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MOTIVATION IN THE WORKPLACE – A GENERATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract:
Understanding generational differences is key to effectively motivating employees across different age groups. By recognizing each generation's unique characteristics, organizations can create more satisfying and productive workplaces. Amid turbulent shifts in the business landscape, and despite extensive prior research on motivation, there remains a need to persist in investigating this area. The main goal of the paper is to investigate generational differences in work motivation among Polish employees, particularly in the post-COVID-19 era. The study focused on analyzing work motivation among employees spanning Generations X, Y, and Z. Data collection for the survey questionnaire took place during the second quarter of 2023, focused on individuals working in the Silesian Voivodeship, Poland. The empirical research results indicate that members of different generations differ in their perceptions of material motivational factors, non-material motivational factors (organizational and psychological), and in their perceptions of motivational barriers. The research findings can serve as a background for considerations regarding the motivation systems applied in organizations in post-pandemic conditions. Organizations can use the research findings to enhance various aspects of organizational effectiveness. Understanding generational disparities can also help create engaging work environments, improve leadership practices, and boost overall productivity and job satisfaction. The empirical studies discussed in this paper represent the first phase of research into work motivation that concerns generational distinctions. They reveal significant differences among generations in evaluating motivational and demotivational factors, laying the groundwork for future investigations.

Key words: motivation, work, employees, generation

INTRODUCTION

Motivation is one of the key areas of business management. It is defined as the "process used to allocate energy to maximize the satisfaction of needs" [1]. Chodkowski [2] links motivation with energy and its role in driving actions efficiently. A motive acts as an internal mechanism that triggers arousal in an individual, directing behaviors towards making choices. Motivation arises when a person perceives a deficiency in something significant and identifies the potential to fulfill that need [3, 4].

Motivated employees are driven to contribute their skills and achieve work goals. This is crucial for organizational success, as employee performance directly impacts an organization's bottom line [5]. Studies have shown the numerous benefits of a motivated workforce, including: workforce stability, better team coordination, increases in employee efficiency, employee satisfaction, and improvements in human capital management [6, 7, 8, 9, 10].

Motivation is divided into external and internal, as well as positive and negative [11]. Internal motivation originates from within the individual, meaning that the person takes action by choice, interest, or pleasure, effortlessly, and often with high engagement. External motivation involves individuals taking actions to achieve rewards/benefits. It is also a way for supervisors to consciously influence employees through punishments, rewards, salaries, and various non-financial methods [2, 12].

Various tools, also known as motivators, instruments, or factors, are used to stimulate human motivation [13]. These tools are categorized based on their impact on the employee, and can be divided as follows: tools of coercion (e.g., prohibitions, regulations, orders), incentives encouragement (economic and non-economic), and persuasion (training and courses, consultations, suggestions, and advice) [14].

Another division considers material (economic) and non-material (non-economic) factors. Among the material factors, one can distinguish monetary incentives primarily encompassing salaries and non-monetary incentives, the purpose of which is to shape and stimulate human motivation by offering employees various additional benefits, such as social benefits, funding for training, or insurance. Non-material factors, on the other hand, are the various

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additional benefits that influence employee motivation in a non-economic form [15].

In studies on motivation, four generations of workers are distinguished: Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials (Generation Y), and Generation Z. However, Baby Boomers are nearing retirement age. Researchers define each generation differently. For example, Smola [16] define Generation Y as those born from 1982 to 1999. According to Boyle [17], Millennials are those born from 1980 to 1995. Revutska [18] consider Millennials to be those born from 1982 to 1996. Similar differences apply to other generations [19, 20].

A characteristic feature of people who represent different generations is their diverse way of perceiving the world around them. This is mainly the result of a diverse system of values, attitudes, and preferences, as well as expectations and needs, towards work and personal life. Belonging to a given generation also has an impact on the approach to work, the ability to use technology, the way of communicating, and the way of shaping career goals [21].

For Generation X, work plays a significant role in life. They value individualism and independence, while their loyalty and respect stem primarily from their competence rather than their positions. They require job stability and a calm work environment. They believe that professional success is linked to education, competence, and commitment [22, 23].

Millennials, often called the “Digital Generation,” grew up surrounded by rapid advancements in technology. This has fostered a strong reliance on technology for them. They readily access information and enhance their knowledge anytime, anywhere, making them feel somewhat incomplete without these digital tools [24, 25, 26].

Generation Z seamlessly navigates both the virtual and real worlds. They can't imagine life without the internet and the technology that surrounds them. These individuals are multitasking masters, highly creative, and driven by challenges. They expect immediate feedback and high rewards. They are also less likely to stay in companies that don't offer opportunities for growth and challenging work [27, 28, 29].

In light of this, researchers in the field of work motivation emphasize the importance of considering generational affiliation in better understanding the workforce's work motivation [30, 31]. Easton [32] point out that generations differ in, for example, cultural values. However, there are also studies that indicate that generational affiliation does not have to be a determinant of motivation [33]. More research is needed in this area.

Amid turbulent changes in the business environment, and despite numerous previous studies on motivation, it seems necessary to continue conducting research in this area. Researchers studying work motivation highlight the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic [34, 35]. The studies revealed a shift in motivational profiles towards valuing individual well-being. Maintaining health, achieving work-life balance, and pursuing personal and professional growth became more prominent motivators.

The main objective of the research is to investigate the generational differences in work motivation among Polish employees, particularly in the post-COVID-19 era. The theoretical framework for the empirical research was developed at the turn of 2022/2023, with a literature review updated in 2024 to ensure the most current information (based SCOPUS database). Empirical research was conducted using an online survey questionnaire created with Google Forms. Purposive sampling was used, aiming for 120 participants: 40 from each generation. The survey was distributed online in the second quarter of 2023, following a pilot study. The research focused on individuals working in the Silesian Voivodeship, Poland.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The theoretical framework is established based on publications retrieved from the SCOPUS database. An examination of scientific literature was conducted in the first quarter of 2024, focusing on the keywords "motivation" and "generation." The search was confined to English-language articles in journals, resulting in a total of 6,321 articles. Subsequently, due to the process of digitalization, the research findings were limited to the years 2000-2023, yielding 5,837 results. The data, depicted in Figure 1, reveal a growing interest in this research domain in recent years, with an observed increase in the number of publications. It can be inferred that the question of motivation within the context of generation is likely to continue attracting significant attention from researchers in the future, as evidenced by the trend line ($R^2 = 0.984$).

