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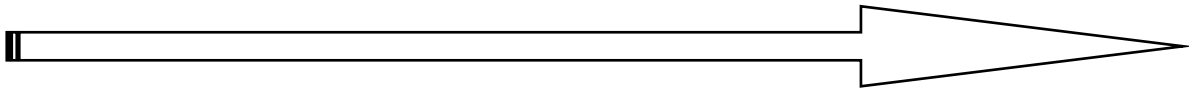
## Days of future passed: an investigation into the perceived generation gap between teachers and students in Hungarian higher education

*Jelen tanulmányban az úgynevezett ezredfordulós generáció - azaz a magyarországi felsőoktatásban jelenleg tanuló generáció - motivációinak és preferenciáinak szakirodalmi áttekintése és empirikus vizsgálata segítségével a hallgatók és nyelvtanárok között lévő generációs különbségeket kutatjuk. A szakirodalmi áttekintés eredményeként kiderült, hogy az eddigi kutatások jelentős különbségeket mutattak ki a tanárok (X generáció) és a hallgatók (Y generáció) között. Ezek a különbségek azonban elsősorban nyugati országokból származó tanulmányok kutatásain alapultak. Megállapítást nyert, hogy a feltételezés, miszerint az Y generáció ugyanolyan az Amerikai Egyesült Államokban, mint Magyarországon, tévesnek bizonyul, mivel nem számol a korábbi tanulmányokban megállapított kulturális különbségekkel. Így tehát empirikus vizsgálatot végeztünk, hogy megismerjük a magyarországi ezredfordulós generáció motivációit és preferenciáit, továbbá mérlegeljük ezen megállapítások nyelvoktatásra gyakorolt lehetséges hatását. Megállapítható, hogy Magyarországon a motivációs tényezők jobban hasonlítanak a korábbi vizsgálatok során más országokban a babyboom generációnál megfigyeltekhez, mint a nyugati országokból származó jelenlegi kutatási eredményekhez. A babyboom generáció motivációs tényezőihez való visszatérés tekintetben az ingaeffektus kezdeti előjelének, vagy talán annak tudható be, hogy a gazdasági viszonyok erősen hatnak a motivációs mintákra. Bár az általánosíthatósághoz további kutatásra van szükség, a kezdeti eredmények azt sejtetik, hogy a jelenleg aktív X generációs tanároknak vissza kell tekinteniük a babyboom generációra, vagyis a volt tanáraikra, ha meg akarják érteni a hallgatók jelenlegi generációját.*

### Introduction

With greater mobility of labour, workplaces have become more diverse not only culturally but generationally as well. Generation management has become an extension of diversity management and the need for language teachers to understand 'where students are coming from' has made the issue of a generation gap a regular issue for discussion. This study aims to identify the Hungarian millennial generation currently in higher education through their motivators and expectations for the future of the ideal organisation. We consider how this Generation Y, or 'Generation M' as they are sometimes called, will perform in this context. Burstein (2014) highlighted that this generation has been nurtured in the environment of new technologies, three dimensionality, video games, online communications and screen and mobile devices, all of which entail a faster pace of life. The Grail report, published in 2011, highlights the differences between each generation, and the following table, adapted with additional findings from Horsaengchai – Mamedova (2011), summarizes some of the key findings of the Grail report, with the assumption that the teaching generation is mostly comprised of Generation X:

Table 1. Key characteristics of generations



<i>Group</i>	<i>Generation X</i>	<i>Generation Y</i>	<i>Generation Z</i>
<i>Name</i>	Latchkey kids	Millennial generation	Digital natives
<i>Teaching aspect</i>	Current teachers	Current students	Students about to enter HE
<i>Birth year (approx.)*</i>	early 1960s to early 1980s	early 1980s to early 2000s	early 2000s to present day
<i>Nurturing Environment</i>	Trends towards divorce, economic uncertainty. New technologies (e.g. cable TV, video games, home computing), Disco / hip-hop culture, punks and anarchy.	Increasing interregional and intercommunity conflicts. New technologies moving at a rapid pace (internet, mobile phones, instant communication via email and sms).	Terrorism and environmental concerns. Economic slowdown Rapid technological growth – social networking, hacking, programming
<i>Stereotypes</i>	individualists, sceptical of authority	'techcomfortable', brand loyal, style-conscious, optimistic	tech savvy, globally connected, flexible and open / tolerant of diverse cultures

