

Adjusting the Touristic Educational System to the Exchange of Generation

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This paper presents the results of a qualitative research based on a focus group organized within the specializations of Tourism - Services, and Management of FSEAA Brasov, and based on evaluation questionnaires of Management in Tourism courses, organized by SFMT during 2016. In this research, the main features of current graduates (Generation Z born after 1994) were captured, the first generation raised in a digital environment with an online childhood, in relationship with their attitude towards the labor market compared to previous generations (X - born between 1966 and 1976 and Y - Millennials - born between 1977 and 1995), and the need to adapt to the educational system, and the employers' attitude towards these new perspectives, where personal time becomes often more important than the work place. This is a generation of independent people that will change the world! The research has led to conclusions and recommendations at several levels: (1) at a national level - the need to propose some strategies for retaining employment inside the national economy and attracting labor from Diaspora; here an important role can be played within the European funding programs POCU and PNRDP to finance entrepreneurial initiatives; (2) at the employers level - implementing appropriate strategies of attracting and creating loyalty of human resources, of reduction or elimination of seasonality; and (3) at the educational system - strategies to encourage completion of studies at all levels, adapting the system to the needs of new generations, through employers' involvement in the educational process by stimulating the dual vocational education.

Keywords: touristic education, employment market, Generation Z, change, adaptation

Introduction

The idea of the paper started from the analysis of the evolution of graduates number from the last five promotions of the SEAA Business Administration specializations as compared to the advancements of the previous promotions as well as the behavior in relation to the school of the students in the Long Life Learning (LLL) programs for obtaining the tourism patent. Education is seen as an important motivation for tourism industry. Also, there is justification for different recruitment and retention strategies among various sectors of the hospitality industry according to generational value shifts (Chen & Choi, 2008). Establishing a theoretical framework for touristic education will assist in the development of products that fulfill both consumers' and providers' needs (Mitchell, 2010).

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Literature Review

The main difference between trainees is their average age, and the fact that those who are enrolled in LLL programs also have work experience, generally at least five years. This fact can create some problems for this young Generation Z (born between 1995 and 2012), according to the competitiveness in the labor market. But they are more open-minded, and they respond easily to the adaptation so, for them, this difference can be transformed into a challenge, trying to work in internships, or like a volunteer in organizations. They love to be surprised because of their flexibility with which they were born. Generation Z has grown with constant moments of change in all areas. This fact has made it very easy for them to adapt to situations. In short, effective job performance depends on the satisfaction of both motivation and maintenance needs (Montana & Petit, 2008). The lack of experience is viewed through the cognitive sphere of the Generation Z as a matter of time in which they can learn and choose to do other courses to compensate for this temporary lack of experience and are looking to develop themselves very quickly. Finding a job is no longer a priority for this generation. Instead, many of them want to open their own business. Therefore, the educational courses they attend are meant to help them run their own business. David Stillman says that Generation Z is very entrepreneurial. Ideally, leaders will find ways for Generation Z to own their projects, and become more entrepreneurial. The difference with this generation is that they won't see getting a job, or generating hobbies. They will try to do both. Surely, this also happened with other generations, but it was kept quietly (D. Stillman & J. Stillman, 2017). In other research, the Generation-Z Millennials are also known as the Net-Generation, or iGeneration, because they have been surrounded by digital technologies since a young age. Predictably, Generation-Z will be as technology-savvy as the Millennials. The accessibility of the technology since a very young age has created opportunities for development in this area. Thus, the global educational offer has changed. Many American universities express their information through online platforms, and even offer free courses to students everywhere. So now the Generation Z knows that the answer to a scientific question is at a distance of a few seconds as a temporary delimitation.

Also, "the Millennials" use of technology is dramatically intensified, and different from preceding generations (Tulgan & Rainmaker Thinking, Inc., 2013). To equilibrate these differences, it is vital that educational curricula be transformed, rather than renovated. With the changing face of education, it is essential to implement new and emerging technologies in order to satisfy the needs of the techno-hungry, and techno-savvy Millennial, and Generation-Z students (Jones, Jo, & Martin, 2007). Because their use of technology has developed the visual ability portion of their brains, visual forms of learning are more effective for these learners (Rothman, 2016).

