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UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND

MASTER OF ARTS IN THE FIELD OF ORGANISATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY



Workplace Generations in South Africa

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"A research project submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts (in the field of Organisational Psychology) in the Faculty of Humanities, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, 15 March 2019."

DECLARATION

I, Craig Ross de Beer, declare that this research project is my own, unaided work. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or for examination at this or any other university.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation for the following people and their invaluable input, support and words of encouragement, throughout this research project:

- To my supervisor, Nicky Israel, a massive thank you for all your insight, guidance, kindness and timeous, detailed feedback, throughout the duration of the project. Your assistance ensured that the weight of this undertaking never got the best of me.

- To my parents, I truly know that your love and care are unwavering, and that you always want the best for me. Thank you for your enduring support, especially throughout my studies. An additional thanks for assisting me with organisational access for this project. I love you both dearly.

- To the masters class of 2018, as well as the entire Wits Organisational Psychology team, you helped to make my masters year one of the best yet. I am grateful for the level of professionalism that each of you brought to the table, and even more so, for all the jokes, conversations and chocolate shared together.

- To all my friends and family, you are immensely valuable, and I delight in your existence. A special thanks to Claire for helping me gain organisational access.

- To *The Redneck Manifesto*, your music has been the soundtrack to my thesis. Please don't wait another eight years to release new material. "go raibh maith agat" - thanks.

- Lastly, to Nikki Paul, your love, care, kindness and generous spirit are a daily reminder of how amazing you are. Thank you for all your words of encouragement, your understanding, and for selflessly being a provider of weather-contextual beverages, snacks, and meals to fuel my writing. Thank you for always being close to me. I love you and appreciate you!

ABSTRACT

As the ratio of Millennials in the workplace has continued to increase over the last twenty years, organisations across the world have been encouraged to tailor specific strategies to attract and retain top performing individuals within this cohort. However, these strategies have often been informed by theoretical arguments, while the empirical research to date reveals mixed findings. In addition, the traditional generational classifications have been principally based on American (U.S.), and to some degree European, historical characteristics. These western classifications of generations largely exclude aspects of culture, personal preferences, or agency inherent in non-western contexts. Therefore, it is unclear to what degree the adoption of the traditional generational classifications are useful in South African workplace contexts. Furthermore, despite the vast social and political differences between generations in South Africa, the inconsistency of findings in the generation-based literature at a local level also suggests that the generation-based strategies for recruitment, retention, reward, and promotion adopted by South African organisations should not be done so unquestioningly.

This study therefore sought to investigate whether significant differences in the relative importance placed on certain workplace factors (values), perceptions of the working environment, and voluntary turnover intention could be identified between the generational cohorts in a sample of South African employees using the traditional generational classifications. It also sought to extend upon the traditional classifications by investigating differences between the Millennial cohort and a combined Generation-X and Baby Boomer grouping, which specifically considered the watershed moments that occurred in South Africa at the end of the Apartheid era.

The study employed a quantitative, non-experimental, cross-sectional, correlational research design to investigate the above questions. Two organisations were approached to obtain data using self-report survey questionnaires that consisted of the following instruments: a demographic questionnaire; the *Importance of Work-Related Factors (Values) Questionnaire*; the *Perceptions of Work Factors in the Organisation Questionnaire*; and lastly the *Voluntary Turnover Intention Scale*. A total of 81 employees from Organisation A and a total of 33 employees from Organisation B participated in the study.

Findings stemming from the analysis of the above data revealed that generational differences do not necessarily translate into overly meaningful, practical differences in the work environment. Rather, in agreement with local and international research, there appear to be more similarities than differences when it comes to generations in the workplace. Furthermore, this research posits that generational membership on its own is not a sufficiently stable factor on which to base policies and procedures aimed at attracting, promoting, training, or retaining specific personnel. Instead, future studies should contemplate a variety of other factors, particularly the roles that life stage and job role may play, in influencing workplace values, perceptions, and intention to leave.

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Introduction

It is predicted that Millennials (individuals born after 1980) will account for between 35% and 50% of the global workforce by the year 2020; as the Baby-Boomer generation progresses towards retirement and Generation Z gradually enters the workplace (ManpowerGroup, 2016; PWC, 2012). Due to this high predicted ratio of working Millennials, organisations across the world are being encouraged to tailor specific strategies to attract and retain top individuals within the Millennial cohort (Deloitte, 2016; Gallup, 2016; KPMG, 2017; ManpowerGroup, 2016). Examples of these strategies include offering flexible working hours, having strong online and social media presence, investing in the latest technology, and making young employees feel irreplaceable, with a key focus on their professional development (Young Entrepreneur Council (YEC), 2018). However, many Millennial-based strategies may not be well-founded, since much of the international literature in this area is theoretical, while the empirical research to date reveals mixed findings, often highlighting more similarities than differences between generational cohorts when it comes to work (Costanza, Badger, Fraser, Severt, & Gade, 2012; Mencl & Lester, 2014). Furthermore, the traditional way in which generations are classified is principally based on American (U.S.), and to some degree European, historical events, which have shaped their socio-political climate and culture. These classifications of the different generations also largely construct the individuals within each cohort as homogenous. Such classifications are problematic due to their stereotypical nature and exclusion of culture, individualism, personal preferences, or agency. Despite being widely used in generation-based research, the traditional classifications of generations also fail to consider the local socio-political histories of other countries, like South Africa, whose societies and cultures have shaped their own generations in unique ways. As such, there can be no automatic universality to labels such as ‘Millennial’, even though such terminology is currently being utilized uncritically in contemporary discourse. Furthermore, while globalization may play a large role in the adoption of Western generation-based ideologies and terminologies, it is unclear to what degree this adoption is useful in South African workplace contexts. This is despite such labels – and the practical outcomes thereof - having already been adopted by certain organisations in South Africa (Deloitte, 2016; KPMG, 2017).

Additionally, while much of the generation-based research acknowledges the general differences that arise between generations as time passes – for example due to changing socio-

political and cultural landscapes, increased use of technology, and globalization – the workplace-specific preferences, perceptions, and values of each generation have been found to be quite similar (Costanza et al., 2012; Mencl & Lester, 2014; SHRM, 2007; Sullivan, Forret, Carraher, & Mainiero, 2009). This suggests that when it comes to the nature of work, differences in age may be superfluous, instead indicating that most employees want good interpersonal relations, decent financial rewards, feedback and recognition, input in how they do their work, opportunities for training and personal growth, and so on – regardless of their generational category.

Therefore, this study aims to contribute to the global literature by adding further empirical evidence to this area through investigating whether significant differences in work-related values and perceptions exist between generational cohorts in South Africa. These findings could either oppose or support the use of the traditionally classified generation-based strategies in South African organisations. In addition, while much of the international literature is based on Western, educated samples from developed nations, this research will add a new perspective to global and African psychology by utilizing a South African sample. Given the high diversity of the South African workforce, and considering the role that our young democracy has played in shaping our generations, this study can further inform organisations about whether to tailor their employee attraction and retention strategies towards the traditional classifications of the generations – or whether to align their approach with a more South African contextualization. It also contributes to the debate as to whether the use of 'workplace generation' as a factor informing these recruitment and retention strategies is valuable at all.

Chapter 1

Literature Review

Generations at work.

During recent decades, organisations have had to negotiate the demographic shifts that have occurred in the global workforce. These include seeking a greater level of equality in terms of gender, race, and cultural diversity; as well as inclusivity for people with disabilities (Kelly, 2014; Martins & Martins, 2014; Mencl & Lester, 2014; SHRM, 2007). The effect of globalization and technological advancements has also had a significant impact on the world of

work in recent times (Haynes, 2013; Mencl & Lester, 2014). An additional workplace factor that has recently gained much consideration is that of generational differences. Globally, there is an increasing emphasis on age and the concept of workplace generations in organisations, which is particularly reflected in policies and shifting workplace practices (Deloitte, 2016; Gallup, 2016; ManpowerGroup, 2016). Given such diversity, many organisations argue that "companies need to better tailor their efforts towards specific cohorts, and Millennials may just be the best place to start" (KPMG, 2017, p.1; ManpowerGroup, 2016; PWC, 2012).

Indeed, many theorists and practitioners believe that significant differences exist between generations at work; a major reason being diversity. Their stance is that diversity in the workforce has the potential to cause "cohort-based differences, difficulties and disputes" (Costanza et al., 2012, p.376). In turn, this is considered to pose issues for how managers approach their recruitment, retention, and employee engagement strategies (Twenge, 2010), as well as how HR policies will meet the needs of employees from multiple generations (Mencl & Lester, 2014). It is also believed that multigenerational workplaces require the strengths and weaknesses of each cohort to be understood and accounted for (Kelly, 2014). However, whether the work-based differences between generations are significant enough to warrant unique strategies and approaches remains to be seen. As Cogin (2012), and Martins and Martins (2014) suggest, there is a lack of empirical evidence surrounding these perceived differences, and many of them are based on stereotypes perpetuated by the media or so-called 'industry experts' - especially regarding the Millennial cohort.

In order to address the perceived differences between generations, a clear understanding of how each generation is traditionally defined, including their associated characteristics, is necessary.

Traditional classifications of workplace generation.

The core definition of a generation is "a cohort of similarly aged people who experience common historical events" (Costanza et al., 2012, p.376). Of greater importance than similar birth dates is the sharedness of historical and socially defining events, provided that such events significantly shape the experiences of the individuals living around that time – usually during

their formative life-stages (Costanza et al., 2012; Kupperschmidt, 2000). Such shared experiences are believed to unite people, instil in them common values and perceptions, and ultimately construct their worldviews in similar ways (Smola & Sutton, 2002). Individuality aside, this collective worldview is believed to influence the way members of a generation navigate their lives, including how they feel towards occupations, organisations, and authority. Furthermore, the shared experiences, expectations, values, and perceptions of a people during a specific epoch is believed to be what sets each generation apart (Fernandez, 2009; Smola & Sutton, 2002).

The traditional, U.S.-based events believed to have shaped generational identities that are most often cited in the literature include Word War Two, the Vietnam War, the civil rights movement, and, more recently, the World Trade Centre attacks in New York City (Becton, Walker, & Jones-Farmer, 2014; Martins & Martins, 2014; Murphy, 2007). Additionally, a generation's physical, mental, and cultural 'proximity' to significant local events has great potential to carve out and shape that generation's unique identity. Such 'events' have also been thought to include parenting style, and the music, art, and pop culture of a given time (Murphy, 2007). Quite recently, the advent and rapid growth of the internet during the 1990s has also shaped the lives of millions of people around the world, especially the younger generations (Martins & Martins, 2014). Therefore, considering that one's proximity to local events has great influence on one's personal identity, it is apparent that although major U.S. and European-based events have potentially impacted people around the world, non-Americans may be influenced far less by such events. This raises questions as to whether the defining features of generational cohorts based on U.S. and European events can be used to similarly distinguish generations effectively in other contexts (Costanza et al., 2012; Martins & Martins, 2014).

Traditional generations and their characteristics.

For the purposes of this study, the 'traditional', U.S. and European-based labels for the three main generations still active in the workplace – 'Baby Boomers' (Boomers), 'Generation-X' (Gen-Xers) and 'Generation Y' (Millennials) - will be described, as well as the general characteristics commonly associated with each one. Although the dates in the research differ slightly, the traditional breakdown of these three generations is generally as follows:

Baby Boomers (born between 1946 and 1964) inherited this title as the generation that followed World War Two, during which time huge numbers of babies were born (Kelly, 2014). The significant events encompassing this generation's experiences include the American civil rights movement, the Vietnam War, and the women's liberation movement (Murphy, 2007). Given the high number of people within this generation, Boomers are generalised as very competitive and self-interested, while respectful towards authority (Allen, 2004, as cited in Becton et al., 2014; Westerman & Yamamura, 2006). However, the view that Boomers later began to be distrustful of authority also exists, supposedly due to their disillusionment with the Vietnam War, the Watergate scandal, and the disgrace of President Nixon (Sullivan et al., 2009). As Kupperschmidt (2000) indicates, there were no grey areas regarding the Vietnam War – Boomers either participated in it or protested it. In addition, children who grew up during times of war, or shortly thereafter, are also believed to develop strong orientations towards materialism and the pursuit of economic goals (Egri & Ralston, 2004; Fenzel, 2013). These goals were made a reality due to their strong work ethic, optimism, and go-the-extra-mile attitude (Fenzel, 2013; Kelly, 2014). Additionally, due to the unified spirit in work that remained after World War Two, Boomers are believed to value teamwork and being part of a collective effort (Jorgensen, 2003). Therefore, they desire being involved in decision-making at work, while their competitive edge instils in them a strong desire for power through career advancement. Indeed, as Fenzel (2013) illustrates, Boomers consider the recognition and status of the 'corner office' as highly desirable. Boomers are also regarded as having a strong psychological contract with their organisation, manifesting in loyalty towards their employers, which in turn was rewarded with job security and steady advancement opportunities until recently (D'Amato &Herzfeld, 2008).

Being economically driven and possessing a strong work ethic means that Boomers are typically believed to 'live to work' and are therefore less interested in work-life balance and flexible working arrangements than Gen-Xers and Millennials are (Sullivan et al., 2009). However, since Boomers are considered very competitive, flexible working arrangements may be viewed more positively as they approach or surpass retirement age, allowing them to maintain a sense of competitiveness as they phase out of the workplace (Kelly, 2014; Westerman & Yamamura, 2006). This illustrates how some characteristics of each generation are context or life-stage specific.

Since Boomers grew up in a time that was highly male-, and Caucasian-centric, the typical workplace lacked diversity in terms of gender, race, and culture. Due to this environment, Boomers are considered to value diversity less than younger generations, who were raised during times of increasing social integration (Mencl & Lester, 2014). Additionally, Boomers are thought to dislike regular feedback, and may even find it insulting, whereas Gen-Xers and Millennials prefer it (Tolbize, 2008).

Generation X (born between 1965 and 1979) followed in the wake of the baby boomers but are believed to have experienced rather different childhoods than their predecessors (Fernandez, 2009). For instance, many children during this era had mothers who were pursuing educational achievements or occupations previously reserved for men, or came from less stable families, due to the increasing rate of divorce (Fernandez, 2009; Murphy, 2007). As such, Gen-Xers grew up under less adult supervision, and were often responsible for their own wellbeing and entertainment (Fernandez, 2009). Consequently, Gen-Xers are considered to be independent, self-reliant, and prefer to work autonomously (Smyrl, 2011). Additionally, they are considered to be highly sceptical and distrustful of authority, a viewpoint that is believed to have been heightened by the aftermath of the Vietnam War, and the Watergate scandal (Kelly, 2014; Sullivan et al., 2009). These latter viewpoints were seemingly shared with, if not initiated by, the late Boomers whose growing distrust of authority may have sparked similar views in the Gen-Xers as they became politically aware (Sullivan et al., 2009). For example, witnessing President Nixon's disgrace and the insecurity of the economy contributed to an "era that was cautious" (Kelly, 2014, p.12). As such, Gen-Xers are thought to be less interested in the politics and processes of work, but rather choose to focus on the outcomes of their work (Smyrl, 2011).

Gen-Xers reportedly grew up with more friends from different cultures than Boomers, and therefore value diversity more than the previous generation (Kicheva, 2017). Additionally, they value the social aspect of work more than Boomers (Nkomo, 2013). Gen-Xers were also exposed to technological advancements such as CDs, remote controls, video games, and the first personal computers. The latter provided new, diverse methods of working, as well as providing instant, more technical feedback than Boomers had experienced (Kicheva, 2017). Coupled with feedback, Gen-Xers are thought to value growth and intellectual development opportunities highly, indicating a greater desire for training than Boomers (Nkomo, 2013). Indeed, as

Kupperschmidt (2000) notes, Gen-Xers "…expect to enhance their marketability through challenging jobs in which they are constantly learning and through employer provided on the job training and opportunities to continue their formal education" (p.70).

Gen-Xers are also believed to indicate the lowest levels of loyalty to their organisation; a belief that was presumably heightened by witnessing both divorce and job lay-offs of their parents or relatives due to corporate downsizing (Kelly, 2014; Kicheva, 2017; Tolbize, 2008). In opposition to the "live to work" mentality of the Boomers, Gen-Xers adopted a "work to live" perspective, which increased their commitment to a more balanced lifestyle (Smyrl, 2011). This ensured that they were more present as parents than their parents had been for them (Fernandez, 2009). Indeed, this generation initiated the concept of work-life balance, bringing it "to the forefront of workplace issues" (Smyrl, 2011, p. 7). However, as Smola and Sutton (2002) illustrate, seeking a good work-life balance did not mean that their work ethic was compromised. On the contrary, given their independence and self-reliance, their hard work is considered a path to maintain power over their own choices (Fernandez, 2009). Therefore, involvement in decision-making is regarded as an important value for Gen-Xers, as well as flexibility in how and when work is done (Kicheva, 2017; Tolbize, 2008). Opposingly, where work-life balance is not achieved, despite a good work ethic, then it is assumed that Gen-Xers' lack of loyalty to their organisation, coupled with their high self-interests, would lead to high turnover intention, should better opportunities arise (Kicheva, 2017). Indeed, as Kupperschmidt (2000) indicates, "…Generation X employees change jobs if their work demands are not met" (p.70).

The Millennials (born between 1980 and 2000) have received the most academic attention of any generational cohort, largely due to the sheer size, diversity and supposed untapped potential that they possess (KPMG, 2017). As such have often been stereotypically labelled by older generational experts in attempts to understand them (Harrington, Van Deusen, Fraone, & Morelock, 2015). Millennials have grown up surrounded by an influx of technological advancements in computing, digitization, and the internet. Indeed, many Millennials did not know life before ATMs, cell phones, and personal computers (Becton et al., 2014). Being accustomed to immediate information access via the internet – and since most Millennials in the workplace are more highly educated than their predecessors - they are thought to place a high value on learning, and to expect continuous and instant communication (Cammarata, 2013;

Kicheva, 2017). However, their preferred type of communication is text-based, and they are considered to have poor verbal communication and interpersonal skills (Kicheva, 2017; Nkomo, 2013). It is also believed that Millennials desire constant recognition and feedback for their efforts, also as a proposed result of the immediacy of text-based and online communication (Mencl & Lester, 2014), as well as being praised or rewarded as a child, simply for taking part (Meier, Austin, & Crocker, 2010). Furthermore, they are thought to habitually require stimulation and opportunities for skills development (Kicheva, 2017). As such, it is apparent that Millennials should value training and development the most of the three generations and, if a lack of stimulation, growth, or choices are perceived, then they should exhibit a strong willingness to leave the organisation (Kicheva, 2017). Much like Gen-Xers, Millennials consider lifelong employment as unrealistic, therefore also exhibiting low expectations of job security. An additional reason why Millennials are fitted with the title of 'job-hopper', is because they are believed to seek different employment opportunities as a means of exposure to new experiences and different people (Martins & Martins, 2014). However, Gallup (2016) suggests that this job-hopping is rather due to only 55% of Millennials being engaged at work.

Contrastively, Millennials are also considered hard workers who will give the effort required to meet their goals (Martins & Martins, 2014). They are described as passionate, confident, and ambitious (Cammarata, 2013). However, given their education and ambition, they are perceived as entitled, preferring to be promoted in a short space of time, while also expecting adequate financial rewards and a satisfying job (Cammarata, 2013). Smyrl (2011) highlights the fast-paced and heavily-scheduled nature of their childhoods, strongly influenced by a multitude of activities, coupled with close parental supervision and support. This has led Millennials to be considered as highly goal- and achievement-oriented. Additionally, given their fast-paced lifestyle, they are considered impatient (Nkomo, 2013), materialistic and status-driven (Lancaster & Stillman, 2002), and rapidly become bored with the status-quo when change is infrequent (Smola & Sutton, 2002). Following on from the trends that Gen-X established, Millennials place considerable importance on work-life balance, seeking a high degree of leisure time, as well as flexible working arrangements (Kicheva, 2017; Nkomo, 2013).

Millennials are also the most diverse of the three generations, both in terms of race and ethnicity, but also in line with the variety of family structures they stem from; including single-

parent homes, same-sex families, and mixed-families (Kelly, 2014). Many Millennials also experienced a highly integrated school environment and upbringing compared to older generations (Frey, 2016). As such, it is not simply that Millennials are the most diverse, but that they are also more accustomed to diversity, and indeed value it. Seemingly, this higher degree of diversity among the Millennial generation is what makes them the most difficult to keep engaged and satisfied at work (Costanza et al., 2012). Alternatively, their acceptance of diversity, and their desire for flexible and exciting workplaces, means that they are highly collaborative, valuing teamwork and collectivism (Zemke, Raines, & Filipczak, 2000).

All things considered, amid a plethora of contradictory labels – "driven, lazy, hard-working, entitled, ambitious, self-centered, socially responsible, disloyal, and committed" (Harrington et al., 2015, p.3) - it appears Millennials are the most focused on, yet least understood generation.

Given the abovementioned generational differences, it is no surprise that organisations are led to believe that policies and procedures aimed at attracting, satisfying, and retaining employees from different cohorts are of great importance. However, as recent research suggests, different generations essentially want many of the same things at work (Mencl & Lester, 2014; SHRM, 2007). What follows is an in-depth look at the theoretical and empirical evidence surrounding generations and their respective similarities and differences regarding work-values, workplace perceptions, and turnover intentions. A first step, however, will be to define each variable in the study.

Generational values and expected outcomes.

As Marques (2007) illustrates, "Conflict is inevitable where different worlds meet, because human beings have an innate tendency to think that their way is the best and that of others is of lesser quality" (p.5). Furthermore, as Cogin (2012) indicates, one's workplace values can have a significant influence on the congruence between employees, the organisation's culture, and the consequent working relationships within that organisation. Acknowledging these concepts provides some insight into the importance of understanding generational differences,

and the potential outcomes that these differences may produce. The importance of understanding, and potentially aligning, a staff contingent's values is also emphasised.

Following Schwartz (1992, as cited in Roe & Ester, 1999, p.3), values can be defined "as desirable states, objects, goals, or behaviours, transcending specific situations and applied as normative standards to judge and to choose among alternative modes of behavior." More specifically, while personal or general values may inform workplace values, this relationship can also work in reverse, where workplace values inform personal values. Additionally, values are considered more stable than the attitudes and behaviours that stem from such values (Cogin, 2012). Simply put, behaviours are the product of certain attitudes that are held, which in turn are informed by the more permanent and deeply-embedded values of a person. The workplace values measured in this study include diversity, teamwork, flexible work, feedback, work-life balance, challenge, training and development, decision-making, financial rewards, and career advancement.

Diversity refers to the degree to which there is variation or difference between entities. As discussed above, Millennials are the most diverse of the three traditional generations utilised in this study. Due to their upbringing within a more integrated and diverse society, they also value diversity in the workplace (Kelly, 2014). As such, and in line with Mencl and Lester's (2014) research, it is expected that the Millennials in the sample will place a higher degree of importance on diversity than the Gen-Xers and Boomers.

Teamwork refers to a collaborative or collective effort pertaining to work duties or tasks. Although Boomers stem from a very large generation, resulting in a high degree of competitiveness among its members (Westerman & Yamamura, 2006), they are also believed to value teamwork due to a post-war spirit of unity and collective achievement (Jorgensen, 2003). Additionally, Millennials are considered to be highly collaborative, valuing teamwork and collectivism more than previous generations, largely due to their appreciation of diverse opinions, as well as the amount of team-centered school projects that they were tasked with (Mencl & Lester, 2014; Zemke et al., 2000). Opposingly, Gen-Xers are considered to be highly independent, self-reliant, and prefer to work autonomously (Smyrl, 2011). Therefore, it is expected that the Gen-Xers in the study will value teamwork the least of the three cohorts.

Flexible work arrangements refer to non-conventional attendance and completion of work-related tasks, whether this be in terms of time or venue flexibility. Further, these allow employees more freedom of choice in determining when and where they complete their work. As such, flexible work arrangements go hand-in-hand with achieving a more balanced life in terms of work and leisure, allowing employees to take care of their work objectives as well as their personal and family-related obligations (Mencl & Lester, 2014). Considering that such work arrangements are fairly contemporary, relying heavily on modern aspects of connectivity and communication, it would seem that Millennials are more comfortable with these work values. However, since Gen-Xers brought these concepts "to the forefront of workplace issues" (Smyrl, 2011, p. 7), it is expected that they will similarly value work-life balance and flexible work highly. Although Boomers traditionally 'worked to live', there is currently more support among this generation for balancing their lives and their work. For instance, Boomers are thought to desire more time with their grandchildren. Furthermore, while they may delay their retirement as much as possible due to economic reasons, they are now more in favour of flexible work, so as to slowly phase into retirement instead of simply ending their careers abruptly (Kelly, 2014). As such, it is expected that all three generations in the study will place a high level of importance on flexible work arrangements as a value.

As discussed, Millennials are accustomed to high levels of constant and immediate feedback – a resultant factor of the immediacy of social media, and mobile- and internet-based communication as well as growing up in a time where everyone received recognition for taking part (Meier et al., 2010; Mencl & Lester, 2014). Opposingly, Boomers are considered to be annoyed by high levels of feedback, preferring to perform their work with a degree of self-reliance (Tolbize, 2008). As such, Boomers are expected to score the lowest on feedback and recognition, followed by Gen-X, and Millennials desiring it the most.

As Forbes (2012) illustrates, recognising the value of a challenging work environment can be a key factor in employees' personal and professional growth. By overcoming challenges, employees can develop a sense of realistic self-worth, as well as an awareness of the link between personal and work-related achievements. Luna-Arocas and Camps (2008, as cited in Mencl & Lester, 2014) also illustrate the connection between one's decision-making involvement and challenging work, suggesting that the more autonomy one has at work, the

more challenging their work becomes. This is due to the desire for growth and learning, which is amplified when it is self-directed (Forbes, 2012). Therefore, since having the power to make one's own decisions at work also leads to higher job satisfaction and performance (Saragih, 2011), it is expected that all three generations will desire decision-making involvement equally, as well as the desire for challenging work that allows a sense of achievement.

Lastly, considering that Millennials are the youngest and least experienced of the generational cohorts, it is predicted that they will value training and development, career advancement, and financial rewards more than the Gen-Xers and Boomers, who, to varying degrees, have already established themselves in their careers and received promotions and financial incentives along the way. Entering the workforce with generally higher levels of education, Millennials place high value on learning, as well as opportunities to continue upskilling themselves, in order to remain competitive in the market (Cammarata, 2013; Kicheva, 2017). This ties in closely with their need to continually advance and their desire to be promoted quickly. Alternatively, Gen-Xers are nearing their promotional ceiling, while Boomers are heading towards retirement (PWC, 2012). While Boomers are said to be highly materialistic (Egri & Ralston, 2004), it is more likely that their experience and seniority already gives them this. Therefore, it is expected that Millennials will score highest on these three values.

Generational perceptions and expected outcomes.

For each value illustrated above, the perception of that value's presence in the work environment will also be measured across each generational cohort. Perceptions of the work environment include organising, interpreting, and giving meaning to the various stimuli received in the workplace (Shethna, 2016). The ways in which the workplace is perceived will largely depend on the degree of alignment between each generation's values, the outcomes associated with those values, and the values that the organisation holds. The perceptions measured in the current study include: diversity climate, training and development, social support, feedback and recognition, pay and raise satisfaction, work–life balance, decision-making involvement, and promotion opportunities. However, in line with Mencl & Lester's (2014) research, "…the perception measures for flexible work arrangements and having a job that challenges me were

not included… since these items were closely related to work–life balance and decision-making involvement measures, respectively" (pp. 262-263).

In addition to measuring the values and perceptions of the work environment across each cohort, voluntary turnover intention was also measured. Voluntary turnover intention, also referred to as 'intention to quit', can be described as an employee's serious consideration or desire to leave their job; and this outlook is thought to be the last step before one actually leaves the organisation (Tett & Meyer, 1993; Yamazakia & Petchdee, 2015). Generational cohort literature presents quite a clear picture in this regard, illustrating that loyalty towards organisations is a thing of the past; a declining value that is coupled with declining levels of job security in organisations (Costanza et al., 2012). Considering these decline levels in loyalty, as well as the abovementioned generational differences regarding loyalty to the employer or organisation, it is expected that Boomers will show the lowest turnover intention, while no significant differences are expected between Gen-Xers and Millennials on this measure. This is because both younger generations are suggested to have witnessed higher rates of divorce, as well as lower job security for their parents (Kelly, 2014; Kicheva, 2017; Tolbize, 2008).

