

MOTIVATION IN HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT ON THE EXAMPLE OF GENERATION Z

Ireneusz DRABIK

University of the National Education Commission, Krakow; ireneusz.drabik@uken.krakow.pl,
ORCID: 0000-0001-8830-1681

Purpose: The theoretical aim of the paper is to present motivation and incentive as the area of human resource management, and to characterise the basic features of Generation Z, i.e. the youngest generation on the modern labour market. The practical goal is to identify and characterise the attitudes towards work and the incentives expected by Generation Z representatives, as well as to find the differences in this area between the generation individual groups, which for the purposes of this research are distinguished using the criterion of age and work experience.

Design/methodology/approach: The theoretical part uses the method of critical analysis of the literature, while the empirical part contains the results of own research using an online survey conducted among representatives of Generation Z.

Findings: Generation Z is not a homogeneous collectivity in terms of motivation for work. Depending on age and professional experience, a diversity of attitudes towards work was found among the members of Generation Z, concerning issues such as the career goal, gratification for work, work-life balance, teamwork, changing jobs, training and development. As regards the expected incentives, different assessments of the importance of their individual types were also found, including incentive, persuasion and coercion measures.

Research limitations/implications: The research results provide a valuable source of information on motivation in human resource management on the example of Generation Z, which proves to be very diverse. They also fill the research gap in this area. The limitations of the study are due to the use of the online survey method. The aim of the acquired knowledge, both methodological and empirical, is to improve the methodology of nationwide representative surveys planned in the future.

Practical implications: The research results provide the managerial staff with knowledge that forms the basis for creating strategies and incentive systems in the area of human resource management in generationally diversified organisations, including those employing representatives of Generation Z.

Social implications: Perceiving the status of an individual in terms of belonging to a specific generation as the main determinant of his/her characteristics, including the attitude to work, would be an example of erroneous stereotyping. Individual generations are not uniform. A single group can demonstrate a huge variety of views, attitudes and behaviours.

Originality/value: The research provides a new perspective on the management of motivation of the representatives of Generation Z, which turns out to be very diverse in terms of attitudes towards work and expected incentives. The paper originality results from the empirical research presenting motivation as an element of human resource management in the context of the Generation Z diversity.

Keywords: human resource management, motivation, incentives, motivation management, Generation Z.

Category of the paper: Research paper.

1. Introduction

Social and economic changes taking place in the modern world force organisations to modify their approaches to human resource management. Employers are looking for new solutions in the above area, which includes the element of motivating employees. This is becoming more and more difficult, as work-related priorities and expectations change dynamically and in many directions. They are diversified in the cross-section of a large number of factors differentiating labour resources, among which the differences between generations play a huge role. In this context, an important theoretical and practical problem is the issue of effective motivation of employees coming from different generations.

There are currently four main generations of employees on the labour market: BB, X, Y and Z. The relatively poorest description can be found of the representatives of the youngest and the least recognized Z Generation, which includes people born after 1995 (Barhate, Dirani, 2022; Barszcz, 2020; Lutyńska, Wasiluk, 2023; Seemiller, Grace, 2016; Seemiller, Grace, 2018; Szukalski, 2012; Wątroba, 2017). It should be emphasised that, in the context of management, the occurrence of these generations is not a problem because on the labour market there have always been employees of different ages. It is important, however, to differentiate the characteristics of individual groups in terms of, for example, presented attitudes towards and expectations of work, as well as their impact on human resource management. Therefore, in recent years, more and more attention has been devoted to the issues of generational diversity management in organisations (Dziopak-Strach, 2018; Godlewska-Majkowska, Lipiec, 2018; Hysa, 2016; Jagoda, 2016; Kordbacheh, Shultz, Olson, 2014; Lapoint, Liprie-Spence, 2017; Lewicka, 2017; Lipka, Król, 2017; Sidor-Rządkowska, 2018; Waligóra, 2018; Warwas, Wiktorowicz, Jawor-Joniewicz, 2018; Wiktorowicz et al., 2016). Particular importance should be given to the youngest and – as already mentioned – the least recognized Z Generation, which is just entering the labour market, but which – according to some forecasts – by 2028 will account for 58% of the global labour force (Borowska, Pietroń-Pyszczyk, 2025; Makolus, 2022).

The issue of motivation in the management literature has been taken up in a great number of studies which present the results of systemic analyses concerning the concept of motivation and incentive (Armstrong, 2010; Dhaliwal, 2016; Juchnowicz, 2012; Kamińska, Warzyński, 2011; Kozłowski, 2009, 2017; Król, Ludwiczynski, 2006; Krzakiewicz, 2006; Kumar et al., 2025; Lenik, 2012; Lipka, 2021; Masłyk-Musiał, 2011; Myjak, 2018; Penc, 2000; Poczowski, 2008; Przybyła, 2003; Woźniak, 2012). Generational diversity and its impact on the selection of appropriate strategies, incentive systems and means, despite being the subject of a growing interest, have not so far been treated in a sufficiently detailed scope and in many cases they mainly take account of the older BB, X and Y generations (Bugaj, Budzanowska-Drzewiecka, Jędrzejczyk, 2022; Jankowiak, Czerwińska-Lubszczyk, 2024; Kobyłka, 2016; Lipka, 2019; Lutyńska, Wasiluk, 2023; Mazur-Wierzbicka, 2015; Murzyn, Nogiec, 2015; Nieżurawska-Zajac, 2020; Opalińska, 2018; Smolbik-Jęczmień, 2013). Works on Generation Z, and, in particular, comprehensive studies including empirical research results, are still rather scarce. Most of them are just a reason for further in-depth research.

Moreover, the results of the research have so far been quite divergent. Some authors emphasise that Generation Z representatives demonstrate a low level of internal motivation, which manifests itself in poor engagement in work (Dziopak-Strach, 2018). Additionally, it is pointed out that this issue is correlated with the years of work experience. Motivation and commitment increase in subsequent age groups with the length of service (Kordbacheh, Shultz, Olson, 2014; Lewicka, 2017). On the other hand, a survey conducted by Juchnowicz (2014) indicated that employees showed the greatest engagement in the first year of employment. Such results can be explained by the fact that respondents with the shortest period of service are in a phase of fascination with their first job. They show a high level of energy and a desire to present themselves to the employer in a good light, feeling no potential frustration caused by previous work experiences. At the same time, the prevailing view is that for all workers, regardless of age, the strongest factor affecting motivation and commitment at work is remuneration, together with financial rewards, followed among others by job security and stability, as well as work atmosphere (Dziopak-Strach, 2018; Jawor-Joniewicz, 2016; Sajkiewicz, 2016). Research results can also be found that indicate that for the youngest generation the most important are the job flexibility, in terms of the place, hours and form of work, and work-life balance, with the financial aspects just behind the above-mentioned factors (Gajda, 2017; Lutyńska, Wasiluk, 2023).

