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REDEFINING LIFE AFTER 50 - GRANDPARENTS ARE PLUGGED - IN

ABSTRACT

At the threshold of the 21st century mankind is being affected globally by the population boom, the longer average lifetime (living longer) and the information boom together with all the benefits and disadvantages of a technical civilization that have never been seen before. This global ageing influences the economy, the culture, the human behavior and attitudes, and also, it has significant implications on several areas of marketing and their applicable set of tools.

Health and quality of life together with the inter-linkages between generations, i.e., the widespread set of issues around ageing, are becoming of ever growing importance. All these foster remarkable changes, and as a consequence, certain real paradigm changes are required as well.

This paper primarily focuses on and discusses in detail the link and attitude of the 50+ generation towards technology, reports a work in progress of an empirical study designed to examine one such research gap.

Keywords: generation marketing, 50+, internet, internet related technologies, ageing

1. INTRODUCTION

The increase in the number and ratio of the 50+ population proves to be a steady process that has a direct impact on the demographic and family structure composition of societies, the labor market, the consumer habits, the operation of health and social supply systems,

the evolvement of human relationships and on the ways people spend their increased free time but even on the way of handling public, political issues.

1.1. Changes in the average life expectancy

In the 20th century the results of the social, economic progress and medical science brought a major breakthrough in the area of life expectancy. These days in the member states of the European Union women could expect to live until about the age of 81-82 and men until around 75. In Hungary this life expectancy among women is on average 77 and for men 68. Consequently a Hungarian citizen lives on average 6-9 years less than his Western European counterpart.

1.2. The present and future size of the group

The proportion of the new ageing group, i.e., the total number of people of 50+ years within the Earth's total population approaches 15%, and more importantly this ratio has already exceeded 33% in the European Union's 27 member states!

In Hungary the ratio of 50+ group within the total population was only 9.8% in 1960 and it has grown to 35.2% by 2007. It means that today every third Hungarian has already turned 50 years or more, in absolute terms it refers to more than 3.5 million inhabitants.

Nowadays the size of the 50+ group already exceeds 1 billion world-wide and by 2050 this figure will jump to ca. 3.1 billion. In Europe this will be a population of 350 million, in Hungary it will reach close to 4 million.¹

2. CHARACTERISTICS, MARKET POTENTIAL OF THE 50+ GROUP

Aging is a multi-factor life process, related to whose evolvement we can also consider its biological, genetic, psychological and social determination and consequences. Therefore, the group of seniors is characterized by considerable heterogeneity: there could be significant differences among old people regarding their life paths, place of residence,

family relations, education, financial-income status and the strongly related consumption, their state of health, rate of activity and self supply, dependence, social relations and their fulfilled roles.²

Let's take a closer look at the main demographical, social characteristics of the elderly group!

Focusing on the demographics, the following Hungarian characteristics can be highlighted:

aging and declining population	increasing male death rate
diminishing families	increasing number of female chronic diseases
increasing divorce rate	increasing dependence
decreasing number of children	increasing regional differences
increasing female ratio	regarding health and life quality: increasing chance dispersion and growing risks

2.1. Genders

Similarly to the other European countries in Hungary we can also highlight 'feminization' among the demographical characteristics of aging, which means that with time men's death ratio is higher than that of women's, therefore in the aging population the majority of women is becoming increasingly marked.

Nowadays as a result of this variance around 50 years of age the ratio of women is 54%, while that of the men is 46%.

2.2. Family and household structure

When understanding the situation of the mature group, key attention must be paid to the fact whether aging people remain on their own as they get older, what kind of a relationship they have with their families, if any, to what extent can they count on their family members or - perhaps in lack of them - on the help of others.

Other interesting findings are boomers' changing views of retirement and the influence of women on this aging generation. Boomers were the first generation in which all women had access to education. That has rippled through women's power in the economy and the workforce, and it will affect how they age. Where previous generations of women might have found the empty nest stage of life a sad and difficult transition, today's boomer women see it as a very positive opportunity to start focusing on themselves and their own interests and desires.

2.3. Income, financial status

Based on the research of KSH³ (Central Statistical Office) in Hungary the annual net income is the highest among the 50-59 year olds when compared to the social average.

