FACTORS INFLUENCING THE RETENTION OF GENERATION Y EMPLOYEES IN THAILAND

Kudtho P[1], Robkit A[1]*, Vock-Wannewitz B[2], Feldmeier G M[2], van Haren P J[1], and Sriyanyong P[1]

[1]Business Administration, International College, King Mongkut's University of Technology North Bangkok, Thailand
[2]Business Administration, Hochschule Bremerhaven, University of Applied Sciences, Germany

Abstract: Generation Y or the Millennial can be classified as persons born between the early 1980s and 2000s, and they have fully entered the workforce and represent the future leaders of the organization. Several literatures; however, dubbed the Millennials as the job-hopping generation due to their preference to explore new career opportunities rather than remaining with one particular organization for life. This research explores and analyzes the factors influencing Generation Y employees to remain with the organization in Thailand by using the Two-factor theory and the Job embeddedness theory. To gain a clear insight into the mind of Generation Y employees, this research employs a mixed method of online quantitative survey and qualitative thematic analysis of interviews. An online questionnaire was given to 100 samples of millennials living in Thailand focusing on demographic and exploring factors deemed vital to their consideration of choosing to remain with employers. Statistical key findings were generated via then explored further in an in-depth interview. The findings show that all four factors regarding motivator factors, hygiene factors, on-the-job embeddedness factors, and off-the-job embeddedness factors have positive impacts on employee retention among Thai Generation Y as they are motivated to prefer employers and work environment that address and satisfy them in these concerns over the sense of loyalty. Meanwhile; the elements of compensation, training and development, work environment, community links (family) are the top issues that strengthen or lessen employees' intention to stay with the company.

Keywords: Generation Y, millennial, employee retention, employee motivation

Introduction

Background

Generation Y ("the Millennials") are those who were born between 1985 to 2000, as of 2021 they are considered to be in their prime and expected to sooner or later become the major players in organizations; especially taking over the future leadership roles. Generation Y have gained a negative reputation for frequent job-hopping behavior, when compared to Generation X (born between 1965 – 1985) and Baby Boomer (born between 1946 – 1964) (Rouse, 2013; Berger, 2016; Kraus, 2017). This behavior leads to high turnover rate and causes organizations to repeat the painstaking and costly process of staff replacement. When an employee leaves, it is not just a shortage of manpower but also their experience, talent and skills, which are considered the ultimate strategic asset of an organization.

*Corresponding Author's Email: acresearch.ic@ic.kmutnb.ac.th

Therefore, organizations are need to better understand the mindsets of the Millennials in order to devise an effective personnel retention strategy to counter the turnover rate. This research aims to explore and analyze the factors influencing Thai Generation Y employees' decision to remain with their organizations. This study involves two theories namely Two-Factor or Motivation Theory (1959) and Job Embeddedness Theory (Mitchell et al., 2011). As the research into Thai Generation Y's mindset and behavior in general is still an on-going subject, exploring the factors influencing their career decision may contribute into learning more about their career behavior and attitude.

Relevant Literatures

Generation Y "the Millennials": Attitudes, characteristic, and job-hopping

Born between the 80s and 2000s. Generation Y grew up in the time of disruption and uncertainty of modern days, ranging from the impact of globalization, economic disruption, technological changes to the threat of terrorism, thus forming a different attitudes and characteristics of Generation Y (Eckleberry-Hunt & Tucciarone, 2011; Goldman Sachs, n.d.). Thai Generation Y's early days would be witnessing the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis and its aftermath, along with several political struggles in the 90s through 2000s. Generation Y are dubbed 'a digital native' due to them growing up in the digital age and heavily rely on technology in everyday life as well as extensive use of social network services to connect with the world around them (Anantatmula & Shrivastav, 2012; Prensky, 2001).