The importance of this research area results, among others, from the fact that – as it can be assumed – Generation Z, apart from being different from its predecessors, is also internally diverse, which affects the management of this youngest group of employees (Aggarwal et al., 2020; Barhate, Dirani, 2022; Borowska, Pietroń-Pyszczyk, 2025; Dobrowolski, Drozdowski, Pandit, 2022; Dwivedula, 2025; Fodor, Jaeckel, 2018; Gabrielova Buchko, 2021; Gajda, 2017; Lipiński, Koczy, 2023; Lutyńska, Wasiluk, 2023; Ławińska, Korombel, 2023; Mahmoud et al., 2021; Messyasz, 2021; Muster, 2020; Różańska-Bińczyk, 2022; Pietroń-Pyszczyk, Borowska, 2022; Tomaszuk, Wasiluk, 2023; Żarczyńska-Dobiesz, Chomętowska, 2014).

2. Motivation and incentive in human resource management in theoretical terms

The issue of motivation has for many years been the subject of interest from both the theory and practice of management, especially the management of human resources in organisations. The knowledge of the mechanisms of human motivation to work and the ability to use them is one of the factors of effective human resource management and organisational success on a competitive market. The issue of motivation is also relevant due to the continuous social and economic changes and generational differences between successive generations of employees.

The concept of “motivation” is understood differently and its universal definition has not been found yet. It is probably due to the fact that there are so many determinants that influence people and their active and conscious shaping of the life and work environment (Kozłowski, 2009, 2017; Krzakiewicz, 2006). Within the scope of the motivation-related issues in human resource management, there are internal and external determinants of people’s behaviours in the work process. From this point of view, two approaches to motivation are of fundamental importance: attributive and functional (Juchnowicz, 2012; Nieżurawska-Zajac, 2020; Pocztowski, 2008). In the attributive approach, motivation is defined as “the internal force and state regulating people's behaviours in the work environment, i.e. the state activating, directing and sustaining their behaviours aimed at achieving professional goals (internal motivation)” (Pocztowski, 2008, p. 203). Motivation in this case means an internal process regulating people’s behaviours in the work process, i.e. influencing decisions about taking up a job, engaging in doing it and giving a job up. In the functional approach, motivation is treated as “a configuration of external factors influencing people’s behaviours and determining their strength and durability (external motivation)” (Pocztowski, 2008, p. 203). In functional terms, motivation means incentive, i.e. conscious and purposeful influence on people’s behaviours in the work process, using knowledge about the factors that determine them. In this approach, motivation is one of the classic management functions, including planning, organising, motivating and controlling.

In the theory and practice of management, shaping people's motivation in an organisation is considered as one of the very important management methods, referred to as motivation management, requiring the formulation of an appropriate incentive strategy. There are interesting studies and considerations in this field, but also considerable areas of ignorance. The question is still open what really motivates people to act, how their motivation to work is influenced by such factors as: inspiring, stimulating, inducing and even forcing, and in what conditions they want to work efficiently, assuming that both people and conditions change (Juchnowicz, 2012).

The incentive strategy consists in setting long-term goals in the sphere of motivating employees, defining the directions of action, the corresponding tools, and allocating the means necessary to achieve the goals. This extends the time horizon of decisions and makes them more rational. The main argument for the need to have an incentive strategy is the fact that incentive solutions should support the global strategy of the organisation and the strategy of human resource management (Juchnowicz, 2010).

The task of the organisation managers is to connect the motivation of employees with the needs of the organisation. This may sometimes require, in addition to trying to strengthen the employees' motivation, a modification of the organisation goals and working methods. Motivation management is the process of identifying the needs of employees and taking them into account so that high-level results should be achieved. In the work environment this means taking into account the needs that people bring with them to the workplace. In the context of managing an organisation, it is extremely important to develop a proper motivation process and an incentive system.

The impact that people's needs have on their actions is used in the motivation process. Motivating is identifying the needs of subordinates and activating these needs consciously to stimulate subordinates to an action that is in line with the manager's will, but also leads to their needs being satisfied. The essence of the motivation process is therefore to put subordinates in a situation in which they can satisfy their needs, provided that the tasks set before them are carried out efficiently (Przybyła, 2003).

The development of a motivation strategy consists in shaping the motivation process and an appropriate incentive system. The motivation process is a broader concept than the incentive system, the latter being a part of the former. The incentive system is a system of logically coherent and mutually supportive means (tools) of motivation (Juchnowicz, 2010). Every manager has many opportunities to stimulate and consolidate motivation. He/she can operate using various means, and so motivate by creating higher wages, but also by getting the employees' interested in the work itself, by creating prospects for promotion, better social benefits, better working conditions, greater opportunities for participation in management, greater freedom of action by expanding the possibilities of choice, etc.

3. Characteristics of Generation Z

The term "generation" has been present in scientific discourse for many years and is characterized by ambiguity (McQueen, 2016). Today, a generation is defined as "a collectivity of individuals born and living in the same era. Belonging to a generation is determined not only by the year of birth, but also by shared experiences shaped by a particular society" (Giddens, Sutton, 2012, p. 1084). McCrindle and Wolfinger (2010, p. 19) regarded a generation as "a group of people born in the same era, shaped by the same times and influenced by

the same social markers – in other words, a cohort united by age and life stage, conditions and technology, events and experiences”. Generational belonging is a subject of interest and analysis in many scientific disciplines, including management, especially in the context of human resource management.

Modern generations are changing much faster than before. In the past, a generational change occurred every 25-30 years, and now new generations may appear even every decade. In the literature, the researchers studying this problem argue about the exact time frame to which a given generation belongs. It is assumed herein that currently on the labour market in Poland there are representatives of four basic generations (Barszcz, 2020; Lutyńska, Wasiluk, 2023; Sidor-Rządkowska, 2018; Wątroba, 2017; Żarczyńska-Dobiesz, Chomątowska, 2014):

1. Baby Boomers (BB) – born between 1946 and 1964.
2. Generation X (Post-Boomers) – born between 1965 and 1979.
3. Generation Y (Millennials, the Internet Generation, the Google Generation, the SMS Generation) – born between 1980 and 1994.
4. Generation Z (Generation C – from the words connected, communicating, content-centric, computerized, community-oriented, always clicking, the members of which are also referred to as Z's, iGeneration, Gen Tech, Gen Wii, Net Gen, digital natives, Gen Next, Post Gen) – born in 1995 and later.

