How to achieve alignment of the Malaysian Gen Y workforce with the systems and structures of organisations in Malaysia

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Southern Cross University

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How to Achieve Alignment of the
Malaysian Gen Y Workforce
with the
Systems and Structures
of
Organisations in Malaysia

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THIS THESIS IS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
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DECLARATION

I certify that the work presented in this thesis is, to the best of my belief and knowledge, original and references have been duly acknowledged. In addition, the material has not been submitted either in whole or in part for a degree at this or any other university.

I acknowledge that I have read and understood the University’s rules, requirements, procedures and policy related to this higher degree research conferment and to the thesis. I certify that I have complied with the rules, requirements, procedures and policy of the University.

........................................................................................................

Lim Kee Choon

Date: 15th July 2014
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Pursuing a doctorate study has long being my aspiration. The doctorate programme offered by SCU allowed me to study areas where my passion lies.

In my DBA journey, my daughter Rei provided me with some of the thoughts of her generation (Gen Y) with me.

Dr. Andy Woo was instrumental in structuring my research through his encouragement, probing questions and most of all his patience.

Professor Dr. Selvanathan, with his passion for excellence in research, gave me the motivation to keep striving.

Along the way were my many friends whom I shared my excitement with and who urged me on.

To all of these people, I wish to express my heartfelt thanks and gratitude.
ABSTRACT

A massive demographic change is taking place in Malaysia and other parts of the world. A large percentage of young adults are joining the workforce, while the older cohorts are leaving the workforce due to retirement. As Generation Y is purported to be technology savvy with very different beliefs, mind-sets, attitudes and preferences towards work, there is a challenge for both Gen Y and organisations in Malaysia to adapt existing organisational systems and structures.

This research explores Generation Y culture and how it can integrate into an organisation’s requirements in terms of its organisational systems and structures, as well as the steps to be taken by organisations to assimilate members of Generation Y.

A qualitative research orientation was adopted for this research. Seven focus groups were used to gather data on Generation Y. Eight interviews were conducted with CEOs, general managers and human resources managers from different types of organisations to examine the thinking and strategies undertaken by organisations to accommodate Generation Y culture. All data gathering took place in Malaysia.

The conclusion reached is that Generation Y members can be groomed to be productive workers and motivated to remain longer in an organisation when appropriate actions are taken by organisations.

The findings from this study will be useful to Generation Y for learning how to align to the requirements of organisations. For organisations, the findings will help in formulating human resources policies and practices that will attract and retain Generation Y in the long term.

Key Words:
Generation Gap  Gen Y  Millennials
Young Adults  New Workforce  Graduate Unemployment
Employability  Talents  Talent Development
Career Development  Training  Coaching, Mentoring
Work  Work Commitment  Organisational Systems
Organisational Structures
## ABBREVIATIONS

<table>
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<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>9MP</td>
<td>Ninth Malaysian Plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>GDP</td>
<td>Gross Domestic Product</td>
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<td>GLCs</td>
<td>Government Linked Companies</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICT</td>
<td>Information and Communications Technology</td>
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<tr>
<td>MDeC</td>
<td>Multimedia Development Corporation</td>
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<tr>
<td>MSC</td>
<td>Malaysian Super Corridor</td>
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<tr>
<td>NEP</td>
<td>National Economic Policy</td>
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<tr>
<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>SKMM/MCMC</td>
<td>Surohanjaya Komunikasi dan Multimedia Malaysia/ Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission</td>
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Introduction
Chapter 1

1.1 Introduction

This research is on Generation Y (Gen Y) and their beliefs, mindsets, attitudes, preferences and aspirations in work and towards organisations. Gen Y is a label placed on a generation born between the years 1980 and 2000 (Arsenault, 2004; Gravett & Throckmorton, 2007; Tapscott, 2009). This generation constitutes the majority of the incoming new workforce today.

The Research Thesis adopts the format of the five chapter thesis put forward by Perry (2002). This is as shown in Figure 1.1 below. The subsections of Chapter 1 are included in Figure 1.1 while the subsections of the other chapters are indicated in their respective chapters.

Figure 1.1: The five chapter thesis with chapter titles and detailed sections of Chapter 1 (Source: adapted from Perry, 2002)
1.1.1 Background: Generation Y – The New Workforce

World events and social norms not only change the world but shape the generations that grow up during particular times (Glass, 2007; Gravett & Throckmorton, 2007; Milliron, 2009). These events are termed defining moments (Schewe & Meredith, 2004) and the influences will be strongest during the generational cohorts’ coming of age (generally considered to be between 17 and 23 years in the United States). These different generations are purported to exhibit major differences in their beliefs, mindsets, values, attitudes, preferences and aspirations in many areas from work to lifestyle (Arsenault, 2004). For ease of referring to these beliefs, mindsets, values, attitudes, preferences and aspirations, they shall be designated as ‘gen cultures’ in this research. The different ‘gen cultures’ give rise to ‘generational differences’ and a mixture of these ‘gen cultures’ constitutes the ‘generational diversities’ that arise in the workplace (Lynne & Stillman, 2002; Deal, 2007). Previous studies investigating these subjects are called ‘generation gap’ studies.

The labels given to the different generations and the year bands they fall under (Arsenault, 2004; Tapscott, 2009; Martin & Tulgan, 2006) are:

1. The Traditionals (Silents) born between 1930 and 1945
2. The Baby Boomers (Boomers) born between 1946 and 1964
3. The Generation X (Gen X, X’ers) born between 1965 and 1976

According to Schewe and Meredith (2004), there are six generations. The additional two generations are before the Traditionals (Silents) mentioned above - the Depression Cohort (1912 to 1921) and the Second World War cohort (1922 to 1927). As the youngest of these two generations are past their mid-eighties today (2014), neither of these cohorts is included in this research. The Traditionals (Silents) are labelled the Post War cohort. Schewe and Meredith further break the Baby Boomers into two groups. As this research is focused more on Gen Y, treating Baby Boomers as a single cohort is deemed sufficient. At the time of Schewe and Meredith’s (2004) research, the latest cohort was Gen X. Gen Y was just coming onto the scene and not many studies had been carried out on Gen Y at that time.

‘Gen Y culture’ is purported to differ radically from the cultures of previous generations. This has been attributed to the coming together simultaneously of powerful forces such as
technological advancement (especially in the area of digital communications and social media); easier accessibility to tertiary education; the greater affluence of modern society; and globalisation during their growing up period and coming of age (Tapscott, 2009; Zevenbergen, 2004). These powerful forces that drive and influence Gen Y culture are described in Chapter 2, Section 2.2.3: Drivers and Influences. The ‘Gen Y culture’ is apparent in work attitudes, lifestyles, communication preferences and learning approaches. This has implications for organisations, business and education. This is depicted in Figure 1.2 below where the broad research problem narrows down to focus around the work environment and to a possible collision course between Gen Y and work as well as between Gen Y and organisations (Gursoy et al, 2008).

Fig. 1.2: Forces influencing and shaping Gen Y (Source: developed for this research)
1.2 The Research Problem and Contributions

1.2.1 The Research Problem

After the literature review in Chapter 2, the broad research problem area identified in Figure 1.2 is narrowed down to the research problem. The statement for the research problem is arrived at after asking the two research questions. Question 1 addresses Gen Y and Question 2 address the organisations that employ members of Gen Y. To guide the development of the research methodology, the research propositions for each research question are then drawn out. All of these are stated below starting with the research problem:

‘How to Achieve Alignment of the Malaysian Gen Y Workforce with the Systems and Structures of Organisations in Malaysia’

The two research questions designed are stated below followed by their respective research propositions.

1.2.2 Research Questions

1. How can Gen Y members align themselves to organisational systems and structures so as to demonstrate work commitment?
2. How can organisations re-design their systems and structures so as to obtain work commitment from members of Gen Y?

1.2.3 Research Propositions

i. For Research Question 1

a. Under favourable circumstances, members of Gen Y will comply with organisational hierarchies, policies, rules and regulations and the required working hours.
b. Career guidance, development programmes and growth opportunities offered by organisations are viewed differently by members of Gen Y than they are by other generations.
c. Gen Y members will demonstrate their commitment to work in their own ways.

ii. For Research Question 2

a. Organisations will need to re-organise their systems and structures to accommodate Gen Y culture.
b. Organisations will need to develop strategic and innovative career development and growth plans to retain Gen Y employees.

1.2.4 Research Objectives
The research objectives are:

- To determine whether Gen Y can align to organisations’ systems and structures by complying with organisational policies, rules and regulations.
- To explore what is attractive to Gen Y in terms of career development, training and working hours.
- To investigate what organisations are doing to address Gen Y culture in order to attract and retain them especially with regards to organisational hierarchies, training and promotional opportunities.

1.2.5 The Contributions
In 2011 in Malaysia, about 70,000 graduates were unemployed (Department of Statistics Malaysia, Statistics of Graduates in the Labor Force 2011). At the same time, organisations were crying out for suitable human talents (McKinsey, 2001; Tapscott, 2009). They were finding difficulties in recruiting and retaining new employees. Meanwhile, their existing experienced and knowledgeable managerial staff would be retiring from the work force in droves in the near future (Ball et al., 2011; Jorgensen, 2005). This study attempts to provide strategies for members of Gen Y to be employable and for organisations to attract and retain Gen Y employees.

Another important contribution is for the educational sector. The findings may provide information for the reform of traditional pedagogy, curricula, contents, and delivery methodologies for Gen Y (and the generations that follow) so as to produce graduates that meet the requirements of a productive workforce.

Other than the issue of unemployment of Gen Y and the shortage of talents faced by organisations mentioned earlier (as a result of a mismatch of skills between Gen Y and organisational requirements; as well as the rapid reduction in the skilled workforce as a result of Baby Boomers reaching their retirement age), one area of theoretical significance in the coming two decades is succession planning for organisations. Senior and higher positions once populated by Baby Boomers will be thinly populated by Gen X (in the Malaysian
demographic context). This represents a crisis in management not only for organisations but for other institutions as well.

An important priority is to examine whether Malaysian Gen Y is the same as or different to Gen Y in other countries around the world. This is covered in the Literature Review in Chapter 2, which finds many similarities but only a few major differences. The main differences are that Malaysian Gen Y members prefer cash rewards to flexible hours; training and development programmes are low on their list of preferences; and they find e-learning unacceptable although mentoring and coaching are welcomed. Loyalty to organisations is very low compared to the Gen Y in the rest of the world and including countries in Asia. All these merit more attention when working on incentives and rewards for Malaysian Gen Y.

1.3 Justifications for the Research

Although many studies have been conducted on generational differences and diversity in the past, today’s attention is focused on Gen Y as evident by the worldwide surveys conducted by PricewaterhouseCoopers (2009, 2008, 2007) and Deloitte (2010, 2009, 2005) as well as new publications on the subject of Gen Y (Tapscott, 2009; Orrell, 2008; Deal, 2007; Gravett & Throockmorton, 2007; Marston, 2007). Likewise, this research focuses on Gen Y but for background, summaries of Gen X culture and Baby Boomers culture are discussed in Chapter 2, Subsection 2.2.5: Cultures of Baby Boomers and Gen X and some comparisons are made in Subsection 2.2.6: Similarities and Differences between Baby Boomers, Gen X and Gen Y cultures.

The upsurge in interest in Gen Y is due to the massive change taking place in demographic patterns all over the world especially with a large percentage of Gen Y coming into the workforce (Ball et al., 2011: Beaver et al., 2005; Cole, 2002). Also, of importance is the need for organisations to ensure continuous profitability and sustainability of their business operations. Figure 1.3 illustrates the situation in the career hierarchy a decade on from 2010. It considers two scenarios. The first one is if the career progress direction and job roles continue along a traditional, mainly aged-based, linear trajectory. The second one is if the more contemporary multi-directional patterns prevail in which upward mobility is rapid (Appelbaum et al., 1997; Baruch, 2004; Garavan et al., 1996),
In the first scenario, a substantial portion of the already small population from the Baby Boomer generation (Statistic Department, Malaysia, 2011) is already retired, leaving behind very few in the top echelons of organisations. Gen X starts filling up the senior management positions while Gen Y is just moving to the supervisory level.

In the second scenario, both Gen X and Gen Y are pushed into senior management positions very much earlier. The implication here is that Gen X will be competing with Gen Y for senior positions. This places more stress on Gen X employees to maintain their positions as well as to be selected for promotions. For members of Gen Y, this means they need to increase their skills competency as well as prepare for heavier role responsibility and accountability. The critical issue is whether organisations are introducing strategies for this development of Gen X, and more specifically for Gen Y in the desired direction and speed. Of more direct interest is whether members of Gen Y are aware of this situation and how they are preparing themselves to fill these roles. Such implications call for further research.

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**Diagram Description:**

- **AGE**
  - Base Year 2010
  - Mid Career
  - Senior Mgt
  - Top Echelon
  - Retired

- **Traditional Career Path**
  - 10 Years from 2010
  - 2020

- **More Contemporary Pattern:**
  - Non-linear, Non Sequential and Non Chronological Age Bound

**Fig. 1.3:** Job roles and functions for different generations in 10 years’ time
(Source: developed for this research from Literature Review)
1.3.1 Research Gaps

Many studies on Gen Y focus on the identification of ‘Gen Y culture’; recommendations to organisations on meeting or accommodating ‘Gen Y culture’; and on offering advice, guidance and recommendations to Gen Y themselves (PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2009, 2008, 2007; Tapscot, 2009; Marston, 2007). The findings mainly support the view that Gen Y seeks a new order in the nature of work and expects organisations to accommodate their preferences and demands. Little emphasis is placed on whether Gen Y is able to adapt, adjust, compromise or even comply and conform to existing fundamental norms, policies, rules and practices required by work and by organisations. This opens up an area for exploration in this research.

From the perspective of organisations, most research focus is on recommendations to organisations on how to attract and retain Gen Y by accommodating ‘Gen Y culture’ (Chester, 2002; Marston, 2007) and not on guiding Gen Y how to align with organisational policies and practices. Therefore, this research investigates whether organisations in Malaysia have incorporated strategies in this direction in their organisational systems and structures.

The above are the broad which this research pursues. These research gaps are more clearly identified in the Literature Review in Chapter 2.

1.4. Methodology

The objective of this research is to explore the ‘why’, ‘which’, ‘when’ and ‘how’ questions related to the need for Gen Y and organisations to meet in the area of work. To accomplish this, the preferred approach is to use a ‘qualitative’ methodology (Neuman, 2006). Through choosing a ‘qualitative’ method, with free-flowing and/or semi-directed questions, more specific issues and their solutions may surface. Adopting a ‘quantitative’ approach constrains this objective by calling for a clearly defined research problem and hypotheses with their predictions pre-determined in advance for testing and confirmation. The data collection is through focus groups for Gen Y (Bryman & Bell, 2007; Kitzinger, 1995; Neuman, 2006) and personal interviews for the organisations (Bryman & Bell, 2007).

Guba & Lincoln (1994) and Lincoln & Guba (1985) propose that in qualitative research methodologies, trustworthiness and authenticity be used as alternatives to reliability and validity which are used in quantitative research methodologies (Bryman & Bell, 2007).
Therefore, the techniques and procedures to establish these are adhered to as closely as possible (McMurray, 2008). Triangulation is one important technique for ensuring trustworthiness and authenticity (Bryman & Bell, 2007).

1.5 Thesis Outline

The thesis follows the ‘five chapters thesis’ recommendations from Perry (2002). The outline of the five chapters is shown in Figure 1.4 below. Chapter 1 contains eight sections and starts off with an introduction on the background in which the research problem, the research questions and the research propositions are described. The justifications for this research are then highlighted. This is followed by the reasons for adopting a qualitative research methodology. The delimitations of the research and assumptions made when doing this research are also laid down together with the definitions of specific terms used. A brief overview of the remaining chapters is given below.

Chapter 2 is the Literature Review. This is where the conceptual framework is first established to determine the parent disciplines and the immediate disciplines from the broad research topic. Subsequently, this is narrowed down to establish the research problem, its research questions and the respective research propositions. The topics reviewed therefore cover the various generations and specifically Gen Y culture; the nature of work; and organisational structures and systems. To provide a firmer foundation for this research, a short review on the validity of the generation theory is undertaken.

Chapter 3 is on the research methodology and the justifications for the chosen research paradigm and methodology are described. The importance of ethical considerations when conducting the research is spelt out too.

Chapter 4 sets out the findings from the field work (focus groups and personal interviews). For the focus group findings, the main themes are paraphrased from the individual members of the focus groups while for the personal interviews, the main themes are summarised for each organisation represented. The data analysis process and techniques are also discussed.

Chapter 5 presents the conclusions with respect to the research problem, the research questions and the research propositions. It then looks at the implications for policies and practices especially in the areas where the greatest impacts will be felt. The limitations of the
research are highlighted together with recommendations on where further research may be conducted.
Figure 1.4: Thesis outline (Source: developed for this research)
1.6 Definitions

**Boundaryless work/career**

This is the pattern of work that is characterised by the changing of work roles and functions by individuals in seeking opportunities and self-improvement across different organisations over a period of time. This definition is based on the work of Arthur and Rousseau (1996). It is not to be confused with the ‘boundaryless organisation’, a term coined by former General Electric chairman, Jack Welch, to refer to the elimination of vertical and horizontal boundaries within the company and to the breaking down of external barriers between the company and its customers and suppliers. See also ‘Protean Career’.

**Career development theories**

In organisational development, career development theories are those that describe the lifelong psychological and behavioral processes together with the contextual influences that shape an individual’s career and life. There are many theories starting with Frank Parsons (Trait and Factor Theory) in 1909 to more contemporary theories from Schein (1978), Super (1988) and Holland (1997).

**Commitment**

The term commitment in this research is used in a holistic manner to cover definitions in a work context. It encompasses work commitment and organisational commitment as the two main components amongst others such as career commitment and professional commitment. Work commitment and organisational commitment are sometimes used interchangeably or they overlapped as seen below. There are variations in their individual definitions and the definitions for the two main components of work commitment and organisational commitment are given below. Another related component is ‘work values’.

*a. Work commitment:* For this research the definitions of terms given by Morrow (1983) are considered. They are protestant work ethic, career salience, job involvement, organisational commitment, and union commitment. Career salience was altered to career commitment by Morrow in 1993 with organisational commitment broken into two – continuance commitment and affective commitment. For ‘continuance commitment’ and ‘affective commitment’ the definitions provided by Meyer and Allen (1983, 1984) were adopted.
i. The protestant work ethic is the extent to which one believes that hard work is important and that leisure time and excess money are detrimental to oneself (Morrow, 1983).

ii. Career commitment is defined as ‘one’s attitude toward one’s profession or vocation’ (Morrow, 1983).

iii. Continuance commitment is defined as ‘the extent to which employees feel committed to their organisations by virtue of the costs that they feel are associated with leaving’ (Meyer and Allen, 1983).

iv. Job involvement is ‘a belief descriptive of the present job and tends to be a function of how much the job can satisfy one’s present needs’ to their organisations by virtue of the costs that they feel are associated with leaving (Morrow, 1983).

v. Affective commitment is ‘positive feelings of identification with, attachment to, and involvement in, the work organisation’ (Meyer and Allen, 1984).

b. Organisational commitment: The often cited definition from Allen and Meyer (1996) is used in this research: ‘a psychological link between the employee and his or her organisation that makes it less likely that the employee will voluntarily leave the organisation’. Organisational commitment contains three components – Normative continuance, continuance commitment and affective commitment. Continuance and affective have already been defined. Normative commitment consists of a belief that it is one's moral obligation to remain with an organisation.

c. Work values: There are a number of definitions on Work values:

i. ‘Work values’ are the end-values such as satisfaction, quality, or reward individuals seek from their work (Super, 1970).

ii. ‘Work values’ are the importance individuals associate with certain outcomes related to attributes of work (Elizur, 1984),

iii. ‘Work values’ are the standards relating to work or the work environment by which individuals decide what is ‘right’ or assess the importance of preferences (Dose, 1997).

Generations
Different cohorts of people born during different periods of time (or generations) for example Traditionals, Baby Boomers, Gen X and Gen Y.
Gen culture (generation culture)
The mindsets, perspectives, attitudes and characteristics of a particular generation.

Generational differences/generation gap
The differences in mindsets, perspectives, attitudes and characteristics of different generations.

Protean career
This is a process theorised by Hall in 1976. It states that the person rather than the organisation should be responsible for career choices and development. One main criterion is the search for self-fulfillment and the motivation is internal (psychological success) and not external.

Shamrock organisation
An organisational model hypothesised by Charles Handy in 1989. He uses the shamrock leaf shape as a symbolic representation of an organisation with three types of workforce, having a main body (permanent core of key employees) and connected lobes (contract workers, subcontractors and the flexible workforce consisting of freelancers, part-timers, etc.) that together form a whole.

1.7. Delimitations of Scope and Assumptions
This research only covers Malaysia and its context. The sample choice for Gen Y is delimited to a single ethnicity and culture in Malaysia and the location is the urban areas of Kuala Lumpur and the Klang Valley only. The sample consisted of final year undergraduates (the Gen Y cohorts) and the Gen Y cohort which comprised people who were already working.

Similarly, the sample for the organisations is delimited to the same geographical area and the organisations are represented by their CEOs, senior managers or human resources officers. The organisations were selected on a convenience basis as well and therefore consisted of a random mix of multi-nationals, public listed companies, Small Medium Industries/Small Medium Enterprises (SMIs/SMEs), private limited companies and government-linked companies (GLCs).
When investigating the research problem, the theories on life-span development, personality, vocational interests and vocational fit merit examination against Gen Y culture antecedents. They fall under the discipline of behavioural science and are therefore incorporated into the Literature Review.

As the research problem also explores the work terms and conditions between Gen Y and organisations, social exchange theory is also of relevance. However, on account of the wide scope of this subject matter, this is not included but a more specific area is studied and this is through the lens of career development. Gen Y is a moving target as they are still progressing to the working age. Only continual longitudinal studies are able to keep the research updated. Meanwhile, this research is delimited as a cross-sectional research done during the period from 2009 to 2014. The demarcations enable easier access for data collection as well as a reasonable cut-off date for the research.

1.8 Conclusion

Chapter 1 gives a summary of the research study which uses the five chapters thesis approach. A brief of each of the five chapters is given. The broad research topic is introduced together with the research problem, the research questions and the research propositions.
Chapter 2

Literature Review
Chapter 2

2.1 Introduction

Chapter 1 introduced the broad research area as the study of Gen Y and their relationship with work and organisations. Gen Y (also known as Millennials) is the label or classification given to the generation born between 1980 and 2000 (Accenture, 2010; Judith, 2008). They are in the process of entering the workforce and will go on to make up the major proportion of the workforce in the next two decades and beyond. Earlier generations before Gen Y are the Traditionals or Silents, with birth dates between 1930 and 1945; the Baby Boomers or Boomers, born between 1946 and 1964; and Generation X, born between 1965 and 1976 (Gravett & Throckmorton, 2007; Tapscott, 2009). More details on these different generations especially Baby Boomers, Gen X and Gen Y are discussed in Section 2.2.

2.1.1 Setting the Scene: The Research Topic

The research problem is ‘How to achieve alignment of the Malaysian Gen Y workforce with the systems and structures of organisations in Malaysia’. This research investigates whether Gen Y can conform to the requirements of organisations and the demands of work. The study is with respect to Malaysia’s emphasis on the K-economy or digital economy. It investigates a Gen Y cohort that is armed with tertiary education, and hence, it investigates executive-level career opportunities in organisations. The conceptual map in the next section provides the direction for the literature review of this research.

2.1.2 The Total Conceptual Map

The conceptual map as shown in figure 2.1 steers the literature review to enable wider exploration and deeper investigation (Hart, 1998). The parent discipline (Perry, 2002) is human resource and it consists of three components. The first component is Gen Y and the associated generational studies. With Gen Y as the new workforce, the nature of work and its evolution over time is examined as the second component of the parent discipline. Similarly, as work predominantly occurs in an organisational setting, the dynamics of organisations form the third component of the parent discipline. This is delimited to organisational systems and structures. Thus, the parent discipline consists of these three components of Gen Y, the nature of work, and organisational systems and structures.
How to Achieve Alignment of the Malaysian Gen Y Workforce with the Systems and Structures of Organisations in Malaysia

2.1 Introduction

2.2 Gen Y Beliefs, Mindsets, Attitudes On Work On Organisations

2.3 Work Type Work Environment Work Functions

2.4 Organisation Structures Systems

2.5 Behavioural Science LifeSpan Dev. Psychology Personality Psychology Career Development Theories

2.6 Organisational Commitment Work Values & Ethics

2.7 Conclusion

2.8 Research Study The Research Problem Theoretical Framework Research Questions

Fig. 2.1: Overall conceptual map (Source: developed for this research)
These three components allow a thorough examination of what has been done (especially landmark studies), follow the history and development of the research topic over time, identify the many different important variables and their relationships, interpret the different contexts the research problem falls under, and uncover new findings (Hart, 1998).

In order to compare, contrast, integrate and synthesise the information covered (Hart, 1998), related theories are drawn in to serve as background references. As the study of both Gen Y culture and organisations (which consist of people), involves behaviors, behavioural science is relevant and is included. Specifically reviewed will be the lifespan development theories including those of Erik Erikson (Guinee, 1998; Slater, 2003; Wang et al, 1997) and Levinson (Levinson, 1986; Thomas et al., 1982; Ornstein et al., 1989). Other areas are personality psychology especially the Big Five (Bozionelos, 2003), Holland’s Vocational Profile – RIASEC (Barrick et al., 2003; Dik et al., 2010; Nauta, 2010), and the Myers Briggs Type Indicator – MBTI (Furham et al., 1993; Liorens, 2010; Sample, 2004). Career development especially as covered in Super’s Life-Career Rainbow (Kosine & Lewis, 2008) is treated here as well.

The immediate discipline (Perry, 2002) is work commitment as it forms the common denominator when investigating the research problem for both Gen Y and organisations. The different types of commitment (Becker et al., 1996; van Vuuren, 2008; Morrow, 1983; Nijhof, 1998) that fall under work commitment are then defined. Included is a discussion of the values of the different generational cohorts (Furham, 1982, 1990; Rhodes, 1983; Smola & Sutton, 2002) and whether the values (especially work values) have remained consistent or have changed.

A summary of the total literature review is presented and the research gaps identified. This is then presented in the conclusion together with the theoretical framework (Sekaran, 2006) and the research questions and the research propositions (Creswell, 2009; Creswell, 2007; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Using this Conceptual Map, the Chapter Structure is as follows.

2.1.3 Chapter Structure
Based on the conceptual map, the literature review chapter will be laid out according to the chapter structure shown in Figure 2.2.
There are eight sections, starting off with Section 2.1– Introduction. This covers ‘Setting the Scene’, ‘the Conceptual Map’ and this ‘Chapter Structure’ before moving on to Section 2.2 – Gen Y, the New Workforce. Greater coverage is provided in this section as it forms the key parent discipline. It examines the demographic pattern (Baby Boomers, Gen X and Gen Y) of Malaysia and then delves into what Gen Y culture constitutes. This is followed by the forces that shape and influence the cultures of the different generational cohorts. The validity of generational studies from both the academic and practitioner perspectives is discussed and the decision to accept it in this study is explained. This section ends with a general overview of Baby Boomers and Gen X cultures and how their similarities and differences with Gen Y culture may provide strategies for enhancing organisational systems and structures.

Section 2.3 is on the changing nature of work. It looks at what work is and whether the meaning of work has changed over time. It further highlights the distinct yet subtle evolvement of work over time especially from industrial or production-based work to work in today’s age of digital technology (computers, the internet, internet videos, mobile phones and
social networks) where information processing and digital content creation are becoming more in demand. The emphasis on brain work over manual skills is addressed together with emerging work/employment patterns such as boundaryless, protean and portfolio work. The section concludes by relating the nature of work with Gen Y and with organisations.

Section 2.4 covers the origin of organisational structures from the classical rigid and bureaucratic military based structure to today’s highly flexible and horizontal organic structures. Study is made on the Shamrock Organisation as advocated by Handy (1991) and its applicability with respect to the arguments in this study. It then moves on to organisational systems where the focus is on the career development process. The attention is on their continued viability and adaptability to the changes in the nature of work and the changing work values of the Gen Y workforce.

Section 2.5 Behavioural Science looks at human behaviours and traits. It zeroes in on lifespan development psychology with emphasis on the psycho-social life stage study of Erik Erikson (Guinee, 1998; Slater, 2003; Wang et al., 1997) and Levinson’s Theory (Levinson, 1986; Thomas et al., 1982; Ornstein et al., 1989) which is more work and career related. Super’s Life Career Rainbow theory (Kosine & Lewis, 2008) is also discussed here for its life stage theme.

A brief discussion on personality psychology is included covering the ‘Big Five’ (Bozionelos, 2003); the widely applied Holland’s Vocational Profile (RIASEC) (Barrick et al., 2003; Dik et al., 2010; Nauta, 2010); and the popular Myers Briggs Indicator (MBTI) (Furham et al., 1993; McCaulley, 1990; Sample, 2004).

Section 2.6 Organisational Commitment discusses the immediate discipline. It highlights various types of commitment with emphasis on work commitment. This is linked to work values, ethics and attitudes. The arguments about whether there is an erosion or change in general and work values are examined.

The summary and conclusion for this literature review is then presented in Section 2.7 together with the tabulation of the gaps uncovered during the literature review. The literature review ends in Section 2.8 – The Research Problem and its Research Questions and Research propositions. They are crafted from the theoretical framework that is established.
2.2 Gen Y: The New Workforce

2.2.1 The Changing Demographics

A major shift is taking place in terms of demographic pattern around the world. Standing out are the two most populous countries of India with 70 million Gen Y (about 5.6% of the estimated 1.25 billion total population in 2012) and China with 60 million Gen Y (about 4.4% of the estimated 1.35 billion total population in 2012). The United States has 10 million Gen Y (about 3.3% of the estimated 300 million total populations in 2012), leading the western countries (Tapscott, 2009). Although the percentages in these countries are low (between 3% and 6%), the significance lies in their sheer numbers. In Malaysia, the same demographic shift can be observed. Although very much smaller in number, in terms of ratio Gen Y makes up a huge proportion of the total population at 38%. Figure 2.3 provides the demographic distribution in Malaysia up to 2007 based on the data from the Statistic Department of Malaysia.

