GENERATION Y KNOWLEDGE WORKERS' EXPERIENCE OF WORK MOTIVATION: A GROUNDED THEORY STUDY

by

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Abstract

Despite the vast amount of research on work motivation, theorists still lack consensus regarding what truly motivates employees; yet employee motivation is widely recognized as critical to organizational survival in the global marketplace. In the knowledge economy, knowledge workers are the key to knowledge creation and, thus, organizational survival and success. Thus, organizations that wish to survive in the current economy must find ways to capitalize on the strengths of knowledge workers by developing an understanding of the motivating forces driving knowledge workers. Research suggests differences in employee motivation across age groups and generations. As Traditionalists and Baby Boomers approach retirement and exit the workforce, Generation Y, born between 1981 and 1997, is becoming a major part of the workforce. Thus, organizational leaders must develop an understanding of what motivates knowledge workers from Generation Y to contribute to the organization's goals and objectives, thereby contributing to higher levels of organizational performance; however, scholarly research has yet to address the work motivation experiences of Generation Y knowledge workers. This grounded theory study explored the work motivation experiences of Generation Y knowledge workers through a review of key motivation theories and exploratory, in-depth interviews with Generation Y knowledge workers in the healthcare industry, toward an understanding of Generation Y's intrinsic and extrinsic motivators, demotivators, and process of and approach to work motivation. The data revealed that Generation Y knowledge workers in the healthcare industry have a strong desire to contribute, both to their organizations and to their communities. The desire for purpose,

which can be achieved through the attainment of social acceptance and self-worth, served as the primary motivator for the research participants.

Dedication

"The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams."

– Eleanor Roosevelt

I hereby dedicate this dissertation to my family and close friends, without whom this journey would not have been possible. To my parents and grandparents, I am thankful to you for instilling in me the love of learning and for encouraging me to achieve my personal best in all things. To my two beautiful children, Austin and Katelynn, who sacrificed some of their precious time with me to allow me to pursue my educational dreams, I will forever be grateful. You inspire me and I will always strive to make you proud. May you always believe in the beauty of your dreams. To my dear friends, June, Linda, and Stephanie, thank you for your constant encouragement throughout this long journey. Your friendships mean the world to me and it is an honor to have such special friends in my life. And, lastly, I dedicate this study to God whose grace and everlasting love helped me navigate this journey despite the numerous challenges I encountered along the way.

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I would also like to thank my academic advisor, Jonathan Gehrz, for his guidance and support. I will always be thankful for the assistance he provided during my doctoral program.

I would like to extend a special thank you to all of my research participants for giving so graciously of their time. I thoroughly enjoyed meeting each and every one of the research participants and I greatly appreciated their willingness to openly speak with me about their work motivation experiences. Their rich, detailed descriptions provided me with additional insight into the work motivation experiences of Generation Y knowledge workers in the healthcare industry and contributed the development of a work motivation theory grounded in the data.

I will forever be indebted to Dr. Laura Markos for her generosity of spirit and time. Throughout my doctoral journey, Dr. Markos graciously shared her knowledge and expertise and encouraged me to pursue my dreams. Her willingness to support my desire to conduct a grounded theory research study, despite my limited background in qualitative research methods at the onset of this study, demonstrates the level of her commitment to me. Together we entered unchartered territory as I embarked on my first

grounded theory research study and, although it was extremely challenging at times, Dr. Markos remained supportive throughout the process and provided valuable feedback, moral support, and encouragement. As a result of her guidance, I learned to appreciate the value of qualitative research and I began to use my voice as a scholarly writer. It was a blessing to work with Dr. Markos throughout my journey and I aspire to one day mentor others the way she mentored me.

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

Introduction to the Problem

In the knowledge economy, the generation and transfer of knowledge represents a critical source of sustainable competitive advantage for organizations (Bartol, Liu, Zeng, & Wu, 2009; Carter & Scarbrough, 2001, p. 215; Kelloway & Barling, 2000, p. 287; McCuiston & Jamrog, 2005, p. 29; Osterloh & Frey, 2000, p. 538). Motivated employees serve as important organizational assets (Drucker, 2008, p. 201; Lord, 2004, p. 27; Maxime, Céline, Villeneuve, Taylor, & Luc, 2009, p. 213) and are the key to competitive advantage (Maxime et al., 2009, p. 213; Whicker & Andrews, 2004, p. 157). To remain competitive, organizations must find effective ways to motivate knowledge workers to generate and transfer knowledge (Carter & Scarbrough, 2001; Osterloh & Frey, 2000) and achieve higher levels of performance (Drucker, 2008, p. 207). Yet, despite recent interest in determining what types of social arrangements enhance knowledge generation and transfer (Bartol et al., 2009; Carter & Scarbrough, 2001; Cowan, David, & Foray, 2000), systematic research addressing what motivates employees to generate and transfer knowledge is scarce and has not adequately dealt with the implications for human resource management practices in the knowledge economy (Carter & Scarbrough, 2001, p. 216; Petroni & Colacino, 2008; Powell & Snellman, 2004, p. 200).

Motivated, satisfied, and committed employees have the ability to positively impact organizational performance (Dirks, 1999; Leschinsky & Michael, 2004, p. 34;

Pun, Chin, & Gill, 2001; Van Dyne, Graham, & Dienesch, 1994). Despite a vast legacy of research on work motivation from the mechanistic, industrialized era (Herzberg, Mausner, & Snyderman, 1959/1993/2008; Maslow, 1943/2008; Vroom, 1964/2008), the literature lacks consensus on effective motivation of knowledge workers in the knowledge economy that has largely supplanted that industrialized environment. With the advent of technology and increased globalization, the nature of work has been redefined (Horwitz, Heng, & Quazi, 2003, p. 23; Smola & Sutton, 2002) because the knowledge economy relies more on intellectual aptitude than on physical labor or natural resources (Powell & Snellman, 2004, p. 199). Faced with rising competitive pressure to innovate and rapid proliferation of products and services (Carter & Scarbrough, 2001, p. 216), organizations that wish to remain competitive in the knowledge economy need to find ways to capitalize on the intellectual capabilities of knowledge workers by finding effective ways to motivate them.

The vast knowledge management literature neglects the human element's role in the creation and dissemination of knowledge in organizations (Carter & Scarbrough, 2001, p. 215) and lacks clarity regarding what motivates knowledge workers (Forstenlechner & Lettice, 2007, p. 823). Knowledge workers represent a new class of worker with different values, needs (Carter & Scarbrough, 2001), and motivation (Kelloway & Barling, 2000, p. 288; Petroni & Colacino, 2008), for whom classical work motivation theories may no longer be entirely relevant (Carter & Scarbrough, 2001; Giles, Lapointe, Murray, & Bélanger, 1999; Petroni & Colacino, 2008). Traditional employment contracts may not be effective for knowledge workers either (Thompson & Heron, 2002), as the psychological contract (Schein, 1980/2008) has changed, both in the

type of work—from industrialized to knowledge (Houghton & Sheehan, 2000, p. 10)—and the structure of the organization—from mechanistic (Burns & Stalker, 1961/2005, pp. 198-202; Morgan, 1997) to organic systems (Burns & Stalker, 1961/2005, pp. 198-202). Within this new framework, Generation Y (born between 1981 and 1997) knowledge workers, those now entering the workforce as adults, are the least known or understood. Thus, organizations may need to develop different employment relationships (Carter & Scarbrough, 2001, p. 222; Horwitz et al., 2003, p. 28), organizational designs (Horwitz et al., 2003, p. 28), human resource management practices (Carter & Scarbrough, 2001, p. 221; Horwitz et al., 2003, p. 28), managerial techniques (Petroni & Colacino, 2008), and reward systems (Carter & Scarbrough, 2001, p. 221; Petroni & Colacino, 2008) to address the needs of knowledge workers in the 21st century knowledge economy, most urgently those of Generation Y.

Today's workforce comprises four distinct generations, each with different approaches to their work, their organizations, and their coworkers (Crampton & Hodge, 2007, p. 16; Derrick & Walker, 2006, p. 63; Patota, Schwartz, & Schwartz, 2007, p. 1; Montana & Lenaghan, 1999). This multigenerational workforce presents unique challenges for organizational leaders (Derrick & Walker, 2006, p. 63; Westerman & Yamamura, 2007, p. 151). Organizational leaders must identify effective ways to motivate employees while leveraging the strengths of each generational cohort to achieve better business results (Derrick & Walker, 2006, p. 66; Patota et al., 2007, p. 1; Westerman & Yamamura, 2007).

Scant, largely anecdotal research suggests differences in employee motivation across age groups (Lord & Farrington, 2006) and generations (Derrick & Walker, 2006;

Leschinsky & Michael, 2004, p. 34; Patota et al., 2007, p. 1), absent scholarly research on the work motivation of Generation Y knowledge workers. With the influx of Generation Y employees into the workforce, organizations must identify what motivates knowledge workers from this generation in order to effectively capitalize on their strengths and build a motivated knowledge workforce for the new knowledge economy, based on solid research.

Background of the Study

Despite the multitude of studies conducted on motivation, widely divergent views still exist regarding the nature of work motivation (Ott, Parkes, & Simpson, 2008b, p. 131). Work motivation theory indicates that numerous factors, such as the work environment, management, advancement opportunities, and recognition, can motivate employees; yet a universal theory of work motivation may be impossible because of the complex nature of human beings and organizations (Jurkiewicz, 2000, p. 61; Ott, Parkes, & Simpson, 2003, p. 139).

Classical motivation theories and managerial practices may need modification to address the needs of knowledge workers due to the nature of knowledge work (Carter & Scarbrough, 2001; Petroni & Colacino, 2008; Šajeva, 2007), which involves the creation and transfer of tacit knowledge (Carter & Scarbrough, 2001, p. 216). Classic motivation theories that focused on *extrinsic motivators* may not sufficiently address knowledge workers' needs for more individualized, *intrinsic motivators* to develop and transfer knowledge to support organizational performance (Šajeva, 2007, p. 648).

Knowledge workers, the dominant group in today's workforce (Drucker, 2008, p. 201), and corporate knowledge (McCuiston & Jamrog, 2005, p. 29) are key

organizational assets. Yet work on the productivity of the knowledge worker has barely begun, standing at roughly where research stood in the year 1900 in terms of understanding of the productivity of the manual worker (Drucker, 2008, p. 197). Urging on this kind of research, knowledge worker productivity will increasingly serve to provide organizations and nations with a competitive advantage (Drucker, 2008, p. 209). Thus, work motivation of knowledge workers is vital to organizational success in the knowledge economy.

The considerable research on knowledge management focuses largely on the technical aspects of knowledge management, neglects the human resource management component of knowledge management (Carter & Scarbrough, 2001; Robertson & Hammersley, 2000), and still lacks clarity regarding what motivates knowledge workers to share their knowledge (Forstenlechner & Lettice, 2007, p. 823), a key component of knowledge work (Bartol et al., 2009). Into this breach, the knowledge management discipline has recently begun to acknowledge the importance of human resource management (Carter & Scarbrough, 2001), but more work needs to be conducted to investigate these issues in detail (Afiouni, 2007). Although researchers generally acknowledge the need to manage knowledge workers differently (Carter & Scarbrough, 2001), the literature still lacks solid evidence to support their assertions (Robertson & Hammersley, 2000).

Research suggests generational differences in work motivation (Crampton & Hodge, 2007, p. 16; Daboval, 1998; Moody, 2007; Patota et al., 2007, p. 1), which can result in work conflicts and misunderstanding (Derrick & Walker, 2006; Patota et al., 2007, p. 1). Despite suggestions that Generation Y is conceptually distinct from other

generations, no empirical results yet validate any such differences (Westerman & Yamamura, 2007, p. 158). Anecdotal evidence suggests that knowledge workers exhibit age-related differences in motivation (Lord & Farrington, 2006, p. 25) and traditional human resource management practices may not effectively motivate younger employees (Cantrell, 2007). Researchers need to examine Generation Y's work needs and demands as compared to Generation X (Westerman & Yamamura, 2007, p. 158). To begin to fill this gap, this grounded theory study explored the work motivation experiences of Generation Y knowledge workers.

Statement of the Problem

Generation Y is a key part of the U. S. workforce. Given previous evidence of generational differences in work motivation (Crampton & Hodge, 2007, p. 16; Daboval, 1998; Moody, 2007; Patota et al., 2007, p. 1), employers need to understand how to motivate employees from Generation Y. The literature does not yet address the work motivation of knowledge workers from Generation Y, as evidenced by the absence of scholarly studies addressing this specific group of individuals. Due to the increased need for knowledge workers in today's hypercompetitive business environment (Lord & Farrington, 2006; Šajeva, 2007) and Generation Y's recent influx into the workforce, organizational leaders must develop a clear understanding of what motivates and demotivates Generation Y knowledge workers' performance on the job.

Purpose of and Rationale for the Study

The purpose of this study was to identify key work motivators and provide an in-depth understanding of the work motivation experiences of Generation Y knowledge

workers with the intent of constructing a motivation model or an emergent motivation theory grounded in the data (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser, 1998). This research may provide employers with meaningful insight into what drives employee performance in the knowledge economy and enable them to employ motivation methods that will improve organizational performance, make better hiring decisions, develop better training programs, and alter the communication methods to increase employee loyalty (Patota et al., 2007). Understanding generational differences can promote the development of more collaborative work environments by enabling managers to leverage the unique strengths of each generational cohort (Patota et al., 2007). This, in turn, can lead to increased productivity, improved team efficiency, decreased conflicts, improved employee retention, and increased employee job satisfaction (Patota et al., 2007, p. 10).

Organizations are facing new challenges that will require the skills and creativity of knowledge workers (Drucker, 2008; McCuiston & Jamrog, 2005, p. 20; Šajeva, 2007). Although research suggests significant differences in the expressed importance of different motivators for members of different age groups (Leschinsky & Michael, 2004, p. 37), scholarly research does not yet address the work motivation of Generation Y knowledge workers, which this study investigated. If organizational leaders develop an understanding of the key generational differences that exist in their organizations, they can leverage the strengths of each generation to improve the productivity of individuals and teams in a multigenerational workforce and to reduce the challenges and conflict resulting from their differences (Patota et al., 2007, p. 5).

Research Questions

As previously indicated, organizations are facing new challenges; organizations that wish to remain competitive in the knowledge economy must rely on the skills and creativity of knowledge workers. Due to the changing composition of the workforce, organizational leaders must also develop an understanding of what motivates knowledge workers from Generation Y, the most recent generational cohort to enter the workforce, yet the motivation of this specific population is not yet addressed in the scholarly literature. Therefore, research is needed to identify what motivates Generation Y knowledge workers.

Creswell (2007) advocates the use of an overarching central research question, which is broad in nature, and several subquestions (Creswell, 2003, p. 106; 2007, p. 108). The central research question (Creswell, 2003, p. 105; 2007, p. 108) this study investigated is as follows: How do Generation Y knowledge workers describe and experience work motivation? This exploratory question encompasses subquestions (Creswell, 2003, p. 106; 2007, p. 108) of Generation Y's (a) intrinsic motivators, (b) extrinsic motivators, and (c) demotivators, as well as this generation's (d) process of and (e) approach to work motivation.

Significance of the Study

With rapid changes in the global economy and increased competition, organizational leaders must identify effective ways to motivate employees to perform at higher levels (Amabile, 1993; Drucker, 2008). "The effects of globalization and healthcare advances on workforce diversity, in terms of gender, ethnicity, age, and work values, represent yet another potent set of influences on work motivation that has yet to

be fully taken into theoretical account" (Kanfer, Chen, & Pritchard, 2008, p. xx). As previously indicated, research also suggests that generational differences may influence work motivation (Crampton & Hodge, 2007, p. 16; Daboval, 1998; Moody, 2007; Patota et al., 2007, p. 1). This study focused on the motivation experiences of Generation Y knowledge workers because knowledge workers are the primary resource for many organizations (Drucker, 2008; Horwitz et al., 2003; McCuiston & Jamrog, 2005, p. 20) and workers from Generation Y represent the fastest growing part of the workforce (Rainmaker Thinking, 2006, p. 3). According to the Division of Labor Force Statistics, there were approximately 6,250,000 members of Generation Y employed in the healthcare and social assistance industry as of 2013, which represents approximately 32% of the total healthcare industry (C. A. Wood, economist, Division of Labor Force Statistics, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, personal communication, March 14, 2014). Due to the sheer size of Generation Y and the increasing demand for knowledge workers in the knowledge economy, Generation Y knowledge workers play a critical role in the success of organizations in the knowledge economy and it is, therefore, imperative for organizational leaders to develop a better understanding of how Generation Y knowledge workers experience work motivation.

Thus, organizational leaders must find ways to motivate knowledge workers from Generation Y to help their organizations succeed in the hypercompetitive global business arena of the 21st century. The study's results provide organizational leaders with a better understanding of what drives employee performance of Generation Y knowledge workers in the knowledge economy, thereby contributing to the development of more effective employee motivation programs for Generation Y knowledge workers. By developing a

better understanding of generational differences in work motivation, organizations will have the ability to reduce turnover/improve employee retention (Moody, 2007; Patota et al., 2007, p. 10), increase commitment (Moody, 2007), increase employee job satisfaction (Moody, 2007; Patota et al., 2007, p. 10), more effectively motivate employees (Moody, 2007), increase productivity (Karp, Fuller, & Sirias, 2002; Kupperschmidt, 2000; Patota et al., 2007, p. 10; Westerman & Yamamura, 2007, p. 158), improve communication, decrease conflict, and improve team efficiency and effectiveness (Patota et al., 2007, p. 10).

The study also has the potential to benefit Generation Y knowledge workers by providing organizational leaders with a more in-depth view of what truly motivates these individuals. This may lead to more effective employee reward and recognition programs, improved communication, and organizational environments that foster collaboration and teamwork amongst the diverse generations. Similarly, members of other generations may benefit from the study's findings by gaining a clearer view of what motivates knowledge workers from Generation Y, and how their work motivators may differ or converge with other generations' in the knowledge economy. Developing an understanding of what motivates Generation Y will enable members of other generations to improve interactions amongst different generations and potentially reduce conflicts.

Definition of Terms

The following section provides definitions for terms with specialized meaning as used in this study:

Baby Boomers

Referred to as *Baby Boomers* because of the boom in the birthrate between 1946 and 1964, researchers disagree about the specific birth years encompassing this generation (Smola & Sutton, 2002, p. 364). This generation is variously reported to include individuals born beginning from 1940 to 1946 and ending from 1960 to 1964.

Extrinsic Motivators

Extrinsic motivation commonly refers to doing something because it leads to a distinguishable outcome (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 55). For the purposes of this study, external motivators are motivators that relate to an individual's desire to attain a specific outcome. These motivators do not directly relate to the individual's needs for self-fulfillment or the individual's desire to perform a specified task for fulfillment. Extrinsic motivators include monetary and nonmonetary rewards such as bonuses and incentives.

Generation and/or Generational Cohort

A generation, commonly referred to as a *generational cohort*, is a group of individuals born between a specified time period who thus share a set of common experiences and collective memories resulting from key events that occurred during their formative years (Jeffries & Hunte, 2004; Kupperschmidt, 2000, p. 66; Leschinsky & Michael, 2004; Patota et al., 2007, p. 2; Schuman & Scott, 1989; Smola & Sutton, 2002, p. 364).

Generation X

Also referred to as *13ers* (Patota et al., 2007, p. 2), *Baby Busters* (Patota et al., 2007, p. 2), the *MTV Generation* (Jeffries & Hunte, 2004; Patota et al., 2007, p. 2),

Twenty-Somethings (Patota et al., 2007, p. 2), Generation X consists of individuals born between 1965 and 1980—a range representing a compromise of the most commonly cited birth years for this generation.

Generation Y

Also referred to as the *Digital Generation* (Martin, 2005, p. 40; Shih & Allen, 2007, p. 90), *Echo Boomers* (Arsenault, 2004, p. 128; Eisner, 2005, p. 4; Macky, Gardner, & Forsyth, 2008, p. 857; Martin, 2005, p. 40; Shih & Allen, 2007, p. 90), *Generation 2001* (Patota et al., 2007, p. 2)*, Generation-D* (Shih & Allen, 2007, p. 90), *Generation E* (Martin, 2005, p. 40), *Generation Net* (Crumpacker & Crumpacker, 2007, p. 354), *Generation Next* (Crumpacker & Crumpacker, 2007, p. 354; Macky et al., 2008, p. 857; Shih & Allen, 2007, p. 90), *Generation Why* (Macky et al., 2008, p. 857), *Internet Generation* (Arsenault, 2004, p. 128; Eisner, 2005, p. 4), *Generation www* (Martin, 2005, p. 40), *Millennials* (Arsenault, 2004, p. 128; Crampton & Hodge, 2007, p. 16; Crumpacker & Crumpacker, 2007, p. 354; Eisner, 2005, p. 4; Martin, 2005, p. 40; Patota et al., 2007, p. 2; Shih & Allen, 2007, p. 90; Smola & Sutton, 2002, p. 364), *Millennium Generation* (Macky et al., 2008, p. 857), *N-Gens* (Martin, 2005, p. 40), *Net Generation* (Patota et al., 2007, p. 2; Shih & Allen, 2007, p. 90), *Newmills* (Shih & Allen, 2007, p.90), *Ne(X)t* (Patota et al., 2007, p. 2)*, Next Generation* (Smola & Sutton, 2002, p. 364), *Nexters* (Arsenault, 2004, p. 128; Crampton & Hodge, 2007, p. 16; Eisner, 2005, p. 4; Martin, 2005, p. 40; Patota et al., 2007, p. 2; Shih & Allen, 2007, p. 90), *Nintendo Generation* (Patota et al., 2007, p. 2) or *Thatcher's Children* (Shih & Allen, 2007, p. 90), Generation Y comprises individuals born between 1981 and 1997, for purposes of this study, a compromise clearly representing the consensus, rather than the cusp, among

conflicting opinions dating this generation in the literature (Arsenault, 2004, 128; Crampton & Hodge, 2007; Hicks & Hicks, 1999; Leschinsky & Michael, 2004, p. 34; Martin, 2005, p. 5; Patota et al., 2007, p. 2; Zemke, Raines, & Filipczak, 2000).

Intrinsic Motivators

Intrinsic motivation is defined as the performance of an activity for the inherent gratification of performing the activity rather than for some separable reward (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 55). When intrinsically motivated, a person is moved to act for the purpose of personal gratification rather than because of external pressures or rewards (p. 55). For the purposes of this study, intrinsic motivators are motivators that are predominantly personal in nature and arising from within the individual. These motivators are for personal gratification and are not tied to monetary rewards. These motivators may become less important to individuals who are affected by other forces such as difficulty in their personal lives.

Knowledge Work

Poorly defined in the literature (Amar, 2004; Horwitz et al., 2003, p. 23; Kelloway & Barling, 2000), with competing, and ambiguous definitions (Benson & Brown, 2007; Horwitz et al., 2003, p. 23; Kelloway & Barling, 2000; Paton, 2009; Timonen & Paloheimo, 2008), knowledge work is commonly defined as a profession or an individual activity (Kelloway & Barling, 2000; Šajeva, 2007). Knowledge work involves information processing, creative problem solving, the production of knowledge, and/or varied and complex work (Benson & Brown, 2007; Timonen & Paloheimo, 2008), which requires the skills of highly qualified and highly educated professionals (Botha,

2000; Horwitz et al., 2003). Knowledge work does not rely on physical inputs and natural resources; instead, knowledge work consists primarily of using employees' knowledge to meet organizational goals and objectives (Botha, 2000; Horwitz et al., 2003). Employees add value to knowledge work through their ideas, intuition, analysis, judgment, synthesis and designs (Botha, 2000; Horwitz et al., 2003).

Knowledge Worker

Also poorly defined and characterized by competing definitions (Horwitz et al., 2003, p. 23; Kelloway & Barling, 2000, p. 287; Paton, 2009; Šajeva, 2007, p. 644), traditional knowledge worker definitions restrictively overlook the increasing role of creative decision-making and participative management inherent in many skilled professions (Kelloway & Barling, 2000, p. 289), and limit the contribution and involvement of key employees and the expectations for contributions from these individuals (p. 289). Limiting the definition of knowledge work to include only employees with specific credentials (e.g., educational background, professional qualifications, and years of experience) shifts the focus from the way in which employees contribute to the organization to focus on what they have done (p. 289). This research used Horwitz et al.'s (2003) definition:

> Knowledge workers have a level of skills/education, with technological literacy, high cognitive power and abstract reasoning. This includes the ability to observe, synthesise and interpret data, and to communicate new solutions for the organisation. The knowledge creation process is part of the organisation's competitive strategy, characterized by information/knowledge sharing and team collaboration to produce more effective actions and solutions. (p. 31)

Chapter 3 further details specific participant selection criteria.

Traditionalists

Also known as the *GI Generation* (Arsenault, 2004, p. 128), *Matures* (Arsenault, 2004, p. 128; Patota et al., 2007, p. 2), *Seniors* (Patota et al., 2007, p. 2), the *Silent Generation* (Arsenault, 2004, p. 128; Patota et al., 2007, p. 2), and *Veterans* (Arsenault, 2004, p. 128; Crampton & Hodge, 2007, p. 16; Crumpacker & Crumpacker, 2007, p. 352), the Traditionalists, reportedly born between 1922 and 1945 (Patota et al., 2007, p. 3), represent the oldest generation in the workforce today.

Work Motivation

Although difficult to define due to its numerous aspects and the multiplicity of views surrounding human motivation (Pinder, 2008, p. 10), this study relies on Pinder's (2008) definition, which describes work motivation as "a set of energetic forces that originate both within as well as beyond an individual's being, to initiate work-related behavior, and to determine its form, direction, intensity, and duration" (p. 11).

Assumptions and Limitations

As previously indicated, research suggests that generational differences exist in work motivation (Crampton & Hodge, 2007, p. 16; Daboval, 1998; Moody, 2007; Patota et al., 2007, p. 1). Following that literature, but in the absence of literature on the work motivation of Generation Y itself, this study was designed to explore the premise that generational differences in employee motivation exist for employees from Generation Y.

This study relied on qualitative data collected through in-depth, face-to-face interviews using open-ended questions, which assume that participants responded openly, honestly, and candidly. Grounded theory analysis based on the individuals' self-reported

opinions may have introduced individual bias. The data also represent only one moment in time. This study drew data from people in a limited number of companies in a small geographic area. The data from this grounded theory study may not be generalizable due to the limited scope of the research (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 251). The findings may not apply to other industries, regions, countries, or cultures.

Nature of the Study

This grounded theory study employed in-depth, open-ended, face-to-face interviews with 20 knowledge workers from Generation Y, targeting healthcare employees in the Midwest, to develop a well-saturated theory. The researcher located potential research participants through professional trade organizations, though participants did not include anyone previously known by the researcher; specific recruitment and selection criteria are detailed in Chapter 3. The study employed a grounded theory research approach (Charmaz, 2006), also detailed in Chapter 3, to identify emerging themes and patterns and to generate comparisons to the existing body of literature.

Figure 1 provides a broad overview, or literature map (Creswell, 2003, pp. 39-41), of the key literatures informing the research question and guiding the remainder of the study.

Literature Map

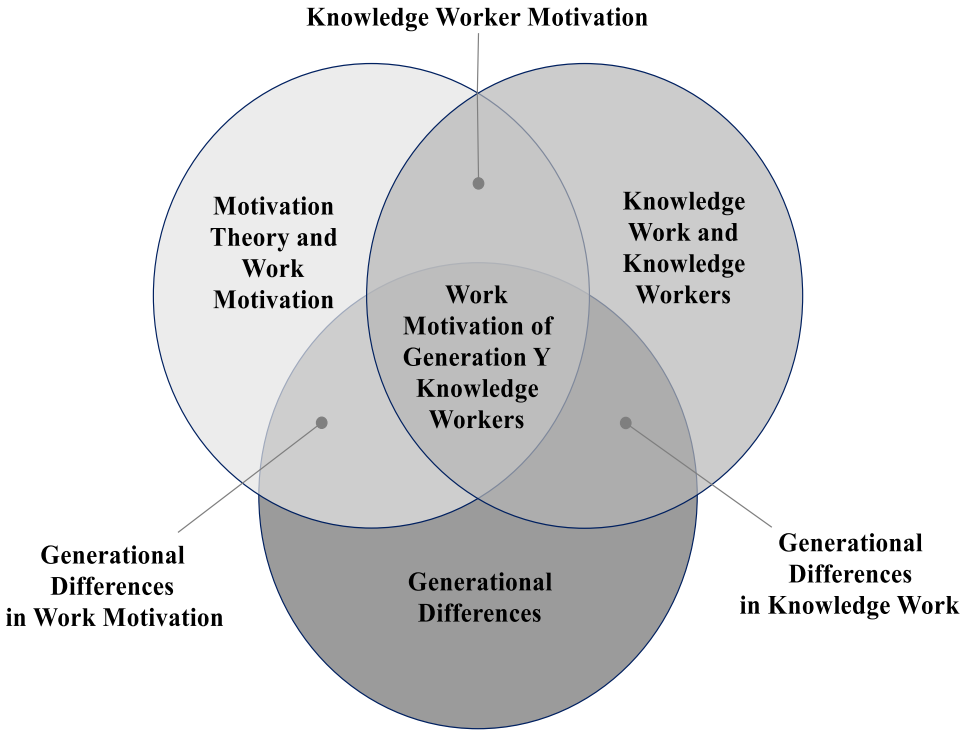

Figure 1. Map of literature informing the study.

Organization of the Remainder of the Study

Consistent with grounded theory research methods, Chapter 2 provides a succinct and limited review of the literature informing the research question and study design, specifically focusing on motivation theory as it relates to work motivation; knowledge workers in the knowledge economy; and generational differences in work motivation, thereby demonstrating the need for research that explores the work motivation experiences of Generation Y knowledge workers, as addressed in this study. The literature review presented in Chapter 2 formed the foundation for a discussion of extant theories, of which specific analysis and full synthesis were delayed until Chapter 5 after

the conduct of this research, to avoid imposing preconceived ideas or received concepts on this study, again consistent with grounded theory research methods (Glaser, 1998, p. 67).

Chapter 3 details the qualitative research methods this study employs, including the theoretical framework; the researcher's philosophy; the role of the researcher; participant selection criteria; data collection, handling, and analysis methods and procedures; related ethical issues; and methodological limitations associated with the study.

Chapter 4 presents the study's findings and initial grounded theory analysis, a summary of the study and the researcher's qualifications and interest in the phenomenon under investigation, and a discussion regarding the researcher's role in the data collection and analysis process. Next presented is an aggregated description of the sample, followed by in-depth descriptions of the participants and a summary of the research methodology and applied data analysis methods. The chapter concludes with a presentation of the data and results of analysis and a summary of the findings.

Chapter 5 critically assesses the findings to reach conclusions, presents a theory grounded in the data, synthesizes the relevant extant theories initially presented in Chapter 2, delineates the study's contributions to and comparisons with the literature, and provides recommendations for future research and practice.

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

A literature review typically offers a critical review of the existing research related to the topic of study. The literature review allows the researcher to demonstrate knowledge of the field, sets the context for the research through an examination and synthesis of relevant literature as it informs and does not yet inform the central research question, and justifies the need for the proposed study by identifying gaps in the literature and related, significant problems in practice. This chapter represents an overview of the relevant literature from a theoretical standpoint and lays the foundation for the research that follows.

Scope and Timing of the Literature Review in Grounded Theory Research

Considerable debate surrounds the use of existing literature prior to the conduct of the study in grounded theory research (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007b, p. 19; Charmaz, 2006, p. 165; McGhee, Marland, & Atkinson, 2007, p. 334). Some researchers argue that grounded theorists should begin a research study without conducting an extensive review of the literature to avoid overreliance on extant ideas and *a priori* assumptions, to minimize the risk of developing preconceived notions about the study (Glaser, 1978; 1992, p. 31; 1998, pp. 67-79; Glaser & Holton, 2004; Glaser & Strauss, 1967/1999/2008; Strauss, 1987; Strauss & Corbin, 1990); yet other researchers argue that grounded theory researchers must have an understanding of the literature in order to develop theoretical sensitivity and identify which concepts represent new contributions to the body of literature (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007b, p. 20; Lempert, 2007, p. 254).

Due to the emergent nature of grounded theory, the scope and timing of the literature review may require modification from the traditional literature review guidelines for research studies (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser, 1998).

> It is critical in GT [grounded theory] methodology to avoid unduly influencing the pre-conceptualization of the research through extensive reading in the substantive area and the forcing of extant theoretical overlays on the collection and analysis of data. To undertake an extensive review of literature before the emergence of a core category violates the basic premise of GT—that being, the theory emerges from the data not from extant theory. It also runs the risk of clouding the researcher's ability to remain open to the emergence of a completely new core category that has not figured prominently in the research to date thereby thwarting the theoretical sensitivity. Practically, it may well result in the researcher spending valuable time on an area of literature that proves to be of little significance to the resultant GT. Instead, GT methodology treats the literature as another source of data to be integrated into the constant comparative analysis process once the core category, its properties and related categories have emerged and the basic conceptual development is well underway. (Glaser & Holton, 2004, p. 9)

Conducting a literature review in the substantive and related areas of the planned research prior to commencing the research is problematic because it goes against conventional wisdom regarding grounded theory research, which indicates that grounded theory research should be emergent and not forced (Glaser, 1998, pp. 67-68; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Conducting pre-research literature reviews in grounded theory studies presents numerous problems (Glaser, 1998; Strauss & Corbin, 1990):

- The researcher may overemphasize irrelevant received concepts that do not fit the study (Glaser, 1998, p. 67), which may stifle creativity (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 50).

- The researcher may develop preconceived notions about a professional problem that is of little relevance to the study, which can detract from the emerging theory (Glaser, 1998, p. 67).

- Speculative, nonscientific interpretations that are not relevant to the research may also find their way into the grounded theory and interfere with discover (Glaser, 1998, p. 67; Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 49).

- In addition, reviewing the extant literature by the pundits in the field may cause the researcher to question his or her abilities to contribute substantively to the existing body of knowledge and the resulting analysis may become replete with rhetoric not grounded in the data itself, thereby eroding the emergent grounded theory (Glaser, 1998, p. 68).

- Lastly, it is impossible to adequately determine which literature is relevant until the main problem of the research study surfaces. Thus, a researcher may spend inordinate amounts of time reviewing the extant literature in areas that are not directly relevant to the emerging grounded theory (Glaser, 1998, pp. 67-68).

In contrast to quantitative research methods, designed to test the relationships among variables, grounded theory research methods seek to discover relevant categories and the relationships among them (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 49). Rather than relying on the extant literature to guide the research process, grounded theory researchers must strive to set aside theoretical ideas and received notions to allow the analytic, substantive theory to emerge from the data (Strauss & Corbin, 1990. pp. 48-50).

In recognition of the aforementioned issues associated with conducting an extensive literature review prior to commencing the research itself, the scope of the literature review included in this chapter is limited to a review of literature that establishes the need and rationale for the study (J. Whitlock, personal communication, June 1, 2009). In an effort to provide a contextual background for the research study, this chapter also provides an initial review of the key literatures informing the central research question (Creswell, 2003, p. 106; 2007, p. 108) as listed in Figure 1:

- motivation theory and its subset, work motivation;
- knowledge work and knowledge workers; and
- generational differences and its subset, work-related generational differences.

The balance of the literature review, including a more extensive review of possible generational differences in work motivation, with a specific focus on Generation Y knowledge workers and relevant work motivation theories, was delayed until the core concepts of the grounded theory emerged (Glaser, 1998, p. 74; Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 50) and the grounded theory was well formulated (Glaser, 1998, p. 74) to minimize the potential for researcher bias, and is thus included in Chapters 5.

This chapter provides a high-level overview of the foundations and historical development of motivation theory from a theoretical standpoint, followed by a more in-depth review of seminal and well-known work motivation theories. A review of the literature on knowledge work and the contemporary work context follows, identifying key factors contributing to the changing nature of work. The review of literature on generational differences in work motivation focuses on motivators driving Baby Boomers and Gen Xers. This chapter concludes with a synthesis of these literatures as they inform, and do not yet inform, the central research question. As previously indicated, the intersections of the literature and particularly the review of literature specifically pertaining to Generation Y knowledge workers and their work motivation experiences will be delayed until after the research study begins, to avoid overreliance on extant ideas and *a priori* assumptions and to minimize the risk of developing preconceived notions about the study (Glaser, 1978, 1992, p. 31; Glaser & Holton, 2004; Glaser & Strauss, 1967/1999/2008; Strauss, 1987; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Therefore, the review of the intersecting literature, including the literature on Generation Y knowledge workers and their work motivation experiences will be included in subsequent chapters.

Foundations and Historical Development of Work Motivation Theory

Historically, social scientists have had conflicting views regarding human motivation because it is a complex social phenomenon (McGregor, 1960/1985, pp. 35-36). "Although there has always been consensus about the need for motivated employees, the same cannot be said for beliefs about how to induce higher levels of motivation (Ott et al., 2008b, p. 131). This section of the literature review provides a broad overview of the foundations and historical development of key work motivation theories from a theoretical standpoint and provides the foundation for this research study. The motivation theories prioritized for discussion in this chapter are prominent in the field, dominant in the organizational behavior literature, and of possible relevance in the knowledge economy.

"The earliest approaches to understanding human motivation date from the time of the Greek philosophers and focus on the concept of hedonism as a principle driving force in behavior" (Steers, Mowday, & Shapiro, 2004, pp. 379-380). Proponents of this school of thought viewed individuals' desires to avoid pain and seek pleasure as key determinants of human behavior (Steers et al., 2004, p. 380). Other philosophers further refined and developed this principle during the 17th and 18th centuries (Steers et al., 2004, p. 380). The Industrial Revolution, and the shift from an agrarian society to a production-based workforce, led to the development of new tactics for employee motivation (Ott et al., 2008b, p. 131; Rhee & Sigler, 2005). This era was driven by the division of labor (Smith, 1776, as cited in Ott et al., 2008b) and incentive piece-rate compensation systems designed to encourage production output (Ott et al., 2008b, p. 131).

Toward the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, views regarding human motivation began to shift from a focus on philosophy to the emerging field of psychology (Ott et al., 2008a, p. 12; Steers et al., 2004, p. 380). Instinct theories emerged during this timeframe (Steers et al., 2004, p. 380). Instinct theorists argued that instinct drove behavior and human behavior was not, therefore, highly rational (Steers et al., 2004, p. 380).

During this same period, Taylor (1916/2005) articulated the principles of scientific management, which focused on identifying the one best method for accomplishing a task. Taylor and his colleagues sought to improve efficiency in manufacturing production through the development of a new and paternalistic approach to management. The improvement of manufacturing techniques led to increased operating efficiency and organizations and employees shared the rewards (Steers et al., 2004, p. 380).

Beginning around the 1920s, various limitations of instinct theories began to emerge (White, 1959) and the focus of motivation research shifted to models based on *drive* or *reinforcement* (Steers et al., 2004, p. 380).

> Led by psychologists such as Thorndike [1911], Woodworth [no citation provided in Steers et al.], and Hull [1943], drive theorists introduced the concept of learning in motivated behavior and posited that decisions concerning present or future behaviors are largely influenced by the consequences of rewards associated with past behavior. (Steers et al., 2004, p. 380)

Ultimately, the machine bureaucracy model, which was once tremendously successful, ceased to produce the desired results due to three significant problems (Nadler & Gerstein, 2006):

- The model was built for the management of relatively stable and predictable situations. It broke down under conditions of uncertainty and instability because of the inability to reconfigure and the lack of emphasis on discretion by individuals. As rates of change increased, organizations based on this model became less effective.

- The model was built on the assumption that the work force was relatively uneducated, had little mobility, and was driven almost exclusively by economic needs. As more educated workers with greater mobility and desire for noneconomic returns from their employment (pride, a feeling of worth and accomplishment, challenge, and growth) came into the work force, the organizations built on this model had a more difficult time motivating and satisfying workers.

- Over time, organizations based on this model experienced their own entropy: they tended to become more complex, less responsive, more inwardly oriented, and more unwieldy. (pp. 733-734)

As the American workforce evolved and became more sophisticated, organizations attempted to further maximize productivity through the principles of scientific management without increasing the rewards for the workforce, leading to a widespread increase in unionization activities in the 1930s (Steers et al., 2004, p. 380).

