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**Organizational factors impacting affective  
commitment of Generation Y**

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**ABSTRACT:**

Y-sukupolvi on tuomassa uutta näkökulmaa työelämään. Heitä ei nähdä pitkäaikaisina sitoutujina organisaatioon, ja edellyttävät työnantajalta enemmän huomiota niin palautteen kuin paloitsemisen muodossa. Y-sukupolven edustajat eivät usein näe itseään työskentelemässä samalla työnantajalla vuosikymmenien ajan, kun heitä edeltävät sukupolvet. Tämä tuo työnantajille haasteita, miten Y-sukupolvea voidaan sitouttaa tehokkaammin. Jatkuva rekrytoiminen on organisaatioille kallista, ja myös osaavat tekijät halutaan pitää organisaatioissa mahdollisimman pitkään.

Tämän tutkimuksen tarkoituksena on selvittää, mitkä tekijät vaikuttavat Y-sukupolven affektiiviseen organisaatiositoutumiseen. Tutkimuksessa sitoutumistekijöitä tarkastellaan organisaatitekijöiden näkökulmasta, joista etenkin johtaminen, autonomia, työn ja vapaa-ajan tasapaino, uramahdollisuudet, sekä organisaation tuki. Lisäksi teoreettisessa viitekehelyssä tutkitaan sitoutumista Meyer ja Allenin sitoutumistyyppien mukaan, joita ovat affektiivinen, normatiivinen ja jatkuvuusitoutuminen. Näistä affektiivinen sitoutuminen valikoitui tutkimuskysymykseen. Tutkimus toteutettiin laadullisella menetelmällä ja empiirinen aineisto kerättiin puolistrukturoiduilla haastatteluilla. Tutkimuksessa haastateltiin yhteensä kuutta henkilöä, jotka edustavat Y-sukupolvea.

Tutkimuksen tulokset osoittivat merkittäviä yhtäläisyyksiä aiempiin tutkimuslöydöksiin. Y-sukupolvi kokee olevansa sitoutunut organisaatioonsa, mutta sitoutumiseen vaikuttaa merkittävästi johtamistyyli, uramahdollisuudet sekä työn ja vapaa-ajan tasapaino. Vastaajat osoittivat affektiivista sitoutumista työnantajaansa kohtaan, sillä heille on tärkeää antaa panoksensa yrityksen toimintaan. He myös kokevat tekevänsä tärkeää työtä. Esimiehen roolilla ja johtamisella on merkittävä vaikutus Y-sukupolvelle. He odottavat transformaationaalista johtajuutta, jossa heitä motivoidaan ja kannustetaan. Y-sukupolvelle on myös tärkeää itseohjautuvuus työssä, ja mahdollisuus vaikuttaa omaan työhön. Kaikki vastaajat korostavat hybridityöskentelymallin tärkeyttä, joka mahdollistaa heille entistä enemmän vapaa-ajan ja työn yhdistämisen. Työtä ei nähdä tärkeimpänä asiana päivässä, ja tasapaino työn ja vapaa-ajan välillä on merkityksellistä. Uramahdollisuuksien tärkeydellä ei ollut merkittävää painoarvoa tuloksissa. Tähän vaikutti myös se, että vastaajat eivät olleet täysin tietoisia organisaation tarjoamista mahdollisuuksista.

Voidaan todeta, että Y-sukupolvi hakee varmuutta ja vakautta elämäänsä, vaikka heitä ei nähdä pitkäaikaisina sitoutujina työnantajaan. Työssä viihtymiseen ja sitoutumiseen voidaan pyrkiä vaikuttamaan välittävällä ja tukevalla esihenkilötyöllä, joka huolehtii työntekijöiden jaksamista ja myös kehittymismahdollisuuksista heidän toiveidensa mukaisesti.

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**KEYWORDS:** Generation Y, organizational commitment, affective commitment, organizational factors

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## 1 Introduction

According to Arsenault (2004), generations are formatted and divided into groups based on certain era they are born. Further, people born during the same era most likely share similar historical events, which then may have shaped their beliefs, values, and view of the world into mutual frame. Hence, this brings diversity to the work places as well, where many generations work together. There are four generations existing in work life when writing this thesis: Baby Boomers born 1946-1964, Generation X born 1965-1979, Generation Y born 1980-1996, and Generation Z born 1997-2012. (Arsenault 2004).

By the year 2025, Generation Y will represent up to 75 % of workforce (Mendryk, 2016). Generation Y, known also as Millennials, has brought a new impact to work places. As Millennials are becoming the biggest workforce in the markets, it is significantly shaping the work culture continuously as well. For instance, in a modern workplace the work is done in teams and employees are able to participate more to company's decision making and development. The companies, where the management exclusively set the rules and tasks related to the work, is not common anymore. (Ramli et al., 2020)

Although Generation Y have been living with technology throughout their lives, Afif (2019) states in his research how it also complicates work-life balance. Work is not tied into one place, and it can be done via smart phone or laptop anywhere. Therefore, in global companies especially, various time zones and flexible working hours may cause lack of work-life balance and issues related to the organizational commitment.

Since COVID-19 outbreak in 2020, organizations worldwide were forced to work from home (WFH) and cut face-to-face interactions between each other with a short notice period. Hence, employees were isolated and working from home, companies had to find ways to keep up high job satisfaction and work commitment through the tough times. Although the workforce nowadays is already technology savvy and is using technology proficiently at work, sudden compulsory remote work affected employees' desired working style significantly. Hence, many companies lost their long-term employees as they

were willing to find another work place where they will be able to work with their proposed working style. It is suggested, that to retain employees companies should adapt hybrid model for their employees. (Chauhan et al. 2022)

Hence, Generation Y are not seen committed to one company for a long time. They tend to look for other career paths frequently. (Wolor et al., 2021). According to recent studies (Ngotngamwong, 2020), only one third of Generation Y stated being committed to the work, and two out of three of Generation Y are thinking of changing their employer within five years. Also, up to 42 per cent out of 16 000 respondents said that instead of working in a job they do not feel joy, they rather would be unemployed (Ngotngamwong, 2020). Consequently, the lack of retain is vastly costly for companies in terms of recruitment and training of a new employee. (Morrell & Abston, 2018). As a result, companies are obliged to consider how they will be able to increase organizational commitment by retaining good employees for a longer period of time.

However, despite there are differences among the existing generations, there is a limited amount of research of Generation Y and managing them at work (Magni & Manzoni 2020). Authors notes that Generation Y have been a widespread discussion topic recently, as Generation Y have been characterized as a relatively different generation compared to the generations in prior. Nevertheless, according to Magni & Manzoni (2020), Generation Y as a job-hopping generation do value work-life balance, satisfying and comfortable working environment, and possibilities for training and personal development more than other generations. Therefore, Generation Y's hopes and wishes related to the work may differ with their Generation X or Baby Boomer supervisor, thus finding mutual values may be challenging and conflicts may occur.

According to Lasarati et al. (2019), employee's organizational commitment and engagement to work itself increases when job satisfaction is in a high level. Furthermore, Al-Jabari & Ghazzawi (2019) state that employees give their contribution to the work when the organization gives the needed support to their psychological well-being as well, as it

is one of the most important measurement in person's life quality, according to Tsauro & Yen (2019). Generation Y highly appreciate meaningful work and great work-life balance. In addition, when their expectations to have an autonomy at work and given tasks that are challenging enough, they will have increased motivation towards the organization and its goals. (Mahmoud, Reisel et al. 2020)

Organizational commitment can be examined from various viewpoints as it refers to employee's level of commitment to the organization. So, it can be viewed by factors such as affective commitment, which refers to the level of emotional attachment to the company and amount of shared values with the company, continuance commitment which refers to employee's awareness of costs if they choose to exit the company, or normative commitment which is related to the feel of obligation to continue working in the company, for instance. These factors can be also defined as affective, continuance, and normative commitment. (Meyer & Allen 1991; Bodjrenout et al. 2019) Hence, these factors has been acknowledged to foresee employee's turnover intention, examine the relationship between the employee and the employer, and investigate in which level the employee is committed to the organization. (Muda & Fook 2020; Mathieu et al. 2015). Therefore, it is vital for organizations to pay attention to employees' organization commitment in terms of autonomy, compensation, job fulfilment, and organizational support for instance. To retain employees, organizations are required to continuously develop their operations to meet employees' expectations of supporting working environment. (Putri et al. 2018). In this thesis, the focus is to research Generation Y's affective organizational commitment.

Among Generation Y, recognition and support from management have significant role in terms of their organizational commitment. Generation Y differ from the generations in prior as they "work to live" and the job does not play dominant role in their live. Therefore, they are seen the least organizational committed generation that is working at this moment. (Wilford 2020)

Further, the existing research has identified several antecedents of organizational commitment. The factors are divided into internal organizational factors and individual factors. Internal organizational factors reflect to the organizational viewpoint, and includes factors such as organizational support, autonomy, training and career development, and leadership for instance. On the other hand, individual factors relates to the commitment from individual's point of view. Hence, it takes into account factors related to individual's educational level, current position in the organization, marital status, and gender for instance. (Bodjrenout et al. 2019)

There is existing studies related to organizational commitment of Generation Y. Valenti (2019) focused on Generation Y's leadership preferences, and no significant preferences for Generation Y were found compared to the older generations. Muskat et al. (2019) researched Generation Y's job satisfaction, and it was found that possibility to participate and having a sense of appreciation increases the job satisfaction. Mahmoud et al. (2020) studied workplace motivation among Generation X, Y, and Z, and it highlights the importance of tech-savvy environment and employer brand. Lastly, Ahakwa et al. (2021) found that organizational learning and working environment have a significant impact on organizational commitment.