The oldest generation of the so-called “Traditionalists” (the Silent Generation) should also be mentioned. These are the people born in 1945 and earlier, who, although possibly still active on the labour market, already play a marginal role there, most often acting as mentors. In addition, there is the term “Millennials”, which is not clear. According to some authors, Millennials are the people born between 1980 and 1995, and in this case they would have to be classed as Generation Y. Others claim that this period should be extended to even the late-90's, which means that Millennials would also include the oldest representatives of Generation Z (Barszcz, 2020; Żarczyńska-Dobiesz, Chomątowska, 2014). The term Generation “Alpha” has also appeared lately to refer to the youngest people born in 2010 and later (*Understanding Generation Alpha*).

The youngest generation entering, and to a large extent already functioning on the labour market, is Generation Z. According to the typology of generations presented earlier, these are people who are currently under 30. Assuming the existence of a separate generation: “Alpha”, the lower age limit of the representatives of Generation Z is now 15. This means a very large variety of Z's in the age span of 15 to 30, who are people learning at different levels of education, as well as graduates of different types of schools, already having several years of work experience.

Trying to characterise Generation Z, it is noted that they have many features in common with the representatives of the earlier Generation Y. This applies to the oldest Z's in particular. On the other hand, there is a consensus that apart from being only more advanced than their predecessors in the use of new technologies, they differ from them significantly in many respects (Żarczyńska-Dobiesz, Chomątowska, 2014).

The representatives of Generation Z grew up surrounded by devices created by new technologies (the computer, the Internet, mobile phones, mobile devices). They use them with great ease, treating their omnipresence as something normal. Using more and more technologically advanced solutions and applications, they have access to all kinds of data and information contained therein, and they can communicate with other people from any place and at any time. They are a global generation and therefore establish international and intercultural contacts easily, thus having a great opportunity to learn foreign languages quickly. Moreover, they can function in parallel in the real and virtual world and make a smooth transition from one to the other because in their opinion the two worlds complement each other.

On the other hand, it is often stressed that members of this cohort focus on new technologies excessively in their life, suffer from increasing addiction to technology and have problems with distinguishing the virtual world from the real one. Living constantly online, Generation Z members limit their verbal communication skills and lose the ability to make contacts in the real world. Among the weaknesses of Z's, problems are also mentioned such as poor concentration, distraction, lack of patience, superficiality in assessing information and making analyses, a materialistic and consumerist approach to life, together with great uncertainty about the future (Barszcz, 2020; Lutyńska, Wasiluk, 2023; Żarczyńska-Dobiesz, Chomątowska, 2014).

4. Results of empirical research

The aim of the quantitative primary research was to identify and characterise attitudes towards work and the means of motivation expected by Generation Z representatives. The research also aimed to identify the differences in this respect between individual groups of this cohort, which were distinguished according to the criterion of age and work experience. The research used an online survey method consisting of closed questions and a metric. The survey was carried out from March to May 2025 with the participation of 440 students and graduates of the University of the Commission for National Education in Krakow, representing Generation Z. The respondents were divided into three groups:

- Group Z1 – people aged 18-24 with no work experience, i.e. they had never worked before under any form of employment (this group accounted for 25.5% of the respondents).
- Group Z2 – people aged 18-24 with work experience, i.e. either they were working at the time or had worked before using any form of employment (39.3% of the respondents).
- Group Z3 – like Group Z2 but older – at the age of 25-30 (35.2% of the respondents).

Women accounted for 65.7% of all the respondents, while men accounted for 34.3%. Nearly half of the respondents described their financial situation as average (46.8%). 11.1% of them described their material situation as very good, 20.5% as good, 13.0% as bad, and 8.6% as very bad. Almost every fifth respondent came from a city with more than 500 thousand inhabitants (19.8%), or from a village (19.5%). The rest came from towns and cities of less than 10 thousand inhabitants (13.9%), 11-50 thousand inhabitants (15.0%), 51-100 thousand inhabitants (16.4%) and 101-500 thousand inhabitants (15.5%).

The subject scope of the research covered attitudes towards work and the means of motivation expected by the representatives of Generation Z.

The following research hypotheses were adopted:

1. There are differences in attitudes towards work depending on the age and professional experience of the members of Generation Z, including attitudes towards issues such as the career goal, gratification/pay for work, work-life balance, teamwork, change of jobs, training and development.
2. The most important in motivating the representatives of Generation Z to work are incentives (including mainly those of a material nature), then persuasion means (related to the formation of relationships, development and achievements), whereas coercive measures (orders, prohibitions, control, penalties) are by far the least important.
3. There are differences in the assessment of motivation means depending on the age and work experience of Generation Z representatives. The older they are and the more experience they have, the more important incentives and persuasion means are for them, while coercive means definitely lose their significance.

The research hypotheses were verified during empirical research, the results of which are presented below.

4.1. Attitudes towards work

“Attitude” is a fundamental concept in social sciences, which results, among others, from the importance it is given in the context of the impact on human behaviour. An attitude is crucial both for the action taken in various areas of one’s own activities, as well as for the activity of others. Attitudes can be used to predict human behaviour (Juchnowicz, 2014; Juchnowicz, Mazurek-Kucharska, Turek, 2018).

A particular type of attitudes that are important from the point of view of creating desired organisational behaviours are the attitudes towards work, i.e. “the tendency of a human to react in a certain way to the tasks and effects of his/her own work” (Juchnowicz, 2014, p. 103). The general attitude towards work consists of many partial attitudes towards different work-related elements (Juchnowicz, Mazurek-Kucharska, Turek, 2018). The elements adopted in this primary research are as follows: the career goal, gratification/pay, work-life balance, teamwork, changing jobs, and training and development (Table 1).

