GENERATION AND CAREER CONCERN: THEIR IMPACT ON

PERCEPTIONS OF EMPLOYABILITY AND JOB INSECURITY

IN A CHANGING EMPLOYMENT CONTEXT

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Abstract

The individual differences literature has suggested that age, generation and career stage are related to a range of individual and organisational outcomes. In an employment context that is becoming increasingly characterised by instability, job insecurity, and responsibility for one's career, individual perceptions of employability and job insecurity are important concepts to explore. However, age, career stage and generation differences in perceptions of employability and job insecurity have received modest attention. The main aim of this study was to explore the relationships between age, generational identity and career stage and the impact that these factors had on perceptions of employability and job insecurity. Aside from the main focus of the present research, this study also aimed to develop a measure of generational identity, as previous research relied on generational measures derived from age that limited the inferences that could be drawn from such research. However, this measure needed more development in order to be used in the main study. Five hundred and nine participants from a range of organisations participated in the main study, completing an online questionnaire containing measures of career stage, perceptions of employability and perceptions of job insecurity. As expected, measures of age generation and career stage were interrelated, providing support for the empirical literature and highlighting the importance of longitudinal research designs in age research. In line with the literature, low perceptions of employability were related to increased perceptions of job insecurity. In particular, Baby Boomers were found to have higher perceptions of job insecurity, as a result of lower perceptions of employability. Generations X and Y were found to have higher perceptions of job insecurity through higher levels of overall career concern. This paper provides support for the relationship between perceptions of employability and job insecurity in the changing employment context. It offers a platform for further empirical research regarding generation differences at work, and further exploration of the concepts of career stage and concern with ones career. Practical implications and directions for further research are discussed.

Introduction

Individual Differences at Work

Differences between individuals of different ages, career stages or generations are very important for organisations. These have been shown to differentially predict organisational attitudes, perceptions and behaviours, such as organisational commitment, job satisfaction, perceptions of employability and perceptions of job insecurity (Rhodes, 1983; Slocum & Cron, 1985; Smola & Sutton, 2002; Twenge & Campbell, 2008). In the current work environment, the way age, generation and career stage impact an individual's perceptions of employability and perceptions of job insecurity are particularly important. Maintaining high perceptions of employability has become a key skill in managing one's career as organisational and economic changes have resulted in an increase in job insecurity (Brown, Hesketh & Williams 2003). The present research comprised an empirical study investigating the relationship between measures of age, generation and career stage, and the impact these have on perceptions of employability and perceptions of job insecurity.

Age

Early empirical studies have focused extensively on how work needs, values attitudes and behaviours differ due to age. Rhodes (1983) meta-analysis indicated that work ethic, affiliation and self actualisation differ with age (Hall & Mansfield 1975; Porter 1983). Age is also positively related to job satisfaction, job involvement, job commitment and accident rates, and negatively with turnover intentions (Rhodes 1983). Other ways to measure age, such as via career stage or generation have been increasingly used throughout the empirical and popular psychology literature.

Career Stage

Career stages are defined as the sequence of events occurring throughout an individual's career, at certain times, that are similar to those of other individuals (Levinson, 1986; Super, 1957). However, career stage measures often categorised individuals into a career stage based on their level of concern with the tasks and issues associated with each career stage or based on their age aligning with the age range considered as reflective of a career stage (Ornstein, Slocum & Cron 1989; Pogson et al., 2003; Slocum & Cron, 1985; Super, Zelkowitz, & Thompson, 1988).

Super's Career Stage Theory (Super, 1957; Super et al. 1988) focused on an individual's working life from starting a career through to retirement. The model postulated that individuals move through career stages based on the concerns they have about their career and the different career-based tasks that they complete as they move through their working life

(Slocum & Cron, 1985; Super et al., 1988). As people move through different career stages, their work attitudes, work values and career decisions change as a result of the different motivational factors and concerns of each stage (Mount, 1984; Slocum & Cron, 1985; Super, 1957). This results in individuals of the same career stage having similar attitudes and behaviours and attempting to satisfy career needs in a similar way (Pogson, Cober, Doverspike, & Rogers, 2003). Super (1957) suggested that individuals who overcome the issues that arise at each career stage are satisfied, and transition to later career stages. Osipow (1996) viewed Super's model as the most advanced and empirically supported career stage model. Furthermore, Super's career stage model has been found to predict job attitudes and perceptions (Ornstein et al. 1989). Therefore, it is a suitable model to use for understanding the relationship between career stages and perceptions of employability and perceptions of job insecurity. Super's career stage model comprises four stages, the Exploration Stage, Establishment Stage, Maintenance Stage and the Decline Stage (Super et al. 1981), discussed below.

The first of Super's (1957) career stages is the Exploration Stage. The main career concerns/tasks of this stage involve developing ideas around the field, level of work and specific occupations that appeal to the individual (Super et al., 1988). Individuals are concerned with exploring their talents before making commitments to a specific career, position and organisation (Cummings & Worely, 1993). Once an individual has decided on a career path, his or her task is to make career goals and meet these goals in order to secure a job in his or her chosen occupation (Slocum & Cron, 1985; Super et al., 1988). Generally, people are concerned with this stage during the ages of 15 to 25 years, when they are entering the labour market (Cummings & Worely, 1993; Super, 1957; Super et al., 1988). An individual's development of his or her career identity occurs during this stage, and once this is developed he or she transitions to the next career stage (Smart, 1998).

The Establishment Stage follows the Exploration Stage. The key tasks of this stage involve securing a place within an organisation and clarifying long-term career options (Cummings & Worely, 1993; Peronne et al., 2003; Super et al. 1988). The aim is to settle into a career that supports the individual's desired lifestyle and uses his or her abilities and talents (Slocum & Cron, 1985; Super et al. 1988). As individuals settle down, work tasks become easier and individuals become more comfortable and autonomous at work (Peronne et al., 2003; Slocum & Cron, 1985; Super, 1957; Super et al., 1988). Performing well, being promoted and advancing at work are also important in this stage (Cummings & Worely, 1993; Peronne et al., 2003; Super et al. 1988). As individuals attempt to achieve their work-related goals they have a propensity to move jobs in order to further their career or secure a promotion (Ornstein et al., 1989; Slocum & Cron, 1985; Super et al. 1988). People normally occupy this stage between the ages of 25 and 45 years (Peronne et al., 2003). Individuals who have established

themselves in a career and have achieved the lifestyle and performance goals they set, move through to the next career stage.

The Maintenance Stage follows from the Establishment Stage. The Maintenance Stage is characterised by maintaining a level of career success and work-related self-concept (Cummings & Worely, 1993; Peronne et al., 2003; Smart, 1998; Super et al., 1988). At this stage, job tasks become routine (Slocum & Cron, 1985) and individuals often look for more innovative or creative ways to perform career and work related tasks (Peronne et al., 2003; Super et al. 1988). However, for many employees in this stage, updating qualifications and behaviours is required in order to maintain a level of skill needed to perform effectively (Peronne et al., 2003; Super et al., 1988). The duration of this stage is believed to be variable, depending largely on individual differences in development, company circumstances and economic changes (Super et al., 1988). However, individuals in this stage are usually between the ages of 45 and 65 years (Peronne et al., 2003; Super et al. 1988).

The final stage in Super's Career Stage Theory is the Decline stage. The main concerns of this stage are redefining oneself without a career, adequately planning for retirement and moving into a retirement lifestyle (Peronne et al., 2003; Super et al., 1988). In this stage individuals initially decrease the pace or volume of work they do as they approach retirement (Peronne et al., 2003; Super et al., 1988). A main concern of this stage is planning for the financial and social aspects of retirement (Peronne et al., 2003; Super et al., 1988). The final task of this stage (and of an individual's career) is the change from work to leisure activities, and redefining one's self-concept so it no longer involves work (Super et al., 1988). The Decline stage is believed to be of concern to those aged 60 to 65 years and onwards (Peronne et al., 2003; Super et al. 1988). However Peronne et al (2003) believes that the retirement planning aspects of this stage occur much earlier in today's society.

When individuals change jobs, occupations or companies, they often re-evaluate their career and seek new career paths and opportunities. This is termed 'recycling' by Super (Ornstein et al., 1989; Super, 1957; Super et al., 1988). When individuals recycle they redefine their self-concept, decide on a new job or career, find a job in their new field and progress through that field (Super, 1957; Super et al., 1988). As a consequence they recycle back through career stages. When individuals recycle through career stages they regress to an earlier career stage (such as Exploration or Establishment) and then follow through Super's career stage in a linear progression, defined by their new career self-concept (Super et al., 1988). As a result, individuals may be concerned with the tasks of a career stage, but not fit with the age ranges for that category. Smart (1998) believed that recycling may be common, as a result of changes in the employment context since the 1980's (Rothwell & Arnold 2007). This is because as a result of these changes in the employment context many people make career changes due to redundancy, child bearing, second careers and other factors.

Research has shown that career stage influences individual values and work related outcomes. The need for affiliation and self-actualisation were highest for those in the Exploration stage, and the need for intrinsic motivation was highest in the Maintenance stage (Hall & Mansfield, 1975). The need for promotion was found to be highest in the Exploration and Establishment stages (Slocum & Cron, 1985). In terms of organisational outcomes, individuals in the Maintenance stage have the highest levels of job involvement, with individuals in the Exploration Stage reporting the lowest levels of job involvement (Ornstein et al., 1989; Slocum & Cron, 1985). Individuals in the Exploration stage were found to shift jobs more frequently than those in the Establishment stage (Slocum & Cron, 1985). Results from Ornstein et al.'s (1989) study found that individuals in the Exploration Stage were less satisfied with their jobs than those in the Establishment Stage.

Most of the empirical research used age as a criterion for career stage membership, which Smart (1998) believed to be inappropriate. The empirical research also utilised many different age ranges from the literature, creating inconsistency with results. Smart (1998) stated that classifying individuals into career stages based on their identification with the concerns characteristic of each career stage is a more suitable measure of career stage than categorising individuals into career stages based on age. Assigning individuals to career stages based on how concerned they are with the tasks and issues at each career stage rectifies the issue of inconsistent age ranges across the literature. It also allows an individual's fit with the tasks and concerns associated with each career stage to be identified. This allows individuals who are recycling through career stages to be identified. The Adult Career Concerns Inventory (ACCI) (Super et al., 1988) was developed by Super to assess an individual's concern with the tasks at each career stage. Research has found the ACCI to be a very consistent predictor of work-related attitudes and values (Rabinowitz & Hall, 1981; Slocum & Cron, 1985). The present study aimed to add to the empirical literature regarding Super's career stages, using a measure of individual fit with career stages, the ACCI. It also aimed to further understanding of the relationship between career stage and perceptions of employability and job insecurity in the current work environment.

Generation

The empirical and popular psychology literature also focused on differentiating people according to generation. Kupperschmidt (2000) defined a generation as an "identifiable group, that shares common years of birth and as a result, significant life events at important stages of development" (pg. 66). Mannehiem (1952/1997), one of the first theorists to discuss generational differences, stated that a generation is defined by two components, a common location in time (a generational cohort) and a generational style.

The literature commonly identifies individuals into generations based on their birth date aligning with a generational cohort. The literature makes reference to many different

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generational cohort typologies. These are often based on popular psychology research and census data, but very rarely on empirical research (Twenge & Campbell, 2008). The most common generational cohort typology is that of Strauss and Howe (1991), which classifies Baby Boomers as those born between 1943 and 1960 (currently aged 49-65), Generation X as those born between 1961 and 1981 (currently aged 28-48) and Generation Y as those born between 1982-2000 (currently aged 9-27) (Strauss & Howe, 1991; Macky, Gardner & Forsyth 2008; Zemke, Raines, & Filipczak, 2000). Whilst this is a US based typology, New Zealand has experienced demographic, social and economic changes similar to those of the US (Applebaum, Serena, & Shapiro, 2004; Cennamo & Gardner, 2008; Statistics New Zealand, 2007). Thus it is appropriate to utilise this typology in the New Zealand context.

Generational difference theory (based on the developmental psychology literature) stated that each generation's attitudes and values were shaped by the demographic, social and economic events that occured during their years of development into adulthood (Dries, Pepermans, & De Kerpel, 2008; Strauss & Howe, 1991). Likewise, each generation's behaviour at work is influenced by prevailing societal situations at the time they entered the workforce (Jurkiewicz, 2000). Lancaster and Stillman (2005) termed these societal factors 'Icons' and 'Conditions'. 'Icons' are people, places or objects that become reference points for a generation (Lancaster & Stillman, 2005). They include a generation's heroes, music, technology, media, home life and work life (Gilleard, 2004; Hankin, 2005). 'Conditions' are events that occur during a generation's development that significantly change the social environment, (Lancaster & Stillman, 2005). Significant events that have impacted the generations alive today include The Great Depression, World War II, the post World War II baby and economic boom, the 'cultural revolution' of the 1960s, the 1970's recession (Gilleard, 2004; Lancaster & Stillman, 2005).

Individuals born in a similar generational cohort experience these events in a similar way. As a result, they share similar values and attitudes (Kupperschmidt 2000; Rhodes 1983; Zemke et al. 2000). Conversely, individuals born in different generations experience these events in different ways and have different attitudes and values (Giancola, 2006; Twenge & Campbell, 2008). This results in each generation having a different generational style (Gilleard 2004). generational style is referred to as a distinct set of attitudes, value and behaviours that influence each generations approach to life and work (Gilleard 2004) Identification with the generational style of a particular generation is termed generational identity. Generational identity is the extent to which an individual's values and attitudes align with the values and attitudes deemed characteristic of a generation, as defined by the popular psychology literature.

It is important to consider generational style and generational identity as generational style forms the basis for generational differences at work (Gilleard 2004; Strauss & Howe 1991). Generational identity indicates the extent to which individuals align with these generational differences. It can provide support for the generational research which suggested that people of different generations had distinct attitudes and values (Giancola, 2006; Twenge & Campbell,

2008). The three generations, Baby Boomers, Generation X and Generation Y, predominantly comprising the working population in New Zealand will be discussed for the remainder of this research.   The 'icons' and 'conditions' that influenced their development are discussed (Lancaster & Stillman, 2005) as are their generational styles.

The Baby Boomers, currently aged 49-65 years were born following World War II, when there was a boom in birth rate, economy, education, housing and science (Kupperschmidt, 2000; Strauss & Howe, 1991). Baby Boomers entered the workforce in a time of spiritual and cultural overhaul; they started the sexual revolution, women's movement, civil rights movement and anti-war movement (Strauss & Howe, 1991). These are important 'conditions' for this generation, along with Woodstock and the introduction of television (Hankin, 2005; Lancaster & Stillman, 2005). People of importance include Martin Luther King, Presidents Nixon and John F. Kennedy, Janis Joplin and the Beatles (Lancaster & Stillman, 2005; Martin & Tulgan, 2002; Strauss & Howe, 1991). This generation ended with the decrease in birth rates, around 1960 (Cennamo & Gardner, 2008). Baby Boomers are believed to make up 36% of the New Zealand Workforce (based on the Statistics New Zealand generational cohort typology) (Cennamo & Gardner, 2008; Statistics New Zealand, 2007).

Generation X, currently aged 28-48 years were born after the economic prosperity resulting from World War II ended, during a time of economic changes, job shortages, stock market crashes and national debt (Kupperschmidt, 2000; Strauss & Howe, 1991; Zemke et al., 2000). Social changes, such as increases in divorce rates, abortion rates (Kupperschmidt, 2000), single parent and two-income families became common (Strauss & Howe 1991). Generation X often had to care for themselves and are described in the literature as "latch-key" children (Zemke et al., 2000). The significant life events, or 'conditions' that characterise this generation reflect these economic and social changes; the Chernobyl disaster, Challenger spacecraft disaster, increases in divorce rates, single parent households, increases in abortion rates and the birth of computers (Lancaster & Stillman, 2005; Martin & Tulgan, 2002; Strauss & Howe, 1991). People, or 'icons' of importance include Bill Clinton, Bill Gates, Madonna, Nelson Mandela and Michael Jordan. According to census statistics and based on the Statistics New Zealand generational typology, Generation X comprise 41% of the New Zealand Workforce (Cennamo & Gardner, 2008; Statistics New Zealand, 2007). This generation ended when an increase in birth rates signalled the start of Generation Y.

Generation Y started with an increase in birth rates as Baby Boomers started having children (Cennamo & Gardner, 2008). As these individuals are currently aged 9-27 years, less is known about them than other generations and current and future social change are likely to define Generation Y. At the start of this generation, abortion, sterilisation and divorce rates decreased in America (Strauss & Howe, 1991). As a result, this generation were born at a time when protection of children was seen as being important, compared to past generations. People and events of importance to Generation Y include Kurt Cobain, Britney Spears, Barney,

Barak Obama, Violence in High Schools (predominantly in the US) (Zemke et al., 2000) and most importantly, the growth of the internet and technology (Cennamo & Gardner, 2008). According to the 2006 New Zealand Census and Statistics New Zealand generational typology, Generation Y make up 17% of the New Zealand Workforce, though this figure will increase as this generation moves into adulthood (Cennamo & Gardner, 2008; Statistics New Zealand, 2007).

The popular psychology literature viewed each generation as having different work values, work characteristics and work preferences. Table 1 compares and contrasts each generation's generational style, based on the popular psychology literature (see Hankin, 2005; Hart, 2006; Jurkiewicz, 2000; Kupperschmidt, 2000; Lancaster & Stillman, 2005; Martin & Tulgan, 2002; Smola & Sutton, 2002; Strauss & Howe, 1991; Wong, Gardiner, Lang, & Coulon, 2008; Zemke et al., 2000).

Table 1: Generational Style of Baby Boomers, Generation X and Generation Y.

