

Generation Z and Employer Branding: Communication Habits and Expectations in the Hungarian Workforce



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Abstract

Every generation has different communication preferences concerning frequency, style, speed, value, and media (Edwards, 2020). Employers of cross-generational workplaces must therefore be aware of the most effective methods of communication. Currently, at least four generations coexist in the same labor market, according to Dixon et al. (2013), namely Baby Boomers (born from 1946 to 1964), Generation X (1965-1980), Millennials (1981-1996), and Generation Z (1997-2012). It has been observed that different generations have unique preferences regarding communication (Downs, 2019) and that the COVID-19 pandemic has reshaped working culture resulting in changes regarding communication habits and expectations (de Lucas Ancillo, del Val Nunez & Gavrilă, 2020). Additionally, companies can rely on new strategies for employer branding via the use of social media platforms nowadays as the use of social media positively relate to corporate reputation (Sivertzen et al., 2013). Hence, this research aims to investigate how Generation Z perceives communication strategies from companies in Hungary shared on social media for employer branding and what they expect from their prospective workplaces.

To obtain data, a combination of personal focus group interviews is conducted with the addition of an online survey. The participants are chosen from a pool of members of the Hungarian active labor market who are born in years that are defined as Generation Z. Thus, in terms of research methodology, mixtures of qualitative and quantitative methods are used in order to explore the phenomenon in-depth, but also to gain a consistent sample size for analysis. For the latter, mathematical and statistical approaches is applied, while for the purpose of analyzing qualitative data, narrative analysis is used. The research points out that Generation Z prioritizes values rather than salaries when looking for a workplace, they expect less flexibility and responsibility at their workplace, and their motivation factors differ from those who entered the job market before or only shortly after the COVID-19 pandemic.

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1. Introduction

With the emergence of new generations, the job market is constantly changing, making it crucial to comprehend their expectations for the workplace as well as their beliefs and experiences. The Hungarian job market is opening up to Generation Z, those born between 1997 and 2012 (Dixon et al., 2013), who bring with them a distinctive set of values and expectations that set them apart from earlier generations (Downs, 2019). Hence, employers looking to retain this generation must understand their priorities and preferences.

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the perspectives, practical knowledge, and job market expectations of Generation Z in Hungary. Focus group interviews with a narrative analysis technique outlined by Catherine Kohler Riessman and an online survey based on Earl Babbie's methodology are among the quantitative and qualitative research techniques used in this study to gather information from a sample of Generation Z workers in the country. Based on professional experience, the focus groups were split into three groups, with each group having two sessions. Friends, coworkers, and students who are active in student organizations received an online survey to complement the results obtained from the focus group interviews.

The structure of this thesis consists of seven chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the topic of employer branding and discusses its importance in the current job market. Chapter 2 provides the theoretical background of employer branding and discusses previous research on Generation Z in the workplace. Chapter 3 explains the methodology of the study, which involves a combination of focus groups and an online survey, and discusses the participants and data collection procedures. Chapter 4 presents the results of the study, which reveal the job preferences and motivational factors of Generation Z in Hungary. Chapter 5 analyzes and interprets the findings and discusses their implications for employers and HR professionals. Chapter 6 summarizes the key points of the study and provides conclusions based on the research questions. Finally, chapter 7 identifies the limitations of the study, including the relatively small sample size and the restriction to only one country, and suggests areas for future research.

The study's research questions focus on the significance of flexibility and work-life balance in Generation Z's decision-making, as well as the elements that affect where and how they choose to work, what their preferences are regarding job advertisements, and the credibility of sources used to learn about potential employers. The study also aims to investigate the motivational factors that lead Generation Z to select one company over another.

The data gathered from the survey and focus group interviews indicate that the trend towards earlier employment among the younger members of Generation Z is influenced by the rise of remote work and the changing job market. It is also clear from the obtained results that specific age groups on the Generation Z spectrum may have different opinions regarding job preferences and view the timeline of their professional career differently.

The results of this study may help in the creation of successful employer branding strategies to attract and keep Generation Z in the Hungarian labor market. The findings might also have an impact on organizations looking to develop a workplace that satisfies the demands and expectations of this generation. Building a company that is desirable to this generation requires understanding the values and expectations of Generation Z.

2. Theoretical background

2.1. Employer branding

Employer branding is a practice in which HR actions in relation to current and potential employees are guided by marketing ideas, particularly the "science of branding." Employer branding considers current and potential employees as branding targets, in contrast to product branding, which evaluates how a product is represented to customers, and corporate branding, which analyzes how an organization is represented to various external audiences (Edwards, 2009).

The ability to attract the most talented, value-fitting individuals comes from having a positive employer reputation. As a result, both labor productivity and product innovation rise, increasing the organization's competitiveness in the process. Consumer opinion of the company's

products is influenced by its reputation. Thus, business owners are increasingly concerned about how prospective employees view them. Organizations must methodically develop their employer brands if they want to win the "battle for talent" (Figurska & Matuska, 2013).

According to Martin R. Edwards, we strive to make our brand known on the market on the one hand, and to create a positive image of it in the eyes of consumers on the other. Knowing the process of brand building, it is important to clarify the concept of the corporate brand, which is an expectation on the part of consumers about what the company will offer for them. Employer branding, therefore, will involve identifying the unique "employment experience" by considering the totality of tangible and intangible reward features that a particular organization offers to its employees. However, a central element to employer branding involves the identification of elements of the character of the organization itself with features such as the organization's key values and the guiding principles (Edwards, 2009).

Employer branding, according to Martin and Beaumont (2003), "*entails controlling a company's image as viewed through the eyes of its associates and potential hires*" (p. 15). This definition emphasizes managing aspects of the company's image by for example, communicating corporate values and guiding principles to help give the employment brand some additional substance by reinforcing an identity and fostering a particular brand image rather than focusing on what benefits and experiences an organization provides for employees. As Dell and Ainspan (2001) argue "*The employer brand establishes the identity of the firm as an employer. It encompasses the firm's values, systems, policies, and behaviors toward the objectives of attracting, motivating, and retaining the firm's current and potential employees*" (p. 10).

2.1.1. Development and importance of employer branding

It is important note major worldwide trends that influence the requirement for employer branding. First and foremost, businesses today function in a constantly evolving and frequently unpredictable environment. Employers who can manage change have the chance to gain a competitive edge in the market as a result of changes in the economy, organizational processes and procedures, and client requirements, to name a few (Figurska & Matuska, 2013).

In terms of the organizational environment, changes in demographics, the structure of human resource competencies, and employee attitudes are crucial for the development of employer branding. Figurska & Matuska (2013) points out that the challenges in finding and keeping the best employees in firms are caused by a declining working-age population, diverse views of the importance of work among young people, and retaining talents.

Globalization is another aspect that Figurska & Matuska (2013) claim affects the necessity of adopting activities in the domain of employer branding. First of all, businesses are increasingly being realized on a global scale by companies. Secondly, due to the development of information and communication technology, it is actually difficult to develop an employer brand in a particular industry or geographic area.

Competitiveness is the next factor in employer branding. Talent management is an area that companies nowadays place a lot of emphasis on because they believe it is necessary for creating an organization that will be competitive in the long run. This is especially true for businesses when it is difficult to find and keep talented people. For Figurska & Matuska (2013), another element impacting the requirement for developing employment branding strategies in firms is transparency. Employees today have the opportunity to express their ideas to a wide audience through online media. As a result, since it will be authenticated by both present and past employees, the information that the employer provides to the labor market must be genuine and transparent.

2.1.2. Organizational identity

Research on organizational identity also contributes to the understanding of the concept of employer branding. According to Albert and Whetten (1985), an organization's organizational identity is its core, persistent, and distinctive characteristic. The idea of employer branding is fundamentally based on the presentation of an element of the organization's employment brand that appeals to both current and future employees. An institution might have a distinctive character that can be recognized by a collective, in particular its employees, is fundamental to the concept of organizational identity. Some definitions of employer branding involve identity specifically, as well as certain traits or features (Dell and Ainspan, 2001). To encourage existing

employees to identify with the company is one of the main goals of an employer branding effort (Martin, 2008).

Theoretical discussions pertaining to organizational identity can therefore enhance and contribute to our understanding of employer branding from the standpoint of that discipline. Companies would anticipate displaying their core, enduring, and distinctive traits when they clarify and present their employment brand. From the perspective of employer branding, its identity helps summarize the company's reputation. For instance, providing shared values as part of an employer brand value proposition will successfully communicate data about the company's essential traits and organizational identity. Research shows a correlation between employee impressions of an organization's identity strength, their level of commitment to and affiliation with that institution, and other favorable employee outcomes (Mael and Ashforth, 1992).

Organizations with an attractive exterior image and an attractive perceived identity tend to be related with higher levels of identification, according to Mael and Ashforth (1992). Similar outcomes are shown for organizations with more perceived prominence and more favorable standing.