Despite the wide-scale differences, as a summary statement we can conclude that the income status of the 50+ category deteriorated to a smaller extent than that of the majority of society. This partly means that the chances of the elderly to become poor are lower, yet the likelihood of the 60+ falling into the highest income quintile did not increase significantly.⁴

2.4. Health condition, quality of life

Life expectancy increased significantly as a result of – besides many other factors – better life conditions and the higher efficiency of prevention and therapeutic activity.

At the same time the expansion of life expectancy upon birth increased the number of regular and irregular changes, disorders, illnesses which become more frequent with age. As a consequence, by the 21st century, maintainable health, prevention, personalized health and social care, the development and maintenance of an acceptable life quality in the course of living with diseases all inevitably become central issues.

3. ACTIVE AGING

'Active aging means staying involved in life, and the boomers are planning to do that.'⁵

Although with differing intensity depending on the societies' economic and moral stage, all developed countries are dealing with the model of active ageing and seeking countermeasures against the socially debarred status. In most developed European countries as well as in the US and Canada the information technology plays a crucial role in enabling elderly people to actively participate in (public)life. The information society reallocates the access to and the accessibility of social resources, information and services.

The growing number of elderly people and the difficulties they have in accessing information technology for generational and technological reasons have unacceptably widened the digital divide. European competitiveness crucially depends on having a strategy at all levels of political governance to promote ICT. The aim should be to encourage elderly people to work for longer in a modern professional environment, and to benefit from their skills and experience. Need to promote the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) such as mobile phones and the Internet, together with telemonitoring and telemedicine tools. Useful as such technologies are in extending working lives and facing up to the challenges of ageing while coping with dependency, not everyone has mastered their use; all the same, such tools contribute to social cohesion.⁶

Almost 90% of older adults want to age in their own homes, and they're willing to use technologies that will help them reach that goal, according to new reports from AARP and the Center for Aging Services Technologies (CAST).⁷

ICTs is about much more than learning to use IT; it also concerns new ways of working and living together, giving people more options for preserving their independence. Indeed, a new information culture must be instilled in everyone, laying the foundations for an economy which contributes more effectively to spatial planning and social progress.

The International Council on Active Aging offers eight trends to watch in 2008 the following are the key 3 trends in connection with the topic to follow⁸:

The Internet as a link to health, social networking and travel. Virtually all new homes in 55+ communities are hardwired for computers and broadband Internet access, and new Web sites targeting the 50+ demographic are launching every day.

Technology as an inspiring activity. Look no further than the Wii, Nintendo's console game where people play sports games such as tennis and bowling, and you can see the future of technology for older adults. Grandparents can play with the grandkids on the same field, Milner says. Other examples include dance-step based mats like Dancetown and a virtual reality machine like the CYBEX Trazer that leads movement and gives sensory feedback.

Lifelong learning opportunities. Educational opportunities are growing, as retirement communities are being built on college campuses, community colleges adapt classes to those over 50 and community centers offer classes in everything from digital photography to nutrition.

4. HUNGARIAN PINPOINTS

The internet penetration is 41% in the second half of 2007 – more than 3 million people get online with a monthly regularity at minimum. Although in the past years a dynamic growth can be observed in the number of internet users, the current penetration level can still be considered low against international benchmarks, even when compared to the over 50% average of the EU and to the data of several neighboring countries.

The contrast is even sharper among the individual age groups. Which is reflected in the fact that while 72% of the 15-24 year olds regularly go online, yet in the 50+ group the penetration is much lower than the average, only 14%.⁹

With the continuous increase of the ratio of internet users the demographic composition of the group also changes, and a positive change can be observed: the different growth dynamics also decreased the gap between the young and the old.¹⁰

The Economist Intelligence Unit prepared that comparative survey in 2008 as well which it screened 70 countries of the world ranking them by their e-readiness. The survey revealed that the rate of digitalization has progressed world wide, Hungary's score increased from last year's 6.16 to 6.30 which ranked the country to the 33rd position – jumping one place up since last year.¹¹

5. SOCIAL SNAPSHOT

The cult of youth will disappear - we need to calculate consciously with the ever growing elderly age group. The social attitude towards elderly people will need to be changed, as the elderly people's attitude towards themselves will change as well. In Eastern Europe the elderly people are currently in an underprivileged situation due to the dramatically low level of tolerance threshold and lack of solidarity. Whereas, in lucky places, especially in the Northern European countries elderly ages are full with activities; elderly people are exemplary, elderly ages serve also for grabbing further opportunities in life.