![Demographic Distribution](image_url)

Figure 2.3: Demographic distribution, Malaysia, 2007 (Source: supplied by Statistic Department, Malaysia)

It can be seen that Gen Y at 38.2% (about 10.4 million of the population), makes up the largest generational cohort with Gen X being slightly half the size of Gen Y at 20.2% (with 5.4 million people). The Baby-Boomers make up the smallest generational cohort at only 13.2% (3.6 million people). This is not surprising in that as a very young country (celebrating only its 57th anniversary of independence in 2014), Malaysia only experienced a population boom in its later growth years. This data is very revealing and its implications for organisations have been mentioned in Section 1.3 – Justifications.
2.2.2 The Culture of Gen Y

The literature on Gen Y culture reveals that its many components may be grouped into the four major categories of entitlement, speed, work-life mix, and anxiety. There are many other variations which may not fall under these four major groupings. These are only mentioned if they are relevant to this research. With this objective, findings on Gen Y culture from the literature review are then identified and compiled under these four main categories:

a. Entitlement

With ‘hovering’ or ‘helicopter’ parents (Fahlbush, 2008; Sheahan, 2008; Tapscott, 2009) supporting, motivating, helping and pushing them in many areas from school work to life choices, members of Gen Y tend to view themselves as special and as winners (Deloitte, 2009a; Tapscott, 2009). The findings of Deloitte (2009a) reveal 86.9% of Gen Y who have worked less than three years state that they are in senior positions (49.8%). This demonstrates the sense of entitlement in Gen Y. Twenge and Campbell (2008) equates these with ‘narcissism’. Narcissism tends to distort one’s perceptions with a bias towards self. Members of Gen Y tend to see themselves as being superior to others, judging themselves more favourably, and rating themselves higher on performance and skills (Twenge & Campbell, 2008). The negative impact of narcissism on work culture is the inability to get along with people, a lack of empathy, an inability to accept others’ views, greater risk taking tendencies, animosity towards criticism and very high expectations (Twenge & Campbell, 2008).

The Gen Y sense of entitlement leads to a much decreased need for social approval. Therefore, Gen Y is less likely to conform, is less formal, has a slight antipathy towards authority figures and feels less need to make an impression (Twenge, 2008). These tendencies have also being viewed as arrogance which includes a lack of respect for the aged and experienced, as well as for hierarchical structure (Deloitte, 2008a).

Gen Y also demonstrates more ‘external locus of control’ than ‘internal locus of control’. In the work environment, this translates to shirking or denying personal accountability and responsibility for failures, and to blaming everything and everyone else including attributing their lack of performance to other factors instead of their abilities (Twenge, 2008). An aspect of Gen Y culture not falling directly under entitlement is the lack of loyalty. In Malaysia, Gen Y loyalty to company is low (57%) with their own interests coming first.
How to Achieve Alignment of the Malaysian Gen Y Workforce with the Systems and Structures of Organisations in Malaysia

(PWC, 2009a). How this compares to Gen Y around the world is further elaborated in Subsection 2.2.2 e.

b. Speed
Gen Y is immersed in an environment where social media and digital communications technology allow for easy access to 24/7 instantaneous connections, anytime, anywhere, total mobility and wide, global reach (PWC, 2009a; Pew, 2010; Tapscott, 2009). These affect the way Gen Y communicates and provide a virtual space or community centre for hanging out (Tapscott, 2009). Other effects are the short attention span of Gen Y (Deloitte, 2008a), their need for speed, constant stimulation, feedback and assurance (Deloitte, 2008a; Sheahan, 2008), and the need for instant gratification (Judith, 2008).

This virtual community or social network has also spawned a new phenomenon – the need for Gen Y to broadcast and reveal trivial aspects of their everyday lives (Tapscott, 2009). A survey by Pew Research Organisation (Pew) in the United States in 2010 found that 72% of Gen Y thinks they reveal too much (Pew, 2010). On a positive note, this is interpreted as the need for Gen Y to share, collaborate, participate, get involved and be in touch and not to be just a passive part of any activity (Tapscott, 2009). In a work setting, when it comes to sharing personal information with employers, Malaysian Gen Y are reluctant to do so. Only 40% of Malaysian Gen Y members are comfortable about sharing personal information with employers (PWC, 2009a).

Another resource offered by social media is the means and ease to rally fast and massive support from people for various reasons (Tapscott, 2009). In the work space, this is a great concern for organisations (Porter, 2008) as such activities may be used against organisational interests.

The rapidly changing world also creates in Gen Y the need for excitement and constant stimulation to prevent boredom (Deloitte, 2008a; Sheahan, 2008). Some see the constant seeking of excitement as searching for challenges (Deloitte, 2008a). Another interpretation is that Gen Y will always be asking ‘What’s new?’ Therefore, they are exploring all the time. Whether this actually translates into innovation is questionable. In the work place, ‘innovation’ to Gen Y probably means breaking all the rules, doing things their way,
discarding all the ‘orders and instructions’, having more sharing and collaboration, and underlying all these, ‘Do not tell us what to do, we will tell you!’ (Tapscott, 2009).

c. **Work – Life Mix**

Fun in the workplace and work life balance appears regularly in many studies (Deloitte, 2008a; Judith, 2008; Tapscott, 2009). Work life balance includes Gen Y’s preference for flexible working hours (Tapscott, 2009) as a means for allocating time for their interests and hobbies or family relationships. A recent survey reveals 58% of Malaysian Gen Y members look forward to flexible working hours but do not expect this to occur soon (PWC, 2009a). Eighty-eight percent of Malaysian Gen Y members expect to work overseas or have opportunities for overseas stints from their employers (PWC, 2009a) while 72% wish to gain different experiences by joining different organisations. Therefore, mixing work and life will be second nature to Gen Y. This means that engaging in social networking, online gaming, short message services (sms), instant messaging, and other online activities simultaneously while working is considered normal (Tapscott, 2009). Today, organisations still disapprove of such behaviours.

Gen Y is said to disdain hard work and to expect high rewards (Brown, 2004; Deloitte, 2009a; Tapscott, 2009). This may be a consequence of the need for fun and coming from a background of family affluence. This probably creates the impression that Gen Y considers the need for establishing work track records as ‘paying their dues’ (Deloitte, 2009a; Sheahan, 2008).

In education, the same types of attitudes are apparent. Gen Y members desire low workload, the minimal expenditure of effort, and the shortest time to complete a course but they still expect to obtain high grades. The high grades are even more important than the analytical, computable and communication skills that they can acquire (Milliron, 2008).

d. **Anxiety and Depression**

Typically ‘helicopter’ parents plan, prepare and manage Gen Y’s schedules, itineraries and activities and their children just have to follow without questions. Consequently, Gen Y has grown up needing clear and well defined instructions in whatever they do and in the decisions they make (Tapscott, 2009). In the workplace where uncertainties abound, where rapid changes are occurring all the time, and where work is growing more complex, this
dependency of Gen Y on precise instructions before they are able to execute their assignments is another great concern for organisations. This lack of independence leads to fear of commitment (and even work) and a lack of purpose or direction. As a result Gen Y has taken to questioning and scrutinising everything most of the time before acting. This is one strategy Gen Y resorts to in order to obtain feedback and to gain some re-assurance (Tapscott, 2009). This behavior is also attributed to the information overload thrusts upon Gen Y. By being highly sceptical and questioning, Gen Y is able to filter information from misinformation and assess the validity and reliability of the information in front of them (Pew, 2010; Tapscott, 2009). All these factors lead to greater anxiety for Gen Y and a study by Twenge (2008) indicates that anxiety and depression have tripled over the last ten years.

e. Malaysian Gen Y compared to other Gen Y cohorts around the world

Some differences between Gen Y in Malaysia and other parts of the world are worth noting. Malaysian Gen Y is almost equally divided over whether they prefer flexible working hours or cash bonuses (57% flexible working hours, 49% cash bonus) and values both of these benefits highly. Only thirty two percent of Malaysian Gen Y rate training and development as important (PWC, 2009a). This differs from the global response from Gen Y cohorts which places training and development as the number one benefit (PWC, 2008). This concurs with Deloitte’s findings (2009a) on Gen Y of US where 63.5% look for opportunity and growth and only 49.8% look at salary and benefits package. For 71% of Malaysian Gen Y, the top method for development is mentoring and coaching in the companies in which they work. Only 12% consider e-learning an acceptable learning or training medium (PWC, 2009a) despite their technological competence.

It was mentioned earlier that 57% of Malaysian Gen Y exhibits a lack of loyalty (PWC, 2009a). This is very low compared to the global rate of 91% of Gen Y. This is also true for the response from Asia at 92%, for Australasia and for the Pacific Islands at 95%, for Western Europe at 89%, and for North America and the Caribbean at 92% (PWC, 2008). This lack of loyalty also translates to short tenure in organisations. In the United States 47.9% of Gen Y indicate that they will not stay longer than two years with their companies (Deloitte, 2009a). In Malaysia, one survey finding states that 86% expect to work with between two and five employer in their lifetime (PWC, 2009a). This appears to be an anomaly as it is not consistent with the results of other studies. The frequent change of employers is described as the ‘job-hopping’ culture of Gen Y (Twenge, 2008). This tendency has also spawned research on
portfolio careers (Ackah & Heaton, 2002; Briscoe & Finkelstein, 2009; Sargent & Domberger, 2007).

Malaysian members of Gen Y (47%) are more reluctant than their global counterparts (36%) to share personal information with their employers. This indicates that Malaysian members of Gen Y maintain a strong boundary between work and personal life (PWC, 2009a; PWC, 2008). Organisations need to allay the concerns of Gen Y if more detailed personal information is required. One consideration is the security and confidentiality of the information gathered.

While much of the world is still struggling after the global financial crisis (Portugal, Greece, Spain, United States), Malaysian Gen Y are almost equally divided about the situation with 48% optimistic and 41% pessimistic about the downturn. On remuneration, 55% are concerned that they may not be fairly paid while 49% are worried that they may not be given enough choice in their career path or career development. Only 16% fear that they may lose their jobs (PWC, 2009a).

The four categories mentioned are summarised for ease of reference in figure 2.10: Gen Y culture. Easy to remember phrases are assigned so as to capture the essence of these four categories. They are:

Under **Entitlement** – What’s in it for me? (WIIFM?), My Right, My Way, My Mind, Autonomy (Freedom), Who are you? (Equality/Arrogance), I am Special (Narcissism), Where’s my Prize? What’s New?

Under **‘Speed’** – Instant Gratification, Short Attention Span, Continuous Stimulation, Easily Bored, Multiple Choices, What’s new? *(Work Security & Work Stability is not a consideration)*.

Under ‘Anxiety’ – Constant Feedback (but cannot take Criticism), Constant Praise & Rewards, Sheltered/Protected (Need Spoon-Feeding).

Before continuing with the cultures of Gen X and Baby Boomers, a short diversion is taken to discuss the causes, drivers and influences that account for the different Generation Cultures.

2.2.3 Drivers and Influences of Gen Y culture
As early as 1952, Karl Mannheim (1952) posed the questions about generations and had delved in great details into what constitutes a generational cohort; its boundaries; and the various factors that account for similarities and differences within the same generational cohorts. His key discourse centres on ‘location’ under the three aspects of (1) non-concrete social group or class position, (2) biological and sociological interactions and (3) inherent and potential propensity to behave, feel, and think in a directed manner. Mannheim expands upon these three aspects and argues that ‘stratification of experience’ is required to define the generational cohort, not just location alone. Subsequent generational studies emphasise this stating that world events, social norms and other forces shape different generations (Baby
Boomers, Gen X and Gen Y) on how the generations grow up (Glass, 2007; Gravett & Throckmorton, 2007; Milliron, 2009). These are listed out in Table 2.1 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Generations</th>
<th>Baby Boomers</th>
<th>Gen X</th>
<th>Gen Y/Millenials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Names</td>
<td>Baby Boomers</td>
<td>Generation X</td>
<td>Generation Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Core values</td>
<td>Optimism  Team work  Personal Gratification  Health &amp; Wellness  Personal Growth  Work</td>
<td>Thinking Globally  Balance  Technoliteracy  Fun  Informality  Reliance  Pragmatism</td>
<td>Confidence  Civic duty  Achievement  Morality  Diversity  Street Smart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Personality</td>
<td>Driven  Soul Searchers  Love-Hate Relationship with Authority</td>
<td>Risk takers  Family-oriented  Skeptical  Focused on Job not Work Hours</td>
<td>Optimistic  Prefer Collective Action  Tenacious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Defining Events</td>
<td>Prosperity  Television  Suburbia  Assassinations  Vietnam War, Cold War  Women’s Lib</td>
<td>Latch Key Kids  Single Parents  MTV  AIDS  Challenger  Fall of Berlin Wall</td>
<td>Internet Chat Lines (Maid*  School Violence  War on Iraq  Sept 11  Bali Bombings  Terrorism  Kosovo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Toys</td>
<td>Pinball Machines  Barbie Dolls</td>
<td>Space Invaders  Cabbage Patch Kids</td>
<td>Nintendo  Pokemon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Food</td>
<td>Home made</td>
<td>Microwave</td>
<td>Delivered (Eat Out*)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>Room fans  Television  78s and LPs  8mm film  Mainframes  Slide rules</td>
<td>Air Conditioning  Cable TV  Cassettes and CDs  VCRs  Transistors  Calculators</td>
<td>Climate Control  Interactive TV  Streaming and MP3s  DVDs  Microchips  Personal Computers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Infrastructure</td>
<td>Test satellites  B-52s  Highways/Freeways</td>
<td>Moon Launches  ICBMs  Telecom Satellites</td>
<td>Space Shuttles  Stealth and Smart Bombs  Internet</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.1: World events and other factors shaping generations (Zevenbergen, Robyn, 2004)

The Core Values and Personality (rows 1 and 2 in Table 2.1) constitute the Generational cultures while the rest (from row 3: Defining Events to row 7: Infrastructure) makes up the Drivers, Influences and Forces. When combined, the events, life style, entertainment and infrastructure (from row 3 to row 7) constitute the ‘defining moments’ posited by Schewe and Meredith (2004).

The five drivers (from rows 3 to 7 in Table 2.1) may be classified under technology and lifestyle category. Not shown but nevertheless an important consideration is education, a major focus in Malaysia. For convenience, other factors such as affluence, ethnicity, socio-economic status and urban/rural divide may be placed under lifestyle. Inglehart (1971) views
education, affluence, and socio-economic status, as key factors in the changing of generational values and their importance are clearly demonstrated through his research findings over time (Inglehart, 2008, 2001, 1971). For ease of explanation, the above drivers and influences are re-arranged and consolidated and represented in figure 2.4 to illustrate how they shape the generational cohorts (Gen Y in particular) and their influences on Gen Y culture, work and organisations. Malaysian members of Gen Y encounter changes in work type and also face their work culture such as work preferences, work values, work attitudes, work ethics, and many other work related issues. These aspects of work are discussed further in Section 2.3 – The Changing World of Work and Section 2.6 – Organisational Commitment.

This study’s detailed review of developments on these forces and drivers making up the defining moments in Malaysia is as follows.

![Figure 2.4 Drivers and influences of Gen Y culture](source)

**a. Technology**

Technology has advanced at a rapid rate and had created the greatest impact on the lives of people and especially Gen Y. Household conveniences, entertainment and toys, technology especially the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and the Internet have become pervasive in people’s lives. These advances keep people in touch 24/7, anytime,
anywhere and they have information at their fingertips (Tapscott, 2009). In both work and at play, the use of computers and mobile phones has become ubiquitous.

Malaysia, despite being a young and not fully developed nation does not lag very far behind the highly developed nations in terms of technology adoption. This is due to the Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC) programme launched in 1996 to propel Malaysia as a global hub for ICT and Multimedia. This programme drives rapid technology penetration in Malaysia.

An internet survey for Malaysia in 2011 indicates that 98.4% of households were using the internet in 2011. Gen Y made up 55% of the users, Gen X, 25% and the Baby Boomers, 15% (SKMM/ MCMC, 2011) as shown in Figure 2.5.

Similarly, in a mobile or handphone survey made in 2012, 86.3% of Malaysians said they were handphone users. The penetration of mobile phone per 100 Malaysians rose about five times from 2000 at 21.8 users per 100 to 100.8 per 100 Malaysians in 2012. According to the breakdown of mobile phone users according to generational categories, the percentages are Gen Y – 58%; Gen X – 20%; and Baby Boomers – 17% as shown in Figure 2.6 (SKMM/MCMC, 2012). Amongst the South East Asian countries, Malaysia ranks third in mobile phone penetration with Singapore ranking first. Vietnam is second and Cambodia is fourth. (Greene, Will, 2013).
In Malaysia, the top social media site accessed by home users in 2011 was Facebook with a majority share of 69.9%. Following very far behind in second place was Twitter with 8.0%. In third place was Tagged.com at 7.4%, and the rest at less than 5.0% (Digital Media in Malaysia, Singapore Management University, 2011). This is depicted in Figure 2.7 below.

In terms of television and radio, radio had its beginning in Malaysia as early as 1921 with television services following in 1963. These were and still are under the Malaysian government’s control (RTM, 2014). By 1984, the first commercial television channel, TV3, was set up. This was followed by other free-to-air TV stations (namely, Metrovision, NTV7,
Channel 9) which were ultimately acquired by Media Prima Sdn. Bhd. including TV3 (Media Prima, 2007).

Subscription TV through satellite direct to home became available in Malaysia in 1996 with the establishment of ASTRO and today reaches 2.9 million households including Brunei (ASTRO, 2014). By 2012, more broadcast stations had been set up from internet television (IPTV) to cable television.

Therefore, the different generations in Malaysia have undergone different technological developments in tandem with their counterparts in other parts of the world. Malaysian Gen Y is at least as technologically competent as other Gen Y cohorts around the world. Malaysian Gen Y also stands out from the other Malaysian generation cohorts with respect to their digital immersion and exposures. It may also be noted that rapid development in technology in Malaysia came at a time when many Gen Y members were at their most impressionable age and therefore these developments may have caused Gen Y culture to be significantly different to earlier generational cultures.

b. Tertiary Education

In Malaysia, tertiary education also underwent tremendous growth and development coinciding with Gen Y’s entry to university. In its early independence days in the 1950’s, Malaysia had just one public university (the University of Malaya). In 2010, there were over 550 private institutes of higher education and 20 public universities (Higher Education Malaysia, 2014). Table 2.2 gives a timeline summary of the growth of public and private universities and how this corresponds to times when different generations became old enough to attend university. As can be seen from Table 2.2, opportunities for higher or tertiary education vary through the different generations. Opportunities for Traditionals and early Baby Boomers were very limited with only one public university (the University of Malaya) established. The younger half of the Baby Boomers and Gen X had slightly better opportunities with the addition of four more public universities. It is Gen Y that had the greatest higher educational opportunities due to the changes to the Malaysian educational policy which resulted in about twenty public universities being established along with more than 600 private institutions of higher learning. This resulted in large numbers of Gen Y acquiring tertiary education. Armed with higher academic qualification, Gen Y has higher expectations when it comes to work and organisations. A higher entry level salary is one of
these expectations. University life exposed Gen Y to new influences including a campus environment in which there was a large community to interact with, resulting in sharing and collaboration and support for the exchange of knowledge and experience. In the context of work, information related to type of work, working environment and working conditions are very attractive topics and shared perceptions are likely to be fostered.

c. **Life Style/Affluence, Culture/Ethnicity, Socio - Economic Status/Urban/Rural**

Income inequity in Malaysia, although still high as indicated by the Gini coefficient, went down from around 49.1 in 2004 (Lim, 2005; Krongkaew 2008; Krongkaew & Ragayah, 2007; Ragayah 1, 2008; Ragayah 2, nd) to 44.1 in 2009 (10MP, 2010). Abundance and opportunity holds sway today especially in the urban areas. The poverty level fell from about 49% in 1970 to less than 10% in 2000 and by 2009; it was less than 3.8% (10MP, 2010; United Nations Development Programme, 2007).

From 1957, the year of independence until today, Malaysia has been enjoying continuous growth. Table 2.3 below shows GDP growth from 1957 to 2010. Growth during the **Pre-NEP**
Table 2.3: GDP growth from 1957 to 2010 (Source: compiled from references stated in table)

(New Economic Policy) days was a result of demand for the natural resources of rubber, tin, palm oil and petroleum. The launch of the New Economic Policy (NEP) in 1970 by the Malaysian government hastened growth through massive government projects and other economic incentives. This growth was only slightly dampened by first the Asian Economic Crisis of 1997 and lately the Global Financial Crisis of 2007/2008 (Bowley, 2010). The latest economic collapse was short lived, for by the first quarter of 2010, the economy was already picking up with a forecast GDP growth rate of 10.1% (10MP, 2010). Urban-rural disparities seemed to be rising in the 1990s and this became greater from 1999 at 1:1.8* to 1:2.11* in 2004 (9MP, 2006). In the Ninth Malaysian Plan (9MP) this was targeted to be reduced to 1:2.00*. The same was true of the ethnic income gaps. (*The higher the ratio, the greater is the disparity).

From the above statistics, it can be seen that the Baby Boomers were coming of age in the 1970s when, as a result of the economic push by the government, both job and business opportunities were good. The Baby Boomers culture values efforts, drives and ambitions (Yu & Miller, 2004; Yu & Miller, 2003) and so the Boomers were able to amass wealth fast. This has resulted in their providing their off-spring (mainly Gen Y) with the best in education (which became very much available with the liberation of the Malaysian educational system) and a life of ease, creature comforts and abundance. Therefore the need to work for a living is of low priority, especially in work where some hardships and inconvenience are inevitable.
2.2.4 Validating Generational Differences Studies

The category or label of Gen Y is derived from generational studies. There appears to be much more materials on this subject from practitioners such as consultants or consultancy firms than from academics (Macky et al., 2008). The studies from practitioners tend to be opinion surveys (or polls), case studies and anecdotal stories. They tend to be of a qualitative nature and therefore they lack empirical, quantitative data (Twenge & Campbell, 2008; Wong et al., 2008). This has led to questions about the validity of generational studies.

As generational study continues, other controversies and debates arise over various inconsistencies (Giancola, 2006; Kowske, 2010). Giancola (2006) has been one of the main critics. Some of his criticisms (Giancola, 2006) were the limited applicability of generational findings to minorities, recent immigrants and women; the unequal distribution of the different generations in the workplace; and the lack of agreement over the precise birth dates of the different generations. Some of these problems were addressed by Mannheim (1952) as will be elaborated later.

The age span of the different generations varies with different authors and this gives rise to queries as well. The cut-off ages for the different generations also overlap creating grey areas. Various practitioners have responded to these difficulties by treating such grey areas separately and placing them under different classifications such as cusps, and front and tail ends cross-overs. However, Giancola’s main arguments boiled down to two main points (Giancola, 2006) were:

1. There was a lack of publications in peer reviewed academic journals.
2. There was little difference between generations especially between the Baby Boomers and Gen X

With regard to the point on the lack of academic publications and studies, ‘generations’ were first introduced in sociological theory in Germany in the 1950s by Karl Mannheim (Arsenault, 2003; Greenwood et al., 2008; Miller & Yu, 2009). Mannheim (1952) established a basic structure for determining what makes up a generational cohort and today’s generational categories have built upon that structure. His definition of a generational unit contains the following three dimensions supported by five characteristics.
A. Dimensions
1. A non-concrete dimension which he calls Social Location.
2. Biological and Social Factor.
3. Inherent Tendency in Social Location.

B. Characteristics
1. New participants in the cultural process are continuously emerging.
2. Previous participants in the process of culture are continuously withdrawing.
3. Members of any one generation can participate only in a temporally limited section of the historical process.
4. Continual transmission of the accumulated cultural heritage is a necessity.
5. The transition from generation to generation is a continuous process.

Mannheim’s (1952) treatise is able to respond to Giancola’s argument that there is no generational cohorts and no generational culture. Mannheim (1952) explains the creation of generational units through ‘Stratification of Experience’ and ‘Actuality’. Stratification of Experience denotes the experience of the same events, data and environment which seep into a similarly stratified consciousness of a group. Actuality refers to the creation of a concrete bond amongst the group members as a result of being exposed to and engulfed in the same social, affective and cognitive forces. This gives rise to different generational units within the same generational cohort.

Meanwhile, in the United States (Simons, 2010), generational studies had their beginning in the 1960s when it was observed that the younger generations expressed very different and distinct views compared to the older generations. These differences were over issues of those times such as the Vietnam War. Another outstanding event at that time was the spread of the hippy movement, called the flower people, by the young adults, with their non-conformist culture. All these led to more studies of what was labelled the Generation Gap by the popular media.

Another academic whose research also centres on generations is Ron Inglehart (1971). His seminal ‘The Silent Revolution’, (1971), maintains that from the early days until today, the different generations have undergone changes in their overall values as countries or societies
modernise. These changes of values are further elaborated in Section 2.6.3 – Work Values, Ethics and Attitudes.

One other academic work that merits mention is that of Schewe and Meredith (2004). Their research is on marketing through the lens of not so much generations but generational cohorts. As mentioned in Subsection 1.1.1: Background: Generation Y – The New Workforce, they define six generational cohorts up to the time of their research with the exclusion of Gen Y which was just coming onto the scene. As mentioned, our research includes only the Traditional (Silent) generational cohorts onwards, including Gen Y. During their time, many marketing campaigns by organisations based on their knowledge on generational cohorts were successfully implemented.

By 2008, a special issue of the *Journal of Managerial Psychology* (2008, Volume 23, No. 8) devoted to generational matters was published (Macky et al., 2008). This indicates the growing interests in generational studies in academia. At time of writing (2012-2013), one Gen Y study from academia was conducted by Dr. Twenge, Professor of Psychology at San Diego State University, whose research method has longitudinal elements. Her dataset consisted of over 1.4 million young people’s responses to psychological questionnaires that had been collected from the 1930s to 2008 (Twenge & Campbell, 2008; Twenge, 2006). In her research, her findings are that Generation Me (sometimes called Gen Y or Millennials) demonstrates narcissism, anxiety, and depression; lower need for social approval; and more external locus of control (Twenge & Campbell, 2008; Twenge, 2006).

Other academic research on Baby Boomers and Gen X includes Smola and Sutton (2002) and Miller and Yu (2009). Differences are found in the work values of Baby Boomers and Gen X. Another study examined the three generations (Baby Boomers, Gen X and Gen Y) of employees in the hospitality industry (Chen & Choi, 2007). Differences in work values are found in the three generations. Similarly, Greenwood et al. (2008) found differences in the three generations in ‘Instrumental’ and ‘Terminal’ values with variables taken from the Rokeach Value Model (1973). These various values are further elaborated in Subsection 2.6.3 – Work Values, Ethics and Attitudes. All these different generational studies indicate the interests of academia on this topic and to an extent their acceptance of different generations.
Practitioners have no doubts on the question of generations. There are numerous studies by practitioners of generational cohorts. Howe and Strauss were two of the earliest proponents of generational differences. Often cited by various authors and later researchers is their founding work, the *The Fourth Turning* (Strauss and Howe, 1997). The premise of this book is that there are four archetypes (Artist, Prophet, Nomad and Hero) which make up the generations from the past until today through four twenty-years cycles or turnings (High, Awakening, Unraveling, Crisis). The treatise is too massive to be reviewed here. Their second book, *Millennials Rising* (Howe and Strauss, 2000) is more on Gen Y where seven traits (of Gen Y culture) are identified – Special; Sheltered; Confident; Team-Oriented; Achieving; Pressured; and Conventional. A number of these traits consistently show up in later generational research as reviewed with references cited in Section 2.2.4 – Gen Cultures of Baby-Boomers and Gen X and Section 2.2.5 – Gen Culture of Gen Y.

Another established practitioner is Tapscott. His book *Grown Up Digital* (2009) – was a spin-off from a research project in 2007 on Gen Y that had US$ 4 million budget sourced from large companies. An example of its rigour was that more than 10,000 people were interviewed online and more than 40 reports were produced. This was followed by several conferences (Tapscott, 2009). The pilot phase of the project covered interviews (using an online questionnaire) with 1,750 young people aged 13 to 20 in the US and Canada. Beginning in May 2007, 5,935 young people aged 16 to 29 years were interviewed in 12 countries (the US, Canada, the United Kingdom, Germany, France, Spain, Mexico, Brazil, Russia, China, Japan and India). As a benchmark sample, Gen X members aged 30 to 41 years and Baby Boomers aged 42 to 61 years were interviewed in The US and Canada with a sample size of 400 for each generation in each country. The sample comprised randomly selected internet users. In addition, 30 ethnographic studies of young people were conducted. Tapscott summarised the findings under nine positive and negative characteristics of Gen Y as shown in Table 2.4.
Table 2.4: Nine positive and negative characteristics of Gen Y (Source: Tapscot, 2009)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Characteristics</th>
<th>Negative Characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Prize Freedom</td>
<td>Dumber</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Customisation/Ownership</td>
<td>Screen Addicts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Collaboration</td>
<td>Different Set of Morals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Scrutinise Traditions</td>
<td>Insecure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Integrity</td>
<td>Bullies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Fun</td>
<td>Violent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Speed</td>
<td>No Work Ethics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Innovation</td>
<td>Entitlement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Technology Savvy</td>
<td>Self Interest</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other practitioners to name a few are Johnson and Johnson (2010), Tulgan (2009), Deal (2007), Martin and Tulgan (2006), and Lancaster and Stillman (2002). Some of them attempt to follow as much as they can a rigorous research methodology as required in academic research but others are satisfied to just present their findings and recommendations. Deal (2007) and Lancaster and Stillman (2002) are examples of the former. Deal (2007) conducted surveys over a five years’ period with 5800 respondents from all over the world. Lancaster and Stillman (2002) selected 3200 respondents that were born and living in the US to compute the findings using various statistical tools. Lancaster and Stillman (2002) started a business in 1997 with generational studies as its main focus. In a five-year period, Lancaster and Stillman (2002) conducted numerous small surveys and in 2000 – 2001 they held a web with 400 respondents. They also conducted many focus groups and consulted with senior management of organisations on generational issues.

Johnson and Johnson (2010), Tulgan (2009), and Martin and Tulgan (2002) did not mention how they arrived at their generational findings and recommendations but presented information that is quite consistent with those of many other works in this area. Overall, most practitioners appear to share the same views on generational cultures.

The summary in Table 2.5 shows the titles, years published, and themes of their books. Their research on the different generations and specifically Gen Y share some of the same conclusion as the studies covered in this literature review.
The relevance of generational studies is further reinforced by the numerous surveys undertaken by big international consultancy firms such as Accenture (2010, 2008), Deloitte (2009) and PricewaterhouseCoopers (2009, 2008, 2007). Their credentials lend validity to the surveys that they have conducted and are still conducting. The study of Gen Y is further supported by on-going programmes. The findings of these surveys are further discussed in Section 2.2.4 – Gen Cultures of Baby-Boomers and Gen X and Section 2.2.5 – Gen Culture of Gen Y.

