

2008

An exploration of Generation Y's experiences of offshore Fly-in/ Fly-out (FIFO) employment

Tayla Carter
Edith Cowan University

Follow this and additional works at: https://ro.ecu.edu.au/theses_hons



Part of the [Industrial and Organizational Psychology Commons](#), and the [Work, Economy and Organizations Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Carter, T. (2008). *An exploration of Generation Y's experiences of offshore Fly-in/Fly-out (FIFO) employment*. Edith Cowan University. https://ro.ecu.edu.au/theses_hons/1166

This Thesis is posted at Research Online.
https://ro.ecu.edu.au/theses_hons/1166

Edith Cowan University

Copyright Warning

You may print or download ONE copy of this document for the purpose of your own research or study.

The University does not authorize you to copy, communicate or otherwise make available electronically to any other person any copyright material contained on this site.

You are reminded of the following:

- Copyright owners are entitled to take legal action against persons who infringe their copyright.
- A reproduction of material that is protected by copyright may be a copyright infringement. Where the reproduction of such material is done without attribution of authorship, with false attribution of authorship or the authorship is treated in a derogatory manner, this may be a breach of the author's moral rights contained in Part IX of the Copyright Act 1968 (Cth).
- Courts have the power to impose a wide range of civil and criminal sanctions for infringement of copyright, infringement of moral rights and other offences under the Copyright Act 1968 (Cth). Higher penalties may apply, and higher damages may be awarded, for offences and infringements involving the conversion of material into digital or electronic form.

USE OF THESIS

The Use of Thesis statement is not included in this version of the thesis.

COPYRIGHT AND ACCESS DECLARATION

I certify that this thesis does not, to the best of my knowledge and belief:

- (i) incorporate without acknowledgement any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any institution of higher education;
- (ii) contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text; or
- (iii) contain any defamatory material.

Signed

Date... 30.11.08



An exploration of Generation Y's experiences of offshore Fly-in/Fly-out (FIFO) employment

Talya Carter

A report submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the requirements for the Award of Bachelor of

Arts (Psychology) Honours,

Faculty of Computing Health and Science,

Edith Cowan University.

Submitted October, 2008

I declare that this written assignment is my own work and does not include:


- (i) Material from published sources without proper acknowledgment, or
- (ii) Material copied from the work of other students.

Signature:

Date: 30.11.09

Declaration

I certify that this thesis does not incorporate, without acknowledgment, any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any institution of higher education and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text.

Signature: Date: 30.11.08

Acknowledgements

My sincere thanks and gratitude go to Dr. Elizabeth Kaczmarek, your guidance, advice and most of all your continued support has been greatly appreciated.

I would also like to give a warm thank you to my family. Thank you for believing in me and for your never-ending support, patience and understanding.

My biggest thanks are reserved for the men who so willingly contributed their valuable time to openly and honestly discuss their experiences of offshore FIFO employment. I truly could not have done this without you.

Table of Contents

Literature Review

Introduction 3

Fly in/Fly out 5

 The current FIFO workforce 5

 Company benefits and key variations between offshore and onshore FIFO 5

Current Approaches to FIFO Research 6

Organisational Considerations and FIFO..... 7

 Theories of job satisfaction..... 7

 Offshore work hazards 9

 Retention and turnover of employees.....10

Psychosocial Considerations and FIFO 12

 Theories of work/life balance 12

 Impact of FIFO on the individual 14

 Effects of offshore FIFO and individual functioning 16

 FIFO and challenges for personal relationships and families 17

Emerging Generational Issues 18

 Generation Y, early adulthood and current research 18

 Attracting and retaining Generation Y 21

 Generation Y and social connectedness 22

 Generation Y and FIFO 23

Summary 24

 Limitations of the research 25

 Conclusion 25

References 27

Research Report

Introduction 40

 FIFO and employment practices 40

 Offshore and onshore FIFO research 41

 Early adulthood and Gen Y research 43

Gen Y and FIFO 45

Research aims 45

Method 46

 Research design 46

 Participants 47

 Materials 48

 Procedure 48

 Ethical considerations 49

 Data analysis 49

Findings and Interpretations 50

 FIFO lifestyle 51

 Financial rewards 52

 Workplace culture 53

 Adjustment..... 54

 Time off 56

 Self-identity 58

 Aspirations..... 59

 Others perception of self and work 59

 Beliefs and attitudes about self..... 61

 Relationships..... 62

 Trust and importance of regular contact within relationships 62

 Difficulty forming and maintaining relationships 64

 Influence of others stories/experiences about relationships 65

Conclusion 66

References 69

Offshore Fly in/Fly out (FIFO) Employment: Work Characteristics and Suitability for

Generation Y

Talya Carter

Offshore Fly in/Fly out (FIFO) Employment: Work Characteristics and Suitability for Generation Y

Abstract

Australia is currently experiencing an ageing of its population, which has the potential to significantly impact on society, namely, employment. With the entry of Generation Y (Gen Y), the Australian workforce consists of four generations who are working increasingly longer hours. Extended working hours has been recognised as a risk factor for several undesirable consequences and is distinctive of fly in/fly out (FIFO) employment. The purpose of the review is to explore the literature which addresses the impact of FIFO employment with a following emphasis on issues surrounding Gen Y. A range of published work was incorporated from the fields of organisational and psychosocial psychology and covered a variety of workplace and well-being aspects to aid in understanding the impact of offshore FIFO employment and its suitability for Gen Y. The research indicated that FIFO work can present unique challenges for individuals and that Gen Y are exhibiting characteristics not seen before in older generations which has implications for the workforce. Investigation into these topics has typically been done from differing perspectives and consequently, knowledge regarding the direct effects of offshore FIFO employment on the current generation of workers remains largely unknown.

Author: Talya Carter

Supervisor: Dr. Elizabeth Kaczmarek

Submitted: October, 2008

Offshore Fly in/Fly out (FIFO) Employment: Work Characteristics and Suitability for Generation Y.

Australia, like most developed nations is experiencing a rapid ageing of the population. The median age of an Australian in 1976 was 28.3 years compared to 36.4 years today and is expected to increase to 40.1 years in a decade (McCrindle, 2006). With the median age of an Australian increasing by 12 years over four decades significant impacts on society are being forecasted by demographers and those in the human service industry. One area where an ageing population significantly impacts on society is in employment, an ageing population directly relates to an ageing workforce (McCrindle, 2006). Additionally, Australia is currently experiencing the biggest generational shift in six decades. With the entry of Generation Y (Gen Y), who are currently aged between 18 and 28 years old to the working world, the Australian workforce for the first time contains four generations (Eisner, 2005). These are the Builders, who were born before 1946, Baby Boomers, who were born between 1946 and 1964, Generation X, who were born between 1965 and 1979 and Gen Y, who were born between 1980 and 1994. This wide range of diversity in the workplace has the potential to be problematic as each generation brings with it a unique set of experiences, attitudes, beliefs and expectations which are not always compatible. Alternatively, if managed correctly the four generations can create a workplace environment characterised by loyalty, enthusiasm, vitality, maturity and a willingness to learn.

The current working climate of the Australian labour force is varied, however, it has been noted that irrespective of generation many Australians are working increasingly long hours. In a study by Skinner and Pocock (2008) on a sample of 1,435 working Australians, 22.5 percent were working 48 hours or more per week. Further investigation into this percentage revealed 31.7 percent of male respondents worked more than 48 hours a week while 11.9 percent of women did so. These long hours spent working have been widely

recognised in the literature as a significant risk factor for a range of undesirable consequences such as physical and mental health complaints, impairments to family and personal relationships and challenges trying to balance work and life commitments (Caruso, 2006; Pocock, 2006; Spurgeon, 2003).

Long working hours and regular absences from home characterise many professions. Some of which include, fly in/fly out (FIFO) employment, commercial fishing, aviation, military services and also long haul truck drivers. FIFO employment can present challenges to all individuals, irrespective of their generation. An exploratory study was conducted by Sibbel and Kaczmarek (2005) which investigated why people chose FIFO, how they made this decision and whether this choice was a permanent one across different stages of the life cycle. Their findings revealed that an individual's decision to work FIFO was influenced by a number of factors relating to the challenges faced by people at a particular stage in the life span. These consisted of educational, health, employment, career, social and support needs. It was noted that the significance of these needs fluctuated according to the specific needs of an individual at a given time in their life. However, the challenges for Gen Y are perhaps not well understood. Further exploration into these issues is important for a number of reasons. Firstly, from an organisational standpoint it is important to identify the issues relating to how to attract and retain this new cohort of workers and secondly, from a psychosocial perspective it is essential to understand how this generation develops psychologically in the context of their social environment.

This review aims to address the general issues confronting the contemporary FIFO workforce with a subsequent emphasis on the unique challenges faced by Gen Y. It will draw upon established work in the fields of organisational and psychosocial psychology, covering a range of workplace and well-being aspects, some of which include job satisfaction, worker retention, work/life balance and personal relationships.

Fly in/Fly out

The current FIFO workforce

As demand for resources continues to expand globally a rising number of mining projects are located in regions away from established areas of population. Due to the remote locality of resources, companies seeking to mine these sites introduced a long distance commuter or FIFO option for their workforce (Houghton, 1993). FIFO can be defined as “all employment in which the work is so isolated from the workers’ homes that food and accommodation are provided for them at the work site, and rosters are established whereby employees spend a fixed number of days at the site, followed by a fixed number of days at home” (Storey & Shrimpton, 1989, p.2).

FIFO operations attract a wide variety of workers to the industry, the Western Australian resources sector is responsible for the direct employment of 52,000 individuals and the indirect employment of 156,000 people; overall this industry employs an estimated 21% of the WA workforce (Chamber of Minerals and Energy of Western Australia [CMEWA], 2006). Statistics reveal that 54.13% of mining personnel are male aged between 35 and 54 years of age, which account for the majority of this workforce. However 34.78% of workers are male aged between 18 and 34 years of age (Australian Bureau of Statistics [ABS], 2006a), indicating that the younger generation of workers are beginning to comprise a moderate percentage of the mining workforce. Women are also employed in the mining industry; however they represent a smaller proportion of personnel with 18% of workers being female of all ages (ABS, 2006a).

Company benefits and key variations between offshore and onshore FIFO

FIFO employment originated in the late 1940’s to service the offshore oil sector in the Gulf of Mexico and oil and gas companies later introduced FIFO to Australia in the 1960’s for both offshore and onshore production (CMEWA, 2006; Houghton, 1993). Since this time

FIFO employment has continued to expand and is now utilised to service all areas of remote mining, including both offshore oil and gas and land based mining projects. It is important to note that FIFO is the only viable option for the offshore oil and gas industry as unlike land based mine sites daily commuting is not possible and permanent accommodations are not available (Shrimpton & Storey, 2001). FIFO is viewed by companies as an effective way to meet the growing demand and an option that also offers several benefits (Houghton, 1993). These benefits include the lower levels of capital expenditure required to run a FIFO operation compared to building a new town suitable for the accommodation of workers and their families. Additionally, there is also a significant reduction in the front-end cost of establishing a new mine (Houghton, 1993). Effectively, large capital outlays on town infrastructure are replaced by transport expenses which are evenly spread across the life of the project; this becomes particularly important for companies as some mine sites have a short life expectancy (Houghton, 1993).

FIFO employment plays an important role in fulfilling the economic, social and workforce needs of the current resources industry. Employment practices of offshore personnel differ from those who work on land based mine sites (CMEWA, 2007; Parkes, 2007). A key variation between the two industries is the differing work patterns employees are required to work. Typically, offshore workers spend two weeks offshore followed by a period of two week on-shore leave (2/2). This differs from land based personnel as the most common work pattern consists of 9 days on with 5 days leave (9/5). Although these work patterns seem to be the most common it is evident that there is a wide array of variation in rosters (CMEWA, 2007; Parkes, 2007).

Current Approaches to FIFO Research

Australian research that focuses on psychosocial aspects of FIFO employment appears to be limited (Sibbel & Kaczmarek, 2005); however existing research has tended to approach

this phenomenon from two, sometimes overlapping perspectives. Firstly, there is a pool of research that has taken an organisational approach and secondly research concerning psychosocial aspects such as well-being. Specifically, organisational research has focused on employee satisfaction, the effects of hazardous work environments, the impact of extended work hours and fatigue as well as ways to retain employees within the industry (Beach, Brereton & Cliff, 2003; Parkes, 2002; Parkes, 2007; Parkes & Clarke, 1997). The psychosocial perspective has focused on how FIFO employment impacts on the individual, their relationships with others and their families as well as how they establish and maintain a work/life balance (Beach, 1999; Cooper & Sutherland, 1987; Houghton, 1993; Kaczmarek & Sibbel, 2008; Parkes, 1998; Taylor, Morrice, Clarke & McCann, 1985; Ulleberg & Rundmo, 1997). Although organisational and psychosocial directions differ in their approaches they also share common characteristics which are often related to each other.

Organisational Considerations and FIFO

Theories of job satisfaction

An individual's feeling of satisfaction toward their employment has meaningful implications for how they perform their job (Turner & Brown, 2004). Job satisfaction is important to consider as it has been related to a reduced intent to leave an organisation, reduced rates of absenteeism, decreased turnover and increased worker well-being and morale (Turner & Brown, 2004). Job satisfaction is typically defined as an employee's level of positive affect toward their current job situation (Jex, 2002). Job satisfaction has been found to comprise of both cognitive and behavioural components. The cognitive aspect represents an employee's beliefs about their job, such as a person may find their job interesting, stimulating, dull or demanding (Jex, 2002). The behavioural component represents employee's behavioural tendencies toward their job; these include attending work regularly, working hard and intending to remain with the organisation for a long period of

time (Jex, 2002). Job satisfaction is largely determined by employees' comparison of what the job is currently providing them and what they would like it to provide. For every aspect of a job, such as pay, working conditions and supervision, employees make some assessment of what they are currently receiving (Judge, Thoresen, Bono & Patton, 2001). These assessments become meaningful to the individual when they are compared with what an employee feels they should be receiving from a certain aspect of their job. These perceptions are based on a number of factors such as the employee's skill, the amount of time they commit to their job and the availability of other employment opportunities (Jex, 2002; Judge et al., 2001). For example, if an employee perceives that what they are currently receiving to be at or above what they should be receiving then they are satisfied, if not, then feelings of dissatisfaction are evoked.