Millennials' attitude can be described as self-confident by doing things in their own way and focusing on their own ambitions (Steiner, 2016). The supporting statement evidence by Mangold (2007) and Carver & Candela (2008) explicated Generation Y as "...prefer to work in groups with hands-on experiences; they enjoy trial and error" (Mangold, 2007: 21). They prefer learning to be creative, interactive, and enjoy thinking outside the box (Lipkin & Perrymore, 2009). An article by Joel Stein in the Time Magazine (2014) titled "The ME ME ME Generation" in which the journalist characterized the Generation Y as being narcissistic and immature, though undeniably also being the future of their nations. Stein mentioned that the Millennials are bolder and more flexible than previous generations. He further reminded his readers that what seemed to be peculiar about this generation might just be an incarnation of what had been done by the previous generation, just in different versions. Stein pointed out Generation Y's behaviors and attitudes as the product of how the prior generations, namely the Baby Boomers, shaped the world and parented their children. Long-term employment is no longer an ideal lifestyle of Generation Y, thus they are prone to job-hopping practice, changing employment at shorter than usual intervals on one's own volition, mainly for personal and professional advancement reasons (Ghiselli, 1974; Rouse, 2013 Pradesh, 2014).The millennials are more open-minded to have different jobs throughout their lifetime, along with the risks that come with the decision (Adkins, 2016). Job-hopping is likened to 'hobo syndrome', to which an

individual switch jobs frequently as a mean to career advancement and enhance their financial gain, or simply seeking more freedom in their life choice as well as gaining new experiences (Philip, 2017; Saleem et al., 2016: 225-229). Job-hopping might happen by chance whenever an opportunity arises, or strategically designed by an individual in order to fit with their long-term goal. Saleem also implied that, as society grew more accustomed to the thought of switching jobs, one's decision to switch employment might just be them following the bandwagon

Employee Retention

An organization is as good as its employees. Competitiveness of an organization comes from its ability to seek and maintain their assets, particularly securing and retaining experienced and skillful workforce (Noe et al., 2018; Okolie & Lrabor, 2019). Replacing an employee cost an organization both time and money in recruitment and assimilating the replacement (Oakes, 2012). Thus, enhancing the retention practice of the organization is a more sustainable solution that can lead to continuous productivity and minimize the cost of employee turnover (Radford & Chapman, 2015: 58). Employee retention is not influenced by a single factor but takes several combined factors to effectively retain the employees. Several literature explore various factors affecting the employee retention include 1) reward and recognition (Das & Baruah, 2013; Rue and Bars, 2004; Silbert, 2005; Walker, 2001; Wyatt, 1999); 2) Promotion and opportunity to growth (Pergamit & Veum, 1999; Prince, 2005); 3) participation in decision making (Hewitt, 2002; Noah, 2008); 4) training and development (Garg & Rastogi, 2006; Handy, 2008; Messmer, 2000; Tomlinson 2002;) ; 5)   compensation; 6) work-life balance (Gardner et al., 2004; Milkovich & Newman, 2004;   Zingheim et al., 2009); 7) work environment (Hashimzade, Myle & Black, 2017; Miller, Erickson & Yust, 2001; Ramlall, 2003; Wells & Thelen, 2002); and 8) leadership (Eisenberger et al., 1990; Elicker et al., 2006; Farr-Wharton, 2002; Fang et al. 2009; McNeese-Smith, 1995; Newsome & Pillari, 1992;).

Theory of Job embeddedness

Job embeddedness (JE) has recently gained significant attention in recent turnover literatures, primarily due to its capacity in predicting employee voluntary turnover beyond what job attitudinal variables could predict (Mitchell et al., 2011). According to the theory, various organization-related and community-related forces can involve and embed people with their careers, becoming the collection of forces that influence employee retention. The deeper the connection employees have with their organizations, the greater chances for them to prefer to remain (Reitz, 2014: 2). The 6 dimensions of job embeddedness are as following:

On-the-job embeddedness refers to the fit, link and sacrifice related to the professional aspect of an employee.

- *Organizational fit* refers to an employee's perceived compatibility and comfort with their organization. The alignment between their personal values, professional goals, and future plan with environment (such as cultures) and demand for their work (such as professional knowledge, expertise, and capabilities) can positively influence their attachment to the organization.

