



# Intergenerational Differences In Work Motivation And Reward Expectation

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**Abstract:** The purpose of this study was to examine how generational differences are influencing work motivation and reward expectations among Generation Y (Gen Y) and Generation Z (Gen Z) employees. This qualitative research employed a semi-structured interview method of data collection. Data from twenty interviews were analysed thematically using Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. The analysis showed both similarities and differences between the two generations. Both Gen Y and Gen Z participants indicated the importance of hybrid work models, meaningful career opportunities, and positive organizational culture. However, there were significant differences as well. The Gen Y participants showed preferences to career development over immediate financial rewards, recognized and valued public recognition, and were motivated in collaborative spaces, the Gen Z participants showed stronger preferences for financial security, private recognition, job stability, and alignment of work with values and passions. The findings suggest generational shifts related to motivational drivers and as organizations move toward more diverse and multigenerational workforces, it is necessary that organizations consider policies and engagement strategies that can meet the needs of a multigenerational workforce.

**Index Terms -** Generation Y, Generation Z, work motivation, reward expectations, Maslow's hierarchy of needs, hybrid work, organizational culture, qualitative research, generational differences, employee engagement

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Organizational behavior concentrates on studying human behavior in an organization to understand the impact of an individual, group, or body on an organization's performance and efficiency. (Robbins and Judge, 2019). Organizational behavior is the interdisciplinary study of the behavior of individuals and groups within an organizational context, as well as the nature of the organization itself. (Colquitt, Lepine, & Wesson, 2022)

At its core, organizational behavior is concerned with understanding how people behave in organizations and how they can be managed to achieve the goals of the organization. This includes examining: motivation, communication, leadership, group dynamics, and decision making. The interaction of these elements with employee attitudes, behavior, and performance is the focus of organizational behavior research and practice. As a scientific discipline, organizational behavior encompasses an array of aims in the workplace, including understanding and forecasting human behavior, enhancing organizational efficiency, and improving employee satisfaction.

Organizational Behavior (OB) researchers gather and study information using methods like surveys, interviews, observations, and experiments. This information is used to create strategies and methods that help increase an organization's success and the satisfaction of employees. OB practitioners include professionals like organizational psychologists, human resource experts, management experts, and others. These practitioners formulate strategies using research data to increase the involvement and productivity of the employees.

Some of the key topics in organizational behavior include

- Satisfaction at work and participation of employees
- Success of leaders and their leadership styles
- Being communicative, social, and other interactional skills
- Management, authority, and being influential
- Culture and atmosphere of an organization
- Giving reason and rewards and encouraging action
- Working as a team and group dynamics
- Making decision

Organizational behavior studies can be applied in many kinds of institutions, including but not limited to commercial entities, governmental institutions, health service providers, and educational centers. The main objective of organizational behavior is to assist institutions in cultivating a suitable environment that is productive while giving employees the opportunity to excel.

### **Motivation and Rewards Expectation**

As stated by Greenberg and Baron (2003), motivation is, "The set of processes that arouse, direct, and maintain human behavior toward attaining some goal" Motivation is a multifaceted subject, which means that people may have varied motives operating at once (Greenberg & Brown, 2003). We act because of our motivation.

There are two defined types of motivation. Firstly, state motivation is short lived and pertains both to a certain task, while trait motivation can simply be termed as unwavering and does not concern itself to the task at hand. This kind of motivation, which is inherent, holds significance upon task completion. The drive in motivation can stem both from within the person, often referred to as personal motives or externally.

Intrinsic motivation is sourced from doing something that is self-satisfying. Extrinsic motivation when there is action taken to gain something, usually a reward or sidestep an action that guarantee punishment. Reading for fun is something that stands for Intrinsic motivation while a clear incentive such as being graded by a teacher transforms the activity to one exemplifying Extrinsic motivation.

Motivation by Baron and Greenberg is composed of three elements: arousal, direction, and maintenance. Arousal pertains to the movement energy associated with an action, and as noted by Greenberg and Baron, motivation is interested in the different choices one takes in the behavior undertaken. The last part of the definition focuses on the maintenance component, which is the effort that enables one to keep going.

### **Work Motivation**

In the 1930s, social scientists as well as managers started looking into the impact of social factors on behavior. It brought to light group dynamics and the fact that employees as actors in an organization have more than one reason to be motivated is a strong powerful element impacting performance.

The willingness and effort one is ready to put into work is termed work motivation as per the definition given in APA dictionary of psychology. Work motivation could stem from an array of factors, including salary and other benefits, recognition achievements, relationships with peers and the feeling that the work done is impactful.

Hauser (2014) views work motivation as a positive energizing force that enables motivation archetypes at the level of self recognition and self fulfillment. Therefore, work motivation exists as a condition of pre self-

actualisation at the individual level and of goal achievement at the organisational level. Persistent low motivation by the employee together with withdrawal behavior adversely impacts performance and productivity at the level of the organization. Furthermore, contributing factors to this discontent include low satisfaction with the job (Toode et al., 2011).

## History of Work Motivation

The dynamics that spark work-related behaviour have been the subject of decades of investigation. Motivation is the main consideration in this area since it explains why people act in certain ways. In particular, some motivation differences among individuals can predominantly be accounted by psychological needs. The motivation factors are considered to be inner psychological resources which results directly as marked efficiency at work performance. A lot of needs, because of their satisfaction, are fundamental to human functioning. Besides personal factors, the social environment also has the potential to be a resource for motivation to work. The understanding of motivation to work is enriched by social relations and social contacts.

More than 150 studies use the primary theories of psychological needs to support motivating practices at work. This demonstrates the importance of psychological needs in ascertaining personal work motivation. This research focuses on the intrinsic and extrinsic aspect of motivation and expectation of rewards from generational context.

Even prior research disregards considering the impact of social phenomena alongside culture as moderating variables on motivational constructs at the cognitive level. Social structure comprises a society's composition. Social structure profoundly affects work motivation. Further hypothesized is the notion that human activity or behavior is shaped by the social contexts that are closely proximal, such as a workgroup, or afar, like culture. We see the dynamic intersection of prosocial motivation and intrinsic drive pulsing the heart of employee contribution to performance. This approach broadens the lens by including prevailing social structures within the motivation framework.

Prosocial motivation refers to the desire to help and enhance the welfare of others. Based on Shao et al. (2019), prosocial motivation is an incentive that encourages employees to engage actively in particular functions of a company. This form of motivation appears to be an example of prosocial motivation; therefore, it is appropriate to suggest that both prosocial motive and intrinsic motive would have to be studied together if one seeks to understand the issue deeply.

One notable set of research projects within the domain of industrial psychology was the Hawthorne studies. Mayo and his associates did the studies at the Hawthorne Works of the Western Electric Company at Chicago from 1924 to 1932. The primary focus of this study was to determine the relationship between productivity and the working conditions of the workers. Researchers changed the temperature and other environmental elements while observing the impact on worker productivity. The researchers came to the conclusion that social and psychological elements were also at work when they found that production increased regardless of whether the environmental conditions were better or worse.