	Baby Boomers	Generation X	Generation Y
Values at work	Personal gratification	Self-reliance	Honesty
	Personal Growth	Autonomy	Integrity
	Team work	Independence	Diversity
	Personal Uniqueness	Entrepreneurship	Responsibility
		Diversity	Team work
Work Characteristics	Individualistic	Comfortable with change	Social
	Self-absorbed	Cynical	Confident
	Competitive	Pragmatic	Optimistic
	Materialistic	Flexible	Achievement oriented
	Relationship focused	Adaptable	Co-operative
	Team players	Multi-tasking	Community oriented
	Sensitive to feedback	Creative	Educated
	Uncomfortable with conflict	Resourceful	Street Smart
	Respectful of authority	Autonomous	Technology savvy
		Goal-oriented	Team workers
			Socially aware
			Altruistic
			Multi-tasking
			Practical
Work Preferences	Job-focused	Career focused	Meaningful work
	"live to work" mentality	Work life balance	Flexible work
	Job security	Lack of job security	Mentoring/Feedback
	Power	Informal approach to work	Career Focused
	Career progression		

The Generational approach to individual differences, both popular and empirical, has been criticised strongly throughout the literature (see Giancola 2006 and Macky et al. 2008 for a discussion). A main criticism is the lack of empirical foundation to most of the literature

regarding generational differences. Twenge and Campbell (2008) criticised Strauss and Howes' (1991) approach, stating that no psychological data was used to validate the 'generational styles' described. They also stated that whilst Zemke et al. (2000), Lancaster and Stillman (2005) and Tulgan (Martin & Tulgan, 2002) utilised qualitative evidence, their findings were also limited by a lack of quantitative data. However, due to a lack of empirical research, these sources are still heavily relied on throughout the generational differences research.

However, the empirical results found regarding generational differences have also been criticised (Giancola 2006). Whilst some findings do align with the popular literature, many studies have found no differences between generations, or found results that were contradictory to the popular literature. Most empirical results supporting the popular psychology literature have been found in the area of individual characteristics (Macky et al. 2008). For example, Twenge and Campbell (2008) found that self-esteem, need for social approval and affiliation were higher in younger generations. Many studies have found no empirical differences between generations, mainly in the area of motivational factors and work values (Wong et al. (2008). For example, Applebaum et al. (2004) found that the motivational factors considered most important by Generation X and Baby Boomers were identical. Contradictory findings regarding generations have been found in the area of work attitudes and values. For example, Wong et al., (2008) found that Generations X and Y were found to be more motivated by progression than Baby Boomers. This does not fit with the popular psychology view that Baby Boomers are more motivated by power and status than Generation X and Y (Wong et al., 2008; Yu & Miller, 2003). Based on the empirical results found regarding generational differences, Applebaum, et al. (2004) believed that there were more similarities between generations than there were differences, a sentiment reiterated by Wong et al. (2008) and Giancola (2006). The present research aimed to add to the empirical literature and provide greater clarity around generational differences.

The empirical findings regarding generational differences are believed to be inconsistent because different age cohorts were utilised throughout the literature (Giancola, 2006; Macky et al., 2008; Smola & Sutton, 2002). These generational cohorts are based on age, making it difficult to separate age and cohort effects (Rhodes 1983). Gilleard (2004) believed that to further understanding of generational differences, research needed to define individuals based on their generational identity, rather by generational cohorts. Generational identity is the extent to which an individual identifies with each generation's generational style, regardless of their generational cohort. Using generational identity as a measure of generation reduces the issues associated with over-determining generation based on age cohorts (Gilleard 2004). Furthermore, generational identity classification systems allow individuals to be classified into a generation based on shared attitudes, values and behaviours, not just on birth date (Gilleard 2004). This aligns with research regarding sex and ethnic identity, where individuals identify to differing degrees with the characteristics of a particular sex or ethnic group, rather than by sex

or ethnicity (Fischer & Moradi, 2001; Kroger, 1997). The present research aimed to categorise participants into generations based on their identification with the generational styles of Baby Boomers, Generation X and Generation Y. Individuals were classified as belonging to the generation whose generational style they identified most strongly with. It was expected that individuals would identify more with the generational identity of their generational cohort. For example, if an individual's age corresponded to the Generation X cohort it was predicted that they would identify more with the generational style of Generation X, than with the generational style of another generation. However, among the Generation X cohort, individuals are likely to differ in the extent to which they identify with Generation X's generational style. A measure of generational identity was developed as one was not available in the literature.

Relationships between Age, Career Stage and Generation:

The empirical literature has found generational cohort to be related to career stage (Smola & Sutton, 2002) and age to be related to career stage (Gould, 1979; Slocum & Cron, 1985). This occured because age, generational and career stage difference theories are all based on the developmental psychology literature (Rhodes, 1983). It also occurred because generation and career measures are often based on age (Gilleard 2004; Rhodes 1983; Smart 1998), particularly generation measures. Most of the empirical findings regarding age, career stage and generational differences also utilise cross-sectional designs, which do not allow for a distinction between age, career stage and cohort effects (Rhodes 1983). Cross sectional designs obtain data from one point in time thus cannot determine whether differences will change over time (as expected with career stage or age related differences) or whether they will remain constant over time (cohort differences). Most studies assessing age, career and generational differences utilised cross-sectional methodologies, therefore, similar empirical results had been found using age, career stage and generation age measures. For example, Rhodes (1983) found that age was positively related to job commitment across many studies. Slocum and Cron (1985) also found that individuals in the Exploration Stage tended to be less committed to their jobs than individuals in the Exploration and Maintenance stages. The generational literature also characterised Baby Boomers as more committed to their organisations than members of Generations X and Y (Hart, 2006; Smola & Sutton, 2002; Wong et al., 2008; Yu & Miller, 2003). The findings presented above linking age and career stage to generation are all based on generation cohort measures. The present research aimed to use a measure of generational identity to assess the relationship between age, generation and career stage. In light of age, career stage and generation being interrelated throughout the literature, the following hypothesis was examined.

Hypothesis 1: Age, career stage and generational identity will be inter-related. People older in age will identify with an earlier generational style or be more concerned with the issues of a

later career stage. Conversely, people younger in age will identify with a later generational style, or be more concerned with the issues of an earlier career stage.

Individual Differences and the Changing World of Work

Career structures and the work environment have changed in recent years. Throughout the mid 20th century, the typical psychological contract[1] was characterised by stability, job security and vertical career progression throughout an organisation (Clarke, 2007; Hall & Mirvis, 1995). However, this traditional work structure was not flexible enough to account for the unstable job markets, organisational changes and changing economies that characterised the employment context since the 1980s (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996; Kuijpers & Scheerens, 2006; Rothwell & Arnold, 2007). As a result, the employment context is now characterised by job instability, lateral career movements and increased responsibility for individuals to manage their own career (Brown et al. 2003). In the new psychological contract, individuals exchanged high performance and flexibility for organisational support and resources to improve their careers independently from the organisation (De Cuyper, Bernhard-Oettel, Bernston, De Witte, & Alarco, 2008). This type of contract is predicted to become increasingly common as the work and economic environment continues to evolve (De Cuyper et al., 2008).

Perceptions of job insecurity are important as research identified that they are increasing among the working population and had negative effects on individual well-being and organisational outcomes (De Cuyper et al., 2008). In the current work environment, where perceptions of job insecurity are high (De Cuyper et al 2008), it is vital for individuals to enhance their perceptions of employability within the labour market (Brown et al., 2003; Fugate, Kinicki, & Ashforth, 2004; Hall & Mirvis, 1995; Rothwell & Arnold, 2007). Employees must be able to cope with perceptions of job insecurity in a proactive way in order to ensure career success (De Cuyper et al., 2008; Fugate et al., 2004). As a result, perceptions of employability are considered to be an employee's main asset in managing his or her career and are an alternative to the traditional concept of organisational security (Clarke, 2007). The literature indicated that age, generation and career stage can influence perceptions of employability and job insecurity (Clarke, 2007; Wong et al., 2008), thus may contribute to significant outcomes for individuals and organisations.

Perceptions of Employability:

Individuals' interpretations/perceptions of their environment and attributes have been shown to effect work related attitudes and behaviours, such as perceptions of employability and perceptions of job insecurity (Silla, De Cuyper, Gracia, Peiro, & De Witte, 2009). Perceptions of

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[1] The psychological contract is defined as the implicit contract entered into by an employee and an employer. It specifies the relationship between each party in terms of what each party will contribute to the employment relationship and what they will receive in turn from the other party (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996; Ashford, Lee, & Bobko, 1989).

employability are defined as an individual's perceptions of the characteristics which allow him or her to be proactive and changeable in his or her career (Fugate et al., 2004; Hillage & Pollard, 1998; Rothwell & Arnold, 2007). Perceptions of employability include perceptions of one's individual capability alongside perception of employment context variables, such as labour market changes, organisational changes and demand for ones occupation (Brown et al., 2003; Fugate et al., 2004).

According to Fugate et al.'s (2004) model, perceptions of adaptability, career identity and human and social capital increase perceptions of employability. Adaptability is comprised of characteristics such as optimism, motivation to learn, openness, internal locus of control and self-efficacy which increase an individual's ability to be proactive and changeable in their career (Fugate et al. 2004). Career Identity is a psychological construct comprised of an individual's hopes, goals, values, beliefs and norms relating to careers (Fugate et al., 2004; McArdle & Waters, 2007). Career identity is used to guide an individual's career direction independent of an organisation, which is especially important in times of career transition or job insecurity (Fugate et al., 2004; McArdle & Waters, 2007; McArdle, Waters, Briscoe, & Hall, 2007). Human capital comprises perceptions of the level of education, work experience, and cognitive ability acquired by an individual throughout his or her career (Fugate et al., 2004). Social capital is the knowledge gained through social networks and social support, which can guide career opportunities (Fugate et al., 2004).

Perceptions of employability involve evaluating one's employability attributes in relation to the current labour market and economic situation (Clarke, 2007; Rothwell & Arnold, 2007). Rothwell and Arnold's (2007) model of employability identified four dimensions where perceptions of employability attributes inform one's overall employability. These dimensions are self-valuation in terms of the internal (or organisational) labour market, self-valuation in terms of the external (or economic) labour market, valuation of one's occupation in the internal (or organisational) labour market and valuation of one's occupation in the external (or economic) labour market (Hillage & Pollard, 1998; Mallough & Kleiner, 2001; Rothwell & Arnold, 2007).

Perceptions of conditions in an organisation, such as internal labour markets, organisational changes and expansions influence perceptions of internal employability (Hillage & Pollard, 1998; Mallough & Kleiner, 2001; Rothwell & Arnold, 2007). Evaluation of economic factors, such as unemployment, labour market trends and demand for one's occupation or skill set in the labour market influence perceptions of external employability (Hillage & Pollard, 1998; Mallough & Kleiner, 2001; Rothwell & Arnold, 2007). Rothwell and Arnold's (2007) model also separated perceptions of employability into perceptions of personal and occupational attributes. Perceptions of personal employability referred to an individual's perception of his or her employability attributes, such as adaptability, career identity and human and social capital identified by Fugate et al. (2004) (Rothwell & Arnold, 2007). Perceptions of occupational employability referred to an individual's perception of the value of his or her occupation,

occupational group or skill set within an organisation and the wide labour market (Rothwell & Arnold, 2007). Rothwell and Arnold (2007) believed that it was important to consider both personal and occupational perceptions of employability as people are likely to balance perceptions of employability across these two facets to inform on their overall perceptions of employability (Rothwell and Arnold 2007).

However, empirical literature on this model is limited, and most employability literature (such as Fugate et al. 2004 and McArdle et al. 2007) has solely discussed perceptions of employability attributes. However, Rothwell and Arnold (2007) believed that perceptions of employability across all four dimensions were important in informing on overall perceptions of employability. They particularly believed that it was important to consider how perceptions of the wider labour market inform overall of employability as the labour market has been characterised by instability and job insecurity since the late 20th century (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996; Kuijpers & Scheerens, 2006; Rothwell & Arnold, 2007), and will continue to evolve (De Cuyper et al. 2008). Rothwell and Arnold (2007) have developed a concise scale designed to measure overall perceptions of employability across all four dimensions. The present research used this scale to assess overall perceptions of employability and to build on the literature regarding Rothwell and Arnold's (2007) model and perceptions of employability in relation to occupational, organisational and labour market factors.

Age Factors and Perceptions of Employability:

Perceptions of employability have been found to be related to many individual outcomes, such as increased well-being, self-esteem, feelings of control over one's career and career success (De Cuyper et al., 2008; Fugate et al., 2004; McArdle et al., 2007; Siebert, Crant, & Kraimer, 1999). Organisational outcomes such as job performance and organisational performance were positively associated with perceptions of employability (Fugate et al., 2004; Siebert et al., 1999). Many studies have indicated that perceptions of employability and employability attributes differ with age. Studies by Silla et al. (2009) and Nielsen (1999) found a significant negative relationship between age and perceptions of employability. Using a scale of negative and positive perceptions of employability, Nielsen (1999) found perceptions of employability to differ with age. Compared to individuals aged 18-34 years, those aged 34-44 years were 1.7% more likely to have negative perceptions of employability, whilst those ages 44 years and above were 3.0% more likely to have negative perceptions of employability. Rothwell and Arnold (2007) also found perceptions of employability to differ with age; those aged less than 34 years showed higher perceptions of employability and those aged 55 years and older showed the lower perceptions of employability. Macky (2004) found that older workers had poorer perceptions about job and career opportunities when made redundant. Clarke (2007) also found that many older individuals did not have high perceptions of their employability when

looking for employment. As a result found they found job seeking to be a more negative experience than those who perceived themselves to have high employability.

Perceptions of employability have been found to differ as a function of career stage and generation, although empirical findings are limited. Clarke's (2007) study found that mid career individuals (possibly those in the Establishment and Maintenance career stages) did not utilise skills such as adaptability, social capital and career identity when looking for a new job. Individuals in the Exploration stage were found to require more feedback when in employment (Slocum & Cron, 1985), a construct related to higher perceptions of employability through information seeking regarding one's abilities and skills (Fugate et al., 2004). Individuals in the Exploration and Establishment career stages were also likely to spend less time in a position and have less commitment to an organisation (Ornstein et al., 1989; Slocum & Cron, 1985), factors shown to increase perceptions of employability (Van Der Heijden, 2000). These findings suggested that individuals in earlier career stages, such as Exploration and Establishment, are more likely to have higher perceptions of employability, which influence organisational and individual outcomes.

The popular psychology literature suggested that members of Generations X and Y may have higher perceptions of employability than Baby Boomers. Compared to Baby Boomers, individuals in Generations X and Y are viewed as individuals who require more feedback (Hankin, 2005), spend less time in a position and have less commitment to an organisation (Cennamo & Gardner, 2008; Kupperschmidt, 2000). These factors are related to increased perceptions of employability (Fugate et al., 2004; Van Der Heijden, 2000). Zemke et al. (2000) suggested that Generation Y individuals are more adaptable than Generation X individuals and Baby Boomers and Sheahan (2006) stated that Generation Y have an inward focus on their career. These characteristics could increase Generation Y's perceptions of employability. Members of Generation Y were also believed to be more technologically savvy than other generations (Zemke et al. 2000). Individuals who are more familiar with new technology are more likely to feel employable (De Cuyper et al., 2008; Zemke et al., 2000). Generation Y individuals are characterised as more optimistic than Generation X individuals or Baby Boomers (Strauss & Howe, 1991; Zemke et al., 2000), a characteristic also related to perceptions of employability (Fugate et al. 2004). Again, these findings are all based on generational cohort measures. Based on the recommendation of Gilleard (2004) the present research aims to replicate such findings using a measure of Generational Identity. The present research aimed to build on the literature linking age and carer stage and generational identity to perceptions of employability. Thus, the following hypothesis was made.

Hypothesis Two: Age, Career stage and Generation (measured via generational identity) will be negatively related to employability. Individuals identifying with older generations and being concerned with earlier career stages are predicted to have lower perceptions of employability

than individuals identifying with younger generations and being concerned with later career stages.

Perceptions of Job Insecurity:

Changes in economic and labour market conditions since the 1980s have resulted in an increase in perceptions of job insecurity (Clarke, 2007; De Cuyper et al., 2008; McArdle & Waters, 2007; Silla et al., 2009). Job insecurity is one of the most significant stressors in modern working life (De Cuyper et al., 2008) and more than two thirds of New Zealand employees will, at some time, be concerned with the security of their job (Macky, 2004). Job Insecurity is defined as "the perceived powerlessness to maintain desired continuity in a threatened job situation" (Greenhalgh & Rosenblatt, 1984, p. 291). It is an individual's perceptions or concerns regarding the loss of a job, or the loss or a job feature that is subjectively important (Greenhalgh & Rosenblatt, 1984; Silla et al., 2009). Job security is comprised of the perceived severity of the threat to one's job and the powerlessness to counteract that effect (Greenhalgh & Rosenblatt, 1984). These factors combine to form overall perceptions of job insecurity (Greenhalgh & Rosenblatt, 1984).

Perceptions of job insecurity are derived from an individual's appraisal of a situation where he or she believes his or her job/ job feature may be threatened (Greenhalgh & Rosenblatt, 1984). Perceptions of job insecurity typically occur when an individual perceives organisational changes such as organisation decline, re-organisation, lay-offs, mergers and changes in technology (Ashford et al., 1989; Greenhalgh & Rosenblatt, 1984). These perceptions may also occur when the wider economic environment or the labour market changes. Perceptions of job insecurity occur when a job, or a feature of a job is under threat (Greenhalgh & Rosenblatt, 1984). Loss of a job feature results in perceptions of job insecurity as it involves the loss of the job that the employee currently identifies with (Greenhalgh & Rosenblatt, 1984). However, organisational membership is not lost (Greenhalgh & Rosenblatt, 1984), thus perceptions of job insecurity may not be as intense. Powerlessness is also an important facet of job insecurity as lack of control (or powerlessness) over a situation exacerbates an individual's perception of job/feature loss (Ashford et al., 1989; Greenhalgh & Rosenblatt, 1984).

