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## **The Reincarnation of Motivation: Millennials vs. Older generations**

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## **The Reincarnation of Work Motivation: Millennials vs Older generations**

### **Abstract**

This study examines generational differences in valuing the sources of motivation in workplace behaviour between millennials and older generations, with a view of assisting managers in making employment decisions and maintaining multigenerational staff in the services sector. Based on systematically sampled data, we used Gagne et al.'s (2014) Multidimensional Work Motivational Scale (herein MWMS) to measure the different facets of work motivators alongside a 3-item measure of employee overall work motivation (designed for this study) to address the hypotheses. We used structural equation modelling procedures to analyse our data. We found that four out of six motivators regress differently to overall work motivation. In other words, both Extrinsic regulation—material and Identified Regulation are valued more by millennials compared to older generations. While Extrinsic regulation—social and Introjected Regulation are valued less by millennials compared to older generations.

**Keywords:** Generational differences; Self-determination theory; Motivation; Invariance analysis; Structural Equation Modelling.

## **Introduction**

The diversity and the multi-generational composition of organisational workforces pose a significant challenge for leadership, considering today's increasingly competitive, global environment. There are various definitions of a generation. Schullery (2013) defines a generation as a group of individuals born within a specified range of birth years with four different generations in the workplace: Traditionalists, or the Silent generation (1925-1945), Baby Boomers (1946-1964), Generation X (1965-1981), and Millennials, or Generation Y (1982-1999). Other scholars argue that the generational gap is not about the number of years and age, rather about connecting events, people, and experiences. For example, according to Twenge et al. (2010), people belonging to the same generation share and experience similar historical, social, and cultural events that influence the development of their attitudes and values. Schullery (2013) highlights that each generational group has different values and characteristics that directly impact on attitudes and behaviours. Therefore, employers need to identify and manage generational dissimilarities in the workplace, so that modified approaches can be made with employee work motivation and retention in mind. Such identification is also essential as these different generational employee cohorts must communicate, and collaboratively work together to achieve overall organisational goals successfully. Accordingly, if employees are unmotivated to perform their tasks, this will significantly affect the development and success of an organisation (Mahmoud & Reisel, 2014). Organisational success is particularly critical in the service sector, where employee's attitudes and behaviours are visible and directly linked to the customer (internal or external) outcomes via interactions. (Pugh, 2001).

Nevertheless, many employers struggle to understand and cater to the needs and working styles of various generations (Bennett, Beehr, & Ivanitskaya, 2017). Gursoy, Maier, & Chi (2008,

p. 448) report that millennials, the youngest generation, differ significantly from earlier generational cohorts in terms of their “worldviews, attitudes towards authority and perspectives on work”. Besides, Gursoy, Maier, & Chi (2008) assert that more employers recognise the importance of understanding the diverse characteristics and preferences of each generation. When employers can understand employee’s needs and abide by each generation’s perspective, the organisation benefits through increased employees’ productivity, morale, and employee retention. Therefore, organisations need to continuously work on changing organisational practices to adapt to the diverse nature of the multigenerational workforce. For service organisations, in particular, creating a quality internal working environment is necessary in order to drive employee satisfaction (Schlager et al., 2011), which in turn leads to improved retention and productivity resulting in better service value ultimately boosting customer satisfaction and loyalty (Heskett et al., 1994).

The millennial generation is often attributed to transforming the business environment from being customer-focused to more employee-focused. Such a *shift* challenges organisations to re-align their priorities with improving employee development, promoting authenticity and transparency, and focusing on work-life balance, as those are among the most important motivational factors for millennials.

Despite the evidence of shifting organisational needs, there are conflicting studies that indicate that there are no significant differences in terms of motivation factors between the various generations. For example, Wong et al. (2008) suggest that the generation gap may not be as significant as previously thought, because employees have similar values and therefore seek the same things in the workplace. Human resource experts, managers and scholars are gradually developing expertise on how to manage and work with people from different generations in the

workplace. Scholarly interest in workplace motivation has led to the postulation that generations have different objectives, desires, and work esteems (Cennamo, Macky, & Gardner, 2008). Further, it is valuable to understand workplace motivation amongst the millennials compared to older generations (Cennamo, Macky, & Gardner, 2008).

This study uses data collected from the survey conducted in Canada, where an estimated 79 per cent of workers are employed in the services sector (World Bank, 2019). As such, it appears timely to examine workplace motivational factors of service sector employees, mainly as they apply to multiple generations. The purpose of this research is to test differences in the theoretical motivation factors between millennials and older generations employees working in service organisations in Canada. The goal is to provide evidence for managers to guide practical decision-making in handling generational differences in Employee Work Motivation, as each generation has a different set of values, preferences, attitudes, and communication styles. Understanding these differences and balancing the needs of many distinct age groups can be a challenging obligation to many employers, especially those labelled as ethically responsible (Lyons & Kuron, 2014; Weeks & Schaffert, 2017). However, if organisational leaders can clearly identify the generational differences and apply modified approaches to managing each generation, employees productivity, confidence, and retention are likely to increase (Gursoy, Maier, & Chi, 2008). The identification and management of workplace generational differences will allow leaders to lessen the difficulties in successfully managing the multi-generational workforce.