One theory which attempts to explain job satisfaction is the job characteristic model developed by Hackman and Oldham (1975). This theory posits that job satisfaction is determined primarily by the nature of employees' jobs or by the characteristics of the organisations in which they work. According to this theory, employees cognitively evaluate their job and organisation and make some determination of their relative level of satisfaction. It was suggested by Hackman and Oldham (1975) that jobs differ in the extent to which they involve five core dimensions, skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy and feedback. If jobs are designed in a way that increases the presence of these characteristics then three important psychological states can occur in employees; experienced meaningfulness of work, experienced responsibility for work outcomes and knowledge of results of work activities. According to Hackman and Oldham (1975) when these psychological states are experienced work motivation and job satisfaction will be high. This model has relevance for FIFO employment as workers may trade off low levels of job satisfaction for financial remuneration (Houghton, 1993).

For FIFO employees there are numerous work practices which may impact on their levels of job satisfaction, one of these being their work rosters. In a study by Parkes and Clark (1997) which examined employee satisfaction with regular 2/2 and 3/3 equal time rosters it was found that there was a significant difference in satisfaction between 2/2 and 3/3 work patterns. The findings revealed that those employees working the 2/2 schedule generally reported higher satisfaction scores compared to those on the 3/3 schedules. Interestingly, when the type of job undertaken by employees and age were considered, job type was a significant factor in predicting satisfaction with work patterns. Those employed in catering, administration and construction reported higher levels of satisfaction with the 2/2 pattern compared to those employed in a maintenance, technical, production, drilling or management position. In contrast, among those working the 3/3 pattern age was a significant factor with older employees being more satisfied than their younger counterparts (Parkes & Clarke, 1997). Therefore, it can be inferred that the type of roster an employee works affects their feelings of satisfaction toward their job.

Offshore work hazards

The work involved on offshore installations can consist of potentially dangerous production and/or drilling operations. Parkes (2007) noted that the concentrated work patterns, the nature of the tasks involved in combination with the effects of fatigue are possible sources of risk to the safety and well-being of employees. Two types of risks have been identified; these are operational risk resulting from human error which includes risk of explosion, fire, structural failure, shut down, reduced productivity and the risk related to the physical and psychological well-being of individuals such as injury, illness, sleep disturbance and anxiety (Parkes, 2007).

The negative effects of extended work hours and fatigue are common to both operational risk and human error. Offshore employees have to remain on the installation

during off-shift hours, leisure activities and sleeping arrangements are restricted to the facilities that are available on board (Parkes, 2002). Research regarding the role of long hours and shift patterns as risk factors for health impairment has been examined primarily in relation to sleep complaints and psychosomatic problems (Parkes, 2002). Parkes (2007) conducted a study that examined the combined effects of shiftwork, differing job types and work perceptions on health related outcomes using 1,598 male employees from the North Sea oil and gas installations. The results revealed that shift work directly predicted gastric problems and sleep disturbances. Parkes (2007) concluded that these effects can be attributed to the circadian adjustment necessitated by changes from day to night work and from night to day work. This problem is particularly relevant in the offshore industry as jobs are commonly covered by 12 hour shifts, and shift changes occur in the middle of the two-week work pattern. When job types were evaluated in the study with relation to health complaints results showed that construction workers were most likely to report work-related injuries, while drillers were most likely to report musculo-skeletal problems (Parkes, 2007). Among both construction and drilling workers headaches were found to be a common health complaint; it was suggested that this could be due to difficult environmental conditions and the physical nature of these jobs.

Retention and turnover of employees

Staff turnover and retention is an important area to consider for all industries and organisations. Some employee turnover has the potential to be beneficial for workplaces as it can attract new skills and ideas to companies and creates new employment opportunities (Pinkovitz & Moskal, 1997). However, continuing high turnover can have a number of negative impacts. Firstly, turnover is a direct financial cost to employers. Specific costs vary depending on industries and occupations and will depend on the nature of the job as well as the difficulty in recruiting a suitable replacement. However, generally, direct costs include

separation costs of departing employees, advertising costs and filling vacancies, training expenses of new personnel and the cost of lost productivity (Pinkovitz & Moskal, 1997). Secondly, turnover impacts adversely on operational efficiency. Where there is ongoing instability in the workforce, consequences can include increased stress and tension among those remaining personnel who have to fill the gaps left by departing employees, declining worker morale and decreased productivity due to loss of work group synergy (Pinkovitz & Moskal, 1997). Thirdly, there has been concern that high rates of turnover can increase the risk of safety incidents. This can be attributed to the greater proportion of new recruits within a workforce. Consequently, communication lapses can occur creating more opportunity for error and difficulties in building and communicating a positive safety culture within a constantly changing workforce. Additionally, high turnover could be an indicator that employees are experiencing significant conflicts in their home and/or work life (Johnson, 1995). This is particularly relevant for FIFO operations as repeated family absence has been shown to contribute to such tensions between the balance of work and family commitments (Beach, 1999; Storey, Shrimpton, Lewis & Clarke, 1989). This conflict is associated with stress, reduced productivity, increased turnover intentions and a range of other negative consequences (Johnson, 1995).

In an attempt to enhance the mining industry's understanding of work force turnover Beach, Brereton and Cliff (2003) collected data from three mines in Western Australia and six mines in northern Queensland. This study focused primarily on FIFO mining sites, as previous studies indicated that FIFO sites tended to have higher levels of turnover than town-based mining sites. A 'case study' methodology was utilised and data was collected from interviews, company records, public documents and site visits. Beach, Brereton and Cliff (2003) found that annual turnover for company employees' averaged 21 percent and turnover rates within sites tended to be highest amongst staff in professional and managerial positions

as well as staff in the operations area. It was also found that employee turnover rates were influenced by a number of factors including the FIFO roster structure with shorter rosters (9 days on/5 days off and 8 days on/6 days off) being associated with lower rates of employee turnover. Another factor that was shown to effect turnover was the level of management commitment to employee training and skill development as well as the extent to which management had been successful in creating and maintaining a positive workplace culture. Thus, it can be assumed that although FIFO turnover is not easy to control, certain aspects of the work arrangement and management style can be addressed to assist with managing the issue. This study investigated staff turnover for land based mining sites and consequently generalising these findings to the offshore oil and gas industry requires caution. However, it provides a good foundation to assist in the understanding of the factors associated with staff turnover within FIFO employment.

Psychosocial Considerations and FIFO

Theories of work / life balance

Due to the diverse nature of the Australian workforce increased emphasis has been placed on issues relating to work/life balance (Cappelli, 2000; Russell & Bowman, 2000). This is important for both employees and organisations as it has become increasingly evident that organisations need to develop strategies that provide employees some flexibility in balancing their work and life commitments (Cappelli, 2000).

As inferred from systems research two significant elements of adult life are work and family (Bronfenbrenner, 1986). However, the expectations that arise from these two domains are not always compatible, creating conflicts between work and family life. These conflicts are related to outcomes such as job dissatisfaction, burnout, and employee turnover (Greenhaus, 1988), as well as to outcomes related to psychological distress such as depression, life and relationship dissatisfaction (Gutek, Searle & Klepa, 1991). Work/family

conflict can be viewed as a form of inter-role conflict, that is, when pressures associated with membership in one role are in conflict with pressures from membership in other roles. This type of conflict reflects the degree to which role responsibilities from the work and family domains are incompatible such that participation in either the work or family role is made more difficult by the virtue of participation in the other role (Gutek, Searle & Klepa, 1991). Thus, the demands of one role (either work or family) can make performance of the other role more complex.

The general demands of a particular role refer to the responsibilities, requirements, expectation, duties and commitments associated with a given role (Netemeyer, Boles, McMurrian, 1996). There have been two specific types of conflict identified, these are time based conflict and strain based conflict. Time based conflict occurs when the amount of time devoted to the family role interferes with performing work related responsibilities and vice versa. Strain based conflict occurs when demands created by the work role interferes with performing family responsibilities and vice versa (Netemeyer, Boles, McMurrian, 1996). For example, irritability and anxiety created by pressures at work interfere with an individual's ability to perform family duties.

In contrast, work/life balance refers to feelings of satisfaction and good levels of functioning at work and at home, with minimum conflict between these domains (Clark, 2000). One theory that has been developed to explain how individuals' maintain a sense of work/life balance is boundary theory. This theory was developed by Nippert-Eng (1996) who suggested that individuals consciously and deliberately create boundaries around their work and personal lives. Additionally, some individuals' construct boundaries to ensure these domains remain separate from one another while others construct boundaries so that the domains can be integrated. Nippert-Eng (1996) identified that the construction of a boundary

conflict can be viewed as a form of inter-role conflict, that is, when pressures associated with membership in one role are in conflict with pressures from membership in other roles. This type of conflict reflects the degree to which role responsibilities from the work and family domains are incompatible such that participation in either the work or family role is made more difficult by the virtue of participation in the other role (Gutek, Searle & Klepa, 1991). Thus, the demands of one role (either work or family) can make performance of the other role more complex.

The general demands of a particular role refer to the responsibilities, requirements, expectation, duties and commitments associated with a given role (Netemeyer, Boles, McMurrian, 1996). There have been two specific types of conflict identified, these are time based conflict and strain based conflict. Time based conflict occurs when the amount of time devoted to the family role interferes with performing work related responsibilities and vice versa. Strain based conflict occurs when demands created by the work role interferes with performing family responsibilities and vice versa (Netemeyer, Boles, McMurrian, 1996). For example, irritability and anxiety created by pressures at work interfere with an individual's ability to perform family duties.

In contrast, work/life balance refers to feelings of satisfaction and good levels of functioning at work and at home, with minimum conflict between these domains (Clark, 2000). One theory that has been developed to explain how individuals' maintain a sense of work/life balance is boundary theory. This theory was developed by Nippert-Eng (1996) who suggested that individuals consciously and deliberately create boundaries around their work and personal lives. Additionally, some individuals' construct boundaries to ensure these domains remain separate from one another while others construct boundaries so that the domains can be integrated. Nippert-Eng (1996) identified that the construction of a boundary

which allows separation or integration depends on various factors including type of occupation, co-workers, family members or individual preference.

This theory was further developed by Ashforth, Kreiner and Fugate (2000), who in their work focused on transitions between roles held within and between domains as a way of understanding how individuals' manage their boundaries. It was suggested that people actively construct a boundary around each domain that varies in strength. Strong boundaries are constructed to maintain work and family as separate domains, whereas weak boundaries are created to facilitate ease of integration between work and family life. Boundary strength can be characterised by permeability and flexibility. A boundary is considered permeable if elements from one domain are readily found in the other domain. Permeability can be conceptualised as interruptions from one domain into the other (Ashforth, Kreiner & Fugate, 2000). For example, a work boundary can be considered permeable if the employee can be contacted by the family while at work. Additionally, a boundary is considered flexible if it could be relaxed to meet the demands of the other domain (Ashforth, Kreiner & Fugate, 2000). For example, a work boundary is flexible if an individual perceives that they could leave their workplace to attend to a family matter. Permeability and flexibility in FIFO employment has the potential to create strain to an individual's work/life balance. Due to the remoteness of work sites and the nature of work and shift arrangements, families may have to wait until an employees' shift is completed before contact with them could be made. Furthermore, flexibility may be difficult as workers are unable to leave work to attend to family matters instantly. Thus, the potential of FIFO work to disrupt a sense of balance in an individual is exacerbated by these factors.

Impact of FIFO on the individual

FIFO employment has the potential to raise a unique set of psychosocial challenges for those who are involved. Investigation into these challenges conducted by Houghton

(1993) found that this lifestyle can impact both positively and negatively on the workers overall psychological functioning. Some of the positive aspects identified by Houghton (1993) were firstly, financial remuneration, companies offer their employees a considerable salary to attract and retain them in the industry. Secondly, the work schedules available to FIFO employees are designed to allow for a period of time at home which enables them to partake in extensive leisure activities and provides an opportunity to spend a solid period of time with friends and family. Furthermore, FIFO employment allows workers and their families to be based in metropolitan areas instead of relocating to remote mining towns thus providing access to a diverse range of government and community services (Houghton, 1993).

In contrast to these positive aspects of the lifestyle, a computer-based survey conducted by Brereton, Barclay, Beach, Laffan and Arts (2006) of 1,370 land based mining industry professionals found that high workforce turnover remains a major concern for the mining industry. The results showed that 9% of respondents had an intention to leave the industry in the next two years and of those likely to leave 52% were under the age of 50, thus suggesting retirement was unlikely to be the motivating factor. Additionally, 48% of people stated that they were likely to change their workplace over the next two years and 39% stated they would change employer. It was found that lifestyle issues had more influence over a person's decision to change compared to professional issues. Maintaining a balance between work and home life was the most important consideration for 50% of the people when considering job options, while 48% of respondents indicated that the FIFO lifestyle put pressure on forming and maintaining personal relationships. The respondents of this survey were members of the Australian Institute of Mining and Metallurgy (AusIMM) and representative of an ageing workforce, with 52% aged 45 years and older, additionally, 90% of people who completed the survey were married or partnered (Brereton et al., 2006). This

suggests that care should be taken in generalising from this sample to the industry as a whole; however, this survey provides valuable insights into the concerns and experiences of mining industry professionals.

Effects of offshore FIFO on individual functioning

In a review of oil and gas industry research Parkes (1998) suggested that compared to land based FIFO employees, offshore workers experience increased levels of anxiety, more sleep problems and a higher workload. Some potential stressors experienced by offshore personnel consist of restricted living and working environments, lack of privacy, constant noise and activity, challenging shift arrangements with workloads fluctuating from periods of boredom to periods of concentrated activity.

