

# **STUDY OF YOUNG GENERATION EXPECTATIONS REGARDING TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT BASED ON A SURVEY CONDUCTED IN TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY AMONG ECONOMICS STUDENTS**

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## **Abstract**

Young generation, people born at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Generation Z), will enter labour market in the nearest future. It is interesting, from the employers' point of view, what are the attitudes of young employees just leaving universities, and what are their expectations in relation to a new job. The survey among students of Economics of the Warsaw University of Technology (WUT) was conducted to assess prospect employees' perception. The survey included questions about the profession that students would like to pursue after graduation, prospect salary, work properties for which students would be willing to devote some of their earnings, what they expect from their future employment. Students expect to work as accountants (60%) and bank clerks (25%). Their salary expectations are realistic, furthermore most of them would accept a reduction in salary in favour of the possibility of development. Students expect good working conditions and a friendly environment. Women pay attention to work-family balance and value free time higher than men. Students are very demanding, they expect flexible working hours and employers' help in the beginning of their career. In the paper implications of the findings are discussed.

**Key words:** young generation, work-related expectations, sex differences

**JEL Code:** A20, I23, J24

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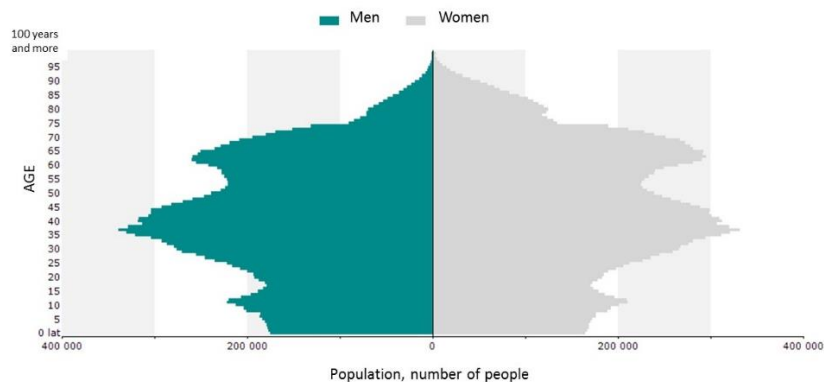
## **Introduction**

Generation Z has received much attention today since young people, who has recently crossed into adulthood, will enter labour market in the nearest future. Generation Z, people who are at the age of 20-25 (Dimock Michael, 2018) are studying now and get ready to take a job. It is interesting, from the employers' point of view, what are the attitudes of young employees just leaving universities and what are their expectations in relation to a new job. Much study in recent years have been devoted to generation Z. Taylor & Keeter (Taylor & Keeter, 2010)

revealed in their research that people of generation Z have common features, interests, values, and expectations. They are the first generation truly global, „always online“, self-confident and the best educated in history; unfortunately they are less likely to get a job than older generations due to overall economic conditions. They think that they are unique, distinct and happy. Fewer people than prior generation Y will have families and children; 75% are not married yet, almost half of generation Z stays with their parents, a large part lives with their partners or roommates. Marriage is important to them but not the most important. They are thinking about earning enough money to lead the kind of life they want; they are very practical, they watch very closely the money they spend. They are willing to change jobs in order to ensure a better life for themselves, value most a successful career, dreamed and well paid job. Generation Z is optimistic and believe that their expectations will come true.

In addition to generation Z's general characteristics, information about their attitude towards work is very important. According to Adecco findings (Adecco, 2015) 20% of US labour market will belong to generation Z in 2019; similarly, in Poland the share of people from this generation will reach 20% in 2020 (Fig. 1) (Statistics Poland, 2018).

**Fig. 1: 2020 population forecast for Poland**



Source: (Statistics Poland, 2018)

Generation Z wants to be free at work, does not tolerate routine and expects to appreciate their talent. They like challenges, development and wise bosses with appropriate qualifications and skills. They prefer working in the place of residence and desire flexible working hours. Generation Z representatives are self-righteous people, who are looking for applause in social media and who do not want to work for the society. They have a problem with socialization and group work for they prefer individual projects and communication via social media to face-to-face conversation (Addor & Ed, 2011). Maybe this is the reason why they do not have soft skills (Tulgan, 2013), however generation Z values more soft than hard ones (Adecco,

2015). Although previous research has indicated characteristic features of the whole generation Z it has not covered the nature of students of Economics who are aware of economic processes, know labor market, principles of management etc.

College of Economics and Social Sciences of WUT that runs the studies of Economics cooperates with organizations which offer students internships and jobs. Both WUT and the employers are interested in students' characteristics to better match educational and job offer to the students requirements. In order to investigate this subject, the survey was conducted among the first year WUT students of Economics. Even though this research is not significant for the whole Polish generation Z, it is important for the local organizations which employ them during their second year of studies and after their graduation.