In conclusion, the above discussions indicate that the study of generational differences cannot be totally dismissed as unsubstantiated and deserves further investigation.

### 2.2.5 Gen Cultures of Baby-Boomers and Gen X

This sub-section reviews the cultures of the two earlier generations – the Baby Boomers and Gen X.

#### a. Baby Boomers

Baby Boomers are postulated to have the following traits. They are optimistic, idealistic and driven. They have a love-hate relationship with authority (Brown, 2004; Glass, 2007a; Glass, 2007b; Wong et al., 2008). In work related matters, Baby Boomers are motivated by salary, title and status and benefits. They work hard and paying their dues to reach higher levels in organisations is important to them (Gravett & Throckmorton, 2007; Lancaster & Stillman; Martin & Tulgan, 2006). Job security is paramount and for this they exhibit high loyalty to the company (Lancaster & Stillman, 2002; Martin & Tulgan, 2006). Their self-identity is defined by their work (Martin & Tulgan, 2006). However, the aging Baby Boomer cohort deviates from these traits which are the characteristics of Baby Boomers in their earlier days. During
their senior years, work-life balance, flexible working hours, supportive supervisors, and work fulfillment take priority (Brown, 2004; Lancaster & Stillman, 2002; Martin & Tulgan, 2006).

b. Gen X
Gen X is considered to be sceptical, self-reliant (as they were latchkey kids during their childhood), and pragmatic. Work-life balance is important to this generation (Glass, 2007a; Glass, 2007b; Gravett & Throckmorton, 2007; Wong et al., 2008). They place personal values and goals over company goals and are unimpressed by authority or institutions (Gravett & Throckmorton, 2007; Martin & Tulgan, 2006; Wong et al., 2008). They are also concerned with personal safety and mistrustful of people in politics, especially in regards to their qualifications and ethics. They value personal growth and development. Their loyalty is to their profession, not to organisations (Gravett & Throckmorton, 2007; Lancaster & Stillman, 2002). Again, as Gen X goes through the life stages, priorities may shift (Wong et al., 2008).

2.2.6 Similarities and Differences between Baby Boomers, Gen X and Gen Y Cultures
From the reviews above of the cultures of the three different generations of Gen Y, Gen X and Baby Boomers, it can be seen that there are more differences than similarities with respect to work and alignment with organisational systems and structures. In today’s workforce, Gen Y is the new entrant while their superiors are mainly from the Baby Boomers and Gen X generations. Studies generally posit that similarities in the generational cultures contribute to a more productive working relationship while differences create conflicts in the work and organisational environment (Arsenault et al., 2008; Danilo et al., 2007).

The above reviews of the culture of the three generational cohorts of Gen Y, Gen X and Baby Boomers indicate the following. In the first category of ‘Entitlement’, overall, Gen Y shows the greatest inclination with the Baby Boomers at the other end and Gen X in between. For the various components of the ‘Entitlement’ category, the same pattern is observed. These are expected to lead to more conflicts than agreement in the workplace where Baby Boomers (and to a lesser extent Gen X) are supervising over members of Gen Y. Both these earlier generations feel upset and violated in their expectations about work ethics and attitudes of Gen Y. For the second category of ‘Speed’, similar patterns are seen, with Gen Y and Baby Boomers being furthest apart and Gen X in the middle. Again, these differences can be a source of conflict as Gen Y’s work ethics are very different from those of Baby Boomers.
The reviews on ‘Work-Life Mix’ show big contrast between Gen Y and Baby Boomers. In the work environment, this is especially so in terms of effort (hard work) and the importance of work over other activities. Members of Gen Y place less importance on work than Baby Boomers do. This is another source of conflict in the workplace since it can lead to Baby Boomers perceiving Gen Y as being lazy and lacking commitment. Lastly, on ‘Anxiety’, Gen Y exhibits the highest level of anxiety followed by Baby Boomers with Gen X being most relaxed of the three cohorts. However, in relation to work issues such as the ability to work independently and commitment to work, Gen Y falls far below Baby Boomers. These are also potential areas for conflict in the workplace.

On the topic of similarities and differences of the three generational cohorts, the two specific dimensions of personal traits and motivators are worth examining. Wong et al. (2008) studied the dimension of Occupational Personality using the six scales of achieving, affiliative; optimistic; variety seeking; independent minded; and conscientiousness (Wong et al., 2008). Their overall findings indicate that on the two scales of variety seeking and independent minded, there is no difference across the three generations. However, there are differences in the other scales. For example, on achieving (ambitious and career centred), Gen X and Gen Y demonstrate stronger tendencies than Baby Boomers – a positive factor in the workplace if addressed well. On conscientiousness, both Gen X and Gen Y are hardworking, another advantageous factor in the workplace. Gen Y and Baby Boomers are more affiliative than Gen X giving rise to better cohesiveness and togetherness in organisations with a good mix of Baby Boomers and Gen Y. Members of Gen X differs from both Baby Boomers and Gen Y on affiliative meaning Gen X prefers to be left alone rather than mix with the other two generational cohorts when it comes to work. Therefore, a combination of Gen X and Baby Boomers; and Gen X and Gen Y in organisations calls for more strategy and efforts to promote team work. Gen X differs from both Baby Boomers and Gen Y on optimism which becomes another source of work conflict. Figure 2.8 below captures these similarities and differences graphically.
For motivators, the second dimension, the six scales used are affiliation; ease and security; immersion; personal growth; power; and progression. No difference is found across the three generations for security and immersion (working beyond 9 to 5). Gen Y is highly motivated by career progression and advancement while Baby Boomers are highest in terms of seeking power (Wong et al.). The findings are captured graphically in figure 2.9.

In addition to the above similarities and differences on the different dimensions for the cultures of Gen Y, Gen X and Baby Boomers, diversity management is another aspect to consider. Diversity is defined as the visible and non-visible differences such as sex, age, upbringing, race, religion, disability and personality in addition to those of demographic and cultural differences (Elmuti, 2001; GroEschl, 1999; Miller & Rowney, 1999). From the
perspective of cultural differences, the five dimensions from different cultures developed by Hofstede come to mind (Dedoussis, 2004; Ng et al., 2007; Odgen & Cheng, 2011). Tapscott’s (1999) study on Gen Y, Gen X and Baby Boomers was conducted in twelve countries (the US, the United Kingdom, Canada, Germany, France, Spain, Mexico, Brazil, Russia, China, Japan and India). The influence of Hoestede’s five dimensions was expected to moderate Gen cultures but the findings revealed little influence and generational cultures appeared consistent across the different countries and cultures. Other studies in the same manner on cultural influences on Gen Y and Gen X have compared Taiwan and the West (Yu & Miller, 2003); China and the USA (Egri & Ralston, 2004); and Gen Y in Malaysia (Kueh & Voon, 2007), to mention a few. Again, the studies reveal more consistency than differences in Gen cultures despite the different countries with their different cultures.

In summary, there are similarities and differences in the different generational cultures but the effects of Hofeste’s cultural variables are negligible. The differences in generational cultures do give rise to behaviours in organisations that need to be addressed. Therefore, awareness of these differences enables organisations to guide Gen Y in aligning with organisational systems and structures.

2.3 The Changing Nature of Work

The nature of work has also been changing over time as a result of forces such as changing social norms, technological interventions, a fast progressing society, globalisation and demographic changes in the workforce composition (Donkin, 2010; Furnham, 2005). Current and new external forces change at a much more rapid rate than forces in the past. They are also disruptive in nature, especially in terms of work in the digital domain. Apart from the forces mentioned above, the recent worldwide economic crisis triggered by the meltdown of Wall Street in 2007/2008 in the US (GIA, 2009; Bowley, 2010; Powell, 2010) is of too great a significance to be ignored as well. These changes are taking place at a time when Gen Y is moving into the workforce. Will these changes help or obstruct Gen Y and at what rate are these changes taking place? The effects of such forces on the nature of work merit review in this research.

2.3.1 Why Work? The Meaning of Work

Today, in a radical shift from traditional thinking, work is no longer accepted as a necessity taking up a major portion of one’s life. Work used to serve the three major roles of (1)
providing social linkage and linkage to social identity, (2) connecting the activity with working for a living and (3) giving orientation and direction to the future (Binde, 2005). Today, work has become a more complex process. It involves more conflicts and contradictions and it can be viewed from many perspectives. There is the need to juggle multiple wishes and meanings. Some of these are: the search for deeper personal meaning, the fulfillment of passions, the alignment of personal goals against those demanded by organisations, the demand for more leisure time for both family and entertainment, and a horde of other wants. While facing these myriad issues, individuals are still not able to escape the basic imperatives for working such as the need for survival, the need to have or possess things (conspicuous consumption), the need to keep up with the demands of life, the need not be left behind, and the need to maximise the use of technological tools for income generation or for life’s convenience (Porter, 2004).

Despite the on-going attempt to reduce the importance of work and to focus more on leisure time for personal and family pursuits (work-life balance), it has been observed that people are working even more hours than long ago (Porter, 2004). This is also in spite of the numerous technological conveniences available today. For Gen Y, these basic necessities have changed too. For example, with Gen Y living with their parents for longer periods (Johnson & Johnson, 2010), the need for survival is less of a concern. On the other hand, possessing things especially technological gadgets (Deal, 2006), is very much part of Gen Y culture. Therefore, Gen Y faces the working world with a more complicated view of the nature and meaning of work. Although Work-Life Balance is another widely touted feature of Gen Y culture (Johnson & Johnson, 2010), will Gen Y face the same predicament of working even more hours than long ago and will Gen Y continue to struggle for work-life balance?

2.3.2 The Evolution of Work over Time and the Impact of Globalisation

a. The Economic Eras

Work has evolved through three phases over time – the Agricultural/Feudal Phase, the Industrial/Production Phase, and the Post-Industrial /Information Phase (Inayatullah, 2008). Since the Industrial Revolution, manufacturing has been the backbone of businesses in all developed and developing countries. This has accounted for the rapid rise of economies and hence the rapid growth and development of these countries. Employment is abundant with roles ranging from factory workers to clerks to technicians and engineers.
A shock greeted the transition into the digital era in the form of the dot-coms scare in late 1990s and early 2000s (Effah, 2012; Lovelock, 2001; Tapia, 2004). Today, we are in the midst of the information age with ever-increasing and rapidly advancing digital technology. New types of work in the digital domain are continuously surfacing. The following services are now mainstream: back-office administration work such as bookkeeping and accounting, taxation, data mining and processing, computing software programming, customer services (call centres), technical support, digital design (for example, promotional graphics, interior decorations), digital entertainment (games design and development, cartoon animation), and even online school tuition services. Work of this nature can be carried out globally across geographical borders. This means major loss of such types of work back in countries to those countries where costs are lower (Friedman, 2006). In 2006, McKinsey and Company estimated that such outsourcing of services may produce an additional US$ 80 billion in revenue (Inayatullah, 2008).

Right on the horizon now are Cloud and Big Data (Davenport et al., 2010; Ohlhorst, 2013; Schonberger & Cukier, 2013) which create new types of role such as Data Scientists, Data Analysts, and Big Data Programmers, amongst others. More discussion of digital-type work is provided in Subsection 2.3.3 – Work Type: Brain Work versus Manual Work. Needless to say, the arrival of new types of work is another contributor to the movement of work across borders especially to those countries with lower cost and abundant high information technology (IT) skills.

b. Globalisation, Economic Recession and the Employment Situation
The digital domain, coupled with globalisation, breaks down geographical barriers. This results in the relocation of work to countries offering the lowest costs. One of the affected industries is manufacturing and production work. Manufacturing and production work has shifted to emerging countries such as China and India (Inayatullah, 2008) where low-skilled, hard-working, and low wages human capital is available in abundance (Fikirkoca, 2007; Inayatullah, 2008). This has led to the closure of manufacturing concerns in the original home countries (including Malaysia) resulting in massive lay-offs and unemployment. Although Malaysia herself is considered a low-cost country, the economic recession of 1997 caused closures and retrenchments in her manufacturing sector. The manufacturing industry registered a drop in production of 21% in the year 2000 and for the electronics sector the drop was 15.1% for the period January to July 2000 and 13.1% for the
first seven months of 2001 (Bank Negara Malaysia, 2001). In the 2007/2008 Economic Report, Malaysia, the electronic sector continued to contract at 5.6% from January to June 2007 while manufacturing only showed a 0.5% growth (Economic Report, Malaysia, 2007/2008). The Selected Social Statistics, Malaysia (2009) indicated almost 48,315 employees were retrenched in 2007. While this mainly affected low skilled workers, blue collar workers and executives were also affected. This reduced the employment opportunities for the incoming Gen Y workforce as well. At the same time, another worldwide influence was the start of economic recession in 2008/2009. This added to the decrease in employment opportunities. All the above represent both opportunities and threats for Gen Y in the world of work

2.3.3 Work Type: Brain Work versus Manual Work

Other than in high demand industries where tough and difficult manual labour is a major requirement of its workforce (for example in the building and construction sector), low-skilled manual labour is slowly fading and even if they do still exist such job is relegated to the bottom of the work pyramid and attracts minimal wages (Binde, 2005; Ware, 2003). Taking its place is digital work (Landry et al., 2005). From just brick and mortar work that was facilitated by digital communication, the situation has now evolved to the stage where the very nature of work is digital. Such digital work breaks down physical barriers, with only an internet connection required (Landry et al., 2005). Digital work comes in the form of conceptualisation, design, innovation, creativity, planning, scheduling, problem solving, strategy development and other similar tasks that require critical thinking and decision-making, in other words demanding cognitive skills (Felin et al., 2009).

The people employed in these tasks are the knowledge workers and are categorised as the ‘creative class’ who will be at the top of the work pyramid. This class now comprises more than 30% of the entire workforce in the USA (Binde, 2005; Landry, 2005; Ware & Grantham, 2003). This trend is observed to be occurring in countries all over the world (Despres & Hiltrop, 1995). Talent has been said to be replacing land, capital and raw materials as the primary source of competitive advantage with knowledge being its new raw material.

Rapidly entering the new digital work environment are new work functions. A search on O*NET gave the following occupations related to the digital era: 15-1099.04 Web Developers, 15-1099.05 Web Administrators, 15-1099.06 Geospatial Information Scientists

Knowledge and the new digital technology have created a boundaryless, virtual, anytime and anywhere work environment. All these point to new directions in areas from workplace design to workforce management (Landry, 2005; Murray & Greenes, 2007; Ware & Grantham, 2003). With virtual work, in an anytime and anywhere work environment, the traditional workplace design layout of cubicles and rooms may give way to spaces for quiet time, common spaces for team collaboration and dialogue, as well as spaces for relaxation, entertainment and refreshment. Google is a much cited example of an innovative workplace environment although it is not the first. Earlier organisations with such workplace concepts in mind are Hewlett Packard, Pixar (Apple) and Microsoft (Walker, 2013; Stewart, 2013; Cheek, 2012). Members of Gen Y due to the emphasis they place on work-life mix as discussed earlier in Subsection 2.2.2c will find such workplace design to be most conducive to their wants.

2.3.4 Emerging Work (Employment) Patterns

With the changes in the nature and type of work and with long-tenure employment being no longer attractive, there are many hypotheses about emerging work or career patterns. Armstrong-Stassen (1998) posited five such patterns. These are: part-time employment, contingent employment, flexitime, compressed working weeks, and teleworking (Furnham, 2000). Of these five patterns, teleworking is the most touted trend and it fits in with the mantra ‘Borderless and Global, Anywhere and Anytime’. This means that work will no longer be confined to any geographical (global) and physical (office) location and that regular nine-to-five working hours will cease to be the norm (Fikirkoca, 2007; Landry, 2005; Ware & Grantham, 2003). Digital technology is the primary enabling force for such a trend (Fikirkoca, 2007, Furnham, 2000) and the demand for talents is driving the global recruitment for knowledge workers.

The instance of teleworking trend appears to be increasing rapidly. In 1998, about 3.1% of the workforce worked in this way according to a European Union study. The study reported some
variations in the rates in European countries: 7% in the UK, 10% in Denmark, and 0.6% in Spain. When given the choice to telework (mostly from home), the proportions who choose to do so were: 44% in the UK, 39% in Germany, 25% in France, and 20% in Italy (Sparrow, 2000). This trend means that organisations will face very little opposition from the workforce for teleworking (Berman et al., 2007). There will be major hurdles to overcome and the main one will be measurement of outcome or results and their corresponding reward structures and systems. Other than teleworking, three major types of departure from traditional full time employment are boundaryless work, protean work, and portfolio work.

a. **Boundaryless Work**
Work defined and classified as ‘boundaryless work’ was the subject of a study undertaken by Arthur and Rousseau (1996) (Ackah & Heaton, 2004; Sommerlund & Boutaiba, 2007). Under their hypothesis, work and career can only be defined by the individuals concerned, and not by any other third parties. This is due to the uncertain and changing work environment in which both job security and tenure are becoming obsolete (Ackah & Heaton, 2004; Sommerlund & Boutaiba, 2007).

Boundaryless work entails working for organisations for very short time spans. For individuals seeking boundaryless work, their top priorities will be self-improvement, self-growth and continuous learning (Akah & Heaton, 2004; Sommerland & Boutaiba, 2007).

b. **Protean Work**
Protean work spans a much longer period than boundaryless work in an organisation. This again means that individuals are responsible for their own career and employability (Akah & Heaton, 2004; Sommerland & Boutaiba, 2007). A second element, which is personal value congruence, is also considered very important (Briscoe & Finkelstein, 2009; Cabrera, 2009; McDonald et al., 2005; Sargent & Domberger, 2007).

c. **Portfolio Work**
Lastly, portfolio work (Handy, 1995; Mallon, 1999; Sargent & Domberger, 2007) involves offering for a fee, a set of personal skills, experiences, knowledge and expertise to organisations (or clients) who require them. The basic characteristic of this work is that it is independent of the traditional form of work in which an individual is employed by an organisation (Handy, 1995). Portfolio work requires the individual to be more self-directed
and to be responsible for their own work or career direction instead of depending on an organisation (Fenwick, 2006; Handy, 1995; Templer & Cawsey, 1999). The literature on Portfolio work has examined various forces driving it and the motivations behind individuals for engaging in it (Handy, 1995; Mary, 1999; Templer & Cawsey, 1999).

A recent study (Dries et al., 2008) on ‘boundaryless work’ reveals that only 6% of working people of the four generations (Traditionals, Baby Boomers, Gen X and Gen Y) engage in this type of work. The balance is in traditional linear, long term career. For a finer interpretation on what constitutes ‘traditional’, the researchers identified five other types of traditional work. They are Bounded, Staying, Homeless, Trapped, and Released. These are illustrated in Table 2.6 and short definitions of these five categories of ‘traditional work’ are given below:

1. Bounded workers follow the traditional career path, work for only one or two organisations during the course of the lifetime, expect job security and standard linear career track, and derive job satisfaction from pay, promotion and status.

2. Staying worker change employers regularly although they long for security and stability. They expect each employer they worked for to offer them the much needed security and stability but this does not happen and so they move.

3. Homeless worker face the same situation as the ‘staying workers’ except that they do not believe that their current organisation will be able to provide them with security and stability. Therefore, they leave hoping to find one such organisation.

4. Trapped workers are those who have worked in an organisation for a long period of time and although they want change, find themselves unable to do leave due to a variety of reasons.

5. Released workers face the same situation as ‘trapped workers’ except that they believe one day they will break free.

The findings from Dries et al. show that the four generations still adhere to the ‘traditional’ type of employment. Across generations, 94% follow ‘traditional’ careers. The breakdowns are 57% in the ‘Bounded’ type, 12% in ‘Staying’, 19% in ‘Homeless’, 3% in ‘Trapped’, and 3% in ‘Released’ (Table 2.7). Only 6% have ‘boundaryless careers’. However, on a generational cohort basis, Gen Y stands out with 51% in ‘Bounded’ followed closely by Gen X at 46% and Baby Boomers trailing at 73%. Again, only 4% of Gen Y opts for ‘Boundaryless’. The 3% of Baby Boomers who are ‘Boundaryless’ may appear an anomaly but taking into account that these Baby Boomers are probably at retirement age (not specified
by the researchers) and therefore no longer tied to any particular organisation, the findings appear credible. The implication is that almost half of Gen Y still adheres to the concept of the ‘traditional’ work type or pattern, which is a noteworthy finding.

Another study (Lyons et al., 2012) appears to support the above findings that the ‘traditional’ approach is still prevalent although in this study, Gen Y demonstrates a leaning towards ‘boundaryless’. The researchers attribute this not only to Gen Y culture but also to influence by other external forces such as downsizing of organisations and flatter organisational structures, which are creating less employment opportunities and limiting upward mobility.

In summing up, it is noted that the new work patterns such as boundaryless, protean or teleworking may not become mainstream immediately (Akah & Heaton, 2004; Sommerlund & Boutaiba, 2007) but it cannot be denied that such changes are beginning to take place and there is evidence of the slow demise of traditional careers (Akah & Heaton, 2004). These changes are yet to penetrate the deep consciousness or cognition of the new workforce, Gen Y and organisations (Sparrow, 2000).

One major point to heed regarding the changes in the nature of work is the difference between ‘employment’ and ‘employability’ (Akah & Heaton, 2004; Clarke, 2008). Traditionally, those who seek employment usually go through a process of searching and responding to job recruitment advertisements, through recruitment agencies, and various other ways of finding work. This is accompanied by the submission of curriculum vitae, followed by requests for attending a series of interviews if selected. Most of the time, in their curriculum vitae, candidates just present the academic qualifications, training, skills and experiences that they have and hope that these match whatever the organisations are looking for. This is now termed as a passive ‘employment’ technique distinct from a new ‘employability’ approach. The difference is that in the ‘employability’ approach, the job seeker takes a more active and

Table 2.6: Percentage of career types for the four generational cohorts
(Source: Dries et al., 2008)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Generation</th>
<th>Bounded</th>
<th>Staying</th>
<th>Homeless</th>
<th>Trapped</th>
<th>Released</th>
<th>Boundaryless</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Traditionals</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baby Boomers</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen X</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen Y</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>57</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

Gen Y
ownership role in ensuring that they have skills and other prerequisites not only to get a job, and stay in a job, but also to move from job to job, and organisation to organisation. Although defining ‘employability’ is proving to be evasive and lacks clarity (Hillage & Pollard, 1998; Pool & Sewell, 2007; Pool et al., 2013), two of the most widely cited definitions are:

1. Employability is about being capable of getting and keeping fulfilling work. It is the capability to move self-sufficiently within the labour market to realise potential through sustainable employment (Hillage & Pollard, 1998)

2. Employability is having a set of skills, knowledge, understanding and personal attributes that make a person more likely to choose and secure occupations in which they can be satisfied and successful (Pool & Sewell, 2007).

A key consideration is the responsibility of the employees in directing and managing their own career paths instead of depending on the employers to do so. This also implies continuous learning, lifelong learning and self-directed learning (Clarke, 2008; Clarke & Patrickson, 2008). To be employable also calls for knowledge, skills, abilities and other attributes (Clarke, 2008). Some examples of skillsets are: soft skills, problem-solving skills, and job-specific functional skills (Finch et al., 2013); employability assets (knowledge, skills, attitudes), deployment skills (career management and job-search skills), and presentation skills (curriculum vitae writing and interview techniques) (Hillage & Pollard, 1998); and skills, competencies and attributes spelt out in the ‘Employability Frame Work’ (ACCI, 2002). In Singapore, the findings of Skills Utilisation at Work Survey, Singapore, 2010, indicate the top three out of nine skills are teamworking skills, problem-solving, and planning skills (Sung et al., 2013);

For employees, particularly Gen Y employees, employability is a response to a challenging employment market characterized by downsizing, flattening of the organisational structure and the outsourcing of work. The benefits gained by employees who increase their ‘employability’ are: having a viable alternative to employment security; the ability to move from job to job, organisation to organisation; and confidence in their own abilities and marketability. However, the need to embrace ‘employability’ is not well accepted by employees including Gen Y (Clarke, 2008: Clarke & Patrickson, 2008).

Organisations view ‘employability’ differently and with mixed concerns. On one hand, it is a concept desired by organisations (Clarke & Patrickson, 2008) as it substitutes long-term
employment with short-term contract (Pascale, 1995; Iles et al., 1996). It enables organisations to have a pool of self-developed potential employees with highly desired skillsets (Clarke, 2008). On the other hand, the suitability of ‘employable’ graduates produced by the higher educational institutions is not deemed as matching industries’ demands (Archer & Davison, 2008; Arthur et al., 2007; Flash Barometer, 2010; Tibby, 2012). Moreover, the self-driven motivation to learn and acquire ‘employability’ skillsets is not a widely accepted practice and attitude amongst those seeking employment. This is the current dilemma facing organisations. Therefore, ‘employability’ is still a perplexing issue that requires further efforts. Further research is needed to raise awareness and to enable effective implementation by various stakeholders before the benefits of ‘employability’ can be fully utilised by both employees and employers.

2.4 The Changing Organisational Systems and Structures

Since Gen Y culture is directed towards employment that is no longer long-term and the terms of work appear to be changing to protean and boundaryless work (Briscoe & Finkelstein, 2009; Mallon, 1999; Sargent & Domberger, 2007), it is of relevance to investigate the current status of organisational development in this direction as well. Of particular interest is whether organisational systems and structures are changing to accommodate these new trends.

2.4.1 Organisational Structures

Organisational structures facilitate: the assigning of tasks to individuals and departments, reporting relationships such as lines of authority, decision making responsibilities, communication tasks, span of control, and effective co-ordination of employees and their tasks to achieve company goals (Daft & Noe, 2001; Greenberg & Baron, 2003; Robbins & Judge, 2007). Military structures were the fore-runners of the highly mechanistic, hierarchical and bureaucratic structures which gradually evolved into today’s modern network structures or forms (Talbot, 2003). Without going into the details of various organisational structures, one organisational structure that falls within the context of this research is the ‘shamrock’ advocated by Handy (Handy, 1991). It addresses the concepts discussed under protean, portfolio, halon and boundaryless work patterns by placing the functional structures of the organisations under three different types. These are represented by the three leaves of the shamrock and hence the label ‘shamrock organisations’. The three different types of functions are the professional core, the contracts (outsourced) and the part-timers (free lancers) as shown in figure 2.11.
The ‘professional core’ consists of very talented, highly qualified individuals who are essential to the organisation. They drive business strategy and growth. The professionals in this group are given the best remunerations and perks. They are highly motivated by the prestige and power they wield. The number of people in the core is therefore not numerous. It has been reported that over the last 10 years, successful companies have halved their core staff but quadrupled their business turnover (Handy, 1991).

A major portion of the work of companies with shamrock structures is contracted out. This contracted work is carried out by either individuals or organisations. This forms the second leaf – ‘the contractors’. If the contractor is an organisation, normally, it is much smaller than the main organisation. It is to be noted that these contractor organisations in turn have their version of the shamrock structure. If the work is contracted to individuals, they are mainly self-employed professionals. Under this arrangement, the contractors are remunerated for their results and not for their time (Handy, 1991).

The third and last leaf consists of ‘part timers’. These are individuals who are willing just to do a job. They are not interested in career development or promotions and have their priorities in other things. They expect decent pay and decent work conditions. This group is motivated to give more provided organisations are able to introduce more innovative incentives and rewards (Handy, 1991).

Despite the numerous literatures on the design and planning of organisational structures, in practice this remains a relatively passive process. The outcome is that the majority of organisations stick to their existing dominant traditional structures. The design of organisational structures is still an emergent process (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1977). However, the
convergence of many dynamic forces is increasing the pressure for disruptive changes and in
the area of organisational structures and demographics (for Gen Y in particular), the shamrock
organisation appears to be a viable direction to follow.

2.4.2 Organisational Systems through the Lens of Career Development
In terms of organisational system, the literature review focuses on career development and the
associated career theories. In light of the factors mentioned, the discussion examines whether
traditional career development needs re-definition (Anakwe, 2000; Gzreda, 2009; Wise and
Millward, 2005). Traditional or established career theories have centred around three foci.
These are (1) personality as demonstrated notably by Holland’s six personality classifications
for matching work or occupational environments, (2) career stages as illustrated notably by
Super’s Life Career Rainbow (Wise and Millward, 2005), and (3) career through lifespan
development as espoused by both Erik Erikson and Levinson (Wodd, 2000; Wise &
Millward, 2005). Lately, the Social Cognitive Career Theory, which is derived from Albert
Bandura’s Social Cognitive Theory, has also been utilised. This theory focuses on self-
efficacy, outcome expectations, and personal goals, as major influence over career choice and
development. A more comprehensive treatment of these theories is included in the following
section, Section 2.5 – Behavioural Science.

Traditional career theory has advanced various career pattern models. The three models that
are most commonly cited are Driver’s theory on Objective Career Patterns, Schein’s
Traditionally, career development has been defined as a uni-directional upward or vertical
move within an organisation. This upward mobility is accompanied by an increase in
responsibility, status, authority, compensation package and perks. It usually culminates in
retirement at about 60 years of age with appropriate recognition by the organisation (the Gold
Watch) (Clarke, 2008; Dries et al., 2008; Wise & Millward, 2005). The organisation plays the
central role in the determination of the individual’s career progress.

This may not be relevant today with changes in the nature of work, the flattening and
downsizing of organisations (Anakwe, 2000; Hall, 2004) and the Gen Y culture (Hall, 2004).
Table 2.7 compares some of the main career elements of career development formulation in
traditional and modern day practices. The differences are clearly discernable. It is due to these
differences that various scholars have been calling for new definitions of career, new career patterns and new motivation (compensation packages and incentives).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Career Elements</th>
<th>Old</th>
<th>New</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Work Nature</td>
<td>Manufacturing, Skilled Labour</td>
<td>Knowledge, Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Work Tasks</td>
<td>Standard Job Roles, Functions, Descriptions</td>
<td>Project Assignments, Tasks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Loyalty</td>
<td>To Organisation</td>
<td>To Authentic Skill Sets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Career Security</td>
<td>Depending on Organisation</td>
<td>Depending on Marketable Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Career Progress</td>
<td>Vertical Promotions</td>
<td>Flexibility and Variety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Rewards</td>
<td>Compensation, Benefits, Incentives, Perks</td>
<td>Fees upon Fulfillment of Contract</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Basis of Authority</td>
<td>Position/Status</td>
<td>Expertise, Track Records</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Control</td>
<td>Hierarchy of Supervisors</td>
<td>Meeting Clients’ Needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Success Strategy</td>
<td>Organisational Politics, Performance</td>
<td>Performance, Contract Assessment and Evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Key Career Requirements</td>
<td>Loyalty, Commitment</td>
<td>Flexibility, Market Alignment, Updated skill sets</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.7: Characteristics of career elements in old and new type of careers
(Source: adapted from Templer and Cawsey, 1999)

One main argument in favour of new definitions is that career development today is no longer restricted to just upward mobility within an organisation and that success is not just materialistically motivated (Anakwe, 2000; Brocklehurst, 2003; Wise & Millward, 2005). Career development can consist of a number of lateral moves that can be non-linear and non-hierarchical and can span a number of organisations. Motivational factors include psychological motivations (for example passion, fulfillment, life-work balance) (Clarke, 2008; Dries et al., 2008; Hall, 2004; Wise & Millward, 2005) as well as materialistic rewards, power and status.