- The fact that 30% of the respondents believe that PC and internet usage is not for the old demonstrates conflicts among age groups.¹²
- The ill treatment of elderly people is more universal than one would think. At an international conference the EU calls attention to the unpleasant facts and to the importance of a more careful treatment of the elderly. Figures show that this is not a groundless action: a recently conducted EU survey reveals that 47% of Europeans feel that seniors are often mistreated in their country. According to the EU it is time to take action. Experts say that the public debate on the elderly has gotten as far as the discussion was on the abuse of children 20–30 years ago.¹³
- For the first time this year a symposium is being organized against loneliness in Vienna, Austria. The objective of the event is to call society's attention to this phenomenon and to fight against it.¹⁴

5.1. The digital divide

The spread of modern information and communications technology (ICT) devices and the lack of their dispersion raise important social policy issues.

Those who cannot, are not able to or do not want to access ICT devices are at a severe disadvantage, those who do not have the digital literacy that allows for the routine use of the internet and mobile communication.

Decision makers and researchers playing part in the forming of information society recognized the society changing role of ICT devices very early on. Warning thoughts on threats, risks emerged as early as the '80s, yet the uncertain questions deriving from the chance of accessing PC and information and the dual (information poor and rich) social image was replaced at the end of the '90s by a more subtle concept of digital division. The past decade saw very important trends in this area, it turned out that digital division intensifies the already existing social inequalities in a cumulative way.

An important experience of developed countries is that the problem of digital division does not disappear with the saturation of ICT devices in society since new technologies, devices (broadband, mobile devices, Web 2.0, etc.) are emerging one after the other, with fault lines appearing again in a similar way.

Consequently, these days we believe that ICT devices are suitable tools to increase equal opportunity and to improve the life quality of social layers, groups which are falling behind. It is not that ICT devices solve the problem of, for instance, old age discrimination but that the access to and the actual use of ICT devices, as well as the online contents and services may foster the decrease of social exclusion and they may also create equal opportunities for the participation in information society¹⁵.

Regarding the PC usage of the elder generations, Hungary continues to be among the laggards of the EU countries. Compared to the surrounding countries the backlog of Hungary is not significant, however, both the Czech Republic and Slovakia are ahead of us in this area.

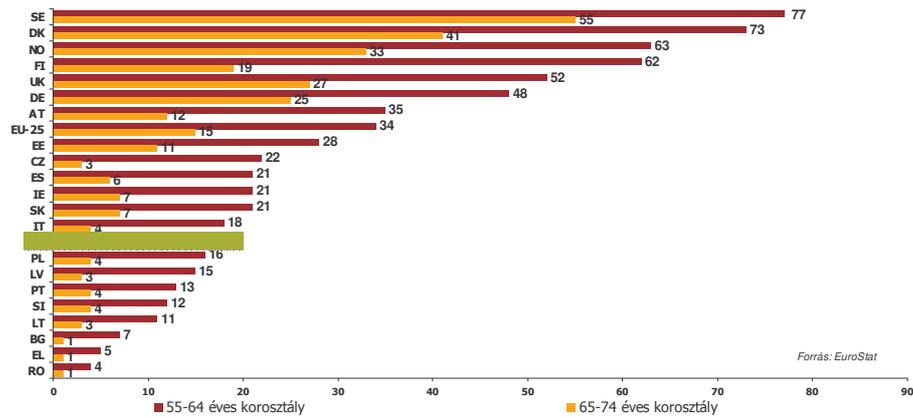


Chart 1. Ratio of PC users among the elderly generations, EU (2004), Source:Eurostat

Regarding internet usage Hungary (based on the data of 2004) is clearly one of the worst ranking countries of the European Union.