Having defined the variables in the study, as well as having predicted the outcomes of each variable for the traditional generational cohorts, based on their general characteristics provided in the research, I now present previous generational research findings. Typical issues and weaknesses present in generation-based research will also be discussed.

Generation-based research findings: International studies.

One major factor to consider is that generational work to date has largely relied on observations, trends, and anecdotal accounts, rather than empirical evidence, and little is known about the values and perspectives of generations and how they impact the workplace. This has resulted in organisations following the 'word on the street', as emphasised by the media, leading to actions that have not been critically assessed by the academic community (Cogin, 2012). Additionally, some research findings released by corporations present extremely broad strokes, making claims that lack validity or generalisability. For instance, the recent 'Millennial Survey' by Deloitte (2016) gathered data from almost 7700 participants, representing 29 countries, with

samples of 200 to 300 people per country. Not only are these samples not large enough to be representative of their larger national populations, but all participants held tertiary qualifications and predominantly worked in the private sector. Here, young employees were fitted with the 'Millennial' label and were found to desire work-life balance the most after salary considerations and, in terms of voluntary turnover intentions, reported high levels of job mobility.

Research by Becton et al. (2014) notes that Baby Boomers in their sample exhibited less intention to quit and more compliance behaviours than Gen-Xers and Millennials, but they also reported very small effect sizes for these relationships. Since Baby Boomers are far nearer to their retirement, intentions to leave their organisation would be expected to be lower than the other two cohorts, hence the study's hypothesis. Interestingly, the researchers went on to caution against tailoring specific generation-based strategies, emphasising that the costs could outweigh the benefits.

In their survey study of 234 accountants in a western state in the U.S., Westerman and Yamamura (2006) found that goal-oriented work-environment fit led to more job satisfaction and 'intention to remain' among Gen-X and Millennials, compared to Baby Boomers, who valued relationship-fit more as a predictor of job satisfaction and intention to remain. These differences, though found to be significant, were extremely limited to one profession (accountants) in one state of the U.S., and pertained to a relatively small sample of people. Additionally, Gen-Xers and Millennials were combined into one group by the researchers, who stated that there were no significant differences between these two cohorts in terms of workplace values, perceptions, or turnover behaviours. This illustrates that the two younger generations were highly similar on these measures within this sample.

Findings by Twenge (2010) illustrate that although Gen-X and Millennials scored higher on extrinsic values such as salary than Baby Boomers, there were no generational differences in altruistic values. In terms of 'job-hopping', Millennials reported having little intention to leave their organisation. Ultimately, the authors conclude that Millennials are "still a paradox in some ways" (Twenge, 2010, p. 209). This illustrates the lack of usefulness of stereotypical labels associated with whole generations to begin with.

In her qualitative study of a multigenerational workforce, Thompson (2017) uncovered mostly "similarities and a few differences" (p. 134). Of the latter, generational differences

emerged along four main themes, namely, work values and conflicts, methods of communication, productivity, and work-life balance. More specifically, Millennials were regarded as lacking respect for authority, while all three generations differed in the ways they communicated, and in their levels of productivity, respectively. Regarding work-life balance, only those from the 'Veteran generation' (the generation preceding Boomers) disagreed with this phenomenon, indicating that Boomers, Gen-Xers, and Millennials agreed on this measure. Thompson (2017) additionally indicated that aside from the Veteran generation, the other three generations were all optimistic regarding future changes in the public sector. The latter three generations also agreed that micro-managing employees was unfavourable. Regarding the preparation of future leaders within the organisation, Boomers and Millennials agreed that a mentoring program was a good idea, while Boomers and Gen-Xers agreed that the workplace had become more relaxed and flexible in recent times.

In a meta-analysis conducted by Costanza et al. (2012), twenty generational-oriented studies were included, comparing three different criteria – job satisfaction, organisational commitment, and intention to quit. Ultimately, the authors conclude that their meta-analytic findings did not support any significant differences between the generations in work-related outcomes. Further, their results indicated that other variables besides age might be better antecedents of voluntary turnover intention, such as job satisfaction and organisational commitment. As with Becton et al. (2014), the authors questioned the approach of organisations to tailor specific strategies towards different generational cohorts.

Considering the international literature, it is evident that there are no certainties or clear arguments to be made when it comes to generational differences in the workplace. Opposingly, there seem to be mixed findings, and often more similarities between the traditional generational cohorts than differences. Though differences in personal values between the generations are strongly argued for in generational cohort theory (see above), these do not seem to consistently present in the workplace in any particularly meaningful way. For instance, where there is evidence to suggest that Millennials have high job mobility (Deloitte, 2016), these findings are opposed by other research (Twenge, 2010). Additionally, Hoover (2009) notes that while many of the observations of Millennials may be accurate in part, they are generalisations, many of which are based on the traits of 'white suburban teens'. As such, many of the findings presented

in the literature raise questions regarding the applicability and utility of traditional workplace generation definitions and assumptions, particularly across different contexts. Further, the applicability of using the traditionally defined generational cut-offs in the South African context remain unclear, and in need of further investigation.

Generations in South Africa.

As discussed, the traditional generational cut-offs are based on the momentous American (U.S.) and European historical events that have defined their socio-political landscapes (Costanza et al., 2012; Kupperschmidt, 2000). While acknowledging that such events have had a widespread impact on the rest of the global climate, countries like South Africa have their own watershed moments, from which our different generations have been shaped over time (Bray, Gooskens, Kahn, Moses, & Seekings, 2010). Of most significance in the South African context are the political events leading up to the eventual release of Nelson Mandela from prison in 1990, and the subsequent first democratic elections in 1994 (South African History Online, 2012). This period of history not only created a fundamental shift in the lives of South Africans but was of global historical significance (Martins & Martins, 2012). Indeed, those born from 1980 onwards have experienced the lifting of international sanctions from South Africa, and the meeting between FW de Klerk and Nelson Mandela, who was later freed in 1990, after 27 years in prison (South African History Online, 2016). During their formative years, this generation experienced the precursors and after-effects of major social and political change. For instance, the End Conscription Campaign (ECC) was formed in 1983, which sought to end compulsory military service; and by 1993 the end of conscription took effect (South African History Online, 2013). This meant that individuals who would now form part of the late Gen-Xers were the last to perform compulsory military service, and therefore no member of the Millennial generation ever had to do so. Additionally, the sporting sanctions that banned South Africa from competing in international events, such as the Olympic Games, were lifted in 1992; resulting in South Africa hosting and winning both the 1995 Rugby World Cup and the 1996 African Cup of Nations (South African History Online, 2011; 2012).

Further, the emergence of a new democracy in 1994 was strengthened by such events as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), the forging of the new constitution, and the

second democratic elections in South Africa that saw Thabo Mbeki become president in 1999 (South African History Online, 2016). Paraphrasing Martins and Martins (2012), "Millennials in South Africa consist of a group… who are old enough to be part of the old regime, but not old enough to have participated in it, and a new generation… born into a new South Africa. This "born free" generation is largely black and has grown up in a world different to that of their parents" (p. 131). Indeed, the 'New South Africa', which is still forming its identity today, represents a considerable era during which marked social integration and idiosyncrasies in the youth, and youth culture, have taken place.

Additionally, the effects of globalisation – increased digitisation and access to trade, education, culture, and technology, to name a few (McGreal, 2006) - cannot be ignored as factors which have far-reaching influences on South Africans. As these effects are more recent, they have had a greater impact on younger South Africans than the older generations. Indeed, many of the technological advances that have shaped the lives of young people around the world have also influenced the lives of young South Africans. Taking these points into account, it is evident that South African Millennials are likely to be different to those generations stemming from before the 1980s. Furthermore, South African Millennials are more likely to fit the U.S., and international conceptions of what a Millennial is, as opposed to the older South African generations which are likely to be more distinct to their relative U.S. cohorts of similar age.

However, this is not to say that South African Millennials have not forged their own, unique identities. For instance, one cannot ignore the degree to which the majority of South Africans are still negotiating their identities between their traditionally collectivist cultural ideologies and the more individualistic cultures of the West. Additionally, since we are considered the 'Rainbow Nation', South Africa is one of the most diverse countries in the world, and its journey towards economic and social transformation since the end of Apartheid continues to contribute to its state of flux (Martins & Martins, 2014).

Considering the above, it is evident that those South Africans born from 1980 onwards have experienced significant identity-shaping events that are highly unique to their generation. As such, Millennials are seemingly the most distinct from those previous generations in South Africa. Following this line of reasoning, a second generational grouping will be examined in this study; comparing a combined Generation-X and Baby Boomer group with the Millennials born

post-1980. Utilising this dichotomous grouping, the overarching question remains as to whether there are significant differences between these generations in the South African workplace context. By exploring this, a clearer indication of South African workplace generations will be provided, and this will assist in determining whether organisations in South Africa should be investing in Millennial-specific programmes. To begin to address this question, insight and research findings from the South African workplace generation literature are discussed below.

Generation-based research findings: South African studies.

The South African literature pertaining to different generations in the workplace provides mixed findings, highlighting both similarities and differences between generational cohorts.

For instance, Jonck, van der Walt, and Sobayeni (2017) aimed to establish whether there were differences between the generations in terms of the work values that they deemed important in a sample of 301 South African**s**, all of whom were currently working or had work experience, from a variety of organisations, and situated in the same geographical location of South Africa. Their findings illustrate that, in terms of work values, Boomers and Millennials shared more similarities than Boomers and Gen-Xers, or Millennials and Gen-Xers. Regarding the former, the Boomers and Millennials in their study displayed shared values for authority, creativity, risk, and social relationships. Of these, their most noteworthy finding was that Millennials valued authority to a similar degree as Boomers, since this is often not believed to be the case. They also found that only the Millennial group valued cultural identity. This reiterated their relatively higher level of diversity, and their appreciation thereof, compared to Boomers and Gen-Xers. Statistically significant differences between the generations were also found on the following values: aesthetics, risk, social interaction, altruism, creativity, cultural identity, personal development, prestige, and variety. Of these, social interaction presented the greatest difference between the groups, with Gen-X valuing it the most. There were no statistically significant differences found between the cohorts for the other thirteen values.

Van der Walt, Jonck, and Sobayeni (2016) also revealed both similarities and differences between the generational cohorts with regards to work ethics, utilizing the same sample data as the above study by Jonck et al., (2017). Of the seven work ethics dimensions, they indicate that

leisure and morality were central to all three groups, drawing similarities to the findings of Twenge (2010), who indicated that leisure was preferred over work across all generations. All three groups also considered morality as the most central ethical dimension. In terms of statistically significant differences, only hard work and delay of gratification were found to be different among the generational cohorts. Regarding the former, the importance of hard work was only slightly higher for Boomers, while Millennials and Gen-Xers scored similarly. Additionally, their findings suggested that Boomers valued delay of gratification the most, while Millennials preferred instant gratification. This has been suggested as a common trait among the Millennial generation due to the immediacy of text- and online communication (Mencl & Lester, 2014).

In line with each generation's commonly associated characteristics, Martins and Martins (2014) found that, in their sample of 6 329 employees from municipalities across one of South Africa's largest metropolitans, Millennials placed high importance on training and development. They indicated that, in line with research by PWC (2012), training was the most highly valued entity among South African Millennials during the initial phases of their careers. Where this entity is absent, they suggested that employees would be more dissatisfied and willing to leave the organisation. Their study also found that Boomers valued teamwork more so than the younger generations, but that they scored the lowest on positivity towards the organisation's vision and mission. Boomers were also found to be the most negative group, while Millennials and Gen-Xers were more positive towards change than Boomers. Overall, they concluded that "Millennials expect many of the same things from their organisations as the generation before them" (Martins & Martins, 2014, p. 137), indicating that seven of their study's measures showed no significant differences between the three generations. As such they suggest that organisations would do well to focus on the similarities between the generations and strategize accordingly.

Nkomo (2013) found that, in his sample of 308 employees from a range of companies in the Gauteng region, Boomers were more intrinsically and extrinsically motivated than Millennials and Gen-Xers. However, Boomers displayed the lowest levels of organisational commitment. Surprisingly, the Millennials in his study revealed the highest levels of organisational commitment, which contradicts the commonly associated characteristics of this cohort. Nevertheless, Millennials indicated the least job satisfaction, while Boomers were the

most satisfied, followed by Gen-Xers. Nkomo (2013) also found that Millennials valued prestige more than the other generations, which he suggested may reflect in the desire to be promoted more quickly than Boomers and Gen-Xers, and to have power and influence over others. These findings are in-line with the commonly associated characteristics of the Millennial generation.

Lastly, findings by Heyns and Kerr (2018) propose that generational cohorts are not significantly different from each other in terms of either intrinsic or extrinsic motivation as well as how these may influence their work behaviour. In their study, only the psychological need for autonomy was found to be different between Millennials and Gen-Xers, in their sample of 164 employees from a Gauteng-based, Rand Water pump station.

As with the international research, generational cohort research in the South African workplace context reveals mixed findings, often presenting more similarities on the specific measures than any practical differences. Alternatively, some findings suggest the opposite of what has been hypothesised by researchers, or argued for by 'industry experts' or the popular press (Cogin, 2012; Deloitte, 2016; KPMG, 2017). Therefore, the applicability and utility of traditional workplace generation definitions and assumptions in the South African workplace context warrant further investigation.

The current study.

Despite the vast social and political differences between generations in South Africa, the inconsistency of findings in the generation-based literature at both a local and an international level suggest that the generation-based strategies for recruitment, retention, reward, and promotion adopted by South African organisations should not be done so unquestioningly. Given these inconsistencies, this study seeks to address the uncritical application of the internationally-based, traditional generational groupings and their associated theoretical attributes by South African organisations. Secondly, it seeks to extend this evaluation of the traditional cohorts, by investigating differences between the Millennials, and a combined Gen-X and Baby Boomer grouping, which considers the watershed moments that occurred at the end of the Apartheid era. This will be performed by specifically examining whether significant differences in the relative importance placed on certain workplace factors, perceptions of the working environment, and

voluntary turnover intention can be identified between the generational cohorts in a sample of South African employees. Additionally, exploring whether there are differences between each cohort in the workplace, and whether these differences are more distinct between the Millennials and previous generations, might provide support for South African-specific generational cut-offs, rather than continued application of the traditional U.S. based groupings in non-American contexts.

Research questions.

- Are there significant differences in the importance placed on various work-related factors (diversity, teamwork, flexible work arrangements, feedback and recognition, work–life balance, challenging job, training and development, involvement in decision-making, financial rewards, and career advancement) between the 'traditional' workplace generations in a sample of South African employees?

- Are there significant differences in the importance placed on various work-related factors (diversity, teamwork, flexible work arrangements, feedback and recognition, work–life balance, challenging job, training and development, involvement in decision-making, financial rewards, and career advancement) between Millennials and a combined Gen-X and Baby Boomer grouping in a sample of South African employees?

- Are there significant differences in perceptions of the work environment (diversity climate, social support, feedback and recognition, work-life balance, training and development, decision-making involvement, pay and raise satisfaction, and promotion opportunities) between the 'traditional' workplace generations in a sample of South African employees?

- Are there significant differences in perceptions of the work environment (diversity climate, social support, feedback and recognition, work-life balance, training and development, decision-making involvement, pay and raise satisfaction, and promotion opportunities) between Millennials and a combined Gen-X and Baby Boomer grouping in a sample of South African employees?

- Are there significant differences in voluntary turnover intention between the ‘traditional’ workplace generations in a sample of South African employees?
- Are there significant differences in voluntary turnover intention between Millennials and a combined Gen-X and Baby Boomer grouping in a sample of South African employees?

Chapter 2

Methods

This chapter will frame the study in terms of its methodology, initially outlining the research design; sample and sampling method; the various instruments that were utilized to measure the study variables; and the procedure that was followed. The study's ethical considerations will be discussed, and lastly a summary of the statistical analyses will be provided.

Research design

This study can be classified as a quantitative, non-experimental, cross-sectional, correlational research design (Rosenthal & Rosnow, 2007). There was no manipulation of any of the variables and no random assignment of participants into experimental or control groups, although contrast groups were constituted by participants from different generational cohorts (Rosenthal & Rosnow, 2007). Since no participant could belong to more than one generation, this was a between-subjects design (Rosenthal & Rosnow, 2007).

Considering that the purpose of correlational research is to establish the degree to which a relationship exists between two or more variables (Field, 2013), this design allowed for the similarities and differences between different generational cohorts to be determined. In essence, a correlational design was well-suited to establish the level of agreement between the generational cohorts in terms of their values, how they perceived their work environment, and their desire to leave their organisation – if at all. A correlational design also offered practicality, and allowed for natural insights into the relationships between the generations to be gained, since none of the variables were purposefully influenced or altered (Field, 2013). However, the limitations of this approach are that, by its cross-sectional nature, the findings present a 'snap-shot' in time of the differences between generational cohorts, which may be subject to change (Babbie & Mouton, 2015). Furthermore, while the strength and direction of the relationships between the cohorts could be established, correlational designs do not allow for causal claims to be made, nor do they address the effects of one variable on another (Rosenthal & Rosnow, 2007).

Sample and sampling method

Upon being granted organisational access, I sent the HR manager of the relevant organisation the link to the online survey via email. Participants were then invited by the HR manager to take part in my research via an email invitation, which included the link to the online version of the survey. Additionally, where employees did not have direct access to a computer or the internet, some research participants completed my survey via hardcopy administration. Participation was voluntary, so whoever chose to participate was included in the study. This constituted a convenient, non-probability sample (Babbie & Mouton, 2015).

Table 1
Sample Comparison (Organisation A vs Organisation B)

	Org. A (N=81)	Org. B (N=33)
Age		
Age Range	22-64	24-62
Average Age	41.16	41.58
Gender		
Female (N)	42	18
Male (N)	38	15
Other (N)	1	0
Racial Category		
Asian (N)	1	3
Black (N)	33	18
Coloured (N)	4	4
Indian (N)	3	2
White (N)	39	6
Other (N)	1	0
Generational Cohort		
Millennial (N)	37	16
Gen-X (N)	28	10
Baby Boomer (N)	16	7

An overall sample of eighty-one participants chose to complete the survey from the first organisation that was approached (Organisation A). The participants ranged in age from 22 to 64

years old, with an average age of 41.16. There were 42 (51.85%) females, 38 (46.91%) males, and 1 (1.23%) participant who identified as 'other' in the sample. 39 (48.14%) of the participants identified as White; 33 (40.74%) as Black, 4 (4.94%) as Coloured, 3 (3.7%) as Indian, 1 (1.23%) as Asian, and 1 (1.23%) as 'other'. In terms of marital status, 42 (51.85%) participants were married, 19 (23.45%) were single, 9 (11.11%) were living together, 8 (9.87%) were divorced, and 3 (3.7%) were engaged.

Based upon the traditional generational cut-offs, the sample consisted of 37 (45.67%) Millennials, 28 (34.56%) Gen-Xers, and 16 (19.75%) Baby Boomers. While initially another generational grouping was created to compare the divided Millennial sample into those born before 1994 and those who were born under the new South African democracy ('born-frees'), there were not enough participants in the 'born-free' category to run a meaningful statistical analysis. Instead, since the Millennial generation is considered the most complex and difficult to understand (Harrington et al., 2015), a second generational grouping was created which compared the Millennial group (n = 37 (45.67%)) with a combined Gen-X and Baby Boomer group (n = 44 (54.32%)).

All participants from Organisation A were full-time employees, and performed various roles in line with the company's core focus: the supply and manufacturing of raw materials within the South African metal industry. Their job roles included Managerial (n = 22 (27.16%)), Sales (n = 13 (16.04%)), Labour (n = 13 (16.04%)), Financial (n = 9 (11.11%)), Administrative (n = 6 (7.4%)), Upper Management (n = 6 (7.4%)), Import/Export (n = 4 (4.94%)), Supervisory (n = 3 (3.7%)), IT (n = 2 (2.46%)), and Human Resources (n = 1 (1.23%)).

In terms of the length of time employees had worked for the company, the mean was 8 years and 10 months, while the range was from 38 years to 2 months, at the time of the survey. Considering the number of times employees at Organisation A had changed jobs in their career, the mean was 3.23 times, and ranged from 0 to 12 times.

An overall sample of 33 participants was obtained from the second organisation that was approached (Organisation B). The participants ranged in age from 24 to 62 years old, with an average age of 41.58. There were 18 (54.54%) females, and 15 (45.45%) males in the sample. 18 (54.54%) of the participants identified as Black; 6 (18.18%) as White, 4 (12.12%) as Coloured, 3 (9.09%) as Asian, and 2 (6.06%) as Indian. In terms of marital status, 14 (42.42%) participants

were married, 13 (39.39%) were single, 2 (6.06%) were living together, 2 (6.06%) were divorced, 1 (3.03%) was engaged, and 1 (3.03%) was widowed.

Based upon the traditional generational cut-offs, the sample consisted of 16 (48.48%) Millennials, 10 (30.3%) Gen-Xers, and 7 (21.21%) Baby Boomers. Given the limited size of each of these groups, there were not enough participants to run a meaningful statistical analysis. Instead, for verification purposes, and to serve as a between-groups comparison between Organisation A and Organisation B, the alternative generational grouping was created which compared the Millennial group (n = 16 (48.48%)) with a combined Gen-X and Boomer group (n = 17 (51.51%)).

Organisation B was similarly in the supply and manufacturing of various raw materials, however, their core business is in the construction and pre-fabricated building industry. Participants were all full-time employees, whose job roles consisted of the following: Finance (n = 9 (27.27%)), Managerial (n = 7 (21.21%)), Administrative (n = 5 (15.15%)), Sales (n = 3 (9.09%)), Supervisory (n = 3 (9.09%)), Human Resources (n = 2 (6.06%)), and Senior Management (n = 1 (3.03%)). The mean length of time spent in Organisation B for the sample was 9 years and 9 months, and ranged between 3 months and 42 years. Employees had changed jobs an average of 2.15 times in their careers, ranging from 0 to 6 times.

Although the sample did not reach the initially-hoped-for 100 participant mark in each organisation, the participants who did take part appeared fairly representative of the diverse South African workplace in terms of ethnicity and culture, and also stemmed from multiple generations. Each participant was also a current employee at the chosen organisation at the time of the study, and was over the age of 18 years. However, acknowledging the limited size of the samples obtained from Organisation A and Organisation B respectively, it was foreseen that the generalizability of the study's results would present a limitation in terms of external validity (Babbie & Mouton, 2015).

Instruments

To address the research questions, data was gathered using a survey questionnaire that consisted of the following instruments: a *demographic questionnaire*, an *Importance of Work*-

Related Factors (Values) *Scale*, a *Perceptions of Work Factors in the Organisation Questionnaire*, and a *Voluntary Turnover Intention Scale*.

Demographic questionnaire

Various demographic descriptors comprised the first section of the survey (please see Appendix E). Of utmost importance was the *age* demographic which was used to divide the sample into each respective generational cohort. In addition to the participant's age, *birth year* was also requested as a means of verifying the generational groups.

Additional demographic variables that allowed for more in-depth characteristics of the sample to be described included: *gender, job role, length of time at current organisation, length of time in current position, number of job changes, marital status,* and whether the participants had *children*. Acknowledging that *race* may have been a sensitive topic, this variable was used strictly for descriptive purposes only.

Importance of Work-Related Factors (Values) Questionnaire

To measure the general importance of work-related values for each cohort, the *Importance of Work-Related Factors (Values) Questionnaire* developed by Mencl and Lester (2014) was used (please see Appendix F). The questionnaire comprised of a list of various work-related factors taken from research by Cennamo and Gardener (2008); Fulmer, Gerhart, and Scott (2003); Joo and Mclean (2006); and Smola and Sutton (2002). The questionnaire was self-report and consisted of ten individual items, rated on a seven-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 (not important at all) to 7 (a must have). These ten items were: (1) an organization that values diversity, (2) teamwork in the workplace, (3) flexible work arrangements, (4) getting immediate feedback and recognition from my supervisor, (5) work–life balance, (6) having a job that challenges me, (7) a company that provides continual training and development opportunities, (8) that I am involved in decision-making processes that affect my work, (9) being financially rewarded for the work I do, and (10) career advancement opportunities within the company.

Participants were required to specify how important each item was to them regardless of what their own organisation currently offered them. Since each item represented a unique work-related factor and the intention was descriptive, there was no total score for the scale and responses for each item were considered individually. The items were derived from previous theory and thus exhibited face and content validity; however, there were no previously established reliability or construct validity estimates for the items (Mencl & Lester, 2014).

Perceptions of Work Factors in the Organisation Questionnaire

This research utilized the *Perceptions of Work Factors in the Organization* composite survey developed by Mencl and Lester (2014) to establish each generation's perceptions of their working environment (please see Appendix G). The composite survey was a self-report questionnaire, consisting of eight sub-measures, with 41 items in total. The sub-measures were as follows: diversity climate ($\alpha = 0.84$), and training and development ($\alpha = 0.88$) consisting of 4 items each; social support ($\alpha = 0.87$), feedback and recognition ($\alpha = 0.9$), and pay and raise satisfaction ($\alpha = 0.94$) consisting of 6 items each; work–life balance ($\alpha = 0.86$), consisting of 5 items; decision-making involvement ($\alpha = 0.94$), consisting of 9 items; and promotion opportunities which consists of 1 item. Each item was answered on a five-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 'Strongly Disagree' (1) to 'Strongly Agree' (5). High scores on each sub-measure indicated a high degree of that measure. As shown above, Cronbach alpha coefficients indicated a high degree of internal consistency reliability for each sub-measure (Mencl & Lester, 2014). Internal consistency reliabilities for the survey were also calculated in the current study and are reported in the results chapter which follows.

Voluntary Turnover Intention Scale

To measure participants' voluntary turnover intention, Kantor's (2013) *Voluntary Turnover Intention Scale* was used (please see Appendix H). As developed by Kantor (2013), this five-item scale was specifically adapted for use in the South African context and is based upon Shore and Martin's (1989) earlier work. Each item in the scale had a unique Likert-type response format, requiring the participant to select their response carefully. An example item

from the VTI scale is: '*Which of the following statements most clearly reflects your feelings about your future with this organisation in the next year?*' Possible responses include: *'I definitely will not leave'; 'I probably will not leave'; 'I am uncertain'; 'I probably will leave'; 'I definitely will leave'* (Shore & Martin, as cited in Kantor, 2013). It must be noted that two of the items were reverse scored, and as such, a higher score on this scale reflected a lower intention to leave the organisation, and vice versa. Based on Kantor's (2013) study, this scale obtained a high degree of internal consistency reliability in a sample of South African organisational employees ($\alpha = 0.9$). An internal consistency reliability estimate for the scale was also calculated in the current study and is reported in the results chapter below.

Procedure

Permission to conduct the research study was obtained from the University of the Witwatersrand Human Research Ethics Committee: Non-Medical (ethics number: MORG/18/003 IH). Satisfying this requirement, I then approached organisations to request their participation in my research using a standardised access request letter (please see Appendix A). The letter indicated that participation entailed distributing my electronic or hard copy survey questionnaire to all their employees, which was to be completed on a voluntary basis. The survey would take approximately thirty minutes to complete and employees would be informed that there would be no direct benefits or foreseeable risks involved in participating in the study. Data from the surveys would be kept strictly confidential and participants would remain anonymous.

In the first organisation (Organisation A), the electronic administration of the research survey was initially chosen. I therefore forwarded the survey link, with a brief invitation to participate (please see Appendix B) in the study, to the HR manager of the organisation. The link and invitation were then forwarded to every current employee within the organisation who had access to a computer and an internet connection. The electronic link to the online survey included a full participant information sheet (please see Appendix C). Since the HR manager was responsible for circulating the invitation and survey link via email to the rest of the company, I did not have access to confidential employee information. Employees were informed that by completing and submitting the survey, this would serve as informed consent to take part in the study. The participant information sheet also explicitly asked whether the participant consented

to take part in the research. Questionnaires were returned via the electronic submission and no IP addresses were recorded, thus ensuring anonymity.

