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What motivates Gen Z at work? An empirical analysis

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ABSTRACT

Purpose – The purpose of this research is to advance the current research on work motivation in generation Z workforce. Empirical research on this topic is nascent. We attempt to address this research gap.

Aim – The objective of this paper is to identify the underlying job characteristic factors that explain motivation in generation Z.

Design/methodology/approach – In line with the research objective, we employed empirical research methods. We surveyed 317 employees belonging to this generational cohort using an online survey. Principal component analysis (PCA) was used to identify the underlying motivation factors.

Findings – Four factors- 'Job enabled growth opportunities', 'Organization support', 'Accountability', and 'Interaction and feedback' were extracted using PCA. These factors accounted for 61.98% of total variance, thus providing a framework of motivating job characteristics specific to generation Z.

Limitations of the study – Self report measures were used to obtain responses. Also, the sample size puts constraints on our analysis at this stage to determine any differences on perceptions of work motivation based on demographical data such as age, professional experience, and employment status. Our future research would include a larger sample size could possibly allow us to explore these research avenues.

Practical implications – The results of this study are potentially useful to design employee engagement practices. Specifically, the findings of this study have implications for human resource practices such as learning & development, performance management, job analysis, and compensation management.

Originality/value – We believe it is one of first works exploring generation Z worker motivation using empirical methods, and a generalized global sample. This study is but a small step in the right direction.

KEY WORDS

job characteristics, employee motivation, generation Z, empirical study

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1 INTRODUCTION

Motivation is an important topic in organizational studies. It is central to our understanding of individual and organizational behavior (Mitchell & Daniels, 2003). It is defined as a set of energetic forces that originate both within as well as beyond the individual's being that influence, the initiation, direction, intensity, and duration of actions (Pinder, 2014 as cited in Kanfer & Chen, 2016). Research has long recognized different sources to derive motivation (c.f. Herzberg, 1966; Porter & Lawler, 1968; Gagné & Deci, 2005). An important contribution comes from the significant advances in the field of human relations movement (Deci & Ryan, 1985) which lead to the development job design theories of work motivation. The traditional job design theories proposed five factors- skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback as being important to motivate employees (Hackman & Oldham, 1975; Turner & Lawrence, 1965). Humphrey et.al (2007) extended the model to propose that task meaningfulness (perception that the task is seen worthwhile, important, or valuable; Allan, Duffy & Collinson, 2018) regulates the relationship between job characteristics and motivation (Kanfer, Frese & Johnson, 2017).

The extant literature on motivation, and job characteristics is extensively grounded in the study of demographic cohorts such as generation X (those born between 1965 and 1980), millennials or generation Y (those born between

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1981 and 1995). For example, Hughes (2011) evaluates the expectations, values, desires, and conflicts that occur in an inter-generational workforce setting. Brown-Crowder (2018) determines the differences in values of workers from different generations and how it affects one's perceptions of job. Kiiru-Weatherley (2017) examined the relationship between one's values and employee engagement across three generations.

As the next generation following the millennials, generation Z (those born between the years 1996 and 2010) becomes the latest generation to join the workforce, there is a need to understand how workplace perceptions have changed for generation Z. We address this gap in the literature.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 WORK MOTIVATION: JOB DESIGN PERSPECTIVE

Literature review on work motivation is exhaustive. There have been numerous reviews to conceptualize work motivation, and also to determine the course of scholastic dialog to advance its understanding for theory and practice (c.f. Cerasoli, Nicklin & Ford, 2014; Ryan, 2011; Kanfer, 2010; Steers, Mowday & Shapiro, 2004; Hardré, 2003). Various research themes pertaining to consequences of work motivation such as turnover intent (Sahir, Phulpoto & Uz-Zaman, 2018), goal achievement as an outcome of work motivation (Janke, Daumiller & Dickhäuser, 2018) are reported. Extant research on the topic also focused on determining the antecedents of work motivation (Thy-Jensen & Ladegaard-Bro, 2018), and critical evaluation of psychometric properties of work motivation scale (Gagné et.al., 2015; Chen & Fouad, 2016).

