



## MANAGING ACROSS GENERATIONS: THE CASE OF BIBITA GROUP

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### **Abstract**

*Working in a multigenerational company is a great challenge, especially when holding a managerial role. The differences between the core competencies of employees, their motivational factors, and the way they perceive ideas differs from generation to generation. Understanding and distinguishing between these differences entails a challenge in itself. To be a successful manager, one needs to be a leader and hold knowledge on properly motivating its employees. This articles' main aim is to identify the gap between the different generations in the market, using a case example of Bibita Group. This article is of high relevance because this sort of research, although quite popular in other countries, has never been conducted in Kosovo. It uses a case example approach, which is a descriptive research design, to derive its conclusions. An overarching research method was used, including multiple research techniques, both qualitative and quantitative, to derive data that were useful for the purpose of this article. The results obtained from a questionnaire helped to better understand the characteristics of each of the staff members as well as their preferred motivational factors. The results revealed that the benefits earned from employing a multigenerational staff in a company outweigh the difficulties and consequences associated with the challenges of managing the gap between them.*

**Keywords:** multi-generational workplace, millennials, generational gap

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### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Working in a multigenerational company can be quite a challenge because it requires understanding how each of the generations work and think, and the factors that motivate them. In order to be able to handle the pressure of successfully managing a multigenerational staff, a manager also should be a leader with a considerable amount of information and the ability to utilize that information to create incentives to motivate each of them. Considering the fast-changing pace of the business environment nowadays, successful management and appropriate organizational behavior are vital factors that contribute to a company's success. Depending on the particular circumstances, different generations require different treatments and thus different management styles. This article examines four different generations that currently are in or

are entering the marketplace: Baby Boomers, Generation X, Generation Y (Millennials), and Generation Z. (AMA, 2017).

Tolbize (2008) conducted a similar project in the U.S., and developed a list of things that motivates employees of different age groups and how to train these groups effectively. The study mainly analyzed attitudes of respect, supervision, authority, work, and loyalty to the employer (Tolbize, 2008). The present article is based on a case example. It focuses on analyzing the behaviors and preferences of different generations working in Bibita Group. Finding the right approaches to different generations is a crucial contributor to any company's success.

The suggestions made in this article can help managers to appropriately attract, recruit, and retain a workforce. The research questions that this article investigated are:

- How should different generations properly be managed in the work place in the case of Bibita Company?
- What are some of the most important motivational factors that drive each generation to contribute to this company?
- What are some of the best approaches one could use toward a multigenerational staff in a company?
- How does Kosovo culture influence employees' work values and attitudes?
- What are some of the benefits of having a multigenerational staff?

The relevance of these research questions lies in the fact that these problems have not been elaborated for the specific case of this company. Furthermore, because culture plays a significant role in determining motivational factors, such a study previously had not been conducted in Kosovo's major companies, so this particular case example also may be able to help other significant companies in Kosovo. In this case, managers need to be able to distinguish among the different factors that motivate different generations of employees. It also is crucial for employers to determine the similarities among the different generations on which they will have to focus. By understanding the similarities among the employees of different generations, managers can set up common rules and goals which make it easier for them to lead.

The primary goal of this article was to explore the differences and similarities among the different generations working in Bibita Group in Kosovo and to suggest some of the best approaches that could be used by Kosovo managers to manage properly their multigenerational staff. Because Kosovo is a small country with a high impact of culture on people's behavior, by understanding the motivational factors that affect the employees of Bibita Company, the suggestions developed from this study also may be of great help to the managers in the other large corporations in Kosovo. Particular focus was given to motivational factors that affect these employees. Understanding these driving forces will help managers to gain a wide picture of the needs and wants of the employees, and in this way to address those preferences in a better, more profitable way.

This article addresses the problems that current managers have when leading a multigenerational company and gives them solutions for better understanding their employees.

Lastly, this article can serve as a guide for managers who are interested in advancing their communication and understanding skills toward the four generations within a company. It will give them knowledge of all the benefits to be gained from leading a multigenerational company. "Generational differences in values and job expectations can be a cause of conflict hindering productivity at the working place" (Goldbeck, 2016).

## 2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The first thing a manager needs to understand best in order to manage an intergenerational gap properly in the workplace is what motivates the employees. There are many of definitions of the concept of motivation. Simply, motivation is a concept whose root word is motive. A motive is an internal force that makes people act (Crouse, 2005). Therefore, motivation is an internal force driving people to achieve their goals and satisfy their needs (Crouse, 2005).

A cost-benefit analysis should be in place which shows managers just how much they are prepared to give up, profit-wise, to have highly motivated employees. However, one should not forget that in the long run, motivated employees become loyal employees, and loyal employees become highly productive given the specific experience that they get from a particular company. Therefore, a loss in profit now can easily translate into a higher profit in the future if one uses the right strategies to sufficiently motivate one's staff so that they are most productive at their tasks without hindering the company's success and productivity.