The Hawthorne effect, in which people alter their behaviour when they are aware that they are being watched, was discovered as a result of the Hawthorne experiments, which made an important contribution to psychology. This effect may affect the findings of research investigations and result in conclusions regarding the variables under study that are unreliable. The Hawthorne effect emphasises how crucial it is to account for participant reaction in research investigations in order to get reliable results. The Hawthorne investigations revolutionised industrial psychology in general and emphasised the need for a deeper comprehension of the variables that affect worker productivity in addition to physical work circumstances.

Finally, few research have looked into the variables affecting job motivation using sizable cross-national samples. By reducing individual bias towards any single culture, a cross-cultural investigation increases the objectivity of the findings. The analysis of the study is therefore essential to gaining new knowledge on how social context affects people's links between psychological needs and motivation at work.

The systematic study of motivational trends at work has the following chronological milestones:

- 1900-1925: Studies in this period focus on biology, behavior, and money.
- 1925-1950: Work from this period is often referred to as ‘Dust Bowl Empiricism’ and included surveys, laboratory and field experiments, the Hawthorne studies, and World War II.
- 1950-1975: Marked by the emergence of motivation and job satisfaction-performance theories including motivation theory, need hierarchy theory, theory X and theory Y, job characteristics, equity theory, expectancy theory, behavior modification, and goal-setting theory.
- 1975-2000: Studies were done on employee’s thoughts which includes goal-setting, goal limitations, social cognitive theory, self-regulation, job characteristics, high performance cycle framework, demands influence performance, mediators, moderators, rewards, satisfaction and principles of organisational justice.

## Reward Expectations

Reward expectations are those anticipations which individuals have towards the rewards that they are to get due to their performance and inputs in a work setting. These expectations are influenced by factors such as prior experience, social comparison, and organizational culture (Vroom, 1964). Reward expectations basically involve intrinsic and extrinsic motivators that influence how workers value themselves within the workplace and their resultant engagement and productivity levels (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

Some of the theoretical frameworks with reward expectation components include Expectancy Theory, which posits that individuals are motivated to act due to specific anticipated outcomes from their actions (Vroom, 1964). In this case, motivation to act stems from the belief effort will generate performance, which in turn, will produce intended rewards. Also, Equity Theory places emphasis on the equality of reward allocation, asserting that employees usually assess their input-output ratios in relation to other participants, which fundamentally determines his or her level of satisfaction and motivation toward work (Adams, 1965).

It is critical for organizations to comprehend reward expectations within the modern workplace as it helps to foster motivation and productivity. Because employees expect to be acknowledged and rewarded in a certain manner, organizations are obligated to change their reward structures (Kuvaas, 2006).

Organizational behavior classifies employee rewards into two categories: intrinsic rewards and extrinsic rewards, as the basic frameworks. This combined system works to enhance motivational aspects, job satisfaction, and performance levels of the employees.

## Intrinsic Rewards

Employees are motivated towards internal psychological rewards which they acquire through their work duties. The nature of one's job generates these rewards while a person experiences satisfaction because the work activities match their ethical values objectives and personal interests (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Psychological rewards generated by each person form their intrinsic elements since these incentives do not depend on external conditions. Workers often experience complete satisfaction and meaningfulness together with individual progress because of their jobs (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). The connection of intrinsic rewards to personal values and interests at work produces sustained motivation through time according to Kuvaas (2006). For example, the achievement of winning a competitive project creates an internal feeling of both accomplishment as well as pride following the research by Deci, Koestner, and Ryan (1999).

According to Gagné & Deci (2005) acquiring work-related skills or expanding work-related knowledge drives intrinsic motivation among workers. Personal independence when combined with autonomy at work leads to better job satisfaction because employees are able to make self driven decision (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). Work Passion develops when a person focuses on activities aligned to their personal interests as well as their

values which brings deep sense of happiness (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). Organizations which establish intrinsic rewards systems gain better employee commitment combined with increased levels of employee dedication.

## Extrinsic Rewards

The organization provides tangible rewards called extrinsic rewards to recognize workers for their performance achievements or contributions. These external rewards drives performance-based actions since they exist independently from individual contributors (Vroom, 1964). Such rewards give quick satisfaction which acts as one tool to maintain essential behavioral patterns (Deci et al., 1999).

The reward system extends beyond financial incentives to include both financial and non-financial incentives as identified by Lawler (1971). The organization gives employees salary and bonuses which include base payments along with performance-related rewards and commissions (Gerhart & Rynes, 2003). Organizations offer promotions to move their staff into higher positions which brings higher accountabilities as well as improved compensations (Porter & Lawler, 1968). Recognition Programs which includes awards, certificates, or public acknowledgment of an employee's achievements also contributes to external rewards (Baker, 2002). Gerhart & Rynes (2003) The compensation package includes health insurance along with retirement plans and other benefits. The use of external rewards causes effective motivation at work but may lose its power when it comes to lasting employee performance. High use of external rewards as motivation by employees can eventually lead to decrease in intrinsic motivation (Deci et al., 1999). Therefore, the goal for organizations should include matching extrinsic compensation systems with intrinsic motivation for workers to achieve maximum engagement (Kuvaas, 2006).

## Theories of Motivation and Reward Expectations

### Herzberg's Theory Of Motivation

The two-factor theory of work motivation, also came to be known as the motivation-hygiene theory was developed by Herzberg, Mausner and Snyderman (1959). They conducted studies to determine the factors influencing satisfaction or dissatisfaction in the job. According to the studies, it was found out that there are 2 factors that affect people's attitudes towards their work, motivation and hygiene factors. Motivation factors are associated with 'the need for growth or self actualisation', These factors include achievement, recognition, responsibility, advancement and the possibility for growth (Herzberg, 1966). Hygiene factors are associated with 'the need to avoid unpleasantness'. These factors include company policies and administration, relationship with supervisors, interpersonal relations, working conditions and salary (Herzberg, 1966). Motivation factors only increase and improve job satisfaction; whereas hygiene factors work to reduce job dissatisfaction. (Herzberg et al., 1959).

The motivational factors can increase job satisfaction, but absence leads to no job satisfaction. Therefore, poor hygiene factors can cause job dissatisfaction, while better hygiene factors can reduce dissatisfaction but cannot cause job satisfaction (Herzberg et al., 1959). Opposite of job dissatisfaction is no job dissatisfaction. Likewise, the opposite of job satisfaction is no job satisfaction (Herzberg, 1966).

### Motivation factors

Motivation factors are intrinsic to the job and lead to positive attitudes towards the job because they satisfy the 'need for growth or self-actualisation' (Herzberg, 1966, p. 75).

Advancement in the workplace: Advancement is a positive change in the position or status held by the person or employee. It is said that there should always be growth opportunities provided the employees.

