INFLUENCING FACTORS FOR THAI GENERATION Z ENTERING WORKFORCE

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Abstract: The career decision of Generation Z, identified as being born between 1995 – 2010, is something to be closely observed as they are becoming the mainstay of the current and future workforce. As Generational Z are more willing to take the risk of job switching, they present one of the greatest challenges for organizations to maintain the turnover rate and cost of replacement. This research is an investigation into the influencing factors for Thai Generation Z concerning their career decision. The survey based on Rich Feller's Flower was conducted with 556 respondents across different stages of life from secondary school stages, college life stage, and early post-college stage. The survey investigated their demographic information, motivational factors for career decision, and an evaluation part of the 5-Point Likert Scale based on the Rich Feller's Flower theory. The One-Way ANOVA statistical analysis is used to test research hypotheses whether the motivational factors within the four groups have significantly different means. The results showed that Thai generation Z is influenced by reasonable salary and good welfare, people's environment in terms of good relationships with coworkers or boss, transferable skills, and knowledge/interests respectively. Based on the hypothesis test, there are statistically significant influencing factors among each different age group. This research provides an insight into the mind of Thai Generation Z concerning their career decision as well as recommendations for organizations to respond to the differing nature of this generation that value passion, work-life balance, people's friendly environment, and fair salary and good welfare.

Keywords: generation z, rich feller's flower, career path, career decision

Introduction

Background

Generation Z refers to those born between 1995 - 2010 (Francis & Hoefel, 2018). In Thailand, Generation Z is estimated as 20% of the total population (National Statistics Office, 2019). The nature of Generation Z has been closely observed in recent years due to them being the future of the workforce and sooner or later will replace the retiring generations such as the Baby Boomer and Generation X. According to Jobthai, an online employment search service; 46% of Thai Generation Z plan to change job within 6 months to 1 year of employment, citing their current employers' inability to satisfy their prioritized needs (2018). As they are soon to become the mainstay of the workforce,

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organizations must face the issues of turnover and replacement. This research aims to investigate the influencing factors for Thai Generation Z entering the workforce, hoping to provide a basis for organizations to consider when dealing with this generation. Factors that would motivate them to join the organization and remain will be explored as well as solutions of how to attract and retain them will be discussed in this research.

Relevant Literatures

Generation Z

The characteristics of Generation Z are primarily associated with digital and information technology due to them being born alongside these technologies (Merriman, 2015). The average age of receiving their first smartphone is 10.3 years old or even younger to receive permission to use their parents' devices (Kasasa, 2020). Some even dubbed them 'the digital natives' (Adigiconsult GmbH, 2020). Generation Z prefers independence and flexibility in their careers, as well as considering work-life balance as priority (Stuckey, 2016). Generation Z doesn't give priority to a job title, instead, they consider chances for career growth, generous pay, chance to create impact to organizations, achievement, an honest and fair superiors, and work-life balance (Jenkins, 2015; Iorgulescu, 2016). They tend to also consider jobs with less commute time and distance, and flexible working hours (Iorgulescu, 2016). While they also seek job security, Generation Z also prefer to be more independent and not being tie down to one permanent employment as well as following their personal goal (Sidorcuka & Chesnovicka, 2017; Patel, 2017). They are likely to be motivated by being with good peers, passion and interest, achievement, compensation package, and working with good superiors who would give them recognition of their accomplishments. (Kirchmayer and Fratričová, 2018; Fero and Dokoupilova, 2019; Holopainen and Suslova, 2019). Chompukum and Chakrapeesirisuk (2020) surveyed 390 students in Bangkok in Thailand about motivation. The important influencing factors of Thai Generation Z were personal happiness, compensation that would create value and success, social responsibilities, and acknowledgment and trust factors. Based on the researches, compensation such as salary or welfare is the most mentioned among Thai Generation Z.