- *Organizational links* refers to the linkage between an employee and members of the organization such as colleagues and superior (Mitchell et al., 2011; Zainuddin & Noor, 2019).

- Organizational sacrifice refers to the perceived cost of material or psychological benefits an employee would no longer receive if they quit the organization. Cost of job switching ranges from losing financial and other perks to losing a valued work relationship.

Off-the job embeddedness refers to the fit, link, and sacrifice related to the employee's personal life.

- *Community fit* refers to an employee's perceived compatibility and comfort with their surroundings and society such as political climate, location, weather, culture, religion and ethical environment, andent entertainment choices (Reitz, 2014).

- *Community links* refers to the healthy connection one has with others surrounding. Relationships with people in their lives such as family members, work and non-work friends, groups and members of the community they are part of, can influence how one would make decisions towards their career (Reitz, 2014)

- *Community sacrifice* refers to the perceived cost of job switching on their personal ties with the community. The sacrifice might be leaving a desirable neighborhood that offers them a safe and comfortable home, being away from people they cherish, or having more difficulty commuting to work would make one become reluctant to relocate.

The crucial aspect of job embeddedness is the linkage of employees with their organizational activities and co-workers and the alignment between employees' life and their jobs and communities (Lee et al., 2014, p. 201).

Two-Factor Theory

Two-Factor Theory (or Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory) consists of motivators and hygiene factors. that influences the level of job satisfaction and dissatisfaction; while determining people's attitudes and intensity of performance (Yusoff et al., 2013). he motivators consist of achievement, career advancement, personal growth, job interest, recognition, and responsibility. The hygiene factors (also known as maintenance factors) are made up of company policies, quality of supervision, relation with others, personal life, working condition, and job security (Herzberg et al., 1959; Sanjeev & Surya, 2016; Yusoff et al., 2013).

Chiat and Panatik (2019) stated that there is a significant relationship between employee turnover rates and their motivation and satisfaction towards their organization; and concluded that motivation through intrinsic factor and hygiene or extrinsic factor plays a crucial role in influencing the rate of employee turnover. Employees would find it difficult to depart the organization if they have to trade off the positive benefits of staying with the current organization.

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Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework was constructed based on the theory of Job embeddedness and the two-factor theory. Factors from each theory serve as independent variables that would affect Generation Y Employee retention (dependent variables)
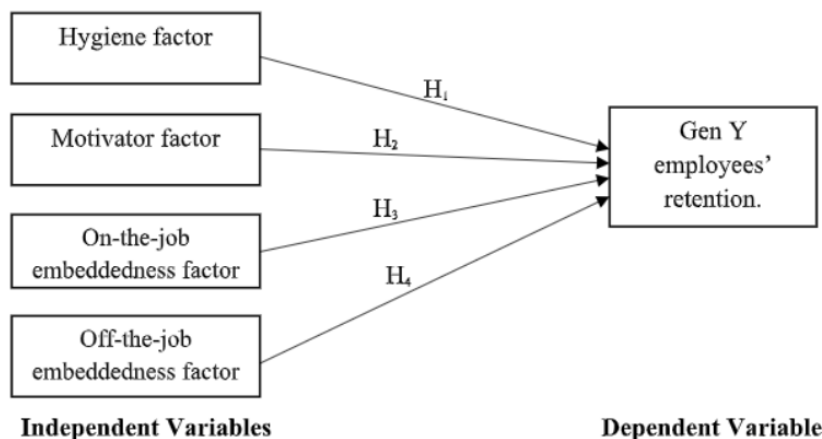

Figure 1: Conceptual framework

Materials and Methods

Research Methods

This research employed a mixed-methods approach that gives a more well-rounded insight into the Generation Y's attitudes and behavior regarding their decision to stay or leave their employment. A convergent parallel design was applied by simultaneously performing quantitative and qualitative elements in the same phase of the research process, weighing the methods evenly, analyzing the two elements independently, comparing or relating the data mutually, and interpreting the findings together (Creswell & Clark, 2011).