## **Literature review and hypotheses**

### *The Millennial Generation*

Millennials are the youngest generation of employees (at the time of conducting this research), and they are entering the workforce with higher numbers every year. According to StatCan (2019), millennials are becoming the largest generation of the Canadian workforce (the millennial cohort surpassed all other generational cohorts for the first time in 2015, accounting for almost 37 per cent of the workforce). Millennials are the offspring of Baby Boomers, and early Generation X. Millennials are described as ‘technologically savvy, better educated, and more ethnically diverse than any previous generation’ (Bannon, Ford, & Meltzer, 2011). Compared to the older generations, millennials have had easy access to technology, they are familiar with the content on the internet and find technology as an essential part of their daily lives (Lebowitz, 2018). Besides, millennials are often considered to be confident, connected, and adaptable (Taylor & Keeter, 2010).

Bannon, Ford, & Meltzer (2011) identify five separate characteristics of the American millennials. These traits include their sophisticated high-tech skills, as well as their thoughts towards work and life balance, corporate social responsibility, education and diversity. Millennials are characterised as tech-savvy and believe that technology helps people utilise their time more efficiently. Thus, many millennials prefer organisations with a reliable technology platform and a casual working environment. According to Bannon, Ford, & Meltzer (2011), millennials value flexibility in their workplace and are less concerned about security and stability. These values suggest that millennial workers are not concerned with losing their jobs, yet, they will challenge themselves to look for other work that satisfies them. Compared to previous generations, millennials put high value on their non-work time and tend to work towards achieving a balance

between workplace success and a healthy lifestyle (Calk & Patrick, 2017; Gursoy, Maier, & Chi, 2008). In the workplace, while millennials are outgoing and thrive in a collaborative work environment, they require enough personal space. Another distinctive trait of millennials is their civic-mindedness. They are realistic and place great significance on positive reinforcement, diversity, and autonomy. Many millennials have a strong desire to contribute to creating a sustainable environment. Accordingly, they have high expectations for corporate social responsibilities (Peretz, 2017) and value transparency and authenticity. Also, millennials are considered better educated than most generations and characterised as goal-oriented; thus, setting high standards for themselves (Rattner, 2015). Millennials are the most diverse generation, and many believe that their mixtures of ideas and backgrounds strengthen the workplace, making diversity a priority (Maiers, 2017). The millennial generation characteristics are notably different from their predecessors; thus, applying traditional approaches to the contemporary generation of employees may be difficult and ineffective. It is vital to identify and understand the distinct characteristics of millennials to avoid miscommunication and misunderstandings in the workplace.

### *Motivation and Underlying Theory*

An early definition of motivation defines it as the problem of accounting for direction, vigour and persistence of behaviour (Atkinson, 1967). More recently, Pritchard & Ashwood (2008, p. 6) define motivation as the “process used to allocate energy to maximise the satisfaction of needs.” It generates a desire within an employee to achieve one’s job on the best aptitude and inventiveness (Martin & Dowson, 2009). Thus, a motivated individual will direct their behaviour or activity to accomplish the proposed goal. It is crucial for employers to understand the importance of employee work motivation, as the success of any organisation depends on employees’ performance

(Govindarajulu & Daily, 2004). There are many benefits to having motivated employees. These benefits include workforce stability (e.g., Bonenberger et al., 2014; Imran, Allil, & Mahmoud, 2017), better team coordination (e.g., Gagné et al., 2014), increases in employee efficiency (e.g., Tudorache, 2013) and higher levels of employee satisfaction (e.g., Mahmoud & Reisel, 2014). An additional benefit of a motivated workforce relates to improvements in human capital management (e.g., Rusu & Avasilcai, 2013).

In the service sector, workplace motivation is vital in providing high levels of customer satisfaction, since satisfied and motivated employees will seek ways to enhance service and customer satisfaction. Organisations gain from highly motivated employees working towards common goals (Sørensen & Sorensen, 2002), such as providing increased customer service. According to Gagné & Deci (2005), motivated employees believe that their efforts will result in outcomes that are meaningful to them and their organisation. Tyler & Blader (2003) indicate that Employee Work Motivation reflects the pride, standing, and identification a worker has with their organisation, which ultimately impacts their motivation to cooperate and work towards organisational goals. As a result, while employee satisfaction represents a critical component of the organisational system, its downstream effects on market orientation, customer response, and financial performance are all indirect; thus, mediated through Employee Work Motivation (Mohr-Jackson, 1991; Oakley, 2012).

With a healthy number of motivation theories posited through scholarly work, these theories are often classified as either process or content theories of motivation; thus, focusing, on either explaining the motivation process or on explaining individual's internal characteristics respectively. Two notable content theories developed to explain motivation are the Maslow's hierarchy of needs, and the two-factor theory from Herzberg (Baldonado, 2013; Pritchard &



Ashwood, 2008; Twenge et al., 2010). Furthermore, Ryan & Deci (2000) developed the self-determination theory (SDT) which provides a multidimensional conceptualisation of motivation using a self-determination continuum in which individual's autonomy shifts from minimally present in a state of amotivation to the maximum state of self-determination where intrinsic motivation is present. Unlike the other known theories, the self-determination theory (SDT) enables the identification of a range of motivation and its various outcomes. SDT theory proposes that individuals can experience motivation in different ways, and it can be either encouraged or discouraged. According to SDT theory, three main types of motivation occur on a self-determination scale of regulatory styles. The three types of motivation are amotivation, intrinsic motivation, and extrinsic motivation. The regulatory styles comprise of amotivation, external regulation, introjected regulation, identified regulation and intrinsic regulation, and they vary from the greatest self-determined and autonomous form of motivation (intrinsic) to the least self-determined and controlled form of motivation (external). Gagné et al. (2014) assert that three essential psychological needs of competence, autonomy, and relatedness are vital for enabling the highest performance in individuals. The need for autonomy refers to an individual's desire to make their own choices and actions and freely express their opinions (Ryan & Deci, 2017). The need for competence is defined as an individual's desire to influence the environment and to also reach desired results (Ryan & Deci, 2000). The need for relatedness is defined as an individual's desire to create equally helpful bonds and positive alliances with others (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Like other motivation theories, SDT agrees to the idea that individuals can be amotivated or motivated. Amotivated individuals have difficulties answering a question on why they want to be employed, as they lack the longing and determination to work. Contrary, motivated individuals

easily answer the same question as their thoughts are directed towards the purpose. Motivated individuals experience both intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation.