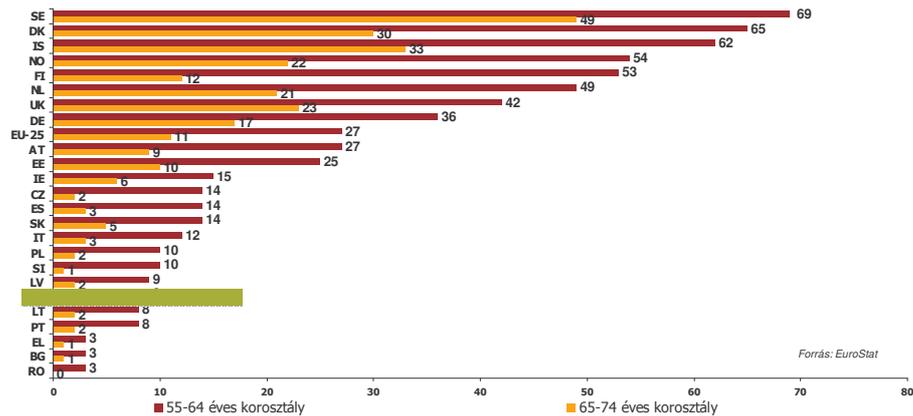


Chart 2. Ratio of Internet users among the elderly generations, EU (2004), Source:Eurostat

The objective of the GfK research ran in 2006 was to identify how older generations can be involved in the circle of internet users. The initial data of this survey: the size of the total mass under survey over 55: 1 980 thousand people, of which 183 000 had an internet access, with 99 000 having home access. The number of people having an internet access outside their homes was 80 000.

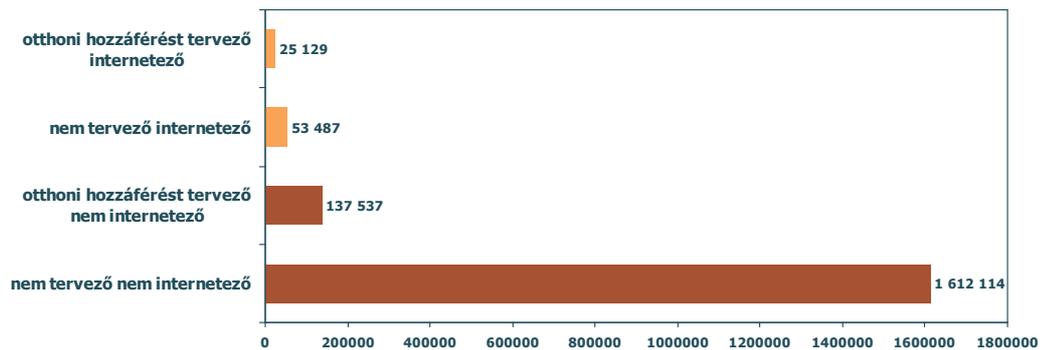


Chart 3. Introduction of the subgroups used in the course of the research (internet users planning to purchase a home access, those internet users who do not plan to have such an access, non internet users planning to purchase a home access, non internet users not planning on having a home access)

6. THE SILVER SURFERS

Nevertheless, today's grandparents are not eager to fully comply with **classis** grandparental patterns. We should not forget that they are those teenagers of the sixties' beat era, just getting retired now and in their heart of hearts they have no intention to cope with the petit bourgeois idyll; rather they want to live their own lives in health, doing sports, traveling, working, shopping and simply having a good time. If they manage to keep themselves active, they will keep both their mental and physical health longer, and they can live their lives nicer and longer.

One would think that the elderly shy away from the novelties of technology, however, this belief is completely false. The main question of the survey conducted by the Information society journal in 2006 was „can the elderly learn the use of ICT-devices?” The answer was a resounding „yes, of course”¹⁶

A great example for the spread of ICT technology is the ever increasing popularity of the use of VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol). One would think that this technology is „too innovative” for the elderly generation, that it primarily impacts the younger group – however a German research found that ca. 12% of VoIP users are between 50 and 64.¹⁷

The members of the mature generation can also be found in high numbers on the market of online games. More and more adults are discovering that on-line games help keep their minds sharp and allow them to socialize via the Internet with people all over the world. In

addition, some online game portal is very popular with the elderly, in the virtual “battlefield” the team of senior users can match strength against the teams of younger players.¹⁸

Silver Surfers (i.e. the 50+ internet users) surf the net primarily to avoid becoming lonely in the last phase of their lives. Consequently the former opinion stating that the retired show little if any interest in the world of internet seems to prove wrong. It is true that 50+ users do not turn into hardware gurus, software developers or IT experts. The members of this age group are only just getting a feel of the World Wide Web and visibly more and more of them like being online – as reported by the survey of the D21 Initiative German civil organization.¹⁹