Research design and tools

In this study, close-ended and open-ended questions are used. Using the close-ended questions, the respondents were able to provide a more precise and specific alternative response by choosing the best answer to reflect their point of view (Zikmund et al., 2012). Also, the respondents were asked open-ended questions in the short answer form in the last part to get the specific answer in order to give the respondent freedom and opportunity to express themselves in their own words (Magnusso & Silfverberg, 2013). The survey questionnaire is structured as following:

- Section A is used to gather information and data with regard to the profile of the demographic of the respondents. This data allows the researcher to establish and understand demographic information of the respondents.

- Section B is to collect the data of independent variables for this study, such as motivation factors, hygiene factors, on-the-job embeddedness, and off-the-job embeddedness. Also, the data for dependent variables is employee retention. Respondents provide their response by rating each factor using the Five-Likert scale. Then, the short open-ended questions were collected after that.

The interview question portion was conducted virtually, following the semi-structured interview approach utilized for being a data collection technique that is versatile, flexible, and enabling reciprocity between the research and the participants (Kallio et al., 2016).

Population and sample

The population consisted of Generation Y born between 1980 - 2000 and have already entered professional careers. Due to the larger size of population with unknown total numbers, sampling size is set at 100 (Ashibly, 2018; Bullen, 2014). The questionnaire has screening questions to maintain the representation of the population. For the interview portion, the method of snowball sampling, a non-probability sampling technique based on referral of the first few samples who would be able to recommend the next samples fitting the criteria. The interview participants can be categorized into 2 groups. The first group is Generation Y employees who are 4 participants, as No. 1-3 and 6. Meanwhile, the second group is HR officers as No. 4 and 5.

Data collection

Due to COVID-19 Pandemic, both the survey and interview were conducted virtually which also enabled the wider pool of population to be accessed. The survey was published on Pantip.com, a popular and long-standing discussion forum and shared through social media services such as Facebook, Twitter and Line Application, all of them are considered popular media channels of Thai Generation Y. The virtual interview conducted via virtual meeting application allowed interviewees to maintain their anonymity, safety and convenience.

Data analysis tools

Power Pivot features of Microsoft Excel and The SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) software were applied to perform the data analysis of the questionnaire using Descriptive Analysis, Reliability Analysis, Correlation Analysis, and the Simple Linear Regression. To analyze the interview data, the thematic analysis of coding the information by finding keywords and categorizing the data was utilized. Thematic analysis is a data analysis method that allows the researcher to identify commonly recognized themes, trends, and relationships of meaning through a dataset in relation to meaningfully answering a specific research question(s).

Ethical considerations

Respondents were informed of the purpose of the survey and further information. In the first part of the questionnaire, they were required to give their consent prior to entering the questionnaire section. All answers were kept anonymous. The interview participants had received the preliminary information stating the purpose and confidential agreement. They are to give written consent within 48 hours before the interview. Their identities are encoded and protected.

Results and Discussion

Demographic Profiling

Samples are found to be single, in their early 20s to early 30s. Most are at the beginning of their career but building up their professional experience.

Factors affecting employee retention

Motivator factors

The overall of motivator factors was at the level of Agree (Mean = 3.79, S.D. = 0.638). Promotion and opportunity for growth have the highest mean value (Mean = 3.88, S.D. = 0.707), followed by reward and recognition (Mean = 3.84, S.D. = 0.711), participation in decision making (Mean = 3.76, S.D. = 0.787), and training and development (Mean = 3.70, S.D. = 0.905).

Hygiene factors

The overall of hygiene factors was at the level of Agree (Mean = 3.75, S.D. = 0.652). Work environment has the highest mean value (Mean = 3.87, S.D. = 0.731), followed by leadership (Mean = 3.76, S.D. = 0.845), work-life balance (Mean = 3.75, S.D. = 0.729), and compensation (Mean = 3.63, S.D. = 0.844).