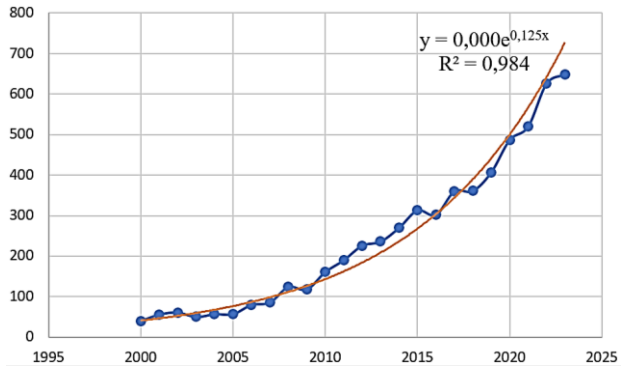


Fig. 1 Number of publications on motivation in the context of generation in Scopus, by publication date

Table 1

Number of publications on motivation in the context of generation, by research area (SCOPUS)

Subject area	Documents
Computer science	1573
Social sciences	1549
Mathematics	981
Engineering	942
Biochemistry, genetics, and molecular biology	929
Medicine	775
Business, management and accounting	710
Psychology	528
Environmental science	512
Energy	451
Arts and humanities	370

Table 1 presents the number of publications found in the SCOPUS database by research area (2000-2023), sorted in descending order based on the number of publications.
The main research areas included: computer science, social sciences, mathematics, engineering, biochemistry, medicine, business, management and accounting, psychology, and environmental science (Tab. 1).
To present currently discussed topics in the field of management regarding motivation in the context of generation, the database was limited to the following scientific areas: business, management, and accounting. A total of 210 publications were retrieved from the years 2010 to 2024. On the dataset obtained, an analysis of co-occurrences for all keywords was conducted using the VOSviewer software tool. The assumption was made that the minimum number of occurrences of a keyword should be 4.
Figure 2 presents the connections between the topics of motivation, generation, and other keywords.

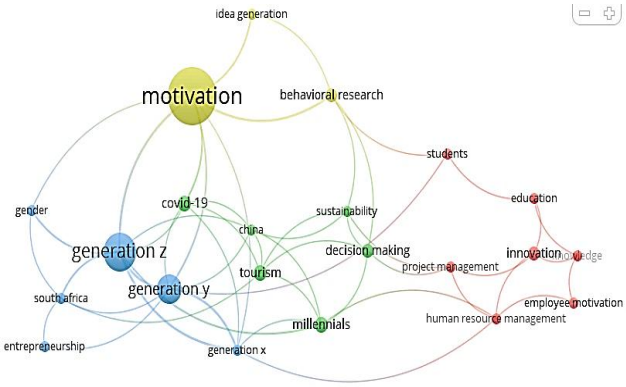


Fig. 2 Main research areas (thematic clusters) for motivation in the context of generation (VOSviewer)

Four main research areas (thematic clusters) have been identified and color-coded as follows: innovation and knowledge (red), contemporary problems (green), generation (blue), and motivation (yellow). One of the research areas, generation (blue cluster), is divided by generational affiliation (X, Y, Z). These studies also take into account gender issues and entrepreneurship. The number of occurrences of each keyword and the strength of its connections (total link strength) are included in Table 2.
Based on the analysis conducted, we can infer that the issue of motivation in the context of generation is a current research problem. It can also be concluded that this area will continue to attract significant interest from researchers in coming years. Furthermore, one of the main scientific areas is management sciences. It has been demonstrated that this issue is currently being analyzed (within the field of management sciences) across four main research areas, including one area focusing on motivation divided by generational affiliation (X, Y, Z). These studies also consider gender and entrepreneurship issues.

Table 2
Number of occurrences of each keyword and total link strength (VOSviewer)

Cluster	Keyword	Occurrence	Total link strength
Innovation and knowledge (red)	Human resource management	4	5
	Innovation	5	4
	Project management	4	4
	Education	4	3
	Students	4	3
	Knowledge	4	3
	Employee motivation	4	2
Contemporary problems (green)	COVID-19	6	7
	Millennials	6	7
	Tourism	6	6
	China	4	6
	Sustainability	4	5
	Decision making	5	5
Generation (blue)	Generation Z	18	17
	Generation Y	13	13
	Generation X	4	10
	South Africa	4	6
	Gender	4	4
	Entrepreneurship	4	2
Motivation (yellow)	Motivation	30	14
	Behavioural research	5	7
	Idea generation	4	3

Subsequently, content analysis of the publications indicated the need to narrow the results to the issue of work-related motivation by adding the keyword "work". Researchers examining motivation for work highlight the changes in this area due to the COVID-19 pandemic [34, 35]. Therefore, the results were further narrowed by restricting them to the years 2021-2024. This was motivated by the need to focus on the most recent studies reflecting the impact of COVID-19 on the economy and addressing current socio-economic issues. Only 21 documents were obtained (Table 3), including four not related to the analyzed area [36, 37, 38, 39].

