

Cultural profile of Ukrainian generation Y: influence of COVID-19

ABSTRACT

The pandemic of the coronavirus infection COVID-19 caused large-scale socio-economic changes in the world and affected all spheres of society in all countries of the world. The interruption in work activity and the closure of companies and enterprises led to changes in the labor market, an increase in unemployment, and significantly reduced the quality of life of millions of people. Negative labor market trends associated with the economic crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic have led to job losses in many sectors of the economy. An additional factor causing increased stress and the emergence of fears is the uncertainty of the economic situation, the impossibility of planning and building a professional perspective. The inability to predict one's life and influence what is happening, a high degree of uncertainty in the economic situation, cause stress and, as a result, emotional exhaustion, which deprive a person of self-confidence, lead to a sense of instability in life and loss of future prospects. A person's involvement in a negative information space and a long stay in conditions of uncertainty causes a decrease in all types of activity, blocks the desire and ability to find and use even simple ways to overcome difficult situations. This study analyzes how the cultural profile of Ukrainian most economically active generation, generation Y, has changed. The cultural profiles of this generation before the start of the pandemic (2018) and during the pandemic (2020) were compared.

1 INTRODUCTION

The globalization tendencies and the impact of the COVID-19 create a need to increase attention to changes in personal management and business communications at all levels (in each country and for the entire business community). In addition, nowadays, there is a change in the age structure of representatives of the business community, both leaders and managers at all levels. Therefore, an important aspect of research is the analysis of the characteristics of new generations, which are now becoming economically active, entering the stage of adulthood.

Thus, in the structure of the Ukrainian labor force in 2021, generation Y is about 25%, only Ukrainian generation X is greater (43%). Nevertheless, tendency of increasing share of generation Y is has a constant character. This factor is indicating an increase in the role of this generation in society.

This generation has unique attributes such as its technological savvy, tolerance and independence, and its aversion to large institutions (Frey, 2018) and it is very important to understand all features of the generation Y.

2 GENERATIONAL THEORY

Howe H. and Strauss W. (2007) created the present generational theory in 90s of XX century. Torocsik M., Szucs K. and Kehl D. (2014) noted the generational approach to the description of the society and the examination of social problems mean the acceptance of the simple

principle, which involves research based on groups by birth age, which results in groups with perceivably different behavior.

That is why it is critical to review how different scientists dealing with the generation boundaries (birth ages). Howe H. and Strauss W. (2007) mentioned that Generation Y has the period of birth 1982-2000 years. Oblinger D. and Oblinger J. (2005) noted that this period is 1985-1991 years. According to the opinion of Reeves T. and Oh E. (2007), this period is 1981-2000 years. As for Ukrainian generation Y in paper (Lepeyko, Blyznyuk 2016), it was proved that period of birth is 1987-2005 years.

3 METHODOLOGY

Torocsik M., Szucs K. and Kehl D. (2014) mentioned the study of generations is based on the differences in their value orientations.

One of the most common survey of values is the value survey developed by Rokeach M. (Rokeach, 1979). Method of Rokeach M. is based on the direct ranking of values that are included value lists: terminal (value-aims) values and instrumental (value-ways) values. In general, there are 18 values in each list and each value has a short description.

The Rokeach values survey was distributed to students of the Simon Kuznets Kharkiv National University of Economics during the COVID-19 pandemic (2020 – 2021). Completion of the survey was anonymous and voluntary. The number of respondents was 100 students. In order to assess demographic characteristics, we asked for information about their age. According date of birth all respondents concern to Generation Y. Respondents were offered the list of terminal values and instrumental values and for each of them the respondents had to determine the significance in their lives and to choose the ranking number from 1 to 18.

In order to examine changes for values and value systems for Generation Y in a period of COVID-19 pandemic, the results were compared with the findings of the Blyznyuk T. (2017) study.

4 ANALYSIS OF DATA AND RESULTS

The results of the survey are shown in the Table 1. For comparative purposes between the before pandemic and in a pandemic of COVID-19 periods, the results of the Blyznyuk T. study of the Generation Y values in a 2016 are also shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Changes in values of Generation Y: impact of COVID-19 pandemic.

