Generation Y in Poland – Expectations and Attitudes of Young People

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Abstract

The article presents an assessment of students studying economics who belong to the Generation Y. Generation Y is a group of people born in the 80s and 90s of the twentieth century. The aim of this study was to verify the correctness of judgments about Generation Y. The article presents results concerning the behaviour of students in 2001 and 2015 years. Subjective evaluation of opinion of Generation Y was examined in the areas of faculty chosen, work, internet, mobility. Data analysis was performed using positional statistics, bar diagrams and parallel set. It was confirmed almost all opinions about Generation Y, indicating only a small difference in the perception of mobility by young students of economics.

Keywords: Generation Y, expectations, behaviour of young people, statistical analysis, parallel sets

Introduction

The aim of the study was to examine whether the Generation Y in Poland corresponds to the reported in the literature characteristics of this age cohort. To achieve this goal were used data collected during questionnaire survey, which was conducted in 2001 and 2015 years.

Generation Y is the youngest group of workforce. Their behaviour patterns are significantly different from the elderly. Understanding their expectations in both the private and professional life is very important, for example in the process of human resource management. Managers must often solve the task of "how to turn this (Generation Y) high maintenance workforce into a high productivity workforce" (Martin, 2005). Characteristics of Generation Y has been repeatedly presented at various scientific articles, for example Barwińska-Małajowicz A. (2011), Bąkowska J. (2013), Hammill G. (2005), Gentry, et al. (2011), Martini, C. (2005), Parment A. (2013), Stanimir (2014, 2015a, 2015b, 2015c). For this reason, only short characteristics of this age cohort is presented below.

Generation Y are people who were born between 1980 and 1999. But those years are conventionally determined. Affiliation to the Generation Y depends on the culture, lifestyle, family and friends patterns, social surrounding [Stanimir 2015c, p. 22] . Deal (2007, p. 14) writes that all generations have similar values and "they just express them differently". Gentry et al. (2011, p. 41) define Generation Y as: "grew up in the digital age", and Generation Y use technology and digital media in every area of life. Social networks and other kinds of virtual communication are integral characteristics of the Generation Y, so this is the first generation naturally without territorial limitations in communications. "Communicators and social networks replace and simplify verbal communication. Decline verbal communication causes problems in the process of applying for work and its implementation." [Stanimir 2015b, p. 173]. Quality of life is very important for them. They believe in education as a key to success. People from Generation Y highly appreciate their abilities and they belief in their own uniqueness. In every area of life they have high expectations and a strong aversion to criticism. They pay high attention to private life, simultaneously with expectation of more freedom and flexibility of working time. Like Martini (2005, p. 40) writes this is first non-nuclear family generation. Their opinion about work is: we must work, but not a lifelong, so they are looking for life-work balance. This is a different attitude toward Generation X, which works to live [Gursoy et al. 2008, p. 451]. Stanimir (2014) shows the differences in perception of life-work balance not only between generations but also differences between men and women of Generation Y. The perception of work is quite different as for Generation X or Baby Boomers. "They know their worth on the labour market" (Barwińska-Małajowicz A. 2011 p. 304). For Generation Y work is a way for self-realisation. They are looking for job which gives them more opportunities to realize private interests. Generation Y appreciate the authorities, but their loyalty ends very quickly. It is multitasking Generation, but in work they need constant feedback, only than they can function correctly. Stanimir (2015c, p. 27) writes that "Generation Y declare their willingness to learn new things but it must be associated with the possibility of achieving additional benefits and not only the execution of work".

In this article are presented results of the analysis of data from questionnaire surveys, which were conducted among students of economic studies in 2001 and 2015 in

Wroclaw. The respondents in both periods were 20-25 years old. In 2001 they were the first people from generation Y, which began its career and studies. They were born between 1976 and 1981. The respondents in 2015 were born between 1990 and 1995. In 2001 students were asked for opinion about:

I. Chosen faculty
II. Work.

In 2015 the survey was conducted to identify the diversity of the behaviour of young people in three areas related to private and professional life:

I. Internet
II. Work
III. Mobility.

Questionnaire in 2001 didn't contain questions related to the importance and use of the Internet, because, at that time, it was not seen as one of the most important sources of information, entertainment, communication or work.