All these developments point to one fundamental point. Irrespective of the categories they fall under, individuals have to play an increasing and more dominant role in their career development (Anakwe, 2000). Loafing at work becomes more difficult. Employability rather than being employed becomes the main objective of individuals (Baruch, 2003; Dries et al., 2008). This calls for individuals to acquire employability knowledge especially knowledge of self, knowledge of others and knowledge of the environment in addition to the traditional specific professional and vocational skills. Individuals’ mindsets, attitudes and behaviour need to be finely attuned to on-going changes and continuous self-directed learning becomes even more important. The ability for accurate and realistic self-assessment determines individuals’ work and life outcomes (Grzeda, 1999).
2.5 Behavioural Science

2.5.1 Introduction

When reviewing the Parent Discipline, theories drawn from Lifespan Development Psychology (LDP) and career/work related theories will be able to add context to the research. Two relevant theories from LDP will be those of Erikson (Guinee, 1998; Slater, 2003; Wang et al., 1997) and Levinson (Levinson, 1986; Thomas et al., 1982; Ornstein et al., 1989). For career/work related theories, the career development theory of Super (Herr, 1997; Kosine & Lewis, 2008; Savickas, 1997) provides a strong foundation to start from. As the research involves people and behavior, a discussion of ‘personality psychology’ will provide some background. The prominent ones to discuss in ‘personality psychology’ are the ‘Big Five’ (Schwoerer et al., 1998) that examines emotions, the matching of work or vocational interests such as Holland’s Vocational Profile, and work fit as measured using the Myers Briggs Types Indicators (MBTI).

2.5.2 Lifespan Development Psychology (LDP)

The review of LDP is relevant as LDP studies the psychosocial development of humans from birth to death. This study is interested in members of Gen Y from when they are 24 years old until they retire at the age of 55 or later. Two renowned studies that cover this lifespan are from Erikson (Guinee, 1998; Slater, 2003; Wang et al., 1997) and Levinson (Levinson, 1986; Thomas et al., 1982; Ornstein et al., 1989). A comprehensive understanding of these two studies helps reconcile lifespan theories with ‘gen culture’. Table 2.8 shows the eight psychosocial stages from birth to death as theorised by Erikson (1950) and Table Figure 2.9 shows the more work oriented stages from Levinson (1978).

a. Erikson’s Eight Psycho-social Lifespan Stages

Table 2.8 shows that some aspects of Gen Y culture may be mapped onto Erikson’s stages. This is shown in the fourth column, Gen Y Patterns. The Gen Y research finding is that members of Gen Y generally had hovering or ‘helicopter’ parents (Fahlbush, 2008; Sheahan, 2008; Howe & Strauss, 2003). These parents demonstrate the characteristics of Life Stages 1 to 5. Therefore, according to Erik Erikson’s theory, Gen Y grows up to be trusting, has high autonomy, has initiative and shows confidence, is hard-working or conscientious and has a strong sense of identity. However, research findings show that Gen Y is narcissistic (Twenge
& Campbell, 2008) and shirks hard work and prefers easy workload (Milliron, 2008). For the rest of the life stages, Gen Y is still very new and young to the workforce and has still to live out their work life.

Table 2.8: The eight psycho-social stages through the lifespan from Erik Erikson (Source: compiled from Guinee, 1988, Slater, 2003, Wang et al., 1977)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Gen Y - Patterns</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stage 1</td>
<td>Trust vs. mistrust (Birth to 1 yr)</td>
<td>A child will only learn trust if its mother meets the child's deep need for attention and affection.</td>
<td>Trust – Hovering Parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 2</td>
<td>Autonomy vs shame (1yr to yrs)</td>
<td>If the exploring child receives encouragement in a search for autonomy, the child will learn trust, otherwise they learn shame and doubt.</td>
<td>Autonomy – Hovering Parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 3</td>
<td>Initiative vs guilt (2 yrs to 6yrs)</td>
<td>If the questioning child is encouraged in their ideas and games, the child will gain confidence or otherwise feel guilty about initiating things.</td>
<td>Initiative – Hovering Parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 4</td>
<td>Industry vs. latency (7 yrs to 11 yrs)</td>
<td>If encouraged and praised by teachers, the child will increase efforts to learn. If always criticized, the child will learn to feel inferior.</td>
<td>Industry – Hovering Parents, Trophy Kids</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 5</td>
<td>Identity vs. role confusion (12 yrs to 19 yrs)</td>
<td>If the child's identity has been reinforced up to puberty, the child will handle it well. If not, there is a frightening identity crisis.</td>
<td>Identity – Hovering Parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 6</td>
<td>Intimacy vs. isolation (20 yrs to 40 yrs)</td>
<td>The young adult starts seeking a partner that can share a big part of his/her life. The negative aspect will be one driven to isolation.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 7</td>
<td>Generativity vs stagnation (41 yrs to 64 yrs)</td>
<td>The middle adulthood looks towards contributing his knowledge, experience to others and society. The negative aspect will be of one who is looking towards his/her own comfort, and inwards towards himself/herself only, with no desire to contribute productively to others and society.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 8</td>
<td>Ego Integrity vs despair (65 yrs to Death)</td>
<td>The late adulthood achieves a sense of fulfillment and self while the negative ones face a period of despair and desperation as they know that the end is not far off and they have wasted their precious early years.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

b. Levinson’s Life Stages

More related to the work environment will be Levinson’s life stage theory as shown in Table 2.9 below. At the time of Levinson’s theory (1978), a different generational cohort occupied the work scene. These were mainly the Baby Boomers. Therefore, the Early Adult Transitions (17 years to 23 years old), of moving out of the parents’ home, finding employment and shopping around for a suitable vocation was the social norm during those
days. Today, Gen Y with their different Gen Y culture may not reflect the same pattern. The new patterns indicate that more and more members of Gen Y are staying with their parents and getting a job is neither a top priority nor a central issue (Smola and Sutton, 2002). The new pattern is inserted into column six.

**Super’s Life - Career Rainbow Theory**

As this theory also has life stages incorporated, it is explored in this section. Super’s theory on career and career development states that they are unique to every individual and are influenced by many factors throughout the individual’s life (Kosine & Lewis, 2008) leading to career maturity (CM). This total career pattern is depicted in Figure 2.12 below.
The bands of the ‘rainbow’ represent the life roles through the individual’s lifespan from child, student, leisurite, citizen, and worker to homemaker/Parent (Herr, 1997). Spanning the radial of the bands are the five career development stages of Growth, Exploration, Establishment, Maintenance and Decline (Giannantonio & Hurley-Hanson, 2006; Kosine & Lewis, 2008; Smart, 1994). A summary of what each stage entails is also provided by the aforesaid scholars. Although an approximate indication of the age range for each stage is shown, Super stresses that it is more important to define career stages operationally by psychological fit rather than by chronological age through the five stages. This effectively means that the progression through the stages is not rigid but flexible and individuals may recycle through certain stages during various periods of their lives. This process is referred to as maxicycling (Bluestein, 1997; Kosine & Lewis, 2008; Smart, 1994). The third component of Super’s Life Career Rainbow Theory is the ‘Lifestyle Factors’. These are the ‘Personal’, ‘Environmental’, and ‘Situational’ determinants. Taken together, they present a very comprehensive model for career development. In 1990, Super presented the Archway model (Herr, 1997; Kosine & Lewis, 2008).
Super’s theory has spanned the last forty to fifty years and many studies have been conducted to test, validate and refine his ideas (Herr, 1997; Repetto, 2001). His Work Importance Study (1979) gave rise to a number of developments such as the Values Scale and the Salience Inventory (SI) (Marques, 2001; Sverko, 2001). Subsequent developments are the Career Development Assessment and Counselling (C-DAC) model and the Adult Career Concerns Inventory (ACCI) (Marques, 2001). Similar developments are also taking place in regard to his early ‘Career Maturity’ concept. This concept is targeted mainly at students and adolescents during the stages from ‘exploration’ to ‘career adaptability’ and the changes cover the Life Roles arising due to today’s fast-changing world (Patton & Lokan, 2001; Savickas, 1997). Today his Life-Career Rainbow theory has evolved to become the Life-Span, Life-Space theory.

By comparing the work of Erik Erikson, Levinson and Super, it can be seen that the main differences introduced by Super are that his career stages are not rigid chronological progressions and there are many other factors occurring simultaneously that influence an individual’s career pattern. While Erik Erikson’s theory deals with the stages of life as a whole and is not restricted to just work or career, Levinson’s theory focuses on career. Levinson’s stages are more rigid and progress in order over an individual’s chronological lifetime.

**2.5.3 Personality Psychology**

Personality is defined as the cognitive and behavioral characteristics of individuals that are stable over time and across situations (Bozionelos, 2003). Although there are numerous theories covering personality traits and interests and/or vocational choice/fit, this review only focuses on some of the more prominent ones which are still in use. These are the Five Factor Model of Personality (FFP) or Big 5, Holland’s Vocational Interest (RIASEC) and the Myers Briggs Type Indicators (MBTI).

**a. The Five Factor Model of Personality (Big Five)**

The Big Five has strong validity and empirical evidence. It consists of the following traits – openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism (Bozionelos, 2003). It is easily discernable which of the five factors are conducive to work and which are not. ‘Openness’ indicates multiple interests, receptivity to new ideas, flexibility in thinking and innovativeness. ‘Conscientiousness’ means the individual is industrious or hard working, has
perseverance and a sense of duty. ‘Extraversion’ is a trait that demonstrates sociability, outgoing behavior and a liking for excitement. ‘Agreeableness’ is characterised by friendliness, modesty and a cooperative attitude. Therefore, individuals who possess a high degree of these four personality traits perform well in the work environment. The opposites of these four personality traits give rise to negative work consequences. On the other hand, ‘neuroticism’ is a trait that impacts negatively on the work environment (and on life too). It involves a tendency to worry excessively, to have a pessimistic outlook, to possess low confidence and to experience negative emotions. These translate to an attitude towards work that is not healthy as individuals with neurotic personalities tend to lack ambition, do not set goals and prefer external motivational features such as security and work conditions rather than intrinsic motivations (Bozionelos, 2003).

b. Holland’s Vocational Profile (RIASEC)
Holland’s vocational profile, popularly designated by the abbreviation of its six vocational interest or personality types ‘RIASEC’, is a prominent theory used in career counseling research and practice. RIASEC stands for Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising and Conventional (Bullock et al., 2009/2010; Dik et al., 2010; Holland, 1997; Nauta, 2010). The descriptions for each personality type, the environmental fit, examples of occupations and college majors are as shown in Table 2.10 below. Holland’s typology enables the matching of individuals demonstrating each of the six profiles with the similar profiles found in jobs or occupations. Such matches or ‘congruence’ give rise to high job satisfaction, performance and competency (Nauta, 2010). In Holland’s theory, the relationships amongst the six personality types are of significance and they are depicted in a hexagonal configuration (Bullock et al., 2009/2010; Holland, 1997; Nauta, 2010) as shown in figure 2.11 below.

Holland also developed some instruments for the assessment of his RIASEC qualities for both individuals and the environment. These are the Vocational Preference Inventory (VPI), the Self-Directed Search (SDS), the Position Classification Inventory (PCI) and the Environmental Assessment Inventory (EAT) amongst many others. Finally, he compiles a list of occupations with RIASEC characteristics under his ‘Dictionary of Holland Occupational Codes (DHOC) (Nauta, 2010). His RIASEC is also incorporated into the Occupational
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Holland Personality Types</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personality</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. <strong>Realistic</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. <strong>Investigative</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. <strong>Artistic</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. <strong>Social</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. <strong>Enterprising</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. <strong>Conventional</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.10: Holland personality types (Source: SOICC, 2008)

The six profiles are equidistant in the sequence RIASEC as shown.

![Holland Personality Types Diagram](image)

Figure 2.13 Holland personality types depicted on a hexagon (Source: USU, n.d.)
Information Network (O*NET) (Reardon et al., 2007). Holland’s RIASEC is generally applicable across cultures and countries but caution needs to be exercised as to its exact fit (Bullock et al., 2009/2010).

c. The Myers Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) is the most popular personality work fit assessment instrument commercially used today. The MBTI was developed from the theory of Carl Jung’s psychological types by the mother and daughter team of Katherine Cook Briggs and Isabel Briggs Meyers (Furnham et al., 1993; Liorens, 2010; Sample, 2004). In this theory, the personalities of individuals are categorised into sixteen personality types according to four basic preferences (Furnham et al., 1993; McCaulley, 1990; Sample, 2004) as show in Table 2.11 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Four Basic Preferences</th>
<th>Sensing Type (S)</th>
<th>Intuitive Type (N)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>With Thinking (T)</td>
<td>With Feeling (F)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introverts (I)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judging (J)</td>
<td>ISTJ</td>
<td>ISFJ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceptive (P)</td>
<td>ISTOP</td>
<td>ISFP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extroverts (E)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceptive (P)</td>
<td>ESTP</td>
<td>ESFP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judging (J)</td>
<td>ESTJ</td>
<td>ESFJ</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.11: The sixteen MBTI personality types (Source: Sample, John, 2004, p68)

With reference to Table 2.11, the four preferences are Extrovert or Introvert, Sensing or Intuition, Thinking or Feeling, and Judgment or Perception. For example, in the Extrovert (E) profile, the individual seeks engagement with the environment and gives priority to the world around them while the Introvert (I) looks into his or her own internal world to explore and reflect on concepts and ideas to explain events. Taking another example, for sensing (S) the individual relies on what is real, practical and observable by the physical senses whereas for the Intuition (N), the individual relies on possibilities, patterns, symbols and implicit meanings suggested by insights (Higgs, 2001; Sample, 2004; Tan & Tiong, 2001).
2.6 Organisational Commitment

2.6.1 Introduction

When exploring Gen Y, the new workforce and their alignment with Organisational Systems and Structures, a common area of interest is organisational commitment or work commitment. When Gen Y enters the world of work, they do so with commitment. When organisations employ Gen Y, they expect work and organisational commitment from Gen Y. Therefore, organisational or work commitment serves as a common denominator if alignment is to come about. In this part of the literature review, organisational commitment or work commitment forms the immediate discipline (Perry, 2002). This review covers the various forms commitment takes and some of the latest research studies in this area. Strongly correlated to work or organisational commitment are Work Values. Different types of work values give rise to either strong or moderate work or organisational commitment (Elizur, 1996). This is discussed below in more detail, especially when in relation to Gen Y.

2.6.2 Work Commitment

Work commitment has always been an important construct (van Vuuren et al., 2008; Nijhof, 1998) when it comes to understanding the productivity or performance of the workforce in organisations. According to Mowday, Steers and Porter (1979), commitment especially organisational commitment has two components – behavior and attitude. In essence, Mowday, Steers and Porter (1979) mention that three characteristics are of utmost importance. They are:

i. A strong belief in and the acceptance of the organisation’s goals and values.
ii. A willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization.
iii. A strong desire to maintain membership in the organisation.

The attitudinal component is given more prominence by Meyer and Allen (1991) as the Affective component in their three components theory. Mowday, Steers and Porter (1979) established the OCQ (Organisational Commitment Questionnaire) which consists of 15 items and was subsequently subjected to extensive tests with many different samples.

For Meyer and Allen (1991), Organisational Commitment is defined as a psychological link between the employee and his or her organisation that makes it less likely that the employee will voluntarily leave the organisation. It contains three components – Affective, Normative,
and Continuance commitment. Affective commitment is based on the emotional attitudes such as identification and involvement with the organisation; Normative Commitment is the sense of obligation to the organisation; and Continuance Commitment is the perceived cost of leaving the organisation (van Vuuren et al., 2008; Powell, 2006; Suliman and Iles, 1999).

Tests on the three components have provided a variety of findings. The main one is that the three components are distinct and different but there are overlaps especially between Affective commitment and Normative commitment; and between Continuance commitment and Normative commitment but very little correlations between Affective commitment and Continuance commitment. The Affective component is also very much correlated with the OCQ from Mowday, Steers and Porter (1979) but the Normative and Continuance commitments are not. Further tests also indicate that both Affective and Normative Commitment positively correlate to work performance and to the efforts exerted by individuals for the organisation. Further research is being undertaken in these areas of commitment.

There are more than 25 commitment related concepts and measures (Carmelli & Gefen, 2005; Carmelli et al., 2007; Morrow, 1983) available when it comes to applying the construct. Some examples are commitment to the workgroup, commitment to the supervisor, commitment to the boss or commitment to the occupation (Becker et al., 1996; van Vuuren et al., 2008; Nijhof, 1998). To wade through this clutter Morrow (1983), establishes five basic forms or constructs of work commitment and these are explored in this research.

They are Work Values as in Protestant Work Ethics; Career Commitment as also found in Job Involvement, Career Salience and Commitment to Profession; Job Focus as in Job Orientation, Job Attachment, Identity Reference, and where Work is a central life interest; Organisational Commitment which contains Continuance and Affective Commitments; and Union Commitment (Carmelli & Gefen, 2005; Carmelli et. al, 2007; Morrow, 1983). This is presented in in Table 2.12 below:
Some explanations are offered with reference to Table 2.12:

1. Work Values: Protestant Work Ethic is the extent to which one believes that hard work is important and that leisure time and excess money are detrimental to oneself (Morrow, 1983).

2. Career Commitment is defined as ‘one’s attitude toward one’s profession or vocation’ with Job Involvement being ‘a belief descriptive of the present job and tends to be a function of how much the job can satisfy one’s present needs’ (Morrow, 1983).


4. Organisational Commitment contains the two constructs of Continuance Commitment which is defined as ‘the extent to which employees feel committed to their organisations by virtue of the costs that they feel are associated with leaving’ and Affective Commitment which is the ‘positive feelings of identification with, attachment to, and involvement in, the work organisation’ (Meyer and Allen, 1983, 1991).

In addition to the above five constructs, findings from Becker et al., 1996 have shown that that commitment to supervisors or work group tends to give rise to better work performance. Likewise, findings have revealed that ‘identification’, a characteristic under ‘Job Focus’ does not relate to job performance (Becker et al., 1996). On the other hand ‘internalisation of goals and values’ which may be associated with most of the five commitment forms also gives rise to improved job performance (Becker et al., 1996).
More specific to Gen Y, is a study by Kim et al., (2009) on Gen Y employees in retail outlets. They investigated the effects of workplace experiences such as role ambiguity and role conflict on job outcome in the form of job performance, job satisfaction and the intention to leave. Their findings reveal that for Gen Y, role conflict does not negatively affect job performance and job satisfaction. This is contrary to the findings of many other studies for the same variables in the same industry for other generational cohorts. One possible reason for this discrepancy is Gen Y culture contains the readiness to overcome setbacks independently. On Gen Y’s perception of role ambiguity, this affects their job performance but not their job satisfaction. Another insightful finding is that supervisor support does not affect Gen Y’s job performance and job satisfaction which again is contrary to many other studies in this area. On a similar basis, work involvement does not affect Gen Y’s job performance and satisfaction. All these findings indicate that Gen Y has many distinct differences not only from other generational cohorts but from traditional work behavior norms as well.

2.6.3 Work Values, Ethics and Attitudes

On the dimension of Work Values, a number of definitions will help to clarify its various meanings. These are:

i. ‘Work values’ are the end-values such as satisfaction, quality, or reward individuals seek from their work (Super, 1970).

ii. ‘Work values’ are defined as the importance individuals associate with certain outcomes related to attributes of work (Elizur, 1984).

iii. ‘Work value’ are the evaluative standards relating to work or the work environment by which individuals discern what is “right” or assess the importance of preferences (Dose, 1997).

The correlations of Work Values with Work Commitment vary according to the dimensions looked at. Examined on the basis of outcomes, the ‘cognitive contents’ of work values (Independence, Job Interest, Use of Abilities, Achievement, and others) have been shown to have strong correlations with work commitment. On the other hand, the ‘affective contents’ (relationships with colleagues, superiors and others) as well as the ‘instrumental (materialistic) contents’ such as Benefits, Security, Working Hours, Work Conditions and Pay) have been shown to be less so. An exception is ‘pay’ or ‘salary’ (instrumental value) which correlates very strongly with work commitment (Elizur, 1996). Studies have shown that there are differences in the work values for different generations (Miller & Yu, 2003;
Smola & Sutton, 2002).

However, when using the fifteen work values from Super’s (1970) Work Value Instrument, a more recent study by Chen and Choi (2007) reveals commonality for the three generational cohorts on the top five work values (Way of Life, Supervisory Relationship, Achievement, Altruism) (with the exception of Gen X), and Economic Return (with the exception of Baby Boomers). This is also true for the last four work values of Surroundings, Associates, Management, and Aesthetics. Standing out for Gen Y is intelligent stimulation, which is relegated to the bottom five as well. This makes sense if intelligent stimulation is considered to involve hard work (Milliron, 2008).

On another value dimension of Instrumental and Terminal Values, a survey by Greenwood et al., 2008 reveals consistency across the three generational cohorts on some values but differences in others. The survey items are taken from the Rokeach Value Model (1973). This scale consists of 18 instrumental values and 18 terminal values. A central argument by Rokeach for this scale is that the number of human values is small and is the same throughout the world (Greenwood et al., 2008). Their findings are shown in Table 2.14 and Table 2.15 below.

Honesty and Responsibility are the top ranking instrumental values for all three generational cohorts with some very slight variations in weighting. Differences emerge for Independence and Ambition, which are quite high up for Gen Y compared to Baby Boomers, but way above those of Gen X. As for Loyalty, Gen Y falls below both Gen X and Baby Boomers but not that very far below. All three generations see themselves as not being Obedient, Polite or Very Imaginative. Both Gen Y and Baby Boomers (but not Gen X) see themselves as rather ‘unforgiving’ too. The rankings in Table 2.13 provide a snapshot of the variations in the instrumental values of the three generational cohorts.
**Table 2.13: Instrumental values ranking (Source: adapted from Greenwood et al, 2008)**

All three generations share the top five or six terminal values with Family Security and Health taking the two top spots for all three generations. Freedom and Self-Respect figure prominently for the three generations as well but True Friendship is a stronger value for Gen Y than for both Gen X and Baby Boomers. ‘A Comfortable Life’ is what all three generations aspire to but this is of less importance to Gen Y. Low down on the bottom five for all three generations are National Security, A World of Peace, Social Recognition and A World of
Beauty. Therefore, when it comes to terminal values, the three generational cohorts appear to have similar values.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th><strong>Gen Y</strong></th>
<th><strong>Baby Boomers</strong></th>
<th><strong>Gen X</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Self-Respect</td>
<td>5. Freedom</td>
<td>5. Inner Harmony</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>Social Recognition</td>
<td>17. A World of Beauty</td>
<td>17. Social Recognition</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.14: Terminal values ranking (Source: Adapted from Greenwood et al, 2008)

Meanwhile, in the findings from Cennamo and Gardner (2008) on the six work values of Extrinsic, Intrinsic, Status, Altruism, Social and Freedom, the only differences for the three generations (Baby Boomers, Gen X and Gen Y) were found in two – status and freedom. They found no difference at all in the other four work values amongst the three generational
cohorts. As anticipated, Gen Y exhibits the highest attractions to both Status and Freedom with Baby Boomers caring the least for Status and Freedom.

Examples of extrinsic work value are the focus on salary and other external rewards whereas examples of intrinsic work value include challenge and meaningful work. Status work value comprises title and position in the organisational hierarchy, power, level of influence and responsibility. Altruism work value denotes paying attention to services that benefits society and the community while Social work value is about relationship. Freedom work value emphasises work-life balance and flexible working hours.

In terms of overall values, Ron Inglehart (1971) in his research ‘The Silent Revolution’ postulates that over the years, values have changed from generation to generation as a result of modernisation and the economic progress of countries and societies. One change is from ‘Acquisition’ to “Post-Bourgeois’. Inglehart defines ‘acquisition’ as the mindsets, beliefs, attitudes and behaviour (‘culture’ in this research) that are directed mainly at materialistic pursuits and supporting the ‘survivalist’ instinct while ‘post-bourgeois’ values place importance on quality of life, freedom, self-expression, and preservation of the natural environment. To test his theory, he carried out three waves of surveys (1981 to 1998) in over 65 countries using the World Values Survey scale (Inglehart & Baker, 2000). The countries survey comprised more than 75% of the world’s population. Since then, a total of five waves of surveys (up to 2007) have been carried out (Inglehart & Welzel, 2009).

The above findings support the view that the main thrust of Gen Y culture appears to closely resemble Inglehart’s ‘post-bourgeois’ values. Meanwhile, Gen X and Baby Boomers, while also caught in the move towards post-bourgeois values, tend to retain more of the ‘acquisition’ values.

2.6.4 Conclusion

When reviewing the literature on organisational commitment, it becomes evident that commitment is not always commitment to organisations. It can take many forms and these may be commitment to the workgroup, commitment to the supervisor, commitment to the boss or commitment to the occupation (Becker et al., 1996; van Vuuren et al., 2008; Nijhof, 1998). Findings yield results indicating that overall organisational commitment is unrelated to job performance (Becker et al., 1996). More findings have shown that commitment to
supervisors or work group tends to give rise to better work performance (Becker et al., 1996). Likewise, findings have also revealed that ‘identification’, does not correlate with job performance (Becker et al., 1996). On the other hand ‘internalisation of goals and values’ does give rise to improved job performance (Becker et al., 1996). The literature review on these values shows that strong and good consistent values exist across all generations and where differences do exist, the generations are not poles apart. Such findings confirm that work commitment and its accompanying work values are common denominators which both Gen Y and organisations may work to achieve alignment. A point that is noteworthy is that in terminal values, the three generational cohorts have the same mindset and remain true to these values.

2.7 Summary of Literature Review

The research problem is ‘How to Achieve the Alignment of the Malaysian Gen Y Workforce with the Systems and Structures of Organisations in Malaysia’. The components making up the parent discipline (Perry, 2002) in the literature review are Gen Y; the Changing Nature of Work; and Organisational Systems and Structures.

The literature review investigates the changing demographics in Malaysia which indicate that Gen Y at 38.2% (10.4 million) of the total Malaysian population (in 2007) is the largest generational cohort. This is followed by Gen X at 20.2% (5.4 million), with Baby Boomers being the smallest at 13.1% (3.6 million). This shift in demographics is causing major concerns due to the anticipated mass exodus of Baby Boomers from the work scene through retirements, and their replacement by a small Gen X cohort and a very large number of members of Gen Y.

The literature review explores the forces of Technology, Education and Lifestyle which are purported to shape Gen Y. Technology is ubiquitous and this is where Gen Y exhibits a strong natural affinity and where Gen Y is the quickest to respond with new behaviours to digital social media. Technology is also responsible for the creation of new types of work. The literature review highlights the different generational cultures, especially Gen Y culture which is considered to be radically different from earlier generations. The validity of these generational studies is also established.
The nature of work and its evolvement over time is studied next. Information and Communication Technology together with computers and internet have changed how work and business is conducted. The impact is even greater due to the new digital media and the digital infrastructure which mean that physical barriers are no longer insurmountable obstacles and where 24/7 communication is becoming the norm. The creation of new digital work environment is inevitable.

The review of literature on organisational structures uncovered many studies on the physical structures of offices and other facilities such as those used by Google, Microsoft and Intel which are deemed conducive to Gen Y. There is little mention in the literature of the fit of organisational structure designs with Gen Y culture. The ‘shamrock’ organisational topology put forward by Handy (1991) appears to offer synergy with Gen Y culture.

Established theories from behavioural science are then covered to provide a background to the complex Gen Y culture. Findings are taken from lifespan development psychology especially the theories of Erik Erikson (1950) and Levinson (1978). Also discussed are works in ‘personality psychology’ including the Big Five, the Myers Briggs Type Indicators and Holland’s RIASEC.

With the Immediate Discipline (Perry, 2002) identified as Organisational Commitment, the literature review covered the complexity and confusion over organisational or work commitment as well as its relationship to performance. Some order was brought to the available material especially with the study from Marrow which classifies commitment into five basic forms (Protestant Work Ethics; Career Commitment, Job Focus, Organisational Commitment and Union Commitment). Regarding work values, it is noted that although there are similarities and differences for different generations, for terminal values there is strong consistency across the three generations.

2.7.1 The Conceptual Research Gaps

The literature review reveals that the majority of past researches emphasises on conflicts between generations due to the different generational cultures at the work place (Arsenault, 2003; Chen & Choi, 2007; Glass, 2007a). The focus has been mainly on Gen X and Baby-Boomers (Jennifer, 2007; Gravett & Throckmorton, 2007; Lancaster & Stillman, 2002) with some newer literature on Gen Y (Chester, 2002; Marston, 2007; Orrell, 2008).
Today, there are more new studies and surveys on Gen Y including those from the latest Accenture’s ‘Millenials at the Gates’ (2008); Deloitte’s ‘Gen Y Human Talent Focus’ (2009), and Tapscott’s (2009) ‘Grown Up Digital’. The approaches of the majority of these studies follow the same patterns of past research in that they identify and establish the Gen culture of Gen Y, accept these to be rigid and true and then make recommendations about how organisations can attract, motivate and retain Gen Y employees. They posit that members of Gen Y have their preference in work rules and conditions and expect organisations to accommodate their preferences and demands. The studies do not question whether Gen Y may demonstrate adaptability and flexibility. They have not investigated whether Gen Y will be able to adapt, adjust, compromise or even comply with certain fundamental norms, policies, rules and practices required by organisations. This is the major gap that this research focuses on. The literature review also indicates that very little work has been done on the relevance of the current career theories and career development for Gen Y. This forms part of the related gap to be addressed.