## **1.1 Research questions**

In the light of this background, this research paper focuses on Generation Y's organizational commitment and on the factors that affect to that. As the Generation Y is becoming the biggest working generation in the job markets, there is a need for understanding what are Generation Y's expectations or desires from the organization in order to have as highly committed employees as possible. This paper focuses on internal organizational factors, that are tied to employee's organizational commitment. Internal organizational factors provides an opportunity to create extensive vision of the elements that may have effect to respondents organizational commitment. Therefore, the two research question are formed:

*How committed is Generation Y to the organization?*

*Whether and how internal organizational factors impact on Generation Y's affective organizational commitment?*

## **1.2 Definition of key concepts**

**Generation** refers to certain age group, who share similar historical experiences and events, which has shaped their beliefs, values, and views towards life. (Arsenault 2004).

**Generation Y** is born between 1980 – 1996. They are becoming the biggest generation in the work force by the end 2025 (Mendryk, 2016). Generation Y is characterized as a job hopping generation, who show significantly low loyalty and commitment towards the organization. (Magni & Manzoni 2020).

**Organizational commitment** refers to employee's commitment to the organization. It is defined as how invested the employee is to their employer and whether they feel the need to stay in the organization. (Saari & Ojala, 2011).

**Affective commitment** refers to employee's emotional connection towards the organization they are working. They do not have an urge to look for another job opportunities, when all their needs are met in the current work place. (Heizman 2019)

## **1.3 Structure of the research**

This paper is divided into six chapters. First, introduction presents shortly the background of the study, research gap and research questions, and structure of the study.

Secondly, the theoretical framework is presented in chapters two and three, where the existing literature of the topic is reviewed. Chapter two focuses on literature of generations, and third chapter theories of organizational commitment. This paper focuses on

Generation Y. In the third chapter organizational commitment is covered by reviewing literature of organizational commitment in general, three-component model of organizational commitment, organizational commitment of Generation Y, and internal organizational factors that influence organizational commitment. Internal organizational factors chosen to this study are leadership, organizational support, perceived organizational support, autonomy, work-life balance, and training and career development.

In chapter four, methodology for this paper is presented. This includes research philosophy, research approach and strategy, research method, data collection and sample, data analyse, and trustworthiness. The fifth chapter finally presents the results of the empirical findings.

Lastly, the chapter six summarizes the thesis with conclusions of the study. Also, the chapter discusses managerial implications, limitations of the study, and suggestion for the future study.

## 2 Introduction of Generations

This chapter presents generation theory, and introduces the existing generations identified.

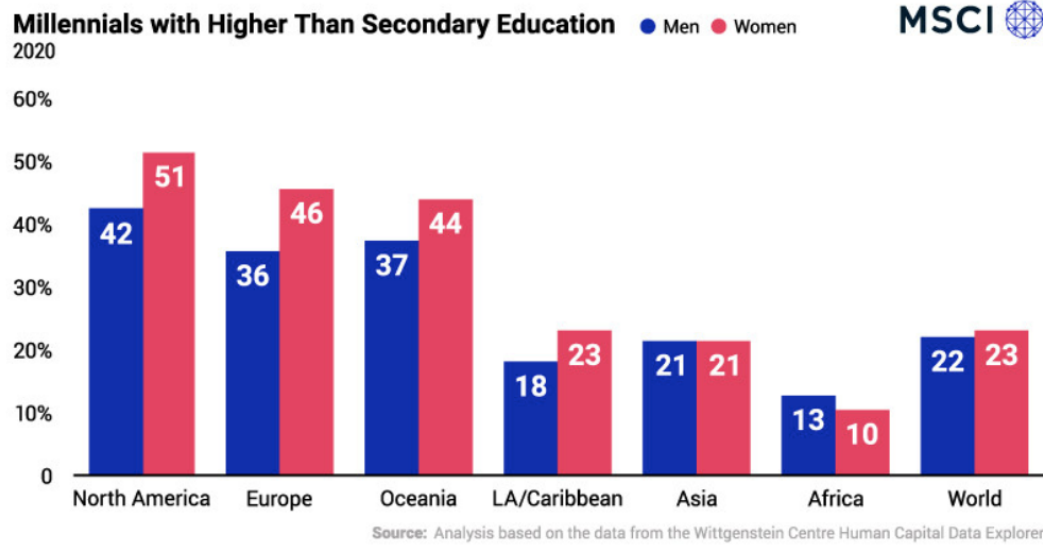
Generations are known as a group of people who have born during the same time period. The generation also shares the experiences from the same historical occasions, such as technological development, wars, and economic crisis. (Kultalahti 2015: 39-40). These form a collective memory inside the generation; shared behaviors, manners, and partialities (Arsenault 2004).

These four generations shown in Figure 1 hold various expectations and values related to the work and the work environment. (Muskat & Reitsamer 2019). As Harberle et al. (2009, p. 62) identified, *“Generational differences impact communication styles, technology needs, professional development preferences, workplaces expectations, compensation and benefits needs, desired leadership styles and the effectiveness of reward and recognition systems.”*



**Figure 1** Generations

In terms of educational background, Generation Y are more highly educated compared to Baby Boomers, according to research by Bialik & Fry (2019). Approximately 39 % of Millennials have bachelor’s degree or higher in age 25-37, while 25 % of Baby Boomers had the same education level in same age. As there is a huge gap between these two generations in terms of education, results of World Economy Forum (2022) show in Figure 2, that Generation Y is the most educated generation in history.



**Figure 2** Millennials with Higher Than Secondary Education

Among Generation Y there is a significant increase in having at least bachelor's degree in age between 25 to 37, according to Mitchell (2022). Where in 21 per cent of women, and 27 percent of men of Baby Boomers in 1982 had at least bachelor's degree, among Generation Y in 2018, 43 percent of women and 36 per cent of men had the same level education.

## 2.1 Baby Boomers

Baby Boomers are born between 1946 and 1964 (Fingerman et al. 2012), and will be retired approximately by 2030 (Knickman et al. 2002). They are characterized as hard-working generation, who worked long hours and put their career before personal life (Cahill & Sedrak 2012). In addition, respecting each other at work and getting respect especially from younger generations is highly valued among Baby Boomers. Furthermore, they appreciate hierarchy and authority. (Venter 2017).

Venter (2017) also discuss, how Baby Boomers prefer to use phone call or face-to-face conversation over e-mail or other interactive options.

## 2.2 Generation X

Generation X is born between 1965-1979 (Carbary et al., 2016). Almost half of X's parents were divorced (Carbary et al., 2016), and working full-time (Gibson et al., 2011). Furthermore, they witnessed high volume of corporation downsizings, which lead to part-time and temporary jobs. As a result, Generation X became independent cohort with a decreased of loyalty to their employee compared to previous generations.

Accordingly their lack of engagement to the work, Generation X values the balance between work and life. (Kapoor et al., 2011). Due to high amount of company downsizings and lay-offs their parents experienced, Generation X do not see their current job as a life-long workplace. (Weerarathna et al. 2022)

Although this generation is not seen so loyal towards their employer, they are characterized as a hard-working generation. They engage to the goals that are set both in personal and organizational level. In addition, Generation X is not dependent of supervising in order to reach the goals and put effort to their work even though they are not watched by their leader. (Weerarathna et al. 2022)

Increased globalization in 1980's had an effect to generation X's point of view in working. Companies became more diverse and global mindset evolved (Berkup, 2014). Calvo-Porrall et al. (2019) characterizes Generation X as a "digital immigrants", since they did not grow along the modern technology, but had to learn and adapt to it as an adult.

## 2.3 Generation Y

According to Pasko et al. (2020), Generation Y is born between 1980 and 1996. They are also called as a digital natives and Internet generation. They have grown into a digital world and are fluent with technology. (Kaifi et al., 2012). Also, Millennials are

characterized as the job-hopping generation due to the relatively frequent necessity to find a new workplace (Ivanović & Ivančević, 2018).

According to World Economic Forum (2022) in Figure 3, there are in total 1.8 billion Millennials around the world, which is 23% of the global population. Millennials are the largest generational group in the world, and they are also the most educated.

Region	Millennials % of Region Population	Number
Asia	24%	1.1B
Africa	21%	278M
Latin America/Caribbean	23%	155M
Europe	20%	148M
North America	21%	76M
Oceania	22%	9M
<b>World</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>1.8B</b>

**Figure 3** Amount of Millennials by region

Generation Y is characterized as a well-educated generation, who aim to their personal goals they have set to themselves. They want to reach the goals in their personal career path and feel the success. Therefore, enjoyable and meaningful work place is crucial for Generation Y. (Wong et al. 2017)

Studies (Gursoy et al., 2008b, Kultalahti, 2015: 46, Naim & Lenka, 2018) show that Generation Y want to improve themselves and their knowledge continuously. Therefore, they are not loyal only for one company and instead they switch from one job to another to keep their competences up-to-date on the job markets. Hence, it is challenging for Generation Y to see their future workwise not even to five years ahead. Zhao et al. (2022) also states, that Generation Y have high ability to adapt into new situations and changes, and receive new information in order to become more independent. Further, Vesterinen & Suutarinen (2011; 115-116) discuss how job markets are changing when bigger

generations are retiring and smaller generations are taking over the job markets. There will be more positions available, and therefore the job applicants are able to choose where they would like to work. Hence, this affects to the commitment to employer.

