

HUNGARIAN MILLENNIALS' ATTITUDES ON BEING ONLINE

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ABSTRACT

Young people love being online. It is true for Hungarians as well, and communications technology plays a strong role in their lives. Young people (born in 1982-1996) were asked about their thoughts on the role of social network and being online in their lives. As a result, opinions of 662 respondents were collected through the method of online survey. The research results indicate that they are quite conscious social network users. The Generation Y's life has been strongly determined by the existence of technological devices, and the communication through online sites. They especially like the social media applications, which basically determine their everyday life, friendships. The users pay just a slight attention to the access to their profile and set up restrictions despite the fact that they also spend most of their time in the cyberspace. The representatives of the generation clearly form a homogenous group, thus supporting the definition, which states that the members of Generation Y were born between 1982 and 1996. On the basis of our research, it can also be concluded that they form a homogenous group on the basis of their Internet usage patterns too.

KEY WORDS

Hungarian millennials, generations, being online, social media.

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Introduction

Information society, rapidly changing world, digital age, consumer society and many other phrases... these are used to describe the 20th and 21st centuries as well as generations growing up in these centuries. Many experts have dealt with the similarities and differences among these generations. The research, of course, are mostly based on sociology, but the technological development of the recent years have had an impact on them, too. In general, it can be declared that development makes you more open, but it is very

interesting, however, that despite this the attitude of the examined members of generation Y to risks is negative; they regard it as a danger and not as a possibility (Kolnhofer-Derecskei, Nagy 2016: 166-168).

Young employees in our days handle different technical devices extraordinarily naturally. These are part of their everyday life. It is a question of course, if they actually use these devices properly. „The new tools of social communication have necessarily brought an era where all of us (including those who are not using online social plat-

forms) have to rethink learning, knowledge sharing and collaboration in a fundamentally different way than ever before. Instead of deeply thinking in a narrow area, having only superficial knowledge of many things will become more dominant" (Szeghegyi, et al. 2014: 242).

It is obvious, however, that in our days all their activities, from private life through learning to employment, are being performed by using different applications, mobile devices and possibilities offered by internet. „Efficient and independent learning means that one is able to learn persistently, to plan his own learning path - individually and in groups as well - and that includes effective time management and information management" (Szeghegyi et al. 2014: 243).

The current research aims to explore how different are the members of generation Y in terms of their internet usage habits; are they conscious users of individual online platforms and which platforms they prefer.

1. Literature review

The generation research was based by William Strauss and Neil Howe American historians with their publication titled *Generations*, published in 1991. They discuss in their paper that there are certain patterns in the attitude, set of values and behaviour of successive human generations, which cyclically follow each other. They argue that historical events are in symbolic relation with generations. A cycle like this is spread over approximately 80 years, during which four generations can be clearly distinguished. Different generations think differently about values. Makkos-Káldi, and et al published in their publication in 2013, based on the baby boomer generation, that "The average figure showed that health was at the first place with most respondents and the family is ranked 2nd, so we can say health is the most impor-

tant value for respondents "(Makkos-Káldi, Eisingerné, Kecskés, p. 126).

It can be concluded that every era begins with the end of a crisis situation; thus the first generation is the so-called prophet, who longs for new values in an environment, which seems to consolidate the post-crisis institutional system. It is followed by an era, in which the role of individual autonomy increases and the institutional system established a short time ago slowly starts to decline. The child of this era is the nomad, who is typically looking for freedom. Individualism is strongly expanding in the third phase. People of this era are mostly endeavouring to increase their wealth. Finally, the restructuring of the society comes, which can be either peaceful or aggressive. Artists live in this era, who must endure the changes around them, but cannot actively participate (Pais 2013).