On-the-job embeddedness factors

The overall of on-the-job embeddedness factors appeared to be at the level of Agree (Mean = 3.79, S.D. = 0.670). When considering each aspect, it indicated that Organizational Links had the highest mean value (Mean = 3.95, S.D. = 0.636), followed by Organizational Fit (Mean = 3.78, S.D. = 0.807), and Organizational Sacrifice (Mean = 3.65, S.D. = 0.885).

Off-the-job embedded factors

The overall of off-the job embeddedness factors appeared to be at the level of Agree (Mean = 3.72, S.D. = 0.667). Community Sacrifice has the highest mean value (Mean = 3.73, S.D. = 0.729), followed by Community Fit (Mean = 3.73, S.D. = 0.769), and Community Links (Mean = 3.69, S.D. = 0.824).

Employee retention

The overall employee retention turned out to be at the level of Neither Agree nor Disagree (Mean = 3.39, S.D. = 1.127). When considering each aspect, it was found that the aspect with the highest mean value was "I love working for this company" (Mean = 3.74, S.D. = 0.824), followed by "I intend to stay in this company as long as possible" (Mean = 3.35, S.D. = 1.660), and "I seldom think about quitting my job" (Mean = 3.08, S.D. = 1.285).

Results from the open-ended questionnaire

Respondents were asked 3 open-ended questions: 'What do you think is the most interesting part of your job?'; 'Please provide the top 3 factors that are most important to you in a job. (e.g., money, work environment, employer, benefits and etc.)'; and "Do you intend to stay or are you looking to leave the organization? Why?". Most of them agreed that the most interesting part of their current job is to receive experience and work challenges. The most important factors to them in a job are money, colleagues, and superiors. Most of them also agreed that if they were not looking to leave their current employment it would be because of good coworkers.

Reliability Analysis Results

Table 1: Reliability Analysis Results

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
Motivator factor	0.868	12
Hygiene factor	0.868	12
On-the-job embeddedness factor	0.843	9
On-the-job embeddedness factor	0.806	9
Employee retention	0.833	3

From table 1, This section offers evaluation of Cronbach's alpha coefficient for inspecting the internal consistency of items that represent any key variables used. Sufficient internal consistency is set at above 0.70 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994) According to Table 1, it showed Cronbach's alpha coefficient valued between 0.809 and 0.868 which indicated that the alpha coefficients of five variables pass through the criteria.

Inferential Analysis

Correlation Coefficient Analysis

Relationships between Motivator factor, Hygiene factor, On -the job embeddedness factor and Off - the job embeddedness factor and retention of workers are analyzed by Pearson's Correlation Analysis.

Table 2: Correlation Coefficient Analysis

Variables		1	2	3	4	5
Motivator factor	Pearson Correlation	1				
	Sig. (2-tailed)					
Hygiene factor	Pearson Correlation	0.758**	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000				
On-the-job embeddedness factor	Pearson Correlation	0.769**	0.803**	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.00			
On-the-job embeddedness factor	Pearson Correlation	0.493**	0.574**	0.647**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	
Employee retention	Pearson Correlation	0.312**	0.279**	0.322**	0.257**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.002	0.005	0.001	0.010	

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

From table 2, when the relation between independent variables and dependent variable was tested, it revealed that:

- Motivator factor has positive relation at a low level (r = 0.312) with employee retention at 0.01 significance level.

- Hygiene factor has positive relation at a low level (r = 0.279) with employee retention at low level at 0.01 significance level.

- On-the-job embeddedness factor has positive relation at a low level (r = 0.322) with employees' retention at low level at 0.01 significance level.

- Off-the-job embeddedness factor has positive relation at a low level ($r = 0.257$) with employees' retention at low level at 0.01 significance level.

Hypothesis Testing

The 4 hypotheses were tested by using simple linear regression. The hypothesis with the significance level less than 0.05 ($p < 0.05$) is supported.