Table 1.*Attitudes of respondents towards work*

Item	Total	Groups of respondents			Change in importance with age and gained work experience
		18-24 years of age, no work experience (Z1)	18-24 years of age, with work experience (Z2)	25-30 years of age, with work experience (Z3)	
Career goal					
Waiting patiently for a raise or promotion in one workplace	43.9 %	31.3 %	38.2 %	59.4 %	↑
Expecting a fast career, parallel careers, an unlimited career	49.3 %	60.7 %	54.9 %	34.8 %	↓
Hard to say	6.8 %	8.0 %	6.9 %	5.8 %	-
Gratification for work					
Sense of pleasure and satisfaction derived from work, the importance of material factors is less important	17.7 %	21.4 %	17.3 %	15.5 %	↓
Quick pay, well-paid job as the most important factor	75.7 %	68.8 %	76.9 %	79.4 %	↑
Hard to say	6.6 %	9.8 %	5.8 %	5.2 %	-
Work-life balance					
Prioritizing work over personal life according to the “I live to work” principle	13.6 %	8.0 %	12.1 %	19.4 %	↑
A great need for flexibility and good work-life balance according to the “I work to live” principle	83.6 %	88.4 %	85.0 %	78.7 %	↓
Hard to say	2.7 %	3.6 %	2.9 %	1.9 %	-
Teamwork					
Great importance of teamwork, readiness to submit to the group with a view to achieving collectivity objectives	39.1 %	34.8 %	39.3 %	41.9 %	↑
Putting individualistic attitudes first, prioritising own needs over collectivity objectives	58.6 %	62.5 %	59.0 %	55.5 %	↓
Hard to say	2.3 %	2.7 %	1.7 %	2.6 %	-
Changing jobs					
Ultimate necessity, fear of losing the achieved position	24.3 %	17.0 %	23.7 %	30.3 %	↑
A normal and common phenomenon, the importance of a high openness to change, professional mobility and ease of adaptation	71.6 %	75.9 %	72.3 %	67.7 %	↓
Hard to say	4.1 %	7.1 %	4.0 %	1.9 %	-
Training & Development					
Training considered as an opportunity to connect with the current workplace (“anchor” of employment)	28.0 %	19.6 %	26.0 %	36.1 %	↑
Readiness for continuous education as a way of career development at various places.	70.5 %	76.8 %	72.3 %	63.9 %	↓
Hard to say	1.6 %	3.6 %	1.7 %	0.0 %	-

Source: own studies.

The surveyed representatives of Generation Z demonstrate quite a lot of impatience when it comes to achieving career goals. Nearly half of them expect a “fast career” (49.3%), slightly less declare “patient waiting for a raise or promotion in one workplace” (43.9%). Although the respondents are before or at the beginning of their professional career, their opinions in this area are clearly defined, only 6.8% do not have a firm opinion and answered “Hard to say”.

The members of Group Z1 (aged 18-24 and never employed) are the most impatient. As many as 60.7% of them expect a “fast career”, and only a third (31.3%) are ready to wait patiently for it to happen. It turns out that people who have already entered the labour market and have some work experience are much more cautious in such declarations. In Group Z2 (people aged 18-24 and with work experience), slightly more than a half (54.9%) expect a “fast career”, and in the oldest group (aged 25-30 with work experience) only a third of the respondents (34.8%) chose this answer. At the same time, the percentage of those waiting patiently for their career to develop increases to 38.2% (Z2) and 59.4% (Z3). The above data indicate that with age and gained work experience, the expectation of a “fast career” among the representatives of Generation Z decreases clearly.

When it comes to the attitudes of respondents towards gratification/pay, as many as 3/4 of them expect “quick pay” and treat “a well-paid job” as “the most important factor” (75.7%). Only 17.7% of the respondents rank high “the sense of pleasure and satisfaction from work”, adding that the importance of material factors is less important, while 6.6% have no opinion on this issue.

“The sense of pleasure and satisfaction from work” with the lesser importance of material factors was most often indicated by the representatives of Group Z1 (aged 18-24 and never employed) (21.4%). This was declared less frequently by members of Group Z2 (aged 18-24 and employed) (17.3%) and Group Z3 (aged 25-30 and employed) (15.5%). At the same time, the percentage of people declaring the expectation of “quick pay” and indicating “a well-paid job as the most important factor” increased in the surveyed groups – 68.8% (Z1), 76.9% (Z2) and 79.4% (Z3). The obtained results clearly show that the attitudes towards and expectations of gratification/pay of the respondents representing Generation Z materialise with age, their entry into the labour market and gained work experience,

The research results also indicate that the surveyed representatives of Generation Z are strong supporters of the work-life balance concept. As many as 83.6% of the respondents declare “a great need for flexibility and work-life balance” according to the “I work to live” principle. On the other hand, only 13.6% declare “prioritising work over personal life” according to the “I live to work” principle, while 2.7% did not have an opinion on this issue.

The highest percentage of people advocating flexibility and work-life balance was found among the people aged 18-24 and never employed, i.e. in Group Z1 (88.4%). It turns out that entering the labour market and first work experience reduce the importance of this attitude. Among those aged 18-24 and already having some work experience (Group Z2), the percentage

of people definitely supporting the work-life balance concept was 85.0%, while among the older representatives of Generation Z, i.e. people aged 25-30 and employed, it was 78.7% (Z3). At the same time, with age and increasing professional activity the percentage of people declaring “prioritising work over personal life” according to the “I live to work” principle gets higher, totalling 8.0% (Z1), 12.1% (Z2) and 19.4% (Z3). In Z3 the group of such people was almost 2.5 times bigger than in Z1. This proves that professional activity and the challenges related thereto, such as the need to care for the job to keep it, the desire for promotion and higher pay, which is of great importance at the beginning of the professional career, result in the readiness to devote oneself more to work, even at the expense of personal life.

Another issue under analysis was the attitude towards teamwork. The research results indicate that among the representatives of Generation Z there is clear domination of the individualistic approach. 58.6% of the respondents declared “an individualistic attitude” and “prioritising own needs over collectivity objectives”. The importance of “team work”, the “readiness to submit to the group with a view to achieving collectivity objectives” were indicated by 39.1% of those surveyed. Only 2.3% of the respondents did not have an opinion on this issue.

Individualistic attitudes are the most pronounced in Group Z1 (aged 18-24 and never employed) (62.5%). They are slightly less visible in Group Z2 (aged 18-24 and employed) (59.0%) and Group Z3 (aged 25-30 and employed) (55.5%). With age and gained work experience the importance of teamwork is indicated more and more often. Great importance of teamwork and the “readiness to submit to the group with a view to achieving collectivity objectives” was indicated by 34.82% of the people in Group Z1, as well as by 39.3% and 41.9% of the people in Group Z2 and Group Z3, respectively.