A person can come up with many differences once analyzing a multi-generational workforce, but the magic only happens if these differences are taken into account and people are given the correct tasks in which they can use their full potential. "Younger workers' enthusiasm for trying new things could be used to encourage a culture of innovation, while older workers can leverage their experience

and broad perspective to help Millennials understand some of the costs and risks associated with their ideas" (The Expedite Team, 2016). Nevertheless, it is crucial to foster an environment in which employees feel free to communicate with one another, and, much more critically, to adapt to one another (Baker, 2015).

## 2.1 Characteristics of Different Generations

Due to entirely different circumstances in which employees were brought up, many differences in values and in the way they view the workplace have occurred (Lawrence & Nohria, 2001). However, there are several critiques of the generalizations made about what motivates each generation. "When people become aware of theories that try to describe them as part of a trend, at least a few will consciously adjust their behavior to disprove the theory or will object on principle to being stereotyped" (Salkowitz, 2008). Therefore, it is good to keep in mind that before using incentives to create motivational factors that satisfy employees' needs, each employee is a unique individual with unique goals and needs in the workplace. Therefore, some motivating factors that may work on one Millennial may just as quickly be a turn-off for another employee who also is a Millennial (Myers & Sadaghiani, 2010).

Baby Boomers are a generation that values authority and hard work. This trait is due to the circumstances in which they were raised, and their parents' mindset, a generation who were working during World War II. They were raised to show responsibility in the workplace, and during their generation, gender equality gained increased attention. They believe in good work organization, they have a high working ethic, and they are polite. They are motivated mostly by integrity, and, among other things, community involvement (Lawrence & Nohria, 2001).

Generation Xers grew up peacefully after the end of the wars. They concentrated on updating their skill sets and suiting them to market needs. This generation is very resourceful and independent and does not mind adapting to the workplace. For them, it is mostly about career

advancements and teamwork (Lawrence & Nohria, 2001).

Millennials are the tech-savvies in the workforce. They grew up during tremendous technological changes, and thus are very tech savvy and flexible. They prefer to be mobile during their work experience, are independent, and do not fancy micromanagement. This generation is very fond of creativity and innovation, likes diversity, and prefers having work-life balance (Lawrence & Nohria, 2001).

Generation Z is even more technologically prone than Millennials, but they still are in starting positions because they have entered the market quite recently. With the oldest being 22 years old, working straight out of college, they value face-to-face interaction, are very innovative, and also value work-life balance (Patel, 2017).

## 3. METHODOLOGY

The research questions presented at the beginning of the article are all descriptive. Five research questions are answered throughout this research using different methods of obtaining research data. The first method was qualitative analysis designed to answer as a whole of the research problems and grasp the manager's point of view. Data were collected through an interview conducted with the Company's CEO, Granit Gruda. Quantitative data were gathered through a questionnaire with multiple-choice questions addressed toward the staff of the organization. This questionnaire was taken from a research study which analyzed the differences between two generations, Gen X and Baby Boomers, in the workplace (Govitvatana, 2001). This questionnaire was chosen because the studies performed in this particular case were similar to and compatible with the studies performed by Govitvatana (2001).

When performing a case study approach, it is quite time-consuming to gather all the information available without hindering the researchers' objectivity. Furthermore, it is not possible to make generalizations when presenting the results, because the objective of the case study itself is to gain an in-depth understanding of the subject researched and evaluated (UK Essays, 2018).

### 3.1 Brief Description of the Company

Bibita Group was founded by Ymer Gruda in 1991 in the city of Peja, Kosovo. First, a production line for carbonated beverages was established in a space of not more than 16 m<sup>2</sup>. In January 2009, Bibita Group signed a license agreement for the category of noncarbonated drinks with Tampico Beverages from Chicago and became a general distributor for the Balkan region. With its presence in many markets around the globe, Bibita Group won two prizes at Gulfood Dubai 2017 with the Dum Dum Fitness line:

- Best soft beverage; and
- Best packaging design.

Bibita Group employs over 60 highly qualified, educated employees of different ages and experiences, who put their best efforts into their workplace. Table 1 presents generational statistics of the employees of Bibita Group.

*Table 1: Age of Respondents in Bibita Group*

Age	Name of generation	Number of employees	Percentage
TBD-22	Generation Z	4	6.50
23-37	Millennials	29	46.80
38-57	Generation X	19	30.60
58+	Baby Boomers	10	16.10
<b>TOTAL</b>		62	100

## 4. RESULTS

### 4.1 Analysis of In-Depth Interview with CEO Granit Gruda

When considering the benefits of leading a multi-generational company, Mr. Gruda brings three of the most important values that diversity in generations to the table. These are: experience exchange among different staff members, mentoring each other, and the creation of a culture in which open communication is valued and is very useful for reaching a high profitability index. According to Mr. Gruda, it is highly essential for a

company to be informed of its staff members' needs and motivational factors, and that it is imperative to overcoming the management struggles for dealing with generations' high diversity. Because of the impression that older generations are more knowledgeable, Millennials tend to suppress their creativity toward problem-solving. Therefore, groups of people of the same generation tend to form cliques inside the company, which is unhealthy for the company's overall success. This also happens because people of different generations have different strategies for solving issues, and different work mentalities. In this way, a conflict among different groups is born, requiring management's help in solving communication issues among staff members. One of the strategies that has not been successful is assigning a team leader based on seniority, meaning that the oldest employee also is a leader because of their experience.