Table 3

Motivation in the context of generation – selected research findings

Authors	Methodology	Research findings
R.C. Lechler, M. Huemann (2024) [30]	Qualitative, four case studies.	A study explores what motivates young project managers, focusing on autonomy, competence, connection, and purpose. These motivators vary in importance by project and organization. This can help companies attract and retain young talent by aligning work environments and careers with their needs.
M. Schröder (2023) [33]	Data from 584,217 individuals sampled by the Integrated Values Survey in 113 countries over more than 30 years.	The study suggests that while work motivation initially increases with age, it gradually declines over time for all individuals, regardless of generation. This indicates that factors like historical context and individual life stages have a greater impact on work motivation and attitudes than generational membership alone.
M. Bhore, P. Tapas (2023) [40]	Questionnaire distributed online. 216 responses from Generation Z women studying at technology institutes in India and working in data science.	The study identifies key factors for organizations to attract and support Gen Z women in Data Science, highlighting the importance of technical education, job opportunities, compensation, and conducive work environments in shaping their career decisions.
A. Lašáková, M. Vojteková, L. Procházková (2023) [41]	Qualitative, empathy-based stories (MEBS). Sample of 437 business students with work experience.	This study highlights gender differences in Gen Z workplace motivation. Gen Z women prioritize social connections, dream jobs, variety, and recognition, while Gen Z men prioritize making a difference, benefits, and work-life balance.
K.A. Boyle (2022) [17]	Interviews were conducted with 36 Millennial graduates from the United Kingdom.	The author examines how Millennials navigate their careers and build their professional identities after graduating from university. The study suggests that Millennials develop greater adaptability, self-motivation, and intrinsic motivation compared to past generations during this transition.
M. Dzhulai, I. Fedulova, I. Bolotina (2022) [19]	Survey among students (1341 respondents) both with and without experience.	A study examined key employer brand aspects for Gen Z, then rated companies' appeal as workplaces for them. This helps companies tailor their employer brand to attract Gen Z talent.
C. Easton, R. Steyn (2022) [32]	Research was conducted in organizations in South Africa, sampling employees across three generations. The sample consisted of 1140 respondents across 19 South African organizations.	The study found generational differences in work values. Millennials, compared to older generations, value less hierarchical structures (lower power distance) and traditional masculinity. They also prioritize long-term goals over short-term gains (higher long-term orientation).
N. Chala, O. Poplavska, N. Danylevych, O. Ievseitseva, R. Sova (2022) [34]	A survey was conducted (2020-2021) among young people in Kyiv (Ukraine) aged 17-22 (287 people participated) who had previous work experience.	A study on Millennials' and Gen Z's motivation post-pandemic found their priorities shifted towards valuing individual well-being. The pandemic's restrictions led them to prioritize health, work-life balance, and personal/professional growth.
T. Turja, T. Särkikoski, P. Koistinen, H. Melin (2022) [42]	Quality of Work Life survey data collected in Finland (N = 4089).	The study emphasizes the need for organizations to support employee motivation and well-being, particularly during changes like workplace automation. It explores how robotization affects employees' needs and job satisfaction, highlighting their role in maintaining motivation and productivity.
B.C. Egbide, M. Agi-Ilochi, J. Madugba, A. Taiwo, I. Ayomide (2022) [43]	Well-structured questionnaires. Employees of the Nigerian hospitality industry (N = 85).	The study suggests that participatory budgeting increases employee motivation to meet company goals while working within set budgets. However, imposed budgeting resulted in slightly better budget control and success rates. The authors recommend

		a balance – using participatory budgeting for motivation, but with proper oversight to ensure strong budget performance.
E. Nkomo (2022) [44]	Quantitative study, sample of tertiary students belonging to Generation Y (N = 519), South Africa.	The study finds Gen Y prioritizes work-life balance and enjoys a sense of independence at work. However, managers report frustration with their high expectations and perceived sense of entitlement. This suggests a need for HR and managers to address work-life balance while managing expectations for Gen Y.
O. Revutska, K. Maršíková (2021) [18]	Quantitative research; standardized questionnaire in electronic form (CAWI method). 3,566 respondents participated.	The paper aims to provide an overview of human resource management's characteristic features in agile companies and identify the attributes preferred by Generation Y representatives in everyday work life.
A.B. Mahmoud, L. Fuxman, I. Mohr, W.D. Reisel, N. Grigoriou (2021) [31]	Self-administered online surveys in Canada.	Results confirm the existence of generational differences in how employees from Generation X, Generation Y, and Generation Z value sources of motivation in the workplace. Offering motivators relevant to each generation is crucial.
E. Goh, T. Baum (2021) [35]	Research explored Generation Z employees (n = 42) through the use of personal interviews.	The COVID-19 pandemic has seen a growing emergence of “quarantine hotels.” Results show that a sense of purpose (making the world safer) and going above and beyond were key motivators for staff. Despite the excitement and danger, family support played a crucial role in their willingness to work in these hotels.
F. Doerwald, H. Zacher, N.W. Van Yperen, S. Scheibe (2021) [45]	Conceptual model based on generativity, lifespan, resource, and motivation theories; a meta-analysis (k = 48, N = 15,356) was conducted.	This study explores "Generativity at work" in Millennials and Gen Z. It describes the desire to guide younger generations as "generativity motive." Findings link this motive to age, gender, and challenging jobs. Additionally, a strong generative motive is associated with higher work motivation, job satisfaction, and career satisfaction.
T. González-González, D.J. García-Almeida (2021) [46]	Data from a survey of 153 front office employees from hotels in Tenerife (Spain).	This research focused on what drives frontline hospitality employees to suggest innovative ideas. They looked at three internal factors: creativity, knowledge (experience and education), and motivation (both internal and external rewards).
C. Peñalba-Aguirrezabalaga, J. Sáenz, P. Ritala, M. Vanhala (2021) [47]	A survey was conducted among Spanish firms with at least 100 employees, resulting in a representative sample of 346 companies.	Authors focused on the combined role of marketing and sales employees' knowledge and motivation to produce superior customer experiences. Results show that employees' motivation (and especially intrinsic motivation) affects customer experiences.

The authors of the publications address current socio-economic issues such as: robotized workplaces [42]; agile companies [18]; women in STEM [40]; employee-driven innovation [46]; and the pandemic [8, 34, 35].
The presented research was conducted using quantitative methods [42] or qualitative methods [30]

Motivation to work – various aspects

There is no single way to categorize motivation, and researchers focus on various factors that influence people's motivation to work. They analyze motivation by examining individuals' needs. Turja et al. [42] divide people's needs in the workplace into basic material needs and psychological needs (e.g., feelings of competence, autonomy, and relatedness). On the other hand, Lechler and Huemann [30] divide motivating factors into need for autonomy; need for relationships (e.g., belonging to the project, being appreciated by others); need for purpose (e.g., creating value for society, creating value for the business); and need for competence (e.g., developing a project career, individual development).
Nkomo's [44] study explored the desires of Generation Y, focusing on their need for material possessions, autonomy, leisure, and enjoyment. The findings suggest that Generation Y displays a heightened sense of entitlement and prioritizes materialism. Results highlight the importance of work-life balance as well. Research indicates that Generation Y values independence and enjoyment in

the workplace, and that these factors influence their professional behaviors.