The sociological research, however, cannot disregard from the impact of information technology developments. Thus, some research distinguishes generations emerging in the modern society based on the impacts of digital age. Tapscott (2009) basically distinguishes four generations. The first that he describes in detail is the baby boom generation born between 1946 and 1964. The phrase baby boom refers to the explosive growth of birth after World War 2. Approximately 81 million people belong to this generation all over the world. For baby boomers, the radio and TV brought the information revolution. The economy had strengthened by the late 1970s and TV had become the greatest achievement in communication revolution. The impact of TV on everyday life had been underestimated first, but soon this platform had become the strongest communication technology. Generation X, who – according to Tapscott – were born between 1965 and 1976, arrived to a specific social environment. This generation is

an extremely aggressive communicator and very strongly media-oriented. The first computer and shortly thereafter the Internet was introduced when they became adults. Typically, they married and had children later; learning and career was important for them. They were followed by generation Y or, in other words, Net-generation. Their number is at least as high as the number of baby boomer generation. They study and work extremely efficiently. They almost immediately process the information they receive and share it with their acquaintances, thus helping its interpretation and reception. The possibilities offered by the Internet are natural for them; they are at home in the world of different applications. This generation is followed by generation Z, who have not stepped into the labour market yet; they are currently studying. All the digital devices are natural for them; they cannot even exist without these (Tapscott 2009).

The references give plenty of features about this generation, on the basis of which their members form a clearly identifiable group. Their everyday relation to technology and digital world; the natural use of computer and internet are probably the most typical features of them. It is equally important, however, that money, career, and success have utmost importance for them because they learned that only these can take them forward in a consumer society. They are often rather autonomous personalities, for whom the workplace is not a lifelong connection; it can be changed at any time (VanMeter et al. 2013). Individual freedom, family, friends, self-expression and the „Carpe Diem” are much more important for them (Boyd 2010). They can easily change not only their employer but any scene of their life (Ng, Parry 2016). It is also enhanced by the lack of existential ties to their home country and the migration processes all over the world. The pos-

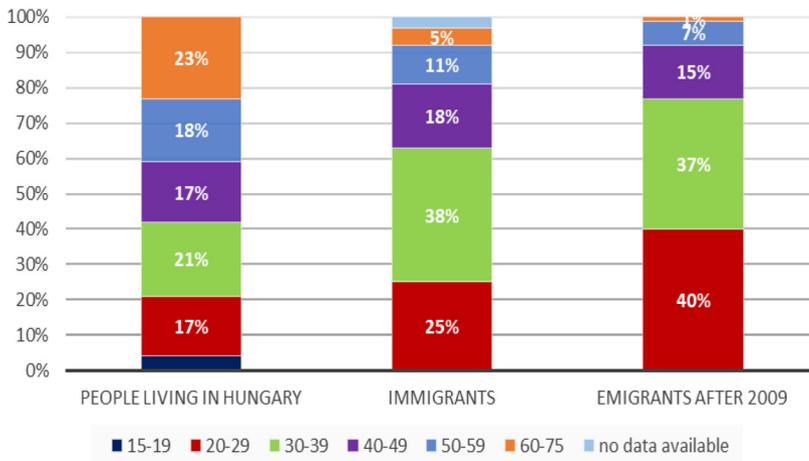
sibilities for contracted work also creates a supportive environment for them.

Regarding the choices of higher education institution, the electronic information sources are becoming increasingly important. The examinations, however, have proved that the need for personal contact is still very strong, despite wide range of and access to electronic communication (Kozma 2005: 141-148, 2013). Examining the Hungarian historical contexts in terms of sociology and politics, Róbert and Valuch (2013) state that the members of generation Y were born after 1982 and they were strongly affected by the explosive development of information technology, globalization and drastic transformation of educational system.

The present study deals with the issues related to generation Y, also known as net-generation. In Hungary, the number of active employees belonging to this age group was almost 1,3 million during the census in 2011. More than 200,000 young Generation Y people studied full-time.

2. The online being and technology

The migration processes have apparently been expanding in the recent years all over the world and this has led to the development of a very specific way of living (Porter 2008). The problem is well-demonstrated by the fact that 1,3 million of employees in the European Union moved from their home countries to other European Union member states in 2014. According to Eurostat data, 18,5 million European people lived in EU-28 on 1st January 2015 who was born somewhere in the European Union but later moved to another EU member country. Hungary should also face this issue because the lack of workforce due to emigration leads to serious economic difficulties.

Figure 1. Breakdown of emigrants according to age groups compared to the Hungarian population


Source: Blaskó, Gödri 2014.

According to a research carried out in the frame of SEEMIG project, the number of people leaving Hungary increased sixfold and the pace of growth will not slow down in the coming years, either. It should also be mentioned that the age composition of emigrating Hungarian population has also changed and increasingly narrowed down to younger – less than 40 years old – people (Blaskó, Gödri 2014). The internet offers a lot of options for this.