2.1.3. Factors of a successful employer brand

The organization's employer brand is being developed as a means of luring in and keeping the most attractive workers, those who will be able to maintain the organization's viability and profitability (Moroko & Uncles, 2008, p. 160). Menor (2010) asserts that certain guidelines must be followed in order to draw in and keep outstanding workers:

Retention and encouraging loyalty depend on maintaining a healthy work-life balance. Making sure that employees don't work too much and have enough downtime will help achieve this and offering a sizable compensation package is also considered essential. HR professionals should look into and provide competitive salaries and benefit packages for the specific position in order to make employees feel valued and fairly compensated for their work.

The foundation of a productive workplace is treating each employee with dignity and respect. Allowing for open communication, giving honest feedback, and recognizing each

employee's contributions can make them feel valued and appreciated. Eliminating favoritism is also necessary to maintain a positive work environment. Treating each employee fairly and without favoritism can boost morale and productivity according to Menor. Similar to this, selecting the ideal employee for the position can boost output and promote a positive work environment and recognizing success and fostering a positive work environment can also help to increase employee satisfaction and retention. Last but not least, allowing workplace flexibility can be challenging, but by establishing clear policies and upholding them, it can increase retention.

According to Griffin and Clarke (2008), the following elements appear to be essential for successful employer branding: 1) definition, 2) execution, 3) engagement, and 4) achievement. In the case of definition, for employer branding to be successful, a business must first comprehend what it means and what are its present and desired brand. After that, it is essential to create a plan, acquire funding, and carry out the plan (Execution). The third step (Engagement), involves motivating present employees to promote the company as a good place to work, focusing on its qualities, which may facilitate the recruitment of new employees. This shows that the company's brand resonates with its current workforce. Finally, the last step (Achievement) refers to assessing and evaluating the benefits brought by employer branding benefits to the firm (pp. 2-3).

Each of these eight crucial components must be present for employer branding to be successful (Sullivan, 2004):

A strong employment brand is built on various factors that must be strategically managed. One key element is a culture of sharing and continuous improvement, which requires a senior management team that promotes, evaluates, and rewards the creation and exchange of best practices. Another essential factor is maintaining a balance between good management practices and initiatives to raise productivity. Gaining public exposure is also critical in positioning the organization as the finest employer, and this can be achieved by being featured on lists of great places to work, local news organizations, and publications, among others.

Employees can also proactively share their experiences, either online or in person, which promotes pride, improves retention rates, and boosts the number of employee referrals for open positions. Managers should also talk and write about their management techniques in visible

ways and aim to be covered in the business press to enhance the organization's visibility, for example through LinkedIn or on company blogs. The organization should also aim to become a benchmark company, one that has best practices that others desire to learn about. Increasing candidate knowledge of the company's best practices is another key factor. This involves designing messaging for the organization's target audience of potential candidates to encourage them to apply for employment based on the management and business practices of the company.

Finally, branding assessment metrics should be included in the evaluation criteria for all significant company activities and their managers. The evaluation's findings should be made public and used as the foundation for future development.

2.2. Generations in the workforce

Generations are people within a delineated population who experience the same significant events within a given period of time (Pilcher, 1994). Below are the different generations which I believe are key participants in my research, highlighting the viewpoints and experiences of Generation Z, born between the years of 1997 and 2010.

2.2.1. Baby-boomers (1946-1964)

There have been major changes in the lives of the baby boom generation, mostly in America. Just think of the movie *Hair*, in which young hippies wanted to break out of their bound world and fought for love, for peace. According to Tari (2010), the generation living in Hungary was not so characterized by eruptions and rebellions, as their socialist conception of life dictated otherwise. Their main characteristics include workplace and mutual respect, discipline, perseverance, and a rigid, conservative mindset (Tari, 2010).

The lives of people born in this generation are characterized by scarcity and they have learned how important values are and how to make the best use of minimal resources. They did not immediately discard their items if they were damaged or defective, reassembled, or repaired. They have become more familiar with the possibilities offered by the Internet and are not deterred from using it either (Schaffer, 2012).

2.2.2. Generation X (1965-1980)

According to Tari (2010), this generation is referred to in the literature as the classic “latchkey kids” who often stayed home without parental supervision (Tari, 2010). Digitization was already observable at a young age, so learning new technology and newer knowledge is not a big problem, but it doesn’t work out if you have to write something down by hand and not by machine. In the same literature, we can read that the parents of this generation have a high divorce rate due to the imbalance between work and home creation. Thus, they tend to enjoy their time after work and maintain a work-life balance (Anantatmula and Shrivastav, 2012).

Annamária Tari’s book states that this generation has already discovered that it can only be successful in the workplace if it manages itself, always has new and up-to-date information and has a proper education and language skills. They also realized the importance of having good relationship capital and developing relationships to provide a better livelihood for themselves and their families. This generation tends to work a lot and there is no time limit like in the previous generation. The 24/7 hour working principle has become a feature that puts it briefly: you have to be available for work every day of the week and every hour of the day. In addition, managers are no longer interested in the time spent at work, but in the actual work, the timesheet - the working hours/performance statement. This is also evident in the structure of the buildings, as everything is open and visible in the glass-walled, open-office-style offices, whether for the boss or other subordinates, so individual performance can be tracked even more (Tari A., 2010).

2.2.3. Generation Y (1981-1996)

For this generation, the electronic world is a fundamental element, as they were able to encounter the opportunities offered by the Internet in their childhood and were introduced to increasingly modern tools as young adults. In a growing consumer society, only money and success can take them forward, so it is natural for them to find a job where they are valued. Today’s young people are characterized by success orientation, independence, and hunger for information (Tari, 2010).

In contrast to the previous generation, they ask questions with great confidence and question the methods that have been proven so far, they do not stick to the rules that have been

proven for years. If they need to discuss a particular topic with their superiors, they may not face the problem in horror, but think of their bosses as helping partners.

They have orientation ability on the Internet and as a result, they also lack focus and their attention spans are less than that of older generations. They are multi-taskers, who panic instantly when making a mistake. Since they grew up on television and social media has also impacted their lives, their expectations towards themselves and the outside world may be too great, resulting in frequent disappointment and a “no longer caring” attitude. They are also very impatient, becoming frustrated from having to take the time to learn or to carefully assess and for this reason, they are prone to procrastination (Tari, 2010).

2.2.4. Generation Z (1997-2012)

The name Z comes from the initials of the English word “zappers,” also referred to in the literature as the switch, network, and Internet generation, but also as digital natives. Several researchers agree that this generation is different from its predecessors. They are demographically segregated as the number of births dropped significantly around the turn of the millennium, making most Z-generations the only children in the family. This will also result in their character they will not be team players at all like the members of the previous generation. Education begins relatively earlier and leaves the school desk much later than members of other generations (Ferincz and Szabó, 2012).

They were born into digitization. For them, modern technology is completely natural, so it is no wonder that it is “socially, technologically the most independent, most empowered generation of all time” (Ferincz and Szabó, 2012).

Digital life has formed an active generation that expresses its views openly. They are typically entrepreneurial and open to innovation, respond and adapt quickly to technological innovations, demand information for free; it has no value to them as they have been around with it since they were born (KPMG, 2018). Their attention is completely divided, as they chat with their friends on the Internet, download a movie and even watch some funny videos at the same time. As a result, they are fast and prefer speed over accuracy, while their information hunger is unquenchable. They think of working in parallel, and multitasking has a significant role to play,

performing multiple tasks at the same time. Consequently, long-term memorization and focused attention are a problem for them, with the average concentration ability of an elementary school student being seven minutes in total (Tari, 2011).

Members of this generation can be attributed to eight typical characteristics, which are: speed, fun, integration, innovation, freedom, collaboration, customizability, and detail. They examine things in detail and try to integrate them in the simplest way possible. We can also refer to them with clever, resourceful, and practical markers. They live in virtual, social networks, which make them much more open, and of course, digital media also plays a big role in this. Because of the visuality, they think in scenarios and not in trends. Their two most prominent characteristics are speed and variety. They do not feel a sense of responsibility, a commitment to a particular organization (Ferincz and Szabó, 2012).

Getting to know Generation Z, which is appearing in increasing numbers on the labor market, can greatly help human resource professionals to successfully motivate and manage members of this generation. According to Pálffy (2020), parents have the primary influence in shaping the generations. In general, it can be stated that the majority of the members of Generation Z are the children of Generation X, while the parents of Generation Y are the Baby Boomers.