H1: Motivator factors' influences on Generation Y Employee retention

Table 3: Motivator factors' influence on Generation Y Employee retention

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.3000	0.653		1.991	0.049
Motivator factor	0.551	0.170	0.312	3.246**	0.002
R = 0.312 R-square = 0.097 F = 10.535 p < 0.01					

Dependent Variable: Generation Y employee retention

** significant at the 0.01 level

From table 3, the results of the regression show the motivator factor is statistically explained 9.7% of the variance on Generation Y employees' retention ($R^2 = 0.097$, $F = 10.535$, $p < 0.01$). The motivator factor positively influences Generation Y employee retention at 0.01 significance level (Beta = 0.312, $p = 0.002$). Thus, H1 is supported.

H2: Hygiene factors' influences on Generation Y employee retention

Table 4: Hygiene factors' influence on Generation Y Employee retention

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.578	0.639		2.469	0.015
Hygiene factor	0.483	0.168	0.279	2.879**	0.015
R = 0.312 R-square = 0.097 F = 10.535 p < 0.01					

Dependent Variable: Generation Y employee retention

** significant at the 0.01 level

From table 4, the results of the regression show hygiene factor is statistically explained 7.8% of the variance on Generation Y employees' retention ($R^2 = 0.078$, $F = 8.289$, $p < 0.01$). The hygiene factor

positively influences Generation Y employee retention at 0.01 significance level (Beta = 0.279, p = 0.005). Thus, H2 is supported.

H3: On-the-job embeddedness factors' influences on Generation Y employee retention

Table 5: On-the-job embeddedness factors' influence on Generation Y Employee retention

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.336	0.620	0.322	2.154	0.034
On-the-job embedded ness factor	0.541	0.161		3.364**	0.001
R = 0.322 R-square = 0.104 F = 11.317 p < 0.01					

Dependent Variable: Generation Y employee retention

** significant at the 0.01 level

From table 5, the results of the regression show the on-the-job embeddedness factor is statistically explained as 10.4% of the variance on Generation Y employees' retention (R^2 = 0.104, F = 11.317, P < 0.01). The on-the-job embeddedness factor positively influences Generation Y employees' retention at 0.01 significance level (Beta = 0.322, p = 0.001). Thus, H3 is supported.

H4: Off-the-job embeddedness factors' influences on Generation Y employee retention

Table 6: Off-the-job embeddedness factors' influences on Generation Y Employee retention

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.776	0.623	0.257	2.851	0.005
Off-the-job embedded ness factor	0.434	0.165		2.632**	0.010
R = 0.257 R-square = 0.066 F = 6.928 p < 0.05					

Dependent Variable: Generation Y employee retention

** significant at the 0.05 level

From table 6, the results of the regression show off-the-job embeddedness factor is statistically explained 6.6% of the variance on Generation Y employees' retention ($R^2 = 0.066$, $F = 6.928$, $p < 0.05$). The off-the-job embeddedness factor positively influences Generation Y employees' retention at 0.05 significance level (Beta = 0.257, $p = 0.05$). Thus, H4 is supported.

Finding from the interview

- Emergent Themes 1: Perspectives of Retention practices in organization. Both HR and Employees associate organization's effort in retention with organization providing welfare and benefits to their employees.

- Emergent Themes 2: Employee's Motivation for Retention

  - Sub-Theme: Reward and recognition

    According to the finding, companies create employee satisfaction using the reward system. Nevertheless, during conversation, none of the participants refer to how recognition from bosses, coworkers or/ and customers affect their feeling of satisfaction.

  - Sub-Theme: Promotion and opportunity for growth

    Participants reflected that large organizations usually observe traditional hierarchical structure based on seniority; while smaller ones have fewer positions to begin with. Some participants identified office politics and hierarchical structure of Thai organizations that interfere with performance evaluation, which hinder career path advancement. Also, while promotion comes with attractive perks and better pay, some respondents voiced their concern about the challenge of taking on more responsibilities.

  - Sub-Theme: Participation in decision making

    Participation in the decision-making process is still an exclusive responsibility of superiors. Generation Y employees are still at the bottom of office hierarchy; thus, their participation in decision making is limited

    Sub-Theme: Training and development factor

    Eagerness to develop themselves and job challenge become the highlight prevalently discussed during the interview. All 6 participants taking part in the interview stated in the same way that characteristics of work are responsible for skills development. A participant admitted that they have already been through 6 jobs in different fields of work as they like to learn new things. Changing jobs brings new challenges, experiences, and thrills into life.