On the theoretical underpinnings of work motivation studies, job design perspective has gained prominence in the recent years; building on robust theoretical lenses. In this, empirical research on work design has predominantly focused on Hackman and Oldham's Job Characteristic Model (1976) that proposed five job dimensions which motivated employees- skill variety, task identity, task significance, feedback, and autonomy. The same model to measure work motivation has been used in the subsequent studies in this period (Champoux, 1980). The job characteristic model has also drawn considerably from the socio-technical system studies (Cherns, 1976) that identifies autonomy at work, challenging nature of work, opportunities for learning on the job, and feedback from work as being constituents of work motivation. Apart from the job characteristics model, other theoretical lenses that have shaped research on work motivation from the job design perspective are Tavistock Studies (Trist & Bamforth, 1951, Cherns, 1976), Scientific management research (Taylor, 1911), Herzberg et al. Two factor theory of motivation (1959), Job enrichment perspective (Paul, Robertson & Herzberg, 1969), Rockeach's Value expression & self-identification (1973), Demand Control Model (Karasek, 1979), Distal Motivation (Kanfer, 1990), and Morgeson and Humphrey's Extended Job Characteristic Model (2006). While there have been numerous studies that critically evaluated these theories of motivation over the years, and in the context of other generational cohorts, studies on generation Z grounded in such robust theoretical lenses is yet to be pursued vigorously by the academic community.

2.2 GENERATION Z: EMERGING RESEARCH THEMES

Scholarly research on generation Z has gained prominence in the recent past. Some of the research themes are understanding the generational differences between generation Z, and older (generational) cohorts (Southgate, 2017), impact of social media on their individual behavior (Puiu, 2016), and learning styles appropriate to generation Z students (Pousson & Myers, 2018).

On the other hand, pertinent research on workplace practices affecting behavioral outcomes in generation Z workers has been sporadic, albeit successfully initiated studies on the topic. For example, Grow, and Yang (2018) state that Generation Z employees tend to value health-care benefits and financial stability at work. Furthermore, they view the work environment to be supportive when it accommodates their schedule and non-work related commitments. Although generation Z can be termed as 'digital natives'-born into an environment of digital technology, they still prefer in-person performance appraisal (Lazányi & Bilan, 2017; Iorgulescu, 2016). This generational cohort is also low on optimism (vis-à-vis millennials, Christensen, Wilson & Edelman, 2018), and therefore considers working in large-stable organizations that offer job security and generous pay to be important. However, this is not to say that generation Z values only extrinsic factors. Opportunities to learn and develop their skills, and making a positive impact is equally important. (Kirchmayer & Fratričová, 2020). In the same vein, Goh and Lee (2018) identify a myriad of workplace practices important to generation Z- interesting work, cross-training (across job functions), working hours, anti-discrimination policies, and workplace safety.

Thus, we infer that workplace characteristics do have a role in shaping the perceptions of generation Z employees towards their work and organizations. This in turn is likely to affect their behavioral outcomes such as motivation.

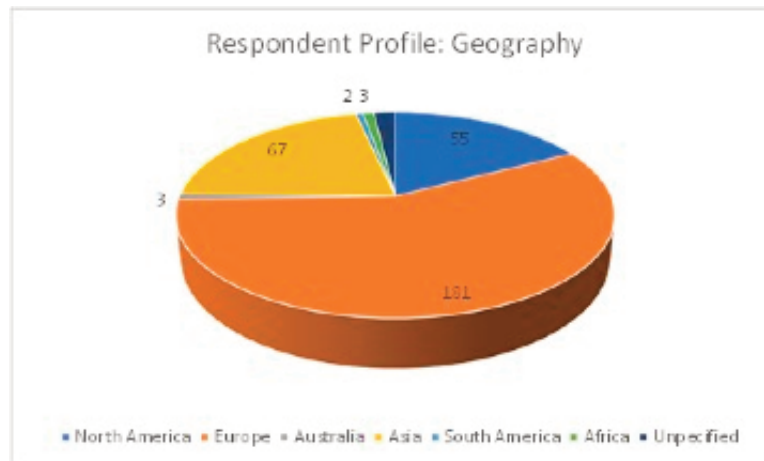
Thus, the objective of this paper is to determine underlying job characteristic factors that explain motivation in generation Z.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 SAMPLE