Since there were some employees who did not have computer and internet access, hard copies of the survey were also administered. This entailed securing an agreed-upon meeting time with the organisation, after which I travelled to the company, briefly explained the research's aims and handed out the questionnaire pack consisting of a participant information sheet (please see Appendix D) and the hard-copy survey which participants could then complete in their own time. Sealed boxes were placed in central locations for the completed surveys to be returned, and the boxes were emptied by me each week for three consecutive weeks. No identifying information was requested on the surveys, thus participants remained anonymous. The HR department was informed that a summary of the general findings of the study could be emailed to them, should they request it. Participants were also asked to give permission for their data to be permanently stored in electronic form and possibly used for future research. Hard copy data was then coded and entered into Excel along with the data collected electronically for analysis.

A similar procedure was followed for collecting data from the second organisation (Organisation B). I forwarded the survey link, with a brief invitation to participate in the study, to the HR manager of the organisation, since the electronic administration of the research survey was preferred. The HR manager then forwarded the link and invitation to every current employee within the organisation who had access to a computer and an internet connection. The electronic link to the online survey included the same full participant information sheet as Organisation A (please see Appendix C). Since the HR manager was responsible for circulating the invitation and survey link via email to the rest of the company, I did not have access to confidential employee information. Employees were informed that by completing and submitting the survey, this would serve as informed consent to take part in the study. The participant information sheet also explicitly asked whether the participant consented to take part in the research. Questionnaires were returned via the electronic submission and no IP addresses were recorded, thus ensuring anonymity.

After a number of weeks of the research survey being open it was decided to administer hard copies of the survey in the hopes of receiving more responses. This entailed securing an agreed-upon meeting time with the organisation, after which I travelled to the company,

reiterated my research's aims and handed out the questionnaire pack consisting of the same participant information sheet that was used for Organisation A (please see Appendix D) and the hard-copy survey which participants could then complete in their own time. Sealed boxes were placed in central locations for the completed surveys to be returned, and the boxes were emptied by me each week for five consecutive weeks. No identifying information was requested on the surveys, thus participants remained anonymous. The HR department was informed that a summary of the general findings of the study could be emailed to them, should they request it. Participants were also asked to give permission for their data to be permanently stored in electronic form and possibly used for future research. Hard copy data was then coded and entered into Excel along with the data collected electronically for analysis.

Ethical Considerations

Permission to conduct the research study was obtained from the University of the Witwatersrand Human Research Ethics Committee: Non-Medical (ethics number: MORG/18/003 IH). To meet the requirements for informed consent (Rosenthal & Rosnow, 2007), participants were given a full participant information sheet (please see Appendices C and D) which specified the broad aims of the study, the researcher's identity and affiliation, and the strictly voluntary, anonymous, and confidential nature of participation. Participants were informed of their right to withdraw (Rosenthal & Rosnow, 2007) during the survey but also that submission of the online survey or the hard copy would be regarded as informed consent to participate in the study. To ensure anonymity and confidentiality (Rosenthal & Rosnow, 2007), the researcher had no access to participants' email addresses, nor to any IP addresses linked to the online survey. No identifying information was requested in the survey itself. Data was stored in a secure location (on a password-protected computer for the electronic data and in a locked cupboard in a secure location for hard copy data) and only the researcher and supervisor had access to the data. Permission to store the data indefinitely in anonymous form and potentially use it in further studies was explicitly asked for. The researcher's, supervisor's, and course co-ordinator's contact details were provided should any queries have arisen and allowed participants to request generalised feedback if they wished to do so (in the form of a brief summary of the broad findings of the study; individual feedback was not possible as the responses were

anonymous). The participant information sheet (please see Appendices C and D) also stipulated that there were no direct benefits and no foreseeable risks for participation in the study. A brief summary of the main findings from the study was offered to all participants and made available to the organisations as well if requested.

Data Analysis

Data was collated and analysed using IBM *SPSS 25* to address each research question.

Firstly, the internal consistency reliabilities of the *Perceptions of Work Factors in the Organisation Questionnaire* and *Voluntary Turnover Intention (VTI) Scale* were determined for my sample using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Internal consistency reliability is a method of gauging how well the items in a test or subscale actually measure the construct they are supposed to represent (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). As a measure of internal consistency reliability, the closer the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for a scale is to one, the more accurately the items within that scale measure what they should. A Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.7 and above is considered acceptable, while above 0.9 is deemed excellent (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Within the *Perceptions* scale, one item of the work-life balance subscale was reverse-scored, as well as two items in the *VTI* scale. Since the *Importance of Work-Related Factors (Values) Questionnaire* was made up of unique items, internal consistency reliability for this scale was not calculated.

Secondly, descriptive statistics for my sample were run, including frequencies, means, standard deviations, histograms, and skewness and kurtosis coefficients as appropriate (Field, 2013). In essence, descriptive statistics allow for the data to be quantitatively summarized in a meaningful way, to present the basic features and patterns that emerge in the data (Howell, 2013). Data was checked for normality in order to see if parametric assumptions were met (Field, 2013). Besides the normal distribution of data, there were various other assumptions that also needed to be met for parametric statistical techniques to be used. These included collinearity of the data, independence of the data, and in cases where ANOVAs and t-tests were used, homogeneity of variance was assessed across groups using Levene's test (Field, 2013). Where these assumptions were not met, the relevant non-parametric statistical techniques were used

instead (Field, 2013). While the *Perception of Work Factors* and *VTI* data were normally distributed, the *Work-Related Factors (Values)* data was skewed, and as such, non-parametric equivalent tests were run on all the latter data.

In order to establish the nature of the links between the traditionally classified workplace generations and the other variables in the study, an initial step was to analyse the relationships between the age of participants in the sample and their various work-related factors (values); perceptions of their work environment; and levels of voluntary turnover intention. In order to assess these relationships, Spearman's correlation coefficients for ranked data (r_s) were used for the non-parametric *Work-Related Factors (Values)* data, while Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficients (r) were used for the normally distributed *Perception of Work Factors* and *VTI* data (Howell, 2013). Both the Spearman's and the Pearson's correlation coefficients can range between -1 and 1, with a score of 0 indicating that there is no linear relationship between the variables (Howell, 2013). The closer the correlation is to either -1 or 1, the stronger the relationship between the two variables (Howell, 2013). A positive linear relationship between the two variables indicates that as one increases in level, so does the other; alternatively, a negative linear relationship indicates that as one variable increases in level, the other decreases (Howell, 2013).

To establish if there were significant differences in the importance placed on various work-related factors between the generational cohorts, a comparison-of-groups analysis was carried out. Based on the skewness and kurtosis coefficients of the data, as well as the relevant histograms; parametric assumptions were not met, and thus Kruskal-Wallis tests were applied (Field, 2013). For the second group comparison between the Millennials and the combined Gen-X and Baby Boomer group, a non-parametric Mann-Whitney U test was used (Field, 2013).

To establish if there were significant differences in the perceptions of work factors and in voluntary turnover intention between the generational cohorts, comparison-of-groups analyses were carried out. Parametric assumptions were met and thus one-way ANOVA was used (Field, 2013). For the second group comparison between the Millennials and the combined Gen-X and Baby Boomer group, independent samples t-tests were run (Field, 2013). Levene's test was utilized to assess the homogeneity of variance across all parametric data where appropriate (Field, 2013).

While the above statistical techniques were applied to the data from Organisation A, there were only limited comparison-of-groups analyses carried out for the Organisation B data due to the limited size of the traditional generation-based groupings, as discussed above. Instead, only the Millennial versus a combined Gen-X and Baby Boomer grouping was analysed.

Therefore, the statistical analyses run on the Organisation B data began with calculating internal consistency reliabilities for the *Perceptions of Work Factors in the Organisation Questionnaire* and *Voluntary Turnover Intention (VTI) Scale*, using Cronbach's Alpha coefficients (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Following this, descriptive statistics (frequencies, means, standard deviations, histograms, and skewness coefficients) were established for the Organisation B sample. As with the data from Organisation A, the *Work-Related Factors (Values)* data from Organisation B was not normally distributed thus the appropriate non-parametric statistical techniques were applied to this scale. Unlike the Organisation A data, some of the *Perception of Work Factors* data for Organisation B appeared to be skewed as well, namely the Feedback and Recognition, Work-Life Balance, Training and Development, and Decision-making Involvement subscales. As such, non-parametric techniques were utilized for these subscales, while the relevant parametric techniques were used for the remaining subscales: Diversity, Social Support, Pay and Raise Satisfaction, and Promotion Opportunities. The *VTI* data was normally distributed, and therefore parametric assumptions were met for this scale.

Thirdly, correlations were run on the data. Spearman's correlation coefficients for ranked data (r_s) were used for the non-parametric *Work-Related Factors (Values)* data, as well as the relevant non-parametric subscales of the *Perception of Work Factors* data. Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficients (r) were used for the normally distributed subscales of the *Perception of Work Factors* and *VTI* data (Howell, 2013)). Lastly, a non-parametric Mann-Whitney U test was used for the comparison between the Millennials and the combined Gen-X and Baby Boomer group, on the *Work-Related Factors (Values)* data, as well as the relevant non-parametric subscales of the *Perception of Work Factors* data (Field, 2013). Independent samples t-tests were run on the remaining parametric subscales of the *Perception of Work Factors* and on the *VTI* data for this grouping (Field, 2013). Homogeneity of variance was assessed using Levene's test as appropriate (Field, 2013).

Chapter 3

Results

The following chapter presents the results of the statistical analyses performed on the data. Statistics were run using IBM's *SPSS 25.*

Cronbach Alpha Coefficients

The Cronbach Alpha Coefficients presented in Table 2 below illustrate the internal consistency reliabilities obtained for the *Perceptions of Work Factors in the Organisation Questionnaire* and *Voluntary Turnover Intention Scale* for the Organisation A data.

Table 2
Cronbach Alpha coefficients (Organisation A)

Variable	Items	Cronbach Alpha
Perceptions of Work Factors		
Diversity	4	0.75
Social Support	6	0.72
Feedback & Recognition	6	0.85
Work-Life Balance	5	0.74
Training & Development	4	0.70
Decision-Making Involvement	9	0.93
Pay & Raise Satisfaction	6	0.95
Voluntary Turnover Intention	5	0.90

As indicated in Table 2, the subscales of the *Perceptions of Work Factors in the Organisation Questionnaire* revealed acceptable to high internal consistency reliability estimates, ranging from 0.70 to 0.95 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Since the subscale 'Promotion Opportunities' only consisted of 1 item, an internal consistency reliability estimate was not possible. The internal consistency reliability for the *Voluntary Turnover Intention Scale* was high (0.90), in line with Kantor's (2013) previous research using a South African sample.

Descriptive Statistics

A basic summary of the descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, and minimum and maximum scores) for each of the variables used in the data from Organisation A are provided in Table 3 below, as are skewness and kurtosis coefficients. Histograms were also examined to assess the normality of the data (please see Figures 1-19 in Appendix I).

Table 3
Descriptive statistics (Organisation A)

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Dev	Min	Max	Skewness	Kurtosis
Work-Related Factors (Values)							
Diversity	81	5.53	1.48	1	7	-.932	0.06
Teamwork	81	6.09	1.10	2	7	-1.570	2.50
Flexible Work	81	4.91	1.49	1	7	-.482	-0.34
Feedback	80	5.16	1.47	1	7	-.925	0.33
W-L Balance	80	5.84	1.10	2	7	-1.030	0.76
Challenge	81	5.56	1.11	3	7	-.456	-0.81
Training & Development	81	5.84	1.23	2	7	-.886	-0.09
Decision-Making	81	5.57	1.36	1	7	-1.371	1.94
Financial Rewards	81	5.89	1.25	1	7	-1.618	2.98
Career Advancement	81	5.74	1.34	1	7	-1.429	2.33
Perceptions of Work Factors							
Diversity	81	14.01	2.82	5	20	-0.461	0.13
Social Support	81	22.44	3.14	14	29	-0.493	0.29
Feedback & Recognition	81	19.10	4.50	6	26	-0.651	0.03
Work-Life Balance	81	17.00	3.28	7	24	-0.349	0.14
Training & Development	81	14.58	2.42	8	20	-0.152	0.17
Decision-Making Involvement	81	32.02	6.51	17	45	-0.181	-0.51
Pay & Raise Satisfaction	81	14.65	5.96	6	25	0.079	-1.04
Promotion Opportunities	81	3.56	1.00	1	5	-0.464	-0.29
Voluntary Turnover Intention	81	18.26	5.24	6	25	-0.434	-0.73

As can be seen in Table 3 above, the work-related factors – which were measured on a 7-point Likert-type scale – all scored highly. For example, flexible work had the lowest mean score (M = 4.91; SD = 1.49), but this was well above average; while teamwork had the highest mean score (M = 6.09; SD = 1.10), which was very close to the maximum score of 7. Taking this into account, as well as the skewness and kurtosis coefficients and the histograms, it is clear that the data was largely negatively skewed. Thus, for this scale, non-parametric equivalent techniques were subsequently carried out.

Regarding the *Perceptions of Work Factors* scale, the data indicated normal distributions, with most subscales presenting fairly high scores. The major exception was that of pay and raise satisfaction (M = 14.65; SD = 5.96), which was just under fifty percent but also highly varied. Decision-making involvement (M = 32.02; SD = 6.51) scored fairly highly but was the most varied score. Voluntary turnover intention (M = 18.26; SD = 5.24) was also normally distributed and scored moderately highly.

Correlations

Spearman's correlation coefficients for ranked data (r_s) were used for the non-parametric *Work-Related Factors (Values)* data from Organisation A. The statistically significant correlations are provided in Table 4 below. For a list of the non-significant Spearman's correlation coefficients, please see Table 17 in Appendix J.

Table 4
Spearman's correlation coefficients (r_s) for work-related factors (values) and age (Organisation A)

Variable	r_s	Sig. (2-tailed)	N
Work-Related Factors (Values)			
Financial Reward	-0.238	0.032	81
Career Advancement	-0.254	0.022	81

As shown in Table 4 above, there was a weak, inverse relationship between age and the given work-related factors, namely financial reward (r_s = -0.24; $p < 0.05$) and career advancement (r_s = -0.25; $p < 0.05$). These correlations suggest that as the age of employees at Organisation A increases, the importance they place on financial rewards and career advancement decreases significantly and slightly.

Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficients (r) were used for the normally distributed *Perception of Work Factors* data and the *Voluntary Turnover Intention* data from Organisation A. The statistically significant correlations are provided below in Table 5. For a list of the non-significant Pearson's correlation coefficients, please see Table 18 in Appendix K.

Table 5
Pearson's correlation coefficients (r) for perception of work factors, voluntary turnover intention, and age (Organisation A)

Variable	r	Sig. (2-tailed)	N
Perceptions of Work Factors			
Social Support	0.357	0.001	81
Feedback & Recognition	0.370	0.001	81
Training & Development	0.250	0.024	81
Decision-Making Involvement	0.381	0.000	81
Pay & Raise Satisfaction	0.505	0.000	81
Voluntary Turnover Intention	0.458	0.000	81

The findings presented in Table 5 indicate that there were moderate, positive relationships between levels of pay and raise satisfaction and age (r = 0.51; $p < 0.05$), as well as between voluntary turnover intention and age (r = 0.46; $p < 0.05$). There were also moderate-to-weak positive relationships between age and perceived involvement in decision-making (r = 0.38; $p < 0.05$), perceived levels of feedback and recognition (r = 0.37; $p < 0.05$), and perceived level of social support in the workplace (r = 0.36; $p < 0.05$). Lastly, there was a weak, positive relationship between age and perceived amount of training and development (r = 0.25; $p < 0.05$).

These findings suggest that as the employees in this organisation get older, they seem to be more satisfied with their level of pay and financial incentives; have more decision-making involvement in their work; receive more feedback and recognition as well as social support within the organisation; and are also provided with more opportunities for training and development. Interestingly, it appears that despite these perceived benefits, there is also an increased desire to leave the organisation as one gets older.

Group Comparisons

To establish if there were significant differences in the importance placed on various work-related factors between the generational cohorts (Organisation A), a comparison-of-groups analysis was carried out using Kruskal-Wallis tests. The results of these tests are presented in Table 6 below.

Table 6
Kruskal-Wallis tests for work-related factors (values) between the traditional generational cohorts (Organisation A)

Variable	X^2	df	Sig.	Effect Size
Work-Related Factors (Values)				
Diversity	7.543	2	0.023	0.094
Teamwork	0.860	2	0.650	0.011
Flexible Work	3.221	2	0.200	0.040
Feedback	4.902	2	0.086	0.061
W-L Balance	2.918	2	0.233	0.036
Challenge	0.804	2	0.669	0.010
Training & Development	5.383	2	0.068	0.067
Decision-Making	4.673	2	0.097	0.058
Financial Rewards	5.222	2	0.073	0.065
Career Advancement	4.795	2	0.091	0.060

As shown in Table 6 above, of the various work-related values, only diversity was valued significantly differently between the generations ($X^2_2 = 7.54$; $p = 0.023$), with a rank of 47.58 for Millennials; 32.09 for Gen-X; and 41.38 for Baby Boomers. Thus, based on the traditional generational groupings, Millennials valued diversity in the workplace the most, followed by Baby Boomers, and then Gen-X the least. However, it must be noted that the effect size for this result was small.

One-way ANOVAs were utilised to assess the differences in perceptions of the work environment and intention to leave the organisation between the traditional generation cohorts (Organisation A). The results are presented in Table 7 below.

Table 7
One-way ANOVA tests for perceptions of work factors and voluntary turnover intention between the traditional generational cohorts (Organisation A)

Variable	Levene's	p-val.	df1	df2	F	Sig.	η_p^2
Perceptions of Work Factors							
Diversity	0.222	0.802	2	78	0.966	0.385	0.024
Social Support	2.061	0.134	2	78	5.265	0.007	0.118
Feedback & Recognition	2.477	0.091	2	78	8.859	0.000	0.185
Work-Life Balance	1.824	0.168	2	78	0.586	0.559	0.014
Training & Development	1.565	0.216	2	78	1.683	0.193	0.041
Decision-Making Involvement	0.081	0.922	2	78	5.499	0.006	0.123
Pay & Raise Satisfaction	0.494	0.612	2	78	12.135	0.000	0.237
Promotion Opportunities	0.061	0.941	2	78	0.057	0.945	0.001
Voluntary Turnover Intention	0.367	0.694	2	78	7.638	0.001	0.163

As displayed in Table 7 above, there were no statistically significant differences between the traditional generational cohorts for perceived diversity, work-life balance, training and development, and promotion opportunities. Opposingly, there were statistically significant differences between the groups regarding how they perceived the following work factors: social support ($F_{(2;78)} = 5.27$; $p < 0.05$; $\eta_p^2 = 0.12$); feedback and recognition ($F_{(2;78)} = 8.86$; $p < 0.05$; $\eta_p^2 = 0.19$); decision-making involvement ($F_{(2;78)} = 5.50$; $p < 0.05$; $\eta_p^2 = 0.12$); and pay and raise

satisfaction ($F_{(2;78)} = 12.14$; $p < 0.05$; $\eta_p^2 = 0.24$). The differences between the groups for voluntary turnover intentions were also statistically significant ($F_{(2;78)} = 7.64$; $p < 0.05$; $\eta_p^2 = 0.16$). Of these statistically significant results, all effect sizes were small.

To better understand the practical implications of these ANOVA findings, post hoc tests were conducted using the Bonferroni method in cases where the original ANOVA result was significant (Organisation A). The results of these post hoc tests are reported in Table 8 below.

Table 8
Bonferroni post-hoc comparisons between the traditional generational cohorts (Organisation A)

Variable	*	Mean Diff.	Std. Error	Sig.	Lower CI‡	Upper CI‡
Social Support						
	1-2	-1.881	0.747	0.042	-3.71	-0.05
	1-3	-2.515	0.893	0.018	-4.70	-0.33
	2-3	-0.634	0.747	1.000	-2.92	1.65
Feedback & Recognition						
	1-2	-3.893	1.031	0.001	-6.42	-1.37
	1-3	-3.813	1.123	0.008	-6.83	-0.80
	2-3	0.080	1.031	1.000	-3.08	3.24
Decision-Making Involvement						
	1-2	-3.574	1.546	0.070	-7.36	0.21
	1-3	-5.637	1.847	0.009	-10.16	-1.12
	2-3	-2.063	1.546	0.869	-6.80	2.67
Pay and Raise Satisfaction						
	1-2	-4.404	1.321	0.004	-7.64	-1.17
	1-3	-7.235	1.578	0.000	-11.10	-3.37
	2-3	-2.830	1.321	0.272	-6.87	1.21
Voluntary Turnover Intention						
	1-2	-3.446	1.216	0.018	-6.42	-0.47
	1-3	-5.133	1.453	0.002	-8.69	-1.58
	2-3	-1.688	1.216	0.813	-5.41	2.04

**Grouping: Millennial = 1; Gen-X = 2; Baby Boomer = 3*

‡ *95% Confidence Interval*

As depicted in Table 8 above, in all cases where the one-way ANOVA produced statistically significant results, the overall post hoc test results produced the same pattern except for decision-making involvement. More specifically, for social support, feedback and recognition, pay and raise satisfaction, and voluntary turnover intention, the statistically significant differences between the generational groupings lay between the Millennial group and both the Gen-X and the Baby Boomer groups, although the Gen-X and Baby Boomer groups were not significantly different from one another. For decision-making involvement, there was only a significant difference between the Millennial group and the Baby Boomer group – neither group was significantly different to the Gen-X group. Interestingly, there were no statistically significant results between the Gen-X and Baby Boomer groups on any of their perceptions of work factors, nor on their intention to leave the organisation.

Thus, based on the traditional generational groupings, Millennials appeared to be the most different to the other two generations, while Gen-Xers and Baby Boomers appeared to be relatively similar. As such, the data was then split dichotomously – the Gen-X and Baby Boomer groups were combined to form one group for comparative analysis against the Millennial group. Given the dichotomous nature of this new variable, appropriate non-parametric tests (Mann-Whitney U tests) were then conducted to establish if there were differences in work-related factors (values); while independent samples t-tests were run to assess if there were differences in perceptions of work factors and voluntary turnover intention, for Organisation A. The results of these tests are presented in Tables 9 and 10.

Considering the findings presented in Table 9 below, statistically significant differences were found between the Millennial ($n = 37$) and combined Gen-X/Baby Boomer group ($n = 44$) for the following values: diversity ($Z = -2.41$; $p < 0.05$; $r = -0.27$), training and development ($Z = -2.22$; $p < 0.05$; $r = -0.25$), financial rewards ($Z = -2.25$; $p < 0.05$; $r = -0.25$), and career advancement ($Z = -2.17$; $p < 0.05$; $r = -0.24$). In each of these four cases, Millennials illustrated a higher rank respectively: diversity (47.58 vs 35.47); training and development (47.01 vs 35.95); financial rewards (47.01 vs 35.94); and career advancement (46.88 vs 36.06). All effect sizes for these results were small.

Table 9
Mann-Whitney U tests for work-related factors (values) between the Millennial and combined Gen-X/Baby Boomer groups (Organisation A)

Variable	Z	Sig. (2-tailed)	r
Work-Related Factors (Values)			
Diversity	-2.411	0.016	-0.268
Teamwork	-0.609	0.542	-0.068
Flexible Work	-1.661	0.097	-0.185
Feedback	-1.597	0.110	-0.177
W-L Balance	-1.196	0.232	-0.199
Challenge	-0.896	0.370	-0.100
Training & Development	-2.219	0.027	-0.247
Decision-Making	-0.508	0.612	-0.056
Financial Rewards	-2.253	0.024	-0.250
Career Advancement	-2.172	0.030	-0.241

These findings suggest that the Millennial group in Organisation A considers diversity as more of a necessity in the workplace, compared to the older employees in the combined Gen-X/Baby Boomer group. Similarly, the Millennial group values training and development opportunities, financial rewards, and career advancement more than their older counterparts in Organisation A.

As illustrated in Table 10 below, statistically significant differences were found between the Millennial (n = 37) and combined Gen-X/Baby Boomer group (n = 44) for their perceptions of the following workplace factors: social support ($t_{79} = -3.18$; $p < 0.05$; $d = 0.71$); feedback and recognition ($t_{79} = -4.24$; $p < 0.05$; $d = 0.94$); decision-making involvement ($t_{79} = -3.14$; $p < 0.05$; $d = 0.70$); and pay and raise satisfaction ($t_{79} = -4.56$; $p < 0.05$; $d = 1.02$). Comparing the respective means for these factors, the Gen-X/BB group scored consistently higher than the Millennial group: social support (23.41 vs 21.30); feedback and recognition (20.86 vs 17.00); decision-making involvement (34.00 vs 29.68); and pay and raise satisfaction (17.14 vs 11.70).

Table 10
Independent t-tests for perceptions of work factors and voluntary turnover intention between the Millennial and combined Gen-X/Baby Boomer groups (Organisation A)

Variable	Levene	p-value	df	t	Sig.	*d*	LCI	UCI
Perceptions of Work Factors								
Diversity	0.115	0.735	79	-1.388	0.169	0.35	-2.11	0.38
Social Support	1.275	0.262	79	-3.184	0.002	0.71	-3.43	-0.79
Feedback & Recognition	1.289	0.260	79	-4.236	0.000	0.94	-5.78	-2.05
Work-life Balance	3.393	0.069	79	-1.090	0.279	0.24	-2.25	0.66
Training & Development	2.402	0.125	79	-1.721	0.089	0.38	-1.98	0.14
Decision-Making Involvement	0.088	0.767	79	-3.138	0.002	0.70	-7.07	-1.58
Pay and Raise Satisfaction	0.043	0.836	79	-4.564	0.000	1.02	-7.80	-3.06
Promotion Opportunities	0.007	0.932	79	0.320	0.750	0.07	-0.38	0.52
Voluntary Turnover Intention	0.113	0.737	79	-3.742	0.000	0.83	-6.22	-1.90

For these results, the Cohen's *d* estimates indicate that social support and decision-making involvement had moderate-to-large effect sizes, while feedback and recognition had a large effect size. Since pay and raise satisfaction had a Cohen's *d* estimate of 1.02, this illustrates that the difference between the two generational cohorts is larger than one standard deviation.

Additionally, there was also a statistically significant difference between the groups on voluntary turnover intention ($t_{79} = -3.74$; $p < 0.05$), where the mean for the combined Gen-X/BB group was higher than the mean for the Millennial group (20.11 vs 16.05). However, since a higher score on the *Voluntary Turnover Intention Scale* illustrates a lower desire to leave the organisation, and vice versa, this finding must be interpreted accordingly. The Cohen's *d* estimate also reflected that this difference had a large effect size.

These findings indicate that the older, more experienced Organisation A employees in the combined Gen-X/Baby Boomer group perceived their level of social support, feedback and recognition, decision-making involvement, and satisfaction with their financial incentives and overall level of pay to be higher than the levels at which the Millennial group perceived these work factors. They were also less inclined to want to leave the organisation.

Organisation B

The results obtained from Organisation B are presented below. These serve as a second sample for analysis and as a comparison group for the results obtained from Organisation A.

Cronbach Alpha Coefficients

The Cronbach Alpha Coefficients presented in Table 11 below illustrate the internal consistency reliabilities obtained for the *Perceptions of Work Factors in the Organisation Questionnaire* and *Voluntary Turnover Intention Scale* for the Organisation B data.