Possibility for growth: personal growth and advancement in a person's career can be achieved as a result of an individual learning new skills, undergoing training, and acquiring new professional knowledge.

Responsibility: this factor can be looked at as a function of the job in terms of responsibility and power. When people can be themselves and are freely given responsibilities, they tend to be much happier.

**Recognition:** management rewarding or praising an employee for meeting set goals or producing quality work is always viewed as positive recognition and is a contributing factor that motivates job satisfaction for employees.

**Achievement:** positive achievement may also be defined as being successful in accomplishing a particular objective like completing a task, solving a certain problem on the job, or seeing the outcome of your efforts.

## Hygiene factors

As noted by Herzberg, hygiene factors pertain to the external environment and can only eliminate dissatisfaction, but not enhance motivation (Herzberg, 1966, p. 75).

**Interpersonal Relations:** Social and professional relations with superiors, subordinates, and colleagues. Work relations and professional social interactions during pauses or during work.

**Salary:** Increments of wages or salary, there should be fairness and equity in the wage structure for all employees.

**Organizational regulations and administration:** This factor concerns either negative or positive organizational regulations that impact worker or employee. Such policies include centralized authority, poor communication channel within organization. It should also encompass hours of work, dress code, breaks, sick leave, holidays, vacation, etc.

**Supervision:** Supervision deals with a supervisor's or a supervisory competence. Some of the factors are willingness of the supervisor to take some action or leadership or teach, be fair to employees, to be knowledgeable about the job. Having good supervisors or access to supervisors is vital in enhancing an employee's satisfaction with the job. The absence of good leadership or management tends to lower the level or quality of job satisfaction.

**Working conditions:** These include factors within the physical work setting. Some examples are the nature of the work, amount of work, space to get the work done, amount of ventilation, tools needed for the job, temperature within the work surrounding and safety. Workers with an ideal working environment tend to attain job satisfaction.

## Maslow's Hierarchy Of Needs Theory

Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory states that as human beings, physiologically and psychologically, we have needs to satisfy, starting with the most basic one, to the more complicated ones. Physical survival is the most basic need, the one that will first direct behavior. Maslow's hierarchy of needs is a motivational theory in psychology that comprises a five level model of human needs, depicted as levels within a pyramid.

1. **Physiological needs** – An individual's survival hinges on a few fundamental needs: these include breathing, eating, drinking, warming the body, sleeping, and sex. A human operates at optimal levels when all needs and demands of life at least partially, are met. These are the bare minimum requirements for existence. Maslow considers physiological needs the primary ones. Once these are taken care of, the rest become less important. For employees, this means having a position, receiving timely payments, and having a reasonable level of comfort at work in addition to access to food and water.

2. **Safety needs** - Assuming physiological requirements have been satisfied, the next area is need for safety. Safety and security needs can be fulfilled by the family and the society. It includes Emotional Security, Social Welfare, Law and Order, Social Stability, Property, Health and Wellness which, include protection from injuries and accidents. Within the employment environment, safety and security needs include the primary terms of formal employment contracts and fringe benefits like pensions, sick leave, and paid medical leave. Moreover, risks to health and safety in the workplace need to be adequately controlled.

3. **Love and belongingness needs** – As with the other needs, belongingness also possesses criteria that define it. It is the need that is focused on the making of interpersonal relationships, to affiliate and be connected,

to be part of a group. These needs may be concerned with friendships, intimacy, trust, acceptance, love, and affection both given and received. These interpersonal relations can be managed at the workplace by fostering collaboration and social interaction in team. In general, managing social needs of employees involves promoting and enhancing teamwork as well as team spirit.

4. Esteem needs: These are defined by self worth, achievement, and respect. Maslow further classified them into two groups: Esteem needs for one's own self which includes dignity, achievement, mastery, and independence, and need for reputation or respect from others including status and prestige. In organizational setting, how employees are regarded and appreciated, is crucial. Recognition for inputs made by employees, social recognition (peer to peer) will provide prestige and respect while at the same time enhance employee esteem.

5. Self-actualization needs: They occupy the highest level in Maslow's hierarchy and refers to the achievement of a person's fullest potential, being fulfilled, opportunities for personal growth. It is wish to attain the zenith of one's capabilities and to reach the highest self. People may perceive or aim at this need very narrowly. As an example, one person may want to idealize becoming a parent. Another person may express this urge in economic, academic, or athletic forms.

### **McGregor's Theory of X and Theory Y**

In 1960, McGregor developed Theory X and Theory Y as two theories of organizational behavior and management. X and Y both have a set of assumptions which shape managerial behavior and style of leadership, human behavior, and human motivation. The assumptions of Theory X revolves with the idea that employees must be controlled, forced, or punished in some way in order to fulfill their work functions to the best of their ability since they are inherently idle and dislike their jobs. The only external demands that are to be supported are; money, career growth, promotion and bonuses. Under this theory, the manager who adopts the model has an authoritarian and directive approach to leadership. They impose strict dependence on rules, policies, fines, and other control measures to guarantee that workers perform their jobs. They argue that employees are to be seen, not heard; they ought not to make the decisions. Also, managers are to use threats and punishment within reasonable limits to achieve goals set by the managers. This approach is associated with having a boss who imposes tasks to be completed without guidance, close supervision, or trust in their ability to perform the tasks.

Based on a pessimistic view of human nature, the assumptions of Theory X create a negative work environment, low morale, high turnover, and little job satisfaction. Workers who have been categorized under Theory X assumption are likely to feel demotivated, underappreciated, and less valued which results in low productivity and poor job performance. In addition to that, employees are also likely to experience absenteeism and turnover as they try to find better, supportive work environments. The opposite is true for Theory Y which states that people are self-starters who strive to do great work, claim their work, and utilize their skills. That stance is complemented with the assertion that people are driven by many things, including positive incentives such as self-improvement, achievement, and happiness at work. Managers aligned with Theory Y believe that trust and flexibility will lead to greater chances of innovation and productivity for the employees.

Within Theory Y, a manager does not solely focus on the work assigned to an employee, but rather give opportunities to the employee for self-growth and self-development. An instructor must promote a positive organizational culture that fosters collaboration, communication, and team spirit. In addition, managers should appraise and celebrate employees' accomplishments and also offer recommendations to help them become better in their jobs. The assumptions of Theory Y are based on a positive view of human nature. Such employees are likely to be motivated, valued, appreciated, and as a result, become even more productive and enhance their job performance. Supported with the right conditions, this could reduce absenteeism and employee turnover as the employees are likely to enjoy working in a nurturing work environment. Managers can help improve both the productivity and workplace culture by adopting Theory Y assumptions, encouraging participation, and fostering supportive environments within the organization.