In line with the research question, empirical research method was applied to determine how motivated were the employees at work. 18 items based on the scale developed by Campion (1988) was used. Through a snow-ball sampling method, we reached out to generation Z working professionals through the authors' professional contacts. In addition, potential respondents were recruited through Facebook. 317 members participated in this study. The average age of the participants was 22.3 years (S.D. 1.9). The average work experience was 2.5 years (S.D. 2.4). The participants represented a wide range of geographical regions that is summarized in Figure 1

Figure 1: Respondent Profile by Geography



3.2 PROCEDURE

We collected data over a 4-month period. The participants received the electronic link to the survey (created using Google Form). Research background, objectives, and the expected conclusions of the study were explained. Informed consent from the participants was taken prior to them taking the survey with detail data management plan given to the participants (ensuring security of data, access, and the respondent's rights to withdraw from the study). The encompassing question that we asked was *how motivating is your job*. This was preceded by a brief note on this section of the instrument which read "In this section, you will find some statements about work and work environment. How true are these statements about your job. Please use the following scale to answer the questions: 1- strongly disagree, 7-strongly agree". As is the case with the original instrument developed by Campion (1988), the questions intended to find out the perceptions of generation Z towards work, and how it determines their work motivation. Furthermore, an explanatory note was included as a part of the survey that clearly explained the objectives of the study.

3.3 MEASURES

We measured work motivation using an 18-item scale developed by Campion (1988). This multimethod job design questionnaire is built on the motivational perspective to job design. The items represent various aspects of a job such as autonomy at work, feedback on the job, social interaction, task goal clarity, task identity, task variety, skill variety, task significance, growth & learning, promotion, achievement, participation, communication, pay adequacy, recognition, and job security. The scale is based on multiple perspectives and taxonomies of work motivation. We choose this instrument for three reasons. First, it encompasses socio-technical approach, job enrichment, intrinsic motivation, and job involvement aspects of work that motivates employees. This is in alignment with the literature that suggests a broad array of items influencing work motivation. Second, there have been previous studies which evaluated the psychometric properties of this scale, and suggested that the motivational approach to measure work motivation that included 18 items as one construct in the original scale may in fact comprise of multiple dimensions (see Edwards, Scully & Brtek, 1999 for a detailed review). Therefore, evaluating the relevance of this instrument to a novel sample such as generation Z, to see if there are underlying dimensions held promise. This also supports our choice to employ principal component analysis. However, we remain cautious in drawing definitive conclusions about detailed psychometric properties of the instrument which is beyond the scope of this paper, and which requires

a greater sample size. Third, there are other scales available which could have been used to measure work motivation (c.f. Morgeson & Humphrey, 2006; Campion & Stevens, 1991), the scale developed by Campion (1988) succinctly mirrors the knowledge characteristics, task characteristics, and social characteristics that are important to explain work motivation. All the items were measured on a 7-point Likert scale with 1 stating strongly disagree to 7 stating strongly agree. Table 1 presents the list of items, and the corresponding abbreviations used for the purpose of analysis.