Members of the individualistic, skeptical Generation X felt it was appropriate to prepare their children for real life and did not believe in the philosophy of the Baby Boomers that if everyone works together and works hard, everyone can win. Generation X parents make it clear: there are losers and winners in the world. The result is an extremely realistic Generation Z (Stillman and Stillman, 2017). It follows from this that generation Z does not believe in the phrases often uttered by employers: "at our company, the employee is at the center". This possibly low loyalty or scepticism is also the result of a realistic assessment of the relationship between employer and employee and their fundamentally different interests. As a result, significant differences can be observed in the ratio of work and private life in the case of the younger generation: while the Baby Boomer and Generations Y mainly focus on the professional field, for the X and Z generations private life becomes more important (Valentine, 2021).

2.3. Motivational theories

Motivation, in other words, encouragement, comes from the Latin verb “movere”, which means movement. It is concerned with processes that explain why and how human behavior is activated (Encyclopedia.com, 2020). In terms of job-related motivation, intrinsic motivation is linked to motivation arising from work and the content of the job, while extrinsic motivation is when management uses incentives such as salary increases, rewards and bonuses (Juhász and Matiscsákné, 2013).

According to a Deloitte’s article written in 2019 by female executives (Gomez et al., 2019), it is important to emphasize that the effect of internal incentives is deeper and significantly more lasting. It is precisely because of this that nowadays incentive systems have gone beyond economic incentives. In the case of Generation Z, the relative decline in the importance of financial incentives will be particularly characteristic: the literature agrees that financial compensation is less important than in previous generations. If given the choice between a better-paying but boring job and a particularly interesting but less well-paying job, Generation Z will most likely choose the latter (Gomez et al., 2019).

In the following subsections, two main theories will be addressed that relates to people’s motivation. Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs and Herzbergs’s Two Factor Model contrasted with the research participants’ given answers to examine whether they can be applied to answer research questions.

2.3.1. Maslow Pyramid

Maslow's name is associated with the need-hierarchy theory. The Maslow Pyramid (1943) is a schematic representation of all human needs, from the simplest and most urgent to the highest. In 1943, psychologist Abraham Maslow described the pyramid of values with one goal: to understand what motivates people to do certain things. The philosophy was that after meeting low-level needs, it is worthwhile to only deal with meeting higher-level needs.

1. Physiological needs: If someone’s needs - such as hunger, thirst - are not met, they cannot concentrate on anything else until then. It is therefore important for an organization to provide the

basic conditions for its employees - dining rooms, changing rooms, adequate temperature, and light.

2. Safety needs: Such needs include adequate employment conditions, pension fund membership, and long-term employment, thus supporting a relatively secure future, but our occupational health care service can also be listed here.

3. Social Needs: Experience has shown that a good staff relationship, a direct superior-subordinate relationship, and a family, friendly group atmosphere contribute to getting closer to self-realization at the top of the pyramid. This strengthens attachment to the workplace and has a greater chance of developing non-work-related joint activities among subordinates.

4. Esteem needs: The need for recognition, and positive feedback is also an influencing factor. The form a manager chooses - benefits in kind or in cash, career development, performance appraisal - greatly contributes to the individual's personality type, as well as to the company's philosophy and income situation.

5. Self-actualization: The apex of the pyramid. After receiving the recognition, it allows us to find the area where we can deliver the best performance, where we feel best. The greatest value for an organization is provided by the individuals who are at that level. The right leadership function at this level plays an important role in applying the right incentives to individuals.



Figure 1: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs by Maslow (1943)

However, it is important to mention that the Maslow Pyramid has its limitations. Moreover, sometimes it is misunderstood, misinterpreted, and considered by many to be outdated, and needs to be supplemented according to the notes of its creator, yet it can easily explain the basic sources of our motivation and the background to our actions. Hence, the hierarchy of needs provides us with a tool to learn not only about the ideas behind our own decisions but also about the factors that motivate others, albeit in a template.

Maslow worked as a clinical psychologist and sought to demonstrate that people are unable to focus on meeting their higher-order needs until their basic lifestyle needs are met (Thompson, 2008). Social validation is also becoming increasingly important, especially since the rise of social media, as it adds to one's social identity and emotional engagement. Rutledge also states that social networking competence has become part of survival in today's world and increases people's sense of safety and security. According to her, fulfilling basic needs would not be possible without social connection, which Maslow did not consider (Rutledge, 2011).

Another aspect that worries modern psychologists is the so-called reverse pyramid when self-improvement and self-realization are paramount. When a person considers themselves ideal, they strive for it and do not necessarily understand why they need it. The "effect of a medical manual" begins: you read the reference book and immediately find all the diseases in yourself. Only today are they not reading reference books, but incredible stories about transformation, results, and takeoff. And they themselves seem to be imperfect, not deserving of something good. And only infinite self-improvement helps to improve the "non-ideal" (Benke, 2018).

It is important to consider one trait: the forms of manifestation of needs in different people can be radically different. In connection with the Maslow pyramid, it is questionable whether a five-item model is sufficient to outline the needs of the individual, or whether it is necessary to differentiate the emerging needs to a greater extent. Maslow observed that a sense of lack of other elements, thus expanding his model into a nine-element pyramid, which are as follows:

1. Biological and physiological needs,
2. Security needs,

3. The need for love and belonging somewhere,
4. Need for recognition,
5. Cognitive needs (desire for knowledge, thinking),
6. Aesthetic need (beauty, balance, form),
7. The need for transcendence instead of the need for self-realization — this belief,
8. The need for research and self-expression,
9. Desire for excellence (helping others achieve self-realization).

According to Maslow, self-realization can be measured by the individual's experience of success, in other words, if the individual is successful in a particular field, he or she has reached the level of self-realization, and most people do not only a few percent of individuals live with it.

Another important factor is that the order of the five and eight elements he formulated (Maslow, 1970) may not be the same for all cultures as a whole. In each culture, the need for love and togetherness is not within the individual's decision-making power, as it is fundamentally up to the family to decide. There are also many examples of creative people being able to realize themselves, who did not have the most basic hygienic factors, in other words, they came from poverty (Benke, 2018).

The research of Tay and Diener (2011) confirms that there are human needs independent of culture, but the research does not claim that the order of these needs and demands is the same for all cultures, so the order of Maslow's pyramid elements may differ from culture to culture.

2.3.2. Herzberg's Two-Factor Model

The next milestone in motivational theories is Herzberg's two-factor model. Herzberg studied what motivates people between the 1950s and 1960s, but in his research, he came across a kind of duality: the opposites of the factors that make individuals motivated do not necessarily cause dissatisfaction, and the opposites of the factors that make individuals unhappy do not cause satisfaction (Herzberg, 1968). Herzberg's model focuses on two factors, as shown in Figure 2:

hygienic factors (basic life needs such as safety) and motivators (such as self-fulfillment or job satisfaction).



Figure 2: Herzberg's Two Factor Theory Model (1968)

According to the model, hygienic factors alone do not make you satisfied, but they do help to avoid dissatisfaction. Herzberg examined when individuals felt good about their work. According to the research, the following factors affect employees' satisfaction: achieving results, recognition of work, responsibility, feeling of progress and the work itself.

In Herzberg's empirical research, he came to the conclusion that the statement that the factors that make dissatisfaction eliminate it is not true. These two factors are completely different from what he called hygienic factors and motivators.

2.4. Early Career Research

The needs and preferences of the current generation, Generation Z, are constantly changing and so is their environment. To attract and keep this group of people as employees, it is essential to be familiar with their needs and expectations given that they will make up a sizable portion of the workforce in the upcoming years.

In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant effect on how people interact at work, communicate, and view their careers. This highlights the need for current research to

capture Generation Z respondents' current attitudes and preferences. As a result, the responses given by Generation Z respondents may have changed and evolved throughout the pandemic.

2.4.1. Zyntern's Junior Research

Currently the most accessible data about the preferences of Hungarian Generation Z is a result of Zyntern's Junior Research. Zyntern.com is one of the largest job posting platforms in Hungary, aimed mostly at university students based in Hungary who aim to find a workplace while completing their university studies. According to their website (www.zyntern.com), their goal is to create an interface for their users through which talented young people of Generation Y and Z, who are at the beginning of their careers, and companies offering internships and recent graduates to this target group can easily find each other.

Zynten also conducted a research following the COVID-19 pandemic to investigate the needs and wants of Generation Y and Z who are about to enter the job market. The study consisted of 4,000 respondents, with its demographics composed of 39% men and 61% women, aged 16-28. Moreover, 55% of the participants were 20-23-year-old university and college students, 18% were 23-26-year-old career starters, 18% were 16-19-year-old high school students, and 9% were employees over 27 years old. The proportion of applicants from rural areas (55%) and Budapest (45%) was approximately the same (Zyntern, 2021).