These generations retrieve the information quicker than other generations, and they can easily understand the content of an article in few seconds. These cognitive abilities develop over time, and they are able to read a large amount of information in just a few minutes. They are thought to have the highest motor skill synchronization for hand, eye, and ear in the history of humanity (Berkup, 2014). They are in a permanent search for new educational minds that help them develop these qualities indirectly. If they are not stimulated to learn to develop, these qualities may take an inappropriate turn, and they can use them purely recreationally, and without any purpose. An effective education that stimulates it helps its innate abilities to personal evolution. That is the reason why the curriculum must be interactive at the present moment with what is happening on the market. Due to the rapid changes taking place in different industries, educational institutions need to prepare their informational input so that they are flexible to change. Reference volumes are no longer

in the way of current innovations, and should therefore be replaced by others that compel the informational supply from daily news. Both the generation Z and the Millennials are generations very easily adaptable to these changes, and they also observe the fastest they can, if the educational offer no longer adapts to the current change in society.

Career planning and development, through effective management, can ensure that desired competencies will exist in the current and future work force, and enable employers to reassign rather than replace talent. The savings realized in the process can, in turn, fund the organization's career planning and develop initiatives. This is observable by younger generations who seek to compensate for the lack of experience with courses to help them engage in internships, where they can practice their knowledge, and they can grow faster from the professional point of view. Carol Hymowitz of the *Wall Street Journal* reports that motivating each of these generations to work together requires relinquishing all approach styles to each other. Understanding the factors that motivate each of these different groups is very important in order to manage effectively (Hymowitz, 2007). They want to work in teams more than the other generations, and this motivates them to continue their professional career (Glass, 2007). The sense of competitiveness is different for them than other generations because they do not need to compete with the team colleague, but rather to compete with the team for a fundamental success of the firm. For the generation Z, it is very important the work environment in which they unfold their activity. Because we are in an era where individual physical work disappears slowly, the generation Z is more sociable and wants a collaborative team (Feiertag & Berge, 2008). This motivates them more than the financial offer, as in the other previous generations. This generation has grown in the gaming world, where each one brings its value in its own way. In their moments of social connection, integrity, and social harmony are the most important values for this generation. The education institutions need to develop studies based on these attitudes of the next generation, working with social tools to attract their motivation and curiosity (Igel & Urquhort, 2012). Generation Z seems to be highly responsive to clearly defined exchanges of time, or tasks for directly calibrated rewards. Generation Z reflects a whole new way of thinking about difference. The idea that in Romanian universities it is necessary to promote entrepreneurship through academic curricula and through a professional conciliation to increase students' awareness to create their own business is very important. The decision to create a new firm depends on the perception regarding achievement, and the entrepreneurial orientation too (Nitu-Antonie & Feder, 2015). As a consequence, there has been growing recognition of the need for sustainability education in programs for tourism students. The development of such programs needs to be based on a sound understanding of the existing values and attitudes of current students (Benckendorff, Moscardo, & Murphy, 2012). In this case, it is necessary to change the whole methodological learning process, if we want to maintain their motivation.

Methodology

Evolution of the Number of Graduates of Business Administration Programs

In the following tables (see Tables 1-3), we have shown the evolution of the number of graduates of the undergraduate programs at SEAA Business Administration at Transilvania University in Brasov for the last five years, since the first Generation Z representatives were admitted to the bachelor's degree. The 2016 and 2017 promotions are Promotions Z!

The number of bachelor's graduates is decreasing year after year by 2014 in the frequency-IF students, those in the Generation Z, unlike those from the ID program that are still part of the Y generation, being on average over 5 years older in age.

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Table 1

Number of the Students of Economy of Trade, Tourism, and Services (IF and ID) Degree

Year of graduation (n)	No. of subscribers		No. of graduates		Graduation (%)	
	IF	ID	IF	ID	IF	ID
2017	87	32	57	30	65.51	93.75
	68	35	57	30	83.82	85.71
2016	75	48	57	18	76	37.5
	62	30	57	18	91.93	60
2015	75	55	57	25	76	45.45
	61	30	57	25	93.44	83.33
2014	77	71	69	37	89.61	52.11
	72	45	69	37	95.83	82.22
2013	88	63	71	37	80.68	58.73
	76	46	71	37	93.42	80.43

Note. Number in bold: Percentage of number of students enrolled in 1st year; number not in bold: Percentage reported by the number of students enrolled in the last year of study. Source: Data from the Faculty of Economic Sciences and Business Administration.