The CEO of the company, Mr. Gruda, also shared his opinions based on his experience of how to ease the process of working with multiple generations. He implied that some key factors that they use to identify which motivational factors work for which generation are listening to the comments of their employees based on their needs and expectations of the job position, their complaints about the management and work process, and whether they have any ideas about how to solve their issues; and including staff in their motivation process.

Mr. Gruda also elaborated further on how every generation has its point of view in the workplace, including different aims regarding their careers. He stated his point of view of the main differences: "What we know for sure is that the main difference among the generations is technology and our knowledge about it."

Mr. Gruda implied that colleagues learn more from each other than from training; thus it is of utmost importance to create a culture of collaboration and openness in communication. Sincere and continuous communication has resulted in the best strategy for managing a multigenerational workforce.

#### 4.2 Analysis of Questionnaires with Bibita Group Staff Members

The first section of the questionnaire collected data regarding the respondents' characteristics, using a Likert scale with five different choices, from the lowest (not obvious) to the highest (extremely obvious). All the respondents were asked to rate their agreement with each characteristic. A total of 33 characteristics were discussed and rated, and those that had a mean score higher than 3 (the average) and a standard deviation lower than 1 are mentioned in the text. The standard deviation indicates how dispersed data are from the mean.

Other statistical tests were performed on the data to obtain significant differences among the generations from the questionnaire. There were six dif-

ferent combinations in total, which emphasized the significant differences between Gen Z and Gen Y, Gen Z and Gen X, Gen Z and Baby Boomers, Gen Y and Gen X, Gen Y and Baby Boomers, and Gen X and Baby Boomers. A *p*-value less than 0.05 is considered to be significant; the significant results, i.e., those with *p*-values less than 0.05, are presented in the text.

Respondents from Generation Z are more inflexible to change and far more competitive than are Millennials and Gen Xers. Gen Z are more loyal than Millennials. They value individuality and give a great deal of importance to the balance between work and personal life. On the other hand, Millennials are in a way more intense than are Generation Z. However, Generation Z has a slightly better work ethic than Millennials.

Table 2: Staff characteristics in Bibita Group

Characteristics of staff - Bibita group			
Generation Z (mean)	Generation Y (mean)	Generation X (mean)	Baby Boomers (mean)
Idealistic (4.00)	Competitive (4.10)	Idealistic (3.42)	Involvement (3.30)
Competitive (4.75)	Loyalty (4.72)	Competitive (3.89)	Loyalty (4.50)
Involvement (4.25)	Team orientation (4.41)	Loyalty (4.84)	Value individuality (4.40)
Loyalty (5.00)	Value diversity (4.41)	Value individuality (4.26)	Team orientation (3.70)
Value individuality (4.75)	Entrepreneurial (4.07)	Team Orientation (4.53)	Values diversity (4.10)
Value diversity (3.75)	Thinking globally (4.41)	Technology skills (4.32)	Entrepreneurial (3.60)
Entrepreneurial (4.00)	Go getters (4.24)	Value diversity (4.16)	Ambitious (4.10)
Thinking globally (4.50)	Ambitious (4.59)	Think globally (4.37)	Team player (3.70)
Go getters (4.50)	Team player (4.24)	Go getters (4.32)	Self-reliant (3.30)
Ambitious (4.50)	Self-reliant (4.45)	Ambitious (4.47)	Pragmatic (3.10)
Likes challenges (4.75)	Pragmatic (3.72)	Like challenges (4.58)	Workaholic (4.10)
Self-reliant (4.50)	Too intense (4.38)	Self-reliant (4.58)	Too intense (4.40)
Work-life balance (4.75)	Committed (4.55)	Work-life balance (4.11)	Respectful (4.40)
Pragmatic (3.75)	Work ethic (4.45)	Workaholics (4.42)	Work ethic (4.40)
Workaholic (4.50)	Self-focused (4.21)	Personal growth (4.26)	Adaptable (4.40)
Personal growth (4.25)	Adaptable (4.10)	Committed (4.79)	Creative (4.00)
Committed (4.50)	Creative (4.21)	Creative (4.42)	
Work ethic (5.00)			
Self-focused (4.00)			
Adaptable (4.50)			
Creative (4.25)			

Generation Z and Baby Boomers, which are respectively the youngest and the oldest generations in the workplace, have many significant but not large differences. Furthermore, respondents from the youngest generation are more active and faster in performing their designated tasks; thus they had a higher mean score for the characteristic “Go Getters” compared to the oldest generation in the workplace, Baby Boomers. They like challenges more than Boomers do, are more self-reliant, and fight to achieve a better balance between personal life and work. Being practical is a skill obtained by Generation Z; therefore they scored higher in pragmatism. Baby Boomers have a different mentality and idea of a respectable working place; therefore they work more intensely. However, this does not necessarily mean that they will reach higher productivity. Generation Z does have slackers, in comparison to the oldest generation, which values hard work. Lastly, the youngest generation also scored higher in whining.