According to this research conducted shortly after the pandemic has passed, published in May 2021, the majority of young Hungarian people would like work at their first job for up to 5 years. The largest proportion of respondents (32%) plans to stay with their first job for more than five years, while the 16-19-year-old age group (35%) and those over 27 think long-term, and among 20-26-year-olds (29%) it is less common to plan beyond 5 years. The research also reveals that young people prefer responsible, independent work and creative development over clear tasks that do not involve much responsibility (Túri, 2021).

3. Research of Generation Z in terms of employer branding

The purpose of this study is to explore how Generation Z perceives employer branding communication strategies that Hungarian companies are disseminating via social media. Additionally, the research analyzes what prospective employees anticipate from their employers. Using personal focus group interviews and an online survey, the study will collect data from a cohort of active labor market participants in Hungary who were born within the Generation Z birth years.

To obtain a comprehensive and extensive sample size for analysis, the research methodology will incorporate both qualitative and quantitative approaches. In conclusion, this research will reveal how Hungarian companies can enhance their employer brand communication strategies to attract and retain Generation Z talent. Additionally, it will help reconcile the divide between Generation Z's expectations and those of previous generations.

3.1. Research objectives

The general objective research is to explore how Generation Z perceives employer branding strategies in Hungarian organizations. Specific objectives include:

1. To investigate the beliefs, experiences, and expectations of Generation Z individuals who are about to enter or have already entered the Hungarian job market.
2. To determine the current working preferences of Generation Z in Hungary.
3. To identify the factors that motivate Generation Z to start working in Hungary.
4. To contribute to the theoretical and empirical understanding of employer branding strategies directed at Generation Z.

3.2. Research questions

Several research questions can be created based on the goals and aims of the research.

1. "What are the beliefs, experiences, and expectations of Generation Z individuals who are about to enter or have already entered the Hungarian job market?" This question is meant to find out how this group feels about and acts in the job market, as well as what their priorities and preferences are when looking for work.

2. "What are the current working preferences of Generation Z?" Since the pandemic has changed the way people work, it is important to find out if Generation Z still values flexibility in their work-life balance or if their goals and preferences have changed, and whether it is still true that they can envision a long term career.

3. "What motivates Generation Z to start working?" This question aims to discover why Generation Z decides to enter the job market and what factors, such as education or personal circumstances, affect when they do so.

By answering these research questions, the study expects to learn more about what Generation Z expects from potential employers in Hungary and what they value most. The results of the study may have benefits for companies that are interested in employing and retaining people in this age group. It may also help companies come up with better strategies and building their brand as a workplace.

3.3. Research methodology

Focus groups and online surveys are two common data collection methods used in social science research (Dillman et al., 2014). A focus group is a qualitative research technique that involves a small group of participants who take part in a facilitated conversation about a specific subject. A moderator guides the discussion and encourages group members to express their thoughts, opinions, and attitudes. Focus groups are frequently used to investigate social and behavioral issues, and to learn about preferences and opinions (Morgan, 1997). As for online

surveys, a questionnaire is sent to a target population via the internet to collect data. It enables quick and effective data collection for researchers (Dillman et al., 2014).

These methodologies are efficient for collecting qualitative and quantitative data from a large sample size, thereby enabling researchers to gain valuable insights into a variety of topics. Each method has its own benefits and drawbacks, and researchers frequently combine the two to gain a comprehensive comprehension of a subject. According to Morgan, Krueger, and King (2017), combining surveys and focus groups can help reveal patterns and relationships between variables, which can help paint a more complete picture of the research topic. The authors point out that while focus groups can offer insights into the meanings and interpretations of these findings, surveys are useful for comprehending prevalence rates and identifying correlations. Combining these approaches enables researchers to develop interventions and policies that reflect a more thorough understanding of the research topic.

Using a combination of focus group interviews and an online survey, I was able to collect both qualitative and quantitative data regarding the perspectives and experiences of Generation Z on the Hungarian job market. The rich, complex data provided by the focus group interviews allowed me to investigate the attitudes and experiences of the participants in depth. The online survey provided a larger sample size (156) and enabled me to collect information from a wider variety of respondents. Both the focus groups and the online survey were conducted in Hungarian, the result will be translated in the thesis.

3.2.1. Focus groups

The focus group interviews conducted for this study were held in Budapest and involved a total of 37 participants. The participants were divided into 6 separate sessions based on their work experience, with each session lasting 90 minutes. To create a comfortable environment for the participants, they were provided with snacks and drinks during the discussions. The participants were given the option to consent to the recording of the discussions, which were led by a moderator and assisted by a note-taker.

Each focus group interview aimed to consist of six to eight participants, allowing for in-depth discussions on the subject. To ensure a variety of perspectives, the focus group interviews

were divided into three categories based on the work experience of the participants: those who had never worked, those with less than two years of professional experience, and those with more than two years of professional experience. There were two focus group sessions for each category, for a total of six focus groups. Each session lasted 90 minutes.

All interviewees were between the ages of 18 and 25 and were selected from a network of student organizations with which I work professionally. This network provided a pool of Generation Z-representative potential participants in Hungary. The participants were contacted via email and social media and provided with comprehensive information regarding the focus group sessions, including the purpose of the research, the confidentiality of their responses, and the length of the sessions. I was able to gain insight into the varied perspectives and expectations of Generation Z on the Hungarian employment market by categorizing the focus group interviews according to the participants' work experience. The participants were able to share their thoughts and experiences pertaining to their particular category, allowing for a more concentrated and in-depth discussion.

A research assistant took notes during the focus group sessions, and another person moderated the conversation. Word for word transcription of the notes ensured that every participant's comment was captured. This was done to make sure nothing was overlooked and to ensure that the data was as precise and in-depth as possible.

The notes were arranged and coded to look for any patterns or connections after the focus groups were finished. Going through the notes and categorizing the responses into various themes or topics were part of this process. This made it easier to spot similarities and differences in the responses, which could later be used to form conclusions and offer advice in light of the research, as advised by Morgan (1997).

The method of narrative analysis developed by Riessman (1993) consists of several steps. She advises researchers to fully transcript interviews before looking for narrative themes in the text. The second step is for researchers to pinpoint the crucial narrative components, such as the plot, characters, and setting. Third, researchers should investigate how these narrative components are connected to one another to form a complete story. Finally, scholars should consider the story's underlying themes and significance.

3.2.2. Online survey

In order to get the best response rates and data quality from an online survey, it is crucial to make sure the survey is well-designed and user-friendly. Survey designers should take into account elements like question wording and order, response options, skip patterns, and overall survey length, according to Dillman et al. (2014).

I have conducted an online survey to collect a larger sample size and quantitative data, in addition to the focus group interviews. I distributed the survey to my friends, colleagues, and pupils who are members of student organizations that I have reached out to. The survey was designed to collect information regarding the opinions and experiences of respondents regarding the Hungarian job market. The survey was distributed through social media and personally through acquaintances, and participants were asked to complete the survey at their convenience. The survey consisted of multiple-choice and open-ended questions and took approximately 10-15 minutes to complete. The survey was open for approximately three weeks I have successfully collected 156 responses from participants who were between the ages of 18 and 25. The survey questionnaire can be found at Appendix 1.

To be able to find possible differences between members of this age range who are typically conducting their bachelors or masters studies, I have also separated my respondents into two more age categories: those who are between the ages of 18 and 21 and those who are between 22 and 25. To ensure that only members of Generation Z take part in the survey, those who indicated their age to be above 25 could not proceed with the questionnaire.

As an instrument for my online survey, I have chosen Google Forms and restricted the answers to one person per email address, ensuring that each response was unique and to avoid any false or duplicated answers.

The questionnaire consisted of 25 questions, with six being open-ended, allowing participants to provide more detailed responses. By incorporating open-ended questions, I was able to gather more in-depth data from the participants. The questions focused on a range of topics, including participants' experiences in the job market, their expectations of their future employers, and the factors that influenced their decision-making process when looking for a job.

The study was representative of the younger members of Generation Z because the demographic breakdown of the respondents showed that the majority were between the ages of 22 and 25, followed by 18 and 21. The gender distribution revealed that men and women were split fairly evenly, with only a small percentage indicating they were of another gender. According to the respondents' level of education, the majority were either working toward a bachelor's or master's degree. Additionally, over two-thirds of the participants had professional experience, demonstrating that they were either actively seeking employment at the time of the survey or already had some professional experience.

Overall:

- 55.8% of respondents are aged 22-25, while 44.2% are 18-21.
- 51.9% of respondents are female, while 46.8% are male, and 1.3% indicated their gender as other.
- 42.3% of respondents are pursuing a master's degree, while 47.4% are pursuing a bachelor's degree, and 10.3% are no longer attending university.
- 67.3% of respondents have professional experience, while 32.7% do not.

4. Results

The attitudes, convictions, and expectations of Hungary's newest workers are of great interest to policymakers and employers alike as the country's labor market experiences rapid change. This study looks into how Generation Z, those who are either just starting out in the workforce or who have some experience, perceives their work preferences, job-seeking behaviors, and employer branding communication strategies that are promoted by Hungarian businesses primarily on social media.