When it comes to technology, boomers and matures are more similar to GenXers than we might think. In attitudes, use of computers and the Internet and cell phones, the three generations are surprisingly alike, reveals new data from JWT Boom and BoomerEyes, a division of C&R Research.²⁰

7. INTERGENERATIONAL CONCEPT

The problem is not that seniors are fearful of technology, it’s that the technology is too difficult to use. In an ever complicated and accelerating world at least the solutions should be simple, the trend of simplification is about to evolve. Today’s technology is not designed to be intuitive for older adults—it’s designed to be cool for young people.

The followers of the trans-generational design concept focus on the fulfillment of the needs of the 50+ generation. Companies should develop products and send such messages to consumers which are primarily geared towards seniors but which also resonate with the younger customer category.

Therefore, besides the currently in place and running inter-generational initiatives in the fields of infocommunications and technology, it is essential to put more and more emphases on the initiatives aiming to trigger generations together and for each others.

In May 2008 the Inforum (Forum of Hungarian IT Organizations for Information Society) launched the 'Spring of Digital Hungary' Program²¹ with the aim to draw the Internet users' attention to the necessity and importance of their potential actions and assistance in eliminating the digital divide.

- The 8th Grandchildren – Grandparents ICT Competition's aim is to involve elderly into the information society – through the assistance of the younger generations. Therefore, the competition is not against generations, but rather it provides a platform for grandchildren and grandparents to experience together the benefits of the Internet itself.
- With over 200 participants, the "50+ Internet Party" organized by the Inforum on the occasion of the Information Society Day (17 May) was a great success. The aim of the event was to help to draw the attention of this population on the benefits of the Internet use, among which the opportunity to be an active member of society while staying healthy and avoiding social isolation.²²
- In the frame of the 'Click, Grandma!' education program and in connection with the year of e-inclusion program, a Digital Photo Contest will be initiated for seniors in late November 2008.²³

What response do we receive from seniors who are helped through this kind of program? The seniors appreciated that these new technologies could keep them connected with their family via e-mail or through digital photography, shop online for gifts for the grandchildren or store important medical information on a flash drive.

In the next decade the 50+ generation will be a significantly more active part of the information society, however numerous above discussed issues are still going to be on the agenda.

The increasing size of the 50+ generation allows for the conclusion that the values mostly associated with maturity today such as knowledge, experience, wisdom, simplicity, patience, having high standards will have an increased impact on the young as well, a kind of more mature social feeling is expected to evolve. The mature generation does not

consider the problem of aging society to be critical, instead of conflicts it focuses on the transfer of values. This will obviously have a key impact on the entirety of the market.

Such transfer in the field of infocommunications needs to be exercised from the younger generations towards the as of today 50+ generation. Further, technology marketers focus on how their product or service can help boomers stay connected with their family and friends, make their lives easier, save them time and enable them to enjoy their current life stage by adding value to their experiences.

8. GENERATIONAL MARKETING

Generations are tied by shared experiences, life encounters and ultimately by shared values. This link is loose but decisive. Loose because there are so many life paths, consumer-purchase decisions in case of a generation that it is extremely difficult to see them as uniform. However, there is a key range along the values which allows for us to connect these decisions and to make the statement that although there are differences among the generations, yet the similarities within the generations move the decisions of the people who belong there²⁴

8.1. The Yankelovich-report

In the United States there is a research series which has been published each year since 1971 called Yankelovich report on generational behaviors. The concept of studies is to capture the cohort-experience that is to find the experiences that define the socialization of generations. Core experiences, major and key events, the „spirit of the age” that follow people until the end of their lives and influence their decisions.

According to the approach of the Yankelovich-report, based on the book describing the system, there are no other survey dimensions apart from the generations. In their book three main generations are analyzed in depth²⁵.

