Generation Y’s Workplace Expectations and Impacts on People Management in Hong Kong

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STATEMENT OF ORIGINALITY

I hereby certify that the work embodied in this thesis is the result of original research and contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution. I give consent to this copy of my thesis, when deposited in the University library, being made available for loan and photocopying subject to the provisions of the Copyright Act 1968.

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SYNOPSIS

The entrance of a new workforce from Generation Y (people born after the 1980s) into the workplace has aroused much discussion in Western countries. It has drawn academic scholars and practitioners’ attention to the potential generational clashes arising from Generation Y’s interactions with other generations. The main concerns come from the new learning styles and expectations upheld by this generation. It has been found that the characteristics and expectations of Generation Y are barely available in academic studies (Shaw & Fairhurst, 2008). For the Generation Y findings that have been published, they are largely confined to Western countries and can hardly be generalized. The applicability of these findings in other parts of the world, especially in Chinese communities, is still largely unknown to academics. This exploratory study purports to investigate the Chinese Generation Y’s work expectations and their impacts within the contemporary workplace setting in order to enhance generational theory. Chinese Generation Y employees, and non-Generation Y managers having Generation Y subordinates, in Hong Kong from a range of diverse industries and job functions were selected through purposive sampling. Individual semi-structured interview was adopted for data collection. The study found that Chinese Generation Y employees in Hong Kong share more commonalities than exceptions with their Western counterparts. The evidence shows that Chinese Generation Y employees differ greatly from non-Generation Y managers in various work expectations in Hong Kong. The results reveal that the Chinese Generation Yers' perceptions are in conflict with the other generations' expectations and are a source in generating the identified workplace tensions. The intergenerational gaps have created broad impacts on people management. The research generates information on the Chinese Generation Y’s people management to substantiate the generational theory and contribute to the academic literature and management practice, as well as business training and executive learning.