bei Interesse an den weiteren Schritten teilhaben. Schreibt mir dazu einfach bis zum 28. Mai auf meine Firmen-E-Mail (danach gerne auch auf meine private E-Mail eine kurze Nachricht und ich gebe ca. alle 3-4 Monate ein Update.

Ansonsten wünsche Ich Euch allen weiterhin viel Erfolg bei Euren eigenen Zielen und bedanke mich auch für die tolle Zusammenarbeit, die mich ja mit dem ein oder anderen von Euch in den letzten Jahren in Verbindung gebracht hat.

Alles Gute.