The next pair of generations, Generation Y and Generation X, do not have many characteristics in which they differ. Only one characteristic resulted in a difference between the two generations that was significant, with a  $p$ -value less than 0.05. This characteristic is “clueless about the future,” in which Generation X had a slightly higher mean score in comparison to Generation Y, meaning that they are more clueless about the future compared to the Millennials.

Another comparison to be made is between Generation Y and Baby Boomers. These two generations differed in many characteristics; those that had a  $p$ -value less than 0.05 were considered to be significant. A total of 10 characteristics had significant differences, such as inflexible to change, involvement, team orientation, technology skills, go-getters, likes challenges, self-reliant, pragmatism, slacker, and whiner. Elaborating further on the significant differences between the two generations, Millennials are more pro-change compared to Baby Boomers. They are also highly involved in their workplace, are better team players, and have superior technological skills. Millennials also are go-getters, love to take on challenging tasks, and are considerably more self-reliant in comparison to the oldest generation in the workplace. They are practical, and therefore scored high in pragmatism.

However, they did turn out to be bigger slackers and whiners compared to baby boomers, although both generations had means less than 2 for these last two characteristics.

Comparing Generation X and Baby Boomers indicated some significant differences between these two generations in terms of the workplace. There were a total of nine significant differences between these two generations, such as inflexible to change, involvements, team orientation, technology skills, go-getters, like challenges, self-reliant, too intense, and clueless about the future. Participants from Generation X are less inflexible to change.

They are more involved in the job, are great team players, and have much better technical skills compared to the oldest generation, Baby Boomers, who spent most of their working lives without technological developments. Gen Xers are quite goal-oriented and work hard to get attain the goals they set for themselves. They like to take on new challenges, and rely on themselves to get the work done by working intensely. However, they are clueless about the future.

### **4.3 Analysis of Motivational Factors Affecting Employees**

This section of the questionnaire was concerned with discovering the different motivational factors that affect the work experience for each generation. The data were gathered using a Likert scale ranging from 1 = not important (NI) to 5 = extremely important (EI). Respondents were asked to rate each of the motivators based on which one suited them best. There were a total of nine motivational factors, which were further elaborated through the mean score and standard deviation. Those with a mean score higher than 3 are discussed in more detail by also considering their standard deviation.

The two top motivators for Generation Z were Training and Challenging work, both with a mean score of 4.75 and a standard deviation of 0.50. Therefore, the results show that participants from Generation Z are willing to learn, and managers should take steps to encourage them through training sessions. Advancing the skills that they gained from their studies plays an important role in their workplace motivation.

Table 3: Motivational factors of the four generations in Bibita Group

Motivation Factors in Different Generations								
Motivation Factors	Generation Z		Generation Y		Generation X		Baby Boomers	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Salary	3.5	0.58	4.14	0.74	3.74	1.15	4	0.67
Incentive	2	1.41	3.86	0.92	3.32	1.25	3.9	0.99
Reward	4	0.82	4.41	0.78	4.37	0.6	4.2	0.79
Personal recognition	4.25	0.96	4.69	0.66	4.37	1.07	4.5	0.71
Training	4.75	0.5	4.41	0.82	4.32	0.75	4	0.67
Challenging work	4.75	0.5	4.17	0.54	4.53	0.7	3.3	0.82
Team building	4	0.82	4.41	0.78	4.63	0.5	4	1.25
Retirement plan	2.25	1.89	2.93	1.69	3.89	1.24	4.7	0.48
Benefits	3.75	0.5	3.97	1.05	4.05	1.03	3.5	0.85

The results in Table 3 indicate that almost every factor in the table is a strong motivator for Generation Y, according to the mean score and the standard deviation for each of the options. Except for retirement plan, which was not included in the list of motivators of respondents from Generation Y, all the motivators had mean scores higher than 3. Respondents from Generation Y are quite ego-centric and like to get proper recognition in front of their peers in order to feel that their contribution to the company matters. This is followed by team building, because they are team-oriented people; training (meaning that they value further career developments); and rewards (monetary or nonmonetary). Salary also is significant for this generation, because they are a generation consisting mostly of young couples who recently started families, and these extra expenses require a substantial monetary foundation.

Another very active generation of the workforce in the case of Bibita Group is Generation X. The most important motivator of this generation was team building, with a mean score of 4.63 and a standard deviation of 0.5. The motivator with the next best mean score, 4.53, was challenging work. Generation X is a hard-working generation who value not only monetary compensation but also different benefits, training, and rewards.

Compared to the respondents from Generation Y and Generation Z, the respondents from this generation, because they are older and closer to retirement than the other two generations, also value the retirement plan as a good motivator, with a mean score of 3.89. However, this motivator has a standard deviation greater than 1, meaning that it has different value throughout the generation.

Lastly, Baby Boomers, the oldest generation in the workplace, valued all the motivators; however, the one motivator which they value most is the retirement plan, which is very logical, because they are approaching retirement and have started thinking of securing a good standard of living once they do retire. The next most critical motivation factor which affects their working environment is personal recognition, with a mean score of 4.50 and a standard deviation of 0.71. This means that Baby Boomers like to get credit for their work and earn authority among their peers, being the oldest members of the working community.