It is quite obvious from Figure 1 that almost 80% of people emigrating after 2009 are in their active working age, under 40 and half of them are under 30. Bediova et al. (2016) confirmed in their examinations that the different generations relate to leaving their homeland or accommodating immigrants differently. They regard it as a basic principle that different cultures cannot prevent them from developing a unified European culture and attitude. Regarding school qualifications, the SEEMIG research has proved that the number of graduates among emigrants is disproportionately higher and this also adds to the problem. While approximately 18% of the adult pop-

ulation have higher education qualifications, this ratio is 32% among emigrants. 84% of the respondents indicated job-related issues as the reason for emigration. Thus the Hungarian labour market should cope not only with the declining number of the workforce but also with the jobs, benefits, and salaries offered by companies in other member countries of the European Union. Regarding the emigration data of 2010, Hungary is somewhere in the middle together with Slovakia; Slovenia and Italy are before Hungary, while Romania, Bulgaria, and Serbia are behind it. Therefore it is also obvious that the issue is not local but rather global, induced by globalization impacts.

By the improvement of technology and expansion of smartphones, the permanent online presence has become natural and – according to some research - this may become seriously addictive (Zhitomirsky-Geffet, Blau 2016).

In 2013, the Pew Research Centre made a survey among the adult American population about the quality of being online. The outcomes of research have proved that

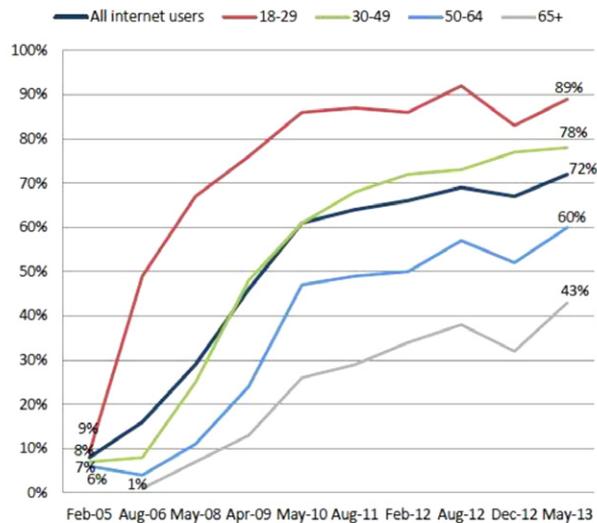
almost 60% of adult population search for their names on the Internet from time to time. It is because almost half of them are worried about the footprint of their online presence.

80% of the respondents are deliberately checking their online presence by regular searches as well as by modifying their profile and security settings. Online reputation has an important role in the recruitment procedures, too, because 70% of employers say that they check the applicant on online platforms.

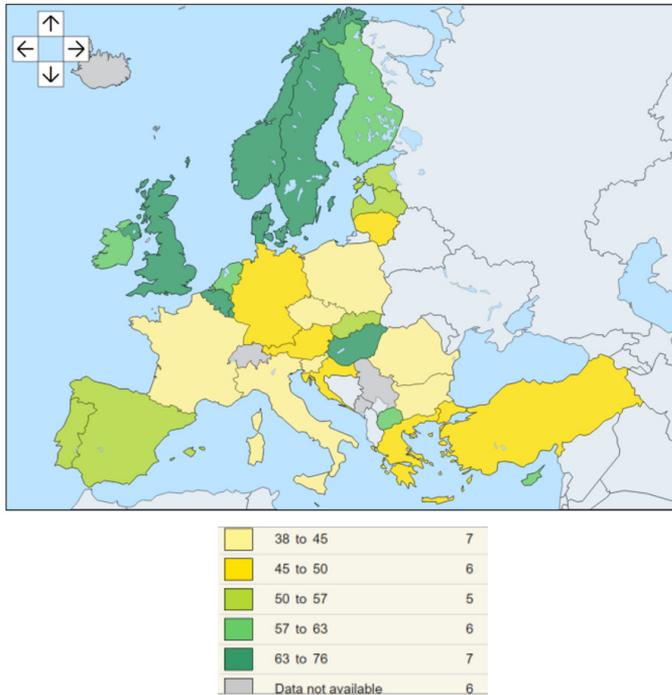
72% of the adult population in USA was present on a social network site in 2013 (Figure 2). It means that the young-

est members of generation Y were around 20-30 years old at that time. It is very clear that their number considerably exceeds the number of all the other age groups in the use of social networks. By contrast, only 52% of the EU population was engaged in social network activities in 2016 (Figure 3). 66% of the Hungarian population, 44% of Romanian or Polish people, 38% of Slovenians, or 40% of the French used a social network platform regularly (Eurostat 2016). The last five years, however, have shown a significantly increasing tendency; therefore this number will probably grow.