This study used a combination of in-person focus groups and an online survey to gather data, with participants chosen from a group of Hungarians who were members of the active labor market and were born in the years that make up Generation Z. The focus groups were split into three groups based on the participants' level of professional experience. A sample of university

students and recent graduates from Hungary submitted 156 responses to the online survey that was made available through Google Forms.

4.1. Analysis

4.1.1. Demographic data

The demographic data collected for this survey consisted of 156 responses from Hungarian members of Generation Z aged 18-25. The majority of the respondents were between the ages of 22-25, comprising 55.8% of the sample, while 44.2% were aged 18-21. This distribution is consistent with the definition of Generation Z as individuals born between the mid-1990s to early 2010s.

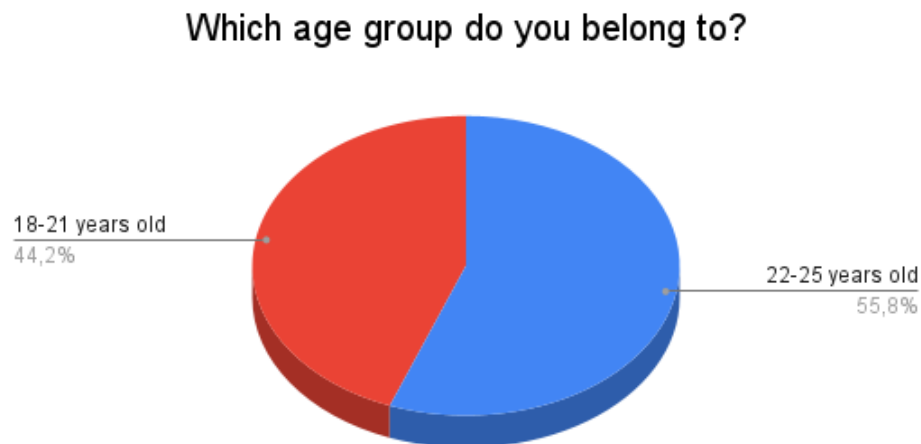


Figure 3: Age of participants of the online survey

In terms of gender, 51.9% of the respondents identified as female, 46.8% identified as male, and 1.3% indicated their gender as other. These results indicate a relatively balanced gender distribution among the participants.

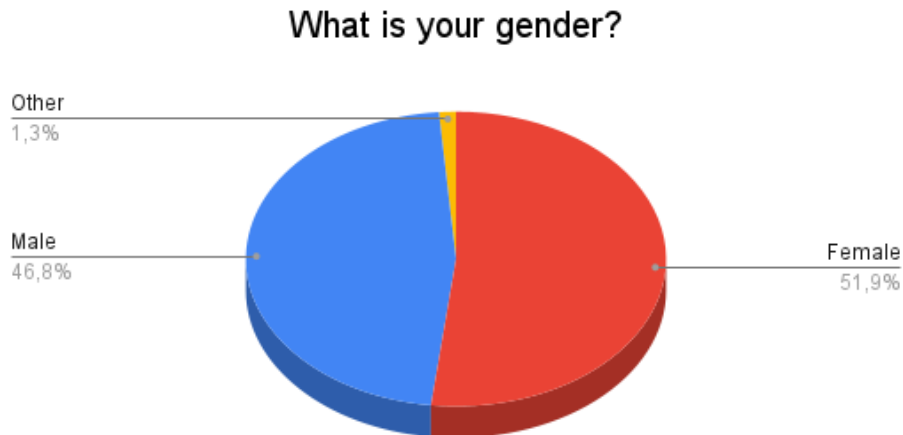


Figure 4: Gender of participants who took part in the online survey

It is worth noting that the sample was limited to Hungarian respondents only. While this provides insight into the attitudes and beliefs of Hungarian members of Generation Z, it may not be generalizable to other countries or cultures. However, given that the study focused on the Hungarian job market, limiting the sample to Hungarian respondents was appropriate and necessary.

In addition to age and gender, academic level is also an important demographic factor to consider in this study. Among the respondents, 47.4% were conducting bachelor studies, 42.3% were pursuing masters, and 10.3% were no longer attending university. These results suggest that the majority of the participants were still in the process of completing their undergraduate or graduate degrees.

The high percentage of participants currently pursuing their bachelor's or master's degree is consistent with the age range of the sample, which includes individuals who are likely still in the process of completing their higher education. This demographic data also provides insight into the educational background of the sample, which may have implications for their career aspirations and expectations.

What is your current academic level?

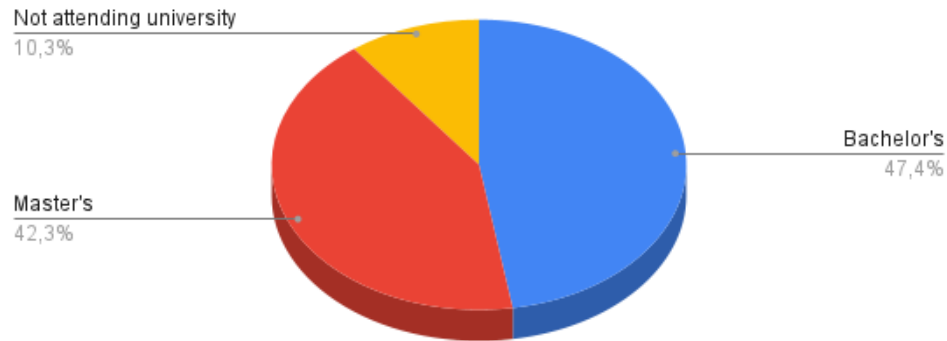


Figure 5: Academic level of participants who took part in the online survey

Another important demographic factor to consider is the geographic location of the participants' high school education. The majority of the respondents (48.7%) attended high school in Budapest, which is not surprising given that Budapest is the capital and largest city in Hungary. Additionally, 9.6% of the respondents attended high school in the Budapest agglomeration, which refers to the surrounding suburbs and towns.

In addition to respondents from the capital and its surrounding area, 27.6% of the respondents attended high school in a large Hungarian city, while 9.6% attended high school in a small Hungarian city. A smaller percentage (3.8%) of the respondents attended high school in a Hungarian village, and only 0.6% of respondents indicated they attended high school abroad.

These results provide insight into the geographic distribution (Figure 6) of the sample and can be useful in understanding potential regional differences in the attitudes and expectations of Hungarian members of Generation Z towards the job market. Furthermore, understanding the geographic distribution of the sample can help in designing targeted recruitment and retention strategies for companies operating in different parts of Hungary.

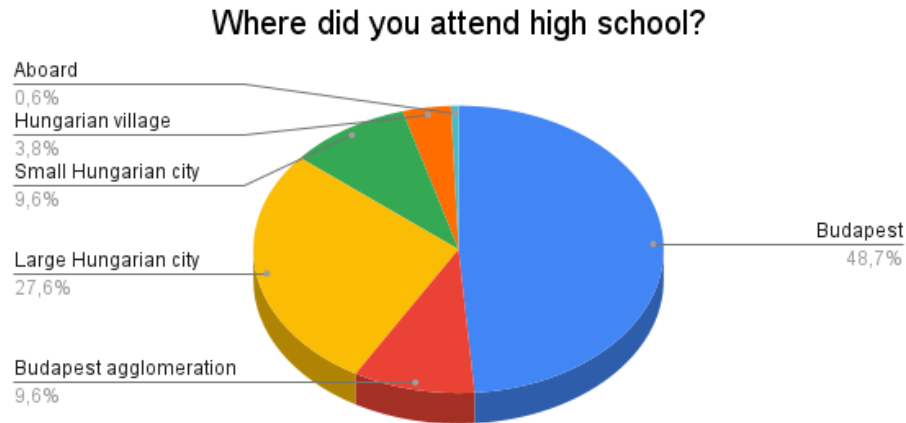


Figure 6: Geographical location during high school of those who took part in the online survey

4.1.2. Questions regarding past experiences

The results from the second part of the survey, which was directed towards those who have had professional work experience, provides interesting insights into the job-hopping tendencies of Generation Z. The data shows that 40% of respondents have already worked at three or more professional jobs, with 36.2% having worked at two different jobs, and 23.8% having only worked at one job. This suggests that members of Generation Z are not afraid to switch jobs frequently in order to find the right fit for them.