Data Characteristics

Below are presented questions which were contained in surveys in 2001 and 2015.

In questionnaire in 2001 in area of chosen faculty, were asked literal questions:

- *Why did you choose University of Economics* (X1)*?* (possible answers: I am interested in economics, management, computer science and financial (a); prestige of the university (b); easy entrance examinations (c); no entrance examinations (d); easy studies (e); my friends have chosen this school (f); other (g));

- *Do you think that studying will help you to find preferred job/occupation* (X2)*?* (possible answers: yes (a); no (b), don't know (c)).

In area of work, were asked literal questions:

- *Do you have a job* (X3)*?* (yes (a), casual work (b), no (c));

- *Where wish you to work after graduation* (X4)*?* (own company (a); employee in a large company (b); employee of a small business (c); managerial position (d); other (e)).

In 2015 the profile of students, their skills and expectations are different than 14 years ago. For this reason, the range of questions has changed. In the area of Internet use the following questions were asked:

- *How important part of life is the Internet for you?* ([very important] 5 4 3 2 1 [completely unimportant]);

- *For what purpose do you most often use the Internet?* Rank 7 means the most important, 1 – the least important (Communication; Official matters; Learning and working; Finance and banking; Entertainment; Shopping; Others).

In area of work, were asked literal questions:

- *Do you have a job or have you ever worked since the age of 18 years?* (yes, no);

- *Are you ready to work abroad* (yes, no, don't know);

- *If you don't want work abroad give three main reasons why?* Rank 3 means main, 2 – very important, 1 – important (lack of knowledge of language; current job in Poland; don't like to go abroad for a long time; safety concerns; family; other);

- *What factors are important to you during your job search and choose the right company?* Select answer: very important, important, I do not know, unimportant, totally unimportant (precisely defined responsibilities; the diversity of the social package; information about bonuses; information about flexible work hours; earnings amount; stability of employment; company location, company image, friends in the company, other).

In area of mobility, were asked literal questions:

- *Have you participated in student exchange programs between universities?* (yes and I never go again; yes and I want go again; no and I do not want to go; no but I'm going to go; don't know).

- *Please do subjective evaluation of your language skills.* English and other languages. Mark 5 means very good skills, 2 – insufficient language skills (in everyday communication; reading, writing, professional communication – at work).

**Fig. 1. Frequencies of answers given for questions X1-X4**
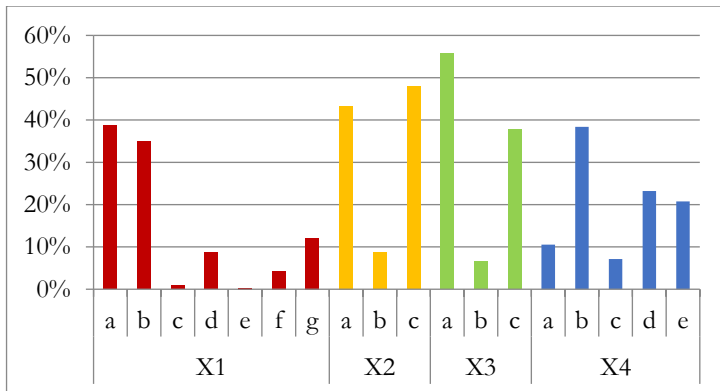
Source: own elaborations.

Main conclusions of the analysis

Figure 1 shows the frequencies of choices of response variants in the four variables (X1-X4). Based on the answers given by students in 2001, should be noted that most people chose business schools because of the interest in subjects and because of the prestige of the university. 43% of respondents thought that their chosen studies will

help them to find preferred job or occupation. 48% of respondents didn't know whether the studies will be helpful in achieving this goal (association of categories of variables X1 and X2 are presented in the next paragraph below). 56% of respondents worked during the study, 38% - didn't. After graduation, most people wanted to work in a large company (38%), and 23% of respondents wanted to occupy managerial positions. Only 11% of respondents planned to work in their own company.