Meanwhile, social scientists and managers began to recognize that employees were complex social beings with multiple motivational influences (Steers et al., 2004, p. 380). This realization ultimately led to the development of the human relations movement (Rhee & Sigler, 2005). The Hawthorne (Mayo, 1933; Roethlisberger, 1941/2005) studies are perhaps the most well-known studies of the human relations movement (Steers et al., 2004, p. 380).

The Hawthorne Studies

The Hawthorne studies, conducted by Mayo (1933; Roethlisberger, 1941/2005) and his team, originated as simple scientific experiments aimed at identifying the

relationship between various changes in the physical work environment (e.g., illumination) to work output (Ott et al., 2008b, p. 132; Rhee & Sigler, 2005, p. 321). The goal of the studies was to use scientific measurement tools to identify the relationship between various elements of the work environment and worker productivity (Roethlisberger, 1941/2005). However, after the studies began, the researchers realized that they needed to interview the employees to gain a better understanding regarding the factors driving employee productivity. The studies revealed a need for greater attention to the human element of motivation by demonstrating the importance of employee attitudes and beliefs (Roethlisberger, 1941/2005, p. 161). The researchers found that employees wanted to discuss their feelings and that management's attentiveness to workers positively influenced employee productivity (Roethlisberger, 1941/2005).

The Hawthorne studies (Mayo, 1933; Roethlisberger, 1941/2005*)* set the groundwork for a set of principles that would displace, 2 decades later, the assumptions of classical organization theory (Shafritz, Ott, & Jang, 2005, p. 145).

> The experiments were the emotional and intellectual wellspring of the organizational behavior perspective and modern theories of motivation; they showed that complex, interacting variables make the difference in motivating people—things like attention paid to workers as individuals, workers' control over their own work, differences between individuals' needs, management's willingness to listen, group norms, and direct feedback. (Shafritz et al., 2005, p. 146)

The Hawthorne studies had far-reaching implications for organizational theorists, dispelling the myth that monetary rewards primarily motivated employees, thus shifting the focus of motivation research away from an emphasis on purely extrinsic rewards. Subsequent theories, such as Maslow's (1943/2008) theory of human motivation, placed an increased emphasis on human needs. Research over subsequent years led to the

development of a variety of management techniques and methods designed to overcome the limitations of the machine bureaucracy (Nadler & Gerstein, 2006, p. 734). These organizational theorists (Argryis, 1957; Likert, 1961) believed that employees wanted to produce quality products and that participation would encourage employees to work collaboratively to reach the organization's goals (Nadler & Gerstein, 2006, p. 734). This school of thought resulted in the development of techniques such as participative management, team building, and job enrichment; however, in many instances, organizational leaders attempted to implement these techniques in organizations designed as mechanistic bureaucracies and they did not achieve the desired results (Nadler & Gerstein, 2006, p. 734).

Maslow's Theory of Human Motivation

Maslow's (1943/2008) theory of human motivation, or hierarchy of needs (Figure 2), is one of the most seminal and thus commonly studied motivation theories (Gambrel & Cianci, 2003; Hendriks, 1999). Maslow postulated that money alone was not a sufficient motivator. He theorized that several different needs motivate humans, hierarchically. He grouped these needs into five distinct categories: basic needs (physiological needs), safety needs, love/belongingness needs, esteem needs, and the need for self-actualization (Maslow, pp. 149-152). According to Maslow, these needs arrange themselves into a hierarchy of relative prepotency in which the emergence of one need is typically contingent upon the prior satisfaction of another, more prepotent need (p. 149).

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

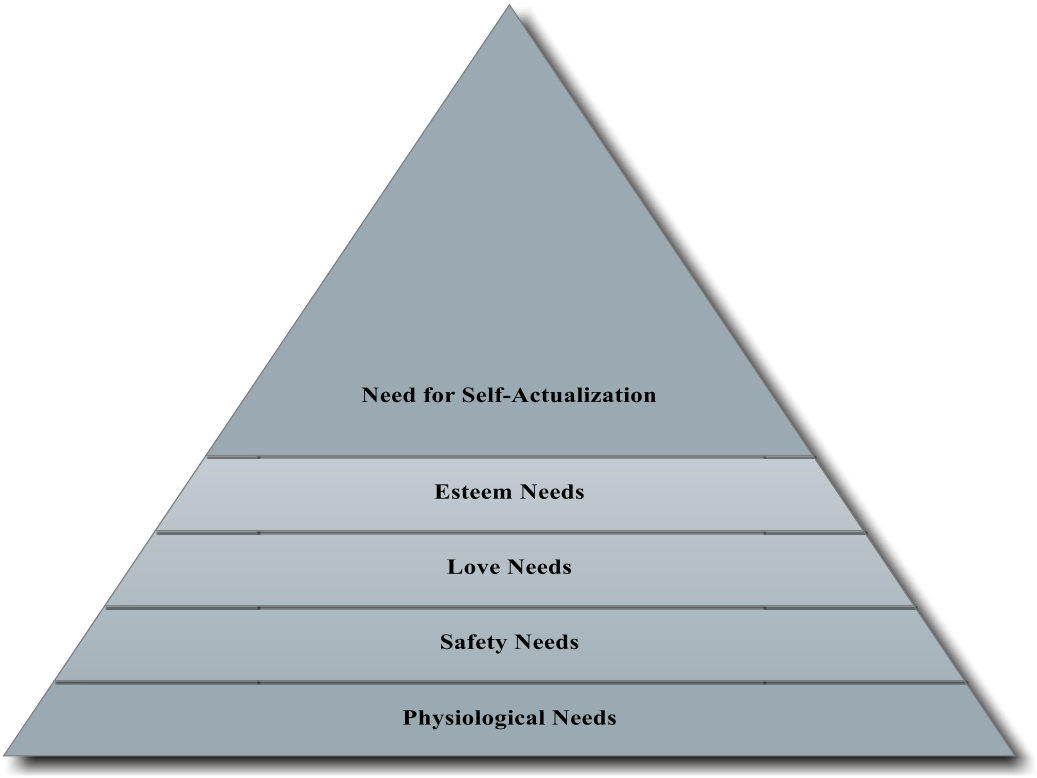

Figure 2. Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

Basic physiological needs represent the lowest, most prepotent, level of the hierarchy: food, water, and shelter (Maslow, 1943/2008, p. 149). If all needs are unsatisfied, the need for food, water, and shelter will typically serve as the individual's primary motivator. In the workplace, basic needs may include the need to work in an environment with ample lighting and temperature control (Brenner, 1999, p. 34; the desire for a comfortable work station (Brenner, 1999, p. 34); access to the necessary and information to perform the job (Brenner, 1999, p. 34); fair wages; and adequate rest. Until the basic physiological needs are met, the other needs will be of little importance because the most prepotent needs are unsatisfied (Maslow, 1943/2008, pp. 149-150). A

layoff, for instance, might threaten and force a worker's focus to return to physiological, rather than other, higher order needs.

When an individual's basic physiological needs are satisfied, *safety needs* emerge as the primary motivator (Maslow, 1943/2008, pp. 150-151). Individuals tend to prefer safe, orderly, predictable environments free from harm (e.g., wild animals, extreme temperatures, criminals, societal unrest, etc.). Although Maslow (1943/2008) posited that American culture, at the time of his theorizing, typically satisfied the safety needs of healthy, normal, fortunate adults, such that the safety needs did not commonly serve as active motivators (p. 150), he indicated that safety needs serve as an active and dominant mobilizer of human motivation during emergency situations (e.g., war, natural disaster, disease, crime wave, etc.). In the work environment, in addition to physical safety, individuals have a need to feel psychologically safe and secure. "Arbitrary management actions, behavior which arouses uncertainty with respect to continued employment or which reflects favoritism or discrimination, unpredictable administration of policy—these can be powerful motivators of the safety needs in the employment relationship" (McGregor, 1960/1985, p. 37). Items such as privacy screens, ergonomic work stations designed to promote good posture and well-being, locking file cabinets to protect personal belongings and confidential information, ample lighting in the parking lot to ensure safety when entering or exiting the building, and security systems provide employees with a sense of safety and security (Brenner, 1999, p. 35). Broader safety and security needs may also impact an individual's behavior by causing the individual to resist change, a human tendency evidencing preference for the familiar (safety) over the unknown (Maslow, 1943/2008, pp. 150-151).

Love/belongingness needs (e.g., love, affection, and desire for belonging), invoked when one's physiological and safety needs are met, involve both giving and receiving love (Maslow, 1943/2008, p. 151). When physiological and safety needs are essentially satisfied, an individual will seek affectionate relationships with others and will strive to attain group acceptance (p. 151). In the work environment, an individual will attempt to satisfy love/belongingness needs by seeking social acceptance from peers and superiors.

Once an individual's love/belongingness needs are satisfied, *esteem needs* become the primary motivator. Esteem needs fall into two categories: the desire for strength, achievement, adequacy, confidence, independence and freedom; and the desire for reputation or prestige, recognition, attention, importance or appreciation (Maslow, 1943/2008, p. 151). In the work environment, items such as respect, employee status, and recognition can lead to the fulfillment of the esteem needs (Brenner, 1999, p. 36). "Satisfaction of the self-esteem need leads to feelings of self-confidence, worth, strength, capability and adequacy of being useful and necessary in the world. But thwarting of these needs produces feelings of inferiority, of weakness, and of helplessness" (Maslow, 1943/2008, p. 151). This suggests that social acceptance and belongingness play a crucial role in the workplace because individuals who feel useful to the organization will gain self-confidence, thereby impacting their desires to make positive contributions to the organization.

Finally, once one's self-esteem needs are met, *self-actualization needs* become the primary motivator (Maslow, 1943/2008, pp. 151-152). Self-actualization refers to an individual's desire for self-fulfillment—the desire to reach one's full potential (p. 152). In

the work context, self-actualization needs can be met by providing employees with the freedom and trust to complete their work while giving them sufficient control over how they perform the work, thereby providing them with an inner sense of achievement and the ability to make positive contributions to the organization (Brenner, 1999, p. 37).

Maslow (1943/2008) thus delineated human needs ranging from basic physiological and safety needs to more complex needs such as self-actualization, and ordered them in a hierarchy in which lower level needs must be satisfied before higher level needs provide motivation. Conversely, if previously satisfied needs become again unsatisfied, those lower level needs take over as the current motivators (e.g., if a person loses a job, higher level needs become irrelevant motivators while replacing the job to satisfy physiological and safety needs once again).

> The physiological needs, along with their partial goals, when chronically gratified cease to exist as active determinants of organizers of behavior. They now exist only in a potential fashion in the sense that they may emerge again to dominate the organism if they are thwarted. (Maslow, 1943/2008, p. 150)

Thus, unsatisfied needs motivate behavior hierarchically and satisfied needs do not (Berl, Williamson, & Powell, 1984, p. 33; Maslow, 1943/2008). Accordingly, gratification and deprivation of needs are equally important in Maslow's (1943/2008) theory of human motivation, because need gratification allows the individual to pursue higher level needs (p. 150), while lower level need deprivation takes precedence over pursuit of higher level needs. If an individual's basic physiological and safety needs are unmet, these needs will serve as the primary motivating forces. In their work, individuals will seek to work in environments that provide them with the opportunities to earn fair wages that enable them to meet their basic needs for food, shelter, and clean water. Once

individuals' basic physiological needs are met, safety needs will become the driving motivational force. Individuals will seek work environments free of unsafe work practices, unethical conduct, and discriminatory behavior. Upon reasonable satisfaction of these lower level needs, individuals will seek social acceptance in the work environment. Recognition and appreciation will become the central focus once the love/belongingness needs have been met. After the physiological, safety, love, and esteem needs are essentially satisfied, individuals will ultimately seek self-fulfillment by attempting to become the ideal worker.

Numerous critiques of Maslow's (1943/2008) theory suggested interdependency, rather than independence, of Maslow's needs categories (e.g., Berl et al., 1984; Heylighen, 1992) and proposed several modifications of the sequential hierarchy of needs (e.g., Alderfer, 1969; Argryis, 1957, 1964; Goebel & Brown, 1981; Hackman & Oldham, 1980; Herzberg, 1966; Ott et al., 2008b, p. 133). Researchers also criticized Maslow's terms, particularly *self-actualization* (Berl et al., 1984; Heylighen, 1992) and *need emergence* (Goebel & Brown, 1981, p. 812), as ambiguous or poorly defined (Berl et al., 1984; Goebel & Brown, 1981).

Berl et al. (1984) further suggested that the most deficient need is not always the most dominant need (p. 34), finding that security and self-actualization needs were the least satisfied needs (p. 34). However, Maslow's (1943/2008) theory relies on needs rather than behavior (p. 153), and Maslow himself indicated that needs and desires are not the only factors affecting an individual's behavior (Goebel & Brown, 1981, p. 810; Maslow, 1943/2008, p. 153; O'Connor & Yballe, 2007, p. 740). According to Maslow,

an individual who is deprived of two needs will want the more basic of the two needs; however, the individual may not act upon the desires (p. 152).

In a work context, the organization should also be considered but not be viewed as the only explanation for an individual's behavior (Brenner, 1999, p. 34). Some researchers have argued that Maslow's (1943/2008) hierarchy of needs oversimplifies motivation by suggesting that deprivation of a need of high prepotency will cause that need to dominate the individual's behavior until the need is satisfied (Wahba & Bridwell, 1973, p. 517). These researchers argue that behavior is multideterminate and gratification of a given need will not necessarily suppress the need and activate the next highest need on the hierarchy because need deprivation does not drive all behavior (Wahba & Bridwell, 1973). Others have found limited support for Maslow's hierarchy of needs and called for further research to develop a more comprehensive theory of motivational development that addresses age-related differences in motivation (Goebel & Brown, 1981, p. 812).

With respect to motivation across the lifespan, one study suggested that the esteem needs peak in adolescence; the need for safety and security increases slightly as people age; the love/belongingness needs continue to rise during early adulthood and dominate at all ages; and the need for self-actualization decreases slightly as people age (Goebel & Brown, 1981, p. 814). Although the study did not appear to completely substantiate Maslow's (1943/2008) hierarchy, the results provided some evidence of needs emergence according to the hierarchy, with children possessing the greatest physiological needs; love/belongingness needs emerging from childhood to young

adulthood; esteem needs peaking in adolescence; and self-actualization needs emerging from childhood to young adulthood (Goebel & Brown, 1981, pp. 811-812).

Another critique of the hierarchy of needs indicated that lower level needs do not need to be gratified before higher level needs become active motivators (Wofford, 1971, p. 515). "Rather than operating in a hierarchical fashion, the need categories appear to function in a complimentary [*sic*] manner" (Wofford, 1971, p. 516). Although these findings appear to refute Maslow's (1943/2008) theory of human motivation by suggesting that the model is not supported by research, these critiques are largely unjustified. Many critics misreported or misunderstood Maslow's (1943/2008) hierarchy of needs writings and took them out of context, thereby losing the original intent and spirit of the hierarchy (O'Connor & Yballe, 2007, p. 739).

Maslow (1943/2008) himself indicated that the hierarchy of needs should not be viewed as rigid; instead, it should serve as a basis for understanding human needs and the order in which they develop (p. 152). Variances in need emergence can occur for a variety of reasons (p. 152), and lower level needs do not require complete satisfaction in order to invoke higher level needs. If basic needs are partially satisfied, higher level needs may be activated (p. 153).

In some instances, a reversal in the hierarchy exists, and self-esteem needs become more important than love/belongingness needs, possibly resulting from the individual's assumption that people who are respected are more likely to gain affection from others (Maslow, 1943/2008, p. 152). In the workplace, an individual may work with great intensity to earn recognition and respect from colleagues in order to gain social acceptance, thereby satisfying the love/belongingness needs.

In some innately creative people, self-actualization needs will emerge even though the basic needs are not satisfied (Maslow, 1943/2008, pp. 152-153). For these innately creative individuals, the desire for creativity will serve as the most important driving force. Whereas for other individuals who have experienced life at a very low level, "the level of aspiration may be permanently deadened or lowered" and the less prepotent goals may never become important (Maslow, 1943/2008, p. 153). As indicated by Maslow (1943/2008), numerous possible exceptions to the hierarchy of needs exist (pp. 152-153). Maslow also recognized other factors at play in human motivation and suggested that motivation cannot be studied in isolation (p. 154).

Furthermore, Maslow (1943/2008) indicated that self-actualization was poorly understood. He posited that most normal people were partially satisfied and partially unsatisfied in all of their basic needs. Thus, most people in American society were not basically satisfied people and the concept of self-actualization remained a challenging problem for research (p. 152).

Despite the multitude of critiques, Maslow's (1943/2008) hierarchy of needs remains one of the most widely recognized theories of motivation (Benson & Dundis, 2003; Hendriks, 1999, p. 94; O'Connor & Yballe, 2007, pp. 739-740; Ott et al., 2008, p. 133) and many organizational leaders still find it intuitively useful (O'Connor & Yballe, 2007, pp. 739-740). Thus, Maslow's hierarchy of needs may still have relevance in the knowledge economy (Hendriks, 1999, p. 95; Stott & Walker, 1995; Tampoe, 1993). Conversely, due to the specialized nature of knowledge work and the changes in the work environment since Maslow's (1943/2008) original development of the hierarchy of needs,

additional research is needed to evaluate whether modifications to the hierarchy are necessary to address the current motivational landscape.

Subsequent to Maslow's (1943/2008) foundational motivation theory, organizational theorists' fundamental assumptions about human behavior at work began to change (Ott, Parkes, & Simpson, 2008a; Shafritz, Ott, & Jang, 2005, p. 145; Steers et al., 2004). In the late 1950s, the focus of organizational behavior shifted from one of dependence to one of codependence between organizations and their employees (Shafritz et al., 2005, p. 145). The organizational behavior perspective on motivation, or *human resource theory*, emerged (Shafritz et al., 2005, p. 145). The organizational behavior perspective places much greater importance on the value of individuals within organizations than classic motivation theories, and recognizes that employee growth and development initiatives naturally lead to organizational creativity, flexibility, and prosperity (Shafritz et al., 2005, p. 145).

Herzberg's Motivation-Hygiene Theory

In the late 1950s, a study on employee job attitudes sought a better understanding of how people felt about and what they wanted from their jobs (Herzberg, Mausner, & Snyderman, 1959/1993/2008). In preparation for the study, Herzberg and his colleagues (Herzberg et al., 1959/1993/2008) reviewed virtually everything published from 1900 to 1955 on the subject of job attitudes (p. xiii). Herzberg et al. (1959/1993/2008) found that, despite the overwhelming multitude of studies conducted to determine what workers wanted from their jobs, the results of the accumulated research studies on job attitudes, which included 155 research studies published between 1920 and 1954, provided contradictory evidence regarding employee job attitudes and were, therefore,

inconclusive (p. xiii). Herzberg et al. (1959/1993/2008) concluded that the vast differences in research methods and design contributed to the conflicting research results on employee job attitudes, noting that even small differences in the phrasing of questions demonstrated major effects on the outcomes of the research (p. xiii).

After reviewing the results of numerous studies about job satisfaction and dissatisfaction, Herzberg and his colleagues (1959/1993/2008) noted an apparent "difference in the primacy of factors, depending upon whether the investigator was looking for things the worker liked or disliked about their jobs" (p. xiii). They thus concluded that some factors may serve as *satisfiers* while others may serve as *dissatisfiers*. Herzberg et al. (1959/1993/2008) derived the basic hypothesis for *The Motivation to Work* from this concept.

Herzberg et al. (1959/1993/2008) used the *sequence of events*, or *critical incidents,* technique to further his hypothesis about job satisfaction and dissatisfaction (p. xiii). They asked research participants to describe incidents about which they felt good or felt bad (p. xiii). The results of the study revealed that extrinsic, or *hygiene factors*, such as the work environment caused dissatisfaction whereas intrinsic factors related to the work itself served as *motivators* (pp. xiii-xiv). Herzberg and his colleagues (1959/1993/2008) therefore concluded that hygiene factors and motivators could not be measured on the same continuum because the two sets of factors that emerged from their study were significantly independent. The results from their study of work motivation led to the development of the motivation-hygiene theory.

The motivation-hygiene theory (Herzberg et al., 1959/1993/2008) posits two distinct types of factors: hygiene factors and motivators. Hygiene factors do not

effectively serve to motivate employees but their absence can serve to demotivate employees. Hygiene factors may include factors such as salary, working conditions, status, and interpersonal relations (Hendriks, 1999, p. 95).

Numerous researchers replicated Herzberg et al.'s (1959/1993/2008) study of motivation-hygiene factors and attained similar results, thereby providing further empirical support of two independent sets of factors (Bassett-Jones & Lloyd, 2005; Hendriks, 1999, p. 95; Herzberg et al., 1959/1993/2008, p. xiv). "Those using the critical incident framework showed a remarkable consistency with the original results, whilst research using the other methods, principally surveys, supported the uniscalar model of job satisfaction" (Bassett-Jones & Lloyd, 2005, p. 933).

Although many studies provided evidence in support of Herzberg et al.'s (1959/1993/2008) motivation-hygiene theory, it was still the subject of considerable debate (Sachau, 2007, p. 377). Researchers challenged Herzberg et al.'s (1959/1993/2008) contention that money was more likely to serve as a hygiene factor than a motivator, and concluded that the data from Herzberg et al.'s (1959/1993/2008) study did not support this assertion (Bassett-Jones & Lloyd, 2005, p. 932; Opsahl & Dunnette, 1966). Herzberg et al.'s (1959/1993/2008) theory also received numerous critiques challenging the research methodology and suggesting that the method itself contributed to participant bias because individuals were more likely to accept responsibility for their successes and blame the organization for their failures (Bassett-Jones & Lloyd, 2005, p. 933; Hardin, 1965; Hulin & Smith, 1965; Sachau, 2007, p. 383; Vroom, 1964/2008). Critics also disputed Herzberg et al.'s (1959/1993/2008) assertion that motivation factors and hygiene factors represented two separate psychological

dimensions (Sachau, 2007). Vroom (1964/2008) offered one of the most powerful critiques of motivation-hygiene theory by suggesting that the research method invoked the research participants' ego defenses, causing individuals to attribute sources of dissatisfaction to the work and sources of job satisfaction to their personal achievements and capabilities (Vroom, 1964, as cited in Bassett-Jones & Lloyd, 2005, p. 933).

Despite the contradictory views on Herzberg et al.'s (1959/1993/2008) motivation-hygiene theory, the theory remains one of the most commonly cited motivation theories. Further, recent research suggests that Herzberg et al.'s (1959/1993/2008) motivation-hygiene theory still has applicability in the 21st century (Bassett-Jones & Lloyd, 2005; Hendriks, 1999; Sachau, 2007) and is of particular relevance when examining the factors influencing the motivation for knowledge sharing, because motivators such as achievement, responsibility, recognition, promotional opportunities, and challenging work appear to trigger knowledge-sharing behaviors, whereas hygiene factors do not appear to motivate knowledge-sharing behaviors (Hendriks, 1999, p. 95).

Bassett-Jones and Lloyd (2005) conducted a study to determine if Herzberg's et al.'s (1959/1993/2008) motivation-hygiene theory held true in the contemporary work context, with the specific goal of identifying what motivates employees to contribute ideas or suggestions in the workplace. The study focused on data obtained from more than 3,000 survey participants from large organizations from various employment sectors in the United Kingdom. The results of the research study revealed that offering extrinsic rewards such as financial inducements and gifts to employees is not the most effective method for motivating employees to contribute ideas (Bassett-Jones & Lloyd, 2005, p.

941) and, thus, provided further evidence in support of Herzberg et al.'s (1959/1993/2008) motivation-hygiene theory. However, the study results also suggested that changes in the organizational structure and reduced promotion opportunities resulting from flatter organizations structures since the time of Herzberg et al.'s (1959/1993/2008) study may place less emphasis on the importance of managerial recognition (Bassett-Jones & Lloyd, 2005, p. 941).

McGregor's Theory X and Theory Y

Building on the organizational behavior school of thought, McGregor (1960/1985) indicated that traditional assumptions about employee behavior were flawed and subsequently led to the development of ineffective management techniques. McGregor (1960/1985) suggested that traditional management techniques, based on influence and control, are ineffective because they are predicated on the assumptions that

- people have an inherent dislike for work and will seek to avoid work whenever possible;
- because individuals dislike work, they must be coerced or controlled in order to get them to pursue the objectives of the organization; and
- humans generally prefer to be directed, like to avoid responsibility, lack ambition, and seek security more than anything else (pp. 33-34).

McGregor referred to this set of assumptions as *Theory X* (p. 35).

McGregor (1960/1985) posited that management techniques based on Theory X are inadequate because they focus primarily on individuals' lower level needs, which are typically met, and they fail to adequately address individuals' higher level needs, such as the social, egoistic, and self-fulfillment needs (pp. 33-43). McGregor stated that management's failure to address individuals' higher level needs contributes to poor

outcomes, which he suggested are a direct result of management's naivety. McGregor further suggested that the deprivation of higher level needs can lead individuals to behave with indolence, passivity, and an unwillingness to accept responsibility (p. 42). Thus, Theory X management fails to recognize the interdependence between employees and their managers (McGregor, 1960/1985).

Organizational leaders operating under Theory X (McGregor, 1960/1985) principles of command and control were not maximizing the potential of employees. Instead, organizational leaders operating under Theory X assumptions were overlooking the benefits that integration of organizational and employee goals could provide. The narrow focus on authority commonly associated with Theory X management principles was a source of the problems in organizations. By abandoning traditional Theory X assumptions and adopting a new organizational outlook with an increased focus on the human needs of employees, organizational leaders could overcome some of the problems traditionally associated with human behavior in organizational settings. "The real need is for new theory, changed assumptions, more understanding of human behavior in organizational settings" (p. 18). Thus *Theory Y* was born.

Unlike Theory X, which is based on the assumption that traditional command-and-control management techniques are necessary to drive employee behavior because humans have an inherent dislike for work, Theory Y operates under a completely different set of assumptions than Theory X (McGregor, 1960/1985):

1. *The expenditure of physical and mental effort in work is as natural as play or rest*. The average human being does not inherently dislike work. Depending on controllable conditions, work may be a source of satisfaction (and will be voluntarily performed) or a source of punishment (and will be avoided if possible).

2. *External control and the threat of punishment are not the only means for bringing about effort toward organizational objectives*. Man will exercise self-direction and self-control in the service of objectives to which he is committed.

3. *Commitment to objectives is a function of the rewards associated with their achievement.* The most significant of such rewards, e.g., the satisfaction of ego and self-actualization needs, can be direct products of effort directed toward the organizational objectives.

4. *The average human being learns, under proper conditions, not only to accept but to seek responsibility.* Avoidance of responsibility, lack of ambition, and emphasis on authority are generally consequences of experience, not inherent human characteristics.

5. *The capacity to exercise a relatively high degree of imagination, ingenuity, and creativity in the solution of organizational problems is widely, not narrowly, distributed in the population*.

6. *Under the conditions of the modern industrial life, the intellectual potentialities of the average human being are only partially utilized.* (pp. 47-48; italics in original)

Command and control is not the most effective method for managing employees especially when their lower level needs are met (McGregor, 1960/1985). Contrary to Theory X assumptions about organizational behavior, proponents of Theory Y posit that integration of the individual employees' needs and the organization's needs is critical for success. Employing this view, organizations will succeed by creating conditions that allow employees to achieve their own goals by directing their efforts to the organization's goals. In essence, organizational leaders will benefit from creating a collaborative work environment that fosters communications and enables workers to actively participate in helping the organization reach its goals while sharing in the resulting rewards (McGregor, 1960/1985, pp. 49-53). Thus, organizations must strive to created conditions in which workers can best achieve their personal goals while pursuing the organization's

goals. Organizational leaders must gain commitment from the workers by continuously encouraging workers to develop and utilize their skills, knowledge, capacity, and ingenuity to contribute to the organization's success (McGregor, 1960/1985, p. 55).

According to Theory Y, in order to gain employee commitment organizational leaders must provide employees with the opportunity to have input in the determining objectives. Employees should be encouraged to take responsibility for their own work performance because it is difficult to obtain genuine commitment from employees by imposing external objectives on them and acceptance of responsibility directly correlates with commitment to objectives (McGregor, 1960/1985, p. 68). Management through integration and self-control—a key element of Theory Y—is not without its challenges. It involves hard work and ongoing communication for organizational leaders and employees to agree upon appropriate targets and objectives that allow employees to reach their goals while pursuing the organization's objectives. However, the implementation of management through integration and self-control may lead to lasting rewards for the employees and the organization because it is easier to obtain genuine commitment from employees when employees have input into the goal setting process (McGregor, 1960/1985).

At the time that McGregor (1960/1985) originally espoused his views on the human side of enterprise, organizations were still predominantly bureaucratic, production-based organizations that viewed employees as interchangeable parts in a mechanistic system, and McGregor's ideas were not readily accepted (Heil, Bennis, & Stephens, 2000, p. 4). "McGregor [1960/1985] believed that as the world became more complex and as technology enabled companies to be more competitive, the dynamics of

people in an organization would become more important to the success of these groups" (Heil et al., 2000, pp. vii-viii). U.S. organizations have since shifted from *mechanistic* to *networked, living organizations* (Burns & Stalker, 1961/2005, pp. 198-202). Accordingly, McGregor's (1960/1985) fundamental ideas about the changing nature of work and people's roles in the workplace are perhaps more important and relevant than ever because they deal with key issues facing organizational leaders in the current economy (Heil et al., 2000, pp. vii-viii).

Theoretical Developments in Work Motivation and Demotivation

In the 1960s and 1970s, at a time when organizations were predominantly rigid, hierarchical bureaucracies, numerous ideas on work motivation emerged (Bassett-Jones & Lloyd, 2005, p. 930). "Many of the ideas emerging from the 1960s and 1970s have subsequently been extended and further developed to reflect an expanded pool of research findings and more sophisticated research methods" (Steers et al., 2004, p. 383). In the 1980s, existing theories were further refined or extended as organizations began to question the assumptions underpinning individualized reward systems (Bassett-Jones & Lloyd, 2005, p. 931). However, by the 1990s, theoretical developments in work motivation appeared to decline (Steers et al., 2004, p. 383). "In short, while other fields of management research (e.g., leadership, decision making, negotiations, groups and teams, and organization design) continue to develop conceptually, substantive theoretical developments focusing on work motivation have not kept pace" (Steers et al., 2004, p. 383).

Despite the lack of recent substantive theoretical developments in work motivation, it is clear that a motivated workforce is the key to a competitive advantage in

the new economy (Steers et al., 2004, p. 383). “While theoretical developments on work motivation may have declined in recent years, the world of work has changed dramatically” (Steers et al., 2004, p. 383), suggesting a need for new research exploring work motivation.

Knowledge Work and Knowledge Workers

Over the past several decades, the advent of technology and increased globalization refined the nature of work (Anderson & McAdam, 2005; Bassett-Jones & Lloyd, 2005; Drucker, 2008; Horwitz, Heng, & Quazi, 2003, p. 23; Marshak, 2002; Smola & Sutton, 2002; Steers et al., 2004, p. 383). The nature of work in developed countries shifted from industrial work, which relied on the use of natural resources and physical inputs (Powell & Snellman, 2004), to a knowledge economy in which organizational knowledge represents the primary organizational asset and a key source of competitive advantage, which is integral to organizational survival. The new knowledge economy represents a shift from production work, which is largely dependent on natural resources and physical inputs, to knowledge-based work that requires creative thinking and innovation (Marshak, 2002), resulting in a greater reliance on intellectual abilities than on physical inputs (Powell & Snellman, 2004, p. 201), and thus places an increased emphasis on the importance of harnessing the skills of knowledge workers, who represent the primary source of competitive advantage in the knowledge economy (Drucker, 2002).

The demographics of the American workforce in the knowledge economy vary considerably from those of the industrial era (Amar, 2004; Bassett-Jones & Lloyd, 2005; Crumpacker & Crumpacker, 2007), resulting, in part, from the dramatic shift in the typical age of employees due to the aging of the Baby Boomers and the decisions of older

workers to delay retirement (Crumpacker & Crumpacker, 2007). For the first time in history, the workforce includes members from four distinct generations (Patota et al., 2007, p. 1). The complex, multifaceted nature of the modern organization also contributes to increased workforce diversity (Benson & Brown, 2007, p. 122) with more women and minorities employed in the workforce than in previous eras, thereby contributing to changes in the dynamics and diversity of the workforce (Amar, 2004; Giancola, 2006, p. 36; Steers et al., 2004, p. 383).

The knowledge economy also represents the evolution of the work environment (Amar, 2004; Marshak, 2002). In today's work environment, technology use is central and knowledge is the key to maintaining a competitive advantage (Amar, 2004; Horwitz et al., 2003; McCuiston & Jamrog, 2005). Further, globalization has changed the dynamics of competition (Amar, 2004; Horwitz et al., 2003; Steers et al., 2004, p. 383).

> Today's workplace is characterized by an increasingly short-term focus, time as a critical performance variable, increasing interdependence among employees (often manifested in some form of team organization), evolving affective responses to the workplace experience, increasing value and motive conflicts on the part of employees, and a clear recognition of the transitory nature of careers. (Steers et al., 2004, p. 384)

The rapid changes in the global economy have created the need for greater reliance on intellectual capital (McCuiston & Jamrog, 2005; Powell & Snellman, 2004). Organizations can no longer rely solely on physical inputs and natural resources (Powell & Snellman, 2004). Instead, organizations must focus on continuous innovation (Dovey & Fenech, 2007; Drucker, 1993, 2008; Powell & Snellman, 2004) which will require a greater reliance on human capital and knowledge workers, in particular, due to their abilities to utilize knowledge to generate creative ideas (Drucker, 2002).

Knowledge Work

Although the literature acknowledges the importance of knowledge workers in determining organizational success, as indicated elsewhere herein, the literature is divided on what constitutes *knowledge work* (Benson & Brown, 2007, p. 124; Timonen & Paloheimo, 2008). Some studies classify knowledge work as work performed by highly educated individuals or by individuals with specific occupations (e.g., engineers, scientists, lawyers, and information technology professionals). These views of knowledge work, which are based on the broad occupational or work-sector approach, unnecessarily limit the definition of knowledge work and place the focus on the occupation rather than the true nature of knowledge work (Benson & Brown, 2007, p. 124).

Despite the conflicting definitions of *knowledge work* (Amar, 2004; Benson & Brown, 2007; Horwitz et al., 2003, p. 23; Kelloway & Barling, 2000; Paton, 2009), scholars agree in certain areas surrounding the nature of knowledge work (Benson & Brown, 2007, pp. 124-125), and "the term *knowledge work* is often used to characterize the shift from routine operational tasks to more varied and complex work (Barley, 1996; Cortada, 1998; Frenkel et al., 1995; Mohrman et al., 1995)" (as cited in Benson & Brown, 2007, p. 124). In addition, most researchers agree that information processing, problem solving, and the creation of knowledge represent key components of knowledge work (Benson & Brown, 2007, pp. 122-125) and that knowledge work represents a shift away from the routine work of the Industrial Era because knowledge work requires employees to utilize their knowledge and decision-making abilities to solve problems and contribute to the success of the organization (Timonen & Paloheimo, 2008, p. 178). In

addition, most researchers recognize the vital importance of knowledge work and the knowledge workers who perform the work in the success of today's organizations.

Knowledge Workers

The demand for knowledge workers is growing at an astonishing rate (Lord & Farrington, 2006; McCuiston & Jamrog, 2005, p. 20) because in the knowledge economy, analytical skills are increasingly important (Locke & Kochan, 1995) and knowledge workers possess intellectual capital that represents a key source of earnings and, thus, leads to organizational survival (Kelloway & Barling, 2000, p. 287). In addition, the rapidly increasing global demand for knowledge workers, the decreasing labor supply attributable to an increase in the number of civilian workers in the United States who will be eligible for retirement in the United States, and the decline in the number of individuals between 35 and 44 years old by the year 2015 are forecast to result in an endemic talent shortage for knowledge intensive professional jobs (McCuiston & Jamrog, 2005, p. 20). "The looming labor shortage is made even more critical by the failure of the U.S. education system to deliver graduates who are perceived to be qualified to enter the workforce (SHRM, 2002)" (as cited in McCuiston & Jamrog, 2005, p. 20).

Research suggests that knowledge workers represent a new class of worker with different values, needs, and motivators from traditional workers (Benson & Brown, 2007; Kelloway & Barling, 2000, p. 288). Although some researchers (e.g., Kelloway & Barling, 2000, p. 291) posit that all employees in today's economy are knowledge workers with varying degrees of knowledge, others (e.g., Horwitz, Heng, & Quazi, 2003) suggest that knowledge workers possess specific skills and attributes that are in high demand (p. 24). The conflicting views regarding the *knowledge worker* definition serve to

further complicate this debate, because many workers who were classified as knowledge workers in previous research studies performed quite routine work and were merely classified as knowledge workers because of the job sectors in which they were employed or because of their occupational titles (Benson & Brown, 2007, p. 125).

As evidenced by the vast amount of literature recognizing organizational knowledge as an important organizational asset and acknowledging knowledge workers as the primary sources of knowledge, it follows that knowledge generation, sharing, and transfer—which represent key components of knowledge work—contribute significantly to the competitive advantage of organizations (McCuiston & Jamrog, 2005, p. 29; Osterloh & Frey, 2000, p. 538). The following section further explores the importance of knowledge generation, sharing, and transfer in the knowledge economy.

Knowledge Generation, Sharing, and Transfer

In the knowledge economy, the generation, sharing, and transfer of knowledge represent critical sources of sustainable competitive advantage for organizations (Bartol, et al., 2009, p. 223; McCuiston & Jamrog, 2005, p. 29; Osterloh & Frey, 2000, p. 538).

> Knowledge sharing has been identified as a major focus area for knowledge management. The relevance of this theme particularly derives from the fact that it provides a link between the level of the individual knowledge workers, where knowledge resides, and the level of the organization where knowledge attains its (economic, competitive) value. (Hendriks, 1999, p. 91)

Although knowledge sharing represents as an integral component of knowledge management, in practice, knowledge sharing still proves to be a significant barrier to knowledge management efforts, and the issue of whether or not knowledge workers are motivated to share their knowledge with others is of critical concern (Hendriks, 1999, p. 91).

A considerable amount of research exists on knowledge management. However, much of the literature focuses on the technical aspects of knowledge management and neglects the human resource management component of knowledge management (Carter & Scarbrough, 2001; Robertson & Hammersley, 2000). Although the knowledge management literature has recently begun to acknowledge the importance of human resource management, more work needs to be conducted to investigate human resource issues in detail (Afiouni, 2007).

Despite the vast literature on knowledge management, the research still lacks clarity regarding what motivates knowledge workers to share their knowledge (Bartol et al., 2009, p. 224; Forstenlechner & Lettice, 2007, p. 823). In recent years, researchers have expressed interest in determining what types of social arrangements enhance knowledge generation, sharing, and transfer (Bartol et al., 2009, p. 224; Cowan et al., 2000)—key components of knowledge work. "Still, systematic empirical research on this topic is scarce and has not dealt with its implications for employment practices" (Powell & Snellman, 2004, p. 200). This study seeks to address knowledge worker motivation through an examination of Generation Y knowledge workers' motivation experiences and may potentially uncover additional information regarding what motivates knowledge workers to generate, share, and transfer their knowledge.

Knowledge Worker Motivation

As indicated earlier in this chapter, knowledge workers are responsible for creating knowledge in the workplace (Amar, 2004; Brenner, 1999, p. 37). Thus, organizational leaders need to develop a better understanding of knowledge workers'

thought processes and behaviors and incorporate these factors into the motivation techniques employed for knowledge workers (Amar, 2004; Benson & Brown, 2007).

Despite the critical role that knowledge workers play in the generation and application of knowledge in the knowledge economy, research to date neglects to adequately address the factors that motivate knowledge workers (Šajeva, 2007), and the limited research that does exist regarding knowledge workers presents conflicting views. Although researchers generally acknowledge the need to manage knowledge workers differently than workers performing routine work, the literature does not provide solid empirical evidence to support this argument (Robertson & Hammersley, 2000).

