

THE GENERATIONAL CONFLICTS

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Abstract

In this article we are dealing with generations that are different from each other by their characteristic in terms of time which they live in. Naturally, generational conflicts arise between the younger and older generations. We describe the generational conflict from the subjective and also objective point of view. In the empirical part we have tried to find out the attitudes of young people towards older people and vice versa, the attitudes of older people towards younger people.

Key words: Generation. Older generation. Younger generation. Generational conflict. Social conflict.

Introduction

In this work we are dealing with the generational conflicts. Mentioned topic is eternal and timeless, because there is a continual substitution of the generations, that are influenced by the other opinion streams and thus also their interests diametrically differ. Logically from this, the conflicts arise. The first part of the topic is theoretical. The second part has the character of empirical research and is based on the questionnaire method.

1 Theoretical part

A family is a group of individuals who are united by blood relationships, marriage or adoption and form an economic unit and their adult members are responsible for the upbringing of the children. A man is not born into an empty environment but to a certain family backgrounds, which is made up of several generations. Generation thus consists of one cohort in the framework of a family tree. Related to the cohorts, it is possible to say that they have certain emergent characteristics, attitudes, values in a changing world. Emergent characteristics mean that social units have a systemic, global and inseparable personalities on the sum of the individual personalities (Viceník, Černík, 2004).

If we take into consideration today's young people and we compare them with the generation of their parents, when they were at a young age, we find out that they are influenced by the other opinion streams and thoughts directions. It all has its causal context. In this context, it is possible to state that throughout the history a certain historical event occurs, which can start a series or stream of events, it reveals the new social or economic problems that are necessary to be responded. All of this has its influence on music, fashion culture and creates new subcultures.

In this context it is possible to indicate that as a result of the internal and external factors the change of socio-economic formations after 1989 occurred (Čemez, 2013). It also has its impacts on the labour market in the sense that youth, vitality and performance are required. The value system of the current younger generation compared to previous generations has shifted. The value of the property has risen and there has been a depreciation of social values (Sak, Kolesárová, 2012).

Generations are different from each other by their characteristic in time they live in. Naturally from generational conflicts between the younger and older generations arise. The conflict arises from a certain tension. Its essence in simplified essence lies in the fact that the old wants to maintain its positions and wants to preserve the status for two reasons:

1. Subjective – either wants to keep the influence and the implied privileges,
2. Objective – does not result from egoistic interests, but from the belief that sustaining of this condition is correct also for future generations.

On the other hand of the barricades, the younger generation stands that thanks to its impatience, eagerness and dynamics wants to tear down the positions and to lead social changes and processes, and thus wants to replace the older generation. Generational replacement is natural. Older ones have to sooner or later give a way to the young, it is just a matter of time. Old ones are gradually stagnating, losing the dynamism and ability to adapt to new and changing conditions in the world, they become incapable of adaptation and die little by little. The old generation is replaced by the new generation. An old age is ended by the death. The simplest definition of death says, that is the collapse of all the fundamental functions of the organism (Kouklík, 2014).

On the basis of the theory of social conflict, it is the social conflict that pushes a social development forward, while social progress is not possible to prevent.

Objectively speaking, inter-generational conflicts are arising from certain positive and negative personalities that both generations have. The problem is that each of the generations looks mostly only at the negative aspects of the other one. If we start with older generation, so here is possible to see these two aspects:

1. Positive – experience,
2. Negative – conservatism.

If we continue with the younger generation, this one is specified by these two aspects:

1. Positive – sense for innovation,
2. Negative – lack of experience.

If we compare the above mentioned aspects between the generations (both positive and negative), it is possible to draw a fairly simple conclusion, that the younger and older generation from this point of view are supplementary, i.e. what is the disadvantage in one generation is an advantage for the other generation. If we continue e.g. to the working level, so on the one hand, there are young workers who are disadvantaged compared to older employees by the lack of practice, but on the other hand they are more flexible (Hroncová, Emmerová et al, 2010). A serious problem is shown by the young people transition between the secondary or university and employment (Millová, 2012). Among the big problems, that will be necessary to face more and more is a decreasing number of population of working age (Páleník, 2012).

2 Empirical research

2.1 Research aim

The aim of the empirical research is to find out what attitudes young people have towards older people and vice versa, older people towards younger people.

2.2 Research objectives

In our empirical research we have set the following objectives:

1. To find out what attitudes young people have towards older people in general,
2. To find out what attitudes young people have towards older people in terms of gender,
3. To find out what attitudes young people have towards older people in terms of municipality residence,
4. To find out what attitudes young people have towards older people in terms of age category,
5. To find out what young people mind the most about the older people,
6. To find out what attitudes older people have towards young people in general,
7. To find out what attitudes older people have towards young people in terms of gender,
8. To find out what attitudes older people have towards young people in terms of municipality residence,
9. To find out what attitudes older people have towards young people in terms of age category,
10. To find out what older people mind the most about the young people.