Figure 2. Social network site use by age group 2005-2013 in USA



Source: Pew Research Center 2013.

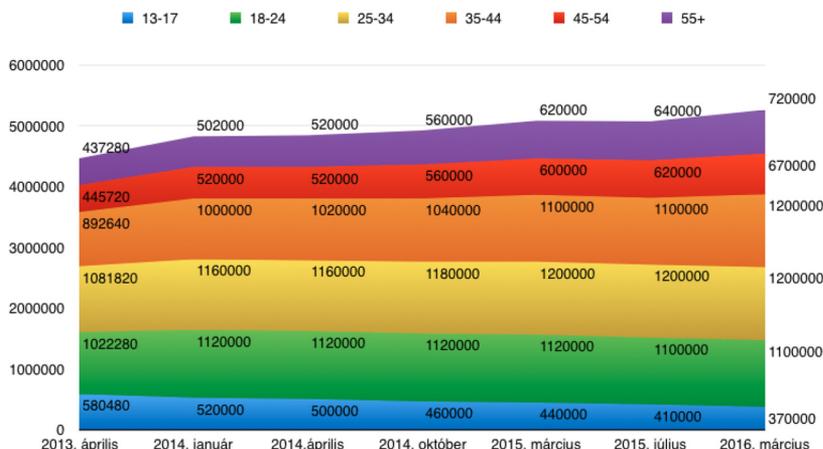
Figure 3. Individuals using the internet for participating in social networks % of individuals aged 16 to 74 in EU


Source: Eurostat 2016.

According to the latest statistical reports, Facebook currently has 1,65 billion users and more than 2 million enterprises can be found on this platform. Approximately 40% of the European adult population use this site. Although the distribution of genders has not changed in recent years (the ratio of female users is 1-3% higher), the generation indices have changed. The older generations have also turned up on the platform. Facebook is still regarded the most popular networking portal, but the recently introduced platforms also attract an increasing number of members from

younger generations (Hutchinson 2017). Twitter, Pinterest, Instagram, and LinkedIn are more and more popular. These sites, however, can be used only in English, therefore they are less visited than Facebook and they serve people who have different demographic characteristics than those on Facebook (Figure 4). The most popular networking site in Hungary has been the Facebook for a long time now. Approximately 5,2 million Hungarian people – more than 50% of the population – used it in March 2016.

Figure 4. Hungarian facebook users by age groups



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Forrás: Facebook

Source: Lévai 2016.

The aim of visiting these websites is to maintain relations and collect news and information and thus creating a specific form of communication (Subramaniam, Rasak 2014). Generation Y manages their social life on this platform almost entirely but they give less attention to security settings and protection of privacy. According to Gallup survey carried out in 2015 the members of Generation Y think that their personal details are not secure (Fleming 2015). They claim that information about individual users can be easily stolen from the databases of companies and PR enterprises, as well as from social networking sites. As the Facebook users in Hungary spend an average of 203 minutes on Facebook (Lévai 2016) it is extremely important that the personal data, which can be accessed through this and other online platforms, are kept safe. There is a further danger that viruses and other malware may ruin IT devices through the open channels. The members of Generation Y are also well aware of the dangers and the harmful activities on the Internet (Freestone, Mitchell 2004).

Consumer habits also change parallel with the expansion of online presence. The users do their purchases and administrative issues through online sites; many of them make even donations to charities on these platforms (Kasriel, Alexander 2015).