Although the author is mindful of the apparent stereotyping and that in some circles it may be considered unhelpful, categorizing some aspects may aid in promoting a mutual understanding across generations as well as apparent communication gaps. Furthermore, although the focus of this study is on the Y generation, it seems that if we accept the generational boundaries by year that have been laid down in previous studies into generations, then further research will be required in a few years' time into the Z generation as it enters higher education.

### Motivators of millennials

Some studies have already covered motivators across generations, such as that by the United Nations in 2009, and the findings are summarized in the following table. It should be noted that this table contains different generations to those in Table 2 as generation Z is omitted:

Table 2. Generational diversity in the workplace

<i>Name and birth year</i>	<b>Baby Boomers Born 1946-1964</b>	<b>Generation X Born 1965-1980</b>	<b>Generation Y Born 1981 and after, (Gen Z- after 2000)</b>
<b>Workplace traits</b>	Big picture / systems in place Bring fresh perspective Do not respect titles Disapprove absolutes and structure Optimism Team orientation Uncomfortable with conflict Personal growth Sensitive to feedback Health and wellness Personal gratification	Positive attitude Impatience Goal orientated Multi-tasking Thinking globally Self-reliance Flexible hours, informal work environment Just a job Techno-literal Informal - balance Give them a lot to do and freedom to do their way Question authority	Confidence Sociability Morality Street smart Diversity Collective action Heroic spirit Tenacity Technological savvy Lack of skills for dealing with difficult people Multitasking Need flexibility
<b>Motivators</b>	Salary	Security	Maintain personal life
<b>Retention</b>	Salary	Security/Salary	Personal relationship
<b>Career Goals</b>	Build a perfect career, excel	Build a transferable career, variety of skills and experiences	Build several parallel careers, have several jobs simultaneously

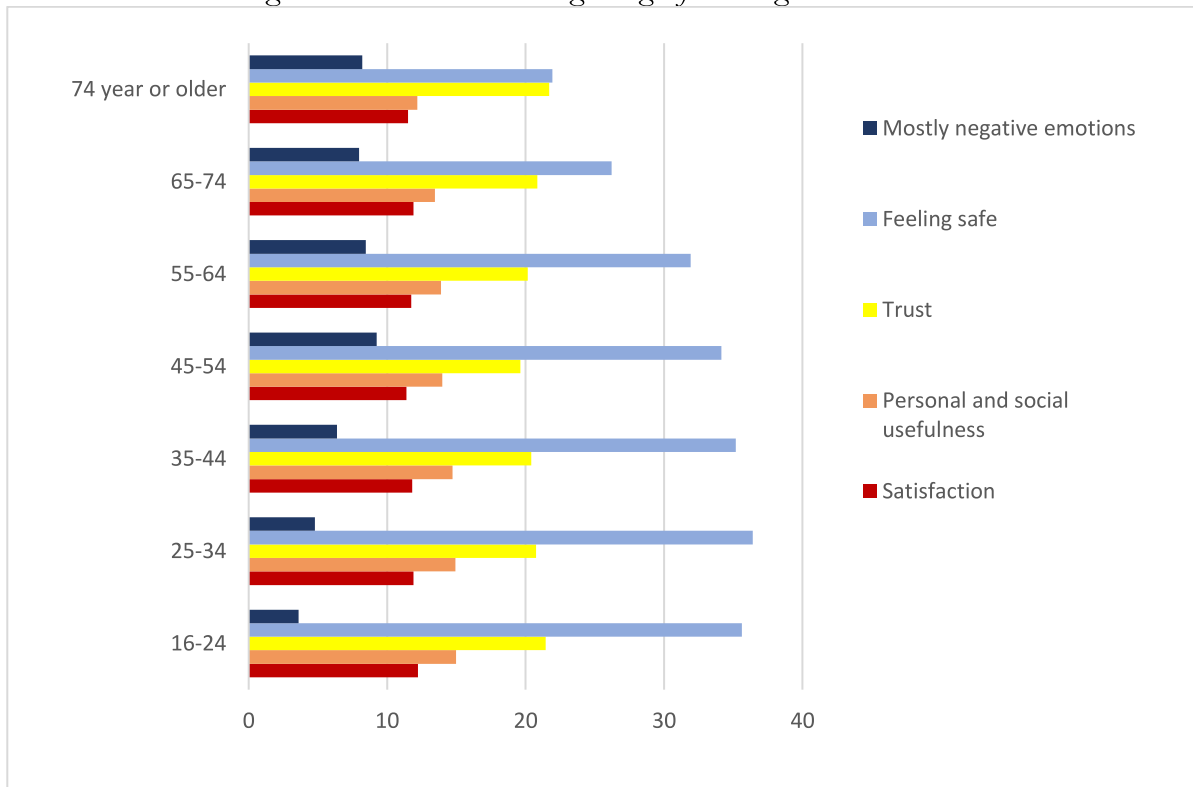
Source: Adapted from the report *Overcoming Generational Gap in the Workplace* by the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund (2009).