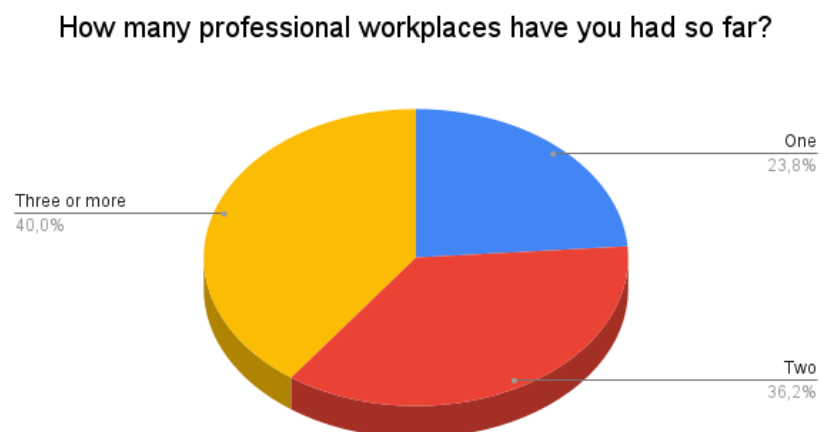


Figure 7: Number of professional workplaces of participants who took part in the online survey

In addition, the data also indicates that the length of time that respondents stayed in each job varies greatly. 28.6% of respondents spent less than half a year at their jobs, while 60% stayed between half a year and one year. Only 11.4% of respondents stayed in their job for longer than one year. This could suggest that members of Generation Z prioritize finding the right fit and are not afraid to move on quickly if they feel that the job does not align with their values or goals.

On average, how much time did you spend at each workplace?

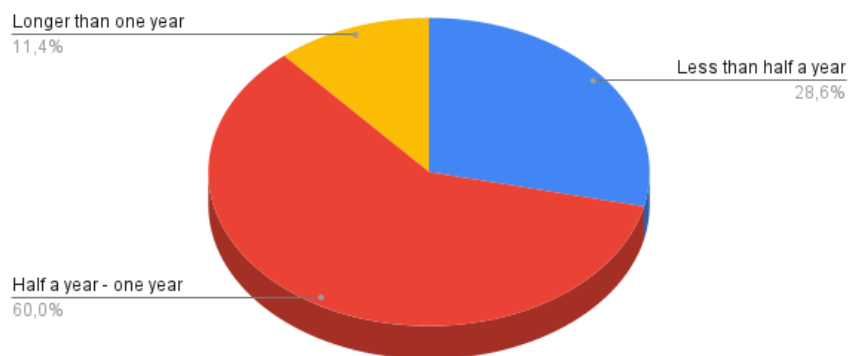


Figure 8: Time spent at workplaces on average of participants who took part in the online survey

4.1.3. When should you start to work?

The findings related to when Generation Z believes it is best to start working are quite interesting. The results reveal that the majority of those who have work experience (blue) voted for 5th-6th semester while those who have no experience and are younger (orange) voted for 3rd-4th semester mostly. It is worth noting that the differences between the two groups were quite significant. This suggests that individuals who have work experience tend to be more cautious and may prefer to concentrate on their studies before entering the job market.

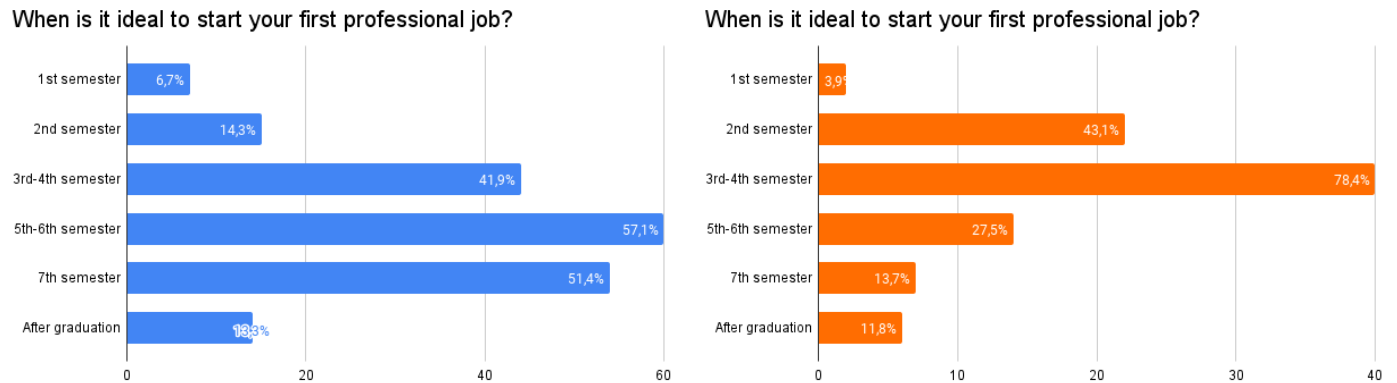


Figure 9: Contrast between when participants who took part in the survey wish to start working or have started to work (blue: those who have work experience, orange: those who do not)

It is also noteworthy that generally, the older members of Generation Z prefer to work in later semesters compared to younger ones based on these numbers. This could be attributed to a variety of factors such as the need to focus on studies, personal preferences, or family expectations. Additionally, it is possible that younger members of Generation Z are more eager to enter the job market as they may feel the need to be financially independent or gain experience in a specific field.

The data on when Generation Z believes it is best to start working suggests that there may be a divide between those who have work experience and those who do not. The rise of remote work has clearly affected the perceptions of when it is best to start working among the younger generation. This trend was evident in the survey results and was supported by the focus group discussions. Participants highlighted the benefits of remote work as it allowed them to start working earlier and gain more professional experience before graduation. “I often bring my work laptop to university and finish my work in class or in the evening. Most workplaces offer flexible hours, I am no longer restricted by only being able to work from 9 to 5”, said one of the participants who has one year of professional experience, aged 21 (P13).

Furthermore, it is worth noting that the pandemic has changed the job market significantly, with many employers adapting to remote work arrangements. As a result, younger members of Generation Z are now able to start working much earlier than before, even while still

attending university. This has led to a shift in mindset among the younger members of Generation Z, who see the benefits of gaining professional experience earlier in their academic career.

In addition, the participants were also asked about what motivates or motivated them to start working in a professional environment. It was surprising to see that the majority (90.1%) of those who graduated from high school in Budapest or agglomeration were not motivated to work by the need to raise money for living costs. Instead, they were motivated by other factors such as gaining experience, feeling pressure from friends and family, or as a means of getting some pocket money that they could spend on social activities, travel, etc.

On the other hand, a significant portion (65.6%) of respondents who graduated from the countryside were motivated to work to raise money for living costs. This suggests that for some students from rural areas, finding employment may be more about financial stability than building a career or gaining experience. It is important to consider these differences in motivations when designing job ads or recruitment strategies targeted at different regions or demographics. People who graduate in the countryside usually want to move to Budapest for better opportunities, which increases their cost of living or their savings needs. People who studied in Budapest would have a higher chance of living with their family and, thus, may not have to worry about living expenses.

What motivates or motivated you to start working?			
Where did you attend high school?	Total number of respondents	Raise money for living costs	Reasons unrelated to living costs
Budapest or agglomeration	91	9,9%	90,1%
Countryside in Hungary	64	65,6%	34,4%

Table 1: Motivation to start working based on place of study

This observation can be related to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, a motivational theory that suggests that human needs are arranged in a hierarchy of five levels. In this context, people who graduated in the countryside may prioritize their physiological and safety needs, which include raising money for living expenses. On the other hand, those who graduated in Budapest may have already satisfied their physiological and safety needs and may be focusing on higher-level needs, such as love and belonging, esteem, and self-actualization. This difference in

priorities could be due to the different environments and opportunities available in rural versus urban areas, which could affect the level of need satisfaction and motivation.

4.1.4. Finding the perfect workplace

In the third part of the survey, participants were asked about finding the perfect workplace. The questions focused on the methods they use to look for jobs, the channels they use to gather information about companies, and what they consider credible sources. Additionally, the survey also inquired about what job seekers look for in a job, what they feel is missing from a job advertisement, and what kind of job ads they prefer. Lastly, respondents were asked if they had any job advertisement that they particularly liked. The information gathered from this part of the survey provides insights into the factors that matter most to job seekers and what companies can do to better attract and retain talent.

Based on the data collected, it was found that the top five sources of job search were LinkedIn, job fairs, student organizations, job agencies, and recommendations from friends.

LinkedIn emerged as the fifth most popular source for job search with 53.2% of the participants using it. Job fairs were ranked as the fourth most popular source of job search with 59.6% of the participants using them. According to my participants, job fairs are popular because they provide face-to-face interaction with recruiters and allow job seekers to learn about multiple job opportunities in a single location. Student organizations were ranked as the third most popular source of job search with 68.6% of the participants using them. Many universities have student organizations that are related to different industries, and these organizations often have connections with professionals in the field. By networking with these professionals, students can learn about job opportunities and gain insights into the industry. Job agencies that specialize in matching Hungarian students were ranked as the second most popular source of job search with 74.4% of the participants using them. Some of the most popular agencies in Hungary are Zyntern, Meló-Diák, Schönherz, Y Diák, Prohuman, euDiákok and MŰISZ. Finally, recommendations from friends were ranked as the most popular source of job search with 91% and is a popular source of job search because they provide a personal connection with the potential employer. When a friend recommends someone for a job, it is often viewed as a vote of confidence, which can increase the likelihood of being hired.