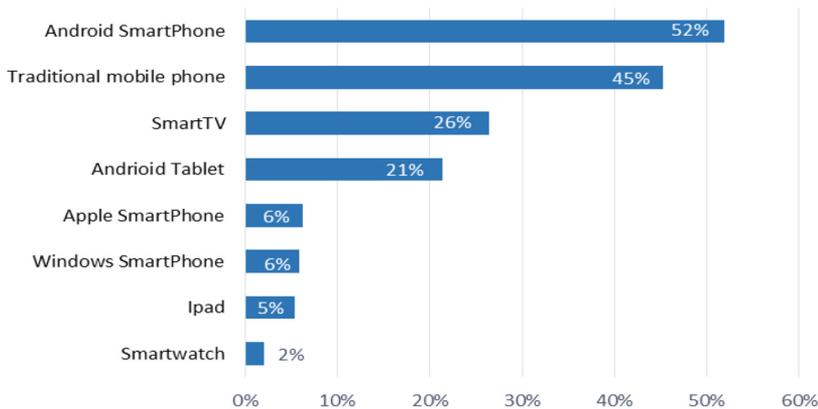
The nature of recreational activities has also changed. Generations Y and Z spend major part of their free time on the internet, under the spell of social media applications, online games and mobile applications (Nagy, Fazekas 2016: 51).

The habits regarding Internet use, however, are affected by multiple factors. It can be clearly concluded from Eurostat data that age is one of the most dominant factors in terms of digital presence. In addition to this, school qualification and income have impact on it, too. While higher income and higher school qualifications have positive impact, the higher age negatively affects Internet use and presence on social media sites. Of course, the increasingly easier access to digital devices also contributes to the expanding presence on Internet. All the households in Hungary possessed

a mobile phone by 2011 and almost 70% of Internet users had smart phones by 2015. The use of mobile Internet – which was introduced parallel to this – had shown permanent expansion, too. According to the survey carried out by MediaQ market re-

search company, almost 65% of the Hungarian population own a smart phone and approximately 30% have another smart device, too, like for example smart watch or smart TV (Figure 5).

Figure 5. Mobile devices in Hungary in 2016



Source: Digitalis magazin 2016.

Due to these changes, we can talk about digital natives, who are those members of generations Y and Z, who were born after 1980 into the world of Internet. They have no problem with adapting to new technologies at all. By contrast, the digital immigrants – members of generation X – are trying very hard to adapt to the rapidly changing world around them (Palfrey, Gasser 2008). Every new concept – either new or old ones – is interpreted differently in this new environment. The concepts of digital immigrants, which root in the industrial age, are being replaced by the concepts of digital natives because these are inevitable in the world of netocracy. In the future, priority will be given to the preparation for knowledge gain; a new culture of learning should be implemented for this because generation Y will not mug up and recite somebody

else's knowledge; they will not buy these methods or only very cheaply (Velencei 2015).

3. Methodology of the research

Our research consisted of two main steps. The first step was the focus group survey, when we tried to map what features are highlighted by the members of individual generations about the representatives of their own generation and other generations. As a result of this, a list of features could be compiled with more than 30 elements.

The second step was a research with the help of a questionnaire survey. In the first question the respondents were asked to select those features, which they regard true for them. These features helped to draw

a characterization about each generation and our results have proved that the members of generation Y were born between 1982 and 1996. It was in accordance with the time frame suggested by sources of professional literature (the methodological background is presented in details in Kolhofer-Derecskei and Reicher 2016).

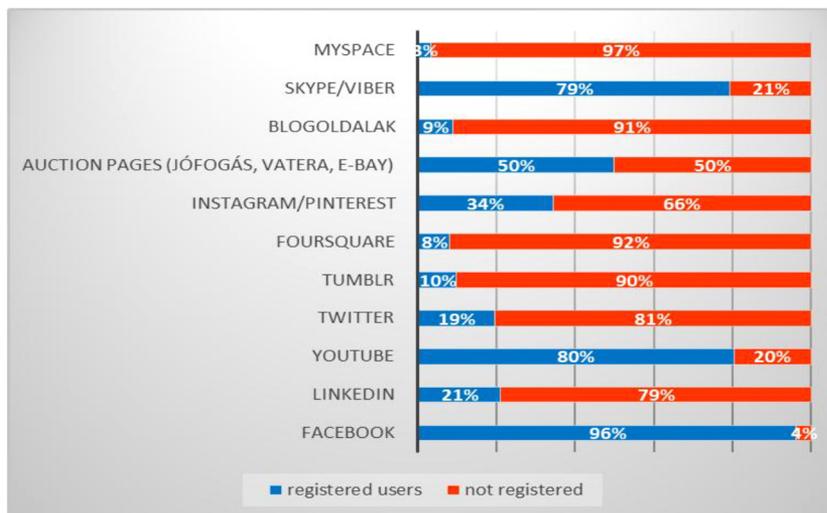
The questionnaire survey was completed by 662 respondents all of whom belong to generation Y. The current research aimed to explore the similarities and differences within this group in terms of their online

presence and the possible correlations among individual behavioural patterns.