- Mature (born between 1909-1945)
- Boomers (between 1946-1964)
- X-generation (1965-1985)

8.2. The Hungarian generations

Examples can be found on generation creation based on the generation cohorts of the Yankelovich Monitor in the works of two prominent Hungarian professors, Mrs. István Hoffmann, Dr.²⁶ and Mária Töröcsik Dr.²⁷

The Hungarian counterparts of the American generations (Töröcsik, 2003)

	Mature generation	Middle aged generation	Young generation
Key experience	war	young pioneer, pioneer, KISZ membership	the island
Positive experiences	„shining winds”	„the happiest hut”	Internet-cafe
Negative experiences	kulak, deportation, requisition	oil crisis	terrorism
March	1956	May 1 parade	plazas
The world	bi-polar world	international construction camp	global world
	TSZ-membership	pop song festival	disco
	peace bond	Gorenje-fever	Süsü, the dragon (puppet character)
Memories on the work environment	brigade movement	GMK (private economic group)	multinational companies
Human relationships	„we are close to one another”	we are with you, Vietnam	I am single
Place of residence	shared rental	system built flat	residential park
Media	Free Europe Radio	No Tv program on Mondays	Big Brother
Passport	first passport	blue and red passports	world passport

Chart 4. Hungarian generational memories (Töröcsik, 2003)

- The characteristics of the mature generation are similar to those of the American, mature generation since they lived among similar circumstances and gathered similar experiences (had to save up, work hard and fight for everything).
- Middle aged generation: the children of the Rátkó era were workaholics, performance oriented and were willing to become entrepreneurs to achieve their goals.
- Young generation: due to mass communication they are basically influenced by the same impacts, have the same experiences and values as their American counterparts.

Generational groupings (Mrs István Hoffmann, Dr 2003)²⁸.

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| 1. The generation of major changes | (born between 1920-1938) |
| 2. The generation of losers and winners | (born between 1939-1960) |
| 3. The generation of the change of the regime | (born between 1961-1980) |
| 4. The generation of the turn of the century | (born between 1981-2000) |

The generation of losers and winners (1939-1960).

The parents of this generation assumed a key role in the replacement of the casualties of war (cca. one million inhabitants) by natural reproduction. This objective was partly met since abortions were not allowed for health reasons and in practice a prison sentence had to be served for such an act, therefore unwanted children were also born.

Forced births made the lives of families even more difficult because the government offered only little financial support for child rearing. Thus, from wanted and unwanted births, the winner and loser generation, which was destined for the replacement of human losses suffered as a result of the war, was born.

This was the era when the two-income family model started to gain ground, increasing the acceleration of female equality, the mass participation of women in secondary and college/university level education.

Consequently, this generation is made up of those, even lower class winners who – as opposed to their opportunities in former regimes – were able to win leadership positions in intellectual, scientific fields. Naturally, this generation also includes the suffering subjects of the preferences of the centrally controlled society: the losers who were unable to realize their hopes and dreams because - judged by their origin – they were unwanted in management positions. From the post-war generations this one has the highest number of disadvantaged citizens but those representing the young at the time of the change of the regime can already be listed among the winners.

Yankelovich MONITOR	Prof.Dr.Töröcsik Mária	Prof.Dr.Hoffmann Istvánné
Matures (1909-1945)	A háború után munkát vállalók (1928 középérték)	A nagy változások generációja (1920-1938 között születtek)
Baby Boomer (1946-1964)	Az új gazdasági mechanizmus környékén munkát vállalók (1953)	A vesztesek és győztesek generációja (1939-1960 között születtek)
GenX (1965-1980)	A rendszerváltás után munkába lépők (1972)	A rendszerváltó generációja (1961-1980 között születtek)
Echo Boomer		Az ezredforduló generációja (1981-2000 között születtek)

Chart 5. Comparison of the generational cohorts.

The generation gaps are quite similar, however, there is a significant difference and that is the Hungarian value orientation.

The comparison shows that the Hungarian generations carry a slightly different value orientation than the roughly similar Northern-American and (Western-) European generations.

In case of the „mature” (Yankelovich) and our post war generation similar but not completely overlapping core experiences can be identified. What is identical is that they lived through or were closely affected by the war and poverty. They lived under oppressive regimes, governments that pushed civilians into the background and taught them obedience. The Hungarian generation suffered these types of interventions into their private lives for a longer period of time, worsened by a revolution (1956) and its consequences. Maybe the most difficult part of the events was that such an ideological

system had to be taken over which was built on a completely new basis and was not directly rooted from our history.