Figure 2 presents the reasons for the choice of economic study described by those who believed (or not), that the study will help them to find preferred work. Regardless of whether the respondents believed that the study will help them to find a preferred job or not (or don't have an opinion), one of the main reasons for the choice made was the prestige of the university. Those who were convinced that find employment in an ideal job, most often made choices of school according to their scientific interests.

Fig. 2. Frequencies of answers given for questions X2 taking into account the variants of X1 (*Why did you choose University of Economics)*
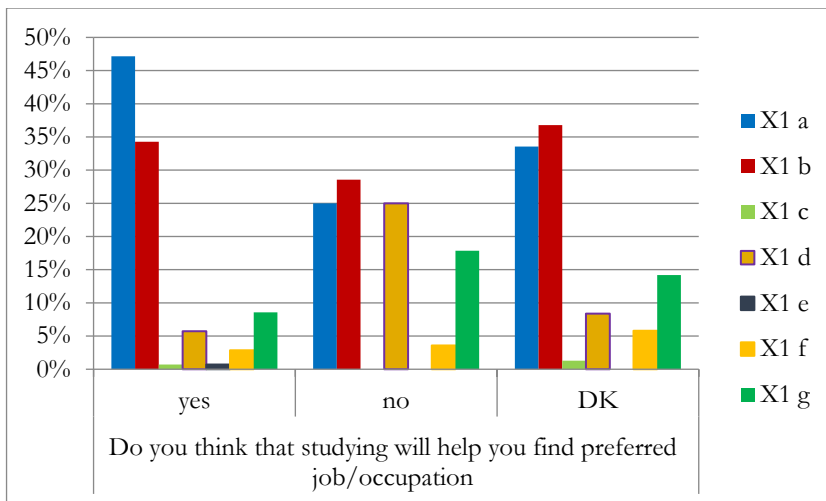
Source: own elaborations.

Figure 3 shows a breakdown of people who worked or not during their studies, due to the expectations for employment after graduation. Among those who worked dominated those who didn't know whether studies will help them to find ideal job. The share of people who positively assessed the chances of finding preferred employment is a little lower. The smallest group of people who believe that studies will help them in finding the perfect job or occupation, are those who have worked casual.

Fig. 3. Frequencies of answers given for questions X3 taking into account the variants of X2 (*Do you think that studying will help you find preferred job/occupation)*
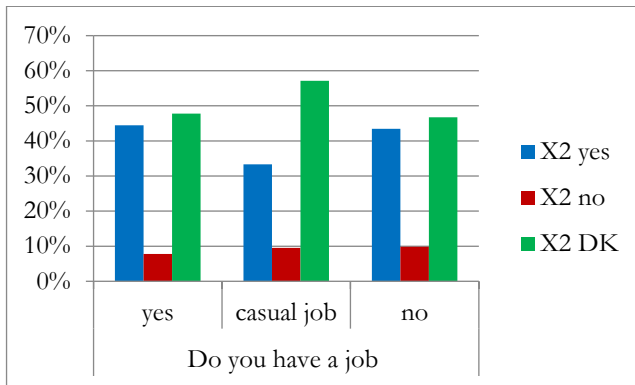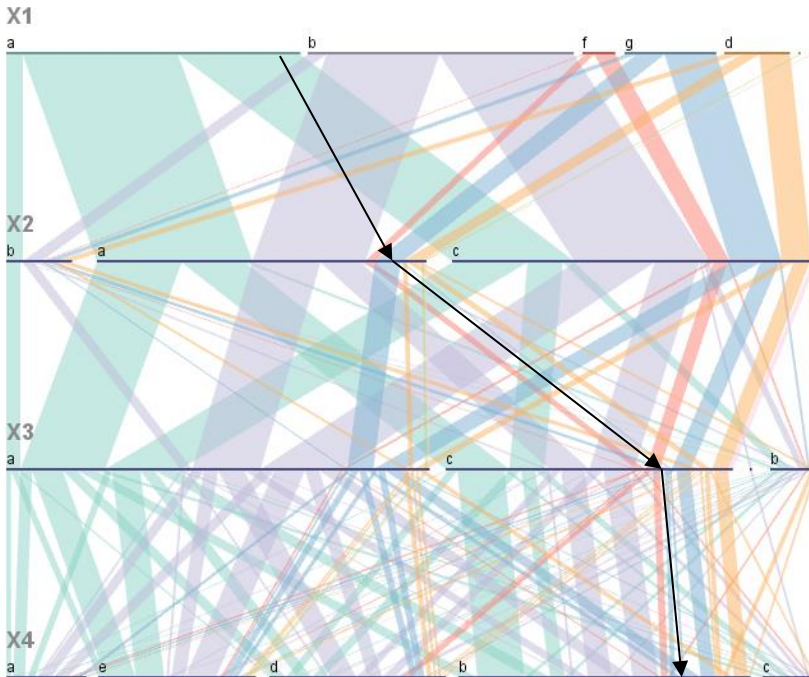

