

A Study on the Impacts of 'Youtube' as an Earning Platform on the Motivation Factors of Generation Z in the Workplace



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ABSTRACT: Motivation' has been proposed as one of the significant and effective methods for handling employee related issues in an organization since the 18th century, when Industrial Revolution (IR) 1.0 transformed the livelihood of people. Human resource practitioners and scholars, through their past studies and research from different eras of time, have identified various factors that motivate the employees. As humans are complex, various motivation theories have been developed by the researchers to understand people's motivation better from different perspectives including their needs. Studies have indicated that various employee-related issues including employee turnover, organizational commitment, employee retention have been resolved through implementing the recommended motivation factors. This whole scenario was effective enough for the prevailing generations including Baby boomers, Gen X and Gen Y, as in most of the cases, issues arise from either the employees or the management where there was a gap of expectation fulfillment between these two parties only. The key question is, apart from these two parties, how if an external environment factor (refers to social media – YouTube in this study), leave an impact on the motivation factors of employees, especially the Gen Z, who is the first generation stepped onto the globally connected world. The focus of this study is centered on exploring the impacts of 'YouTube' as an earning platform on the motivation factors of Gen Z in their workplace.

KEYWORDS: motivation factors, Gen Z, YouTube, earning platform, prevailing generations, management.

INTRODUCTION

'Motivation' is one of the effective strategies proposed by past research and studies for various employees related issues. In the context of management, the term 'motivation' become familiar during the Industrial Revolution (IR) 1.0, where more manufacturing companies existed, and more employees were needed for the production. As the industry started to revolutionize gradually from 18th century till now (IR 4.0), the management get more complicated and various management issues related to the employees existed, regardless of their levels and industries. Therefore, many studies were conducted from time to time by the past researchers and various motivation factors were identified through their theories. Those identified motivation factors were categorized into intrinsic and extrinsic. In the context of business, the management uses several factors as strategies to ensure the employees' contribution is optimal. The higher the employees are motivated, the higher the employees have the sense of commitment toward the organization (Suzila Mat Salleh et.al., 2016). The most common intrinsic and extrinsic motivation factors which have been selected for this study will be discussed in 'Findings & Discussion'. Gen Z who born in and after year 1995, started to enter the Malaysian labour market since year 2013 (those born in year 1995 reach the age of 18 in year 2013, and they are eligible to work if they do not consider tertiary level of education). However, since year 2020 the number of Gen Z workers entering the Malaysian labour market is growing tremendously and research has indicated by year 2025, Malaysian workforce would rely heavily on Gen Z and Millennials (WTW Compensation Survey).

YouTube, which is an American based social media platform, was launched in year 2005. Initially it was operated as a platform for watching videos, and gradually people around the world started to open their own account in YouTube for uploading and sharing videos not only as a social activity, but they view it as an earning platform. The initial minimum requirement to earn from YouTube is: (1) to have 1000 subscribers (2) 4000 watch hours in the past year (Jakupovic & Robert Michael, 2019). Approximately 300 videos are being uploaded to YouTube every minute and 1.5 billion viewers logged in to watch videos every month (Matney, 2017). Compared to the prevailing generations, the younger generation, Gen Z, is being the most active users of social media (Huff, 2017). As technology was easily accessible to them since their childhood, handling social medias is much more convenient to them, which

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drive them to earn through the platform, which they have knowledge about. In that case, the impact of YouTube on the motivating factors of Gen Z in the working place will be discussed further in the upcoming chapter.

METHODOLOGY

Scope

The scope of this study is centred on exploring the impacts of YouTube as an earning platform on the motivation factors of Gen Z in their respective workplace. On the first hand, the motivation factors of the Gen Z will be discussed with the consideration of the common motivation factors of the prevailing generations as a reference. Secondly, Gen Z as the YouTube content creators will be explored, in the context of Malaysia. Thirdly the impacts of YouTube as an earning platform on the motivation factors of Gen Z will be analysed in this study. As it is an empirical study in conjunction with secondary data, the data about the 'motivation factors of Gen Z', 'Gen Z as YouTubers in Malaysia' and the 'impacts of YouTube as an earning platform on Gen Z' were collected from secondary sources including journals, newspapers, and articles from relevant online platforms, including Google Scholars.

FINDINGS & DISCUSSIONS

1. Motivation Factors of Gen Z (with reference to motivation factors of the prevailing generations including Baby Boomers, Gen X and Gen Y).

1.1 Theories of Motivation

Basset-Jones and Llyod argues that the motivation theories which developed by the researchers of motivation, can be divided into content and process theories of motivation.