## McClelland's Theory of Needs

McClelland's Theory of Needs is the work of David McClelland and his colleagues. It posits that people are motivated to perform activities regardless of their age, culture, gender, or race. The framework explains three possible needs for an individual to possess. The motivation can be through power, affiliation, or even achievement. One trait tends to be stronger than the other, but all of them coexist in an individual. It examines three needs:

- Need for achievement (nAch) refers to the need to pursue personally set goals. Accomplished people in life exhibit four attributes that are aligned with achievement motivation: tendency to seek tasks of intermediate difficulty, assume personal responsibility for outcomes, desire for evaluative feedback, and, in some cases, the employment of active and constructive means of problem solving.
- Need for power (nPow) is defined as the need to influence other people and force them to do things they would not do otherwise. The type of person who loves contests focuses attention on personal power and the desire to dominate others.
- Need for affiliation (nAff) refers to the wish that people have to develop warm and friendly relationships with those around them. When the need for affiliation is high, there is greater conformity to group norms and behaviors.

People who are achievers perform best when there is a 0.5 probability of success (50-50) chance. They do not like to gamble where the odds are greatly in their favor because they derive no satisfaction from winning due to random chance, and they also tend to avoid low odds where the challenge is to skill, but rather, high achievers are likely to set goals that require some expenditure of effort. For instance, high achievers are not likely to want to be managed, because which provide they are mostly concerned with self-performance as opposed to luring people into performing for low-level managers.

## Expectancy Theory

Psychological theory developed by Victor Vroom in 1964 explains that people select their choices of action through anticipating the expected consequences of their work efforts. The theory demonstrates that individuals select specific behaviors when they believe their hard work will deliver the outcomes they desire which will lead to their desired benefits. The application of Expectancy Theory within organizations proves valuable because organizations benefit from knowing employee motivation factors that drive productivity along with work satisfaction levels.

Expectancy Theory functions on three points

**Expectancy (Effort-Performance Relationship):** It refers to the expectation that efforts will lead to performance. People view additional attempts in performing directly relating to producing superior results. The evaluation of task performance ability by employees depends on their skill set and resources as well as their past experience. Successful outcomes of the task from employees' effort cause them to become more inclined to dedicate efforts to their tasks. Workers who demonstrate self-confidence in their skills together with understanding that increased work results in better achievement often show higher motivation.

**Instrumentality (Performance-Reward Relationship):** When employees recognize that adequate performance will produce specific measurable benefits and rewards they perceive an instrumentality. Workers evaluate how much their work performance will be rewarded with desired results. When workers notice performance rewards are linked fairly to their work they are doing, they will increase their motivation to boost their output.

**Valence (Value of Rewards):** The evaluation of personal value an individual gives to expected rewards defines valence. Employees possess their own unique personal preferences for rewards that influence their reward valuation basis. A higher evaluation of reward value leads to increased motivation for its attainment. A worker places greater value on appreciation than financial compensation which leads to intensified work performance.

The motivational force can be expressed through a mathematical statement

$$\text{Motivation} = \text{Expectancy} \times \text{Instrumentality} \times \text{Valence}$$

The three elements explain why motivation exists. Motivation levels in an employee decline when they perceive either belief that effort leads to performance or any of the three elements to be weak.

Companies boost employee motivation and give rewards by creating particular goals that employees believe are reachable. The uniqueness of the goals helps develop expectancy elements in motivation. Regular feedback about employee performance helps build the instrumentality factor through efficiency by displaying connection between effort and rewards. The specific preferences of employees become known to companies which enables them to provide highly-valued reward systems leading to increased motivational levels within their workforce. Through employee training investments organizations create better skills and confidence that leads to higher expectancy and stronger overall motivation.

### Equity Theory

Equity Theory given by John Stacey Adams 1965 introduced that people judge the fairness of rewards through comparisons of their work contributions versus rewards received from others. People exchange their effort, ability and time for rewards that include salary, reward and benefits. When people detect either underpayment or overpayment in a system they will experience dissatisfaction which leads to actions aimed at regaining equity.

The fundamental principle of this theory shows that unequal perceptions force employees to alter their performance levels or ask for workplace changes or quit their organization entirely. Scholarly studies confirm that Equity Theory can explain workplace motivation as well as employee satisfaction (Adams, 1965; Cropanzano & Wright, 2001). People evaluate both their work input effort along with received compensation through comparison with others performing similar work. People determine their satisfaction levels together with motivation based on relative comparisons between themselves and others.

An individual brings components like Time and effort, Skills and expertise, Experience and education, Loyalty and commitment while performing a task. Outputs of these components include Salary and bonuses, Recognition and praise, Benefits and promotions and Job security.

People who sense that their work results match those of others experience satisfaction along with motivation. However, people develop dissatisfaction when they identify underpayment by working harder than they are compensated or overpayment through getting more compensation than their work merits. It leads to decreasing effort and seeking increased rewards. Organizations can develop reward plans with equal distribution through understanding of employee equity perspectives which leads to improved motivation and satisfaction. The working environment's fairness leads employees to become satisfied with their jobs and engaged at work which increases their productivity.

### Characteristics of Generation Y and Z

Millennials, another term for Generation Y, are born between 1981 and 1996. The latter cohort, Generation Z encompasses individuals born between the years 1997 and 2012.

#### Characteristics of Generation Y (Millennials)

1. Generation Y puts work-life balance as their primary focus by looking for flexible scheduling which helps them maintain their personal-professional equilibrium (McCrindle 2016).
2. Millennials exhibit first-rate technological abilities since they experience life while the internet and mobile devices become essential tools in their environment (Forbes, 2019).
3. The members of this generation actively pursue work that combines their individual values with the opportunity to make positive social contributions. Workers who dedicate themselves to seeing results in their work task as well as organizations that focus on CSR activities (Imagine, 2022).

4. The work style of Millennials includes teamwork along with collaboration since they avoid individual activities and choose group settings (McCordle, 2016).
5. Focus is on continuous learning and actively pursuing professional advancement and skill building opportunities through training and advancement channels at their workplace (Imagine, 2022).

#### Characteristics of Generation Z

1. The generation Z pursues financial security above all else because they observed economic struggles in their youth (McCordle, 2016).
2. This new generation places mental wellness first while promoting workplaces that construct structures for mental health programs and foster environments of mental and physical health (Imagine, 2022).
3. Gen Z members show dedication to social justice and environmental concerns therefore they look for employers who genuinely support these causes (Forbes, 2019).
4. Gen Z approaches their career expectations with realistic pragmatism instead of idealism as they focus on work stability according to Imagine (2022).
5. Those born in the digital age can flawlessly navigate digital platforms because they learned their skills with smartphones and social media so they want immediate personalized engagement at work (Forbes, 2019).

#### Intergenerational Differences at Workplace

Majority of researches done globally has focused on understanding workforce based on the age groupings, suggested by popular generational labels Generation X, those born between 1965 and 1980; Generation Y (Millennials), those born between 1981 and 1996; and Generation Z, ones born between 1997 and 2012, who are entering the workforce (Lyons & Kuron, 2014; Parry & Urwin, 2011; Bresman & Rao, 2017).

