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MOTIVATING GENERATION Y: WHAT MILLENNIALS NEED FOR ENHANCING WORKPLACE SATISFACTION AND PRODUCTIVITY

SUMMARY

The issues surrounding motivation within Generation Y have emerged as profoundly significant in contemporary society, presenting complex challenges that demand careful resolution. Constructing an effective motivation system has emerged as a paramount determinant of job performance. Moreover, the recognition of motivation as a critical factor influencing overall employee engagement has gained prominence; however, it frequently lacks appropriate attention and consideration. Motivation is not a delegable concept; it does not manifest implicitly and does not inherently form a part of an employee's professional competency portfolio. This article researches the intrinsic beliefs and preferences among Generation Y members relating to their motivation, which once met will most likely subsequently contribute to heightened job satisfaction and increased organizational productivity. It delves into the motivational drivers and employs empirical methodologies to substantiate the relationship and positive influence of motivation characteristics specific to this generation on their effectiveness and efficiency. The findings offer valuable recommendations for enterprises, managers, and human resources departments aiming to explore the dimensions of motivation, job satisfaction, and interpersonal relationships within their organizations.

Key words: generation Y, motivation, job satisfaction, employee engagement, organizational productivity.

INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary business landscape, characterized by intense competition, organizations are grappling with the challenge of retaining high-quality talent. Irrespective of their size, technological infrastructure, or market orientation, many organizations face the pressing issue of staff retention. To harness the full potential of their existing resources and maximize employee motivation, modern companies

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recognize the necessity of fostering strong and positive relationships between employees and the organization (Sheppard, 2016).

Effective utilization of human resources is pivotal to an organization's success, as human resources constitute the driving force behind an organization's operations (Postolov, 2011). Motivation, therefore, emerges as a central concern within the realm of management. A robust motivational philosophy and practice enhances productivity, quality, and service, while fostering a harmonious and pleasant work environment amplifies employee motivation and, consequently, organizational profitability (Benegal, 2013). However, despite the recognition of motivation's significance, it often receives inadequate attention in the pursuit of numerical targets and performance indicators (Robbins, Judge, Sanghi, 2009). This paper endeavors to explore the extent to which certain preferences and factors influence the effectiveness and efficiency of Generation Y members, subsequently impacting job satisfaction and organizational productivity.

In contemporary workplaces, generational diversity is discernible, posing a managerial challenge in terms of creating conducive work conditions and managing activities that align with the values and expectations of each generation (Masic, 2009). Generation Y, in particular, presents a unique challenge, characterized by distinctive attributes that set it apart from previous generations and, at times, provoke misconceptions. Consequently, there is a compelling need for in-depth investigation.

The primary objective of this paper is to elucidate the preferences of Generation Y and its responsiveness to motivational drivers. Given that Generation Y constitutes a significant portion of the emerging workforce, adapting to their needs becomes a top priority for employers. The initial step in this process involves comprehending their characteristics, desires, and needs, along with the factors influencing their work habits and attitudes, as all of them will be explained in-depth in the theoretical background and the review of the foundational literature. Subsequently, it necessitates dispelling stereotypes and emphasizing the advantages that this generation offers to secure a competitive market position (Kultalahti, Viitala, 2015). These stereotypes, which include those that members of this Generation quickly hop from one job to the next, work to live instead of living to work, strive to find shortcuts when working, feel entitled, and similar, are unfounded and managers and business leaders analyze their signature strengths to improve the overall competitiveness of their workforce (Kultalahti, Viitala, 2015).

Generation Y exhibits a proclivity for working in environments that foster innovation, skill development, and displays a philanthropic approach to societal concerns. They are inclined toward tasks that hold essential significance for the organization's vision and goals (Howe, Strauss, 2009).