Generation Y is used to group-related tasks throughout their lives. Activities have been done together with others since school. Therefore, they expect to be able to maintain this working style in their workplace as well. Although Generation Y is considered to be highly teamwork oriented, they are also independent, self-assured and expressive. (Gursoy et al., 2008b) Moreover, Generation Y appreciate continuous and transparent information sharing at work. They expect to receive all information, even beyond their positions in the organization. As they are used to work in groups throughout their lives, effective information flow is seen as an important aspect regarding organizational commitment. (Walden et al. 2017)

Generation Y want to have an influence to the work culture and leadership in their workplace. They are ready to challenge the leadership models and policies. (Ahonen et al., 2010). Hence, there is a need for a novel leadership, which takes into account work-life balance and career opportunities. Millennials are not expected to commit to one employer for decades, and they value opportunities to develop themselves and their career. (Pyöriä et al., 2013). Ultimately, career development and training opportunities are valued among Generation Y, and if the organization is not able to cover the expectations and offer a career path in the organization, Generation Y may relatively easily change the employer in order to reach their career path goals. (Naim & Lenka 2018)

Flexibility is a need among Generation Y. According to Sinha and Kshatriya (2016), employees' autonomy at work may increase loyalty towards the work place. The employee's possibility to decide how, when, and where the work is done, can positively influence productivity, creativity and commitment. Also, Generation Y is looking for a great work-life balance, as they prioritize their personal life and time for family and friends. Flexibility at work and ability to adjust their work days around the responsibilities in personal

life, is highly appreciated. Today's work places includes modern technology which hence allows greater flexibility to work from desired location, and modify the working hours. (Afif 2019).

## **2.4 Generation Z**

Generation Z is born between 1997 and 2012, and is the youngest and newest generation (Djafarova & Bowes 2021). Generation Z has had a major impact of modern technology as it significantly evolved in early 2000's, and they grew up within it since young age. Therefore, they are used to have a access to Internet continuously, and fluently use it to find information. In addition, Generation Z has increasingly moved social interaction to be managed through screen. (Pichler et al. 2021)

However, when writing this thesis, Generation Z age range is between 26-11 years. Therefore, there is not much academic research published yet, as half of the generation is still minor and have not entered to organizations and work life. Thus, this paper focuses on Generation Y and its organizational commitment.

## **2.5 Critical review of Generations**

Although generational categories are widely studied, however, it has been raised up that such studies do not take into account personal viewpoints of individual's stage and/or situation of life, preferences, or characteristics. Individual's own personal profile develops throughout his/her live and he/she may rather adapt into different generation than suggested by studies and their birth date. For example, a person has not born during the timeframe for Generation Y, but he/she may show familiar traits defined to that generation. For example, the person may have grown up along with Generation Y through studies, social events, and work places, which ultimately affects the person's personal profile and point of views in life. (Helyer & Lee 2012)

In addition, academic literature mostly focuses on differences between generations in work life, and the differences are built on observations. However, studies (Helyer & Lee 2012, Lester et al. 2012) show also similarities between the generations. Across generations individuals value respectable leadership, competitive salary, and growth opportunities. Also, all generations are aware of the need for modern technology to rise productivity and efficiency.

According to Lester et al. (2012), Baby boomers, Generation X and Generation Y has not shown major differences in terms of valuation of technology. It is commonly assumed that older generations battle against technology, as it is argued in this study as well earlier. However, the results show that all generations has recognized the value of technology in a modern workplace, as it is crucial in the competitive work environment. Despite of some criticism it is commonly seen that Generation Y is however bringing new characteristics and expectations to work life.

Next chapter will discuss further about organizational commitment and further, organizational commitment of Generation Y.

### 3 Organizational commitment

This chapter discusses about organizational commitment and its three component model, factors influencing organizational commitment, and Generation Y's organizational commitment.

Organizational commitment refers to *“the relative strength of and individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organization”* (Al-Jabari & Ghazzawi 2019). In other words, it is defined as employee's attitude towards organization, feel of need to stay in the organization, and person's investments for company's good. (Saari & Ojala, 2011) In the past decade work life has changed rapidly due to highly increased globalization. Therefore, organizations are forced to find more effective ways to manage employees and remain the employees without decreasing individual's job satisfaction and organizational commitment. (Ridwan et al., 2020).

Furthermore, organizational commitment is connected to the level of employee's motivation. Highly motivated employee will do their best to reach the goals that are set for them. Moreover, motivated employees have a positive impact to organization's operations, as they voluntarily contribute towards organization's success and find it meaningful and awarding and important to themselves. Hence, motivated employees can express why they want to be employed, while unmotivated employee may find it challenging. (Mahmoud et al. 2021)

#### 3.1 Three component model of organizational commitment

Meyer and Allen (1991) have conceptualized organizational commitment to three-component model, where the approaches are referred to affective, continuance, and normative commitment (see Figure 4). In these three approaches the commitment is viewed from psychological state that illustrates employee's connection with the organization, and has impact for the decision to continue working in the organization or leave.



**Figure 4** Meyer and Allen's three-component model of organizational commitment

**Affective commitment** refers to the “*employee’s emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the organization*”. (Meyer & Allen, 1991:67). In the other words, employee continues working in the organization by their own will, when they have a strong affective commitment. Furthermore, employee enjoys their work tasks and working environment, and does not have any need to look other job opportunities. In addition, confident relationship with management and supervisor may increase the level of affective commitment to the organization. (Heizman 2019)

When an employee remains in the company because they feel the need to, there is a **continuance commitment**. It refers to “*an awareness of the costs associated with leaving the organization*” (Meyer & Allen, 1991:67). The employee may want to leave the company, but it would cost more to leave rather than stay. Therefore, the possible uncertainty in the job markets retains the employees in the current organizations although they may be unsatisfied in their current job. In addition, there may be uncertainty how other possible employers view them when applying to other organizations. (Heizman 2019)

Lastly, **normative commitment** refers to employee's experience, where they feel obligation to continue working in the organization. Hence, when employees feel that they should keep working with the company for some reason and against their real wishes, the normative commitment is on the high level. (Meyer & Allen, 1991). They may experience social pressure for instance, or organization is offering compensations that engages the employee to the organization. (Heizman 2019)

In this paper, the focus has been narrowed down to the research about affective organizational commitment.

### **3.2 Factors influencing the organizational commitment**

Organizational commitment is the relationship between employer and employee, and it is vital for companies to have employees with high level of commitment as it signals their engagement and retention in the organization. (Al-Jabari & Ghazzawi 2019). The antecedents of organizational commitment can be viewed on either from personal or organizational point of view (Bodjrenout et al. 2019). Following factors regarding organizational commitment were especially highlighted in existing literature: leadership, job autonomy, organizational support, training and development, and work-life balance.

**Leadership** has a meaningful role when measuring employee's organizational commitment, as it has a significant role in employee's affective organizational commitment. Also, effective leadership style has been also discovered to reduce turnover intention in longer run. (Bodjrenout et al. 2019). Two leadership styles has been found: transformational leadership and transactional leadership. Transactional leadership refers to leadership style, where the motivation is built up around concrete rewarding and compensation, such as money for instance. (Keskes 2014) Transformational leadership on the other hand refers to a leader who understands their employee's desires and needs and is able to inspire them. In addition, they encourage others to find opportunities for personal development and want to support through the path. (Purwanto 2020). Further, Purwanto (2020) states, that leadership style can have a significant effect to employee's

organizational commitment. Transformational leaders are found to retain employees and keep them motivated and loyal to the company.

Also, Rafferty & Griffin (2004) have formed five-factor model to define transformational leadership. The model includes vision, inspirational communication, encouraging management, intellectual stimulation, and personal rewarding. Vision fosters charisma, which is stated to be one of the most important factors in transformational leadership. Inspirational communication increases motivation and trust among the employees. Further, charismatic leaders utilize inspirational speeches to enhance organization's vision and goals, and hence encourage employees to work for them. Encouraging management takes employee's personal needs into account and genuinely consider their well-being. Also, they try to create friendly, enjoyable, and psychologically supportive work environment. Intellectual stimulation factor's purpose is to improve employees problem-solving skills. Lastly, personal rewarding means that supervisor offers praises and recognitions in individual level. The personal rewarding comes true, when the leader shows appreciation for employee's efforts reaching the results. To conclude, leadership theories include multiple factors, and researches show that they have a significant impact on employee's organizational commitment.