The largest difference stands between the boomers (Yankelovich) and those working in the Hungarian soft socialism. While the boomers, the moderns were able to experience the joy of wealth, the visible and notable process of prosperity, in our country this core experience meant living in a society with a closed ideology that could only produce prosperity in comparison with itself. Consequently we can state that the processes are similar, only the emergence of its results is limited under the Hungarian circumstances²⁹.

A similar opinion was formulated by J. Walker Smith in his answer to the question regarding the international relevance of their research results. In his view the baby boomer phenomenon offers the least guidance on the markets of societies with other parameters.

However, the mentality of the GenX generation living in a globalizing environment is much more general³⁰.

Age as an explanatory factor is surely not enough for the description of people or groups of individuals. Several things can be rendered likely, precisely based on the cohort experiences and certain life situations, but the analyses definitely need to take a broader approach than this. Remaining in a single dimension only allows for a surface look but it does not facilitate a deeper understanding. There are several opportunities for the use of at least one more dimension, these may be: social status, income, pace of life, family status, more specifically the responsibility assumed for others.

The *Életstílus@Inspiráció*s model also uses an analysis methodology that captures generations. The author chose pace of life as a second dimension interpreted along slowing down / becoming slower – acceleration / speeding up. Based on objective measurement or subjective perception the pace of life can be slow or fast, the life of the consumer is characterized by the lack of time or the slow down of /putting the breaks on time. The system also interprets differentiation along the modernity-tradition as a value orientation dimension. Therefore this factor can also explain the lifestyle of generations, although this is not in the focal point of the approach³¹. This dimension indicates the

ability to keep up with the times, ICT usage, the related knowledge and modern value orientation.

Following the understanding of the main features of each generation and the identification of their key characteristics a problem arises. Can the overlapping groups on the periphery, which can also be considered temporary, be treated separately? The reason why this question arises is that transitional groups carry the characteristics of the previous and the upcoming generations.

As to what extent a part of a generation falls sideline largely depends on the intensity of life events emerging in the given era and the experiences they can gather and not just on their differences from the former ones.

Who fall into the 50+ category today in Hungary? Today the children of the Ratkó era and those who are older represent the over fifty category and slowly those who were born at the turn of the 60s reach his age as well.

If we look back to the generational distribution we can see the group with a divisive title „losers and winners” (1939-60), by almost completely reaching the 50+ category.

However, the elderly of the category are the offsprings of the previous generation (1920-38) and so it would be even less easy and grounded to talk about the 50+ circle as a unified target group than about the individual generations. As we have already seen, it is not easy to talk about one generation alone in its entirety. With the increase of life expectancy this category is getting broader and broader, therefore if we stick to age as a differentiation factor it is a question which group gets more attention.

Due to the variance between the two generations the old elderly and the new ones who are becoming members of the emerging 50+ group will continue to coexist on the market for a very long time.

Among the presented models ICT usage emerged as an analysis dimension that is also very similar to the pace of life. Along this factor the two generations separate sharply both according to domestic quantitative analyses and to international literature.

Considering the accelerating pace of technological development the question still remains whether a generation spanning 20 years can be treated as one, can the core experiences of

its members be identical when it comes to technology? To what extent do the more elderly members of the next generation fall to the sidelines of their group from this perspective?

By considering the experiences of the next generation is it enough to think about the 'emergence' of the internet, when does the 'relationship of 50+ to ICT' become truly characteristic, from which point can we say that internet is an indispensable part of our lives?

9. RESEARCH CONCEPT

As a result of the demographic change a new society is created and this process is expected to further intensify from 2010: compared to the previous period there will be fewer young and middle aged people and a lot more older employees, pensioners and seniors. Our societies must find ways to bring the undiscovered opportunities of the young and the old to the surface. The contribution of every impacted party will be required: a new kind of solidarity based on mutual support and the mutual exchange of capabilities and experiences need to be established among the generations.³²

Both the scientific and practical approach of lifelong learning aim to put the development of the capabilities of the elderly into the context of diverse life phases. The central elements of this new theory must be the intergenerational component as well as the focus on the concept of productive old age.³³

The research aims to reveal the relationship of the digital natives and the nomads as it is today and how the representatives of the two sides perceive this connection. We can see a new trend and perhaps this is the first time history sees such a peculiar exchange of roles when the young teach - or at least assist - the old. This new field is the use of computers which comes naturally to the young since they are born into it, while the adults keep learning it. A similar effect can be seen when it comes to the installation of newly

purchased electronic devices. The generation which was trained upon lego games and other construction sets effortlessly understands any graphic installation instruction³⁴

As opposed to former technologies, the technology of today's information society has a deeper impact on our lives, it changes our relationships and understanding. New technology uproots us from the traditional, direct human communication based environment.