Job insecurity is related to a range of negative individual and organisational outcomes (Silla et al., 2009). Most of the empirical research discussed individuals' reactions to job loss. Similar reactions may result from perceptions of job insecurity, as these perceptions may often be a precursor to job loss. However, no empirical research has assessed this. Across many studies, negative relationships between perceptions of job insecurity, powerlessness and physical and mental well-being have been found (see De Cuyper et al., 2008; Macky, 2004; Silla et al., 2009; Wanberg, Kammeyer-Mueller, & Shi, 2001 for a discussion). Greenhalgh (1979) and Strange (1977) found that anticipated job loss produced a similar reaction to death

and physical dismemberment. Perceptions of job insecurity have significant impacts on organisational outcomes as they are related to a withdrawal response from the organisation (Ashford et al., 1989). Studies have found perceptions of job insecurity to be negatively related to organisational commitment, job satisfaction, work engagement, productivity and organisational trust and positively related to intentions to turnover (Ashford et al., 1989; Ashford & Taylor, 1990; De Cuyper et al., 2008; Greenhalgh & Rosenblatt, 1984; Macky, 2004; Oldham, Julik, Ambrose, Stepina, & Brand, 1986).

Perceptions of Employability and Job Insecurity:

Perceptions of employability have been found to be related to perceptions of job insecurity and the negative effects resulting from higher perceptions of job insecurity (De Cuyper et al., 2008; Fugate et al., 2004; Greenhalgh & Rosenblatt, 1984; Silla et al., 2009). Individuals with higher perceptions of employability may view job-related changes and job loss as a challenge rather than a major threat, and as a result may be less likely to perceive job insecurity (De Cuyper et al., 2008; Fugate et al., 2004; McArdle et al., 2007). Silla et al. (2009) and De Cuyper et al. (2008) suggested that employees with higher perceptions of employability are protected against perceptions of job insecurity and are more likely to perceive their jobs as secure.

Perceptions of employability constructs have also been found to be negatively related to perceptions of job insecurity. Perceptions of adaptability are likely to buffer against perceptions of job insecurity (McArdle et al., 2007; Siebert et al., 1999). McArdle and Waters (2007) found that individuals who were adaptable were more likely to plan for job insecurity and proactively identify employment opportunities before job loss occurred (Fugate et al., 2004). Perceptions of adaptability are also related to an individual's perceptions of control over his or her career, which are related to perceptions of job insecurity (Silla et al., 2009). Individuals with a career-focused career concept are likely to view their career as independent from an organisation (McArdle et al., 2007). They may be able to cope with perceptions of job insecurity more than those with organisation-focused career identity, as perceptions of job insecurity are not directly effecting their career self-concept (McArdle & Waters, 2007; McArdle et al., 2007). Individuals with positive perceptions of their human capital may perceive more opportunities in the labour market and may feel more confident to promote themselves within the labour market (Fugate et al., 2004; McArdle & Waters, 2007; McArdle et al., 2007). Social capital has been found to be a strong predictor of coping ability during times of job insecurity and job loss (Fugate et al., 2004; McArdle & Waters, 2007). These findings indicated that perceptions of employability attributes and related to lower perceptions of job insecurity.

Empirical research regarding Rothwell and Arnold's (2007) model of perceptions of employability, specifically how perceptions of occupational, organisational and external perceptions of employability influence perceptions of job insecurity is limited. However, some

research indicated that individuals who were more conscious of internal and external labour market changes had higher perceptions of employability and lower perceptions of job insecurity (Rothwell & Arnold 2007). In particular, Bussing (1999) found that perceptions of employment within the labour market are negatively related to perceptions of job insecurity. Fugate et al. (2004) and McArdle et al. (2007) indicated that individuals with higher perceptions of employability were likely to proactively identify employment opportunities before job loss occurred (Fugate et al., 2004; McArdle et al., 2007). They were also more likely to identify opportunities in the market place and promote themselves in the job market if job loss occured (Fugate et al., 2004). These findings, whilst limited indicated that perceptions of employability within external and internal labour markets may reduce perceptions of job insecurity alongside perceptions of employability attributes. Based on these findings, the following hypothesis was made.

Hypothesis Three: Perceptions of employability will be negatively related to perceptions of job insecurity.

Age Factors and Their Impact on Perceptions of Employability and Job Insecurity

Age, generation and career stage have been shown to influence the relationship between perceptions of employability and perceptions of job insecurity. This has important implications. Perceptions of employability and job insecurity are related to individual and organisational outcomes and individuals of different ages, generational identity and career stage may be differentially effected by these outcomes. In New Zealand older individuals may be more susceptible to perceptions of job insecurity (Macky 2004) and the negative health effects associated with perceptions of job insecurity (Cheng & Chan, 2008). Inkson and Arthur (2001) believe that older employees who have spent most of their career in the traditional employment context may not perceive that career success and perceptions of job security are dependent on their ability to manage their own employability.

Super's career stage theory (Super et al. 1988) indicated that individuals in the Exploration and Establishment career stages are less likely to value security in a job, compared to those in the Maintenance and Decline career stages. Therefore they may be less concerned with perceptions of job insecurity. Exploration and Establishment stage individuals whose career identity is based on their career, rather than on their position in an organisation are likely to have higher perceptions of employability and lower perceptions of job insecurity (McArdle & Waters, 2007; McArdle et al., 2007). Slocum and Cron (1985) and Ornstien et al. (1989) found individuals in later career stages (such as Maintenance and Decline) to have higher levels of job involvement and organisational commitment. Therefore, they are more likely to have higher perceptions of job insecurity as their perceptions of employability are defined by their job identity, rather than their career identity (Greenhalgh & Rosenblatt, 1984; McArdle & Waters,

2007; Wanberg et al., 2001). Individuals in the Maintenance and Decline career stages are more likely to have mortgage, family and retirement planning obligations (Super et al. 1988). Individuals who are dependent on a job, because of such obligations are more likely to experience job insecurity (Greenhalgh & Rosenblatt, 1984) as job loss may negatively impact his or her lifestyle alongside his or her career. These findings indicated that individuals in earlier career stages, such as Exploration and Establishment are likely to have high perceptions of employability and as a result, low perceptions of job insecurity. Individuals in later career stages, such as Maintenance and Decline are likely to have lower perceptions of employability and higher perceptions of job insecurity.

The popular literature suggested that Generation may impact the relationship between perceptions of employability and perceptions of job insecurity. Wong et al. (2008) hypothesised that Baby Boomers are more likely to value job security, compared to Generation X and Y workers. Therefore as Baby Boomers may be more attuned to perceptions of job insecurity than Generations X and Y, and may also view job insecurity as more important. Baby Boomers are also characterised as being much more job-oriented than Generation X and Y individuals (Cennamo & Gardner, 2008; Howe, Strauss, & Matson, 2000; Kupperschmidt, 2000; Zemke et al., 2000). Therefore, Baby Boomers may have higher perceptions of job insecurity as their self-concept is more closely tied to an organisation compared to that of Generations X and Y. Generation Y individuals are characterised as being much more technologically savvy than Generation X or Baby Boomer individuals (Zemke et al., 2000). Individuals who are more familiar with new technology are more likely to have higher perceptions of employability, and in turn, lower perceptions of job insecurity (De Cuyper et al., 2008). Furthermore, Clarke (2007) found that many older workers felt lower perceptions of employability during job search as they did not know much about technology. Generation X and Y individuals may also have more qualifications than older workers, as they have grown up in a time when educational requirements for many jobs have increased. Supporting this, Generation Y individuals are viewed as the most educated and street smart generation to date (Zemke et al., 2000). As a result, Generation Y may have higher perceptions of employability and lower perceptions of job insecurity. This research is based on Generational cohort measures of generation. The present study aimed to build on this research using a measure of generational identity, rather than assigning individuals into generations based on generational cohort.

The present study aimed to assess the impact that career stage and generational identity had on the relationship between perceptions of employability and perceptions of job insecurity. Based on the previous findings and predictions from the popular literature the following hypothesis was made.

Hypothesis Four: Individuals identifying with an older generation or showing concern with later career stages are predicted to have lower perceptions of employability and higher perceptions

of job insecurity. Conversely, individuals identifying with a later generation or showing concern with earlier career stages are predicted to have higher perceptions of employability and lower perceptions of job insecurity.

The Present Research

The present study aimed to assess the relationship between measures of age, generational identity and career stage. Age, generational cohort and career stage had been shown throughout the literature to be interrelated. However, researchers had expressed concern with the use of generational cohort measures and recommend that generational identity measures be developed to measure generational differences. The present research also aimed to build on the empirical research indicating that perceptions of employability were negatively related to perceptions of job insecurity. Furthermore, this research focused on the impact that generational identity and career stage had on the relationship between perceptions of employability and perceptions of job insecurity.

Pilot Study

Overview:

Previous research which discussed the limitations of generational findings indicated that generational cohort measures created inconsistencies throughout the generational literature and made it difficult to separate generational effects from age or career stage effects (Giancola, 2006; Gilleard 2004; Macky et al., 2008; Smola & Sutton, 2002). As an alternative, Gilleard (2004) suggested that measures of generational identity should be utilised in the generational differences literature. Generational identity is the extent to which an individual identifies with each generation's generational style, regardless of their generational cohort. Each generation is defined in the literature as having a generational style, or set of characteristics that combine to form their shared attitudes and values. Generational identity measures allow individuals to be classified into a generation based their alignment with a generational style (Gilleard 2004). The strength of generational identity within a generational cohort can also be assessed. In the current study items were developed to assess generational identity, as a measure was not available in the literature.

Method:

Participants:

Thirty people, with a mean age of 40 and a standard deviation of 14 participated in the pilot study. Based on Strauss and Howe's (1991) generational cohort typology, 9 people were classified as Baby Boomers, 10 were classified as generation X and 7 were classified as generation Y. Four participants did not record their age thus were omitted from the validity analyses but not the scale development analyses as these did not require a measure of age. Sex was not recorded.

Scale Development:

The Generational Identity Scale (GIS) was designed to measure the extent to which individuals aligned with the values and attitudes deemed characteristic of Baby Boomers, Generation X and Generation Y (Hankin, 2005; Kupperschmidt, 2000; Lancaster & Stillman, 2005; Martin & Tulgan, 2002; Marston, 2007; Montana & Lenaghan, 1999; Sheahan, 2006; Strauss & Howe, 1991; Zemke et al. 2000). Although this literature was a combination of popular psychology and empirical literature, item development relied predominantly on the popular psychology literature as confirmatory empirical research was sparse. The GIS contained 12 generational identity items and two open ended questions designed to assess the participant's perception of the scale and the questionnaire's face validity and comprehensibility. The Generational Identity Scale (GIS) contained three subscales, each comprised of 4 items, which were ordered alternately. The Baby Boomer scale was comprised of items 1, 4, 7 and 10,

the Generation X scale was comprised of items 2, 5, 8 and 11 and the Generation Y scale was comprised of items 3, 6, 9 and 12. See appendix A for the full questionnaire.

Based on the popular psychology literature, key characteristics of each generation were identified by the primary researcher and secondary supervisor and were recorded. Following this, attributes that were characteristic of a single generation and whose opposite was characteristic of the remaining two generations were used as the basis for each item. Items were developed so each item included two polar opposite characteristics/attitudes, one that described the target generation and the other that described the two remaining generations. For example, a Baby Boomer attitude consistently identified throughout the literature was 'loyalty to a company'. In contrast, both Generation X and Generation Y are identified as being loyal to a profession or to their own career (Martin & Tulgan, 2002; Martson, 2007; R. Zemke et al., 2000). Thus, a question was developed "Loyalty to my company is more important than furthering my career elsewhere". When developing the scale, care was taken to ensure that both phrases/statements were polar opposites and that neither phrase/statement had a negative connotation or was socially undesirable. For example; 'sceptical' was a phrase used to describe the attitude of Generation X. This was changed to the phrase 'cautious' to reduce socially desirable responding and an opposite phrase 'confident' was paired with this as it described the attitude of Generation Y and Baby Boomers.

Items were developed in this way to assess whether an individual identified more with the characteristic/attitude of the target generation rather than the characteristic/attitude of other generations. Participants were asked to record the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with a statement characteristic of a single generation on a 7-point likert-type scale. The response scale was designed in line with scale development recommendations from Krosnick, Judd and Wittenbrink (2005). A 7-point likert-type scale was chosen, instead of a 5-point likert-type scale. Krosnick et al (2005) believed a 7-point likert-type scale enabled participants to make finer distinctions between their attitudes and values, whilst ensuring that reliability and validity was optimised. A neutral point on the scale was included, as Krosnick et al. (2005) stated that it increased reliability and validity if participants have genuinely neutral opinions. However, neutral over-responding was assessed during analysis to assess whether participants were responding in a neutral way more than random responding would predict.

Procedure:

Participants were given the survey and asked to complete it in their own time. Once participants had completed the survey, time was allocated so the researcher could discuss the individual's responses to the two free response questions. This discussion ensured that the researcher fully understood each individual's comments around comprehensibility and face validity. Participants were verbally debriefed that the point of participation was to assist in developing items to assess generational identity.

Results:

Scale Development:

Table 2 shows the mean and standard deviation for each item, separated into the three sub-scales. Mean values for all items (except items 1, 4 and 7) are close to the midpoint of the scale. All standard deviations were considered by the primary researcher not to be too high or low to be of concern. Responses to items 1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12 were normally distributed (see Appendix B for normal distribution graphs). Item 2 appeared to be negatively skewed, but skew and kurtosis statistics were not significant (skewness= -0.30, n.s; Kurtosis= -1.13, n.s). Item 6 was also negatively skewed, (skewness== 2.25, p<0.05) though kurtosis statistics were not significant, indicating a platykurtic distribution.

Neutral over-responding was also assessed by comparing the total number of neutral responses to the number expected due to random responding (around 14%). The total number of neutral response across all participants was 14%, indicating neutral over-responding was not an issue. Comments regarding face validity indicated that most people did not recognise that the scale was measuring generational identity, but believed it was measuring attitudes and values at work. This is not necessarily indicative of low face validity as the scale was measuring attitudes and values at work, but in terms of generational differences.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for Generational Identity Items

Item	*Mean*	*Standard Deviation*	Range
Baby Boomer scale			
Item 1	2.63	0.76	3
Item 4	2.69	1.28	6
Item 7	2.67	1.37	5
Item 10	4.13	1.66	5
Generation X scale			
Item 2	4.10	1.54	5
Item 5	4.13	1.54	5
Item 8	3.93	1.76	6
Item 11	3.63	1.47	5
Generation Y scale			
Item 3	3.97	1.50	5
Item 6	5.33	1.60	6
Item 9	4.73	1.46	5
Item 12	4.53	1.48	5

Inter-item correlations and Cronbach's alpha were used to assess inter-item reliability across the three sub-scales. Pallant (2007) stated that inter-item correlations (ranging from 0.20-0.40) were a more suitable indicator of reliability than Cronbach's alpha for scales with less than 10 items. However, Cronbach's alpha values will still be reported to enable a comparison with other scales. Correlations between the three sub-scales were also calculated but were not significant. A Cronbach Alpha of 0.49 was found across all scale items.

Table 3 shows the inter-item correlation matrix for the Baby Boomer sub-scale. Item one correlated negatively with items 4 and 7 and positively with item 10. Once item 1 was removed, all inter-item correlations were positive, although only the inter-item correlation between item 7 and item 10 was within the recommended range. With item 1 removed, Cronbach's alpha increased from 0.31 to 0.36 and individual's average scores on the Baby Boomer sub-scale correlated with age, $r = 0.42$, $p < 0.05$.

Table 3: Inter-item correlations, Baby Boomer scale

	Item 1	Item 4	Item 7	Item 10
Item 1	1.000	**-.13**	**-.20**	**.20**
Item 4		1.000	**.11**	**.16**
Item 7			1.000	**.20**
Item 10				1.000

Table 4 shows the inter-item correlation matrix for the Generation X scale. Inter-item correlations between item 5 and 2, item 5 and 8 and item 8 and 11 were within the acceptable range. Item 2 correlated poorly with items 8 and 11 and once removed, Cronbach's alpha increased from 0.40 to 0.42. However, even with item two removed, average scores on the generation X sub-scale did not correlate significantly with age, $r = 0.11$, *n.s.*

Table 4: Inter-item correlations, Generation X sub-scale

	Item 2	Item 5	Item 8	Item 11
Item 2	1.000	**.23**	**.03**	**.03**
Item 5		1.000	**.24**	**.11**
Item 8			1.000	**.23**
Item 11				**1.000**

Table 5 shows the inter-item correlation matrix for the generation Y scale. Inter-item correlations between items 3 and 6, items 3 and 12, items 6 and 12 were within the acceptable range. Item 9 correlated poorly with item 3, item 6 and item 12, and once removed, Cronbach's alpha increased from 0.45 to 0.57. However, even with item 9 excluded, the average scores on the generation Y sub-scale score did not correlate significantly with age, $r = - 0.04$, *n.s.*

Table 5: Inter-item correlations, Generation Y sub-scale

	Item 3	Item 6	Item 9	Item 12
Item 3	1.000	**.24**	**-.10**	**.27**
Item 6		1.000	**.07**	**.40**
Item 9			1.000	**.12**
Item 12				1.000

Construct Validity:

According to central tendency statistics, inter-item correlations and Cronbach's alpha values items 1, 2, and 9 were removed from the generational identity scale. However, even with these items removed, Cronbach alpha scores remained low. A total of 3 items per sub-scale remained, which were used for the remaining analyses. To assess the relationship between the generational cohort measure and the GIS, participants were categorised into generational cohort using Strauss and Howe's (1991) generational cohort typology. This typology classified Baby Boomers as those aged 49-65 years, members of Generation X as those aged 28-48 years and members of Generation Y as those aged 16-27 years. Participants were classified into a generational identity category based on the GIS sub-scale with which they had the highest mean score. Table 6 shows the number of individuals in each generational cohort and the GIS sub-scale, either Baby-Boomer, Generation X or Generation Y, they identified most strongly with. Across all generations most individuals identified most strongly with the Generation Y sub-scale. More Baby-boomers identified with the Baby Boomer sub-scale than members of other generation cohorts and more Generation X individuals identified with the Generation X sub-scale than did member of other generation cohorts.