From these trends, not only differences but also similarities can be spotted, which, if used correctly, can make the management's task of decreasing the generation gap much easier. Especially with the similarities, management can find solutions to decrease the generation gap in the workplace.

#### 4.4 Analysis of Approaches to Decreasing the Generation Gap

This section introduces several approaches to decreasing the generation gap in the workplace. Table 4 lists the percentages of each of the options that were selected by the respondents employed at Bibita Group using a Likert scale from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree.

### 5. DISCUSSION

This section discusses the final findings of this article, based on which a set of recommendations is presented for managing the generation gap. This section also answers the research questions based on the research findings. Future studies in this field of research are recommended due to certain limi-

tations. Recommendations are given to managers, which also should be useful for HR managers of other companies operating in Kosovo.

#### 5.1 Theoretical Contribution and Interpretation of Results

In today’s workplace, there are four generations. Each of these generations has its idea of work ethic, productivity, and culture. This creates a generation gap in the workplace, which is a challenge to manage. This generation gap impacts the workplace and atmosphere, often in negative ways, hindering productivity and business profitability.

The four generations discussed in this article are Baby Boomers (born 1945–1960), Generation X (born 1961–1980), Generation Y (born 1981–1995),

Table 4: Approaches to Decreasing the Generation Gap

Solutions to generation gap	SD%	D %	N %	A %	SA %	MEAN	SD
Work unit meeting	1.6	1.6	27.4	48.4	21.0	3.85	0.83
Team building	1.6	1.6	12.9	41.9	41.9	4.21	0.85
Create an atmosphere of fellowship	0.0	0.0	3.2	37.1	59.7	4.56	0.56
Put the right people in the right job	0.0	1.6	4.8	19.4	74.2	4.66	0.65
Rotate people's positions so they can enrich their experience and understand the needs of other people and departments	0.0	3.2	11.3	35.5	50.0	4.32	0.81
Provide training and development opportunities	1.6	0.0	8.1	21.0	69.4	4.56	0.78
Keep open communication channels	0.0	3.2	12.9	29.0	54.8	4.35	0.83
Respect competence and initiative	1.6	6.5	9.7	25.8	56.5	4.29	1
Create an atmosphere of mutual empathy and respect	0.0	0.0	12.9	24.2	62.9	4.5	0.72
Train in generational preferences	1.6	6.5	16.1	32.3	43.5	4.1	1
Coaching and mentoring	0.0	9.7	16.1	30.6	43.5	4.08	1
Operate from a sophisticated management style	3.2	0.0	19.4	37.1	40.3	4.11	0.94
Treat employee like customer	11.3	17.7	27.4	25.8	17.7	3.21	1.26
Walk the talk	0.0	3.2	14.5	19.4	62.9	4.42	0.86
Provide information about each group’s trait	3.2	17.7	19.4	25.8	33.9	3.69	1.21
No longer “one size fits all”	0.0	4.8	22.6	32.3	40.3	4.08	0.91
Increase open lines of communication in order to voice and articulate differences in work styles and values	0.0	0.0	22.6	30.6	46.8	4.24	0.8
Learn to value the difference and to leverage the talents of all members	0.0	1.6	6.5	29.0	62.9	4.53	0.69

SD = Strongly disagree, D = Disagree, N = Neutral, A = Agree, and SA = Strongly agree

and Generation Z (born 1996–2010). Through a thorough elaboration of each research question, this article provides recommendations for managers and creates a more profound understanding of the workforce available in Bibita Group.

### ***5.1.1 Proper Way to Manage Different Generations in the Workplace in the Case of Bibita Company***

Taking a look at the wide picture, a common base among the four different generations can be identified. This is determined first by looking at the mean scores of all the generations regarding their characteristics. The characteristics which describe them best are loyalty, value individuality, entrepreneurial, ambitious, self-reliant, and creativeness. These six characteristics are the common base among the four discussed generations; therefore, they should be considered when managing strategies are being built. Looking deeper, each generation has its own differences and preferences based not only upon age but also upon the different events that occurred throughout life. For example, to keep good relations with Baby Boomers, one must provide them with growth opportunities, because they are quite authoritative. They feel the need to be the star of the company (Tanner, 2018); therefore, personal recognition plays a crucial role when dealing with them. Generation X values work–life balance; therefore, making them work long hours can backfire (Tanner, 2018). Millennials also are a generation eager to learn and work, but also to have a life outside their daily jobs. They are quite optimistic (Tanner, 2018) and like challenges and achievements; therefore, management has to provide them with an opportunity to be mentored by Baby Boomers and provide them training with which they can advance in their careers (Tanner, 2018).