There is noticeable readiness to change jobs among the representatives of Generation Z if necessary. Nearly 3/4 of the respondents (71.6%) declared that “changing jobs is a normal and common phenomenon”, emphasising the “importance of a high openness to change, professional mobility and ease of adaptation”. Only one in four respondents said that “changing jobs is the ultimate necessity” accompanied by the “fear of losing the achieved position” (24.3%), while 4.1% had no opinion on this issue.

The highest number of those treating change as a “normal and common phenomenon” was among the people aged 18-24 and never employed (Group Z1) (75.9%). In Group Z2 (aged 18-24 and employed), the percentage was already smaller (72.3%), while the lowest was among the older and working representatives of Generation Z, i.e. people aged 25-30 and employed (Z3) (67.7%). At the same time, the perception of changing jobs as the “ultimate necessity” accompanied by the “fear of losing the achieved position” was the least common in Group Z1 (17.0%), while it was more frequent in Group Z2 (23.7%) and Group Z3 (30.3%). In the case of the older members of Generation Z (Group Z3), i.e. the people aged 25-30 and employed), such opinions were almost twice as common as in Group Z1 (aged 18-24 and never employed). Functioning on the labour market and achieving a certain professional position, although not at

all the highest in the case of even older members of Generation Z, weakens the readiness to change jobs and treat this as a “normal and common phenomenon”. Instead, a fear of the change and loss of the achieved position appears.

The last analysed issue concerning attitudes towards work was the importance of training in the context of professional development. A vast majority of the respondents pointed to the “readiness for continuous education as a way of career development at various places” (70.5%), while those who treated training as “an opportunity to connect with the current workplace”, thus perceiving it as a certain “anchor” (guarantee) of employment at their current workplace belonged to a minority (28.0%). Only 1.6% of those surveyed had no opinion on this issue.

The most active approach to training as a “way of career development at various places” was demonstrated by the members of Group Z1 (aged 18-24 and never employed) (76.8%). In Group Z2 (aged 18-24 and employed) and in Group Z3 (aged 25-30 and employed), the percentage was 72.3% and 63.9%, respectively. The passive approach, meaning that training is treated as “an opportunity to connect with the current workplace”, i.e. in terms of a guarantee of current employment, was most often demonstrated by the members of Group Z3 (36.1%), followed by Group Z2 (26.0%) and Group Z1 (19.6%). This attitude was indicated almost twice more often by the older representatives of Generation Z, who already had some work experience. The above indicates that with age and the achievement of a certain professional position, the tendency to engage in training as a means of acquiring new knowledge, skills and competences useful in potential new workplaces decreases.

All in all, the above data show that with age and gained work experience, the expectation of a “fast career” among the representatives of Generation Z decreases clearly. They become more patient in achieving their career goals. In addition, their attitudes and expectations towards gratification for work become more materialistic. Work activity and the challenges related to satisfying job requirements result in increased readiness for greater devotion to work, even at the expense of personal life. There is a growing awareness of the role and importance of team work. On the other hand, the willingness to change jobs and undertake training useful in possible new jobs decreases.

4.2. Means of motivation

The means used in the incentive system (also referred to as stimuli, motivators, instruments and forms of motivation) can be classified according to a number of criteria (Przybyła, 2003). According to the criterion of financial (material) measurability, material and non-material means are distinguished. Using the criterion of formal validity (recognising the means as binding and/or acceptable), formal and informal means can be considered. The criterion of the direction and manner of their impact on employees makes it possible to distinguish positive and negative means (rewards and penalties). In another approach, the means of motivation can be divided into three basic groups: incentive, persuasion, and coercion means (Juchnowicz,

2012; Penc, 2000). The incentive means are any promises made to a member of an organisation (employee) that if the organisation recommendation is followed, there will be consequences whose positive value (useful result) exceeds the cost of performance of/compliance with the recommendation. The persuasion means are motivation means referring to internal motivation, resulting from mutual relations between the motivating representative of the organisation and the motivated employee. The coercive means, on the other hand, include all dictates and prohibitions, orders and recommendations, as well as advice of the superior that force a certain behaviour and action within the organisation.

The research used the approach of the Kontekst HR International Group consultants, who proposed the so-called motivational mix consisting of five main interrelated areas of motivation instruments. These include “material values” (incentive means), “relationships”, “achievements”, “development” (persuasion means), and “pressure” (coercion means) (*Mix motywacyjny*). Twenty-three detailed means were analysed in each of the five areas of motivation. Generation Z representatives were asked to determine the weight of each of them on a scale from 1 to 3, where 1 meant that the means of motivation was not important for them, 2 meant that it was of average importance, and 3 meant that the motivation means was important.

In the total number of Generation Z respondents, in the five main areas of motivation means, the highest average ratings were given to “material values” (2.78), “relationships” (2.76) and “development” (2.73). “Achievements” ranked slightly lower (2.59), while “pressure” was assessed the lowest (1.67%) (Table 2). In other words, the research results show that the most important instruments for motivating Generation Z representatives are incentive means (“material values”), then the means of persuasion (“relationships”, “development”, “achievements”), and the means of coercion (“pressure”) are considered as the least important.

Table 2.

The importance of the main groups of motivation means (on a scale from 1 /not important/ to 3 /important/) and the change in the respondents' opinion

Item	Total		Groups of respondents						Change in importance with age and gained work experience
			18-24 years of age, no work experience (Z1)		18-24 years of age, with work experience (Z2)		25-30 years of age, with work experience (Z3)		
	Assessment	Place	Assessment	Place	Assessment	Place	Assessment	Place	
Material values	2.78	1	2.74	2	2.75	2-3	2.78	2	↑
Relationships	2.76	2	2.71	3	2.77	1	2.79	1	↑
Achievements	2.59	4	2.57	4	2.61	4	2.58	4	-
Development	2.73	3	2.79	1	2.75	2-3	2.65	3	↓
Pressure	1.67	5	1.56	5	1.70	5	1.72	5	↑

Source: own studies.