Theories of Motivation

Organizations face the challenge of motivating their employees, not only to perform their best but also to remain with them. Motivation keeps individuals persistent toward their goal through pursuing particular courses of action (Mitchell, 1997; Skripak, 2016). Three major development of motivation concepts are discussed in this literature: Hierarchy of Needs, Theories of X and Y, and the Two-Factor Theory.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs proposed that people have 5 levels of fundamental needs: 1) physiological needs (to satisfy a person's basic biological needs); 2) safety needs (to feel secure); 3) social needs (to satisfy the need of belonging, approval, and fellowship); 4) esteem needs (to satisfy the need of appreciation, accomplishment, and being recognized in particular social position); and 5) self-actualization needs (to achieve the desire for self-fulfillment) (Maslow, 1943)

McGregor's Theory X and Theory Y explored the job incentive and manipulation. Theory X highlights the importance of supervision, physical reward; and negative consequences; while Theory Y focuses on job satisfaction and having employees perform without direct supervision (McGregor, 1960).

Two-Factors Theory by Herzberg et al. (1959) focuses on motivators (intrinsic factors) and hygiene factors (extrinsic factors). Motivators include accomplishment, appreciation, work assignments, accountabilities, and career advancement. Motivators can also be a challenging job, an award for one's achievement, commitment, involvement opportunity, and contribution to the organization (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). The six top factors leading to extreme dissatisfaction were called hygiene factors. Hygiene Factors include the company's direction, regulation, connection to superiors, conditions of working, payment, and relation with colleagues.

Rich Feller's Flower Theory

Rich Feller's Flower Theory was conceived by Richard N. Bolles (2019) uses a diagram of flowers with 7 petals representing 7 factors one would take into account when choosing a career path. The 7 petals consists of 1) people (that one would like to work with and be around); 2) workplace (work condition and circumstance that one would thrive); 3) skills (that one already possess and would be able to use in their career); 4) purpose in life; 5) knowledge (that one already acquired and enjoy), 6) salary and responsibilities (that one would like to take); and 7) geography (that one would like to live and work) 2020

Materials and Methods

Research method, design and tools

This research employed quantitative approach. The research was constructed into 3 main sections: 1) Demographic information; 2) Influencing factors for selecting a future dream job and employer; and 3) Evaluation of influencing factors for entering the workforce based on Rich Feller's Flower theory.

Population and sample

As the oldest of Generation Z would be in their mid-20s and the youngest would be in their teen at the time of this research; this research collects data from different sources of participants in order to represent the diverse age and status of Generation Z as much as possible. A total of 556 responses were collected. Samples represents 4 groups of Generation Z as following:

- Group 1: Thai Generation Z who are 12 – 15 years who are in lower secondary school
- Group 2: Thai Generation Z who are 16 – 18 years who are in upper secondary school
- Group 3: Thai Generation Z who are 19 – 22 years who are in college
- Group 4: Thai Generation Z who are 23 – 25 years who have already finished undergraduate study and are beginning their career.

Data analysis tools

Statistical software SPSS was used to code and process the data obtained from the survey. The author makes use of descriptive statistics. The data in the second section or the open-ended questions are coded and quantified for the frequency. ANOVA or Analysis of Variance refers to "a statistical test used to analyze the difference between the means of more than two groups" (Bevans, 2020). A one-way ANOVA is used when the researcher collected the data about one categorical independent variable and one quantitative dependent variable. The independent variable should have at least three levels or at least three different groups or categories" (Bevans, 2020). Since the hypothesis is to test if there are the different influencing factors between the four groups of Generation Z of Thailand, a statistical test, one-way ANOVA, is used for the hypothesis test.

Ethical considerations

The purpose of the research was informed to the respondents before starting data collection. Consent from younger participants was sought via their schools. Information and identity of participants were protected.

Results and Discussion

Result from the survey

The study revealed that for Thai Generation Z, salary (70%), people's environment (26%) and welfare (17%) are what they concern the most when making a decision to stay with one employer for a longer duration. The younger ones asserted that they would work for reasonable salary fitting with their responsibilities as long as it enables them to cover cost of living. The idea of the instability of the country's economy also influences this generation to concern about their income and savings. For

people's environment, Generation Z would look for organizations known for a good workplace vibe and fair boss. As for welfare, Generation Z uses this as a factor when choosing between companies that offer similar compensation.