The expectations with regard to the basis for motivation, career goals and reasons for retention of staff all represent significant challenges for not only leadership in multi-generational organisations but for language teachers looking to motivate their students. The issue of how these generational differences can be seen or not seen to emerge in the case of Hungary is covered in the following section.

### Previous studies into generation gaps in Hungary

If we consider the actual apparent differences across generations in Hungary then there are also some emerging trends that we should consider in developing a profile of a Hungarian millennial. The Hungarian statistics office produced a STADAT report giving information on Hungarians across a spectrum of age ranges in 2013. The following figure uses the data from the STADAT report and highlights differences between age ranges for feeling safe, trust, negative emotions (including an absence of positive emotions), a sense of personal and social usefulness and satisfaction. It can be seen in the following figure that millennials fall into the category of 16-35 year olds, loosely based upon the separations by birthdate mentioned earlier in this paper:

Figure 1. Variances across age ranges for Hungarians in 2013



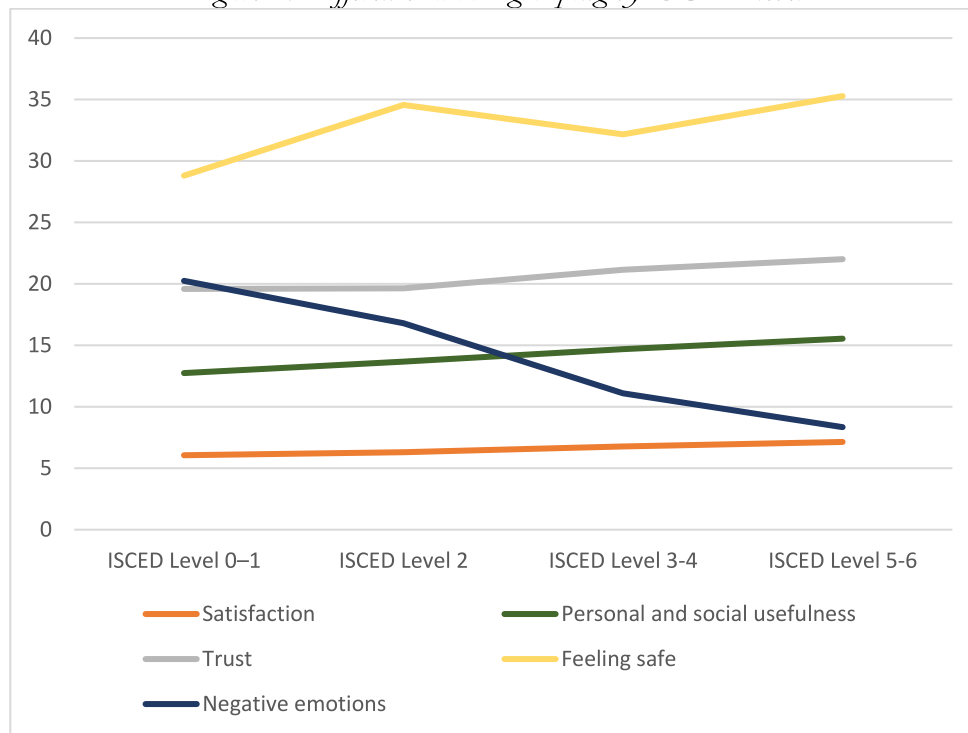
Source: STADAT (2013), Hungarian statistics office (ksh.hu)