According to the questionnaire results, staff members of all generations gave importance to loyalty. Therefore, companies should reward employees for their loyalty by giving them extra benefits, such as extra vacation days for every year spent with the company. Management should give employees enough space to express themselves and get things done in their way. It is essential for the employees to know what the company wants to achieve in the

future, and to know in what areas each of them can help it to arrive at that stage successfully. Cross-generational leadership approaches can be used to help manage the gap created among different generations employed in the company. Benefits should be assessed based on employees' individual needs, and mentoring should become part of the company's culture, so that the knowledge created over the years can be passed on to the younger generations joining the company (Morris, 2018). Mutual respect and understanding are crucial when considering the profitability of the company; therefore, giving employees a chance to work together and mentor each other in their areas of knowledge can enhance the company's overall success (Morris, 2018).

Employees at Bibita Group are quite ambitious; therefore, management should give them tasks in which they can creatively come up with different solutions, always keeping open communication channels between the management and staff. The staff should feel welcome to discuss problematic issues with the management, and together, combining the managements' experience in the business and the employees' technical skills, to achieve cost-effectiveness, which is quite important for the company's profitability. Lipman (2017) discussed certain techniques for breaking the ice and easily managing generational differences which also were indicated by the answers provided by the staff members of Bibita Group. Creating teams with people of different generations to generate ideas is a good start (Lipman, 2017), an approach which was positively rated by the employees of Bibita Group. Creating an atmosphere of fellowship is another approach to decrease the generation gap, according to the answers of the surveyed staff, which complies with a technique discussed by Lipman, in which companies create an atmosphere in which employees interact with one another less formally in order to break the ice among them (Lipman, 2017). The most important idea proposed by Lipman and that also is very important according to the initial survey results is for management to use more-sophisticated methods of understanding their staff needs, and put an end to the "one size fits all" model of motivation. This can be achieved by updating the management style and adapting it to each employee individually (Lipman, 2017).

### **5.1.2 Most Important Motivational Factors Driving Each Generation to Contribute to this Company**

When discussing the motivational factors in the survey, it was identified that almost all the motivational factors were listed as important. The bottom line is that staff members value financial security, and above all they value personal growth within the company. Therefore the factors that were the most important were salary, rewards, personal recognition, training, the presence of challenging tasks, team building, and other benefits available.

Looking at the wide picture, by training employees to perform well in their tasks, giving them challenging work, and rewarding them with both monetary and nonmonetary means, each employee will be motivated to give the shot in the workplace. There is no doubt that management also should consider revising its motivational HR policies when managing different generations, for example when dealing with Baby Boomers, who mostly value the retirement plan. This can be done by offering them good retirement conditions in exchange for other benefits, which can be offered to younger generations who are not necessarily interested in retirement.

A few data points obtained through the literature review agreed with the data obtained through the case example results. Because Generation Z employees are among the youngest in the market, and have been in the market for a short time, companies do not have much information about them. According to Patel (2017) this generation is motivated mostly by achievement and independence, which also is true in the case of Bibita, because they value challenging work and training programs in which they can further advance their working skills. Furthermore, CWB (2017) discussed how this generation is driven by monetary benefits, which again is confirmed through the results indicating that staff members of Generation Z mostly are motivated by salaries, rewards, and different monetary benefits associated with the job.

CWB (2017) and Lawrence & Nohria (2001) both discussed independence and flexibility as two traits that should be taken into consideration when opting for the best strategies to motivate

Generation Y employees. This theory is supported by the data obtained through the Bibita Group case example, which indicated that this generation is self-reliant. Furthermore, according to Alton (2017), Generation Y is very accepting of diversity among work-place colleagues, which is supported by the case example results which showed this generation to be quite adaptable toward people. Moreover, Schweyer (2015) pointed out that rewarding Generation Y employees with recognition plays a crucial role in effectively motivating them to give their best effort in the workplace, a theory which is supported by the questionnaire results obtained in the Bibita Group case example.

Generation X is a unique generation which is both independent and likes teamwork (Lawrence & Nohria, 2001). The ease of this group of employees when working in teams also is evident from the questionnaire results. According to DelCampo, Haggerty, Haney & Knipple (2011), Generation Xers have a high drive to acquire. This trait also is described as the go-getter characteristic, which was rated high in Bibita Group Generation X questionnaires. Because this group is very competitive in nature and values career security (CWB, 2017), this generation developed good technological skills despite being a generation older than Millennials. This theory is well backed up by the case example results gathered through the questionnaires. Lawrence & Nohria (2001) claimed that employees of the Baby Boomer generation are hard workers and have a strong work ethic, two traits that are backed up by the data obtained through the questionnaires. Therefore, managers should keep in mind that this generation is motivated by integrity.

An important difference in the motivations of Baby Boomers and other generations in the workplace is a retirement plan. This high motivation factor is backed up both by the literature and the questionnaire results. Another option which may motivate them is post-retirement opportunities (Sullivan, 2018). Because 42% of this generation do not have savings for their retirement, they will need a chance to extend their working period so that they can begin saving in order to retire financially secure (Sullivan, 2018).

In addition to using the data gathered from the questionnaire and the literature review, management should consider the life stages of their employees in order to motivate them properly. For example, if Millennials are in an early stage of marriage, when they have babies and more obligations, one can presume that this particular segment is in need of higher salaries, as opposed to other benefits, and so on. Therefore, it is of utmost importance that management is familiar with its staff not just in terms of age, but also in terms of personal interests affected by life stages on an individual level.