Result based on Rich Feller's Flower Theory

Each participant was asked to choose top 3 elements of Rich Feller's Flower relevant to their decision to choose a future career. The top three most significant factors for Generation Z of Thailand are salary (66%), people environment 56%), and transferable skills (50%). Both knowledge/interests (37%) and working conditions (36%) are almost equally rated followed by purpose in life (34%) and the final factor is geography (21%).
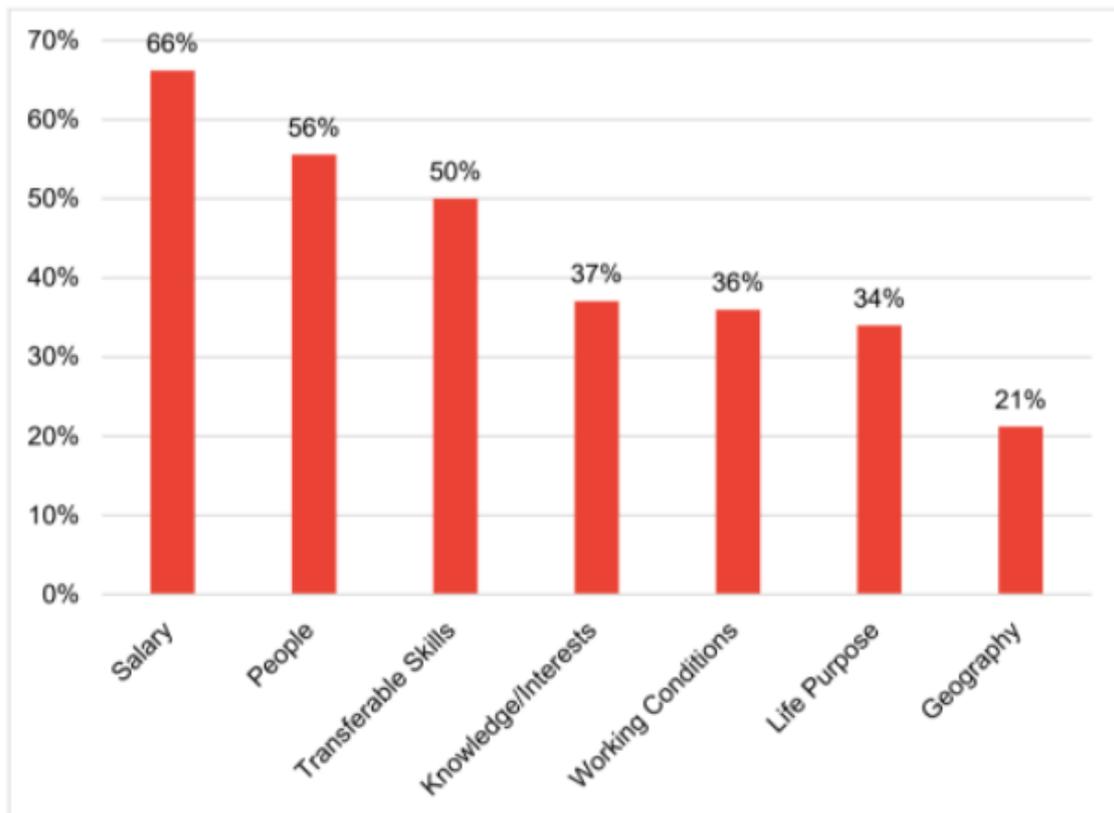