*Intrinsic motivation* is defined as a state where individuals are willing to complete an activity, because he or she considers the activity interesting and pleasurable, rather than for some separable consequence (Ryan & Deci, 2017). When individuals are intrinsically motivated, they are motivated by self-satisfaction, and thus, are driven to perform according to organisational requirements. Such employees meet challenges without the need for additional compensation or without the need for recognition, personal gain, or other types of benefits. Intrinsic motivation values meaningful relationships, personal growth, and making contributions, as those provide a higher level of contentment. Ryan & Deci (2000) confirm that when a person is intrinsically motivated, they are moved to perform for their own pleasure and enjoyment instead of being driven by external pressures, demands, and rewards. Ryan & Deci (2000) propose that the fulfilment of three basic psychological needs of competence, relatedness, and autonomy is guaranteed in intrinsic motivation. This suggests that an intrinsically motivated individual is psychologically stable and content with performing their tasks and challenges.

*Extrinsic motivation* comes down to societal values and expectations, which include such attributes as money and popularity. When an individual is driven extrinsically, they perform tasks and challenges to receive rewards or acknowledgement (thus extrinsic regulation—material or extrinsic regulation—social). Ryan & Deci (2000) describe extrinsic motivation as a state where individuals expect to achieve certain outcome for their behaviours. However, being extrinsically driven is less psychologically stable compared to being intrinsically driven. Extrinsic motivation is further categorised into a scale of external regulation, introjected regulation and identified regulation (Gagné et al., 2014). External regulation occurs when individuals are motivated by

external demands, benefits and rewards. Introjected regulation is suggested to be a controlled form of rule, where individuals perform their tasks or activities to prevent internally compulsory guilt, anxiety or to enhance self-esteem. Identified regulation is proposed to be more autonomous than introjected regulation as individuals purposefully value a behavioural regulation and accept it as their own (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

*Amotivation* is defined as a state where individuals cannot understand that the outcome of their behaviour is related to their initial behaviour. It is described as the lack of motivation in performing actions, and amotivated individuals are neither extrinsically nor intrinsically driven. It is explained as an apathetic behaviour toward an activity (Imran, Allil, & Mahmoud, 2017). On the scale of motivation, amotivation is measured to be the lowest level of autonomy (Gagné et al., 2014).

#### *What motivates millennials*

Several studies indicate that millennials must be approached differently compared to other generations when it comes to workplace motivation (e.g., Kultalahti et al., 2015). Millennials are not simply motivated by monetary rewards. A recent study on millennials' workplace motivation by Calk & Patrick (2017), found that millennials are motivated by a collaborative work environment, with challenging and meaningful work. There is additional support for these findings from Kultalahti et al. (2015) and Kim, Knutson, & Choi (2015).

Many findings suggest that millennials want fulfilment in work and autonomy over their work (A. Hill, 2017). Another essential motivational factor that millennials expect is opportunities for advancement (Calk & Patrick, 2017). Millennials desire to be challenged at work and thus, providing the millennial generation with professional development and career advancement is essential (Calk & Patrick, 2017). Millennials are viewed as less loyal and less trustworthy

compared to the previous generations, and therefore, they require strong motivators to inspire them to dedicate time and effort (Pontefract, 2018). Kim, Knutson, & Choi (2015) highlight the importance of providing millennials with specific direction as it results in more productive and efficient employees.

Further, employers need to be cautious with managing millennials as findings indicate that they desire to be led, but dislike being controlled. Another factor that increases millennials job satisfaction is workplace engagement. Millennials are confident and are not intimidated by superiors, so they enjoy providing suggestions and ideas to management, which gives them a sense of belonging. Therefore, having supportive leaders and employers who values their ideas and creativity will be beneficial in motivating millennials.

Extant research suggests that the major factors that impact millennials loyalty and retention include: a good work-life balance (Barron et al., 2007; Twenge et al., 2010), meaningful and innovative work (Bannon, Ford, & Meltzer, 2011) and adequate recognition (Murphy, 2018). While there are numerous studies on the motivational factors valued by millennials, it is important to understand that generational differences in the workplace may lead to conflict and low engagement amongst employees and management. Nevertheless, if the generational differences are managed successfully, it will create a positive work culture and improve employee engagement and motivation. By examining what motivates millennials in the service industry within the Canadian setting, we extend our existing knowledge on workplace motivation.