A considerable body of research suggests that knowledge workers are motivated by different factors than manual laborers, who were the predominant focus of classic motivation theories (Benson & Brown, 2007, p. 122; Giles et al., 1999; Horwitz et al., 2003; Kalra, 1997), discussion of which will be deferred until after the core components of the grounded theory emerge. Yet some research asserts that traditional motivation techniques (e.g., money, rewards, incentives) are effective for knowledge workers (Kelloway & Barling, 2000). This debate could stem, in part, from the varying definitions of *knowledge worker* that exist.

Because of the conflicting views on what constitutes *knowledge work* (Benson & Brown, 2007), and the limited empirical research on the motivation of knowledge workers, it is difficult to discern what truly motivates knowledge workers. "Managing knowledge workers continues to perplex experienced managers across divergent industries" (Steers et al., 2004, p. 383). The changes in the nature of work and the work environment profoundly influence how organizations attempt to motivate their employees

yet very few genuine theoretical developments in work motivation exist and management models addressing the new era of work are lacking (Steers et al., 2004, p. 384).

Although agreement is lacking regarding what motivates knowledge workers, it is clear that organizations that wish to survive in the knowledge economy will need to determine how to effectively motivate knowledge workers because knowledge workers are valuable organizational assets (Drucker, 2002). This research will explore the work motivation experiences of Generation Y knowledge workers with the intention of developing a theory or model that adequately addresses the motivational challenges presented by the newest generation of knowledge workers, as research suggests that generational differences exist at work.

The following section provides a broad overview of the literature pertaining to generational differences at work. However, as previously indicated, this chapter will not include an in-depth analysis of the literature pertaining to generational differences in work motivation per se, to avoid the development of preconceived notions regarding what motivates Generation Y knowledge workers, in keeping with grounded theory methods literature (Glaser, 1978, 1992; Glaser & Holton, 2004; Glaser & Strauss, 1967/1999/2008; Strauss, 1987; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The subsequent chapters will provide more analysis of the literature as it pertains to the motivation of this study's research participants—Generation Y knowledge workers—and the grounded theory that emerges from this study's findings.

Generational Differences at Work

Newspaper articles and popular books on the topic of generational differences at work abound. In the scholarly literature,

> differences between generations are theorised to occur because of major influences in the environment within which early human socialization occurs; influences that impact on the development of personality, values, beliefs and expectations that, once formed, are stable into adulthood. (Macky et al., 2008, p. 858)

Although the popular press makes a strong argument in support of generational differences at work and widespread acceptance of this notion exists (Patota et al., 2007), the argument that generational differences at work exist is not universally accepted (Crumpacker & Crumpacker, 2007, p. 361). Some researchers suggest a lack of empirical evidence to validate assertions of generational differences at work (Macky et al., 2008, p. 857) citing that the differences are attributable to age and/or maturation (Jurkiewicz, 2000; Rhodes, 1983) or career stage (Jurkiewicz, 2000; Polach, 2006; Rhodes, 1983). Still others contend that more similarities between the generations than differences exist and that history merely repeats itself with each generation's entrance to the workforce (Jurkiewicz, 2000). However, research suggests that the current workforce does not replicate the generation gap of the past, in which a generation grows up and becomes like its parents; instead, the current workforce represents a convergence of four generations with distinctly different paths in work and life (Patota et al., 2007, p. 1).

Several factors surround the debate regarding generational differences at work:

- lack of consensus regarding the birth years each generation encompasses (Crumpacker & Crumpacker, 2007; Giancola, 2006, p. 36; Leschinsky & Michael, 2004, p. 35; Patota et al., 2007, p. 2; Smola & Sutton, 2002, p. 364),
- disagreement regarding the specific number of generations (Crumpacker & Crumpacker, 2007, p. 361; Giancola, 2006, p. 36), and
- dispute regarding whether or not sufficient empirical evidence to support the existence of generational gaps exists (Crumpacker & Crumpacker, 2007; Giancola, 2006, p. 36; Macky et al., 2008, p. 857).

Although the vast majority of the literature identifies only four generations in today's workforce (Arsenault, 2004; Crampton & Hodge, 2007; Crumpacker & Crumpacker, 2007; Derrick & Walker, 2006; Eisner, 2005; Leschinsky & Michael, 2004, p. 35; Patota et al., 2007, p. 2), classifications for generations are not universally accepted, with some demographers (e.g., Mitchell, 2003; Zemke et al., 2000) utilizing different classification systems (Giancola, 2006, p. 33; Leschinsky & Michael, 2004, p. 35; Patota et al., 2007, p. 2) and some researchers arguing in favor of recognizing more than four generations (Crumpacker & Crumpacker, 2007, p. 361; Giancola, 2006, p. 33; Meredith & Schewe, 1994). Proponents of this latter argument suggest that *cuspers*—individuals born on the cusp of a generation—should be categorized distinct from other members of their respective generations as they are likely to identify equally with members of two different generations (Crumpacker & Crumpacker, 2007, p. 361). Although cuspers technically experience the same historical events as other members of their generations, cuspers may not be affected by the same life experiences during their formative years as other members of their generations (Arsenault, 2004; Crumpacker & Crumpacker, p. 361). The events that individuals experience during their formative years are believed to most heavily influence their values (Kupperschmidt, 2000). Cuspers may, therefore, hold different values than other members of their generations.

Another perspective is that the two most recent generations to enter the workforce—Generation X and Generation Y—share enough common beliefs and values that they should be consolidated into a single generational cohort, *Generation XY* (Giancola, 2006). This argument reflects the realization that technology has played a major role during the past several decades, thereby blurring the definition of shared

experiences because generations are now able to experience historical events via the Internet (Crumpacker & Crumpacker, 2007). However, due to Generation Y's recent entrance into the workforce and the scant empirical research available on Generation Y at work, the argument for consolidating Generation X and Generation Y into a single generational cohort seems premature.

Some researchers assert that insufficient empirical evidence supports the argument that generational differences exist in the workforce today (Crumpacker & Crumpacker, 2007, p. 363; Macky et al., 2008, p. 857). This assertion may result from the lack of scholarly research articles surrounding generational differences at work published in human resource management journals (Crumpacker & Crumpacker, 2007, p. 362) and the relative scarcity of empirical research validating generational differences (Arsenault, 2004, p. 126). Nonetheless, numerous studies evidence support of a generation gap in the workforce (Arsenault, 2004; Crumpacker & Crumpacker, 2007, p. 363; Daboval, 1998; Leschinsky & Michael, 2004; Patota et al., 2007; Schuman & Scott, 1989; Smola & Sutton, 2002).

Despite arguments challenging the generational differences perspective, the literature reflects general agreement that members of a generation share similar experiences with other members of the same generation (Crampton & Hodge, 2007, p. 16; Crumpacker & Crumpacker, 2007; Patota et al., 2007, p. 2; Schuman & Scott, 1989). This does not mean that the shared experiences affect all members of the same generation in the same manner (Patota et al., 2007, p. 2). In some instances, a *crossover effect* occurs when a particular event is so important that it affects members of more than one generation (Arsenault, 2004, pp. 125-126; Patota et al., 2007, p. 2). Other factors, such as

age (Montana & Lenaghan, 1999; Polach, 2006), career and/or life stage (Giancola, 2006; Montana & Lenaghan, 1999; Polach, 2006), culture (Crumpacker & Crumpacker, 2007, p. 362; Shih & Allen, 2007, p. 92), gender (Crumpacker & Crumpacker, 2007, p. 362), external environment (Montana & Lenaghan, 1999), race or ethnicity (Crumpacker & Crumpacker, 2007, p. 362), geographic location (Crumpacker & Crumpacker, 2007, p. 362), religion (Crumpacker & Crumpacker, 2007, p. 362), socio-economic status (Crumpacker & Crumpacker, 2007, p. 362), and societal environment (Smola & Sutton, 2002, p. 381) also have the potential to shape an individual's life experiences (Crumpacker & Crumpacker, 2007, p. 362).

An awareness of generational differences can provide organizations with valuable information pertaining to the values and belief systems of employees from different generations. Such awareness will enable organizational leaders to address more adequately the needs of employees from distinct generational cohorts by providing additional insight into what motivates employees from each generation, while fostering a positive work environment. The following section provides information about the key attributes and values of each of the four generations currently in the workforce.

Generations at Work

Despite discrepancies in the range of birth years encompassing each generation in the literature (Crampton & Hodge, 2007, p. 16; Crumpacker & Crumpacker, 2007; Eisner, 2005, p. 4; Patota et al., 2007; Smola & Sutton, 2002, p. 364), with a few exceptions, researchers typically agree that four distinct generations exist in the workforce today—Traditionalists, Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Generation Y (Crampton & Hodge, 2007, p. 16; Crumpacker & Crumpacker, 2007; Derrick & Walker,

2006, p. 63; Giancola, 2006; Eisner, 2005, p. 5; Patota et al., 2007). The key demographic characteristics for each of these generational cohorts, as defined in this study, are included in Table 1. The size for each generation in the table is derived from Eisner's (2005, p. 12) demographic figures because of the similarity of birth years in the data source.

Table 1. Generations in the Workforce as Defined in This Study

Generational Cohort	Birth Years	Ages in 2012	Size
Traditionalists	1922-1944	68-90	75 million
Baby Boomers	1945-1964	48-67	80 million
Generation X	1965-1980	32-47	46 million
Generation Y	1981-1997	15-31	76 million

Note. Information for birth years and generation sizes were derived from "Managing Generation Y," by S. P. Eisner, 2005, *SAM Advanced Management Journal*, *70*(4), 4-15. No permissions required.

As indicated in Table 1, the Traditionalists have now reached retirement age and the Baby Boomers are approaching retirement age. The pending retirement of the Baby Boomers coupled with the relatively small size of Generation X (Applebaum, Serena, & Shapiro, 2004) suggest that Generation Y will comprise a major part of the workforce in the United States.

The remainder of this section highlights some of the characteristics that typify the generational cohorts presently in the workforce, with a predominant focus on the three most prevalent generations in the workplace today—Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Generation Y—and identifies some of the shared life events that influenced members of each generation during their formative years. A review of the literature pertaining to the

generational differences in work motivation experiences of Baby Boomers and Generation X follows, with a discussion of the possible implications for this research study. This section also provides a brief overview of the status of the literature surrounding Generation Y's work motivation experiences, the focus of this research study. Subsequent chapters will include a more in-depth discussion of Generation Y's work motivation experiences to minimize the potential for researcher bias prior to the conduct of the study.

Traditionalists

Traditionalists, the most senior generation at work today, currently represent the smallest percentage of workers actively employed in the workforce (Crampton & Hodge, 2007, p. 17; Eisner, 2005, p. 5). Influenced by times of extreme hardship such as the 1929 stock market crash, the Great Depression of the 1930s, and World War II, Traditionalists have a tendency to respect authority (Arsenault, 2004, p. 129; Bell & Narz, 2007, p. 57; Crampton & Hodge, 2007, p. 19; Crumpacker & Crumpacker, 2007, pp. 352-353; Kupperschmidt, 2000, p. 68; Patota et al., 2007, p. 3) and they take pride in their work (Crampton & Hodge, 207, p. 17). In general, Traditionalists are disciplined individuals who work hard (Arsenault, 2004, p. 129; Bell & Narz, 2007, p. 57; Kupperschmidt, 2000, p. 68) and put duty before pleasure (Bell & Narz, 2007, p. 57; Patota et al., 2007, p. 3). Traditionalists are typically patriotic, loyal individuals who value family (Eisner, 2005, p. 5), safe working environments, job security, and benefits (Kupperschmidt, 2000, p. 68). They are dedicated employees (Arsenault, 2004, p. 129) who are respectful of the organization's policies and procedures and they are willing to put in a hard day's work in exchange for fairness and pay (Crampton & Hodge, 2007, p. 17; Patota et al., 2007, p. 3).

Baby Boomers

The Baby Boomers, the Traditionalists' children, represent the largest generation in history (Eisner, 2005, p. 5). Unlike the Traditionalists, Baby Boomers were socialized during the 1950s and 1960s, a time characterized by safety and postwar prosperity (Eisner, 2005, p. 5; Jeffries & Hunte, 2004, p. 43). Baby Boomers were raised during an era in which many social norms were redefined (Eisner, 2005, p. 5). Significant events such as the Civil Rights Movement (Crumpacker & Crumpacker, 2007, p. 353; Jeffries & Hunte, 2004, p. 43), the women's movement (Crumpacker & Crumpacker, 2007, p. 353), the Vietnam War (Crumpacker & Crumpacker, 2007, p. 353), the assassination of public figures, student activism, and the antiwar movement influenced Baby Boomers (Jeffries & Hunte, 2004, p. 43).

Research suggests that, like their parents, Baby Boomers are typically loyal individuals who respect authority (Eisner, 2005, p. 5). However, Baby Boomers also believe in growth, change, and expansion and they are willing to work long hours to succeed (Eisner, 2005, p. 5). Boomers are workaholics who appreciate recognition for a job well done and value promotions, titles, and corner offices (Crumpacker & Crumpacker, 2007, p. 355; Kupperschmidt, 2000, p. 68) and disdain laziness (Crumpacker & Crumpacker, 2007, p. 353).

Generation X

Members of Generation X were raised in an era of globalization, downsizing, and significant technology advancements (Eisner, 2005, p. 12). Unlike Traditionalists and Baby Boomers, Gen Xers are skeptical of authority (Crumpacker & Crumpacker, 2007, p. 353) and they tend to distrust companies and lack loyalty, due in large part to the

corporate downsizing initiatives that they witnessed affect their parents (Eisner, 2005). This generation of latchkey kids grew up in an era of soaring national debt (Kupperschmidt, 2000, p. 69), dual-income families (Crumpacker & Crumpacker, 2007, p. 353; Polach, 2006, p. 2), and record-breaking divorce rates (Kupperschmidt, 2000, p. 69; Polach, 2006, p. 2), and learned to be independent and embrace change (Eisner, 2005, p. 12).

Research suggests that Generation X's work demands are considerably different from other generations (Kupperschmidt, 2000, p. 70). Gen Xers learned independence and self-reliance at an early age because many of them grew up with both parents in the workforce (Crumpacker & Crumpacker, 2007, p. 353). Therefore, Gen Xers value autonomy (Crumpacker & Crumpacker, 2007, p. 355). Members of Generation X are motivated by work-life balance (Jeffries & Hunte, 2004, p. 47; Kupperschmidt, 2000, p. 70), flexibility (Crumpacker & Crumpacker, 2007, p. 355; Jeffries & Hunte, 2004, p. 47), challenging work (Jeffries & Hunte, 2004, p. 47), and frequent performance feedback (Jeffries & Hunte, 2004, p. 47).

Generation Y

As indicated in Chapter 1, the generation following Generation X is commonly referred to as Generation Y. The literature contains little agreement regarding the years encompassing Generation Y, with their birth years reported to begin anywhere from 1977 to 1981 and end somewhere around 2000, as evidenced in Table 2. As also indicated in Chapter 1, for the purposes of this study, Generation Y includes individuals born between 1981 and 1997, a compromise representing the birth years most commonly included in this generation in the literature.

Table 2. Birth Years Reported for Generation Y

Birth Years	Researchers
1977 – 1997	Hicks & Hicks, 1999
1978 – 1988	Martin, 2005, p. 39
1978 – 1995	Smola & Sutton, 2002, p. 371
1980 – 1999	Crampton & Hodge, 2007, p. 16
1980 – 2000	Leschinsky & Michael, 2004, p. 34
1981 and after	Eisner, 2005, p. 4
1981 – 1997	Current study, Chapter 1, Generation Y
1981 to 1999	Lancaster & Stillman, 2002
1981 and after	Patota et al., 2007, p. 2
1981 – 2000	Arsenault, 2004, p. 129; Zemke et al., 2000

Generation Y is an ethnically diverse group of individuals (Jeffries & Hunte, 2004, p. 43) that "has been deeply affected by several trends of the 1990s and 2000s: a renewed focus on children, family, scheduled and structured lives, multiculturalism, terrorism, heroism, patriotism, parent advocacy, and globalization" (Eisner, 2005, p. 9). These parents of Millennials nurtured their children by investing in them financially and becoming intensely involved in their activities (Crumpacker & Crumpacker, 2007, p. 354; Shih & Allen, 2007, p. 90). Members of Generation Y tend to be family-oriented, civic-minded, team players who desire to serve the community (Eisner, 2005; Jeffries & Hunte, 2004, p. 44). The close and positive relationships formed between members of Generation Y and their parents, the Boomers, have resulted in a smaller generation gap

than usual, with Generation Y adopting many of the same values as their parents (Giancola, 2006, p. 34; Shih & Allen, 2007, p. 90).

Technology has surrounded individuals from Generation Y their entire lives and rendered them more technologically advanced than members of previous generations such as the Baby Boomers (Eisner, 2005; Hatfield, 2002). Generation Y's constant exposure to continuous change has more adequately prepared them for jobs that require creativity and critical thinking skills (Hatfield, 2002). Thus, these individuals do not necessarily have to have a college degree to fill the role of knowledge worker in today's business environment.

Generation Y's recent entrance into the workforce will have a profound effect on organizations. Due to Generation Y's sheer size, nearly as large as the Baby Boomer generation (Yeaton, 2008), and the increased life expectancy of individuals in the United States, Generation Y will be a powerful force in the workforce for decades to come. This coupled with the comparatively smaller size of Generation X (Bell & Narz, 2007, p. 57) and the increased number of Baby Boomers approaching retirement age (McCuiston & Jamrog, 2005) illustrates the critical importance for organizational leaders to develop an understanding of what drives Generation Y at work.

Generational Differences in Work Motivation

Research suggests that motivation differs based on membership in distinct generations or age groups (Leschinsky & Michael, 2004, p. 35; Montana & Lenaghan, 1999; Moody, 2007, p. 101; O'Bannon, 2001; Zemke et al., 2000). Although age and/or maturation and career stage may impact work motivation, as some research indicates (Giancola, 2006; Jurkiewicz, 2000; Polach, 2006; Rhodes, 1983), sufficient evidence also

exists to suggest that generational differences influence work motivation (Crampton & Hodge, 2007, p. 16; Daboval, 1998; Patota et al., 2007, p. 1; Smola & Sutton, 2002). Thus, the need remains to develop a better understanding of how generational differences influence work motivation (Jeffries & Hunte, 2004, p. 37).

A study conducted by Montana and Lenaghan (1999) identified differences in perceived key motivators of white-collar managers from different age groups. Unlike individuals from earlier generations, members of Generation X and Generation Y ranked *steady employment* and *chance for promotion* as two of their principal motivators demonstrating generational differences in motivational preferences (Montana & Lenaghan, 1999). However, the results of the study also revealed that members of Generation X and Generation Y were motivated by the same factors as each other, with *steady employment* ranked as the most important motivator (Montana & Lenaghan, 1999).

Moody's (2007) study of generational differences among Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Generation Y employees in the financial services industry confirmed that some motivational differences exist for members of different generations or age groups. The study revealed that salary becomes more important to employees as they get older, benefits and control over work also become more important as age increases, and advancement opportunities become less important (pp. 68-70). However, the results of the study also suggested that similarities between generations exist, with members of all three generations expressing a desire to be able to speak freely, have interesting work, be a part of a team, and receive recognition (p. 92).

Although some studies suggest that the work motivators for Baby Boomers and Xers are not very different (Janiszewski, 2004; Koenigscknecht, 2002; Withers, 2002), the vast majority of the research suggests that generational differences exist between Baby Boomers and Xers (Adams, 2000; Bradford, 1993; Jurkiewicz, 2000; Jurkiewicz & Brown, 1998; Karp, Sirias, & Arnold, 1999; Kupperschmidt, 2000; O'Bannon, 2001; Smola & Sutton, 2002). A cross-sectional study of the work-related differences and similarities of Baby Boomer and Generation X employees in the public sector found high levels of similarity between the two generations (Jurkiewicz, 2000). The study's sample included 241 employees—63 members of Generation X and 178 Baby Boomers—from a large metropolitan area in the Midwest (Jurkiewicz, 2000, p. 62). Study participants were asked to rank 15 work-related motivational factors, designating the most important factor as 1 and the least important factor as 15. Of the 15 work-related motivational factors ranked by participants, only 3 factors showed significant differences between the two generational cohorts (Jurkiewicz, 2000, p. 63). Boomers placed more importance on the chance to learn new things and freedom from pressures to conform both on and off the job than their Gen X counterparts, while Gen Xers ranked freedom from supervision significantly higher than the Baby Boomer participants (Jurkiewicz, 2000, p. 63). Although this appears to refute commonly held beliefs about generational differences in the workplace, the research study, which relied on survey data based on a strictly ordinal scale, did not provide sufficient information to adequately determine the intensity of the factors ranked by participants, nor did it provide insight into the reasons why the members of each generation ranked the work-related motivational factors as they did. Furthermore, the researcher acknowledged that Baby Boomers and Gen Xers have

different methods of communication (Jurkiewicz, 2000, p. 65), which may also have impacted the way in which the research participants responded to the survey.

> Today's workforce is unique because there are four separate, distinct generations working side-by-side, frequently each with a different approach to their company, their co-workers and the work itself. This is not the generation gap of the past, where a generation grows up and becomes their parents. Instead, it is a convergence of four generations, where each one may be substantially different from the others and each is often on an entirely different path in work and in life. (Patota et al., 2007, p. 1)

Understanding generational differences in work motivation can assist organizational leaders in developing a more productive work environment that fosters innovation and teamwork (Kupperschmidt, 2000). "The examination of generational differences among workers is a critical and underdeveloped area of inquiry for management research" (Westerman & Yamamura, 2007, p. 150). Due to Generation Y's recent entrance into the workforce, a need exists for research to further explore whether Generation Y has unique workplace needs and demands in comparison to Generation X (Westerman & Yamamura, 2007, p. 158) and how generational differences may affect work motivation in the current economy.

Preliminary Synthesis on Motivation and Knowledge Work

Over the past several decades, increased globalization and the advent of technology have dramatically changed the nature of work in the United States (Smola & Sutton, 2002). This new era represents a shift from industrial work, which focused on physical labor and work output, to knowledge-based work, which focuses on innovation and creativity. In order to remain competitive in the new work environment, organizations must make significant investments in their intellectual capital because knowledge now represents the key source of competitive advantage in the global

economy. This will require organizational leaders to identify effective ways to motivate knowledge workers.

In addition to a change in the nature of work, organizations are also experiencing a change in the demographics of the workforce. Factors such as changes in cultural norms, an increased number of women in the workforce, higher minority birth rates, shifts in the economy, and more diverse lifestyles contribute to the increasing diversity of the workforce (Giancola, 2006, p. 36). The diverse workforce has highly divergent needs and demands (Steers et al., 2004, p. 383) and research suggests that generational differences in work motivation exist.

The conclusion from this preliminary review of the literature on work motivation studies is that variations in work motivation between generational cohort groups probably exist. As indicated in Chapter 1, despite numerous research studies on employee motivation and generational differences at work, a gap exists in empirical research addressing the work motivation experiences of Generation Y knowledge workers. Accordingly, the goal of this research study was to extend the existing body of knowledge informing organizational stakeholders on the motivation of knowledge workers from Generation Y via exploratory research to develop a model or emergent theory describing the work motivation experiences of Generation Y knowledge workers. The use of a grounded theory approach provided additional insight into not only the motivation experiences of Generation Y knowledge workers but also their (a) intrinsic motivators, (b) extrinsic motivators, and (c) demotivators, as well as this generation's (d) process of and (e) approach to work motivation.

CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY

Overview

This chapter details the study's qualitative research methods and design, including the theoretical framework, researcher's philosophy, the role of the researcher, participant selection criteria, data collection and handling methods, data analysis procedures, and related ethical issues. This chapter also provides a summary of the methodological limitations associated with this study and addresses how the study's design minimizes the problems associated with each.

Theoretical Framework

The focus of this research was the work motivation experiences of Generation Y knowledge workers, operationalized herein via a study of healthcare workers in the Midwest. The work motivation experiences of Generation Y knowledge workers represent a phenomenon on which scholarly research is currently lacking. As indicated in Chapter 1, this research offers meaningful insight into what drives knowledge worker motivation, and thus methods to improve organizational performance, make better hiring decisions, develop better training programs, and increase employee loyalty (Patota et al., 2007).

The goal of this study was to provide an in-depth analysis of the participants' self-described work motivation experiences and clearly detail the factors that they feel motivate or demotivate them at and in their work. This study explored the research participants' perspectives on work motivation and opened the door to emergent

motivation theories, to understand the participants' perspectives as knowledge workers and as members of a newer generation.

The central research question (Creswell, 2003, 2007) that this study investigated was as follows: How do Generation Y knowledge workers describe and experience work motivation? As noted in Chapter 1, subquestions (Creswell, 2003, p. 106; 2007, p. 108) clarifying the data comprised this generation's intrinsic and extrinsic motivators, demotivators, and this generation's process of and approach to work motivation.

Researcher's Philosophy

In addition to grounding this study's design in the literature, this chapter explicates this researcher's assumptions, paradigms, and beliefs as the instrument of the research, and attempts acknowledgement of how participation in the role of researcher influences the conduct of the study (Creswell, 2007, p. 15).

> The research design process in qualitative research begins with philosophical assumptions that the inquirers make in deciding to undertake a qualitative study. In addition, researchers bring their own worldviews, paradigms, or sets of beliefs to the research project, and these inform the conduct and writing of a qualitative study. (Creswell, 2007, p. 15)

Five philosophical assumptions lead researchers to select qualitative research methods: ontology, epistemology, axiology, rhetorical, and methodological assumptions (Creswell, 2007, p. 15). "The assumptions reflect a particular stance that researchers make when they choose qualitative research" (Creswell, 2007, p. 19). This section briefly summarizes the philosophical assumptions of the researcher prior to the conduct of this research.

As a social constructivist (Creswell, 2007, pp. 20-21), the ontological view (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 5) of this researcher is one of subjective, multiple realities,

positing that the individuals involved in the phenomenon under study represent critical sources of information. In this study, the participants' words illuminated the various perspectives that exist regarding work motivation in the knowledge economy.

Epistemology addresses the relationship between the researcher and the research (Creswell, 2007, pp. 16-18). In qualitative research studies, researchers seek to minimize the distance between themselves and the research by collaborating with participants and spending time in the field (Creswell, 2007, pp. 16-18). Consistent with qualitative research methods, the goal in this research study was to minimize the distance between the researcher and the research participants by acknowledging the researcher's role in the study and by developing a trusting relationship with the participants, which provided a better understanding of what the participants were saying (Creswell, 2007, p. 18).

Axiology is concerned with the role of values in research (Creswell, 2007, pp. 16-18). Although all researchers bring their values to a study, qualitative researchers make a concerted effort to disclose how their values shape the study and the resulting analysis (Creswell, 2007, pp. 16-18). As further outlined in the reflexivity section below, the use of reflexivity facilitates disclosure of the role of this researcher's values in shaping the study's design and interpretation of the data throughout this study.

Qualitative researchers tend to adopt the rhetorical assumption that the writing style in qualitative research studies should be informal and personal (Creswell, 2007, pp. 16-18). In qualitative research studies, researchers rely upon the participants to give meaning to the data, so the writing often employs terminology that is meaningful to the research participants rather than textbook definitions that are of little relevance to the subject matter under investigation (Creswell, 2007, pp. 16-19). Utilizing the research

participants' own words and stories facilitates the provision of evidence of different perspectives and realities (Charmaz, 2006). The presentation of study findings in Chapter 4 includes illustrations that capture the participants' meanings in their own words and constructs.

"The procedures of qualitative research, or its methodology, are characterized as inductive, emerging, and shaped by the researcher's experience in collecting and analyzing the data" (Creswell, 2007, p. 19). Qualitative methodological assumptions lead qualitative researchers to use inductive logic (Creswell, 2007, pp. 16-19). In addition, qualitative researchers must continuously evaluate the data to identify emerging themes and make changes to the research design, if indicated by the data. Accordingly, this study employed qualitative research methods that were flexible enough to enable adequate address of the work motivation experiences of Generation Y knowledge workers, the population under examination in this study.

Choice of Methods and Research Design

The research question(s) should drive the methodological approach used to conduct the research (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 12) and the research design. The most important criterion for selecting the appropriate research method is that which best suits the research problem (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, pp. 24-25) and the research question (Seidman, 2006, p. 11). Qualitative research methods are ideal for research that seeks understanding of a concept or a phenomenon in the absence of research pertaining to the subject of investigation (Corbin & Strauss, 2008) or in instances in which the concepts pertaining to the given phenomenon are poorly understood or have not been fully developed (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 25). As demonstrated in Chapters 1 and 2, the

literature still lacks consensus regarding what motivates workers and the work motivation experiences of Generation Y knowledge workers are poorly understood.

Given this lack of data and scholarly research on the work motivation experiences of Generation Y knowledge workers, yet evidence of possible generational differences in motivation (Crampton & Hodge, 2007, p. 16; Daboval, 1998; Moody, 2007; Patota et al., 2007, p. 1), this study's use of a more flexible qualitative research design permitted exploration of new concepts and constructs (Charmaz, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 25) of the work motivation experiences of Generation Y knowledge workers as they emerged, and thus facilitated further examination of this phenomenon.

Qualitative research methods offer more flexibility than quantitative research methods because they are less rigid (Charmaz, 2006, p. 17) and they permit the researcher to follow leads as they emerge (Charmaz, 2006, p. 14; Corbin & Strauss, 2008). In addition, qualitative methods allow the researcher to capture the inner experiences of the research participants (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 12; Seidman, 2006) and determine how the research participants form meaning (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 12); in this study, to discover how Generation Y knowledge workers experience work motivation.

Grounded theory methods are among the most influential qualitative research methods when generating theory is the researcher's principal endeavor (Strauss & Corbin, 1997, p. vii). Grounded theory is useful when a theory to explain a process does not exist, or when existing models or theories fail to address the population under study (Creswell, 2007, p. 66). Grounded theory is suitable for handling problems for which the researcher does not have a preconceived research hypothesis (Glaser, 1998, p. 11).

Grounded theory research methods are also valuable in situations in which theories exist but fail to address potentially important variables that are of interest to the researcher (Creswell, 2007, p. 66) because grounded theory research allows the researcher to gain an understanding of a phenomenon through the perception of those experiencing it (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Grounded theory research is well suited for research aimed at discovering the participants' problems and generating a theory that addresses the problems (Glaser, 1998, p. 11). Accordingly, due to the limited research on the work motivation experiences of Generation Y knowledge workers and the considerable changes in the work environment since the development of the most prominent work motivation theories, this study employed grounded theory research methods (Charmaz, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Glaser & Strauss, 1967/1999/2008; Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1997), using flexible guidelines for qualitative data collection and analysis (Charmaz, 2006, p. 2).

Although the research design employed various grounded theory elements, classic approaches to grounded theory do not offer the flexibility that some qualitative researchers desire (Creswell, 2007, p. 68) and "there has historically been a problematic pretense that the researcher can be and/or should be invisible" (Clarke, 2005, p. 12). This study's design relied primarily upon the constructivist grounded theory methods developed by Charmaz (1983, 1995, 2000, 2001, 2003, 2005, 2006), because of the emphasis on interaction with the data and emerging ideas throughout the data collection and data analysis processes (2006, p. 179). Charmaz's (2006) social constructivist approach to grounded theory had several attractive features, such as a flexible structure (Creswell, 2007, p. 66), which permitted the researcher to focus attention on the

participants' views of the situation (Creswell, 2007, p. 20); adaptability (Creswell, 2007, p. 68); and the use of reflexivity (Clarke, 2005, p.15). Employing a constructivist approach to grounded theory allowed the researcher to look for the complexity of views rather than relying on a postpositivist, reductionist approach that would have required the researcher to narrow the meanings into a few categories or ideas (Creswell, 2007, p. 20).

Participant Selection

The intent in grounded theory research is to ground the theory in the data through *representativeness of concepts* in their varying forms (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 190), not to generalize per se (Charmaz, 2006, p. 101; Dey, 1999, p. 38; Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 190). Therefore, the issue is not whether the researcher can generalize the research findings to a broader population (Creswell, 2007, p. 126). Instead, the researcher's task is to develop an understanding of the research participants' experiences by searching for different sets of conditions affecting the phenomena and to incorporate that data into the emerging model or theory (Charmaz, 2006, p. 101; Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 190).

In this study, in-depth interviews served as the primary method for data collection. The basic underlying assumptions in interview studies are considerably different from those of experimental studies; therefore, researchers must approach participant selection in a different manner (Seidman, 2006, p. 51). Random sampling is not feasible in interview studies because randomness depends on a very large number of research participants and "true randomness would be prohibitive in an in-depth interview study" (Seidman, 2006, p. 51). In addition, individuals must consent to participate in the

interviews, which introduces an element of self-selection and is, thus, incompatible with true randomness (Seidman, 2006, p. 51).

The goal in in-depth interview studies is for the researcher to conduct interviews in a manner that enables the research participants' compelling stories about their experiences to replace the surface considerations of randomness and generalizability (Seidman, 2006, p. 51). This enables the researcher to make connections among the participants' experiences and, by elucidating the research participants' stories in rich detail, provides readers with the ability to make connections to their own experiences (Seidman, 2006, p. 52).

Due to the unique nature of grounded theory research, "it can't be judged by using the usual criteria, nor can sampling be guided by the logic of other types of research because its purposes, logic, canons, and procedures are quite different than in quantitative research" (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 191). In grounded theory research, the sampling methods change significantly as the research progresses (Morse, 2010, p. 235). The initial sampling methods provide a point of departure in grounded theory research and subsequent sampling methods allow for theoretical elaboration and refinement (Charmaz, 2006, p. 100).

The sampling methods utilized in this study, in the order in which used, were

1. *Maximum variation* (Creswell, 2007; Patton, 1989; Seidman, 2006), *criterion sampling* (Creswell, 2003, p. 127). The researcher utilized specific criteria to select research participants for this study. To increase the ability of readers to connect to the research findings, the researcher selected research participants from the widest range of people and sites within the limits of this study (Seidman, 2006, p. 52-53). The researcher used this sampling approach to maximize the differences at the beginning of this research study in order to identify the scope, major components, and trajectory of the overall phenomena

(Morse, 2010, p. 235) and to increase the likelihood that the research findings would reflect varying perspectives (Creswell, 2007, p. 126).

2. *Purposeful sampling* (Charmaz, 2006; Morse, 2010; Patton, 1989; Seidman, 2006). This research study utilized purposeful sampling to select research participants as indicated by the researcher's initial analysis of interviews (Morse, 2010, p. 235). These interviews revealed how the research participants partitioned the emerging phenomena (Morse, 2010, p. 235) of work motivation. "The researcher will then proceed to sample according to the way this scheme sorts the phenomenon" (Morse, 2010, p. 235).

3. *Theoretical sampling* (Charmaz, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Dey, 1999; Glaser, 1978; Glaser & Strauss, 1967/1999/2008; Morse, 2010; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). In this study, the researcher selected participants according to the descriptive needs of the emerging concepts and theory (Morse, 2010, p. 235). These needs dictated the subsequent sampling strategies and goals (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser, 1978; Morse, 2010, p. 235) and led to the development of full and robust categories (Charmaz, 2006, p. 103).

The following section discusses each of these sampling methods in greater detail within the context of this study.

The initial task for the researcher in a grounded theory research study is to obtain an overview of the overall process or phenomenon under study (Morse, 2010, p. 235). During this phase of the research study, the researcher seeks to determine the boundaries and dimensions, as well as the path of the research study (Morse, 2010, p. 235). At this phase of the research, this researcher sought assistance from professional trade associations to locate individuals from a wide range of sites, who had experienced the phenomenon under study, and who were able to provide examples of the concepts of interest (Morse, 2020, p. 235; Seidman, 2006).

The researcher conducted purposeful sampling to maximize the variation of meaning, thus shaping the scope of the phenomena or concepts (Morse, 2010, p. 236; Patton, 1989; Seidman, 2006). "Sociological categories may be tentatively used to guide

the purposeful selection of participants: groupings by age, gender, socio-economic class, employment, and so forth" (Morse, 2010, p. 236). The use of a targeted research question also guided the participant selection process during this phase of the research (Morse, 2010, p. 236). In this study, the interviews with the initial research participants provided the researcher with additional insight into the phenomenon under study and guided future sampling strategies (Morse, 2010, p. 237).

Once the general path of the phenomenon took shape, the researcher employed a purposeful sampling strategy (Morse, 2010, p. 235; Patton, 1989; Seidman, 2006) aimed at locating participants who were be able to further explicate about the different stages of the phenomenon as they experienced it (Morse, 2010, p. 237). During this phase of the data collection process the researcher aimed to obtain rich descriptions of the various phases of the phenomenon under study (Morse, 2010, p. 237).

As the study progressed, the researcher employed theoretical sampling techniques (Charmaz, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Dey, 1999; Glaser & Strauss, 1967/1999/2008; Morse, 2010), which enabled the emerging categories and the researcher's increased understanding of the emerging theory to guide the data collection process (Morse, 2010, p. 240).

> It is by theoretical sampling that representativeness and consistency are achieved. In grounded theory, representativeness of concepts, not of persons, is crucial. The aim is ultimately to build a theoretical explanation by specifying phenomena in terms of conditions that give rise to them, how they are expressed through action/interaction, the consequences that result from them, and variations of these qualifiers. The aim is not to generalize findings to a broader population per se. (Corbin & Strauss, 1990)

The *purposeful* or *purposive* (Charmaz, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Creswell, 2003, p. 127; Dey, 1999; Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 27; Patton, 1989; Seidman, 2006;

Weiss, 1994, p. 23), *criterion sample* (Creswell, 2003, p. 127) established for this research, aimed at exploring participants' work motivation experiences, targeted the population of Generation Y knowledge workers fitting the participant selection criteria below. To avoid dilution via competing industries and/or regions, the criterion sample consisted of

- Generation Y knowledge workers (as defined in Chapter 1),
- employed in the healthcare industry in the Midwestern United States,
- unknown to the researcher and not employed at the researcher's organization, and
- volunteering in response to the profile *Generation Y knowledge worker employed in the healthcare industry in the Midwest*.

As previously indicated, this research utilized professional trade associations as a method for locating prospective research participants. As further detailed herein, this researcher informed members of professional trade associations that she wanted to interview individuals fitting the participant selection criteria and asked them to volunteer in response to the Call for Research Participants. Prospective participants contacted the researcher directly to nominate themselves for participation in this study. This approach generated a candidate pool that was well beyond the geographical and social circles of the researcher (Weiss, 1994, p. 25). To maintain participant privacy, the researcher did not disclose to the professional trade associations whether any individual participated in the study or not.

To increase the ability of readers to connect to the research findings, the researcher distributed the Call for Research Participants to five trade associations: the Health Care Compliance Association (HCCA), the Healthcare Billing and Management

Association (HBMA), the Illinois Nurses Association (INA), the Medical Group Management Association (MGMA), and the Wisconsin Chapter of the American College of Healthcare Executives (ACHE). The researcher then selected research participants from the widest range of people and sites within the limits of this study (Seidman, 2006, p. 52-53), to maximize the differences at the beginning of this research study in order to identify the scope, major components, and trajectory of the overall phenomena (Morse, 2010, p. 235) and to increase the likelihood that the research findings would reflect varying perspectives (Creswell, 2007, p. 126). Individuals from all five of the trade associations responded to the initial Call for Research Participants. However, the final study yielded participants from only four of the five trade associations selected for inclusion in the study because some of the initial respondents failed to meet the necessary screening criteria and could not be included in the study as a result.

The researcher contacted all individuals who volunteered to participate in the study in response to the Call for Research Participants and who appeared to meet the initial study participation criteria (Generation Y knowledge workers as defined in Chapter 1: employed in the healthcare industry in the Midwestern United States, unknown to the researcher and not employed at the researcher's organization, and volunteering in response to the profile Generation Y knowledge worker employed in the healthcare industry in the Midwest) to schedule preliminary telephone screening interviews. A few individuals who initially volunteered to participate in the study worked in organizations outside of the geographic scope of this study. The researcher thanked them for their willingness to participate in the study and informed them that she would contact them if the geographic scope of the study expanded.

The researcher contacted the remaining individuals who responded to the Call for Research Participants to schedule the preliminary telephone screening interviews. After obtaining the private contact information from prospective research participants, potential participants participated in a preliminary telephone screening interview to verify that they met the participation criteria, confirm that they were interested in voluntarily participating in the study, and provide their preliminary participation consent. To determine if the remaining individuals fit the balance of the participation criteria and to assess their willingness to participate in the study, the researcher personally conducted the preliminary telephone screening interviews. During the initial contact, each potential participant received a brief explanation of the study and participated in a preliminary telephone screening interview (Appendix A) to provide the necessary demographic and screening data. The researcher informed individuals who participated in the preliminary telephone screening interviews that she would contact them to schedule a face-to-face interview if they fit the participation criteria.