Table 1: Theories of Motivation

Theories of Motivation	
Content Theories	Process Theories
Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs	Vroom's Expectancy Theory
Herzberg's Two Factor Theory	Adam's Equity Theory
McClelland's Three Needs Theory	Reinforcement Theory
Alderfer's ERG Theory	Taylor's Theory
McGregor's X & Y Theory	Bandara's Self Efficacy Theory

While content theories refer to 'what' motivates employees, process theories refer to 'how' employees are getting motivated. In this study, the motivation factors have been derived from content theories, where the common factors have been divided into intrinsic and extrinsic.

1.2 Intrinsic vs. Extrinsic Motivation Factors

The broad categories of motivation, intrinsic and extrinsic, have been researched across various contexts since 19th century (Lin, 2007; Amabile, 1993; Ryan & Deci, 2000). Intrinsic motivation is intangible, and it comes internally within an individual, without seeking the motivation outside. The most common intrinsic motivation factors are empowerment, recognition and belongingness. On the other hand, extrinsic motivation is tangible and refers to the external sources of rewards which motivate an individual. Some of the most common extrinsic motivation factors are salary, work environment, career development. As there is no one size fits all solution, different individuals have different needs which drive them to work in the organization. This rule also applies to the new generation, Gen Z.

While some studies do claim that money (salary) remains the most important motivation factor (Akintoye, 2000), there are also studies proved that working environment is essential for contribution of good performance or else it can lead to employee turnover (Buzzle, 2010). As empowerment provide employees an authority for decision making which gives them a sense of responsibility (Madura, 2007), some studies indicate that Gen Z, as the generation who is seeking for authority, can be motivated through this factor. Paying for performance or promotions also have motivated people in the working environment (Kinicki & Williams, 2008), as it is being rewarded based on the performance of employees. In the case of Gen Z, though the most common motivation factors which drive the prevailing generations can drive this generation too, yet, YouTube as an earning platform do impact their motivation factors.

2. Gen Z as YouTubers in Malaysia

Gen Z workers in Malaysia, where who known as 'digital natives' as technology was accessed by them easily (Marc Prensky, 2001),

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do earn through YouTube as 'content creator' and YouTube influencer. According to Assoc Prof Dr Haslina Muhamad, Universiti Malaya Anthropology and Sociology Department, '*Gen Z do not want nine-to-five jobs because they can choose to profit from social media through content or online entrepreneurship*'. Compared to the prevailing generations, Gen Z who were born after the third era of globalization do aware much about the social media as an easy earning platform and it has been found that Gen Z in Malaysia is spending an average time of 8 hours a day on the internet as they are heavily dependent on their smartphones and social media (Tjiptono et.al., 2023).

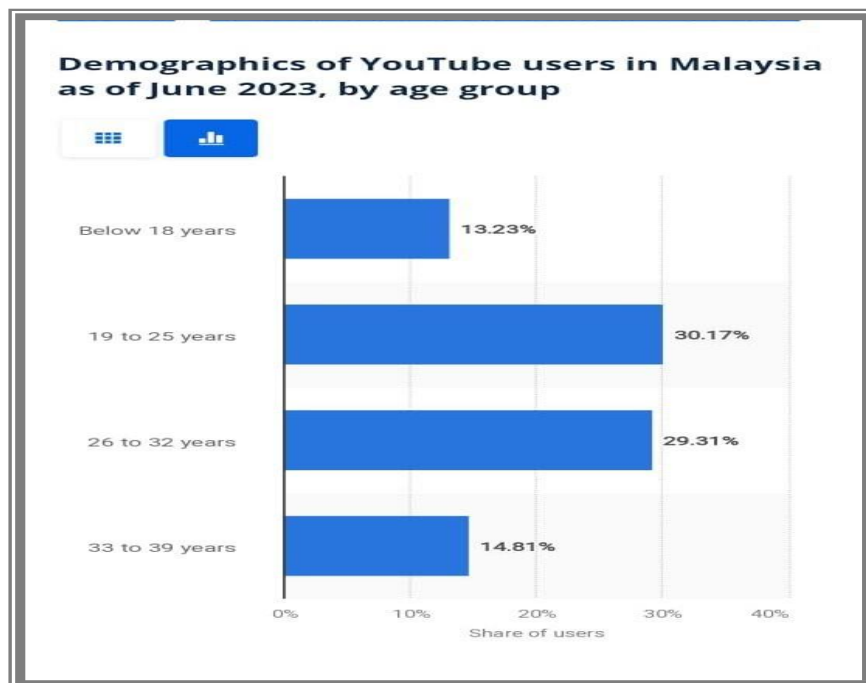


Figure 1: Demographics of YouTube Users in Malaysia, Statistica Research Department

The above chart shows that Gen Z made up the majority (30.17%) YouTube users in Malaysia, which indicate that this generation, although younger, they have more exposure to the social media platforms and this influence them to view YouTube as an earning platform.