The psychosocial health and well-being of offshore employees is an important area of research as it allows valuable insights into how this lifestyle impacts on an individual. In an early study, Cooper and Sutherland (1987) explored the psychosocial and occupational stressors experienced by employees in the United Kingdom and Dutch sectors of the North Sea. The study assessed the mental well-being and job satisfaction with additional attention given to the incidence of accidents that occurred offshore in a sample of 194 male participants on drilling rig and production platform installations. The results showed that this occupational cohort were considerably less satisfied with their jobs than their onshore counterparts. It was also found that overall mental well-being compared favourably with that of the general population however, levels of anxiety were significantly higher. Multivariate analysis of the results demonstrated that relationships at work and at home were strong predictors of both job dissatisfaction and mental ill-health (Cooper & Sutherland, 1987). These findings suggest that forming strong personal relationships have the capacity to promote increased well-being in FIFO employees.

FIFO and challenges for personal relationships and families

FIFO employment impacts not only the worker, but also on those people around them (Clark, McCann, Morrice & Taylor, 1985). The FIFO lifestyle requires families to cope with regular absences and the emotional demands of frequent partings and reunions. The separation from family and other social networks due to extended work periods has the potential to cause substantial strain for offshore workers, ultimately having an impact on their psychosocial health and well-being (Parkes, 1998; Ulleberg & Rundmo, 1997).

The impact that the FIFO lifestyle has on families was explored in the early years of the North Sea exploration and production. Morrice and Taylor (1978; as cited in Parker, Clavarino, & Hubinger, 1998) identified a recurrent pattern of clinical symptoms which consisted of affective distress and behavioural changes in women whose husbands were employed in the offshore oil industry. As a result of their findings they labelled this pattern the 'intermittent husband syndrome' and found that psychiatric intervention would be advantageous for 10 percent of their sample ($N = 200$). However, in a later study which compared the physical and mental health between wives whose partners worked either offshore or onshore no differences were found (Taylor et al., 1985). Thus the existence of the 'intermittent husband syndrome' was not established.

In a more recent study of this phenomenon Parkes, Carnell and Farmer (2005) conducted surveys ($N=245$) and telephone interviews ($N=39$) to investigate the perceptions, attitudes and concerns of the female spouses of offshore employees in the UK sector of the North Sea. The results found that while spouses reported a number of problems and concerns relating to the offshore lifestyle and its impact on children, negative views were not universal among the sample. They discovered that most partners adapted reasonably well to the demands and challenges of having a partner working offshore. Two-thirds of the women in the sample experienced minor and usually temporary problems with their relationships,

family interactions and social life. However, the majority appeared to manage family demands adequately and to cope well with the emotional pressures of recurring separations and reunions. The women in the sample generally perceived both the positive and negative aspects of the lifestyle and often embraced the degree of independence this lifestyle offered them. Overall, these findings are more positive than previous research conducted by Morrice and Taylor (1978; as cited in Parker, Clavarino, & Hubinger, 1998) suggesting that, even though there can be disadvantages to this lifestyle some couples manage to implement effective coping strategies.

At present, Australian workers are increasingly working longer hours and as a result emphasis has been placed on how this affects families. Research has suggested that extended working hours can negatively impact on an individuals' health and well-being, personal relationships, children and the community (Beach, 1999; Pocock, 2001). Additionally, Brofenbrenner (1986) suggested that a child's psychological development can be affected by external environments such as their parents' work place. This is significant for FIFO work as employees are repeatedly away from their children, often missing out on important family occasions such as birthdays (Parkes, Carnell & Farmer, 2005). The parenting style of FIFO employees has been termed 'intermittent parenting' due to the recurring absences necessitated by this work (Beach, 1999). Research has demonstrated that intermittent parenting is not fundamentally flawed, as physical absence from children does not imply emotional absence (Beach, 1999; Gallegos, 2006).

Emerging Generational Issues

Generation Y, early adulthood and current research

At present, the Australian workforce comprises of four generations; the Builders, Baby Boomers, Generation X and Gen Y (Eisner, 2005). Each generation brings a unique set of attitudes and expectations to the workplace and this diversity can have implications on

how employees and employers interact. Gen Y is the most recent cohort to enter the workforce and research has shown this generation are exhibiting some very distinctive characteristics when compared to their older counterparts (McCrindle, 2006; Savage, Collins-Mayo, Mayo & Cray, 2006; Sheahan, 2008). The available literature generates some discrepancies in how this generation are chronologically identified, however, for the purpose of this paper Gen Y can be defined as the people who were born between 1980 and 1994 (McCrindle, 2006). The current research on Gen Y has tended to take a human resources and marketing approach and has focused on how to attract and retain this cohort in the workplace, how to market goods to this generation and the common characteristics exhibited by this group of young people. The psychological literature surrounding Gen Y appears to be limited. However, the field of psychology has contributed to understanding Gen Y by focusing on the developmental stages of individuals across the lifespan.

As inferred from psychological literature, Gen Y is currently in the stage of early adulthood. As an individual develops they encounter a range of developmental tasks which are sets of requirements relevant for development which people have to master at specific ages (Havinghurst, 1948, as cited in Bangerter, Grob & Krings, 2001). They include components such as knowledge about socially desirable goals, models about how to achieve them and normative standards and age deadlines. Success or failure in the resolution of developmental challenges impacts on an individual's well-being and social acceptance as well as how they overcome subsequent developmental tasks (Havinghurst, 1948, as cited in Bangerter, Grob & Krings, 2001).

Early adulthood characterises an important developmental phase of the lifespan; it entails the developmental tasks of connecting to others, completing an education or training, finding a job, establishing a home, potentially partnering and starting a family (Arnett, 2000). Additionally, during this period most people develop certain personality characteristics; these

include becoming more socially dominant, warm, responsible, agreeable and emotionally stable (Arnett, 2000). According to Erikson (1963; as cited in Arnett, 2000) the major challenges confronted in early adulthood are intimacy and isolation. It is posited that people seek to find mutually satisfying relationships, primarily through marriage or close partners and friends. If negotiation of this is successful then people can experience a deep level of intimacy with others. However, if one fails to effectively accomplish this then they may isolate or distance themselves from others. The young adult must successfully overcome this identity crisis before being able to move into the next stage of adult development (Erikson, 1963; as cited in Arnett, 2000). According to developmental psychology all individuals experience early adulthood at some point across the lifespan however, this is an important consideration for Gen Y as they are currently in the process of confronting the challenges associated with this developmental period.

As previously noted, Gen Y is the newest generation to enter the workforce and is a much larger cohort than the generation that came before them (Eisner, 2005; McCrindle, 2006). According to Eisner (2005) Gen Y are sociable, willing to fight for freedom and are arguably patriotic. They are the most technically literate, educated and ethnically diverse generation in history and tend to have more disposable income. Gen Y have a poor reputation when it comes to job commitment and company loyalty (Sheahan, 2008). However, research by McCrindle (2006) suggested that although Gen Y are three times more likely to change jobs in a year compared to the older generation, the frequent movement was typically due to their desire for variety, challenge, success, change and actively seeking out people who will further their development.

In support of the previous findings, Hays Recruitment (2005) conducted an online survey with 1,200 people which compared Gen Y with the remainder of the workforce. The results of the survey found that this generation are career focused, yet risk-takers when it

comes to their careers. When asked to rate what was important to their future, Gen Y placed their career first compared to the remainder of the workforce who rated their health as most important. Gen Y anticipated staying with their current employer for roughly 2-4 years, while the average for the remaining workforce was over 6 years. Gen Y placed the strongest emphasis on work/life balance when it came to choosing employment and expected an employer to provide them with ongoing learning and development, career progression, mentoring and strong leadership. In comparison, ongoing learning and development was most important to the remainder of the workforce, followed by work/life balance. Despite these differences, both groups believed adding value to their employer's organisation is a priority and both believed they were loyal employees, yet Gen Y admitted they anticipated remaining with an employer for just two to four years. Additionally, the results of the survey showed that benefits are influential for Gen Y, with 42% of Gen Y respondents indicating that they would not accept a job if it did not provide "perks" while 37% would not accept a job if it did not provide a parking space. In comparison, the remainder of the workforce stated that a lack of benefits would not hold them back from accepting a position (Hays Recruitment, 2005).

Attracting and retaining Generation Y

As a result of the aging population within the Australian workforce there has been an increasing interest in how companies can attract and retain Gen Y employees (McCrindle, 2006). One of the largest research papers to be conducted into Gen Y's attitudes towards work was conducted by McCrindle (2006), this research surveyed 3,000 Australians and benchmarked the findings of Gen Y against the older generations. These surveys were followed up by focus groups of Gen Y's which allowed validation of the quantitative findings and to gain further explanation of their attitudes towards the working environment. The results are consistent with the Hays Recruitment research (2005) which indicate that Gen Y have multiple expectations of an organisation, it is not just the job description that attracts

them but the workplace culture, variety, apparent “fun”, training, management style and flexibility that drives them. Additionally, when seeking a position 37.5% preferred a larger company with over 50 staff compared with 27.3% of baby boomers. When it comes to retaining Gen Y in the workforce research showed that 86% of them expected a promotion within two years, and McCrindle (2006) suggested that Gen Y employees were unlikely to remain with their current employer if no promotion was granted within this time. Work/life balance again emerged as a priority for Gen Y with one quarter of focus group participants placing this at the top of the list. It has been suggested that while employment matters to Gen Y and is an integral part of their life it is not their entire life, instead, work to Gen Y provides the financial means that enables them to engage in various aspects of life.

Generation Y and social connectedness

Gen Y are technologically connected like no other cohort, from their mobile phones to instant online messaging they can have access to each other and the rest of the world 24 hours a day. However, research by McCrindle (2006) indicated that this form of social connectedness has not met their social needs and they are searching for an authentic sense of community which entails forming close social relationships with others. Calek and Zander (1996) identified three main points which summed up the anxiety felt by this generation; namely, that they felt alone, abandoned and alienated. The authors then compared them with the older generation and suggested that Gen Y want to connect with other people and that they choose close relationships over employment and maintaining a sense of work/life balance over career advancement. However, Gen Y appears to have a reluctance to commit to community. According to the Australian Census results (ABS, 2006b) people today are getting married much later than previous generations, indicating that the majority of Gen Y at this time are unmarried. It was suggested that these findings could be due to the younger generation wanting to form close social relationships that the word community implies,

however they do not want the risk or cost associated with these aspects of life (McCrindle, 2006).

Generation Y and FIFO

At present, literature focusing on generational issues in the FIFO industry appears to be limited. Research on FIFO employment has characteristically focused on the effects of FIFO and families, as well as accident rates among workers, attrition, absenteeism and the effect of roster schedules on stress and physical health (Chen, Wong, Lin & Cooper, 2003; Gallegos, 2006; Keown, 2005; Parkes, 1998; Shrimpton & Storey, 2001; Ulleberg & Rundmo, 1997). This research has commonly been directed towards older males who are in established relationships or marriages and those men who have children. This has implications for research as studies focusing on these individuals are typically concentrating on an older population who are experiencing different developmental challenges to those people going through early adulthood.

Currently, it appears that no studies have directly researched the effects of FIFO employment and Gen Y. However, several studies have focused on how certain work rosters that are characteristic of FIFO employment, namely shift work, impact on individuals (Boggild, Burr, Tuchsén & Jeppesen, 2001; Boggild & Knutsson, 1999; de Jonge, Bosma, Peter, & Siegrist, 2000). These studies indicated that shift work, especially if it included night shifts, adversely impacts on an individual's physical health, psychological well-being and increases the risk of work-related accidents and injuries. These findings are significant for the FIFO industry as employees are often exposed to demanding shift work patterns (Parkes, 2007).

A study conducted by Reid and Dawson (2001) provides some insight into the effects of shift work on younger and older people. In their study they simulated a 12 hour shift rotation in a laboratory for six consecutive days and measured the performance between

younger and older people. Participants completed two 12 hour day shifts, followed by two 12 hour night shifts and were separated into two groups according to age, the younger group had a mean age of 21.1 years and the older group had a mean age of 43.9 years. Performance was measured using a computer administered neurobehavioural performance task every hour. The results showed that younger people performed considerably better than older participants. Additionally, there was a significant change in performance across the shifts for the older participants such that performance increased during the day shifts and decreased across the night shift. In contrast, the younger participants were able to maintain performance across both day and night shifts (Reid & Dawson, 2001). These findings suggest that younger people have a greater capacity to adapt to the demands of shift work rosters. However, further investigation would be useful in determining the effect of age in the performance and well being of shift workers.

Summary

The reviewed literature provided valuable insight into the impact of FIFO work as well as assisting with understanding Gen Y. As indicated by the literature, FIFO employment creates a unique set of challenges for those involved with this lifestyle. It has the potential to affect not only the employee but also their families and other personal relationships. The research suggested that regardless of generation, FIFO employment offered both advantages and disadvantages to individuals. The current research on Gen Y indicated that this cohort exhibits unique characteristics, not seen in older generations. Additionally, the literature revealed that it is important to understand the beliefs and expectations Gen Y bring to the workplace so relevant strategies can be implemented to attract and retain this young group of employees.

Limitations of the literature

The present literature focusing on offshore FIFO employment has some limitations. Most of the research conducted in this area has been related to the psychosocial effects and best practice responses to emerging issues. Some aspects of this employment which has generated investigation is how companies can create a safer work environment, prevention of stress in employees and finding optimal working schedules. However, the literature generally contains limited information about the success of such responses. Most of the studies conducted on offshore FIFO employment have typically focused on how this work impacts older male workers in the UK sector of the North Sea. This has implications for research as extrapolating the findings to Australian workers is problematic. Furthermore, there appears to be a large gap in the psychological literature focusing on Gen Y. The majority of research on this generation has emerged from human resources and marketing perspectives which fails to address the psychological development and functioning of this cohort. The reviewed literature indicated that although both offshore FIFO employment and Gen Y have generated research, the two areas have typically been studied separately. Hence, it appears to remain unknown how the younger generation employed offshore on a FIFO basis confront the challenges presented by this lifestyle.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this review aimed to highlight the general challenges experienced by the FIFO workforce and investigate the emerging issues surrounding Gen Y. It did this by exploring relevant work in the fields of organisational and psychosocial psychology focusing on a range of aspects related to workplace issues and individual well-being. Some of the aspects covered included job satisfaction, employee retention, work/life balance and personal relationships. From reviewing the present literature it is evident that further research is

required to explore how offshore FIFO employment impacts on Gen Y's overall psychological functioning and well-being.