After completion of the preliminary telephone screening interview, potential participants received either

- an invitation to participate in the study and schedule face-to-face interviews; or
- notification that the study already had enough participants for the initial round of interviews with a request for permission to contact them later in the study, if necessary; or
- notification that they did not fit the profile, with an expression of gratitude for their willingness to participate.

A few individuals who participated in the preliminary telephone screening interviews did not meet the requirements of the study because they did not fit the

definition of knowledge workers used in this study. The researcher notified them of this and thanked them for their willingness to participate in the study. The researcher contacted the remaining individuals who met the screening criteria and any balancing of the range of participant demographics to (a) invite them to participate in the study and set up interview times for the in-depth, face-to-face interviews or (b) to advise them that the study was full at that time and to request permission to contact them in the future, if necessary. As indicated elsewhere herein, the professional trade associations did not receive notification as to whether or not any specific individuals actually participated in the study.

Because more than enough individuals who fit the participant selection criteria volunteered to participate in this study, the researcher sought to maximize the heterogeneity of the sample by attempting to balance the initial participant pool on such factors as sex, specific age, education level, years of knowledge work experience, work roles, and employers, to provide a range and breadth of data (Weiss, 1994, p. 24). As the study progressed, the researcher employed *theoretical sampling* techniques, as further detailed herein, which sometimes reveal the need for new participants or for subsequent interviews with earlier participants (Charmaz, 2006, pp. 102-103).

This research study included interviews with 20 individuals (Creswell, 2007, p. 126). After conducting analysis of the initial 20 interview transcripts, the researcher determined, in consultation with the researcher's mentor and chair, that data redundancy (Seidman, 2006) and theoretical saturation (Charmaz, 2006, pp. 113-115) were reached.

Data Collection, Analysis, and Presentation

Grounded theory studies utilize the *constant comparative method* (Charmaz, 2006, p. 54; Glaser & Strauss, 1967/1999/2008; Robson, 2002, p. 193; Strauss, 1987), which involves continuous comparison of data and theory beginning with the data collection process (Huberman & Miles, 2002, p. 8). The constant comparative method allows researchers to develop theories that are plausible, integrated, consistent, and close to the data because it provides for adequate flexibility for the researcher to pursue emergent concepts, which aids with the creative generation of theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967/1999/2008, p. 103). Simultaneous data collection and analysis enable researchers to conduct in-depth analyses by further explicating the research problems and engaging in the developing categories of data (Charmaz, 2006, p. 48). The results of the early data analysis guided subsequent data collection (Neuman, 2006, p. 458). Each data collection and analysis process is detailed below.

Interviewing

Observation alone does not allow discovery of how an individual views his or her own behavior (Seidman, 2006, p. 9). Allowing the research participants to tell their stories enabled them to select, reflect upon, and give order to the details of their experiences (Seidman, 2006, p. 7).

Interviewing is typically the best method of inquiry in studies that seek understanding of the research participants' experiences and their meaning making from those experiences (Seidman, 2006, p. 11). Interviewing serves as a critical data collection tool in grounded theory studies (Robson, 2002, p. 191) because it provides access to research participants' consciousness, and thus access to the most complex social issues,

which are abstractions based on the concrete experiences of individuals (Seidman, 2006, p. 7). Due to the complex nature of human motivation (Pinder, 2008), the primary data collection tool for this research study was *intensive* (Charmaz, 2006, p. 25), *semi-structured, in-depth, face-to-face interviews* (Seidman, 2006) to elicit participants' interpretations of their work motivation experiences.

This research occurred in the field to allow access to firsthand information (Creswell, 2007, p. 18). As noted, data collection consisted of *intensive interviewing* (Charmaz, 2006; Weiss, 1994, p. 207), which focused on detail and completeness of accounts (Weiss, 1994, p. 207), permitting in-depth exploration (Charmaz, 2006) of Generation Y knowledge workers' work motivation experiences.

Seidman (2006) recommended a 3-interview series, which typically consists of

- Interview 1: Focused life history;
- Interview 2: The details of experience; and
- Interview 3: Reflection on the meaning (pp. 16-22).

The purposes of this model are to allow the researcher to sufficiently establish the context of the research participants' experience, to provide the research participants with the ability to reconstruct their experiences within the appropriate context, and to provide the participants with ample opportunities to reflect on the meaning of their experiences (Seidman, 2006, pp. 16-22). Although Seidman recommended conducting three separate face-to-face interviews with research participants, spaced from 3 days to 1 week apart, to accomplish the aforementioned objectives, he indicated that modifications to the structure and process described above may be necessary to accommodate participants' schedules (pp. 21-22).

In this study, the interviewing process consisted of four phases:

- Phase 1: the preliminary telephone screening interview to obtain background and demographic information to determine if the prospective participants fit the profile for the study;
- Phase 2: an in-depth, face-to-face interview which lasted approximately 2 to 3 hours (described below);
- Phase 3: a subsequent interview to obtain additional information, if necessary; and
- Phase 4: a follow-up email message to the participants containing the typed transcript from the interview(s) to ensure the integrity and anonymity of the data, and to obtain additional clarification as necessary.

The Phase 2 interviews used *open-ended questions* (Charmaz, 2006): *initial questions,* to sufficiently establish the context of the research participants' experiences; *intermediate questions* (Charmaz, 2006), to provide the research participants with the ability to reconstruct their experiences within the appropriate context (Seidman, 2006, pp. 16-22); and *ending questions* (Charmaz, 2006), to provide the participants with ample opportunity to reflect on the meaning of their experiences (Seidman, 2006, pp. 16-22) and to bring the interview to closure on a positive note (Charmaz, 2006, p. 30).

Prior to conducting Phase 2 interviews, research participants received the Informed Consent Form, as further detailed in the Ethical Considerations section of this chapter, to review and to stimulate their thought processes. The researcher required each research participant to submit the signed Informed Consent Form prior to participation in the face-to-face interviews. In an effort to preserve the participants' privacy, face-to-face interviews occurred in mutually agreed locations that the researcher and participant both deemed to be convenient, comfortable, safe, private enough for interviewing, and conducive to high-quality recording (Seidman, 2006).

The researcher in this study conducted all interviews personally, utilizing the assistance of voice recognition software, Dragon™ Naturally Speaking® (Nuance Communications, 2002-2014) to capture research participants' responses to interview questions. Each research participant wore a headset during the interviews to facilitate high-quality recording and transcription.

The questions contained in the Interview Protocol (Creswell, 2007, p. 133; Appendix B) served as guiding questions during the interviews (Seidman, 2006, p. 92; Weiss, 1994, p. 52). The interviews consisted of primarily nonjudgmental, open-ended questions (Creswell, 2007, p. 43; Seidman, 2006, pp. 84-85), which allowed the research participants to elucidate their work motivation experiences, explore their meanings (Seidman, 2006, p. 92), and encouraged their unanticipated statements and stories to emerge (Charmaz, 2006, p. 26). The researcher used additional probes as necessary and followed leads that emerged during the interviews, (Seidman, 2006, p. 81) to fill conceptual gaps and gain an increased understanding of the participants' experiences (Creswell, 2007, p. 43), thereby "increasing the analytic incisiveness of the resultant analysis" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 29).

The Interview Protocol (Appendix B) was used as a guide, consistent with the constant comparative method (Charmaz, 2006, p. 54; Glaser & Strauss, 1967/1999/2008; Robson, 2002, p. 193; Strauss, 1987). As the study progressed, the researcher made minor changes to the Interview Protocol and supplemented the protocol with additional probing questions when appropriate (Weiss, 1994, p.52) to allow exploration of new themes or concepts as they emerged from the data (Charmaz, 2006). This allowed further

investigation of new ideas if participants brought up other topics that proved to be important to the research (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 152).

This researcher personally transcribed some interviews and utilized a transcriptionist for the remaining interviews. This researcher personally reviewed all transcripts after the initial transcription was complete and edited the interview data to remove or generalize potentially identifiable information (e.g., names of individuals, organizations, titles, occupations, etc.) and replaced the same with pseudonyms or generic descriptions in brackets (e.g., "[company name]"). After transcription of the recorded interviews, a review of the typed transcripts ensured that the transcripts matched the interview recordings verbatim, eliminating only nonwords such as *uh*.

Although the participants' responses to the interview questions served as the primary source of data for this study, this researcher also made field notes during and/or immediately after the interviews (Charmaz, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 2008, pp. 123-124; Creswell, 2003, p. 185; Glaser & Strauss, 1967/1999/2008). As previously indicated, a reflective journal (Creswell, 2007, p. 131) and memo writing (Charmaz, 2006, p. 72; Corbin & Strauss, 2008, pp. 117-141; Creswell, 2007, p. 131; Glaser & Strauss, 1967/1999/2008; Robson, 2002), as further detailed below, served as mechanisms to reflect on the research process and emerging themes and patterns throughout the research process.

Field Testing

Prior to commencing the research study, field tests, conducted in accordance with the methods and procedures detailed herein, provided the opportunity to simulate the forthcoming interviews to determine if the structure of the Interview Protocol (Appendix

B) facilitated connections with participants (Weiss, 1994, p. 52); to identify which interview questions produced critical data; and to explore the interviewing techniques of the researcher. Conducting field tests also provided this researcher with the opportunity to address any questions or concerns about the conduct of the study and/or the latitude that she would have in reflexively adapting the study protocols (Charmaz, 2006) to emergent themes, for instance, as the study proceeded, consistent with the grounded theory methods literature. The field tests also revealed the need for revisions to the Interview Protocol (Appendix B), offered some preliminary feedback regarding the researcher's interviewing techniques, and provided an estimate of the time required to conduct the in-depth interviews.

The three individuals who participated in the first round of field tests met the majority of the participant selection criteria, except for being known to the researcher, and thus not fully qualified for the study. Prior to commencing the field tests, each field-test participant received a brief overview of this research study and an explanation of the field-testing process. Field-test participants were advised that the information from their interviews would enable further refinement of the data collection procedures for this study and that their responses would not be included in the dissertation. Each field-test participant then granted the researcher permission to record the interview to simulate the interview process presented herein.

The field tests also tested the transcription software and process. Prior to conducting the field-test interviews, each field-test participant agreed to wear a headset and speak into the microphone, to allow the voice-recognition software, Dragon™ Naturally Speaking® (Nuance Communications Inc., 2002-2014), to assist with the

transcription process. After each field-test participant became comfortable with the process, the researcher moved the computer screen out of the participant's line of sight to avoid distraction by the computer-assisted transcription. The automated transcriptions yielded a high degree of accuracy, requiring minimal fine-point editing to achieve 100% accuracy of the recordings, so the researcher utilized the software to aid with the transcription of the interviews in this study.

The first round of field-test interviews lasted 30 to 35 minutes, suggesting that the Interview Protocol (Appendix B) and/or procedures required modification to include additional follow-up questions and probes to encourage research participants to tell more stories, describe their experiences in greater depth and detail, to further clarify participants' experiences. In addition, several questions caused confusion for the participants. This researcher modified or struck these questions and added questions and potential probes to the Interview Protocol to encourage participants to reflect upon their experiences and elicit more stories and details about their views of work motivation.

The second round of field tests involved two different individuals to test the revised questions and further refine the Interview Protocol (Appendix B). The second round of field tests lasted between 1 and 2 hours and did not indicate the need for any major revisions to the Interview Protocol, but did reveal some technological issues with the transcription software, further supporting the need to audio record the interviews for backup purposes. In addition, one of the individuals who participated in the second round of field tests referenced her position at a past employer more frequently than her current position, due to her recent job transition. Therefore, the Interview Protocol was modified to remind participants that they could draw on past work experiences, if necessary. As

previously indicated, additional revisions to the Interview Protocol occurred as necessary, consistent with grounded theory research methods, throughout the research process to permit exploration of emergent themes and ideas (Charmaz, 2006, p. 29). "Beyond the decisions concerning initial collection of data, further collection cannot be planned in advance of the emerging theory" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967/1999/2008, p. 47). Instead, the emerging theory suggested further data collection activities (Glaser & Strauss, 1967/1999/2008, p. 47).

The field tests and subsequent review of the recordings provided this researcher with additional insights on and comfort with the interviewing process. In particular, the field tests assisted the researcher with handling of pauses, silences, and requests for further detail or clarification, which allowed the participants to think and follow through with further depth that might otherwise be lost.

Data Analysis

This research utilized grounded theory methods to analyze the data (Charmaz, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Glaser, 1978, 1998; Glaser & Strauss, 1967/1999/2008; Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1997). As previously mentioned, this research relied primarily on the constructivist grounded theory techniques established by Charmaz (2006), due to their focus on interaction with the data throughout the research process and the flexibility they afford throughout the data analysis process (Creswell, 2007).

This study's data analysis process utilized conceptual categories to organize the raw data from this research to create themes or concepts (Neuman, 2006, p. 460). Qualitative coding, driven by the research question, served as an integral part of the data

analysis process that may lead to new questions, theory, or generalizations (Neuman, 2006, p. 460; Robson, 2002, p. 497) emanating from this study:

> Codes are tags or labels for assigning units of meaning to the descriptive or inferential information compiled during a study. Codes usually are attached to "chunks" of varying size—words, phrases, sentences or whole paragraphs, connected or un-connected to a specific setting. (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 56)

The sections below detail each analysis method utilized in this study.

Coding. Qualitative coding is the process of defining what the data are about by assigning labels to segments of data in an effort to categorize, summarize, and account for the data (Charmaz, 2006, p. 43). The goal of qualitative coding is to provide an analytic frame upon which the researcher can build an analysis (p. 45).

"Coding is the pivotal link between collecting data and developing an emergent theory to explain these data" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 46). Throughout the coding process, the data analysis conducted by the researcher provided additional insight about the work motivation experiences of Generation Y knowledge workers and it helped direct subsequent data gathering initiatives (Charmaz, 2006, p. 42). This research consisted of three phases of coding, *initial coding* and *focused coding* (Charmaz, 2006), as further described herein, and *theoretical coding* (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser, 1978) to identify potential relationships between categories developed during focused coding.

Initial coding. Initial coding involved a careful review of fragments of the data—words, lines, segments, and incidents (Charmaz, 2006). During the initial coding process, researchers must remain open to all possible theoretical directions indicated by the data (Charmaz, 2006, pp. 46-47). Rather than segmenting the data into predefined categories, researchers should study the emerging data (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser, 1978, 1998) in order

to construct codes and develop them into categories that crystallize the experiences of the participants. In this study, the researcher constructed initial codes that were "provisional, comparative, and grounded in the data" (Charmaz, 2006, pp. 48-49). Initial codes served as the foundation for the development of a nascent theory explaining the data and directed subsequent data gathering initiatives (Charmaz, 2006, p. 48).

During the initial coding process, researchers should select codes that reflect action in order to reduce the likelihood of prematurely making conceptual leaps and adopting extant theories (Charmaz, 2006, p. 48; Glaser, 1978, 1998). Utilizing open-ended codes allowed the researcher in this study to remain open to other analytic possibilities and progressively pursue codes that fit the data (Charmaz, 2006, p. 48).In this study, the use of line-by-line coding facilitated a more in-depth understanding of the data and reduced the potential for bias (Charmaz, 2006, pp. 50-53; Glaser, 1978) in the initial coding phase. Because line-by-line coding required the researcher to look at all of the data, rather than selectively reviewing incidents that the researcher felt were of interest, it reduced the likelihood of suppressing preconceived notions on the data (Charmaz, 2006, p. 51) and/or overlooking some of the data. Line-by-line coding was also beneficial because it drew attention to ideas that may not have been readily apparent in a general thematic analysis (Charmaz, 2006, p. 50) by encouraging critical and analytical data assessment rather than acceptance of the participants' worldviews at face value (Charmaz, 2006, p. 51). Line-by-line coding was, therefore, more likely to yield an objective view of the data. Line-by-line coding also generated additional leads to pursue and provided focus to subsequent data collection and coding (Charmaz, 2006, p. 53) in this study.

Focused coding. After establishing strong analytical categories through the initial and line-by-line coding analyses, the researcher used focused coding (Charmaz, 2006) to further synthesize and explain the data (p. 57). Focused coding, which involved a review of the most significant and frequent initial codes, facilitated incisive and complete categorization of the data (Charmaz, 2006, pp. 57-58). During this process, the researcher also evaluated and determined the adequacy of the initial codes (Charmaz, 2006, p. 57). If necessary, this researcher may return to the field to interview earlier research participants again in order to further investigate topics that may have not been readily discernible during the initial interviews (Charmaz, 2006, p. 58). In addition, this researcher elaborated on these codes and moved to extant theoretical codes as indicated by the emerging analysis (Charmaz, 2006, p. 42).

Theoretical coding. Theoretical coding allowed the researcher to specify possible relationships between codes identified during the focused coding process. Theoretical codes allowed the researcher to conceptualize the relationships between substantive codes and to integrate them into a possible theory (Charmaz, 2006, p. 63; Glaser, 1978, p. 72). This researcher utilized theoretical codes to sharpen the data analysis in this study, while exercising caution to avoid imposing a forced framework on the codes (Charmaz, 2006).

Memo writing. As indicated elsewhere in this chapter, this researcher also utilized memo writing (Charmaz, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Creswell, 2007; Glaser & Strauss, 1967/1999/2008; Robson, 2002, p. 497) throughout the data analysis process to reflect on the research process itself and to document information regarding key concepts or themes emerging from the data. Due to the inductive nature of qualitative

research, and particularly grounded theory research, researchers should begin to look for patterns and relationships early in the research process (Charmaz, 2006; Neuman, 2006, p. 458). Review of the interview transcripts led to the identification of emerging themes and patterns (Charmaz, 2006; Creswell, 2007) and enabled the researcher to draw comparisons to the existing literature related to generational differences in knowledge worker motivation. Throughout the research process, memos served as a mechanism for this researcher to summarize data, reflect on emerging themes and patterns, capture emerging analyses, and further refine ideas (Charmaz, 2006, pp. 72-94).

Memo writing (Charmaz, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Glaser & Strauss, 1967/1999/2008; Robson, 2002, p. 497) is a pivotal part of the discovery process in grounded theory research (Charmaz, 2006, p. 72). In this study, initial memos consisted of informal notes regarding the research process and the corresponding data. These memos captured thoughts about the raw data and explored possibilities for refining subsequent data collection.

As the research progressed, the researcher used memos to compare data from various research participants and document emerging patterns or themes from the data. Some memos included direct quotes from the research participants for illustration purposes. In addition to utilizing memos to analyze the data obtained from the interviews, memos also permit researchers to reflect upon their involvement in the research process. These memos contained information regarding the researcher's initial perceptions of the research question, any known biases or preconceptions, how the research process evolved throughout the study, and the researcher's thoughts about the research process and the

resulting data (Charmaz, 2006, pp. 188-189; Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 31; Finlay, 2002; Glaser & Strauss, 1967/1999/2008, p. 107; Smith, 2006).

Theoretical sampling, saturation, and sorting. After reviewing the focused codes and constructing initial conceptual categories from the data, the researcher conducted theoretical sampling to seek and collect pertinent data to elaborate and refine the categories in the emerging theory (Charmaz, 2006, p. 96; Glaser & Strauss, 1967/1999/2008; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Unlike other forms of sampling, theoretical sampling is an aspect of data collection and analysis, designed to assist with the development of emerging theoretical categories (Charmaz, 2006, pp. 96-97). "Theoretical sampling involves starting with data, constructing tentative ideas about the data, and then examining these ideas through further empirical inquiry" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 102). Theoretical sampling further guided data collection toward explicit development of theoretical categories derived from analysis of Generation Y knowledge workers' motivational world, which subsequently contributed to a more focused analysis (Charmaz, 2006, pp. 97-104; Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

The use of theoretical sampling assisted with the development of full and robust categories (Charmaz, 2006, p. 103; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Theoretical sampling enabled the researcher to identify gaps in the categories or emerging analysis, saturate the properties of core conceptual categories, distinguish between categories, increase the conceptual precision of categories, and identify possible relationships among categories (Charmaz, 2006, pp. 96-115). This researcher worked to develop the properties of the data analysis categories until no new or relevant data properties emerged (Charmaz, 2006, p. 96; Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 188) and the data reached *theoretical saturation*

(Charmaz, 2006, p. 114; Strauss & Corbin, 1990) or *theoretical sufficiency* (Dey, 1999, p. 257).

> Saturation is not seeing the same pattern over and over again. It is the conceptualization of comparisons of these incidents which yield different properties of the pattern, until no new properties of the pattern emerge. This yields conceptual density that when integrated into hypotheses make up the body of the generated grounded theory with theoretical completeness. (Glaser, 2001, p. 191)

To achieve theoretical saturation or theoretical sufficiency, the researcher conducted follow up interviews with earlier research participants to gather additional information to further illuminate the theoretical categories.

The use of *sorting* to create and refine theoretical links between categories facilitated the comparison of categories at an abstract level (Charmaz, 2006, p. 115). The comparison of memos with other memos sparked new ideas and helped the researcher discern relationships between memos (Charmaz, 2006, p. 117; Glaser, 1998). It is important to experiment with different arrangements of memos to refine categories (Charmaz, 2006, p. 117). Sorting permitted this researcher to consider how the categories reflected the participants' experiences, which led to the development of theoretical statements that most adequately echoed the phenomenon (Charmaz, 2006, p. 117).

This researcher also utilized diagrams to create concrete images that depicted the relationships between categories (Charmaz, 2006, p. 117). This facilitated more thorough analysis of the various relationships that existed, by drawing attention to the power, scope, and direction of the categories, thereby enabling the analysis to move beyond the microsocial structures and immediate experiences of the participants to larger social conditions and consequences (Charmaz, 2006, pp. 117-118). Sorting and integrating

memos and diagrams unveiled implicit theoretical codes and theoretical links not otherwise readily apparent (Charmaz, 2006, p. 121), which led to an interpretive understanding of the work motivation experiences of Generation Y knowledge workers.

Presentation of Findings

Chapter 4 presents the study's findings and initial grounded theory analysis. This study's findings are presented in Chapter 4 herein in several ways:

- an aggregated summary of participant demographics;
- individual participant profiles to provide background information and in-depth understanding of the research participants' lives;
- a summary of each research phase, delineating how the research process evolved as new concepts and/or themes emerged;
- detailing of the coding process, to provide insight into how the codes developed throughout the conduct of the study; and
- detailing of common responses, key themes, and categories.

Ultimately, Chapter 5 presents a theory grounded in the data.

Where appropriate, data aggregation (e.g., demographics, common responses) was utilized. Individual participant profiles were sufficiently generalized to again avoid disclosure of identifiable characteristics, to give a sense of the individual's approach to work motivation. Trends and common themes were reviewed. Interview transcripts were paraphrased and/or individual quotations were edited for length, clarity, or to preserve confidentiality, as noted above.

As previously indicated, this research study compares the information from the interviews and observations with related research in the literature (Charmaz, 2006), in Chapter 5. This researcher searched for patterns—similarities or differences across

participants—which might lead to the development of new work motivation concepts or theory to stimulate understanding, while striving to avoid errors, false conclusions, and misleading inferences (Neuman, 2006, p. 458). Chapter 5 presents critical assessment of the findings to reach conclusions and organize the details from the data into a coherent picture, model, or set of interlocked concepts that comprise a nascent theory, grounded in the data (Neuman, 2006, p. 458). Chapter 5 also delineates the study's contributions to and comparisons with the literature and presents recommendations for future research and practice.

Credibility and Verification

Considerable debate surrounds the appropriate methods for evaluating the credibility and efficacy of qualitative research (Creswell, 2003, p. 194). Accordingly, the terminology used to describe the standards for evaluating qualitative research varies widely. Qualitative researchers refer to terms such as *auditability* (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 278); *authenticity* (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 278), *confirmability* (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 278), *credibility* (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 278), *dependability* (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 278), *external validity* (LeCompte & Goetz, 1982; Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 279), *fittingness* (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 279), *integrity* (Watson & Girard, 2004), *internal validity* (LeCompte & Goetz, 1982; Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 278), *objectivity* (LeCompte & Goetz, 1982; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 278), *reactivity* (Katz, 1983; Miles & Huberman, 1994), *reliability* (Katz, 1983; LeCompte & Goetz, 1982; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 278), *replicability* (Katz, 1983;

Miles & Huberman, 1994), *representativeness* (Katz, 1983; Miles & Huberman, 1994, pp. 263-264), *rigor* (Mays & Pope, 1995), *transferability* (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 279), and *trustworthiness* (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Among multiple views regarding the techniques for evaluating and validating qualitative research, it is clear that the research design must incorporate steps for assuring that the research is meaningful and valid.

"Qualitative researchers strive for 'understanding,' that deep structure of knowledge that comes from visiting personally with participants, spending extensive time in the field, and probing to obtain detailed meanings" (Creswell, 2007, p. 201). Qualitative researchers add value to their studies through creating thick, detailed descriptions and developing a closeness to the research participants (Creswell, 1998, p. 201).

Researchers conducting qualitative research studies must take steps to establish credibility (Charmaz, 2006; Lincoln & Guba, 1985, pp. 289-332). "To demonstrate credibility, the weight of evidences should become persuasive" (Eisner, 1991, pp. 110-112). This study employed several validation strategies (Creswell, 2007, pp. 207-209) to establish credibility. These validation strategies, as detailed elsewhere herein, included

- clarification of researcher bias;
- prolonged engagement and persistent observation in the field;
- rich, thick description; and
- member checking.

To provide a better understanding of this researcher's position and any biases or assumptions that may have impacted the inquiry, this document makes the researcher's

views and perspectives explicit. In the Researcher's Philosophy section of this chapter, the researcher disclosed her philosophical assumptions and utilized reflexivity to unveil any known biases that may have influenced her interpretation and approach to the study (Creswell, 2007, p. 208). The use of reflexivity (Creswell, 2007, p. 213) throughout the research study, as described earlier, provides readers with an understanding of the researcher's involvement in the research process, to check for researcher effects and biases (Miles & Huberman, 1994, pp. 265-266) and to explain how the researcher's interpretations of the data influenced the research process. In addition, exclusion of participants known to the researcher or employed in the researcher's own organization worked to reduce researcher bias (Seidman, 2006).

Prolonged engagement and persistent observation in the field enable researchers to build mutual trust with the research participants and learn more about their lived experiences (Creswell, 2007, p. 207). As mentioned previously, conducting in-depth, face-to-face interviews with the research participants allowed this researcher to develop rapport with the research participants (Seidman, 2006), thereby encouraging them to elucidate their stories of work motivation. The constant comparative method (Charmaz, 2006, p. 54; Glaser & Strauss, 1967/1999/2008; Robson, 2002, p. 193; Strauss, 1987) provided the researcher with the opportunity to check for misinformation stemming from distortions introduced by the participants or the researcher's own biases and enabled the researcher to make decisions about salient themes relevant to the purpose of the study.

To increase confidence in the findings and to provide an in-depth understanding of the research participants' experiences, this study includes rich, thick descriptions. This will give the readers the opportunity to make decisions regarding transferability, thereby

enabling them to gauge the potential applicability of study's findings to other settings (Creswell, 2007, p. 209).

Consistent with grounded theory methods, this study utilized *member checking* (Charmaz, 2006, p. 111; Robson, 2002, p. 175) to provide research participants with the opportunity to review the typed transcripts of their respective interviews for accuracy, to identify any discrepancies, ensure coding of identifying information, make any changes they deemed necessary, and provide any final reflections, via private e-mail. Member checking not only added to the credibility of the findings but it also served as a method for verifying the accuracy of the data.

The techniques outlined above provided more credibility to the research study and permitted verification of the findings. This researcher also adhered to the principles of ethical research to ensure that the researcher did not influence the research participants unduly. The next section provides a more detailed explanation of the ethical considerations in this study.

Ethical Considerations

The ethics of social and behavioral research demand that research and its conduct benefit society by providing useful knowledge based on valid research principles while respecting the rights of the research participants (Sieber, 2009, pp. 106-107). To accomplish this goal, researchers must develop an understanding of the research participants' perspectives and how the phenomenon under investigation affects them (Sieber, 2009, p. 107).

The three main principles guiding human research studies (Sieber, 2009) are

- *Beneficence*: maximizing good outcomes for science, humanity and the individual research participant, while avoiding or minimizing unnecessary risk, harm or wrong;

- *Respect for [participants]*: protecting the autonomy of (autonomous) persons, and treating the nonautonomous with respect and special protections; [and]

- *Justice*: ensuring reasonable, nonexploitative, and carefully considered procedures and their fair administration. (p. 109)

Researchers examine issues that directly affect participants' lives (Sieber, 2009). Therefore, researchers must take steps to design their research studies carefully to ensure that all individuals affected by the research are recognized and respected (Sieber, 2009, p. 106). Inadequate address of the interests of the research participants could lead to a flawed research design and inaccurate findings (Sieber, 2009, p. 106).

Ethical guidelines for conducting social science research commonly address the issues of informed consent, consequences associated with participation in the research study, participant confidentiality, and the role of the researcher (Kvale, 2007, p. 27; Sieber, 2009). This section provides a brief overview of the ethical considerations and resulting research procedures and safeguards that this study employed to adhere to the ethical guidelines for conducting qualitative research.

In this study, the researcher conducted the research in a manner that ensured the highest level of integrity and quality. Participation in this research was on a strictly voluntary basis and the researcher informed participants of their rights to withdraw from the research study at any time (Kvale, 2007, p. 27; Sieber, 2009). As introduced above, the researcher asked research participants to acknowledge *voluntary informed consent* (Sieber, 2009, p. 111) by obtaining their signatures on the Informed Consent Form prior to conducting their respective face-to-face interviews:

- *Voluntary* means without threat or undue inducement. . . .
- *Informed* means knowing what a reasonable person in the same situation would want to know before giving consent, including who the researcher is and why the study is being done. . . .
- *Consent* means explicit agreement to participate. (Sieber, 2009, p. 111)

To obtain voluntary informed consent, researchers must fully inform prospective research participants about the purpose, methods, and possible uses for the research (Kvale, 2007, p. 27; Sieber, 2009, pp. 110-117). Researchers should also notify prospective research participants of what participation in the research entails and of the potential benefits and risks associated with participation in the research so that they have a reasonable expectation of what to anticipate in the research process (Kvale, 2007, p. 27; Sieber, 2009, p. 111). This researcher invited prospective research participants to ask questions about the research process and responded thoughtfully to their comments, questions, and concerns to facilitate adequate decision-making (Sieber, 2009).

Throughout the research study, researchers should address participants with respect and openness. Researchers should also speak to research participants in a manner that is easily understood, utilizing vocabulary that is comprehensible to research participants (Sieber, 2009, pp. 110-113). As noted above, this researcher worked to develop rapport with the research participants by demonstrating a genuine interest in their work motivation experiences. This served to create a beneficial relationship of trust with the research participants (Sieber, 2009, p. 113).

Privacy and confidentiality are important aspects of social research (Sieber, 2009). To minimize the risks to research participants in this research, this study included adequate safeguards to protect the confidentiality of the information collected (Kvale,

2007, p. 27). As previously indicated, this researcher notified research participants of their rights and utilized aliases or pseudonyms to further protect the identities of the research participants and to disguise the names of organizations or places (Kvale, 2007). This researcher also made a concerted effort to respect the participants' personal boundaries (Sieber, 2009, p. 123). The Informed Consent Form further details the steps developed to assure privacy and confidentiality (Sieber, 2009) in this study.

Vulnerable subjects are individuals who are less likely to be able to defend themselves than others in a specific setting or situation (Robson, 2002, p. 70). Workers are vulnerable subjects because the study's outcomes, if one's participation therein were known, could jeopardize participants' opportunities for advancement, relationships with other workers, and relationships with management. The inappropriate release of individually identifiable information pertaining to a research participant could negatively influence the worker's job retention and/or work-related benefits. To avoid or minimize these risks, researchers must take additional precautions to protect the confidentiality of the data obtained from the worker research participants. As previously indicated, in addition to disguising the participants' names and the names of the organizations for which they worked (Sieber, 2009), this researcher did not disclose to the trade associations whether or not individuals participated in the study to further protect the participants' privacy.

Interviews were audio recorded to preserve the vividness of the participants' own words and to enable attentiveness to the participants during the interviews (Weiss, 1994, p. 54). Audio recording may induce participants to hesitate to reveal sensitive information (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 28), or to state something different from their actual reality

(p. 29). Furthermore, research participants may not realize the subtleties that affect their interactions with others or fully articulate what is taking place (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, pp. 29-30). Verbatim transcripts preserved the participants' words and participant transcript review or member checking afforded participants the opportunity to validate the accuracy of the transcripts and provide notification of any errors or omissions, in order to preserve the credibility of the data. Providing research participants with the opportunity to review and approve their transcripts also continued to build trust.

This researcher will store the confidential data and transcripts from the interviews in a secure location for a maximum of 7 years. At the conclusion of this timeframe, the researcher will permanently destroy all data. The researcher will not permit unauthorized access to the study data or results.

Methodological Limitations

As with any research study, this study has certain methodological limitations. This section reviews the limitations of the methodology and highlights the strategies employed to minimize the identified limitations.

Qualitative Research Methods

Qualitative research methods present some underlying methodological issues (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 9) because the researcher-self is inseparable from the personal-self (Creswell, 2003, p. 182) and the words the researcher associates with the fieldwork experiences are framed, inevitably, by the researcher's implicit concepts (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 9). The researcher's interpretations of the data, therefore, are framed by the researcher's understanding of the subject under investigation and the

contextual factors associated with it. To minimize potential biases associated with the research process, researchers must make a concerted effort to remain self-aware (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 10) by reflecting on their role in the research process throughout the conduct of the study (Charmaz, 2006) and attempting to capture the true nature of the participants' experiences by listening attentively to the participants' own feelings and perceptions. As detailed elsewhere herein, memoing, journaling, and reflexivity served to disclose this researcher's own biases to the reader by bracketing the researcher's views apart from the research process itself.

Grounded Theory Research

Similarly, as with any research method, grounded theory has certain limitations. Grounded theory, founded on the premise that the best approach to theory development is through analyzing the actions, interactions, and processes of the individuals involved, requires the researcher to start a research study without preconceived notions about the research (Robson, 2002, p. 192). This can be problematic because no researcher is a blank slate. The prescribed categories commonly associated with classic grounded theory research methods can also be problematic because the categories may not be appropriate for certain studies (Charmaz, 2006; Robson, 2002, p. 192). In an attempt to overcome these limitations, this study relied upon a constructivist approach to grounded theory, which advocates the use of reflexivity and a more flexible research design. This approach permitted this researcher to reflect upon her own involvement in the research process, interactively move from data collection to analysis to collection and clarification, and avoid use of prescribed categories that were not be appropriate for a study about the work motivation experiences of Generation Y knowledge workers. The use of multiple

interviews and member checking of the transcripts and initial results also served to engage the participants in verifying the efficacy of the coding, analysis, and theorizing processes.

Interviewing

Interviewing involves interaction between the researcher and research participants. The researcher's interaction with research participants during the interviews has the ability to affect research participants' responses to interview questions (Miles & Huberman, 1994, pp. 265-266; Seidman, 2006, p. 23). In an effort to minimize the distortion that can occur because of the researcher's role in the interviews, researchers should avoid the use of leading questions (Seidman, 2006, p. 84) and give research participants the opportunity "to reconstruct their experiences according to their own sense of what was important" (Seidman, 2006, p. 85). In this study, the researcher limited her own interaction in the interviews to minimize distortion (Patton, 1989, p. 157), reduce researcher effects, which can create bias (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 265), and to avoid distracting participants from their own experiences (Seidman, 2006, p. 89). This researcher also made a concerted effort to refrain from positively or negatively reinforcing what the participants were saying to reduce the risk of distorting how the research participants responded (Seidman, 2006, pp. 89-90).

As stated earlier, this research did not involve interviews with anyone previously known to the researcher to avoid any conflicts of interest or partiality (Creswell, 2007). This researcher also strived to avoid imposing her own interests on the experiences of participants (Seidman, 2006, p. 92). As such, the Interview Protocol (Appendix B) served solely to guide the interview process and the researcher did not manipulate participants to

respond to the questions contained in the Interview Protocol. The field tests also provided an opportunity for the researcher to examine her interviewing techniques to ensure that she was not asking leading questions or unduly influencing the participants. After completion of the field tests, this researcher critically assessed the audio recordings to identify potential problems with the interviewing procedures and refined them accordingly to minimize the risk of distortion. By conducting several phases of interviewing (the preliminary telephone screening interview; in-depth, face-to-face interviews; and follow-up interviews) and member checking, this researcher also built rapport and trust with the research participants, increasing the study's credibility.

CHAPTER 4. RESULTS

This chapter begins with a summary of the study and the researcher's qualifications and interest in the phenomenon under investigation, the work motivation experiences of Generation Y knowledge workers; the researcher's role in the data collection and analysis process; and a discussion of the possible researcher effects on the data at any stage of the project. Next presented is an aggregated description of the sample, followed by in-depth descriptions of the participants sufficiently disguised to protect the research participants' identities, followed by the research methodology and applied data analysis methods. The chapter concludes with a presentation of the data and results of analysis, and a summary of the findings, setting the stage for the discussion presented in Chapter 5.

The Study and the Researcher

This section provides a summary of the study and discusses the researcher's role in the study. The section concludes with a discussion of reflexivity and the role of the researcher.

The Study

This chapter presents the study's findings in several ways: an aggregated summary of participant demographics; individual participant profiles to provide background information and in-depth understanding of the research participants' lives; a summary of each research phase, delineating how the research process evolved as new concepts and/or themes emerged; detailing of the coding process, to provide insight into

how the codes developed throughout the conduct of the study; detailing of common responses, key themes, and categories; and a summary of the findings.

The central research question (Creswell, 2003, p. 105; 2007, p. 108) which the researcher designed this study to investigate was, How do Generation Y knowledge workers describe and experience work motivation? The purpose of this chapter is to present the study's findings relative to this exploratory central research question and the subquestions (Creswell, 2003, p. 106; 2007, p. 108) it encompassed, of Generation Y's (a) intrinsic motivators, (b) extrinsic motivators, and (c) demotivators, as well as this generation's (d) process of and (e) approach to work motivation.

The Researcher

Prior to commencing this research study, the researcher had served in numerous leadership roles in the workforce and had experience working with and supervising knowledge workers from four distinct generations. Throughout the course of her career, the researcher had also spearheaded and participated in numerous process improvement initiatives involving knowledge workers, which provided her with the opportunity to gain initial insight into the work motivation experiences of these individuals. This initial exposure to the work motivation experiences of knowledge workers, coupled with the researcher's educational background in organizational behavior and leadership, provided the researcher with the knowledge necessary to commence the study.

The researcher's initial interest in the work motivation experiences of Generation Y knowledge workers developed through her daily interactions with employees from four distinct generational cohorts. As an executive with direct and indirect supervisory responsibilities, the researcher witnessed a variety of different work and communication

styles among her employees, and frequently heard members of Generation Y express concerns that their work motivation preferences were poorly understood. The researcher also commonly heard organizational leaders discuss their frustration with this "younger generation of workers" and their lack of work motivation. These experiences contributed to the researcher's desire to conduct a study to investigate further the work motivation experiences of Generation Y knowledge workers.

Prior to commencing this study, the researcher had very limited experience in conducting qualitative research. Although the researcher had previously conducted some research interviews for a commissioned research study, the researcher had no prior experience with grounded theory research and, thus, had to spend an extensive amount of time researching the methods prior to beginning the research. The researcher utilized the field tests to refine her interview skills and the Interview Protocol (Appendix B), as described in Chapter 3.

As also indicated in Chapter 3, the researcher personally conducted all of the research interviews and, thus, served as the primary instrument of the research (Creswell, 2003) and as an observer during the interview process. The researcher also served in the role of interpreter while conducting the data analysis and constructing meaning from the data. Throughout the study, the researcher remained cognizant of her involvement in the research process and took precautionary steps to avoid unduly influencing the participants' responses to interview questions.