With the rising number of Generation Y members entering the workforce, organizations are increasingly compelled to bridge generational gaps, foster acceptance of new generations, and harness their potential fully. Consequently, this paper aims to lay the foundation for understanding motivation, delving into motivational theories, and exploring various motivational instigators. It will also elucidate the fundamental characteristics of Generation Y, underpinned by empirical

research, which substantiates the relationship between Generation Y's unique motivators and their effectiveness and efficiency.

The outcomes of this research endeavor can serve as a cornerstone for future studies on similar themes and offer valuable recommendations for enterprises, managers, and human resources departments seeking to assess motivation levels, job satisfaction, and interpersonal dynamics within their organizations.

Concept of Motivation

The concept of motivation is multifaceted and defies a singular definition. Just as there is no one-size-fits-all job position or task, there exists no universal approach to motivation. Moreover, alongside motivation lies its counterpart, demotivation, which poses a significant challenge to organizational management (McClelland, 2009). The ability to discern early signs of demotivation is a crucial skill for effective managers, preventing dissatisfaction from culminating in open expressions of discontent among employees (Shuklev, 2013).

Human desires are inherently insatiable, with employee expectations perpetually on the rise, regardless of the organization's achievements (Yamaguchi, 2003). To align these expectations with an organization's goals, it is essential to keep employees informed about the company's objectives and actively involve them in their realization. Motivation derives its etymology from the Latin word "muovere," meaning "to move." Numerous scholars have contributed their definitions of motivation, reflecting its multifaceted nature:

- McClelland (2009) characterizes motivation as a broad force residing within individuals, driving excitement, direction, and persistent voluntary efforts to attain goals.
- Campbell and Pritchard (1976) see motivation as a set of psychological processes that induce initiative, direction, intensity, and persistence in behavior.
- Vroom (1964) defines motivation as the rationale behind human behavior and the logic guiding individuals' activity choices.
- Denhardt et al. (2008) simply state that motivation is what drives people's actions.

Two primary types of workplace motivation exist. The first involves employees seeking, finding, and engaging in work that fulfills their needs, while the second hinges on extrinsic factors such as salary increases, promotions, and rewards (Chapman, 2014).

In addition to these two types, workplace motivation can also be categorized into internal (Type 1) and extrinsic (Type 2) motivation. Internal motivation stems from self-generated factors like autonomy, skill development, and work challenge, leading individuals to perform tasks for personal satisfaction and intrinsic rewards. Extrinsic motivation, on the other hand, revolves around external rewards, including salary increases, promotions, praise, and disciplinary actions.

The most effective organizational motivation system typically combines both internal and extrinsic motivation strategies, necessitating the creation of a comprehensive framework that incorporates both types (Shannon, 2005).

One of the contributions to the motivation theory has been made by Maslow's theory of needs, which considers that motivation is the result of people's efforts to fulfill five elementary needs, including psychological needs, the need to feel safe and secure, social needs or belongingness, esteem, and eventually individual self-actualization (Taormina, Gao, 2013). Maslow's theory of human motivation is one of the landmark theories for describing human motivation, and its applicability in a wide variety of contexts has been proven multiple times besides the criticism and support expressed in current literature. In that sense, the theory claims that if an employee has met all the basic human needs, they are more likely to feel motivated and stay in their workplace (Trivedi, Mehta, 2019). Additionally, it has been found that the satisfaction of every higher-level need is influenced by the satisfaction of the need, which is just below it in Maslow's hierarchy (Taormina, Gao, 2013).

Strategies of Financial and Non-Financial Motivation

Financial Motivation

Financial incentives have historically been employed to motivate employees, as exemplified by Frederick Taylor's use of financial rewards in the late 19th century to stimulate employee productivity (Vroom, 1964). These incentives ranged from salary bonuses to innovation fees, fostering financial well-being. Direct material benefits often include salaries and bonuses, which contribute to the financial well-being of the workforce without any indirect effects (Spisakova, 2019). On the other hand, the indirect material benefits can include scholarships for additional education, study visits, and making company cars available at the disposal of the employee, which doesn't involve a direct transfer of cash (Alam, Hassan, Bowyer, Reaz, 2020). These two forms of material benefits constitute the two primary forms of financial compensation. However, the evolving landscape of employee compensation now calls for a more flexible, personalized approach.