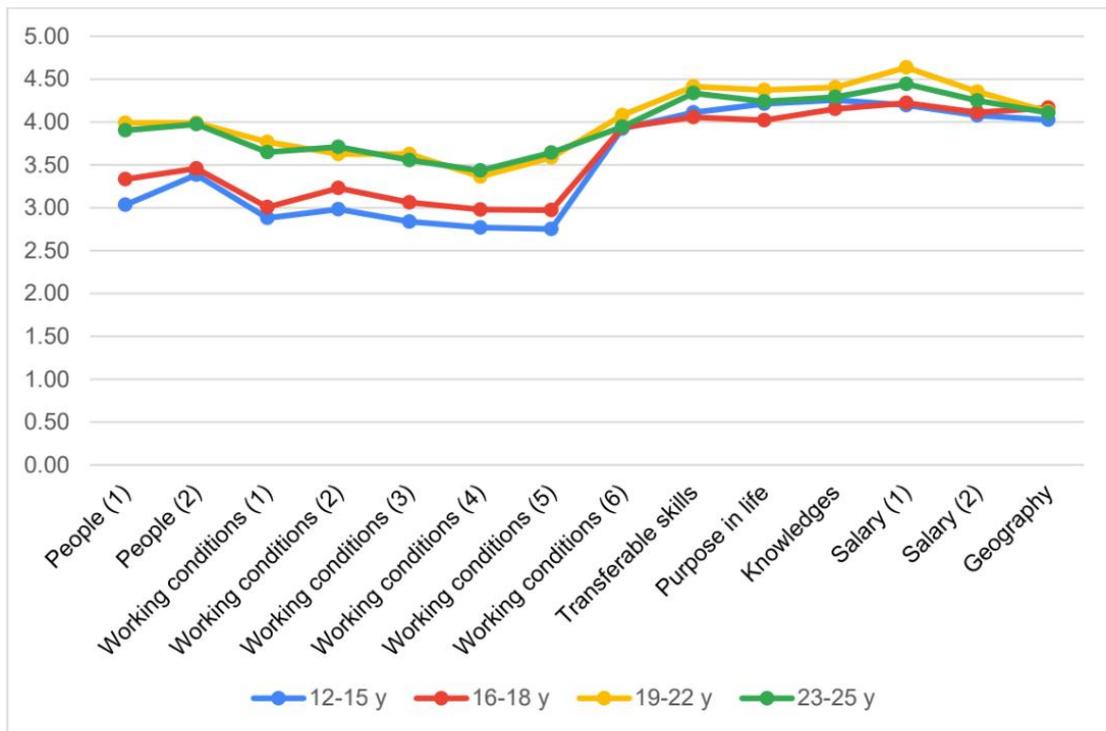*Figure 1: Results based on Rich Feller's Flower Theory.*

Figure 2: Mean comparisons among four group and 14 questions

Seven Factors/Age	12-15 y	S.D	16-18 y	S.D	19-22 y	S.D	23-25 y	S.D	P-Value
People (1)	3.03	1.12	3.33	1.04	3.99	0.89	3.90	0.94	0.001
People (2)	3.38	1.00	3.46	1.02	3.99	0.83	3.97	0.91	0.001
Working conditions (1)	2.88	0.93	3.01	1.04	3.77	1.00	3.65	0.92	0.001
Working conditions (2)	2.98	1.06	3.23	1.09	3.63	0.99	3.71	0.99	0.001
Working conditions (3)	2.84	1.11	3.06	0.99	3.63	0.99	3.56	0.98	0.001
Working conditions (4)	2.75	1.10	2.97	1.07	3.59	1.04	3.64	1.14	0.001
Working conditions (5)	4.21	1.10	4.02	0.98	4.37	0.98	4.24	1.05	0.001
Working conditions (6)	3.92	0.89	3.94	1.03	4.08	0.83	3.94	0.94	0.578
Transferable skills	4.11	0.89	4.06	0.88	4.41	0.64	4.34	0.80	0.001
Purpose in life	4.21	0.93	4.02	0.91	4.37	0.76	4.24	0.81	0.013
Knowledges	4.26	0.91	4.15	0.88	4.40	0.79	4.29	0.83	0.153
Salary (1)	4.20	0.80	4.22	0.83	4.64	0.60	4.44	0.72	0.000
Salary (2)	4.08	0.85	4.11	0.88	4.35	0.76	4.25	0.75	0.033
Geography	4.03	1.00	4.17	0.90	4.12	0.90	4.11	0.94	0.683

Figure 3: Descriptive statistics of the influencing factors among age groups

By using the one-way ANOVA and Multiple comparisons, patterns of how each factor influenced different group of Generation Z started to emerge. When taking a closer look at how each group of Thai Generation Z make decisions toward their future, we can pair Group 1 (12-15) with Group 2 (16