The hierarchy of the importance of the three most important areas was different in the three surveyed groups of respondents. Among the younger respondents aged 18-24 and never employed (Group Z1), “development” (2.79) ranked first, followed by “material values” (2.74) and “relationships” (2.71). The respondents aged 18-24 and employed (Group Z2) indicated “relationships” as the most important (2.77), followed by equally ranked “material values” (2.75) and “development” (2.75). A similar order of importance was observed among the older respondents aged 25-30 and employed (Group Z3), i.e. “relationships” (2.79), “material values” (2.78), “development” (2.65). Only the last two areas, “achievements” and “pressure” ranked the lowest in each group in the fourth and fifth place.

In addition to the above-mentioned hierarchy of the importance of the five main areas of motivation means, it is also worth noting that with age and gained work experience, the respondents rated higher “material values” (Z1: 2.74; Z2: 2.75; Z3: 2.78), “relationships” (Z1: 2.71; Z2: 2.77; Z3: 2.79) and “pressure” (Z1: 1.56; Z2: 1.70; Z3: 1.72), but the importance of “development” decreased (Z1: 2.79; Z2: 2.75; Z3: 2.65). In the case of “achievements”, no such clear-cut dependencies were found.

The overall assessments of the five main areas of motivation means presented above are based on a thorough analysis of the detailed means corresponding to them (Table 3). Of the twenty-three motivation means under analysis, the respondents ranked first in terms of importance: “pay” (incentive in the area of “material values” – ranked 2.94), “work atmosphere” (2.90) and “team relationships” (2.89) (means of persuasion in the area of “relationships”), “contact with modern technologies” (2.87, means of persuasion in the area of “development”), “relationships with the superior” (2.86, means of persuasion in the area of “relationships”). At the very end were two coercive means in the area of “pressure”, i.e. “the scope and intensity of control” (1.71) and “penalty hazard” (1.63).

Table 3.

The importance of individual motivation means in the respondents' opinion (on a scale from 1 /not important/ to 3 /important/)

Item	Importance				Assessment	Place
	Important (3)	Average importance (2)	Not important (1)	Hard to say		
Total						
Material values						
Pay	95.0 %	4.1 %	0.9 %	0.0 %	2.94	1
Safe working conditions	88.0 %	5.7 %	3.4 %	3.0 %	2.79	8-9
Job security	67.5 %	22.7 %	5.2 %	4.5 %	2.53	19
Material rewards	88.6 %	5.0 %	3.9 %	2.5 %	2.80	7
Bonuses and additional benefits	91.1 %	4.5 %	2.5 %	1.8 %	2.85	6
Relationships						
Organisational culture	74.1 %	15.9 %	6.8 %	3.2 %	2.61	14-15
Work atmosphere	93.2 %	4.3 %	1.4 %	1.1 %	2.90	2

Cont. Table 3.

Relationships in the team	92.5 %	5.0 %	1.4 %	1.1 %	2.89	3
Relationships with the superior	91.6 %	4.3 %	2.7 %	1.4 %	2.86	5
Organisational credibility	70.9 %	16.8 %	8.0 %	4.3 %	2.54	18
Achievements						
Status of the position held	69.1 %	17.7 %	8.9 %	4.3 %	2.52	20
Opportunity to succeed	71.6 %	19.1 %	6.6 %	2.7 %	2.60	16
Recognition, appreciation	76.6 %	17.5 %	3.4 %	2.5 %	2.68	12
Delegation of responsibility (powers)	71.1 %	17.0 %	7.0 %	4.8 %	2.55	17
Promotions	74.1 %	14.8 %	8.9 %	2.3 %	2.61	14-15
Development						
Work in a creative team	78.9 %	9.8 %	9.1 %	2.3 %	2.65	13
Opportunity to gain new experience	86.6 %	6.1 %	6.4 %	0.9 %	2.78	10
Training	85.0 %	7.0 %	6.1 %	1.8 %	2.75	11
Coaching	73.0 %	9.1 %	13.2 %	4.8 %	2.50	21
Contact with modern technologies	93.0 %	3.9 %	0.5 %	2.7 %	2.87	4
Expanding knowledge	86.4 %	7.3 %	5.2 %	1.1 %	2.79	8-9
Pressure						
Penalty hazard	20.9 %	35.2 %	29.8 %	14.1 %	1.63	23
Scope and intensity of control	24.3 %	37.3 %	23.9 %	14.5 %	1.71	22
Respondents aged 18-24 with no work experience (Z1)						
Material values						
Pay	92.0 %	6.3 %	1.8 %	0.0 %	2.90	2
Safe working conditions	84.8 %	6.3 %	5.4 %	3.6 %	2.72	12
Job security	54.5 %	30.4 %	9.8 %	5.4 %	2.34	21
Material rewards	90.2 %	6.3 %	3.6 %	0.0 %	2.87	6-7
Bonuses and additional benefits	91.1 %	7.1 %	1.8 %	0.0 %	2.89	3-4
Relationships						
Organisational culture	70.5 %	17.0 %	7.1 %	5.4 %	2.53	18
Work atmosphere	93.8 %	6.3 %	0.0 %	0.0 %	2.94	1
Relationships in the team	91.1 %	7.1 %	1.8 %	0.0 %	2.89	3-4
Relationships with the superior	88.4 %	5.4 %	3.6 %	2.7 %	2.79	10
Organisational credibility	64.3 %	18.8 %	9.8 %	7.1 %	2.40	20
Achievements						
Status of the position held	67.9 %	15.2 %	11.6 %	5.4 %	2.46	19
Opportunity to succeed	72.3 %	16.1 %	8.0 %	3.6 %	2.57	16
Recognition, appreciation	76.8 %	17.0 %	3.6 %	2.7 %	2.68	13
Delegation of responsibility (powers)	72.3 %	16.1 %	4.5 %	7.1 %	2.54	17
Promotions	74.1 %	14.3 %	9.8 %	1.8 %	2.61	14
Development						
Work in a creative team	85.7 %	7.1 %	4.5 %	2.7 %	2.76	11
Opportunity to gain new experience	91.1 %	6.3 %	2.7 %	0.0 %	2.88	5
Training	88.4 %	5.4 %	4.5 %	1.8 %	2.80	9
Coaching	77.7 %	8.9 %	7.1 %	6.3 %	2.58	15
Contact with modern technologies	90.2 %	7.1 %	0.0 %	2.7 %	2.85	8
Expanding knowledge	90.2 %	6.3 %	3.6 %	0.0 %	2.87	6-7
Pressure						
Penalty hazard	21.4 %	25.0 %	32.1 %	21.4 %	1.46	23
Scope and intensity of control	27.7 %	26.8 %	28.6 %	17.0 %	1.65	22
Respondents aged 18-24 with work experience (Z2)						
Material values						
Pay	94.2 %	4.6 %	1.2 %	0.0 %	2.93	1
Safe working conditions	87.3 %	6.4 %	2.9 %	3.5 %	2.77	10-11
Job security	64.2 %	27.2 %	4.0 %	4.6 %	2.51	20-21
Material rewards	88.4 %	4.0 %	3.5 %	4.0 %	2.77	10-11
Bonuses and additional benefits	84.4 %	11.0 %	2.9 %	1.7 %	2.78	9

Cont. table 3.