A significant area of research is the distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic motivations. Peñalba-Aguirrezabalaga et al. [47] highlight the importance of intrinsic motivation, which describes the desire to do something because it is inherently interesting and fulfilling. In contrast, extrinsic motivation refers to performing a task for external rewards or to avoid punishment [48]. Easton [32] focused on work values, also categorizing them into two main types: extrinsic and intronic work values. They analyzed tools such as remuneration and salary growth; career growth; flexible work practices; interesting and challenging work; and independence/autonomy in the job role and fewer rules. Intronic values are personal development and growth; recognition; work-family life balance; a sense of purpose aligned to the employer's values and ethics; and contribution by way of new ideas.

In contrast, González-González [46] measured motivation by considering three factors: intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation (direct rewards), and the perception of a motivating suggestion system (also considered extrinsic motivation, specifically when suggestions are implemented).

Motivation to work and generation

The authors focus on individual generations. Nkomo [44] conducted a study on a sample of students aged 18 to 32 years, defined by the author as Generation Y. Lechler [30] also focus on Generation Y, motivating it by stating, "most of our workforce consists of members of Generation Y, making it necessary to understand their motivations to work." Lašáková [41] focus on Generation Z. Mahmoud et al. [8] focus on the differences among Generations X, Y, and Z in terms of their motivation.

The authors of the studies emphasize the need to consider generational membership in order to better understand work motivation [17, 30, 34]. Boyle [17] demonstrated in their study that Millennials seemed to enhance their adaptability, self-motivation, and intrinsic drive following their transition to the workforce, exhibiting a distinct approach compared to earlier generations. Mahmoud et al. [8] showed that Generation Z is more sensitive to amotivation compared to Generations X and Y. They found that extrinsic material regulation serves as a significant source of overall work motivation only for Generation Z. Generation X values extrinsic social regulation. Additionally, intrinsic motivation contributes more to Generation Z employees' overall work motivation than it does for Generations X and Y.

The researchers focus on various generations, gender, and specification of workplaces. Lašáková [41] point out gender variances in the motivational factors of the younger generation. They found that Generation Z women show notably higher consideration for the social dimensions of interpersonal connections in the workplace. They analyzed a wide range of factors, such as: having a dream job; low levels of routine; experiencing job success; the need to receive recognition for work done; making a meaningful difference at work; the extrinsic factor of benefits; leisure-related aspects of a happy personal life and no stress at work [41]. Bhore [40] highlighted that technical education, employment prospects, compensation, and supportive environments have a significant and positive impact on the career choices of female Generation Z professionals in the field of data science. Revutska [18] explored the distinctive traits of human resource management in agile organizations and identified the preferences of Generation Y members in their daily work routine. They examined aspects such as informal corporate culture, individual discussions, and team-based problem-solving/conflict resolution.

It is worth noting that Lašáková [41] analyzed in terms of gender and generation a very wide range of factors including not only motivating factors but also demotivating ones (motivational barriers), such as: bad relationships with colleagues; routine; lack of benefits; inflexible working hours; lack of ethics; poor relations; burnout.

Despite this, Schröder [32] emphasizes that belonging to a specific generation may not necessarily determine motivation. He argues that "work motivation is not determined by generation but rather by age and period." His findings suggest that the importance of work initially increases with age but then decreases over time, regardless of generational affiliation. These age and period effects imply that later generations may appear less motivated by work, and that birth year or generational membership alone cannot fully explain work motivation when considering age and period effects.

Amid volatile shifts in the business landscape, and despite numerous prior studies on motivation, there is a compelling need to persist in research efforts in this realm. The authors of the study point out the changes in the economic environment that affect motivation, such as the technology revolution or the pandemic [34]. Mahmoud et al. [8] suggested that organizations must effectively convey robust branding through modern communication channels (such as social media networks), which Generations Y and Z utilize more adeptly than any other working generation. Additionally, the authors propose that service-oriented organizations with a diverse generational makeup should implement new measures of workplace flexibility to withstand continuous disruptions (such as the coronavirus disease). Goh [35] demonstrated shifts in the motivational landscape of Millennials and Generation Z amidst pandemic-induced restrictions. This transformation highlighted the importance of individuality-awareness values such as health maintenance, life balance, and personal and professional growth. The findings suggest the delineation of two primary motivational strategies: career-focused and classic with elements of well-being.

The following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: Members of different generations differ in their perceptions of material motivational factors.

H2: Members of different generations differ in their perceptions of non-material motivational factors.

H3: Members of different generations differ in their perceptions of motivational barriers.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND SAMPLE STRUCTURE

The main goal of the research is to investigate generational differences in work motivation among employees. The scope of the conducted research encompassed an analysis of work motivation among employees from Generations X, Y, and Z. The subject scope included working-age individuals belonging to Generations X, Y, and Z. The study adopted the following age boundaries in classifying the respective generations [49]: Generation X (born during 1965-1979), Generation Y (born during 1980-1994), and Generation Z (born in 1995 or later). The research focused on employed individuals currently working in public institutions, enterprises, or other organizations, those engaged in their own business activities, as well as those who have jobs but are currently not working due to reasons such as illness, vacation, maternity leave, scheduling arrangements, participation in training, or other reasons, provided that the expected period of absence does not exceed three months (GUS [50]). The timeframe of the study covers the second quarter of the year 2023. Prior to the main research, a pilot study was conducted. The spatial scope of the empirical research covers the Silesian Voivodeship in Poland.

A quantitative method was employed in the study, utilizing a research tool in the form of a survey questionnaire. The questionnaire was prepared in an online format using the Google Forms tool. The study opted for purposive sampling. It was decided to survey 120 individuals, with 40 individuals from each generation. The questionnaire was distributed online.

Table 4

Sample structure

	GenX (N)	GenY (N)	GenZ (N)	GenX (%)	GenY (%)	GenZ (%)
Employment contract	40	34	24	100.00%	85.00%	60.00%
Civil law contract	0	5	15	0.00%	12.50%	37.50%
Other	0	1	1	0.00%	2.50%	2.50%
Sum	**40**	**40**	**40**	**100.00%**	**100.00%**	**100.00%**
Female	20	22	33	50.00%	55.00%	82.50%
Male	20	18	7	50.00%	45.00%	17.50%
Sum	**40**	**40**	**40**	**100.00%**	**100.00%**	**100.00%**

The sample consists of 120 individuals (Table 4), with 75 women (62.5%) and 45 men (37.5%). Generation X has the highest proportion of individuals with employment contracts, that rate decreasing with each subsequent generation. All individuals from Generation X (100%) have employment contracts, whereas the same applies to 85% of Generation Y and 60% of Generation Z.