- Emergent Theme 3: Hygiene factor for Retention
    - Sub-Theme: Compensation

      From the perspective of employees, salary should be based on performance and matches employee's skills and level responsibilities that would satisfy employees. From HR's perspective, higher compensation is not the main factor to retain Generation Y.
    - Sub-Theme: Work-life balance

      The lack of work-hour flexibility is concerned by participants. According to the statement of the participants, it was found that flexible attendance can lead to job satisfaction of Generation Y employees, and most employees also received good flexible time. Strict attendance, rigid working-hour, or early morning start could lead to dissatisfaction.
    - Sub-Theme: Work environment

      Work Environment directly affects Generation Y employee' satisfaction which coworkers were mentioned as an initial issue by 4 out of 6 participants. Problems occurring between departments caused work ambiance to become uncomfortable and stressful, leading to dissatisfaction with the work environment that would drive them to leave. Another point raised was regarding the aesthetic and flexibility of office's workspace
    - Sub-Theme: Leadership factor

      According to the findings, Thai Generation Y prefers open-minded, democratic, inclusive and supportive leaders.
- Emergent Theme 4: On-the job embeddedness
    - Sub-Theme: Organizational links

      Coworkers and the leader are important factors that result in organization links for most of the participants. Friendly and positive relationships resulting in a close bond between coworkers; thus, reducing the yearning for change of employment. Resignation of close-colleagues can also be the catalyst of an employee to leave themself. Internal relationship; therefore, must be carefully managed by the HR department and executives.
    - Sub-Theme: Organizational links

      Organizational culture was identified as greatly responsible for their decision to leave or stay. Seniority system is present in both Thai and international companies along with conservative management style causing dismay in younger employees. Status usually comes with seniority and at a lower level, Generation Y find themselves unable to express their opinion or disagreement with more senior colleagues or superior, leading to a distance among employees.
    - Sub-Theme: Organizational sacrifice

      Participants ranked losing relationships with coworkers as number 1 cause of regret if they chose to leave their employment, followed by welfare, and salary. Reluctancy also

comes from facing the uncertainty of a new work environment, new colleagues, and the new job itself.

- Emergent Theme 5: Off- the-job embeddedness
  - Sub-Theme: Community links

    Family members are the first factor they take into account when deciding to stay or to resign. According to Hofstede Insights, Thailand scores 20 on individualism which indicates a high collectivism society. This reflects the close-knitted and strong commitment a Thai would have with their family, extended family, and friends in the long-run. Consequently, if the company has a policy that can take care of the family of the employees, they can increase their intention to stay longer.

  - Sub-Theme: Community fit

    Compare to those who have been living in the same environment since birth (including living with their family in big cities like Bangkok Metropolitan), those who migrate from provincial areas is reported to be more sensitive to change in their lifestyle and exhausting urban environment, with higher pressure and competition in daily life compared to their hometown that might make them ponder for resignation.

  - Sub-Theme: Community sacrifice

    According to the interview, it showed that 3 out of 6 participants perceived switching employment would come with some degree of sacrifice which would be their friendships (non-work friends), family connections, and physical environment; especially, if it involves relocation.

- Emergent Theme 6: What can retain Generation Y to stay?

Table 7 shows how 6 interview respondents rank factors they see as most influential to their decision to stay or leave an organization. Work environment, compensation and organization fit are the most mentioned. Other factors mentioned include job challenge, participation in decision making, benefit and welfare, work-life balance, and promotion and opportunity to career growth.