4. Analysis of the research results

Analysis of the results achieved indicates that Facebook was on the first place as the online media use. It was followed by YouTube and Viber/Skype. Only a few respondents (3%) indicated that they used (or were registered users) blog sites (Figure 6).

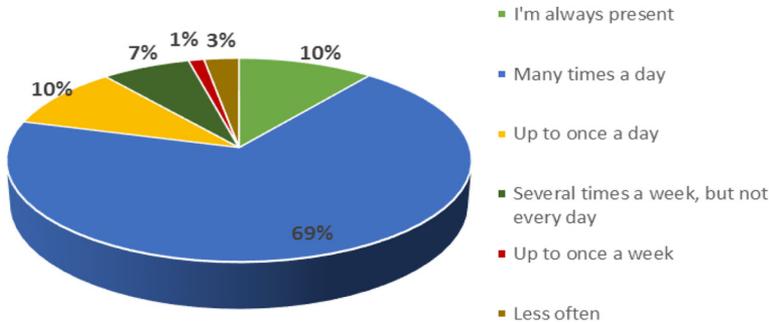
Figure 6. Online media surfaces



Source: Own elaboration.

The importance of permanent online presence was the highest among LinkedIn users; 46% of registered respondents regarded it very important on a 5-point scale. Twitter users considered the least important to have permanent online connection. Merely 38% of registered users of online

sites allow to see their profile with preliminary permission only and almost 10% of people using online sites do not deal with this security issue at all. Approximately 70% of respondents use the surface(s) they registered to several times a day (Figure 7).

Figure 7. Frequency of utilisation


Source: Own elaboration.

There was no difference in terms of popularity; the results were the same in case of all the aforementioned sites. All the outcomes of comparisons showed that the groups on individual websites behave rather similarly (Table 1).

Table 1. Frequency of online surfaces use

Registered user	How often do you use the chosen sites?						Total
	I am always online	Several times a day	Max once a day	Several times a week, but not daily	Max once a week	Rarely	
Tumblr	18,5%	67,7%	6,2%	1,5%	1,5%	4,6%	100,0%
Foursquare	16,7%	68,5%	1,9%	7,4%	0,0%	5,6%	100,0%
Instagram/Pinterest	14,1%	70,5%	8,4%	5,3%	0,0%	1,8%	100,0%
Auction sites (Jófogás, vatera, E-bay)	9,1%	71,2%	7,9%	9,1%	,6%	2,1%	100,0%
Blogs	17,2%	63,8%	5,2%	12,1%	0,0%	1,7%	100,0%
Skype/viber	11,2%	71,3%	8,4%	7,2%	,4%	1,5%	100,0%
Myspace	9,1%	68,2%	4,5%	9,1%	0,0%	9,1%	100,0%
Facebook	10,8%	70,6%	9,9%	5,8%	1,1%	1,7%	100,0%
LinkedIn	15,1%	64,7%	10,1%	7,9%	1,4%	,7%	100,0%
Youtube	11,1%	71,4%	8,1%	6,8%	1,1%	1,5%	100,0%
Twitter	14,7%	70,5%	3,9%	7,0%	1,6%	2,3%	100,0%
Average	13,4%	69,0%	6,8%	7,2%	0,7%	3,0%	

Source: Own elaboration.

There was a clear difference, however, between the net usage patterns of users who registered and those who did not register on the online sites. My examinations have always been carried with 95% reliability level. Registered users of YouTube ($p=0,001$), LinkedIn ($p=0,001$) and Skype/Viber ($p=0,000$) regarded significantly more important to have permanent Internet connection than non-registered users. Similarly significant differences could be discovered in terms of the latest technology applications. Skype/Viber users ($p=0,000$), Twitter and Instagram ($p=0,001$) users as well as YouTube and LinkedIn ($p=0,000$) users rated the importance of the latest technological applications significantly higher.

There was also a difference between genders in terms of registering on different websites. There were significantly more registered female users on Instagram/Pinterest sites ($p=0,011$) and Facebook ($p=0,016$); while there are significantly more males on Twitter ($p=0,012$) and YouTube ($p=0,05$).