Second, **organizational support** is found to have a strong positive impact to employee's organizational commitment. It has a connection to affective commitment when it is viewed on how employee comprehends the support given by the organization. (Bodjrenout et al. 2019). Further, Perceived Organizational Support (POS) refers to "*employees' perceptions that the organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being.*", according to Eisenberg et al. (2020). When employee receive desired support from their organization, they feel more motivated, loyal, and committed to the organization. POS theory includes factors such as fairness, support and encouragement from leaders and colleagues, and positive work conditions and human resource methods. Treating employees equally and respectfully, participating them in decision-making, and giving them voice should have a significant positive effect on employees' well-being. In

addition, work conditions have been researched in various aspects, for example, rewarding, independency, stress factors, training, and job security. (Rhoades & Eisenberger 2002)

**Autonomy** refers to how much freedom an employee has in their work and how much they are able to adjust their work in daily basis. Especially, as remote or hybrid work model has been increasingly established in the organizations in the past few years since pandemic, and thus level of autonomy has become even more important factor for employees. Employees desire possibility to influence their own work load and ways to do it. As a result, it has been found to have a significantly positive effect to employee's organizational commitment. (Bodjrenout et al. 2019).

**Work-life balance** refers to how time between work and personal life has been balanced. Every individual has their own personal needs and demands for working hours done per day, but there is also need for personal life, as people have various life roles throughout their lives. Having various life roles can be rewarding and energizing, or on the other side straining and decreasing balance maintaining. (Brough et al. 2020) Therefore, lack of work-life balance can have a negative impact on organizational commitment, and well-maintained work-life balance can increase organizational commitment. Work-life balance is becoming significantly important factor for employees, as work is not seen as a only aspect in life anymore. (Wood et al. 2020)

Lastly, **training and career possibilities** has been found to increase employee's organizational commitment. If employer is able to offer for an employee a clear career path or possibilities to improve already existing skills, there is decreased chances for a turnover intention. In addition, with career development opportunities employee is willing to invest more time and effort to the organization. (Bodjrenout et al. 2019). Further, the Social Exchange Theory explains also employee retention as employees and employers are involved in exchange correlation. As employees have received training and they have been integrated to the organization, they may feel responsibility to pay back to the

employer by showing increased loyalty, work performance, and commitment. (Xuecheng et al., 2022).

### **3.3 Organizational commitment of Generation Y**

Compared to older generations, Baby Boomers and Generation X, Generation Y is bringing new perspective to the work life. Studies have shown that prior generations tend to show long-term loyalty and commitment to their employer, while Generation Y is expressing their needs for flexibility and meaningful work. Further, Generation Y prefers low hierarchy over high distance between management and employees. (Valenti 2019) In addition, Generation Y is looking for security from the employer while they are lacking of commitment to the employer. (Muskat et al. 2019)

Generation Y is described as a group who hold a high motivation for continuous learning and finding new opportunities to develop and grow at work. They desire a meaningful and challenging work place, where they are given enough independency and responsibilities. (Putri et al. 2018). In addition, Generation Y highly appreciates and requires respectable work-life balance. They prefer to have enough days off for vacations for instance, rather than high wage. Ultimately, if the management is able to respond the individual's needs to flexibility and work-life balance, presumably the employee will show more productivity at work. (Valenti 2019; Mahmoud et al. 2021).

As earlier generations have shown more long-term commitment to one organization, and work up to several decades for one employer, Generation Y tends to switch job even more frequently than other generations before. Therefore, Generation Y is seen as a job-hopping generation. Especially growing technology and globalization have increased the various job opportunities around the world. Thus one organization is not seen as a life-long work place. (Pandey 2019). Hence, it is a challenge for organizations to focus on their development and how to retain Generation Y longer than couple of years (Naim & Lenka 2018).

Generation Y prefer to work in the company that they see right for them, yet they tend to show relatively low loyalty and commitment to the company. Also, organizational hierarchy is not seen important, and they desire equality among employees and leaders. Ultimately, if they do not feel appreciated in term of their ideas for development, they do not enjoy the work environment, or the work does not feel meaningful, Generation Y starts to seek new opportunities. (Ngotngamwong, 2020)

In addition, remote work has brought some benefits and positive factors for employees as well. Generation Y is looking for a respectable work-life balance (DeVaney 2015), which can be reached by remote or hybrid work model. With flexible working hours employees are able to adjust their daily schedules more efficiently. Also, working from home will reduce costs and time in terms of commuting to the physical office, thus more time will be reserved to reach daily goals at work and more time will be left to personal life. (Hafshah et al. 2022)

### **3.4 Summary**

The competition in the job market is extensive nowadays, and companies are battling to either retain their current employees or on the other hand attract new talents to their organization. The factors influencing the organizational commitment has been studied and existing literature shows the variety of factors that needs to take into the consideration.

Organizational commitment theories explain different viewpoints to define employee's organizational commitment. Three-component model of organizational commitment (Meyer & Allen 1991) is widely known and used in research. Affective commitment explains employee's psychological or emotional attachment to the organization, normative commitment refers to employee's feel of obligation to remain in the organization, and lastly continuance commitment refers to the situations, where employee may want to exit the current organization, but the uncertainty at the job markets retains them in the

organization. In this thesis, the study focuses in-depth to employee's affective commitment to the organization.

Also, there are several factors that influence employee's organizational commitment. The factors are divided into two themes: personal perspective and organizational perspective. (Bodjrenout et al. 2019). Leadership, job autonomy, organizational support, training and career opportunities, and work-life balance are internal organizational factors that are especially shown in existing literature. Studies points out that these factors are influencing Generation Y's organizational commitment, and therefore they were chosen to study in this thesis.

Firstly, leadership is studied to have a markable meaning to the organizational commitment. Also, flexibility and autonomy are expected to receive from the organization. That also includes possibility to decide how and where the job is done. Pandemic brought remote work and then later hybrid work model to the work life, and since then it has been highly valued and expected to remain. Generation Y is keen to follow their personal career path, and hope that the organization would provide training or clear career path for them. The commitment to the organization decreases, if the organization is not able to deliver career development opportunities and desired organizational support, consequently job hopping may begin to find more challenging work tasks.

Further, perceived organizational support determines employee's experience of how they are valued and cared at the organization. When the organizational support is satisfying to the employees, the affective commitment increases and they are willing to give their best input to the organization's good. However, employees expect to receive competitive compensation and rewarding in general of their input to the organization. Generation Y wants to be recognized and receive regular rewarding from their leader to maintain great focus and motivation to the work and organization. Generation Y also strongly highlights the importance of work-life balance. They work to live, and their personal life is the most important factor in their lives.

Generation Y is bringing new perspective to the job markets and challenging employers. It is acknowledged that Generation Y is not so keen to long-term commitment in one organization, like the generations in prior, Generation X and Baby Boomers. Therefore, new technics and approaches to improve commitment needs to be introduced. It is vital, because employees with high-level commitment are less interested in to change the organization and are show more productivity. Committed employee is ready to give out more than is expected, and is willing to put their best effort for company's good. As Generation Y differs from earlier generations with their level of commitment, it is relevant topic to explore what factors are influencing their organizational commitment.

According to literature, Generation Y is expecting to receive more distinctive attention from their employer, and hence they hope that their personal traits, strengths, and working styles are taken into account. Personal appreciation and valuation at work is highly expected. Also, Generation Y values low hierarchy in the organization, and the leader should be easy to approach in daily basis. Generation Y is more educated than earlier generations, and high-level education most likely has also increased awareness of the possibilities in work life and Generation Y therefore is interested in continuous growth and career development to achieve their personal goals, which then may be more extensive than earlier generations have had.

However, even though there is discussion available how Generation Y is bringing new characteries to the work life, and how they differ from earlier generations, the topic has also shown generational similarities in the results. Helyer & Lee (2012) points out, how generation theories do not take into account personal characteries and every individual's different stages in their life or their preferences in general. Generations can be categorized in some level based on common historical events or other events that people born during same timeline share, but still personal experiences influences significantly how the individual build their personal profile in life.

## **4 Methodology**

This chapter discusses about research philosophy, research approach and strategy, and the research method which is chosen to this study. Also, data collection and sample is presented.

### **4.1 Research philosophy**

Research philosophy refers to “the set of beliefs concerning the nature of the reality being investigated and the choice of the type of research philosophy applied in an area of research study depends on the knowledge being investigated.” (Chege & Otiento 2020)

There are four major research philosophies which are positivism, critical realism, interpretivism, and pragmatism. Positivism refers to research that relies on concrete data, and therefore feelings are not involved. Positivist would create hypotheses based on existing theory, and then test those. Thus, positivism is mostly used in quantitative research. Critical realism is based on both in reality and on how we experience a phenomenon. Therefore, it can be used in both quantitative and qualitative research. Interpretivism is respectable research philosophy for qualitative research, as it aims to seek understand divergence among society. Lastly, pragmatism mixes qualitative and quantitative research methods together. Moreover, pragmatism philosophy encourages to use the possible technique that is suitable to answer to the formed research question. (Saunders et al. 2007, p. 103-110)

After overviewing different research philosophies, interpretivism is chosen research philosophy to this thesis, as it identifies individual’s experiences and point of view. Also, interpretivism allows to utilize interviews in research. Thus, there is opportunity to analyze the results in-depth with meanings and interpretations.