References

- Arnett, J. (2000). Emerging adulthood: A theory of development from the late teens through the early twenties. *American Psychologist*, 55, 469 – 480.
- Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2006a). *Industry of employment by age and sex based on place of usual residence*. Retrieved March 13, 2008, from <http://www.censusdata.abs.gov.au>
- Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2006b). *Registered marital status by age and sex – Australia*. Retrieved August 20, 2008, from <http://www.censusdata.abs.gov.au>
- Ashforth, B. E., Kreiner, G. E., & Fugate, M. (2000). All in a day's work: Boundaries and micro role transitions. *Academy of Management Review*, 25, 472–491.
- Bangerter, A., Grob, A., Krings, F. (2001). Personal goals at age 25 in three generations of the twentieth century: Young adulthood in historical context. *Swiss Journal of Psychology*, 60, 59 – 64.
- Beach, R. (1999) The impact of intense work schedules on family structure: a case study of a 4:1 fly in/fly out schedule in the Australian mining industry. In Collis, M., Munro, L., Russell, S. (eds) *Sociology for a New Millenium Challenges and Prospects*: 22: 289-299.
- Beach, R., Brereton, D., & Cliff, D. (2003). *Workforce turnover in FIFO mining operations in Australia: An exploratory study*. Perth, W.A.: CMEWA.
- Boggild, H., Burr, H., Tuchsén, F., & Jeppesen, H. (2001). Work environment of Danish shift and day workers. *Scandinavian Journal of Work, Environment & Health*, 27, 97-105.
- Boggild, H., & Knutsson, A. (1999). Shift work, risk factors and cardiovascular disease. *Scandinavian Journal of Work, Environment and Health*, 25, 85 – 99.

- Brereton, D., Barclay, M., Beach, R., Laffan, W., & Arts, D. (2006). Survey of minerals industry professionals: Key findings. Brisbane, QLD: University of Queensland, Centre for Social Responsibility in Mining.
- Bronfenbrenner, U. (1986). Ecology of the family as a context for human development: Research perspectives. *Developmental Psychology*, 22, 723 – 742.
- Cappelli, P. (2000). A market-driven approach to retaining talent. *Harvard Business Review*, 78, 103 – 111.
- Caruso, C. (2006). Possible broad impacts of long work hours. *Industrial Health*, 44, 531-536.
- Celek, T., & Zander, D. (1996). *Inside the Soul of a New Generation*. Michigan: Zondervan.
- Chamber of Minerals and Energy of Western Australia. (2006). *People at work*. Perth, WA: CMEWA.
- Chamber of Minerals and Energy of Western Australia. (2007). *Expanding horizons 2007*. Perth, WA: CMEWA.
- Chen, W., Wong, T., Yu, T., Lin, Y., & Cooper, C. (2003). Determinants of perceived occupational stress among Chinese oil workers. *Work and Stress*, 17, 287 – 305.
- Clark, S. C. (2000). Work/family border theory: A new theory of work/family balance. *Human Relations*, 53, 747-770.
- Clark, D., McCann, K., Morrice, K., & Taylor, R. (1985). Work and marriage in the offshore oil industry. *International Journal of Social Ergonomics*, 12, 36 – 47.
- Cooper, C., & Sutherland, V. (1987). Job stress, mental health, and accidents among offshore workers in the oil and gas extraction industries. *Journal of Occupational Medicine*, 29, 119 – 125.

- De Jonge, J., Bosma, H., Peter, R., & Siegrist, J. (2000). Job strain, effort-reward imbalance and employee well-being: A large-scale cross-sectional study. *Social Science and Medicine*, 50, 1317-1327.
- Eisner, S. (2005). Managing Generation Y. *Advanced Management Journal*, 70, 4 – 16.
- Gallegos, D. (2006). “Aeroplanes always come back”: Fly-in fly-out employment: Managing the parenting transitions.** Perth, WA: Murdoch University, Centre for Social and Community Research.
- Greenhaus, J. H. (1988). The intersection of work–family roles: Individual, interpersonal, and organizational issues. *Journal of Social Behavior and Personality*, 3, 23–44.
- Gutek, B. A., Searle, S., & Klepa, L. (1991). Rational versus gender role expectations for work–family conflict. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 76, 560–568.
- Hackman, J. R., & Oldham, G. R. (1975). Development of the job diagnostic survey. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 60, 159 – 170.
- Hays Recruitment. (2005). *Portraying generation Y*. Retrieved August 3, 2008, from <http://www.hays.com.au/news/ausworkplace/issue4.aspx>
- Houghton, D. (1993). Long distance commuting: A new approach to mining in Australia. *The Geographical Journal*, 159, 281 – 290.
- Jex, S. (2002). *Organizational Psychology: A Scientist-Practitioner Approach*. New York: John Wiley and Sons.
- Johnson, A. (1995). The business case for work-family programs. *Journal of Accountancy* 180, 53-59.
- Judge, T., Thoesen, C., Bono, J., & Patton, G. (2001). The job satisfaction-job performance relationship: A qualitative and quantitative review. *Psychological Bulletin*, 127, 376-407.

- Kaczmarek, E., & Sibbel, A. (2008). The psychosocial well-being of children from Australian military and fly-in/fly out (FIFO) mining families. *Community, Work & Family*, 11, 297 – 312.
- Keown, N. (2005). *Digging deep for better health: A study of the health status of men in the Goldfields mining industry of Western Australia*. Kalgoorlie, WA: Goldfields Mens Health Inc.
- McCrindle, M. (2006). *From Builders & Boomers to Xers and Y's: A Social Report on Generations X & Y*. Retrieved August 6, 2008, from http://www.mccrindle.com.au/wp_pdf/BuildersBoomers_X_Y.pdf
- Netemeyer, R., Boles, J., & McMurrian, R. (1996). Development and validation of work-family conflict and family-work conflict scales. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 81, 400-410.
- Nippert-Eng, C. E. (1996). *Home and work*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Parker, A., Clavarino, A., & Hubinger, L. (1998). *The impact of Great Barrier Reef pilotage work on wives and families*. (Rep. No. 3). Canberra, ACT: Australian Maritime Safety Authority.
- Parkes, K. (1998). Psychosocial aspects of stress, health and safety on North Sea installations. *Scandinavian Journal of Work and Environmental Health*, 24, 321 – 333.
- Parkes, K. (2002). Age, smoking, and negative affectivity as predictors of sleep patterns among shiftworkers in two environments. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 7, 156-173.

- Parkes, K. (2007). Shiftwork and Health. In S. Ayers, A. Baum, C. McManus, S. Newman, K. Wallston, J. Weinman & R. West (Eds.) *Cambridge Handbook of Psychology, Health and Medicine* (2nd ed.). UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Parkes, K., Carnell, S., & Farmer, E. (2005). 'Living two lives:' Perceptions, attitudes and experiences of spouses of UK offshore workers. *Community, Work and Family*, 8, 413-437.
- Parkes, K., & Clark, M. (1997). *Psychosocial Aspects of Work and Health in the North Sea Oil and Gas Industry. Part V: Offshore Work/Leave Schedules. Data Analysis and Review*. Oxford.
- Pinkovitz, W., & Moskal, J. (1997). *How much does your employee turnover cost?* Retrieved August 11, 2008 from <http://www.Uwex.Edu/Ces/Cced/Publicat/Turn.Html>
- Pocock, B. (2001). *Fifty families: What unreasonable hours are doing to Australians, their families and their communities*. Perth: Australian Council of Trade Unions.
- Pocock, B. (2006). *The labour market ate my babies: Work, children and a sustainable future*. Sydney: Federation Press.
- Reid, K., & Dawson, D. (2001). Comparing performance on a simulated 12 hour shift rotation in young and older subjects. *Occupational Environmental Medicine*, 58, 58 – 62.
- Russell, G., & Bowman, L. (2000). *Work and family: Current thinking, research and practice*. Canberra, ACT: Department of family and community services.
- Savage, S., Collins-Mayo, S., Mayo, B., & Cray, G. (2006). *Making Sense of Generation Y*. England: Church House Publishing.

- Sheahan, P. (2008). *Understanding Generation Y*. Retrieved August 15, 2008, from www.petersheahan.com.au/cpa/exe/exe_file_get.asp?fileName=Understanding+Generation+Y.pdf
- Shrimpton, M., & Storey, K. (2001). *The Effects of Offshore Employment in the Petroleum Industry: A Cross-National Perspective*. Herndon, Virginia, U.S: Department of the Interior Minerals Management Service Environmental Studies Program.
- Sibbel, A., & Kaczmarek, E. (2005, July). *When the dust settles, how do families decide: Residential or FIFO?* Paper presented at the 14th biennial Australasian Human Development Association Conference, Perth, Western Australia.
- Skinner, N., & Pocock, B. (2008). *Work, life and workplace culture: The Australian work and life index 2008*. South Australia: University of South Australia, Hawke Research Institute for Sustainable Societies.
- Spurgeon, A. (2003). *Working time: Its impact on safety and health*. Seoul: International Labour Organization and Korean Occupational Safety and Health Research Institute.
- Storey, K., & Shrimpton, M. (1989). *Long distance labour commuting in the Canadian mining industry*. (Working Paper No. 43) Kingston, Ontario: Queen's University, Centre for Resource Studies.
- Storey, K., M. Shrimpton, M., Lewis, J & Clarke, D. (1989). *Family Life Impacts of Offshore Oil and Gas Employment*. (Rep. No. 4). Newfoundland: Memorial University of Newfoundland, Institute of Social and Economic Research.
- Taylor, R., Morrice, K., Clark, D., & McCann, K. (1985). The psycho-social consequences of intermittent husband absence: An epidemiological study. *Social Science Medicine*, 20, 877-885.

- Turner, J., & Brown, G. (2004). An improved job dimension scale to measure job satisfaction. *Journal of the Academy of Business and Economics*, 4, 22-27.
- Ulleberg, P., & Rundmo, T. (1997). Job stress, social support, job satisfaction and absenteeism among offshore oil personnel. *Work and Stress*, 11, 215 – 228.

Guidelines for Contributions by Authors
For Literature Review Only

Work and Stress

Manuscript preparation:

Adherence to the following guidelines, while not a condition of acceptance, will expedite the review, editing and publication of your paper.

1. Basic requirements

- Manuscripts should be consistent with the Aims and Scope of the journal.
- Type the manuscript in 12-point Times, on single sides only, in double line spacing throughout (including tables and references). Use generous margins of at least 2.5 cm (1") at the top, bottom, left and right of the page and number all pages.
- The first page is the title page and should include the title of the paper and the names and full postal addresses of all authors. Also include contact details for the author to whom correspondence and proofs should be sent: fax, telephone number and e-mail address. When there is joint authorship it will be assumed that the first-named author is the corresponding author unless otherwise stated.
- The title page will be removed when the paper is sent out for blind review. Papers submitted electronically should have the title page in a separate file.
- Authors are asked to make sure that no clues as to their identity are given elsewhere on the paper. This includes acknowledgements, which can be combined with the title page until a paper is accepted for publication.
- Page two of the paper should repeat the full title, and include an Abstract of up to 200 words.

- Manuscripts should be compiled in the following order: Title page; Abstract; Keywords; Introduction; Method; Results; Discussion/Conclusions; Notes (if necessary); References; Table(s) with caption(s) on individual pages; Figure caption(s) (as a list).
- The Method section typically includes subsections on participants and procedure, and on measures. The Discussion section should include mention of any limitations of the study. It should demonstrate a thorough and up-to-date knowledge of the world-wide literature on the subject under consideration.
- Figures and tables should be supplied on separate pages. They should be placed at the end of the manuscript, not inserted within the text. Group together figure captions on another sheet.
- The journal does not use footnotes. Please incorporate notes into the body of the text or list in a "Notes" section at the end of the paper.
- Any acknowledgements that you wish to make should be included in a separate headed section at the end of the manuscript once it has been accepted for publication.
- *Work and Stress* does *not* publish appendices. Readers may contact the corresponding author for information that is too detailed to be included in the text.
- Please supply a short biographical note (**100 words**) for each author. It will not be published, and should be supplied separately from the manuscript.
- Clearly explain - or avoid the use of - terms that might only be understood by a local or national readership. Also explain specialist terms that will only be comprehensible to one section of the readership.

2. Style guidelines

- The journal follows the APA reference style.

3. Content

1. Empirical papers should advance knowledge, policy or practice. Different thresholds of acceptability may be appropriate for different types of paper. Scholarly papers describing and reviewing specialist concerns for the non-academic readership are encouraged. Empirical papers should not exceed about **30 double-spaced typewritten pages** (inclusive of references, figures and tables). The journal is keen to support new developments in empirical and theoretical research, so innovative themes and procedures are encouraged. Although empirical research reports form the majority of published papers, constructively critical surveys of field studies, theoretical contributions and prescriptive articles (with methodological, statistical or procedural suggestions) are also welcome.
2. Review papers must demonstrate a thorough and up-to-date knowledge of the relevant literature, not only nationally but also worldwide. Do not combine in one paper a comprehensive review and the report of an empirical study. Please contact the Editor before writing a review paper (as opposed to an original study) for *Work and Stress* so that you can receive guidance from the Editor before embarking on a lengthy paper.
3. Shorter papers are welcomed, and may receive earlier publication.
4. Papers that do not meet the criteria for full academic papers can be considered for publication as Research Notes or Practice Notes and should not exceed **3,000 words/6 published pages** (plus two figures/tables). Potential authors are reminded about the limitations of cross-sectional, self-report studies. In papers that report such studies, authors should make it clear why this design and method are justified in their

particular case. It may be, for example, that (a) their study is very original; (b) steps are taken to control for self-report biases; (c) no causality is claimed (d) the limitations are clearly stated. However, in all cases authors are asked to deal with these issues in the paper and in the covering letter to the Editor. This may avoid unnecessary revision or rejection of the paper.