I have tried to explore the correlations in the further part of our research. First I have examined if the questions regarding Internet usage patterns can be organized into clearly distinct factors. The factor analysis started from the fact that the observed variables can be led back to background variables, which are not correlated to each other. The values of correlation matrix ($0,15 \leq r \leq 0,33$), however, indicated that there was no relation among the individual variables.

Despite this, I have tried to run a principal component analysis. The difference between factor analysis and principal component analysis is that while the factor analysis uses only the common variance, the principal component analysis makes use of the whole variance. This method, however, has not been successful.

Although the data clearly indicated the homogenous response, I have tried to form clusters with the help of original variables. The cluster analysis is the whole family of techniques, which enable to distribute a large number of respondents into smaller groups by ensuring homogeneity in terms of attitude, experiences, preferences and/or behaviour of members. The point in this segmentation technique is that the differences among respondents are small within the cluster, but the differences among groups are huge. According to the expectations, it was not possible to define different user groups on the basis of values appearing in the clusters.

As a result of this, it can be concluded that the generation Y group of respondents is highly homogenous; their Internet usage habits are very similar. Their relation to technology shows almost the same attitude. This homogenous group - although it can be described excellently on the basis of some aspects - cannot be divided into further subgroups.

Thus it can be declared that the respondents in our research have fully met the preliminary expectations. Those who belong to generation Y on the basis of their date of birth have developed their traits according to this and behave in the world of information technology very similarly.

5. Discussion

As the sampling method could not produce a representative sample, the present research can be regarded mainly as exploratory. The results, however, can offer an important starting point for employers and employees as well as for the development of future research. It can be declared that major part of respondents is registered users on the currently most popular social networking site - Facebook - but they turn up on other online platforms, too. It can also be seen that these sites the use of LinkedIn, Skype and Viber applications, as well as blog sites for will definitely be expanding in the future. The Facebook rather attracts people with high-school qualifications, while LinkedIn is for higher education graduates.

The members of generation Y in Hungary were born into an extraordinary political environment, an explosive transformation. Their life has been strongly determined by the existence of technological devices, Internet, and the communication through online sites. It has been confirmed that they especially like the social media applications, which basically determine

their everyday life, friendships, and partner relations. They regard it very important to be online permanently, thus being available for everybody in almost 24 hours a day. Almost 65% of the users, however, do not pay any or just a slight attention to the access to their profile and setting up restrictions despite the fact that they also spend most of their time in the cyberspace, because more than 70% of respondents said that they visit these sites several times a day. The members of this generation are registered users mostly on Facebook, YouTube and chat applications. The users of different applications, however, visit their chosen online site with very similar frequency. It was not possible to form further groups from the sample in our examination. The representatives of the generation clearly form a homogenous group, thus supporting the definition, which states that the members of Generation Y were born between 1982 and 1996. On the basis of our research, it can also be concluded that they form a homogenous group on the basis of their Internet usage patterns.

Conclusions

Since these members of Generation have a very important role in the labour market and they will represent an increasing purchasing power, it is very important to know their attitudes, their appearances in order to reach them with job opportunities, marketing campaigns, services, and products. The labour market should also prepare for generation Y and the senior management (Kolnhofer-Derecskei 2016) should definitely be aware of this because their behavior and management style influence the creativity expected from this generation.

It is interesting to cite the result of former research, which had been made among undergraduate students from several courses, who could already be ranked

among generation Y. The research focused on the technical skills and the conclusion was that the members of this generation regarded entrepreneurship as well as the use of word processor and spreadsheet application the most important. These aspects, however, have not been raised with us at all. The technology addiction may sometimes include the information technology line, but this concept means a basically different thing. The presence on online social media sites fulfils a social demand. It should be noted that the knowledge of different softwares and programming languages was considered the least important, although currently they offer very marketable skills and well-paying jobs in Hungary (Farkas, Nagy 2008).

Limitation of this study must be also kept in mind. Like almost all research this one also reports averages. Clearly, not every member of generations appraise the same values. On the other hand, from our reading of the data, most generational differences seem age differences through individual maturation rather than real generational diversities suggesting that generational gap can be useful and helpful. Since our long-term objective was to quantify the differences between characteristics, which describe the members of this generation, this question has been fit into our questionnaire as a partial topic of a comprehensive research.

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