Table 2: Top Ten YouTubers in Malaysia, as of year 2024

Alyssa Dezek	Born in April 21, 2008 (Gen Z)
Namewee	
JO Channel	
Ling Bigyong	Born in March 21, 1997 (Gen Z)
Syahmi Sazli	Born in March 23, 1995 (Gen Z)
Isa Isarb	Born in April 11, 1998 (Gen Z)
TV Terlajak Laris	
Bella Khan	Born in December 27, 1995 (Gen Z)
MeleTOP	
Jordan Yeoh Fitness	

Source: <https://www.insg.co/en/malaysian-youtubers/>

From Table 1 above, it is appropriate to conclude that, among the top ten YouTubers in Malaysia, who is having millions of subscribers, half of the YouTubers (5 out of 10) are Gen Z, who is using YouTube as an 'earning' platform, as acquiring the knowledge about emerging technologies is not a challenging job for this 'digital' generation.

3. Impacts of YouTube as an 'Earning Platform' on Gen Z Motivation Factors

As an earning platform, YouTube provide payment (not fixed), with the condition that the uploaded videos must reach certain number of views. The more the number of views, the more will be payment offered and vice versa. In the context of Gen Z, as they have been described as digital natives (Marc Prensky, 2001), creative and exposed to more technology compared to the prevailing

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generations, creating content and uploading creative videos is not a challenging job for them. The list of top ten Youtubers in Malaysia, where half of them is Gen Z, is the proof that content creating and getting more subscribers is an easy job for the Gen Z. Therefore, motivating Gen Z through salary alone is not that effective as YouTube impact this motivation factor.

A study was conducted by Zuzana Kirchmayer (2018), in Slovakia, among Gen Z Business students for identifying their motivation factors at work. Out of 235 samples, 665 unique answers have been collected through narrative data collection method of empathy-based stories (MEBS) and upon further analysis, those 665 were grouped into a set of 25 factors. It has been found that 'enjoying one's work', 'quality of relationship with coworkers' and 'achieving one's goal' are the most prevalent motivational factors in the eyes of Gen Z. Looking at the result of this study, it clearly shows that Gen Z gave more priority to their psychological needs rather than physiological needs. Therefore, salary and working environment alone do not motivate Gen Z.

As majority of Gen Z are the children of Millennials, research indicates that they possess some of the qualities of Millennials including determined, loyal, thoughtful and responsible (Bharat Chillakuri & Rajendra Mahanandia, 2018). However, Gen Z do possess some other qualities which Millennials did not pay much attention like, empowerment and entrepreneurial as they were born in the digital age and after the third era of globalization. As YouTube, as an earning platform allows them to be their own boss for the work that they are doing and have authority over their activities, it is appropriate to mention that YouTube does impact the intrinsic motivation factors of Gen Z.

RECOMMENDATION

As it is an empirical study in conjunction with the secondary data which collected from journals and articles, the percentage and precise relationship with its significance between the impact of YouTube and the motivation factors may be inaccurate. Therefore, it is recommended to broaden the study through collection of primary data from the sample of Gen Z to get a clear picture on the impacts of YouTube as an earning platform on the motivation factors of Gen Z.

CONCLUSION

'Motivation' is one of effective strategies used by the management since 18th century for various management issues related to the employees especially including employee retention, employee turnover, employee performance and so on. As motivation is basically a psychological element, it has a great impact on the employees' behaviour toward an organization from the aspect of their contribution to improve performance (Jones & George, 2008). Various intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors have been identified in the past research and studies, where the management implemented those factors for sorting out various management issues from the aspect of employees, who were mostly baby boomers, Generation X and Millennials.

The motivation factors of Baby boomers, Gen X and Millennials have been developed through the needs of those respective generations. Since the Industrial Revolution (IR) 1.0, people worked in organizations as they had some needs, and these needs were categorized into physiological and psychological needs. In the context of Gen Z during the IR 4.0, though they do have some needs which the management could use as factors for engaging them, emergence of technologies, like social media as an earning platform do impact the motivation factors of Gen Z. In this study, which is an empiric and through secondary data collection, the impacts of YouTube as an 'earning platform' have been explored. For further analysis and to get the clear picture on the relationship between the motivation factors and the YouTube as an earning platform, it is recommended that, primary data needs to be collected from the sample of Gen Z and expand the study further.

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