Table 11
Cronbach Alpha coefficients (Organisation B)

Variable	Items	Cronbach Alpha
Perceptions of Work Factors		
Diversity	4	0.701
Social Support	6	0.623
Feedback & Recognition	6	0.855
Work-Life Balance	5	0.530
Training & Development	4	0.888
Decision-Making Involvement	9	0.890
Pay & Raise Satisfaction	6	0.962
Voluntary Turnover Intention	5	0.799

As indicated in Table 11, the subscales of the *Perceptions of Work Factors in the Organisation Questionnaire* revealed acceptable to high internal consistency reliability estimates, ranging from 0.70 to 0.96, except for social support (0.62), and work-life balance (0.52) (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). It is probable that the small sample size (n = 33) of the Organisation B data is the cause of these low internal consistency reliability estimates. Since the subscale ‘Promotion Opportunities’ only consisted of 1 item, an internal consistency reliability estimate was not possible. The internal consistency reliability for the *Voluntary Turnover Intention Scale* was also acceptable (0.80), although it was slightly lower than in Organisation A and in Kantor’s (2013) previous research using a South African sample.

Descriptive Statistics

A basic summary of the descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, and minimum and maximum scores) for each of the variables used in the data from Organisation B are provided in Table 12 below, as well as skewness and kurtosis coefficients. Histograms were also examined to assess the normality of the data (please see Figures 20-38 in Appendix L).

Table 12
Descriptive statistics (Organisation B)

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Dev	Min	Max	Skewness	Kurtosis
Work-Related Factors (Values)							
Diversity	33	6.15	1.12	4	7	-1.165	-0.028
Teamwork	33	6.39	0.79	4	7	-1.165	3.371
Flexible Work	33	5.03	1.59	1	7	-0.449	-0.246
Feedback	32	5.47	1.44	2	7	-0.839	-0.329
W-L Balance	33	5.76	1.23	3	7	-0.914	-0.163
Challenge	33	5.76	1.25	3	7	-0.937	-0.272
Training & Development	33	6.00	1.06	4	7	-1.004	-0.086
Decision-Making	33	5.61	1.35	1	7	-1.512	3.082
Financial Rewards	33	5.58	1.54	1	7	-1.241	1.307
Career Advancement	33	5.91	1.59	1	7	-2.133	4.277
Perceptions of Work Factors							
Diversity	33	15.00	2.74	7	20	-0.622	0.734
Social Support	33	22.21	2.90	17	30	0.168	0.918
Feedback & Recognition	33	19.18	4.54	8	24	-1.089	0.611
Work-Life Balance	33	17.06	2.47	10	21	-1.023	1.060
Training & Development	33	15.09	2.75	9	20	-1.094	1.038
Decision-Making Involvement	33	32.61	5.91	14	44	-1.091	2.505
Pay & Raise Satisfaction	33	16.39	5.97	6	30	-0.117	-0.420
Promotion Opportunities	33	3.82	0.98	1	5	-0.874	0.887
Voluntary Turnover Intention	33	16.33	4.14	10	25	0.323	-0.605

Similarly to the data from Organisation A, the work-related factors from Organisation B scored highly. For example, flexible work similarly had the lowest mean score (M = 5.03; SD =

1.59), which was still well above average; while teamwork similarly had the highest mean score (M = 6.39; SD = 0.79), which was very close to the maximum score of 7. Considering this, together with the skewness and kurtosis coefficients and the histograms, it is evident that the data was largely negatively skewed. Thus, as with Organisation A, non-parametric equivalent techniques were subsequently carried out for the *Work-Related Factors (Values)* data for Organisation B.

Regarding the *Perceptions of Work Factors* scale, the data indicated normal distributions for diversity, social support, pay and raise satisfaction, and promotion opportunities, while feedback and recognition, work-life balance, training and development, and decision-making involvement did not follow a normal distribution. Most subscales presented fairly high scores, with the exception of pay and raise satisfaction (M = 16.39; SD = 5.97), which was just over fifty percent and was the most varied score. Voluntary turnover intention (M = 16.33; SD = 4.14) was also normally distributed and scored moderately.

Correlations

Spearman's correlation coefficients for ranked data (r_s) were used for the non-parametric *Work-Related Factors (Values)* data from Organisation B. The statistically significant correlations are provided in Table 13 below. For a list of the non-significant Spearman's correlation coefficients, please see Table 19 in Appendix M.

Table 13
Spearman's correlation coefficients (r_s) for work-related factors (values) and age (Organisation B)

Variable	r_s	Sig. (2-tailed)	N
Work-Related Factors (Values)			
Flexible Work	-0.443	0.010	33
Challenge	-0.379	0.030	33

As shown in Table 13 above, there was a weak-to-moderate, inverse relationship between age and flexible work (r_s = -0.44; $p < 0.05$), and a weak, inverse relationship between age and

challenge (r_s = -0.38; p < 0.05). These correlations suggest that as an Organisation B employee's age increases, the importance they place on flexible work arrangements and having work that is considered challenging decreases slightly.

Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficients (*r*) were used for the normally distributed subscales of the *Perception of Work Factors* data and the *Voluntary Turnover Intention* data from Organisation B. In addition, Spearman's correlation coefficients for ranked data (r_s) were used for the non-parametric subscales of the *Perception of Work Factors* data. The only statistically significant correlation is provided below in Table 14. For a list of the non-significant correlation coefficients, please see Table 20 in Appendix N.

Table 14
Correlation coefficient (r) for perception of work factors, voluntary turnover intention, and age (Organisation B)

Variable	r	Sig. (2-tailed)	N
Perceptions of Work Factors			
Pay & Raise Satisfaction	0.541	0.001	33

The finding presented in Table 14 indicates that there was a significant, moderate, positive relationship between levels of pay and raise satisfaction and age (r = 0.54; p < 0.05). There were no other statistically significant correlations between employees' perceptions of their work environment and age, nor was there a statistically significant correlation between voluntary turnover intention and age.

This finding suggests that as the employees in Organisation B get older, they are more satisfied with their level of pay and the raises they have typically received.

Group Comparisons

To establish if there were significant differences between the Millennial cohort and the combined Gen-X/Boomer cohort for the importance placed on various work-related factors at Organisation B, a series of Mann-Whitney U tests were conducted. Similarly, the non-parametric

subscales of the *Perceptions of Work Factors* data were also analysed using Mann-Whitney U tests. The results of these tests are presented in Table 15 below.

Table 15
Mann-Whitney U tests for work-related factors (values) and non-normal perceptions of work factors between the Millennial and combined Gen-X/Baby Boomer groups (Organisation B)

Variable	Z	Sig. (2-tailed)	r
Work-Related Factors (Values)			
Diversity	-1.759	0.079	-0.306
Teamwork	-0.792	0.429	-0.138
Flexible Work	-3.568	0.000	-0.621
Feedback	-1.676	0.094	-0.292
W-L Balance	-2.040	0.041	-0.355
Challenge	-2.757	0.006	-0.480
Training & Development	-0.468	0.640	-0.081
Decision-Making	-0.133	0.895	-0.023
Financial Rewards	-0.226	0.821	-0.039
Career Advancement	-1.741	0.082	-0.303
Perceptions of Work Factors			
Feedback & Recognition	-2.343	0.019	-0.408
Work-Life Balance	-0.128	0.898	-0.022
Training & Development	-0.149	0.881	-0.026
Decision-making Involvement	-1.487	0.137	-0.259

As shown in Table 15 above, statistically significant differences were found between the Millennial (n = 16) and combined Gen-X/Baby Boomer group (n = 17) on the following values: flexible work ($Z = -3.57$; $p < 0.05$; $r = -0.62$), work-life balance ($Z = -2.04$; $p < 0.05$; $r = -0.36$), and challenge ($Z = -2.76$; $p < 0.05$; $r = -0.48$). Additionally, a moderate effect size was found for both flexible work and challenge, while a weak-to-moderate effect size was found between the generations for work-life balance. In each of these three cases, Millennials illustrated a higher rank respectively: flexible work (23.03 vs 11.32); work-life balance (20.34 vs 13.85); and challenge (21.47 vs 12.79).

Additionally, the difference between the two cohorts was statistically significant for feedback and recognition ($Z = -2.34$; $p < 0.05$; $r = -0.41$) however the combined Gen-X/Boomer cohort scored higher than the Millennial group in this regard (20.79 vs 12.97). This result had a weak-to-moderate effect size.

These findings suggest that the younger Millennials in Organisation B placed a higher value on flexible work arrangements, work-life balance, and work that challenges them, in contrast to the older employees within the combined Gen-X and Boomer cohort. The combined Gen-X and Boomer group from Organisation B also reported experiencing a greater level of perceived feedback and recognition than their younger counterparts in the Millennial group within their organisation.

Independent samples t-tests were run to assess if there were significant differences in the normally distributed subscales of the *Perceptions of Work Factors* and *Voluntary Turnover Intention* data for Organisation B. The results of these tests are presented in Table 16 below.

Table 16
Independent t-tests for normal perceptions of work factors and voluntary turnover intention between the Millennial and combined Gen-X/Baby Boomer groups (Organisation B)

Variable	Levene	p-value	df	t	Sig.	*d*	LCI	UCI
Perceptions of Work Factors								
Diversity	2.606	0.117	31	0.887	0.382	0.31	-1.10	2.80
Social Support	0.057	0.813	31	-0.762	0.452	0.27	-2.85	1.30
Pay and Raise Satisfaction	1.433	0.240	31	-3.200	0.003	1.11	-9.60	-2.13
Promotion Opportunities	1.590	0.217	31	0.318	0.753	0.12	-0.60	0.82
Voluntary Turnover Intention	2.458	0.127	31	-1.214	0.234	0.42	-4.66	1.18

As presented in Table 16 above, a statistically significant difference was found between the Millennial ($n = 16$) and combined Gen-X/Baby Boomer group ($n = 17$) for their perceptions of pay and raise satisfaction ($t_{31} = -3.20$; $p < 0.05$; $d = 1.11$). A comparison of the respective means for this subscale indicated that the Gen-X/Boomer group scored higher than the Millennial group (19.24 vs 13.38). In addition, the Cohen's *d* estimate indicates that the means for the generational cohorts differed by more than one standard deviation. Lastly, there were no

other statistically significant differences between the groups for the perceptions of work factors and no statistically significant difference between the groups for voluntary turnover intention.

This finding suggests that the more senior employees in Organisation B have a higher level of satisfaction with their levels of pay and additional financial incentives than the employees in the younger Millennial cohort at the organisation.

Chapter 4

Discussion

Workplace generations research is fraught with inconsistencies, as both the international and the South African literature present mixed findings, and often reveal more similarities between the traditional generational cohorts than differences (Becton et al., 2014; Costanza et al., 2012; Jonck et al., 2017; Twenge, 2010). As such, the relevance of using the traditionally defined generational cut-offs in the South African context remains unclear and needs further investigation. Therefore, a primary aim of this study was to investigate the applicability of the internationally-based, traditional generational groupings and their associated theoretical attributes in a South African context. Secondly, the study sought to extend this evaluation of the traditional generational cohorts by investigating differences between the Millennial cohort and a combined Gen-X and Baby Boomer grouping, by considering the watershed moments that occurred in South Africa at the end of the Apartheid era (SA History, 2012). More specifically, this was done by examining whether significant differences in the relative importance placed on certain workplace factors, perceptions of the work environment, and voluntary turnover intention could be identified between the traditional generational cohorts and between the binary generational groupings in a sample of South African employees. This chapter will discuss the results of the statistical analyses performed in the study with reference to existing theory and empirical findings. The strengths and limitations of the study, as well as directions for future research will also be put forward.

Relationships between employees' values, perceptions of the work environment, voluntary turnover intention, and age

An initial aim of this research was to explore the nature of the relationships between the different generations and their relative work-related values. Spearman's correlation coefficients were used to evaluate the relationships between these values and age in both samples.

Of the ten work-related factors (values) measured in the study, only two were significantly correlated with age in the sample drawn from Organisation A. More specifically, weak, inverse relationships were found between age and financial reward, and age and career advancement.

These correlations suggest that as the age of employees working at Organisation A increases, the importance that is placed on financial rewards and career advancement decreases slightly. This pinpoints how, as older employees in Organisation A gain more experience and seniority over time, they are likely to value financial rewards and opportunities to advance their careers slightly less than younger employees, whose careers are less established, and who are likely to earn less. Younger employees are still anxious to prove themselves, seeking to grow their careers as well as realise the financial benefits along the way (Cammarata, 2013; Smyrl, 2011). This characteristic is generally expected, since employees tend to advance to higher paying positions over time, and therefore care slightly less about career advancement and financial rewards once their careers have plateaued or towards the end of their careers. For instance, PWC (2012) suggests that Gen-Xers are currently reaching their promotional ceiling while Boomers are phasing into retirement. While seemingly a generational issue, this point emphasises a fine distinction between the significance of age and the role that life stage plays in determining what employees value (SHRM, 2007). For instance, those in the initial phases of their careers, regardless of age, are more likely to seek rapid advancement and more financial rewards than those whose careers are more established. Similarly, those with young families might value financial incentives quite strongly as a means of coping with the pressures of being new parents, above those employees whose children are independent or who have had time to become financially stable. Although age plays a part in these scenarios, it does not seem to be as large a determining factor as life stage.

Looking at the sample drawn from Organisation B, there were also two work-related factors (values) that were correlated with age. More specifically, the Spearman's correlation coefficients indicated that there were significant, negative associations between age and flexible work, and age and challenge. These results suggest that as employee age increases in Organisation B, the importance placed on flexible work arrangements and having work that is considered challenging decreases slightly. Noting the former correlation, this can be explained by the fact that flexible work arrangements are closely related to achieving a more balanced life regarding work and leisure (Mencl & Lester, 2014). Organising one's work around expected deadlines, while also balancing personal and family obligations, is considered to be more of a contemporary aspect of work which was initially introduced by the Gen-Xers, and taken further by subsequent generations (Smyrl, 2011). Thus, in line with the theory, younger employees are

likely to value flexi-time more than older generations. However, drawing on the life-stage argument presented above, an alternate interpretation could be that flexible working arrangements may have less to do with age or generational membership as such and more to do with one's parental and social obligations.

For the second significant correlation at Organisation B, it was expected that all three generations would appreciate the link between challenging work and the resultant sense of achievement in meeting such challenges. However, as Forbes (2012) indicates, continually seeking out a challenging work environment can lead to increased personal and professional growth. Furthermore, since Millennials generally enter the workforce with higher levels of education, they highly value continued learning and growth opportunities to remain competitive in the market (Cammarata, 2013; Kicheva, 2017). Thus, it makes theoretical sense that younger employees at Organisation B slightly prefer challenging work, as it could give them a competitive edge later in their careers. This ties in closely with their need to continually advance and their desire to be promoted quickly (Nkomo, 2013).

Since the findings from Organisation B differed from those at Organisation A, it would appear that the above relationships are a function of the respective organisations and the samples drawn, or possibly due to sampling error. However, there is a more general pattern that is apparent, illustrating that older employees tend to be more established, preferring routine to novelty, and that they also tend to have less demands placed on them by family commitments. As illustrated, this suggests that the links could be more a function of life stage and more senior job roles rather than workplace generation per se. This additionally suggests that the links between generational membership and values are not consistent across organisational contexts, and that there are more similarities than differences between generations.

In extension of the initial aim, the nature of the relationships between age and perceptions of the work environment as well as between age and voluntary turnover intention were explored using Pearson's correlation coefficients in the first sample and a combination of Pearson's correlation coefficients and Spearman's correlation coefficients in the second sample.

At Organisation A, age was significantly correlated with five of the eight workplace perceptions measured, as well as with voluntary turnover intention. For the former, there were moderate, positive relationships between perceived pay and raise satisfaction levels and age, as

well as moderate-to-weak positive relationships between age and perceived involvement in decision-making, perceived feedback and recognition, and perceived social support. Additionally, there was a weak, positive relationship between age and perceived training and development.

Firstly, these correlations indicate that as employees in Organisation A get older and gain more seniority in the workplace, they are more satisfied with their levels of pay. Similarly, Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficients indicated a significant, moderate, positive relationship between perceived levels of pay and raise satisfaction and age at Organisation B. The ensuing argument is thus supported by both samples drawn, indicating that older generations in the workplace have typically established their careers more than the Millennials, and therefore are more satisfied with their levels of pay and the raises they have received.

Additionally, the sample drawn from Organisation A suggests that with age and seniority come greater levels of perceived power and autonomy, and as a result, slightly more involvement in decision-making. Having a voice in the direction of the company, as well as making one's own decisions at work, has been shown to result in higher job satisfaction and performance (Saragih, 2011). Therefore, since the Millennials are younger, they seemingly have less opportunity for their input to be considered, and are more likely to be following orders as opposed to directing their own efforts.

At Organisation A, perceived feedback and recognition was also higher among the more senior employees. Given the above point, it is apparent that the decision makers in the company are also the ones to receive higher degrees of feedback surrounding those decisions, as well as surrounding the implications of their decisions. With the power to 'call the shots' also comes a higher degree of status and recognition for doing so. Once more, the younger Millennials, who are less experienced, clearly perceive their status as lower, and given the fact that they are accustomed to high levels of feedback in other forms, seemingly do not receive enough work-related feedback (Meier et al., 2010; Mencl & Lester, 2014).

The older Organisation A employees also perceived their levels of social support to be higher than the younger employees at the company. The possible reasons for this could be that since the more senior employees also have more status and authority to make decisions, they are treated in a generally respectful, reverent manner by their subordinates. An extension of this

argument could be explained by the theory that ‘givers’ of social support usually end up receiving more in return than those who are simply ‘receivers’ of social support (Riche, 2015). As such, the more experienced employees who are in positions of leadership, and by extension are expected to provide their teams with support and resources, are positioned to receive more social support in return, compared to those who simply receive. As such, heading up departments or teams could be met with support from fellow teams members to a larger extent than simply being in the team itself. Additionally, it is likely that more senior employees have had more time to establish meaningful working relationships, and even friendships, with colleagues, clients, and the wider public.

The correlation between age and perceived training and development at Organisation A suggests that the older employees have received slightly more opportunities to attend training programs and to develop their skills than the younger employees. This could simply be due to the longer extent of the older employees’ careers, as opposed to the Millennials who may have received less training by comparison. Once more, seniority and experience may be the determining factor in this regard. Interestingly, this opposes the point illustrated by Mencl and Lester (2014), suggesting that younger employees are more likely to participate in training programs to develop new skills than older employees. This is an extension of the argument that Millennials prioritise learning and career growth, and, in doing so, hope to gain a competitive edge over their peers (Cammarata, 2013; Kicheva, 2017; Nkomo, 2013). Therefore, although a significant relationship was found between age and training and development, it was the opposite of the generalised expectation.

Lastly, a moderate, positive relationship was found between voluntary turnover and age. However, as noted, a high score on the *Voluntary Turnover Intention Scale* indicated a lesser desire to leave the organisation, and vice versa. Therefore, this correlation must be interpreted inversely. As such, in addition to the higher levels of perceived pay, decision-making involvement, feedback and recognition, social support, and training and development, it is not surprising that the more senior members of Organisation A indicated less desire to leave the organisation than the younger employees. The company-specific benefits associated with older employees at Organisation A clearly reflect a higher degree of loyalty towards said company than the more junior employees. More broadly, this is in line with previous findings by Costanza

et al., (2012), D'Amato and Herzfeld (2008), and Lub, Bijvank, Bal, Blomme and Schalk (2011), which indicate that Boomers are generally considered to have a strong psychological contract with their organisation, and are more loyal than their younger counterparts, especially Millennials who are considered to have higher job mobility (Martins & Martins, 2014). However, this finding is opposed by Twenge's (2010) research, and partially contradicts the findings by Khalid, Nor, Ismail, and Razali, (2013), who illustrated that Millennials are somewhat indifferent, neither willing to leave nor to stay at their organisation.

Considering the above, it is interesting to note that the sample drawn from Organisation B did not add any further support to the findings from Organisation A, except for pay and raise satisfaction (as discussed). While the sample size at Organisation B was limited, it is still worth noting that only one of the eight perception measures was significantly correlated with age, and that voluntary turnover intention was also non-significant. This suggests that many of the findings discussed between the generations so far could be context specific, illustrating trends that are unique to the organisation itself, and not indicative of broader generation-based characteristics. Therefore, the evidence to suggest that the general stereotypes associated with the age of an employee as an indicator of workplace generation are true in the South African context may be somewhat lacking. Additionally, it is also apparent that many of the findings could also be reflective of one's life stage or specific job role within the company, and not simply one's age or generational membership. For instance, although it is assumed that older employees are generally more senior and experienced, it is apparent from the data that at least four of the Millennials at Organisation A are in management positions, and the majority of them have children.

Group comparisons between the traditional generations on work related values, perceptions of the work environment, and voluntary turnover intention

A second aim of the current study was to address whether there were significant differences between the traditional generational cohorts on various work-related factors (values), perceptions of the work environment, and voluntary turnover intention. This comparison of the three traditional generational groupings could only be carried out in Organisation A, however, as

the sample from Organisation B was too small to allow for a meaningful analysis to be conducted in this regard.

For the work-related factors (values) in Organisation A, only diversity was statistically significant between the traditional generation classifications, with Millennials placing the most importance on diversity in the workplace, followed by Baby Boomers, and Gen-X the least. This finding was partially expected, since Millennials are considered to be the most diverse, and also generally value diversity the most of the three generations (Kelly, 2014; Mencl & Lester, 2014). However, it was expected that Gen-Xers, who apparently grew up with more friends from different cultures than Boomers, would value diversity more than the previous generation (Kicheva, 2017). Interestingly, this was not the case. Of some caution when interpreting this result, however, is that the effect size was small for this finding, indicating that although statistically significant, the differences between the generations on valuing diversity should not be overstated. Additionally, although diversity was valued slightly differently by the generations, there was no statistically significant difference in the way diversity was perceived in the workplace by the participants from Organisation A. This could suggest that, as South Africans, all three generations have become accustomed to, expectant of, and accepting of diversity in the workplace. Alternatively, it also illustrates an important distinction between the values that each generation is believed to hold and their actual perceptions. While generational membership may impact peoples' beliefs about what should be important, it does not appear to automatically play a role in how they interpret the workplace around them. Further, this opposes the assumption that generational values will automatically influence the workplace context.

Regarding the traditional generations' perceptions of the work environment for Organisation A, statistically significant differences were found in how they perceived levels of social support, feedback and recognition, decision-making involvement, and pay and raise satisfaction. Bonferroni post hoc tests illustrated that these differences lay between the Millennials and each of the other two groups, except for decision-making involvement, which was only significantly different between the Millennials and the Boomers. Of particular interest is that the Boomers and the Gen-Xers revealed similar results on all the above measures.

These results suggest that Boomers and Gen-Xers have higher perceived levels of social support, feedback and recognition, and pay and raise satisfaction than the Millennials at

Organisation A. In line with the discussion above, the more seniority the employees have, the greater their levels of satisfaction are with their pay and the raises they have typically received in the past. Opposingly, Millennials are still forging their careers, and have yet to advance to pay scales they are happy with. This is especially noteworthy considering their generally higher levels of education than previous generations (Cammarata, 2013), as well as their apparent attitude of entitlement and preference to be promoted within a short period of time (Cammarata, 2013). Millennials at Organisation A may also be less satisfied with their levels of pay due to their high levels of ambition and high-achievement orientation (Smyrl, 2011), coupled with the fast-paced lifestyle to which they have become accustomed, which reportedly makes them more impatient (Nkomo, 2013).

Boomers and Gen-Xers may also perceive higher levels of social support in the workplace compared to Millennials because with seniority and experience comes more time to form meaningful working relationships, and even friendships, with colleagues. This especially makes sense for Gen-Xers, who reportedly value the social aspect of work more than Boomers, although Boomers are also believed to value teamwork due to a post-war spirit of unity and collective achievement, which may be why no difference was found between the two older generations on this measure (Jorgensen, 2003; Nkomo, 2013). This finding is particularly surprising, however, given that Millennials are considered to be highly collaborative, appreciating teamwork and collectivism (Zemke, Raines, & Filipczak, 2000). A possible reason for these differences in perceived social support could be that Organisation A does not provide Millennials with enough opportunities to collaborate and socialize, which perhaps they desire even more than Gen-Xers. Additionally, the perceived lack of social support among Millennials could stem from a lack of guidance or mentorship from the older generations, which is a workplace characteristic that Millennials reportedly value greatly (Cogin, 2012). Indeed, as Naim and Lenka (2017) indicate, providing mentorship for Millennials has a direct influence on their intention to stay, and this finding was mediated by perceived organisational (social) support.

Regarding their perceived levels of feedback and recognition, Millennials perhaps illustrate less satisfaction on this measure due to generally valuing feedback more than older generations (Meier et al., 2010; Mencl & Lester, 2014). As such, the levels of feedback within Organisation A may be sufficient for Boomers and Gen-Xers, but fall short for younger

employees, considering the levels of feedback that Millennials are used to via various internet-based platforms, mobile communication, and gaming (Becton et al., 2014; Cammarata, 2013). Furthermore, given their relatively junior position compared to the older generations, Millennials are yet to earn the levels of recognition and status which they strongly desire and are impatient to receive (Lancaster & Stillman, 2002; Nkomo, 2013).

Acknowledging that having the power to make one's own decisions at work results in higher job satisfaction and performance (Saragih, 2011), it was expected that all three generations would desire decision-making involvement equally, as well as challenging work which would allow a sense of achievement to be realised. Since only Boomers and Millennials differed significantly on perceived levels of decision-making involvement, it makes sense that Boomers, who are likely to be higher up in the organisation and enjoy greater levels of power, were more satisfied with this measure than their Millennial counterparts.

Lastly, the differences between the groups for voluntary turnover intention were also statistically significant however, as above, only between the Millennial cohort and each of the other two groups. Therefore, there was no statistically significant difference between Gen-Xers and Boomers on voluntary turnover intention. In line with the correlations reported above, Millennials illustrated a greater desire to voluntarily leave the organisation than Boomers and Gen-Xers. This could be due to the lower levels of perceived social support, feedback and recognition, pay and raise satisfaction, and decision-making involvement they receive compared to the older cohorts. As such, the perception of these factors may be translating into a lack of growth opportunities or stimulation, which may be a causal factor in their higher willingness to leave the organisation (Kicheva, 2017). However, since the present study did not account for potential extraneous factors, it cannot be ruled out that the Millennials' levels of job satisfaction or life stage, for example, did not contribute to higher voluntary turnover intention rather than simply their generational grouping (Costanza et al., 2012). Additionally, it must be noted that each finding had a small effect size. As above, this indicates that these differences should not be overstated.

Therefore, considering the traditional generations in this study, there does not appear to be sufficient evidence to support the implementation of policies and procedures aimed at

attracting and retaining members of specific generational groups based purely on the generational stereotypes that abound in South African organisations.

Dichotomous group comparisons between the Millennials and the combined Generation-X/Baby Boomer cohort on work related values, perceptions of the work environment, and voluntary turnover intention

The theoretical argument for the dichotomous grouping illustrated in the literature focusses mainly on the watershed moments that happened in South Africa, leading up to, and culminating in, the end of Apartheid in 1994 (South African History Online, 2012). Based on this argument, it is apparent that Millennials in South Africa are highly divergent to the generations that came before them, due to increasing social integration during many Millennials' formative years. Since both Gen-Xers and Boomers grew up within the confines of the Apartheid system, these two generations appear to possess more similarities with each other than they do with Millennials. Furthermore, this notion was confirmed by the Bonferroni post hoc test which illustrated that there were no significant differences between the latter two generations on how they perceived the workplace or on measures of voluntary turnover intention.

As such, the Gen-Xers and Boomers in each of the two samples were combined, and thus a dichotomous split between this grouping and the Millennial cohort was analysed further. This split served to fulfil the third aim of this study, which was to extend the traditional generational grouping by investigating whether there were statistically significant differences between Millennials and a combined Gen-X/Boomer group on measures of workplace factors (values), perceptions of the work environment, and voluntary turnover intention in the South African context.

Firstly, statistically significant differences were found between the Organisation A Millennial and combined Gen-X/Boomer groups on the workplace factors (values) of diversity, training and development, financial rewards, and career advancement. On each of these four measures, Millennials illustrated a higher rank respectively, although all effect sizes for these results were small.