Table 6: Frequency table: Generational cohort and GIS sub-scale.

	Baby Boomer sub-scale	Generation X sub-scale	Generation Y sub-scale
Baby Boomer cohort	2	2	5
Generation X cohort	0	4	6
Generation Y Cohort	0	1	6

A 3 (Generational cohort: Baby Boomer/ Generation X/ Generation Y) x 3 (GIS sub-scale: Baby Boomer/ Generation X/ Generation Y) ANOVA with repeated measures on the second factor indicated a significant within-subjects difference in GIS sub-scale scores across generations, $F_{(2,44)} = 16.15$, $p < 0.0.1$. No significant post-hoc differences were found, but a significant linear relationship across GIS sub-scales was found, $F_{(1, 22)} = 32.94$, $p < 0.0.1$ (Figure 1). The mean age for the Baby Boomer Sub-scale was 56 years (standard deviation = 4.2 years), for the Generation X sub-scale, 40 years (standard deviation= 13.0 years) and for the Generation Y sub-scale 38 years (standard deviation = 14.0 years).
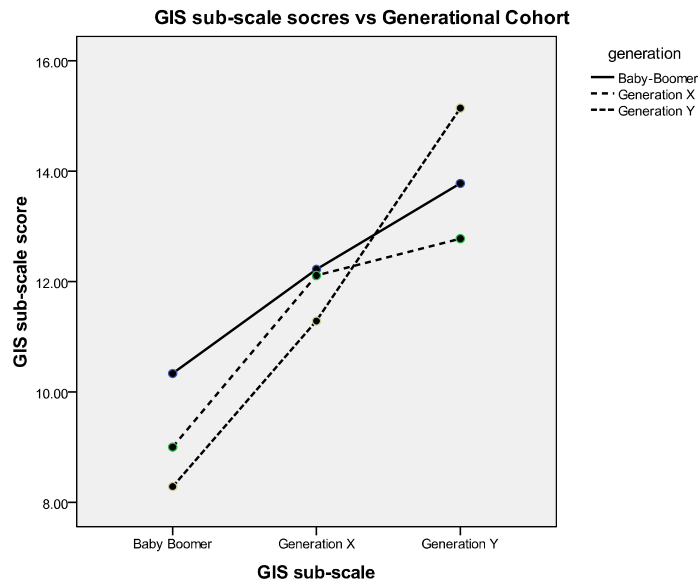
Figure 1: Means Plot of GIS Sub-scale Scores Vs. Generational Cohort

Discussion:

Based on measures of central tendency, and comparisons with generational cohort measures the generational identity scale showed promise. The final 9 items showed acceptable mean, standard deviation and range values and some items showed inter-item correlations within the acceptable range. However, all Cronbach's alpha and most inter-item correlation values for each sub-scale were below the acceptable range. Only the Baby Boomer sub-scale correlated significantly with age and whist the GIS sub-scale had a linear relationship with generational cohort measures, distinct differences between generations could not be identified with the scale.

There are a number of potential reasons why this scale development did not yield positive results. Small sample size may have reduced the power of some analyses; only 30 participants completed the survey. Only 7-10 people were classified into each generation according to the Strauss and Howe's (1991) typology and even less were categorised into each GIS sub-scale. Whilst the items themselves were designed to reduce socially desirable responding (Krosnick et al. 2005), social desirability could have influenced the results as participants were asked to discuss their answers to the two free-response questions with the primary researcher. Comprehensibility and face validity needed to be discussed with participants as this was a pilot study. Future research with this scale should keep questions associated with face validity and comprehensibility separate from the main items to ensure social desirability is not an issue.

A limited number of items were developed for the scale, as a result of the reliance on popular psychology literature and the limited amount of empirical research. Many of the characteristics identified in the popular literature were repeated across sources or were characteristic of multiple generations. As a result, only 12 characteristics that were specific to a

single generation, and reflective or the two remaining generations, could be identified throughout the literature. This may suggest that the popular psychology literature does not differentiate between generations as clearly as it purports. Reliance on popular psychology literature is a major limitation for all generational differences research (Giancola 2006). This can only be improved by increasing the volume of empirical literature on generational differences, which was one of the aims of the current research. Likewise, Strauss and Howe's (1991) typology is considered the most common way to classify people into generations (Macky et al., 2008), but is not supported by empirical research. This indicates that whilst Strauss and Howe's (1991) typology was used throughout the literature as the most common generational cohort typology, it does not have empirical support to attest to its utility. Therefore, this typology may not be a valid comparison to measure construct validity, but was used as it was the best measure available.

The GIS showed promise, but it was beyond the scope of the current research to develop it further. Although the generational cohort method of classifying generations has limitations, the Strauss and Howe (1991) typology was used in the main study of this dissertation as a measure of generation. The generational identity scale was included in the main study of this dissertation in order to obtain a larger sample size for future scale development and potential empirical use (See appendix C for the final Generational Identity Scale), but the results are not be reported here.

Method

Participants:

A total of 509 participants from around New Zealand volunteered to participate in the study in return for entry into a prize draw. Participants were recruited through a range of organisations, a social networking site and a professional membership group. Participants ranged in age from 16 to 68 years, with a mean age of 40 years and a standard deviation of 12.3 years. Based on Strauss and Howe's (1991) age cohorts, 146 (28.6%) participants were classified as Baby-Boomers (49-65 years), 257 (50.4%) as members of Generation X (28-48 years) and 106 (20.8%) as members of Generation Y (16-27 years). In terms of sex, 179 (35.1%) participants were male and 330 (64.7%) were female. Participants were employed in a range of occupations (see table 7). The majority of participants, 408 (80.0 %) were employed as full-time employees, 85 (16.7%) were part-time employees, 11 (2.2%) were temporary/casual employees and 5 (1.0 %) were self-employed (or other) workers. In terms of the type of organisation employed in, 119 (23.3%) participants worked for public organisations, 351 (68.8%) worked for private organisations, whilst 39 (7.6%) worked for another, unspecified type of organisation (for example, a not-for-profit organisation).

Table 7: Occupational Descriptive Statistics

Occupation	Frequency	Percent of total
Manager	66	12.9%
Technician/Trade Worker	39	7.6%
Clerical/Administrative Worker	112	22.0%
Professional	210	41.2%
Machine Operator/Driver	2	0.4%
Sales/Hospitality Worker	17	3.3%
Labourer	0	0.0%
Community or Health Services Professional	19	3.7%
Other	44	8.6%
Total	509	100%

Materials:

A questionnaire was developed that included an introduction page, demographic questions (age, sex, employment status, occupation and organisation type), pre-validated scales (measuring career stage, employability and job insecurity), the GIS and a debriefing page. Five versions of the survey were developed. Each survey commenced with the introduction page and demographic questions then presented the scales Adult Career Concerns Inventory- Short Form (ACCI-SF; Peronne et al. 2003) Employability Scale (Rothwell & Arnold, 2007) and the Job Insecurity Scale- Abridged (JIS-A; Lee, Bobko, Ashford, Chen, & Ren, 2007)

in a counterbalanced order; the purpose of this was to reduce order and fatigue effects. Following this in all five versions was the GIS and finally, the debriefing page. The full questionnaire can be found in Appendix C.

Introduction/ informed consent page:

The introduction page of the questionnaire invited people to complete a questionnaire titled "*Individual Perceptions of Careers and Work"* which aimed to understand more about how individuals viewed their career and their work. Contact details for the primary researcher were included, should participants have any questions regarding the research. It was stated that the research had been reviewed and approved by the University of Canterbury Human Ethics Committee and that participation would remain anonymous The introduction page also described the incentive for participating in the research, a one in fifty chance of winning a $50 gift voucher. Finally, participants were informed that by starting the survey they were giving their informed consent to participate in the study.

Demographic Information Section:

This section asked participants to identify their age, in number of years, and sex, either male or female. Participants were also asked what under which occupational group they worked, whether it be manager, technician or trade worker, clerical or administrative worker, professional, machine operator or driver, sales or hospitality worker, labourer, community or health service professional or other. Participants were asked their employment status, full-time, part-time or casual/temporary or other. They were also asked the type of organisation in which they were employed, private, public or other.

Adult Career Concerns Inventory-Short Form (ACCI-SF; Perrone et al., 2003):

The ACCI-SF is based on the Adult Career Concerns Inventory (ACCI) developed by Super, et al. (1988), which was designed for vocational councillors but has been used in academic research. The ACCI was too lengthy to use in the present study thus the ACCI-SF (Perrone et al., 2003) was used as an alternative. The ACCI-SF contained 12 items and measured concern with the 4 career stages of Super's Career Stage theory (Super 1957). One item corresponded to each sub stage in the ACCI. The items were grouped according to their corresponding career stage; Exploration stage items 1-3, Establishment Stage items 4-6, Maintenance Stage items 7-9, and Decline Stage items 10-12. Individuals were presented with statements regarding career concerns (e.g., "Planning how to get ahead in my established field of work") and were asked to rate how much each of the statements about careers concerned them on a 5 point likert-type scale (1, no concern- 5, great concern).

Studies have shown that there are no differences between individuals' performance on the ACCI and the ACCI-SF (Perrone et al., 2003); Campbell and Fiske's (1959) study indicated

that the ACCI and ACCI-SF were parallel forms (Perrone et al., 2003). Cronbach's alphas for the ACCI-SF ranged from 0.73 to 0.87 for each career stage, indicating acceptable reliability (Perrone et al., 2003). Cronbach's alphas of 0.82 (exploration), 0.75 (establishment), 0.82, (maintenance), 0.69 (decline) and 0.75 (across all career stages), were found in the current study, indicating acceptable reliability.

The ACCI-SF was scored so that one score was created for each career stage within the questionnaire. This was done by weighting each response (no concern=1, no-concern-neutral=2, neutral=3, neutral-great concern=4, great concern=5) and then averaging the three items corresponding to the same stage. In order to utilise these scores for correlational analyses the scores for each career stage (Exploration, Establishment, Maintenance and Decline) were added together to give an overall career stage score.

Employability Scale (Rothwell & Arnold, 2007)

The employability scale, developed by Rothwell and Arnold (2007) was an 11 item scale measuring perceptions of employability across the four dimensions where perceptions of employability contribute to an overall perceptions of employability. These four dimensions are self-valuation in the current organisation, perceived value of occupation in the current organisation, self-valuation outside the current organisation and perceived value of occupation outside the current organisation (Fugate et al. 2004; Hillage & Pollard 1998, Mallough & Kleiner 2001). Perceptions of employability attributes were integrated into an individual's perception of employability in the self-valuation dimensions of the model (Rothwell & Arnold, 2007). Individuals were presented with statements such as, "I have good prospects in this organisation because my employer values my personal contribution" and are asked to state their agreement with the statement on a 5 point likert-type scale (1, strongly agree to 5, strongly disagree).

Coefficient alphas range for the employability scale ranged from 0.72-0.83 (Rothwell & Arnold, 2007); In this study, a Cronbach alpha of 0.84 was found. The employability scale was found to be significantly different from the subjective career success scale (Greenhaus, Parasuraman, & Wormley, 1990; Nabi, 1999) and the professional commitment scale, (Tsui, Pearce, & Tripoli, 1997), indicating discriminant validity. The employability scale was scored by averaging responses across all items in the scale to obtain a single score for employability.

Job Insecurity Scale-Abridged (JIS-A) (Lee et al., 2007):

The JIS-A determined individual perceptions of job insecurity by measuring the importance of job characteristics, the likelihood of losing job characteristics and powerlessness in the workplace, related to perceptions of job insecurity (Lee et al., 2007). The JIS-A was developed as an alternative to the lengthy JIS developed by Ashford, Lee and Bobko (1989), which was developed in line with the recommendations of Greenhalgh and Rosenbaltt (1984).

The scale had five sub-scales (Importance of job features, probability of negative change to these job features, importance of total job changes, likelihood of change to total job features and powerlessness) and a total of 37 items. Participants were required to respond to these items using a variety of 5-point likert-type scales such as 1=very unimportant, 5= very important; 1=negative change very unlikely, 5=negative change very likely or 1=strongly disagree, 5= strongly agree. The JIS-A can be scored in terms of each sub-scale or as a total score, determined by the following formula (Ashford et al. 1989). This formula was used in the present study.

Fully composite JIS= [sum (importance of job feature X likelihood of loosing job feature) + sum (importance of negative changes in total job X likelihood of negative changes in total job)] X [perceived powerlessness to resist threat].

Coefficient alphas for the JIS-A ranged from 0.69-0.93 (Lee et al. 2007) and a Cronbach alpha of 0.80 was found for the current study. Lee et al. (2007) found significant evidence for convergent validity. Items in the JIS-A correlated with items from the original JIS (Lee et al. 2007), and with other job insecurity measures (Caplan, Cobb, French, Vann, Harrison & Pinneau 1975). The JIS-A was found to be unrelated to the Job Mobility Scale, indicating discriminant validity (Lee et al. 2007). The JIS-A had high construct validity as it correlated highly with antecedent and outcome variables, such as organisational changes, somatic complaints and job performance (Lee et al. 2007).

Generational Identity Scale (GIS):
The GIS followed all other scales in the questionnaire in all five versions. A full description of the scale was provided in the pilot study section.

Debriefing page:
The debriefing page followed all the scales in the questionnaire. It explained the full title of the research to participants (*Age factors and their impact on employability and job security)* and stated that the research aimed to find out how people of different ages, generations, or career stages viewed their employability and job security. The debriefing page explained that the full title and purpose of the research were not provided before completion of the survey in order to prevent social norms or expectations influencing individuals' responses. Contact details for the main researcher and primary supervisor were also given as were contact details for community support services if people felt the research had uncovered issues they would like to discuss. Participants were reminded that they could withdraw from the study if they wished at this point, but not afterwards as their data would be stored anonymously and could not be identified to be retrieved.

Prize Draw Registration Form:

The prize draw registration followed the debriefing page for those participants who consented to their research being included in the study, upon completion of the questionnaire. Participants were advised of the prize draw (a 1 in 50 chance of winning a $50 gift voucher) and were asked to enter their full name, email address and telephone number. This data was recorded and stored separately from the responses to the main questionnaire and participants were informed of this.

Procedure:

Participants completed the survey in an online format using *Lime Survey,* a free survey development and administration tool hosted on the University of Canterbury web servers for the Department of Psychology. *Lime Survey* allowed data to be collected securely and each different survey version to be run simultaneously. *Lime Survey* also protected against multiple responding from participants; Internet protocol (IP) addresses were recorded and the survey could not be completed more than once from a given IP address.

Permission to recruit participants was obtained from organisations prior to employees being invited to participate. Invitations for employees to participate were posted on each company's intranet or physical notice board where all employees could view them. Invitations to participate were also sent to a professional member group through their internet notice board. The social networking site *Facebook* and email were also used to send out invitations to participate. With these methods, a snowballing effect was employed (Dries et al. 2008). Participants received the same invitation to complete the survey, but were asked to forward the invitation onto family members and friends who may also wish to participate.

All participants received a description of the research and a URL link to the survey, which they opened in their personal internet browser (See appendix C for the description of the research). Participants then viewed the information and informed consent page and completed the survey if they consented. Following the debriefing page, participants who still consented to the inclusion of their data in the study clicked the "consent" button and their results were automatically saved. Once the survey had been completed, these participants were automatically directed via another URL link to the prize draw registration form, also developed and hosted by *Lime Survey.* Participants who did not consent to the research after the debriefing page were directed to click the "close" button and were then exited from the browser; they did not complete the prize draw entry form.

Results

Version Analyses

Preliminary analyses were conducted to assess whether there were any significant effects of version type on the relationships between the key variables. Correlations between key variables were calculated separately for each survey version and compared. The relationship patterns across key variables were considered by the primary researcher and primary supervisor to be very similar across all 5 versions. Thus, all versions were included in the main analyses (see appendix D for correlations across versions).

Career Stage Scores

The ACCI-SF produced four scores, each indicating an individual's level of concern with the career foci at one of the four career stages, Exploration, Establishment, Maintenance and Decline. Dominant career stage score refers to an individual's highest mean score(s) from the four career stage scores obtained from the ACCI-SF (Peronne et al. 2003). A combination of dominant career stages indicated that an individual was equally concerned with the career foci across a number of different career stages. Exploratory analysis of dominant career stage scores found 15 different combinations of dominant career stages (see appendix E for career stage categories). Career stage categories 1-7 aligned with Super's (1957) career stage theory, which stated that individuals are likely to show greatest concern for the issues of one career stage, or be in a career transition, showing concern for the issues related to two adjacent career stages. Career Stage categories 1-7 had the following dominant career stages: Exploration (1), Exploration and Establishment (2), Establishment (3), Establishment and Maintenance (4), Maintenance (5), Maintenance and Decline (6) and Decline (7). Categories 1-7 comprised 80.70% of the original sample. Categories 8-15 had low frequencies and individuals often identified with three or more dominant career stages. Categories 8-15 comprised 19.30% of the original sample (See appendix E for distribution table of career stage categories).