Reflexivity and the Role of the Researcher

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the researcher's previous work experiences and interests shaped the initial design of this study, and the researcher's involvement in

the study had the potential to impact the participants' responses during the interview process (Seidman, 2006; Weiss, 1994). In an effort to remain objective throughout the study, the researcher refrained from discussing her views with the research participants (Weiss, 1994) and wrote reflective logs and memos (Charmaz, 2006, p. 72) throughout the study to track how her involvement in the research process may have affected the study. Aside from the possible impact of serving in the role of researcher in a qualitative research study, as previously mentioned, the researcher is not aware of any significant effects of her involvement on the participants or the data.

Researchers serve as the key instruments in qualitative research studies (Charmaz, 2006). "The researcher's role is to gain a 'holistic' (systemic, encompassing, integrated) overview of the context under study; its logic, its arrangements, its explicit and implicit rules" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 6). Qualitative research requires researchers to collect the data themselves through examination of documents, observations, and/or interviewing participants (Patton, 2002) and to interpret the data by developing descriptions of the research participants, conducting analysis, formulating conclusions about the meanings derived from the study, describing the lessons learned, and offering suggestions for future research (Creswell, 2003, p. 182).

Qualitative researchers conduct personal interpretation of the data (Creswell, 2003, p. 182; 2007, p. 39). "The researchers' interpretations cannot be separated from their own background, history, context, and prior understandings" (Creswell, 2007, p. 39). Consequently, the researcher's background and beliefs shape the development of the study (Charmaz, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 31). It is, therefore, critical for the qualitative researcher to be aware of and reflect upon how his or her personal lens and

involvement in the study shape the outcome of the study (Charmaz, 2006, p. 15; Clarke, 2005; Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 31; Patton, 2002, pp. 64-66).

Recognizing that the researcher-self is inseparable from the personal-self is important (Creswell, 2003, p. 182). Qualitative research methods in particular emphasize the importance of acknowledging the researcher's biases, values, or interests—also known as *reflexivity* (Charmaz, 2006, pp. 188-189; Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 31; Finlay, 2002) or self-awareness (Smith, 2006, p. 210). This study involved *reflexive research* (Charmaz, 2006) in order to fully embrace and exploit the subjectivity of this researcher. Throughout the research process, researchers should attempt to remain aware of and reflect upon their involvement in the research and modify their actions accordingly. Throughout this study, the researcher endeavored to monitor her position in relationship to the research process and the individual research participants (Coe, 1991) by documenting her views and involvement in the research process, to make the reflexive process more visible and to increase the credibility of the research (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 31; Finlay, 2002; Miles & Huberman, 1994, pp. 277-278; Smith, 2006).

In this study, one of the roles of the researcher was that of an observer, recognizing that the views of the research participants shaped the study and the emerging theory (Charmaz, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 31; Seidman, 2006; Weiss, 1994). Admittedly, the personal beliefs and interests of the researcher shaped the initial design of this study and the researcher's involvement in the study had the potential to affect the participants' responses during the interview process (Seidman, 2006; Weiss, 1994). As the facilitator during the interview process, the researcher served as the primary instrument of the research (Creswell, 2003). As such, in this study the researcher made a

concerted effort to refrain from discussing her views with the participants and only interjected for clarification purposes during the interviews (Weiss, 1994). Although this researcher made every effort to be as objective as possible throughout the research process, the researcher's role in the research process ultimately influences the study (Charmaz, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Seidman, 2006; Weiss, 1994).

"Qualitative research is fundamentally interpretive" (Creswell, 2003, p. 182). In this study, the researcher also served in the role of interpreter while analyzing the data and constructing meaning from it. This research explored and interpreted the implicit meanings associated with the participants' statements to develop categories that adequately portrayed the participants' experiences (Charmaz, 2006).

Using reflective logs, memos (Charmaz, 2006, p. 72), and discussion points generated from field notes, this research reflected upon how the researcher's involvement in the study affected the research process (Smith, 2006). The closing chapter revisits how the personal perspectives of this researcher affected the research process and discusses how the results of the research influenced the researcher's views regarding work motivation.

Description of the Participants and Other Data Sources

This section of the study commences with an aggregated summary of the participant demographics and includes basic demographic information about the participants. Individual participant profiles follow the aggregated summary of the participant demographics and provide the reader with a glimpse of the motivational factors driving each participant.

Aggregated Summary of Participant Demographics

This section includes an aggregated summary of the participant demographics to provider readers with a better understanding of the research participants' backgrounds. The section commences with information about the total number of participants who volunteered and qualified for the study. Next, the researcher presents additional information about the participants including the participants' birth years, educational levels, job types, and work experience in order to provide additional context for the study.

Size of the final sample. As previously indicated, the researcher utilized maximum variation (Patton, 1989; Seidman, 2006), criterion sampling (Creswell, 2003, p. 127) to select research participants for this study. In total, 40 individuals responded to the Call for Research Participants and volunteered for participation in the study. The researcher immediately disqualified five of the volunteers from participation in the study because they lived outside the geographic region for the study, were personally known to the researcher, and/or they were referred by someone who personally knew the researcher. The researcher followed up with the remaining 35 volunteers (28 women and seven men) to set up the preliminary telephone screening interviews. Ultimately, the researcher disqualified five additional volunteers because they did not fit the knowledge worker criteria as defined in this study and/or they did not fit the generational criteria for the study. In total, 20 of the 30 individuals who volunteered participated in the face-to-face interviews. Of these, 17 were women and three were men. The researcher kept the contact information for the remaining 10 volunteers on file and advised them that she would contact them if she determined that she needed additional participants for the study

in order to reach theoretical saturation. After reaching theoretical saturation with the initial 20 participants, the researcher determined that the additional 10 volunteers would not need to participate in the study.

Participants' ages. The participants' ages ranged from 23 to 30 at the time of the face-to-face interviews. Table 3 provides a summary of the participants' birth years.

Table 3. Participants' Birth Years

Birth year	Age in 2011	*n* (*N* = 20)
1981	30	4
1982	29	4
1983	28	3
1984	27	2
1985	26	3
1986	25	1
1987	24	1
1988	23	2

As reflected in Table 3, only a few of the research participants were born after 1985. The requirement for research participants to be knowledge workers may have limited the number of participants at the younger end of the generation due to their recent entry into the workforce and potentially limited work experience, thereby preventing them from meeting the participant research criteria identified for this study.

Educational background. The participants had varied educational backgrounds with degrees ranging from associate's degrees through master's degrees. Some

participants held more than one college degree and other participants were pursuing a second degree at the time of this research study. The majority of the research participants (15 out of 20) held a minimum of a bachelor's degree; five of the participants held associate's degrees, nine held bachelor's degrees and six held master's degrees. The participants majored in several different areas, primarily in nursing and healthcare related fields such as healthcare administration or science. Four participants had more than one major or more than one degree. Major areas of concentration included biological sciences or biology (two participants), business administration (one participant), communications (one participant), family nurse practitioner (one participant), healthcare administration (three participants), journalism (one participant), microbiology (one participant), nursing (13 participants), and public administration (one participant).

Job types. Many of the participants, 13, held clinical positions involving direct patient care (e.g., staff nurse, charge nurse, nurse manager, nurse practitioner), which may have affected the outcome of the study. The remaining seven participants held administrative positions in the healthcare industry (e.g., director of physician clinics, health information specialist, clinic manager, clinical informatics analyst, executive director, director of operations, and communications consultant) or academic positions (e.g., assistant professor).

Work experience. The participants had varying levels of work experience. Some participants worked in their positions for less than a year; others had more than 9 years of experience on the job. Seven of the participants had less than 1 year of experience in their current jobs, eight of the participants had been employed at their current organization for

2 to 4 years, and five of the participants had been employed in their current roles for more than 5 years.

Two participants had more than one job at the time of the interviews. The researcher asked those participants to clarify to which position they were referring when responding to each interview question. The researcher instructed all participants not to restrict their responses to the interview questions to their current positions and that they could respond with regard to a previous position if desired. The researcher asked participants to specify if they were referring to a previous position when responding to the interview questions.

Individual Participant Profiles

The individual profiles that follow provide some background information on the participants and their perspectives on work motivation. As previously indicated, the researcher disguised all names and sufficiently generalized the profiles to protect the identities of the participants. Furthermore, none of the pseudonyms utilized in this study represent names of any of the other participants.

"Amanda." "Amanda" was a registered nurse employed at a large not-for-profit health system. "Amanda" held an associate's degree and was pursuing a bachelor's of science in nursing. Her primary job function was caring for patients and monitoring their progress. She did not have any supervisory responsibility but she was responsible for managing a very complex process and training other individuals on her unit. "Amanda" described herself as a social, people person whose family influenced her to pursue a career in healthcare. She indicated that her primary reason for working was that she

enjoyed people. “Amanda” stated that she enjoyed caring for patients and “doing something good.” “Amanda” enjoyed working in a team environment where everyone worked well together and she stated that her relationships with her peers made her work enjoyable. “Amanda’s” boss also motivated her to keep pushing herself to do more. “Amanda” indicated that she previously worked in an environment where everything was rushed and everyone just concentrated on his or her own things and nobody was willing to help others out. She found it frustrating in that environment because she could not get other people to support her.

“Amber.” “Amber” was a registered nurse with two bachelor’s degrees. She worked as a nurse at a large, not-for-profit healthcare facility. Her primary responsibilities were patient care and supervising other individuals on her unit. She stated that she enjoyed helping patients and taking care of them. She also indicated that developing good friendships with her teammates and having a flexible schedule were important to her. “Amber” stated that wanting to be the very best at her job and helping people by giving them a good experience motivated her. She said money could also serve as a motivator, although it was not her primary motivator. “Amber” found it discouraging when she had to work with other nurses who had negative attitudes, were lazy, and did not want to help the team. She was also frustrated when there was a lack of communication on the unit.

“Ashley.” “Ashley” was a registered nurse with an associate’s degree. She was pursuing her bachelor’s degree. “Ashley” worked as a nurse at a not-for-profit healthcare facility and her primary job responsibilities included patient care, nursing assessments,

and patient interventions. She also had supervisory responsibilities. “Ashley’s” family had a background in healthcare and she decided to pursue a nursing career because it provided her with the flexibility she desired and the ability to help provide for her family. “Ashley” described herself as an “adrenaline person” who was energized by fast paced, challenging work and helping provide patients with the best care. She enjoyed helping others but became frustrated when others did not do the same for her and did not finish their work. “Ashley” enjoyed working with her peers if they helped each other but felt irritated if they did not help each other. She liked learning new things and enjoyed the challenge of her job but she disliked working in an environment with all women due to the cattiness and gossip associated with it.

“Brandon.” “Brandon” worked as a director for a large, not-for-profit health system. He held two master’s degrees. “Brandon” had supervisory responsibilities over clinical and nonclinical professionals although he did not have a clinical background. “Brandon” indicated that he was motivated by a desire to help others and make a difference. “Brandon” was most motivated by challenging projects, learning from experts, and being recognized. “Brandon” disliked inefficient decision-making processes and performing unnecessary tasks (busywork). He appreciated recognition for his contributions and cited it as his primary motivator. “Brandon” attributed his desire for recognition to a desire for the organization’s leaders to show that they were taking a vested interest in his future.

“Christina.” “Christina” was a clinician with a master’s degree who worked at two distinct organizations. She worked in a clinical setting at a for-profit organization and

she worked in a nonclinical setting at a large, not-for-profit organization. “Christina” had supervisory responsibility in her clinical role. “Christina” indicated that she enjoyed making a positive contribution and stated that she was most energized when “everyone’s excited to be there, when [her] coworkers are in a good mood and [she was] busy, but not overwhelmed.” She appreciated recognition from her patients and employer, and felt good about her work when she received a raise because she was doing good work. “Christina” described herself as a self-motivated individual who enjoyed interacting with people, making a difference, and seeing the results of her work. She disliked busywork, negativity, and inflexible schedules. “Christina” attributed her desire for praise and recognition to her upbringing, stating that her parents recognized and praised her for doing well as a child so she grew up wanting praise and recognition. Her ideal job would be a job that makes sense financially and is intellectually stimulating and flexible.

“David.” “David” was a director for a large not-for-profit health system. He held a master’s degree and had supervisory responsibilities. “David” indicated that he was motivated by the desire to lead others and motivate them. He felt it was his calling. Challenging tasks and process improvement initiatives also motivated him because he was able to use analytical skills to accomplish a project. “David” disliked dealing with drama and nonproductive activities. Interacting with colleagues who “don’t get it” also frustrated him. He appreciated the opportunity to effect change and inspire staff members and he stated that he did not need words of affirmation as a reward. He valued getting feedback, receiving fair compensation, and work-life balance. “David” attributed his motivation to help others to his upbringing and his faith.

"Elizabeth." "Elizabeth" was a registered nurse employed at a large, not-for-profit healthcare facility. She held an associate's degree in nursing and was serving in a clinical role with no supervisory authority. "Elizabeth's" primary job responsibilities included direct patient care and supervision of a complex process involving technology. She described herself as a positive, motivated, driven person who enjoyed working in a friendly, open environment doing something that had meaning. She stated that her primary reason for working was to feel like she accomplished something and that she was making a difference. She further indicated that she needed to be appreciated to feel good. Working in a positive, social environment; having fun; and doing something that mattered motivated "Elizabeth." "Elizabeth" also enjoyed learning something new every day, putting her knowledge to use, being in control of something, and being the "go-to person" because it gave her a sense of accomplishment. "Elizabeth" liked working with her peers because they provided the added push to want to go to work, but she disliked working with so many women because there was a lot of complaining and whining. She stated that she did not want to be around grumpy people with negative attitudes.

"Heather." "Heather" was a registered nurse with an associate's degree who worked in a clinical setting at a healthcare facility. Her primary responsibilities were patient care and supervising other individuals on her unit. She described herself as someone who enjoyed helping everyone and volunteering and stated that helping others gave her a feeling of self worth. She indicated that she was motivated by her patients and the appreciation that she receives from them and their family members, especially when she knew that she had made a difference in their lives. She enjoyed working in an environment where individuals were friendly, team players who helped each other out.

Older nurses who complained about having to work, belittled her, and who were not willing to help new employees frustrated "Heather." She stated that her team was the best and she valued the support and encouragement she received from her fellow colleagues and her supervisor.

"Jennifer." "Jennifer" held a bachelor's degree and worked as a registered nurse at a not-for-profit hospital and a for-profit healthcare organization. Her primary responsibilities were patient care and patient assessments. She did not have any supervisory responsibility. Her primary reason for working was out of monetary necessity but she stated that she always wanted to be a nurse and that she loved taking care of patients and being a patient advocate. Being part of a team and knowing that she had helped people motivated her and gave her a sense of self-worth. "Jennifer" found it aggravating when the managers did not get along and failed to work as a team and she said that it made her dread going to work because the lack of communication was aggravating. "Jennifer's" peers directly influenced how she felt about her work. She said making people feel better and helping people fulfilled her dream. However, "Jennifer" did not enjoy working with difficult patients or having conflicts with coworkers.

"Jessica." "Jessica" held a bachelor's degree and worked in a nonclinical, analytical position at a midsize for-profit healthcare organization. She did not have any supervisory authority but she conducted training for other members of her organization and she oversaw various process improvement initiatives. She had previous experience working in public health and had served as an organizational consultant. She indicated that she enjoyed working for an organization that was flexible and open to change and

new ideas for improving workflows because she knew she would not just be in a "static position" where she just did what she was told. "Jessica" wanted to work for a company where what the company actually did motivated her, so that is what made her decide to work for her organization. "Jessica" indicated that she was a change agent who was bored by the routine and wanted to keep "progressing towards something new, something better . . . something more innovative." "Jessica" stated that she was motivated by the desire to be a good employee and by achieving a sense of accomplishment. In her mind, the work in itself was the reward. "Jessica" also indicated that the potential for advancement opportunities motivated her.

"Kayla." "Kayla" was a registered nurse employed on a specialty unit at a large not-for-profit hospital. She held a bachelor's degree in nursing. Her job responsibilities included patient care and assessments and she had supervisory responsibility. "Kayla" indicated that money and helping others were her primary reasons for working. She stated that doing good for others was her primary motivator, and she enjoyed working with complex patient cases because it required critical thinking. "Kayla" was frustrated by a lack of leadership support and employees who were only worried about themselves and did not help others. She also indicated that working with energetic individuals made all of the difference in the world in how she felt about her job. Achieving work-life balance was also important to "Kayla."

"Lauren." "Lauren" was a registered nurse employed on a specialty unit at a large not-for-profit healthcare facility. She held a bachelor's degree. Her job responsibilities consisted of patient assessment and care in addition to supervisory

responsibilities at times. “Lauren” stated that she enjoyed socializing and taking care of people. She indicated that her primary reasons for working were for self-fulfillment and to see the difference she made in others’ lives. “Lauren” enjoyed going to work and looked forward to seeing her coworkers, patients, and the patients’ family members because she was attached to them. “Lauren” felt that her peers had a positive influence on her and served as motivators for her because they were helpful and she could ask them questions. She enjoyed working in an environment that allowed her to exercise autonomy and make decisions, and she felt energized during critical or emergent situations because she was the patients’ lifeline. “Lauren” disliked jumping through “hoops” for processes that she felt were unnecessary and that did not add value.

“Lisa.” “Lisa” held a bachelor’s degree and was a registered nurse employed in a nonclinical role at a not-for-profit healthcare facility. “Lisa’s” job responsibilities varied and included large-scale projects involving complex decision-making and interdepartmental communication. She did not have any supervisory responsibility but her job involved coordination and communication with employees throughout the healthcare facility. She enjoyed working for a goal-oriented, visionary individual who took a personal interest in employees and was very accepting and open to new ideas. She previously worked in a clinical role but she got “burnt out” and wanted more flexibility and regular hours so that she could spend more time with her family. “Lisa” enjoyed being part of something that improved patient care. However, “Lisa” also found her work stressful because there was a lot of change. She liked to complete tasks each day but it was difficult due to the nature of her project-based position. “Lisa” valued continued growth opportunities and she loved making a difference. Project implementation and staff

interaction motivated “Lisa”. “Lisa” stated that she found it “refreshing” and “rewarding” to see something she was a part of become successful. Competing priorities and her previous boss’s lack of understanding about what certain projects involved frustrated her. “Lisa” disliked rework and inefficient processes and thrived on feedback and approval from others. “Lisa” also valued continuing education opportunities, effective communication, and team decision making.

“Megan.” “Megan” was a registered nurse with a bachelor’s degree. She was employed on a specialty unit at a larger not-for-profit healthcare facility, where her primary job responsibilities were patient care and the interdisciplinary interaction required to coordinate the plan of care for patients. She had no supervisory responsibilities. “Megan” went into the nursing field because she enjoyed helping people and making patients smile. She was proud to work at her organization because of its great reputation and its community involvement. She also enjoyed working at her facility because it was a fast-paced environment and organizational leaders were not afraid of change. “Megan” indicated that her primary reasons for working were money and satisfaction. “Megan” found satisfaction in seeing patients progress and getting results. She was frustrated by people who did not do their jobs, and nonresponsive physicians. Receiving recognition and praise from patients made “Megan” want to go to work. “Megan” also thrived on challenging work that kept her stimulated and allowed her to use her knowledge base.

“Melissa.” “Melissa” was a registered nurse employed on a specialty unit at a large not-for-profit hospital. She had a bachelor’s degree. Her primary job responsibilities

including patient care, charting, and training other nurses. She also had supervisory responsibility. Her primary reason for working was partially financial in nature; however, she stated that her desire to work was more about personal satisfaction than money. "Melissa" was most motivated by the desire to help others—patients and other employees alike. She valued a supportive work environment and teamwork. Inefficient scheduling of patients and staff frustrated her because it affected the nurses' ability to provide the necessary care to patients. "Melissa" cited patient satisfaction as her primary motivator because she liked the way it made her feel.

"Michael." Due to his family's involvement in healthcare, "Michael" grew up envisioning a career on the clinical side of healthcare but ultimately found his calling in healthcare administration. Family influenced him to pursue a career on the business side of medicine because employers did not compensate physicians adequately any longer. A "drive to want to actually fix the broken [healthcare] system" influenced him. "Michael" held a bachelor's degree and served in an administrative role at a large not-for-profit healthcare facility. "Michael" had direct supervisory responsibility for clinical and nonclinical employees and he was responsible for a variety of functions including business development, operations management, budgeting, and strategic planning. Driven by the desire to make a difference, to make healthcare better, and to make the biggest positive changes he could, "Michael" indicated that most days he felt engaged and excited to be at work. "Michael" stated that his scope of responsibility is his primary motivator. He enjoyed having autonomy, receiving organizational support, and seeing his ideas "come to life." He also liked knowing that C-level executives recognized his value. "Michael" indicated that he detested bureaucracy and inefficient processes that were

designed for ineffective people more than anything else. He also stated that he would not work for an organization if not provided with the necessary tools to perform his job functions.

"Nicole." "Nicole" held a master's degree and worked in a nonclinical, administrative role at a large not-for-profit healthcare organization. Her primary job responsibilities included coordinating with individuals in the organization and community to promote increased collaboration and to ensure that people used resources wisely. "Nicole" did not have any supervisory responsibility. However, she had responsibility for leading and managing several different initiatives for the health system. "Nicole" grew up wanting to make a difference and be involved in "things bigger than [herself]." She stated that she could not imagine not working. "Nicole" liked having a sense of responsibility and accomplishing things. She also enjoyed being part of a team that was open to new ideas and in which she felt valued. "Nicole" indicated that she previously worked too many long hours at an organization that did not give back to her. After working there, she learned the importance of valuing herself. Working with people and doing meaningful work to achieve positive outcomes within the community motivated "Nicole." "Nicole" also stated that all types of feedback motivated her. "Nicole" disliked corporate politics, disorganization, working with negative people who will never change, having no control over things, and feeling powerless. "Nicole" valued camaraderie, having the freedom and independence to do her work and effect change, and having the trust of her team and supervisor.

"Rachel." "Rachel" was serving in an administrative role at a not-for-profit healthcare organization where she had direct and indirect supervisory authority. She held a graduate degree and had a background in healthcare administration. Prior to accepting the job at her current employer, "Rachel" had worked at another healthcare organization. She left her previous employer because she felt she had found herself "at a dead end" and she felt stuck in a "monotonous routine." She indicated that she wanted to use her knowledge and education to accomplish something and she was looking for advancement opportunities that did not exist within the organization. "Rachel" described herself as an "outside-the-box thinker" who was a "big picture kind of person." She detested "busywork" and thrived on challenge. She valued accomplishment and appreciated opportunities for growth. Accomplishing things and making a difference motivated "Rachel." She valued communication and she liked recognition and acknowledgement from employees, peers, and superiors, although she stated that the job itself should be the motivator.

"Rebecca." "Rebecca" held a master's degree and worked as a registered nurse on a specialty unit at a large not-for-profit healthcare facility. Her primary job responsibilities were patient care and assessment. She did not have any supervisory responsibility. She previously worked at another organization where she felt like she hit a brick wall so she opted to go to work for a different organization that had a mission and values that supported process changes and where management was open to change. She stated that she liked being part of a team and she felt that it was vital to work in a supportive environment where people "have each other's backs." Providing quality care, being involved with committees, teaching others and supporting them, and helping to

change processes requiring change, growth opportunities, and making a positive contribution all served as motivators for "Rebecca." A lack of managerial support, staffing issues, poor communication, and poor decision-making frustrated her.

Other Data Sources Accessed

In addition to utilizing the interview transcripts for data analysis, the researcher also made observations during the interview process to document areas of possible interest. The researcher also kept a reflective journal with memos, diagrams, and discussion points from field notes to reflect on the research process and emerging theories and patterns. Throughout the research process, the researcher frequently reviewed the memos and field notes to stimulate thought about the emerging theory.

Excluded Data Sources

Upon receipt of the initial Call for Research Participants, 40 individuals contacted the researcher to volunteer for participation in the study. As previously indicated, five of these individuals resided in geographic areas outside the scope of the study and/or the researcher personally knew them. The researcher excluded them from participation in the study as a result. Five other individuals who lived in the geographic region and volunteered for the study were disqualified from participation in the study after the researcher conducted the preliminary telephone screening interviews and determined that they did not fit the knowledge worker criteria as defined in this study. There were also 10 individuals who volunteered to participate in the study and met the qualifying criteria but the researcher did not include them in the study because she had obtained a sufficient number of participants. The researcher asked these individuals if she could keep their

contact information on file in the event that she needed additional participants to reach theoretical saturation. All of the qualified individuals agreed to remain available if the researcher needed additional participants.

At the conclusion of the preliminary telephone screening interviews, the researcher had more than enough volunteers who fit the participation criteria for the study. As indicated in Chapter 3, the researcher sought to maximize the heterogeneity of the sample by attempting to balance the initial participant pool on such factors as sex, specific age, education level, years of knowledge work experience, work roles, and employers, to provide a range and breadth of data (Weiss, 1994, p. 24). The majority of the individuals who responded to the initial Call for Research Participants were female nurses. Therefore, in an effort to balance the participant demographics, the researcher limited the number of female nurses selected for participation in the study and endeavored to conduct face-to-face interviews with all male volunteers (clinical or nonclinical) who qualified for participation in the study and all nonclinical volunteers (male or female) who qualified for participation in the study. In addition, the researcher selected volunteers from the participant pool with varying ages, levels of work experience, and educational backgrounds. Due to some scheduling conflicts and time constraints, the researcher was not able to interview all male participants who qualified for participation in the study. However, the researcher was able to achieve a good balance of participants from clinical and nonclinical roles with varying levels of work experience and different educational backgrounds.

Research Methodology Applied to Data Analysis

This section of the chapter provides a summary of the research phases, including the data collection process, the coding process and its evolution, the data analysis process, and challenges encountered during the data collection and analysis.

Summary of Research Phases

This section summarizes the research phases in this study and reflects on how the study evolved and the resultant grounded theory emerged. This section begins with a brief summary of the data collection process, followed by an in-depth discussion of the coding process and its evolution. This section concludes with a discussion regarding how the researcher employed the constant comparative method (Charmaz, 2006, p. 54; Glaser & Strauss, 1967/1999/2008; Robson, 2002, p. 193; Strauss, 1987), to analyze the data and inform theory.

The data collection process. The data collection process consisted of a series of interviews. The researcher conducted preliminary telephone screening interviews with prospective participants to determine if they qualified for participation in the study. The researcher then contacted individuals who qualified for participation in the study to schedule a two-phase face-to-face interview with the researcher.

The researcher conducted face-to-face interviews with participants during a 5-month time period from February 2011 through June 2011. Consistent with the constant comparative method (Charmaz, 2006, p. 54; Glaser & Strauss, 1967/1999/2008; Robson, 2002, p. 193; Strauss, 1987), data analysis began when the data collection commenced and, as previously indicated, the researcher wrote memos and kept reflective logs

throughout the course of the study. The researcher held the face-to-face interviews in locations that were convenient for the participants and conducive to conducting interviews.

During the first phase of the face-to-face interview, the researcher utilized the Interview Protocol (Appendix B) to ask the participants questions. At the conclusion of the first phase of the interviews, the researcher asked the participants follow-up questions regarding any themes that emerged during the interviews. The researcher tailored the questions in the second phase of the face-to-face interviews to each participant by following up on concepts or themes that related to their earlier responses to questions contained in the Interview Protocol. For example, if a participant mentioned important concepts such as stress at work or the work environment during the first phase of the face-to-face interview, the researcher would follow up on those concepts during the second phase of the interview to gain additional insight into the participant's lived experiences and the implicit meanings of these concepts for the participant and how they affected the participant and the participant's work motivation.

After conducting the first several face-to-face interviews, the researcher gained a greater comfort level with the interview process and began to see important concepts and themes emerging in the data. At this point, the researcher realized that she would need to ask participants additional follow-up questions to continue to explore concepts that arose during the first phase of the interview process or in interviews with previous participants, as appropriate. The researcher, therefore, took copious notes during the interview process to capture key concepts for follow up questioning. At the conclusion of the first phase of the face-to-face interviews, the researcher asked participants questions about specific

codes or themes that emerged during the course of the interview or interviews with previous participants, which is consistent with the constant comparative method utilized in grounded theory research (Charmaz, 2006). This allowed the researcher to obtain more in-depth responses to questions related to key codes or themes that emerged in the study and provided research participants with the opportunity to reflect on their work motivation experiences as well as the researcher's interpretation of the data. After transcribing the interviews, the researcher contacted the research participants to obtain their written approval of the transcripts and to ensure that the researcher had adequately captured the essence of their experiences.

The coding process and its evolution. As outlined in Chapter 3, the initial coding process began with line-by-line coding (Charmaz, 2006). During this phase of the research, the researcher named each line of written data. This process was very time consuming and, at times, the researcher struggled with identifying meaningful initial codes due to the researcher's lack of coding experience and the placement of line breaks. However, as the coding process progressed, the researcher became more adept at identifying meaningful initial codes that guided the researcher as the data analysis process evolved. This process helped the researcher to identify the research participants' implicit concerns as well as explicit statements and helped her to refocus later interviews (Charmaz, 2006, p. 50).

The researcher used a flexible coding strategy that allowed her to build the analysis from the ground up (Charmaz, 2006, p. 51). The researcher did not restrict the codes to a predetermined list of codes but rather assigned codes based on the information contained in the data. This provided the researcher with information for additional lines

of inquiry and, as the study evolved, the researcher refined the questions asked of participants to expand further on certain topics (e.g., busywork). When the researcher asked the first research participant, "Rachel," to describe a time when she put in very little effort at work and when she did not work so hard, "Rachel" mentioned the concept of busywork and discussed her dislike for busywork.

> I would say it was when I get bored with . . . .I don't do busywork well. In my previous position it would be, the answer to this, would be just toward the end, I would go in around seven o'clock and work really hard and then I'd have most of my work done so I would do whatever I could to pass time for a couple hours [un]til, you know, more things came along. I don't have that problem now, of course. But now it would be just on the day when I've got a lot of busywork waiting on me and I know I have meetings all day tomorrow and I should be doing the busywork on my desk but I honestly would love just to have someone to say, "Could you file these me for me? Could you sign these forms? Could you [pause], you know?," but I don't have a secretary. It's not that way in a small organization. So, anyway I think those are the times when I probably put in the least effort.

When the researcher asked "Rachel" to define busywork further, "Rachel" mentioned monotonous tasks such as filing things and signing invoices. Other participants mentioned similar feelings when discussing busywork. For example, when the researcher asked "Kayla" how she felt about doing busywork, "Kayla" replied, "I feel I'm busy enough [that] I don't need to be doing things that aren't necessary." Because this concept continued to emerge with other participants, the researcher identified "detesting busywork" as an initial code and followed up with participants who mentioned similar concepts to determine if the code should be elevated to a focused code.

After establishing some strong analytic directions through the initial line-by-line coding, the researcher conducted focused coding to synthesize and explain larger segments of data (Charmaz, 2006, p. 57). In this phase of the research, the researcher

used the codes most significant to and/or most frequently mentioned by many of the participants to analyze the data further. The researcher then reviewed the initial codes to determine which codes made the most analytic sense to categorize data incisively (Charmaz, 2006, p. 57). The researcher grouped like codes together as the analysis progressed to move the analysis to a higher level of synthesis. For example, acknowledgement, praise, and recognition had similar themes and meaning to the participants. Thus, the researcher grouped these codes together for analysis.

After reviewing the initial line-by-line coding from earlier respondents, the researcher began to explore some of the initial codes with subsequent research participants. This allowed the researcher to move across interviews and observations to compare participants' experiences, actions, and interpretations (Charmaz, 2006, p. 59). This process revealed new threads for analysis. The researcher compared the data to the focused codes, began to refine the codes, and developed initial categories.

The final phase of the coding process was theoretical coding. During the theoretical coding phase, the researcher compared codes to other codes and began to make connections between codes at a more abstract level. These theoretical codes, as further discussed in the theoretical coding section below, specified possible relationships between categories and added precision and clarity to the developing analysis (Charmaz, 2006, p. 63).

Data analysis and the constant comparative method. As described in Chapter 3, the researcher utilized the constant comparative method (Charmaz, 2006, p. 54; Glaser & Strauss, 1967/1999/2008; Robson, 2002, p. 193; Strauss, 1987) throughout the research process to ensure that the data analysis was consistent with the research participants'

work motivation experiences. The researcher also employed the use of memos and diagrams to move beyond the microlevel of analysis to examine larger social conditions and consequences (Charmaz, 2006, p. 118) related to work motivation. By sorting and integrating memos, the researcher was able to illuminate the relationships between codes and think through connections among categories that might not have emerged otherwise (Charmaz, 2006, p. 121). The movement back and forth between data collection and analysis allowed the researcher to raise the conceptual level of the categories by expanding on major concepts identified in the initial data analysis (Charmaz, 2006, p. 119).

The researcher followed the grounded theory research protocol outlined in Chapter 3 with one minor variation. Due to the distance between the majority of the research participants and the researcher, the researcher opted to conduct the Phase 2 and Phase 3 interviews with the participants on the same day for logistical purposes. The researcher followed the Interview Protocol (Appendix B) for the Phase 2 interviews and then proceeded to ask the research participants subsequent interview questions regarding emerging concepts and themes. The researcher provided research participants with the opportunity to take a break between the Phase 2 and Phase 3 interviews to allow them time to reflect on the questions from the Phase 2 interview. The minor modification in the research protocol provided the researcher with the opportunity to conduct all of the Phase 3 interviews with the participants as face-to-face interviews, which may not have been possible otherwise. In addition, it gave the participants the opportunity to further expand on discussions that occurred during the Phase 2 interviews, while their responses to the questions contained in the Interview Protocol were still fresh in their minds. It also

provided the researcher with a better understanding of the participants' individual work motivation experiences prior to conducting the Phase 2 interviews with subsequent participants. This allowed the researcher to reflect more closely on the meanings of the participants' words and provided her with the ability to analyze more carefully the subsequent participants' responses to the questions contained in the Interview Protocol.

Challenges Arising During Data Collection or Analysis

There were no significant problems during the data collection or analysis process. However, the researcher did encounter a few minor issues with regard to the data collection and data analysis processes.

When the researcher initially designed the study, she intended to utilize snowball sampling (Bertaux, 1981; Seidman, 2006; Weiss, 1994) to recruit participants. Because the researcher lives in a region that is in close proximity to three major metropolitan areas, she felt it would be easy to obtain volunteer participants within close proximity to her home. She, therefore, designed the study to include face-to-face interviews with participants. Upon learning that the school no longer viewed snowball sampling as an acceptable approach for participant recruitment, due to research ethics concerns regarding anonymity, the researcher modified her study design to include maximum variation, criterion sampling without giving thought to how the new recruitment strategy would affect the participation pool. The researcher's modified recruitment strategy yielded participants from five states, which made conducting face-to-face interviews more challenging due to the distance between the participants and the researcher. Nevertheless, although the geographic diversity made scheduling interviews more challenging, the

researcher was able to conduct face-to-face interviews with all of the participants, as promised in the research protocol.

In addition to the aforementioned issue regarding the diverse geographic locations of the research participants, the researcher also experienced some issues with the quality of the audiorecordings, as some of the interview locations were less conducive to recording conversations than others. The researcher utilized two digital recording devices to aid in the recording process, and voice recognition software was also used to aid in the transcription process, as outlined in Chapter 3. This facilitated proper recording of participants' responses and minimized the issues associated with noise interference at public locations.

The final issue encountered during the data collection and data analysis process was a result of the researcher's inexperience with conducting grounded theory research studies. As previously mentioned in this chapter, the researcher had no prior experience conducting grounded theory research, which complicated the data analysis process. However, the researcher became more comfortable with the data analysis process as the study progressed.

Presentation of Data and Results of Analysis

In this section, the researcher presents the data and the results of the analysis, while providing insight into how the data analysis evolved through the use of the constant comparative method (Charmaz, 2006, p. 54; Glaser & Strauss, 1967/1999/2008; Robson, 2002, p. 193; Strauss, 1987). This section commences with a detailing of common responses, key themes, and categories. The section provides descriptions of the initial codes, focused codes, and theoretical codes including supporting information from the

data that informed the developing grounded theory. The section concludes with a set of propositions and a grounded theory described in light of the original research question and subquestions, and a summary and synthesis of the study's findings which suggest that Generation Y knowledge workers are primarily motivated by intrinsic factors such as the desire to make a difference and meaningful work.

Detailing of Common Responses, Key Themes, and Categories

As a novice to conducting grounded theory research, the researcher chose to utilize a constructivist approach (Charmaz, 2006) to grounded theory, which provided the researcher with more flexibility in coding and analyzing the data. This section presents a detailing of common responses, key themes, and categories. In general, the researcher chose to focus on codes and themes that reflected the views and/or experiences of multiple participants. In each of the coding sections below, the researcher discusses the results of the coding and provides examples of the participants' words and descriptions of the concepts presented to illustrate the participants' experiences.

Initial coding. During the initial coding process, the researcher employed line-by-line coding to facilitate a more in-depth analysis of the data and to identify codes that may not have been readily apparent in a general thematic analysis (Charmaz, 2006, p. 50). The use of line-by-line coding required the researcher to assign a code to each line of the participants' interview transcripts. The researcher conducted line-by-line coding by assigning a code to each line on the printed transcripts from each interview.

During the line-by-line coding process, the researcher assigned codes that were "provisional, comparative, and grounded in the data" (Charmaz, 2006, pp. 48-49).

Whenever possible, the researcher assigned initial codes that reflected the action of the transcript line (e.g., feeling energized, detesting bureaucracy, thriving on challenge) and crystallized the experiences of the research participants, as recommended by Charmaz (2006). This prevented the researcher from prematurely assigning categories to the data. The initial codes directed subsequent data gathering initiatives and provided the basis for the developing grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006, p. 48).

Although the initial coding process was challenging and extremely time consuming, it provided the researcher with the opportunity to reflect more closely on the meaning of the participants' words, provided additional insight into the participants' work motivation experiences, and helped guide subsequent data collection activities.

At the conclusion of each face-to-face interview, the researcher transcribed the interview data verbatim and carefully reviewed the interview transcript to ensure accuracy. She then conducted the initial line-by-line coding process, as outlined above. After assigning an action code to each line of the transcript, the researcher reviewed the initial codes identified and compared them to other codes in the same transcript and in other transcripts. The researcher then documented the most salient themes—the most commonly occurring themes and/or the themes most directly impacting the participants' work motivation experiences—from the interviews in field notes and memos (Charmaz, 2006) to capture the essence of the research participants' work motivation experiences. When reviewing the themes to determine which themes were the most salient, the researcher also evaluated the emotions evoked by the participants when discussing certain topics (e.g., how passionately the participants felt about certain issues).

In total, the researcher identified more than 250 initial codes (Appendix C). As previously indicated, these codes were "provisional, comparative, and grounded in the data" (Charmaz, 2006, pp. 48-49) and they reflected the actions described by the research participants. Some initial codes reflected the sentiments of the participants (e.g., feeling frustrated) and others reflected the participants' actions (e.g., making a contribution). Initial codes included, but were not limited to, the codes listed in Appendix C. Although the list of initial codes contained in Appendix C is not all-inclusive, the codes listed represent the most common participant responses and recurring themes.

After reviewing the initial codes assigned in each participant's interview transcript and comparing them to the initial codes from other participants, the researcher narrowed the list of initial codes down to 28 focused codes that reflected the most salient themes from the data. The focused coding section provides a more detailed analysis of the initial codes that evolved into focused codes.

Focused coding. During the second phase of the data analysis process the researcher utilized focused coding. In this step of the analysis, the researcher assigned codes that were more directed, selective, and conceptual than the line-by-line codes (Charmaz, 2006, p. 57; Glaser, 1978) established in the initial coding phase. By utilizing the most significant and/or frequent earlier codes, the researcher sifted through large amounts of data to assign focused codes (Charmaz, 2006, p. 57). The researcher used focused codes to synthesize and explain larger segments of the data (Charmaz, 2006, p. 57).

Upon completion of the initial coding process, the researcher carefully reviewed all transcripts again and evaluated the initial codes to determine which codes were the

most significant and/or most frequent codes represented in the data (Charmaz, 2006, pp. 57-59). During this process, the researcher also combined like codes with each other to condense data and develop a more manageable subset of codes. Then the researcher compared data to the focused codes to refine them to develop categories (Charmaz, 2006, p. 60). The following categories represent the most commonly recurring themes from the data, with the themes most significantly impacting the participants' work motivation experiences listed first.