- 18) and pair Group 3 (19-22) and Group 4 (23-25). According to figure 2, the younger ones (12-18 years) rated people factors and working conditions lower than the older ones (19-25 years). Transferable skills and salary show slightly different scores among the four groups but there are some statistically significant. The working condition or a stable job and geography are statistically insignificant which means all four groups agreed that they prefer to have job security and to work at their favorite location at the same level. Those who are 12 - 15 years value knowledge/interests as the most important factor among seven elements (mean = 4.26). The second factor is purpose in life (mean = 4.21), while the third factor is salary (mean = 4.20).

Salary is the most influential factor in choosing a job between 16 – 25 years. Those who are 16 - 18 years value salary (mean = 4.22), geography (mean =4.17), and knowledge/interests (mean = 4.15) as the three most influencing factors respectively. The three most important factors for 19 - 22 years are salary (mean = 4.64), transferable skills (mean = 4.41), and knowledge/interests (mean=4.40) respectively. The oldest one's value salary (mean=4.44), knowledge/interests (mean=4.29), and salary (2) or level of responsibilities (mean = 4.25) as the top three most important factors to choose a job. Based on the multiple comparisons and mean comparisons, there are clearly different perspectives in terms of influencing factors for those entering the workforce between those who have work experience and those who have no work experience. For example, People 1 represents a good relationship with the boss, supervisor, and colleagues. People 2 represents your willingness to serve or help your boss and colleagues. The youngest (12-15 years) who have less work experience rated this factor at the lowest, while university students, graduates, and current workers (19-25 years) who have more work experience rated people factor higher.

Conclusion and recommendation

This research explored factors influencing ThaiGeneration Z's future career decision using Rich Feller's Flower Theory as a basis. The research employed a quantitative approach, collecting response from Thai Generation Z aged between 12 - 25 years old. Thai Generation Z were broke down into 4 groups of different age range and characteristics ranging from highschoolers, college students, to young professionals. Based on the quantitative analysis, the top four factors based on Rich Feller's Flower and descriptive answers that influence Generation Z in Thailand entering the workforce are salary, people environment, transferable skills, and knowledge/interests respectively. The hypothesis was tested by One-way ANOVA statistical analysis and shown that there are statistically significant motivators of people within the same birth group. There is statistically insignificance of job security and geography, while there is a statistical significance of people environment, working conditions, transferable skills, purpose in life, knowledge/interests, and salary/level of responsibilities. Point worth being noted is the differences in the way the older groups (age 19-25) are more concerned of

the work environment and characteristics of their colleagues than the younger groups (age 12 -18). This is attributed to their different level of work and life experience. While salary is an attractive factor, Generation Z would prefer to receive a reasonable salary appropriate to their responsibilities. Generation Z are not reluctant to leave their employment to pursue their goal if they feel the current employers are not satisfying their priorities; especially, if they lose passion for the job.

Recommendations

Organizations in Thailand should pay attention to the trend of Generation Z and understand their nature at best. Organizations should expect the effect of generational gaps when recruiting and retaining Generation Z workforce. A people friendly and open-minded organization would be more attractive to Generation. Organizations should also consider creating opportunities for younger employees to have moments to shine by giving them opportunities to participate in decision making or contributing to challenging projects. This would maintain their interest in the company, as long as it doesn't take up all of their personal time, in which they would strongly object. Lastly, superiors and executives should also understand and be patient with the nature of Generation Z that might not conform with the rigid office protocols or ritual; and take as much opportunity as possible to have an open communication with them in order to bridge the gaps of generation.

Further research

To better understand the implications of these results, future studies could address a comparison of the influencing factors of the younger people entering the workforce between their domestic country and foreign country whether the different cultures provide different work motivation. The application of Rich Feller's Flower with the work motivation research is very new, future studies could also investigate if the people from different six regions of Thailand have different influencing factors. Since the Northeastern region of Thailand is an important source of migrating workforce, further research should explore the influencing factors for this important group and compare it with others from different regions of Thailand.

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Declaration of Interest Statement

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interests.

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