

Content Summary (Abstract)

Title of the Thesis: Motivation and Incentives in the workplace

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Summary

This thesis investigates the factors influencing employee motivation and engagement, with a particular focus on generational differences among employees (X, Y, Z). The aim is to identify the key factors affecting motivation and to explore effective incentive strategies tailored to the diverse needs and values of each generational cohort.

The study combines theoretical analysis with empirical research. An online survey of 14 questions was conducted from March to June 2025 with 110 participants. Initially, respondents were selected from personal contacts, colleagues, and professional networks, after which the snowball sampling method was applied to expand the survey's reach and diversify the sample. The questionnaire collected demographic information, satisfaction with compensation and incentive systems, preferred leadership styles, ideal work environments, and factors influencing motivation and engagement. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and comparative methods to identify trends and differences between generations.

Based on the survey, the following research hypotheses were proposed:

- H1: Levels of work motivation differ significantly across generations
- H2: Most employees lose motivation primarily due to low income and inadequate compensation systems
- H3: Employees' work motivation increases significantly when the work environment allows creativity and is accompanied by clear strategic leadership
- H4: Younger generations prefer flexible and creative work environments compared to older generations
- H5: Employees prioritize a creative work environment that ensures continuous development over all other factors, as this is a direct condition for maintaining long term motivation.

The findings indicate that generational factors play a supportive role, while organizational and individual factors, such as work environment, professional development opportunities, compensation systems, and recognition have stronger direct impacts on motivation. Employees generally prefer a balanced work environment that allows them to accomplish tasks efficiently while maintaining work–life balance. Factors that most reduce motivation include excessive workload, chronic stress, and lack of supportive environments.

The study also reveals that less visible factors, such as corporate culture and recognition, can be powerful motivators when combined with development opportunities and a supportive work environment. The results provide a foundation for leaders and HR professionals to balance ideal expectations with practical realities, enhancing engagement, satisfaction, and long-term organizational performance.

I wish to express my sincere gratitude to everyone who supported, inspired, and accompanied me throughout the research process, especially my supervisor and the participants of the survey. I hope that the findings of this thesis offer useful insights and practical value, contributing to the enrichment of research in employee motivation and human resource management.

If any shortcomings, inaccuracies, or errors occurred during the research process, I kindly ask the esteemed reviewers and educators for their understanding, as well as constructive feedback that will enable me to further develop and refine my future work.