These are some of the common generational issues in the workplace:

- **Defining Stereotypes:** There is a chance for conflict due to the presence of various attitudes, values, and beliefs stemming from different age groups within an organization (Sprague, 2008). This invariably leads to stereotypes. For instance, older generation workers may stereotypically label a younger co-worker as devoid of respect for authority. Younger workers may label older generation coworkers as out-of-date and resisting new ideas.
- **Working Styles:** With regards to technology, Generation Y are experienced with major technological equipment and tools that are common today though they might not be aware of certain aspects of technology that developed after they entered the existing workforce, like social media and other interactive tools and equipment (Lester et al., 2012). Compared to their previous generation (Gen X), Generation Y prefers an autonomous style of working (Kupperschmidt, 2000; Jurkiewicz, 2000). Thereafter it became an everyday reality for next generation to come (Thomson & Gregory, 2012).
- **Communication Problems:** Older generations tend to prefer face-to-face communication and are frustrated when attempts at communication are ignored or misconstrued because of technology overuse and on the other hand younger generations rely on technology for communication, which can be difficult for older generations to understand (Bennett et al., 2012).

## 2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Steward (2009) analyzed Maslow's theory and its application to motivation in a multigenerational workforce. He brought up the idea that there is a distinct perception and work ethic pattern across generations – Seniors, Baby Boomers, Gen X, and Gen Y. He further stated, however, that Maslow's model is applicable in explaining how different age groups are motivated to work and learn.

Wieck RN et al (2010) assessed the impact of managerial relationships on turnover of senior, Gen X, and Millennial nurses. As for the purposes of this study, data were collected from 22 nurses through an online survey that measured job satisfaction and perception of safety. Outcomes showed that younger nurses reported lower levels of satisfaction as compared to the nurses over 40. Safety concerns were reported by 40% of participants. One-third of millennial nurses are expected to resign within the next 2 years.

Montana and Petit (2011) explored motivational factors for Gen X and Y with emerging factors impacting Gen Z. For this, 200 participants were asked to rank top 6 most motivating factors through a survey. Results indicated Gen X and Y having similar motivating factors of Respect at work and Good pay, while Gen Y expressed the need for getting along with coworkers, making it an important factor for Gen Z too.

Schullery, N. M. (2013) studied the Engagement at workplace and Generational Differences in Values. For this purpose, three generational cohorts of 16,000 American high school seniors were surveyed. Results indicate altruistic value to be same. However, when looked at in aggregate, other generational differences are significant.

Najjar and Fares (2017) investigated management's motivational practices and the differences in motivational factors, by using Maslow's theory of needs. After collecting empirical data, they found that interpretation of the findings varied heavily on potential differences in motivational factors regarding the job status.

Callanan (2019) studied reward management system for Gen Y and Z. For this purpose, semi structured interviews of 6 participants was taken from different sectors. Findings indicate presence of conflict and competitiveness between both generation with difference in rewards both generations expected.

Güngör (2019) investigated Gen Y and Z workforce motivation at an R&D center. The study revealed that generational traits greatly influence work attitude and motivation. The nature of work and creative knowledge work has changed extremely in recent decades, and those who are entering the workforce tend to be more adaptable to the changes, and will use flexible work schedules to enhance their competitiveness in the creative R&D job market. It does not seem prudent to employ the same working motivation factors for all generational cohorts. Underappreciated motivation and value factors within work practices related to the age preferences of the employees may reduce efficiency and increase harm to wellbeing, particularly among R&D employees in this study.

Acheampong (2020) studied reward preferences for Gen Z. For this, systematic review of 32 research studies was done. Findings indicate the effect of life experiences, personal background and gender influencing the reward preference and work values for Gen Z which affects the strategies for recruitment, attraction and retention of Gen Z workforce.

Magni and Beatrice Manzoni (2020) surveyed 1,000 workers of a large Italian company on different dimensions of their expectations, motivation, and feedback. Federico found that Gen Y workers had comparatively higher expectations than their colleagues. Nonetheless, the way the various aspects are ranked is largely consistent across generations.

Mahmoud et al., (2020) studied the generational difference of work motivation across Generation X, Y and Z. For this purpose, self report questionnaire was filled by 1349 participants working in service sector in Canada. Findings suggest that intrinsic motivation affects Gen Z the most, both Gen X and Y value recognition as a motivation and Gen X value extrinsic source of motivation.

Amy Dunne (2022) explored whether different generations have varying expectations of rewards. She conducted interviews to collect the data she needed. Results show that Generation Z get motivation through the work and possibility of career progression whereas Y is preoccupied with monetary compensation and benefits. The findings indicate a lack of motivation and undervaluation of employees, the level of input and efforts that are provided do not correspond to the rewards offered by the organisation.

Lee et al., (2022) studied effect of employee generation on motivation and retention. For this purpose, survey was conducted on 489 participants. Findings suggest transformational leadership working as retention strategy for all 3 generations, while work life balance affected motivation of Gen X, autonomy for Gen Y and Corporate social responsibility and autonomy for Gen Z.

Bernard Binczycki (2023) highlighted the aspects of work motivation pertaining to Generation Z. This was done by conducting a survey on 649 respondents which was focused on people who had just started their career. The results provide understanding on how young people value work in terms of their preferences, expectations and overall value perception. The survey results can be extremely useful for employers trying to design policies for effective and efficient human resource management. Also, performing competency mapping for Generation Z can help curb the disparity between the skills that the labor market needs and those possessed by the applicants.

Dreyer & Stojanová, (2023) explored entrepreneurial motivation differences between Gen Y and Z. A comprehensive literature review of past researches was done. Findings indicate that Gen Z are more driven by purpose than Money, effective with digital communication and prefer clear work life balance contrasting with Gen Y who believe in mixing up both.

Sabila et al., (2024) studied the impact of Intrinsic and Extrinsic motivation on Gen Y and Z employees. For this, thorough literature review of past researches was done. Results suggest that Gen Y is motivated by recognition, opportunities for professional development and financial rewards, while Gen Z expects instant rewards, digital recognition and financial stability. Among intrinsic factors, Gen Y has a focus on getting more responsibilities, meaningful work, autonomy motivates Gen Y, while having innovation, creativity, practical skills motivates Gen Z.

### **3. RESEARCH METHOD**

#### **3.1 Aim**

To understand whether work motivation and reward expectation is affected by generational differences among individuals

#### **3.2 Research Questions**

1. To explore the generation-related differences in work motivation among individuals.
2. To explore the generation-related differences in reward expectation among individuals.
3. To study whether individuals from different generations differ on the 5 levels of Maslow's need hierarchy.

#### **3.3 Research design**

The study was conducted using qualitative research design, since in this particular research, the objective was to explore various factors that play a role in keeping an individual motivated towards work. Qualitative design enables a researcher to study in detail the particular phenomenon under consideration and it allows for a greater exploration of factors, thoughts and experiences.