In light of small frequency and lack of distinction among categories 8-15, they were removed from the between groups analyses and only categories 1-7 were used. This created a group of 411 participants who had a mean age of 40.3 years (standard deviation = 12.3 years), age range of 16-68 years and a sex distribution pattern (Males 35%, Females 65%) the same as the original sample (Males 35%, Females 65%). The 98 participants excluded had a mean age of 38 years (standard deviation = 12 years), age range of 22- 64 years and sex distribution pattern (Males 32%, Females 67%) similar to the original sample and the participants from categories 1-7. A t-Test (independent means) showed no significant difference in age between the original group of 411 participants and the excluded group of 98 participants, t (507) = - 1.27, n.s.

Age, Career Stage and Generation differences

A single-factor ANOVA[2] (Career stage: Exploration/Exploration-Establishment/ Establishment/Establishment-Maintenance/Maintenance/Maintenance-Decline/Decline) with age as the dependent variable revealed a significant effect, $F(6, 97) = 15.53$, $p < .01$. A linear trend analysis indicated a significant linear relationship, $F(1,409) = 84.12$, $p < .01$ (Figure 2). A cubic trend was also found $F(3,407) = 28.51$, $p < .01$. Post-hoc Tukey tests revealed significant differences ($p < .05$) between the Exploration category (M=33.30) and the Establishment-Maintenance (M=45.50), Maintenance (M= 40.50), Maintenance-Decline (M= 43.20) and Decline categories (M= 46.60). Significant differences were also found between the Exploration-Establishment category (M= 34.10) and the Establishment-Maintenance, Maintenance-Decline and Decline categories. The Decline category was also found to be significantly different to the Establishment (M= 38.60) and Maintenance categories.
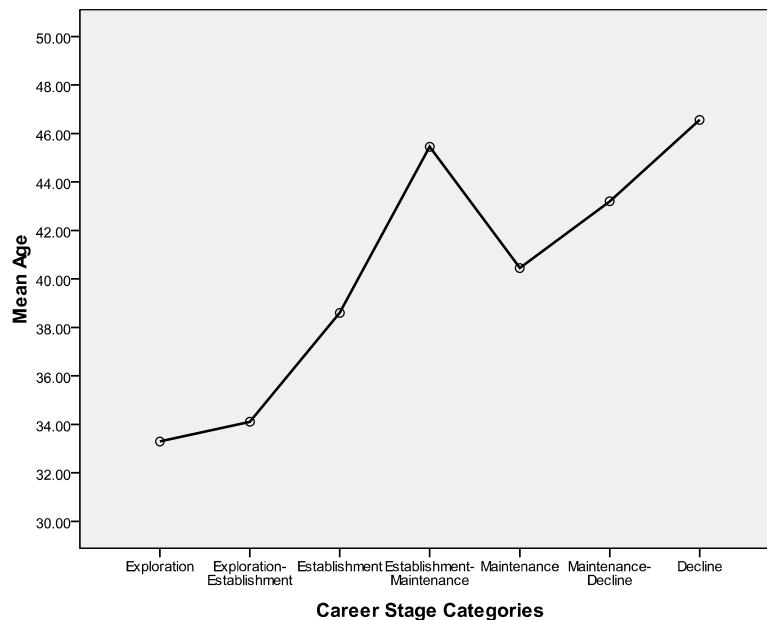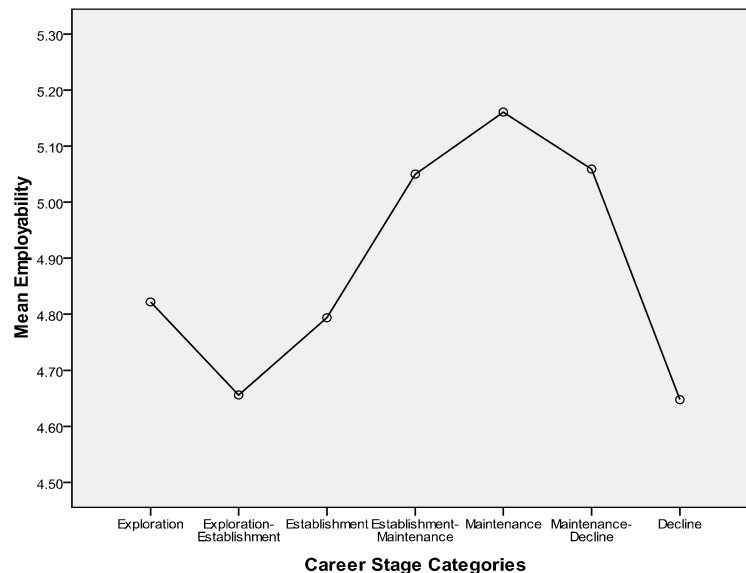

Figure 2: Means plot of age and career stage categories.

A single-factor ANOVA (Generation: Baby Boomer/ Generation X/ Generation Y) with age as the dependent variable revealed a significant effect, $F(2, 410) = 824.00$, $p < .01$. A linear trend analysis indicated a significant linear relationship, $F(1,409) = 1626.00$ $p < .01$ (Figure 3). Post-hoc Tukey tests revealed significant differences ($p < .05$) in age between all three generations, Baby Boomers (M=55.16), Generation X (M=38.36), Generation Y (M= 24.08).

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[2] As unequal sample sizes were obtained for each independent variable (due to the nature of data collection) the welsh procedure (a between differences significance test for groups of unequal sample sizes) was used for all single-factor ANOVAs in this study. Pallant (2007) stated that this was a suitable alternative to correct for unequal sample sizes when conducting single-factor ANOVA's.
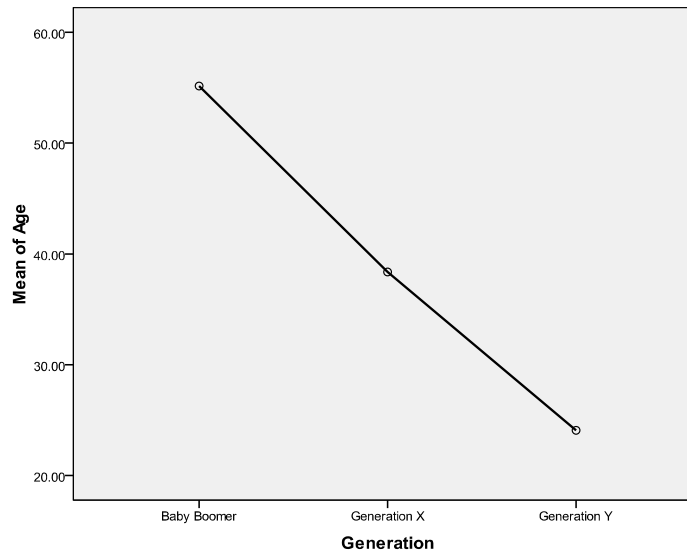
Figure 3: Means plot of age and Generation

Generation identification was based on Strauss and Howe's (1991) generational cohort typology, which categorised Baby Boomers as those aged 49-65 years, Generation X as those aged 28-48 years and Generation Y as those aged 16-27 years. As a result, generation was a categorical variable. The frequencies of each generation identifying with each career stage category are show in Table 8. Within each generation, most people identified with a single career stage than with combined career-stages (83% and 17% respectively). Of the Baby Boomer participants the highest percentage were in the Decline (43.90%) or Maintenance (17.10%) stages, with a relatively even distribution across the other stages. For Generation X participants there was a relatively even spread across the 4 main career stages, with the highest percentage being in the Decline stage (32.40%), followed by the Exploration (20.60%) and Maintenance (20.60%) stages. The highest proportion of Generation Y employees were in the Exploration stage (46.50%), with a relatively even distribution across the other career stages.

Table 8: Frequency Table: Generation and Career Stage Categories

	Career Stage Categories							
	Exploration	Exploration-Establishment	**Establishment**	Establishment-Maintenance	**Maintenance**	Maintenance-Decline	**Decline**	*Total*
Baby Boomer	14 11.4%	5 4.1%	12 9.8%	9 7.3%	21 17.1%	8 6.5%	54 43.9%	123
Generation X	42 20.6%	12 5.9%	22 10.8%	11 5.4%	42 20.6%	9 4.4%	66 32.4%	204
Generation Y	39 46.5%	11 13.1%	11 13.1%	0 0%	10 11.9%	3 3.6%	10 11.9%	84
Total	95	28	45	20	73	20	130	411

Generation, Career Stage and Perceptions of Employability:

A single factor ANOVA (Career stage: Exploration/Exploration-Establishment/ Establishment/Establishment-Maintenance/Maintenance/Maintenance-Decline/Decline), with perceptions of employability as the dependent variable revealed a significant effect of career stage on perceptions of employability, ($F_{(6, 410)}$ = 2.58, p < .05). A curvilinear trend analysis found a significant cubic trend, $F_{(3,407)}$ = 5.39, p < .01) (Figure 4). Post-hoc Tukey tests (p < .05) revealed only a significant difference between the Maintenance category (M= 5.20) and the Decline category (M= 4.60).

Figure 4: Means plot of employability and career stage categories

A single-factor ANOVA (Generation: Baby boomer/Generation X/Generation Y) with perceptions of employability as the dependent variable revealed a significant effect of generation on perceptions of employability ($F_{(2, 410)}$ = 7.15, p = .01). A linear trend analysis found a significant linear relationship between generation and perceptions of employability, F (1,

409) = 13.20, $p < 0.01$ (Figure 5). Post-hoc Tukey analyses revealed significant differences ($p <$ .05) in mean perceptions of employability between Baby Boomers (M= 4.6) and both Generation X (M=4.9) and Generation Y (M= 5.0).
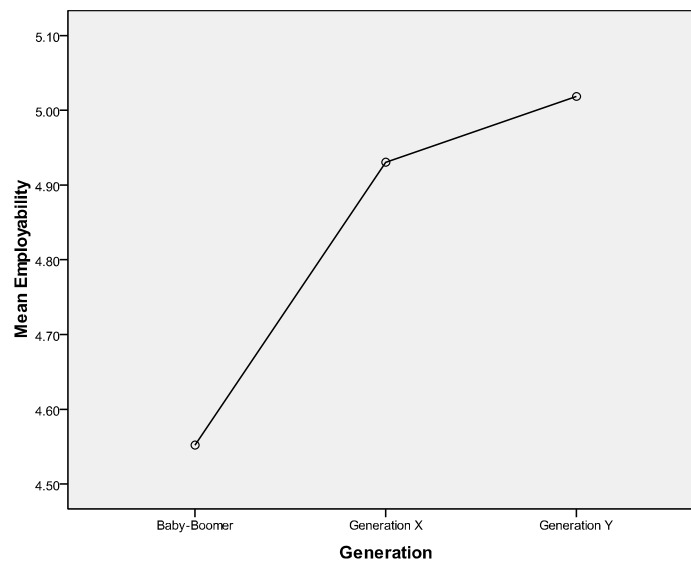
Figure 5: Means plot of generation and mean employability

A combined 3 (Generation: Baby Boomer/Generation X/Generation Y) x 4 (Career stage: Exploration/Establishment/Maintenance/Decline) between-subjects ANOVA with perceptions of employability as the dependent variable did not reveal a significant interaction effect between career stage and generation (F (11, 343) = 1.41, *n.s).* Only the four predominant career stages (Exploration, Establishment, Maintenance and Decline) were used as the dominant career stages (Exploration-Establishment, Establishment-Maintenance and Maintenance-Decline) contained missing cells (See table 7).

Generation, Career Stage and Perceptions of Job Insecurity:
No significant differences in perceptions of Job Insecurity were found between career stage categories (F (6, 410) = 0.80, *n.s*) or generations (F (2, 410) = 2.18, *n.s*). A combined # 3 (Generation: Baby Boomer/Generation X/Generation Y) x 4 (Career stage: exploration/establishment/maintenance/decline) between-subjects ANOVA with perceptions of job insecurity as the dependent variable did not reveal a significant interaction effect between career stage and generation (F (11, 391) = 1.20, *n.s).*

Career Concern:
When analysing the main four-career stage scores it was found that participants (using the original sample of 509 participants) often scored similarly across all 4 career stages. Correlations between all four career stages were found to be significant, ranging from 0.28-0.73, and a Cronbach's coefficient alpha of 0.75 was found between the four career stage

scores. Thus, analysing results based on career stage categories may give the impression of distinct differences between stages when these may be quite small. The ACCI measured an individual's degree of concern associated with factors typical of each career stage. As individuals scored similarly across all four career stages this suggested that individuals may not be concerned about the factors associated with a single career stage, but rather may be concerned (or not concerned) about the issues associated with all stages of a career.

In order to obtain a measure of an individual's concern with all stages of a career, each individual's mean score on each of the four career stage variables was summed to create a single score, termed overall career concern. High scores on this measure indicate high levels of concern with the issues of all career stages, whilst low scores indicate less overall concern with the issues of all career stages. These scores had a mean of 13.80 and a standard deviation of 3.11. Scores ranged from 4.33 to 19.33, with a possible range of 0.00 to 20.00. Scores were normally distributed. For all following regression analyses, overall career concern will be used as a continuous variable, representing career stage.

A single factor ANOVA (Generation: Baby-Boomer, Generation X, Generation Y) with overall career concern as the dependent measure revealed a significant effect, F (2, 507) = 8.39, p < 0.01. A linear trend analysis indicated a linear relationship between generation and overall career concern, F (1, 507) = 15.34, p < 0.01 (Figure 6). Post-hoc Tukey analyses revealed significant differences (p < .05) between each generation, Baby Boomers (M= 13.50), Generation X (M= 14.20) and Generation Y (15.10). This indicated that Baby-Boomers had lower levels of overall career concern than those in Generation X. Baby Boomers and Generation X also had lower overall levels of career concern than Generation Y.
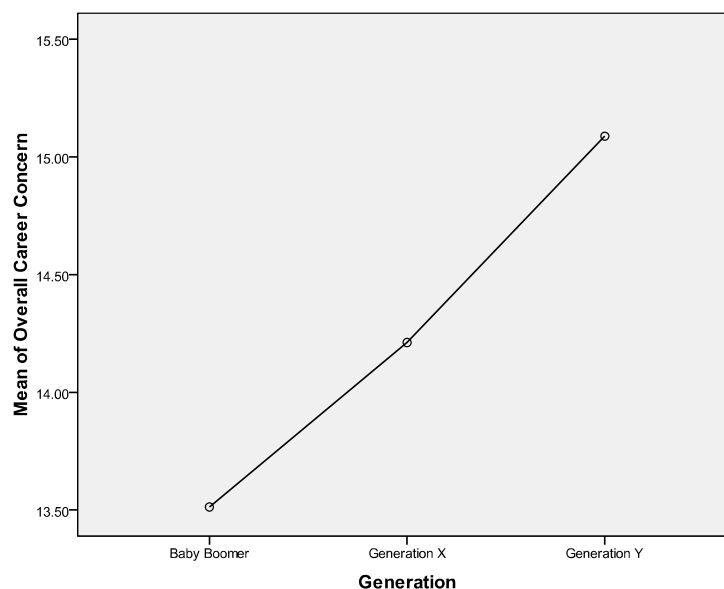
Figure 6: Means plot of overall career concern and generation

Predicting Perceptions of Employability and Job Insecurity:

As generation was derived directly from age, it was highly correlated to age, r (509) = -.89, $p <$ .01. Correlations also indicated that overall career concern scores and age were significantly correlated (r (509) = - 0.13, $p < 0.01$), as were generation and overall career concern scores (r (509) = .17, $p < 0.01$) (Figure 7).These correlations are still low enough for multicollinearity not to be an issue (Pallant 2007).

Regression analyses were used to test the influence of overall career concern and generation on perceptions of employability and the influence of overall career concern, generation and perceptions of employability on perceptions of job insecurity. Firstly, overall career concern and generation were regressed onto perceptions of employability. The overall regression was significant, F (2, 506) 12.20, $p < 0.01$ and explained 21% of the variance in perception of employability scores. Generation was a significant predictor of perceptions of employability, $β$= 0.22, t (506) = 4.93, $p < 0.01$. The positive Beta weight indicated that perceptions of employability were higher for later born generations, such as Generation X and Y. However, overall career concern was not a significant predictor of employability, $β$= - 0.05, t (506) = - 1.13, n.s (Figure 7).