Relationships						
Organisational culture	74.6 %	16.2 %	6.4 %	2.9 %	2.62	14
Work atmosphere	93.1 %	3.5 %	1.7 %	1.7 %	2.88	3
Relationships in the team	93.6 %	4.0 %	1.2 %	1.2 %	2.90	2
Relationships with the superior	91.3 %	4.0 %	2.9 %	1.7 %	2.85	4
Organisational credibility	72.3 %	16.8 %	6.9 %	4.0 %	2.57	18
Achievements						
Status of the position held	68.8 %	18.5 %	8.1 %	4.6 %	2.51	20-21
Opportunity to succeed	70.5 %	19.7 %	7.5 %	2.3 %	2.58	17
Recognition, appreciation	78.0 %	17.9 %	2.9 %	1.2 %	2.73	12
Delegation of responsibility (powers)	73.4 %	17.3 %	5.2 %	4.0 %	2.60	15-16
Promotions	74.0 %	15.6 %	6.9 %	3.5 %	2.60	15-16
Development						
Work in a creative team	78.0 %	11.6 %	8.7 %	1.7 %	2.66	13
Opportunity to gain new experience	89.6 %	5.2 %	4.0 %	1.2 %	2.83	6-7
Training	88.4 %	6.9 %	4.0 %	0.6 %	2.83	6-7
Coaching	72.3 %	11.0 %	13.3 %	3.5 %	2.52	19
Contact with modern technologies	92.5 %	3.5 %	0.0 %	4.0 %	2.84	5
Expanding knowledge	87.3 %	5.8 %	5.8 %	1.2 %	2.79	8
Pressure						
Penalty hazard	22.5 %	32.9 %	31.2 %	13.3 %	1.65	23
Scope and intensity of control	26.0 %	38.7 %	20.2 %	15.0 %	1.76	22
Respondents aged 25-30 with work experience (Z3)						
Material values						
Pay	98.1 %	1.9 %	0.0 %	0.0 %	2.98	1
Safe working conditions	91.0 %	4.5 %	2.6 %	1.9 %	2.85	6
Job security	80.6 %	12.3 %	3.2 %	3.9 %	2.70	9
Material rewards	87.7 %	5.2 %	4.5 %	2.6 %	2.78	7
Bonuses and additional benefits	78.1 %	11.0 %	5.8 %	5.2 %	2.62	15
Relationships						
Organisational culture	76.1 %	14.8 %	7.1 %	1.9 %	2.65	11
Work atmosphere	92.9 %	3.9 %	1.9 %	1.3 %	2.88	4
Relationships in the team	92.3 %	4.5 %	1.3 %	1.9 %	2.87	5
Relationships with the superior	94.2 %	3.9 %	1.9 %	0.0 %	2.92	2-3
Organisational credibility	74.2 %	15.5 %	7.7 %	2.6 %	2.61	16-17
Achievements						
Status of the position held	70.3 %	18.7 %	7.7 %	3.2 %	2.56	19
Opportunity to succeed	72.3 %	20.6 %	4.5 %	2.6 %	2.63	12-14
Recognition, appreciation	74.8 %	17.4 %	3.9 %	3.9 %	2.63	12-14
Delegation of responsibility (powers)	67.7 %	17.4 %	11.0 %	3.9 %	2.49	20
Promotions	74.2 %	14.2 %	10.3 %	1.3 %	2.61	16-17
Development						
Work in a creative team	74.8 %	9.7 %	12.9 %	2.6 %	2.57	18
Opportunity to gain new experience	80.0 %	7.1 %	11.6 %	1.3 %	2.66	10
Training	78.7 %	8.4 %	9.7 %	3.2 %	2.63	12-14
Coaching	70.3 %	7.1 %	17.4 %	5.2 %	2.43	21
Contact with modern technologies	95.5 %	1.9 %	1.3 %	1.3 %	2.92	2-3
Expanding knowledge	82.6 %	9.7 %	5.8 %	1.9 %	2.73	8
Pressure						
Penalty hazard	18.7 %	45.2 %	26.5 %	9.7 %	1.73	22
Scope and intensity of control	20.0 %	43.2 %	24.5 %	12.3 %	1.71	23

Source: own studies.

The assessments and the different hierarchies of importance of individual means of motivation were very different in the three analysed groups of respondents. Among the younger respondents aged 18-24 and never employed (group Z1), “work atmosphere” (2.94) was ranked

first, followed by “pay” (2.90), “relationships with the superior” (2.89), “bonuses and benefits” (2.89) and “opportunity to gain new experience” (2.88). It is worth noting that the last two issues mentioned above were not among the most important for the respondents in general.

In Group Z2 (aged 18-24 and employed) and in Group Z3 (aged 25-30 and employed), the most important were the same means as those indicated by the respondents in general, but in a different order. In group Z2, the importance hierarchy was as follows: “pay” (2.93), “relationships in the team” (2.90), “work atmosphere” (2.88), “relationships with the superior” (2.85) and “contact with modern technologies” (2.84). In Group Z3 “pay” also turned out to be the most important (2.98), but then there were: “relationships with the superior” (2.92), “contact with modern technologies” (2.92), “work atmosphere” (2.88) and “relationships in the team” (2.87). The groups (Z1, Z2 and Z3) agreed only in relation to the issues defined as “scope and intensity of control” and “penalty hazard”, included in the “pressure” area. In each group they took the last two places.

Analysing the development of the assessments of the importance of motivation means in the groups of respondents, it should be noted that in the case of as many as fifteen of the twenty-three analysed means, there is a linear relationship between their importance and the age of the respondents and their work experience (Table 4). In all the groups of the respondents (Z1, Z2, Z3), the importance of nine means of motivation: “pay”, “safe working conditions”, “job security”, “organisational culture”, “relationships with the superior”, “organisational credibility”, “status of the position held”, “opportunity to succeed” and “penalty hazard” increased. In contrast, six means were assessed lower in importance: “bonuses and additional benefits”, “work atmosphere”, “work in a creative team”, “opportunities to gain new experience”, “coaching” and “learning”. For the remaining eight means under analysis, no such clear-cut relationship was found.