Table 1: Broad Aspects and Specific Functions of EOP with Hypotheses

Item	Abbreviation
The job allows freedom, independence, or discretion in work scheduling, sequence methods, procedures, quality control, or other decision making	frdmtsk
The work I do provides me with direct feedback about the effectiveness (e.g., Quality and Quantity) of my performance	fdbwrk
My managers and coworkers provide me with feedback about the effectiveness (e.g., Quality and quantity) of my performance	fdbcoll
My job provides the opportunity for social interaction such as team work or coworker assistance	sclintr
The job duties, requirements, and goals are clear and specific	jbrespclear
I have a variety of duties, tasks, and activities on my job	tskvrty
The job requires completion of a whole and identifiable piece of work. It gives you a chance to do an entire piece of work from beginning to end	tskidnty
My job requires a high level of knowledge and skills	advskills
My job requires a variety of knowledge and skills	varskills
My job is significant and important compared with other jobs at the organization	tsksignfce
My job provides the opportunity for learning and growth in competence and proficiency	jblearn
My job provides opportunity for advancement to higher level jobs	jbprrmntn
My job gives me a feeling of achievement and accomplishment	jbachvmnt
My job gives me the opportunity to participate in decisions that affect my job	jbdccimkng
The job has access to relevant communication channels and information flows	eascomm
My job offers adequate pay compared with the job requirements and with pay in similar jobs	payadt
The job provides acknowledgement and recognition from others	jbrcgtn
My job offers job security as long as I do a good job	jbscurty

3.4 ANALYSIS

In line with the research objective, Principal Component Analysis (PCA) with varimax rotation was conducted. The purpose of this paper is to determine whether there are underlying factors that would better explain the interrelationship between the variables. Therefore, we have not analyzed differences in perceptions of work motivation within this sample based on demographic information such as experience in organizations, age, or current employment status.

4 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy was 0.90. Significance of Barlett's test of sphericity was 0.000. Therefore, the dataset was highly appropriate for Principal Component Analysis (PCA). Table 2 shows the means and standard deviations of all items. Four factors that explained 61.98% of variance (see Figure 2). The reliability of items for factor 1 (JbVar, JbLearn, JbAdvskill, AbAcvmnt, and JbVar) is 0.85; for factor 2 (JbRcgn, JbDecimkng, Tsksgnfce, JbPrmntn, EaseComm, Adqtpay) is 0.79; for factor 3 (TskIdnty, JbRespClr, JbScrty) is 0.67; and factor 4 (fdbcoll, fdbwrk, sclintrn) is 0.80. Figure 3 shows factor loadings of the items on corresponding factors. Pearson's correlation was used to determine the correlation between the factors. All the factors reflected a positive and significant correlation with each other. Thus, it can be concluded that these four factors would explain work motivation of generation Z employees (see Table 3).

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation: 18 Items

Item	Mean	Standard Deviation
Frdmtsk	5.16	1.52
Fdbwrk	5.39	1.38
Fdbcoll	5.24	1.40
Scintr	5.54	1.39
Jbrespcler	5.38	1.33
Tskidnty	5.42	1.34
Tskvrty	5.70	1.33
Advskills	5.15	1.59
Varskills	5.49	1.35
Tskfignfce	3.89	1.71
Jblearn	5.51	1.37
Jbprmtn	4.76	1.79
Jbachvmnt	5.39	1.36
Jbdecimkng	5.15	1.43
Eascomm	5.09	1.45
Payadt	4.83	1.53
Jbrcgntn	4.68	1.60
Jbsecurty	5.36	1.35

Figure 2: Total Variance Explained: 4 Factors

Total Variance Explained									
Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	7.303	40.570	40.570	7.303	40.570	40.570	3.278	18.212	18.212
2	1.431	7.851	48.521	1.431	7.851	48.521	3.214	17.655	36.067
3	1.341	7.448	55.968	1.341	7.448	55.968	2.347	13.037	49.105
4	1.084	6.021	61.989	1.084	6.021	61.989	2.319	12.885	61.989
5	.854	4.740	66.730						
6	.784	4.353	71.085						
7	.763	4.237	75.322						
8	.713	3.951	79.283						
9	.557	3.095	82.377						
10	.536	2.972	85.349						
11	.464	2.578	87.927						
12	.428	2.382	90.309						
13	.390	2.165	92.473						
14	.356	1.980	94.453						
15	.316	1.760	96.213						
16	.255	1.418	97.631						
17	.234	1.301	98.932						
18	.192	1.068	100.000						