## 4.2 Research approach and strategy

Most well-known research approaches are deductive, inductive, and abductive approaches. Deductive approach is mainly used in quantitative research as it based on building hypotheses and testing them. Further, to reach desired outcome, highly structured methodology is used in order to guarantee its reliability. Also, the existing theory is adjusted based on the findings if necessary. Inductive approach on the other hand, relies on smaller samples than deductive approach. Therefore, it is mostly used in qualitative research and applies range of methods for data collection. Thus, it allows to examine variety of observations of phenomena. (Saunders et al. 2007, p. 117-119) Lastly, abductive approach is a combination of deductive and inductive approaches, where the research process starts with unpredicted elements, and continues towards to their reasoning. Also, existing data can be modified and adjusted based on the data collected from the research. (Janiszewski & Van Osselaer, 2021) Therefore, abductive approach is chosen to this thesis.

There are three main research strategies to use: exploratory, descriptive, and explanatory strategy. The chosen strategy guides you how the formed research question's answer would result. In addition, it shapes the purpose of the research. Exploratory research can be conducted by a search of the literature, interviewing "experts" in the subject, or conducting focus group interviews. The benefit of exploratory research is that it is adjustable for changes and the path of the research may change if additional facts occurs along the research. However, there needs to be a direction defined in the beginning, and it then may narrow down during the process. However, exploratory strategy is often used, when the studied topic is still relatively unknown or has insignificant previous studies to explore. Descriptive strategy requires a distinct view of the phenomena before collecting the data. Further, it aims to describe certain event, for example overview of demographics, survey data summary, or baseline data creating. Lastly, explanatory strategy aims to find and explain relationship between variables. In addition, it can be used in both qualitative and quantitative data collection. In quantitative research explanatory strategy analyses the correlations and relationship between variables. On the other hand,

in qualitative research explanatory strategy aims to clarify the reasons why something is done in certain way for instance. (Saunders et al. 2007, p. 132-134)

To summarize, abductive approach is chosen to this paper, as it allows to develop and change the theoretical framework throughout the process. In addition, explanatory research strategy is chosen, as it offers contextual understanding which can be used to explain the factors influencing the studied phenomenon. Also, explanatory research strategy allows to understand in-depth individual's perspectives and experiences for instance.

### **4.3 Research method**

There are two major research methods to use for: quantitative and qualitative research. Quantitative research method relies on bigger data collections, which are built on hypotheses. It aims to collect concrete data to understand a certain phenomenon or generalize particular sample studied from an extensive group. In addition, in quantitative research highly structured methods are used, as it does not allow exceptions during research. Therefore, it enables to collect identical data form larger groups as well. (Holton & Burnett 2005)

Qualitative research method is used, when the research aims to find non-numerical, in-depth sight based on individual's experiences and perspectives. According to Busetto et al. (2020), it is also characterized by *"flexibility, openness, and responsivity to context."* Most common technique for qualitative research is to conduct interviews. (Hammarberg et al. 2016). According to Alshenqeeti (2014), an interview is *"a conversation, whose purpose is to gather descriptions of the interviewee."* Therefore, interviews are suitable choice when the aim is to understand certain topic with in-depth data. However, there is four most common interview models to use regarding the goal of the research: structured interview, open-ended/unstructured interview, semi-structured interview, and focus group interviewing. In structured interviews there are questions that mostly collects 'yes' or 'no' answers, and therefore there is no space for open conversation. Secondly,

unstructured interviews allow both sides to adjust the interview situation regarding the interview content and questions. Thirdly, the semi-structured interviews has a certain question pattern to support the interview, but it allows to have an open conversation throughout the interview. In addition, there is space for additional questions. Lastly, focus group interviews is referred as *“an interviewing technique in which participants are selected because they are a purposive, although not necessarily representative, sampling of a specific population, this group being ‘focused’ on a given topic”* (Alshenqeeti 2014).

For this thesis qualitative research method is chosen as it responses to the desire to collect data based on individual’s perspectives and experiences. Also, the research will be done by using semi-structured interviews. In semi-structured interviews there is a structure of questions done in prior, but it allows to have open conversation throughout the interview. (Busetto et al. 2020).

#### **4.4 Data collection and sample**

As stated in the chapter 4.3, qualitative research method and semi-structured interviews were chosen to this research as they are interactive and allows to receive broad insight of researched phenomena. Certain question pattern was formed to guide the conversation forward. However, there is simultaneously space for more open question to receive more in-depth data of a certain topic.

In total, 6 semi-structured interviews were conducted for this research. The respondents work in the field of human resources, and all of them represent Generation Y, and are born between 1980-1996. All interviews were done via online video conference, and they were one-to-one conversations. The interviews were conducted in Finnish to ensure that the respondents have full ability to express themselves and give extensive answers for given questions. The interviews varied from 35 to 55 minutes. Before starting the interviews, all respondents gave their permission for recording and transcribing, so the collected data could be analyzed later.

The interviews had a certain question pattern which was followed with every respondent, but there were follow-up questions when needed. As the interviews were initially conducted in Finnish, the most relevant comments were later translated to English to provide evidence in this paper. The results are presented anonymously.

#### **4.4.1 Sample**

The age distribution in this study was from 28 till 38. There was only one female participants, and rest five interviewees were men. They all share the same educational background, and they have graduated from bachelor's degree in business administration.

Four out of six interviewees were working as HR consultants, one interviewee as recruitment consultant, and one as service manager. The years they had worked in the organization so far varied between 8 and 2 years.

The participants were selected to this interview based on their age to remain the research gap and they were found through the connections the author has. The table 1 presents the background information of the participants. To maintain the anonymity for this research, more detailed information is not released.

The interviews were recorded and transcribed with the respondent's permission. The records were save as audio files and written documents so the results can be studied later in detail. The transcription fosters to avoid mistakes in terms of errors in interpretation or personal bias. In addition, direct citations are used in the results in this paper to support the evidence gained from the interviews to describe interviewee's responses in-depth.

**Table 1** Sample description

<b>Respondent</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Educational background</b>	<b>Job title</b>	<b>Years they have been in working in the organization</b>
1	Male	29	Bachelor in Business Administration	Recruitment consultant	8
2	Male	31	Bachelor in Business Administration	HR consultant	7
3	Female	29	Bachelor in Business Administration	HR consultant	2
4	Male	38	Bachelor in Business Administration	HR consultant	3
5	Male	28	Bachelor in Business Administration	HR consultant	2,5
6	Male	34	Bachelor in Business Administration	Service Manager	2

## 4.5 Data analysis

According to Graue (2015), qualitative data analysis aims to *“describe a phenomenon in some or greater detail, compare several cases on what they have in common or on the differences between them, and/or develop a theory of the phenomenon under study from the analysis of empirical material.”* Qualitative data is based on interaction with other human being and the data is about meanings and thoughts that has come up during the data collection as there are multiple ways to collect the data: structured, semi-structured, unstructured interviews, or focus groups for instance. The data collection creates notes and transcripts based on the interactions.

Content analysis is initially created to quantitative research, but it can be applied to qualitative data analysis as well. In this approach the content is categorized by using texts or other communication forms. Content analysis approach helps to understand repeating patterns or themes, and it is the most suitable choice when there is significant volume of data to analyse, there is a need for categorization, or if quantitative data is wanted to include to the qualitative data. (Graue 2015)

## 4.6 Trustworthiness

Four most used practices to witness the trustworthiness of the study are credibility, dependability, transferability, and conformability (Gunawan 2015). By these concepts the study can be review whether the results and findings can be trusted.

First, credibility refers to how trustful the results of the research are, and can the reader trust to the findings based on their interpretations. To build credibility for the study during data collection, developing evidence chain is important. By building enough evidence for the study, the credibility can be illustrated to external readers. (Steward et al. 2017) In this research, the credibility was ensured by providing detailed explanation of the research context, participants of the study, and lastly findings are explained.

Secondly, dependability refers to whether the results are consistent, and would the same results appear if the study would be repeated. In other words, dependability describes the reliability of the study. (Gunawan 2015) To show dependability in this study, the research process is documented carefully and with clear structure. The process includes data collection, data analysis and sample, and findings. Also, semi-structured interviews are used as a standardized research method. By these actions, the research can be repeated by following the same process.

Transferability on the other hand explains if the result would be able to transfer and apply to other settings of the study. These settings could be for example different groups of people or other contexts. (Gunawan 2015) This chapter provides extensive explanation of the settings for this study, which includes research method, description of the participants, and the studied phenomena. By the information provided, other researchers can see whether this research could be applied to other research settings.

Lastly, conformability refers to the fact, if the results are influenced by biases of the researcher, or are the findings genuinely based on the respondent's real experiences. (Gunawan 2015) To provide evidence of respondent's own experiences and answers in this study, quotes from the interviews are attached to the results.

## 5 Results

This chapter presents the results of the research. The research is divided into two main themes that focus on the level of commitment of Generation Y and internal organizational factors that impact on their commitment. The identified main internal organizational factors includes leadership, work-life balance and autonomy, training and career development, and organizational support.

### 5.1 Commitment

All respondents felt at the time when the interview took place, that they are committed to the organization.