5. *Work and Stress* welcomes offers of Editorials that are relevant to the journal's concern for psychological, social and organisational issues in occupational health and safety, particularly (but not exclusively) where the focus relates to work stress. The best editorials are those focused on an issue of current interest that will stimulate thought and debate on the journal. Please contact the editorial team in advance if you are interested in contributing an editorial, so that the subject can be agreed.

The following are guidelines only:

- Editorials should not exceed **1500 to 2000 words** in length, and can include a few references.
- Scope. They should be of interest to a large proportion of the journal's readers.
- Topicality. They should be of current relevance, although the production process means that there will inevitably be a delay of several months before an editorial appears in print.
- Style. Although this should be scholarly, avoid the use of specialist jargon that will not be understood by a wide readership. Editorials can be a little more "popular" than academic papers.
- Opinions. An editorial gives the writer the opportunity to express his or her own views. These need not be those of the journal or the publisher, and a disclaimer to that effect is published in the journal.

An Exploration of Generation Y's Experiences of Offshore Fly-in/Fly-out Employment

Talya Carter

An Exploration of Generation Y's Experiences of Offshore Fly-in/Fly-out Employment

Abstract

Offshore fly in/fly out (FIFO) employment creates unique challenges for personnel, such as restricted working conditions and recurring separations from social support networks. Regardless of these challenges, this industry attracts a wide variety of individuals, including those navigating early adulthood and who belong to the generational cohort known as Generation Y (Gen Y). This qualitative study explored the experiences of Gen Y employed offshore in a FIFO capacity using a social constructionist framework. Ten male participants aged between 18 and 28 years old participated in this study. Thematic content analysis of the in-depth interviews revealed three broad themes; these included the FIFO lifestyle, Self-identity and Relationships. It was concluded that in general, the men were satisfied with their employment and lifestyle, despite the many challenges they are confronted with.

Author: Talya Carter

Supervisor: Dr. Elizabeth Kaczmarek

Submitted: October, 2008

An Exploration of Generation Y's Experiences of Offshore Fly-in/Fly-out Employment

The demand for natural resources continues to expand globally. In an attempt to meet this increasing demand, mining projects are being located in regions away from established areas of population. Due to the remote locality of these resources, companies seeking to mine these sites introduced a long distance commuter, or Fly in Fly out (FIFO) option for their workforce (Houghton, 1993). The mining industry plays an important role in Australia's economy and available statistics reveal that in Western Australia alone, the resources sector is responsible for the direct employment of 52,000 individuals and the indirect employment of 156,000 people. Overall this industry employs an estimated 21% of the WA workforce (CMEWA, 2006). The mining sector attracts a wide variety of individuals to the workforce some of whom are individuals in early adulthood. It has been estimated that within the mining sector 15,195 individuals are aged between 15 and 34 years of age (Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), 2006).

The generation of individuals currently navigating the challenges of early adulthood are known as Generation Y (Gen Y). Gen Y can be classified as the people who were born between 1980 and 1994 (McCrindle, 2006). Gen Y is the most recent cohort to enter the workforce and is much larger than the generation that came before them (Eisner, 2005; McCrindle, 2006). At present, there appears to be a limited body of literature focusing on the psychological aspects of Gen Y and additionally, little is known about how Gen Y confront the challenges generated by FIFO employment.

FIFO and Employment Practices

FIFO operations have been used internationally by the offshore oil and gas industry since the late 1940's and was introduced to Australia in the 1960's by the oil and gas companies to service both onshore and offshore production (CMEWA, 2006; Houghton, 1993). FIFO employment can be defined as "all employment in which the work is so isolated

from the workers' homes that food and accommodation are provided for them at the work site, and rosters are established whereby employees spend a fixed number of days at the site, followed by a fixed number of days at home" (Storey & Shrimpton, 1989, p.2). At present, such practices are used to service offshore oil and gas and also land based mining sites.

Although FIFO arrangements are now utilised by both land based mining companies and offshore oil and gas companies the employment practices of offshore employees differ from those who work on land based mine sites (CMEWA, 2007; Parkes, 2007). A key variation between the two industries is the differing work patterns employees are required to work. Typically, offshore workers spend an equal amount of time at work and at home, for example, they may spend two weeks offshore followed by a period of two weeks on-shore leave (2weeks/2weeks). This differs from onshore personnel who can be employed on different types of rosters, these are typically characterised by the workers spending more time away than home. For instance, the most common work pattern for land based employees consists of 9 days away and 5 days at home (9days/5days). Although these work patterns seem to be the most common it is evident that there is a wide array of variation in rosters (CMEWA, 2007; Parkes, 2007). Additionally, offshore employees are also exposed to different working environments compared to land-based employees. Offshore workers are exposed to constant noise and activity, live and work in restricted locations for a period of time without any breaks and also frequently share many facilities with other workers such as bedrooms and bathrooms (Ulleberg & Rundmo, 1997). This differs from land-based employees as typically, the worker is allocated a private room and can remove themselves from the work site on completion of their shift (Shrimpton & Storey, 2001).

Offshore and Onshore FIFO Research

Research into FIFO employment conducted by Houghton (1993) indicated that this lifestyle can impact both positively and negatively on the workers overall psychological

functioning. Houghton (1993) outlined some positive aspects associated with the FIFO lifestyle. These included firstly, high financial remuneration to attract workers to the industry. Secondly, FIFO work schedules are designed to allow for a period of time at home which enables workers to partake in extensive leisure activities and provides an opportunity to spend a solid period of time with family. Recent research has tended to focus on the children of FIFO workers and has demonstrated that employment related absence does not impact on a child's depressive symptomatology, levels of anxiety or their perception of family functioning (Kaczmarek & Sibbel, 2008). Additionally, similar research found that having a parent employed in a FIFO capacity was not typically problematic for children and that parents can implement certain strategies to help children successfully adjust and manage the FIFO lifestyle (Gallegos, 2006). Furthermore, FIFO employment allows workers and their families to be based in metropolitan areas instead of relocating to remote mining towns thus providing access to a diverse range of government and community services (Houghton, 1993).

In contrast, a survey of land based mining employees conducted by Venables, Beach and Brereton (2002) revealed that a large number of respondents reported that the FIFO lifestyle put substantial pressure on forming and maintaining personal relationships and over half indicated that their life lacked balance between work, health and relaxation. This survey also illustrated that social isolation was a significant issue for many employed on a FIFO basis as they were unable to participate in social and community activities due to their work rosters.

The Venables, Beach and Brereton (2002) study supported oil and gas industry based research conducted by Parkes' (1998). Parkes (1998) reported that compared to land based FIFO employees, offshore workers experienced increased levels of anxiety, more sleep problems and a higher workload. The offshore working environment is characterised by

several elements that can create stress for individuals (Parkes, 1998; Sutherland & Flin, 1989). These elements include exposure to adverse physical conditions, the remoteness of installations, restricted working and living arrangements, lack of privacy, perceived dangers of the offshore environment including the requirement of helicopter travel, demanding shift schedules and the separation from support networks (Cooper & Sutherland, 1987; Parkes, 1998; Sutherland & Cooper, 1991). These negative factors have been shown to adversely impact on the psychological health and well-being of personnel, with employees experiencing pervasive tension and apprehension, decreased job satisfaction and minor health problems such as sleeping difficulties and stomach complaints (Parkes, 1998; Ulleberg & Rundmo, 1997).

Early Adulthood and Gen Y Research

As previously stated the mining industry employs a portion of individuals who are currently in early adulthood and belong to the generational cohort known as Gen Y. Early adulthood characterises an important developmental phase of the life span; it entails the developmental tasks of connecting to others, completing education or training, finding a job, establishing a home, potentially partnering and starting a family (Arnett, 2000). Chronologically this period is anywhere from 18 through to 30 years of age. According to Erikson (1963; as cited in Arnett, 2000) the bipolar outcomes of this stage are intimacy and isolation, it is posited that one must successfully navigate this identity crisis before being able to move into the next phase of adult development.

Currently, Australia is experiencing an ageing of its population and due to this there has been an increasing interest in how companies can attract and retain Gen Y employees (McCrindle, 2006). The available research on Gen Y appears to be limited, however that which exists is primarily concerned with attracting and retaining this cohort, common characteristics exhibited by this group of young people, as well as their work perceptions

(Eisner, 2005; McCrindle, 2006; Sheahan, 2008). It is important to note that generalising the characteristics of an entire generation of individuals is problematic and the information that exists is predominately derived not from psychological research but from other disciplines such as Human Resources. However, the existing generalisations and descriptions provide a good foundation for further psychological investigation.

According to Eisner (2005) Gen Y has a strong sense of morality, are sociable, willing to fight for freedom and are arguably patriotic. They are the most technically literate, educated and ethnically diverse generation in history and tend to have more disposable income. Gen Y have a reputation for poor job commitment and little company loyalty, however, research by McCrindle (2006) suggested that although Gen Y are three times more likely to change jobs in a year compared to older generations this frequent movement was due to their desire for variety, challenge, success, change and seeking out people who will further their development.

Experiences that occur during the formative childhood and teenage years create and define differences between generations (Eisner, 2006). Each generation possesses a unique set of experiences, attitudes, beliefs and expectations about a variety of situations, including personal relationships. Gen Y have observed their parents get the rewards of hard work such as houses, cars and material wealth and subsequently they have benefited from this as they are the most materially endowed, and entertained generation to date (Sheahan, 2008). However, they have also witnessed the cost of their parents' success in terms of absentee parenting and broken marriages (McCrindle, 2002; Sheahan, 2008).

In a qualitative study focusing on the perceptions young people hold about relationships, it was found that although young people aspire to marry someone who will understand their intimate feelings, needs and desires, financial independence is a priority (Dafoe-Whithead & Popenoe, 2000). Cohabiting with a potential partner is also crucial for

Gen Y as they believe living together first is a way to avoid the risk of divorce or being in an unhappy marriage. It was suggested by Dafoe-Whithead & Popenoe (2000) that this cohabiting has been influenced by their parents' failed or unhappy marriages. Young people have witnessed the negative experiences of divorce from their parents and this has dramatically eroded their confidence in the permanence of marriage. Additionally, the negative advice received from parents and relatives regarding marriage have made them cautious of committing to another, subsequently they view marriage as exposing them to economic risk and possibly jeopardising their hard earned individual independence (Dafoe-Whithead & Popenoe, 2000).

Gen Y and FIFO

At present, literature focusing on generational issues within the FIFO industry appears to be scarce. Research in this area has characteristically focused on the effects of FIFO and families, as well as accident rates among workers, attrition, absenteeism and the effect of roster schedules on stress and physical health (Chen, Wong, Yu, Lin & Cooper, 2003; Gallegos, 2006; Kaczmarek & Sibbel, 2008; Parkes, 1998; Shrimpton & Storey, 2001; Ulleberg & Rundmo, 1997). This research has commonly been directed towards males who are in established relationships or marriages and those employees who have children. However, little research has been done on the new generation of employees entering the FIFO work force and the impact this lifestyle has on their developmental progress and overall psychosocial functioning.

Research Aims

In order to determine the overall psychological impact offshore FIFO employment has on Gen Y, their individual perceptions of this lifestyle need to be explored. Thus, gaining insight into how Gen Y involved in oil and gas based FIFO employment can successfully navigate developmental and psychosocial challenges while dealing with extended absences

from community and support networks. This research will build on the current body of psychological knowledge that surrounds this area (Chen, Wong, Yu, Lin & Cooper, 2003; Gallegos, 2006; Kaczmarek & Sibbel, 2008; Parkes, 1992, 1997, 1998; Parkes & Clarke, 1997; Shrimpton & Storey, 2001; Ulleberg & Rundmo, 1997) and act as a foundation to further research focusing on generational issues for people working in a FIFO capacity. Additionally, this study could also provide valuable information to oil and gas companies on how to assist and support Gen Y workers facing these challenges, with the aim of creating a more productive young workforce. The question this study aims to address is what are the psychosocial challenges experienced by Gen Y when employed offshore in a FIFO capacity?

Method

Research Design

Due to the exploratory nature of this study an in-depth qualitative research design was utilised to gain insight into the experiences of Gen Y workers employed on a FIFO basis. Qualitative research designs are advantageous in that they firstly enable the unearthing of subjective meanings and interpretations people give to their experiences and secondly, they allow aspects of social processes to be studied that cannot be examined using other methodologies (Daly & McDonald, 1992).

This study adopted a social constructionist framework as this perspective is based on the assumption that people construct their own social world and focuses on the meaning and motives individuals attach to their experiences (Burr, 2003). This framework views individuals as active agents who construct their knowledge and common ways of understanding the world through social processes and interactions with others in the course of social life (Burr, 2003). By using a social constructionist approach in the current study it enables a greater understanding of how Gen Y involved in FIFO construct and give meaning

to their experiences as well as how they view their self-identity while working offshore in a FIFO capacity.

Participants

Ten adult male participants aged between 18 – 28 years of age who were currently employed offshore on a FIFO basis were recruited to participate in this study. Although women are involved in FIFO employment males were selected as they represent a larger proportion of the offshore FIFO industry (ABS, 2006). This study focused solely on oil and gas industry employees as research suggests that they experience different issues compared to land based FIFO personnel. The number of participants was sufficient to achieve saturation of content (Beanland, Schneider, LoBiondo-Wood, Harber, 1999). The type of work engaged in by each participant varied, the majority worked on an oil rig in differing capacities however two were involved in supporting the rigs from offshore marine vessels. As shown in Table 1, roster patterns also varied across participants, ranging from 2 weeks on/2 weeks off to 5 weeks on/5 weeks off. Additionally, the amount of time each participant had been involved in FIFO employment ranged from seven months to eight years.