The main topics covered in the literature review and the gaps uncovered are summarised in Table 2.15 below. Section 2.8 discusses the research problem, the research questions and research propositions arising from the above gaps.
## 2.8 The Research Problem

### 2.8.1 Introduction

The broad topic indicates that when Gen Y faces the world of work and organisations, a collision is imminent (Gursoy et al., 2008). This collision gives rise to six possible responses resulting in five possible outcomes. These are as depicted in Figure 2.14 below. In the figure, the outcomes represented by Boxes 3 and 4 are related to the research gap. Box 3 represents the alignment of Gen Y with the requirements of organisations and Box 4 represents organisations reaching out to meet Gen Y. Such a situation will be beneficial to both Gen Y and Organisations. Therefore, the research questions are:

1. Will Gen Y align, adapt, accept and comply with organisational requirements?
2. Will Organisations reach out to Gen Y by making relevant changes in their organisational procedures that will appeal to Gen Y?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Direction of Research</th>
<th>Research</th>
<th>Latest References</th>
<th>Gaps</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Generational Studies</td>
<td>Conflicts between Different Generations</td>
<td>Done</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Gen Y</td>
<td>Identification of Gen Y culture</td>
<td>Done</td>
<td>Accenture, Deloitte, PEW, PWC, Porter Novelli, Robert Half International, Tapscott, Twenge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Recommendations to Organisations on how to Attract, Recruit, Motivate and Retain Gen Y</td>
<td>Done</td>
<td>Chester, Eric; Howe, Neil and Strauss, William; Marston, Cam; Orrell, Lisa; Tulgan, Bruce</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Career Guidance and Development to Gen Y</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Compliance, Adaptability to Organisations</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>√</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Nature of Work</td>
<td>Digital Technology, Digital Communications and Social Networks, Internet, Back Office and Outsourcing</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Boundaryless, Pro tease, Portfolio, Virtual</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>Compensation, Incentives, Rewards</td>
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<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Career Development</td>
<td>No</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Work Commitment</td>
<td>Organisational Commitment</td>
<td>Done</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Gen Y, Work and Organisational Systems and Structures</td>
<td>Together in One Research Study</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.15 Summary of literature review and gaps (Source: developed for this research)
The above research questions are what the research is attempting to discover. These are then translated into a single Research Problem: ‘How to Achieve Alignment of the Malaysian Gen Y Workforce with the Systems and Structures of Organisations in Malaysia’.

2.8.2 The Theoretical Framework

With the Research Problem established in the previous section, the variables that surround the research problem in their natural settings will now be identified and examined. These are what constitute the independent and dependent variables as well as variables that moderate or
confound the findings (Sekaran, 2006). Putting all these variables together and examining their inter-relationships will give rise to the theoretical framework (Sekaran, 2006).

In this study, for the purpose of examining the alignment of Gen Y with organisational systems and structures, Gen Y becomes the dependent variable. However, there is also the expectation that organisations will reach out and make changes to suit Gen Y. For this reason, organisations behave as dependent variables as well. Therefore, there is a two-way relationship that is being investigated. The emphasis is more towards Gen Y meeting or adapting with organisational requirements but opposite process is explored as well. Gen Y and organisations are inter-related as they affect each other. More specifically, it is the culture of Gen Y (Gen Y culture) that is called into question. Similarly, for organisations, it is the design of their organisational systems and structures that determines the desired outcome, which is work commitment from Gen Y.

The theoretical framework illustrated in Figure 2.15 below attempts to put these various variables together without making them too inflexible. In qualitative research where induction rather than deduction is the approach, and where the research aims to make sense and to find meanings (Neuman, 2006) related to the research problem, this slightly broader treatment is appropriate. It can be seen that the variables of organisations are various variables in organisational systems and organisational structures. These variables are treated as independent variables. Changes in them influence Gen Y members in their work commitment. In this respect, work commitment is designated as a dependent variable that acts as the indicator for Gen Y.

In Figure 2.15, under organisational systems, some of the independent variables identified are career development, reward/promotion, motivation, work environment (physical), work environment (procedures) and training to mention a few. For this research, career development is the lens through which the problem is examined. A few types of organisational structures are presented as the Independent Variables. However, this research focuses on the ‘Shamrock’ organisation as one that meets the need of Gen Y. For the independent variables of organisational systems and structures, investigations were made as to whether organisations have made changes, are making changes and will be making changes so that Gen Y, the new workforce will find them acceptable. As many other studies have been conducted in this area, this is just given a light treatment.
Figure 2.15: Theoretical framework for research (Source: developed for this research)
Other independent variables are classified under three broad categories of ‘by self’ (that is by Gen Y themselves), ‘by others’ and ‘by circumstances’. For ‘by self’, under the literature review, ‘Gen Y culture’ is described under the four headings of Entitlement; Speed; Work-Life Balance; and Anxiety. Mnemonic to help remember these four headings are: ‘What’s in it for me?’; ‘I Want It Now’; ‘Where is the Fun?’; and ‘How Am I Doing?’ The literature review spells out that the Gen Y culture is not conducive to organisational or work commitment and Gen Y expects their culture to be accepted by organisations. The research problem explores whether Gen Y members may adapt or modify their culture to align with organisational systems and structures, leading to work or organisational commitment.

Variables that fall under the section ‘by others’ are: by parents, schools, society, and the government. In the literature review, parents have been identified as one of the factors shaping Gen Y culture. The education system is another although this refers primary tertiary education. Societies, especially societies that are affluent and consumption-oriented have also been identified as strongly influencing Gen Y. Therefore, variables under ‘by others’ are inserted as reminders only. Lastly in the category ‘by circumstances’, the impact from socio-economic status, adversity, economy and most significantly, that of technology are discussed in the literature review and inserted into the theoretical framework to make it complete. These represent either Independent or Moderating Variables depending on the context that they are viewed in. This theoretical framework then contextualises the research problem.

2.8.3 The Research Questions and Propositions

To investigate the research problem, two research questions are posed.

A. Research Questions

1. How can Gen Y members align themselves to Organisational Systems and Structures so as to demonstrate work commitment?
2. How can Organisations re-design their systems and structures so as to obtain work commitment from members of Gen Y?

B. Research Propositions

To support each research question, research propositions were developed. This is to facilitate data collection and analysis. The terminology ‘research propositions’ is used instead of ‘hypotheses’ to indicate that it is more the relationships amongst variables that qualitative
research is investigating and not causal relationships. Hypotheses are usually associated with ‘testing’ which is the norm in quantitative research methodology but not so in qualitative research methodology (Neuman, 2006; Sekaran, 2006). Therefore, this terminology is maintained throughout the thesis to ensure consistency.

**For Research Question 1**

a. Under favourable circumstances, members of Gen Y will comply with organisational hierarchies, policies, rules and regulations and the required working hours.

b. Career Guidance, Development Programmes and Growth Opportunities offered by organisations are viewed differently by members of Gen Y than they are by other generations.

c. Gen Y members will demonstrate their commitment to work in their own ways.

**For Research Question 2**

a. Organisations will need to re-organise their systems and structures to accommodate Gen Y culture.

b. Organisations will need to develop strategic and innovative career development and growth plans to retain Gen Y employees.

This brings Chapter 2: Literature Review to an end. Following, will be Chapter 3: Methodology.
Chapter 3

Research Methodology
Chapter 3

3.1 Introduction

In Chapter 2, the literature review covers multiple sources of writings from multiple topics related to the Research Problem which is ‘How to Achieve Alignment of the Malaysian Gen Y Workforce with the Systems and Structures of Organisations in Malaysia’. This is in line with the characteristics of qualitative methodology (Creswell, 2007). From the literature review, the research questions and propositions that emerged are:

3.1.1 Research Questions

1. How can Gen Y members align themselves to Organisational Systems and Structures so as to demonstrate work commitment?
2. How can Organisations re-design their systems and structures so as to obtain work commitment from members of Gen Y?

3.1.2 Research Propositions

For Research Question 1

a. Under favourable circumstances, members of Gen Y will comply with organisational hierarchies, policies, rules and regulations and the required working hours.
b. Career Guidance, Development Programmes and Growth Opportunities offered by organisations are viewed differently by members of Gen Y than they are by other generations.
c. Gen Y members will demonstrate their commitment to work in their own ways.

For Research Question 2

a. Organisations will need to re-organise their systems and structures to accommodate Gen Y culture.
b. Organisations will need to develop strategic and innovative career development and growth plans to retain Gen Y employees.

3.1.3 The Chapter Structure

Chapter 3 contains seven sections as shown in Figure 3.1. Section 3.1 – Introduction, starts off with the departure points of the research questions and research propositions established in Chapter 2 together with Subsection 3.1.1 – The Chapter Structure. This is followed by Section
3.2 which provides an overview of the various research methodologies available to researchers. The justifications for using the preferred qualitative research methodology in this research are put forward in Section 3.2. Supporting this is a description on the paradigm of the researcher in Subsection 3.2.1 – Acknowledging Social Self (Creswell, 2009; Creswell, 2007; Neuman, 2006).

The reasons for the use of focus groups for Gen Y and personal interviews with senior executives in organisations as the data collection method are elaborated in Subsection 3.2.2.

Section 3.3 – Research Design gives an account of the research map or framework starting with the purpose for the study and a detail discussion on the strategies of inquiry. The inclusion of methodology, ethical considerations, findings and conclusions is also pointed out in the research design. This is followed by the rest of the sections where details on each of these aspects of the research are provided.
Under Section 3.4 – Outlining Data Collection and Analysis, the process for conducting focus groups and personal interviews is comprehensively laid out together with the strategies and procedures for carrying out the data analysis. Section 3.5 – Research Quality dwells on the importance of rigour and accuracy. In this section, the topics of trustworthiness (Subsection 3.5.1), authenticity (Subsection 3.4.2) and triangulation (Subsection 3.5.3) are covered.

The need for addressing ethical considerations is discussed in Section 3.6: Ethical Considerations with Section 3.7 – Conclusion ending this chapter.

3.2 Justifications for the Selection of the Qualitative Research Methodology

During most of the 20th century, the research environment was predominantly quantitative by virtue of its strong foundation based on the natural science model. This model uses observable and measurable facts (in particular supporting the positivist paradigm) and favours the deductive testing of theories (Bryman & Bell, 2007; Denzin & Lincoln, 2008; Tashakkori & Tedlie, 2003). In the last two decades, the introduction of qualitative research methodologies has given rise to much controversy and debates about these two methodologies with their respective proponents positioned in a confrontational and antagonistic manner (known as the ‘paradigm wars’). Today, both research methodologies are accepted as complementary and subscribing to different styles and techniques, and they adopt different paradigms (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008; Murray, 2009; Tashakkori & Tedlie, 2003). Recognising the strengths and merits of both methodologies, a third methodology combining them (known as mixed method research) with its many variants, has evolved (Murray, 2009; Tashakkori & Tedlie, 2003; Tashakkori & Tedlie, 1998). All these three methodologies are now being employed (Creswell, 2009).

The term ‘paradigm’ according to Kuhn (1970) refers to divergent sets of beliefs about the nature of reality, the problems reality poses, and the proper way to investigate those problems (Neuman, 2006; Ricci, 1977). This meaning was further elaborated by Guba (1970) as a worldview or a basic set of beliefs that guide action (Creswell, 2007; Creswell & Clark, 2007). The three major research paradigms are ‘positivism’, ‘interpretivism’, and ‘critical social science’ with two lesser ones known as ‘feminist’ and ‘post modernism’ (Neuman, 2006). Paradigms contain the three elements of ontology, epistemology and methodology (Maryln & Perry, 2000). Recently, two more elements have been added: ‘values’ and ‘practical considerations’ (Bryman & Bell, 2007) or ‘values/axiology’ and ‘rhetoric’
(Creswell & Clark, 2007). Ontology is to do with the nature of reality while epistemology is about how one obtains knowledge. Methodology as a process is a determinant of the direction and accuracy of the research study while values will inadvertently creep into the research as they cannot be consciously kept isolated. Rhetoric represents the language of the research study (Creswell & Clark, 2007). Practical considerations also play a role in many aspects of the research (Bryman & Bell, 2007). These five elements combine to exert their influences on research studies as shown in Figure 3.2: Influences on research study:

![Figure 3.2: Influences on research (Source: Bryman & Bell, 2007)](image)

Table 3.1 in below clearly and comprehensively summarises the main characteristics in ten important areas of the three major research paradigms (positivism, interpretative social science and critical social science) with two minor ones (feminism and post modernism) (Neumann, 2006).
Table 3.1: Major characteristics in ten areas for different paradigm (Source; Neuman, 2006)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason for Research (Purpose)</th>
<th>Nature of Social Reality (Ontology)</th>
<th>Human Nature</th>
<th>Role of Common Sense</th>
<th>Theories look like</th>
<th>An explanation that is true</th>
<th>Good evidence</th>
<th>Relevance of Knowledge (Epistemology)</th>
<th>Place for Values</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To discover natural laws so people can predict and control events</td>
<td>Stable pre-existing patterns or order that can be discovered</td>
<td>Self-interested and rational individuals who are shaped by external forces</td>
<td>Clearly distinct from and less valid than science</td>
<td>A logical deductive system of interconnected definitions, axioms and laws</td>
<td>Is logically connected to laws and based on facts</td>
<td>Is based on precise observations that others can repeat</td>
<td>An instrumental orientation is used, knowledge enables people to master and control events</td>
<td>Science is value free and values have no place except when choosing a topic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To understand and describe meaningful social actions</td>
<td>Fluid definitions of a situation created by human interaction</td>
<td>Social beings who create meaning and who constantly make sense of their worlds</td>
<td>Powerful everyday theories used by ordinary people</td>
<td>A description of how a group’s meaning system is generated and sustained</td>
<td>Resonate and feels right to those who are being studied</td>
<td>Is embedded in the context of fluid social interactions</td>
<td>A practical orientation is used, knowledge enables people to embrace/share empathically others’ life worlds and experiences</td>
<td>Values are an integral part of social life, no group’s values are wrong, only different</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To smash myths and empower people to change society</td>
<td>Multilayers and governed by hidden, underlying structures</td>
<td>Creative, adaptive people with unrealised potential, trapped by illusions</td>
<td>False beliefs that hide power and objective conditions</td>
<td>A critique that reveals true conditions and helps people take action</td>
<td>Supplies people with tools needed to change the world</td>
<td>Is informed by a theory that penetrates the surface level</td>
<td>A dialectical orientation is used, knowledge lets people see and alter deeper structures</td>
<td>All science must begin with a value position, some positions are right, some are wrong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To empower people to advance values of nurturing others and equality</td>
<td>Gendered-structured power relations that keep people oppressed</td>
<td>Gendered beings with unrealistic potential often trapped by unseen forces</td>
<td>False beliefs that hide power and objective conditions</td>
<td>A critique that reveals true conditions and helps people see the way to a better world</td>
<td>Supplies ideas/tools to help liberate people from oppressive relations</td>
<td>Is informed by theory that reveals gender structures</td>
<td>Knowledge raises awareness and empowers people to make change</td>
<td>Values are essential to research and feminist ones are clearly preferred</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To express the subjective self, to be playful, and to entertain and stimulate</td>
<td>Chaotic and fluid without real pattern or master plan</td>
<td>Creative, dynamic beings with unrealized potential</td>
<td>The essence of social reality that is superior to scientific and or bureaucratic forms of reasoning</td>
<td>A performance or work of artistic expression that can amuse, shock or stimulate others</td>
<td>No one explanation is more true, all are true for those who accept them</td>
<td>Has aesthetic properties and resonates with people’s inner feelings</td>
<td>Former knowledge has no special value, it can amuse or bring personal enjoyment</td>
<td>Values are integral to research but all value positions are equal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With the differences in assumptions and ideas of the different paradigms on ontology, epistemology and several other aspects outlined above, an account on the researcher’s own position with respect to these not only provides a detailed look into the paradigms but also introduces the paradigm of the researcher. This is presented in the following Subsection.
3.2.1 Acknowledging Social Self

The different research methodologies have developed over time as a result of the different paradigms (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008; Murray, 2009; Tashakkori & Tedlie, 2003; Tashakkori & Tedlie, 1998). The researcher brings along with him or her, his or her paradigm which influences his or her choice of research problem and the research methodology used. Sometimes, the researcher makes his or her paradigm explicit by discussing them in the research (Creswell & Clark, 2007). With Table 3.1 as a reference, the researcher’s paradigm, ontology and epistemology are as follows:

1. The purpose for the research was to understand and describe Malaysian Gen Y and to discover how they might fit into the systems and structures of today’s organisations in Malaysia. This aim was consistent with the perspective of the interpretative social science. The objective of this research study was not to discover natural law as characterised by positivism, nor to challenge the existing status quo or to establish a new regime as in critical social science. However, some feminist beliefs about empowering and nurturing people were present.

2. Ontology: Regarding the nature of social reality, the belief of the researcher is that society and people are fluid and contain sufficient flexibility and adaptability for social reality to be jointly created by both parties. This again is an interpretivist view. The researcher does not subscribe to the idea that social reality is a stable pre-existing situation just waiting to be discovered as envisaged by the positivists. It is believed that an individual will be able to take charge and shape their social reality. Although there are no underlying, hidden multi-layers as viewed by critical social science, there is a central tendency to work towards goodness for all. The feminist and postmodern viewpoints play no role at all.

3. Epistemology: The researcher’s paradigm as far as the relevance of knowledge is concerned covers the four areas of positivism, interpretivism, critical social science and feminism. Knowledge is viewed as instrumental, practical, dialectical and empowering.

4. Others: On the other dimensions, the leanings of the researcher skewed towards the interpretivist views and values. For example, people are considered by the researcher to be able to create meaning, make sense of the world and have great volition. People have good solid common sense derived from their lived experience and will be able to
apply this experience well. Other interpretivist views are that values are integral parts of social life and there are critical universal positive values. Undesirable ones are those that are harmful to both people and society.

The researcher also accepts some aspects of critical social science such as the view that people have unrealised potential are creative but are sometimes clouded in their views which prevent them from being pragmatic. The positivist inclination of the researcher differentiates true explanations into two categories. For the physical world, this will be governed by scientific laws and facts. However, in terms of human behaviours, cognition and emotion, true explanations are determined by humanistic values, and thinking and acting right.

This strong interpretivist leaning is one of the reasons why the researcher preferred the qualitative research methodology. Other reasons are highlighted in the next Subsection 3.2.2 Why Qualitative?

3.2.2 Why Qualitative Research Methodology?

There are some distinct differences between qualitative research and quantitative research (Neuman, 2006). These differences are shown in Table 3.2: Quantitative Versus Qualitative Research below. An understanding of the differences between qualitative and quantitative research methodology provides the basis for this qualitative research.

The objective of this research is to explore the ‘why’, ‘which’, ‘when’ and ‘how’ questions related to the need for Gen Y and the organisations to meet in the area of work. It looks for answers rather than seeks causal explanations (Neuman, 2006). When addressing this problem, the Malaysian Gen Y’s worldviews, values, beliefs and attitudes (Gen Y culture) were examined in detail. To accomplish this, the best approach was to use a qualitative methodology (Neuman, 2006). A qualitative approach makes the informants more human and related to people’s environments instead of comprising objective statistics with no emotions and feelings attached.
How to Achieve Alignment of the Malaysian Gen Y Workforce with the Systems and Structures of Organisations in Malaysia

2014

Table 3.2: Qualitative Versus Quantitative Research
(Source: Neuman, 2006)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QUALITATIVE</th>
<th>QUANTITATIVE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Capture and discover meaning once the researcher becomes immersed in the data</td>
<td>Test hypothesis that the researcher begins with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concepts are in the form of themes, motives, generalizations and taxonomies</td>
<td>Concepts are in the form of distinct variables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measures are created in an adhoc manner and are often specific to the individual setting or researcher</td>
<td>Measures are systematically created before data collection and are standardised</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data are in the form of words and images from documents, observations and transcripts</td>
<td>Data are in the form of numbers from precise measurement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theory can be causal or non-causal and is often inductive</td>
<td>Theory is largely causal and deductive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research procedures are particular and replication is very rare</td>
<td>Procedures are standard and replication is often</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysis proceeds by extracting themes or generalizations from evidence and organizing data to present a coherent, consistent picture</td>
<td>Analysis proceeds by using statistics, tables or charts and discussing how what they show related to hypothesis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It was also the intention during this research study for theories to emerge. A qualitative methodology provides for greater freedom and there are few restrictions to inhibit probing into unknown territories. In contrast, a quantitative approach restrains the research study by confining it within existing theories and pre-established hypotheses.

The volatile unprecedented forces found in the world today provide further impetus to fully utilise the exploratory freedom provided by the qualitative approach. With technology advancing at breakneck speed, with so much affluence (despite the current downturn) and the large population of the new but highly educated generation coming into the working world in Malaysia, radical changes are anticipated. Researching within the confines of established theories will not yield breakthroughs that the world of work, the new workforce and organisations need. Nevertheless, existing theories still serve as departure points provide important background knowledge and foundation.

The more important objective of this research was to obtain direct contributions from the sample (both Malaysian Gen Y and Organisations) to the research interpretations and findings (Bryman & Bell, 2007; Neuman, 2006) and not just reach conclusions based on the analysis, deduction and evaluation of the researcher. This led to the use of the qualitative approach as well.
### 3.2.3 Why Focus Groups and Personal Interviews?

When humans are the primary data sources, data collection in qualitative research methodologies takes the forms of interviews and personal observations in the field (Bryman & Bell, 2007; Morgan, 1997; Sekaran, 2006). Gen Y as a large cohort makes personal interviews difficult to carry out. Ethnographic study requires research over a long time period and would have required more time than the researcher had available. Moreover, the population of Gen Y is widely distributed in the Malaysian society and not restricted within any community for an ethnography study to take place. Consequently, using case studies was also inappropriate. Therefore, the use of focus groups was the most viable option available (Krueger & Casey, 2009). Focus group is a data collection method that is well suited to a qualitative methodology (Bryman & Bell, 2007; Kitzinger & Barbour, 1999; Morgan, 1997; Neuman, 2006; Stewart et al., 2007).

Using focus groups allowed for intimate participation (Baker et al., 1999; Kitzinger & Barbour, 1999; Morgan, 1997) by the research subjects who were members of the Malaysian Gen Y, whereby their mindsets, attitudes, experiences, opinions, wishes and concerns were extracted from their deliberations. Fitting snugly into the Gen Y category were the 2011 Malaysian final year university undergraduates. These were people who shared many similar characteristics such as age, and at least, for a period of time, were in the same environment (university). All of them shared the common goal of looking for a job upon graduation. These were some of the characteristics that focus groups were able to benefit from (Krueger & Casey, 2009; Stewart et al., 2007). These characteristics provided the group cohesiveness and compatibility which enabled information to be discussed in a manner which achieved some consensus despite the individual differences and other variables such as socio-economic status and the participants’ off-campus environment (Krueger & Casey, 2009; Morgan, 1997; Stewart et al., 2007).

In addition, the group synergy and group dynamics stimulated rigorous discussions where deeper and richer meanings surfaced and new ideas emerged (Creswell, 2007; Kitzinger, 1995; Krueger & Casey, 2009; Stewart et al., 2007). Therefore, final year university undergraduates fulfilled the data collection criteria (Krueger & Casey, 2009) for this research and it was from this group that the purposive sample for the focus groups was drawn.
There are some criticisms and some limitations of focus groups. It has been claimed that focus groups tend to intellectualise, make up answers, and be dominated by certain individuals (Krueger & Casey, 2009; Morgan, 1997; Stewart et al., 2007). These problems were reduced through the design of semi-structured open questions instead of direct questions when facilitating the focus group sessions. Notwithstanding, the use of focus groups is very much supported by the many advantages highlighted above (Stewart et al., 2007; Krueger & Casey, 2009; Morgan, 1997).

In terms of data collection on organisations, as the research topic covered different types of organisations instead of focusing on a particular organization, the use of case studies was not relevant. Similarly, to invite members from several organisations to form a focus group would have posed difficulties in coordination especially in getting these members to be present at the same time. Although it was possible to recruit several members from the same organisation to form a focus group, the information extracted would only have been from one organisation. Forming a number of focus groups extended the available resources significantly. Therefore, an easier and simpler alternative was to conduct personal interviews with senior officers from purposive selected organisations (Bryman & Bell, 2007; David & Birmingham, 2003). This made it possible to obtain cross sectional views from organisations on changes to their organisational systems and structures to accommodate Gen Y culture.

### 3.3 Research Design

#### 3.3.1 Introduction

In Section 3.2 above, justifications were made for adopting a qualitative methodology for this research. This section describes the research design. This discussion covers the purpose of the research study, the paradigm, the methodology, the inquiry approach, the data collection and analysis, and the quality of research. Also included are the ethical considerations. This is illustrated in Figure 3.3 Research Design Map.
3.3.2 **Purpose of Research – Exploratory**

The purpose of a research project can fall under one of three categories – exploratory, descriptive and explanation/causal. The different dimensions and characteristics that make up each category (Neumann, 2006, Zikmund, 2003) are illustrated in Table 3.3 below. With Table 3.3 as a guide, it was quickly established that this study is not ‘explanatory’ which calls for causal relationships. Between ‘exploratory’ and ‘descriptive’, this research appears to lean more towards ‘exploratory’ as the research problem was to examine whether Gen Y was aligning to organisational systems and structures and vice versa. For Organisations, this research explored whether steps were taken by organisations to recruit, motivate and retain Gen Y employees, what these steps were and whether they were implemented on an ad-hoc or long-term basis. In the Malaysian context, both these issues were not fully understood and therefore the gathering of more data and information was required. There was also the intention of the research to generate new ideas, conjectures and hypotheses which could then be the foundation for future studies (Neuman, 2006, Zikmund, 2003). Based on these points, this research was judged to be ‘exploratory’.

Figure 3.3 Research design map (Source: developed for this research)
Table 3.3: Purpose of Research (Neumann, 2006)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EXPLORATORY</th>
<th>DESCRIPTIVE</th>
<th>EXPLANATORY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Become familiar with the basic facts, setting, and contents</td>
<td>Provide a detail, highly accurate picture</td>
<td>Test a theory’s prediction or principle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Create a general mental picture of conditions</td>
<td>Locate new data that contradict past data</td>
<td>Elaborate or enrich a theory’s explanation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Formulate or focus questions for future research</td>
<td>Create a set of categories or classify types</td>
<td>Extend a theory to new issues or topics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Generate new ideas, conjectures, or hypotheses</td>
<td>Clarify a sequence of steps or stages</td>
<td>Support or refute an explanation or prediction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Determine the feasibility of conducting research</td>
<td>Document a causal process or mechanism</td>
<td>Link issues or topics with a general principle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Develop techniques for measuring and locating future data</td>
<td>Report on the background or context of a situation</td>
<td>Determine which of several explanations is best</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.3.3 Audience for Research Findings

The research findings are targeted more towards the general public, the Malaysian Gen Y and the senior officers of organisations. Academia was included as well so that new findings may add to the existing pool of academic knowledge (Neuman, 2006).

3.3.4 Inquiry Approach

In the earlier sections, the different research paradigms with their different ontologies and epistemologies have been discussed. A qualitative methodology and an interpretivist lens were selected for the research study. In qualitative research, there is no single agreed upon design structure. There are many approaches and a few have gained prominence. Amongst them are narrative research, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography and case study research (Creswell, 2007). This section examines these five approaches or qualitative strategies (Creswell, 2009; Creswell, 2007) and it examines the characteristics of these various approaches to determine the research design. The five approaches are:

a. Narrative Research

Narrative research (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) is a strategy of inquiry where the lives of individuals are studied and where one or more individuals are invited to tell their stories. The information is then put together by the researcher in a chronological manner together with the views of the researcher.
b. **Phenomenological Research**

Phenomenological research (Moustakas, 1994) is a strategy of inquiry whereby a phenomenon is described by participants and the researcher identifies the essence of the human experience. This involves studying a small number of subjects through extensive and prolonged engagement. The researcher puts his or her own experiences to one side in order to understand the experience of the participants.

c. **Grounded Theory**

Grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006, Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1998) is a strategy of inquiry in which the researcher derives a general, abstract theory grounded in the data provided by the participants. This process involves using multiple stages of data collection.

d. **Ethnography**

Ethnography is a strategy of inquiry where the researcher studies an intact cultural group in a natural setting over a long period of time. Data is collected through observations and interviews.

e. **Case Studies**

Case Studies are a strategy of inquiry in which the researcher explores in-depth a subject by investigating one or several individuals or institutions.

The summary of the characteristics of these approaches are shown below in Table 3.4:

Structures of the Five Approaches (Creswell, 2007). The intended characteristics of this research were compared and contrasted with those in Table 3.4 to determine which strategy or strategies of inquiry was appropriate.

**3.3.5 The Research Inquiry Employed**

Upon examining the characteristics and parameters for the five inquiry approaches as listed in Table 3.4, it was noted that this research was not able to fit into any of the five inquiry approaches. Therefore, this research was considered as basic qualitative research.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Narrative Research</th>
<th>Phenomenology</th>
<th>Grounded Theory</th>
<th>Ethnography</th>
<th>Case Study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Focus</strong></td>
<td>Exploring the life of an individual</td>
<td>Understanding the Essence of the Experience</td>
<td>Developing a Theory Grounded in Data from the Field</td>
<td>Describing and Interpreting a Culture Sharing Group</td>
<td>Developing an In-depth Description and Analysis of a Case or Multiple Case</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Type of Problem Best Suited</strong></td>
<td>Needing to Tell Stories of Individual Experiences</td>
<td>Needing to Describe the Essence of a Lived Phenomenon</td>
<td>Grounding a Theory in the Views of the Participants</td>
<td>Describing and Interpreting the Shared Patterns of Culture of a Group</td>
<td>Providing and In-depth Understanding of a Case or Cases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Discipline Background</strong></td>
<td>Drawing from the Humanities including Anthropology, Literature, History, Psychology and Sociology</td>
<td>Drawing from Psychology, Philosophy and Education</td>
<td>Drawing from Sociology</td>
<td>Drawing from Anthropology and Sociology</td>
<td>Drawing from Psychology, Law, Political Science and Medicine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Units of Analysis</strong></td>
<td>Studying One or More Individuals</td>
<td>Studying Several Individuals that have Shared the Experience</td>
<td>Studying a Process, Action or Interaction involving Many Individuals</td>
<td>Studying a Group that Share the Same Culture</td>
<td>Studying an Event, a Programme, an Activity, More than One Individual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Data Collection Forms</strong></td>
<td>Using Primarily Interviews and Documents</td>
<td>Using Primarily Interviews with Individuals, although Documents, Observations and Art may also be Considered</td>
<td>Using Primarily Interviews with 20-60 Individuals</td>
<td>Using Primarily Observations and Interviews, but perhaps Collecting Other Sources during Extended Time in the Field</td>
<td>Using Multiple Sources, such as Interviews, Observations, Documents, Artifacts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Data Analysis Strategies</strong></td>
<td>Analysing data for Stories, ‘restorying’ developing themes, often using a chronology</td>
<td>Analysing Data for Significant Statements, Meaning Units, Textual and Structural Description, Description of the Essence</td>
<td>Analysing Data through Open Coding, Axial Coding, Selective Coding</td>
<td>Analysing Data through Description of the Culture-Sharing Group, Themes about the Group</td>
<td>Analysing Data through Description of the Case and Themes of the Case as well as Cross Case Themes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Written Report</strong></td>
<td>Developing a Narrative about the Stories of an Individual’s Life</td>
<td>Describing the ‘Essence’ of the Experience</td>
<td>Generating a Theory illustrated in a figure</td>
<td>Describing How a Culture Sharing Group Works</td>
<td>Developing a Detailed Analysis of One or more Cases</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.4: Structures of the five approaches (Source: Creswell, John W, 2007).
3.3.6 Time Dimension in Research

As the research problem was related to Gen Y, the time dimension has a bearing on the research. This effectively means that any research on Gen Y needs to consider the length of time from when they first entered the workforce (at about 25 years old of age or more) to their age of retirement (at about sixty-five years). This is a span of about forty years. Therefore, a more comprehensive study requires a longitudinal treatment. On account of limited resources this research was done on a cross-sectional basis and focuses on the work entry stage (Bryman & Bell, 2007). Under such circumstances, this research forms only a portion of a continuing research which may be undertaken by many others in the future.