Non-Financial Motivation

Beyond financial incentives, many managers recognize the effectiveness of non-financial rewards in enhancing employee satisfaction. Certain non-financial motivators, aligned with individual preferences, can yield high satisfaction levels. The COVID-19 pandemic has further underscored the importance of non-financial incentives in optimizing organizational costs while bolstering employee motivation (Mani, Mishra, 2020).

Non-financial motivators can be flexible, personalized, and easy to implement, offering long-term motivational benefits. Intrinsic rewards, such as meaningful work, are particularly potent in maintaining long-term motivation, while extrinsic rewards, such as money, may provide short-term impetus (Blaskova, Grazulis, 2009). Consequently, the optimal motivation strategy often involves a combination of both types.

Several landmark strategies for non-financial motivation stand out in current literature on employee motivation (Swartling, Poksinska, 2013; Kumar, Hossain, Nasrin, 2015):

- **Workplace Design and Organization:** The design of the workplace can significantly impact employee performance, job satisfaction, and physical and mental health.
- **Flexible Working Hours:** Shift work trends have increased, but attention to employee well-being during night shifts is crucial.
- **Employee Involvement in Decision-Making:** Employees at all levels desire participation in decision-making processes, as they often possess valuable insights into operational challenges.
- **Staff Training:** Continuous learning and development are essential for individuals and organizations.
- **Optimal Working Conditions:** Safe, well-ventilated, and ergonomically designed workplaces are critical.
- **Respect for Employees:** Respect and professional development are fundamental for employee performance.
- **Work-Life Balance:** Achieving harmony between work and personal life is essential for employee retention.
- **Job Type:** The nature of work profoundly affects motivation, with job characteristics aligning with Maslow's theory playing a crucial role.
- **Workload Management, Job Rotation, and Job Enrichment:** Increasing workload, job rotation, and job enrichment strategies can enhance motivation and skills development.

Defining the Term Generation

Generations consist of individuals born and living during approximately the same historical period. Generational classification typically includes attributes such as year of birth, a sense of belonging to the generation, common beliefs and behaviors, and shared historical experiences. Generational understanding is paramount in the context of the workplace.

Generation Y

Generation Y, often referred to as Millennials, presents a unique challenge to HR managers. They have grown up in a world dominated by technology, where instant messaging, DVDs, and mobile phones are ubiquitous. Their close connection to the digital realm results from the pervasive use of technology in education. Generation Y thrives in a non-linear, fast-paced environment, adapting effortlessly to multiple sources of information. This adaptability positions them as well-prepared for dynamic work environments.

Some of the wishes and needs that are often attributed to members of this organization include the need for a more balanced work-life relationship as well as more flexibility in terms of remote jobs or jobs that go beyond the traditional nine-to-five schedule (Du Plessis, Barkhuizen, Stanz, Schutte, 2015). They tend to be

results-oriented, ambitious, and collaborative when working in teams. In other words, the social needs are more pronounced in this generation. Another habit of this generation is their frequent use of technology as one of the first massively digitally literate generations in the workplace (Buzza, 2017).

However, many Generation Y members lack certain skills sought by HR managers for specific roles within organizations. They prioritize career suitability, work-life balance, and independence over mere job acquisition, with job satisfaction outweighing monetary rewards. Understanding and catering to the needs of this generation is imperative for HR managers to successfully manage and retain talented individuals. Generation Y places a premium on access to knowledge and technology, the fulfillment of educational demands, participatory management, compensation flexibility, feedback, teamwork, negotiation readiness, technology adoption, professional use of the internet, and a conducive online presence.