The purpose of this study was to describe and identify students' approach to prospect work and their expectations regarding future employment. It turned out that first year students are very wise. They know what they really want, realistically assess their future jobs, knowing what would actually be possible including their prospect positions and earnings.

## **1. Methodology**

The purpose of the current investigation was to discover the WUT students of Economics needs, expectations and preferences regarding their future jobs. All of them will shortly be in their internships and will work in organizations that cooperates with the WUT; that's why it was so important to analyse their characteristics. For this purpose, a survey was conducted among all full-time and part-time 122 first year students of Economics, 85 women and 37 men. Due to unequal participation of both sexes all conclusions refer to their percentage share. All participants were 20 to 23 years old; all of them represent generation Z. The study was designed based on the previous similar surveys where university students from various countries were questioned about their attitudes (Fortune, 2015; Half, 2016; Iorgulescu, 2016; Kirchmayer & Fratričová, 2017; Töröcsik, Szűcs, & Kehl, 2014). The questionnaire was comprised of open and closed questions; seven regarded students' expected jobs, salaries, properties of jobs that they value more than earnings. Twenty three closed questions regarded pay and working conditions, possibility of development and working for society. Additional identification questions regarded respondents' age, sex and work experience. The survey was carried out in January 2018. All questions are presented in the table 3.

Indicators of central tendency and location (mean, mode, median), descriptive statistics, indicators of variability (range, standard deviation), crosstabulations, frequency distributions

and ANOVA analysis were used in the study. The results were worked out using the SPSS programme.

## 2 Results and discussion

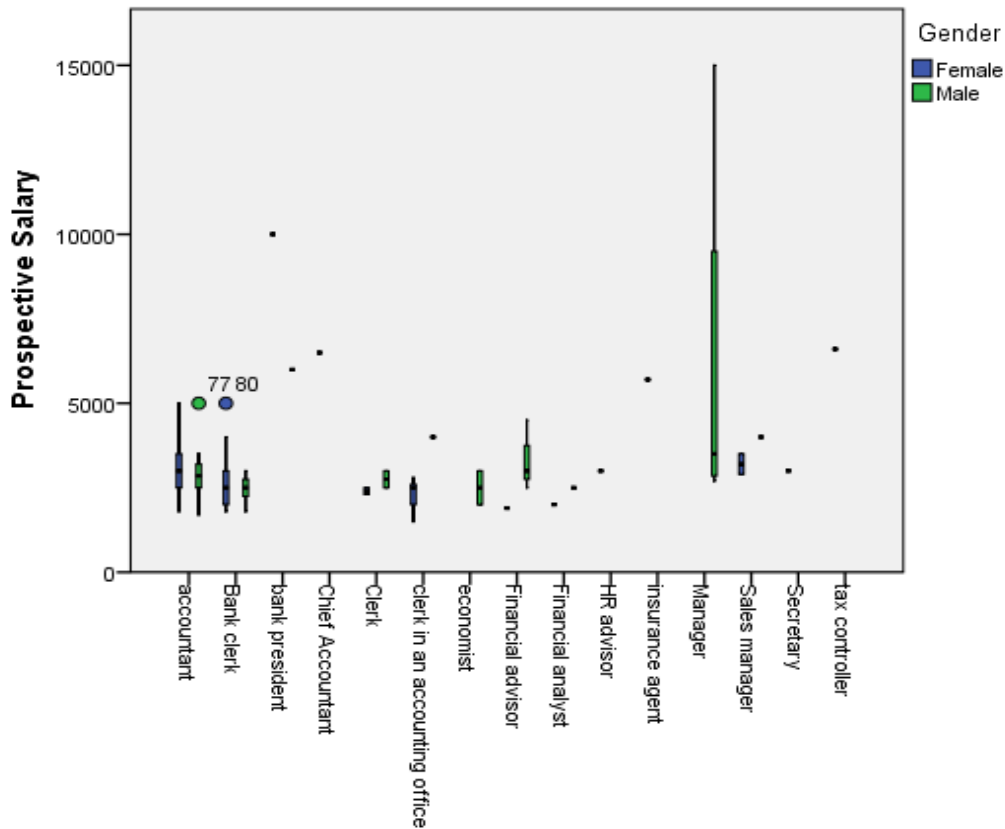
Data obtained in previous studies indicates that perception of expectations regarding prospect job depends on gender and previous job experience (Iorgulescu, 2016; Kirchmayer & Fratričová, 2017). In the current study, attention has been paid to these and other aspects related to future work. In the survey conducted at Warsaw University of Technology students were asked what would be their most probable occupation after graduation (Tab. 1). The number of people studying economics indicates that the profession has been feminized (70% of women, 30% of men). 60% of respondents consider working as accountants (53% of women, 38% of men), 25% would like to become bank clerks (27% of women, 21% of men). Individuals consider other professions like clerks, economists, financial advisors, financial analysts, only men plan to take managerial positions. Salaries in the above professions (Fig. 2) are expected at a level slightly below the national average, which amount to PLN 4516,69 (Statistics Poland, 2018). Those few students who declared prospect managerial position expect five-figure salary.