2.3 Methodology and sample characteristic

As a method we used a questionnaire method, and we operated with two questionnaires. One was designed for the older people, another for young people. In both cases, we sent 200 questionnaires. In the case of older people, we got returned 132, in the case of young people 128. Therefore we operated with two research samples.

Regarding to the first sample, it includes young people from 18 to 29. In terms of gender, the sample of young respondents is more or less balanced. Concerning the permanent residence, we divided this research sample according to the eight municipality regions with approximately balanced representation. As regards the age criterion, we divided the research sample into the following age categories:

- 18 – 19 years old
- 20 – 21 years old
- 22 – 23 years old
- 24 – 25 years old
- 26 – 27 years old
- 28 – 29 years old.

These age categories are approximately equally represented.

Table 1 – Young respondents in terms of gender

| | n | % |
|-------|-----|-------|
| Men | 60 | 46,69 |
| Women | 68 | 53,13 |
| total | 128 | 100 |

Table 2 – Young respondents in terms of municipality

| | n | % |
|-----------------|-----|-------|
| Bratislava | 17 | 13,28 |
| Trnava | 15 | 11,72 |
| Nitra | 15 | 11,72 |
| Trenčín | 17 | 13,28 |
| Banská Bystrica | 18 | 14,06 |
| Žilina | 16 | 12,50 |
| Košice | 14 | 10,94 |
| Prešov | 16 | 12,50 |
| Total | 128 | 100 |

Table 3 – Young respondents in terms of age

| age categories | n | % |
|----------------|-----|-------|
| 18 - 19 | 21 | 16,41 |
| 20 - 21 | 20 | 15,61 |
| 22 - 23 | 22 | 17,19 |
| 24 - 25 | 23 | 17,97 |
| 26 - 27 | 19 | 14,84 |
| 28 - 29 | 23 | 17,97 |
| Total | 128 | 100 |

The second sample includes the older people older than 62. From the point of view of gender, the two categories are approximately equally represented. The same can be said about the representation of respondents in the individual regions. The respondents are divided according to the following age categories:

- 62 – 65 years old
- 66 – 69 years old
- 70 – 75 years old
- 76 – 80 years old

- 81 and more.

These categories are approximately equally represented.

Table 4 – Older respondents in terms of gender

| | n | % |
|-------|-----|-------|
| Men | 71 | 53,79 |
| Women | 61 | 46,21 |
| Total | 132 | 100 |

Table 5 – Older respondents in terms of municipality

| | n | % |
|-----------------|-----|-------|
| Bratislava | 19 | 14,39 |
| Trnava | 17 | 12,88 |
| Nitra | 19 | 14,39 |
| Trenčín | 16 | 12,12 |
| Banská Bystrica | 15 | 11,36 |
| Žilina | 15 | 11,36 |
| Košice | 15 | 11,36 |
| Prešov | 16 | 12,12 |
| Total | 132 | 100 |

Table 6 – Older respondents in terms of age

| age categories | n | % |
|----------------|-----|-------|
| 62 – 65 | 24 | 18,18 |
| 66 – 69 | 26 | 19,70 |
| 70 – 75 | 27 | 20,45 |
| 76 – 80 | 29 | 21,97 |
| 81 and more | 26 | 19,70 |
| Total | 132 | 100 |

2.4 Evaluation and analysis of the research results

As shown in table 7, generally, the negative attitudes towards older people prevalent among young people (58,60 %), while positive attitudes reached a smaller part (28,13 %).

Table 7 – Attitude of young people towards older people in general

| | n | % |
|----------|-----|-------|
| positive | 36 | 28,13 |
| negative | 75 | 58,60 |
| neutral | 17 | 13,28 |
| Total | 128 | 100 |

When we look at more detailed information, the table 8 indicates that from the point of view of both genders, almost equally, the negative attitude of young people prevails towards older people – slightly over 58 %.

Table 8 – Attitude of young people towards older people in terms of gender

| | positive | | negative | | neutral | | total | |
|-------|----------|-------|----------|-------|---------|-------|-------|-----|
| | n | % | n | % | n | % | n | % |
| Men | 18 | 30 | 35 | 58,33 | 7 | 11,67 | 60 | 100 |
| Women | 18 | 26,47 | 40 | 58,82 | 10 | 14,71 | 68 | 100 |
| total | 36 | | 75 | | 17 | | 128 | |

Table 9 focuses on the attitudes of young people towards the older people in terms of residence in the municipality. In all the municipalities prevails a negative attitude, which achieves over 50, even to 60%. The only exception is Bratislava region, where a negative attitude has reached "only" 47,06 %.