Table 1

Participant Details

Pseudonym	Amount of time employed FIFO	Roster cycle
Alex	7 months	2weeks/2weeks
Anthony	18 months	5weeks/5weeks
Brett	3 years	2weeks/2weeks
Nick	8 years	2weeks/2weeks
Matthew	8 years	2weeks/2weeks
Peter	2.5 years	2weeks/2weeks
Robert	4 years	2weeks/2weeks

Christian	2 years	2weeks/2weeks
Chris	6 years	2weeks/2weeks
John	3 years	4weeks/4weeks

Materials

A semi- structured interview schedule with open ended questions was used to identify the participants’ experiences of offshore FIFO employment. The interview protocol consisted of four to five general questions as well as two or three probes for each question to encourage participants to elaborate on their thoughts and feelings regarding a particular issue (see Appendix A). Questions were related to participants overall experience with the lifestyle generated by FIFO employment and how they felt this impacted on different aspects of lives.

A tape recorder was utilised to obtain a complete record of the verbal interaction for each participant. An advantage of tape recorded interviews is they provide a level of detail and accuracy that cannot be obtained by memory or note taking alone (Liamputtong & Ezzy, 2005).

Procedure

Following approval from the Human Ethics Subcommittee at Edith Cowan University participants were recruited through an advertisement placed in the local newspaper (see Appendix B). Once a participant had become involved in the study the researcher asked if they knew of others who would be willing to participate, thus, utilising a snowballing technique.

Data was collected through a series of semi-structured, face to face interviews which varied in length from 32 minutes to 62 minutes. Semi-structured interviews are valuable in gaining additional information and for developing rapport (Berg, 2001).

Prior to the commencement of the interview the researcher introduced herself and explained the purpose of the study being conducted. Participants were then provided with an information letter which detailed the study (See Appendix C). The researcher informed the participant of the voluntary nature of this study and that they were free to withdraw at any time. Written consent was obtained from the participant before the interview began, this consent covered their involvement and the approval of the audio being recorded from the interview (Appendix D).

Interviews were arranged at a mutually agreed time and place and were conducted in a conversational format. Conversational interviews were conducted as a way of gaining insight into individual interpretations of personal experience (Berg, 2001). Once the interviews were completed the participants were provided with a list of contact numbers for a variety of support services. This was done to ensure the participants had an outlet to discuss any issues that may have arisen for them from the interviewing process.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical issues such as confidentiality, anonymity and informed consent were addressed before each interview and were reiterated as necessary during and on completion of the interview. To ensure confidentiality of participant information, all data records were stored in a locked cabinet at Edith Cowan University. Furthermore, throughout the research paper all participants' names and those mentioned in the interview were allocated pseudonyms so that only the researcher was aware of identifying information.

Data Analysis

Qualitative analysis facilitates the reduction of large amounts of data into to smaller themes (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Each interview was transcribed verbatim from the recordings to ensure authentic records for analysis. Thematic content analysis was used to analyse the data in order to identify central patterns and themes (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). All

transcripts were read a number of times to ensure the identification of important information. Whilst reading and re-reading the transcripts, reflections were noted by the researcher and salient words, phrases and passages were highlighted in each transcript. Highlighted words were then translated into codes in order to give meaning to the descriptive information and facilitate the grouping together of themes. Themes representing the meaning underlying a group of codes were identified.

To ensure rigour was maintained while conducting this research several methods were employed; interpretive rigour, methodological rigour, triangulation and saturation. Interpretive rigour was ensured through providing extensive segments or complete primary texts in the final report, and also by allowing another researcher to verify the conclusions drawn from the coding process (Liamputtong & Ezzy, 2005). Methodological rigour was achieved in the current study by outlining how access was obtained to participants, how the researcher presented herself to the participants, how data was collected and how the data was coded and analysed (Liamputtong & Ezzy, 2005). Furthermore, triangulation was utilised to ensure the accuracy of conclusions. This was achieved by emailing four participants an interim results sheet and asking them to provide feedback via email. The feedback that was obtained from the participants endorsed the interpretations of the study. Finally, interviews were conducted until saturation was reached; meaning that no new data was emerging, this ensured that all the information was captured.

Findings and Interpretations

During the analysis of the experiences of this small sample of Gen Y employees working offshore in a FIFO capacity three dominant themes emerged from the data. As shown in Table 2 these themes included: FIFO lifestyle, Self-identity and Relationships.

Table 2

Themes and Sub-themes

Themes	Sub-themes
FIFO lifestyle	Financial rewards
	Workplace culture
	Adjustment
	Time off
Self-identity	Aspirations
	Others perception of self and work
	Beliefs and attitudes about self
Relationships	Trust and importance of regular contact within relationships
	Difficulty forming and maintaining relationships
	Influence of others experiences about relationships

FIFO Lifestyle

Issues related to aspects of the FIFO lifestyle emerged as a dominant theme across the data. The majority of participants interviewed were unified in their identification of the issues that arise for them as a result of their FIFO employment. Four main issues associated with the FIFO lifestyle included: financial rewards, workplace culture, adjustment and time off.

Financial rewards

The men in this study reported that financial remuneration was an important factor in both attracting and retaining them in the industry and that their wages enabled them to have a degree of financial freedom. This is similar to previous research which suggests that the financial gains generated by FIFO employment are considered one of the positive aspects of this lifestyle (Collinson, 1998; Houghton, 1993). For example, Christian commented:

"The money is good...obviously the money is what takes me that way."

Matthew also stated:

"It's the main reason you do it really; I would say would be for the money."

Additionally, this study supports previous research that notes offshore FIFO workers generally have relatively high disposable incomes as they typically have few expenses or opportunities to spend money during their time at work (Shrimpton & Storey, 2001). As Alex said:

"I spend a fair bit of money on just getting stuff I have wanted to get. If I have seen something I would always be like 'oh bugger it, get it' sort of thing, and you have still got enough, you can put money away as well so a bit of both sort of thing, it's good."

When discussing spending habits Matthew reported things that his income was spent on:

"Toys, motorbikes and things... Holidays, drinking, things you don't really need. Just waste of money, clothes. It's not really a waste of money but it could have been used a lot more wisely. Casino's..."

This pattern of spending was common across participants with many buying things that bought them pleasure without much hesitation for how it would impact on their current financial situation. Although participants spent their money on items that enhanced their sense of well being, many of them also valued their income as a means for providing a stable

future and used their money to invest in assets such as property and stock market shares. As Peter stated *"I've got the houses as investments and some shares."*

Workplace culture

The workplace culture described by the participants indicated that while there was a sense of camaraderie and mateship among employees there was also an element of trying to establish a social hierarchy within the workplace. Similarly, Ulleberg and Rundmo (1997) suggested that individuals seek support from colleagues while at work and found that social support from a supervisor or co-worker appeared to reduce employees' level of job strain. For example Brett commented:

"When I am out at work there are people there to support me because sometimes it can get lonely and I mean us guys we speak about everything out there... it's not unusual to feel counted out there when you are a couple of days into a trip you know, you're just getting used to being out there and a couple of guys come up and they will slap you on the back, just the contact you know, it helps."

Matthew also stated:

"It's just like being with your mates a lot of the time, just take the piss and having a joke and a laugh and talking about drinking and women and whatever"

Chris pointed out the importance of being able to get along with everyone while at work:

"Yeah, everyone gets along really well... if you don't get along with anyone out there you sort of get weeded out. It's a pretty close knit sort of thing."

This finding is consistent with Gen Y research which suggests employees highly regard a workplace environment where they can interact socially and work collaboratively with others (McCrindle, 2006). Thus, it can be assumed that the unique nature of FIFO employment satisfies both of these aspects as employees often work in teams while on shift

and socialise with others during meal times, in accommodation facilities and when engaging in recreational activities on the rig.

In contrast to the positive aspects of working in such a close environment the men indicated that it can become difficult when others attempt to establish a sense of dominance among the work group. For instance, Nick highlighted the negative aspect of the workplace culture:

"You know what guys are like... if they find a chink in someone's armour they will just keep chipping away at it until they break you, and especially in that environment, it's just guys trying to stamp their authority on things and be the dominant male."

Additionally, Robert said:

"Guys get out there, they see what you are doing and then they ask you what money you are on. It all becomes a competition... they will be on the computer saying these are my toys and this and that."

At present, little research seems to exist exploring the social dynamics of the offshore workplace. This finding is important as the way workers interact with each other has the potential to significantly impact on their feelings of satisfaction and well being whilst at work.

Adjustment

It was evident from the interviews that a significant challenge raised by FIFO employment was the periods of adjustment individuals are faced with both prior to departure and on arrival at work. This finding supports research conducted by Gallegos (2006) who identified that FIFO employees experience an emotional cycle that occurs when the worker arrives home and departs for work. Consistent with the findings reported by Gallegos (2006) participants in this study reported depressive feelings in the time leading up to their return to work and during the first few days of their trip, establishing a routine early was also

identified as important for them. Additionally, previous research exploring the impact of shift systems on domestic life noted that workers often take approximately four days to adjust to life onshore (Collinson, 1998). The current study provides some support for this however adjustment periods were not isolated to those involved in relationships.

When discussing his feelings about returning to work Peter remarked: *"It's kind of depressing sometimes, like when there is a lot going on or if you are missing out on things like parties or whatever."*

Additionally Robert commented that he experienced a sense of institutionalisation:

"Returning to work and living on the platform pretty much feels like you're going back to prison... You don't have any windows in your room. Just wall to wall, that's it. And you wake up a certain time, you have got to do things at a certain time, lunch certain time."

On arrival at work participants reported that establishing a routine was an important factor in assisting them to cope with their time at work. For instance Anthony reported: *"The first few days are hard to adjust but once you get into the swing of it it's alright."*

Many men in this sample also acknowledged feelings of disappointment during their last few days prior to returning to work which were exacerbated if they believed they were going to miss out on social events they perceived to be important. Although this was viewed as an inevitable aspect of the job, it still generated unfavourable feelings for the workers. Furthermore, the participants tried to avoid thinking about what was going at home as a way to cope with this challenge, for example Nick commented *"if you don't think about it, it doesn't bother you."* This is comparable to the finding by Gallegos (2006) who reported that with the exception of Christmas, workers did not find missing family occasions such as birthdays to be problematic. However, for the participants in this study important social events included weddings, concerts and other social gatherings. This apparent fear of missing

out on social occasions can be compared to the research which suggests that a predominant characteristic of Gen Y is that they are highly sociable (Eisner, 2005).

Time off

The amount of time off generated by FIFO employment emerged as a significant positive aspect of this lifestyle. This finding supports that of Gallegos (2006) who found that second to financial gains, time away from work was the most frequently reported reason for continuing with FIFO employment. The men in this study reported that this time off enabled them to engage in activities which increased their sense of well-being. These included opportunities to travel and partake in social activities without being concerned about work commitments.

In contrast to engaging in positive activities to increase well-being many participants reported having experience with illicit drugs. Although they did not identify as drug users many commented that they consumed illicit drugs recreationally while they were at home, this drug use has the potential to negatively impact on varying facets of their lives such as emotional states and future employment prospects should they return a positive urinalysis test.

When discussing what he enjoyed about the FIFO lifestyle Brett stated:

"The time off and the time I get to spend with my friends is a big one for me... it's given me the opportunity to travel and do things you don't normally get to do... the freedom to move and do what I like when I like when I'm not at work is the biggest draw card for me."

Additionally, Anthony said:

"Five weeks off paid for and yeah, living on your own watch, doing whatever you want... With five weeks I can travel... I can do a lot of things."

Travel was frequently mentioned as an activity that was undertaken by the individuals in this study, it was also suggested that the money generated by this work provided them with the means to do this. The social activities reported often revolved around the consumption of alcohol and the occasional use of illicit drugs. However, these factors were not viewed as problematic and were generally considered normative behaviour. When describing what he had been doing with his time off Christian stated:

"I think I have been drunk just about every day."

When referring to his alcohol consumption while he is at home Matthew noted:

"I would come back and go out on a Friday and maybe come home on the Sunday or something like that...maybe drink for seven days straight... definitely way too much... But it's good fun. I mean at the same time when you are away for three or four weeks you won't have any so I suppose you kind of clear yourself up to do some damage again. It's just the way it is."

Illicit drug use also surfaced as an activity participants engaged in during their time away from work. Peter explained:

"I like to take drugs and stuff... [I use] pretty much anything I can get my hands on... because you are sort of doing nothing at home so yeah you just smoke pot all day... it ends up being every day and before you know it every trip... I would probably have pills on the weekend, probably every weekend... and ice if that's going around."

Many of the participants also reported having experience with a variety of illicit drugs, for example Matthew said:

"I've took drugs before. I mean I was never a drug addict or anything... as long as it was for fun and recreational... [I've taken] ecstasy, cocaine, hash, speed, acid... a few different things but never been a heavy user."

While Collinson (1998) suggested that FIFO employees typically consume higher levels of alcohol during their time off compared to the general population, the available research that explores illicit drug use among offshore personnel appears limited.

Additionally, due to the exploratory nature of the present study it is difficult to distinguish between whether the participants' drug use is a result of their work practices or a generational effect that can be witnessed across all industries. However, in general research focusing on work stressors and substance use Frone (2008) found that illicit drugs are more likely to be used in response to work stressors rather than induced by them. This is relevant for FIFO employees as they are frequently exposed to workplace stressors and thus, it can be assumed that their illicit drug use reduces the tension associated with these. In addition, boredom could be a contributing factor for the men's alcohol consumption and illicit drug use for example Brett commented "*...come 1 o'clock you know you haven't really done much so I will crack a beer or something.*"

Most men in the study also commented that they enjoyed using their time off productively, for example many did maintenance on their homes. Additionally, most enjoyed partaking in fairly active recreational activities, some of the commonly cited pastimes included motorbike riding, diving and four wheel driving.