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Figure 3: Factor Loadings

Rotated Component Matrix^a

	Component			
	1	2	3	4
jbvarskill	.838	.187	.097	.121
jblearn	.739	.217	.255	.180
jbadvskill	.725	.413	-.004	.164
jbacvmt	.627	.400	.345	.159
jbvar	.611	-.119	.455	.258
jbrecogntn	.133	.741	.131	.282
jbdecimkng	.457	.624	.174	.153
tsksgnfce	.259	.600	.026	.060
jbprmntn	.182	.554	-.121	.418
easecomm	.353	.535	.236	.277
frdmwrk	.115	.522	.279	-.020
adqtpay	-.066	.504	.340	.267
tskidnty	.345	.150	.766	.012
jbrespclr	.108	.121	.697	.264
jbscrty	.168	.449	.518	.091
fdbcoll	.222	.162	.120	.853
fdbwrk	.218	.213	.187	.767
sclintrn	.114	.242	.495	.575

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 9 iterations.

Table 3: Mean, SD, and Correlation of Factors

Items	Factor	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4
1	Job enabled growth opportunities	5.14	1.08	1	0.60**	0.57**	0.53**
2	Organization support	4.71	1.11		1	0.51**	0.57**
3	Accountability	5.38	1.03			1	0.52**
4	Interaction and feedback	5.35	1.16				1

**correlation significant at 0.01 level

The results of the principal component analysis (PCA) reveal that there are four factors that explain the motivating characteristics of a job. Further in this paper, we will discuss in detail these factors, and also juxtapose these results with pertinent research.

4.1 FACTOR 1. JOB ENABLED GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES

Previous research that compared motivation across generational cohorts suggested that older workers valued nature of work and challenges on the job more than the younger workers. Furthermore, issues pertinent to control of work- how and where they work were more principal to older workers than the younger workers. Other factors such as opportunity to perform a variety of tasks on the job, acquire and use advanced job-related skills, and learning were also more significantly important to the older workers over the younger workers (Stork, 2008). Echoing these findings, Piotrowska (2019) find that employees are intrinsically motivated to acquire skills. They value autonomy

to undertake tasks that lead to their professional development. Götze, Jeske and Benters (2018) in their study of pharmaceutical organizations in Germany are cautiously optimistic about the effects of employee learning on motivation. They conclude that unless organizations regularly review their training programs to make them relevant to the employees' work, and the employees are closely involved with co-creation of the training content, the effect of employee learning on motivation is less significant. Thus, we can infer that the learning opportunities need to be integrated with skills that are directly pertinent to the job. An important aspect to employee learning is enable the employee to experience achievement on the job. In this direction, literature points to a specific human resource practice-integration of micro-credentials in the employee learning programs. Fields (2015), and Diaz (2016) in their respective studies underscore the growing relevance of micro-credentials or short certificate programs that provide a testimony of specific skills acquired by the employee. These micro-credentials are integrated into the employee development plans, thus reflecting a certain level of achievement for the employee. For example, Lopez, and Galindo (2016) described the use of 'digital badges' being awarded to the employees after they have successfully completed a micro-credential. Employees recognize these digital badges as an evidence of achievement (also see Copenhaver & Pritchard, 2017 for a detailed pertinent literature review). Thus, human resource managers and supervisors should ensure that tasks are so structured so as to enable professional development of the employees.