#### **3.4 Tools of data collection**

**Semi Structured Interview:** A semi-structured interview collects data by asking questions within a particular thematic area. There is no set order of the questions to be asked. The questions are open ended and flexible as per the direction of the interview. Such interviews allow a detailed discussion of crucial topics since two way communication is encouraged. Semi structured interviews work effectively when the data being collected is qualitative and open ended. It explores participants' thoughts, feelings and beliefs about a certain topic which can be personal or sensitive issues.

**Interview guide:** An interview guide was formulated by brainstorming various types of questions and probes that can be asked for all 5 levels of Maslow's theory. It was utilized to ensure that all relevant details were gathered during the interviews. This allows the interviewer to ask specific questions and further follow-up on the basis of responses to gain an in-depth understanding.

### 3.5 Sample

The data was collected from sample size of 20 participants, which comprised of 10 Generation Y participants and 10 Generation Z participants. Two sampling techniques were used namely, purposive and convenience sampling.

Purposive sampling is a method whereby choice of a sample is at the discretion of the researcher. It is also known as selective sampling. Sample is selected on the basis of what can provide the best information according to research objectives. It enables researchers to get a lot of information out of the data that they have collected. This method is cost effective and time effective when compared to other methods of sampling. For this study, semi structured interviews have been done on 20 participants from two generations, generation Y and generation Z

In convenience sampling participants are chosen based on their availability and accessibility. This sampling method is commonly used in cases where it is difficult to achieve a representative sample, like small-scale studies, or if the population is not well-defined. Convenience sampling has several advantages, including its ease of use, low cost, and convenience. However, it also has several drawbacks, including a high risk of bias and a lack of generalizability. Since there is lack of random selection, the results may not represent whole population.

### 3.6 Inclusion Exclusion criteria

The inclusion criteria is the participants must be either from Generation Y (1981 and 1996) or Generation Z (1997 to 2012) and currently working in the private sector whether full-time, part-time, or on a contract. Exclusion criteria is participants born before 1981 or after 2012, or working in the public sector, government, or non-profit organizations.

### 3.7 Data analysis

The data has been analyzed using thematic analysis. It can be utilized with a number of qualitative data types like interviews, focus groups etc. It is frequently utilized when deeper understanding, comprehension of intricate phenomena, or insight gathering on experiences, perspectives, and processes are needed.

**Braun and Clarke Approach:**

Braun and Clarke approach is among the most popular methods of performing thematic analysis. This approach relies on an iterative process to analysis, meaning that the analyst returns to the data repeatedly to refine understanding and ensure that themes are actually present within the data.

### Steps of thematic analysis:

1. **Familiarising yourself with the data:** Reading and r the data can help you become comfortable with it, which is the first step in understanding it. This entails immersing yourself in the facts and taking notes on your first concepts, ideas, and observations.
2. **Generating initial codes:** The researcher now creates a list of codes that best describe the meaning of the data. This can be achieved by underlining or highlighting important words, phrases, and passages of the text.
3. **Searching for themes:** After creating the initial codes, the researcher looks for patterns and themes in the data. In order to do this, related codes must be grouped together, and overarching themes must be found that summarise the significance of the data.

4. Reviewing themes: The researcher goes over and edits the themes after they have been identified. Themes may need to be updated, merged, or sub-themes may need to be developed to represent the data's more precise facets
5. Defining and naming themes: The themes must be described and given names as the last phase. To do this, define each topic succinctly and clearly, then choose a name that appropriately describes the subject's content.

### 3.8 Ethical consideration

**Confidentiality:** according to the interview conditions, protecting the identity of respondents was vital thus employing anonymity within the informed consent document signed by participants and announced before the recording of the interview.

**Informed consent:** Voluntary consent of a person to participate in a procedure was provided so that they understood the nature of the procedure, its potential benefits and risks, and available opportunities such as recording of answers which was used for transcription analysis, time commitment and confidentiality.

**Freedom of withdrawal:** This ethical consideration was also mentioned in the consent form and the conditions were made as a place where the individual was given the freedom to voice out any queries or concerns they had before and after the conduction of the interview.

**Debriefing:** After the interviews were over it was made sure that all the important information was shared with the participants and feedback was taken from them

**Reflexivity:** Reflexivity was done by the researcher before and after the conduction of the interview in order to be transparent and self-aware about their values, beliefs, culture, politics; and what was thought and felt during the research process, which influenced how to conduct the research and helped in interpreting the findings.

### 3.9 Procedure

Ten participants each from Generation Y and Generation Z were recruited via purposive and convenience sampling. This primary recruitment was done through social media, professional networks as well as academic contacts. Interested participants were screened for eligibility and given informed consent form which explained the purpose of the study, voluntary participation, confidentiality of data and right to withdraw.

The data collection spanned a four-week period that consisted of in person and virtual interviews, as per the participants' preferences. Virtual meetings took place on Google Meet or Zoom, as agreed upon prior to the interview, while in-person interviews were conducted at calm and quiet pre-chosen locations to enhance participant comfort and minimize distractions. The research aims shaped the semi-structured interview guide. The interview guide had open-ended questions that would capture participant perspectives regarding work motivation and reward expectations relative to Maslow's need hierarchy theory.

In the participants' presence, the interviews were conducted on average for between 30-45 minutes with their audio-recordings. The recordings were transcribed manually. Thematic analysis was conducted as per Braun and Clarke (2006). Analysis steps included becoming familiar with the transcripts, coding them using initial codes, progressing through theme development and refinement, and outlining overarching narrative patterns in this case, motivational drivers and expectations relative to generational cohort.

## 4. RESULT

Table 1 – depicting needs of Gen Y participants

Themes	Sub themes	Excerpts/quotes
Level 1: Basic Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Minimal impact of perks on job satisfaction</li> <li>- Career development as primary motivator over financial rewards</li> <li>- Preference for hybrid work setup for productivity</li> </ul>	<p>“Honestly, free lunches, travel reimbursements, or office perks don't matter too much to me.”</p> <p>“Personally, I would say that non-financial motivators, especially those that contribute to my career development, are what really motivate me.”</p> <p>“For me, I find that the hybrid model works the best.”</p>
Level 2: Safety Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Low value placed on job security without growth</li> <li>- Lack of comfort discussing mental health at work</li> <li>- Work-life balance valued but sacrificed for career growth</li> </ul>	<p>“If there is no growth around, in all honesty, job security does not matter much to me.”</p> <p>“I don't think I would feel comfortable laying my employer in on the whole issue of stress or mental well-being.”</p> <p>“I value work-life balance, especially when a little sacrifice will contribute to my career.”</p>
Level 3: Social Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Value for informal social interactions for team bonding</li> <li>- Motivated by collaborative, team-oriented culture</li> <li>- Inspired by visionary leadership that communicates purpose</li> </ul>	<p>“Informal networking appeals to me a lot.”</p> <p>“It goes a long way when everyone is working together toward a shared goal.”</p> <p>“Visionary leaders inspire me the most.”</p>
Level 4: Esteem Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Focus on personal recognition rather than peer comparison</li> <li>- Monetary rewards as preferred recognition for effort</li> <li>- Preference for timely and public recognition from leadership</li> </ul>	<p>“For me, what really matters is that my effort gets appropriately recognized and rewarded.”</p> <p>“Financial rewards work best for me.”</p> <p>“Getting recognition in front of the team and from leadership is a bonus.”</p>
Level 5: Self-Actualization Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Strong desire for continuous learning and skill development</li> <li>- High salary prioritized over passion and values</li> <li>- Willingness to stay long-</li> </ul>	<p>“I really value opportunities for subject enrichment.”</p> <p>“Honestly, a high salary is tremendously important to me.”</p> <p>“A combination of professional growth and meaningful work that fits in with my</p>

	term if work is meaningful and offers growth	career aspirations would be very important.”
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Table 2- depicting needs of Gen Z participants