3.3.7 Data Collection and Analysis, Quality of Research, Ethical Considerations

The above is dealt with in full in their own sections 3.4, 3.5 and 3.6.

3.4 Outlining Data Collection and Analysis

The data collection was through focus groups (Bryman & Bell, 2007; Kitzinger, 1995; Kitzinger & Barbour, 1999; Kruger & Casey, 2009; Neuman, 2006; Stewart et al., 2007) for Gen Y and personal interviews for the organisations (Bryman & Bell, 2007). Unlike quantitative data analysis which comes after the completion of the data collection stage (Neuman, 2006), the data analysis in the form of searching through the data to discover themes and patterns was started once a few focus groups had been convened (Neuman, 2006). This was facilitated by preparing beforehand, categories and sub-categories which were considered possible dimensions of the research problems. These were the ‘Gen culture’ of Malaysian Gen Y, work ethics and values, work norms, rules and practices as well as the requirements of organisations.

3.4.1 Focus Groups and Personal Interviews

a. Focus Groups

Six focus group sessions were conducted from June until the third week of November 2011 when saturation was deemed to have taken place (Kruger & Casey, 2009; Neuman, 2006; Stewart et al., 2007). Four focus groups consisted of final year university students (who fell into the Gen Y age band) while two focus groups consisted of working adults who fell under the Gen Y age band. They consisted of a single ethnicity. They were located in the urban areas of Kuala Lumpur and the Klang Valley and the groups contained both males and females. The final year students were from private colleges and universities. They were full
time students and were not working. However, they had some working experience either through internships or part-time jobs. Each Focus Group consisted of between six and eight participants (Bryman & Bell, 2007; Kitzinger & Barbour, 1999; Kruger & Casey, 2009).

The necessary ethical formalities as required were observed with the participants signing the consent forms to confirm their voluntary participation. Each session was captured using note taking as well as recording with a digital recorder. Each session was conducted at 2.30pm and lasted approximately three hours. Saturation appeared to take place from the fourth focus group session and this was confirmed by the last two focus groups as no new information was surfacing. This was the cue to start a more in-depth data analysis. After the first focus group session, general reflections had already been taking place and patterns sought for.

It was during the writing up of this chapter that it was discovered that more data was required to provide deeper findings on some of the research propositions especially on research propositions: 1c - Gen Y members will demonstrate their commitment to work in their own ways. A seventh focus group was convened on 11 September 2012. The focus group compositions are shown in Table 3.4 below.

The focus groups for Gen Y were held in an air-conditioned training room. During the sessions, the training room was closed to others to prevent unwanted interruptions. Refreshments and snacks were available to keep the participants comfortable.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Focus Groups</th>
<th>Undergraduates</th>
<th>Working Gen Y</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date Convened</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19-06-2011</td>
<td>23 yrs - 8</td>
<td>21 yrs - 3</td>
<td>22 yrs - 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-11-2011</td>
<td>24 yrs - 1</td>
<td>28 yrs - 1</td>
<td>32 yrs - 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22-11-2011</td>
<td>23 yrs - 1</td>
<td>27 yrs - 1</td>
<td>30 yrs - 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-11-2011</td>
<td>22 yrs - 7</td>
<td>26 yrs - 2</td>
<td>29 yrs - 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-06-2011</td>
<td>20 yrs - 3</td>
<td>28 yrs - 1</td>
<td>32 yrs - 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 - 07 - 2011</td>
<td>29 yrs - 4</td>
<td>29 yrs - 2</td>
<td>32 yrs - 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-09-2012</td>
<td>28 yrs - 3</td>
<td>26 yrs - 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Participants</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age at 2011</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male – 7</td>
<td>Male – 3</td>
<td>Male – 6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female - 1</td>
<td>Female - 4</td>
<td>Female - 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.4 Number of focus groups, category, participants and date convened (Source: developed for this research)
b. **Personal Interviews**

Data collection for the organisations, which was in the form of personal interviews, took place simultaneously with recording and analysis of the findings from the Gen Y focus groups. Eight organisations were conveniently and randomly selected and their CEOs, general managers, managers or human resource officers were then interviewed.

Interviews started at the end of December 2011 and continued up to the end of June 2012. The long duration was due to the time required for responses from companies after official invitations were sent to them. The response from companies was poor and the rate of refusal was high. Finally, the personal interviews were made possible through direct verbal invitations to company officers who were personally acquainted with the researcher. Eight company officers were interviewed. More data was gathered from participation by the researcher in a one-day public seminar cum forum organised by an online recruitment company, JobStreet.com.

Interviews were conducted in an informal atmosphere over tea or coffee. Generally, the personal interviews were conducted at the office of the officers of the company concerned. It was possible to interview representatives from a variety of companies ranging from small businesses, manufacturers, retailers, services (hotels, hospitals) to branch companies of multi-nationals. As this portion of the research just played a supporting and supplementary role to the main Research Problem, this method was considered adequate.

Company A was a Malaysian company offering accounting, auditing and taxation services. It was established in 1995 and at the time of interview, had 80 employees and five branch offices throughout Malaysia and had been in operations for 14 years. The officer interviewed was the founder and CEO.

Company B was the Malaysian branch of a Japanese electronics entertainment, audio visual and musical instrument organisation. Originally, it was a local Malaysian limited company which was the distributor for this Japanese company’s products and services. It was fully acquired by the Japanese company in 1997. The officer interviewed was the General Manager of the company. It had more than a hundred employees and thirty to forty percent of the employees were Senior Executives or Executives. Ten percent of these Senior Executives and
Executives were less than 32 years old. More than fifty percent of their staff had been with the company for more than ten years.

Company C was in the hospitality sector. It was located in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, and was part of a global service apartment chain. It started operations in January 2010. It had over 200 rooms with recreational, entertainment and dining facilities. The officer interviewed was the General Manager. Managers and executives made up only fifteen percent of the company with the balance in the rank and file. Total staff strength was 105 people.

Company D was a small Malaysian IT Services Company which was owner-managed and had 15 staff consisting mainly of software programmers with the owner directly responsible for sales. The majority of the staff was below thirty five years old and most of them had been with the company for more than five years.

Company E was a public listed Malaysian company distributing health equipment. It was established in 1996 (16 years old in 2012). It had 169 retail outlets in 26 cities across 9 countries in the Asia Pacific region. In total it had more than a thousand staff. The majority of the staff at the head office was engaged in back office functions such as finance, administration, warehousing and human resource. Marketing and Sales were handled by managerial level staff responsible for the operations of the retail outlets with each outlet having either a manager or supervisor and sales floor staff.

Company F was a Real Estate Agency established in 2004. It had eleven negotiators (independent sales people working on commissions only and without any basic salary or other allowances). Its main geographical areas of business were Kuala Lumpur and the Klang Valley in Malaysia.

Company G was a video production/animation production house in Malaysia. The video production business was established in 1988 and the company started animation production in 2000. It had twenty-five full-time staff consisting of scriptwriters, film directors and animators. Slightly more than half of the staff was below 32 years old and most of them had been with the company for around two years. The company worked on one or two special big projects in a year and these projects were outsourced. In addition, the company produced video dramas and television movies for the Malaysian television stations.
Company H was a Mechanical and Electrical Consulting firm. It was part of a multinational organisation with its headquarters in Australia. The company was established in 1959 with its Malaysian operations in 1982 and which were subsequently taken over by Malaysian directors/owners in 1998 and which had operated independently since then, with license to continue using the multinational’s name and logo. It had over eighty employees with seventy-five percent of them being engineers. Sixty percent of the staff had been with the company for more than five years. About fifty percent of their staff was below thirty two years of age in 2012.

The final data collection came from a one day public seminar cum forum organised by JobStreet.com and held at the Sunway Pyramid Convention Centre in Petaling Jaya on 17 July 2012. There were more than three hundred participants. The theme was ‘The New Rules of Talent Management’. Speakers and the panel members were from the human resource departments of multinational companies and local Malaysian corporations. The topics included talent retention and some of them therefore dealt in depth on some of the practices undertaken by these corporations in the areas of training and career development. One multinational IT company and two local Malaysian corporations presented very detailed descriptions of their programmes in both training and career development. Spread throughout the seminar was the emphasis on young talents from the Gen Y cohort. The distribution of the different types of companies is summarised in Table 3.5 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Company</th>
<th>Number of Companies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SMI/SMEs</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MNCs</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLCs</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conference Presenters</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>11</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.5: Composition of companies in personal interviews
(Source: developed for this research)

c. **Sampling**

The sampling for both the Focus Group members and the senior executives from various organisations was purposive and on a convenience basis (Kitzinger & Barbour, 1999; Morgan, 1997; Neuman, 2006). The constraint on this purposive sampling in terms of sample bias (Morgan, 1997) is acknowledged, especially the use of final year graduates as members
of some focus groups. They do not really represent working Gen Y but their age mean they fall within the Gen Y cohort. The other purposive, convenience sample was drawn from working Gen Y to reduce this sampling bias. However, to gain access to this sample was difficult. Therefore, only three focus groups of working Gen Y were successfully convened. The inclusion of final-year university graduates as the sample for focus groups at least satisfied the need for segmentation and homogeneity (Morgan, 1997).

For the personal interviews, it was acknowledged that there was a sampling bias because the officers interviewed were only from a small number of organisations and therefore did not represent all organisations. The findings were therefore only indicative of the positions of organisations. This sampling is adequate considering that this portion of the research is just a supporting and supplementary adjunct to the main research problem.

d. Facilitating/Interview Structure of Focus Groups and Personal Interviews

For efficiency, the level of structure for focus group discussion needs to be well thought through (Morgan, 1997). At one end, the focus group discussions adhere to established procedures on the conduct of interviews, facilitation and moderation. These call for a standardised interview approach, the intimate involvement of the moderator, and specific interview questions. A major constraint is that the data gathered is limited by the questions posed. Another is that the moderator directs the contents of the discussion. The one big advantage is that such an approach provides for consistency. This is useful where the research objective is to test a very specific research problem.

At the other end is the less structured or unstructured approach. The interview questions are not too specific but open in nature. The moderator is not intrusive or overly involved in the discussion process and allows for a free flow of the discussions with minimal guidance to keep the overall theme in line (Bryman & Bell, 2007). The disadvantage is that the different focus groups are opened to a wider range of views making subsequent data analysis to be much more difficult. The advantage is that the true unrestricted voices of the focus groups are heard. This approach is useful for research of a truly exploratory nature and where the research problem is difficult to define and pin down. There is also a mix of these two extremes termed the ‘Funnel’ by Morgan (1997). This method starts with a less structured approach and moves on to more specific questions.
In this research study, the level of focus group structure used was the Funnel method. The structured portion was on the interview agenda and the broad research topic. The unstructured part contained no specific interview questions at all except for non-directive prompts or semi-structured open questions to keep the discussions flowing and to moderate the discussions (giving all members the opportunity to voice their thoughts) (Bryman & Bell, 2007; Neuman, 2006). The involvement of the researcher was as a moderator and not a researcher.

The same method was adopted for the Personal Interviews as well. The interview guide or agenda for both the Focus Groups and the Personal Interviews are shown in Appendix A: Focus Groups Agenda and Appendix B: Personal Interviews Agenda. Lastly, to achieve truly open responses, the researcher was on alert for the various biases such as ‘interview bias’ (Neuman, 2006), ‘prestige bias’ (Neuman, 2006), and ‘response bias’ (Neuman, 2006) to prevent them from creeping in.

### 3.4.2 Qualitative Data Analysis

Unlike quantitative data analysis which comes after the completion of the data collection stage (Neuman, 2006), the data analysis starts at the same time as the focus group discussions and personal interviews. The objective was to discover themes and patterns that were arising (Neuman, 2006). Data analysis consists of three concurrent components: data reduction; data display; and conclusion drawing and verifying (Miles & Huberman, 1994). This is shown in Figure 3.4: Iterative Model of Data Analysis Components below:

![Iterative model of data analysis components](image)

*Figure 3.4: Iterative model of data analysis components (Source: Miles & Huberman, 1994)*
Qualitative research methodology is by its very nature unstructured and fully exploratory. Research questions and propositions emerge inductively from grounded data. However, in this study, the research questions and propositions were established from a theoretical framework derived from the literature review (Chapter 2). This somewhat directed the data analysis to centre on the research questions and propositions. However, great effort was made to analyse beyond them and to explore and to reach deeper findings and conclusions.

Qualitative research yields a lot of data in the form of words, phrases, sentences, body language and many other indicators extracted by the senses (Miles & Huberman, 1994). To manage this overwhelming overload of data, some simple pre-designed field notes templates were used to capture such observances in addition to electronic aids such as an audio recorder during data collection. Interpretations and patterns were simultaneously noted in these templates during data collection as well. The field notes templates for the focus groups are shown in Appendix C and Appendix D. For personal interviews, a note book was used.

The data analysis process consisted of data reduction through the selection, focus, simplification, abstracts (summaries) and transformation of the data from the field notes and transcripts into chunks where meaningful information was filtered for interpretation. The data were then sorted, classified and arranged into general categories and themes (Open Coding). From these tentative categories and themes a second round was conducted to determine and establish causes, consequences, conditions, interaction, relationships, linkages and queries where major or core themes were them formed (Axial Coding). Lastly, these major themes were re-examined, re-organised and checked off against the raw field notes as well as the tentative categories and themes arranged during the axial coding or selective coding (Creswell, 2009; Neuman, 2006). Through this iterative process, the original vast amount of data was reduced to major themes and then graphically displayed as shown in Chapter 4 together with quoted transcripts from the focus group participants.

3.5 Research Quality

3.5.1 Introduction

It has been mentioned that during most of the twentieth century, the research environment has been predominantly quantitative, supporting the positivist paradigm (Bryman & Bell, 2007; Denzin & Lincoln, 2008; Tashakkori & Tedlie, 2003). Today, qualitative research methodologies have gained acceptance as complementary but as subscribing to different
styles, techniques, and paradigms (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008; Tashakkori & Tedlie, 2003; Thomas, 2009). To ensure the quality of research, new terms and techniques have been instituted as equivalents to the quantitative counterparts of ‘validity’, ‘reliability’ and ‘objectivity’ (LeCompte & Goetz, 1982). These are ‘trustworthiness’, ‘authenticity’ and ‘confirmability’ and were put forward by Lincoln and Guba, 1985 (Bryman & Bell, 2007; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The quantitative and qualitative quality terms are as illustrated in Table 3.6.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Quantitative</th>
<th>Qualitative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Internal Validity/Face Validity</td>
<td>Trustworthiness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>External Validity/Predictive Validity</td>
<td>Credibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Reliability</td>
<td>Authenticity/Dependability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Objectivity</td>
<td>Confirmability</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.6: Reliability and validity and their qualitative equivalents
(Source: Extracted from Neuman, 2006)

There are techniques to address these quality measures as listed in Table 3.7 below. As not all the recommended techniques can be applied in this research due to resource constraints, mainly of time and also other issues as discussed in the details later, the ones applied in this research are indicated.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Technique Recommendations</th>
<th>This Study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td><strong>Five recommendations for Creditability (Internal Validity)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. Activities for Increasing Creditability Possibilities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a. Prolonged Engagement</td>
<td>Partially</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. Persistent Observation</td>
<td>Partially</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c. Triangulation</td>
<td>Partially</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Peer Debriefing</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Negative Case Analysis</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Referential Adequacy</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Member Checks</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Three recommendations for Transferability (External Validity)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. Identical Elements</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Thick Descriptions</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Purposive Sampling</td>
<td>High Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Four recommendations for Dependability (Reliability)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. Naturally follows recommendations for Creditability</td>
<td>Partially</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Overlap Methods</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Stepwise Replications</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Inquiry Audit</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Three recommendations for Confirmability (Objectivity)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. Inquiry Audit</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Triangulation</td>
<td>Partially</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Reflexive Journal</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.7: Recommended techniques for establishing ‘trustworthiness’ and ‘authenticity’ (Source: Lincoln & Guba, 1985)
3.5.2 Trustworthiness (Validity)

a. Creditability

Out of the five recommendations for ‘creditability’ from Lincoln and Guba (1985), three of them (peer debriefing, negative case analysis, member Checks) were difficult to implement.

Peer debriefing requires a disinterested peer to sieve through the research study with a critical eye. A disinterested peer is someone who is conversant with research methodology, has wide and deep knowledge of academic and practical subjects and is neither the superior nor subordinate of the researcher (Creswell, 2009; Creswell, 2007; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Tashakkori & Tedlie, 1998). Finding this person to volunteer for the role was difficult.

For negative case analysis, the many variables surrounding the research problem made it difficult to build distinct negative cases.

For member checks, going back to the respondents and giving them the opportunity to give feedback on the data collected, the analysis, the interpretations, the findings and the conclusions arrived was too hard given the limited time and effort resources of the researcher (Creswell, 2009; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Tashakkori & Tedlie, 1998). For the respondents, the additional heavy workload and extra time required was a deterrent for them to give consent. Therefore, this was deemed not to be viable.

Only the last two recommended techniques were suitable for implementation, that is, ‘activities for increasing creditability possibilities (prolonged engagement; persistent observation and triangulation)’ and ‘referential adequacy’. For the former, the three activities contained within (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) were attained as follows - ‘prolonged engagement’ was accomplished through the setting up of more than five focus groups for Gen Y and more than eight personal interviews for the organisations; ‘persistent observation’ was achieved through the practice of constant alertness throughout the sessions. As the third component ‘triangulation’ contains more complex implementation criteria, this is discussed separately later in this chapter.

On ‘referential adequacy’, the requirement was to store or archive the raw data collected so that these might be later retrieved by others for evaluation purpose. This was achieved by filing the raw field notes.
b. Transferability

For ‘Transferability’, there were three recommended techniques by Lincoln and Guba, 1985 (identical elements, thick descriptions, purposive sampling). In a strict sense, transferability in qualitative research is extremely difficult to achieve. In principle, the research findings are only applicable to the time and context when and where the research study takes place. In practice, the research findings have use outside these boundaries. This is through ‘thick descriptions’ (Creswell, 2009; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Tashakkori & Tedlie, 1998) in which full and extensive descriptions are presented. The decision regarding ‘transferability’ then rests on those interested in wanting to use the research findings. In this research, ‘thick descriptions’ were employed from the start by having a wide and deep coverage for the literature review and a detailed explanation of the methodology. They were carried through to the findings chapter where illustrative display matrices containing relevant and copious quotations from the focus group transcripts were presented.

‘Purposive sampling’ was accomplished by targeting the required respondents for the focus groups of university undergraduates in their final year of studies (Gen Y by age group cohort default) and working members of Gen Y (purposively selected). Similarly the respondents for personal interviews were purposively sampled from a variety of organisations. ‘Identical elements’ were present in that the respondents exhibited and shared similar characteristics in the case of Gen Y, and common positions or objectives in the case of organisations, within the context of this study.

3.5.3 Authenticity/Dependability

The last two recommendations were for ‘dependability’ and ‘confirmability’. In qualitative research, ‘reliability’ is approached differently and viewed as a part of a larger set of factors that are associated with observed change (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The qualitative researchers call it ‘dependability’ and to achieve this, there are four recommendations (naturally follows recommendations for creditability; overlap methods; stepwise replication; inquiry audit) (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Studying these four recommendations, the first is straightforward and attainable with the establishment of ‘creditability’. ‘Overlap methods’ are basically ‘triangulation’ methods and attaining these is needed to fulfill the ‘triangulation’ requirements. This is discussed separately later. The ‘stepwise method’ was deemed too complicated to implement in this research as it requires at least two persons in the inquiry team. They are broken up into two teams to conduct the data collection independently but in a
synchronised manner. The ‘stepwise method’ was therefore not adopted in this study. ‘Inquiry audit’ was not undertaken for this study as it calls for the appointment of an independent inquiry auditor to examine the process of inquiry and to determine its acceptability. Such a person would have been difficult and time consuming to identify and find.

3.5.4 Confirmability

The inquiry audit can be used to establish ‘creditability’. However, this was not done for this research as mentioned earlier. The two other methods were triangulation and a reflexive journal. Triangulation is addressed below. A reflexive journal was kept all the time.

a. Triangulation

In the application of triangulation for this research, the four different modes of triangulation (Denzin, 1978) were examined. They are: the use of multiple and different sources, the use of different research methodologies, different investigators, and different theories (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Neuman, 2006; Tashakkori & Tedlie, 1998).

Using multiple and different sources means getting one or more other sources to provide the data collection and comparing the data for similarity or for similar patterns. In this research, the use of about six different Focus Groups comprising groups of university undergraduates and groups of young workers for Gen Y and about eight respondents from different types of organisations for the personal interviews fulfill this requirement (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). As this research study used only one research design, that is qualitative, triangulation of different methods did not arise and therefore was not applicable. The same was true for the triangulation of different inquirers as the researcher was the sole inquirer.

A review of triangulation of theory shows that there were debates over this. It was overwhelmingly rejected by Lincoln & Guba. They argued that facts are determined by theory and cannot exist outside the framework of the theory. Therefore, it makes no sense for facts to be supported by multiple theories (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). On the other hand, there are researchers who have employed triangulation of theory and Denzin is its main proponent. They therefore do not subscribe to the arguments of Lincoln and Guba (Neuman, 2006). Taking into account both views, this research applied the triangulation of theory with some flexibility. Different theories that contain elements pertaining to the research problem were identified and studied for relevance. This was in the area of life stage and work cycles. Life
stage theories come from Behavioural Science (Psychology) especially the lifespan development theory’ of Erik Erikson (Berk, 2004). More focused on the work environment in the life stage is the life-structure theory’ of Levinson, Daniel (Berk, 2004; Peterson, 2004). The other theories were those taken from the field of organisational behaviour and development where they are relevant when analysing and interpreting the data collection from the personal interviews about organisational systems and structures. The specific theory of Donald Super on career development stages covers both life stage and career stage. Placing them together, a common pattern and theme was traced. This served as a point of reference for triangulation with the findings collected.

3.6 Ethical considerations

There are no hard and fast rules in the area of ethical considerations when it comes to business, social and academic research. A common base is that they are governed by societal norms. In research work, there are three parties involved and each party deserves some general rights and obligations. The three parties are the researcher, the sponsoring client (the university in the case of educational research) and the respondents (Zikmund, 2003). However, as a result of the interaction of the three parties with different objectives and expectations, conflicts arise that lead to ethical issues. These range from the very general to the specific. In this respect, for DBA research candidates in Southern Cross University (SCU), guidelines for ethical conduct and practice have been established (SCU, 2014). The objectives for this ethical requirement are: it is required under the Australian government’s National statement on ethical conduct in human research, it safeguards the rights of participants, protects the university and the researcher, and it helps the researcher to clarify the research design and plan in tandem with developing the methodology chapter. Therefore, an official ‘ethics application’ was duly submitted to the SCU ethics committee approval. An Expedited Ethics Application (low risk) DBA is available for DBA-type research. It was approved and a reference (ECN Number) was assigned for commencement of data collection and for insertion into the information sheet.

Important information required in the ethics application included: the aim of research, a concise literature review for the committee to make a judgement on the justification for the study and the level of risk; the research steps so the committee can make a judgement on risk, a separate form for research conducted outside Australia, indicative interview questions, an
informed consent form to be signed by participants, and details of the complaints process and contact person.

The ethical aspects included were: anonymity, confidentiality, ability to withdraw at any time, no inducements or coercion to participate, secure lodging of data, and aggregated results available to participants. For the focus groups and personal interviews, personal and private details of the respondents were required. Therefore to safeguard and assure the respondents of such privacy, confidentiality and anonymity was emphasised (Neuman, 2006; Zikmund, 2003). Permission from the respondents was sought on the use of digital audio recording during the discussions or interviews to assist the accurate capture of data. There were no covert operations practised (Neuman, 2006).

All the above was clearly explained to potential informants during the call for participation and any queries or concerns from them were addressed immediately. The consent of those who accepted and agreed to participate was confirmed in writing (Neuman, 2006; Zikmund, 2003). As the focus groups were conducted in a comfortable office environment, many ethical considerations were easily adhered to. The risk of physical harm was virtually non-existent. Drinks, snacks and small breaks were provided throughout the discussions. This prevented fatigue and physical stress. The research topics under discussion were not of a sensitive or very intimate nature and therefore the risk of psychological harm or loss of self-esteem was negligible (Neuman, 2006). Care was taken by the researcher to ensure that the discussions proceeded in an open and free manner without duress. The ethical considerations were also applicable for the personal interviews. Since the personal interviews were also held either in the respondent’s own office or at a comfortable, safe public eating place, the same concerns for physical harm and fatigues were low as well.

The use and the ownership of the data, findings and results (Krueger, 2009; Neuman, 2006) was of concern to the respondents. In a research setting, the only purpose for the findings and results was to understand, discover and unravel the research problem and propositions posited, and this was clearly explained to the respondents. This was specified together with a ‘no misuse’ clause on the ethic form signed by the respondents. Regarding the ownership of data, the raw and secondary data remained the property of the respondents while the findings and results became the property of the researcher. The respondents were given full access to the findings and results upon request but these findings and results are the full copyright
How to Achieve Alignment of the Malaysian Gen Y Workforce with the Systems and Structures of Organisations in Malaysia

3.7 Conclusion

This chapter describes the research methodology and the data collection instruments employed. The research methodology selected was a qualitative one and the reasons for this decision were provided. The data collection instruments were the use of focus groups for Gen Y and personal interviews for organisations. The research problem and propositions were restated and re-examined to achieve better compatibility with the research methodology.

As befitting qualitative research methodology, the paradigm, epistemology and ontology of the researcher were clarified and elaborated, followed by the justifications on the use of a qualitative approach as opposed to a quantitative approach. An important component was the research design and a detailed discussion on the methods of inquiry was carried out. The steps taken in the research design were then clearly enumerated, especially in relation to the data collection methods using focus groups and personal interviews as well as in the data analysis procedures.

A thorough examination of the recommendations and guidelines available to achieve a high quality study was undertaken. This examination involved discussing validity and reliability using their qualitative equivalents. A decision was made to employ the procedures posited by Lincoln and Guba (1985) which used the terms ‘trustworthiness’ and ‘authenticity’. Those that could be applied using the resources available and which were practical to implement were then identified and selected for use. The same treatment was given to the process of triangulation and slight modifications to those recommended were made to render them more suitable for this study.

The chapter ends with a description on the ethical considerations and the procedures followed before commencement of data collection. Preparations were made for the identification of the research population and for the invitations sent to the focus groups and personal interviews while awaiting the approval of the ethics application.
Chapter 4

Analysis and Findings
Chapter 4

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter outlines the research methodology adopted, the data collection method and the data analysis process undertaken for this research study. The research methodology is qualitative nature. The data collection methods are: the use of focus groups when addressing Gen Y culture; and the use of personal interviews when examining organisations on their thoughts in the design of their organisational systems and structures to accommodate the new demands from Gen Y.

This chapter is on tabling the findings and performing the analysis from the field data collected. In qualitative research, the findings and analysis are not separate independent activities following sequentially after the data collection but is an ongoing iterative process that is immersed with the data collection activity that takes place simultaneously (Neuman, 2006). Therefore, even when data collection was still on-going, the findings were reflected upon and patterns were sought.

The chapter structure is shown below.

4.1.1 Chapter Structure

This chapter is made up of four sections as shown in figure 4.1 below.

![Chapter 4: Findings and Analysis](image)

Fig. 4.1: Structure of Chapter 4 (Source: developed for this research)
Section 4.1 – Introduction serves as a bridge between Chapter 3 Methodology and the current Chapter 4. The main point raised is that in a qualitative research study, the findings and analysis processes are iterative and take place in conjunction with the data collection and other activities. An overview of the chapter structure is provided in Section 4.1.1 – Chapter Structure. It states the number of sections and the topics contain therein. The restatement of the research questions and their respective research propositions is made in Section 4.1.2 – Research Propositions. Section 4.1.3 – Data Collection Activities describes the arrangements and the implementation of the focus groups and personal interviews.

The remaining sections in Chapter 4, starting with Section 4.2 – Data Analysis, present the findings and analysis of the various research propositions together with Section 4.3 – Data Analysis (Unplanned Data) touching on data arising that was not planned for. Chapter 4 ends with its own conclusion.

4.1.2 Restating the Research Questions and Research Propositions

In Chapter 2, under section 2.8.3, the research questions are posed as follows:

A. Research Questions
   1. How can Gen Y members align themselves to organisational systems and structures so as to demonstrate work commitment?
   2. How can organisations re-design their systems and structures so as to obtain work commitment from members of Gen Y?

To support each research questions, the respective research propositions were crafted.

B. Research Propositions

For Research Question 1
   a. Under favourable circumstances, members of Gen Y will comply with organisational hierarchies, policies, rules and regulations and the required working hours.
   b. Career guidance, development programmes and growth opportunities offered by organisations are viewed differently by members of Gen Y than they are by other generations.
   c. Gen Y members will demonstrate their commitment to work in their own ways.
For Research Question 2

a. Organisations will need to re-organise their systems and structures to accommodate Gen Y culture.

b. Organisations will need to develop strategic and innovative career development and growth plans to retain Gen Y employees.

4.1.3 Data Collection Activities

Data collection only started after the ethics application approval was obtained on 18 April 2011 with Approval Code ECN -11-093. Data collection consists of two portions, (1) focus groups for Gen Y and (2) personal interviews for organisations.