Table 7: Summary of Emergent Theme 6

Respondents	Rank 1	Rank 2	Rank 3
1	Compensation	Work environment	Organizational fit
2	Coworker (work environment	Organizational fit	Work environment

3	job challenge (training and development)	work-life balance	Work environment
4	job challenge (training and development)	Compensation	Work environment
5	Compensation	Participation in decision making	Work environment (specifically, open-minded and forgiving)
6	Compensation	Promotion and opportunity to career growth	Benefit and welfare

Discussion

Motivator factor

The overall mean value of Motivator factor was 3.79. This result indicates that most of the respondents are satisfied with their work situation. Chiat & Panatik (2019) found that there is a significant relationship between employee turnover rates and their motivation and satisfaction towards their organization. Monetary reward cannot be used as an easy fix to turnover problem but a combination of recognition, appropriated responsibility, clear opportunities for career growth and participation in decision making.

Hygiene factor

The overall mean value of the Hygiene factor was 3.75 which means that most of the respondents are quite satisfied with their current employment. Generation Y are found to value their work-life balance, flexibility, and freedom for the sake of mental well-being. Work-life balance is gradually becoming important for employee engagement and tends to affect their decision to stay in organization or to leave (Ellenbecker, 2004). Work environment plays an important role in determining whether the workplace would provide them comfort or the source of stress. Concerning leadership, Generation Y prefers working under leaders who are open-minded and fair and feels uncomfortable with rigid hierarchical structures of organization that leave small room for creativity and bonding with coworkers. According to Newsome & Pillari (1992), the role of supervisor is crucial to the company, and various studies have shown that a good relationship between supervisor and subordinates increases employee job satisfaction.

On-the-Job embeddedness factors

The overall mean value of the On-the-Job embeddedness factors was 3.95 which means that organizational dimension (i.e attachment to working groups) influences most of the respondents with their intention to stay. Attachment to coworkers is a recurring theme when concerning what would make them regret leaving their current job; while facing the uncertainty of the new job or being unemployed would cause them to reassess their situation. Generation Y seeks work that gives them both the ability to put food on the table and to advance as a professional. They are up for challenges and learning new skills. When the passion for their current job runs cold, it is natural for them to seek a new place to grow.

Off-the-Job embeddedness factors

The overall mean value of the Off-the-Job embeddedness factor was 3.72, which means that community dimension related with staying intention in most of the respondents. A nation high with collectivism like Thailand places priority on familial obligations and communal good. The key factors that were talked about most are family-oriented. This is consistent with Mitchell et al, (2011) who suggested the influences of personal relationships and community to employee's decision to leave or stay with their current employer. Another interesting feature of Thai culture is a close-knitted familial tie in which adult children tend to stay with parents until they have their own family. While migration is common for those from provincial areas, their yearning for home is extraordinarily strong. Workplace that is closer to their parents' home or has a family-like atmosphere would be quite attractive to employees

Conclusions

Employee retention has become more challenging with the changing characteristics of the workforce. Generation Y is becoming the mainstay of the present-day workforce as they are replacing the retiring generations, yet they are prone to job-hopping. High turnover rate can harm an organization both financially and productivity; thus, it is vital for organizations to understand Generation Y characteristics and factors that would influence their decision to leave or stay. This research explored such factors in Thai Generation Y professionals based on Two-Factor Theory and Job-Embeddedness theory. Using a mix-methods approach of survey and interview of employees and HR officers, the result showed that all factors presented in both theories are relevant to Thai Generation Y's decision to leave or stay with their employment, with some noteworthy points revealed. Thai Generation seeks appropriate compensation and responsibilities, as well as a positive and encouraging work environment and leadership. Growing up in a collectivist society, Thai Generation Y are influenced by their bond with family, colleagues and friends. The study also revealed the underlying impact of seniority-based work environments that discourage them from fully utilizing their potential; thus,

limiting their contribution and engagement with the organization leading to job dissatisfaction. The result from this research can be used as a basis for organization to develop and improve their employee retention strategy in order to reduce turnover rate and increase employee loyalty.

Further research

This research has investigated merely Generation Y employees in Thailand. The researcher suggests that the future studies be investigated in different countries or be carried out in a more specific department or industry to obtain more accurate results. Subsequent comparative research focusing on Generation Y from different national, cultural, and society background should be considered to enrich the field of study.

Declaration of Interest Statement

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interests.

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