Value	Ranking of values		In-crease/decrease (+/-)
	COVID-19 pandemic (2020-2021)	Without / before COVID-19 pandemic (2016)	
Set A. Terminal values			
Active and interesting life	1	1	-
Inner harmony	2	2	-
Wisdom	3	3	-
Health	4	4	-
Interesting job	5	5	-
Love	6	6	-
Financially secured and comfortable life	7	7	-
Knowledge	8	10	+2

Real friendship	9	8	-1
Public recognition	10	9	-1
Development	11	12	+1
Productive life	12	11	-1
Aspirations beauty	13	14	+1
Freedom	14	13	-1
Happy family life	15	15	-
Happiness of others	16	16	-
Art	17	17	-
Pleasure	18	18	-
Set B. Instrumental values			
Accuracy (cleanliness)	1	1	-
High demands	2	2	-
Manners and politeness	3	3	-
Intelligence and education	4	5	+1
Buoyancy	5	4	-1
Rationalism	6	10	+4
Irreconcilability to shortcomings in themselves and others	7	8	+1
Independence	8	7	-1
Self-control	9	11	+2
Responsibility	10	9	-1
Diligence (discipline)	11	6	-5
Tolerance	12	14	+2
Courage in views, opinions	13	12	-1
Strong will	14	13	-1
Liberality	15	16	+1
Honesty	16	15	-1
Effectiveness in activities	17	17	-
Keeness (thoughtfulness)	18	18	-

In the period of COVID-19 the order of terminal values for Generation Y did not change dramatically apart from knowledge, which increased in importance by 2 ranks. Several terminal values, however, were ranked much differently before and in the COVID-19 pandemic period. The following shows those values, which experienced an important increase or decrease of two ranks or more.

Diligence (discipline), which was ranked 6th most important in a period without/before COVID-19, saw the largest decrease. Respondents in the period of COVID-19 pandemic ranked it as being 11th most important. A likely explanation for this is the fact that live was moved to distance format, the people were restricted in free movement, habitual duties have become irrelevant, and deadlines have become flexible. The largest increase was for rationalism, which saw an increase in importance of four ranks. In the survey instrument used, rationalism as ability to think logically and to take rational decisions. This is because people understood that their health and life depend upon rational decisions; and in pandemic period it is necessary to abstract from emotions in order to control the situation.

Self-control and tolerance increase by two ranks. Self-control, which is defined by the restraint, self-discipline, may have increased due to Generation Y's desire for financially secured and comfortable life. Rey-Ares L., Fernández-López S., Castro-González S. and Rodeiro-Pazos D. (2021) emphasizes that the members of Generation Y are willing to spend money without first thinking about the benefits of the items they are willing to buy, thus often struggling with self-control in spending. However, the COVID-19 pandemic changed this attitude, because of restrictions to visiting public places, in particular shops, and also because of

the uncertainty and misunderstanding when everything will end, which stimulated members of the Generation Y to control their spending.

Tolerance is defined by tolerant attitude to views and ideas of others, ability to forgive the mistakes of others. COVID-19 has affected the relationship of people to each other regardless of the generation, people have become more tolerant.

5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY AND FURTHER RESEARCH

The conducted research and its results have some limitations:

- the possible subjectivity of the respondents;
- limited research by one country, namely Ukraine, since the ranking of values in different countries may differ;
- limitations of the method of Rokeach, to which the ambiguity of the ranking criteria, expressed in the fact that some respondents, when ranking the list of values, take into account the degree of their relevance, while others are guided only by their absolute significance, some relate them to their individual life, others take into account their significance for society and humanity as a whole.

6 CONCLUSIONS

This study provides two major contributions. First, this research details how values have changed over time under the influence of the COVID-19 pandemic. Second, the results of the study contribute to generational research by generalizing two profiles of Generation Y using a time-lagged study.

The study showed that the COVID-19 pandemic had practically no effect on the formation of the terminal values of the Ukrainian Generation Y. Based on the analysis of ranking of terminal values of Ukrainian Generation Y, it can be argued that the leading ranks of terminal values are defined by five common values of individual interaction: active and interesting life, inner harmony, wisdom, health and interesting job. The least significant terminal values for Generation Y are happiness of others, art and pleasure.

However, at the same time, the structure of the instrumental values of the Generation Y changed. In the hierarchy of instrumental values, the most significant values are accuracy, high demands, manners and politeness, intelligence and education, buoyancy. In a pandemic period, two values became more important than before: rationalism and self-control.

Thus, changes in incremental and terminal values show that the psychological stress experienced by Generation Y during the COVID-19 pandemic leads to a change in their behavior patterns. Thus, health remains one of the 5 priority terminal values, however, the importance of such incremental values as discipline and responsibility are declining, as well as tolerance and self-control are raising. This means that in order to organize remote work in a pandemic, it is impossible to directly use Western experience, but it is necessary to develop models that will take into account the specifics of the Ukrainian mentality and the value characteristics of Generation Y.

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