Drawing upon previous studies related to motivational factors across generations and the motivation factor structure proposed by Gagné et al. (2014), we posit:

*H1: Multidimensional Work Motivational Scale (MWMS) is a six-factor structure that consists of Amotivation, Extrinsic Regulation—Social, Extrinsic Regulation—Material, Introjected Regulation, Identified Regulation and Intrinsic motivation*

Furthermore, we argue that not having an independent measure of employee overall work motivation would imply, basically, testing for differences in the pattern of correlations among the motivation dimensions (i.e., the extent to which they differentially load on a higher-order factor). Thus, we hypothesise the following:

*H2: The paths from MWMS dimensions to employee overall work motivation are valid but not invariant across the generations, i.e., the millennials vs. the older generations. In other words, millennials and older generations have different sources of motivation.*

## **Methods:**

### *Participants*

The population of this study comprised of the members of the labour force in the Canadian services sector who had LinkedIn profiles. According to Statistics Canada, 15.1 million individuals of the workforce in Canada are employed in services-producing businesses where females (54%) are the majority (StatCan, 2019). Also, fifty per cent of the employees in Canada are university degree/bachelor's holders (StatCan, 2020). However, no statistics were found regarding the number of LinkedIn users working in the services sector in Canada. Thus, we determined the number of the invitations based on the unknown population size of the intended participants as well as consideration of previous related research (Hair et al., 2010; R. Hill, 1998) and finally, the minimisation of potential low response rates. Afterwards, an online survey was run in the fourth quarter of 2017, and a link to a self-administered questionnaire was distributed via a professional

social network invitation (i.e., LinkedIn) to 600 participants working in various service industries in Canada and owning LinkedIn profile. We approached this by setting LinkedIn filters to list members employed in the services sector in Canada. Having filtered search results, the researchers selected one participant for every three counts. Our sampling procedure is in line with those followed in similar studies (e.g., Dettmers & Biemelt, 2018). Participants were informed of the purpose and procedures of the study. They were given permission to ask questions, raise survey concerns or withdraw from the study at any time. Consent to participate in the study was part of the survey sent to the participants, and because the survey was conducted online, no participant signature was obtained. The survey responses were anonymous, and all participants were assured of the confidentiality of their responses. The survey took approximately 10 minutes to complete and a total of 263 respondents completed the questionnaire, yielding a response rate of roughly 44 per cent which is very close to the average response rate trending in organisational research (Baruch & Holtom, 2008). The majority of the sample were millennials (56 per cent), female (61 per cent) and educated to a bachelor's level (50 per cent). We evaluated non-response bias by comparing the earliest scores of 50 respondents with the latest fifty (assuming that the late respondent is the same as the non-respondent). All results produced small, not significant differences using an independent-sample t-test and Cohen's *d* (see Appendix 1). Therefore, we judged our sample to be significantly low in non-response bias (Mahmoud & Grigoriou, 2019).

#### *Instrument and procedure*

The Multidimensional Work Motivational Scale (MWMS) suggested by Gagné et al. (2014) was employed to measure work motivation dimensions. The Multidimensional Work Motivational Scale (MWMS) was modelled after the self-determination theory by Ryan and Deci (2000). The MWMS is a 19-item scale that measures three different types of motivation: extrinsic, intrinsic,

and amotivation. The scale is comprised of six subscales (i.e., Amotivation, Extrinsic Regulation-Social, Extrinsic Regulation-Material, Introjected Regulation, Identified Regulation, Intrinsic Motivation) containing three to four items each. Participants responded to the question “Why do you or would you put efforts into your current job” by assessing their level of agreement with each item using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = does not correspond at all, to 5 = corresponds completely). To add more robustness and validity to study’s findings, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was run along with testing for convergent validity using the average variance extracted (AVE) as well as composite reliability alphas (CR) to test hypothesis 1. Before proceeding with the path analysis using an SEM via Amos 23, we utilised the Common Latent Factor (CLF) to assess the Common Method Bias (CMB), i.e., we tested a null hypothesis concerning variance that might be caused by the measurement approach rather than the variates the measures epitomise (Podsakoff et al., 2003). In this regard, we assessed CMB using Gaskin and Lim’s (2017) *equal specific bias test* plugin (See Table III and Table IV). The chi-square test for the zero constrained model was significant (i.e., measurable bias was detected). Therefore, a bias distribution test was made (of equal constraints). The chi-square test was significant on that test as well (i.e., unevenly distributed bias); thus, we retained the CLF for the subsequent path analysis.

Additionally, in order to conclude findings that would extend the current literature in this area in a meaningful way, we designed a 3-item unidimensional independent scale to measure employee overall work motivation comprising: “Overall, I feel motivated to do my job”, “Overall, doing my job is such a source of inspiration for me”, and “Overall, I feel determined to do my job”. This provided findings to which specific motivational factors millennials valued in the service industry. We assessed the validity and reliability of our employee’s motivation measure,

and it returned values that proved it to be of sufficient validity and reliability, i.e., AVE = .61 > .5; CR = .81.

To test hypothesis 2, path analysis followed by an invariance test were conducted to test the path from MWMS components to employee overall work motivation and detect any variations between the millennials and the older generations (i.e., Gen X and Baby boomer) of the sample through a dichotomous variable named generations with two values (i.e., 0 = older generations and 1 = millennials).