4.2 Data Analysis (Gen Y and Organisations)

4.2.1 Gen Y – Focus Groups

A. Data Display Matrices

During the focus group sessions, field notes were written and audio recordings taken and later transcript made. The field notes and transcript was then analysed and sorted roughly and allocated to the three research propositions. Within the categories of the three research propositions, the data was further sorted, identified and grouped under more categories, forming patterns and themes according to each research proposition. The results of these activities were then tabulated as display matrices. The display matrices for each of the three research propositions are shown in Tables 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ref No.</th>
<th>Comments</th>
<th>Patterns</th>
<th>Names</th>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Working</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1A</td>
<td>It’s hard to get a job.</td>
<td>No Choice</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1B</td>
<td>No choice, I cannot get a job in related field.</td>
<td>No Choice</td>
<td>THL</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1C</td>
<td>No choice comes with the job. Manage yourself better than fuss over the rules and regulations.</td>
<td>No Choice</td>
<td>AT</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1D</td>
<td>The rules and regulations are the common ones practised in most organisations and I can accept them.</td>
<td>No Choice</td>
<td>TW</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2A</td>
<td>Staying back late in the office is acceptable</td>
<td>Working Hours</td>
<td>MJ</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2B</td>
<td>In Malaysia, local companies are out to exploit their employees; so long working hours are expected. This is refuted by VV ‘Employees in western countries work long hours as well’.</td>
<td>Working Hours Flexi-Hours</td>
<td>BB</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2C</td>
<td>Work conditions will definitely be tough during ‘chamerring’ but I shall accept them fully as this is part of the requirement in the legal profession before one can be a partner or set up one’s own practice.</td>
<td>Working Hours Flexi-Hours</td>
<td>HS</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2D</td>
<td>We have deadlines to meet twice a year and during these times we need to work long hours and non-stop. I do not like this. I am looking for an alternative career</td>
<td>Working Hours Flexi-Hours</td>
<td>VL</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2E</td>
<td>To me, in my work, it is not about the number of working days or hours. It is more about stretching myself and giving my best and I shall put in both time and effort to achieve this.</td>
<td>Working Hours Flexi-Hours</td>
<td>RL</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2F</td>
<td>Flexible working hour is an idealistic concept and in Malaysia is very rarely practised by private organisations. You may find them in government services but not officially.</td>
<td>Working Hours Flexi-Hours</td>
<td>KS</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2G</td>
<td>Flexible working hours won’t be practised for years to come.</td>
<td>Working Hours Flexi-Hours</td>
<td>BB</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2H</td>
<td>I am now working in a company with regular 9 to 5 working hours. Although I would like to go off at 5.00pm sharp. I do not do so as the boss frowns on this. Therefore, I stay back until 7.00pm but I will be on instant messaging instead of doing work.</td>
<td>Working Hours Flexi-Hours</td>
<td>PM</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2I</td>
<td>I work in a bank as an accounts executive and my hours are long and cover weekends as well. The practice is to focus on sale-related activities during regular working hours and to do the paper work after office hours. It is also the practice of the company to call for meetings or give briefings after office hours.</td>
<td>Working Hours Flexi-Hours</td>
<td>VV</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2J  |  It is difficult to achieve work-life balance.  
| Work | Working Hours  
| Flexi-Hours | JY | ✓ |

2K  |  As a software engineer in a software company, I am given more flexibility. I can work according to my own schedule except for designated core hours every day (usually 2.00pm to 3.00pm) where I must be in the office and also every morning where we have fifteen minutes of stand-up reporting and discussions.  
| Work | Working Hours  
| Flexi-Hours | RR | ✓ |

3A  |  I have stuck to the 5½ days’ work week so far but am now facing frustration. I am looking for a company that has a five-days working week.  
As I am in the Human Resource department, I have also found it difficult to recruit new applicants because of this 5½-day working week policy in this organization.  
| 5½ Days | CN | ✓ |

3B  |  It is the same in my organisation. Although I can still accept the 5½- day working week, most of my colleagues do not feel the same. You can see the change in mood on Friday. It happens to all the generations.  
| 5½ Days | MO | ✓ |

3C  |  My last job also had a 5½- day working week. I have since left and found a company that allows more flexi-hours.  
| 5½ Days | JT | ✓ |

Table 4.1: Focus group display matrix A (Source: develop for this research)

b. Research Proposition 1b: Career guidance, development programmes and growth opportunities offered by organisations are viewed differently by members of Gen Y than they are by other generations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RefNo.</th>
<th>Comments</th>
<th>Patterns</th>
<th>Names</th>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Working</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1A</td>
<td>Training is necessary but the trainer must be competent and training need to be related to the job. On the job training is preferred. Most companies do not want to waste time on training.</td>
<td>Training On the Job</td>
<td>SB</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1B</td>
<td>Training is very important as it allows me to know the direction of the company. For me, I am always willing to learn. To improve</td>
<td>Training Self Initiative</td>
<td>RC</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>myself, I will participate in company projects, show initiative and take on challenging tasks.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1C</strong></td>
<td><strong>Training is not practical. It all depends on oneself to be observant and to be learning.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Training</strong></td>
<td><strong>SN</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1D</strong></td>
<td><strong>Companies usually set some criteria for eligibility for training. In my company, only those employees who have served for more than three years are eligible. There is a contract to be signed too. I was selected for many training courses and promoted quite fast to Assistant Manager.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Training</strong></td>
<td><strong>CN</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1E</strong></td>
<td><strong>My company does not have any training programmes. To be promoted, I will need to just show more initiative in my work, volunteer to assist my supervisor, request for more tasks outside my scope of work.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Training</strong></td>
<td><strong>GR</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **1F** | **Working in small companies allows you to learn many different aspects of a company’s operations whereas working for a large organisation may mean being pigeon-holed into some specific job function. Therefore a small company will be able to provide more varied exposure, experience and knowledge. These are very important for future endeavours.**  
VV wholeheartedly agreed. | **Training** | **PW** |
|   |   |   | ✓ |
| **1G** | **To advance in your career, you need to demonstrate that you are very much better than others and be very committed in your work. Your results will count for more than just talk.** | **Self Initiative** | **HS** |
|   |   |   | ✓ |
| **1H** | **I am staying with the present company despite better offers from other companies. The reason is that the company will promote me to become a branch manager if I continue to work well.** | **Self Initiative** | **TW** |
|   |   |   | ✓ |
| **1I** | **When I first started working, I changed job almost every two years as I felt that this would better contribute to my learning and experience. I have set a target that by 35 years old, I will settle at a suitable company to build my career or find a suitable business to venture into.** | **Self Initiative** | **VL** |
|   |   |   | ✓ |
Table 4.2: Focus group display matrix B (Source: developed for this research)

c. Research Proposition 1c: Gen Y members will demonstrate their commitment to work in their own ways.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ref No.</th>
<th>Comments</th>
<th>Patterns</th>
<th>Names</th>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Working</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1A</td>
<td>I will perform the company’s tasks as best as I can.</td>
<td>Do Best For Company</td>
<td>WD</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1B</td>
<td>I will coach new recruits.</td>
<td>Do Extra For Company</td>
<td>AW</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1C</td>
<td>I will demonstrate competency and as an auditor I will reduce the risk to my company by uncovering fraud and unethical practices in the companies I audit.</td>
<td>Do Best For Company</td>
<td>KK</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2A</td>
<td>My contribution will be mainly in providing a fresh mind and outlook on work assignments.</td>
<td>Innovate For Company</td>
<td>AT</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2B</td>
<td>I bring energy and enthusiasm to the organisation</td>
<td>Motivate Others For Company</td>
<td>JT</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2C</td>
<td>I usually set myself higher targets to achieve than those given by the company.</td>
<td>Do Best For Company</td>
<td>VV</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2D</td>
<td>I wish I could receive more feedback from the Sales and Marketing people on the usefulness of the company’s software to the customers so that I can improve its features.</td>
<td>Care For Company</td>
<td>RR</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3A</td>
<td>I just work according to the assignments given to me by my boss.</td>
<td>Basic Work For Boss</td>
<td>MM</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3B</td>
<td>I shall give my best in the work assigned to me by my boss so as to enable him to give a good presentation to the customers. However, there are times when there are no assignments and it becomes boring. I request more assignments from my boss but there are none available.</td>
<td>Do Best For Boss</td>
<td>PM</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3C</td>
<td>I take every task as a personal challenge but it also depends on the type of boss I have.</td>
<td>Do Best For Boss</td>
<td>CN</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3D</td>
<td>I am committed to the boss providing he/she can communicate well with me.</td>
<td>Do Best For Boss</td>
<td>MO</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3E</td>
<td>I shall work hard for a supportive boss who will help me to grow.</td>
<td>Do Best For Boss</td>
<td>JJ</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4A</td>
<td>I shall be passionate and dedicated in my work to gain experience and to be noticed</td>
<td>Do Best For Self</td>
<td>HS</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4B</td>
<td>I shall be committed to my work in order to be recognised as a competent person.</td>
<td>Do Best For Self</td>
<td>JY</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5A</td>
<td>As a teacher in a child care environment, I will be very committed to my work as I feel very responsible for the well-being of the children I am in charge of.</td>
<td>Do Best Higher Goals</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5B</td>
<td>I put a lot of effort into my work as I see in it an opportunity to create values to humanities and society.</td>
<td>Do Best Higher Goals</td>
<td>RL</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.3: Focus group display matrix C (Source: developed for this research)
B. Data Analysis and Findings

a. Research Proposition 1a: Under favourable circumstances, members of Gen Y will comply with organisational hierarchies, policies, rules and regulations and the required working hours.

The literature review indicates that members of Gen Y want autonomy, are self-important, do things their own way, seek challenging jobs and fast promotion, and want to have fun. The implications of these qualities are many. Top on the list is that they do not wish to conform to hierarchical structure of many levels in organisations as this impedes their promotional progress. Complying with rules and regulations is another requirement that goes against their need for autonomy. Another requirement is being expected to work long and rigid hours that restrict their movements and reduce their time for fun. Gen Y employees do not like it when they are not given positions of authority as this hurts their sense of self-importance. The requirements discussed here are these are things they are expected to want to avoid. However, the findings from the Focus Groups provide a deeper understanding of their responses or reactions to all these restrictions. When it comes to compliance with organisational policies, rules and regulations, one common refrain heard was ‘We had no choice’. This is as indicated in Table 4.1: Focus Group Display Matrix A (1A, 1B, 1C). There were mixed reasons for their feelings they had no choice. The major one was jobs were difficult to come by and therefore they were willing to accommodate the many traditional procedures and practices of organisations. Difficulties in finding jobs were due to the poor global economic which affects Malaysia. In addition, such restrictive rules and regulations were standard operating procedures.

Regarding long working hours, working on weekends and the need to stay back late (2A to 2J), the main perception was these were the unspoken norms in organisations in Malaysia. To go against these norms was frowned upon by both colleagues and superiors. For example, participants said leaving promptly after office hours was viewed unfavourably by management and impeded progress or promotions within the company (2H). This same concern was also the reason for occasionally working on weekends. Thus, the focus groups had mixed feelings about the long hours and additional hours. Some felt that compliance enhanced their opportunities for promotion within the companies (2A, 2C and 2E) but some were looking for ways to leave the companies or even the professions (2E), hoping that better alternatives were available in other organisations. Some Gen Y who viewed such conditions
as a learning experience or part of the requirements of particular professions. Some did not mind as long as they were paid for the extra work and time. As far as the limited number of days for vacation, this was again perceived as normal in most companies and the respondents could not expect anything more.

Flexible hours, although something highly desired by most Gen Y, were dismissed as ‘dreams’ as Gen Y perceived that the majority of Malaysian organisations were very unlikely to offer such benefits for years to come (2F and 2J). Only one working Gen Y had some form of flexible hours (2K). Related to this benefit was the wish for work-life balance. The comments above indicate that ‘work-life balance’ was difficult to attain (2J). Most agreed that much personal time was taken up by time spent working. This was compounded by the horrendous daily traffic jams encountered when commuting to and from the office for work. The consensus was that not much time was left for personal needs, let alone other pursuits. Most grin and bear these hard working conditions out of necessity. Many job hopped to look for better working conditions but some stayed on with the expectation that promotion to more senior or managerial positions in three to four years’ time might bring better or more favorable conditions.

The seventh focus group introduced an issue which was not touched upon during the earlier groups. This was the number of days in the working week. Although in Malaysia, all government institutions are now on five days week and many companies have adopted the same practice, there are many more companies that still adhere to the five-and-a-half day working week. It appeared that this is a major issue for Gen Y. One Gen Y participant from a recruitment agency confirmed that a five-day working week was a major demand from the job applicants (Ref. 3A). One participant who had previously worked in a five-and-the-half day working week company had left and found work in another company that offered some flexi-hours (3C) while the others were contemplating leaving.

As can be seen, for Research Proposition 1, the focus group findings uncovered some of the reasons, both positive and negative, for why members of Gen Y complied with or adapted to organisational rules and regulations. In summary, the main one reason was that Gen Y had no choice because of the need to keep a job and because they were difficult to come by. The overall mindset was that the rules and regulations were standard in organisations in Malaysia
and therefore Gen Y had to accept them. It was unusual for organisations to have really unreasonable or undesirable rules and regulation.

Gen Y employees acknowledged that for certain industries and professions, such as banking and accountancy, there are inevitably periods when leave is frozen, long working hours become compulsory and working through weekends becomes necessary. Early and mid-year are the busy times for accountancy firms whereas for banks busy times are always at the end of the day when the daily balance has to be closed, and hence, some employees need to work until very late hours. Gen Y employees accepted that these periods cannot be avoided except by leaving the industry or profession.

For most other industries, Gen Y expects that when they reach a certain level of seniority, there are additional perks including better working conditions and more flexible working hours. Most Gen Y has a strong preference for a five-day working week and therefore rejects work that required five-and-the-half day week.

b. Research Proposition 1b: Career guidance, development programmes and growth opportunities offered by organisations are viewed differently by members of Gen Y than they are by other generations.

The members of the focus groups consisting of working Gen Y reported that career guidance, development programmes and growth opportunities were available in the form of self-development, rewards, promotions, growth opportunities and ambitions. For the final year undergraduates, as they generally had no permanent working experience, their responses to this proposition were drawn out through questions on career counselling provided by the universities. Table 4.2 - The Focus Group Display Matrix B shows the data collected and the patterns formed.

When it came to improving their prospects for advancement in their work and career, both the undergraduates and working Gen Y in the focus groups indicated that they relied more on their own initiatives in the acquisition of skills and knowledge rather than on training and development programmes provided by organisations (1C, 1E, 1F, 1G, 1I). The responses from university undergraduates on training showed that they felt training was useful but with qualifications. Firstly, the trainers needed to be competent and the topics needed to be related
to the job (1A). Secondly, more important behaviours were continuous learning, initiative, being more observant, and taking on challenging tasks (1B and 1C).

Meanwhile, working Gen Y believed that most companies other than large organisations, did not have any training or career development programmes at all (1E). Even, if training was available, there were conditions to fulfill for an employee to be eligible (1D). Overall, they felt that if training was to be considered, their preference was for ‘on the job’ training. One working Gen Y believed that higher post graduate qualifications could improve his standing with potential employers (1L).

On the topic of career counselling, university undergraduates said that the emphasis was more on writing resumes’ preparing for job interviews and the handling of the interviews – in other words, it focused on how to get a job and therefore was not particularly useful. Career talks given by organisations were also seen as unrealistic and merely propaganda (2A). Therefore the Gen Y undergraduates were sceptical of such activities. The working Gen Y recalled encountering the same issues during their undergraduate years and as a result they carried this impression into their working lives. They did not expect organisations to play a major role in helping them. The majority believed that they themselves were responsible for their advancement and that they could do this by the accumulation of skills, knowledge and experience (1F, 1G, 1H) and by looking for better positions in other organisations (1I, 1I). They did not know how to acquire the required skills, knowledge and experience in a structured manner and they proceeded in an unplanned, haphazard manner. Overall, both groups had little knowledge or awareness of career planning and development.

The findings are consistent with features of Gen Y culture highlighted in Chapter 2 – Literature Review. These are:

i. Training and development has very low priority in advancing career at only 32% (PWC, 2009a) for Malaysian Gen Y. For 71% of Malaysian Gen Y, the top method for development was mentoring and coaching in the companies they worked for.

ii. Narcissism among Gen Y can create a bias towards themselves. Members of Gen Y tend to see themselves as superior to others, and tend to rate themselves higher on performance (Twenge and Campbell, 2008).

iii. Some Gen Y members seek excitement by constantly looking for challenging work (Deloitte, 2008a).
The above patterns indicate that the acquisition of skills and knowledge through training somehow did not catch the attention of Gen Y and was not attractive to them. This was even more so with training programmes that were offered by organisations. Therefore, the views of Gen Y on training as a mean of career development, growth opportunities and promotions are different from traditional thinking. Their strong beliefs in themselves and in the value of their own experience and capabilities for determining their promotions or career growth are refreshing and new. However, most do not approach their career development in a purposeful manner but in a non-directed way and unplanned manner.

c. **Research Proposition 1c:** Gen Y members will demonstrate their commitment to work in their own ways.

In relation to this research proposition, it is evident from the focus Groups discussions that Gen Y members tend to have a strong intention to commit themselves fully to their work tasks. Both groups (final year university students and those already working) expressed the same sentiment. The focus group data display is shown in Table 4.3. The table reveals the many different ways Gen Y members demonstrated their commitment. Some of these ways were: fulfilling company tasks to the best of their ability (1A, 3B, 3C); coaching new recruits (1B); uncovering fraud and unethical practices in the case of an accounting student (1C); providing fresh and new perspectives to work assignments (2A); bringing energy and enthusiasm to the organisation (2B); setting higher targets for themselves compared to company targets (2C); improving on features and benefits of products and services (2D); and for the betterment of society (5A, 5B).

It is of interest that Gen Y undergraduates tend to direct their work commitment to either the companies or themselves (1A, 1B, 1C, 2A, 2B) while working Gen Y tend to direct their commitment to their supervisors or bosses (3A, 3B, 3C, 3D, 3E). However, for the working Gen Y, the intensity of their commitment depended on the type of bosses they had. They were more committed when bosses were nurturing, had constant communication with them and assisted them in their career growth (3C, 3D, 3E).

Gen Y bemoaned that there was a lack of positive and proper feedback on their performance. What they tend to receive instead was negative feedback in the form of scolding, sarcasm and...
criticism. The reactions or responses of Gen Y to the negative feedback varied according to individual factors (2D).

How consistent are the above findings related to Gen Y culture? In the literature review, Gen Y is said to need clear instructions in whatever they do or in the decisions they make. Therefore, in the workplace, when this clarity is not forthcoming, Gen Y members tend to resort to working according to their own perceptions of excellent work. That may account their showing commitment differently. Moreover, with their tendency to see themselves as being superior to others, judging themselves favourably, and rating themselves higher on performance, they are under the impression that they are working efficiently and competently. Therefore, the findings reveal that members of Gen Y demonstrate their work commitment in their own ways which relate to their Gen Y culture. At the same time, the findings also provide some of the reasons why they behave in this manner. The findings may be used by organisations that wish to guide Gen Y into aligning their work commitment with organisational objectives.

4.2.2 Organisations – Personal Interviews

This portion of the research investigates how organisations approach Gen Y employees and was conducted through personal interviews. It was decided not to make verbatim record of the interviews so as to offer ease and convenience to the senior managers of the organisations who were very busy people. Therefore, only note taking was used. The notes were then summarised, sorted, and the analysis and findings are presented next.

For the research on organisations, there are two propositions as highlighted in Section 4.1.2. Generally, all the officers interviewed shared the same opinions on the two propositions but their reasons varied according to the type of organisations they came from. All of the officers interviewed mentioned that the incentive plans mainly came from their personal initiatives and were tailored according to their own perceptions of how the incentive programmes motivated the employees for better performance and retention. These incentive plans were generally additional to the standard incentives offered by the organisations. On the other hand, the presentations from the one day seminar cum forum, where the organisations comprised multinational companies and large Malaysian corporations, the findings are that such organisations had elaborate compensation and reward systems as well as very structured career development programmes. More specific information is provided below.
a. **Research Proposition 2a:** Organisations will need to re-organise their systems and structures to accommodate Gen Y culture.

Most of the officers interviewed tended to be of the view that organisational structures were something inherited by the organisations. Company practices were already established and had developed over the years the organisations had been in existence. Most such organisational structures were bureaucratic with a few hierarchical layers comprising their heads, managers and supervisors. These perspectives came mainly from the larger organisations. In these large organisations, there tended to be more top level positions created such as general managers, vice presidents and other senior executive positions. These positions were created to meet the demands for promotions for key employees who had been with the growing company for more than 10 years. Most of the officers contended that there was little they could do to institute changes to the organisational structures. This was especially true for organisations with headquarters overseas. Of the officers who were able to introduce some changes to the organisational structures, most were inclined ‘not to break what is not broken’. For attracting, recruiting, motivating and keeping good staff, their preferred approaches were to use incentives and rewards. Changing the organisational structure was regarded as a very daunting task, which carried very heavy responsibilities, and had fearful consequences. The smaller organisations had very simple structures and they therefore paid scant attention to this area.

One organisation that had taken a different approach to the hierarchical structure was company H, the engineering consultancy. It placed the engineers and their supporting teams into ad-hoc groups according to the projects received by the company. These groups were usually led by a mid-level engineer. This process provided both ownership and pride for the teams to excel. It also provided learning and growth opportunities for the leaders of the teams. Other incentives included Friday night social gatherings, company trips, sports, and games. This company believed in training and encouraged its staff to attend technical training which was paid for by the company. All engineers were given a computer notebook with all the necessary office software and the special engineering software. There was no curb on internet activities with trust placed on the employees to exercise self-discipline.
b. **Research Proposition 2b:** Organisations will need to develop strategic and innovative career development and growth plans to retain Gen Y employees.

The analysis of the data from the personal interviews shows that only large multinational companies have career guidance and development programmes for their employees. This was strongly reinforced by the in-depth presentations given by the speakers of the multinational companies and local Malaysian corporations. These speakers were all very senior human resource directors. Most other companies did not have such programmes in place.

Compensation, rewards and incentives were the main processes used by these other companies to motivate their employees. Many claimed to offer better salaries at ten to fifteen percent above market rates. Most of the time, the compensation and reward programmes were very basic and satisfied the mandatory requirements of the government regulations. These were contributions to employee provident funds, workers’ funds, annual and medical leave, the gazetted public holidays, overtime payments and allowances. Outside the government regulations were the yearly salary increments, the annual bonuses, the various commission schemes for sales staff and the opportunities for promotion. All these were standard benefits and not much attention was paid to how to make them more innovative. There were very few special compensation and reward schemes that sought to attract, retain or motivate employees. Other incentives were usually implemented on an ad-hoc basis. They came in the form of company trips, company dinners, company games, health check activities and get-together parties. Most of the time, these were not integral parts of organisations’ standard practice but more the personal initiatives of the heads of the organisations (from CEOs and senior managers).

The data gathered also uncovered some very innovative incentives schemes introduced through personal initiatives. One such scheme was the award of increments and cash incentives outside the traditional year-end bonuses. Increments of up to twenty percent were awarded to top performers and deserving employees. When such unexpected rewards were dished out, the employees concerned were appreciative and became more committed in their work but they also became shining examples to other employees. According to the officers who issued such rewards, it also removed the difficult problem of the amounts of increment to give and whom to award them to the end of every year. This sensitive situation was caused by the expectations of employees. Officers were faced with the question of whether the increment was too little and hence whether it had a negative impact on the employees, or
whether it was too much and therefore did not encourage improvements to future performance.

4.3 Data Analysis (Unplanned Data)

4.3.1 Focus Groups

During the data collection for the focus groups, the following common recurring themes arose. Both groups acknowledged that jobs or work were hard to come by, but for different reasons. The university students were aware that many of them shared similar levels of academic attainment. With the exception of those with outstanding grades, they acknowledged that the chances for their resumes to stand out and catch the attention of prospective employers were extremely slim. Hence, most of them found difficulties in securing interviews let alone landing a job. In addition, their enrolments in the various disciplines were more due to the influence of teachers and friends, the decisions of parents, and their prevailing financial situations rather than their own choices. Their choices were seldom grounded in thorough investigations of various important criteria. Very few actually knew where their interests lay, or what university courses to take. The realisation only arose after they had graduated and were preparing to enter the job market. It was only then that they started to relate the types of courses they had taken and the grades they had achieved with job availability, starting salaries and the type of companies to work for. Naivety and idealism showed in most of them.

Working Gen Y exhibited slightly better understanding of reality. Although they were working, most were not entirely satisfied with what they were doing but were staying on because jobs were difficult to find. Another more compelling reason was that the existing jobs at least provided them with incomes to cover their living expenses. One other fear was the risks associated with changing jobs or job hopping. Both groups agreed that Gen Y from more affluent families did not face such situations. Surprisingly, none cited a lack of skills, competencies, or poor work ethics and personal attitudes as the reasons for not getting a job. The summary is tabulated in Table 4.4: Unplanned Data.
### 4.3.2 Organisations – Personal Interviews

One key unplanned finding was that it was not the issue of changes in organisational structures that needed to be addressed but the type or form of employment. The feedback indicated that the trend was towards outsourcing which is one leaf from Handy’s Shamrock organisation reviewed previously. Part-timers or free lancers were not favoured in most organisations except those in the insurance, banking and financial industries.

### 4.4 Conclusion

This chapter presents the findings from the data collection to respond to the research questions and research propositions. The data came from focus groups for Gen Y respondents and personal interviews for organisations. For the focus groups, patterns related to the research questions and propositions were identified, selected, categorised and tabled so as to provide clear indicators of the directions that they were leading to, so that conclusions might be drawn under the next chapter – Chapter Five.

For the Personal Interviews, the data collected was presented in a different manner. They were transcribed and then common comments or opinions that related to the research questions and research propositions were summarised. Some unplanned data that arose were also noted and presented. All these will provide the basis for the conclusions to be drawn on the research questions and research propositions in the next chapter – Chapter Five.
Chapter 5

Conclusions and Recommendations
Chapter 5

5.1 Introduction

This chapter summarises the final conclusions from the findings and analysis of the various research propositions as presented in Chapter 4 and how they relate to Chapter 2 – Literature Review. This is followed with some recommendations. The outlines of the previous four chapters are also briefly recaptured. This chapter contains eight sections as illustrated in Figure 5.1 below:

![Chapter 5: Recommendations and Conclusions](image)

Figure 5.1: Chapter Structure (Source: developed for this research)

The eight sections in Chapter 5 start with Section 5.1 – Introduction together with an outline of the chapter structure and a quick recap of the previous four chapters. Section 5.2 covers the conclusions arrived at for each research proposition related to the two research questions respond to the research problem. There are five research propositions; three of them are on GenY culture towards work and organisations, and the other two on organisations’ responses to Gen Y culture.

This is followed by Section 5.3 which provides the conclusions on the Research Problem which is

‘How to Achieve Alignment of the Malaysian Gen Y Workforce with the Systems and Structures of Organisations in Malaysia’

The conclusions from Section 5.2 and Section 5.3 lead to the development of a theory or model in Section 5.4 that may offer a more adequate and comprehensive framework for the
alignment of Gen Y culture towards work and organisations and how the systems and structures of organisations may be modified to meet these requirements as well.

The implications of these findings and conclusions on policies and practices are then outlined in Section 5.5. This research is not without its limitations and they are highlighted under Section 5.6. Similarly, this research is by no means exhaustive and can be used as a basis for bringing out the richness of the subject on Gen Y in organisations. These are put forward in Section 5.7. Chapter 5 ends with Section 5.8 giving the conclusion for this chapter and the thesis. This research study uses Perry’s five-chapter thesis model (Perry, Chad, 2002). Chapter 1 is the introduction to the whole research study and gives an overview of what will be covered in the five chapters.

Chapter 2 contains the literature review on Gen Y culture and the alignment with work and the systems and structures of organisations. This led to the research problem which is reiterated below. To identify the gaps in knowledge related to the research problem, the literature review was given a wide and an in-depth treatment. This has culminated in the two research questions and their respective research propositions.

5.1.1 The Research Problem

‘How to Achieve Alignment of the Malaysian Gen Y Workforce with the Systems and Structures of Organisations in Malaysia’

5.1.2 Research Questions

1. How can Gen Y members align themselves to organisational systems and structures so as to demonstrate work commitment?
2. How can organisations re-design their systems and structures so as to obtain work commitment from members of Gen Y?

Supporting each research question, the research propositions were crafted:

5.1.3 Research Propositions

i. For Research Question 1

a. Under favourable circumstances, members of Gen Y will comply with organisational hierarchies, policies, rules and regulations and the required working hours.
b. Career guidance, development programmes and growth opportunities offered by organisations are viewed differently by members of Gen Y than they are by other generations.

c. Gen Y members will demonstrate their commitment to work in their own ways.

ii. For Research Question 2

a. Organisations will need to re-organise their systems and structures to accommodate Gen Y culture.

b. Organisations will need to develop strategic and innovative career development and growth plans to retain Gen Y employees.

Chapter 3 reviews the research methodology and the justifications for the methodology chosen. The data collection methods, which consisted of focus groups for Gen Y and personal interviews for organisations, were then elaborated. To ensure research quality, trustworthiness, authenticity and confirmability were taken into considerations and were adhered to as much as possible. Lastly, ethical considerations related to doing this research are spelt out, the necessary approval obtained and the required procedures strictly adhered to.

Chapter 4 compiles, presents and computes the data collected from the field work and provides the analysis, interpretations and findings. The above four chapters lead to this chapter, in which conclusions are reached for the five research propositions arising from the two research questions that were developed to address the research problem.

5.2 Conclusions on each Research Proposition

The literature review in Chapter 2 covered the five areas of Gen Y culture, the nature of work, organisational structures and systems, behavioural science and work commitment. These five areas are addressed together, with the analysis and findings of Chapter 4, when drawing the conclusions for each research proposition. Table 5.1 below provides a summary for the results of research question 1 and Table 5.2 provides a summary for the results of research question 2.
Table 5.1: Summary of literature review and findings for research question 1
(Source: developed for this research)

Referring to table 5.1, the detailed descriptions of the conclusions to the respective research propositions for research question 1 are as follows.

### 5.2.1 Research Propositions for Research Question 1

**a. Research Proposition 1a:** Under favourable circumstances, members of Gen Y will comply with organisational hierarchies, policies, rules and regulations and the required working hours.