The theoretical framework was derived from the Scopus database and analyzed using the VOSviewer software tool. Statistical data analysis was conducted using PS Imago Process.

RESULTS

Motivational factors have been divided into material and non-material ones, with the latter being further categorized as organizational (e.g., autonomy in decision-making, promotion, possibility of remote work/working from home) and psychological (e.g., good relationships with colleagues based on communication and trust, praise, and recognition), as discussed in the publications by Kaczyńska et al. [51] and Turja et al. [42].

The survey questionnaire asked respondents to assess the following material motivating factors: salary level (WYNA); financial bonus (PREM); performance-based pay (WYNI); training and professional development funding (SZKO); work phone, laptop (TELE); company car (SAMO); company meals (OBIA); company events (IMPR); legal and financial assistance (DORA); discounts on company products (ZNIŻ); team-building trips (WYCI); parking spaces (PARK); and benefits such as multisport cards, health insurance, subsidies for vacations, subsidies for education costs such as foreign languages, etc. (BENE) (Table 5).

The response options included:

1 – Does not affect my motivation;
2 – Has a low impact on my motivation;
3 – I'm not sure if it affects my motivation;
4 – Has an impact on my motivation;
5 – Has a very high impact on my motivation.

The one-way ANOVA in Table 6 showed statistically significant differences ($p < 0.05$) for most material factors among the individual generations. All generations emphasize the importance of financial bonuses (PREM), with the arithmetic mean exceeding 4 in each of the surveyed groups (Table 5).

Table 5

Material motivational factors by generation (Generations X, Y, and Z)

Total	WYNA	PREM	WYNI	SZKO	TELE	SAMO	OBIA	IMPR	DORA	ZNIŻ	WYCI	PARK	BENE
N	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120
Mean	4.15	4.45	3.67	3.45	3.13	3.05	2.76	2.93	3.21	2.81	2.73	3.00	3.63
M	5.00	5.00	4.00	4.00	3.50	3.00	3.00	3.00	4.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	4.00
D	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	1.00	4.00	4.00	5.00
SD	1.16	0.80	1.49	1.53	1.28	1.36	1.29	1.38	1.48	1.46	1.35	1.30	1.59
Min	1.00	2.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Max	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00
Q1	4.00	4.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	1.00	1.00	2.00	2.00
Q3	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	5.00
GenX	WYNA	PREM	WYNI	SZKO	TELE	SAMO	OBIA	IMPR	DORA	ZNIŻ	WYCI	PARK	BENE
N	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40
Mean	4.40	4.35	2.65	2.00	2.60	2.55	2.73	2.30	3.60	3.30	1.45	3.05	2.28
M	5.00	5.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	4.00	4.00	1.00	3.00	2.00
D	5.00	5.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	4.00	1.00	4.00	4.00	1.00	4.00	1.00
SD	1.08	0.92	1.61	1.30	1.37	1.48	1.30	1.44	1.45	1.42	0.71	1.32	1.52
Min	1.00	2.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Max	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	4.00	5.00	5.00
Q1	4.00	4.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	2.00	1.00	2.00	2.00	1.00	2.00	1.00
Q3	5.00	5.00	4.00	2.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	5.00	4.00	2.00	4.00	4.00
GenY	WYNA	PREM	WYNI	SZKO	TELE	SAMO	OBIA	IMPR	DORA	ZNIŻ	WYCI	PARK	BENE
N	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40
Mean	3.48	4.38	4.08	4.33	3.50	3.38	2.50	3.40	2.75	2.13	3.48	2.50	4.30
M	4.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	4.00	4.00	2.00	4.00	2.00	2.00	4.00	2.00	5.00
D	4.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	4.00	4.00	1.00	4.00	1.00	1.00	4.00	2.00	5.00
SD	1.34	0.87	1.23	1.07	1.13	1.27	1.43	1.34	1.63	1.36	1.11	1.26	1.11
Min	1.00	2.00	2.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Max	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00
Q1	2.00	4.00	3.25	4.00	3.00	2.00	1.00	2.00	1.00	1.00	2.00	2.00	4.00
Q3	4.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	3.00	4.00	3.00	5.00
GenZ	WYNA	PREM	WYNI	SZKO	TELE	SAMO	OBIA	IMPR	DORA	ZNIŻ	WYCI	PARK	BENE
N	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40
Mean	4.58	4.63	4.28	4.03	3.30	3.23	3.05	3.10	3.28	3.00	3.25	3.45	4.33
M	5.00	5.00	5.00	4.00	4.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	4.00	3.00	3.00	4.00	5.00
D	5.00	5.00	5.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	5.00
SD	0.68	0.54	1.04	1.00	1.16	1.19	1.08	1.13	1.24	1.36	1.15	1.15	1.16
Min	2.00	3.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Max	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00
Q1	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	2.25	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	3.00	4.00
Q3	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	5.00

Table 6

ANOVA test for material motivational factors (Generations X, Y, and Z)

		Sum of squares	Degrees of freedom	Mean squares	F value	Sig.
WYNA	Between groups	27.950	2	13.975	12.262	0.000
	Within groups	133.350	117	1.140		
	Total	161.300	119			
PREM	Between groups	1.850	2	0.925	1.465	0.235
	Within groups	73.850	117	0.631		
	Total	75.700	119			
WYNI	Between groups	62.817	2	31.408	18.205	0.000
	Within groups	201.850	117	1.725		
	Total	264.667	119			
SZKO	Between groups	127.950	2	63.975	49.984	0.000
	Within groups	149.750	117	1.280		
	Total	277.700	119			
TELE	Between groups	17.867	2	8.933	5.939	0.003
	Within groups	176.000	117	1.504		
	Total	193.867	119			