Source: own elaborations.

Figure 4 shows the graph constructed using the Parallel Sets V2.1[1] program. Method of Parallel Sets is a technique for visualization categorical data, which are cross-tabulated. The horizontal lines shows the frequencies of each category for chosen variable. From each category in upper line goes ribbons which connect all categories from bottom line, corresponding to frequencies of how often each category occurred. The lowest division indicates the size of this part of the population that chooses indicated pattern (track) of categories of the variables.

The most numerous group (pattern dividing the population is indicated in Figure 4 by arrows), covering 6% of the study population, are people who chose the university because of the compatibility of their interests (X1a), thought that the studies will be helpful in finding preferred job or occupation (X2a), they didn't have work (X3c), and after graduation they wanted to work in a large company (X4b). It was interesting what path chose people for whom very important was the prestige of the university (the purple colour of ribbons). In the first step are constructed two main groups: those who believed that the studies will help to find a dream job and those who didn't know whether the studies provide such an opportunity. After taking another variable into account, population becomes increasingly diverse – it can be identify four main paths. After taking the last variable into account, the largest group (4% of the population) are people who chose the university because of its prestige (X1b), but they didn't know if studies are helpful in finding preferred job (X2c), they were working during studies (X3a) and didn't have defined plans for jobs after graduation.

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[1] Szczegółowy opis programu znajduje się na https://eagereyes.org/parallel-sets.

Fig. 4. Parallel stets of Variables X1, X2, X3, X4


Source: own elaborations using Parallel Sets V2.1.

First area analysed in 2015 was Internet use. In 2015, the Y Generation, evaluated Internet as very important and as essential part of life.

Very important	Important
70%	28%

The result confirms that Generation Y is a generation of ICT with natural use of the modern technologies, specially the Internet. If for 98% of young people the Internet was important in their daily lives, so it was examined for what purpose were they used it.

Figure 5 shows the frequency of Internet use by students corresponding to different purposes.