Nevertheless, these findings suggest that Millennials in Organisation A value diversity as more of a necessity in the workplace compared to the older employees in the company. This finding ties in to some degree with the findings of Jonck et al., (2017), who reported that only the Millennial group valued cultural identity. In addition, Millennials valued training and development opportunities the most of the three generations in Organisation A, which concurs with the findings of Martins and Martins (2014). Furthermore, Millennials also valued financial rewards and career advancement more than their older counterparts in Organisation A. Together, these findings indicate that Millennials, who since South Africa's new democracy came into existence in 1994 have enjoyed a far more integrated society and schooling system compared to the generations before them, are more appreciative of diversity and cultural identity and see it as a workplace requirement (Jonck et al., 2017). Additionally, considering their younger age and less experience, their higher need for training and development could reflect a greater desire to be upskilled, and therefore to be competitive in the labour market. Similarly, their greater need for financial rewards and career advancement opportunities follows logically, reflecting their earlier career status, while also suggesting that the Gen-X and Baby Boomers may have already benefited from their longer experience in the workplace.

Regarding the findings from Organisation B, statistically significant differences were found between the Millennial and combined Gen-X/Baby Boomer groups on the values of flexible work, work-life balance, and challenge. Furthermore, a moderate effect size was found for flexible work and for challenge, while a weak-to-moderate effect size was found between the generations for work-life balance. These findings suggest that the younger Millennials in Organisation B placed a higher value on flexible work arrangements, work-life balance, and work that challenges them in contrast to the older employees within the combined Gen-X and Boomer cohort.

Of the former two, Mencl and Lester (2014) illustrate the close conceptual nature between flexible work arrangements and efforts pursued to balance work and leisure, additionally indicating that all three generations are likely to value flexi-time and work-life balance equally. Twenge (2010), also reported that leisure was preferred over work across all three generational cohorts. Similarly, in the South African context, Jonck et al. (2017) found that the value of leisure was central to all three generations. Therefore, the current study's findings at

Organisation B oppose previous research in both the international and local arenas, suggesting that Millennials do indeed prefer work arrangements that are flexible, allowing them to prioritise both their work and leisure time. While Gen-Xers may have introduced these concepts to the workplace, internationally (Smyrl, 2011), it appears that the phenomenon has taken hold in South Africa more recently. However, this finding could simply be a unique artefact of the study, since the sample from Organisation B is limited in size. Therefore, it may not be indicative of an actual pattern of differences. As such, further research would be needed to establish this.

It was also expected that challenging work would produce similarities across the three generations (Mencl & Lester, 2014). However, Millennials at Organisation B evidently prefer challenging work over the combined Gen-X/Boomer group. As discussed earlier, this could be explained by the link between challenging work and increases in personal and professional growth (Forbes, 2012). As illustrated, Millennials have been shown to generally enter the workforce with higher levels of education, and strongly value opportunities to learn and grow, as a means to maintain a competitive edge in the market (Cammarata, 2013; Kicheva, 2017). As such, it could be that the Millennials at Organisation B prefer challenging work, since it might serve their careers well, later down the line. Additionally, as Nkomo (2013) reports, this ties in closely with their need to readily advance themselves through promotions.

Interestingly, the Organisation A and B findings appear dissimilar, which could be a function of each specific sample, especially due to the small sample obtained from Organisation B. However, such contrasting values could also be indicative of other factors besides generational membership. Indeed, these differences can be seen as providing further evidence of variations across time and context, and as refuting the idea that there are stable, meaningful differences between the generations in the workplace context. This notion is supported by the conclusions of Heyns and Kerr (2018), as well as Martins and Martins (2014), who illustrate that generational cohorts share many similarities, and that Millennials want many of the same things as the generations before them.

Regarding perceptions of the work environment and voluntary turnover intention for Organisation A, statistically significant differences were found between the two cohorts for their perceptions of social support, feedback and recognition, decision-making involvement, and pay and raise satisfaction. Here, the combined Gen-X/Boomer group scored consistently higher than

the Millennial group on all these measures. For these results, the Cohen's *d* estimates indicated that social support and decision-making involvement had moderate-to-large effect sizes, while feedback and recognition had a large effect size. Since pay and raise satisfaction had a Cohen's *d* estimate of 1.02, this illustrated that the difference between the two generational cohorts was larger than one standard deviation - a large effect.

One similarity to note is that perceived feedback and recognition was also statistically significant between the Millennials and the combined Gen-X/Boomer cohort at Organisation B. While the effect size was weak-to-moderate in strength, this result adds support for the notion that the older generations receive higher levels of feedback and recognition than the Millennials, who have typically established their careers to a lesser degree than their seniors. However, despite the consistency on this measure across organisational contexts, the small sample size of organisation B does pose issues regarding the broader generalisability of these findings.

As with the argument made earlier, the more experienced Boomers and Gen-Xers showed higher levels of perceived decision-making involvement as well as perceived satisfaction with the financial-incentives that they have received compared to the younger and less experienced Millennial group. This is likely to be because they are more senior in the organisation and therefore have more autonomy in their work as well as their seniority and experience providing them with better salaries and increases. Lastly, the results also pinpoint that seniority provides not only more perceived recognition but more perceived social support. Acknowledging that perceived social support is linked to the value of teamwork (Mencl & Lester, 2014), Boomers were found to value teamwork the most in research by Martins and Martins (2014), while Jonck et al. (2017) found that social interaction was valued the most by Generation X. Thus, it appears that Millennials could potentially garner more social support at work if they focussed on being team-players or building their interpersonal relationships. This notion is supported by the general outlook that Millennials' preferred type of communication is text-based, and that their verbal communication is deemed poor, thus affecting their interpersonal skills (Kicheva, 2017; Nkomo, 2013).

Additionally, there was also a statistically significant difference between the groups on voluntary turnover intention, reflecting a greater desire by Millennials to want to leave the organisation than the older generations. The effect size for this finding was large, illustrating

once more that Millennials seem to be more eager to leave an organisation than Gen-Xers and Boomers, given their lower perceptions regarding pay, autonomy, social support, and recognition. Interestingly, this finding contradicts the findings of Nkomo (2013), who noted that the Millennials in his study possessed the highest levels of organisational commitment despite the common generalisation that Millennials are job hoppers. Furthermore, in line with Gallup (2016), Martins and Martins (2014), and PWC (2012), the high turnover rate among younger employees might not be the simple product of their generational membership, but rather an indication of poor engagement, or a lack of job satisfaction, respectively. Further, noting that there were no differences found between the dichotomous groupings at Organisation B on measures of voluntary turnover intention, this once again raises questions about the behavioural assumptions of employees based solely on their generational membership. Additionally, the lack of further differences between the two organisations on perceptions of the work environment as well as voluntary turnover intention in this study indicate that workplace generations might be more similar than different, and that generational membership alone appears to have little stability in its impact on perceptions and turnover behaviours.

General Discussion

In line with much of the international and local literature, the majority of the variables measured between the generational cohorts in this study proved to be statistically non-significant, suggesting more similarities between the generational cohorts than differences. For instance, since only the value of diversity was found to be different between the three traditional generations for the sample from Organisation A, this implies that the generational cohorts possessed similar values when it came to teamwork, flexible working arrangements, feedback, work-life balance, enjoying work that they find challenging, attitudes towards training and development, involvement in decision-making, financial rewards, and career advancement opportunities. From this, it can be concluded that many of the employees at Organisation A hold similar workplace values despite their generational membership.

Although the Organisation A generational cohorts perceived their work environment differently on four of the eight measures, as well as voluntary turnover intention, similarities were found in the way they perceived diversity (despite valuing it differently), work-life balance, opportunities

for training and development, and promotional opportunities. Of the perception measures that were significant, it was further established that the differences between the cohorts only occurred between the younger Millennial generation and each of the older two generations. Interestingly, this meant that there were no statistically significant differences between Gen-Xers and Boomers on any of the perception measures.

This finding adds strength to the notion that utilising the traditional U.S. and European-based cut-offs to define generations outside of these contexts makes little sense. Since each generation is believed to be shaped uniquely by the sharedness of the historical and socially defining events that they encountered, especially during the formative years of life (Costanza et al., 2012; Kupperschmidt, 2000), it does not make sense for societies outside of the U.S. and Europe to base their generational cut-offs on events other than their own, unique, watershed moments. However, considering South Africa's major watershed moment as the end of Apartheid in 1994, as well the high degree of globalisation and interconnectedness of contemporary society, the Millennial generation in South Africa is arguably the most similar to people born around the same time internationally. Therefore, South African Millennials can be considered to be the most different to previous South African generations.

While acknowledging this, it is still apparent that such generational differences do not necessarily translate into overly meaningful, practical differences in the work environment. Rather, in agreement with local and international research, there appear to be more similarities than differences when it comes to generations in the workplace (Costanza et al., 2012; Mencl & Lester, 2014). For instance, four of the ten workplace factors (values) were found to be significant between the dichotomous grouping of Millennials versus the combined Gen-X/Baby Boomer cohort in Organisation A. Therefore, the generations appeared to value teamwork, flexible working arrangements, feedback, work-life balance, enjoying work that they found challenging, and involvement in decision-making to a similar degree. They also perceived the level of diversity, work-life balance, training and development, and promotional opportunities in their organisation similarly. It must also be noted that the data from Organisation B revealed far more similarities than differences based on generational membership, and only a few commonalities existed between the two organisations.

Lastly, it is also worth noting that many of the general characteristics associated with each generation ignore aspects of individual agency and are stereotypical in nature. Since South Africa is one of the most diverse countries in the world, differences along ethnic, cultural, language, religious, and gender lines may prove to be more important factors worth managing than addressing the factor of similarly-aged people in the workplace. Furthermore, there are a host of other more tangible socio-economic and market-related factors which are likely to shape the working lives of South Africans differently (SHRM, 2007). Of those mentioned above, one's life stage and job role seem to be important factors worth noting as potential causes of differences that managers would need to be aware of and sympathetic to. Therefore, as a concluding statement, the findings of the present study provide further evidence of the trends already apparent in the international and local literature. Furthermore, they suggest that generational membership is not a sufficiently stable factor on which to base policies and procedures aimed at attracting, promoting, training, and retaining specific personnel.

Strengths and limitations of the study

Due to its correlational nature, this design allowed for the similarities and differences between the different generational cohorts to be determined. A strength of this approach was that it was well-suited to establish the level of agreement between the generational cohorts in terms of their values, how they perceived their work environment, and their desire to leave their organisation – if at all. A correlational design also offered practicality and allowed for natural insights into the relationships between the generations to be gained, since none of the variables were purposefully influenced or altered (Field, 2013).

However, the confines of this cross-sectional approach are that the findings illustrate a 'snap-shot' in time of the differences between the generational cohorts, which may be subject to change (Babbie & Mouton, 2015). Furthermore, correlational designs cannot infer causality, and while the strength and direction of the relationships between the cohorts could be established, these do not address the effects of one variable on another (Rosenthal & Rosnow, 2007).

A second strength of this research was that participants were analysed within the context of their own organisations. This allowed for more accurate analyses to be performed regarding

the *Perceptions of Work Factors in the Organisation Questionnaire*, and the *Voluntary Turnover Intention Scale* data. Approaching individual employees from multiple organisations or analyzing across different organisations rather than within each organisation would not have worked when using these instruments as there would have been no way in which to standardize contextual differences in policy and practice. However, since organisations were approached individually, this meant that the overall sample at Organisation A (n = 81) was not ideal, since more participants were aimed for. Similarly, the total sample from Organisation B (n = 33) was insufficient in terms of running certain statistical analyses, and thus the Generation X and Baby Boomer data had to be combined and only subsequently used for the dichotomous group analyses. Additionally, while the Organisation B data could be used for direct comparisons with the findings from Organisation A, this had to be done very cautiously. Had the sample from Organisation B been larger, this would have allowed for a more robust comparison which could have added credibility to the overall findings of the study.

Another potential strength of the study was that Organisation B was purposefully approached on the basis that as it was located in a similar industry to that of Organisation A. This was done to improve the comparability of the study's findings. However, although the findings of the study are applicable, the generalizability of the findings regarding the specific values, perceptions, and voluntary turnover intention identified could be limited, and potentially bound to this specific industry and their types of work. In line with this, a further limitation was that the survey was self-reported, and the sampling method constituted a convenient, non-probability sample, which also impacts on the generalizability of the study's findings (Babbie & Mouton, 2015).

Nevertheless, the samples obtained were very reflective of the diverse South African population. Despite this, they were also all volunteers thus there could be volunteer bias present in their responses (Babbie & Mouton, 2015). Additionally, considering the ways in which data were gathered, it is possible that including the name of the research in the title of the survey questionnaire potentially evoked ideas or feelings about generations among the participants. As such, this may have caused some biases in the ways participants responded to the survey (Babbie & Mouton, 2015). This could be controlled for in future by avoiding a title.

Various other factors presented strengths and weaknesses in the current study. For example, this study possessed a strength in the sense that Cronbach Alpha coefficients were all in the acceptable-to-high range, indicating good internal consistency reliability of the scale measures. Contrastively, one could argue that the group sizes were not quite equal, especially when considering the disparity between the Millennial and Boomer groups (although this was somewhat expected considering that early Boomers began retiring from 2010 onwards).

Directions for future research

It is recommended that future studies in the field of generational research should follow the example set by Cennamo and Gardner (2008) and Mencl and Lester (2014) and control for potential covariates such as gender, socio-economic background, and life stage, for example. The latter is indeed noteworthy, and should either be controlled for as a covariate or included in the analysis of generations in the workplace to some degree. As the SHRM (2007) illustrates, the different stages of life that employees experience can have a significant impact on how they attain balance. For instance, employees with young families hold values such as work-life balance in high regard, which influences how they perceive their work environment. While both young and old employees may value time with their families equally, this may manifest in varying ways based on their current life stage context (SHRM, 2007).

Another issue to consider based on the abovementioned limitations is that future studies should be conducted longitudinally as a means of observing the potential changes in values and perceptions that employees undergo throughout their lives. This would overcome the ‘snapshot’ in time that the current design is limited by. Additional designs to consider are qualitative or survey-based studies, which could help to identify perceived watershed moments and definitions of generations in the South African context and to augment quantitative comparisons.

Extending upon this, since much of the generational cohort research is based upon the traditional U.S. based cut-offs, future generational research in South Africa should be more centred around our own watershed moments. In doing so, the research will be more aligned with generational cohort theory, which highlights the sharedness of socially-defining events which shape generations in the first place. More importantly, this could begin to establish the unique

South African cut-off dates that are applicable for defining generations more accurately for the future. Future studies could also evaluate the current policies and practices implemented in South African organisations on the basis of generations, to see if these are still useful despite lacking a strong theoretical base.

Lastly, in general, the South African research in this area is somewhat limited or under-developed; therefore, more studies with larger samples from multiple organisations in multiple industries across South Africa are needed to build upon the current theoretical and empirical evidence.

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Appendix A: Access Request Letter

Psychology
School of Human & Community Development
University of the Witwatersrand
Private Bag 3, WITS, 2050
Tel: (011) 717 4500 Fax: (011) 717 4559

Good day, Date: _____

My name is Craig de Beer and I am conducting research for the purposes of obtaining a Masters Degree in Organisational Psychology at the University of the Witwatersrand. As part of this degree I am required to complete a research project and present a thesis on the information obtained. The more responses I receive, the greater the strength of my research. My research aims to investigate the nature of the relationships between different generations in the workplace, in terms of workplace values, perceptions of the work environment, and voluntary turnover intention.

Participation in this research will involve white-collar employees in your organisation completing either an electronic survey or a hard-copy questionnaire as preferred by you. The questionnaire will take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete. **Please note that employee participation will be completely voluntary, and employees will not be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way should they choose to either complete or not complete the questionnaire.**

No identifying information, such as names or I.D. numbers will be requested. The completed questionnaire will not be seen by any person other than myself and my supervisor and the responses will only be looked at in relation to all other responses. As responses are anonymous it will not be possible to provide individual or departmental feedback. There are no direct benefits or foreseeable risks for taking part in this study.

If employees choose to participate in this study, they will be asked to complete the questionnaires as carefully and honestly as possible in their free time. The questionnaire will be administered via an email link and submission of the online questionnaire will be regarded as informed consent to participate. If you would prefer that employees be provided with hard copies of the questionnaire instead of electronically, then questionnaire packs will be distributed and employees will be asked to return the completed questionnaires to a sealed box in a central location. Return of a completed questionnaire will be taken as informed consent to participate in the study. Feedback pertaining to the results of the study can be given in the form of a summary of the overall findings and can be emailed to you and your organisation if desired as well as made available to participants on request. Participants will also be provided with my contact details and my supervisor's contact details if they have any further questions or would like more information. In order to invite employees in your organisation to take part in this research, I am requesting your permission to conduct my study at your organisation and to have an email sent to employees to inform them of the study and request their participation or to distribute copies of the questionnaire if preferred.

This research will contribute to psychological knowledge and if you choose to allow this study to be conducted at your organisation with those employees who are willing to participate, it would be greatly appreciated. Should you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact either me or my supervisor as per the details below. Ethical queries can also be directed to the course coordinator, Dr Colleen Bernstein (Colleen.Bernstein@wits.ac.za).

Kind Regards

Craig de Beer (762269@students.wits.ac.za) Supervisor: Nicky Israel (nicky.israel@wits.ac.za)

Appendix B – Brief Invitation to Participate

Good day, Date: _____

My name is Craig De Beer and I am an Organisational Psychology Masters student at the University of the Witwatersrand. I am doing a study to explore the nature of the relationships between different generations in the workplace, in terms of workplace values, perceptions of the work environment, and voluntary turnover intention. In order to get data for the study, I am asking employees over the age of 18 at [name of organisation to be inserted] to please complete a questionnaire (either online or paper-based).

I would really appreciate if you would consider participating in my study.

Please follow the link below which will take you to an online survey with the participant information sheet and questionnaires.

[link address to be inserted]

Thank you.

Craig De Beer
762269@students.wits.ac.za

Supervisor: Nicky Israel
Nicky.Israel@wits.ac.za

Appendix C: Participant Information Sheet (Online)

Psychology
School of Human & Community Development
University of the Witwatersrand
Private Bag 3, WITS, 2050
Tel: (011) 717 4500 Fax: (011) 717 4559

Good day, Date: _____

My name is Craig de Beer and I am conducting research for the purposes of obtaining a Masters Degree in Organisational Psychology at the University of the Witwatersrand. As part of this degree I am required to complete a research project and present a thesis on the information obtained. The more responses I receive, the greater the strength of my research. My research aims to investigate the nature of the relationships between different generations in the workplace, in terms of workplace values, perceptions of the work environment, and voluntary turnover intention.

I would like to invite you to take part in my research however please note that in order to participate, you need to meet the following requirements: you need to be over the age of 18 years and employed by [name of organisation to be inserted]. If you meet these criteria and are willing, participation in this research will involve you completing the questionnaire that follows. The questionnaire will take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete. Please note that your participation is completely voluntary and you will not be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way for choosing to complete or to not complete the questionnaire.

No identifying information, such as your name or I.D. number is asked for and no-one at your organisation will be aware of whether you choose to participate or not**.** You will therefore remain anonymous and the data you provide will not be linked to you as an individual in any way. Your completed questionnaire will not be seen by any other person and will only be processed by myself and my supervisor. There are no direct benefits or foreseeable risks to taking part in this study.

If you choose to participate in the study, please complete the questionnaire as carefully and honestly as possible. The questionnaire can be accessed by clicking on the link in this email. Once you have answered the questions, please submit the online questionnaire. Once you have submitted your questionnaire, your identity will not be linked to your responses and thus your anonymity will be ensured. If you do submit your questionnaire, this will be considered as informed consent to participate in the study. The online questionnaire will remain open for completion until [insert date].

Please note that as the study is anonymous, it is not possible to give individual feedback. Feedback of the general results will be given in the form of a summary of the overall findings of the research. This summary can be emailed to you on request using the contact details below. With your permission, we would also like to store your responses permanently in anonymous, electronic form and to possibly use this for future research projects.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me or my supervisor as per the details below. Ethical queries can also be directed to the course coordinator, Dr Colleen Bernstein (Colleen.Bernstein@wits.ac.za). This research will contribute to psychological knowledge and if you choose to complete the questionnaire, your participation in this study would be greatly appreciated.

Kind Regards

Craig de Beer (762269@students.wits.ac.za) Supervisor: Nicky Israel (nicky.israel@wits.ac.za)

Disclaimer: I have read the above information and consent to participate in this study on a voluntary basis. I also understand that I may withdraw at any point until submission of the questionnaire.

Yes	*No*

Appendix D: Participant Information Sheet (Hard-copy)

Psychology
School of Human & Community Development
University of the Witwatersrand
Private Bag 3, WITS, 2050
Tel: (011) 717 4500 Fax: (011) 717 4559

Good day, Date: _____

My name is Craig de Beer and I am conducting research for the purposes of obtaining a Masters Degree in Organisational Psychology at the University of the Witwatersrand. As part of this degree I am required to complete a research project and present a thesis on the information obtained. The more responses I receive, the greater the strength of my research. My research aims to investigate the nature of the relationships between different generations in the workplace, in terms of workplace values, perceptions of the work environment, and voluntary turnover intention.

I would like to invite you to take part in my research, however please note that in order to participate, you need to meet the following requirements: you need to be over the age of 18 years and employed by [name of organisation to be inserted]. If you meet these criteria and are willing, participation in this research will involve you completing the attached questionnaire. The questionnaire will take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete. Please note that your participation is completely voluntary, and you will not be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way for choosing to complete or to not complete the questionnaire.

No identifying information, such as your name or I.D. number is asked for and no-one at your organisation will be aware of whether you choose to participate or not**.** You will therefore remain anonymous and the data you provide will not be linked to you as an individual in any way. Your completed questionnaire will not be seen by any other person and will only be processed by myself and my supervisor. There are no direct benefits or foreseeable risks to taking part in this study.

If you choose to participate in the study, please complete the attached questionnaire as carefully and honestly as possible. Once you have answered the questions, please place the completed hardcopy questionnaire in the box labelled "Craig de Beer Research: Completed Questionnaires", which will be placed in [central location to be confirmed]. This will ensure your anonymity. If you do return your questionnaire, this will be considered as informed consent to participate in the study. Please complete the hardcopy questionnaire and place it in the sealed box by no later than [insert date].

Please note that as the study is anonymous, it is not possible to give individual feedback. Feedback of the general results will be given in the form of a summary of the overall findings of the research. This summary can be emailed to you on request using the contact details below. With your permission, we would also like to store your responses permanently in anonymous, electronic form and to possibly use this for future research projects. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me or my supervisor as per the details below. Ethical queries can also be directed to the course coordinator, Dr Colleen Bernstein (Colleen.Bernstein@wits.ac.za). This research will contribute to psychological knowledge and if you choose to complete the questionnaire, your participation in this study would be greatly appreciated.

Kind Regards

Craig de Beer (762269@students.wits.ac.za) Supervisor: Nicky Israel (nicky.israel@wits.ac.za)

Disclaimer: I have read the above information and consent to participate in this study on a voluntary basis. I also understand that I may withdraw at any point until submission of the questionnaire.

Yes	*No*

Appendix E – Demographic questionnaire

Please provide the following:

Age							
Birth Year							
Gender	Male	Female	Other				
Marital Status	Single	Engaged	Married	Divorced	Widowed	Living Together	Other
Children?	Yes	No	Number of children (if applicable)				
Race	Asian	Black	Coloured	Indian	White	Other	
Job Role (e.g. manager, designer, consultant, advertiser, human resources) _____							
How long have you been working at your current organisation? _____							
How long have you been working in your current position? _____							
How many times have you changed jobs (different organisations) in your career? _____							

Appendix F – Mencl & Lester's (2014) ***Importance of Work-Related Factors (Values) Questionnaire***

Please indicate how important the following values are to you?

	Not important at all	Slightly important	Somewhat important	Important	Fairly important	Very important	A must-have (essential)
1. An organisation that values diversity							
2. Teamwork in the workplace							
3. Flexible work arrangements							
4. Getting immediate feedback and recognition from my supervisor							
5. Work–life balance							
6. Having a job that challenges me							
7. A company that provides continual training and development opportunities							
8. That I am involved in decision-making processes that affect my work							
9. Being financially rewarded for the work I do							
10. Career advancement opportunities within the company							

Appendix G – Mencl & Lester's (2014) ***Perceptions of Work Factors in the Organisation Questionnaire***

Please indicate to what degree you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
If I perform well, I am more likely to be promoted.					
My job allows me to decide on my own how to go about doing my work.					
My organisation makes it easy for people from diverse backgrounds to fit in and be accepted.					
I have the opportunity to develop close friendships in my job.					
I receive a great deal of information from my manager and co-workers about my job performance.					
I am easily able to balance the demands of my work and personal/family life.					
I receive sufficient training to do my job.					
I have sufficient authority to fulfil my job responsibilities.					
I am satisfied with my take-home pay.					
Where I work, employees are developed and advanced without regard to the gender or the racial, religious, or cultural background of the individuals.					
I have the chance in my job to get to know other people.					
Other people in the organisation, such as managers and co-workers, provide information about the effectiveness (e.g., quality and quantity) of my job performance.					

I have sufficient time away from my job to maintain adequate work and personal/family life balance.					
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Education and training are integral parts of this company's culture.					
I have enough input in deciding how to accomplish my work.					
I am satisfied with my most recent raise					
Managers demonstrate through their actions that they want to hire and retain and diverse workforce.					
I have the opportunity to meet with others in my work.					
I receive feedback on my performance from other people in my organization (such as my manager or co-workers).					
When I take a vacation, I am able to separate myself from my work and enjoy myself.					
I have had sufficient/adequate job-related training.					
I have enough freedom over how I do my job.					
I am satisfied with my current salary.					
I feel that my immediate manager does a good job of managing people with diverse backgrounds (in terms of age, sex, race, religion, or culture).					
My supervisor is concerned about the welfare of the people that work for him/her.					
I am satisfied with the amount of recognition I receive when I do a good job.					
All in all, I am successful in balancing my work and personal/family life.					
If I felt that I needed more job-related training, the company would provide it.					

My job gives me a chance to use my personal initiative or judgment in carrying out the work.					
I am satisfied with the raises I have typically received in the past.					
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
People I work with take a personal interest in me.					
Generally, I feel this company rewards employees who make an extra effort.					
I often feel drained when I go home from work because of work pressures and problems.					
My job allows me to make a lot of decisions on my own.					
I am satisfied with my overall level of pay.					
People I work with are friendly.					
There is a strong link between how well I perform my job and the likelihood of receiving high-performance appraisal ratings.					
My job provides me with significant autonomy in making decisions.					
I am satisfied with the size of my current salary.					
My job allows me to make decisions about what methods I use to complete my work.					
My job gives me considerable opportunity for independence and freedom in how I do the work.					