Self-identity

An individual develops a sense of identity through various ways. Firstly, through personal identity, this is based on the individual's representation of themselves and includes personality traits and individual attitudes such as values, beliefs and goals (Stets & Burke, 2003). Secondly, through the social self, this is a reflection and internalisation of others reactions to the public self as presented in social interaction (Stets & Burke, 2003). Self-identity was a significant factor that emerged from the data. Some common issues to arise

under this theme included: aspirations, others perceptions of self and work and beliefs and attitudes about self.

Aspirations

The majority of the individuals in this study commented that they did not want to continue working offshore for a long period of time. This finding is consistent with the current Gen Y research that suggests members of this generation have shorter tenure in jobs than the generations that came before them (McCrindle, 2006). Some noted that they were unsure what the future held for their careers but many suggested that they did not envisage themselves being employed in a job that required them to work 9am to 5pm. Many of the participants also aspired to retire at an early age. Brett was one individual who did not see himself working from 9am to 5pm:

"...It's not forever for me either... but it's providing a means to an end at the moment to help me get where I would like to be later... I still would never envisage working full time 9 to 5 ever. I just can't see myself getting injected into that sort of life."

Matthew articulated another advantage of FIFO work for him:

"... I'll maybe retire when I'm 50 or something like that... I've got the option of doing that if I want to, rather than 9 – 5... Something I always said I wouldn't do is work 9 – 5."

From the comments provided it was evident that the men believed the FIFO lifestyle facilitated their current goals and aspirations thus, influencing their construction of personal self-identity.

Others perceptions of self and work

The perceptions other people form and express about individuals influence the formation of the social self (Stets & Burke, 2003). Participants in this study felt other people not involved in FIFO employment viewed their work and lifestyle negatively, with many

choosing not to disclose their occupation to others in an attempt to avoid being judged unfavourably. When discussing how he felt others viewed his occupation Nick reported:

"I think some people are actually quite jealous of it, the fact that you know, you don't really go without anything"

Additionally, Alex commented:

"I just feel like sometimes people are like oh yeah... you just go up there and are on holidays for two weeks."

Some participants did not discuss their occupation with others for fear of others forming negative opinions about them. For example Brett stated:

"I don't like speaking about it because sometimes you get people thinking you are talking it up... so I just tell people I fix light bulbs or something like that... [others think] that you have got no responsibilities, you just don't give a shit, you have got all this money, you are causing problems with all you guys spending hard and large and big and that's causing problems down here for everybody else."

Furthermore Robert said:

"When people ask me what I do I just say "oh I deliver milk, that's all I do"... I don't like to tell them."

These negative perceptions of the FIFO lifestyle by others can have implications for the formation of identity for these individuals. Many of the men in this study indicated that people not involved in the industry, viewed the work as overly simplistic and often expressed feelings of jealousy and resentment towards them because of the work they do. This appeared impact the participants as there is a discrepancy between how the workers view the lifestyle and how they feel others perceive it *"People think we are slack, we are just watching movies all the time... I have done a 16 hour shift on a drill before. It isn't an easy job"* (Christian).

They acknowledged that the FIFO lifestyle has its benefits but consider the work to be relatively demanding and a lifestyle that requires fairly substantial sacrifices.

Beliefs and attitudes about self

The beliefs an individual holds about themselves is an integral component of self-identity (Tyler, Kramer & John, 1999). Typically, the men in this study shared similar beliefs about themselves. They viewed themselves as relatively hard working, easy going and resilient and felt that it was these characteristics that enabled them to effectively cope with offshore FIFO employment. When discussing the qualities that are required to manage the FIFO lifestyle Matthew said:

"I wouldn't say everyone could work offshore... I would say it takes a certain type of person... I mean you've got to be an easy going and pretty open and not offended too easily."

Additionally, Robert commented:

"Well I'm just a pretty laid back person. I just get on with anybody because you have to."

When discussing his attitude toward dealing with work related pressures Anthony stated:

"You just take it on the chin. If you don't let stuff like that worry you, you will be alright."

Many of the men also reported witnessing other people fail to effectively manage the pressures of the FIFO lifestyle. They contributed this to several reasons, some of which included, lack of knowledge around what to expect prior to arrival at the workplace, failure to get along with others at work and an inability to be resilient when confronted with obstacles. Thus, it can be suggested that the beliefs and attitudes these individuals hold about themselves have enabled them to successfully overcome challenges that have arisen for them whilst working offshore.

Relationships

The impact FIFO employment has on personal relationships has frequently been identified in the literature as a source of stress for personnel (Clarke, McCann, Morrice & Taylor, 1985; Collinson, 1998; Parkes, 1997; Shrimpton & Storey, 2001). Consistent with this, relationship issues emerged as a dominant theme amongst the men in this study. Less than half of the men in the study were currently in a relationship at the time of the interview, however were willing to recall their experience. Some viewed the lifestyle as a positive for relationships such that, the separations generated feelings of appreciation for each other. However, the majority of men indicated that the FIFO lifestyle places considerable pressure on personal relationships. The main issues to emerge under this theme included: trust and importance of regular contact within relationships, difficulty forming and maintaining relationships and the influence of others experiences about relationships.

Trust and importance of regular contact within relationships

Trust in close personal relationships refers to the confidence an individual has in a partner's willingness to be responsive to the person's needs, even when they conflict with the partner's own preference (Remple, Holmes, & Zanna, 1985). In this study, trust and regular contact emerged as a significant factor for the men. If trust was not apparent within relationships they felt that the relationship was unable to be maintained. Additionally, the contact between partners enabled the worker to cope with the periods of separation. When disclosing a time his girlfriend broke his trust Peter commented:

"She cheated on me once... the big thing was trust and especially while I am away it was really hard and I suppose that is one of the reasons why I ring her every day. Just to know where she is... If your relationship is going to work you have got to trust each other."

The regularity of contact was also important for those in a relationship. When discussing the issue of contact between him and his partner Anthony said:

"I am big on it, even if it is just talking about nothing... and it helps during the day as well to know that you have got like an email to read and reply to or a phone call or something like that"

Alternatively, Chris felt that he had little to contribute when he spoke to his partner as his daily activities did not vary greatly, he stated:

"I don't like talking to her on the phone out there, not much happens during the day so it makes it hard... it's just another day. Woke up went to work. You only ring up because you want to hear them talk... so it gets frustrating for her when you are out there and you just get in the zone and you are eating, working, sleeping and that's it."

Remple, Ross and Holmes (2001) suggested that people who have a high level of trust within relationships feel secure and confident that their partner can be counted on to care for them and be responsive to their needs. Accordingly, they are willing to interpret relationship events in ways that are consistent with their positive expectation. Thus, couples who have high levels of trust in their relationships diminish the significance of negative events by viewing them in the broader context of more positive experiences and expectations (Remple et al., 2001). This has implications for FIFO workers as couples who have high trust can justify the periods of separation in the context of the positive experience of being able to spend extended periods of quality time with their partners when they are not at work.

Alternatively, people who have low trust within relationships experience feelings of insecurity and tend to amplify their partner's negative behaviour and minimise the effects of any positive actions (Remple et al., 2001). This is important for FIFO employees as if they are in a relationship characterised by little trust they can often find themselves ruminating about what their partner is doing at home, thus impacting on their overall feeling of well-

being. From the responses provided in this study it can be assumed that regular contact with the partner at home facilitated feelings of trust for the employee.

Difficulty forming and maintaining relationships

The ability to form and maintain close personal relationships is a challenge that must be confronted in order for the young adult to successfully navigate the developmental stage of early adulthood (Arnett, 2000). The men in this study highlighted that the FIFO lifestyle places pressure on forming and maintaining relationships. It was frequently cited that this difficulty was a result of the recurring absences required by FIFO employment. Brett commented:

"Throughout the majority of my offshore lifestyle I haven't been in a relationship... the worst part is the um, going away... especially at the start of the relationship because you didn't know how things were going to turn out and you have got to be there to inject yourself into a relationship and people are very fast and frequent nowadays."

Furthermore, when discussing his experience with relationships Chris stated:

"It's hard to be single out there because you come home and especially try and establish a relationship and two weeks off goes so quick and then you are back at work and then you see them going 'oh,' you know, just freaking out."

Some men thought that the FIFO lifestyle gave them a lot of time to reflect on their relationships and what their partners were doing at home and thus, chose to avoid them.

When discussing his relationship experience Alex reported:

"I sort of tended to avoid them... I didn't want to have to think about what was going on down here and I didn't want to have my mind occupied even though it sort of was anyway but I did try to keep a distance in the relationship... it's just so easy for your mind to wander up there."

As inferred from developmental research, an inability to establish close relationships in early adulthood can lead to feelings of isolation (Erikson, 1963; as cited in Arnett, 2000). This has implications for FIFO employees as the difficulty experienced in forming relationships can potentially impact on the successful navigation of this developmental stage thus, impacting on their transition to the next stage of development.

Influence of others stories/experiences about relationships

The men in this study reported that the close nature of the working environment facilitated the sharing of others personal stories and experiences of relationships. These stories predominately revolved around negative experiences thus, influencing the participants' attitudes towards relationships. Chris commented:

"You don't get a good view of marriage because they [the other men] are going 'oh we are paying this much for to about three kids' and your sitting there thinking oh fuck is this what I have to look forward to?"

Anthony also said:

"A lot of the guys out there are all split up and they have got stories and stuff like that... they love ripping into you about it as well, they tell you when you get home, knock on the front door and run around the back."

This finding is similar to Wallerstein and Lewis (2004) who found that young adults who had witnessed their parents' divorce were openly pessimistic about marriage and divorce and sought to avoid both. The men in their study had a desire for love but a wariness of being hurt, consequently they were more likely to withdraw from involvement in current relationships and a significant number of young men avoided relationships altogether (Wallerstein & Lewis, 2004). Additionally, as Dafoe-Whitehead and Popenoe (2000) have suggested, young people are receiving negative advice about marriage from parents and relatives and as a result they are becoming cautious about forming intimate relationships with

another. However, for the men in this study these negative stories and experiences were not coming from their parents or relatives but instead the older men at work. This sharing of stories among colleagues could be indicative of a generational effect across industries and not one specific to FIFO employment. Although, the influence these stories have on the young men could be exacerbated by the close nature of the working environment and the extended periods of time workers spend with each other. This finding suggests that the older generation of males are passing down negative stories and experiences which, in turn, influence the young men's behaviour and attitude toward relationships.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of Gen Y employed offshore in a FIFO capacity to determine the psychosocial impact of this lifestyle. Utilising a social constructionist approach provided valuable insight into how these individuals constructed their self-identity and gave meaning to their experiences. A series of semi-structured interviews facilitated open and honest discussion about personal experiences and the men seemed enthusiastic and willing to convey their thoughts and opinions. As a result of this several themes were identified. These themes included the FIFO lifestyle, self-identity and relationships. The key finding of this study was that generally, the men were satisfied with their employment and lifestyle, despite the many challenges they are confronted by as a result. Overall, the men seemed to have adjusted well to the stressors associated with offshore FIFO employment and had positive attitudes and beliefs about themselves as individuals.

The main limitation of this study was the relatively small number of participants. Although saturation of content was established, generalising these findings to the oil and gas industry as a whole requires caution. Additionally, all the participants in this study were men which could have created a gender biased view of FIFO employment. However, even though

women are employed within the industry the male sample can be considered representative of the offshore workforce as males comprise the majority of offshore FIFO personnel.

This study has implications for the current body of knowledge around how FIFO employment impacts on the psychosocial development of Gen Y employees and also offshore FIFO policy. Firstly, it provides evidence to suggest that the men are successfully navigating most developmental milestones while being employed in a FIFO capacity. Secondly, it contributes to current research that identifies FIFO employment requires individuals to confront a unique set of challenges. Some of these include the confined work and living conditions, demanding shift patterns and isolation from community and social supports (Cooper & Sutherland, 1987; Parkes, 1992; Ulleberg & Rundmo, 1997). Previous studies (Chen et al., 2003; Cooper & Sutherland, 1987; Parkes, 1992, 1998; Ulleberg & Rundmo, 1997) identified that the negative factors associated with offshore FIFO employment adversely affects workers psychological well-being. The current study did not entirely support this conclusion; instead it was found that although these elements can be viewed as unfavourable, they are also considered an inevitable characteristic of the job. An individual must be willing to effectively confront these challenges in order to benefit from the positive aspects FIFO employment offers.

From this study it is evident that having the right attitude toward offshore FIFO employment is an imperative coping strategy utilised by this group of young people. If younger employees do not have the right attitude and effective coping styles they are unlikely to remain in the industry due to the impact this can have on their psychological functioning. This has implications for the offshore oil and gas industry, as companies seeking to employ and retain Gen Y employees should attempt to ensure younger personnel are well informed about what to expect prior to going offshore. Younger workers should be educated in the

areas of how to integrate into close work groups, effective communication in relation to conflict management, effective coping strategies as well as financial management.

As this was an exploratory study, it was difficult to differentiate what was a result of FIFO employment and what was a result of generational effects that may be present across all industries. Consequently, further investigation into generational effects and FIFO employment is warranted. It is recommended that future research in this area utilise both qualitative and quantitative methodologies to gain a greater understanding of the issues confronted by this cohort. Finally, the findings from this study have highlighted the benefit of conducting qualitative research to provide a greater understanding of how offshore FIFO employment impacts on Gen Y employees. From this perspective, developing a questionnaire for Gen Y FIFO personnel in which a larger population can be reached may be considered both feasible and important in furthering the understanding of the psychosocial impact this employment has on the emerging generation of workers.