Overall career concern, generation and perceptions of employability were regressed onto perceptions of job insecurity; the overall regression was significant, $R^2 = 0.13$ F (3,505) 25.06, $p < 0.01$ and explained 36% of the variance in perceptions of job insecurity (Figure 7). Overall career concern was the strongest predictor of perceptions of job insecurity, $β = 0.24$, t (505) = 5.59, $p < 0.01$. The beta-weight indicated that higher overall career concern were associated with higher perceptions of job insecurity. Perceptions of employability was the second highest predictor of perceptions of job insecurity, $β = - 0.22$, t (505) = - 5.22, $p < 0.01$ and the negative beta weight indicated that higher perceptions of employability predicted lower perceptions of job insecurity. Generation was also found to predict perceptions of job insecurity $β = - 0.15$, t (505)= - 3.43, $p < 0.01$. The negative beta weight indicated that earlier generations had higher perceptions of job insecurity.
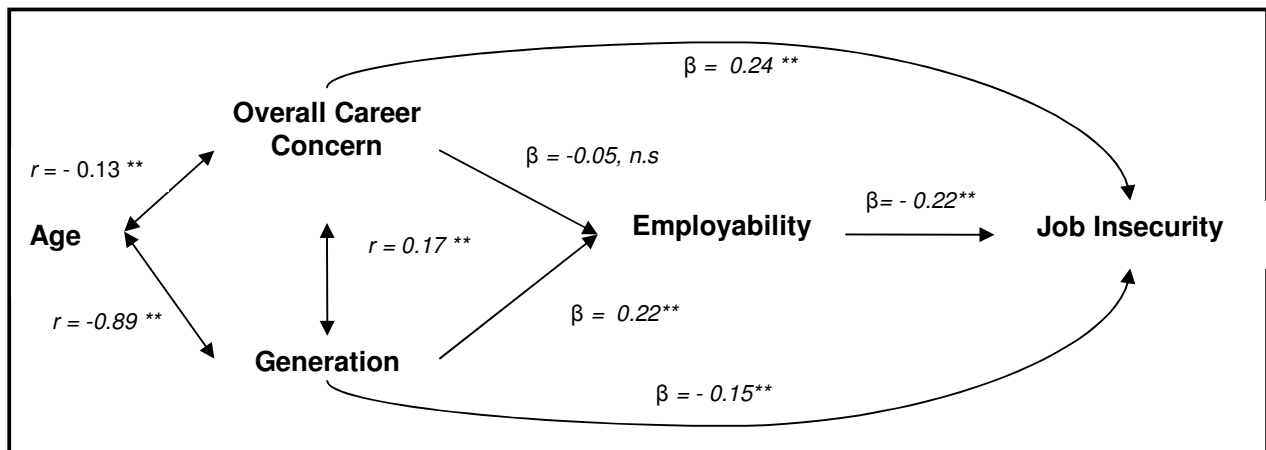
Figure 7: The Relationship between Generation, Overall Career Concern, Perceptions of Employability and Perceptions of Job Insecurity (*=p<0.05, **=p<0.01).

A meditational analysis, (see Baron and Kenny 1986) was conducted to test if Generation's impact on perceptions of job insecurity was predominantly through its impact on employability (as hypothesised) or if the relationship between generation and job insecurity was as strong (Figure 8). The meditational analysis indicated a partial mediation; the relationship between generation and perceptions of job insecurity reduced when employability mediated the relationship, though generation still had some independent effect on perceptions of job insecurity. A Sobel's test indicated that this reduction was significant, Sobels test= - 3.573, $p <$ 0.01.
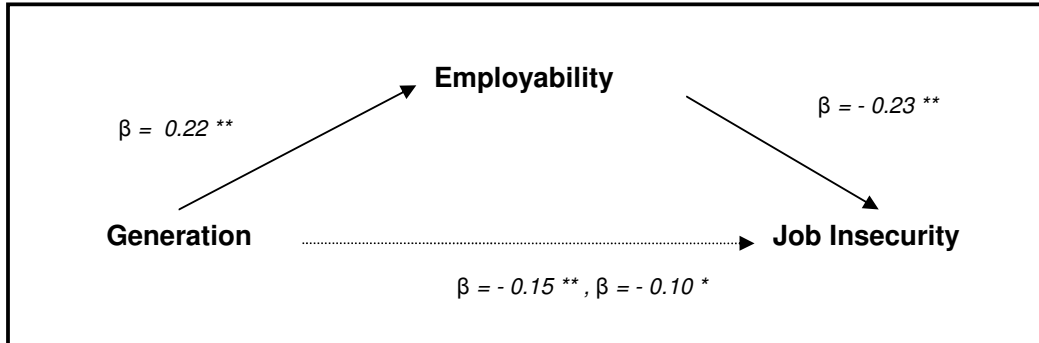
Figure 8: The mediator relationship between generation, employability and job insecurity (*=p<0.05, **=p<0.01).

Discussion

The Present Research

This study examined the relationship between measures of age, generational identity and career stage. Following this, the impact that generational identity and career stage had on perceptions of employability and perceptions of job insecurity was assessed. The extent to which generation and career stage could predict perceptions of employability and perceptions of job insecurity was analysed, as was the impact of generation and career stage on the relationship between perceptions of employability and perceptions of job insecurity.

Age, Career Stage and Generation

Results from the present study found age, career stage and generation (based on Strauss and Howe's generational cohort typology) to be interrelated. Firstly, generation was measured via the generational cohort methodology, which required generation to be directly derived from age. Baby Boomers were older than members of Generation X, who were older than members of Generation Y. Gilleard (2004) believed that in order to further the research on generational differences, researchers need to move away from generational cohort measures and towards measures that assess generational identity. The present study attempted to create a questionnaire to measure generational identity. However, the questionnaire needed development beyond the scope of this research in order to be included in the study. The use of a generational identity measure would reduce the reliance on generational measures based on age, which have been criticised in the literature (Giancola 2006; Gilleard 2005; Macky et al. 2008). It would also provide greater meaning to the results found, as differences could be attributed to differences in generational style, rather than differences in age cohort. Future research could refine the items of the questionnaire already developed, or could develop an additional measure of generational identity. Regardless, there is significant scope for further research in this area.

Age was also found to differ linearly across career stage (as a categorical measure). Earlier career stages, such as the Exploration stage were occupied by individuals younger in age, whilst later career stages, such as the Decline stage, were occupied by individuals older in age. The finding that age increased linearly across career stages aligned with Super's career stage theory (Super 1957). However, only the mean age for the Establishment stage was found to align with the age ranges hypothesised by Super (Super 1957). The mean ages found for all four career stages do align with those found by Ornstein et al. (1989). The age ranges identified by Super (1957) were younger than those found by Ornstein et al. (1989) and the present research for the Exploration stage, but were older than those found for the Maintenance and Decline stages. This indicated that the ages ranges suggested by Super (Super 1957) are

different to those found in practice. Individuals may start their careers later than Super (1957) predicted, especially if they complete tertiary education. Peronne et al. (2003) believed that individuals may also think about retirement planning earlier than Super (1957) suggested.

A curvilinear relationship between age and career stage was also found, as the mean age of the Establishment-Maintenance category was older than those of the adjacent career stage categories. Whilst the proportion of participants occupying this category (3.9%) was small, this finding provides further support that a strictly linear model of career stages may not be suitable for describing careers in practice. This finding of a curvilinear relationship between age and career stage may also indicate that careers have changed since the development of Super's model in the 1950's (Super 1957). Older individuals may also be concerned with mid-career stages (such as the Establishment-Maintenance stage) if they are changing careers or organisation, which is becoming increasingly common in the current employment context (De Cuyper et al. 2008; Fugate et al. 2004).

Generation and career stage (as a categorical measure) were found to be related. This occurred because the generational cohort measure was derived from age, and age was found to differ across career stage. It was found that Baby Boomer individuals predominantly occupied the Maintenance and Decline career stages, Generation X individuals were more spread out across career stages and members of Generation Y were found to predominantly occupy the Exploration career stage. Generation X individuals may be spread out across many career stages because across the age range specified for this generation (28-48 years) individuals are likely to have different foci to their career, such as establishing a career, advancing in a career, balancing career with family, and possibly planning for retirement. These foci align with the Exploration, Establishment, Maintenance and Decline career stages respectively. An interesting point to note is that across all generations a proportion of individuals also occupied the Decline career stage, which was not expected based on the age ranges specified by Super (1957). This supported Peronne et al.'s (2003) view that in the current work environment people across all career stages are actively planning for their retirement. These findings provide support for the literature which suggests that individuals are now required to manage their careers and retirement independently of an organisation (Brown et al. 2003). Again, this indicated that careers have changed since the development of Super's model (Super 1957).

During preliminary analysis it was found that individuals' scores across each of the four career stages (Exploration, Establishment, Maintenance and Decline) were highly correlated. This suggested that separating individuals into discrete career stage categories was giving the impression that individuals aligned with a single career stage category when this was not necessarily an accurate representation. It appeared that individuals were more likely to show a similar level of concern regarding the issues across all career stages, rather than concern for the issues of one career stage.

The present finding suggested that the use of Super's career stages to describe individuals' approach to modern careers may be obsolete. These results support the literature suggesting that the change in employment context since the 1980s has impacted on the way individuals approach their career (Arthur and Rousseau 1996; Brown et al. 2003; Clarke 2007; Hall & Mirvis 1995; Rothwell and Arnold 2007). Peronne et al. (2003) stated that in the modern work environment individuals are likely to plan for their retirement and seek fulfilling work independent of career stage. The finding in the present study that a proportion of individuals across all career stages occupied the Decline stage is consistent with this belief. In the current work environment the number of people working outside of the traditional linear career path has also increased (Arthur and Rousseau 1996). The career paths of women, those with disabilities or those in their second or third careers have been found to be different to the traditional linear career path suggested by Super (Lynn et al. 1996; Ornstein & Isabella 1990; Peronne et al. 2003; Smart 1998). Non-linear career progression is much more pervasive in these groups, as they often take time out of the work-force to re-train or raise children. Super's career stage theory does not pay sufficient attention to these groups of employees who are becoming more prevalent in the current labour market, or to the notion that can careers progress in a non-linear way.

Furthermore, no historical information regarding the relationships among career stages could be obtained, suggesting that Super's career stage theory may have never been an accurate reflection of individual's careers. The ACCI technical manual (Super et al. 1989) and previous empirical research (Ornstien et al. 1989) did not provide information regarding the relationships between career stages. This makes it impossible to confirm whether career stage scores have ever been distinct. Due to lack of exploration of data by researchers, the literature has (possibly falsely) suggested that Super's career stage model is suitable model for the development of careers. The present findings and empirical literature suggest that Super's career theory is not suitable at describing careers either in the current career context or historically. As a consequence, future research should consider moving away from viewing careers as linear set of stages and approach careers from a more holistic, career-wide viewpoint. In line with this recommendation, the following findings regarding perceptions of employability and perceptions of job insecurity will be discussed in terms of overall career concern rather than career stage.

When career stage was represented as overall career concern, a very different picture of the link between career and generation emerged. Results from the present study found that across generations overall career concern increased, with Generation Y having higher levels of career concern than Generation X who had higher levels of career concern than Baby Boomers. These results support the popular psychology literature regarding generational differences, which stated that Baby Boomers were more job-focused than individuals from Generations X and Y, who were more career focused (Kupperschmidt 2000; Strauss and Howe 1991; Yu and

Miller 2003). Individuals who are more career focused are likely to have a greater focus on aspects of their career, whilst individuals who are job focused are likely to be more focused on the tasks of their job rather than on their careers. Thus, Generations X and Y are likely to be concerned with their careers whilst Baby Boomers are likely to be focused on their jobs. The findings from this study also aligned with those of Wong et al. (2008), who found that individuals from Generations X and Y are more motivated by progression, thus may be more concerned with their career path than Baby Boomer individuals. The present findings and the empirical research indicated that Generations X and Y were more concerned about their overall career, whilst Baby Boomers were more concerned about their role within an organisation.

Generation, Career Concern and Perceptions of Employability and Job Insecurity

The present research indicated that Baby Boomers perceptions of their employability were significantly lower than those of individuals from Generations X and Y. This result directly aligned with the popular generational literature, which suggested that individuals from Generations X and Y prefer more feedback from their managers, are more adaptable, have a greater career focus and more technology savvy than Baby Boomer individuals (Cennamo & Gardner 2008; Kupperschmidt 2000; Sheahan 2006; Strauss and Howe 1991; Zemke et al. 2000). These factors are all related to increased perceptions of employability (Clarke 2007; Fugate et al. 2004). As generation in this study is directly derived from age it also aligns with the findings of Silla et al. (2009), Rothwell and Arnold (2007), De Cuyper et al (2008) and Nielsen (1999) who found perceptions of employability to decrease due to age.

The results from the present study indicated that individuals who had higher perceptions of their employability (independent of overall career concern and generation) had lower perceptions of job insecurity. This result directly supported the findings of De Cupyer et al. (2008), Silla et al. (2009) and McArdle (McArdle et al. 2007; McArdle and Waters 2007) who found perceptions of employability and employability attributes (such as adaptability, career identity, social capital and human capital) to be negatively related to perceptions of employability. The present findings also added to those of Bussing (1999), who found that perceptions of employability within the labour market negatively related to perceptions of job insecurity. The empirical research and the findings from the current study indicated that perceptions of employability can reduce perceptions of job insecurity in a work environment characterised by job insecurity, labour market instability and organisational change (Brown et al. 2003).

The present findings indicated that Baby Boomers were more likely to have higher perceptions of job insecurity as a result of lower perceptions of employability. This was expected and somewhat aligns with the empirical findings and popular psychology literature, which suggested that generations' X and Y have greater perceptions of their employability and as a result, lower perceptions of job insecurity (Cennamo &Gardner 2008; Wong et al. 2008;

Zemke et al 2000). However, no significant differences in perceptions of job insecurity were found between generations in the present study. As generation is directly derived from age, these results support the empirical findings suggesting that age impacts perceptions of employability, which in turn impacts perceptions of job insecurity (De Cuyper et al. 2008; Nielsen 1999; Rothwell and Arnold 2007). The present study also found generation to have an influence on perceptions of job insecurity independently of perceptions of employability. This aligned with the literature which suggested that Baby Boomers were more likely to value job security, in comparison to individuals in Generations X and Y (Wong et al 2008). Baby Boomers were also perceived as more job-focused than individuals in Generations X and Y (Strauss and Howe 1991) and were more likely to rely on job security to fulfil their family, mortgage and retirement planning obligations (Greenhalgh & Rosenblatt 1984). Soehlnlein (1998) and Silla et al. (2009) found age to be positively related to job insecurity, which provides additional support for the relationship between generation and job insecurity as generation was directly derived from age in this study.

The present findings, combined with the empirical and popular literature indicated that Baby Boomer employees may not perceive career success to be dependent on their ability to manage their perceptions of employability (Inkson and Arthur 2001), or may think they are 'past it' and cannot compete in ever-changing labour markets. As a result, they may have increased perceptions of job insecurity. Combined with the empirical research, the current findings indicated that Baby Boomers are particularly at risk of experiencing low well-being in times of perceived job insecurity. The negative relationship between perceptions of job insecurity and well-being is well established (Greenhalgh & Rosenblatt 1984; Silla et al, 2009) and older individuals are much more likely to suffer the negative consequences associated with job insecurity (Macky 2004). Reduced well-being not only has a negative effect on employees but is related to a psychological withdrawal response from work (Greenhalgh & Rosenblatt 1984). Thus, high perceptions of job insecurity among Baby Boomers are likely to have negative impacts on organisations, such as reduced organisational commitment, job satisfaction, work engagement, productivity, organisational trust and tenure (Ashford et al. 1989; Ashford and Taylor 1990; De Cuyper et al. 2008; Greenhalgh & Rosenblatt 1984; Macky 2004).

Overall career concern was also found to be a strong predictor of perceptions of job insecurity, which was not expected in the current study. Whilst no generational differences in perceptions of job insecurity were found, other findings from the present research and popular literature suggested that individuals in Generations X and Y may have higher perceptions of job insecurity as a consequence of having higher levels of overall career concern. Factors such as career focus and locus of control[3] may influence the relationship between Generation, overall

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[3] Locus of control refers to the extent to which individuals believe they can control the events that happen in their life. Individuals with an internal locus of control believe that they can generally influence and control the events and situations that happen around them. Individuals with an external locus of control believe that they do not have control or influence over the events around them (Fugate et al., 2004; Spector, 1988).

career concern and perceptions of job insecurity. Generations X and Y are believed to have greater career focus than Baby Boomers (Sheanan 2006). Individuals with a high career focus may be more attuned to organisational and labour market changes that have been shown to increase perceptions of job insecurity (Ashford et al 1989; Greenhalgh & Rosenblatt 1984). Generations X and Y are also believed to have an external locus of control, when compared to Baby Boomer individuals (Twenge and Campbell 2008). This may impact Generation X and Y's perceptions of their ability to control changes to their career, which may contribute to the perceptions of powerlessness associated with perceptions of job insecurity (Greenhalgh & Rosenblatt 1984). As a result, the negative implications of high perceptions of job insecurity, such as reduced well-being and negative organisational outcomes may also impact Generation X and Y individuals, but through overall career concern rather than perceptions of employability.

These differences in overall career concern, perceptions of employability and job insecurity across generations indicate the need for organisations to manage Baby Boomers and Generations X and Y in different ways. Interventions aimed at increasing well-being for Baby Boomer employees should focus on increasing their perceptions of employability and reducing perceptions of job insecurity (Silla et al. 2009). Development programmes that focus on building an individual's social and human capital or his or her ability to understand internal and external labour markets may increase perceptions of employability for Baby Boomer employees. Organisational development programmes aimed at teaching coping skills during organisational change may also reduce the feelings of powerlessness which contribute to perceptions of job insecurity. Development programmes aimed at reducing perceptions of job insecurity amongst Generations X and Y should focus on increasing career skills or career development opportunities independent of an organisation. Regardless of the interventions used, these programmes will be increasingly important as labour markets become more changeable and individuals take more responsibility for their own careers (Brown et al. 2003; De Cuyper et al 2008)

Implications and Future Research Considerations

Throughout the present research, differences have been found between Baby Boomers and Generations X and Y. Perceptions of employability were found to differ between Baby Boomers and Generations X and Y. Differences in perceptions of employability were in turn found to influence perceptions of job insecurity. These findings supported the empirical research which suggested that Baby Boomers were different to Generations X and Y in regards to perceptions of employability, but that Generations X and Y were similar (Cennamo & Gardner 2008; Kupperschmidt 2000; Sheahan 2006; Strauss and Howe 1991; Wong et al. 2008; Zemke et al. 2000). The present research also found overall career concern to increase across generations. However the supporting literature only differentiated between Baby Boomers and Generations X and Y (Sheanan 2006; Twenge & Campbell 2008).