*“Great colleagues and team that I work with significantly builds my commitment. If I would not have this good work community, I would think some other options in terms of work.”*

*“I share the same values with the organization, like freedom and personal responsibilities in work”*

Although all respondents were happy to their situation and level of commitment at this moment, two respondents has also questioned their commitment lately. Managerial issues and lack of career development has been the main concerns, but they are also aware of bad job markets at this moment which do not foster changing the organization. Work community and colleagues were also important for the respondents.

*“When I am trusted and we have common trust with each other. Also, the feel of belonging to the work community and that there are people who genuinely care about you and you care about.”*

Without the great colleagues the commitment would easily decrease. The organizational culture and its values was also answered repeatedly. By values they mean the freedom that has given, which allows them to do their job how they see the best while having the responsibility of their job. Low hierarchy was also mentioned, as everyone at work are easy to approach regardless of their title or position in the organization.

The respondents value the social aspect and feeling of belonging at the work, as they work part of the teams. It has significant effect to their commitment. According to responses, having variety of different work tasks is seen important, and having professional colleagues who help and share their knowledge. In addition, the respondents find it vital to have the freedom to choose how they prefer to do their job, but also have enough responsibilities. Diversity at the work place was seen important as well. It is valued that the organization has diverse employees and how everyone can be themselves and there is no need to have separate work character.

*“I think it is important that everyone can be themselves at work regardless their background, character, age, gender or other things”*

All respondents shared similar thoughts of the reasons why they feel dedicated to the organization at this moment. They get feelings of success and they feel that they are doing meaningful job that has a genuine purpose. Also, they experience that their working field offers almost continuously new things to learn that are important to know for the job. Also, they feel that they are good at their job. In addition, one respondent has experienced, that they have been able to move forward in their desired career path in the organization. This has increased the commitment as well.

The respondents see themselves working in the organization at least one or two years from now on. Further, when their commitment to the current position was discussed, they forecast themselves working there five years than less. One respondent also

mentioned, that if there will not be any development for their work tasks the next year, they are willing to seriously start to look another job.

*“Like the worst thing that could happen is that I would still be working in this same position after 10 years counting from now.”*

*“If organizational culture and everything stays the same, I do not see myself changing the organization anytime soon.”*

Generation Y is characterized as a ‘job hopping generation’ in the literature (Magni & Manzoni 2020; Ivanović & Ivančević 2018). The respondents reflected their thoughts whether it is better to work in a one or few organizations throughout their career, or on the other hand switch the job more often by following new challenges for instance. The answers varied in some level, however, to gain diverse experience throughout the career was seen relevant.

*“We only live once, and the more you see and experience is better and it applies to work as well. I do think that working in the same organization throughout the career would not give you all the experience that you would get from multiple employers.”*

*“I would say that our generation does not think it would be realistic anymore to find one job where you could spend the entire career. I think we have agreed that it is maybe not possible and at the work we think more about the things what we desire and want from the work place, and if those things does not appear, we relatively boldly start to look for something else.”*

*“Ideally the best occasion would be to find the organization where you can share the values, where you have the thrive, where you can create*

*your own career path and have chance to slowly develop your skills and add new tasks to your work.*

One respondent reflected that the length of commitment also may be depend on the age and field they are working. In some field it may be seen more relevant to switch jobs more frequently. The age is related to how much experience the person already has and if it is always necessary to do job hopping. However, the respondents concluded in their interviews that gaining diverse experience and having career development is richness even though it may then require changing the positions more often. To conclude, the respondents however shows affective commitment to the organization, as they did not show need to change the organization at that time. Based on the interviews there were no any critical factors occurring that may cause the respondents to start considering the organization change.

So far, the interviews has given a review that the respondents feel committed to their organization and they do not have a feeling to leave. However, there may be some events that would make then change or consider changing the organization. One respondent brought up the current global situation, and how the on-going war and economic crisis has caused a lot of uncertainty. Further, if the uncertainty reaches their organization as well, the feel of safety and secure may disappear and active them to change the organization. Organizational changes were mentioned as well. The current work community and job description are highly valued and those have a positive effect to the commitment as well. In addition, one respondent may change the organization, if there would be bad management and non-functional work environment.

*“It really frustrated me, if there are common rules set to follow by everyone, and those are not followed. Also, the lack of appreciation and support make me to consider other organization to work.”*

*“If someone would come up with very good compensation deal, of course I would have to consider it, although of course I would also have figure out what other things they have to offer and how is the work community there.”*

## **5.2 Internal organizational factors**

The existing literature states (Bodjrenou 2019) that leadership, work-life balance, autonomy, training and career development, and organizational support are found as an internal factors affecting the organizational commitment. When the results were analyzed it was found that these antecedents were especially highlighted by interviewees also in the present study.

### **5.2.1 Leadership**

In the interview, it was discussed how the respondents wants to be managed and how that effected their commitment. Similarities were found, as they are looking for a leadership that is flexible, relaxed, and does not perform micromanaging. The support from the supervisor was seen as an important factor as well. Also, they are expecting to have a clear guidance and training for their tasks.

*“Humane leader style where everyone are seen as individuals. The leadership should not be based on only numbers and data, although those needs to be followed as well.”*

*“No micromanaging, there has to be clear goals so the team knows where we are aiming to. Managers would trust your work process without need to report every minute of your day.”*

The leader was seen as an important factor to affect their organizational commitment. The respondents described how it has a significant effect on individual’s and team’s well-

being, functioning, and dynamic. One respondent pointed out the leader's position to help with the employee's career development. The respondents were mostly satisfied with their current leader, and that was impacting to affective commitment. They experience, that things at work and in their team are functioning so well, that they do not find reason to change the organization. The lack of leadership may also have affect to the organizational commitment, as the leader is seen as a guide for the team who leads towards the team's goals.

*"I think it's supervisor's responsibility to help with the career development, it has a big meaning for me."*

*"As things are going so well at this moment, it would always be risky to change to somewhere else because you can never know how it would be there then."*

*"If my current supervisor would resign, I would resign as well, or at least start to seriously consider to look job somewhere else."*

### **5.2.2 Work-life balance**

All respondents pointed out that work is not seen as the important part of the day. Mostly, the work is seen as a factor that brings money which then allows to do preferred things in their personal life. They did not exclude any specific values from their lives, but balance between work and personal life was significantly highlighted. Also, they find it important to work in the organization that offers interesting work tasks.

*"I work so I can live my life in a certain way, because free time and my personal life is my priority."*

*“At the work it is important to have the feeling of belonging, because it is a major part of our lives and the time we spend at the work after all, so it is important to enjoy the work you are doing.”*

*“I find it important that the work does not limit my free time, and that I am able to pace my work and free time. The work needs to be easily adjusted to my free time.”*

*“Social interactions at work are meaningful to me. That would not happen if I would be unemployed and sitting at home alone. Also, some of my coworkers has become a real friends to me which very important to me.”*

The respondents expressed that the work is not the priority in their lives, and their focus is on other things. However, they feel that they are doing important and meaningful job that they really enjoy. It appeared, that in order to feel committed to the organization, the job needs to have some real purpose. A good work community was mentioned as well, as the colleagues are seen meaningful and it brings the social aspect to the day regardless the communication is done on-site or remote.

It was discovered from the answers, that the respondents experience a good work-life balance when the interview took place. Some respondents shared their experiences, how the work-life balance may vary, as some seasons are more busier than other. Also, it was pointed out that in order to have a good work-life balance it requires personal learning as well to find the balance.

*“There has been times where I have been over flexible when it comes to work, but it is something I have had to learn to set up the boundaries.”*

*“No one is expecting me to be available outside my working hours. The management is not waiting me to be over flexible continuously. We work to live, not live to work.”*

Also, the respondents brought up the importance of the support from the team. To maintain good work-life balance and not feeling over stressed by the work it is discovered that it requires the support from the team as well. Lastly, the respondents agreed that good work-life balance is an important factor regarding the organizational commitment.

### **5.2.3 Autonomy**

The interviewees reflected that there is possibility to make own decisions and adjust the work in their preferred way, but as they are in contact with various stakeholders as well, it may limit in some level the decision making, as there may be some meetings that has to be done in certain time. Autonomy was seen as quite important factor regarding the commitment as the respondents want to have the freedom do to their job in their own way.

*“There is administrative work and then meeting and other social events. I can adjust a lot in which day I do decide to focus on administrative tasks and which days I try to focus more on meetings.”*

*“As in large extent I am able to plan my own work although there are the routines as well, but I can decide when I do them, and it increases the commitment.”*

*“The biggest commitment factor is that I am able to influence my own work, and there is no one coming to me in the mornings with the list telling me what to do and what time.”*

The responses strongly emphasized the importance of being able to choose their preferred working model, as they have chosen to follow the hybrid model, where you can work both on-site and remote. Some respondents also have family connections far from their home, and they appreciate the hybrid model allows them to work in the chosen location, and the work is not tied into one place.

*“Hybrid model gives the flexibility as my family lives far, so now I am able to visit them whenever, because I am able to work from there as well.”*

*“The most important thing is to be able to choose how and where I do my job. I would never choose an organization where it is mandatory to go to office, or on the other an organization, where there would not be any physical office to go. Being able to choose the working model that is most suitable for me, has a significant affect to my commitment.”*

*“Is I would have to come to office five times a week, I would immediately start to look another job.”*

However, even if the respondents preferred not to come to office every day, the physical office was seen as an important factor as well. The respondents also like to visit office occasionally to meet their colleagues and have social interactions. The possibility to choose the desired work model and thus being able to combine flexibly their work and personal life together was seen a markable commitment factor. Mandatory office days or removed remote work possibility would have significant negative influence on organizational commitment.