### **Results:**

Using structural equation modelling (SEM), this research tested the MWMS hypothesised structure affirming MWMS measurement model as a six-factor composite variate shown in Figure 1. The study used a set of model-fit indices to assess the validity of the measurement model. The employed fit-indices set included the following statistics:  $\chi^2/df$  = Chi-square divided by degrees of freedom (Bollen, 1989), RMSEA = Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (MacCallum, Browne, & Sugawara, 1996), SRMR = Standardised Root Mean Square Residual (Li-Tze Hu & Bentler, 1995), CFI = Comparative Fit Index (Bentler, 1990), and TLI = Tucker-Lewis index (Tucker & Lewis, 1973). Our resulting indices taken together (i.e.,  $\chi^2/df = 1.75 < 5$ ; RMSEA = .06 < .08; SRMR = .07 < .08; CFI = .94 > .9; and TLI = .92 very close to .95), further, (see Table I and Table II), all AVE values exceeded the minimum of 0.5 recommended by Fornell & Larcker (1981) and CR values were between .7 and .9 (Hair Jr et al., 2017). Thus, all data analysed suggest that the MWMS model is a good fit to the data. We therefore conclude that hypothesis 1 is supported which implies confirmation of the dimensionality of Gagné et al.'s (2014) MWMS.



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To test hypothesis 2, this research ran a path analysis of the links between MWMS and employee overall work motivation with gender and educational level as control variables. Our results exhibited an excellent model fit, i.e.,  $\chi^2/df = 1.75 < 3$ ; CFI = .95 > .09; RMSEA = .063 < .08; PClose = .094 > .05 (Li-Tzi Hu & Bentler, 1999). Also, an equivalency analysis was run to test the difference between an unconstrained model, which presumes that the two groups (i.e., millennials and older generations) are generating different values of the parameters when the model is applied to the data, and a set of constrained models. This method presupposes that both groups are yielding equivalent values of given sets of parameters when the model is applied to the data (Meyers, Gamst, & Guarino, 2017). In our study, the unconstrained model yielded a statistically significant chi square difference,  $\chi^2 (18, N = 263) = 77.17, P < .0001$ . Thus, there is at least one structural weight moderated by generational differences and to know which path(s) are moderated, a further pairwise parameter comparisons are conducted using Z score that is calculated on the basis of statistical significance level which equals 0.05. The significance of the pairwise parameter differences is assessed against a Z score equal to 1.64. Thus, generational differences are found to moderate four structural weights from motivation to Extrinsic regulation—material

( $Z = 1.67 > 1.64$ ), Extrinsic regulation—social ( $Z = 1.81 > 1.64$ ), introjected regulation ( $Z = 4.09 > 1.64$ ) and identified regulation ( $Z = 2.55 > 1.64$ ) alongside education ( $Z = 4.09 > 1.64$ ). Specifically Figure 2 illustrates that Extrinsic regulation—material ( $\beta_{\text{millennials}} = .54, P < .01$ ;  $\beta_{\text{older generations}} = .46, P < .05$ ) and Identified Regulation ( $\beta_{\text{millennials}} = .73, P < .001$ ;  $\beta_{\text{older generations}} = .34, P < .01$ ) are valued more by the millennials than older generations as a source of motivation, whilst Extrinsic regulation—social ( $\beta_{\text{millennials}} = .07, P > .05$ ;  $\beta_{\text{older generations}} = .85, P < .01$ ) and Introjected Regulation ( $\beta_{\text{millennials}} = -.16, P > .05$ ;  $\beta_{\text{older generations}} = .61, P < .01$ ) are valued less by the millennials than older generations as a source of motivation. Also, males are found to be generally more motivated at workplace than females ( $\beta = -.29, P < .05$ ). Whilst, higher educated worker from generations older than the millennials tend to be more motivated than lower educated from the same generational group ( $\beta_{\text{millennials}} = -.17, P > .05$ ;  $\beta_{\text{older generations}} = .45, P < .01$ ). The study concluded that H2 is partially supported, i.e., the paths from MWMS components to employee overall work motivation were found to be valid, but only four paths were discovered to be not invariant due to generational differences. In other words, extrinsic regulation—material, extrinsic regulation—social, introjected regulation and identified regulation regresses differently to employee overall work motivation between the millennials and older generations.

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### **Discussion:**

Our research is a scholarly attempt to replicate the structural validity of Gagné et al.'s (2014) Multidimensional Work Motivation Scale (MWMS) amongst a systematic random sample of employees working in the services sector in Canada. Additionally, it is the first of its kind that offers a generational invariance analysis of what is valued as a source of work motivation between the millennials and the older generations based on MWMS and using a structural equation modelling approach. In this regard, two hypotheses were specified and tested to conclude the research findings.

First, Multidimensional Work Motivation Scale (MWMS) was developed by Gagné et al. (2014) to measure motivation with six factors comprising: Amotivation, Extrinsic Regulation—Material, Extrinsic Material—Social, Introjected Regulation, Identified Regulation, and Intrinsic Motivation. Our study found that the MWMS exhibited excellent stability by showing a good fit for our sample data. Thus, hypothesis 1 is accepted and the dimensionality of MWMS was confirmed (Gagné et al., 2014). Our empirical validation of the MWMS framework sits alongside other validation studies (Neves & Coimbra, 2018).

Second, this research hypothesised that the sources of motivation identified by MWMS are not invariant in predicting employee overall work motivation between the millennials and the older generations. This hypothesis received partial validation., i.e.at least one of the six dimensions of MWMS differs in its contribution towards motivation between the millennials and the older

generations. Such findings are consistent with age-related motivation theory in the service sector (Afthinos, Theodorakis, & Nassis, 2005). Thus, path analysis and an equivalency test were performed to detect any significant differences between the two groups. Only two dimensions, i.e., amotivation and intrinsic motivation, were found to act similarly between the two age groups. However, extrinsic regulation—social and introjected regulation were significantly less of value to contribute to the motivational mindset of the millennials as compared to the older generations. Inversely, extrinsic regulation—material and identified regulation were significantly more valued by the millennials than older generations. This finding is in line with most of the body of scholarly research in this area (e.g., Kultalahti et al., 2015). In keeping with extant theory on job design and workplace motivation (Grant, 2007), the finding implies that service organisations are advised to use and give more weight to material rewards, e.g., pay raises and non-monetary benefits, as well as, identify regulated approaches, e.g., internalisation of the task value (according to Fernet et al. (2008), many jobs are not inherently interesting), when they attempt to motivate millennial employees (Gagné et al., 2014).