In the literature review, Gen Y culture was examined in regards to the following areas: entitlement, speed, work-life mix, and anxiety. Under the category of Entitlement, Gen Y has been described as self-centred and narcissistic. According to this view, they want to have autonomy and to do things their ways. Therefore, previous studies have asserted that Gen Y does not fit well into the restrictive policies, rules and regulations of organisations and will find them to be stifling. This interpretation is consistent with the findings from the focus groups when it comes to the thinking (Culture) of Gen Y. However, when it comes to their
behaviours, the findings are different. Under certain circumstances, Gen Y is prepared to modify and adapt their culture to satisfy other more important and immediate needs. Top on Gen Y’s list is the need to survive and to make an independent living. Threatening this need is the tough employment market and, of those already employed, fears of losing their job. The conclusion is that positive or negative influences members of Gen Y to accommodate or comply with the requirements of the organisations.

Under the category Speed, Gen Y employees find the traditional work and organisational settings a hindrance to their desire for rapid advancement and exciting work. Neither will Gen Y put up with long hours of work. That is why scanning the job market for better working conditions and salaries is always on their minds. This is the underlying theme across the three research propositions. The conclusion is that Gen Y is faced with a go/stay tension and is ever ready to job hop.

As for the category Work-Life Mix, although previous research indicates that Gen Y wants to achieve a suitable balance, this research reveals that Gen Y in Malaysia is more realistic, or rather has a sense of resignation or helplessness over the situation. Gen Y therefore does not have high expectations obtaining a satisfactory work-life balance. The conclusion is that Gen Y accepts this situation very reluctantly and considers that work intrudes into their other life pursuits.

Lastly, the category Anxiety is another underlying theme for the three research propositions. The conclusion is that working within the traditional work and organisational environment is very much against the grain of Gen Y culture and therefore places Gen Y under great duress and stress.

On the Nature of Work, the conclusion is that members of Gen Y still believe that they need to work in order to survive. This is more apparent for Gen Y from less affluent families. For those coming from families with higher socio-economic status and families where parents are more indulgent, the need for a job is less pressing and these members of Gen Y tend to fall back onto their Gen Y culture. The type of job that Gen Y reaches out for are still of the traditional type except for those members of Gen Y who study information technology and are consequently exposed to new digital types of work. The work pattern for Gen Y is to have many different jobs especially before their early forties. After this time of their lives, the pace
will slow down. This is due to both age and competition from younger people entering the jobs market.

Organisational structures are viewed by Gen Y as standard and fixed and therefore do not figure much in Gen Y’s minds. However, their prevalent notion is that the steep ladder to the top hierarchy is too slow for their career progress. As for the career development process in organisations, Gen. Y has very little knowledge and relies on their own efforts according to their entitlement Gen Y culture. The overall conclusion reached for this Research Proposition is that Gen Y is accommodating of, and adaptable to, organisational demands and requirements especially when they encounter either favourable or unfavourable circumstances.

b. **Research Proposition 1b:** Career guidance, development programmes and growth opportunities offered by organisations are viewed differently by members of Gen Y than they are by other generations.

True to the ‘Trophy Kids’ label, members of Gen Y consider themselves to be self-driven and top achievers and they prefer to take charge of their own career development and growth. As this is Gen Y’s inherent leaning, they show little interests in what organisations are able to provide in this area. The lack of interest also translates into little knowledge of organisation’s career development plans. The findings from the focus groups confirm this perception.

Gen Y’s drive is for a better lifestyle and this encompasses very high salary expectations, fast promotions, and a satisfactory work-life balance (befitting all four categories of Gen Y culture). However, for Gen Y, this is a double-edged sword as they are still relatively naïve and inexperienced in the realm of work. Therefore, their initial attempts at climbing the career ladder are clumsy and without clear directions. They are mainly confined to jumping from job to job. In their job hopping, Gen Y members tend to stay within their industry or career profession and rarely venture into something new. All the above add to the tendency for Gen Y members to be anxious.

The conclusion is that as Gen Y views career development and growth opportunities from a perspective that is different from that of other generations, consequently, programmes in this area by organisations are unable to figure prominently. For Gen Y to form new
perspectives on such schemes, organisations need to disseminate and communicate the benefits of these schemes very clearly to Gen Y.

c. **Research Proposition 1c:** Gen Y members will demonstrate their commitment to work in their own ways.

In the literature, Gen Y culture is said to contribute to the lack of work commitment in Gen Y. The category of Entitlement indicates that Gen Y wants to have autonomy and do things their own ways. The category of Speed indicates that Gen Y members are easily bored and have short attention span while the category of Work-Life Mix indicates fun foremost in Gen Y’s minds. All these indicate a lack of work commitment on the part of Gen Y. However, this research findings find that Gen Y does work very hard and with dedication but in their own ways. The issue is that Gen Y does not know how to convey their contributions clearly to the organisations. On the other hand, organisations either fail to notice this work because they view things with their traditional eyes, or they have difficulties in monitoring and measuring the results.

The conclusion is that members of Gen Y view work commitment in their own ways. To maximise the work commitment of Gen Y, the priority for organisations is to show Gen Y how to do this correctly. Moreover, organisations need to change their traditional ways of measuring work commitment. One other point worth mentioning is that the literature review indicates that commitment to supervisors plays a strong role in the retention of employees and in their performance. Therefore, the up skilling of the knowledge of managers and immediate supervisors in this area will greatly improve the effective working environments of organisations.

5.2.2 **Research Propositions for Research Question 2**

Table 5.2 below compares findings in the literature with the findings from personal interviews conducted with the CEOs and senior management officers who came from various organisations in Malaysia.
The majority of organisations acknowledge that there are generational differences in the workplace and that Gen Y is a generation that demonstrates distinctive differences in many areas and especially in work and attitudes towards organisational systems and structures. With reference to Table 5.2, for the two research propositions posed, the conclusions drawn are as follows:

**a. Research Proposition 2a:** Organisations will need to re-organise their systems and structures to accommodate Gen Y culture.

The literature review touches on the ‘Shamrock’ model for organisations in which organisations are seen as consisting of three distinctive functional areas. These areas are developed to accommodate the challenges to organisational effectiveness posed by the diverse and complex work force; globalisation; and competition. The three functional areas comprise the Professional Core, The Contracts, and The Part Timers. The shamrock model appears to fit in well with the demands from Gen Y. Therefore, according to the literature, it will be worthwhile for organisations to consider this model seriously. However, the research findings...
indicate that the situation in Malaysia is different, and the majority of organisations are content to stay with their existing organisational structures and no significant changes have been made to them. Other than a few organisations making attempts to slightly flatten the hierarchy in the organisational tree, most retain traditional bureaucratic structures.

For organisations in Malaysia which are subsidiaries of foreign companies, the local senior management views change to organisational structures to be the responsibility of their corporate headquarters and hence outside the local authority or jurisdiction. As such decisions regarding modifying or changing organisational structures do not arise at all. Therefore the conclusion drawn is that organisations in Malaysia generally do not make radical or incremental changes to their organisational structures and tend to stay with their inherited structures.

On the possible re-organisation of their organisational systems, the findings reveal that organisations in Malaysia still resort to very traditional methods. These relate mainly to improvements in their recruitment and selection practices; offering higher salary scales; more incentives; higher bonuses; and more fun activities (such as outings, team games, and parties). There are few schemes that are targeted towards Gen Y. Other than the bigger companies in Malaysia, most of such initiatives are undertaken within the personal authority of the senior management staff concerned (the CEO or GM) and on a case-by-case basis. They rarely spill into standard company policies and operating procedures. The conclusion is that re-organising the systems to reach out to Gen Y has yet to figure prominently. However, the trend is starting to change with more Malaysian organisations recognising the need to do so.

b. Research Proposition 2b: Organisations will need to develop strategic and innovative career development and growth plans to retain Gen Y employees.

Other than the giant conglomerates, most organisations in Malaysia do not have well designed and structured career guidance and employee development and growth schemes. Even if career guidance and growth paths are available, they are usually reserved for senior staff. New employees are usually not given much information about such programmes and more details are slowly released to them over their working years.
For many of the larger organisations and conglomerates, career planning and growth plans for employees are well designed, comprehensive and cover all levels of staff. In addition, the incentives are varied and numerous. These are all effectively communicated to all employees. Policies for these schemes are generally proposed and recommended by the human resource departments to the organisations’ top management for discussions and approval with full execution undertaken by the human resource department upon approval. Such procedures are not available to the smaller organisations due to the lack of resources and hence the lack of structured career development schemes in these organisations.

The conclusion is that the larger organisations such as multi-nationals and public corporations do have well designed career development plans but smaller organisations lack the resources to implement such schemes. Early interventions by both large and small organisations in guiding and introducing their Gen Y employees to innovative career development and advancement schemes can only spell greater benefits for both Gen Y and the organisations.

5.3 Conclusions on the Research Problem

In Chapter 2 – Literature Review, Section 2.8 addresses the broad research problem which points to probable clashes or mismatches between Gen Y, the changing nature of work, and organisational systems and structures. In this collision, the gap identified for research is ‘How to Achieve Alignment of the Malaysian Gen Y Workforce with the Systems and Structures of Organisations in Malaysia’. The conclusions drawn on the research propositions are specific to their contents which together lead to the research questions on which they are directed to. Putting these conclusions together, the overall conclusions for the research questions were then established. These are presented below:

5.3.1 Conclusions for Research Question 1

Research Question 1 is ‘How can Gen Y members align themselves to organisational systems and structures so as to demonstrate work commitment?’ Three research propositions were formulated to tease out answers to this question. Upon close examination of the conclusions of the three research propositions and upon putting them together, the overall conclusion for research question 1 on Gen Y reached is that Gen Y is amenable, flexible and able to align with organisational systems and structures. Gen Y employees are also committed to their work.
The findings indicate that misconceptions arise due to differing viewpoints on many aspects of work and organisational settings between Gen Y and organisations. Once these differing views are bridged through common understanding, it is apparent that the way Gen Y is portrayed in previous research is not entirely accurate, and Gen Y is able to fully align with organisational systems and structures. By complying with the rules and regulations of organisations, Gen Y employees aspire to be recognised by their organisations and to be suitably rewarded and promoted within a short time. Gen Y employees leave their organisations because they fail to achieve these expectations but more significantly, because they are not kept informed of the reasons why they fail to meet them.

To facilitate the alignment of Gen Y with organisational systems and structures, there are many actions organisations can take. These are addressed in the conclusions for research question 2. Gen Y views organisational structures as standard and fixed and therefore take scant notice of them. Their prevalent notion is that the steep hierarchical ladder to the top is a hindrance to Gen Y employees’ career progress and their solution is to move up by changing jobs.

5.3.2 Conclusions Research Question 2
Research Question 2 is ‘How can organisations re-design their systems and structures so as to obtain work commitment from members of Gen Y? Two research propositions were developed to uncover meanings in this area. The conclusion reached is that generally, organisations acknowledge that Gen Y is different to other generations and is difficult to manage. However, organisations still do not attach great significance to this problem and therefore have not given sufficient attention to Gen Y. Most organisations believe that they are able to address the Gen Y situation.

As modifying or changing the organisational structures to meet new demands is not the top priority for organisations, their approach is to resort to more easily available and familiar solutions in the organisational systems to resolve the work challenges posed by Gen Y. These are the traditional remuneration, incentive, and training schemes. Such schemes are mainly ad-hoc in nature and are implemented under the authority of the relevant CEOs and GMs and are usually outside standard corporate policies. Therefore, such schemes change when there is a change in CEOs or GMs. The exceptions are multinational companies and large local Malaysian corporations in which standard corporate policies include elaborate processes and
systems for compensation and benefits, training, and career development. This is not the case for most small companies which lack the necessary resources and are able to offer only ad hoc affordable incentive schemes.

Organisations need to design and implement more new and innovative programmes into their systems. Creating a more effective communication channel with Gen Y is one thing they can do. Clearly enunciated career development and growth opportunity guidelines are another. The benefits of the different growth stages such as the number of promotional levels and their frequency and duration complete with the accompanying titles/designations, befitting salaries and perks, need to be spelt out as well. The performance criteria required to move through these stages need to be included as part of the complete package.

5.3.3 Conclusion to Research Problem
The conclusions drawn from the research propositions and the research questions all lead to the overall in-depth conclusion on the research problem ‘How can Gen Y members align themselves to organisational systems and structures so as to demonstrate work commitment?’ One conclusion is that Gen Y is adaptable and is able to align to the systems and structures of organisations. This alignment is achievable if clear communications are established between Gen Y and organisations as to the interpretations of the Gen Y employees’ work and organisational requirements and the benefits that may be gained by both parties. Another conclusion is that Gen Y culture is both inherent and strong but Gen Y is naïve about the real working world and organisational requirements. New learning, exposure and experience are able to ameliorate and reduce the intensity of Gen Y culture. One example is for Gen Y employees to realise that jumping from job to job is not the solution to their predicament if their work competency remains poor. With reflections and insights gained from their learning and experiences, members of Gen Y are ready to adapt and modify their Gen Y culture to suit their situation. Although organisations have done very little to review their existing organisational structures, the need to do so (especially in line with the shamrock model) becomes more pressing.

To speed up Gen Y’s learning about the realities of working in organisations and the working world, the introduction of longer-term induction programmes and of career development training in schools and universities are some of the ways. Other beneficial interventions are for organisations to provide frequent feedback, to give clear and precise instructions, to award
frequent but small rewards and recognitions, to design frequent and more levels of promotion, and to allow more team-based and collaborative tasks or project assignments. The speed and success of these interventions are accomplished through delivery approaches that appeal to members of Gen Y. Coaching and on-the-job training are favoured by Gen Y.

Traditional work measurement methods that focus on time utilisation and physical presence in the office need to be replaced with more result-oriented measurements by organisations. This needs to be accompanied by a rewards and incentive system that is more than just monetary in nature. Some examples are the careful implementation of flexible hours and time off in lieu; anytime, anywhere working features; challenging tasks and the other desirables from Gen Y culture.

The overall conclusion to the research problem is that if all the above conditions are in place, Gen Y is realistic when it comes to work and that adherence to Gen Y culture is reduced. This results in their fitting into both working life and organisational requirements. Needless to say, organisations need to reciprocate by incorporating innovative, non-traditional rewards and promotional schemes; career development planning and a conducive work environment.

5.4 Theory Development

As discussed in Chapter Three, Section 3.2, this research adopts a qualitative methodology (Neuman, 2006; Zikmund, 2003). The reasons for this approach are clearly explained in Subsection 3.2.2 Why Qualitative? and the purpose of the research is exploratory as described in Section 3.3 Research Design. Using the paradigm of interpretative social science, the research addresses the ten areas for different paradigms as depicted in Table 3.1 in Section 3.2 where the purpose is to understand and describe meaningful social actions. Although at the end of the research study it was hoped that some form of theory would emerge, no new empirical theory is forthcoming. However, in its place, a re-examination of some existing theories was called on account of the benefits that they can bring to the study of Gen Y culture. These are the life stage and career theories of Erikson, Levinson, Super and Holland which were discussed in Chapter Two – Literature Review, Section 2.5 – Behavioural Science. These are basically developmental stage theories based on the objectivist school of thoughts (Wise & Millward, 2005). Although these theories are considered as traditional and almost irrelevant in today’s world, a revision may add new contributions to the said theories in light of the new context. It is also required to re-examine the existing career development
theories especially the Career Theory of Donald Super in which the growth and exploratory stages are now more applicable for inclusion into school’s syllabi and the establishment and maintenance stages are suitable for inclusion in the syllabi for undergraduates in universities and in career development training for young executives in organisations.

5.5 Implications for Policies and Practices

The intervention mentioned in section 5.4 has become more acute as a result of the drastic changes in workplace demographic profiles as well as changes in the nature of work that are anticipated in the coming two decades. The first implication for policies that has an impact on Gen Y and the following generations is for the Malaysian government to consider work expectations, work ethics and employability in the education and human resource systems. The other is for corporations to recognise the different nature of Gen Y culture and to implement appropriate strategies to enhance their organisational systems and to a certain extent to review their organisational structures. The practices involve the implementation of such policies by schools and universities as well as corporations.

5.5.1 Implications for Policies

In moving forward to becoming a fully developed nation by 2020, one important requirement is for Malaysia to develop responsible and productive citizens who can contribute to the growth and prosperity of the nation. With the changing demographic profile, Gen Y and the future generations will play key roles in this nation building process during the 21st century.

This research identifies some policy areas that merit scrutiny that will help to fulfill the objective of becoming a fully developed nation by 2020. One such area is the area of work. The ongoing acute shortage of talented workers is a pressing issue for businesses and industries. This is accompanied by the need to match the knowledge and skills of the new workforce with the changing skill requirements of the modern workplace. Both of these contribute to chronic unemployment. Two major stakeholders who have the power to address these problems are the Malaysian Government and organisations.

The Malaysian Government needs to equip the new workforce with work readiness, work ethics and employability skills. The relevant ministries which can play key roles are the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Human Resources and the Ministry of Science and Technology. A key ingredient is that the various ministries need to work in a unified manner.
The Ministry of Education needs to address the design of new curricula with stronger emphasis on work awareness, work readiness, work ethics, and both professional and industrial skills. This new curriculum needs to be introduced early from Form 3 (15 years old) in secondary school right up to the final year of undergraduate university studies. Guidance may be drawn from Super’s growth and exploratory stages which emphasise on career awareness and preparation.

At the tertiary level, the design of less academic programmes that are well planned and structured through collaborations of universities and industries will allow undergraduates to interface and transit into the working world. Needless to say, internship programmes have already been introduced but a more structured approach will bring greater benefits to the interns and to the organisations. A longer duration of at least six months for these internships will enable real skills to be learnt.

A career development portfolio is becoming a strong component of courses in many universities. More can be achieved if the universities can incorporate in courses some compulsory hours which will include talks and discussions from supervisors and senior managers from organisations. This takes the focus of undergraduates away from passing examinations and enables them to participate more actively in the talks and discussions once such talks and discussions form part of their examination criteria. All these initiatives will equip Gen Y and the generations that follow to move into the working world with greater ease and without a shock.

As the 21st century moves into a fast changing digital era with many new demands arising from the digital domain, the Ministry of Science and Technology is able to lead in this arena by bringing in the latest programmes and activities from the advanced countries through conferences, seminars, and exhibitions. So that they filter down and benefit the undergraduates and young working adults, fees need to be low and affordable. The Ministry can work hand-in-hand with MDEC (the Multimedia Development Corporation in the MSC) which is under the Ministry of Communications and Multimedia.

In today’s digital world, there are numerous online courses which are offered without charge and which come with certifications for a small fee. The Malaysia government needs to leverage these courses by offering joint recognition and incentives for those who embark on
these studies on their own. In this manner, Gen Y and young working adults can be motivated to improve their skills and competencies through self-directed learning efforts. This will increase the skill pool in the country. The Ministry of Human Resources can look in this direction as well. Similarly, organisations can promote similar incentives for their employees.

The participation of organisations is just as important. In terms of their policies, organisations, need to pay more attention and play a more committed role. Within their own organisations, they can establish a learning culture by rewarding efforts and incentives in this area for Gen Y. Other initiatives can include well-designed in-house induction programmes for developing work values, work attitudes, work etiquette and for increasing the productivity of Gen Y.

As innovations from new Information Technology devices and software applications (for example, social media applications, mobile ‘apps’, Big Data and Analytics) are evolving at a very rapid rate, universities with their long tenure courses are often not able to keep pace with such developments. Universities can overcome this predicament by partnering with organisations and practitioners with new knowledge and skills to offer short modular courses. Some small private specialist training centres have started up to meet these demands as a business venture. However, they need to charge high fees to cover the heavy resources required. This is not sustainable as the high fees deter potential participants which result in the business ventures closing down. Intervention by the Malaysian Government in the design of a better business model can create a thriving small skill centre hub. This can be in the form of financial incentives and facilities for such small skill centres; employability values for undergraduates; and promotional opportunities for Gen Y employees. In this manner, all stakeholders can benefit.

5.5.2 Implications for Practices

The many implications for policy discussed in the earlier section can be translated into practical changes. Therefore, these are not repeated here. This section will touch upon the actual practices that have taken place or are yet to be implemented. The Ministry of Education has yet to initiate any work related curriculum for implementation in secondary schools. On the other hand, the Ministry of Human Resources through Talent Corporation Malaysia Berhad (TalentCorp) together with the Ministry of Higher Education has already engaged universities with industries to provide career awareness and a structured internship programme (SIP) targeting 12,000 undergraduates per annum (TalentCorp, 2014; Zuhrin,
The SIP runs for a period of 10 weeks and participating organisations need to meet the following criteria: for manufacturing companies, a share capital of at least RM 2.5 million, average revenue of RM 21 million or more over the past three years, and a headcount of more than 100 full-time employees. For non-manufacturing companies, the minimum headcount is 50 full-time employees. The outcome of the SIP has yet to be seen but, given the high qualifying criteria for organisations and the not-so- attractive incentives, buy-in for organisations to participate is difficult. The other factor is that there are not many organisations in Malaysia that meet the criteria for participation and hence the scheme is not able to cope with the numbers of student internships desired. These problems make the viability and usefulness of the SIP uncertain. On a recent visit to the website on 12 May 2014, no reports were available as to the outcomes of the SIP. There was no doubt that numerous activities were undertaken, but without a yearly report as to the success in meeting its objectives of placing 12,000 undergraduates per annum through internship, the activities are easily misconstrued as ineffective.

Another programme undertaken by TalentCorp is the upskilling programme which targets up to 10,000 graduates per year. No report whatsoever was available to show whether this programme has met its objectives. Lastly, the website appears to be very guarded and interaction with the public, the undergraduates, young working adults and organisations, appears to be tightly controlled. This seems to be at odds with today’s age of open social media and free flow of information. A more open website could only give rise to more value-added suggestions and participation by all interested parties.

The above initiatives still do not contribute to meeting the new work opportunities in the digital domain and this is where the many small specialist training centres are able to fill the gap by offering short training courses on this new digital work. The encouragement through financial incentives from the Malaysian Government for setting up qualified specialist training centers especially by experienced and knowledgeable personnel in the industry will provide more avenues for the acquisition of the new digital skills and competencies. Other than this, universities will also need to start designing and implementing work related contents into their curricula.

Finally, there is a need for the Malaysian Government and media to change the beliefs of parents about education and employment. Currently, parents focus on high grades, academic
qualifications and popular professional disciplines such as Accountancy, Law and Medicine. Big news stories and publicity which highlights academic achievements need to be played down and more attention constantly needs to be given to the acquisition of employability skills and competencies. In addition, more news and information about the success of new digital work and its demands can raise awareness on these new opportunities other than those of traditional professional careers. This awareness will enable parents to replace the tuition mindset in which the objective is academic excellence, with a mindset that values employability skills. Parents will also be exposed and become familiar with new work types in the digital era. The timely intervention of the new work related requirements in education, and intervention by all other stakeholders in related areas may be the start of increased employability for Gen Y and the generations to follow.

5.6 Limitations

Previous research on Gen Y has been conducted in the USA, Europe and in some Asian countries as discussed in Chapter Two – Literature Review. A few touches on the Malaysian Gen Y culture for example studies by PricewaterhouseCoopers and Deloitte just to mention two. Findings appear to support the claim that generational differences are similar across culture (Orrell, 2008). However, there are other studies that indicate otherwise (Egri & Ralston, 2004; Wyn & Woodman, 2006; Yu & Miller, 2003). In the literature review some differences and some similarities taken from PricewaterhouseCoopers surveys are highlighted as indications that there are more to this claim if in-depth studies are to be undertaken. As time does not allow the duplication of generational studies in Malaysia, and the objective is not to duplicate such studies, it is acknowledged that the exclusion of cultural influences from the research places some constraints on the findings related to the Gen Y research problem. To mitigate this limitation, the sample choice for the focus group participants was limited to a single ethnicity and culture in Malaysia.

Another limitation was the variables affecting the Gen Y research with respect to rural/urban environment. Our sample was therefore delimited to the new workforce or Gen Y based only in Kuala Lumpur and the Klang Valley in Malaysia. This confined the research to urban areas only. The inclusion of final year undergraduates in the focus group sample oriented the study towards work at the executive level. This was also true when recruiting the working Gen Y from companies, as they mainly fell under the executive category rather than at the workers’ or operators’ level.
Similarly, the sample for the organisations was delimited to the same geographical area and the organisations were represented by their CEOs, senior managers or the human resource officers. Although more complete findings on the research study may be derived by selecting a cross section of organisations according to size and industry, the scarcity of resources especially time prevented such an exercise from being carried out. Therefore, selection was more on a convenience but slightly purposive basis.

Other limitations were those usually associated with qualitative research methodology. Findings are not generalisable and trustworthiness is something especially difficult to arrive at. In the context of this research, triangulation was not directly applied but was adapted as explained in Chapter 3 so that its objectives were met in the best possible manner.

5.7 Areas for Further Research
The literature review has indicated that from this broad based research, there are many other areas where further research may be undertaken. For a start, Malaysia as a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural country provides a rich environment for research on Gen Y to be made on the different ethnic groups and cultures in her pluralistic society. This may reveal rich information on ethnic and cultural influences on Gen Y culture.

Another area for research is education and how this shapes Gen Y culture towards work. Based on today’s situation of unemployed youths (read Gen Y) and the mismatch with the needs of employers, research may investigate whether the educational system in schools and universities is a factor. Research may be narrowed down to address one or a combination of components such as duration of study at the various levels; the number of levels of education from primary school to university; the sequential upward progression of students; the syllabi and curricula; delivery methodology; the use of technology; the methods of evaluation and the role of education (such as the building of character and values, preparing employability and/or for research). Such research on education may also investigate where and how parents form opinions and make evaluations on what education may bring to their children (the students).

In the area of work, further research may be made on organisations especially the small and medium industries/ small and medium enterprises (SMIs/SMEs) as to the problems they faced with employing young graduates (Gen Y). The findings on organisations indicate that multinationals and large organisations have quite well structured processes in selection,
recruitment and retention through the use of better compensation and rewards packages, better structured training programmes, and proper career development paths. This is in contrast with the small organisations such as SMIs/SMEs where the owners CEOs or even employee CEOs tend to handle such requirements on a personal basis and where budgets are very limited. What support and assistance do the SMIs/SMEs require for them to manage these processes?

A re-examination of career development theories may add to knowledge about productive Gen Y workers, especially when the traditional career mindsets and organisational hierarchies are breaking down.

5.8 Conclusion

In this chapter, the conclusions reached on the research questions and their research propositions were presented to provide the overall conclusions on the research problem. This chapter has explored theory development and explained that no new empirical theory has surfaced. In the absence of new theory, there arises the need to review and revise some existing theories so as enable them to catch up with the changing demographics (Gen Y), the changing nature of work and the evolving technology in the digital domain. The existing theories to study are the lifespan development theories of Erik Erikson and Levinson and in particular the Career Development theory of Super.

The implications for policies and practices were addressed next. In this regard, the main stakeholder is the Malaysian Government through its various ministries. Key ministries are the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Human Resources and the Ministry of Science and Technology. Other stakeholders are the nation’s schools, colleges, universities and organisations. Parents play important roles as well.

The limitations encountered in this research were then highlighted. One limitation is not taking into considerations the cross cultural influence of Gen Y studies. The others are more in the nature of resource constraints. The research was conducted more on urban Gen Y and organisations in the Kuala Lumpur, Klang Valley location and the sampling was convenience sampling and slightly purposive. Trustworthiness, especially triangulation, in this research was difficult to achieve because only one research methodology (qualitative) was used instead of using mixed methodology such as using a combination of qualitative and quantitative methodology.
This research took a more broad-based approach as the objective was to be exploratory and to uncover areas for more specific research to be carried out. In this respect, more specific research can be made on the educational system and on how this may bridge Gen Y and future generations in work and in employability. Complementing this could be research on how organisations may pool together to play a greater role in preparing Gen Y for their work roles. Another area of research is to investigate whether there are changes to the existing lifespan development theory of Erik Erikson and the work stage theory of Levinson on account of the different generation (Gen Y) and other new influencing forces.

Lastly, an overarching conclusion to the research problem is not to view Gen Y as one separate isolated generation but as the vanguard of the new 21st century generations to come – generations that see the birth of a new era where the norm involves rapid change, disruptive technological innovations, continuing globalisation, a borderless digital world, new work types and, worldwide economic uncertainty. This means that the continuing study of Gen Y and future generations, the nature of work, and organisational systems and structures will make a significant contribution to meeting the demands and needs of this new era.
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## APPENDIX

### Appendix A

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FOCUS GROUP AGENDA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>No.</strong></td>
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2 Hrs 40 mins

Fig. 3.7: Focus Groups Agenda (Source: Developed for this Research)
### Appendix B

**PERSONAL INTERVIEW AGENDA**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Topics/Activities</th>
<th>Prompts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>5 mins</td>
<td>Introduction Purpose of Interview Discussion Conventions Ethical Considerations</td>
<td>Feel comfortable, relax and at ease Summary of Purpose Rules, Breaks, Refreshments, etc Explain, clarify, fill in required forms</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>3 mins</td>
<td>Opening Topics</td>
<td>General - What do you think of Gen Y in the Workforce? Their mindsets and attitudes towards work. (Job Hopping Work Conditions tenure, flexitime, working hours, type of work, salary, promotions)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>5 mins</td>
<td>Is your organisation restructuring your organisational structure to accommodate Gen Y?</td>
<td>Examples: Any Org. Structure Redesign? - Hierarchies or Flat, Empowerment, Power Structure, Shamrock?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>5 mins</td>
<td>Career Development and Promotional Opportunities?</td>
<td>Available to All or Selected/Qualified Positions Available as in Upward Mobility or Horizontal Moves Promotional Levels and Frequency Incentives Career Development Programmes Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>5 mins</td>
<td>How can they fit into your organisation</td>
<td>Can they fit into your organisations? What do they need to do to fit into your organisations? What are non-negotiable conditions? What are negotiable?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>5 min</td>
<td>Any Other Matters deemed Important but Not Raised?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>3 mins</td>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>Summing Up and Tying Loose Ends Date and Time for Another Session if Necessary Thank You</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

31 mins

Fig: 3.8 Personal Interviews Agenda (Source: Developed for this Research)
Appendix C

Field Notes Template: Focus Groups

Cover Page

A. Focus Group Members (Names and Abbreviations)  Date. ____________
1. ____________________  6. ____________________
2. ____________________  7. ____________________
3. ____________________  8. ____________________
4. ____________________  9. ____________________
5. ____________________  10. ________________

B. Location/Address ____________________

C. Sitting Arrangements

Fig. 3.10 Field Notes Template Focus Groups (Source: Develop for this Research)

D. Start Time ________________  End Time ________________

E. Any Matters Arising

F. Moderator ____________________
Appendix D

Fig. 3.11 Continuing Pages of Field Notes (Source: Developed for this Research)