In this sense, Generation Y's attributes and expectations necessitate a thorough understanding by HR managers, who must adapt their strategies to harness this generation's potential while navigating the challenges associated with its unique characteristics.

HR Managers' Role in Understanding and Motivating Generation Y

To successfully manage and retain the talent within Generation Y, HR managers must grasp their unique needs and motivations. Here are key considerations (Kultalahti, Viitala, 2015; Ray, Singh, 2016; Du Plessis, Barkhuizen, Stanz, Schutte, 2015):

Access to Knowledge and Technology. Talented workers demand access to up-to-date technology. Organizations must stay abreast of technological advancements to attract and retain Generation Y employees. This entails a continuous cycle of upgrading outdated technology to remain competitive.

Meeting Training Needs. While Generation Y may have grown up in a technologically advanced environment, it doesn't necessarily mean they possess all the skills required for their roles. HR managers must recognize the importance of ongoing learning and development in a rapidly changing world. Formal education doesn't end at a specific age; instead, it becomes a lifelong pursuit.

Participatory Management. The workforce of the future craves participation in decision-making processes. Generation Y seeks to have their voices heard and to actively contribute to organizational changes. HR managers must foster a culture of inclusion and participation.

Compensation Flexibility. Unlike the rigid compensation structures of the past, today's compensation is often more flexible and tailored to individual needs. HR managers need to adapt to this shift and offer options such as additional education benefits, parental leave, and retirement plans that suit the diverse needs of Generation Y employees.

Providing Feedback. Generation Y values feedback, often seeking affirmation for a job well done. HR managers should cultivate a feedback-rich environment that provides constructive praise and recognition.

Embracing Teamwork. This generation thrives in collaborative settings. They prefer seeking multiple opinions and working in teams. HR managers should design teams to maximize their effectiveness as a whole.

Negotiation Readiness. Generation Y resists rigid rules and seeks logical explanations for actions. They've been raised in an environment that encourages negotiation. HR managers should be prepared for questions and discussions.

Fearless Technology Adoption. This generation fearlessly adopts new technologies, but their confidence can sometimes lead to challenges. HR managers must guide and support them, addressing any overconfidence that may arise.

Managing Online Presence. Generation Y's constant use of the internet, including personal social media accounts, can pose challenges. HR managers must establish clear guidelines to ensure professional conduct online, protecting both the organization's reputation and the individual's privacy.

In navigating these considerations, HR managers can harness the potential of Generation Y, providing an environment where they can thrive while contributing to the organization's growth in the 21st century.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The research conducted for this study utilized an electronic survey approach. The data collection period spanned from March 28, 2023, to April 12, 2023. The primary objective of the survey was to investigate the impact of motivational factors on individuals belonging to Generation Y. To achieve this, a structured questionnaire comprising a total of 12 questions was developed. The survey instrument employed a Likert scale, enabling respondents to express their level of agreement or disagreement on a five-point scale, as follows: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral (Neither Agree nor Disagree), 4 = Agree and 5 = Strongly Agree.

A total of 106 participants voluntarily took part in the survey. Of these, 48 identified as female, and 58 identified as male. The research aimed to capture a diverse sample of Generation Y individuals to ensure a comprehensive understanding of their perceptions regarding motivational factors. All the participants identified as currently employed in an organization operating on the territory of the Republic of North Macedonia.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Motivational Factors for Generation Y

In this section, we present the key findings regarding the motivational drivers for Generation Y, based on the responses collected from the survey participants.

Salary as a Motivational Driver

The survey sought to assess the significance of salary as a motivator among Generation Y individuals. The results indicate that a substantial 50% of respondents consider salary to be of great importance in motivating them, while only a mere 4% do not find it important for motivation. This emphasizes the centrality of salary as a motivational factor within this generation (Fig. 1).