Table 2

Number of the Students of Management (IF and ID) Degree

Year of graduation (n)	No. of subscribers		No. of graduates		Graduation (%)	
	IF	ID	IF	ID	IF	ID
2017	57	46	33	31	57.89	67.39
	42	39	33	31	78.57	79.48
2016	78	56	49	30	62.82	53.57
	59	39	49	30	83.05	76.92
2015	75	55	50	32	66.66	58.18
	57	39	50	32	87.72	82.05
2014	76	76	46	57	60.52	75
	55	65	46	57	83.63	87.69
2013	88	103	59	53	67.04	51.45
	67	75	59	53	88.06	70.66

Note. Number in bold: Percentage of number of students enrolled in 1st year; number not in bold: Percentage reported by the number of students enrolled in the last year of study. Source: Data from the Faculty of Economic Sciences and Business Administration.

Table 3

Number of the Students of Business Administration Degree (Taught in English) (IF)

Year of graduation (n)	No. of subscribers		No. of graduates		Graduation (%)	
	IF	ID	IF	ID	IF	ID
2017	39	-	19	-	48.71	-
	25	-	19	-	76	-
2016	47	-	29	-	61.70	-
	34	-	29	-	85.29	-
2015	48	-	33	-	68.75	-
	36	-	33	-	91.66	-
2014	50	-	41	-	82	-
	45	-	41	-	91.11	-
2013	57	-	48	-	84.21	-
	52	-	48	-	99.30	-

Note. Number in bold: Percentage of number of students enrolled in 1st year; number not in bold: Percentage reported by the number of students enrolled in the last year of study. Source: Data from the Faculty of Economic Sciences and Business Administration.

This evolution was recorded in the situation when the conditions were kept constant - the same education system according to the Bologna process, the same professors, the same analytical programs, and the same study conditions (halls, endowments, schedules). At the same time, the dropout rate, and those who did not complete the LLL programs were close to zero. The big difference, apparently, is the change of generations, from Y to Z in the undergraduate studies, as opposed to LLL programs.

Table 4 below shows the evolution of the number of enrollment and graduates in management training in tourism in the last five years. Here we can see the particularly low degree of abandonment, all being components of the Y generation, with an average age of approximately 32 years old.

Table 4

The Evolution of the Number of Enrollment and Graduates in Management Training in Tourism in the Last Five Years

Year of graduation (<i>n</i>)	No. of subscribers	No. of graduates	Graduation (%)
2017	146	143	97.94
2016	67	66	98.50
2015	131	128	97.71
2014	87	87	100
2013	118	116	98.30

Note. Source: Data from Formare Managerial in Turism Ltd Brasov.

Then the question arises, why do these differences arise, and what needs to be done to reduce school dropout and increase the percentage of graduates? The answer to this question will lead us to review what, in our educational system, we call “student centered learning”.

Differences Between Generations

In the following section, we will present the main features of the last five generations, trying to capture the similarities and differences between them, as well as the main causes that have generated them.

Boomers I Baby Boomers Generation. This generation includes people born between 1946 and 1954 (Schroer, 2015), so immediately after the Second World War. Their current age is therefore 63-71 years old, and most of them have retired.

This generation has witnessed the beginnings of the US human rights movement, the hippie movement under the *Flower Power* slogan as a form of non-violent protest against the Vietnam War. It was a generation of slogans such as *Make Love Not War*, an active and optimistic generation (Hall, 2007). It is a generation characterized by respect, good sense and diligence.

Boomers II Generation/Jones Generation. This generation includes those born between 1955 and 1965 (Schroer, 2015), aged between 52 and 62. In the US, it is the post-Watergate generation which, after the Nixon government - the only president who has been dismissed, and after numerous scandals in Mafia politics and scandals - has lost confidence in the ruling class and politics in general. The economic environment with fierce and ever-growing competition has influenced a generation with a high degree of individualism, selfishness, and skepticism. Most of the members of this generation grew in the shadow of the previous one, a very strong one, and they were not particularly remarkable.

Generation X. This generation includes people born between 1966 and 1976 (Schroer, 2015), and therefore aged 41-51. Generation X has been defined as an “in between” generation (Investopedia Academy, 2016). It is called the Lost Generation, being exposed to divorces, prolonged kindergartens, having deficient relationships with parents. It is a selfish and passive social generation, with the lowest percentages of voting. Generation X-ers want a life outside of work - they are not likely to sacrifice themselves for the company (Gursoy, Maier, & Chi, 2008). Family relationships marked positive, being much more responsible for family life economy, and within this generation, more intellectuals have departed than in previous generations.

In Romania, this generation includes Decrees (those born after 1967) when the birth rate doubled following the abortion bans decree (Tocilă, 2015). A large generation followed, including individuals who had to struggle hard for a better place in society. Practically, they currently support the country’s economy, being in full physical and intellectual strength; but have gone through the biggest changes, being often confused.