References

- Arnett, J. (2000). Emerging adulthood: A theory of development from the late teens through the early twenties. *American Psychologist*, 55, 469 – 480.
- Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2006). *Industry of employment by age and sex based on place of usual residence*. Retrieved March 13, 2008, from <http://www.censusdata.abs.gov.au>
- Beanland, C., Schneider, Z., LoBiondo-Wood, G., & Harber, J. (1999). *Nursing research: Methods, critical appraisal and utilisation*. Sydney: Harcourt.
- Berg, B.L. (2001). *Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences* (4th ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Burr, V. (2003). *Social Constructionism*. London: Routledge.
- Chamber of Minerals and Energy of Western Australia. (2006). *People at work*. Perth, WA: CMEWA.
- Chamber of Minerals and Energy of Western Australia. (2007). *Expanding horizons 2007*. Perth, WA: CMEWA.
- Chen, W., Wong, T., Yu, T., Lin, Y., & Cooper, C. (2003). Determinants of perceived occupational stress among Chinese oil workers. *Work and Stress*, 17, 287 – 305.
- Clarke, D., McCann, K., Morrice, K., & Taylor, R (1985). Work and marriage in the offshore oil industry. *International Journal of Social Economics*, 12(2), 36-47.
- Collinson, D. (1998). "Shift-Ing Lives": Work-home pressures in the North Sea oil industry. *The Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology*, 35, 301-324.
- Cooper, C., & Sutherland, V. (1987). Job stress, mental health, and accidents among offshore workers in the oil and gas extraction industries. *Journal of Occupational Medicine*, 29, 119-125.
- Corbin, J., & Strauss, A. (2008). *Basics of Qualitative Research* (3rd ed.). California: Sage Publications Inc.

- Dafoe-Whitehead, B., & Popenoe, D. (2000). *Sex without strings, relationships without rings. National Marriage Project*. New Jersey, USA: State University of New Jersey, National Marriage Project.
- Daly, J., & McDonald, I. (1992). Introduction: The problem as we saw it. In J. Daly, I. McDonald, & E. Willis (Eds.), *Researching Health Care: Designs, Dilemmas, Disciplines*. Routledge: London.
- Eisner, S. (2005). Managing Generation Y. *Advanced Management Journal*, 70, 4 – 16.
- Frone, M. (2008). Are work stressors related to employee substance use? The importance of temporal context in assessments of alcohol and illicit drug use. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 93, 199 – 206.
- Gallegos, D. (2006). “Aeroplanes always come back”: *Fly-in fly-out employment: Managing the parenting transitions*. Perth, WA: Murdoch University, Centre for Social and Community Research.
- Houghton, D. (1993). Long distance commuting: A new approach to mining in Australia. *The Geographical Journal*, 159, 281 – 290.
- Kaczmarek, E., & Sibbel, A. (2008). The psychosocial well-being of children from Australian military and fly-in/fly out (FIFO) mining families. *Community, Work & Family*, 11, 297 – 312.
- Liamputtong, P., & Ezzy, D. (2005). *Qualitative research methods* (2nd ed.). Victoria: Oxford University Press.
- McCrindle, M. (2002). *Understanding Generation Y*. Retrieved September 18, 2008, from www.mccrindle.com.au
- McCrindle, M. (2006). *From Builders & Boomers to Xers and Y's: A Social Report on Generations X & Y*. Retrieved August 6, 2008, from http://www.mccrindle.com.au/wp_pdf/BuildersBoomers_X_Y.pdf

- Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Parkes, K. (1992). Mental health in the oil industry: A comparative study of onshore and offshore employees. *Psychological Medicine*, 22, 997 – 1009.
- Parkes, K. (1998). Psychosocial aspects of stress, health and safety on North Sea installations. *Scandinavian Journal of Work and Environmental Health*, 24, 321 – 333.
- Parkes, K. (2007). Shiftwork and Health. In S. Ayers, A. Baum, C. McManus, S. Newman, K. Wallston, J. Weinman & R. West (Eds.) *Cambridge Handbook of Psychology, Health and Medicine* (2nd ed.). UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Parkes, K., & Clark, M. (1997). *Psychosocial Aspects of Work and Health in the North Sea Oil and Gas Industry. Part V: Offshore Work/Leave Schedules. Data Analysis and Review*. Oxford.
- Rempel, J. K., Holmes, J. G., & Zanna, M. P. (1985). Trust in close relationships. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 49, 95–112.
- Remple, J., Ross, M., & Holmes, J. (2001). Trust and communicated attributions in close relationships. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 81, 57-64.
- Sheahan, P. (2008). *Understanding Generation Y*. Retrieved August 15, 2008, from www.petersheahan.com.au/cpa/exc/exc_file_get.asp?fileName=Understanding+Generation+Y.pdf
- Shrimpton, M., & Storey, K. (2001). *The Effects of Offshore Employment in the Petroleum Industry: A Cross-National Perspective*. Herndon, Virginia, U.S: Department of the Interior Minerals Management Service Environmental Studies Program.
- Stets, J., & Burke, P. (2003). A Sociological approach to self and identity. In M. Leary & J. Tangney, (Eds.) *Handbook of self and identity*. New York: Guilford Press.

- Storey, K., & Shrimpton, M. (1989). *Long distance labour commuting in the Canadian mining industry*. (Working Paper No. 43) Kingston, Ontario: Queen's University, Centre for Resource Studies.
- Sutherland, V. J., & Cooper, C. L. (1991). *Stress and Accidents in the Offshore Oil and Gas Industry*. Houston: Gulf Publishing Company.
- Sutherland, V. J., & Flin, R. H. (1989). Stress at Sea: A review of working conditions in the offshore oil and fishing industries. *Work & Stress* 3, 269-285.
- Tyler, T., Kramer, R., John, O. (1999). *The Psychology of the Social Self*. London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Ulleberg, P., & Rundmo, T. (1997). Job stress, social support, job satisfaction and absenteeism among offshore oil personnel. *Work & Stress*, 11, 215 - 228.
- Venables, M., Beach, R., & Brereton, D. (2002). Key findings from the AusIMM 2001 survey of mining professionals. Brisbane: Centre for Social Responsibility in Mining, University of Queensland.
- Wallerstein, J., & Lewis, J. (2004). The unexpected legacy of divorce: Report of a 25 year study. *Psychoanalytic Psychology*, 21, 353 – 370.

Appendix A

Interview schedule

1. Can you tell me about your experience of being employed on a FIFO basis?

Prompts –

- What are some of the positive aspects?
 - What are some of the negative aspects?
 - How has this lifestyle impacted your social relationships?
 - What is your experience of adjusting to the lifestyle?
2. What was it that attracted you to work in this industry?
- Are those things still relevant for you now?
 - What do you do with your time away from work?

3. How do you imagine your future to look like?

Prompts –

- Does this future involve continuing in the mining industry?
 - If so, why or why not?
4. Do you feel there is a difference between younger and older of FIFO workers?

Prompts –

- If so, in what way?

Appendix B

Advertisement for local paper

Are you male aged between 18 and 28 working FIFO in the oil and gas industry? Then I am keen to talk to you about the impact this work has on your life as part of a research project. If this is you and you want to share your experiences please contact me, Talya on 0403-472-980 or talyac@student.ecu.edu.au

Appendix C

Information Sheet

Dear Participant,

Thank you for your interest in this study. My name is Talya Carter and I am currently undertaking my Psychology (Honours) degree at Edith Cowan University, Western Australia. As part of my course requirement I must complete a research project in an area of interest that would add to the current body of knowledge in that field. The present study has been approved by the Ethics Committee of the faculty of Computing Health and Science.

The aim of this proposed study is to explore the experiences of Generation Y workers aged between 18 and 28 employed on a FIFO basis within the offshore oil and gas industry. It is hoped that this study will highlight the issues that face younger workers who choose to work in this industry and provide a foundation for continued research that specifically focuses on the needs of younger people.

Your involvement in this research will be to participate in one face-to-face interview, which will be tape recorded and will take approximately 1 hour. During the interview I will ask you questions regarding your experiences of FIFO employment. I am interested in everything you have to say about your experiences in relation to working FIFO.

Your participation in this study is voluntary and you may withdraw at anytime and remove any data that you may have contributed. Any information provided during the interview will be treated as strictly confidential and the final report will not disclose your identity and at no time will your name be reported. If you are interested in the outcome of this research project, I would be pleased to share it with you upon its completion which is scheduled for December 2008. My contact details are listed below.

If you have any questions about the project or require more information please do not hesitate to contact me on the details provided below, or my supervisor Dr. Elizabeth Kaczmarek on 6304-5193. If you would prefer to speak to a third party not involved in the study please contact Kim Gifkins, Research Ethics Officer on 6304-2170.

Thank you for your interest in this study; if you would like to participate I can be contacted on the following:

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

talyac@student.ecu.edu.au

Yours Sincerely,

Talya Carter

Appendix D

Participant consent form

I _____ have read the information sheet provided and agree to participate in the research conducted by Talya Carter of Edith Cowan University. I understand the purpose and nature of the study and I am participating voluntarily with the knowledge I can refuse to answer questions and withdraw without penalty at any time. Any questions I have asked regarding this research has been answered to my approval.

I grant the permission of the information I provide to be used in the process of completing a Psychology (Honours) degree and acknowledge that this research may be published at some stage. I understand that identifiable information about me will not be included.

I agree to have the interview tape recorded and understand that once the information has been transcribed, the recording will be destroyed.

Participant's signature: _____ Date: _____

Contact Number: _____

Researcher's signature _____ Date: _____

Guidelines for Contributions by Authors: For Research Report Only

Community, Work and Family

Instructions for Authors

*****Note to Authors:** please make sure your contact address information is clearly visible on the **outside** of all packages you are sending to Editors.***

Community, Work & Family welcomes original contributions from all parts of the world on the understanding that their contents have not previously been published nor submitted elsewhere for publication. All submissions will be sent anonymously to independent referees. Authors are themselves responsible for obtaining permission to reproduce copyright material from other sources. *There are no page charges.*

Authors should send the final, revised version of their articles in both hard copy paper and electronic disk forms. It is essential that the hard copy (paper) version *exactly* matches the material on disk. Please print out the hard copy from the disk you are sending. Submit three printed copies of the final version with the disk to the journal's editorial office. Save all files on a standard 3.5 inch high-density disk. We prefer to receive disks in Microsoft Word in a PC format, but can translate from most other common word-processing programs as well as Macs. Please specify which program you have used. Do not save your files as "text only" or "read only".

Manuscripts may be in the form of: (i) regular articles (between 5,000 and 10,000 words); or, (ii) short reports for rapid publication (not exceeding 2,000 words); or, (iii) personal accounts for the 'Voices' section (not exceeding 2,000 words). Four complete copies and an electronic version on a floppy disk should be submitted to: The Editors, *Community, Work & Family*, Department of Psychology and Speech Pathology, Manchester Metropolitan University, Elizabeth Gaskell Campus, Hathersage Road, Manchester M13 0JA, UK. Email: cwf@mmu.ac.uk.

All submissions should be in the style of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (5th edition). Papers should be typed on one side of the paper, double spaced throughout (including the references), with margins of at least 2.5 cm (1 inch). All pages must be numbered. The first page should include the title of the paper, first name, middle initial(s) and last name of the author(s), and for each author a short institutional address, and an abbreviated title (for running headlines within the article). At the bottom of the page give the full name and address (including telephone and fax numbers and e-mail address if possible) of the author to whom all correspondence (including proofs) should be sent. The second page should repeat the title and contain an abstract in English of not more than 200 words. Authors are invited to submit additional abstracts in French and Spanish. The third page should repeat the title as a heading to the main body of the text. The text should normally be divided into sections with appropriate headings and subheadings. Within the text section headings and subheadings should be typed on a separate line without numbering, indentation or bold or italic typeface.

Units of Measurement

All measurements must be cited in SI units.

Illustrations

All illustrations (including photographs, graphs and diagrams) should be referred to as Figures and

their position indicated in the text (e.g. Fig. 3). Each should be submitted on a separate sheet of paper, numbered on the back with Figure number (Arabic numerals) and the title of the paper. The captions of all figures should be submitted on a separate sheet, should include keys to symbols, and should make interpretation possible without reference to the text. Figures should ideally be professionally drawn and should be capable of reduction.

Tables should be submitted on separate sheets, numbered in Arabic numerals, and their position indicated in the text (e.g. Table 1). Each table should have a short, self-explanatory title. Vertical rules should not be used to separate columns. Units should appear in parentheses in the column heading but not in the body of the table. Any explanatory notes should be given as a footnote at the bottom of the table.

Style guidelines

Description of the Journal's [article style](#)

Description of the Journal's [reference style](#), [Quick guide](#)

Any consistent spelling style is acceptable. Use single quotation marks with double within if needed.

This journal requires a short paragraph of bibliographical details for all contributors.

If you have any questions about references or formatting your article, please contact authorqueries@tandf.co.uk (please mention the journal title in your email).

Free article access:

Corresponding authors will receive free online access to their article through our website (www.informaworld.com) and a complimentary copy of the issue containing their article. Reprints of articles published in this journal can be purchased through Rightslink® when proofs are received. If you have any queries, please contact our reprints department at reprints@tandf.co.uk

Back Issues

Taylor & Francis retains a three year back issue stock of journals. Older volumes are held by our official stockists: Periodicals Service Company www.periodicals.com/tandf.html, 11 Main street, Germantown, NY 12526, USA to whom all orders and enquiries should be addressed. Telephone: +1 518 537 4700; Fax: +1 518 537 5899; Email: psc@periodicals.com

Copyright. It is a condition of publication that authors assign copyright or license the publication rights in their articles, including abstracts, to Taylor & Francis. This enables us to ensure full copyright protection and to disseminate the article, and of course the Journal, to the widest possible readership in print and electronic formats as appropriate. Authors may, of course, use the article elsewhere after publication without prior permission from Taylor & Francis, provided that acknowledgement is given to the Journal as original source of publication, and that Taylor & Francis is notified so that our records show that its use is properly authorised. Authors retain a number of other rights under the Taylor & Francis rights policies documents. These policies are referred to at <http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/authorrights.pdf> for full details. Authors are themselves responsible for obtaining permission to reproduce copyright material from other sources.