Fig. 5. Frequencies of Internet use divided into purposes
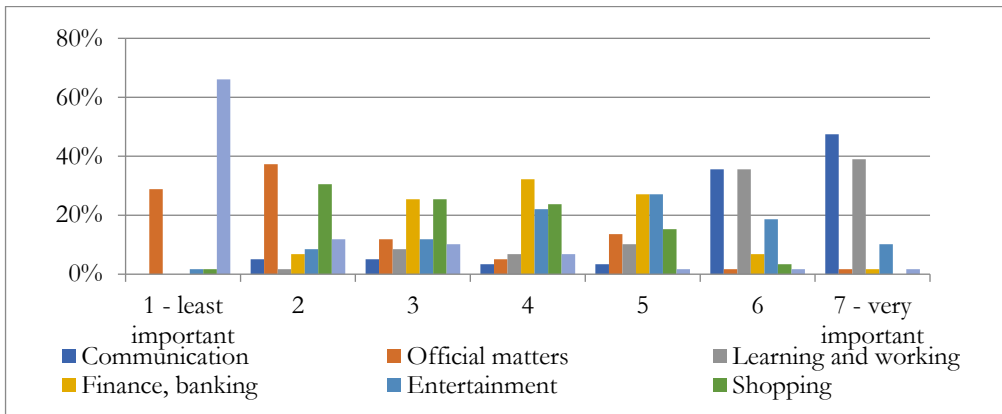
Source: own elaborations.

Use of the Internet by different generations of Poles, was discussed in the article Stanimir (2015a). There were used data from panel survey: Soicial Polish Diagnozis [Rada Monitoringu Społecznego 2013]. There were obtained results similar to those presented in Figure 1. The most important for Generation Y were the possibilities of using the Internet to communicate, work and study. Finance and banking were often indicated as carried out via the Internet, as well as entertainment. Young people least likely used the Internet to deal with official matters. As indicated in the article Stanimir (2015 a, p. 51) in 2013, young people also used the Internet to communicate, entertainment and study or work, but also to deal with banking metters. On the other hand they didn't use the Internet to do shopping or own creativity. Also, online shopping was rarely indicated by the Generation Y in 2015. Figure 6 shows opinions about working abroad but taking into account respondents who have ever worked or not.

Fig. 6. Frequencies of respondents who wanted to work abroad divided into groups of people ever worked or not.
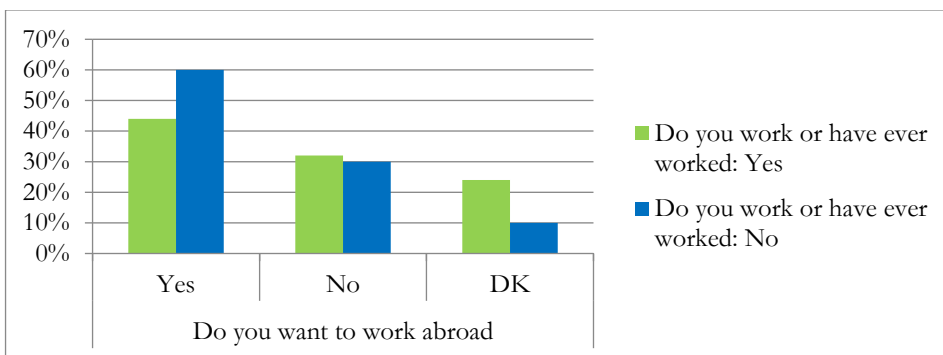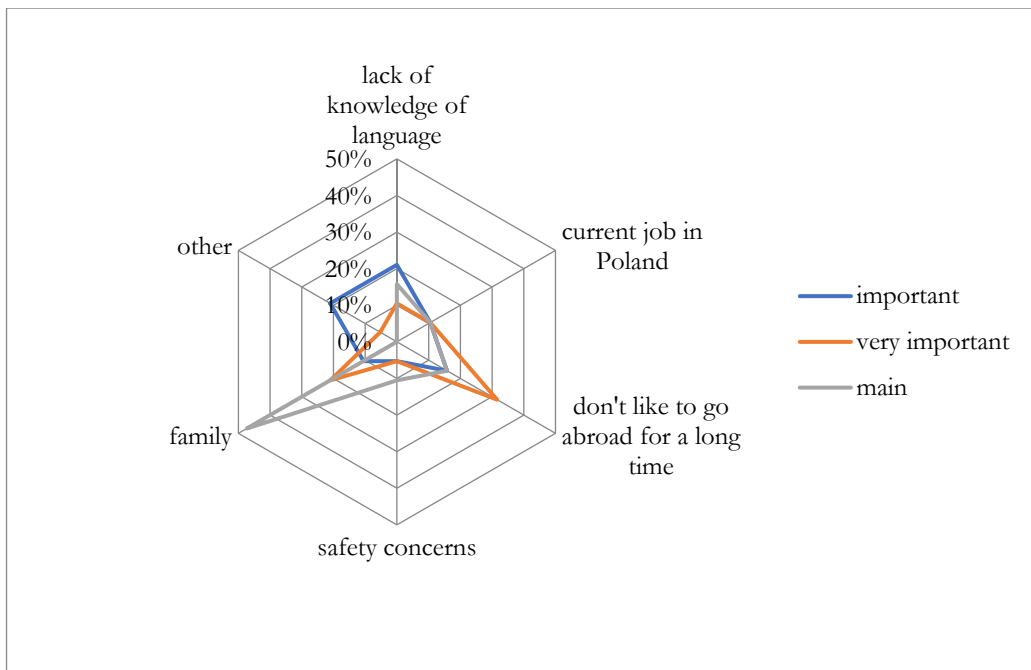