If we first consider the aspect of feeling safe, then there appears to be a trend towards feeling less safe the older a Hungarian person is. Furthermore, there appears to be an anomaly in that the millennial generation is split: those aged 25-34 have a higher sense of safety compared to the younger 16-24 age millennials. This could be due to the fact that the younger millennials have been through a number of financial crises while growing up, with their parents' concerns and stresses impacting upon them, such as Hungary being one of a handful of countries that were on the brink of collapse around the same time that the crunch came for Greece and the fact that a majority of Hungarian loans were in Swiss currency and doubled in size during the financial crises. Although not a focus of this paper, it can be seen that trust dips for the 45-54 age range and then increases with the Gen Xers and then the millennials, back to earlier levels of the veterans/baby boomers. The millennial generation in Hungary is also markedly lower in negative emotions and, similar to the trend

for trust, negative emotions were at their peak for 45-54 year olds and then have an increasing tendency towards millennials. Personal and social usefulness and satisfaction have changed only very slightly across the age ranges.

Using the data from the Hungarian statistics office, we can also consider the profile of Hungarian millennials in terms not only of where they are in relation to past generations and ages but also in relation to future generations. As can be seen in the following table, the groupings are based upon the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED), which is as follows:

Figure 2. Differences across grouping by ISCED level



Source: STADAT (2013), Hungarian statistics office (ksh.hu)

### Motivated millennials

Back in 1980 Kozeki (1980) published a study of motivators of Hungarian and American students. Frymier's Junior Index of motivation was used (Frymier, 1970). Despite clear cultural and economic differences, it was found that teachers perceived in a similar way the motivators of students: intelligence, creativity and grades in school. According to Kozeki (1980:7) the data being collected in entirely different socio-cultural contexts and producing the same findings "strengthens the validation studies by suggestion that the JIM scale measures a reality that exists independently of cultural or political orientation". This claim seems very much at odds with the later findings in cultural studies concerning cultural studies and, more importantly, studies examining the link between motivation and culture, such as the collection of studies in a book entitled *motivation and culture* by Munro et al. (2014), or a cross-cultural study by Helou – Viitala (2007) which found that culture does influence motivational practices and that the extent of cultural effects depends on whether the culture is task-orientated or person-orientated as the person-oriented culture tends towards the use of innovative motivational practices, with the aim of developing individuals

and their work, whereas a task-oriented culture promotes the use of traditional motivation tools. Interestingly, Barrett et al. (2003) compared cultural behaviour and motivation in Poland and the US and found that there were significant differences in motivation for individualist and collectivist cultures: “collectivists were more likely to be motivated to comply with the same request for other-oriented rather than self-oriented reasons and that collective-primacy persons reported a greater tendency to comply with a request to help a stranger for reasons of social obligation to their group than did individual-primacy persons” (Barrett et al., 2003:19). This study implies that there may be similarities in motivation across collectivist or individualist cultures, but does not mean an absolute justification for using millennial profiles from Western countries and applying them to a Hungarian context. Furthermore, the temptation here is to use cultural studies such as those of Hofstede’s to deduce that Hungary is a collectivist culture and therefore motivation to comply is based on the needs of others than oneself (Hofstede, 1990). However, Hofstede’s study took place in early generation(s) and applying it to current Hungarian millennials would involve making a false assumption of culture being a constant rather than a dynamic ever-changing pattern of values, beliefs and assumptions, or to use Hofstede’s own definition of culture that culture is the ‘software of the mind’, then any 30 year old software would definitely be in need of an update.