4.2 FACTOR 2. ORGANIZATION SUPPORT

Job characteristics such as perceptions of advancement opportunities, task significance, and autonomy significantly determine the person-organization fit (congruence between individual's values and workplace characteristics), and eventually on employee motivation and retention (Ertas, 2019). These arguments are grounded in social exchange theory (Blau, 1964; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). According to this theory, individuals would weigh the fairness of exchange of certain workplace factors against the work efforts expended. If the perception is unfair, they are more likely to quit organizations. These workplace factors can be financial rewards, or those related to work characteristics such as task significance, and freedom at work. An important argument about perceptions of fairness is related to how individuals view growth motives at work. Baltes and Baltes (1990) in their Selection-Optimization-Compensation model propose that older workers allocate fewer resources to growth with advancing age. Further, the model argues that when time is perceived as expansive, or open-ended, developmental goals that secure the future are prioritized by individuals (Freund & Ebner, 2005; Kooji & Bal, 2014). Generation Z employees would be in early career stages. With a potential lifetime career span that is at least four decades, it is reasonable to assume that this young workforce would be invested in career development. These workers would focus on attaining task related competence (Kooji & Bal, 2014). Furthermore, the motives to acquire such task related competencies are closely associated with job characteristics such as challenging work (Latham & Pinder, 2005; Kooji et al., 2011). A corollary to this argument is also provided by Self Determination theory (Gagné & Deci, 2005). According to this theory, individuals will have an intrinsic proclivity for autonomy at work, acquire skills, and relatedness. In other words, work characteristics such as recognition, promotion, and communication between colleagues are important for motivation and growth. The effects of financial rewards or adequacy of pay on motivation is debatable. For example, in a study of nurses working in a Southern US hospital, Dave et al. (2011) find that extrinsic rewards such as pay are valued by nurses who are intrinsically motivated. Intrinsic motivation on the other hand is related to job characteristics such as task significance. Other studies on the salience of rewards to the employees have suggested that individuals' preference for financial rewards will change with the age. Doering et al (1983) in their seminal work suggest that older workers prefer increased pension and related benefits over short term pay increases. Similarly Moi-Barak (1995), and Loi and Shulz (2007), and concluded that older workers valued long term financial rewards, and benefits that are associated with work. This then explains the importance of stable careers and job security being associated with pay and other job characteristics. Interestingly, generation Z's perceptions of financial rewards seem to reflect those of the previous generations. This then provides a common ground for the young and the senior members of the organization. Some of the human resource practices pertaining to rewards, and long-term benefits can be so structured so as to meet the expectations of a majority of workers in the organization, irrespective of their generational identification. Thus, factor 2- Organization support is an important factor that explains what generation Z seek from their nature of work.

4.3 FACTOR 3. ACCOUNTABILITY

Task identity is the degree to which the job requires completing a whole or an identifiable piece of work (Hackman, & Oldham, 1975). This perhaps is most evident in organizations such as armed forces where the job responsibilities are very specific, and the soldiers are required to serve on specific missions and tasks. In a study of 300 newly recruited soldiers into Swedish Armed Forces, Österberg, and Rydstedt (2018) test job characteristic model (Hackman & Oldham, 1975) for their effects on various attitudinal and behavioral outcomes including motivation. Task identity strongly correlated positively with employee motivation. These results assume even more

significance when we consider the sample. The members of the armed forces surveyed reported to a clear supervisor (officer). Given the authoritarian nature of the organization structure, the job responsibilities were clear. This suggests that having a clear description of job responsibilities is closely associated with task identity. The study clearly identified the lack of adequate financial rewards to the members of the armed forces. However, it also concludes that the members see their work as a calling and therefore are less sensitive to financial rewards.