When asked about what channels Generation Z uses to find information about companies that they consider working for, 88.5% voted for finding a friend or acquaintance who works at the given company, making it the most credible source among the participants. This also connects with the previous result, meaning that young people still mostly rely on their connections and relationships for information regarding work.

The second most popular source is attending an open day (74.4%) and the company's official website came third with 70.5%. In terms of social media, 53.8% of the participants claim to use Facebook for getting to know their potential employer better. The data obtained from these two questions clearly highlight the need of Generation Z to learn not only about the profile of the company itself, but also its culture, faces and leaders.

The next part of this section concentrated on credibility of sources. Participants were asked to rank the credibility of given sources on a scale of completely credible to not credible at all. The answers given by younger (aged 18-21) and older (aged 22-25) participants were contrasted to see if their answers may vary significantly.

What sources do you believe are credible, in terms of job hunting?		
	18-21 years olds	22-25 years olds
<i>Total number of respondents</i>	69	87
Facebook and Instagram posts	75,4%	78,2%
TikTok posts	75,4%	60,9%
LinkedIn posts	34,8%	72,4%
Glassdoor reviews	7,2%	52,9%
Company newsletter	17,4%	21,8%
Video interview with leaders and colleagues	71,0%	80,5%
Company website	62,3%	72,4%
Company visit or meetup	95,7%	94,3%
Opinion of friend working there	97,1%	98,9%

Table 2: Generation Z sources of information when job hunting

In case of both age groups, company visits or meetups and the opinion of friends working at the prospective company won by majority, all above 90%. Video interviews with leaders and colleagues are also deemed credible by all participants, while company newsletters ranked lowest

on the scale. The results of the survey suggest that for Generation Z, employer branding plays a significant role in the job search process. Factors such as company visits or meetups, the opinion of friends working at the prospective company, and video interviews with leaders and colleagues are deemed credible sources of information for young job seekers. A participant from the focus group with two years of professional experience and a Master's degree on the way commented: "I always utilize my network when applying to jobs. I trust my friends' opinion way more than what I can read from a dry job advertisement" (P35). Another participant added "In my experience, if you apply without a recommendation, the recruitment process can take months. I applied twice with a referral and the usual time was cut in half" (P27). Members of the focus group with no professional experience strongly agreed that "company visits are the best way of truly getting to know who you will be working for. You can get a feel of the place, meet your future colleagues, ask directly about the position and if you're lucky, you can go home with a bunch of freebies" (P3). These findings indicate that companies need to invest in their employer branding strategies and put more emphasis on appearing at jobs fairs, universities or hosting their own career day. Additionally, if companies invest in employer branding, there is a higher chance that Generation Z will find friends' posts about the company online, not only face-to-face.

For the last part of this section, participants were asked open-ended questions regarding what they search for in a job description, what they frequently miss from them and what kind of job descriptions are to their liking. Among the responses, a significant majority of 86% expressed frustration with the absence of salary information in job descriptions. A focus group participant with one year of experience expressed that "we do not know what our worth is on the market. There are so many variables and I always get anxious when they ask about my payment expectations. I am scared that if I give the wrong answer they will not hire me, so I always say a lower number than what I would actually like to get" (P14). Other common concerns included not knowing about career advancement opportunities, the availability of work-from-home options, the identity of the supervisor or team members, and information about company culture. These findings suggest that job seekers prioritize transparency and specificity in job descriptions, particularly when it comes to compensation and work arrangements. Employers may benefit from taking these preferences into account when crafting job postings to attract top talent.

Furthermore, the majority of respondents (86.5%) expressed a preference for job postings that provide a clear picture of what their work day will be like, complete with informative details about the company's expectations and goals. The respondents expressed a preference for job postings that are highly detailed and informative as they provide a clear picture of what their workday will look like. This suggests that job seekers today are seeking more than just a list of responsibilities in their job descriptions. The focus group participants also agreed in that “job descriptions are always the same: competitive salary, diverse projects, flexibility... they are always mentioned but nothing specific is ever given, like how much we can expect to earn or what our day will be like in this role” (P20).

The survey further revealed that storytelling videos are also popular among job seekers, with 55% of participants expressing a preference for them. Storytelling videos offer representation of the company's culture and values and are an effective way to bring job descriptions to life. In contrast, traditional formal job descriptions were only favored by 19.9% of respondents, highlighting the need for companies to adopt more creative and engaging approaches to job advertisements. As highlighted by a focus group participant who is actively searching for their first job, “I like it when there is more to a job description than just stating what they want from us. I enjoy seeing the faces of people I will be working with and vidoes that show around the office” (P9).

Employers need to create job postings that are tailored to the needs and preferences of modern job seekers by providing detailed and informative job descriptions and incorporating storytelling videos into their recruitment strategies.

4.1.5. Working preferences

When asked about the ideal working arrangement, specifically whether the participants prefer working remotely, in the office or in a hybrid manner, the answers given by the two age groups have been contrasted once again and significant differences regarding have been found their preferences. Of the 18-21 year old age group, more than two thirds of the participants indicated that they prefer to work in a hybrid arrangement, while more than half of the older age group expressed that they prefer to work remotely from the comfort of their homes.

What is your preferred working arrangement?		
	18-21 years olds	22-25 years olds
<i>Total number of respondents</i>	69	87
Full time in the office	21,7%	6,9%
Hybrid (2-3 days home office)	72,5%	41,4%
100% home office	5,8%	51,7%

Table 3: Preferred working arrangement of Generation Z

The participants of all three focus groups were asked the same question to get more insight about this result. Those who have more than two years of professional working experience expressed that since most of them started working before the COVID-19 pandemic, they have also lived through the 100% online working era as well and have gotten used to it. “I honestly can’t imagine going back to working in the office full time. I am much more productive from home, plus commuting to work is taking away too much from my day” (P34), said one participant who is currently in the last year of their Masters’s studies. Another participant added: “My mental health is much better since I started working from home. I no longer have to stress about workplace drama or fear that my boss lurking behind my monitor. I don’t think it’s realistic that you have to sit in an actual office to do your job properly” (P25). On the other hand, participants who are about to start working for the first time have very different opinions: “if I didn’t have to attend university classes, I would honestly prefer to work from the office full time. I want to get to know people and I want my superiors to recognise me” (P1). Another participant from the same group expressed that “I feel the need to be in the office to be able to learn something. I never worked before and while it may sound silly, I want to experience having a badge and sit in long meetings while wearing a nice suit” (P3).

The results revealed that a significant majority of respondents (81.4%) expressed a preference for working in a multinational environment. The respondents supported their choice by an expressed a desire to work in multinational companies because of their interest in relocating and working abroad. They are also attracted to multinational organizations that offer rotational and internship programs, due to the fact that respondents believe that such programs can help them develop a broad range of skills and experiences, which can be beneficial to their

career advancement. In addition, the survey found that the respondents tend to prefer companies with well-known names, suggesting that brand reputation plays a significant role in their career choices. The focus group interviews highlighted that those who have not worked or have minimal work experience choose a company first, then find a position that they can apply for. Those who have already worked for more than two years do the opposite, as in they look for specific positions and only consider which company they apply to afterwards. However, they agreed that “now I don’t care that much about the company, but for my first job I definitely wanted a name that will stick out in my resume” (P34). Furthermore, the respondents expressed a desire for home office opportunities, which highlights the importance of flexibility and work-life balance in career decisions.

The survey also revealed that 35.9% of respondents prefer to work at startups while 28.8% of respondents expressed a desire to start their own business, signifying the entrepreneurial spirit among job seekers. These findings suggest that the traditional career paths of working for established companies are increasingly being supplanted by a desire for autonomy and entrepreneurial ventures. Interestingly, the survey also found that 21.2% of respondents preferred to work for large national companies, while 17.3% were interested in family businesses. Additionally, 16.7% of respondents preferred small and medium enterprises, 15.4% nonprofit companies, and 7.1% in the public sector. Overall, the results demonstrate that job seekers today have a range of career preferences, with a clear preference for multinational environments.

The participants were also asked which factors they consider most important at a workplace. The respondents were asked to rate the importance of various factors on a scale of essential, important, less important, and does not matter. Among the essential factors, home office was the highest rated with 63.5% of participants considering it a crucial aspect of their ideal workplace. This result highlights the growing importance of flexible work arrangements in today's job market. The second most essential factor for job seekers was a well-known company name with 53.8% of participants rating it as essential. This finding emphasizes the importance of brand reputation in attracting and retaining Generation Z. Good community, flexibility, advancement opportunities, and high salary were also rated as essential factors by a significant percentage of respondents, indicating that job seekers place a high value on career growth and financial stability.