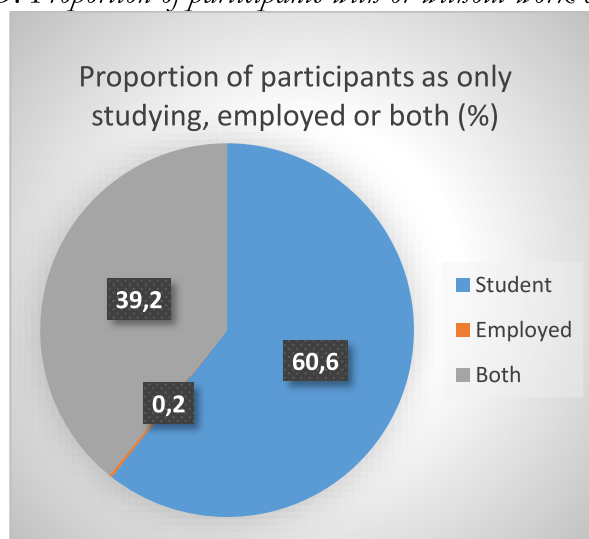
Since empirical studies indicate potential for cultural differences with regard to motivation, the question is what could be seen to motivate Hungarians specifically and whether there are any intergenerational differences concerning motivation. Roe et al. (2000) examined work motivation for Hungary, Bulgaria and the Netherlands for a common model. It was not only found that ‘one size doesn’t fit all’ for motivation but also that there was little evidence for a motivation after-effect of communism for Bulgaria and the Netherlands. It was found that Hungarians were motivated by the opportunity to satisfy social needs, which reinforces the aspect of a collectivist culture impacting upon motivation referred to in other empirical studies – especially as it was also found that an opportunity for belongingness had a negative relationship with stress amongst Hungarians.

There have been a number of studies of motivating learners (e.g. Dornyei (2001) with a study into motivating language learners), however these studies of what motivates learners will not necessarily bring us closer to understanding what students see as the main motivators for the workplace and life in general. Németh et al. (2013) conducted a study of job satisfaction in the Hungarian health sector when compared with findings from a similar study in 2003. It was found that Hungarians were more likely to leave their profession if there is a perceived limitation of promotional opportunities, little freedom in decision making and poor communication. Poor communication was a factor specifically related to the health sector as it underwent significant reorganisation, which not only caused uncertainty and a greater work strain but also was based upon the lack of being given correct information at the right time, resulting in numerous misunderstandings. Although we could entertain the possibility perhaps that promotional opportunities and the need for autonomy as potentially characteristic of Hungarians, we cannot assume that the sample used in this study, which did not specify the ages of the participants, contained solely millennials. Thus, this study cannot be seen as generalizable for Hungarians and certainly not for Hungarian millennials, but may serve as an initial indicator that Hungarians may be motivated by promotional opportunities and responsibility with associated freedom to make decisions.

## Methodology

The first phase of the study was to distribute a printed questionnaire to accessible participants in the study with a possibility of distributing and collecting the questionnaires on the same day over a period of a few weeks in September and October 2015. 500 questionnaires were distributed and 423 were received, giving a response rate of 85%. From the 423 questionnaires, 17 were incomplete or incorrectly completed leading to a final sample of 406 responses for the first phase of questionnaire distribution. From the sample 138 were male and 268 female. It was hoped to get an even mix of young people with and without work experience, however, as can be seen in the following figure, the majority of respondents have no prior work experience:

Figure 3. Proportion of participants with or without work experience



As the majority of the sample have no work experience, it could be said that they have no idea how an organisation should work and therefore gave their responses based upon guesswork. However, many of the students from the institutions are required to conduct case studies of organisations as a part of their work. Furthermore, the questionnaire is concerned with values relating to the organisation rather than displaying an understanding of the organisation itself.

The key aspect with regard to the distribution of the sample concerns the age range, i.e. birth dates. The sample included the entire possible range for millennials to ensure that the cluster analysis would pick up any clusters based upon birth date. The following figure shows the age ranges for the sample:

Table 3. Range of ages for the sample

<b>Birth date</b>	<b>Frequency (f)</b>
1977-1979	15
1980-1989	43
1990-1997	348
<b>TOTAL</b>	406

As can be seen in the table, the age ranges cover the millennials and beyond. This is due to the fact that part of this study will examine whether there are significant between values and motivators according to birth dates and preconceived age boundaries between generations. The initial findings include all of the participants as at this stage no significant difference has been found for these two variables based upon date of birth.