### **5.1.3 Best Approaches toward a Multigenerational Staff in a Company**

Because all the employees were interviewed for this article, it was relatively easy to identify the motivating factors and determine the staff characteristics and what works best for each of them. When building different strategies for how to address staff members of different generations, one should keep on mind the several options/alternatives of Section 3 of the questionnaire. Employees valued having the right people in the right positions. They appreciated an environment in which open communication channels are present, creating opportunities for them to express their ideas and give input to the company's success. In a company such as Bibita Group, with a large variety of ages, it is quite a challenge to create strategies which include all the motivational factors, because it will be quite costly. Therefore, recommendations for managers of Bibita Group are included, explaining what they should consider in order to successfully handle the challenges that are present within a multigenerational company. These recommendations were derived by analyzing the data obtained from the questionnaire, and by obtaining information from a thorough literature review discussing multiple companies that have similar generational gap challenges.

First and foremost, management should keep open communication channels and keep in mind that stereotypes are only stereotypes. Therefore, building a trusting environment, in which the employer and the employees discuss issues and collaborate to find solutions together gives the

managers a chance to get a fresh perspective and gives the employees a sense of respect and appreciation. The results from the questionnaires and similar research show that building collaborative relationships between staff and management is crucial for the healthy operation of an organization (AMA, 2019).

Managers should stop analyzing differences among the staff members and focus on the similarities instead. Therefore, they should look beyond differences and try to come up with solutions best suited to mutual gain and to the company's success. It is imperative for a company's management to keep in mind that there are differences not only among generations, but also among individuals. Therefore, knowing all employees and understanding their individual needs is of great value and builds a solid base for successful outcomes in the future (AMA, 2019).

Lastly, mixing people in a group of different generations is a good strategy; therefore, it is crucial that the management takes advantage of the benefits of a multigenerational workforce. To eliminate some of the disadvantages of the generation gap, one can help the employees to better understand the needs of each generation through different training programs. In this way, employees can collaborate without challenges of communication (AMA, 2019).

### **5.1.4 The Influence of Kosovo Culture on Employees' Work Values and Attitudes**

There is no arguing that the culture in which people grow up and spend their life affects the way they think and what they find motivating and vital. Differences in generations and their work mentality also are affected by culture.

According to NDP (2018), although Kosovo has the youngest population in Europe, it has a high unemployment rate and therefore it is challenging to find a job in Kosovo. This difficulty is suffered mostly by the younger generations, who are caught in this transitioning state at a crucial age, leaving many educated young people inexperienced and on a waiting list for future employment (UNDP, 2018).

About 30% of Kosovo's population lives below the poverty line, which ranks the country among the least developed countries in Southeastern Europe (BTI Project, 2018). Because there is a gap between genders in the employment rate—45.6% of males are in the workforce, whereas only 12.6% of women are present in Kosovo's workforce—these employees' value more motivational factors such as salaries. This happens because in many families, men support their family alone, whereas women stay at home and bring up the children (ASK, 2018). "The most pronounced unemployment rate is in the age group of 15–24 with 55.0%" (ASK, 2018).

These factors of a transitioning state affect the mindset of employees in the workforce in Kosovo. Much work needs to be done by the state to create a better marketplace. One of the most important is lowering the corruption rate, which would make foreign investors feel safer about conducting work in Kosovo. A decreasing rate of unemployment may ease some of the motivational factors that are based solely on salary or monetary benefits. This, in turn, will promote loyalty due to the decrease in the threat that employees feel in such a competitive workforce and a low market demand.

Generally speaking, the imbalance between the market necessity and the supply of workers, creates fierce competition in terms of getting and keeping a job, which might affect work productivity in the end. This could occur from directing so much attention to further advancements and training that work productivity at the office falls.

Trying always to be ahead in terms of education does not necessarily translate into better productivity in the current workplace. On the contrary, too much attention to training may hinder productivity at work. However, it is a chain which needs to be disassembled over a longer period by increasing employment to relieve some of the pressure that young people feel nowadays about work and family support.

#### **5.1.5 Benefits of a Multigenerational Staff**

Despite the vast amount of challenges that a multigenerational staff represents, there are many benefits involved as well. One of the most important benefits that a multigenerational workforce brings

to the company is creating a particular culture in a company in which employees can freely communicate with one another, learn from each other through mentoring, and exchange their experiences with one another. The exchange of experiences in a multigenerational workplace makes the company stronger and more reliable both in terms of productivity and in terms of how others view it from the outside. A stronger decision-making process due to many viewpoints that are available as a result of a multigenerational staff is another benefit to companies (AARP, 2007).

Looking further into the secondary data obtained through the literature review, it can be concluded that diversity is a great innovation drive (Schultz, 2015). Looking at the generations present in the marketplace, many of their traits that were found by both Schultz (2015) and the results obtained through primary research at Bibita Group can bring multiple benefits to companies employing multigenerational staff, thus increasing their revenues.