#### 5.2.4 Career development opportunities

The respondents were not highly aware of the career development opportunities that their organization may offer. Few respondents also mentioned that they do not have any specific career path developed, so the possible training opportunities provided by their organization were not seen so important. On the other hand, some respondents were interested in to have possibility to develop either their already existing skills or have an opportunity to learn more in their organization. One respondent was attending to career development course, but they criticized the fact that the opportunities could be promoted more visible and more frequently. Also, there were discussion how the supervisor could encourage more to look for the options or offer suitable courses that are available.

*“I am aware that we have variety of internal training courses available, but I am not really interested in doing them voluntarily without any clear development plan.”*

*“As our organization is relevantly big, I believe there should be a wide variety different opportunities, but I am not so aware is there same possibilities for everyone.”*

*“The feel that the most of the courses that are available, do not bring much new information, and they feel quite superficial. I would hope to have more in-depth trainings.”*

*“Clear career path and learning opportunities are important. I do not see that those have come true in this organization, but I have learned so much already so it has committed me anyway.”*

One respondent described that they have vision what they want to do in the future, but it most likely will not be possible to fully implement in their current organization. Two respondents mentioned, that may be go back to university to gain more skills and

knowledge that they can apply to their career later, although they reflected that the organization may also offer in-depth training that they could implement to their current position. One respondent did not have any personal career path planned or visioned.

*“I think it fosters the commitment significantly, if people would not get stuck into their position, and the organization would ask their employees their career plans and help to reach them. That would increase the organizational commitment a lot and the organization would not lose good employees.”*

Also, some respondents articulated that there is no support from the supervisor regarding possible training or career path. However, this was depended on the respondent's experiences of their leader.

*“I do not think it is implemented so effectively, because there is not guidance or clear support from the supervisor for example, and it is really up to individual's initiative.”*

*“We are not encouraged by our team's supervisor to start any courses or trainings that could be beneficial to improve our already existing skills, even though it could be very good way to create even better employees and keep us committed.”*

To conclude, the offered training opportunities related to respondents desired career development, and training or courses that are available to improve already existing skills had varying thoughts among the respondents. Most of the respondents were not so aware what there really is available, and if their organization is able to offer a clear career development plan. Also, the possible courses available were not seen as they would offer any real in-depth information that would be beneficial to improve their already existing skills. Also, their supervisor's support had a meaning, as it did not appear that the

supervisors would actively suggest suitable training, or the support was missing in total. However, if the respondent had been looking initially some courses that they found interesting, in some cases they did not find their supervisor denying to participating. To summarize, internal career development opportunities did not show major effect to respondents organizational commitment.

### 5.2.5 Organizational support

Few respondents said, that they do get enough support from their team or their leader which have caused lack of commitment. One respondent highlighted the importance of openness in the work community, where you can talk with the colleagues and share the things going in your mind and thus receive the immediate support. On the other hand, few respondents were lacking the support from their leader, but they then get the support from other internal directions or from their team.

*“There is a lot of peer support among colleagues, and you can talk either about positive or negative things. No need to think what to say and to who, like we are quite open here.”*

*“We are not physically in the same place with my supervisor very often, so it requires activity from my side as well if I want to discuss about something. However, I do get the needed support anytime I need.”*

Overall, the respondents felt that they are valued employees to their organization. In some cases it was more visible than in the others. Some respondents said, that they do receive a direct appreciation from their supervisor and their team, and on the other hand some respondents are missing the visible valuation. However, in the discussions it did not appear that this would be a critical commitment factor to the respondents.

*“I consider being a valued employee, but it does not show in anyway. There is no any real recollections from my supervisor for example.”*

*"I do receive positive feedback from my performance and successful cases are appraised. Even sometimes everything does not go as planned, the smaller success in the work is noticed which gives the boost and good feeling."*

*"From my team leader I receive valuation frequently, but if we think the organization in whole, I do not see that one individual employee gets a lot of feedback from the management from the higher level."*

The compensation was seen relevantly important aspect. The respondents talked about their bonus models, but some of them are not even sure in which reasons it is given. Thus, more openness to the rewarding and compensation system is wished. One respondent stated that lack of appreciation and compensation would make them to change the organization and it affects to the motivation. One respondent said, that money probably is not the motivator in the longer time line, although the compensation has to be in satisfied level so it compensates the work input and lost free time. Overall, the compensation is not experienced as a significant factor affecting to the commitment, or it is in desired level in their current organization although some critical view occurred in the interviews. The discussions of the compensation there appeared with more of feelings of disappointment or frustration.

*The bonus does not solely create the commitment. It is more about the daily work life, where you receive actively acknowledgment and appreciation from your team or colleagues."*

*"There could be more compensation available and it should be more open. I see that the bonus is part of our salary and part of our well done performance, but the compensation and rewarding could be more than just that."*

*“It (compensation) does not have to come from the higher level from the organization, more like in team level, that my leader would show their appreciation more often by some actions.”*

*“The compensation includes especially, that the organization takes care of employee’s mental and physical well-being, so they have the thrive to do this job in the future as well.”*

Lastly, organizational support was seen as an important or significantly important factor in terms of their organizational commitment. One respondent highlighted the meaning of career support and how it would increase their organizational commitment. As well one another respondent mentioned the continuous and more prioritized skills development. The importance of a good team and leader was discussed. In addition, other internal directions such as HR and payroll, and their importance were mentioned.

*“I guess the organizational support includes all occupation health care, functional working tools and the desired working model are all supporting in the bigger picture which I highly appreciate ... Leader who gives the support and helps me to get through when any issue occurs. It has significant affect to the commitment.”*

To conclude, respondents especially highlighted the importance of the good work environment and their colleagues. This came up during the interviews, and was repeated in the end of the interview as well by multiple respondents. They look for events together for instance, as those are seen as a great opportunity to connect people and tighten the work community. Also, one respondent reflected in the end of the interview how Generation Y is more bold to try new things if all expectations are not fulfilled in the current organization. However, it might be that in the next employer things are even worse and the change of employer is repeated. Generation Y think more what things they want

from their employer and where they can reach those aspects the best. On the other hand, they go to study to increase the changes for other roles.

In addition, it was pointed out how every organization should genuinely put effort to their employees and their wellbeing. Also, the organization should take care of both mental and physical health so we have energy to do this job in the future as well. Although money is the key for success in the organizations, there could be more soft values as well.

## 6 Conclusion

This chapter presents a summary of key findings, managerial implications, limitations of the study, and lastly suggestions for the future research.

### 6.1 Summary of key findings

According to this study, the respondents representing Generation Y are more committed to their organization than was expected, and the most affective factors to the commitment are work-life balance, autonomy, and leadership. Also, meaningful tasks, career development and work environment affect to the markable factors affecting to the commitment. The results relates to the findings of study conducted by Valenti (2019), which presents the factors that Generation Y values in work life, such as low hierarchy, meaningful work, career development, security from the employer, independency and responsibilities, and flexibility. Also, good work-life balance appeared strongly both in the results of this study and in the existing literature. If these needs are met, the commitment increases. On the other hand, if the expectations are not fulfilled, the long-term commitment may turn to be challenging.

Generation Y is looking for a security from their employer (Muskat et al. 2019). They show commitment to the organization, and mostly external factors influence the organization change or consideration of change. The factors interviewees named were economic uncertainty and its impacts to work, forecast of unstable future for the organization, change negotiations, organizational changes, competitive compensation offer from another organization, and bad management. One respondent stated in the interview *“If the situation would be uncertain or the organization’s future looks instable, I would start looking for the feeling of security from somewhere else”*. Generation Y finds the feeling of security and certainty important and it has an impact to the organizational commitment as well. However, organization cannot always manage external issues that impact the organization itself as well, but satisfying compensation level and functional management are factors that can be managed and improved.

Generation Y is characterized as a job-hopping generation (Magni & Manzoni 2020; Ivanović & Ivančević, 2018), who are challenging to retain in one organization for a long-term. However, the results of the study do not fully support the statement. The respondents experience relatively high commitment to the organization, and have not actively considered of changing the employer. Respondent's shared mutual thoughts and ideas of how often it would be relevant to change the organization and how it is not worth to retain in the same organization throughout the career, but job-hopping too often was not seen ideal either. If the organization does not deliver the desired career path development and career opportunities in reasonable amount of time, affective commitment decreases.

The lack of career opportunities was experienced, and as it has been stated in the previous chapter, it has decreased the commitment even though currently there is no need yet to consider changing the organization. Generation Y is keen on personal development and curious to find ways to improve. Further, career development is seen precisely as a personal improvement rather than hierarchical climbing to the higher level positions in the organization. As Naim & Lenka (2018) introduced, globalization and increased competition in the field relates to the need for training and career development. Based on the results, the respondent's current organizations however do not provide a clear career development path or career opportunities, and therefore some of the interviewees have considered applying to university for instance in order to gain more knowledge of their desired field. Intense competition drives Generation Y to gather skills and knowledge which would separate them from their competitors. Thus, the organization would have a great gap to provide extended selection of opportunities and hence retain Generation Y employees for a long-term.