Theme	Subtheme	Supporting Excerpts
Level 1: Basic Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Preference for workplace amenities</li> <li>- Financial rewards as top motivators</li> <li>- Hybrid work model for balance</li> </ul>	<p>“I definitely prefer workplaces with fancy amenities.”</p> <p>“To me, a pay raise will motivate me the most.”</p> <p>“Definitely Hybrid...I want a fair share of life at home and at the office.”</p>
Level 2: Safety Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Job security prioritized</li> <li>- Comfort discussing mental wellbeing</li> <li>- Willingness to sacrifice work-life balance for growth</li> </ul>	<p>“Job security is very important to me.”</p> <p>“I feel open to talk about such topics.”</p> <p>“I don’t believe in giving myself time every single day to just relax.”</p>
Level 3: Social Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Preference for self-directed social interaction</li> <li>- Values culture that allows mistakes</li> <li>- Supportive mentoring leadership preferred</li> </ul>	<p>“I prefer making plans myself rather than office forcing me to interact.”</p> <p>“Where it is okay to make mistakes, and no one finds faults in each other.”</p> <p>“I think supportive mentor because I always wish to know how can I do my job better.”</p>
Level 4: Esteem Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Comparison of rewards with peers</li> <li>- Preference for recognition through bonuses</li> <li>- Private appreciation motivates more than public praise</li> </ul>	<p>“I do compare to understand my position in market.”</p> <p>“I want recognition through rewards like bonuses.”</p> <p>“To me, appreciation in private motivates me a lot.”</p>

Level 5: Self-Actualization Needs	-Seeks career development through diverse experiences - Role alignment with personal passion - Culture and growth opportunities essential	“Giving my diverse experience and exposure of various projects in my domain.” “Role which aligns with my passion and values.” “Great culture and growth opportunities.”
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## 5. DISCUSSION

The aim of the study was to understand if work motivation and reward expectation is affected by generational differences among individuals. For this, 20 semi-structured interviews with both Gen Y and Gen Z participants were conducted. The data of both Gen Y and Gen Z were analyzed thematically. Similarities and differences were found according to each level of Maslow’s need theory.

### Theme 1: Basic Needs

According to Maslow’s need hierarchy theory, Level 1 talks about basic needs which includes working environment, facilities and amenities like access to food, water, travel reimbursements etc. While asking Gen Y and Gen Z about it, the findings were as follows

Table 5.1

Level 1 needs	Gen Y	Gen Z
Basic Needs	-Minimal impact of perks on job satisfaction -Career development as primary motivator over financial rewards -Preference for hybrid work setup for productivity	-Preference for workplace amenities -Financial rewards as top motivators -Hybrid work model for balance

Overall, both the generations emphasized on the need of having hybrid work setup for enhancing productivity. However, there were differences regarding additional perks and reward expectations. For Gen Y, additional amenities like free meals, travel reimbursements did not influence their motivation level a lot. However, for Gen Z, there was a high preference for such perks. Gen Y’s focus was more towards getting career development opportunities instead of just financial rewards, contrasting with Gen Z perspective of having Financial rewards as the top motivator. Organizations must also pay their employees enough to provide them with suitable living circumstances (Kaur, 2013).

### Theme 2: Safety Needs

According to Maslow’s need hierarchy theory, Level 2 talks about providing a sense of security and stability to employees. This can be achieved by providing job security, creating a physically and mentally safe work environment etc. While asking Gen Y and Gen Z about it, the findings were as follows

Table 5.2

Level 2 needs	Gen Y	Gen Z
Safety Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Low value placed on job security without growth</li> <li>-Lack of comfort discussing mental health at work</li> <li>-Work-life balance valued but sacrificed for career growth</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Job security prioritized</li> <li>-Comfort discussing mental wellbeing</li> <li>-Willingness to sacrifice work-life balance for growth</li> </ul>

For Gen Y, having growth at workplace was more crucial than just job security, contrasting with the perspective of Gen Z who preferred job security more. Another difference has been observed with the way both generations perceive the concept of Mental Health at workplace. Gen Y did not feel much comfortable to discuss personal crisis and mental well being with their employers, whereas Gen Z were a lot more comfortable discussing their mental health with the fellow employees and managers. This can be attributed to Gen Y growing up in the time when mental health was stigmatized, whereas during the time of Gen Z, concept of mental health awareness was in the mainstream. Both generations shared a common opinion on work life balance. They acknowledged the importance of maintaining clear balance between both, however they were cas well. It is often driven by the ambition and a desire for getting success early in career. Continued employment that is free from favoritism, discrimination, or unpredictable policy enforcement helps meet an employee's need for security (Hamner & Organ, 1978).

### Theme 3: Social needs

According to Maslow's need hierarchy theory, Level 3 talks about the need for social interaction, belongingness, positive relationships with colleagues, leaders and positive workplace culture. Organizations can create opportunities for employee's connection and collaboration, foster a positive work environment and team work. While asking Gen Y and Gen Z about it, the findings were as follows

Table 5.3

Level 3 needs	Gen Y	Gen Z
Social Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Value for informal social interactions for team bonding</li> <li>-Motivated by collaborative, team-oriented culture</li> <li>-Inspired by visionary leadership that communicates purpose</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Preference for self-directed social interaction</li> <li>-Values culture that allows mistakes</li> <li>-Supportive mentoring leadership preferred</li> </ul>

Gen Y had a higher preference for having informal social interaction events for team bonding, while Gen Z felt it as an unnecessary compulsion and preferred self-directed social interactions to foster authentic relationships. In terms of culture, Gen Y were motivated highly by a collaborative and team oriented culture, while Gen Z prefer value driven culture where making mistakes is seen as an opportunity to grow. Gen Y had a preference for leaders with a long term vision, purpose and has the ability to inspire others, while Gen Z preferred leaders who guides, mentors and supports them through their professional journey since they are relatively new to the workforce.