4.4 FACTOR 4. INTERACTION AND FEEDBACK

With the rise of communication platforms and technology, organizations today grapple with the challenge of information overload, as much as they are looking to leverage the opportunities to enhance employee productivity using these same tools. Extant research is divided on whether employees should be allowed to communicate using social media at work. Kane et al. (2014) show that employee productivity is increased when they use social media with colleagues. It provides a platform for the employees to gain social and emotional support. Martin, Parry, and Flowers (2015) extend this argument to show that using social media fosters greater collaboration at work and benefits employee morale. On the other hand, Coker (2013), and Rosen and Samuel (2015) claim that increased use of social media at work impedes productivity. Bizzi (2017) resolves this debate by concluding that when employees can interact with those outside the organizations, it reduces their productivity. On the other hand, when employees use the same tools to interact with colleagues, it leads to greater collaboration and productivity. As implied in the discussion of this factor, an important facet to social interaction between the employees is to increase their productivity. To achieve this, the employees will need to obtain feedback from their managers and colleagues (Daniels, & Bailey, 2014). Furthermore, feedback from impersonal systems (such as equipment displays) also play an important part in performance improvement (Hattrup, Edwards & Funk, 2020). In order to understand the effects of impersonal systems or feedback from work on one's performance, Lee, Lim, and Oah (2020) ran an experimental design on college students where they were required to perform a task. As a part of the design, some of these students received immediate feedback on their performance from the system, and the remaining students were oblivious to their progress. The study concluded that when the students were made aware of their performance, the feedback achieved its objectives of performance improvement more effectively. Conflating these perspectives on sources of feedback, Cattaneo, Boldrini, and Lubinu (2020) show how formal and informal performance debriefings among the employees become more effective when supported by immediate feedback on task performance from a system such as a simulator. They base their arguments on Loprieto's et al. (2016) definition of a debrief. According to this, debriefing promotes reflective thinking among participants while providing feedback on their completed tasks. It is during the debriefing that employees understand their emotions, question, reflect, and provide feedback to one another. This then provides an opportunity for organizations to fully leverage the benefits of current technology for enhanced communication among the employees. Generation Z are digital natives who are adept at technology. Organizations can use communication platforms structured on popular social media to promote information exchange among the employees.

4.5 JUXTAPOSITION WITH LITERATURE

The findings of the current paper confirm the extant literature on the effect of job design on work motivation. Recent research by Mat et al. (2017) concludes that job complexity, and employee learning are determinants of work motivation. Employees engaged in complex tasks tend to learn on the job, and work independently to achieve the outcomes; those engaged in less complex tasks show proclivity for group work and social learning. In both these cases, job complexity and learning have been found to be closely associated with each other in determining one's work motivation. These findings reflect other similar studies (c.f. Leach et al., 2013; Griffin, 1991; Grant, 2008) which suggests that employees engaged in complex tasks tend to learn on the job in order to respond quickly to the uncertainty. Such behavior leads to work motivation. Thus, we conclude that factor 1 – job enabled growth opportunities is in consonance with extant literature (also see Knight & Parker, 2021).

Factor 2 – Organizational support perhaps bring forward the underlying motivational processes that determine why generation Z employees engage in knowledge sharing (itemized as ease of communication exchange), and how is such behavior related to fulfilment of certain esteem needs such as recognition, and growth opportunities at work. Knowledge sharing is encouraged by most of the modern organizations. However, it presents a dilemma to the employees. Employees may be demotivated to share knowledge because it may not be reciprocated by their colleagues, and undermines the importance of employee. Therefore, employees who contribute to the collective knowledge of the organization, tend to recoup this investment through social prestige and recognition in the organization (Barclay, 2010; Park, Chae & Choi, 2017). Such recognition is attained through task characteristics such as making important decisions, attaining promotions, and securing adequate pay. Thus, we conclude factor 2-organizational support is in alignment with extant literature.

Job insecurity is a stressor, and defined as one's inability to maintain desired continuity. This lack of continuity may be with respect to the whole job (called quantitative job insecurity) or with regards to important parts of the job (termed qualitative insecurity, Tu et.al, 2020). Qualitative job insecurity impedes the professional growth of the employees by denying employees opportunities to assume responsibility for work. Furthermore, employees who may be motivated by such professional growth opportunities may feel stifled when they lack adequate information about their (job responsibilities). This undermines their effectiveness at work, and will negatively affect their work motivation (Van den Broeck, 2014). Therefore, factor 3-Accountability seem to suggest that generation Z employees demonstrate a strong proclivity for knowledge of job responsibilities because it affects their perceptions of job security. Thus, these findings are in conformity with extant literature