Generation Y, Echo Boomers or Millennials. This generation includes people born between 1977 and 1994 (Schroer, 2015), aged 23-40.

They are the most numerous than Baby Boomers, but not in Romania, where after 1990 the birth rate has dropped dramatically. Sophisticated, technology-oriented, immune to most techniques of economic and social manipulation because they have been exposed to them and evolved with them, they are among the most educated generations, with increased trust in their own, goal-oriented, creative. They have grown up under the attention of parents, in accessible social groups, and have hobbies. They are diverse, creative, and adaptable, but have financial difficulties. They are united as generations and socially active, protesting when something is inconvenient. Now they are the ones who redefine the notion of politically correct, denying it most of the time!

Generation Z. This generation includes those born between 1995 and 2012 (Schroer, 2015), aged 5-22. It is a generation that grows in an environment characterized by diversity. They are exposed to an unprecedented dynamic technological level, being childlike in the online environment, being native-digital.

They are very realistic, flexible, do not believe in ideals, and want, more than anything, independence. Most of them are convinced that they will change the world. They need increased attention, individualized, for each of them. They are, by definition, the graduates of the last two promotions from the Bachelor’s degree course!

Qualitative Research

Focus group research was conducted on two samples of 12 subjects, one consisting of graduates of the 2017 Tourism-Services Promotion, and the other of the current course management specialists in the tourism activity in the classroom after the completion of the activities, discussions on data subjects, recorded, and further processed, moderated by the authors of the paper.

Discussions focused on the following topics:

- (1) Attitude towards school;
- (2) Attitude towards a new job;
- (3) Fidelity to the workplace;
- (4) Expectations towards the educational system;
- (5) Expectations for the new job;
- (6) Expectations towards society;
- (7) Attitude towards your own family.

By age, the two samples comprise members of the X, Y (LLL courses), and Z generations respectively (the students), and reveal the following mutations expected according to previous general studies, and confirmed on the new expectations and behaviors of the generation Z:

(1) They doubt everything - anything they do not like, advertise - teachers, work schedule, atmosphere, and working conditions;

(2) They get the idea forwarded, they do not need additional information, and they prefer to search for themselves from internet sources, being convinced that they know everything or they can find anything;

(3) I prefer to make decisions alone, feeling offended by any direct suggestion;

(4) I do not mind the mistakes, any mistake seems to be excusable, minor, and can be right;

(5) They get bored quickly, they have no patience;

(6) They have a very personal opinion of their own;

(7) He dislikes everything, wants to change, everyone in previous generations is overcome;

(8) Their personal time matters most. They are not willing to work longer hours, overtime, even if they are well paid;

(9) Do not attach any job, are willing to change as soon as something bothers them, even if finding a new job can be very difficult;

(10) The family is much less important than their own, and they are not willing to take responsibility for any other person.

Conclusions

As a result of the qualitative research conducted, of the bibliographic, and of the authors' own observations, in the attitude towards the new generations a new approach to the concept of student-centered education should be considered, from the following points of view:

(1) The stimulation of the individual creativity through free themes and discussions. Otherwise, do not be surprised that they will move quickly into the virtual environment, or even fall asleep in the classroom!

(2) Quitting of one-way teaching systems from teacher to student. Students are considered our partners with equal rights! If we do not prove that we are transmitting information, and we do not recite, we will quickly lose their respect!

(3) The examination must go back to classical systems or referral support, and rely less on rigid grid tests. They will want to stand out and enhance their personality!

(4) Respecting work schedules, teaching hours, and breaks. Otherwise, they will not see any problem leaving the classroom!

(5) Friendly attitude and empathy towards student problems. Only by proximity and friendly attitude will we succeed in raising their attention!

(6) Using feedback by evaluating student activity; we are partners with equal rights!

(7) Stronger involvement of students in practical activities, organizing events, prizes competitions to stimulate their creativity and competitiveness. The standard is no longer the average student!

At a national level, due to the fact that almost half of the active Romanians are working abroad, some strategies are needed in order to retain the labor force inside the national economy and attract labor from Diaspora; here, an important role can be played within the European funding programs POCU (Diaspora Start Up) and PNRDP to finance entrepreneurial initiatives.

The aging of the workforce and the concurrent advent of the Millennials represent a major demographic and sociological phenomenon that can have dominant implications for organizations, as a whole. The Boomers and Millennials will be working together for the next decade or so (Chaudhuri & Ghosh, 2012). At the employers level, implementing appropriate strategies is needed, for attracting and creating loyalty of human resources, reduction or elimination of seasonality. But these are the lines for further researches.

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