Source: own elaborations.

Figure 6 presents the attitudes of Generation Y to work abroad in association with situation, whether they ever worked, or still never were worked. Chi-square statistic for this association is equal 1,22 and p-value: 0,54. It follows that the analyzed variables are independent. From Figure 6 shows that more people who have already worked didn't know whether they want to work abroad. Thus, their tendency to mobility were not specified. A greater percentage of people who have never worked wanted to leave to work abroad than from people who have already taken a job.

Both among people who worked or didn't have gainful employment, about 30% did not want to work abroad. The question is what is the main reason of this situation. The respondents could identify three reasons (main, very important and important) for not want to work abroad. Figure 7 shows the obtained results. Main reason why they didn't want go abroad to work was a family, very important reason was that they don't like go abroad for a long time, and important reasons were lack of language knowledge and other.

Fig. 7. Main reasons for not going to work abroad

Source: own elaborations.

Another question asked to respondents was related to expectations of future jobs. Table 1 shows the median for each variant.

Table 1. Median value for all factors defining ideal company or work place.

Median	Very important	Important	DK	Unimportant	Totally unimportant
Precisely defined responsibilities					
The diversity of the social package					
Information about bonuses					
Information about flexible work hours					
Earnings amount					
Stability of employment					
Company location					
Company image					
Friends in the company					

Source: own elaborations.

Very important factor in the process of choosing right company was salary. Important were: precisely defined responsibilities, diversity of the social package, information about bonuses and flexible work hours, stability of employment and finally company location. Unimportant was company image.

In the next step, was examined the current students tendency to mobility. Mobility is understood as a willingness to participate in the exchange of students between universities. This variable is analysed in correspondence to language knowledge and skills. Only 6% of all population took part in such a kind of studies, and half of them didn't want to participate again. 45% of respondents didn't take part in students exchange and didn't want to, despite the fact that 59% of them well-evaluate their own language skills in everyday communication, 70% in reading, 41% in writing and 19% in professional conversations – at work.

Conclusions

When analysis subjective evaluation of opinion of Generation Y was examined in the areas of faculty chosen, work, internet, mobility. It was confirmed almost all opinions about Generation Y, indicating only a small difference in the perception of mobility by young students of economics. It was pointed out that for students in 2001, it was important to pursue their own interests. They chose the university, which gave them

a very good education. Many of them believed that the selected studies are the way to their ideal career path. In 2015, students were asked about the importance of the Internet in their daily lives. Their opinion was consistent with the characteristics of Generation Y. The Internet was for them ways to communicate, learn, work and entertainment. These choices are also consistent with the general characteristics of Generation Y. Aspect of the employment, which does not correspond to common views and opinions on Generation Y is mobility. Students showed average interest in working abroad and lack of willingness to travel abroad to study.

Acknowledgements

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