Table 9 – Attitude of young people towards older people in terms of municipality

| | positive | | negative | | neutral | | total | |
|-----------------|----------|-------|----------|-------|---------|-------|-------|-----|
| | n | % | n | % | n | % | n | % |
| Bratislava | 5 | 29,41 | 8 | 47,06 | 4 | 23,53 | 17 | 100 |
| Trnava | 4 | 26,67 | 9 | 60 | 2 | 13,33 | 15 | 100 |
| Nitra | 5 | 33,33 | 9 | 60 | 1 | 6,67 | 15 | 100 |
| Trenčín | 4 | 23,53 | 11 | 64,71 | 2 | 11,76 | 17 | 100 |
| Banská Bystrica | 5 | 27,78 | 10 | 55,56 | 3 | 16,67 | 18 | 100 |
| Žilina | 5 | 31,25 | 9 | 56,25 | 2 | 12,5 | 16 | 100 |
| Košice | 4 | 28,57 | 9 | 64,29 | 1 | 7,14 | 14 | 100 |
| Prešov | 4 | 25 | 10 | 62,5 | 2 | 12,5 | 16 | 100 |
| total | 36 | | 75 | | 17 | | 128 | |

Table 10 shows that in the context of rising age from 18 to 29 the negative attitude of young people towards older people also decreases and on the contrary, positive attitude rises. The only exception is the category of 26 to 27 where the value of the negative attitude is higher than in the previous age category from 24 to 25.

Table 10 – Attitude of young people towards older people in terms of age category

| age categories | positive | | negative | | neutral | | total | |
|----------------|----------|-------|----------|-------|---------|-------|-------|-----|
| | n | % | n | % | n | % | n | % |
| 18 - 19 | 2 | 9,52 | 16 | 76,2 | 3 | 14,29 | 21 | 100 |
| 20 - 21 | 2 | 10,00 | 15 | 75 | 3 | 15,00 | 20 | 100 |
| 22 - 23 | 7 | 31,82 | 12 | 54,55 | 3 | 13,64 | 22 | 100 |
| 24 - 25 | 8 | 34,78 | 12 | 52,17 | 3 | 13,04 | 23 | 100 |
| 26 - 27 | 7 | 36,84 | 10 | 52,63 | 2 | 10,53 | 19 | 100 |
| 28 - 29 | 10 | 43,48 | 10 | 43,48 | 3 | 13,04 | 23 | 100 |
| total | 36 | | 75 | | 17 | | 128 | |

As revealed from the following table, the conservatism is what young people mind the most about older people

Table 11 – What younger people mind the most about the older people

| opinion | n | % |
|--|-----|-------|
| conservatism | 41 | 31,06 |
| mentoring | 32 | 25,00 |
| working retired people occupy the jobs | 25 | 19,53 |
| requiring excessive respect | 18 | 14,06 |
| indoctrination | 16 | 12,50 |
| total | 132 | 100 |

If we look at intergenerational conflict from the opposite point of view, i.e. from the point of view of the older generation, so then we find according to table 12, that older people have in general a negative attitude towards the young generation and it reaches a value of 60,61 %.

Table 12 – Attitude of older people towards young people in general

| | n | % |
|----------|-----|-------|
| positive | 31 | 23,48 |
| negative | 80 | 60,61 |
| neutral | 21 | 15,91 |
| total | 132 | 100 |

From the perspective of gender, it is seen that a negative attitude prevails, which is reached in both sexes approximately the same value – over 60 %. On the contrary, a positive attitude reaches a value of around 22 – 23 %.

Table 13 – Attitude of older people towards young people in terms of gender

| | positive | | negative | | neutral | | total | |
|-------|----------|-------|----------|-------|---------|-------|-------|-----|
| | n | % | n | % | n | % | n | % |
| Men | 17 | 23,86 | 43 | 60,56 | 11 | 15,49 | 71 | 100 |
| Women | 14 | 22,95 | 37 | 60,66 | 10 | 16,39 | 61 | 100 |
| total | 31 | | 80 | | 21 | | 132 | |

In the case of a residence in municipality regions here in all the municipalities succeeds the negative attitude that reaches from 50 % in Trenčín region to 70,59 % in Trnava region.