Appendix H – Kantor's (2013) ***Voluntary Turnover Intention Scale***

Please select the most appropriate answer for each question [by placing a cross in the relevant box – for hard copy administration only]

1. Which of the following statements most clearly reflects your feelings about your future with this organisation in the next year?	
	I definitely will not leave
	I probably will not leave.
	I am uncertain
	I probably will leave
	I definitely will leave

2. How do you feel about leaving this organisation?	
	I am presently looking and planning to leave
	I am seriously considering leaving in the near future
	I have no feelings about this one way or the other
	As far as I can see ahead, I intend to stay with this organisation
	It is very unlikely that I would ever consider leaving this organisation

3. If you were completely free to choose, would you prefer or not prefer to continue working for this organisation?	
	Prefer very much to continue working for this organisation
	Prefer to work here
	Don't care either way
	Prefer not to work here
	Prefer very much not to continue working for this organisation

4. How important is it to you personally that you spend your career in this organisation rather than some other organisation?	
	It is of no importance at all
	I have mixed feelings about its importance
	It is of some importance
	It is fairly important
	It is very important to me to spend my career in this organisation

5. If the economic climate were better:	
	I would definitely want to leave my current job
	I would possibly consider leaving my current job
	I have no feelings about this one way or the other
	I would not want to leave my current job
	I would definitely not want to leave my current job

Appendix I – Histograms (Organisation A)

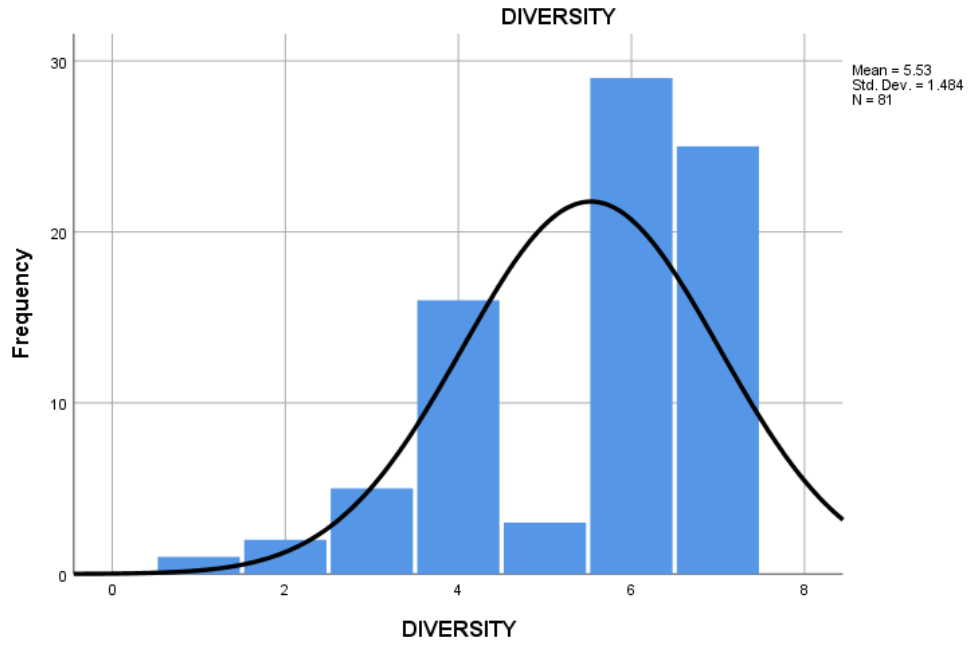

Figure 1

Histogram for Work-Related Factors (Values) scale: Diversity

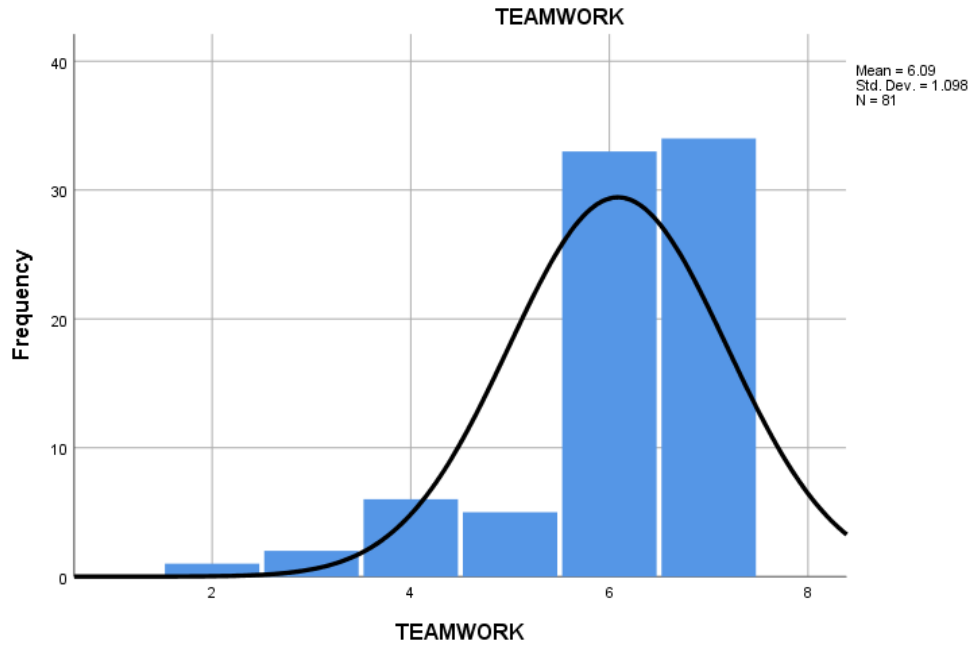

Figure 2

Histogram for Work-Related Factors (Values) scale: Teamwork

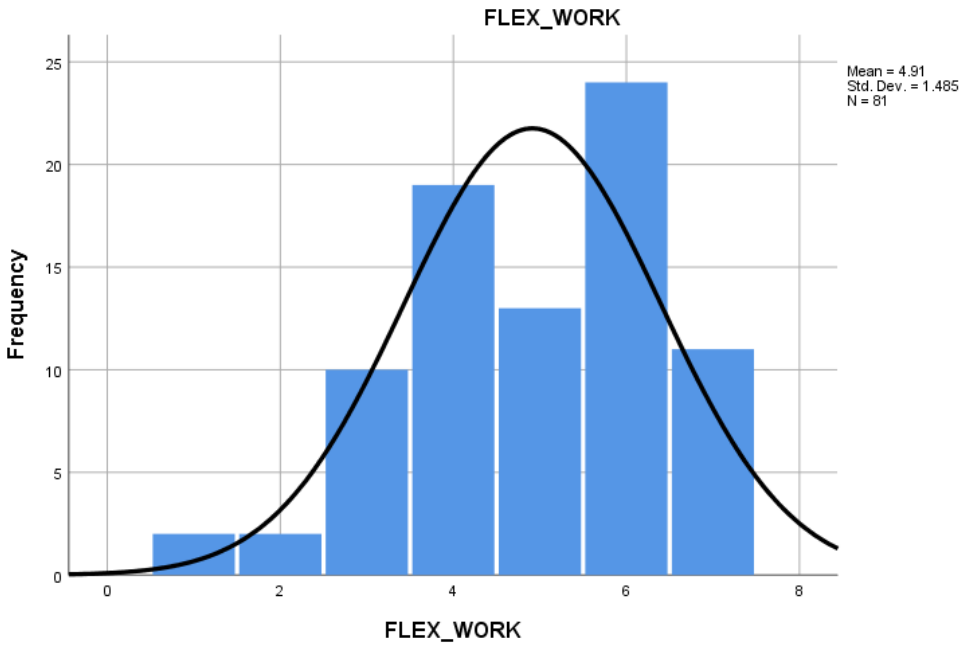

Figure 3

Histogram for Work-Related Factors (Values) scale: Flexible Work

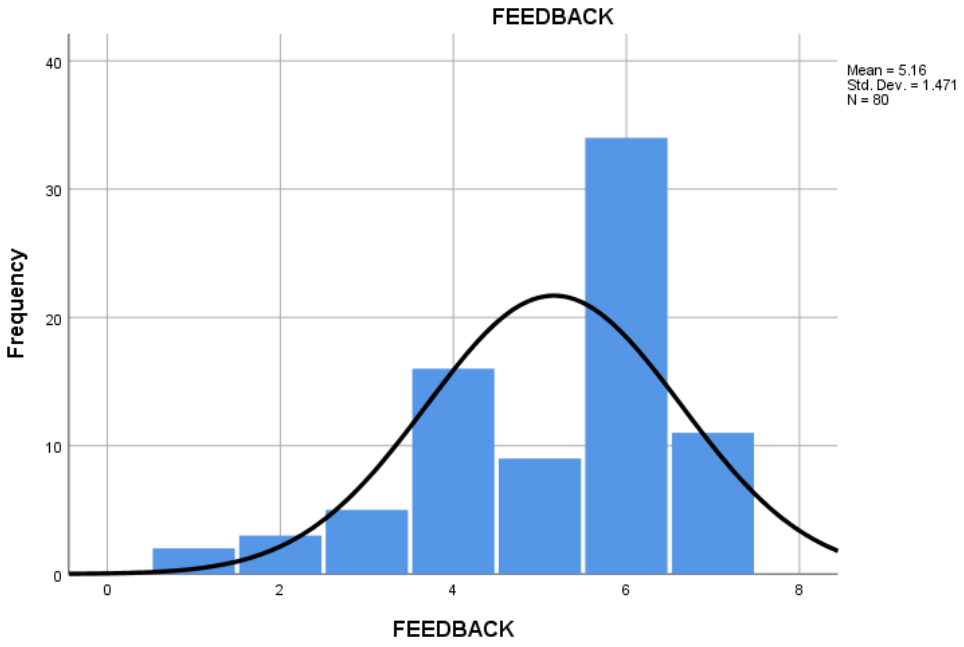

Figure 4

Histogram for Work-Related Factors (Values) scale: Feedback

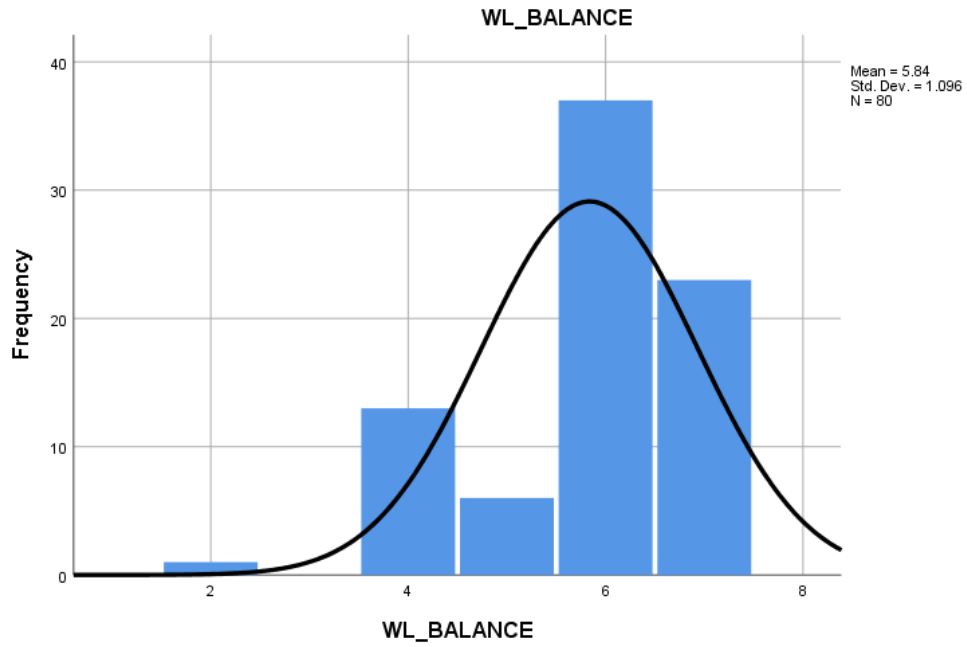

Figure 5

Histogram for Work-Related Factors (Values) scale: Work-Life Balance

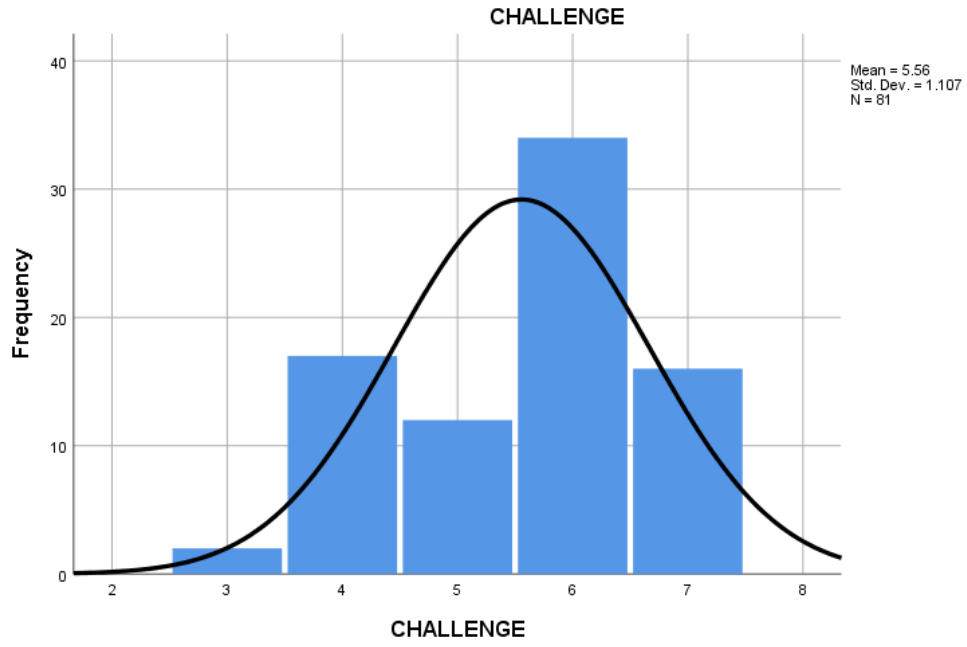

Figure 6

Histogram for Work-Related Factors (Values) scale: Challenge

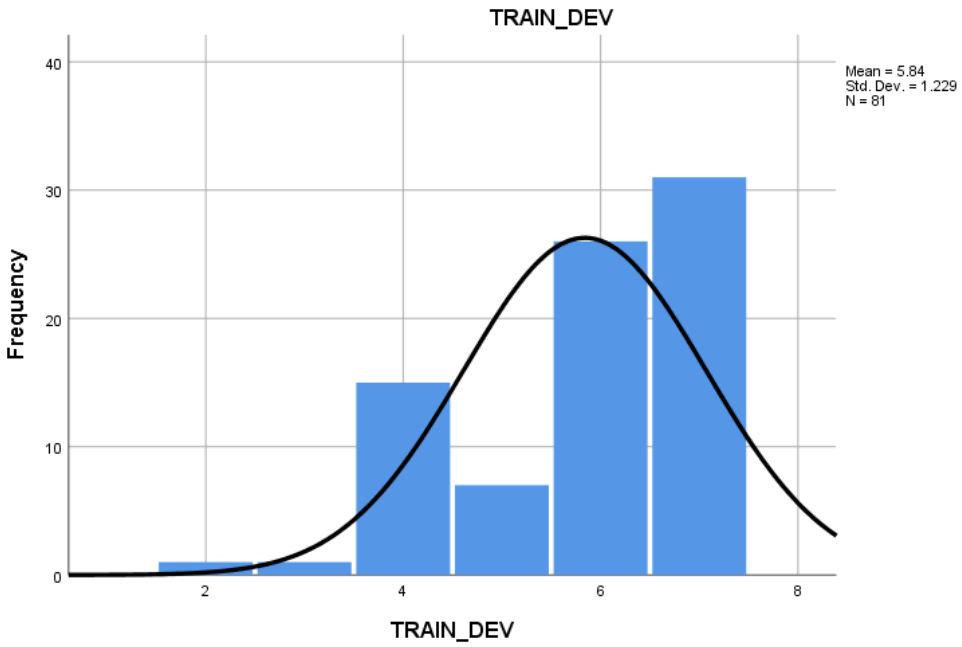

Figure 7

Histogram for Work-Related Factors (Values) scale: Training & Development

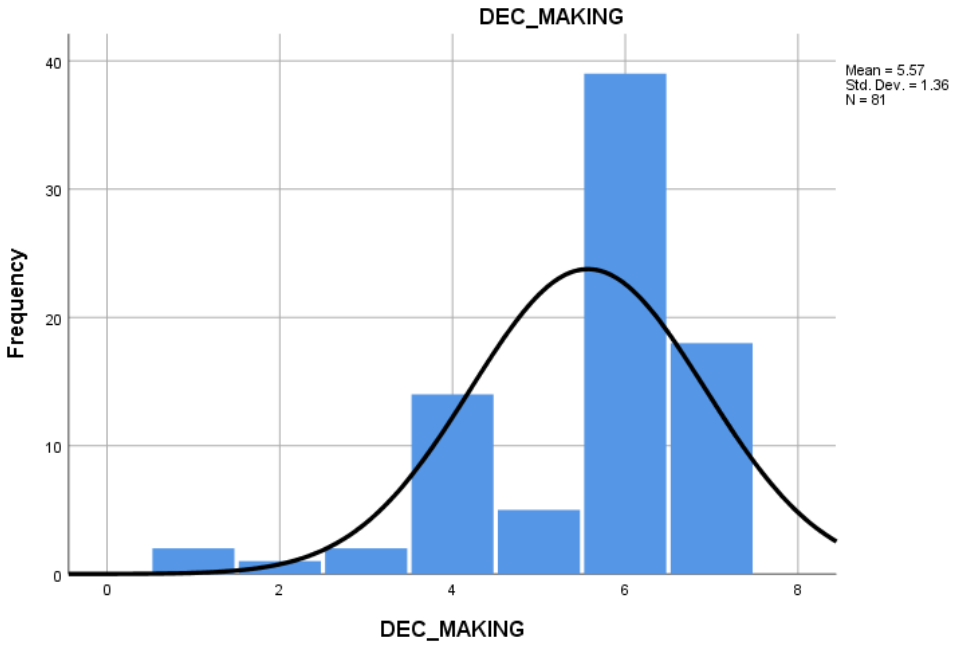

Figure 8

Histogram for Work-Related Factors (Values) scale: Decision-making Involvement

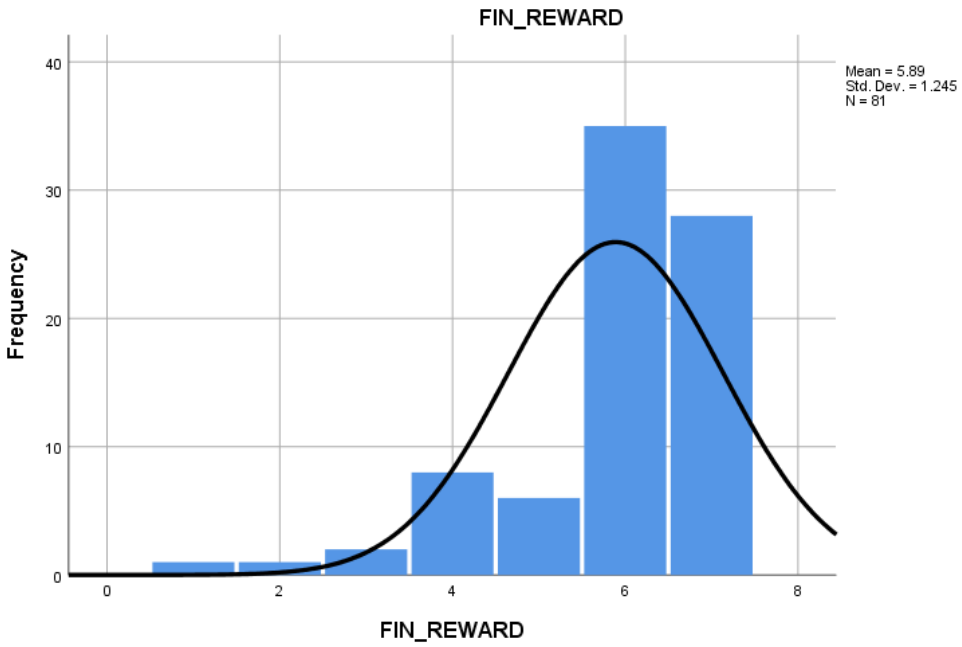

Figure 9

Histogram for Work-Related Factors (Values) scale: Financial Rewards

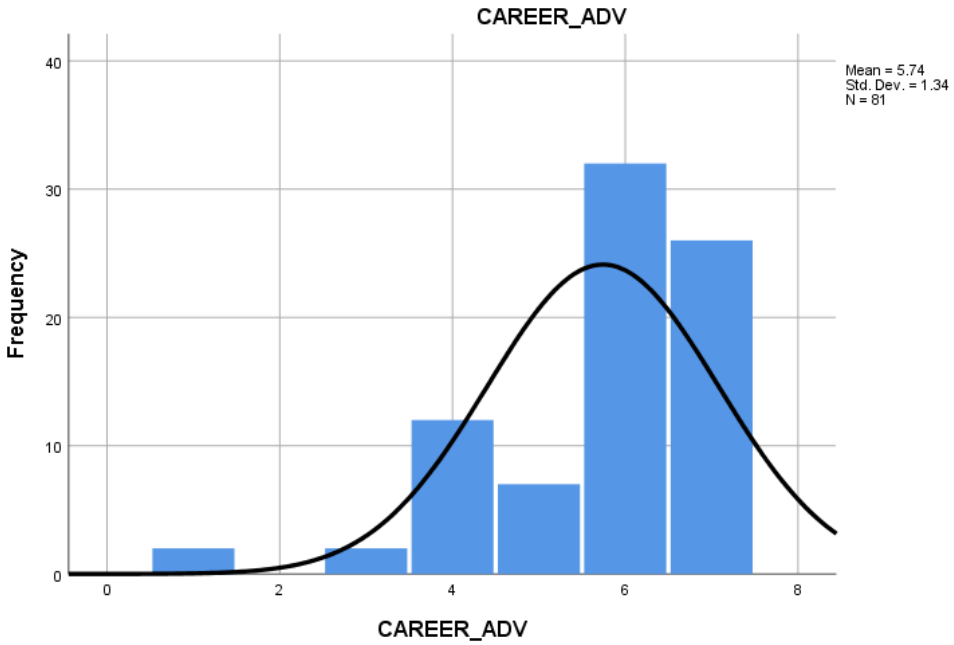

Figure 10

Histogram for Work-Related Factors (Values) scale: Career Advancement Opportunities

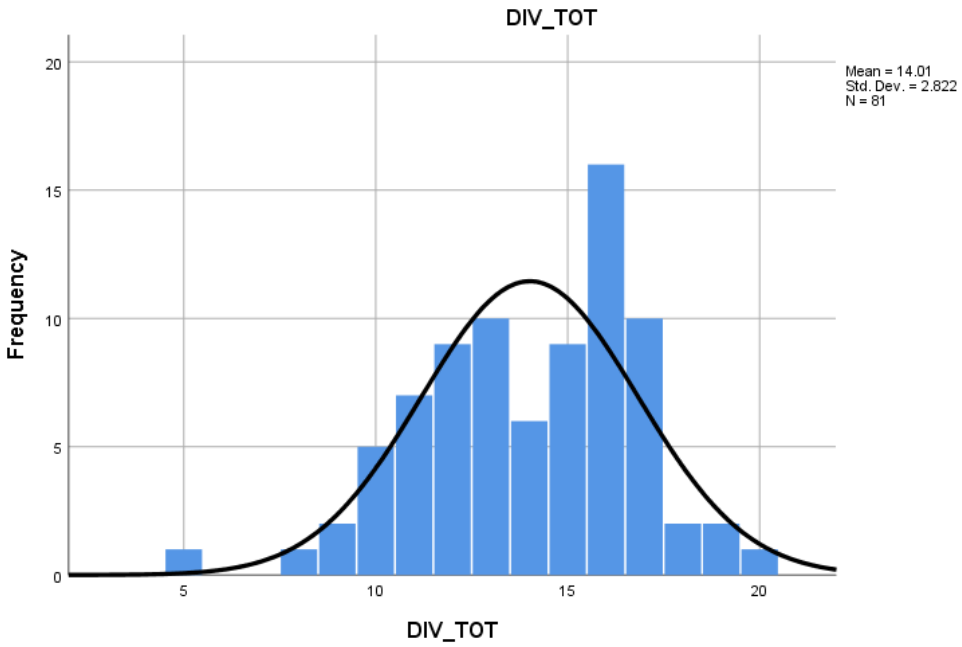

Figure 11

Histogram for Perceptions of Work Factors in the Organisation Questionnaire: Diversity

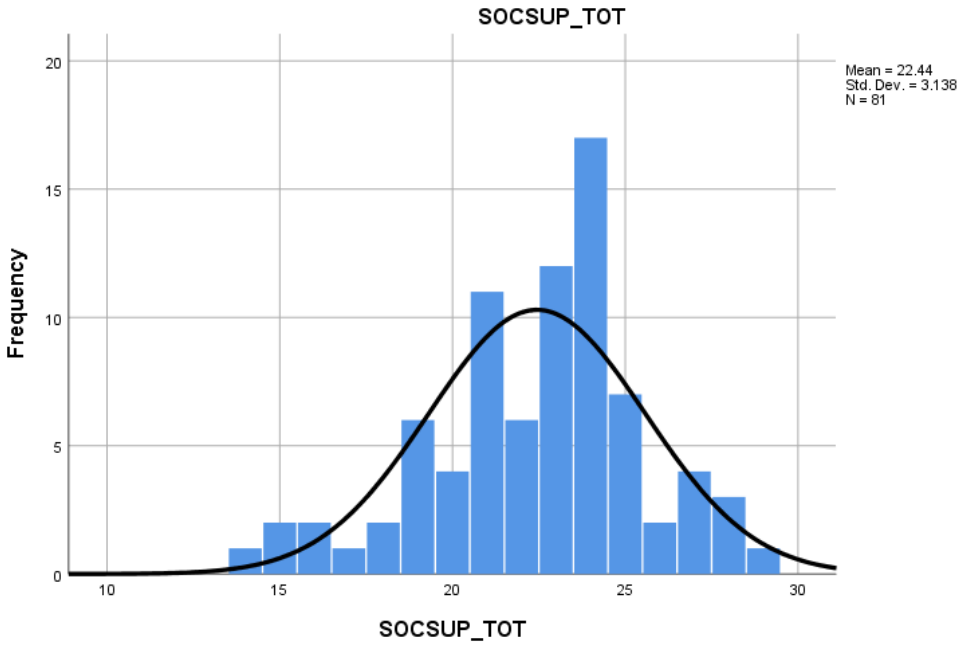

Figure 12

Histogram for Perceptions of Work Factors in the Organisation Questionnaire: Social Support

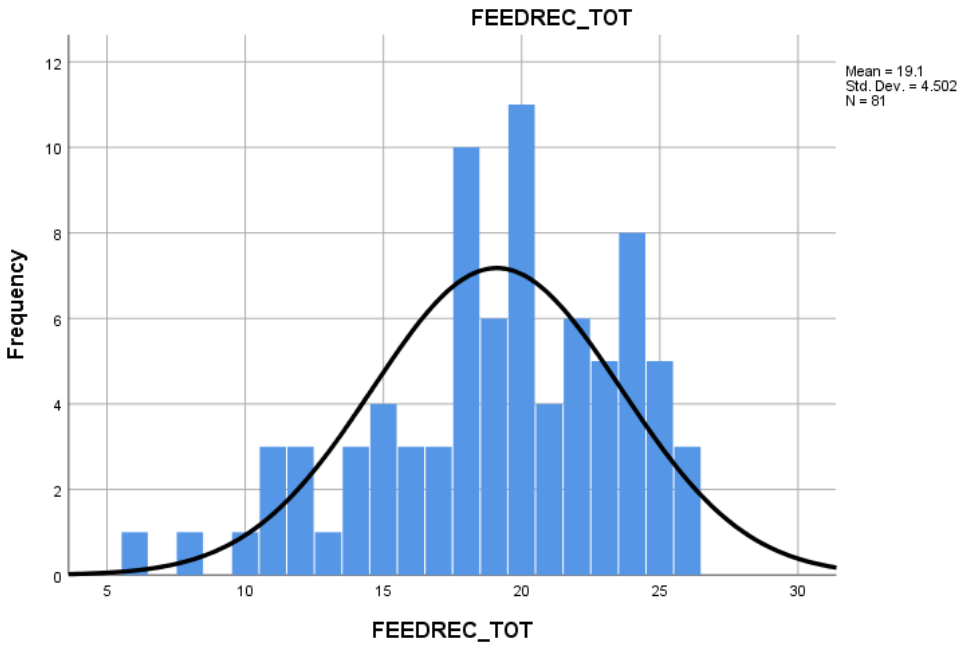

Figure 13

Histogram for Perceptions of Work Factors in the Organisation Questionnaire: Feedback & Recognition