#### Theme 4: Self esteem needs

According to Maslow's need hierarchy theory, The 4th level includes esteem needs within the organizational context and requires acknowledging and appreciating employees contributions, allowing them to grow and develop professionally, and nurturing an inclusive culture within the workplace

Table 5.4

Level 4 needs	Gen Y	Gen Z
Esteem Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Focus on personal recognition rather than peer comparison</li> <li>-Monetary rewards as preferred recognition for effort</li> <li>-Preference for timely and public recognition from leadership</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Comparison of rewards with peers</li> <li>-Preference for recognition through bonuses</li> <li>-Private appreciation motivates more than public praise</li> </ul>

In self esteem needs, Gen Z participants compared their rewards with their peers which affected their motivation. This can be understood through Equity theory (J Stacy Adams, 1963), which explains motivation depends on comparison of Rewards to Input ratio with others. In contrast, Gen Y did not actively compare their rewards with others with focus on self-comparison. Esteem needs are linked to a person's need for accomplishment, adequacy, and independence (Pardee, 1990). Both generations expected monetary rewards, including bonuses, incentives, profit sharing etc. However the method of appreciation differed, Gen Y expected a timely, public recognition from the leadership, while Gen Z preferred a private appreciation.

#### Theme 5: Self actualization needs

According to Maslow's need hierarchy theory, Level 5 includes Self-Actualization needs which focuses on giving employees the opportunity to realize their full potential, personal growth, and development in their work, giving them challenging tasks, providing opportunities for career advancement, and fostering innovation.

Table 5.5

Level 5 needs	Gen Y	Gen Z
Self-Actualization Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Strong desire for continuous learning and skill development</li> <li>-High salary prioritized over passion and values</li> <li>-Willingness to stay long-term if work is meaningful and offers growth</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Seeks career development through diverse experiences</li> <li>-Role alignment with personal passion</li> <li>-Culture and growth opportunities essential</li> </ul>

For Gen Y, the idea of career development is through continuously learning new skills and staying up to date with changing market trends, while for Gen Z development happens through gaining experiences by actual hands-on projects. Gen Y were inclined towards choosing a job with higher salary even at the cost of their passion and values, contrasting with Gen Z perspective of valuing role alignment with personal passion before any salary. Despite differences, both generations have a common expectation of having meaningful career growth opportunities and good culture to make them stay in a company for long term. Diverting employees from their core duties for growth and giving them new tools, new challenges and recognition may seem like an expense but in long term it yields tremendous profit in terms of loyalty, willingness to work hard and desire to help the company succeed (L., Cooper, 2018).

Thus, we see that across all the levels there are certain differences and similarities that stand out for the Gen Y and Gen Z participants. An overall analysis of the data gives the sense that both the generations do having hybrid work setup for enhancing productivity, willingness to compromise on work life balance for a faster career growth, preference for monetary rewards and expectation of having meaningful career growth opportunities and good culture to make them stay in a company for long term. Gen Y did place a high importance on additional perks and prioritized career development opportunities and professional growth at a workplace. They valued team bonding activities, public recognition, collaborative work culture and a higher salary over values and passion. Whereas Gen Z expressed high expectation for additional benefits like free meals, travel reimbursements etc and job security. They preferred self directed social interactions, supportive culture, private recognition for their work and a role which aligns with passion and values.

## 5.2 Limitations

One of the limitations is in the geographical scope of the research. Since participants were selected from Tier 1 cities, findings might not easily translate to other cultural, economic, or institutional locations. Localized factors, regional workplaces, and economic influences would play their part in limiting the applicability of participant responses. In addition, the study mainly relied on self-reports through interviews, which are a source of bias of social desirability and selective disclosure. The research also narrowed the focus on the variables that have been selected, leaving out many other plausible variables like psychological characteristics or organization dynamics which affects work motivation. Future studies should widen the spectrum and take a broader approach to reflect the problem's full complexity. Subjectivity on the part of the researcher is another limitation, specially in qualitative research where the data interpretation brings subjective judgment. Lastly, the data collection was hindered somewhat due to limitations in technology and resources. Few of the participants experienced difficulty in accessing the digital tools necessary for interviews, thus possibly compromising the richness of their responses or their completeness. Technical glitches, accessibility of the internet, or familiarity with digital platforms could have also acted as confounding factors for manipulating data quality from the onset.

## 5.3 Implications

Increasing the sample and ensuring better broad demographic representation would improve the generalizability of the results. Including participants across a wider span of industries, positions, and socio-economic contexts would deepen the understanding of how generational motivations differ in varied work environments. Future studies could include participants from underrepresented subgroups like those working in the informal sector or gig economies, as their motivational patterns may differ greatly. The longitudinal study by following the Y and Z generations over time will help expose the evolution of work motivations through varying life and career stages. This will also allow an assessment of the long-term effectiveness of organizational interventions, leadership style, or work policies on motivation. Mixed-method of using qualitative and quantitative methodologies or using interdisciplinary frameworks like combining Maslow's perspective with Herzberg's could lead to richer insight on intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Finally, another recommendation for future research is consideration of employer perspectives or managerial observations, therefore helping to avoid biases on self-reporting. This would validate the responses of participants while also giving a of generational motivation dynamics in relation to workplaces.

## 5.4 Conclusion

The aim of the study was to understand and assess the factors that affect motivation and reward expectations among Gen Y and Gen Z individuals. This was done with the help of Maslow's Hierarchy of needs theory and results depict that Maslow's theory is generally applicable to both Generation Y and Generation Z however with some key differences in the way they play out in everyday life for these individuals. Differences and similarities were noted in the way each level is perceived by the participants. Their responses reveal that both the generations perceive the level differently, their expectations, their output and how the needs actually play out in real life scenarios are quite different. At the physiological level, both generations preferred a hybrid work setup, but Gen Z placed greater emphasis on workplace amenities and financial perks, whereas Gen Y was driven more by opportunities for career development than additional benefits. For safety needs, Gen Y leaned toward growth even at the cost of job security, while Gen Z prioritized stability and showed greater openness in discussing mental well-being at work.

When it came to social needs, Gen Y preferred structured, informal team bonding, while Gen Z leaned toward self-directed, authentic interactions and sought a culture that allows mistakes. Leadership expectations also differed—Gen Y looked for visionary leaders, while Gen Z valued mentoring and supportive leadership. In terms of esteem needs, both groups valued monetary rewards, but Gen Z was more sensitive to peer comparison and preferred private recognition, whereas Gen Y desired public acknowledgment and focused on personal benchmarks. Lastly, for self-actualization, Gen Y emphasized having opportunities for continuous growth and high salaries, even at the expense of personal values, while Gen Z favored alignment with passion and diverse work experiences to achieve fulfillment.

Overall, both generations shared common ground on the importance of growth opportunities, meaningful work, and organizational culture as key factors for long-term commitment. However, their pathways to motivation and fulfillment differed significantly. Recognizing these nuances can help organizations craft inclusive motivation strategies, tailored reward systems, and development pathways that cater to the distinct yet intersecting needs of Gen Y and Gen Z.

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