These findings and interpretations are more indicative of a dichotomy between Baby Boomers and Generation X and Y individuals. This has significant implications for the generational literature. Firstly, it questions the assumption in the popular psychology that there are three generations (Baby Boomers, Generation X and Generation Y) currently in the working population. The popular literature suggested that generations are distinct. However, this literature is not based on the empirical research but on but speculations and hypotheses (Twenge & Campbell 2008; Giancola 2006). Furthermore, across the literature each generation was characterised using similar attributes, however the literature still asserted that each generation was distinct (Stauss and Howe 1991). This indicated that the differences between Baby Boomers, Generation X and Generation Y are not as distinct as the popular literature suggested. Alternatively, the current working population may be comprised of two generations, those who are above 50 (Baby Boomers) and those who are below 50 (Generations X and Y). This aligns with much of the empirical research which found attitudes and values to be similar between generations X and Y (see Wong et al. 2008; Applebaum et al. 2004).

Whilst this research does not suggest that the concept of generations is obsolete, it suggests that careful considerations need to be made regarding the utility of the popular psychology literature when defining generations. Future research should not assume that the generational cohorts provided in the popular psychology literature are valid. Instead, future research should only utilise empirical studies to inform on differences between generations. This reiterates the need for a generational identity measure within the literature. Such a measure could empirically assess whether Generations X and Y do have distinct identities, rather than relying on the popular literature assumption that people born in different periods have different attitudes and values (Strauss & Howe 1991). Generational research needs to base its conclusions on empirical research and empirical measures in order to understand the differences between generations. Future research could base its hypotheses solely on empirical data and conduct research to expand on these empirical findings.

The present findings and interpretations also have considerable implications for the validity of Super's career theory and the empirical research based on linear career stage models. The empirical research to date may not accurately reflect the outcomes related to linear career stage models. This poses concerns regarding the validity of the individual and organisational outcomes found to be related to career stage. The empirical findings regarding career stages and organisational outcomes should be re-established in light of the relationships found between career stages in this study. Researchers should turn towards non-linear models when studying careers, or should analyse their data thoroughly to ensure that linear career stage models accurately describe their data.

Furthermore, researchers and practitioners should not rely on linear career stage models to guide their assumptions regarding an individual's approach to work and career. As the current study, and other empirical research has shown (Ornstein & Isabella 1990; Peronne

et al. 2003), linear career stage models cannot accurately describe the careers of many individuals. In order to accurately describe careers in the current employment context, researchers should turn their focus to theories which take a more holistic approach to careers. These theories, such as the boundary-less career theory (Arthur & Rousseau 1996), may be more appreciative of the fact that that careers are likely to change between individuals and change across each individual's life time in the current employment context.

Future research should focus on expanding such models. There is also great potential for further research in the area of overall career concern. Whilst studies have found and explored similar constructs, such as job involvement (Probst 2000; Rabinowitz & Hall 1981), and professional commitment (McAulay 2000), no research has specifically assessed why overall career concern is related to outcomes such as perceptions of job insecurity. Future research could explore how overall career concern also predicts other individual or organisational outcomes which impact on an individual's approach to their career. There is also potential for a scale of overall career concern to be developed that is dedicated to measuring overall career concern independently of career stage.

Finally, the present research reiterates the belief in the literature that the current employment context is different to what it was during the mid 20th century (Hall & Mirvis 1995). Baby Boomers, who entered the workforce when the employment context was characterised by stability, job security and linear career progression (Clarke 2007; Hall & Mirvis 1995) have been found to be different to Generations X and Y who have only worked in the current employment context, characterised by job instability and non linear career movements (Brown et al. 2003). Linear career movements, which may have characterised an individual's approach to their career in the past, are now obsolete. Individuals now need to be adaptable in their career and need to improve their careers independently of an organisation (De Cuyper et al. 2008; Fugate et al. 2004). They also need to cope with perceptions of job insecurity in a proactive way in order to ensure career success (De Cuyper et al., 2008; Fugate et al., 2004), rather than relying on an organisation to full-fill their career needs and move them up the career ladder (Clarke 2007). Generations X and Y may be more able than Baby Boomers to react to this new environment. Thus, Baby Boomers may need additional support to cope in the current work environment, which will continue to evolve and be characterised by job insecurity, flexibility and organisational change (De Cuyper et al. 2008).

Limitations:

Whilst this research has uncovered interesting findings that impact how Generation and overall career concern influence perceptions of employability and perceptions of job insecurity, a few considerations need to be taken into account. A key limitation of this study is the use of a cross sectional design. Rhodes (1983) stated that cross sectional research designs do not allow researchers to ascertain whether differences in job related attitudes are due to age,

career stage or generational effects. Whilst the current study found supporting evidence for differences in perceptions of employability and perceptions of job insecurity across generation and overall career concern, these differences cannot be easily separated due to the reliance on cross sectional data. The use of a cross sectional data design also limits the conclusions that can be made regarding causal direction of the relationships between generations, employability, overall career concern and perceptions of job insecurity. However, the directions assumed align with those found by other research (De Cuyper et al 2008; Silla et al. 2009). It also creates issues regarding the incremental validity of generational measures, especially those based on age. As generational cohort measures are derived from age and cannot be separated due to cross sectional research design it limits the applicability of generational models and empirical findings.

It was beyond the scope of this study to use a longitudinal research design, but many researchers suggested that longitudinal studies would add to the literature regarding generations, employability and job insecurity (De Cuyper et al. 2008; Macky 2008; Rhodes 1983; Silla et al, 2009). Longitudinal design enables age and generational differences to be separated as data is collected across generations and ages at different points in time (Rhodes 1983). Longitudinal designs will also allow for causal direction to be established in terms of perceptions of employability and job insecurity. Future research should utilise longitudinal designs to assess the relationships between generation, overall career concern and perceptions of employability and job insecurity.

As the focus of the present study was measuring perceptions of employability and job insecurity, this study relied on self-report information. Bias or inflation from participants can influence self-report data. Efforts were made to reduce this impact; the questionnaire was designed in-line with recommendations from the University of Canterbury ethics committee, encouraging participants to answer honestly and assuring them that their answers were anonymous. Furthermore, these results aligned with those of Silla et al. (2009) and De Cuyper et al (2008) who used different self-report measures of job insecurity and employability. However, future research regarding employability and job insecurity should compare objective employability measures (such as employment, tenure, education), self-report employability measures and job insecurity data. This would inform on the reliability among such measures, reduce bias or inflation from participants and expand the employability and job insecurity literature.

Conclusion:

The findings from the present research add considerably to the research and literature regarding generational differences and the research on perceptions of job insecurity. In particular the finding that career stage theories may not longer describe individuals approach to

careers has significant implications for the career stage literature. It also supports the notion that over time careers have changed, mainly due to the change in the employment context.

Perceptions of employability were found to predict perceptions of job insecurity in the current study, a finding which directly aligns with previous literature. It was also found that Baby Boomer individuals have lower perceptions of employability, which influenced their perceptions of job insecurity. These findings directly support the literature regarding perceptions of employability and job insecurity. They also enhance understanding of the antecedents of job insecurity in an employment context where job insecurity is becoming increasingly common. On the other hand, Generations X and Y were found to have higher levels of overall career concern, which may impact perceptions of job insecurity. This finding provides a platform for further research regarding the attitudes and perceptions associated with overall career concern.

These findings support the popular psychology literature, which indicated that each generation is likely to approach work and their careers in a different way. It particularly supported the generational psychology literature which suggested that Baby Boomers may approach work differently to Generations X and Y. These differences have implications for how Baby Boomers and Generations X and Y are managed at work, particularly in times when perceptions job insecurity may be high. The results from the present study add to the empirical literature regarding generational differences in career related perceptions and provide a basis for further empirical research on career related generational differences.

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Appendix A Generational Identity Scale Questionnaire

For each of the statements below please indicate the extent to which you agree with the statement. Do this by ticking the appropriate number for each item. The more that you agree with an item the higher the number you should tick.

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat Disagree	kind-of disagree	Neutral	kind-of agree	somewhat agree	strongly agree
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Loyalty to my company is more important than furthering my career elsewhere							
2. In life, it is better to be generally cautious than generally confident							
3. Social/community development is more important than individual development							
4. Valuing established methods at work is more important than embracing new ideas							
5. Individual contribution should be recognised more than the team effort							
6. A team is more effective if it is relaxed rather than formal							
7. Experience in a job is a better measure of success than achievements in a job							
8. At work, avoiding political issues is better than taking an interest in political issues.							
9. Enjoying the people you work with is more important than enjoying the job that you do							
10. A boss who gives good instructions is better than a boss who seeks opinions							
11. Figuring it out myself is more important than asking for help when I need it							
12. At work, a focus on fairness and equality is better than a focus on productivity and results							

Comments about the questions: (E. G., Do you think they are easy to understand, is it easy to say how much you agree or disagree with the question)

What do you think the questions are trying to measure?

Appendix B: Generational Identity Scale Items- Normal Distribution Graphs

Baby Boomer Sub-scale
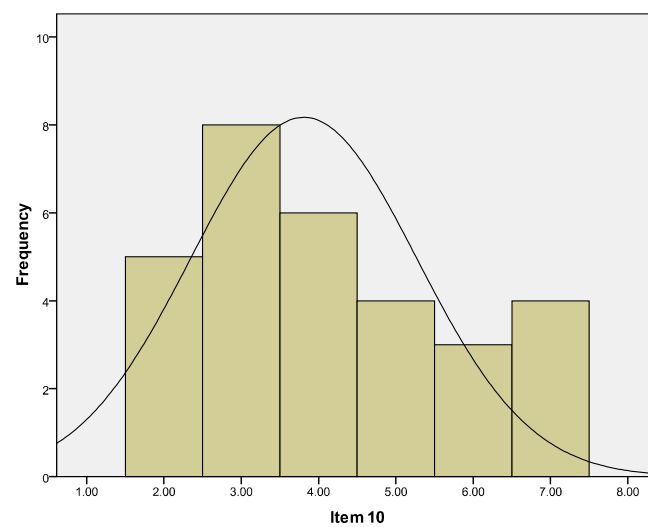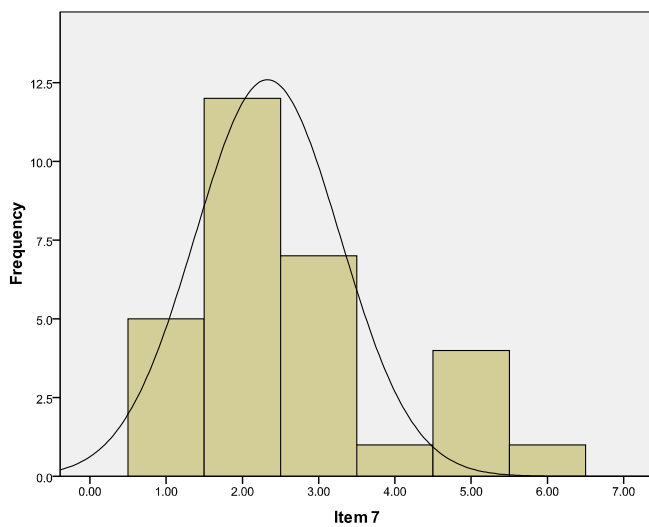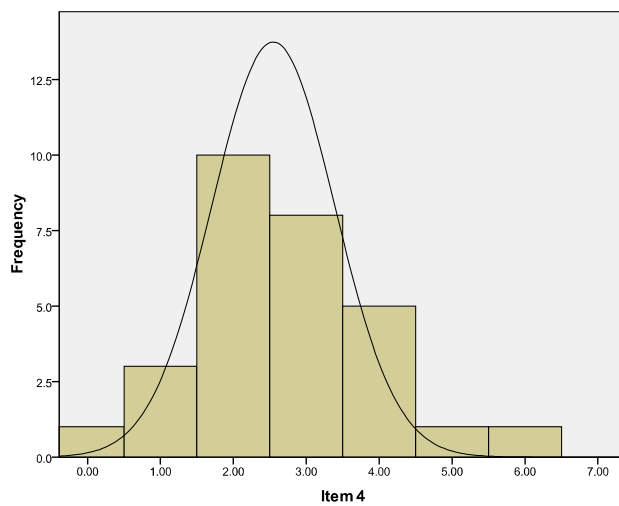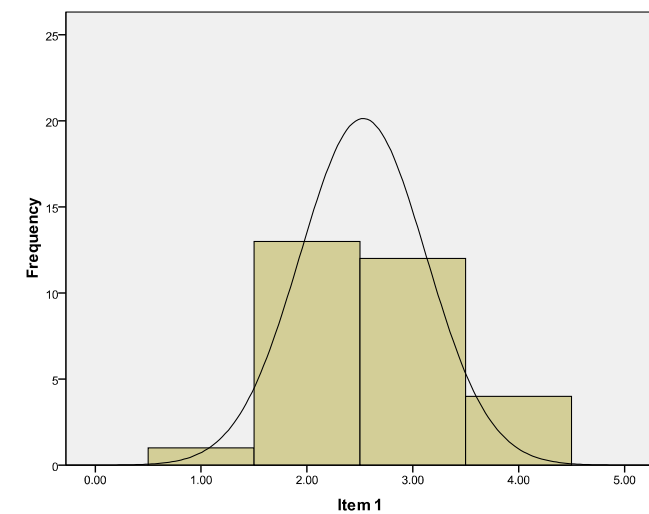
Generation X Sub-scale
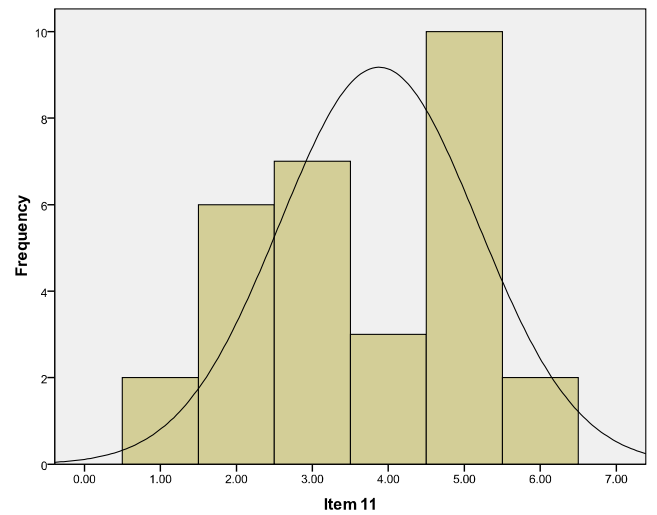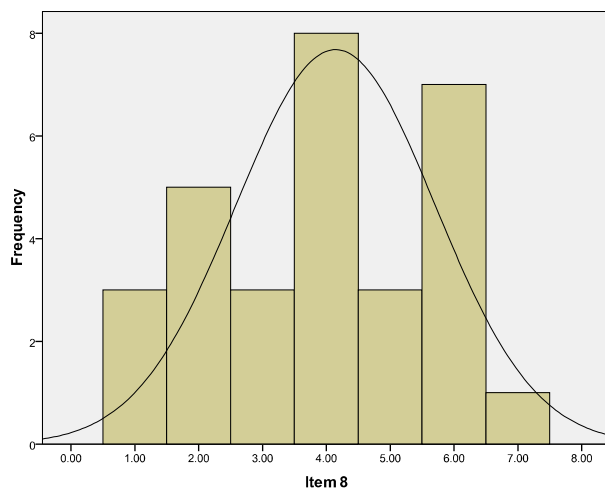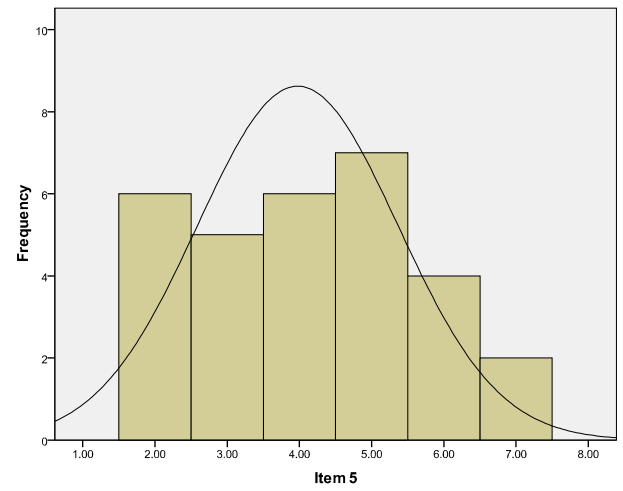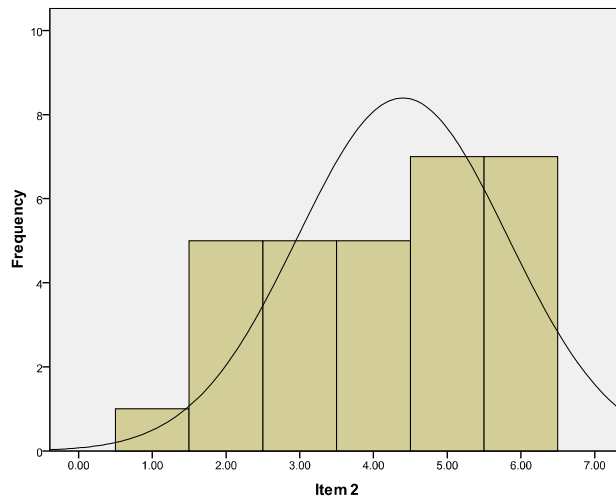
Generation Y Sub-scale
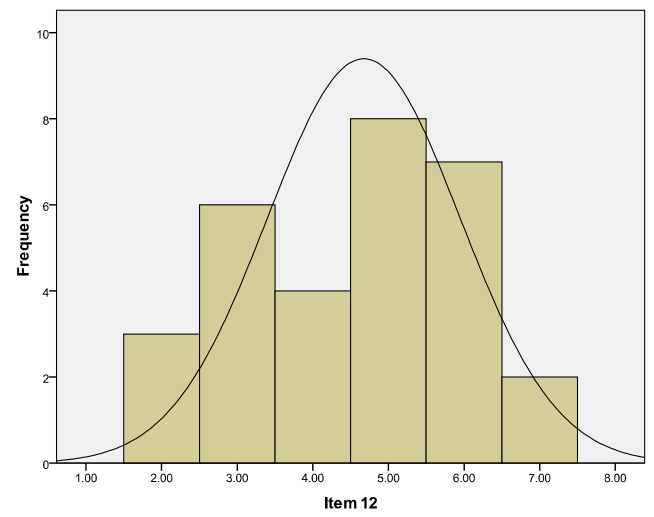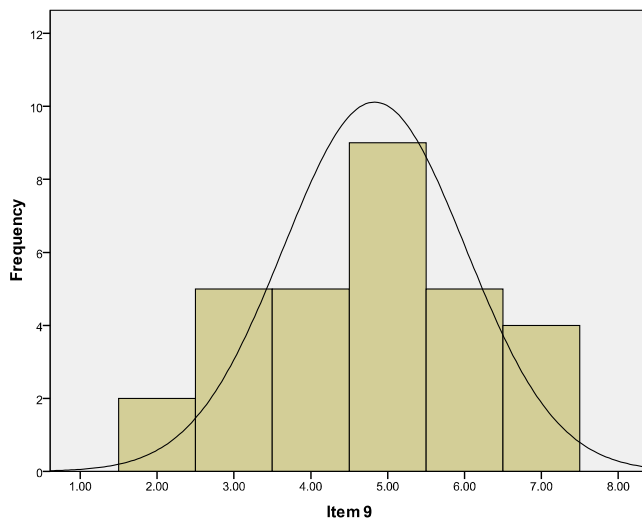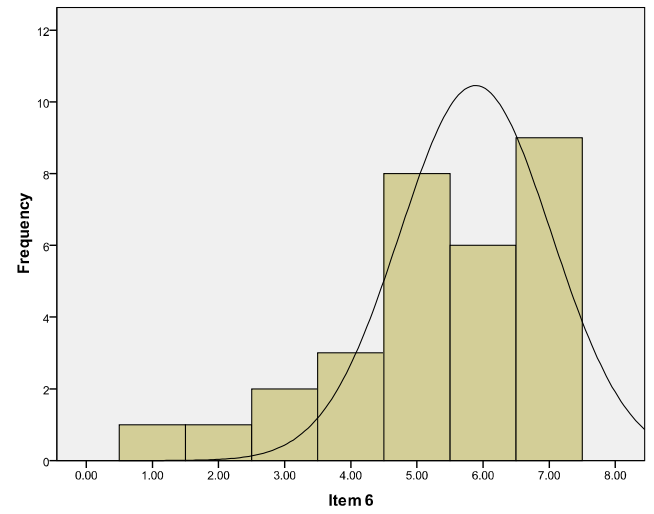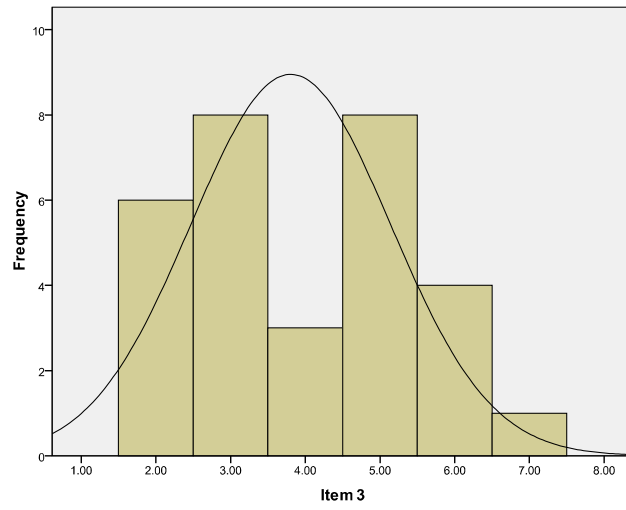
Appendix C: Study Questionnaire