Making a difference, helping people, and/or making a contribution. Making a difference was the most common theme discussed by participants. All 20 participants mentioned the desire to make a difference, help others, or make a positive contribution and some cited making a difference as their primary reason for working. When the researcher asked "Michael" about his primary reason for working, "Michael" replied, "making a difference; making a change. My primary reason is trying to make it better, actually seeing those positive changes being made. That's why I work." Another participant, "Amber," discussed what motivated her at work, "I think wanting to be perfect at what I do motivates me. I want to help people. I want to give them a good experience. . . . I want people to look at me and say she is a good nurse." "Nicole" also discussed the importance of making a difference by stating,

> I just wanted to make a difference. My dad works in public service, so I definitely was inspired by him, but I think I was just taught to look at things that are bigger than myself in a bigger picture; so that made a difference to me rather than just thinking about working [un]til I get my social security statement. . . . I don't want to push widgets. I want to do something that is fun and *really makes a difference* [emphasis added] so . . . . I want to know the strategy. I want to know everything that we do in a big picture before I need to get my pieces of the pie and work on that . . . . It just makes you feel more valued and it makes you feel like, it makes you see your contribution in the bigger picture of that team. ("Nicole")

Participants who were able to make a difference and help others were more likely to feel a sense of accomplishment than participants who did not feel that they had made a significant contribution to the organization's goals or to the community at large. When participants talked about their most memorable moments and their most positive work experiences, they commonly recounted stories of helping others and making positive contributions to the organization's goals. This was especially true when their peers, their superiors, the patients, and/or the patients' families recognized the research participants for their efforts. "Megan" described her most amazing day ever at work by stating,

> One could be a patient had been in the hospital for days, weeks, and we finally got things wrapped up and they were finally able to go home. We were able to get their infections cleared up and we were able to get them rehabbed and walking again and feeling better and, you know, after being in the hospital for so many weeks and being able to be discharged back home with help, it's very rewarding to see from the time they came in and how their time at the hospital has progressed and how the patient has progressed forward and not deteriorated since they've been in the hospital and being able to go home and not to a nursing home with a family's help and at-home nurses and therapists to help continue with that rehab process. That was one very rewarding experience. ("Megan")

Making a difference and helping people gave participants a sense of accomplishment, which, in turn, motivated them to perform at higher levels.

Sharing knowledge and/or desiring a learning environment. In total, 17 participants discussed the importance of knowledge sharing and/or learning environments and the direct impact knowledge sharing had on their work motivation experiences. "Lisa" discussed the importance of working in a learning environment, "We are going to be participating in a research study which is new for our institution, so that's exciting too. I can see a lot of value in just continuing to grow and expand and learn new things." Another participant, "Nicole" explained that she valued knowledge sharing in the work

environment and it motivated her because it allowed her to develop a better understanding of her role in the bigger picture:

> I will go a mile a minute for you, but I really need to be let in behind the curtain. I want to know the strategy. I want to know everything that we do in a big picture before I need to get my pieces of the pie and work on that. . . . So it just makes you feel more valued and it makes you feel like it makes see your contribution in the bigger picture of that team.

In environments where knowledge was not shared, the participants expressed extreme dissatisfaction with the lack of proper knowledge sharing and indicated that they felt the environment contributed to poor decision making and dissension amongst the workers. In organizations with learning environments in which organizational leaders encouraged knowledge sharing, participants indicated that they thrived in those environments and they felt more motivated to work to achieve the organization's goals.

Being part of a team. Throughout the course of the study, 16 participants mentioned the importance of teamwork in the motivational process. When participants felt that their peers and superiors worked together as a cohesive unit, they felt incentivized to work harder to support their team members. In organizations that fostered a positive team environment, research participants often mentioned the friendships they had formed with their colleagues and they discussed how those friendships helped them cope with work during particularly busy or stressful times. "Rebecca" indicated that her peers and her relationships with them influenced how she felt about her work:

> They're vital. The people I work with like I stated previously either make or break your job really how much you enjoy it as long as you feel like you're part of the team and you can work together and you can you have each other's backs and they'll help you out in a tough situation. They're the people that you depend on when things get rough. They're also the people that you have the conversations with about that how excited that the [patient] got better and went home.

In some instances, participants referenced their team members as family; in other instances, they discussed how their peers made work more enjoyable because they had a strong support network. “Lauren” indicated that she enjoyed going to work and stated, “I look forward to going in and seeing my coworkers [be]cause they’re like my friends.” When asked to discuss how her relationships with her peers influenced how she felt about her work, “Angela” responded by stating,

> So far, I have really good relationships with the other nurses at work and I think it makes it better for your, for a work environment because it makes you enjoy going to work. It makes you not want to let them down. It makes you want to perform your best you can. (“Angela”)

In organizations in which there was a lack of teamwork, participants expressed dissatisfaction with the work environment and indicated that it contributed to higher levels of stress. Often times, the lack of teamwork contributed to negative feelings about the work environment and participants indicated they did not feel as motivated at work, especially when there was a lack of accountability within the team. When discussing the pace of work at her organization, “Nicole” indicated that she had to be cautious not to intimidate her colleagues because she worked at a faster pace than them and she did not want them to feel threatened by her:

> You do 95 things in one day and that’s not their culture. It’s okay that things move slowly. It’s okay that, you know, it takes a couple weeks to do things, and that’s not my style, and so I know they’re just joking about it, but I do have to be sensitive to trying to be too much of a go-getter and, I don’t know, it could seem like I’m trying to show up my team and I’m not. I’m just trying to promote them. (“Nicole”)

Being part of a team had the ability to positively or negatively impact the participants’ work motivation experiences. In instances with supportive team environments, participants were generally more satisfied and more motivated at work.

Feeling valued. Fifteen participants expressed a desire to feel valued by their peers, superiors, patients, and family members. When participants felt valued by their organizational leaders and/or their coworkers, it gave them a sense of self-worth and motivated them. This goes back to the participants' desires to make a difference and help others. When they felt that others valued them and appreciated their efforts, they were willing to go the extra mile at work. "Elizabeth" summed it up by saying,

> I need more in life. I need more. I need to learn. I need to [pauses]—it's tough. It's tough to find the words. [Pause] I don't know if this is the right way to say it, but I need to feel like I matter—like I made a difference—like I made a difference in someone else's life. I helped someone or I taught someone something or I changed. I don't want to say I changed someone's life, because I don't know if I've actually done that and maybe I have, you know. I only see some of the patients for, you know, so many days. Some of them have come back to me and they do remember me and they thank me and that just feels—it feels good. It feels good and I don't know if I—I guess I just I need that. ("Elizabeth")

Another participant, "Megan" described receiving acknowledgement as an event or an experience that stood out in her mind by stating,

> That would be when a patient says thank you. That's *huge*. Those two words from a patient in a bed are, can totally change the outlook of a day. Really they, those two words are huge. They can turn your day from being the most awful, horrific day into the best day when a patient says thank you or just they show your appreciation. They acknowledge all the hard work you've done. Those two words are great. It's a great feeling. ("Megan")

In general, participants felt more motivated if they felt valued. The desire to feel valued directly related to the participants' needs for self-worth and meaning.

Finding meaningful work and/or finding purpose. Fourteen participants referenced the importance of meaningful work and/or finding purpose. As "Nicole" indicated,

> I'm not sure that I underscored one of the most important things to me that's coming to mind, and that really is, like, the whole purpose of work. I think that's

> probably the biggest motivator for me. . . . Number one it's: Who are you working with every day? Are they positive relationships? Are they adding to your life or taking away? But really the close second number two is: You know, are you pushing buttons in a factory or does your work have purpose, meaning, are you making a difference? And that's *really, really* important to me.

When participants felt their work was meaningful, it gave them a sense of purpose and they felt a sense of accomplishment. This sense of purpose served as a motivator for participants. "Jessica" discussed the importance of finding purpose. When asked which factors she thought were the most important in what motivated her in her work, she replied,

> Things that are most important to me, kind of like I said before, was being motivated to the cause, whatever that company's purpose is, it has to, well, I want it to be something that is also important to me, you know, something that I believe in, something I think that people need that makes their life better such as healthcare.

In general, participants wanted to use their skills and talents to contribute to the organization's goals. Participants wanted to be involved with the decision-making process and be a part of the big picture. Most participants expressed a strong desire to do meaningful work that contributed to the bigger picture. This provided the participants with a strong sense of job satisfaction and contributed to their self-worth.

Desiring challenging work. Research participants consistently mentioned challenging work as a motivating force. When discussing the jobs, 13 participants indicated that challenging jobs that allowed them to use their creative problem solving skills were the jobs that satisfied them the most because they felt that they were able to contribute to the greater good and make a difference. When asked why she decided to pursue a career in healthcare, "Rachel" responded that she always found the healthcare industry intriguing. When asked what she anticipated that type of work would be like,

"Rachel" replied, "Very high strung workforce—a lot of responsibility, challenging—I thrive on that type of environment. I get bored otherwise so it was something really appealing to me." As with many of the other focused codes, the desire for challenging work tied into the participants' desire to make an impact.

Accomplishing goals and/or achieving tasks. As previously indicated, accomplishment was an important theme in this study, with 12 of the participants mentioning this theme. When discussing their jobs, several participants mentioned the desire to accomplish goals at work. Often times, they referenced that checking things off their to-do lists made them feel satisfied because they had contributed. When asked about her primary reason for working, "Elizabeth," replied, "To feel like I've accomplished something—to have a goal. I need goals. I need structure; I don't know if that's the right word. I need to be around people." When the researcher asked "David" why achievement was so important to him, he replied,

> That's a good question, and I don't think I have a good answer [laughs]. Honestly, I think, you know, I think in my spirit, you know, just within me, it's just a passion that I have that I have to achieve. I have to succeed. Failure is not an option. ("David")

In general, research participants who felt a strong sense of accomplishment were more motivated at work and expressed greater satisfaction in their jobs.

Accepting accountability. Twelve research participants discussed accountability when asked to speak about their frustrations with work. These participants frequently mentioned that a lack of accountability from their team members contributed to dissatisfaction and conflict. Although accountability did not serve as a motivator for the

research participants, the absence of accountability influenced the participants' overall feelings about their team members and their jobs in general and served as a demotivator.

> I think the most frustrating thing is the coworkers that I work with who aren't as motivated as I am to take care of their patients like I do or to do tasks and get things done. If they just want to sit around and play on the Internet or talk on the phone and not actually get their work done. . . it makes me feel helpless sometimes. It makes me feel discouraged that maybe I should be lazy and then, you know, I won't have to have two [patient type] patients or if I make myself not be a hard worker then I could have the expectations of me lowered. ("Amber")

Other participants also cited a lack of accountability as a major source of frustration at work:

> There are some frustrations. When people don't do their job, that's one of the things that really frustrates me, is that we do have some people that, you know, come to work and sometimes just like to sit around and chat, and I don't think that's what, you know, work is for. So, when people don't do their jobs, that becomes very frustrating at work. It can put me behind in my day. It could take me away from my patients' care. If somebody else isn't doing that job, as the RN I have to step up and do it and I'm fully capable of doing it just as they are. However, you know, if they're in the break room talking on the phone, then you know, that's unacceptable. But, you know, I give them their privacy. I don't know what they're talking about on the phone, so I have to step up and do their job as well as mine and, you know, if it becomes too much of an issue or if it's done on a you know repetitive or daily basis, then you know it's something that will need to be brought up and discussed, you know, with managers, but you know. And I have no problem telling them, you know, "While you were on the phone back there, I had to go do this, this, and this because you were on the phone," you know, just so that they're aware that, you know, I took note that they were on the phone. But that is one thing that frustrates me is when people don't do their job [laughs]. ("Megan")

When asked how being surrounded by coworkers who are not contributing or not working efficiently affected them, participants indicated that it affected their desire to contribute, as evidenced by the following quote:.

> [Laughs] It's so frustrating. It's really frustrating and it affects my work because I just feel like, man, I guess I was just in an HR management class, so I don't know if you're familiar with the term like equity theory that the inputs that you're putting into something you expect like the similar outputs to be put out and if you

> compare similar jobs if [employee name] and [employee name] are putting in similar inputs, they should get similar outputs. When that's not happening and there's no equity there that you're working your buns off and you're putting in all of this time and getting, you know, whatever out of it as far as recognition or outcomes and then this person is just schmutsing around and putting in nothing, but then like still has the title, still has the office, still has the whatever and is wasting time and is get similar like feedback it does tick me off because I just, it's wasting everyone's life [laughs]. ("Nicole")

In some instances, the lack of team member accountability contributed to participants' desires to leave their organizations or departments in search of more cohesive team environments in which other employees readily accepted accountability for their work and contributed by assisting their coworkers during times of need. The researcher asked "Nicole" if the lack of coworker accountability changed how she approached her work. She replied,

> No, because I just, I differentiate myself from that individual. I think, over time, if I would have stayed in that team, yeah, I would probably come in later. I would probably say, "Well, no one's even going to really notice if I do this or not, you know, so I just won't do it," or, you know, another issue within some of the leaders that I've worked with is either complete delegation to their team members or just excuses. Like if you do actually catch them in, you know, an honest feedback conversation of, "Hey, I thought you were going to get that to me," or whatever, they're so afraid to say, "Oh, yeah, I made a mistake," or "Oh, you know, maybe I misunderstood that," it's like, "Well, I gave that to so and so and she just didn't do it" or you know, "Why? Who cares?" It's not emotional! It's just like, hey, let's figure this out, you know again another inefficiency and so it didn't affect my motivation other than to feel like I'm not at the right organization. In that way, I guess in a bigger picture, it did. Again, I'm really committed to the fact that I'm being paid. . . . They've helped me with tuition reimbursement and so I have this contract in myself to give back to that organization that's given to me. So I put up the same amount of effort I believe, but it is—I guess—a demotivator in that, man, if I work at this great place that I think is great and *they're valuing that* [emphasis added], what does that mean? You know, am I even really valued for what I'm bringing which [I] feel is the antithesis of what *that* is and so I guess in that way, yeah, *it is a huge demotivator* [emphasis added]. I don't think it impacts my work, more the attitude, more the relationships that I would want to form. And, yeah, I did start looking for jobs outside which I never thought that I would do because it's like this organization's going to turn into this if this is promoted and permitted. ("Nicole")

Although "Nicole" indicated that the lack of coworker accountability did not affect how she approached her work, she stated that it did affect her attitude. In the end, it also contributed to her desire to leave the organization.

Clearly, coworker accountability played a large role in how participants felt about their organizations. The presence or absence of coworker accountability impacted how participants felt about their organizations and could affect their work motivation, positively or negatively. The lack of coworker accountability was one of the most prevalent frustrations for participants and a recurring theme throughout the research.

Being noticed. Twelve participants expressed a desire to be noticed by their peers, superiors, patients, and/or family members. Being noticed was an important theme because participants who felt that their efforts were recognized and acknowledged were more motivated at work. When the researcher asked "Melissa" how it felt made her feel that others had noticed, she replied,

> It really makes me feel like I've, you know, accomplished something, like I've really, you know, learned a lot. I feel that I've, that I've really learned a lot and that, you know, people seem to respect me. You know, I am one of the younger nurses there and so that, and that makes me feel proud of myself [laughs]. ("Melissa")

Being noticed was a large component of receiving social acceptance and it motivated participants to work harder.

Thinking critically. Throughout the course of the study, 12 research participants mentioned the desire to work in positions that required them to employ critical thinking and analytical skills. They enjoyed being involved in complex projects that contributed to the greater good of the organization. They especially liked being involved with the

planning phases of the process improvement initiatives and seeing them through to fruition. They felt a sense of accomplishment when they saw positive changes occur as a direct result of their involvement in the projects. In addition, they felt stimulated.

Desiring advancement opportunities. Eleven (11) participants described themselves as growth-oriented individuals who sought advancement opportunities. They wanted to continuously improve and advance within their organizations. When participants did not feel that sufficient advancement opportunities existed within their organizations, they indicated they were less motivated. Participants did not want to get stuck in "dead end jobs" that did not allow them to utilize their skills and abilities. Rather, they expressed a desire to work in progressive organizations that recognized their value and provided sufficient advancement opportunities. This directly related to participants' desires for personal growth. Ultimately, participants wanted to continue to improve their skill sets and advance progressively.

Desiring personal growth. Half of the research participants (10) expressed a desire to achieve personal growth. Personal growth came in many forms (e.g., acquisition of new skills, educational pursuit, self-improvement initiatives, promotion, etc.). One participant, "Rachel," discussed being motivated when others acknowledged her for her growth:

> I think acknowledgment does [motivate me] to some extent—for people to realize your worth and that I, you know, you don't want to think that that matters but I think it does to everyone. A pat on the back is not a terrible thing to let—for someone to let you know you've done well and that you they can see your growth.

The desire for personal growth also included a desire for advancement opportunities. The desire for personal growth appeared to relate to the participants' desire

for self-worth. Participants sought growth opportunities that would make them more valuable to their organizations and provide them with sufficient advancement opportunities so they could continuously increase their value to the organization.

Dealing with drama. Numerous participants (10) expressed a disdain for drama in the workplace. When discussing frustrations at work, "David" summed it up by saying,

> Again, the drama frustrates me, the emotions, the cattiness, the gossiping, the pretty much the nonproductive activities, the whining of my colleagues, they feel overwhelmed and woe is me. I mean, it's just, you know, it's somewhat draining. Again, I think things have changed culturally within the director level position and I think when people became directors, you know, years ago it was not the same role as it is now and it's more demanding and I think some people, you know, don't have the aptitude or the ability to multitask or manage multiple projects or multiple tasks, and, and they just, just nag and nag and nag, and complain and it just, it's annoying. And like I said, I think, you know, nothing against other generations, but a lot of it, you know, a lot of these individuals are, you know, older than my mother and it's, it just gets tiresome. ("David")

Dealing with drama was a demotivator for participants, especially when they worked in fast-paced work environments that required collaboration and teamwork. The drama often contributed to higher levels of participant stress and negatively impacted the participants' work motivation experiences because they dreaded going to work in environments that fostered drama rather than teamwork.

Valuing positive organizational culture. The organizational culture played an important role in participants' perceptions of the workplace and their motivational levels. Half of the participants (10) mentioned the value of organizational culture. When the researcher asked "Nicole" to discuss how political barriers, the organizational culture, and the human element affected her work motivation, she replied by stating,

> [Laughs] Call me a socialist or an idealist, whatever, but I feel like a university, a church, an organization, even if it's a for-profit organization, every formation has

> a culture and it is made up of people. It doesn't matter the title. It doesn't matter the contribution, you know dollar-wise or what have you, they're made up of people and if you, you know for-profit organizations arguably they would be motivated more by profits, but still they get along with one another. I know people who work at certain banks, and they just love one another. It's important to like who you work with. You spend a lot of time with them, and it's important as a leader to me, I guess this is another leadership quality that I think is important—is when you're making operational, financial decisions, fine, good. Everybody knows. Sometimes that's difficult. Understand how it impacts people. Communicate openly with people. Trust people to be rationale human beings and give them adult choices or adult information that they can then use to choose whatever they want to choose. I think that's a really important part of it. So, to me, you know culture is really important to encourage people to develop and grow, to have teammates have each other's backs and to just be aware that this is a community and a business. ("Nicole")

In some instances, the organizational culture caused participants to consider other career options. "David" discussed the importance of teamwork and organizational culture by saying,

> I think teamwork is key to, you know, see achieving a task or goal, and I think, you know, what can bring down a team, again, it goes back to the unproductive stuff, the drama, the extra things that don't produce, that won't bring value or chemistry to a team and I think those kind of things that can bring a team down, and like I said, culture is key [be]cause, you know, depending on the culture of the [organization], it may be hard to move forward with a particular project because of the resistance I may face because of what they are used to, that they're not used to change or anything different, bringing change to a culture that's not used to it is going to be hard. ("David")

When participants felt that the organizational culture was one that encouraged knowledge sharing, collaboration, teamwork, and positive change, the participants indicated that they were typically more motivated. If the participants felt that the organizational culture stifled creativity or inhibited change from occurring, they were more likely to become frustrated at work.

Attaining autonomy and/or being in control. Autonomy and control over decision-making were two important themes that emerged during the research process.

However, although nine participants expressed a desire to have autonomy, they also expressed dissatisfaction when their immediate supervisors or the organizational leaders did not provide them with enough direction or guidance. This was particularly true when the participants were new in their roles within their respective departments and/or organizations. When there was a lack of direction provided, participants felt lost and they experienced frustration with the absence of guidance. In general, participants wanted organizational leaders to provide them with the necessary guidance and tools to perform their jobs, but they also wanted the organizational leaders to give them the autonomy to achieve the desired outcomes through the participants' own methods. In other words, participants wanted organizational leaders to provide them with the desired goals and they wanted the authority to choose the path needed to reach those goals.

Dealing with conflict at work. One of the largest sources of dissatisfaction and frustrations for participants was conflict at work. Nine participants mentioned that they did not like dealing with conflict at work and if conflict remained unresolved, it negatively affected their work motivation. Many participants also mentioned malicious or spiteful behavior and conflict between peers and superiors as major sources of frustration in the workforce and such conflict often resulted in the participants' desires to seek alternate employment opportunities.

Detesting busywork. When discussing sources of frustration or discontent in the work environment, at least eight participants mentioned their abhorrence to "busywork" or monotonous tasks that did not challenge them or stimulate their thought processes. When discussing busywork, "Kayla" stated, "I feel I'm busy enough I don't need to be

doing things that aren't [long pause] necessary." Some participants mentioned how the days would drag on when they were in unfulfilling roles that merely required them to conduct busywork. In several instances, participants mentioned that busywork was an ineffective use of their time because it prevented them from addressing other issues that required knowledge management. Busywork served as a demotivator because participants felt that it took them away from more meaningful work that made a difference.

Desiring to succeed. Eight participants specifically talked about their desires to succeed and make an impact. Several participants also talked about the importance of being successful in pursuit of their own goals. When asked about why she worked so hard, "Angela" replied,

> I feel like I just worked because or worked so hard because it was like my, besides having my [child], it was my first main accomplishment that was mine, that it was on it my shoulders if I failed or succeeded and I wanted to succeed. ("Angela")

She further indicated that she worked hard because she had not received support from her family to pursue her career goals. When discussing the lack of support from her family, "Angela" stated that her family told her she would have to pursue her career goal on her own.

> I was just like, okay, "*I'll show you* [emphasis added]," and so I did. It was a long road, but I eventually accomplished it and I did it, and I mean now they're very proud of me, but that's why I say it's, it's an accomplishment that was mine. . . . It made me feel like a stronger person, a more independent person, knowing that I could achieve things and accomplish things and I didn't have to have somebody doing it for me. ("Angela")

Another participant, "Melissa," had a similar experience. Her family's background was in another industry and she chose a career in healthcare. She felt a sense

of pride because she was able to differentiate herself from her family and become successful in her own field. It was something that was hers alone.

> My family is very traditional, so I think, you know, this is, like I said, very, you know, liberating for me and I can, you know, succeed and do, you know, just excel in nursing and it just makes me independent because I think I'm an independent person anyway [laughs]. ("Melissa")

When the researcher asked "David" why he worked so hard, he replied,

> A lot of it is just, I'm just, I want to be successful and it's something kind of in me that just wants to, just this drive to achieve and that's why I think, you know, I'm where I'm at today. . . . I just have that innate passion to. . . just accomplish the task or accomplish the project or accomplish the challenge. That I don't know. I guess I don't have a good scientific answer in response to that. ("David")

In general, the participants wanted to be successful because it contributed to their self-worth and it gave them a sense of purpose.

Desiring flexibility. Flexibility, both in terms of the processes conducted to achieve the desired organizational outcomes and concerning work schedules, was an important source of motivation for eight of the study's participants. Many participants expressed dissatisfaction when there was a lack of flexibility in their jobs. "Christina" mentioned her desire for flexibility,

> I would like to be able to maybe have a little bit more flexibility in terms of, you know, one of the challenges and the rewards and the challenges of healthcare is, you know, I'm taking care of people who are sick and they're, therefore, very demanding so it's rewarding to able to help them but it is also challenging that, you know, I can't work from home. I can't, you know, just take an afternoon off if I decide to that day because I have people that depend on me and need to—need to see me so that can be hard. ("Christina")

Although the presence of flexibility did not necessarily emerge as a primary motivator, the lack of flexibility served as a demotivator and some research participants

indicated that the lack of flexibility in their jobs would ultimately cause them to seek employment elsewhere.

Thriving on change. Change management was a recurring theme throughout the interview process. Eight participants discussed the desire to work for organizations that promoted change. In addition, participants discussed frustrations with organizations in which leaders did not effect change when necessary. Several participants mentioned their disgust with organizational leaders who resisted change in favor of conducting business the way they always had, regardless of whether or not it made sense in the current work environment. Participants also discussed the desire to work for organizations that were adept at implementing changes without requiring employees to jump through unnecessary bureaucratic hoops to implement the changes. In general, research participants who worked for organizations that were willing to adapt to the changing demands of the business world were more satisfied than participants who worked for organizations that resisted change or that prolonged the change process unnecessarily. The vast majority of the participants indicated that they thrived in environments that fostered change. When asked, "What motivates or energizes you at or about your work?" "David" replied,

> I think what motivates me is just the challenge of trying to, you know, again accomplish a particular task. Again, one of the tasks, you know, was, you know, a lot of what the culture of our organization is about is lean and process improvement, and I think what motivates me is the ability to look at a process, dissect the process and provide recommendations on how to improve that process and then now that I'm in a position of authority, I can actually execute that, that process, but now, you know, what I've learned in the last 2 years is that there is an art to that, because again, you are dealing with people. So it's not like you can just write yourself a recommendation on paper, and say, oh yeah, this is a great opportunity to change. You have to actually guide, coach, and motivate and inspire people to make that change. But as far as what motivates me is really like I said, being able to dissect that information and really use my analytical skills to

> provide recommendations and change and, like I said, just recently to see a change come to fruition, [be]cause it was truly exhilarating. ("David")

Participants' related their desire to work in organizations that fostered positive change to their desire to make a difference. Participants were motivated to make positive changes that contributed to the overall organizational goals and benefited others.

Feeling needed. Participants often expressed a desire to feel needed. Seven participants explicitly mentioned their desires to feel needed. "Elizabeth" related the desire to be the "go-to person" because it would give her a sense of accomplishment. When asked why a particular job would be ideal for her, she stated,

> Maybe because I would be in control of something, and I haven't always been able to be in control in nursing, and maybe that might give me a sense of accomplishment, or a sense of, 'If you need help, I'll help you. If you need me, I'll be there. If you have a question, I'll answer it—just being that go-to person. I've always, I like that. I like being that person. ("Elizabeth")

This desire to feel needed also contributed to the participants' feelings of self-worth.

Detesting inefficiency. Six participants mentioned the speed or pace of the work in their organizations. This was commonly a source of frustration for participants who felt that decision-making and/or process changes did not happen as quickly or as efficiently as they would like. Several participants mentioned that inefficient decision-making was a source of angst for them because it impeded their abilities to do their jobs. "Brandon" explained that the desire for efficiency and speed was not about a desire for instant gratification, but rather about being able to make solid, intelligent, well-informed decisions based on the most accurate information available. When asked to tell the researcher what his ideal workplace would be like, what it would look like, and what the structure would be, he replied,

> I hate bureaucracy. Well, I think it all starts with a very solid information system, and so there is a great IBM commercial where (not to digress, but it will help drive home my point)—I can't remember the exact words, but some, you know, there is a guy standing, saying, "Imagine you are trying to cross a busy street and you are trying to use a picture you took 5 minutes ago. In this day and age, you can't make good, quick business decisions that build upon poor systems." And so I think inherently what we end up spending a lot of time doing is going out and gathering little bits of information or so I've got to talk to finance and they've got to pull a report and I've got to talk to HR and they've got to pull a report and by the time you get all of those things lined up and executed like 3 weeks down the line and you are like this is sort of meaningless for me to do anything with because I can't, I can't make a timely decision, but the window for opportunity has already passed. ("Brandon")

"Lisa" also expressed her dislike for inefficiency:

> At work, I don't like rework. I think it's a waste of time. I'd rather take 5 hours and figure something out and do it the right way the first time rather than just throw something in place and see if it works. Oh, it doesn't. Turn around and throw something else in place. It just seems inefficient to me. I'd rather be efficient, really think things through, kind of get the stakeholders involved and make sure that it's going to work for them instead of just what I think is best, make sure it is best for them as well so that's more of the perfectionist side of me and then, then the people-pleaser is where I want to make sure that it is going to suit the stakeholders and the people involved, and you know, ultimately, yeah, I want to know that my boss thinks I'm doing a good job. ("Lisa")

Participants generally expressed a dislike for inefficient processes because they ultimately caused the need for rework and contributed to unnecessary delays in the processes which impacted the success of their organizations and the outcomes obtained.

Feeling frustrated: "Do you want fries with that?" Participants frequently mentioned sources of frustration at work. The majority of the frustrations surrounded four major areas: lack of accountability and/or teamwork, inefficient processes and/or poor decision-making, poor organizational culture, and busywork.

> My most frustrating days of work would be when I feel like I can't actually get to my little fun, happy checklist of super-important, world-saving things—I'm kidding, but you know, to me they kind of are [laughs] and I'm just like churning out other people's crap all day or answering, "Do you want fries with that order?"

> most of the day, and then you end with, you know, answering all of the emails that caught, that you didn't catch up on during the day, and then at the end of the day you're like, "Okay, I worked 9½ hours today, 10 hours with no lunch, what did I do?" That is the most frustrating day, where you literally worked your hardest and other than pleasing other people and putting out maybe a fire or two; what the heck did you get done, you know? ("Nicole")

These sources of frustration had the ability to impact the participants' desires to go to work on any given day. Participants' frustrations typically stemmed from things that interfered with their abilities to effectively do their jobs.

Jumping through hoops. Four participants mentioned frustrations resulting from the requirement to "jump through hoops." They felt that the requirement to "jump through hoops" only impeded their ability to perform their jobs and do what was necessary to make a positive contribution to the organization's goals. In general, participants desired to work in efficient organizations and the requirement to "jump through hoops" to accomplish tasks was a demotivator because, like busywork, it detracted participants from performing more meaningful work that contributed to the greater good.

Loathing bureaucracy. Four research participants mentioned that they detested bureaucracy within their organizations. Most participants who discussed bureaucracy felt that their organizations would be better served by developing more efficient processes that did not require them to go through as much "red tape" as bureaucracies did. "David" stated, "Again, [it's] the extra stuff that makes meetings unproductive."

Creating community. Three participants spoke about community and its importance to them. In some instances, participants spoke about their communities and

how their organizations contributed to the local communities and why that was important to them. In other instances, participants referred to the community within their organizations and how the organizational community impacted their motivation. When participants felt that the organization made a positive contribution to the community, they generally felt a greater sense of purpose. This is an important theme because the majority of participants expressed a desire to help others or to make a difference.

Dealing with "other people's crap." At least three participants expressed frustration about working in noncollaborative environments. "Nicole" indicated that dealing with "other people's crap" impacted her in the same sense that drama affected other participants' work motivation experiences. The need to deal with "other people's crap" prevented her from being able to conduct her own work and to her, dealing with "other people's crap" was a meaningless activity that prevented her from doing productive work that made a difference.

Loathing politics. Two participants also mentioned a disdain for politics because they felt that politics impeded their abilities to perform their jobs and contributed to unnecessary drama in the workforce. These participants indicated that their dislike for corporate politics was an important factor in their work motivation experiences and, therefore, merited inclusion in the study's results.

> I do understand politics, and again, you study politics in school, in business school, and so you know that's going to be there, but I think the drama and the emotions, which is kind of politics compounded, I guess, it just makes things unproductive. Politics makes things unproductive as well, because you really can't be clear minded and objective when running a business because of politics. You know, there's some things people just don't do, [that] would be the right thing to do, because of politics, and so those things do prevent or prohibit, you know, progress; and I think one of the things that, you know, you see a lot of that

> from my perception—again nothing against other generations—is, you know, I see a lot of people just kind of get caught up in that, and I know, I think it's in every generation, but I think some generations because people are stuck in their ways and they, you know, it's who they are. ("David")

Research participants commonly referred to the presence of politics in organizations in a negative light, and political issues served as demotivators for several participants because they felt that political behavior impeded their progress and impacted their abilities to make a difference.

Summary of focused codes. As evidenced by the focused codes above, a variety of factors affected the work motivation experiences of the Generation Y knowledge workers who participated in this research study, with the most significant codes being

- making a difference, helping people, and/or making a contribution;
- sharing knowledge and/or desiring a learning environment;
- being part of a team;
- feeling valued; and
- finding meaningful work and/or purpose.

In many instances, the focused codes defined above had attributes similar to other focused codes. The researcher chose to define the codes based on the participants' descriptions of their work motivation experiences and sought to avoid premature grouping of the codes. As a result, the researcher did not group codes together unless it was evident that the participants' meanings for the codes related directly to other code categories identified during the focused coding process. The following theoretical coding section provides more insight into the theoretical relationships between codes and offers additional insight into the emerging grounded theory pertaining to the work motivation

experiences of Generation Y knowledge workers employed in the healthcare industry in the Midwest.

Theoretical coding. Theoretical coding allowed the researcher to identify possible relationships between codes established during the focused coding process. Theoretical coding enabled the researcher to conceptualize the relationships between substantive codes and to integrate them into a possible theory (Charmaz, 2006, p. 63; Glaser, 1978, p. 72). This researcher utilized theoretical codes to sharpen the data analysis in this study, while exercising caution to avoid imposing a forced framework on the codes (Charmaz, 2006).

During this phase of the coding process, the researcher analyzed the focused codes and identified relationships between codes and categories. The theoretical coding analysis revealed interconnected codes within five overlapping categories: desiring purpose; desiring self-worth; valuing positive organizational culture; receiving social acceptance; and desiring equity. Each of these categories influenced the participants' work motivation experiences. The following section discusses the theoretical codes in more detail and provides a list of the focused codes associated with each theoretical category. In many instances, focused codes appear in more than one theoretical coding category due to the overlapping nature of the themes.

Desiring purpose. The majority of the research participants mentioned the importance of finding meaningful work and purpose. They wanted to make a contribution and help others. The focused codes included in this theoretical category are

- making a difference, helping people, and/or making a contribution;

- sharing knowledge and/or desiring a learning environment;
- being part of a team;
- feeling valued;
- finding meaningful work and/or finding purpose;
- desiring challenging work;
- accomplishing and/or achieving tasks;
- accepting accountability;
- being noticed;
- thinking critically;
- desiring personal growth;
- detesting busywork;
- desiring to succeed;
- thriving on change; and
- feeling needed.

Participants possessed an intense internal desire to perform meaningful work. If participants felt that they were conducting meaningful work that made a difference and contributed to the greater good, they were more motivated and generally more satisfied in their jobs. Conversely, participants' feelings that their work lacked meaning or purpose (e.g., busywork) contributed to feelings of frustration and served as a demotivator. In some instances, the lack of meaningful work and purpose drove participants to seek new jobs within their organizations or to leave their organizations altogether.

Desiring self-worth. As illustrated in the focused coding section, research participants also desired a sense of self-worth. Focused codes encompassed in this category are

- making a difference, helping people, and/or making a contribution;
- sharing knowledge and/or desiring a learning environment;
- feeling valued;
- finding meaningful work and/or finding purpose;
- desiring challenging work;
- accomplishing and/or achieving tasks;
- thinking critically;
- desiring advancement opportunities;
- desiring personal growth;
- detesting busywork;
- desiring to succeed; and
- feeling needed.

Participants took pride in achieving tasks and accomplishing goals. They desired challenging work that enabled them to think critically and make a difference by helping others. Participants wanted to receive respect and feel valued. The desire for self-worth directly related to the participants' desire for purpose, which is discussed further below. If participants did not feel that their work was making a difference, they were less motivated and it contributed to negative feelings about their jobs and/or their organizations.

Receiving social acceptance. The concept of social acceptance was also an integral factor in the participants' work motivation experiences. Participants wanted to work in cohesive teams to create a sense of community. Focused codes in this category include

- making a difference, helping people, and/or making a contribution;
- being part of a team;
- feeling valued;
- being noticed;
- desiring to succeed;
- feeling needed; and
- creating community.

Participants wanted to be a part of something bigger than themselves. Receiving recognition and respect from fellow team members and organizational leaders contributed to participants' feelings of self-worth and motivated them to perform at higher levels. In organizations that fostered positive team environments and in which team members accepted accountability, participants felt a strong sense of commitment to their organizations and they were more motivated. The organizational culture also had a significant impact on the participants' work motivation experiences.

Valuing positive organizational culture. Throughout the course of the study, participants discussed organizational issues that impacted their work motivation experiences. The focused codes included in this category include

- sharing knowledge and/or desiring a learning environment;
- being part of a team;

- accepting accountability;
- desiring advancement opportunities;
- dealing with drama;
- attaining autonomy and/or being in control;
- dealing with conflict at work;
- desiring flexibility;
- thriving on change;
- detesting inefficiency;
- jumping through hoops;
- loathing bureaucracy;
- creating community; and
- loathing politics.

Participants frequently expressed frustration with factors relating to the organizational culture (e.g., bureaucracy, politics, busywork, jumping through hoops, inefficiency, resistance to change, poor decision-making, lack of accountability, etc.). In general, the absence of a positive organizational culture that fostered teamwork, collaboration, efficient decision-making, and effective change management caused participants to lose faith in their organizations and served as a demotivator. Often times, poor organizational culture contributed to participants' decisions to seek alternative employment opportunities and it also affected their willingness to go the extra mile. When participants felt the organizational culture was not supportive of their needs, they indicated that it negatively impacted their work motivation, their relationships with colleagues, and/or their desire to contribute to the organization's goals. Participants wanted to work in

environments that were conducive to effective teamwork and decision-making and they expressed a desire to work in equitable environments.

Desiring equity. As mentioned above, research participants wanted to work in organizations that fostered collaboration and knowledge sharing. They wanted to be treated as partners. Participants expressed a strong desire for equity in the work environment. The focused codes included in this category are

- accepting accountability;
- desiring flexibility;
- detesting inefficiency;
- feeling frustrated: "Do you want fries with that?"; and
- dealing with "other people's crap."

Participants wanted to receive respect and recognition for their contributions. They wanted their organizational leaders to invest in them in the same way that they invested in their organizations. Of critical importance to the research participants was working for an organization that treated employees fairly and gave back to the employees in exchange for their contributions. Participants wanted acknowledgement and recognition for their efforts and they wanted organizational leaders to reward them for their work. They wanted to work for organizations that invested in their employees by sharing knowledge, providing advancement and educational opportunities, and supporting employees' needs for flexibility, autonomy, and work-life balance. When the employees felt that there was a reciprocal relationship with the organization, it positively affected their work motivation and desire to contribute to the organization's goals. In essence, participants

sought balance and equity. When participants felt that the organization was investing in them, they were more motivated.

Set of Propositions and Grounded Theory

This section presents a set of propositions and a grounded theory from the data. The researcher describes the propositions in light of the subquestions (Creswell, 2003, p. 106; 2007, p. 108) of Generation Y's (a) intrinsic motivators, (b) extrinsic motivators, and (c) demotivators; as well as this generation's (d) process of and (e) approach to work motivation; and concludes with a discussion of the central research question (Creswell, 2003, p. 105; 2007, p. 108) this study investigated: How do Generation Y knowledge workers describe and experience work motivation?

Intrinsic motivators. Many of the motivators described by research participants were intrinsic motivators, as defined in Chapter 1, which were personal in nature and arose from within the individuals. Intrinsic motivators such as personal satisfaction drove the participants to work harder and perform at higher levels. Other factors such as difficulty in the participants' personal lives had the ability to influence the participants' primary motivators but most participants listed intrinsic motivators such as the desire to contribute or helping others as their primary motivators, regardless of their socioeconomic status.

Participants cited numerous intrinsic motivators as their driving motivators. Intrinsic motivators mentioned by the participants included the following examples:

- Internal desire to achieve a particular task or accomplish goals (e.g., working with the robot, serving on committees, starting IVs, conducting process improvement initiatives, opening new clinics, public speaking, etc.)