Furthermore, service organisation should avoid introjected regulated motivation methods which relate to internally controlled pressuring sources like shame, ego-involvement and guilt (Gagné et al., 2014; Ryan & Connell, 1989) where the targeted workforce is of a millennial majority. Unlike the millennials, older generations can be more effectively motivated through external social rewards (e.g., when a supervisor shows respect and recognition to their subordinates). While controlling for gender and education during hypothesis 2 testing led to differences between males and females as well as high educated and low educated in their overall work motivations, however, such results tend to be varying and conflicting amongst studies on work motivation (Kalkowski & Fritz, 2004).

The literature also signposts that many of the preferences of millennials are culturally invariant and deemed to be *very* alike in diverse countries (Kultalahti et al., 2015). Thus, our results can be highly generalisable to other contexts.

### *Implications*

The results of this study have implications for organisational practice. First, as more millennials enter the workforce, human resource departments must reflect their understanding of workplace motivators for millennial candidates. More importantly, employers must be able to demonstrate these motivators before being able to attract the best millennial generation candidates to their organisation. Thus, creating a favourable and robust employer brand (EB) becomes important (Schlager et al., 2011) as it helps in promoting positive attitudes from current employees who are proud to work for a strong-branded organization, as well as to attract the best new millennial talent successfully. Internal employee branding has been shown to be linked to organisations with a strong Internal Marketing Orientation (Boukis, Gounaris, & Lings, 2017), which in turn improves employee's fit within the service organisation and leads to higher job satisfaction (Gounaris & Boukis, 2013), ultimately contributing to enhanced customer satisfaction with the original and repeat service.

Second, given the technology-savvy nature of millennials, and the information revolution they grew up in, it is easier today than ever before for millennials to identify prospective employers who can demonstrate they understand what motivates millennials in workplace settings. This puts pressures on organisations to not only create an inclusive and understanding multi-generational working environment but to be able to successfully communicate strong branding via modern communications channels, including social media channels which millennials utilise better than any other generation.

Finally, as the first raft of millennials who enter the workforce to reach higher positions within their employer organisations, they are likely to be employing younger millennials. This ‘millennials employing millennials’ phenomenon potentially gives organisations a competitive advantage in selecting the best available millennial talent over those organisations who do not demonstrate a sound understanding of the motivational factors driving millennial employees. Once again, establishing a strong EB via IMO will prove to be especially beneficial here.

#### *Limitations and recommendations for future research*

One limitation of our study is the reliance upon a single country for data limitation (Kultalahti et al., 2015). Future studies can examine our focal theme from numerous alternative geographical settings. For instance, since millennials are known to be tech-savvy, future scholarly work can address the potential correlation between a country’s rate of technology adoption and millennials’ workplace motivating factors. Similarly, future studies can discuss the role of national culture, task significance, and genderplay in determining how different generations are motivated in the workplace. That said, future studies can be conducted in other countries for aiding companies redesign work tasks in light of today's increasingly competitive, global environment. For example, how Japan’s strict, even gruelling work ethic may (or may not) motivate millennials in direct comparison to a culturally driven, more relaxed work ethic found in Mediterranean countries. Finally, future work in this area can examine the rate of economic development and how it may (or may not) impact millennial employee work motivation. Future research could consider further separating industries where most millennials work to explore if there are any significant generational motivational differences across different sectors.

With most of our sample respondents being women and holding a university degree, that might refer to a sample distortion. However, the characteristics of our sample exhibited a large similarity to the workforce population's in Canada. Also, the results of the non-bias sample test added more support to the rigour and validity of our sampling procedure. Notwithstanding, we suggest future research to re-examine the effects of the generational differences using larger sample sizes and including the newest generation in employment, i.e., generation Z.