## Findings

Based upon the data from a sample of 406 participants, the motivators were categorised into 10 key areas based upon similarity, e.g. participants referring to a ‘good salary’, ‘big bonus’ or ‘chance to earn a lot of money with overtime’ were classed under the heading ‘money’. This categorisation process was somewhat arbitrary, but based upon allocation by an HR expert (for knowledge of key classifications of motivators in the workplace), a Hungarian language teacher (for translation and ensuring correct meaning for classification) and the researcher. The motivators expressed by the participants can be seen in the following table:

*Table 4. Key motivators for Hungarian millennials*

<b>Motivator</b>	<b>No. of participants</b>
Money	114
Working Conditions	92
Task	82
Opportunities To Develop	53
Promotion Prospects	14
Position	12
Colleagues	9
Reputation (company)	5
Respect	4
Recognition	1
<i>Missing</i>	<i>20</i>
<b>Total Sample</b>	<b>406</b>

As can be seen from Table 4, money is the main motivator for this sample. This appears to indicate that the economic environment has a significant impact upon values and, as with Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, it is the basic physical needs that come first, followed by more intrinsic needs such as a sense of belonging (colleagues) and an opportunity to develop. However, the latter motivator may well be influenced by the fact that the majority of the sample was taken from students in full time higher education, i.e., they had opted for further development in higher education when given a choice. This seems to indicate a predilection towards learning and may explain why this motivator came



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fourth in the list. The qualitative interview planned to take place after the quantitative part of the study should shed further light on these findings.

If we consider these findings in relation to the motivators listed in Table 2 of this paper then it seems that the millennial generation is in fact closer to the baby boomer generation in the priority towards salary. This could mean that generations experience a ‘pendulum effect’, i.e. that like a pendulum, a generation may revert in a particular direction, the next generation rebels against their parents and ‘swings’ in the opposite direction, and then the third generation swings back again in rebelling against their parents and is in fact returning to the orientation of the first generation. It will be interesting to see if the Z generation exhibits the same traits and orientations of the X generation in the pendulum effect. However, we should note that these findings are for the baby boomer generation for Western countries, so we have essentially found that the baby boomer generation of the US had similar motivators as the current millennials generation in Hungary. Whether this is due to having a similar environment is questionable if we consider progress in general and technological developments in particular. Nonetheless, it was surprising to note from the findings that although security was grouped together with working conditions it did not feature predominantly in that grouping. Working conditions involved the overall conditions, of work in the particular organisation, rather than more individual aspects such as task and colleagues to work with.

Task featured in third place as a motivator and this point seems especially significant from a teacher’s perspective. In this grouping participants expressed a concern for the task to be manageable and interesting. This might indicate that there is either a lack of confidence in their own abilities or conversely a lack of confidence in the person that allocates the work.

## Conclusions

It was found that the motivators for the Hungarian millennial generation are not the same as those found in studies for the same generation in Western countries. Although the sample size is rather small, it does raise the issue of cultural differences and whether any study concerning the people of one country can be applied instantly, and without modifications and allowances, to another.

It was found that motivators in Hungary are close to the baby boom generation in the Western countries. This is in contrast to a study by Lurf – Vásárhelyi (2013) that found the Hungarian millennials to be close to the findings of previous studies in the US. Thus, it seems that further research is required to confirm these initial findings, with a much bigger sample. However, it is important to note that the study of Lurf – Vásárhelyi (2013) involved interviewing HR employees to comment on how they perceived the Y Generation as leaders, rather than the generation itself. Further research may also investigate whether there truly is a pendulum effect between generations or that progress and environmental factors have a greater impact in determining the traits and characteristics of a generation.

In terms of the implications of this study for language teachers, it seems that we are constantly trying to find ways to grab the interest of our students and keep up-to-date. If a pendulum effect is found to exist then it may be the case that in order to understand our students we need to look back at the previous generation i.e. the orientations of our parents, as a means towards understanding our students.

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