Workplace Questionnaire; win a $50 voucher

To Whom it may concern,

You are invited to complete a questionnaire titled **Individual Perceptions of Careers and Work**.

This questionnaire is being carried out as part of a Master of Science (Applied Psychology) by Courtney McGuigan, under the primary supervision of Professor Lucy Johnston. The aim of the project is to understand more about how individuals view their career and their work.

Participation involves completing an online questionnaire that takes 10-15 minutes to complete and can be paused and resumed at any stage. Completion of this questionnaire is anonymous and this project has been reviewed and approved by the University of Canterbury Human Ethics Committee.

As a token for completing the questionnaire, you will be entered into a prize draw for a 1 in 50 chance to win a $50 Westfield or Petrol gift voucher. The information entered into the prize draw registration is kept separate from your responses in the main survey.

If you have any questions about participation, Courtney can be contacted on chm32@student.canterbury.ac.nz.

I thank you in advance for your time, your participation is greatly appreciated. To complete the questionnaire, please click on the following link (or paste it into your internet browser):

link inserted here (dependent on survey version)###

Yours Sincerely,
Courtney McGuigan

Individual Perceptions of Careers and Work

Please read the following note before completing the questionnaire.

You are invited to participate in the research project *Individual Perceptions of Careers and Work* by completing the following questionnaires. The aim of the project is to understand more about how individuals view their career and their work.

The project is being carried out as a requirement for a Master of Science (Applied Psychology) by Courtney McGuigan, under the primary supervision of Professor Lucy Johnston. Courtney can be contacted on chm32@student.canterbury.ac.nz. She will be pleased to discuss any concerns you may have about participation in the project.

Participation in this research is anonymous, and you will not be asked any identifying information. You may withdraw your participation, including withdrawal of any information you have provided, at any stage during the completion of the questionnaires. However, once you have submitted your completed questionnaires, your data cannot be retrieved as it is anonymous.

As a token for completing the research you will be entered into a prize draw for a $50 Westfield or Petrol gift voucher. We are hoping to recruit around 250 participants and there will be a $50 voucher available for each 50 people who participate.

By completing the questionnaire it will be understood that you have consented to participate in the project, and that you consent to publication of the results of the project with the understanding that anonymity will be preserved.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the University of Canterbury Full Ethics Committee.

Section 1 Demographic information

Are you Male or Female?

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- ○Female
- ○Male

Please select your occupation from the list below

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- ○Manager
- ○Technician or Trade Worker
- ○Clerical or Administrative Worker

- ○Professional
- ○Machinery Operator/Driver
- ○Sales or Hospitaility Worker
- ○Labourer
- ○Community or Health Service Professional
- ○Other

What is your employment status?

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- ○full time employment
- ○part-time employment
- ○temporary/casual employment
- ○other

What type of organisation do you work for?

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- ○Private
- ○Public
- ○Other

Section 2A

For each of the items below please indicate the extent to which it is a concern to you. Do this by selecting the appropriate number for each item. The more that an item is of concern to you the higher the number you should select.

	No concern 1	2	Neutral 3	4	Great concern 5
Finding the line of work that I am best suited for	○	○	○	○	○
Finding a line of work that interests me	○	○	○	○	○
Getting started in my chosen career field	○	○	○	○	○
Settling down in a job I can stay with	○	○	○	○	○
Becoming especially knowledgeable or skilful at work	○	○	○	○	○
Planning how to get ahead in my established field of work	○	○	○	○	○
Keeping the respect of people in my field	○	○	○	○	○
Attending meetings and seminars on new methods	○	○	○	○	○
Identifying new problems to work on	○	○	○	○	○
Developing easier ways to do my work	○	○	○	○	○
Planning well for retirement	○	○	○	○	○

	No concern 1	2	Neutral 3	4	Great concern 5
Having a good place to live in retirement	○	○	○	○	○

Section 2B

For each of the statements below please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement. Do this by selecting the appropriate number for each statement. The more you agree with a statement you the higher the number you should select.

	Strongly Disagree 1	2	3	Neutral 4	5	6	Strongly Agree 7
Even if there was downsizing in this organisation I am confident that I would be retained	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
My personal networks in this organisation help me in my career.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I am aware of the opportunities arising in this organisation even if they are different to what I do now	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
The skills I have gained in my present job are transferable to other occupations outside this organisation	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I could easily retrain to make myself more employable elsewhere.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I have a good knowledge of opportunities for me outside of this organisation even if they are quite different to what I do now	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Among the people who do the same job as me I am well respected in this organisation.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
If I needed to, I could easily get another job like mine in a similar organisation.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I could easily get a similar job to mine in almost any organisation.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Anyone with my level of skills, knowledge, job similarity and organisational experience will be highly sought after by employers.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I could get any job, anywhere, so long as my skills and experience were reasonably relevant	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Section 2C

In your working life, please rate how important each of the following features is to you personally. Do this by selecting the appropriate number for each feature. The more important a feature is to you the higher the number you should select.

	Very Unimportant 1	2	Neutral 3	4	Very Important 5
Maintaining your current pay?	○	○	○	○	○
Maintaining opportunities to receive periodic pay increases?	○	○	○	○	○
The freedom to schedule your work?	○	○	○	○	○
The freedom to perform the work in the manner you see fit?	○	○	○	○	○
A sense of community in working with good co-workers?	○	○	○	○	○
The quality of the supervision your receive?	○	○	○	○	○
A job where you do an entire piece of work from start to finish?	○	○	○	○	○
A job that has significant/important impact on others?	○	○	○	○	○
A job in which you can tell how well you are doing as you do it?	○	○	○	○	○

Looking into the future, it is possible that changes could negatively affect each of these features. Please indicate below how likely you think it is that such negative changes will happen for you. The more likely you think negative changes are the higher the number you should select.

	Negative change very unlikely 1	2	Neutral 3	4	Negative change very likely 5
Maintaining your current pay?	○	○	○	○	○
Maintaining opportunities to receive periodic pay increases?	○	○	○	○	○
The freedom to schedule your work?	○	○	○	○	○

	Negative change very unlikely 1	2	Neutral 3	4	Negative change very likely 5
The freedom to perform the work in the manner you see fit?	○	○	○	○	○
A sense of community in working with good co-workers?	○	○	○	○	○
The quality of the supervision you receive?	○	○	○	○	○
A job where you do an entire piece of work from start to finish?	○	○	○	○	○
A job that has significant/important impact on others?	○	○	○	○	○
A job in which you can tell how well you are doing as you do it?	○	○	○	○	○

Assume for a moment that each of the following events could happen to you. For each event rate how important you would consider such an event to be. The more important it is the higher the number you should select.

	Very Unimportant 1	2	Neutral 3	4	Very Important 5
You will be moved to a lower level in the organisation	○	○	○	○	○
You will be moved to another job at the same level within the organisation	○	○	○	○	○
You will be moved to a different job at a higher position in your current location	○	○	○	○	○
You will be moved to a different job at a higher position in a different geographic location	○	○	○	○	○
Your future pay will be reduced	○	○	○	○	○
Your department or division's future will be uncertain	○	○	○	○	○
You will be pressured to accept early retirement	○	○	○	○	○
You will be pressured to work fewer hours	○	○	○	○	○

Again, thinking about the future, how likely is it that each of these events might actually occur to you in your current job? The more likely you think each event is the higher the number you should select.

	Very Unlikely 1	2	Neutral 3	4	Very Likely 5
You will lose your job and be moved to a lower level in the organisation	○	○	○	○	○
You will lose your job and be moved to another job at the same level within the organisation	○	○	○	○	○
You will be moved to a higher position within your current location	○	○	○	○	○
You will be moved to a higher position in another geographic location	○	○	○	○	○
You will lose your job and be laid off for a short while	○	○	○	○	○
You will lose your job and be laid off permanently	○	○	○	○	○
You will find your department or division's future uncertain	○	○	○	○	○
You will be pressured to accept early retirement	○	○	○	○	○
You will be pressured to work fewer hours	○	○	○	○	○

For each of the following statements please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements. Do this by selecting the appropriate number for each statement. The more you agree with each statement the higher the number you should select.

	Strongly Disagree 1	2	3	Neutral 4	5	6	Strongly Agree 7
I have enough power in this organisation to control events that might affect my job	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
In this organisation, I can prevent negative things from effecting my work situation	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I understand this organisation well enough to be able to control things that affect me	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Section 3

For each of the statements below please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement. Do this by selecting the appropriate number for each statement. The more you agree with a statement you the higher the number you should select.

	Strongly Disagree 1	2	3	Neutral 4	5	6	Strongly Agree 7
Social/community development is more important than individual development	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Valuing established methods at work is more important than embracing new ideas	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Individual contribution should be recognised more than the team effort	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
A team is more effective if it is relaxed rather than formal	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Experience in a job is a better measure of success than achievements in a job	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
At work, avoiding political issues is better than taking an interest in political issues	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
A boss who gives good instructions is better than a boss who seeks opinions	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Figuring it out myself is more important than asking for help when I need it	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
At work, a focus on fairness and equality is better than a focus on productivity and results	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

DeBrief

Thank you for taking part in this research. The full title of the research project is **Age factors and their impact on employability and job security.** The questionnaires that you completed provided information about career stage, age, generational identity, views of employability, and views of job security.

The aim of this research was to understand how age, career stage and identification with a generation (e.g. Baby-boomer, generation X and Generation Y) effects individual's views of how employable they are. People of different ages may view themselves as more or less employable, and understanding how people of different ages view themselves will help organisations to support people of different ages throughout their career.

This research also collected information on how secure an individual believes their current job to be. It is important to understand how job security affects people of different ages so that organisations can support people of different ages in ways that will benefit the individual.

The full title and purpose of the study was not provided before you completed the questionnaires to ensure that you were not influenced by what you thought the purpose of the research to be when answering the questions.

If, throughout the course of completing this questionnaire issues have been brought to your awareness that you would like to discuss, you are advised to contact the support groups shown below:

Citizens Advice Bureau: 0800 367 222
Lifeline 24 hour counselling service: 0800 543 354

For any comments about the questionnaire, or to view the results please contact Courtney McGuigan (primary researcher) chm32@student.canterbury.ac.nz, or Professor Lucy Johnston (Supervisor), (03) 364 2967 or lucy.johnston@canterbury.ac.nz . They will be pleased to discuss any concerns you may have about participation in the project.

You can withdraw from the project at this stage, including withdrawal of any information you have provided.

Thank-you for completing the questionnaire

Appendix D: Correlations between Survey Versions

Age vs. Exploration Stage:

VERSION 1	-0.40
VERSION 2	-0.28
VERSION 3	-0.53
VERSION 4	-0.32
VERSION 5	-0.18
VERSION 6[4]	-0.22

Age vs. Establishment Stage:

VERSION 1	-0.31
VERSION 2	-0.03
VERSION 3	-0.54
VERSION 4	-0.28
VERSION 5	-.070
VERSION 6	-0.23

Age vs. Maintenance Stage:

VERSION 1	-0.30
VERSION 2	0.10
VERSION 3	-0.40
VERSION 4	0.06
VERSION 5	0.07
VERSION 6	0.08

Age vs. Decline Stage:

VERSION 1	0.28
VERSION 2	0.23
VERSION 3	0.18
VERSION 4	-0.28
VERSION 5	0.25
VERSION 6	0.22

Exploration Stage vs Employability:

VERSION 1	0.23
VERSION 2	-0.11
VERSION 3	0.02
VERSION 4	0.02
VERSION 5	-0.17
VERSION 6	-0.22

Establishment Stage vs Employability:

VERSION 1	0.23
VERSION 2	-0.10
VERSION 3	0.13
VERSION 4	0.01
VERSION 5	-0.15
VERSION 6	-0.14

---

[4] Note: Version six was identical in structure to Version one. However, these results were kept separate as participants were from a large public organisation and the primary researcher wished to assess whether participants from this organisation differed in responses to other versions, where responses were from a range of organisations.

Maintenance Stage vs Employability:

VERSION 1	0.15
VERSION 2	0.13
VERSION 3	0.22
VERSION 4	0.06
VERSION 5	-0.14
VERSION 6	-0.14

Decline Stage vs Employability:

VERSION 1	-0.07
VERSION 2	0.04
VERSION 3	0.05
VERSION 4	-0.01
VERSION 5	0.03
VERSION 6	-0.06

Employability vs Job insecurity:

VERSION 1	0.46
VERSION 2	0.22
VERSION 3	0.46
VERSION 4	0.33
VERSION 5	0.25
VERSION 6	0.18

Age vs Job Insecurity:

VERSION 1	-0.22
VERSION 2	0.00
VERSION 3	0.00
VERSION 4	0.09
VERSION 5	-0.06
VERSION 6	0.03

Age vs Employability:

VERSION 1	-0.16
VERSION 2	-0.14
VERSION 3	-0.18
VERSION 4	-0.20
VERSION 5	-0.05
VERSION 6	-0.29

Appendix E: Career Stage Category Frequency Table

Category Label	Dominant Career Stage	Frequency	Percent of Total
1	Exploration	95	18.6
2	Exploration and Establishment	28	5.5
3	Establishment	45	8.8
4	Establishment and Maintenance	20	3.9
5	Maintenance	73	14.3
6	Maintenance and Decline	20	3.9
7	Decline	130	25.5
8	Establishment and Decline	10	2.0
9	Exploration, Establishment and Maintenance	11	2.2
10	Exploration, Maintenance and Decline	11	2.2
11	Establishment, Maintenance and Decline	11	2.2
12	Exploration and Maintenance	23	4.5
13	Exploration, Establishment and Decline	6	1.2
14	All categories	12	2.4
15	Exploration and Decline	14	2.7
Total		509	100