The technical skills and the multitasking that Millennials bring to the table easily can be combined with the skills of older generations to achieve higher efficiency (Schultz, 2015). Generation Xers, who are considered to be loyal (Schultz, 2015; Bibita Group, 2018), well-educated, and creative in their problem-solving techniques, are a great asset to a company. They are the one generation that has traits of both Baby Boomers and Millennials, combining them into an almost perfect combination, which makes them quite versatile, or, in other words, adaptable. They are independent and tech savvy, and also like challenges (Bibita Group, 2018), as described by the traits from the questionnaires; therefore, they are "revenue generators" (Schultz, 2015). Baby Boomers are hard workers and competitive (CWB, 2017; Lawrence & Nohria, 2001; Schultz, 2015) which is confirmed by the questionnaire results, thus giving the company the benefit of a well-experienced team member who can mentor younger generations in the tricks of the business world and deliver the best knowledge (Schultz, 2015). Schultz (2015) found that a diverse group of problem solvers was better at solving company issues than were the best problem solvers who were not diverse within their teams.

Bibita Group built a strong reputation for loyalty and a unique culture in which a horizontal management style is used, and they consistently try to get the best out of every employee by understanding their needs and motivating them with the proper factors according not only to their age but also to their individual needs. In order to do this, they enable successful communication between the staff members and the management, in which no idea goes unheard.

## 5.2 Limitations and Future Research Suggestions

Because this study had a relatively small sample size, one cannot apply the conclusions to a broader population sample, which in the future might be done by conducting research about the entire country. This research was conducted only on a specific workforce, employees of Bibita Group; therefore, a recommendation for future research is to use a larger sample size representing the entire population of Kosovo.

Future study recommendations include widening the area of research among the different generations, such as evaluation of the similarities, evaluation of the degree to which different generations employ their so-called characteristics, discussions of cross-cultural values, and ethnical differences among different generations and ethnicities in Kosovo. Another study could be entirely theoretical and could discuss how to make sense of all these differences that already exist among the different generations (Campbell, Twenge & Campbell, 2017).

## 6. CONCLUSION

The generation gap in the case of Bibita Group is dismantled. The company employs all four generations that are currently in the market. They encountered many difficulties in motivating their staff members due to the variety of employees' mindsets which are due to different generational mindsets. In this study, a thorough literature review was performed in order to grasp the main ideas of generational challenges and motivational factors for each generation.

After inputting the results of the secondary data, primary data were gathered from an open-ended question interview with the company's CEO, Granit Gruda, and from 62 questionnaires that were distributed among the staff of the company. Therefore, the primary data consisted of both qualitative and quantitative methodology designs. This research provides knowledge of Bibita's employees and their characteristics and motivating factors which were gathered by surveying each of them individually. There are several accomplishments and data tests derived in this article, which can be used by the management of Bibita Group to best suit their employees' needs to company objectives.

First and foremost, this article identified staff preferences and opinions about different motivational factors that affect them. It also identified a set of characteristics which can be analyzed to ease the team-making process in the future.

Secondly, by analyzing the data in this article, Bibita Groups' management team can gain a better understanding of their staff's needs. In this way they can come up with strategies for fulfilling these needs without hurting the organization's culture or wellbeing. This will decrease the challenges presented when dealing with a multigenerational staff.

Lastly, the questionnaire provided answers and gathered opinions about the best approaches to decreasing the challenges of a generation gap in the workplace. These approaches may, in turn, help the company to take advantage of the benefits that are presented by a multigenerational staff.

In conclusion, this article provides the management of Bibita Group with a road map of alternatives to address the problems that a multigenerational company might create. This will give them a chance to better satisfy their staff, may result in higher job effectiveness.

## EXTENDED SUMMARY/IZVLEČEK

Delo v večgeneracijskem podjetju predstavlja velik izziv, zlasti za posameznike na vodstvenih položajih. Razlike med temeljnimi kompetencami zaposlenih, njihovimi motivacijskimi dejavniki in načinom dojemanja idej se od generacije do generacije razlikujejo. Sposobnost razumevanja teh razlik predstavlja svojevrsten izziv. Uspešen manager mora biti dober vodja ter posedovati znanja o tem, kako motivirati svoje zaposlene. Glavni cilj raziskav je ugotoviti vrzel med različnimi generacijami na trgu dela s pomočjo študije primera skupine Bibita. Prispevek je zelo pomemben, saj tovrstne raziskave, kljub priljubljenosti v drugih državah, še nikoli niso bile izvedene na področju Kosova. Avtorji so se v raziskavi poslužili metode študije primera z opisno raziskovalno zasnovo. Za pridobitev podatkov so uporabili raziskovalno metodo, ki vključuje številne raziskovalne tehnike, tako kvalitativne kot kvantitativne. Končne ugotovitve prispevka pripomorejo k boljšemu razumevanju značilnosti zaposlenih ter razumevanju dejavnikov, ki povečujejo njihovo raven motiviranosti. Rezultati raziskave so razkrili, da koristi zaposlovanja večgeneracijskega osebja v podjetju presegajo težave in posledice, povezane z izzivi njihovega ravnanja.

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