Birth is placed into a historic era and as a result those who are born at a given age share a common fate. Each generation lives history in an individual way. The impact of the given events of the era become an integrated part of its identity and starts to operate as collective memory. This forces each generation to enter into a dialogue or conflict with those who have different memorial tradition. Previously the generation-forming impacts derived from history while today they spring from technological development. The conflict of the old and the new swells and then – along the demographic characteristics to be described later on – evolves into not just a quality but a quantity conflict as well³⁵.

Castells describes this world state built on new networking, in which the use of internet, mobile telephones and the wide toolset of ICT devices becomes a life changing experience for the new generation (Castells, M. 2005). In itself, this communication network offers great opportunities for formal and informal society organization, however, it is still not enough to describe the novelty of the social formation which has entered into the information age³⁶.(Csepeli, 2004)

The core knowledge of the digital generation living at the turn of the century is the digital experience. Being born into the information age also means that network based communication – when anyone can talk to another person anywhere, about anything – becomes natural. These new dimensions change people's relationship networks and their attitudes toward the world.

The elderly and the digital nomads can be best integrated into the information society if there are people who teach them.

Previously the relationship of the young and the old was characterized by asymmetry. There was asymmetry in the area of power and knowledge. The direction of socialization

pointed from the old towards the young. By now this has changed, the direction of socialization has reversed. What is actually the contact point between the generation of digital experience and the older generations?³⁷

From many aspects the members of the digital generation did not grow up. The task is to discover the inner child! If this is successful, people will understand one another regardless of generations. The magical experience of childhood – which is very similar to the digital experience - must be discovered. Magical thinking allows for children to become whatever and whoever they want to be. The internet offers entirely new opportunities to form an identity and to establish community relationships. Knowledge and its application available through the internet carry the element that anything can be turned and changed into anything. The key is to return to this attitude, to preserve the attraction to new, untested things.

This shared relationship of the generations is only a temporary phenomenon which is typical for the formulating age barrier. However, it will be a core characteristic of the present and the upcoming two decades – the realization and conscious application of this fact will become important.

The objective of the secondary analysis of the quantitative research is to distinguish the percentage of internet users within the population³⁸, to identify their demographic features, to understand the characteristics of tool and content usage.

A key area of the analysis is the exploration of the attitude statements. The attitude statements used during the analysis allow for the performance of multiple variable statistical analyses (factor, cluster analysis, correspondence, MDS).

A survey was conducted interviewing 150 university students as a special target group to collect the opinions of the young generation. They were asked to share their associations upon hearing 50+, on the perceived physical appearance of the generation as well as on the relationship of the generation and ICT. They were interviewed about their experiences on the realized help provision and on the impact of this help on the life of the 50+ generation. The coding used during the processing of the questionnaire allowed for the performance of multiple variable statistical analyses (factor, cluster analysis, correspondence, MDS).

The next step is to deepen our understanding of the quantitative results by using qualitative techniques.

Consumer in depth interviews were carried out – regarding the size of the sample, 25 – with the representatives of the generation, the personal interviews were conducted based on a questionnaire catalogue and they lasted for about 25-30 minutes each. Main topics: ICT usage, experiences related to ICT devices and requesting-accepting help.

The attitude analysis, the findings of the in depth interviews, the results of the open questions serve as basis for the formulation of those cards required for the Q method which will be used later in the course of the expert in-depth interviews.

The aim of the qualitative research is to find out whether the old saying: “Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach him how to fish and you feed him for a lifetime” continues to work in this area as well. What are the techniques that support successful fishing, where does help come from, do the lives of lay people really change – and if yes, to what extent – by becoming fishermen.

(The key statements, complex results and limitations of the ongoing research are to be reviewed within the framework of the presentation.)

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