SAMO	**Between groups**	**15.450**	**2**	**7.725**	**4.425**	**0.014**
	Within groups	204.250	117	1.746		
	Total	219.700	119			
OBIA	Between groups	6.117	2	3.058	1.865	0.159
	Within groups	191.875	117	1.640		
	Total	197.992	119			
IMPR	Between groups	25.867	2	12.933	7.581	0.001
	Within groups	199.600	117	1.706		
	Total	225.467	119			
DORA	Between groups	14.717	2	7.358	3.513	0.033
	Within groups	245.075	117	2.095		
	Total	259.792	119			
ZNIŻ	Between groups	29.817	2	14.908	7.830	0.001
	Within groups	222.775	117	1.904		
	Total	252.592	119			
WYCI	Between groups	98.550	2	49.275	48.295	0.000
	Within groups	119.375	117	1.020		
	Total	217.925	119			
PARK	Between groups	18.200	2	9.100	5.856	0.004
	Within groups	181.800	117	1.554		
	Total	200.000	119			
BENE	Between groups	110.717	2	55.358	33.884	0.000
	Within groups	191.150	117	1.634		
	Total	301.867	119			

Generation X also pays particular attention to salary level (WYNA), while Generation Y focuses on performance-based pay (WYNI), training and professional development funding (SZKO), and benefits (BENE). Compared to Millennials, Generation Z places greater emphasis on the level of basic salary (WYNA). Therefore, hypothesis 1 was supported – members of different generations differ in their perceptions of material motivational factors.

The subsequent phase involved investigating non-material factors. The survey questionnaire asked respondents to assess non-material motivational factors, which were categorized as organizational and psychological. The organizational factors included: flexible working hours (ELAS); work-life balance (WLB); participation in developmental projects (PROJ); possibility of remote work (ZDAL); conveniently scheduled leave (URLO); and access to modern technologies (TECH). The psychological aspects included: self-fulfillment (SAMO); recognition (POCH); job stability (STAB); good relationships with colleagues (RELA); positive interpersonal relationships with supervisors (KONT); and trust within the company (ZAUF) (Table 7). The response options included:

1 – Does not affect my motivation;
2 – Has a low impact on my motivation;
3 – I'm not sure if it affects my motivation;
4 – Has an impact on my motivation;
5 – Has a very high impact on my motivation.

The one-way ANOVA in Table 8 showed statistically significant differences ($p < 0.05$) for all organizational and psychological factors among the individual generations. Generation X rates the importance of organizational factors the lowest (Table 7). Among the listed factors, they rate conveniently scheduled leave (URLO) the highest. Generation Y emphasizes the importance of work-life balance (WLB), participation in developmental projects (PROJ), and possibility of remote work (ZDAL). On the contrary, Generation Z focused on flexible working hours (ELAS), conveniently scheduled leave (URLO), and access to modern technologies (TECH).

Table 7

Non-material motivational factors (organizational and psychological) by generation (Generations X, Y, and Z)

Total	**ELAS**	**WLB**	**PROJ**	**ZDAL**	**URLO**	**TECH**	**SAMO**	**POCH**	**STAB**	**RELA**	**KONT**	**ZAUF**
N	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120
Mean	3.28	3.89	3.73	3.30	3.39	3.28	3.77	3.30	4.23	3.60	3.43	3.87
M	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	5.00	4.00	4.00	4.00
D	5.00	5.00	5.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	5.00	4.00	5.00	4.00	4.00	4.00
SD	1.68	1.19	1.47	1.52	1.48	1.46	1.28	1.29	1.06	1.33	1.41	1.24
Min	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Max	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00
Q1	1.25	3.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	3.00	2.00	4.00	2.00	2.00	4.00
Q3	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	4.00	5.00	4.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00
GenX	**ELAS**	**WLB**	**PROJ**	**ZDAL**	**URLO**	**TECH**	**SAMO**	**POCH**	**STAB**	**RELA**	**KONT**	**ZAUF**
N	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40
Mean	1.83	3.38	3.98	2.00	2.28	1.83	2.83	2.33	4.15	2.20	2.55	3.95
M	1.00	4.00	4.00	1.00	2.00	2.00	3.00	2.00	5.00	2.00	2.00	4.00
D	1.00	4.00	5.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	4.00	2.00	5.00	2.00	2.00	4.00

SD	1.24	1.19	1.35	1.41	1.38	1.01	1.30	0.94	1.19	1.04	1.34	1.13
Min	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	2.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Max	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	4.00	5.00	4.00	5.00	5.00
Q1	1.00	2.00	4.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	2.00	2.00	3.00	1.00	2.00	4.00
Q3	2.00	4.00	5.00	2.00	4.00	2.00	4.00	3.00	5.00	3.00	4.00	5.00
GenY	**ELAS**	**WLB**	**PROJ**	**ZDAL**	**URLO**	**TECH**	**SAMO**	**POCH**	**STAB**	**RELA**	**KONT**	**ZAUF**
N	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40
Mean	3.73	4.33	2.85	4.03	4.18	3.90	4.25	3.40	4.35	4.20	3.68	3.45
M	4.00	5.00	2.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	5.00	4.00	5.00	4.00	4.00	4.00
D	5.00	5.00	1.00a	4.00	4.00	4.00	5.00	4.00	5.00	4.00	4.00	4.00
SD	1.47	1.02	1.63	1.10	0.87	1.15	1.03	1.32	1.05	0.85	1.29	1.47
Min	1.00	2.00	1.00	1.00	2.00	1.00	2.00	1.00	1.00	2.00	1.00	1.00
Max	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00
Q1	2.00	4.00	1.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	2.00	4.00	4.00	2.25	2.00
Q3	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	4.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00
GenZ	**ELAS**	**WLB**	**PROJ**	**ZDAL**	**URLO**	**TECH**	**SAMO**	**POCH**	**STAB**	**RELA**	**KONT**	**ZAUF**
N	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40
Mean	4.30	3.98	4.35	3.88	3.73	4.10	4.23	4.18	4.18	4.40	4.08	4.20
M	5.00	4.00	5.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	5.00	4.00	4.00
D	5.00	5.00	5.00	4.00	5.00	4.00	5.00	4.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00
SD	1.22	1.17	0.92	1.11	1.41	0.96	0.92	0.84	0.93	0.74	1.14	0.97
Min	1.00	1.00	2.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	1.00	1.00
Max	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00
Q1	4.00	3.00	4.00	3.00	3.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00
Q3	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00