**Tab. 1: Students expectations about most probable occupations after graduation**

Prospective occupation	Number of Females	% of Females	Number of Males	% of Males	Total	% of Total
Accountant	45	52,94%	14	37,84%	59	48,36%
Bank clerk	23	27,06%	8	21,62%	31	25,41%
Bank president	1	1,18%	1	2,70%	2	1,64%
Chief accountant	1	1,18%	0	0,00%	1	0,82%
Clerk	2	2,35%	2	5,41%	4	3,28%
Clerk in an accounting office	5	5,88%	1	2,70%	6	4,92%
Economist	0	0,00%	2	5,41%	2	1,64%
Financial advisor	1	1,18%	3	8,11%	4	3,28%
Financial analyst	1	1,18%	1	2,70%	2	1,64%
HR advisor	1	1,18%	0	0,00%	1	0,82%
Insurance agent	1	1,18%	0	0,00%	1	0,82%
Manager	0	0,00%	4	10,81%	4	3,28%
Sales manager	2	2,35%	1	2,70%	3	2,46%
Secretary	1	1,18%	0	0,00%	1	0,82%
Tax controller	1	1,18%	0	0,00%	1	0,82%

Source: Author's own research.

**Fig. 2: Students expectations regarding prospective salaries**



Source: Author's own research.

The statistics of students expectations regarding features of prospective jobs are presented in the Table 2. For answers, Likert scale was involved with 1 for the smallest value, 4 for the middle and 7 for the opposite highest value of the variable. As expected 90,6% of women and 94,6 men expect better than average working conditions. The statement that Generation Z does not want to work in a group has not been confirmed. More than 50% students take into account working with people. Other features are similar to those described in the literature. Students require additional benefits, challenges, they allow relocation and require autonomy; the distributions with mode value of 5 are more spread than the one for working conditions.

It is clearly seen that students look into the future. Most people (mode value 7) consider self development as the most important thing at work and 93,1% may sacrifice work with higher salary for the one where they can learn, however they are indifferent about training at work, more than 60% rate this question at the average level. More than 50% respondents, men and women, are ready to work overtime. For more than 80% the type of work is very important, while their job title has no value for them (uniform distribution). Students highly value prospective promotion, salary, success and safety at work (mode value = 7). 70% of students

consider reputation of the company as a very important value (mode value = 5 and 6). Work-family balance and job satisfaction are very important for them (mode values = 7) while work-free time balance is of less importance (mode value = 6); women value both variables work-family balance and work-free time balance higher than men (p-values respectively are equal 0,046 and 0,017, Fig. 3).

**Tab. 2: Students expectations regarding characteristics of prospective jobs**

Expected job characteristics	Mean	Median	Mode	Std. Deviation
Likert scale, variables values: 1 – low, 4 – middle, 7 – high				
Working Conditions	5,85	6,00	6	1,018
Working With People	4,97	5,00	5 <sup>a</sup>	1,454
Additional Benefits	4,74	5,00	5	1,378
Challenges	4,66	5,00	5	1,407
Location	5,07	5,00	5	1,506
Self development	6,20	6,00	7	0,924
Type of work	5,54	6,00	6	1,172
Job title	3,88	4,00	5	1,779
Training opportunity	4,66	5,00	6	1,412
Prospects for promotion	6,23	6,00	7	0,907
Salary	6,31	7,00	7	0,857
Company reputation	5,20	5,00	6	1,261
Safety at work	6,12	7,00	7	1,085
Autonomy	4,89	5,00	5	1,175
Work-family balance	6,55	6,00	7	6,368
Job satisfaction	6,15	6,50	7	1,104
Work-free time balance	5,69	6,00	6	1,092
Devoting private time to society	3,94	4,00	4	1,445
Success at Work	6,11	6,00	7	1,083
Life satisfacion	5,94	6,00	7	1,015
Overtime work	4,75	5,00	7	1,816
Gender equality (1 - women are treated better, 4 - equally, 7 - women are treated worse than men)	4,28	4,00	4	1,197
a - Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown				