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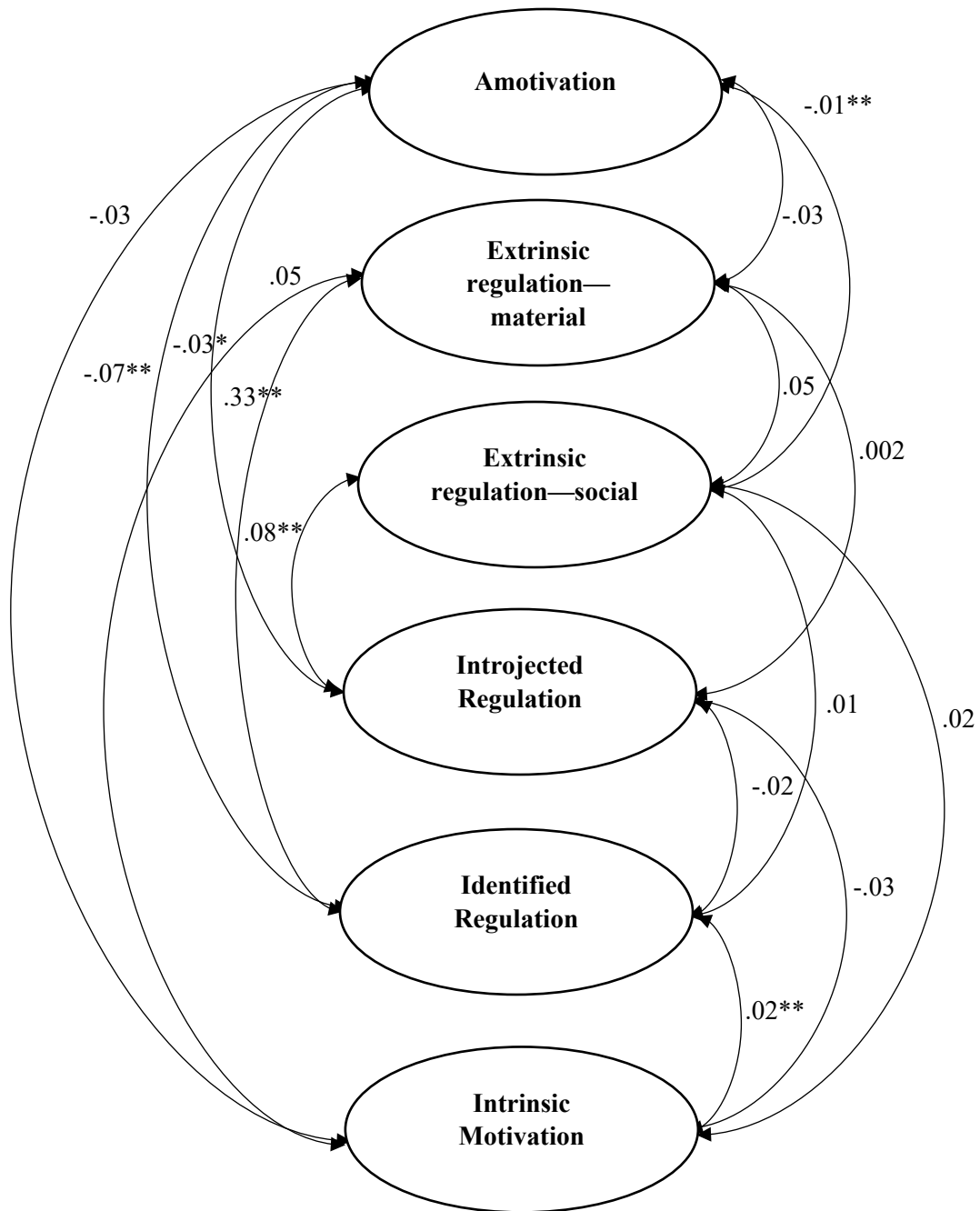
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## Appendix 1: Non-response bias test

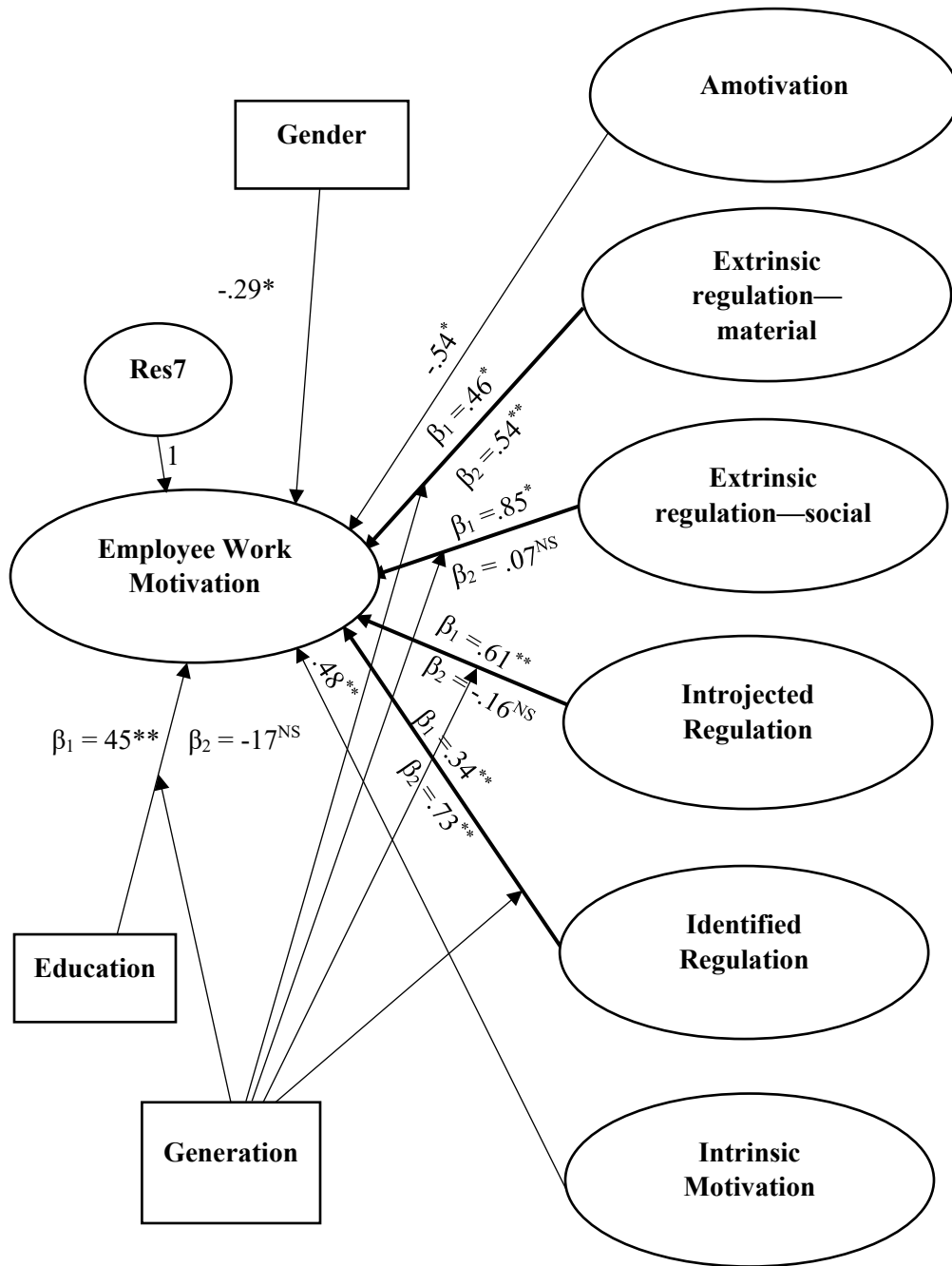
Construct	Item	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>Cohen's d</i>
Amotivation	Am1	0.425	0.672	.085
	Am2	1.029	0.306	.2058
	Am3	1.708	0.091	.3416
Extrinsic regulation—social	Ext-Soc1	0.823	0.413	.1646
	Ext-Soc2	1.974	0.051	.3948
	Ext-Soc3	0.129	0.897	.0258
Extrinsic regulation—material	Ext-Mat1	1.189	0.237	.2378
	Ext-Mat2	0.646	0.52	.1292
	Ext-Mat3	1.364	0.176	.2728
Introjected regulation	Introj1	1.701	0.092	.3402
	Introj2	1.227	0.223	.2454
	Introj3	0.627	0.532	.1254
	Introj4	1.217	0.227	.2434
Identified regulation	Ident1	1.809	0.074	.3618
	Ident2	1.777	0.079	.3554
	Ident3	1.348	0.181	.2696
Intrinsic motivation	Intrin1	1.655	0.101	.331
	Intrin2	1.488	0.14	.2976
	Intrin3	0.464	0.644	.0928
Employee overall work motivation	EM01	0.745	0.458	.149
	EM02	0.697	0.487	.1394
	EM03	0.478	0.634	.0956