Table 8

ANOVA test for non-material (organizational and psychological) motivational factors (Generations X, Y, and Z)

		Sum of squares	Degrees of freedom	Mean squares	F value	Sig.
ELAS	Between groups	134.217	2	67.108	38.841	0.000
	Within groups	202.150	117	1.728		
	Total	336.367	119			
WLB	Between groups	18.467	2	9.233	7.244	0.001
	Within groups	149.125	117	1.275		
	Total	167.592	119			
PROJ	Between groups	48.750	2	24.375	13.766	0.000
	Within groups	207.175	117	1.771		
	Total	255.925	119			
ZDAL	Between groups	101.850	2	50.925	34.371	0.000
	Within groups	173.350	117	1.482		
	Total	275.200	119			
URLO	Between groups	78.867	2	39.433	25.388	0.000
	Within groups	181.725	117	1.553		
	Total	260.592	119			
TECH	Between groups	46.817	2	23.408	14.150	0.000
	Within groups	193.550	117	1.654		
	Total	240.367	119			
SAMO	Between groups	53.217	2	26.608	22.197	0.000
	Within groups	140.250	117	1.199		
	Total	193.467	119			
POCH	Between groups	69.050	2	34.525	31.037	0.000
	Within groups	130.150	117	1.112		
	Total	199.200	119			
STAB	Between groups	0.950	2	0.475	0.421	0.657
	Within groups	131.975	117	1.128		
	Total	132.925	119			
RELA	Between groups	118.400	2	59.200	74.961	0.000
	Within groups	92.400	117	0.790		
	Total	210.800	119			
KONT	Between groups	50.017	2	25.008	15.778	0.000
	Within groups	185.450	117	1.585		
	Total	235.467	119			

ZAUF	Between groups	11.667	2	5.833	4.010	0.021
	Within groups	170.200	117	1.455		
	Total	181.867	119			

Generation X also rates the importance of psychological factors the lowest (Table 7). Among the listed factors, they rate job stability (STAB) the highest. Generation Y emphasizes the importance of self-fulfillment (SAMO), job stability (STAB), and good relationships with colleagues (RELA). Generation Z rates all analyzed psychological factors highly.

The last aspect examined is motivational barriers (Table 9). The survey questionnaire asked respondents to assess the following demotivating factors at work: low salary (WYNA); no clear division of duties (OBOW); poor work atmosphere (ATMO); lack of communication within the team (KOMU); lack of sense of purpose in work (SENS); delegation of too many tasks at once by the supervisor (DELE); lack of mutual respect (SZAC); lack of opportunities for development and skills enhancement (KWAL); no possibility of promotion (AWAN); and lack of benefits (BENE).

Table 9

Motivational barriers by generation (Generations X, Y, and Z)

Total	**WYNA**	**OBOW**	**ATMO**	**KOMU**	**SENS**	**DELE**	**SZAC**	**KWAL**	**AWAN**	**BENE**
N	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120
Mean	4.04	3.73	3.83	3.49	3.97	3.93	3.86	3.38	3.73	3.34
M	5.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00
D	5.00	4.00	5.00	4.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00
SD	1.30	1.34	1.25	1.46	1.27	1.27	1.18	1.62	1.42	1.57
Min	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Max	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00
Q1	4.00	3.00	3.00	2.00	3.25	3.00	3.00	2.00	3.00	2.00
Q3	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00
GenX	**WYNA**	**OBOW**	**ATMO**	**KOMU**	**SENS**	**DELE**	**SZAC**	**KWAL**	**AWAN**	**BENE**
N	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40
Mean	4.33	3.78	3.05	2.10	2.90	4.23	3.45	1.48	2.75	1.85
M	5.00	4.00	3.00	1.50	3.00	4.50	4.00	1.00	2.00	1.00
D	5.00	4.00	2.00	1.00	2.00	5.00	4.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
SD	1.07	1.17	1.47	1.41	1.37	1.05	1.11	0.91	1.60	1.29
Min	2.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Max	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00
Q1	4.00	4.00	2.00	1.00	2.00	4.00	2.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Q3	5.00	4.75	4.75	3.00	4.00	5.00	4.00	2.00	4.00	2.75
GenY	**WYNA**	**OBOW**	**ATMO**	**KOMU**	**SENS**	**DELE**	**SZAC**	**KWAL**	**AWAN**	**BENE**
N	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40
Mean	3.18	3.20	3.93	4.00	4.60	3.13	3.58	4.45	4.50	4.45
M	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	5.00	3.00	4.00	5.00	5.00	5.00
D	4.00	5.00	4.00	4.00	5.00	4.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00
SD	1.53	1.65	1.02	0.91	0.63	1.47	1.30	0.68	0.72	0.93
Min	1.00	1.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	1.00	1.00	2.00	2.00	1.00
Max	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00
Q1	2.00	1.25	4.00	4.00	4.00	2.00	2.00	4.00	4.00	4.00
Q3	4.75	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	4.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00
GenZ	**WYNA**	**OBOW**	**ATMO**	**KOMU**	**SENS**	**DELE**	**SZAC**	**KWAL**	**AWAN**	**BENE**
N	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40
Mean	4.63	4.23	4.50	4.38	4.40	4.43	4.55	4.23	4.05	3.83
M	5.00	4.00	5.00	4.50	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	4.00	4.00
D	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	4.00
SD	0.67	0.92	0.72	0.77	0.93	0.81	0.78	1.05	1.13	1.06
Min	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	1.00	2.00	2.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Max	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00
Q1	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	3.25	3.25
Q3	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	4.75

The response options included:

1 – Does not affect my motivation;

2 – Has a rather negative impact on my motivation;

3 – I'm not sure if it affects my motivation;

4 – Has a negative impact on my motivation;

5 – Has a very negative impact on my motivation.

The one-way ANOVA in Table 10 was used to compare the differences between the three independent groups: Generations X, Y, and Z.

The test showed statistically significant differences ($p < 0.05$) for all barriers among the individual generations. The main barriers (Tab. 9) for Generation X are low salaries (WYNA) and delegation of too many tasks at once by the supervisor (DELE) – average above 4. Generation Y pays attention to barriers such as lack of sense of purpose in work (SENS), lack of opportunities for development and skills enhancement (KWAL), no possibility of promotion (AWAN), and lack of benefits (BENE) – average above 4. Generation Z pays attention to a very wide range of barriers – all barriers analyzed were rated very high (compared to other generations of employees). Therefore, hypothesis 3 was supported – members of different generations differ in their perceptions of motivational barriers.