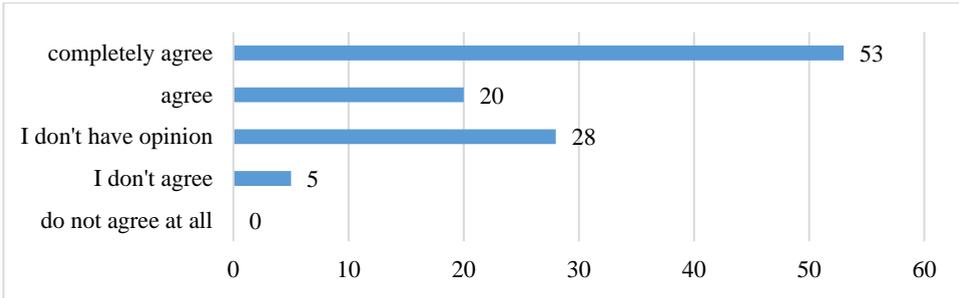


Figure 1 Salary as a motivational driver

Bonuses and Incentives as Motivational Boosters

Similar to the findings concerning salary, the responses regarding bonuses and incentives yielded comparable results. It is evident that both bonuses and incentives are significant motivational boosters for Generation Y, aligning with the importance they place on these forms of recognition and reward (Fig. 2).

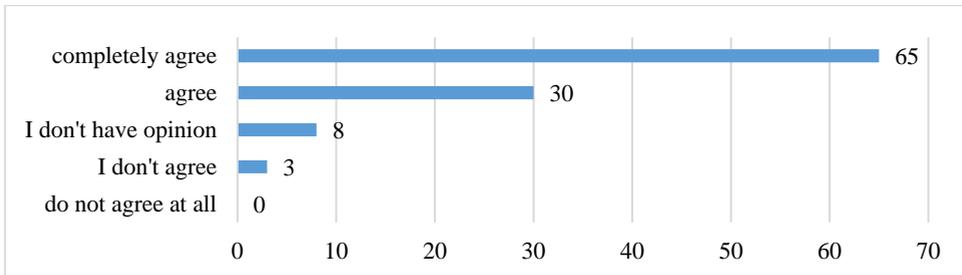


Figure 2 Bonuses and incentives as a motivational booster

Company Car as a Motivational Booster

When it comes to the provision of a company car as a motivator, respondents demonstrated a preference for this benefit (Fig. 3). Notably, having a company car not only signifies status within society but also holds importance among their peers within Generation Y.

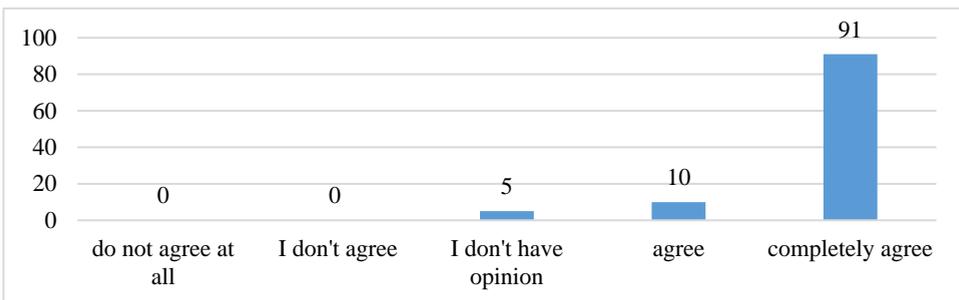


Figure 3 Company car as a motivational booster

Other Motivational Triggers

The table presents responses related to various motivational factors, such as security on paid free days (as a reward), career development, access to paid training, feedback, balance between private and professional life, and independence³:

Table 1 Other motivational triggers

	Do not agree at all	I don't agree	I don't have an opinion	Agree	Completely agree	Average
Answer/corresponding factor	<u>(1)</u>	<u>(2)</u>	<u>(3)</u>	<u>(4)</u>	<u>(5)</u>	*
Reward and security on paid free days	0	2	10	35	59	4,41
Development of career	0	0	0	17	89	4,84
Access and paid trainings	0	0	0	26	80	4,75
Feedback	0	0	2	36	68	4,62
Balance of the private-professional life	0	0	0	10	96	4,91
Independence	0	0	0	12	94	4,89

Source: Authors' own research

The findings from this survey underscore the significance of the listed motivational factors for Generation Y in the workplace. These motivators play a vital role in enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of this generation. Therefore, organizations should pay special attention to these motivational triggers in their efforts to engage Generation Y more effectively.