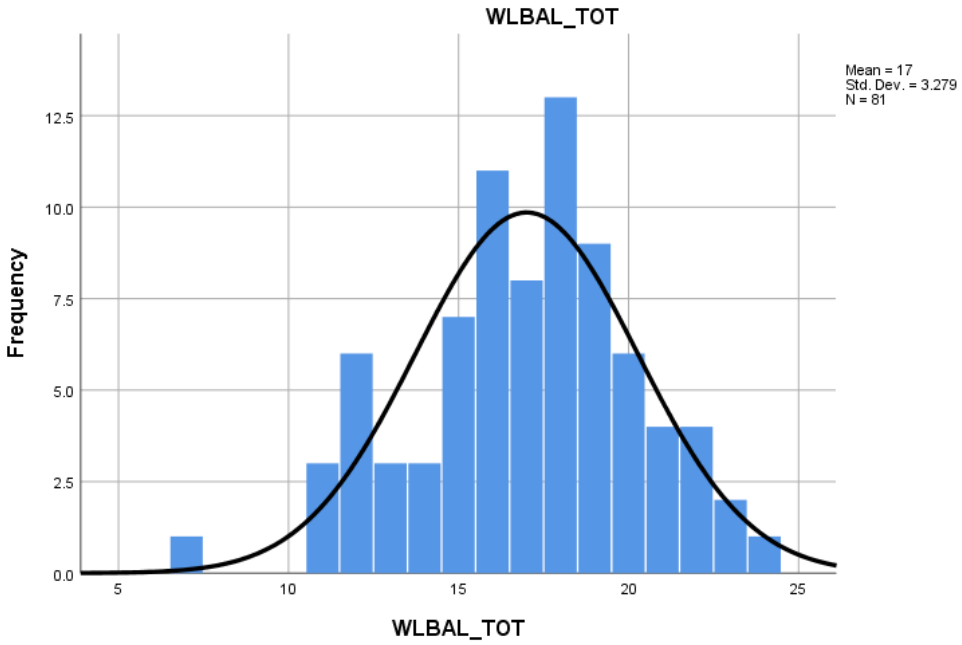

Figure 14

Histogram for Perceptions of Work Factors in the Organisation Questionnaire: Work-Life Balance

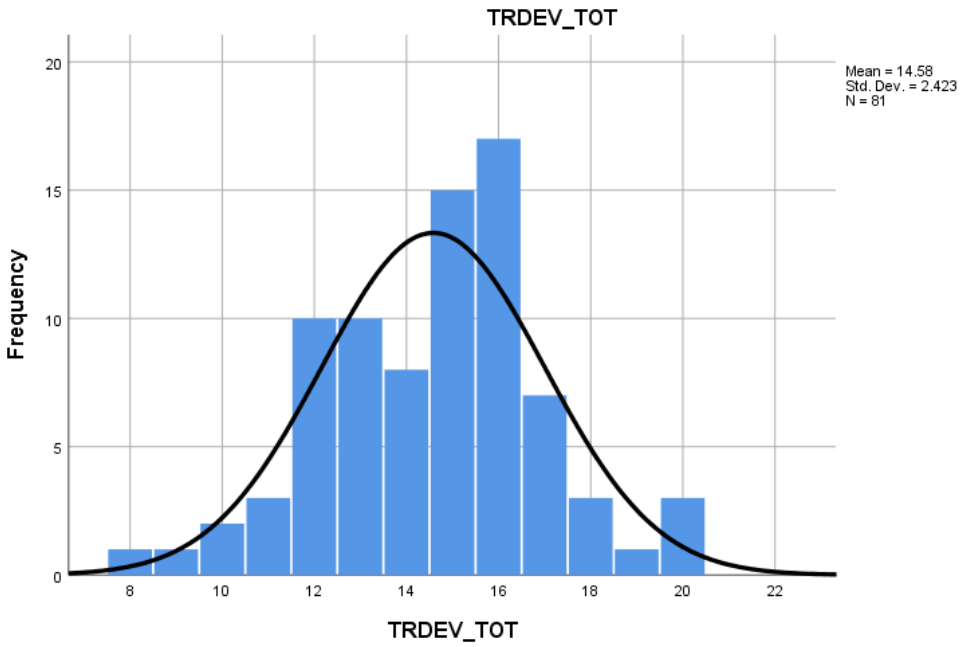

Figure 15

Histogram for Perceptions of Work Factors in the Organisation Questionnaire: Training & Development

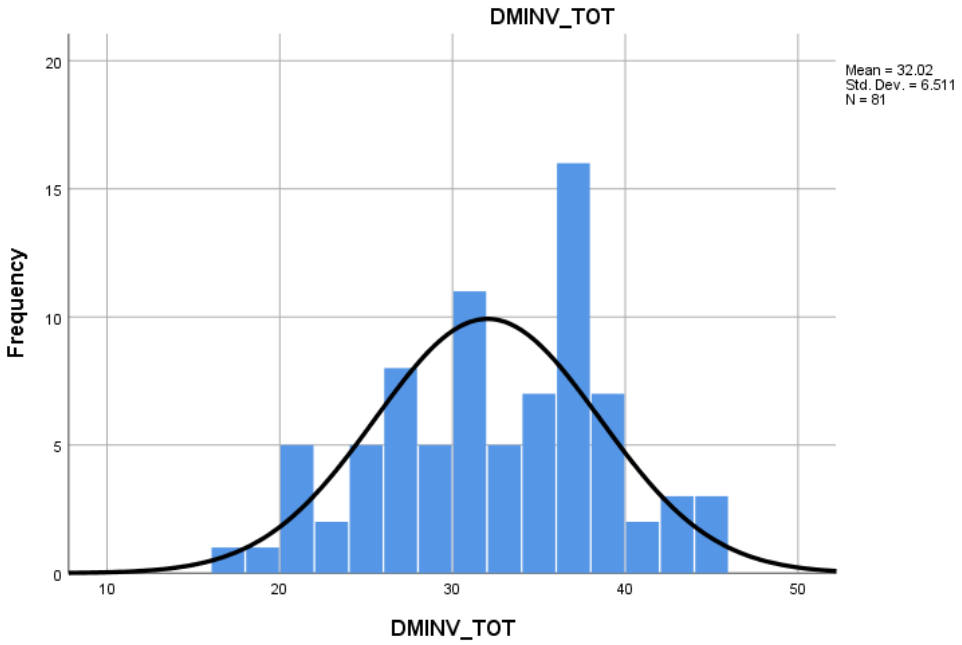

Figure 16

Histogram for Perceptions of Work Factors in the Organisation Questionnaire: Decision-making Involvement

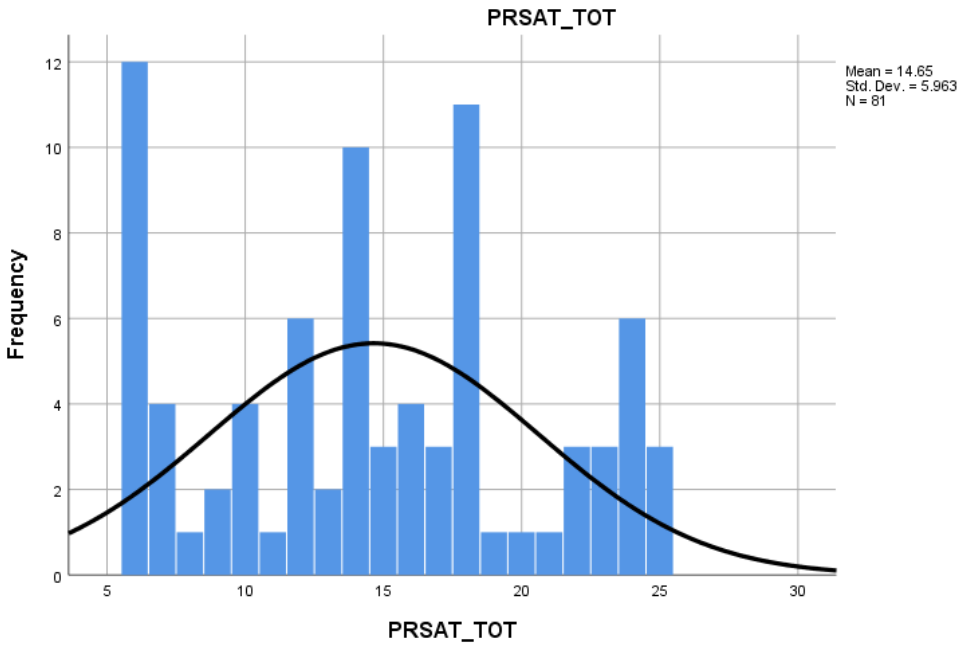

Figure 17

Histogram for Perceptions of Work Factors in the Organisation Questionnaire: Pay & Raise Satisfaction

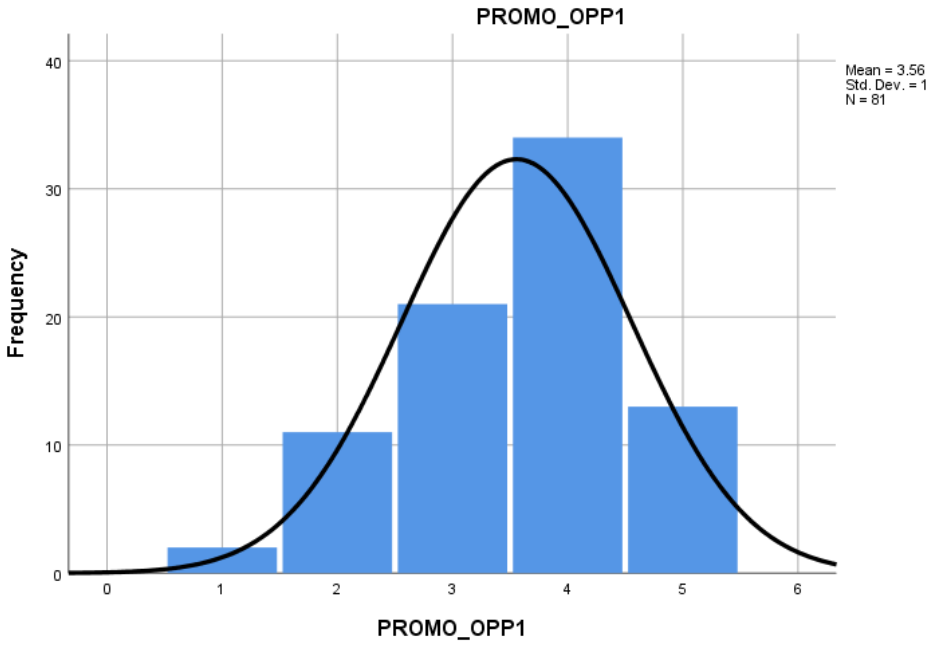

Figure 18

Histogram for Perceptions of Work Factors in the Organisation Questionnaire: Promotion Opportunities

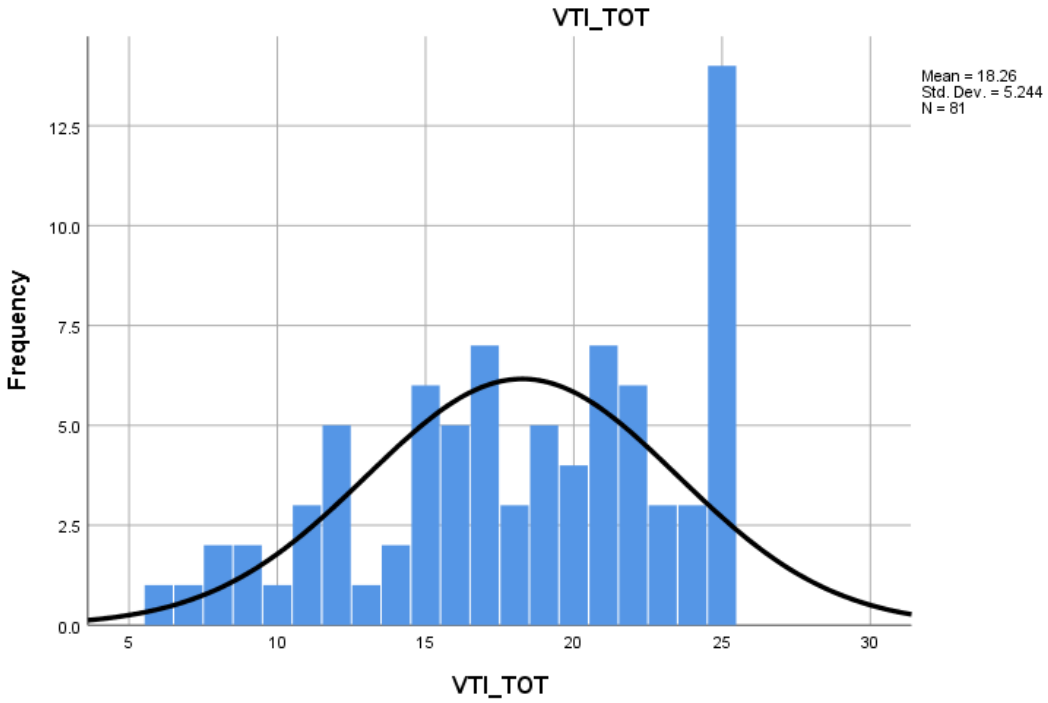

Figure 19

Histogram for Voluntary Turnover Intension Scale

Appendix J - Non-significant Correlations (Organisation A)

Table 17

Non-significant Spearman's correlation coefficients (r_s) for Work-Related Factors (Values) and Age

Variable	r_s	Sig. (2-tailed)	N
Work-Related Factors (Values)			
Diversity	-0.210	0.060	81
Teamwork	-0.001	0.993	81
Flexible Work	-0.159	0.156	81
Feedback	-0.073	0.520	80
W-L Balance	-0.014	0.899	80
Challenge	0.067	0.553	81
Training & Development	-0.215	0.054	81
Decision-Making	0.111	0.325	81

Appendix K - Non-significant Correlations (Organisation A)

Table 18

Non-significant Pearson's correlation coefficients (r) for Perception of Work Factors, and Age:

Variable	r	Sig. (2-tailed)	N
Perceptions of Work Factors			
Diversity	0.193	0.085	81
Work-Life Balance	0.151	0.179	81
Promotion Opportunities	-0.084	0.455	81

Appendix L – Histograms (Organisation B)