Table 4.

Change in the importance of individual motivation means in the respondents' opinion (on a scale from 1 /not important/ to 3 /important/)

Item	Total		Groups of respondents						Change in importance with age and gained work experience
			18-24 years of age, no work experience (Z1)		18-24 years of age, with work experience (Z2)		25-30 years of age, with work experience (Z3)		
	Assessment	Place	Assessment	Place	Assessment	Place	Assessment	Place	
Material values									
Pay	2.94	1	2.90	2	2.93	1	2.98	1	↑
Safe working conditions	2.79	8-9	2.72	12	2.77	10-11	2.85	6	↑
Job security	2.53	19	2.34	21	2.51	20-21	2.70	9	↑
Material rewards	2.80	7	2.87	6-7	2.77	10-11	2.78	7	-
Bonuses and additional benefits	2.85	6	2.89	3-4	2.78	9	2.62	15	↓

Cont. Table 4.

Relationships									
Organisational culture	2.61	14-15	2.53	18	2.62	14	2.65	11	↑
Work atmosphere	2.90	2	2.94	1	2.88	3	2.88	4	↓
Relationships in the team	2.89	3	2.89	3-4	2.90	2	2.87	5	-
Relationships with the superior	2.86	5	2.79	10	2.85	4	2.92	2-3	↑
Organisational credibility	2.54	18	2.40	20	2.57	18	2.61	16-17	↑
Achievements									
Status of the position held	2.52	20	2.46	19	2.51	20-21	2.56	19	↑
Opportunity to succeed	2.60	16	2.57	16	2.58	17	2.63	12-14	↑
Recognition, appreciation	2.68	12	2.68	13	2.73	12	2.63	12-14	-
Delegation of responsibility (powers)	2.55	17	2.54	17	2.60	15-16	2.49	20	-
Promotions	2.61	14-15	2.61	14	2.60	15-16	2.61	16-17	-
Development									
Work in a creative team	2.65	13	2.76	11	2.66	13	2.57	18	↓
Opportunity to gain new experience	2.78	10	2.88	5	2.83	6-7	2.66	10	↓
Training	2.75	11	2.80	9	2.83	6-7	2.63	12-14	-
Coaching	2.50	21	2.58	15	2.52	19	2.43	21	↓
Contact with modern technologies	2.87	4	2.85	8	2.84	5	2.92	2-3	-
Expanding knowledge	2.79	8-9	2.87	6-7	2.79	8	2.73	8	↓
Pressure									
Penalty hazard	1.63	23	1.46	23	1.65	23	1.73	22	↑
Scope and intensity of control	1.71	22	1.65	22	1.76	22	1.71	23	-

Source: own studies.

To sum up this part of the research, it should be noted that “material values”, including pay, are generally the most important factors motivating Generation Z representatives. Next are the means of persuasion (“relationships”, “development”, “achievements”), and by far the least important are the means of coercion (“pressure”). However, the hierarchy of the importance of the groups of the means is slightly different in individual groups of the respondents distinguished for the purposes of the survey. Moreover, differences were also observed in the assessment of the importance of specific motivation means made by the members of the different groups under analysis.

5. Summary and conclusions

Generational diversity translates into the situation on the labour market, where representatives of different generations meet. It also affects the functioning of generationally diverse organisations. Rational management of motivation in such organisations requires the development of a balanced, extreme-free approach to the issue of generational diversity of

employees. A special group, composed of the representatives of the youngest Generation Z, is now gradually entering the market and gaining first work experience. The members of this cohort are not only specifically different from previous generations, but they also demonstrate considerable diversity within their own collectivity.

The results of the research are consistent with those indicating that financial aspects are generally the most important factor motivating to work. The impact of other factors is smaller and at the same time varied (Dziopak-Strach, 2018; Jawor-Joniewicz, 2016; Sajkiewicz, 2016). On the other hand, it should be emphasised that Generation Z is not homogeneous in this respect. There are differences in attitudes towards work depending on the age and work experience of Generation Z representatives, including attitudes to issues such as the career goal, gratification/pay for work, work-life balance, teamwork, changing jobs, training and development. Hypothesis 1, accepted in the research, has thus been confirmed. It turns out that with age and growing work experience the following phenomena occur in relation to Generation Z representatives:

- the expectation of a “fast career” decreases,
- the attitudes and expectations concerning gratification for work materialise (respondents expect “quick pay” and indicate a “well-paid job as the most important factor”),
- the readiness to “put work over personal life” according to the “I live to work” principle grows,
- the importance of “teamwork” and “the readiness to submit to the group with a view to achieving collectivity objectives” become greater,
- the willingness to change jobs, which is considered as the “ultimate necessity”, and which is accompanied by a “fear of losing the achieved position”, decreases,
- the readiness for “continuous education as a way of career development at different places” decreases.

Hypothesis 2 has also been confirmed. According to it, Generation Z representatives find the biggest motivation in incentives means, the most important being “material values”, followed by persuasion means (related to “relationships”, “development” and “achievements”). This cohort considers the means of coercion (“pressure”) as the least motivating.

Hypothesis 3 has been confirmed in part. Although there are differences in the assessment of the motivation means depending on the age and work experience of the members of Generation Z, they are a bit different from what was assumed. According to the assumptions, with the respondents’ age and work experience, the importance of incentive and persuasion means should increase, while the means of coercion should gradually lose significance. But it turns out that there appears an increase in the importance of not only incentive but also coercive means (“material values” and “pressure”, respectively), while in the case of persuasion means, which include a great variety of measures, one of them becomes more important (“relationships”), another loses its significance (“development”), and yet another

(“achievements”) does not show a clear-cut dependence on the age and work experience of the respondents.

The presented research may be an introduction to future in-depth studies on the role and importance of motivation in human resource management in generationally diverse organisations. It would be particularly interesting to create a panel of respondents and cyclical surveys indicating changes in their attitudes towards work as well as the role of individual groups of motivation means. With the respondents' transition from one age group to another and with increased work experience, the new potential research area is the identification and characterisation of factors related to job satisfaction or professional burnout.

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