Table 14 – Attitude of older people towards young people in terms of municipality residence

| | positive | | negative | | neutral | | total | |
|-----------------|----------|-------|----------|-------|---------|-------|-------|-----|
| | n | % | n | % | n | % | n | % |
| Bratislava | 4 | 21,05 | 11 | 57,89 | 4 | 21,05 | 19 | 100 |
| Trnava | 3 | 17,65 | 12 | 70,59 | 2 | 11,76 | 17 | 100 |
| Nitra | 4 | 21,05 | 11 | 57,89 | 4 | 21,05 | 19 | 100 |
| Trenčín | 5 | 31,25 | 8 | 50 | 3 | 18,75 | 16 | 100 |
| Banská Bystrica | 5 | 33,33 | 8 | 53,33 | 2 | 13,33 | 15 | 100 |
| Žilina | 3 | 20,00 | 10 | 66,67 | 2 | 13,33 | 15 | 100 |
| Košice | 4 | 26,27 | 9 | 60,00 | 2 | 13,33 | 15 | 100 |
| Prešov | 3 | 18,75 | 11 | 68,75 | 2 | 12,5 | 16 | 100 |
| total | 31 | | 80 | | 21 | | 132 | |

From the point of view of age categories of older people (62 – 65, 66 – 69, 70 – 75, 76 – 80, 81 and more) it is seen in table 15, that the negative attitude tends to rise and vice versa, the positive attitude decreases with the exception of a positive attitude in the category of 76 – 80 which is higher than in the previous category.

Table 15 – Attitude of older people towards young people in terms of age category

| age categories | positive | | negative | | neutral | | total | |
|----------------|----------|-------|----------|-------|---------|-------|-------|-----|
| | n | % | n | % | n | % | n | % |
| 62 - 65 | 9 | 37,50 | 11 | 42,31 | 4 | 16,67 | 24 | 100 |
| 66 - 69 | 8 | 30,76 | 15 | 57,69 | 3 | 11,53 | 26 | 100 |
| 70 - 75 | 6 | 22,22 | 16 | 59,26 | 5 | 18,52 | 27 | 100 |
| 76 - 80 | 7 | 24,14 | 18 | 62,07 | 4 | 13,79 | 29 | 100 |
| 81 and more | 1 | 3,85 | 20 | 76,92 | 5 | 19,23 | 26 | 100 |
| total | 31 | | 80 | | 21 | | 132 | |

The table below points out the views of older people from the issue they mind the most about the younger generation, respondents could indicate only one issue. Most of the respondents stated rudeness.

Table 16 – What older people mind the most about the young people

| opinion | n | % |
|-----------------------------------|-----|-------|
| rudeness | 40 | 31,25 |
| disrespect to older people | 28 | 21,88 |
| vulgarity | 21 | 16,41 |
| low level of manners | 15 | 11,72 |
| material values orientation | 12 | 9,38 |
| "inappropriate" life orientations | 10 | 7,81 |
| lack of national awareness | 2 | 1,56 |
| total | 128 | 100 |

2.5 Summary of research conclusions

1. In general, the negative attitudes of young people towards older people prevails (58,60 %), while positive attitudes reached the less value (28,13 %),
2. From the point of view of both genders, the negative attitude of young people towards older people prevails almost equally – slightly over 58 %,
3. In all the municipalities prevails a negative attitude, which achieves over 50, even to 60 %. The only exception is Bratislava region, where the negative attitudes outweigh the positive, but reached "only" 47,06 %,
4. In relation with rising age from 18 to 29 the negative attitude of young people towards older people decreases and on the contrary, a positive attitude rises. The only exception is the category of 26 to 27, where the value of the negative attitude is higher than in the previous age category from 24 to 25,
5. The conservatism is the issue that young people mind the most about the older people,
6. Older people have in general a negative attitude towards young generation and it reaches a value of 60,61 %,
7. Older people from the perspective of gender have a negative attitude, which reaches in both sexes approximately the same value – over 60 %. On the contrary, a positive attitude reaches a value of around 22 – 23 %,
8. Older people in terms of residence in municipalities maintain a negative attitude, which reaches from 50 % in Trenčín region to 70,59 % in Trnava region,
9. From the point of view of age categories of older people (62 – 65, 66 – 69, 70 – 75, 76 – 80, 81 and more) it is seen that the negative attitude tends to rise and vice versa, the positive attitude decreases with the exception of a positive attitude in the category of 76 – 80 which is higher than in the previous category,
10. The rudeness is the issue that older people mind the most about the young people.

Conclusion

In conclusion it can be stated that between the older and younger generation prevail mutually negative perceptions regardless of gender or municipality. With the rising age of young people negative perceptions are

decreasing. For older people it is the opposite, with increasing age negative attitudes towards young people are rising. Older people mind the most about young people rudeness and young people obstruct the conservatism the most about the older people

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