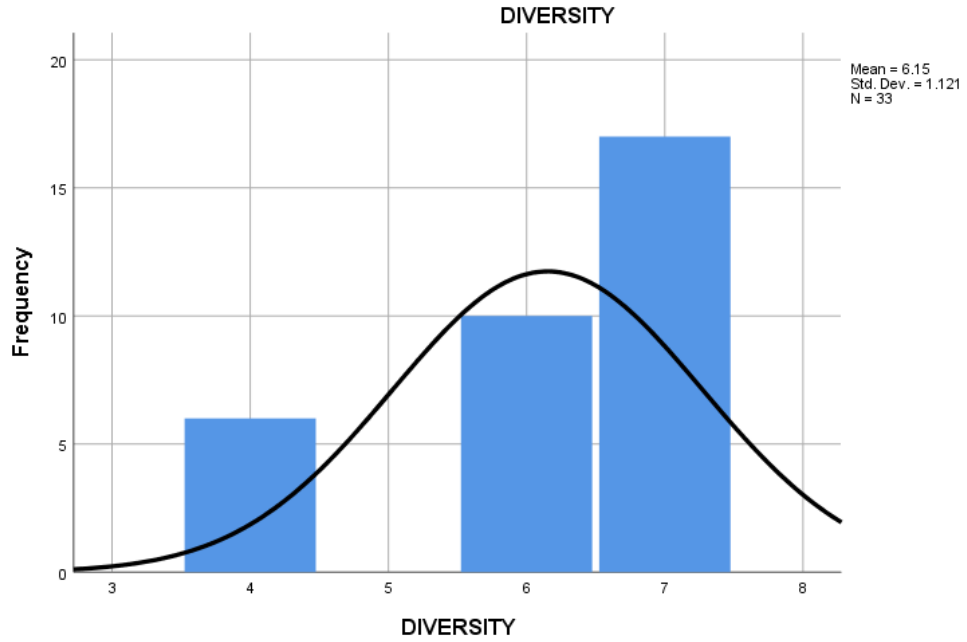

Figure 20

Histogram for Work-Related Factors (Values) scale: Diversity

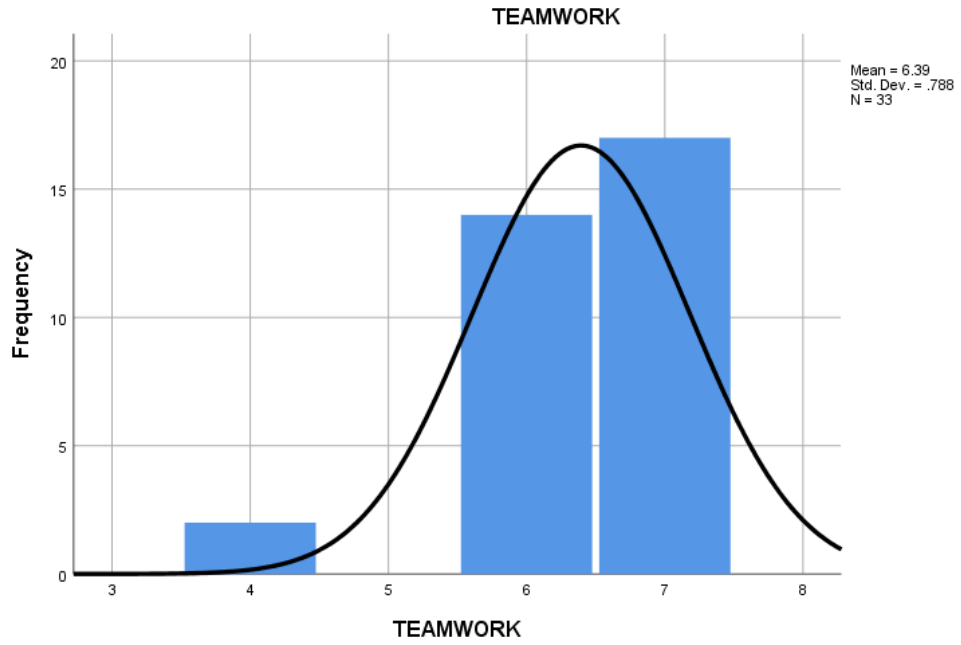

Figure 21

Histogram for Work-Related Factors (Values) scale: Teamwork

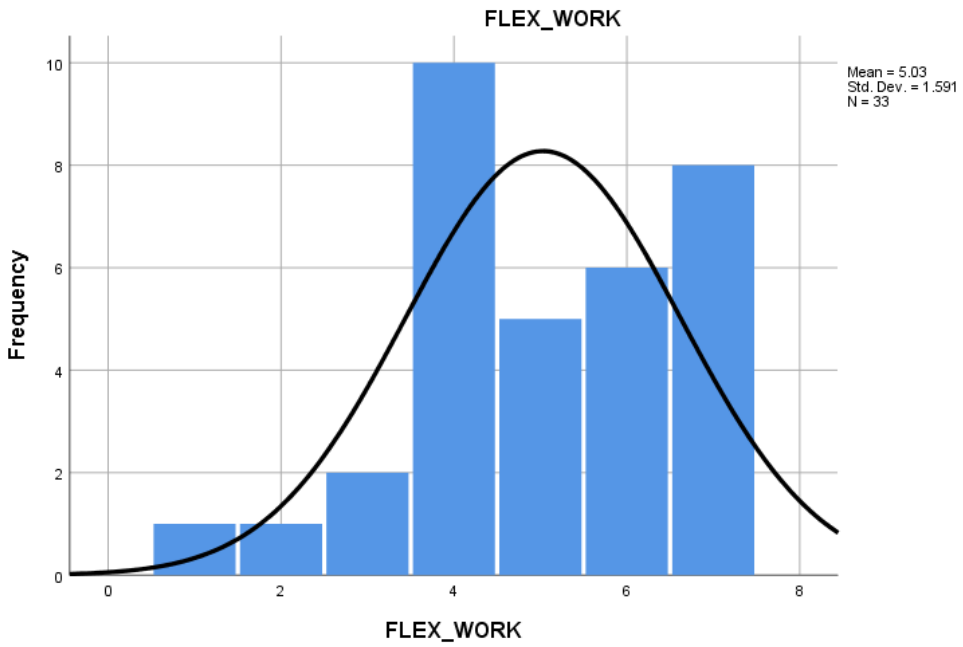

Figure 22

Histogram for Work-Related Factors (Values) scale: Flexible Work

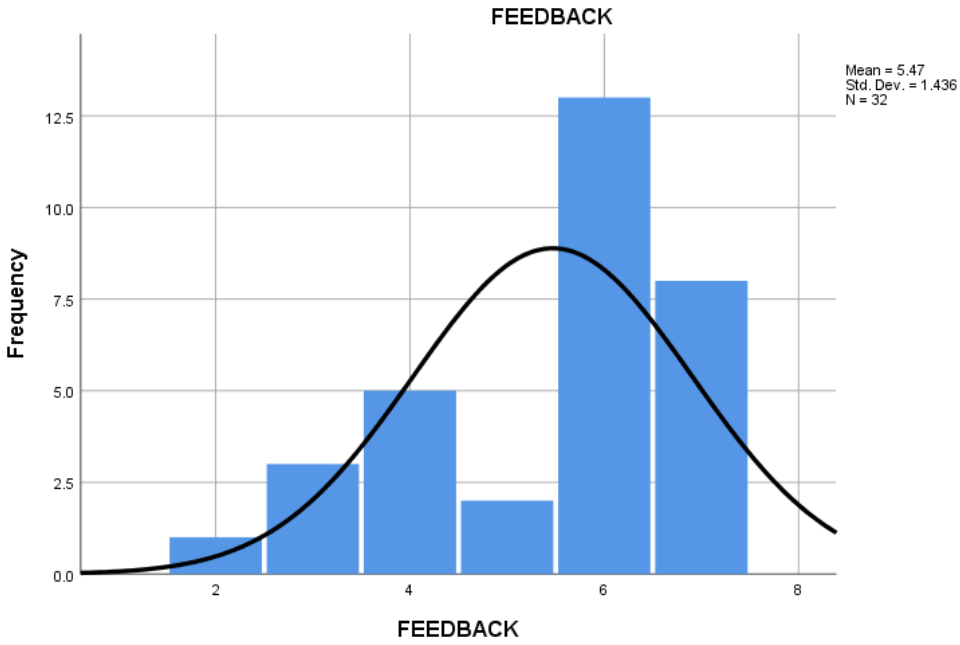

Figure 23

Histogram for Work-Related Factors (Values) scale: Feedback

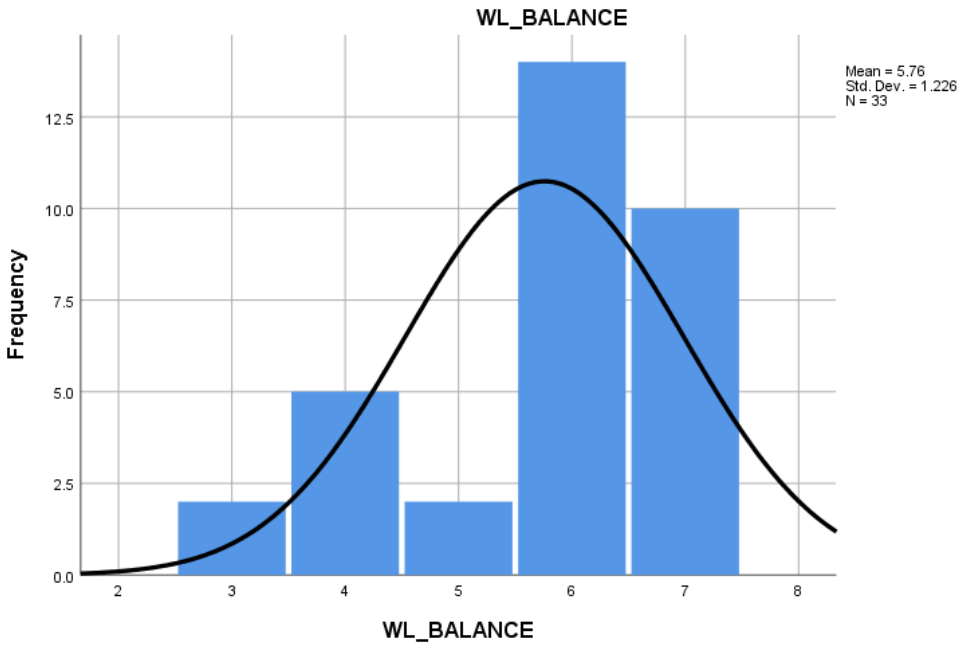

Figure 24

Histogram for Work-Related Factors (Values) scale: Work-Life Balance

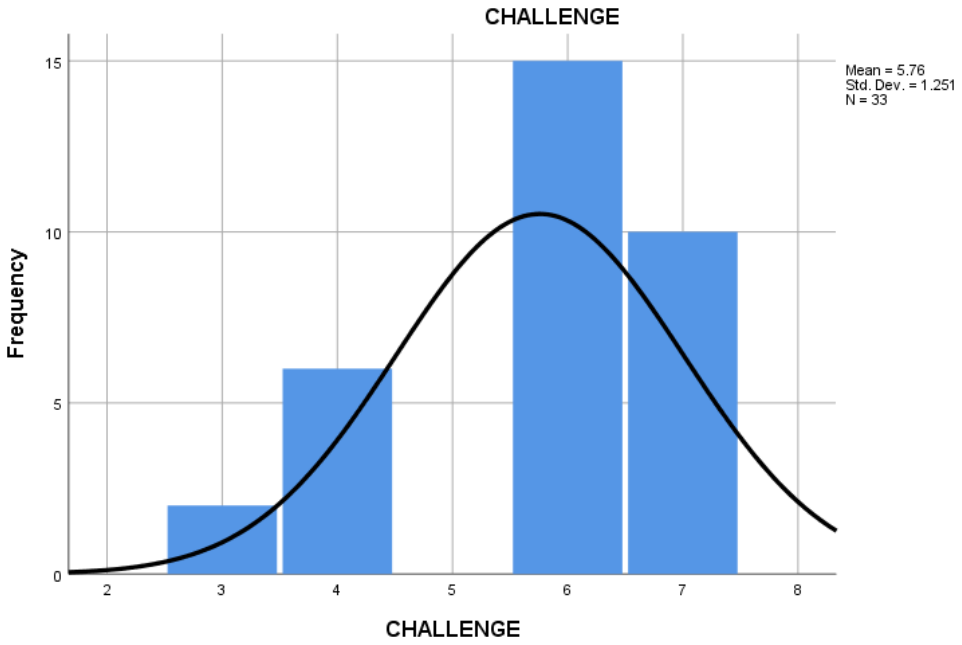

Figure 25

Histogram for Work-Related Factors (Values) scale: Challenge

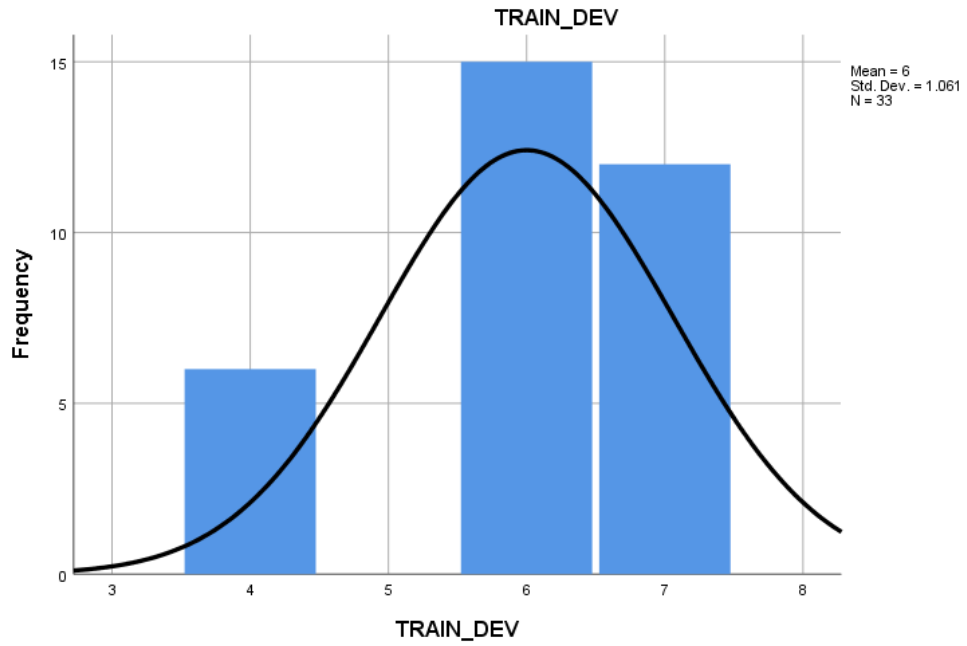

Figure 26

Histogram for Work-Related Factors (Values) scale: Training & Development

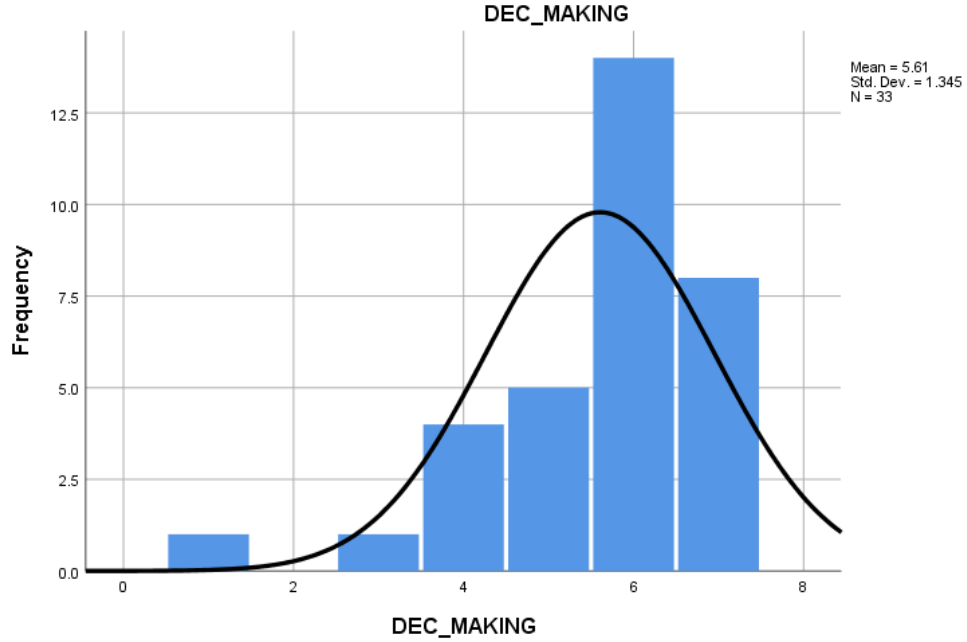

Figure 27

Histogram for Work-Related Factors (Values) scale: Decision-making Involvement

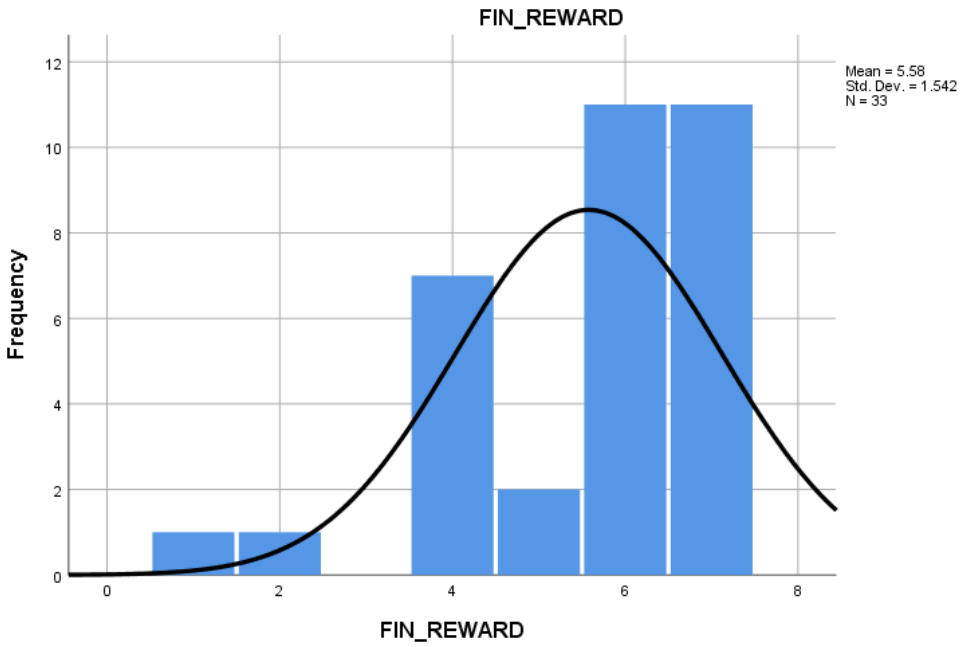

Figure 28

Histogram for Work-Related Factors (Values) scale: Financial Reward

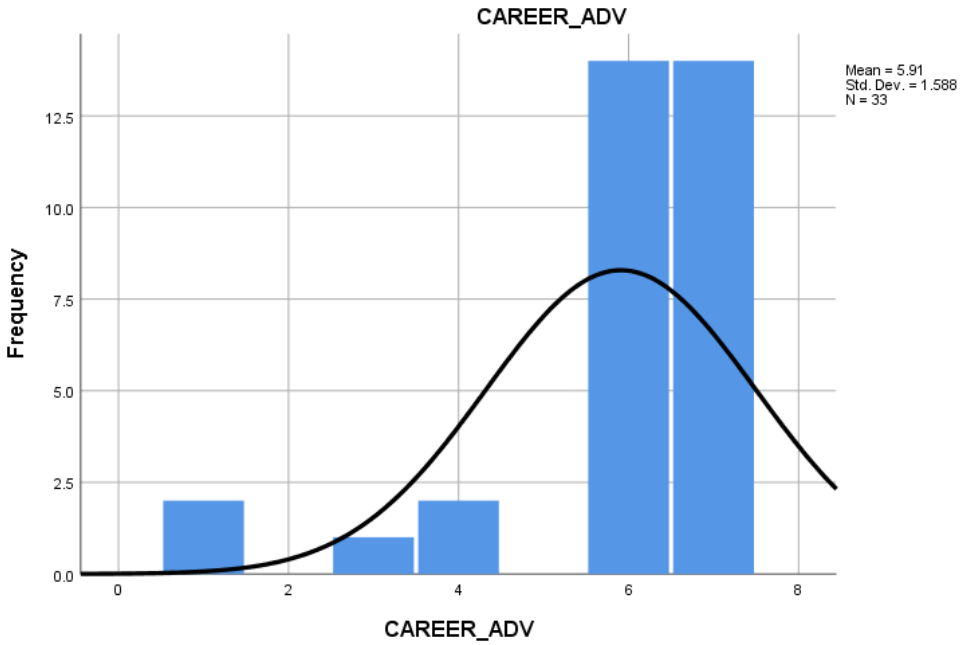

Figure 29

Histogram for Work-Related Factors (Values) scale: Career Advancement

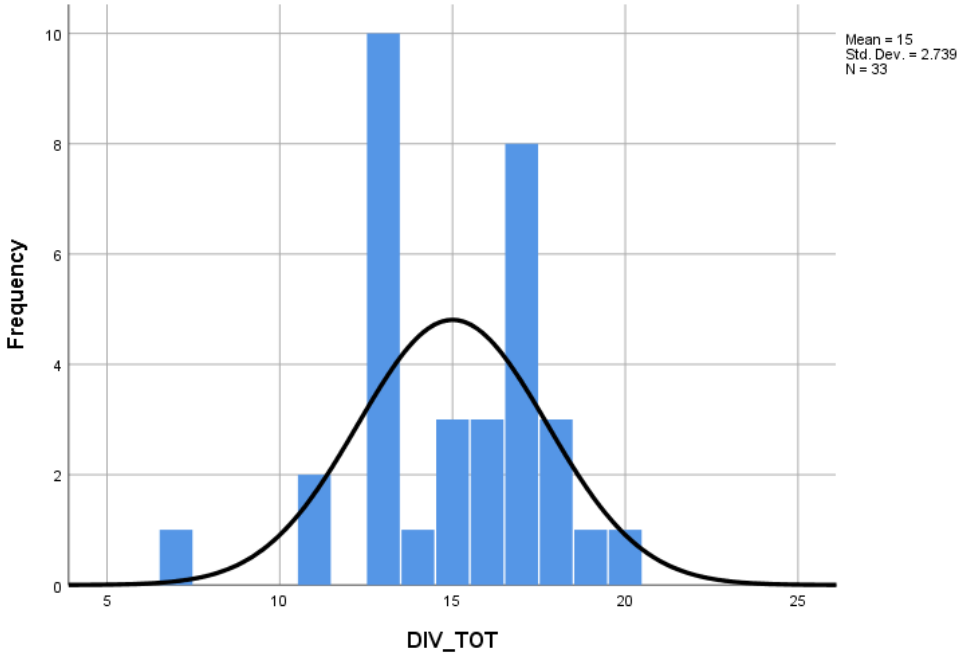

Figure 30

Histogram for Perceptions of Work Factors in the Organisation Questionnaire: Diversity

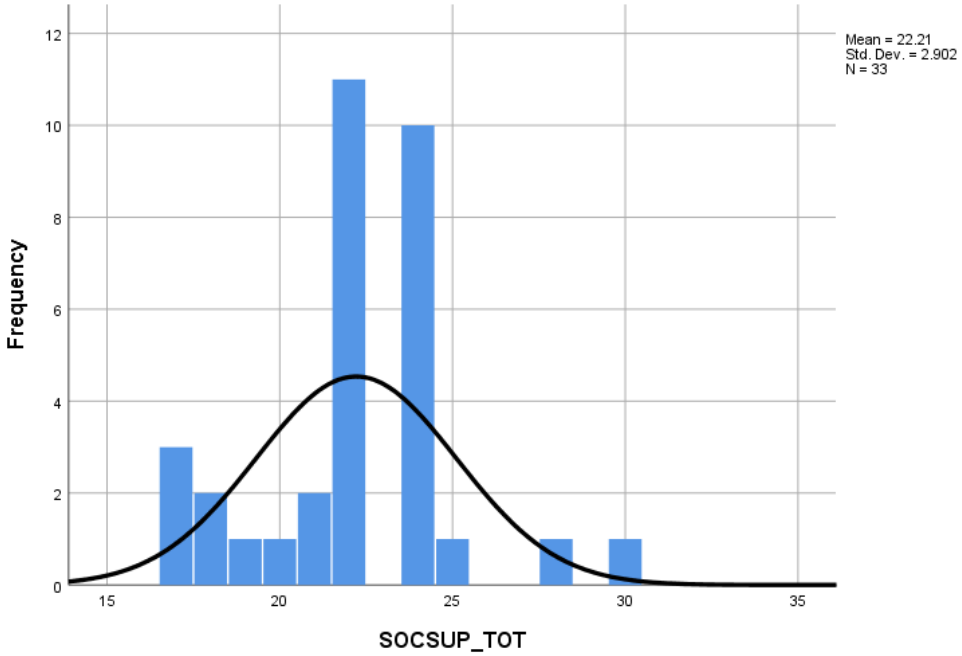

Figure 31

Histogram for Perceptions of Work Factors in the Organisation Questionnaire: Social Support

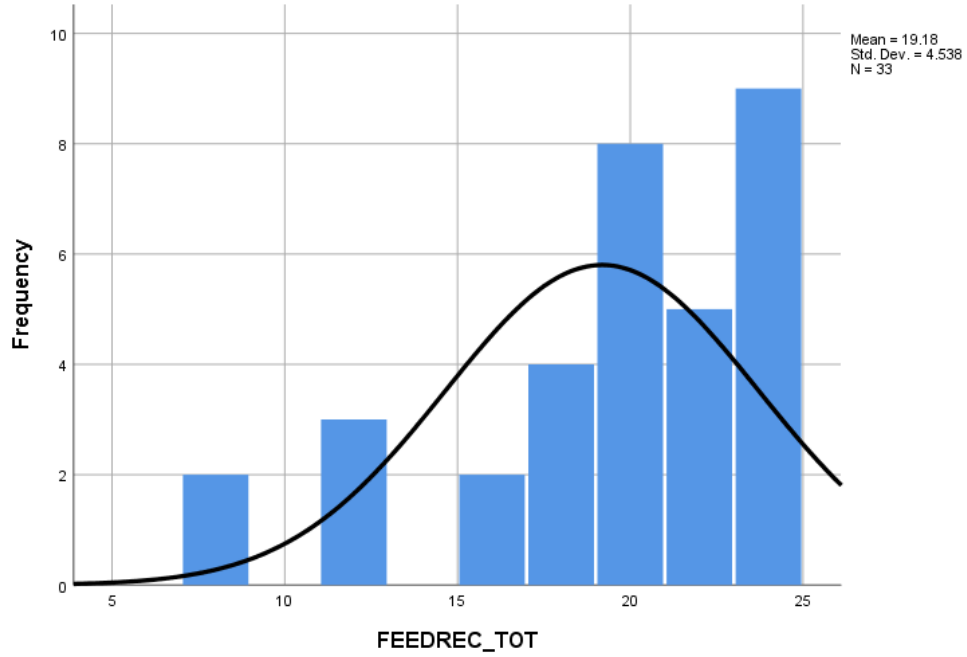

Figure 32

Histogram for Perceptions of Work Factors in the Organisation Questionnaire: Feedback & Recognition

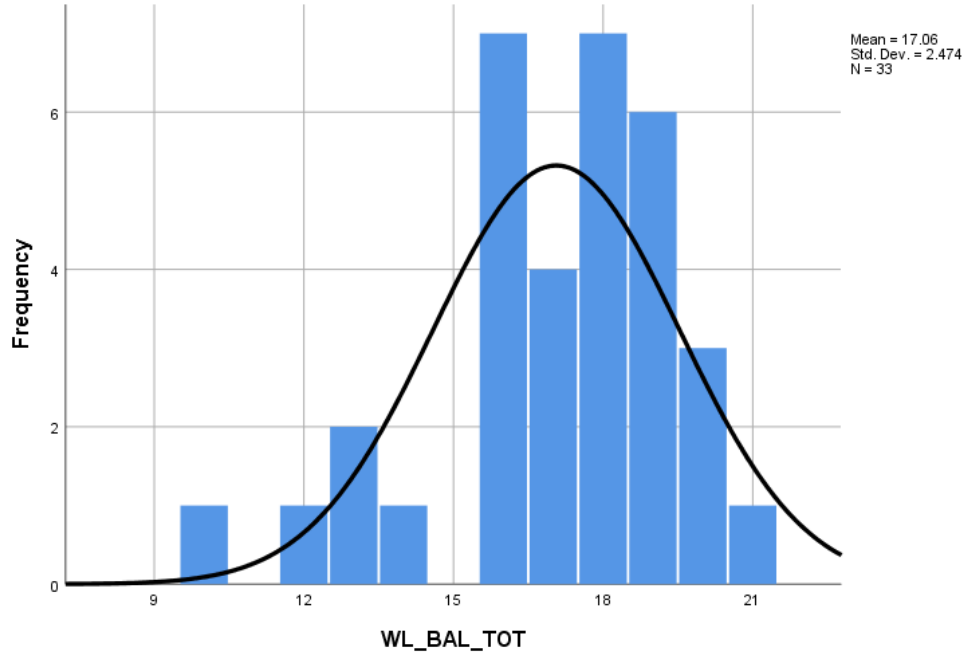

Figure 33

Histogram for Perceptions of Work Factors in the Organisation Questionnaire: Work-Life Balance

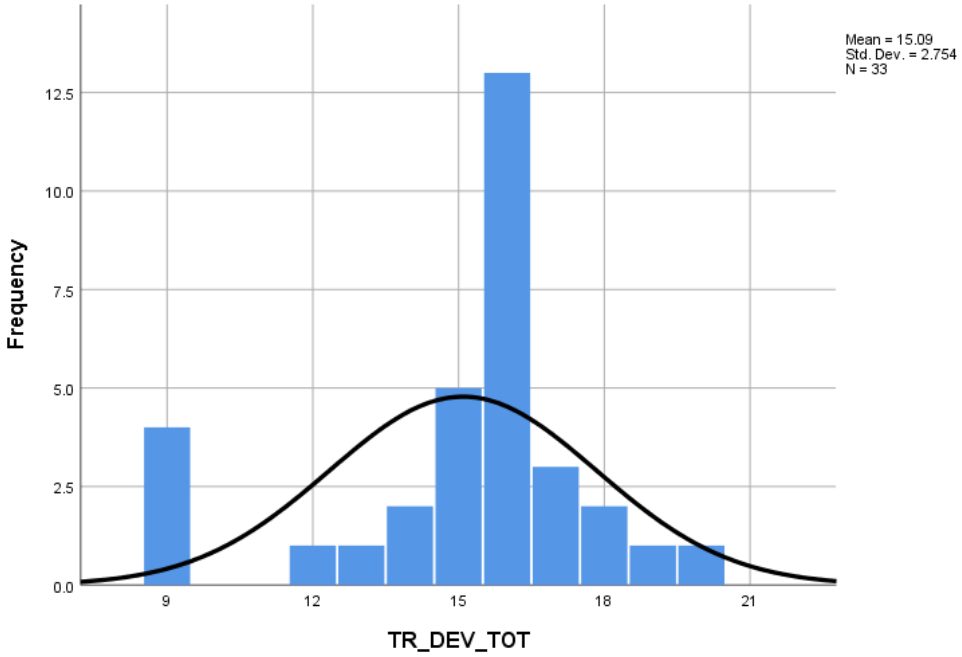

Figure 34

Histogram for Perceptions of Work Factors in the Organisation Questionnaire: Training & Development

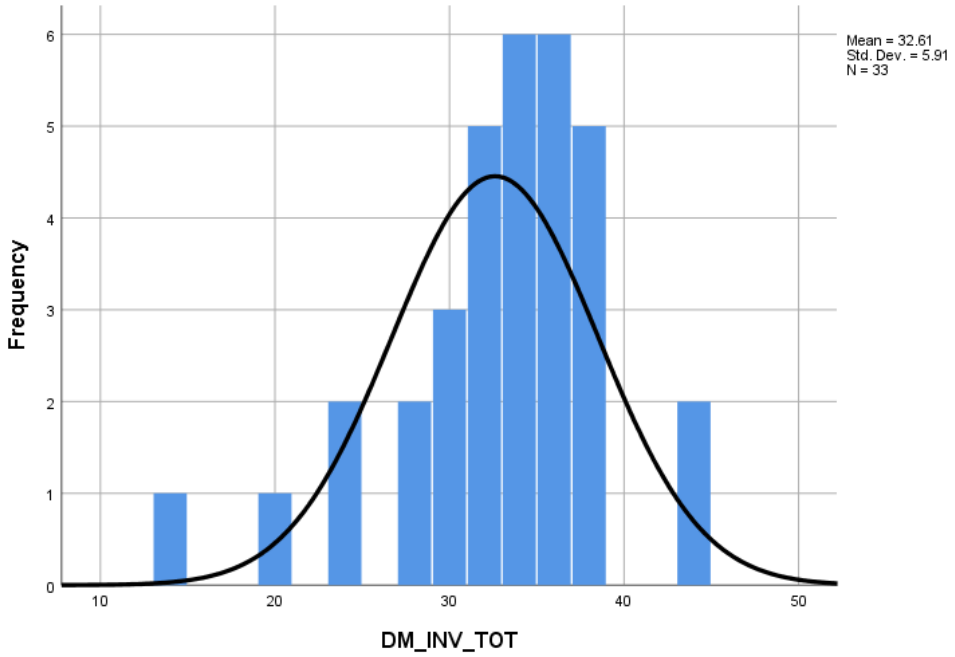

Figure 35

Histogram for Perceptions of Work Factors in the Organisation Questionnaire: Decision-making Involvement

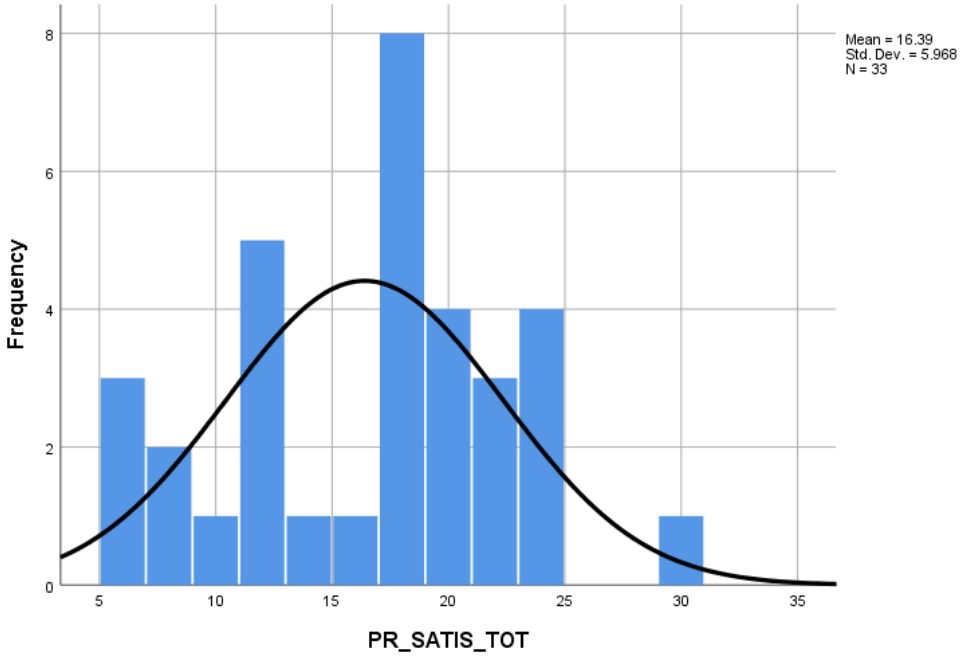

Figure 36

Histogram for Perceptions of Work Factors in the Organisation Questionnaire: Pay & Raise Satisfaction

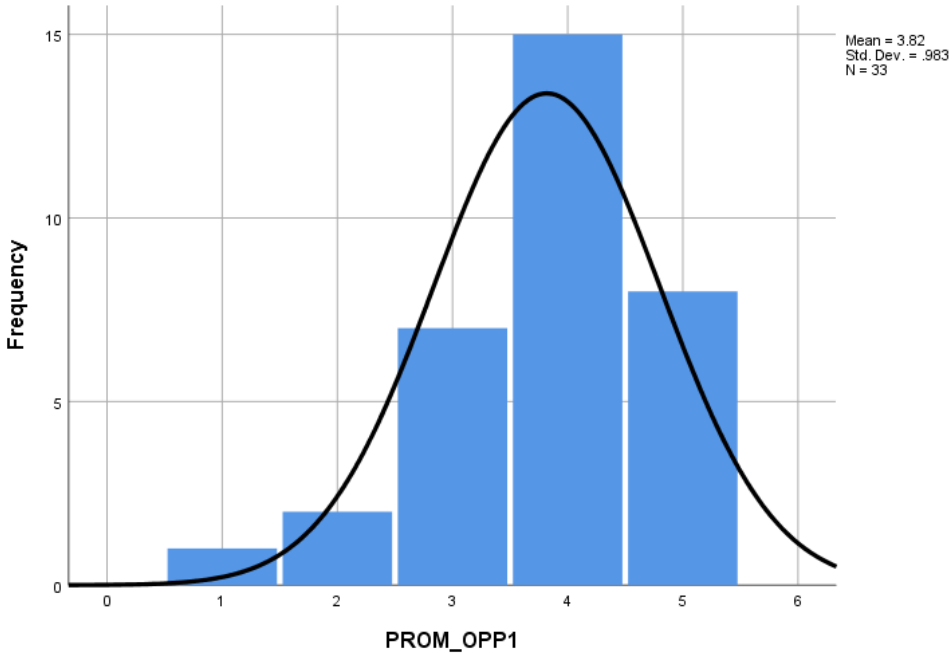

Figure 37

Histogram for Perceptions of Work Factors in the Organisation Questionnaire: Promotion Opportunities

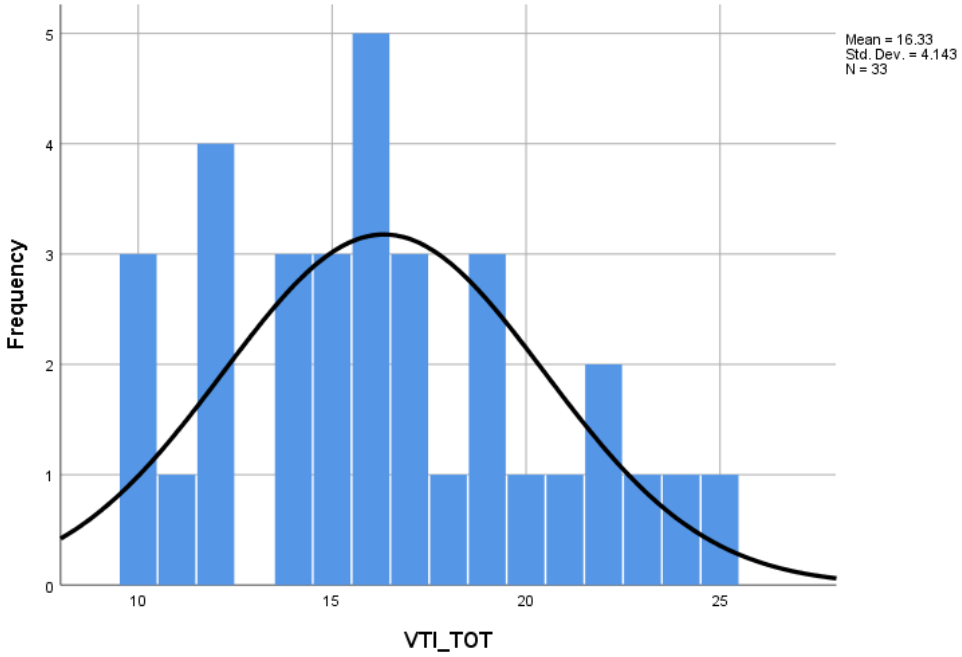

Figure 38

Histogram for Voluntary Turnover Intension Scale

Appendix M - Non-significant Correlations (Organisation B)

Table 19

Non-significant Spearman's correlation coefficients (r_s) for Work-Related Factors (Values) and Age

Variable	r_s	Sig. (2-tailed)	N
Work-Related Factors (Values)			
Diversity	-0.252	0.157	33
Teamwork	-0.007	0.696	33
Feedback	-0.204	0.262	33
W-L Balance	-0.181	0.314	33
Training & Development	-0.053	0.772	33
Decision-Making	0.026	0.887	33
Financial Rewards	-0.010	0.957	33
Career Advancement	-0.171	0.342	33

Appendix N - Non-significant Correlations (Organisation B)

Table 20

Non-significant correlation coefficients (r and r_s) for Perception of Work Factors, Voluntary Turnover Intention, and Age:

Variable	r	Sig. (2-tailed)	N
Perceptions of Work Factors			
Diversity	-0.205	0.252	33
Social Support	0.053	0.769	33
Promotion Opportunities	-0.117	0.515	33
	r_s		
Feedback & Recognition	0.282	0.111	33
Work-Life Balance	0.018	0.923	33
Training & Development	-0.063	0.728	33
Decision-making Involvement	0.215	0.229	33
	r		
Voluntary Turnover Intention	0.270	0.129	33

Appendix O - Ethics clearance certificate

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (SCHOOL OF HUMAN & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE	**PROTOCOL NUMBER: MORG/18/003 IH**
PROJECT TITLE:	Workplace generations in South Africa
INVESTIGATORS	De Beer Craig
DEPARTMENT	Psychology
DATE CONSIDERED	28/06/18
DECISION OF COMMITTEE*	Approved

This ethical clearance is valid for 2 years and may be renewed upon application

DATE: 28 June 2018

CHAIRPERSON
(Dr Colleen Bernstein)

cc Supervisor: Ms Nicky Israel
Psychology

DECLARATION OF INVESTIGATOR (S)

To be completed in duplicate and **one copy** returned to the Secretary, Room 100015, 10th floor, Senate House, University.

I/we fully understand the conditions under which I am/we are authorized to carry out the abovementioned research and I/we guarantee to ensure compliance with these conditions. Should any departure be contemplated from the research procedure, as approved, I/we undertake to submit a revised protocol to the Committee.

This ethical clearance will expire on 31 December 2020

PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER IN ALL ENQUIRIES