## Figures

Figure 1: Hypothesis 1 testing results



**Figure 2: Hypothesis 2 testing results**



Where applicable  $\beta_1$  represents a coefficient of older generations whilst  $\beta_2$  denotes a millennials'

\*  $P < .05$

\*\*  $P < .01$

<sup>NS</sup> Non-significant

**Tables**

**Table I: Inter-correlations**

<b>Factor</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>AVE</b>	<b>CR</b>	<b>Amotivation</b>	<b>Extrinsic regulation— material</b>	<b>Extrinsic regulation— social</b>	<b>Introjected Regulation</b>	<b>Identified Regulation</b>	<b>Intrinsic Motivation</b>
<b>Amotivation</b>	1.25	.42	.60	.82	1					
<b>Extrinsic regulation— material</b>	3.96	.65	.71	.83	-.307**	1				
<b>Extrinsic regulation— social</b>	3.96	.65	.60	.85	-.307**	1.000**	1			
<b>Introjected Regulation</b>	3.19	.65	.70	.82	-.275**	.316**	.316**	1		
<b>Identified Regulation</b>	3.41	.79	.74	.85	-.191**	.031	.031	.03	1	
<b>Intrinsic Motivation</b>	2.93	.76	.75	.89	-.218**	.027	.027	.029	.392**	1
<b>Employee Work Motivation</b>	3.49	.42	.61	.81	-.422**	.729**	.729**	.521**	.542**	.533**

\*\*  $P < .01$ , \*  $P < .05$

**Table II: Rotated Component Matrix**

Item	Rotated Component Matrix						
	Identified Regulation	Extrinsic regulation—social	Amotivation	Introjected Regulation	Intrinsic Motivation	Extrinsic regulation—material	Overall work motivation
Q01			.786				
Q02			.769				
Q03			.709				
Q04						.796	
Q05						.838	
Q06						.438	
Q07		.301					
Q08		.864					
Q09		.878					
Q10	.585						
Q11	.592						
Q12	.704						
Q13				.844			
Q14				.783			
Q15				.772			
Q16				.901			
Q17					.855		
Q18					.869		
Q19					.783		
EM01							.914
EM02							.866
EM03							.479
Eigenvalues	1.872	2.008	3.122	1.811	1.763	2.788	1.814
% of Variance	9.854	10.567	16.431	9.533	9.280	14.673	60.474

**Table III: Zero Constraints Test**

<b>Is there specific bias?</b>				
<b>Model</b>	$\chi^2$	<i>df</i>	<b>Delta</b>	<b><i>P</i></b>
Unconstrained Model	182.991	73	$\chi^2 = 138.742$	< .0001
Zero Constrained Model	321.733	89	<i>df</i> = 16	

**Table IV: Equal Constraints Test**

<b>Is bias evenly distributed?</b>				
<b>Model</b>	$\chi^2$	<i>df</i>	<b>Delta</b>	<b><i>P</i></b>
Unconstrained Model	182.991	24	$\chi^2 = 138.627$	< .0001
Equal Constrained Model	321.618	88	<i>df</i> = 15	