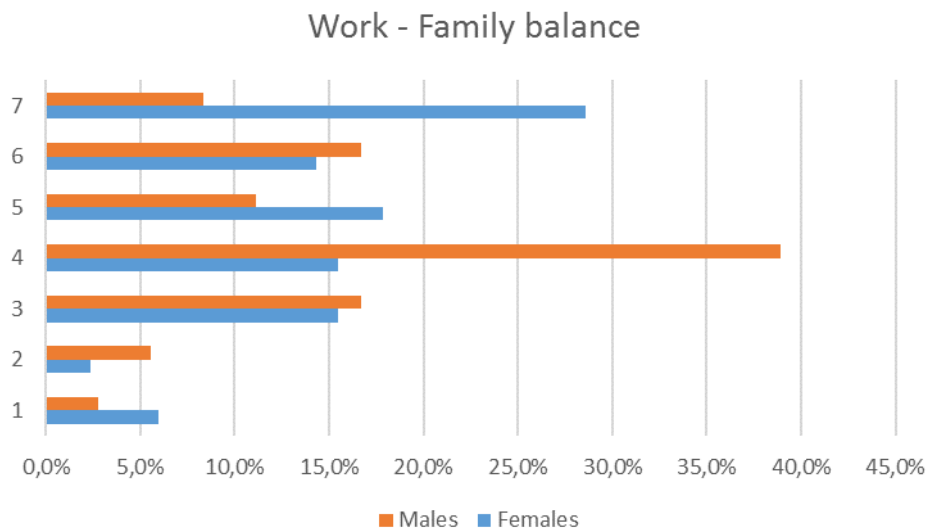
Source: Author's own research.

Students do not want to devote their private time for others, variable „devoting private time for society“ has a normal distribution (Mode=4, SD=1,445). 57% students (56% of women and 61% of men) consider men and women as treated equally, however 35% of women think that women are treated worse than men, on the contrary 16,6% men share that opinion; the difference is statistically important (p-value=0,011). Differences in men's and women's opinions about working conditions are also statistically important (p-value=0,023), 40% of

women rate that question at the highest value while more than 50% of men rate this variable at the average level (values 5 and 6).

There are no statistically important influence on student responses and differences in men and women answers as regards to type of studies and previous work experience.

**Fig. 2: Work-family balance, responses of men and women**



Source: Author's own research

## Conclusion

The results of the survey conducted among WUT students of Economics confirmed results achieved in previous studies (Iorgulescu, 2016; Kubátová, n.d.; Pînzaru F., Vătămănescu E., Mitan A., Săvulescu R., Vițelar A., Noaghea C., 2016; Pyöriä, Ojala, Saari, & Järvinen, 2017). Students of Economics want to develop very quickly even at the price of losing their current income. They want a broad autonomy, independence and flexible working hours. Free time and family are very important for them, especially for women. Unfortunately, they do not want to devote time to the community.

Based on the results of the survey employers can better match their job offers for future employees. Even though students are very demanding, they want to work hard and improve their skills. Students clearly expect help from employers at the first stage of their work. The greatest chance to get to know the expectations of employees is to talk to each person and listen carefully to everyone.

## 6 Appendix

**Tab. 3: Questionnaire used in the survey regarding students of Economics opinions about their future jobs**

No	Question	Answer
1	What profession, in your opinion, is your most probable choice after graduation? What salary is most probable in this profession?	Open question
2	What other two professions could you take into consideration, one with higher salary, other with lower salary, than your most probable choice? Determine the most likely earnings.	Open question
3	Which profession is the best choice, taking into account only the salary, for the graduate in economics?	Open question
4	Which profession is the best choice, taking into account the description of the profession, for the graduate in economics?	Open question
5	Is there a conflict between your previous answers? If yes, how can you solve it?	Open question
6	Are there any job properties that you value to sacrifice a part of your earnings to get it? What are those properties? What are the limitations of readiness to sacrifice your earnings?	Open question
7	What do you value at work?	
7.1	Working Conditions	
7.2	Working With People	
7.3	Additional Benefits	
7.4	Challenges	
7.5	Location	
7.6	Self development	
7.7	Type of work	
7.8	Job title	
7.9	Training opportunity	
7.10	Prospects for promotion	
7.11	Salary	
7.12	Company reputation	
7.13	Safety at work	
7.14	Autonomy	
7.15	Work-family balance	
7.17	Job satisfaction	
7.18	Work-free time balance	
7.19	Devoting private time to society	
7.20	Success at Work	
7.21	Life satisfacion	
7.22	Overtime work	
7.23	Gender equality	(1 - women are treated better, 4 - equally, 7 - women are treated worse than men)
	Do you have previous work experience?	Yes/No
	What is important of Economics graduate?	Open question

Source: Author's own research



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