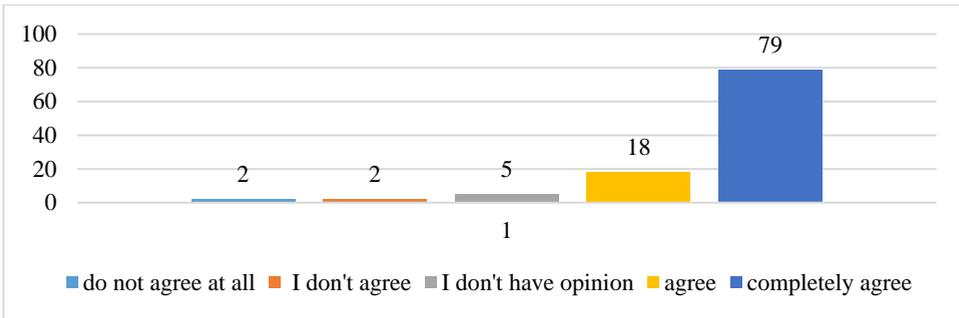
The results demonstrate a high level of consensus among Generation Y members regarding the importance of the motivational factors listed in Table 1. Their preferences align with these factors, indicating a clear inclination toward benefits and conditions that promote motivation.

Clear Responsibility as a Motivational Driver

Generation Y respondents exhibited a unanimous preference for clear responsibility as a motivational driver (Fig. 4).

An impressive 100% of the respondents expressed agreement with this notion, highlighting the importance of well-defined roles and accountabilities in their work.

³ We weighed the answers: do not agree at all with 1, I don't agree with 2, I don't have opinion with 3, agree with 4 and completely agree with 5. Then, we calculated a mean value of the given answers, weighed by the corresponding factor.

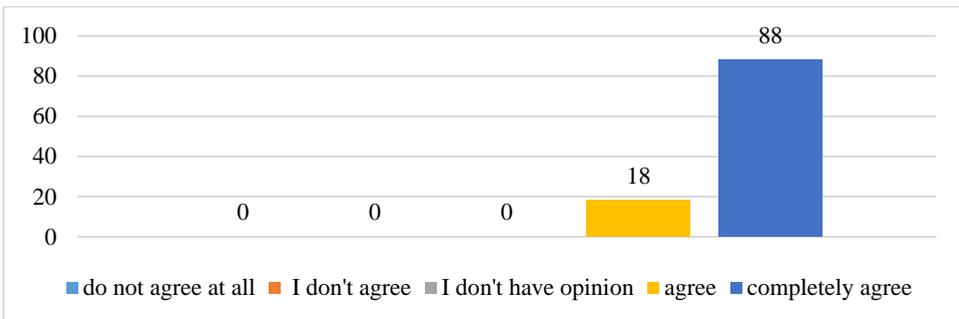


Source: Authors' own research

Figure 4 Clear responsibility as a motivational driver

Participation in Decision-Making as a Motivational Booster

In terms of participation in decision-making, Generation Y individuals indicated a strong desire to have their voices heard. The chart shows that the vast majority of respondents seek active involvement in decision-making processes (Fig.5).



Source: Authors' own research

Figure 5 Participation in decision-making as a motivational booster

Flexible Work and Flexible Schedules

Lastly, with respect to flexible work arrangements and schedules, Generation Y demonstrates a clear preference (Fig.6).