Work-life balance was also rated as an essential factor by 37.2% of participants, reflecting the importance of maintaining a healthy work-life balance in today's fast-paced work environment. Modern office and a young team were also rated as essential factors by a significant percentage of respondents, highlighting the importance of workplace culture and the need for companies to create a modern and dynamic work environment.

Company benefits, shared values, real responsibility, diverse projects, sustainability, diversity, and frequent team building were also rated as important factors by a significant percentage of respondents, indicating that job seekers place value on a wide range of factors beyond just financial compensation.

The results of the survey align with various motivation theories that emphasize the importance of non-financial factors in motivating employees. For instance, the Two-Factor Theory by Herzberg highlights the significance of both hygiene factors (such as work-life balance, company benefits, and working conditions) and motivational factors (such as career advancement opportunities, responsibility, and recognition) in determining job satisfaction and motivation.

Participants were also asked to indicate which three benefits would make them choose one job offer over another. The results revealed that having a mentor was the most popular benefit among respondents, with 51.9% of participants selecting it as one of their top three choices. This result highlights the importance of career development and mentorship. Employee discounts were also highly rated, with exactly 50% of participants indicating it as one of their top three benefits. Professional training opportunity was the third most popular benefit, with 39.1% of participants selecting it as one of their top three choices. This result emphasizes the importance of investing in employee training and development programs.

Interestingly, none of the participants selected community areas as one of their top three benefits, indicating that this benefit is not particularly attractive to job seekers. This finding suggests that companies should focus their resources on offering benefits that are most meaningful to job seekers, such as mentorship, employee discounts, and professional training. Companies that invest in career development programs, financial incentives, and employee

training opportunities will be better positioned to attract and retain the best employees in a job market.

4.1.6. Future prospects

For the final part of the survey, respondents were asked to indicate how far ahead they could see in terms of their professional career. The results were divided based on age groups, and they provide valuable insights into the career aspirations of different generations.

Interestingly, the results of this survey differ from the findings of a 2020 research conducted by Zyntern, which suggested that Generation Z could see themselves working at their company for five years. However, the results of this survey suggest that job seekers have different expectations and aspirations for their professional careers.

How far ahead can you think of your professional career?		
	18-21 years olds	22-25 years olds
<i>Total number of respondents</i>	69	87
Less than half a year	76,8%	9,2%
Between half a year - 1 year	17,4%	37,9%
Between 1 and 2 years	1,4%	49,4%
More than 2 years	4,3%	3,4%

Table 4: How far ahead Generation Z can see in terms of their professional career

The findings of this study indicate that there is a significant difference in the ability of the younger and older age groups within Generation Z to envision their professional careers in the future. Specifically, the younger participants, those aged 18-21 years old, were found to be less capable of envisioning their professional careers beyond a period of less than half a year, while the older age group, aged 22-25, were able to envision their professional careers up to a period of 1-2 years ahead. When the focus groups were asked about this, the answer was the same across all three groups: “we have learned that everything changes and nothing is predictable.”

These findings have important implications for employers seeking to attract and retain talent from Generation Z. It suggests that younger members of this generation may require more frequent and explicit communication about potential career paths and opportunities within the organization. At the same time, employers may be able to provide more long-term career planning and development opportunities for older members of this generation.

5. Discussion

The combination of online survey and focus group interviews proved to be an effective method for uncovering valuable information about the job preferences of Generation Z. The results of this research provide insights that differ from previous studies, such as Zyntern's 2021 research, which showed that Generation Z desires stability in the workplace and can see themselves working at a company for five or more years. The findings of my research suggest that this is no longer the case for a significant proportion of this generation, with some only envisioning themselves staying at a company for less than six months.

The results also highlight the importance of personal touch in job descriptions, as Generation Z wants to get a feel for the company's environment and culture before applying. This finding aligns with previous research that emphasizes the importance of company culture and values in attracting and retaining this generation. Furthermore, subgroups within Generation Z, based on their ages, have different job preferences, motivations, and experiences. In my interpretation, this is largely due to the stage of life they were in during the pandemic, which impacted their perceptions of work, career, and the future.

It is important to note that the research highlights the fact that Generation Z cannot be generalized as one group with similar job preferences and attitudes towards work. It is crucial that future studies take into account the diversity within this generation and conduct targeted research to uncover meaningful results.

In summation, companies should focus on providing a personalized experience for job seekers, including job descriptions that accurately reflect the company's culture and values.

Additionally, companies should recognize that the preferences and motivations of Generation Z vary depending on their age and life experiences, and tailor their employer branding strategies accordingly.

6. Conclusion

Employer branding is now essential for businesses to attract and keep top talent in the workforce, especially among the younger generation. Generation Z is entering the workforce as the baby boomer generation is retiring, and they have distinct expectations and preferences for their workplace. It is crucial to comprehend their perspectives on their work and careers as well as their experiences and expectations. Focus groups and an online survey were used in Hungary to investigate these issues and learn more about the current job preferences of Generation Z.

The purpose of the research was to learn more about the motivational and working preferences of Generation Z in the Hungarian labor market. According to the study's results, this generation is seeking more than just a job; they also want a sense of purpose and a workplace environment that reflects their values. Additionally, they don't see themselves staying with the same employer for an extended period of time because they want to explore all of their options in order to advance their careers and because the job market is constantly changing. Additionally, the study found that Generation Z's motivational factors varied across age subgroups, primarily as a result of the pandemic's influence on their experiences and expectations.

In conclusion, the study showed that employer branding is essential for businesses to draw in and keep top Generation Z talent in Hungary. The research underlined how crucial it is to comprehend the particular requirements and preferences of this generation in order to design a workplace that supports their values and motivates them. In order to foster a favorable perception of the business among Generation Z, it is advised that organizations develop a strong employer branding strategy that incorporates the insights gained from this research.

7. Limitations and future prospects

The present study has certain limitations. The relatively small sample size of the study, which was conducted exclusively in Hungary, is one of its primary limitations. While the data gathered from the participants provide valuable insights into the occupational preferences and motivations of Generation Z in Hungary, it may not be representative of the entire generation. To ensure the generalizability of future findings, researchers should consider increasing the sample size and conducting studies in multiple countries.

In addition, the methodology employed for this study was restricted to online surveys and focus groups. Other methods, such as interviews or observational studies, could provide additional insight into the employment preferences and motivations of Generation Z. Future research should incorporate a variety of data collection techniques to improve the validity and dependability of the findings.

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Appendix 1: focus group interview

6 groups with 5-8 participants

Time frame: 90 minutes

Main topics:

1. When do you apply for an internship?

- What is their motivation for applying for an internship?
- What are their fears, dilemmas, expectations?

2. What is the process of searching for an internship position?

- Where are they looking?
- What makes a company or position attractive?
- What influences their decisions when applying?

3. Stereotypes

- How do companies see you (as Generation Z)
 - Lack of responsibility
 - Job-hopping
 - Lack of ownership
 - Lack of goals
 - Lack of respect

There will be formulated statements for each topic. During the interview, the participants must respond to the statements, which will lead the conversation.

Exact questions

1. When do you apply for an internship?

- Tell us about how you looked for your first internship position!
- I decide to apply for an internship... (motivation)
 - because all my friends are working and I'm afraid that I'll fall behind them
 - because I need the money (e.g. for rent)
 - because I want to develop myself professionally
- I am scared because... (hesitation, difficulties)
 - I can't tell the difference between the companies

- I don't know what the names of the individual positions mean
- I am not prepared enough for the internship position
- I have no idea what a workplace looks like
- I don't know if I will have time to work parallel to my studies
- What is the ideal life stage for a student to apply for an internship?

2. What is the process of searching for an internship position?

- When I make a judgment of a company...
 - I base it on the opinion of my peers
 - I base it on the reports of colleagues working there
 - I base it on the online/offline messages communicated by the given company
- I am looking for a personal meeting with colleagues working there before applying (company open days, meetups, etc.)
- How do you search for job advertisements? (where, based on what, what do you filter, etc.)
- How do you decide what to apply for among the ads you find?
- What makes a job advertisement good?
 - What information were you primarily looking for in an ad?
 - What information did you miss when searching?
- Recruitment and decision process
 - How many places did you apply?
 - How many places were you invited to interview?
 - How many places did you go to interview?
 - How many offers did you get?
 - How did you decide between them?

3. Future and preferences

- Can you see yourself committing to a position for 12 months? (why?)
- How far ahead do you see yourself in terms of your career?
 - Less than half a year
 - Half a year – one year
 - One – two years
 - Longer than two years