Table 10

ANOVA test for motivational barriers (Generations X, Y, and Z)

		Sum of squares	Degrees of freedom	Mean squares	F value	Sig.
WYNA	Between groups	46.867	2	23.433	17.812	0.000
	Within groups	153.925	117	1.316		
	Total	200.792	119			
OBOW	Between groups	21.117	2	10.558	6.422	0.002
	Within groups	192.350	117	1.644		
	Total	213.467	119			
ATMO	Between groups	42.650	2	21.325	17.246	0.000
	Within groups	144.675	117	1.237		
	Total	187.325	119			
KOMU	Between groups	119.017	2	59.508	52.359	0.000
	Within groups	132.975	117	1.137		
	Total	251.992	119			
SENS	Between groups	69.067	2	34.533	32.902	0.000
	Within groups	122.800	117	1.050		
	Total	191.867	119			
DELE	Between groups	39.200	2	19.600	14.976	0.000
	Within groups	153.125	117	1.309		
	Total	192.325	119			
SZAC	Between groups	29.017	2	14.508	12.339	0.000
	Within groups	137.575	117	1.176		
	Total	166.592	119			
KWAL	Between groups	219.517	2	109.758	138.306	0.000
	Within groups	92.850	117	0.794		
	Total	312.367	119			
AWAN	Between groups	74.467	2	37.233	26.086	0.000
	Within groups	167.000	117	1.427		
	Total	241.467	119			
BENE	Between groups	159.817	2	79.908	70.203	0.000
	Within groups	133.175	117	1.138		
	Total	292.992	119			

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Considering generational membership is essential for understanding work motivation and developing effective strategies to engage and motivate employees across different generations. By recognizing the unique characteristics and values of each generation, organizations can create workplaces that are more conducive to employee satisfaction, productivity, and overall success.

The primary findings from the theoretical analysis are the following:

- The issue of motivation in the context of generation is a current research problem, and this area will continue to be of interest to researchers in the coming years.
- Within management/business studies, the issue of motivation in the context of generation is analyzed within four main research areas, including one area focusing on motivation based on membership in specific generations – Generations X, Y, and Z.

The empirical research results indicate that members of different generations differ in their perceptions of material motivational factors (H1). There are statistically significant differences for most material factors among the individual generations. All generations emphasize the importance of financial bonuses. Compared to Millennials, Generations Z and X place greater emphasis on the level of basic salary. This contrasts with the findings of Nkomo [44], which suggest that Generation Y displays a heightened sense of entitlement and prioritizes materialism. These discrepancies could be attributed to differences

arising from the socio-economic environment – Nkomo conducted research on students in South Africa.

The empirical research results indicate that members of different generations differ in their perceptions of non-material (organizational and psychological) motivational factors (H2). This aligns with the findings of Easton [32]. Generation X rates the importance of organizational and psychological factors the lowest, which appears interesting in the context of Schröder's research [33]. What is more, access to modern technologies is a more crucial aspect for younger generations than for Generation X. This is consistent with the findings of Mahmoud et al. [8].

Our research results have shown that members of different generations differ in their perceptions of motivational barriers (H3) – such results were obtained for all barriers analyzed. Similar results were obtained in previous studies by Lašáková [41]. Generation Z focuses on a very wide range of barriers – all barriers analyzed were rated very high. It can be inferred that Generation Z is more sensitive to motivational barriers compared to Generations X and Y. This is consistent with earlier findings by Mahmoud et al. [8]. They also indicated that Generation Z is more sensitive to amotivation compared to Generations X and Y.

In conclusion, the primary findings from the empirical research are as follows:

- All generations emphasize the importance of financial bonuses.
- Members of different generations differ in their perceptions of material motivational factors (H1) such as salary level, training, work phone, laptop or car, parking spaces, or benefits (such as multisport cards, health insurance, subsidies for vacations).
- Compared to Millennials, Generations Z and X place greater emphasis on the level of basic salary.
- Members of different generations differ in their perceptions of non-material (organizational and psychological) motivational factors (H2).
- Generation X rates the importance of organizational and psychological factors the lowest.
- Access to modern technologies is a more crucial aspect for younger generations than for Generation X.
- Members of different generations differ in their perceptions of motivational barriers (H3) such as low salary, poor work atmosphere, or lack of communication within the team.
- Generation Z is more sensitive to motivational barriers compared to Generations Y and X.
- The impact of motivational and demotivational factors on the perception of motivation is rated lower by Generation X than by the other generations.

The research findings can serve as a background for considerations regarding the motivation systems applied in organizations in post-pandemic conditions. However, it is essential to remember that the implementation or alteration of a motivation system in a specific organization should take into account its specificity. Lechler [30], who conducted research based on a case study, indicated that motivators have varying levels of importance in different project and organizational contexts. The motivation system should consider factors such as the gender and age of the employed staff.

Regardless, the research findings can serve as a valuable resource for organizations to enhance their effectiveness across various areas. In human resource management, for instance, organizations can tailor their recruitment, retention, and performance management strategies to meet the motivational needs of different generations. Additionally, understanding generational differences and motivational factors can help organizations create work environments that foster engagement, productivity, and job satisfaction among employees. Furthermore, leaders can use these insights to refine their communication, coaching, and mentoring techniques to suit different generations and their motivational preferences, thereby improving leadership practices.

The main limitations concern the sample size and the specification of the workplace. The empirical studies presented in this paper are one stage of research into work motivation in the context of generational differences. They have shown statistically significant differences between various generations in the assessment of motivational and demotivational factors. This provides a basis for further research in this area using a larger sample size.

It is also worth focusing future research on a selected group of employees, such as the youngest participants in the labor market. As Generation Z enters the workforce, it is crucial to understand their unique characteristics, values, and preferences. This understanding can help organizations adapt and create a more welcoming environment. Traditional approaches may not be as effective for this generation.

The study presented in this paper does not provide information about the specific industries or occupations represented in the sample. Subsequent studies should also focus on employees in selected industries because the specific nature of the workplace determines employees' motivation.

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