Source: Authors' own research

Figure 6 Flexible work and flexible schedules

The graph indicates that respondents overwhelmingly agree (groups 4 and 5) with the importance of flexibility in their work arrangements.

These findings collectively shed light on the motivational preferences of Generation Y, emphasizing the importance of aligning workplace practices with their expectations and needs. Organizations that recognize and cater to these preferences are better positioned to engage and retain this dynamic generation of workers.

When the members and demographics of the workforce are profiled, HR professionals can formulate and implement specific, custom-tailored strategies for boosting employee motivation at the workplace per the principles of strategic HR management (Tessema, Tesfom, Faircloth, Tesfagiorgis, Teckle, 2022). Based on the research results, HR professionals can consider participatory strategies for motivating employees who are members of Generation Y. Bottom-up and holistic strategies, which stimulate a collaborative environment and at the same time flexible working arrangements (Kusumah, Fitriani, Satriadi, 2023), are more likely to keep this segment of the workforce more engaged and satisfied as their primary source of motivation likes in the financial motivators and their value for freedom and contribution in the organization. Thus, HR professionals and business leaders can benefit from including them and their experience-driven ideas in the decision-making processes and the formulation of the HR strategies themselves.

The study doesn't come free of a few constraints, which at the same time are potential avenues for future research. To begin with, the chosen research context was the Republic of North Macedonia, yet the study can be further scaled up and implemented in other countries and regions to gain a cross-regional aspect of the study. Moreover, future researchers can explore how different employees who are members of Generation Y find motivation based on their years of experience in the organization, years of experience in the same job position, sector, or industry where they work, their educational background, and similar.

CONCLUSION

In the ever-evolving landscape of the twenty-first century, effective human resource management has emerged as a pivotal source of competitive advantage for organizations, possibly even surpassing other factors in long-term performance. As competition among organizations intensifies, the ability to replicate technology, production processes, and products becomes increasingly common. However, what remains challenging to emulate is the intricate realm of human resource management. Thus, human resources have assumed the role of a distinctive and unparalleled competitive edge for organizations. In the current milieu characterized by rapid changes and unique organizational conditions, the management of human resources stands as a linchpin for organizational success. Motivation, both as a managerial function and as a phenomenon within the intricate workings of enterprises operating in turbulent environments, presents a rich arena for exploring methods and their practical application in daily operations. Motivating employees in companies has evolved over the course of management's historical development. Understanding the nuances of motivating Generation Y, a demographic marked by

distinct characteristics, is imperative. In this regard, it is crucial to first acknowledge their distinctive traits and then tailor strategies accordingly, such as a participatory strategy and a strategy for flexible working arrangements. One of the critical dimensions in which Generation Y diverges from other generations lies in their motivational drivers. While extensive research has explored motivation in the past, yielding various theories and motivator types, this study has cast a spotlight on how these motivators resonate with Generation Y. Born and raised in an era defined by pervasive information technology and a unique mindset, Generation Y exhibits a distinct outlook on life. Drawing from a comprehensive review of the literature, this research has identified a key priority for Generation Y concerning motivational triggers: achieving a harmonious balance between their private and professional lives. Additionally, their preferences encompass the necessity for collaborative teamwork, dynamic and diversified work responsibilities, a nuanced understanding of compensation structures, active participation in decision-making processes, and avenues for career development. Empirical evidence substantiates that the theoretical tenets concerning Generation Y's behavior with regard to motivational drivers closely align with reality. Notably, the research conducted in the Republic of North Macedonia underscores those members of Generation Y accord high importance to factors such as compensation, teamwork, the equilibrium between private and professional life, career advancement, and more. As organizations continue to adapt to the changing times, recognizing and embracing the motivational preferences of Generation Y is pivotal. Those who successfully integrate these preferences into their human resource management strategies are poised to not only attract but also retain the talents of this unique and influential generation, ensuring a competitive edge in an ever-evolving landscape.

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