There were respondents who have a passion towards their work and have a desire to develop in their organization. As Naim & Lenka (2018) stated, Generation Y is seeking the organization, where they have career development path and possibility to challenge

themselves. Individuals, who are participated to the work where they see themselves developing, also have higher interest to stay in the organization longer. Further, participation to desired work tasks creates positive work experiences and increases affective commitment. Employees with affective commitment are expected to feel that they are doing meaningful job, and that also appeared in the results of this study. The respondents overall are satisfied with their current position and organization, which shows the will to be part of the organization. They feel that they are doing meaningful job and they are giving their effort to the organizations good. Some of the respondents mentioned, that they are good at what they are doing and that motivates as well. The feel of belonging and the feel of success has created the attachment and organizational commitment. The stable work community without frequent changes among the colleagues has created a strong bond in teams and has increased the motivation.

The results of this study revealed that leadership has significant impact to organizational commitment. Good management influences the desire to stay, and bad management on the other hand may have negative influence to the commitment. As Bodjrenout et al. (2019) stated, successful and functional leadership reduces turnover intention. In the results of this study it appeared, that leadership is seen as a significant factor to the organizational commitment. The respondents had various experiences of the leadership, and the interviewees who have had satisfying management, also had high level commitment to the organization. Also, respondents with bad management experiences, stated that the leadership does have an effect to their organizational commitment. Transformational leadership was desired leadership style based on this study. Especially encouraging leadership, and personal rewarding from the five-factor model of transformational leadership by Rafferty & Griffin (2004) appeared. Other factors from the model did not show strong influence in this study. However, it can be stated that Generation Y is expecting to have a transformational leadership, who shows consideration on their psychological well-being and notices individuals' accomplishments.

Generation Y is looking for an active leader, who genuinely cares of their employees and is interested in their development and wishes for their career path. The leader should show empathy and be able to give feedback and also reward for success. Although low-hierarchy is desired, the leader needs to have authority to guide employees forward to their goals at work. Micromanaging needs to be avoided, as Generation Y is looking for an organization where they have freedom to work independently while having the responsibilities. Also, equality is highly expected, and diversity at the work place is appreciated. They want to have ability to be genuine themselves at work and be appreciated and valued.

Based on the results, Generation Y considers the job as a mandatory aspect in their daily life, which enable their free time. However, it is important that the work environment is enjoyable and the work is invigorating and meaningful as we spend third of our day at work and most of the time when we are awake. Personal life experiences, happiness and relationships interviewees stated to be significantly more important for them than work. As the life outside the work shows the most important role for Generation Y, flexibility at work is essential. Especially, flexible working model was vital for each respondent, and they all stated that hybrid model is the most suitable. Having ability to work from home whenever, it allows more time for personal life simultaneously. It is seen so significant, that it can radically affect to the commitment if changes to the current occurs. These experiences support Chauhan et al. (2022) findings as some organizations have lost their employees when they have not been able to choose their desired working model.

## **6.2 Managerial implications**

Firstly, to foster Generation Y's long-term organizational commitment the organization should invest to leadership development. As results revealed, Generation Y prefers transformational leadership style, where their well-being has been taken into account as well. Therefore, the leadership should be someone who gives support for their employees, is easy to approach, and also guidance and feedback regularly. Further, one-to-one discussions between the employee and leader brings the opportunity to share concerns,

experiences, and suggestions for the leader. When there is a continuous or even regular open discussion sessions, the employee will feel that they are appreciated and valued in the organization, and their opinions and experiences matters. This is important for Generation Y as they want to feel appreciated and feel that they are doing meaningful job. Successful leadership fosters their organizational commitment as well.

Generation Y highly values autonomy in their work. Therefore, it is crucial that leaders to do not practice micromanaging and shows trust towards their employees. The organization should give the employees role for decision-making, and also allow them to take control of their own work. Further, this comes in connection with work-life balance, which is significantly important for Generation Y. The organization needs to provide and promote flexible working hours and possibility to work either remote or on-site. As results showed, Generation Y appreciates the possibility to decide where they work from. It has given them opportunity for example visit their long-distance family inside the country more often.

Generation Y also highlights the importance of the work community and culture. The organization could foster the work environment, where employees feels safe and secure. Generation Y appreciates open work community, where they can be as they are. They want to feel supported, respected and valued as an employee. This requires more actions from leaders to maintain employee's positive attitude towards the organization. These aspects can be fostered by recognition and rewarding for instance. Also, doing activities as a team can bring people more together and enhance open communication and team work.

According to the results of this research, Generation Y also appreciates their organization's values and mission. It is important for them that the company values follow their own. Therefore, the organization needs to communicate about their mission and values clearly to the employees and indicate how employee's work is important for the organization and how it contributes to the organization goals.

Lastly, Generation Y is looking for career opportunities in the organization. Therefore, the organization should provide transparent opportunities for career advancement and show the possibilities they have offer for learning and skill development. Generation Y is looking for a continuous learning and they do not see themselves sticking in one position long-term if there is no possibilities to evolve. In the large-sized organization it may be challenging to take into account each individual, leadership shows vital role when discussing career opportunities. Employee's closest leader should be supportive and have conversations with the them often enough to learn what are the individual's hopes for the future. Further, it then requires leader's activity to show support and discuss with the employee about the possible opportunities that are available and guide them forward. In the future, the organization should show more support in terms of career opportunities, as Generation Y see it as an important factor regarding their organizational commitment.

To conclude, organizations can improve their actions to retain and engage Generation Y employees by addressing these practical implications.

### **6.3 Limitations of the study**

The answers from the interviews had a lot of similarities and the results were distinct. There were six respondents in total in this research. With more extensive group of interviewees the results could have brought more insight and perspective for the topic.

There is limited evidence on specific characters of Generation Y, as most of the studies are done in United States of America, China, Indonesia, or in other rather large countries. Also, the studies regarding organizational commitment of Generation Y are usually made in one specific field, such as tourism or health care for instance.

## 6.4 Suggestions for the future research

Although Generation Y and its organizational commitment is already studied by various researchers, there could be follow-up research in the future to see if the work life has radically changed by Generation Y. The literature has been suggesting that Generation Y is bringing new working styles and attitudes to the organizations. Therefore, it could be suggested to have an extended research in the future to conclude whether these statements have come true.

Generation Y has been in the work life for some time already, when this thesis has been written. The Generation Y age range is from 27 to 43 years. Also, there is already a lot of studies written for organizational commitment of Generation Y. This study was done, because at this time even the youngest Generation Y presentative have finished their studies and have proceeded to the work life. The next generation after Generation Y is Generation Z, which is slowly arriving to the work life. The researchers have defined Generation Z to be born between 1996 – 2012, and hence the oldest from this generation are already 26 years old. They may have finished their studies already and are now looking for an organization they could commit to.

The characteristics of Generation Y are not yet studied in same extend as Generation Y. However it is pointed out that Generation Z is even more digital and tech-savvy. How Generation Z want to be managed? As older generations are retiring in next two decades, and Generation Y and Z are taking the power on job markets, more studies could be conducted regarding the organizational commitment of Generation Z. There could be comparative studies between these two generations, to understand in-depth how the work life will may change in the future.

Every generation bring new characteries to the work life and shapes the organizational culture and how the work is done. Also, expectations towards leadership and career opportunities change and develop. Therefore, to summarize, organizational commitment is an important aspect to study with all generations.

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1. Interview questions

Background information:

Age:

Educational background:

How long the respondent has been working in the organization?

Commitment:

How committed you are to the organization at the moment?

What factors keeps you committed to your current organization?

What is important to you in your job? Does these factors come true in your current position?

Why do you do this job? How strong is your dedication to this organization?

How long you see yourself working in this organization?

Do you think it is better to work in a few organizations throughout your career, or switch the job more often by following new challenges for instance? Why?

What events would make you change or consider changing the organization?

Do you have goals for your career path? Can you see that you can achieve these goals with your current employer?

Leadership:

How you would like to be managed?

Are you satisfied with your current leader? Why?

Do you consider that your current leader is affecting your commitment to the organization? Why?

Work-life balance and autonomy:

What things are important to you in your life? What work means to you as a one aspect in your day?

Do you think that you have a good work-life balance, and how do you think this balance contributes to your commitment to the organization?

Which working style you mostly prefer: on-site, remote, or hybrid? How this preference aligns with your commitment to the organization?

Do you have possibility to influence to your work and make your own decisions, and how do you believe this level of autonomy impacts to your organizational commitment?

Do you feel you have enough freedom to adjust your work and work load in daily basis?

How important flexibility and autonomy is to you regarding your work and does it have an impact to your organizational commitment?

Training and career development:

Does your organization offer enough training that is related to your desired career path?

Do you feel the organization offers you clear career path to improve your already existing skills?

How does the training and career development possibilities affect to your organizational commitment? How important these things are to you?

Organizational support:

Do you receive enough support to your daily performance?

Do you feel that the organization values your input to the organization?

How important compensation and rewarding is to you? Does it have an influence to your organizational commitment?

What role organizational support plays to you regarding your organizational commitment?

Do you have anything else to add?