- Feeling of belonging
    - Being a part of a team and a positive team environment
    - Sense of family
    - Being recognized or acknowledged

- Feeling of contribution
    - Helping others (the morally right thing to do)
    - Helping community
    - Helping the organization
    - Helping family (financially or otherwise (e.g., providing insurance))

- Feeling of satisfaction
    - Job well done
    - Sense of accomplishment
    - Making a difference
    - Receiving praise
      Activities that bring the participant pleasure (e.g., responding to code blue calls, etc.)

- Feeling of self-worth
    - Meaningful work ("not just a number")
    - Finding purpose and/or wanting to work for an organization that gives back (community involvement)
    - Development of a particular skill
    - Having something that is my own
    - Contribution to the greater good and/or teamwork
      Supervisor recognition and/or peer recognition, and/or patient recognition

- "Focus on the future"
    - Seeing the big picture
        - Working toward a goal
        - Working efficiently
        - Finding purpose
    - Personal growth
        - Knowledge acquisition
        - Knowledge sharing
        - Educational opportunities
        - Acquisition of new skills

    - Advancement opportunities
        - Promotion
            - Challenging and/or meaningful work
            - Not wanting to get stuck (avoiding monotonous routines)
            - Greater autonomy
            - Financial need (Extrinsic: security)
        - Continuous improvement
            - Improved outcomes
            - Making a difference
            - Organizational improvement
            - Environment and/or community
            - Personal growth
    - Work-life balance
        - Quality of life
        - Flexibility
        - Family involvement

- Activities that bring the participants pleasure
    - Feeling needed
    - Thinking critically
    - Making a difference
    - Making a contribution
    - Being well liked

- Things that help the participant achieve personal growth
    - Knowledge sharing
    - Learning a particular skill
    - Educational training opportunities
    - Advancement opportunities

- Doing what is morally right
    - Helping others
    - Contributing to the team
    - Creating community

Although the aforementioned motivators, which were the primary motivators for the participants, had predominantly intrinsic attributes, some of these motivators had

extrinsic components as well. This is partially because these motivators involved external factors outside of the participants' control. The researcher chose to classify the aforementioned motivators as intrinsic because they were typically associated with the participants' internal desires to contribute to others and make a difference without an expectation of an extrinsic reward.

The research also revealed that other forces such as difficulty in an individual's personal life might affect intrinsic motivators. For example, if a participant was experiencing a financial crisis, then the individual might forego the pursuit of intrinsic motivators in pursuit of extrinsic motivators. One participant mentioned taking a job at a company out of necessity although the job did not provide her with personal gratification. She was concerned that the job market was poor and she might not find something else so she opted to take the best offer she received in order to ensure she would be able to pay her bills. Although a few participants indicated they had to work out of necessity or to help contribute to their families, even those participants typically cited nonmonetary, intrinsic motivators such as the desire to help others as their primary motivators.

The most predominant motivators for the research participants were centric to the concepts of finding purpose, making a difference, helping others, and contributing. Participants expressed their desires to contribute to the greater good of their organizations, their families, and to society. They also sought opportunities to better themselves through knowledge sharing and educational opportunities to increase their skills and expand their knowledge, thereby allowing them to continuously improve.

Some participants also discussed extrinsic motivators, including monetary rewards, of importance to them. The next section provides additional information regarding the extrinsic motivators mentioned by the research participants.

Extrinsic motivators. Unlike intrinsic motivators, as defined in Chapter 1, extrinsic motivators include factors that are external in nature and not directly related to self-fulfillment or the satisfaction of performing a given task. Extrinsic motivators cited by participants included the following:

- Monetary rewards
    - Salary increases and bonuses, which participants mentioned infrequently and did not serve as the primary motivators for the majority of participants

- Nonmonetary rewards
    - Advancement opportunities
    - Being part of a team
    - Contributing to the team
    - Receiving respect
    - Receiving social recognition and praise from superiors, coworkers, family, patients, and other community members as important motivators

As with the motivators listed in the Intrinsic Motivators section, many of the extrinsic motivators have intrinsic attributes as well. When the researcher asked participants to discuss their motivation experiences, they did not specifically mention intrinsic or extrinsic motivators. Instead they focused on their desires to make a difference and contribute. The overlapping nature of the motivators expressed by the participants suggests that participants were not solely motivated by intrinsic or extrinsic motivators. Rather, they described their motivation experiences, which included both

intrinsic and extrinsic motivators, with an emphasis on the desire to contribute, help others, and make a difference.

Extrinsic motivators did not serve as the primary motivators for the participants. However, the absence of some of these extrinsic motivators had the ability to influence the participants' desires to stay at their organizations. Participants also discussed demotivators contributing to their lack of desire to work to reach the organization's goals. The next section presents a discussion of the demotivators mentioned by participants.

Demotivators. Throughout the interview process, participants frequently discussed areas of frustration at work. Following is a list of the demotivators mentioned by the study participants:

- Bureaucracy
- Busywork and/or nonchallenging work
- Lack of accountability
- Lack of teamwork
- Lack of work-life balance
- Lack of organizational support
    - Lack of proper technology
    - Poor organizational approach to change management and/or process improvement
    - Poor leadership
    - Poor communication

These demotivators, such as poor communication, bureaucracy, busywork, lack of teamwork, lack of work-life balance, lack of organizational support (lack of proper technology, poor organizational approach to change management and/or process improvement, poor leadership, and poor communication), affected participants' outlooks

and could impact their willingness to contribute to their organizations. Research participants indicated that these factors also impacted their desire to work for a particular department or organization and ultimately affected their feelings about their jobs.

Although the aforementioned factors served to demotivate participants, the converse situations did not necessarily motivate the participants. For example, the absence of work-life balance caused frustration for some participants but the presence of work-life balance did not serve as the primary motivator for any participant. Similarly, when communication and proper organizational support were in place, participants enjoyed their jobs more and felt more appreciated, but effective organizational communication did not serve as the primary motivator for participants. This suggests that the factors classified as demotivators in this study have the ability to negatively affect the participants' work motivation experiences but the absence of the demotivators did not necessarily motivate the individuals. It is clear, however, that demotivators impacted the participants' attitudes and their views of their organizations.

Process of and approach to work motivation. Although the data analysis process revealed numerous intrinsic and extrinsic motivators, as well as demotivators, there was a great deal of overlap between intrinsic and extrinsic motivators and demotivators. Although the intrinsic and extrinsic motivators, as well as demotivators, provide insight into the participants' process of and approach to work motivation, the results of the study revealed that the desire to make a difference, help people, and/or to contribute served as the primary motivators for the study participants. These factors appeared to relate directly to the participants' desires for meaning and purpose in their lives.

Meaning and/or purpose. Research participants continuously sought opportunities to make a difference in their own lives and the lives of others. Participants wanted to work for organizations that valued them as individuals and provided them with opportunities to fulfill their needs. The following concepts emerged as primary motivators for participants:

- recognition, praise, and acknowledgement;
- knowledge sharing, educational offerings, growth potential, and advancement opportunities;
- flexibility and work-life balance;
- social acceptance and teamwork; and
- contribution, helping others, and feeling good.

All of these concepts directly related to the participants' desires for meaning and purpose. Research participants did not seem to be lazy or to seek instant gratification. In general, research participants described themselves as highly motivated individuals who wanted to make a difference in their organizations and their surrounding communities. They wanted to be equipped with the knowledge and tools necessary to make intelligent, informed decisions that benefited their organizations, their communities, and themselves. They continuously sought ways to better themselves and their organizations for the greater good.

Neither personal gain nor the desire for instant gratification appeared to motivate participants. Their desires for praise, recognition, acknowledgement, knowledge sharing, educational offerings, growth potential, advancement opportunities, flexibility, work-life balance, social acceptance, teamwork, contribution, helping others, and feeling good stemmed from lessons from the past (e.g., family members' experiences, friends'

experiences, personal experience, and shared generational experiences) and their desires for the future (e.g., work-life balance, flexibility, and quality of life).

Overall Analysis of the Central Research Question

Although numerous factors contributed to the work motivation experiences of the research participants—Generation Y knowledge workers employed in the healthcare industry—including intrinsic and extrinsic motivators, their primary motivators were finding purpose; making a difference, helping people, and/or making a contribution; sharing knowledge; being part of a team; and feeling valued. Although the participants expressed internal desires to help others and make a difference, the participants also sought appreciation and recognition in exchange for their contributions.

Participants were driven to perform at higher levels and to give more to organizations that invested in them, provided them with educational opportunities, involved them in the decision-making process, gave them the opportunity to make a difference, recognized their efforts, provided them with autonomy and flexibility, and valued them as individuals. Participants were willing to give of themselves to benefit the organization if they felt their organizations were investing in them and providing equity.

Summary

The results of the study suggest that Generation Y knowledge workers employed in the healthcare industry are purpose driven and they desire meaningful work. They want to make a difference, help people, and/or make a contribution. In addition, they desire challenging work that allows them to utilize their critical thinking and analytical skills to help others and contribute to their organizations and/or their communities. They also seek

reciprocal relationships that provide equity and allow them to benefit from being team players. Whether intrinsically or extrinsically motivated, the research participants sought relationships that provided balance and meaning.

Chapter 5 further details the results of the study and their implications and presents the nascent grounded theory that addresses the participants' work motivation experiences. The chapter concludes with a summation of the study and recommendations for future research and practice.

CHAPTER 5. DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS

Overview

This closing chapter provides a summary of the study's results; a discussion of the results and their implications; a presentation of the nascent grounded theory; a critical comparison of the study's results to previous literature; the researcher's assessment of the research methods and personal reflections; and the limitations of the study. The chapter closes with conclusions on the study and recommendations for future research and for practice.

As indicated in Chapter 2, the researcher delayed conducting portions of the literature review, such as the intersections of the literature and particularly the review of literature specifically pertaining to Generation Y knowledge workers and their work motivation experiences, until after the research began, to avoid overreliance on extant ideas and *a priori* assumptions and to minimize the risk of developing preconceived notions about the study (Glaser, 1978, 1992, p. 31; Glaser & Holton, 2004; Glaser & Strauss, 1967/1999/2008; Strauss, 1987; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Therefore, this chapter includes a review of the intersecting literature, including the literature on Generation Y knowledge workers and their work motivation experiences.

The aim of this research study was to conceptualize and identify the underlying elements that critically influence work motivation of Generation Y knowledge workers. The researcher conducted in-depth, face-to-face interviews of Generation Y knowledge workers to accomplish this. Upon completion of the interviews, the researcher reviewed the data for recurring themes and patterns.

Summary of the Results

To place the summary of results in context, this section revisits the research problem, the study's significance, the literature informing the study design and recent updates on same, and the methodology used in the study. These summaries are followed by a concise recapitulation of the study's findings.

Revisiting the Research Problem

The data revealed that Generation Y knowledge workers in the healthcare industry have a strong desire to contribute, both to their organizations and to their communities. The desire to contribute and make a difference by helping others was perhaps the strongest motivating force for this sample of the research population. The participants' stories elucidate how their ability to contribute affects their overall outlook toward their jobs and their work in general. When research participants were able to make a difference, they felt a sense of accomplishment, pride, and self-worth, which renewed their sense of commitment to their organizations. In situations in which external forces or other factors, such as a lack of proper resources, prevented the research participants from being able to make a difference or help others, the participants expressed frustration with their organizational leaders and a lack of desire to go to work. Others' acknowledgements of the participants for their positive contributions gave them a sense of accomplishment and motivated them.

Significance of the Study

As mentioned in Chapter 1, "the effects of globalization and healthcare advances on workforce diversity, in terms of gender, ethnicity, age, and work values, represent yet

another potent set of influences on work motivation that has yet to be fully taken into theoretical account" (Kanfer, Chen, & Pritchard, 2008, p. xx). Given that research also suggests that generational differences may influence work motivation (Crampton & Hodge, 2007, p. 16; Daboval, 1998; Moody, 2007; Patota et al., 2007, p. 1), this study focused on the motivation experiences of Generation Y knowledge workers to develop a better understanding of how Generation Y knowledge workers experience work motivation.

The study's results provide organizational leaders with a better understanding of what drives employee performance of Generation Y knowledge workers in the knowledge economy, thereby contributing to the development of more effective employee motivation programs for Generation Y knowledge workers. Equipped with a better understanding of generational differences in work motivation, organizational leaders will have the ability to reduce turnover and improve employee retention (Moody, 2007; Patota et al., 2007, p. 10), increase commitment (Moody, 2007), increase employee job satisfaction (Moody, 2007; Patota et al., 2007, p. 10), more effectively motivate employees (Moody, 2007), increase productivity (Karp, Fuller, & Sirias, 2002; Kupperschmidt, 2000; Patota et al., 2007, p. 10; Westerman & Yamamura, 2007, p. 158), improve communication, decrease conflict, and improve team efficiency and effectiveness (Patota et al., 2007, p. 10).

The study's results also have the potential to benefit Generation Y knowledge workers as well as members of other generations by providing organizational leaders with a more in-depth view of what truly motivates Generation Y knowledge workers and how their work motivators may differ or converge with those of other generations in the

knowledge economy. This may lead to more effective employee reward and recognition programs, improved communication, and organizational environments that foster collaboration and teamwork amongst the diverse generations. Developing an understanding of what motivates Generation Y will also enable members of other generations to improve interactions amongst different generations and potentially reduce conflicts.

Brief Review and Update of the Literature Informing the Study Design

This section provides a discussion of any new findings related to the review of the literature presented in Chapter 2, which formed the foundation for a discussion of extant theories, of which specific analysis and full synthesis were delayed until after the conduct of this research, to avoid imposing preconceived ideas or received concepts on this study, again consistent with grounded theory research methods (Glaser, 1998, p. 67). Following the conduct of this research, the researcher conducted searches of the literature to identify any new findings since she conducted the initial literature review.

Foundations and historical development of work motivation theory. In 2005, Latham and Pinder examined the progress made in work motivation theory and research over a 30-year span through a meta-analysis on work motivation and related concepts. Their meta-analysis examined research on needs, values, traits, and cognition (p. 485). It also examined the importance of context in work motivation research with a focus on three main elements in the literature: job design, national culture, and person-environment fit (p. 485). They focused their examination of the literature primarily on research introduced between 1993 and 2003, concluding that the three most noteworthy

approaches to work motivation to appear in the last 30 years were: goal-setting, social-cognitive, and organizational justice theories (p. 485). After conducting the meta-analysis, Latham and Pinder (2005) concluded that significant progress in work motivation research occurred in the past 30 years and new research studies built on existing theories (p. 507). However, despite the vast amount of research on work motivation in recent years, Latham and Pinder (2005) indicated, "Few fundamentally new models of work motivation have appeared with the groundbreaking impact that Maslow's need theory, Vroom's expectancy theory, or Locke & Latham's goal-setting theory had when they were initially promulgated" (p. 507).

Knowledge work and workers. As indicated in Chapter 2, the demand for knowledge workers is growing at an astonishing rate (Lord & Farrington, 2006; McCuiston & Jamrog, 2005, p. 20) because in the knowledge economy, analytical skills are increasingly important (Locke & Kochan, 1995) and knowledge workers possess intellectual capital that represents a key source of earnings and, thus, leads to organizational survival (Kelloway & Barling, 2000, p. 287). In addition, the rapidly increasing global demand for knowledge workers, the decreasing labor supply attributable to an increase in the number of civilian workers in the United States who will be eligible for retirement in the United States, and the decline in the number of individuals between 35 and 44 years old by the year 2015, are forecast to result in an endemic talent shortage for knowledge intensive professional jobs (McCuiston & Jamrog, 2005, p. 20).

Research suggests that knowledge workers represent a new class of worker with different values, needs, and motivators from traditional workers (Benson & Brown, 2007; Kelloway & Barling, 2000, p. 288), which this study explored.

Generational differences at work. Although the popular press makes a strong argument in support of generational differences at work, and widespread acceptance of this notion exists (Patota et al., 2007), the argument that generational differences at work exist is not universally accepted (Crumpacker & Crumpacker, 2007, p. 361). Some researchers suggest a lack of empirical evidence to validate assertions of generational differences at work (Macky et al., 2008, p. 857), citing that the differences are attributable to age and/or maturation (Jurkiewicz, 2000; Rhodes, 1983), or career stage (Jurkiewicz, 2000; Polach, 2006; Rhodes, 1983). Still others contend that more similarities exist between the generations than differences, and that history merely repeats itself with each generation's entrance to the workforce (Jurkiewicz, 2000). However, research suggests that the current workforce does not replicate the generation gap of the past, in which a generation grows up and becomes like its parents; instead, the current workforce represents a convergence of four generations with distinctly different paths in work and life (Patota et al., 2007, p. 1).

Despite arguments challenging the generational differences perspective, the literature reflects general agreement that members of a generation share similar experiences (Crampton & Hodge, 2007, p. 16; Crumpacker & Crumpacker, 2007; Patota et al., 2007, p. 2; Schuman & Scott, 1989). Other factors, such as age (Montana & Lenaghan, 1999; Polach, 2006), career and/or life stage (Giancola, 2006; Montana & Lenaghan, 1999; Polach, 2006), culture (Crumpacker & Crumpacker, 2007, p. 362; Shih

& Allen, 2007, p. 92), gender (Crumpacker & Crumpacker, 2007, p. 362), external environment (Montana & Lenaghan, 1999), race or ethnicity (Crumpacker & Crumpacker, 2007, p. 362), geographic location (Crumpacker & Crumpacker, 2007, p. 362), religion (Crumpacker & Crumpacker, 2007, p. 362), socioeconomic status (Crumpacker & Crumpacker, 2007, p. 362), and societal environment (Smola & Sutton, 2002, p. 381), also have the potential to shape an individual's life experiences (Crumpacker & Crumpacker, 2007, p. 362).

Awareness and understanding of generational differences can provide organizations with valuable information pertaining to the values and belief systems of employees from different generations. Such knowledge will facilitate organizational leaders in addressing more adequately the needs of employees from distinct generational cohorts by providing additional insight into what motivates employees from each generation, while fostering a positive work environment.

Work motivation and knowledge work. As indicated in Chapter 2, despite the critical role that knowledge workers play in the creation and application of knowledge in the knowledge economy, research to date neglects adequate address of the factors that motivate knowledge workers (Ambrose & Kulik, 1999; Šajeva, 2007), and the limited research that does exist regarding knowledge workers presents conflicting views (Benson & Brown, 2007; Steers et al., 2004). Although researchers generally acknowledge the need to manage knowledge workers differently than workers performing routine work (Benson & Brown, 2007, p. 122; Giles et al., 1999; Horwitz et al., 2003; Kalra, 1997), the literature does not provide solid empirical evidence to support this argument (Robertson & Hammersley, 2000).

A considerable body of research suggests that knowledge workers are motivated by different factors than manual laborers, who were the predominant focus of classic motivation theories (Benson & Brown, 2007, p. 122; Giles et al., 1999; Horwitz et al., 2003; Kalra, 1997), yet some research asserts that traditional motivation techniques (e.g., money, rewards, incentives) are effective for knowledge workers (Kelloway & Barling, 2000). This debate could stem, in part, from the varying definitions of *knowledge worker* that exist.

Because of the conflicting views on what constitutes *knowledge work* (Benson & Brown, 2007), and limited empirical research (Šajeva, 2007), the motivation of knowledge workers is not yet well understood (Benson & Brown, 2007, Steers et al., 2004). The changes in the nature of work and the work environment profoundly influence how organizations attempt to motivate their employees, yet very few genuine theoretical developments in work motivation exist and management models addressing the new era of work are lacking (Steers et al., p. 384).

Although agreement is lacking regarding what motivates knowledge workers, it is clear that organizations that wish to survive in the knowledge economy will need to determine how to effectively motivate knowledge workers because knowledge workers are valuable organizational assets (Drucker, 2002). This research explored the work motivation experiences of Generation Y knowledge workers and led to the development a nascent grounded theory that addresses the motivational challenges presented by the newest generation of knowledge workers, Generation Y.

Research Methodology Used in This Study

As noted in Chapter 1 and further detailed in Chapter 3, this study employed a grounded theory research approach (Charmaz, 2006) involving in-depth, open-ended, face-to-face interviews with 20 knowledge workers from Generation Y, targeting healthcare employees in the Midwest, to identify emerging themes and patterns and to generate comparisons to the existing body of literature to develop a well-saturated theory. The researcher located potential research participants through a Call for Participants that she sent to professional trade organizations to recruit volunteers for the study, though participants did not include anyone previously acquainted with the researcher.

Summary of This Study's Findings

This section provides a concise recapitulation of the following theoretical concepts derived from the study: desiring purpose, desiring self-worth, receiving social acceptance, valuing positive organizational culture, and desiring equity, as developed and detailed in Chapter 4. Discussion of the results follows this recap.

Desiring purpose. The majority of the research participants mentioned the importance of finding meaningful work and purpose. The research participants wanted to make a contribution and help others. The focused codes included in this theoretical category are making a difference, helping people and/or making a contribution; sharing knowledge and/or desiring a learning environment; being part of a team; feeling valued; finding meaningful work and/or finding purpose; desiring challenging work; accomplishing and/or achieving tasks; accepting accountability; being noticed; thinking

critically; desiring personal growth; detesting busywork; desiring to succeed; thriving on change; and feeling needed.

Desiring self-worth. The research participants expressed a desire for self-worth. This desire related directly to the participants' desire for purpose, and encompassed making a difference, helping people, and/or making a contribution; sharing knowledge and/or desiring a learning environment; feeling valued; finding meaningful work and/or finding purpose; desiring challenging work; accomplishing and/or achieving tasks; thinking critically; desiring advancement opportunities; desiring personal growth; detesting busywork; desiring to succeed; and feeling needed.

Receiving social acceptance. The concept of social acceptance was another integral factor in the participants' work motivation experiences. Participants wanted to work in cohesive teams to create a sense of community. Focused codes in this category include making a difference, helping people, and/or making a contribution; being part of a team; feeling valued; being noticed; desiring to succeed; feeling needed; and creating community.

Valuing positive organizational culture. Organizational culture also played an important role in the work motivation experiences of the research participants. Codes in this category include sharing knowledge and/or desiring a learning environment; being part of a team; accepting accountability; desiring advancement opportunities; dealing with drama; dealing with conflict at work; attaining autonomy and/or being in control; desiring flexibility; thriving on change; detesting inefficiency; jumping through hoops; loathing bureaucracy; creating community; and loathing politics. The absence of a

positive organizational culture served as a demotivator for research participants and had the ability to influence participants' willingness to stay at their organizations. In contrast, in situations in which the participants felt that there was a healthy organizational culture that supported effective teamwork and decision making, the organizational culture had the ability to motivate employees to go the extra mile at work.

Desiring equity. Research participants wanted to work in organizations that fostered collaboration and knowledge sharing. Participants wanted to be treated with respect and they expressed a strong desire for equity in the work environment. Desiring equity included the following codes: accepting accountability; desiring flexibility; detesting inefficiency; feeling frustrated: "Do you want fries with that?"; and dealing with "other people's crap." Working for an organization that treats employees fairly and gives back to the employees in exchange for their contributions was of critical importance to the research participants. When the participants felt that there was a reciprocal relationship with the organization, it positively affected their work motivation and desire to contribute to the organization's goals.

Discussion of the Results

This section provides a more in-depth discussion of the results, including an analysis of the findings in relation to the research questions; a summary of the study's limitations, discussed further below; and a reassessment of the study's research methods. The section concludes with reflections on the research process.

Analysis of Findings in Relation to the Research Questions

The central research question (Creswell, 2003, p. 105; 2007, p. 108*)* this study investigated was as follows: How do Generation Y knowledge workers describe and experience work motivation? This exploratory question encompassed subquestions (Creswell, 2003, p. 106; 2007, p. 108) of Generation Y's descriptions and experiences of their (a) intrinsic motivators, (b) extrinsic motivators, and (c) demotivators, as well as their (d) process of and (e) approach to work motivation.

As indicated above, the research revealed five theoretical categories: desiring purpose, desiring self-worth, receiving social acceptance, valuing positive organizational culture, and desiring equity. The codes in these categories included both intrinsic and extrinsic motivators, as well as demotivators. The primary motivators for the research participants appeared to be intrinsic in nature. Although a few participants indicated they had to work out of financial necessity, even those participants typically cited nonmonetary, intrinsic motivators, such as the desire to help others, as their primary motivators. Participants did occasionally mention extrinsic motivators, which include factors that are external in nature and not directly related to self-fulfillment or the satisfaction of performing a given task.

The demotivators for the research participants primarily included concepts related to poor organizational culture and inequity. The demotivators commonly cited by the research participants included bureaucracy, busywork and/or nonchallenging work, lack of accountability, lack of teamwork, lack of work-life balance, lack of organizational support, lack of proper technology, poor organizational approach to change management and/or process improvement, poor leadership, and poor communication. Although these

demotivators had a negative impact on the participants' work motivation, their absence did not necessarily serve to motivate the participants. As indicated in Chapter 4, the most predominant motivators for the research participants were centric to the concepts of finding purpose, making a difference, helping others, and contributing, which is the central finding of this research study.

As the participants described their work motivation experiences, they frequently discussed their desires to find meaningful work and/or purpose. This included discussions of their desires to make a difference, help people, and/or make a contribution. All 20 participants mentioned the desire to make a difference, help people, and/or make a contribution and, for some, it was their primary reason for working. When discussing their work motivation experiences, participants often recounted stories of how helping others or making a contribution to the team gave them a sense of accomplishment and/or achievement. As they discussed their most positive work experiences, they told stories of how they helped their patients and their families, how they improved processes that contributed to greater organizational efficiency, or how they implemented things that would benefit the community. Participants stated that they thrived on change and they discussed their desires to work in learning environments that fostered collaborative teams and knowledge sharing.

When discussing their desires to be a part of a team, they frequently mentioned the closeness they felt to their team members and sometimes referred to them as family, stating that working with their teammates was one of the things they enjoyed most about their jobs. They also mentioned how the absence of accountability from others was a job deterrent and a demotivator. Participants felt valued when their team members noticed

them and recognized their contributions to the organization, which instilled a sense of pride in them because they felt needed. Along with the desire to work in collaborative team environments came the desire for personal growth and challenging work which required critical thinking. Participants often expressed their desires to succeed in the workforce and discussed the sense of pride and accomplishment they received from doing a job well.

Overview of Study Limitations

Given the literature suggesting that generational differences exist in work motivation, but in the absence of literature on the work motivation of Generation Y itself, this study was designed to explore and describe Generation Y's work motivation. This section provides a brief overview of the study limitations that contextualize this study's results, each detailed in another section below.

This study relied on qualitative data collected through in-depth, face-to-face interviews using open-ended questions, and the assumption that participants responded openly, honestly, and candidly. Grounded theory analysis based on the individuals' self-reported opinions may have introduced individual bias. This study drew data from Generation Y knowledge workers employed in the healthcare industry in the Midwest, and the data represented only one moment in time. The generalizability of the results from this grounded theory study may be limited due to the scope of the research (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 251). Because the research participants included only knowledge workers, the results may not be applicable to individuals who are not knowledge workers. Because the research participants were all members of Generation Y, all in the healthcare industry, and all in the Midwest US, the results may not apply to other generations,

industries, regions, countries, or cultures. Each of these limitations in discussed in detail in a dedicated section below.

Methods Reassessment and Reflections on the Research Process

The goals of this study were to provide an in-depth analysis of the participants' self-described work motivation experiences and to clearly detail the factors that they felt motivated or demotivated them at and in their work. This study explored the research participants' perspectives on work motivation and opened the door to emergent motivation theory, to understand the participants' perspectives as knowledge workers and as members of a newer generation.

The central research question (Creswell, 2003, p. 105; 2007, p. 108) that this study investigated was as follows: How do Generation Y knowledge workers describe and experience work motivation? Subquestions (Creswell, 2003, p. 106; 2007, p. 108) clarifying the data comprised this generation's intrinsic and extrinsic motivators, demotivators, and their process of and approach to work motivation.

This section provides a reassessment of the methods used in this study including any problems or flaws with the study design, participant recruitment, data collection, and data analysis to be detailed further in the Limitations section below. The section concludes with reflections on the research process.

Study design. This study employed grounded theory research methods, which are among the most influential qualitative research methods when generating theory is the researcher's principal endeavor (Strauss & Corbin, 1997, p. vii). Grounded theory is useful when a theory to explain a process does not exist, or when existing models or

theories fail to address the population under study (Creswell, 2007, p. 66). The use of grounded theory methods allowed the researcher to explore the work motivation experiences of Generation Y knowledge workers in the healthcare industry through an examination of the participants' lived experiences. The study's design provided the researcher with greater insight into what motivates Generation Y knowledge workers and, although qualitative research designs have the potential to introduce researcher bias, this study's design allowed the researcher to gain rich data regarding the participants' work motivation experiences that might not have been available through the use of quantitative research methods.

Recruiting. The sampling methods utilized in this study, in the order in which used, were maximum variation (Patton, 1989; Seidman, 2006), criterion sampling (Creswell, 2003, p. 127), purposeful sampling (Charmaz, 2006; Morse, 2010; Patton, 1989; Seidman, 2006), and theoretical sampling (Charmaz, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Dey, 1999; Glaser, 1978; Glaser & Strauss, 1967/1999/2008; Morse, 2010; Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

As detailed in Chapter 3, the researcher utilized maximum variation, criterion sampling to select research participants from the widest range of people and sites within the limits of this study (Seidman, 2006, pp. 52-53). The researcher used this sampling approach to maximize the differences at the beginning of this research study in order to identify the scope, major components, and trajectory of the overall work motivation phenomenon (Morse, 2010, p. 235) and to increase the likelihood that the research findings would reflect varying perspectives (Creswell, 2007, p. 126). Because more than enough individuals who fit the participant selection criteria volunteered to participate in

this study, the researcher sought to maximize the heterogeneity of the sample by attempting to balance the initial participant pool on such factors as sex, specific age, education level, years of knowledge work experience, work roles, and employers, to provide a range and breadth of data (Weiss, 1994, p. 24).

The researcher then utilized purposeful sampling (Charmaz, 2006; Morse, 2010; Patton, 1989; Seidman, 2006) to select research participants as indicated by the researcher's initial analysis of interviews (Morse, 2010, p. 235). These interviews revealed how the research participants partitioned the emerging phenomena (Morse, 2010, p. 235) of work motivation and allowed the researcher to sample according to conduct a purposeful sampling strategy (Morse, 2010, p. 235; Patton, 1989; Seidman, 2006) aimed at locating participants who were be able to further explicate the different stages of the work motivation phenomenon as they experienced it. During this phase of the data collection process, the researcher aimed to obtain rich descriptions of the various aspects of the participants' work motivation experiences.

As the study progressed, the researcher then employed theoretical sampling techniques (Charmaz, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Dey, 1999; Glaser, 1978; Glaser & Strauss, 1967/1999/2008; Morse, 2010; Strauss & Corbin, 1990) according to the descriptive needs of the emerging concepts and theory (Morse, 2010, p. 235). These needs dictated the subsequent sampling strategies and goals (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser 1978; Morse, 2010, p. 235) and led to the development of full and robust categories (Charmaz, 2006, p. 103), which led to the development of a nascent work motivation theory as described below.

The aforementioned recruiting strategies yielded a relatively diverse participant pool. Although the majority of the individuals who responded to the initial Call for Research Participants were female nurses, the researcher was able to maximize the heterogeneity of the participant pool by limiting the number of female nurses selected for participation in the study and endeavoring to conduct face-to-face interviews with all male volunteers (clinical or nonclinical) who qualified for participation in the study and all nonclinical volunteers (male or female) who qualified for participation in the study. In addition, the researcher selected volunteers from the participant pool with varying ages, levels of work experience, and educational backgrounds. As previously indicated, due to some scheduling conflicts and time constraints, the researcher was not able to interview all of the male participants who qualified for participation in the study. However, the researcher was able to achieve a good balance of participants from clinical and nonclinical roles with varying levels of work experience and different educational backgrounds.

Although the recruitment strategies enabled the researcher to generate a sufficient participant pool for the study, they did not yield as many male participants as female participants. This could be a reflection of the ratio of male to female Generation Y knowledge workers employed in the healthcare industry. However, future researchers may seek to determine if there are gender differences in the work motivation experiences of Generation Y knowledge workers. The study did not include as many nonclinical participants as clinical participants. It may be beneficial for future researchers to increase the number of nonclinical participants to address possible different motivators for this subset of Generation Y knowledge workers.

Although the participant pool did not yield proportionate numbers of males and females or clinical and nonclinical knowledge workers, the recruitment techniques utilized allowed the researcher to reach data redundancy and achieve theoretical saturation. Ultimately, the researcher was able to build a theoretical explanation of the work motivation experiences of Generation Y knowledge workers, based on representativeness of concepts, not of people, consistent with the goals of grounded theory research.

Data collection and analysis. As previously indicated, the researcher used the interviewing as the primary data collection method and conducted the data analysis utilizing the constant comparative method, consistent with grounded theory research methods. There were no significant problems during the data collection or analysis process. Although the diverse geographic locations of the study participants made scheduling the face-to-face interviews challenging at times, the face-to-face interviews yielded rich descriptions and stories that might have been lost through telephone interviews (Weiss, 1994, p. 59). The use of transcription software in addition to an audiorecorder allowed the researcher to engage with the participants during the interviews and facilitated proper recording of participants' responses and minimized the issues associated with noise interference at public locations.

The data analysis consisted of three levels of coding: initial coding, focused coding, and theoretical coding. The coding process enabled the researcher to analyze the participants' interview transcripts at multiple levels and resulted in the development 28 focused codes within five theoretical categories: desiring purpose, desiring self-worth, receiving social acceptance, valuing positive organizational culture, and desiring equity.

Reflections on the research process. When the researcher began this research study, she was a novice researcher with limited exposure to qualitative research methods. With a background in business, she initially gravitated toward quantitative research methods, so when faced with the daunting task of conducting a qualitative research study for the first time, she did not know fully what to expect of the research process. As the research study began to take shape, the researcher developed a greater appreciation for qualitative research methods and their value in the research world.

At the outset of the research process, the researcher was not aware of any preconceived notions or biases she had about the research study itself. As she began to conduct the research and reflect on the research process, she realized the value of the qualitative research process, which allowed the researcher to personally observe the research participants and their emotions as they discussed their work motivation experiences, and to meaningfully probe for further information when participants conveyed information that affected their work motivation experiences and influenced their work. By conducting a grounded theory research study, the researcher was able to gather rich, meaningful data that would not have been attainable through a quantitative study of similar scope. The rich descriptions provided by the research participants as they elucidated their stories provided the researcher with greater insight into the work motivation experiences of Generation Y knowledge workers. Through the research participants' stories, the researcher was able to identify what motivated and demotivated these individuals, and to develop an understanding of why Generation Y knowledge workers are motivated the way they are.

As the study progressed, the researcher developed a greater understanding of the research participants' desire to contribute and make a difference, and began to see the connection between their need to contribute and make a difference and their desire to work for learning organizations that foster teamwork, knowledge sharing, and effective change management. Generation Y, the generation commonly criticized in anecdotal literature for its need for instant gratification (Sweat, 2012), is driven by the desire to help others through creative thinking and informed decision making. Generation Y's desire for quick feedback is not driven by a desire for instant gratification, but rather by their desire to make timely, informed decisions that will contribute to the greater good of the organization and/or the community at large. They thrive on contribution and acknowledgement for a job well done, and will go to great lengths to help others if they feel valued and supported.

Additional Literature Informing This Study's Grounded Theory

This section provides a review of additional literature informing this study's grounded theory, including a review of the intersecting literature on Generation Y and work motivation, the review of which was specifically delayed until after the research commenced to avoid imposing preconceived notions on the data.

Work Motivation and Generation Y

After completing the data analysis for the study, the researcher reviewed the work motivation literature specifically focused on members of Generation Y employed in the healthcare industry. Chung and Fitzsimons (2013) reviewed several studies focused on the work motivation of Generation Y healthcare workers. These studies revealed that this

generation of workers comprises technologically advanced individuals who are vocal about their needs and have an altruistic desire to contribute (Chung & Fitzsimons, 2013, pp. 1173-1179). According to the studies, Generation Y workers seek meaningful and challenging work and they want to work in organizations that encourage learning and professional development (Chung & Fitzsimons, 2013, p. 1178). They also desire work-life balance and flexibility and would trade pay for meaningful work at an organization in which employees are listened to and recognized for their efforts (Chung & Fitzsimons, 2013, p. 1178).

Work Motivation and Purpose

Following the development of the nascent grounded theory regarding the work motivation experiences of Generation Y knowledge workers (explicated below), the researcher conducted a further search of the literature to identify literature surrounding the core concepts of the nascent theory: work motivation and purpose and/or meaning. The results of this literature search yielded research articles that confirmed the importance of meaning and/or purpose in the context of work motivation. Researchers Morrison, Burke III, and Green (2007) discussed the importance of creating meaning in the healthcare workplace and suggested that the need for meaning in work is transgenerational (p. 101). Morrison et al. stated that "logotherapy or meaning theory holds the potential to positively impact job satisfaction and staff turnover in the health care industry by influencing the internal motivation of its employees" (p. 108) and indicated that it would be worthwhile for organizational leaders to approach motivation from this view, especially given the many challenges facing the healthcare industry.

Moody and Pesut (2006) also discussed the importance of meaning and purpose in the context of work motivation as it relates to professional nursing work.

Implications of the Study Results

This section provides a comparison of the study findings to the literature initially presented in Chapter 2 as well as the literature introduced earlier in this chapter, and contextualization of the study's findings in the literature. The section concludes with implications for practice and implications for organizational research and theory, which lead to the presentation of the nascent grounded theory.

Comparison of Study Findings to the Literature

This section compares the study findings to the literature on foundations and historical development of work motivation theory; knowledge work and workers; generational differences at work; and motivation and knowledge work.

Foundations and historical development of work motivation theory. This section compares the study findings to the foundational literature on and historical development of work motivation theory, including a review of the Hawthorne studies (Mayo, 1933; Roethlisberger, 1941/2005), Maslow's (1943/2008) theory of human motivation, Herzberg et al.'s (1959/1993/2008) motivation-hygiene theory, and McGregor's (1960/1985) Theory X and Theory Y. The section also contains a discussion of knowledge work and workers; generational differences at work; work motivation and knowledge work, work motivation and Generation Y; and work motivation and purpose. The section concludes with a contextualization of the findings in the literature.

The Hawthorne studies. As indicated in Chapter 2, the Hawthorne studies, conducted by Mayo (1933; Roethlisberger, 1941/2005) and his team, originated as simple scientific experiments aimed at identifying the relationship between various changes in the physical work environment (e.g., illumination) to work output (Ott et al., 2008b, p. 132; Rhee & Sigler, 2005, p. 321). The studies revealed a need for greater attention to the human element of motivation by demonstrating the importance of employee attitudes and beliefs (Roethlisberger, 1941/2005, p. 143). The researchers discovered that management's attentiveness to workers positively influenced employee productivity (Roethlisberger, 1941/2005). The results of this study support the findings of the Hawthorne studies by further demonstrating that purely extrinsic motivators such as monetary rewards do not serve as the primary motivators for the research participants. Instead, the research participants sought collaborative work environments in which organizational leaders valued employees and recognized them for their individual contributions, fostered knowledge sharing amongst employees, allowed employees to have autonomy and gave them control over their own work while creating a sense of community. Like the Hawthorne studies, the study results also support the need for organizations to shift away from mechanistic bureaucracy to more collaborative work environments in which employees can make a difference by being part of a team that works together to reach the organization's goals.

Maslow's theory of human motivation. Maslow (1943/2008) postulated that money alone was not a sufficient motivator. He theorized that several different needs motivate humans, hierarchically. He grouped these needs into five distinct categories: basic needs (physiological needs), safety needs, love/belongingness needs, esteem needs,

and the need for self-actualization (pp. 149-152). According to Maslow, these needs arrange themselves into a hierarchy of relative prepotency in which the emergence of one need is typically contingent upon the prior satisfaction of another, more prepotent need (p. 149).