Performance feedback from colleagues, supervisors, and work itself elicits positive or negative emotions in an employee (Belschak & Den Hartog, 2009). Typically, such feedback would include interactions with managers and peers on a range of work-related behaviors (Waldman, 2003). Feedback on one's performance itself may include two facets- how well an individual accomplished a certain task, and how to adjust a certain behavior to achieve an outcome. The former is called outcome feedback, while the latter is called process feedback (Liang, 2016). While outcome feedback is elicited through colleagues and supervisors, it alone is insufficient in improving employee's performance. Process feedback allows an employee to monitor one's performance on the job, and adjust the behavior and therefore the work efforts accordingly. Therefore, such feedback would have implications for one's motivation on the job (Liang, 2016). Thus, factor 4-Interaction and feedback suggests that generation Z employees value interactions with colleagues and supervisors as it helps them become aware of the output, and process feedback from their doing the work itself as it helps them develop appropriate behaviors. Therefore, the findings of factor 4 resonate with extant literature.

5 LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

We note two limitations of our study. First, self-report measures were used to obtain the responses. This is a limitation of our research design. However, the larger research study entailed obtaining both qualitative, and quantitative data about work motivation. This necessitated use of open-ended questions requiring elaborate responses. Thus, the research instrument was deemed appropriate. A second limitation pertains to the sample size. However, when considering the larger context of research design adopted in the more recent studies on generation Z, we believe this to be an adequate sample size (c.f. Shen et.al, 2020: n=100; Kemp, Cowart & Bui, 2020: n=34; Murillo-Zamorano, 2019: n=160; Fratričová & Kirchmayer, 2018: n=235).

Future research should replicate the findings of the current paper for a larger and different sample. Further research should test how each of these four factors that constitute motivating job characteristics determine pertinent motivational processes such as self-efficacy, and behavioral outcomes such as turnover intent (Boudrias et al., 2020; Qowi et al., 2018). It is also important to understand the interaction between the job characteristics and one's disposition such as personality trait for their combined effect on purposeful work behavior (such as work motivation; Barrick, Mount & Li, 2013). This will enable researchers to refine the model of work motivation. Another promising direction for future research lies in rigorous testing of the job characteristics model theory itself. Humphrey, Nahrgang, and Morgeson (2007) note that the theory of job characteristics does not consider the role of relational features of work (such as individuals working in teams or with customers). Therefore, there is a need to extend the theory to include other such variables (Kanfer, Frese & Johnson, 2017).

6 ACADEMIC AND MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

Current research on what motivates generation Z though nascent, is promising. Fratričová, and Kirchmayer (2018) identify three dominant themes: *employee*, *job*, and *organization*, within which factors such as poor content of work, bad team climate, work overload, and lack of sense of purpose on the job were identified as drivers of motivation. Narrative data collection methods were used to identify the factors that acted as drivers and barriers to motivation. Earlier research by Kubátová (2016) concludes that generation Z prefers independent virtual work; thus, indicating a strong proclivity for autonomy. Evidence also points towards generation Z's need for organizational support to realize their professional ambitions (Singh Ghura, 2017). Interestingly, the findings of our empirical analysis support these conclusions. The four factors that explain motivation relate to one's job, organizational support, and one's need for advancement. Therefore, we believe the current paper furthers the dialog on issues most important to generation Z employees at the workplace.

From the managerial perspective, the findings of the study have significant implications for human resource management practices in organizations. For example, the study may provide inputs for job crafting-describing how

employees leverage development opportunities at work by being engaged with challenging tasks and interacting with others. Other human resource practices such as reward management, employee retention, and learning may also be potentially structured based on these research results.

7 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the current research sought to empirically determine job characteristics that are motivating to generation Z. Four factors related to organizational support, growth opportunities, rewards and accountability at work, and work- related interaction are found to best explain the worker motivation. The findings of the study support the contemporary arguments that motivation is a complex variable. It is an outcome of multitude of factors such as work content, work context, and individual disposition. This highlights the need to explore these interactions in greater detail with more rigor specifically with respect to this generational cohort.

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