Although the results of this study supported some elements of Maslow's (1943/2008) theory of human motivation, there was not clear support for the precise hierarchical depiction of motivation presented by Maslow. Participants infrequently mentioned the needs portrayed at the lowest levels of Maslow's hierarchy of needs—basic physiological needs and safety needs. Although a few participants discussed the importance of having access to the necessary information to perform their jobs, which represents a basic physiological need in the work environment (Brenner, 1999, p. 34), participants did not cite basic physiological needs as their primary motivators. Instead, participants indicated that the absence of the necessary information to perform their jobs served as a demotivator and could potentially lead to the impetus to change jobs, if not corrected. Although Maslow (1943/2008) posited that American culture, at the time of his theorizing, typically satisfied the safety needs of healthy, normal, fortunate adults, such that the safety needs did not commonly serve as active motivators (p. 150), he indicated that safety needs serve as an active and dominant mobilizer of human motivation during emergency situations (e.g., war, natural disaster, disease, crime wave, etc.). In the work environment, in addition to physical safety, individuals have a need to feel psychologically safe and secure. The results of this study did not reveal safety needs as a primary motivator for participants although participants occasionally mentioned their dislike for unfair treatment or unpredictable administration of policies. Although

participants valued their work environments, the desire for safety was not a common theme in this study.

This study's results did have congruence with the higher levels of Maslow's (1943/2008) hierarchy—love/belongingness needs, esteem needs, and the need for self-actualization—and supported the idea that individuals are driven by complex interrelated variables. Maslow's categorization of higher level motivation needs related closely to the participants' desires to receive social acceptance (*love/belongingness needs*), desires for self-worth (*esteem needs*), and their overarching desire for purpose and meaning (*need for self-actualization*).

Although the participants did not express many safety or physiological needs when discussing their work motivation experiences, they frequently discussed their desire for belonging and their desires to make a difference by helping people and/or making a contribution. These concepts were closely related to Maslow's (1943/2008) *love/belongingness needs* and did serve as motivators for the participants. In the work environment, participants sought to satisfy these needs by seeking social acceptance from peers and superiors.

Maslow's (1943/2008) *esteem needs* fall into two categories: the desire for strength, achievement, adequacy, confidence, independence and freedom; and the desire for reputation or prestige, recognition, attention, importance or appreciation (p. 151). "Satisfaction of the self-esteem need leads to feelings of self-confidence, worth, strength, capability and adequacy of being useful and necessary in the world. But thwarting of these needs produces feelings of inferiority, of weakness, and of helplessness" (p. 151). The research participants' desires for self-worth relate closely to Maslow's *esteem needs*

and suggest that social acceptance plays a crucial role in the workplace because individuals who feel useful to the organization will gain self-confidence and self-worth, thereby impacting their desires to make positive contributions to their organizations.

The final level of Maslow's (1943/2008) hierarchy of needs is self-actualization *needs* (pp. 151-152). *Self-actualization* refers to an individual's desire for self-fulfillment—the desire to reach one's full potential (p. 152). Maslow's self-actualization needs, which represent the highest level of motivators in his hierarchy, are closely aligned with the desire for purpose expressed by participants in this study. Like Maslow's self-actualization needs, the desire for purpose was the ultimate motivator for research participants. The desire for purpose encompassed elements from the four other theoretical categories from this study: desiring equity, valuing positive organizational culture, receiving social acceptance, and desiring self-worth. The desire for purpose was the primary motivator for research participants and achieving purpose was an integral part of the research participants' work motivation experiences.

The gratification and deprivation of needs are equally important in Maslow's (1943/2008) theory of human motivation, because need gratification allows the individual to pursue higher level needs (p. 150), whereas lower level need deprivation takes precedence over pursuit of higher level needs. Although the lower level needs on Maslow's hierarchy did not represent key concepts in the participants' work motivation experiences, the absence of a healthy organizational culture which promoted equity had the ability to negatively influence participants' motivation, for instance. The higher level needs represented in Maslow's hierarchy do have meaning in the context of this study, although the overlapping nature of the codes in the theoretical categories does not

definitively support the hierarchical structure posited by Maslow. Upon reasonable satisfaction of these lower level needs, individuals will seek social acceptance in the work environment. As suggested in numerous critiques of Maslow's theory, the needs categories may be more interdependent than Maslow suggested (e.g., Berl et al., 1984; Heylighen, 1992).

In a work context, the organization should also be considered in, but not be viewed as the only explanation for, an individual's behavior (Brenner, 1999, p. 34). Maslow (1943/2008) also recognized other factors at play in human motivation and suggested that motivation cannot be studied in isolation (p. 154).

Although this study' results do not appear to completely substantiate Maslow's (1943/2008) hierarchy, the results provided some evidence of needs emergence according to the hierarchy, with the absence of safety and physiological needs serving as potential demotivators.

Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory. Despite the contradictory views on Herzberg et al.'s (1959/1993/2008) motivation-hygiene theory mentioned in Chapter 2 (Bassett-Jones & Lloyd, 2005, p. 933; Hardin, 1965; Hulin & Smith, 1965; Sachau, 2007, p. 383; Vroom, 1964/2008), the results of this research reveal that offering extrinsic rewards such as financial inducements and gifts to employees is not the most effective method for motivating employees to contribute ideas (Bassett-Jones & Lloyd, 2005, p. 941) and, thus, provide further evidence in support of Herzberg et al.'s (1959/1993/2008) motivation-hygiene theory. Participants did not report extrinsic factors such as salary and working conditions as their primary motivators, but the absence of these factors caused

dissatisfaction for participants and served as demotivators. Intrinsic factors related to the work itself served as motivators.

McGregor's Theory X and Theory Y. According to McGregor (1960/1985), exercising traditional command-and-control managerial techniques is not the most effective method for managing employees, especially those whose lower level needs are met. McGregor (1960/1985) suggested that traditional management techniques, based on influence and control, are ineffective because they are predicated on the assumptions that

- people have an inherent dislike for work and will seek to avoid work whenever possible;
- because individuals dislike work, they must be coerced or controlled in order to get them to pursue the objectives of the organization; and
- humans generally prefer to be directed, like to avoid responsibility, lack ambition, and seek security more than anything else (pp. 33-34).

McGregor referred to this set of assumptions as *Theory X* (p. 35).

The results of this study further discredit Theory X by demonstrating that participants had an inherent desire to find meaningful work and/or purpose and would work in support of the organization's goals if they perceived the organization's goals as worthy and they felt valued and needed. Participants discussed their desires to work for organizations which supported their desires to help others and make a difference. Unlike the assumptions of Theory X, which suggest that individuals prefer to be directed, like to avoid responsibility, lack ambition, and seek security more than anything else, this study's participants expressed a desire to have autonomy and control. They wanted to be involved in the decision-making process and share knowledge throughout the organization and they sought purpose and meaning more than anything else.

Contrary to Theory X assumptions about organizational behavior, McGregor's (1960/1985) Theory Y states that integration of the individual employees' needs and the organization's needs is critical for success. Employing this view, organizations will succeed by creating conditions that allow employees to achieve their own goals by directing their efforts to the organization's goals. In essence, organizational leaders will benefit from creating a collaborative work environment that fosters communications and enables workers to actively participate in helping the organization reach its goals while sharing in the resulting rewards (pp. 49-53). The results of this research study support the need for organizational cultures in which workers can best achieve their personal goals while pursuing the organization's goals. Organizational leaders must gain commitment from workers by continuously encouraging workers to develop and utilize their skills, knowledge, capacity, and ingenuity to contribute to the organization's success (p. 55).

At the time that McGregor (1960/1985) originally espoused his views on *The Human Side of Enterprise*, employers were still predominantly bureaucratic, production-based organizations that viewed employees as interchangeable parts in a mechanistic system, and McGregor's ideas were not readily accepted (Heil et al., 2000, p. 4). However, the changing nature of the workforce and advancements in technology have enabled companies to become more competitive in world markets, thus increasing the competition and creating an increased need for successful team collaboration in organizations. As previously mentioned in Chapter 2, U.S. organizations have shifted from *mechanistic* to *networked, living organizations* (Burns & Stalker, 1961/2005, pp. 198-202) which rely on knowledge workers. Accordingly, McGregor's (1960/1985) fundamental ideas about the changing nature of work and people's roles in the workplace

are perhaps more important and relevant than ever because they deal with key issues facing organizational leaders in the current economy (Heil et al., 2000, pp. vii-viii).

Knowledge work and workers. Research suggests that classical motivation theories and managerial practices may need modification to address the needs of knowledge workers due to the nature of knowledge work (Carter & Scarbrough, 2001; Petroni & Colacino, 2008; Šajeva, 2007), which involves the creation and transfer of tacit knowledge (Carter & Scarbrough, 2001, p. 216). In this study, participants spoke often about their desires to continue to grow personally and professionally. For the research participants, it was important to work for organizations that valued their input and allowed them to take advantage of educational opportunities that improved their skillsets and provided them with flexibility to accomplish the organization's goals through their own methods. When the organizational culture was a positive one that promoted learning and information sharing, the research participants indicated they were more satisfied in their roles and they stated they were much more likely to stay at their organizations because they felt valued.

Generational differences at work. Due to the limited scope of this study, it is unclear whether or not the participants' work motivation experiences represent generational differences in work motivation or not. Although the participants did describe different philosophies regarding their communication styles and attitudes toward change than they reported for their colleagues from different generations, these differences may be a result of age-related or career-stage differences in philosophies. To truly determine if

the differences are generational, future researchers should conduct longitudinal studies regarding this specific research population.

Work motivation and knowledge work. As indicated in Chapter 2, research suggests that knowledge workers represent a new class of worker with different values, needs (Carter & Scarbrough, 2001), and motivation (Kelloway & Barling, 2000, p. 288; Petroni & Colacino, 2008), for whom classical work motivation theories may no longer be entirely relevant (Carter & Scarbrough, 2001; Giles et al., 1999; Petroni & Colacino, 2008). Classic motivation theories that focused on *extrinsic motivators* may not sufficiently address knowledge workers' needs for more individualized, *intrinsic motivators* to develop and transfer knowledge to support organizational performance (Šajeva, 2007, p. 648). The results of this study provide support for the claim that knowledge workers have different values and needs than other classes of workers. The study revealed that intrinsic motivators such as the desire to contribute and finding meaningful work were the primary motivators for the research participants.

Work motivation and Generation Y. As discussed earlier in this chapter, recent studies on the work motivation experiences of Generation Y employees, revealed that members of this generation are motivated by intrinsic motivators such as the desire to contribute (Chung & Fitzsimons, 2013, pp. 1173–1179). Research indicates that individuals from Generation Y are technologically advanced issues with a desire to contribute. According to recent research studies, Generation Y workers seek meaningful and challenging work and they want to work in organizations that encourage learning and professional development (Chung & Fitzsimons, 2013, p. 1178). They also desire work-

life balance and flexibility, and would trade pay for meaningful work at an organization in which employees are listened to and recognized for their efforts (Chung & Fitzsimons, 2013, p. 1178). Although the studies did not address whether these traits are unique to members of Generation Y, the research is consistent with the findings of this research study, which indicate that the desire for purpose and meaning are the primary motivators for these individuals.

Work motivation and purpose. This research study revealed that purpose and meaning served as effective motivators for the research participants. This is consistent with recent studies on work motivation, which indicate that there has been a shift from extrinsic motivators, which were prevalent motivators during the mechanistic era, to intrinsic motivators, which provide employees with a greater sense of meaning and purpose. The following section discusses this in further detail and presents the nascent theory that resulted from this research study.

Contextualization of Findings in the Literature

As previously indicated, although the literature on work motivation is vast, there are relatively few empirical studies that address the work motivation experiences of Generation Y (Robertson & Hammersley, 2000; Westerman & Yamamura, 2007), and none that specifically addresses the work motivation experiences of Generation Y knowledge workers in the healthcare industry. The work motivation literature suggests that generational differences in work motivation may exist (Crampton & Hodge, 2007, p. 16; Daboval, 1998; Moody, 2007; Patota et al., 2007, p. 1) and indicates that organizational leaders need to identify the work motivation preferences of each

generation to capitalize on the strengths of their employees (Patota et al., 2007). The literature also indicates that knowledge workers are motivated differently than other types of workers due to the nature of their work, which involves a high level of critical thinking skills and creativity (Kelloway & Barling, 2000, p. 288; Petroni & Colacino, 2008).

This study was designed to address the gaps in the literature through a grounded theory approach aimed at identifying the work motivation experiences of Generation Y knowledge workers in the healthcare industry. The study's findings support the concept that knowledge workers are motivated differently than other individuals in the workplace and point to the importance of intrinsic motivators such as the desire for purpose and meaning. The study also contributes to the literature by presenting data on the work motivation experiences of Generation Y, a generation for which very little empirical research on work motivation exists.

As further discussed in the Recommendations for Further Research section below, future research studies will need to expand this study within Generation Y and outside of the generation to adequately assess if the motivators presented in this study are the same for other generations of knowledge workers or if they are unique to members of this generation. In addition, future research should include other industries outside healthcare to determine if the study's findings are applicable to Generation Y knowledge workers from other industries.

Implications for Practice

This section presents the unique findings of this study and discusses the implications of this study's results for the healthcare industry, organizational leaders, Generation Y knowledge workers, and members of other generations.

Unique findings and/or additions to the literature. This study was the first empirical study of its kind to specifically address the work motivation experiences of Generation Y knowledge workers employed in the healthcare industry in the Midwest. The study's findings suggest that Generation Y knowledge workers are primarily motivated by intrinsic motivators such as the desire for purpose and meaning, rather than purely extrinsic motivators such as monetary rewards. The participants' desires for social acceptance and self-worth contributed to their work motivation experiences and desire for purpose and meaning.

Implications for the healthcare industry. In an era of rapid technological change, increasing healthcare regulations, shrinking margins, and an aging population, healthcare organizations are struggling to keep up with the challenges they face. Healthcare organizations that wish to stay ahead of the curve will need to continue to recruit and retain qualified knowledge workers to remain competitive in the marketplace. With the Baby Boomers approaching retirement, it is critical for organizational leaders to find ways to motivate today's youngest generation in the workforce, Generation Y. This study's results reveal that organizational leaders who wish to attract and retain skilled knowledge workers will need to find ways to create collaborative work environments that promote knowledge sharing and teamwork, while providing knowledge workers with challenging and meaningful work and the autonomy and flexibility they desire.

Implications for organizational leaders. Organizations that wish to survive in today's hypercompetitive business world will need to harness the strengths of Generation Y knowledge workers. Organizational leaders will need to abandon their traditional

bureaucratic organizational structures and create networked organizational structures that promote knowledge sharing and collaboration across all functions, departments, and levels. By involving knowledge workers in the decision-making process from the outset of the planning phases, organizational leaders will be able to capitalize on Generation Y knowledge workers' longing to contribute and make a difference, and such involvement and engagement will provide these workers with the challenging work, meaning, and purpose they so desperately desire.

Implications for Generation Y knowledge workers. The results of this study shed light on the work motivation experiences of Generation Y knowledge workers and will provide organizational leaders with the insight necessary to further harness the potential of Generation Y knowledge workers. If organizational leaders work to create collaborative work environments that promote critical thinking and teamwork, Generation Y knowledge workers will benefit by achieving social acceptance and self-worth, thereby contributing to their overarching desire for meaning and purpose.

Implications for members of other generations. The study's results will provide members of other generations with additional insight into the motivators driving Generation Y knowledge workers. Through the development of an increased understanding of the work motivation experiences of Generation Y knowledge workers, members of other generations will begin to understand the need to develop techniques for working more collaboratively with members of Generation Y, thereby fostering the development of an organizational culture in which employees feel needed and valued.

Implications for Organizational Theory and Research

The study's findings build on the existing literature by providing additional insight into the work motivation experiences of Generation Y knowledge workers, who are relatively new entrants to the workforce. These research findings led to the development of a nascent grounded theory, introduced below, that will serve as the foundation for future research studies and theory concerning the work motivation experiences of Generation Y knowledge workers. A section detailing Recommendations for Future Research follows the grounded theory section.

Initial Proposed Grounded Theory Based on This Study

The study results led to the development of a nascent theory surrounding the work motivation experiences of Generation Y knowledge workers, as follows:

> **Generation Y knowledge workers are motivated primarily by a desire for purpose and meaning, which can be achieved through the attainment of social acceptance and self-worth in their work. An organizational environment that does not support teamwork, collaboration, and knowledge sharing, and/or lacks equity, can demotivate these individuals and potentially contribute to their desire to leave the organization.**

Figure 3 provides a visual depiction of the study's results that led to the development of this grounded theory on the work motivation experiences of Generation Y knowledge workers. As depicted in Figure 3, the data from this study yielded five theoretical categories related to the work motivation experiences of Generation Y knowledge workers: desiring purpose, desiring self-worth, receiving social acceptance, valuing organizational culture, and desiring equity. The theoretical categories represented by the four quadrants of the circle contain motivation concepts that contribute to the

central category, desiring purpose, which encompasses many of the elements of the other four.

The desire for purpose was the primary motivator for the research participants; the codes listed in blue in Figure 3 represent factors that directly relate to the participants' desire for purpose. The items listed in red represent demotivators mentioned by the participants, and the factors listed in black are motivators that did not overlap with the central theoretical category, desiring purpose.

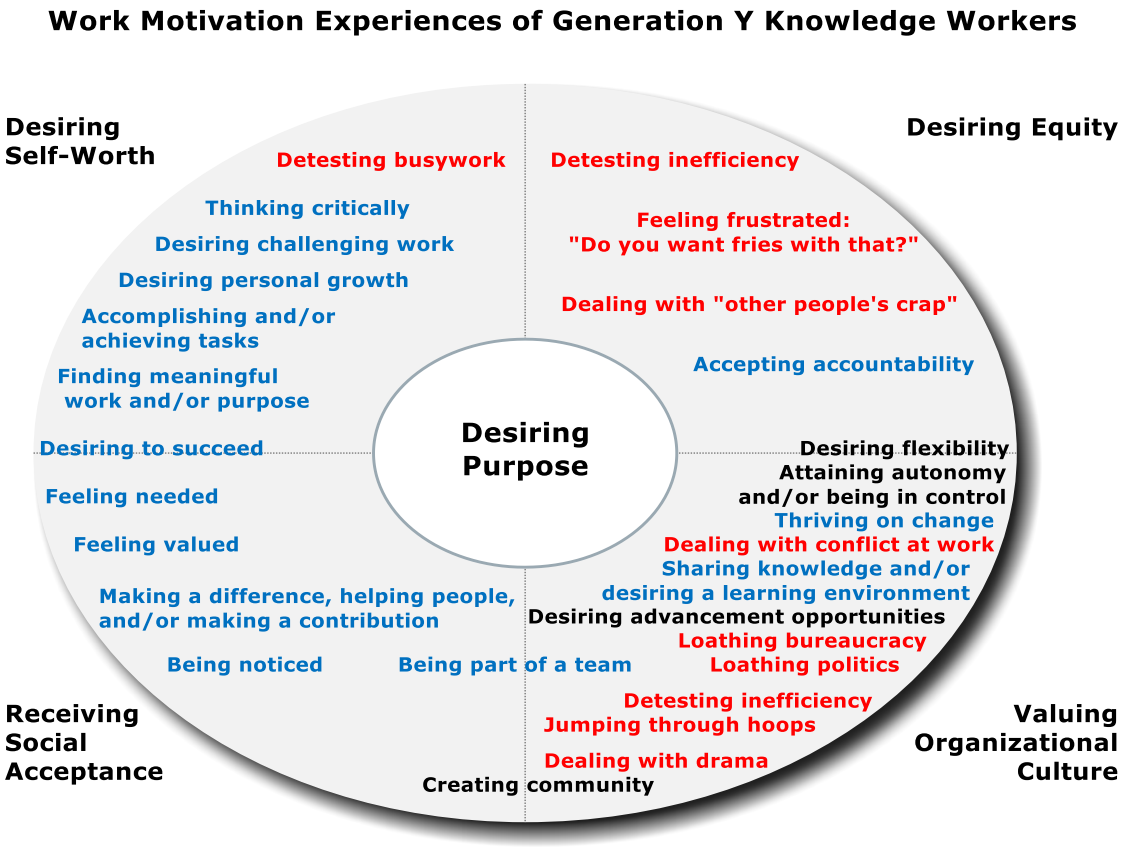

Figure 3. Work motivation experiences of Generation Y knowledge workers. The quadrants represent the theoretical work motivation categories derived from this study, with motivators and demotivators listed in their respective quadrants. Focused codes listed in blue represent motivators that directly related to the participants' desire for purpose; codes listed in black represented motivators that did not directly relate to the participants' desire for purpose; codes listed in red served as demotivators. Copyright 2014 by Keri Alexander. Original work of the author; all rights reserved.

Due to the interconnectedness and complexity of work motivation, many of the codes listed in the figure above span more than one theoretical category. Although the focused codes and theoretical categories depicted above led to the development of this nascent grounded theory on the work motivation experiences of Generation Y knowledge workers, the focused codes listed may not have equal weight for the participants. The participants made more distinctions about their work motivation experiences in some instances than they did in others, so future research may be useful to achieve a more in-depth analysis of the motivators and demotivators identified herein.

Limitations of the Study

This section provides a more in-depth review of the study's limitations, including a discussion regarding the scope of the study, the study's generalizability, and the methodological limitations of the study. The section concludes with a summary of the study's limitations, followed by corresponding suggestions for future research.

Scope of Study and Generalizability

As stated in Chapter 1, this study drew data from Generation Y knowledge workers in a limited number of companies in a small geographic area in a single industry, the healthcare industry. Due to the limited scope of this research, the data from this grounded theory study may not be generalizable (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 251). The findings may not apply to other industries, generations, regions, countries, or cultures.

The desire for purpose and the desire to contribute may be a common motivator for healthcare employees, as it may directly relate to the types of individuals who seek employment in the healthcare industry. In other words, individuals who chose a career in

healthcare may have certain personality traits and/or characteristics that drive them to find careers with meaning and purpose. These individuals' desire to contribute may be what leads to their selection of careers in healthcare. This factor may influence this study's findings. However, Generation Y knowledge workers were the focus of this study, the findings are still relevant regardless of whether or not these individuals self-selected for careers in healthcare because of their innate need to contribute and make a difference or not.

The nonwork influences on work motivation, which have the ability to impact individuals' work motivation experiences, was outside the scope of this study. Future research on the potential impact of nonwork influences, such as family life, on the work motivation experiences of knowledge workers would be useful.

The data also represent only one moment in time. Therefore, it is uncertain whether or not the participants' views regarding work motivation will change as they mature and progress in their careers.

Methodological Limitations

As noted in Chapter 1, this study relied on qualitative data collected through in-depth, face-to-face interviews using open-ended questions, which assume that participants responded openly, honestly, and candidly. Grounded theory analysis based on the individuals' self-reported opinions may introduce individual bias. Although the researcher designed the Interview Protocol (Appendix B) to avoid imposing her own interests on the experiences of participants (Seidman, 2006, p. 92).

Researcher bias. To provide a better understanding of this researcher's position and any biases or assumptions that may have impacted the inquiry, the researcher made her views and perspectives explicit by disclosing her philosophical assumptions in the Researcher's Philosophy section of Chapter 3 and utilizing reflexivity to unveil any known biases that may have influenced her interpretation and approach to the study. The use of reflexivity throughout the research study, as described earlier in the Reflexivity and the Role of the Researcher section of Chapter 4, provides readers with an understanding of the researcher's involvement in the research process, to check for researcher effects and biases (Miles & Huberman, 1994, pp. 265-266) and to explain how the researcher's interpretations of the data influenced the research process. In addition, exclusion of participants known to the researcher or employed in the researcher's own organization worked to reduce researcher bias (Seidman, 2006).

Limitations of grounded theory research methods. Grounded theory requires the researcher to start a research study without preconceived notions about the research (Robson, 2002, p. 192) and the prescribed categories commonly associated with classic grounded theory research methods can also be problematic because the categories may not be appropriate for certain studies (Charmaz, 2006; Robson, 2002, p. 192). In an attempt to overcome these limitations, this study relied upon a constructivist approach to grounded theory, which advocates the use of reflexivity and a more flexible research design. This approach permitted this researcher to reflect upon her own involvement in the research process, to move interactively from data collection to analysis to collection and clarification, and to avoid use of prescribed categories that were not be appropriate for a study about the work motivation experiences of Generation Y knowledge workers.

The use of multiple interviews and member checking of the transcripts and initial results also served to engage the participants in verifying the efficacy of the coding, analysis, and theorizing processes and reduced the potential for interview bias.

Interview bias. The researcher's interaction with research participants during interviews has the ability to affect research participants' responses to interview questions (Miles & Huberman, 1994, pp. 265-266; Seidman, 2006, p. 23). In an effort to minimize the distortion that can occur because of the researcher's role in the interviews, the researcher avoided the use of leading questions (Seidman, 2006, p. 84) and gave the research participants the opportunity "to reconstruct their experiences according to their own sense of what was important" (Seidman, 2006, p. 85). In addition, the researcher limited her own interaction in the interviews to minimize distortion (Patton, 1989, p. 157), reduce researcher effects, which can create bias (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 265), and to avoid distracting participants from their own experiences (Seidman, 2006, p. 89). The researcher also made a concerted effort to refrain from positively or negatively reinforcing what the participants were saying to reduce the risk of distorting how the research participants responded (Seidman, 2006, pp. 89-90).

Summary of Limitations of the Study

The primary limitations of this study related to the scope of the study and the research methodology employed. Although the limited scope of the study prevents generalizability of the results and the use of grounded theory research methods introduces the potential for researcher bias, there were no significant limitations impacting the results of the study. The study yielded meaningful results through the analysis of the

participants' lived motivation experiences and provided greater insight into the work motivation experiences of Generation Y knowledge workers employed in the healthcare industry. The following section provides recommendations for future research aimed at expanding the study to identify if the study's findings apply outside the scope of this study.

Recommendations for Further Research

Future research should expand the geographic area to identify any specific motivational issues related to geographical region. In addition, future research should expand the study outside of the healthcare industry to determine if the same motivational forces exist for Generational Y knowledge workers in other service and nonservice industries. This will allow researchers to more adequately determine if knowledge workers in healthcare positions feel a greater desire to contribute and make a difference than knowledge workers in other industries or career paths.

The central research question (Creswell, 2003, p. 106; 2007, p. 108) this study investigated was as follows: How do Generation Y knowledge workers experience and describe work motivation? This exploratory question encompassed subquestions (Creswell, 2003, p. 106; 2007, p. 108) of Generation Y's (a) intrinsic motivators, (b) extrinsic motivators, and (c) demotivators, as well as this generation's (d) process of and (e) approach to work motivation. Implicit therein are subordinate questions of possible different motivators for subsets of Generation Y knowledge workers. Future research should explore such implicit questions regarding possible different motivators for subsets of Generation Y knowledge workers (e.g., by sex, age, education, occupation, industry, region, etc.).

It may be beneficial to break Generation Y knowledge workers into two age groupings to determine if work motivators vary by age group in addition to generation. Research suggests that age-related differences may affect employee work motivation (Jurkiewicz, 2000, p. 66). Therefore, longitudinal examination of Generation Y cohorts may also be beneficial to advance understanding of this area of inquiry.

Furthermore, it is unclear whether or not the study's findings are indeed unique to this generation or if the study's findings would also apply to healthcare knowledge workers from other generational cohorts. Future studies will need to address this.

Due to the limited scope of the study, and to preserve the anonymity of the research participants, the researcher did not design the study to include feedback from the research participants' supervisors regarding the participants' motivational factors. Such information may provide additional insight into the work motivation of Generation Y knowledge workers. Similarly, information from interview participants from other generations may be useful to explore any variations in motivators and demotivators, and perspectives on same, to provide comparative data across the generations.

Conclusion

In the knowledge economy, Generation Y knowledge workers serve as important organizational assets and represent a critical source of competitive advantage for organizations. To remain competitive, organizational leaders must find ways to motivate Generation Y knowledge workers to achieve higher levels of performance in support of the organization's goals.

This study's results revealed that Generation Y knowledge workers are motivated primarily by a desire for purpose and meaning, which can be achieved through the

attainment of social acceptance and self-worth in their work. An organizational environment that does not support teamwork, collaboration, and knowledge sharing, and/or lacks equity, can demotivate these individuals and potentially contribute to their desire to leave the organization. Organizational leaders who recognize the motivational needs of Generation Y knowledge workers and create work environments that foster collaboration, teamwork, and knowledge sharing amongst employees will reap the rewards by harnessing the critical thinking skills of this important group of employees.

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APPENDIX A: POTENTIAL PARTICIPANT SCREENING QUESTIONNAIRE

[This may be used for telephone and oral contact or as written communication.]

Potential Participant: _____

Phone: _____

Personal [not work] Email: _____

Referred by: _____

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this research study on the work motivation of Generation Y knowledge workers. To determine if you qualify for the study, I need to gather some background information about you, your job, and your education. This will take approximately 15 minutes. Is this a good time to do that?

[If NO]: Schedule a subsequent time to conduct the preliminary telephone screening interview.

[If YES]: Thank you.

1. What is your gender?
2. What year were you born?
3. What is the highest level of education you completed (High School Graduate/Some College/College Degree/Graduate Degree/Postgraduate)? [If participant attended college] What was your major/area of academic concentration?
4. In what industry are you presently employed?
5. With what organization are you employed?
6. What type of an organization is it (for-profit, not-for-profit, government, etc.)?
7. What is your organization's primary business (healthcare delivery, pharmaceuticals, medical equipment, medical consulting, etc.)?

8. How many people are employed by your current organization?
9. How long have you been employed at your current organization?
10. What is your professional position/role/title within the organization?
11. What is your primary job function?
12. Please provide a brief explanation of your job duties.
13. Do you supervise other people? If so, how many?
14. How many individuals (such as team members or individuals in your department) do you consistently work with on a daily basis? Approximately how many of these individuals are knowledge workers?

[If participant meets criteria]: After reviewing the results of the preliminary telephone screening interviews, I will be in contact with you to let you know if you qualify for the study. If you are selected to participate in the study, I will contact you to schedule a face-to-face interview. Would that be acceptable? Thank you for your time. [Obtain phone numbers and private/home email address.]

[If participant does not meet criteria]: I appreciate your time and participation. However, I am looking for individuals with different professional positions/roles [or from the specified age group]. Thank you for your time.

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Good (morning/afternoon/evening), [Name of participant]. Thank you for agreeing to discuss your work motivation experiences with me.

[Verify that consent form has been signed.]

As we discussed, this research study is about the work motivation experiences of Generation Y knowledge workers employed in the healthcare industry in the Midwest. As a knowledge worker employed in the healthcare industry, I am interested in the stories of Generation Y knowledge workers and how various issues affect their work motivation. The information obtained in this study will provide insight into what motivates Generation Y knowledge workers and will potentially reveal generational differences in the work motivation experiences of knowledge workers.

During this interview, I will refer to knowledge work and knowledge workers. For the purposes of this research, I will use the following definition of knowledge workers:

> Knowledge workers have a level of skills/education, with technological literacy, high cognitive power and abstract reasoning. This includes the ability to observe, synthesize and interpret data, and to communicate new solutions for the organization. The knowledge creation process is part of the organization's competitive strategy, characterized by information/knowledge sharing and team collaboration to produce more effective actions and solutions. (Horwitz et al., 2003, p. 31)

I will also ask you questions pertaining to your work. In some instances, I will ask you questions about your current position. In other instances, I will ask you questions about work in general. If I do not specifically indicate that I am interested in your current job when asking you the question, please feel free to draw upon past work experiences as you see fit.

As we discussed before, I will audio record the interview so that I can accurately transcribe your remarks. This also avoids the need for me to take notes, but I may still jot down an occasional note or a follow-up question so that I do not interrupt your train of thought.

[If OK, turn on audio recorder and supply headset; demonstrate how transcription works, and then turn the computer monitor toward me.] [If not, interview ends.]

Do you have any questions or comments before we begin?

[Initial Open-ended Questions]

1. Describe your first childhood memory about what you wanted to be when you grew up. Why did you want to pursue that line of work? What did you anticipate that type of work would be like?
2. Tell me about what motivated you to go into the field you work in today.
3. What contributed to your decision to work for your current organization?
4. Tell me about what attracted you to your current job.
5. Did you consider other jobs or career paths? What influenced your choices? How did you decide to follow this path versus any others?

[Intermediate Questions]

6. What is your primary reason for working?
7. How did you feel when you learned that you got this job? Why did you feel that way?
8. What were your thoughts about your job when you started in this position?
9. How, if at all, have your feelings about the job changed since then?
10. How has your career progressed since you started this job?

11. What negative changes, if any, have occurred in your job or career since you started working at your current organization?
12. Could you describe how you feel about your work throughout a typical day? [Probe for different times.]
13. Tell me about your most amazing day ever at work.
14. Tell me about your worst day ever at work.
15. As you look back on how you feel about your career thus far—what you love and don't love about your career, work, and job—what events or experiences stand out in your mind? [Pause for answer.] Could you describe each one? [Pause for answer.] How did these events affect you? [Pause for answer.] How did you respond to the resulting situations?
16. What motivates or energizes you at or about your work? [Pause for answer.] Tell me about incidents when you were most energized at work.
17. What frustrates you at or about your work? [Pause for answer.] Tell me about incidents when you were most frustrated with work.
18. Describe a time when you worked very hard on your work and why you worked so hard.
19. Describe a time when you put in very little effort at work and why you didn't work hard.
20. Describe a time when your feelings about your job were unquestionably higher than usual.
21. Describe a time when your feelings about your job were unquestionably lower than usual.

22. How do your peers and your relationships with them influence how you feel about your work?
23. What are your favorite elements of your job and what do you like about them?
24. What are your least favorite elements of your job? Why?
25. Where do you see yourself headed in your job and career in the future?
26. Describe your ideal job or the work you would like to do in the future and why it is ideal for you?

[Ending Questions]

27. What factors do you think are most important in what motivates you in your work? [Pause for answer.] How did you discover each of these things about you and your work?
28. How have you grown as a person since you started this job? [Pause for answer.] Please tell me about your strengths that you discovered or developed through this position.
29. Anything else that you think I should know to develop a better understanding of your work motivation experiences?
30. Anything that you might not have thought about before, that occurred to you during this interview?

[Closing Remarks]

Thank you for your time. As I indicated earlier, I will use your private email address to send you an electronic copy of the interview transcript within the next several weeks. I would greatly appreciate it if you could review the transcript to ensure that the information contained therein is accurate and that any potentially identifying information

has been removed or disguised to your satisfaction. You can just respond via email with any changes, corrections, or additions, and your approval to include quotes from the transcript in my study, and of course any questions.

As I review the information from your interview and compare it to others, additional questions may arise. May I contact you if I need to clarify something or if additional questions arise?

Thank you very much for your participation in this study.

APPENDIX C: INITIAL CODES

accepting accountability
accomplishing goals
achieving tasks
attaining autonomy (being in control)
avoiding monotonous routines
becoming an expert
being a hard worker (not wasting time)
being able to depend on others' help
being efficient
being motivated by a cause
being motivated by a company that cares about its employees
being noticed by big brother
being part of a team
being respectful of where your money comes from (earning your money)
being well liked
breaking the routine of every day (special projects)
checking things off lists
communicating effectively
coping with stress
creating community
creating messes
dealing with conflict at work
dealing with drama
dealing with "other people's crap"
dealing with personnel issues
demonstrating my potential
desiring advancement opportunities
desiring effective communication
desiring flexibility
desiring good relationships with coworkers
desiring growth opportunities
desiring important work
desiring personal growth
desiring promotion
desiring purpose
desiring to succeed
detesting busywork

detesting inefficiency
detesting rework (losing time)
developing awareness
developing better customer service skills
disliking boring work
disliking busywork
disliking dealing with angry people
disliking monotonous routines
disliking pessimism
disliking sitting all day
disliking uninteresting work
disliking upset people
doing something that is important to me
doing work that comes naturally to me (using my skill set)
dreading going to work when there are problems with other employees
enjoying being a good employee
enjoying being young and independent
enjoying contact with people outside of the office (e.g., patients)
enjoying extra projects
enjoying interacting with others
enjoying problem solving
expanding knowledge and worth
feeling appreciated
feeling bored
feeling cared about
feeling confused
feeling different
feeling disgruntled
feeling excited
feeling frustrated (e.g., “Do you want fries with that?”)
feeling frustrated by little things
feeling frustrated that others didn’t do their jobs correctly
feeling frustrated with interpersonal issues
feeling important
feeling like an underachiever
feeling like job was unimportant
feeling like you are just a number
feeling lost

feeling needed
feeling neglected
feeling overwhelmed
feeling purposeless
feeling relaxed
feeling satisfied
feeling satisfied that I did my best
feeling skeptical
feeling special
feeling stuck
feeling trusted
feeling unappreciated
feeling upset
finding it difficult to work for a company that I didn't care about
finding it difficult to work for a company where it wasn't exciting or important
finding meaningful work
finding new ways to do things
finding purpose
gaining authority through knowledge
gaining knowledge
getting an adrenaline rush
getting nothing done
getting noticed
getting positive feedback
going above and beyond
growing professionally
having freedom to do things the best possible way (autonomy)
helping others
helping people
hitting dead ends (feeling stuck)
interacting with others
jumping through hoops
keeping busy all day
lacking clear direction for the future
lacking direction
lacking opportunity
learning about professional relationships
learning new things

listening to patients' stories (being entertained)
living comfortably
loathing bureaucracy
loathing politics
loving satisfaction
making a contribution
making a difference
making sure it was done well
needing additional responsibility
needing increased pay
not caring
not making a whole lot of money (not a lot of extra)
not putting forth a lot of effort on a simple task because it didn't matter
not trusting
not understanding
not wanting to be limited
not wanting to embarrass myself
not wanting to put effort into little things you don't care about
not wanting to work at a job that isn't exciting
overlooking need
picturing myself doing something more important
pursuing enjoyable work
pursuing opportunity
putting it on a back burner
receiving a promotion with the promise of a career
receiving peer or supervisor recognition
receiving respect
recognizing the importance of relationships to teams
seeing the big picture
seeking and/or desiring meaningful work
seeking challenging work
seeking growth
seeking respect
sharing knowledge
sharing with others
speaking the opposite of the truth
specializing
standing out (feeling alive)

taking notice of “the stepchildren”
taking work home
thinking about being a stay at home mom
thinking about the big picture
thinking critically
thinking no one cares
thriving on challenge
thriving on change
time flying by
valuing positive organizational culture
wanting acknowledgement
wanting management to take notice
wanting others to be mindful of us
wanting others to think of us
wanting to be at the forefront of people’s minds
wanting to help more
wanting to pursue a career
wanting to understand how things relate to each other
watching the clock
working as a team to find a solution
working out of necessity
working really hard (wanting to stand out)

APPENDIX D. STATEMENT OF ORIGINAL WORK

Academic Honesty Policy

Capella University's Academic Honesty Policy (**3.01.01**) holds learners accountable for the integrity of work they submit, which includes but is not limited to discussion postings, assignments, comprehensive exams, and the dissertation or capstone project.

Established in the Policy are the expectations for original work, rationale for the policy, definition of terms that pertain to academic honesty and original work, and disciplinary consequences of academic dishonesty. Also stated in the Policy is the expectation that learners will follow APA rules for citing another person's ideas or works.

The following standards for original work and definition of *plagiarism* are discussed in the Policy:

> Learners are expected to be the sole authors of their work and to acknowledge the authorship of others' work through proper citation and reference. Use of another person's ideas, including another learner's, without proper reference or citation constitutes plagiarism and academic dishonesty and is prohibited conduct. (p. 1)
>
> Plagiarism is one example of academic dishonesty. Plagiarism is presenting someone else's ideas or work as your own. Plagiarism also includes copying verbatim or rephrasing ideas without properly acknowledging the source by author, date, and publication medium. (p. 2)

Capella University's Research Misconduct Policy (3.03.06) holds learners accountable for research integrity. What constitutes research misconduct is discussed in the Policy:

> Research misconduct includes but is not limited to falsification, fabrication, plagiarism, misappropriation, or other practices that seriously deviate from those that are commonly accepted within the academic community for proposing, conducting, or reviewing research, or in reporting research results. (p. 1)

Learners failing to abide by these policies are subject to consequences, including but not limited to dismissal or revocation of the degree.

Statement of Original Work and Signature

I have read, understood, and abided by Capella University's Academic Honesty Policy (3.01.01) and Research Misconduct Policy (3.03.06), including the Policy Statements, Rationale, and Definitions.

I attest that this dissertation or capstone project is my own work. Where I have used the ideas or words of others, I have paraphrased, summarized, or used direct quotes following the guidelines set forth in the APA *Publication Manual*.

Learner name and date	Keri Alexander 12/20/2014
Mentor name and school	Laura Markos, PhD, School of Business and Technology