Chapter 12

Motivation Factors for Generation Z in Higher Education

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ABSTRACT

In educational experience in the past years, students’ attitude toward learning has changed. The authors made a complex research in five Hungarian universities among economist students and their teachers. The focus of the research was learning motivation factors of students who participate in higher education in the field of economics. Another research question focused on the use of ICT tools. To answer these questions, the authors conducted a questionnaire, made workshops and interviews with students and teachers as well. In the questionnaire, they got answers to how often they face different teaching methodologies, to what extent do these methods support their learning, and what kind of expectations do they have from an electronic learning environment. During the analysis, the authors got some insights into students’ preferences using electronic platforms. The questionnaires provided an opportunity to analyse some questions from students’ and teachers’ perspectives too.

INTRODUCTION

Members of generation Z are currently studying at the universities. They have grown in a rapid change of technology and it is essential for them to use digital technologies in their daily life. Learning habits of Gen Z or otherwise digital natives, called by Marc Prensky (2001), has changed totally. It is a challenge for teachers, who are digital immigrants, to teach and motivate Gen Z, because it looks like they speak different languages. Since they learn differently a lot of question about teaching methodology raise up. They are used to the rapid flow of information and they process information differently. Their learning is characterized by preference for speed, nonlinear processing, multitasking, efficient technology utilization, individualism (not to like the teamwork), personalized work (Berkup, 2014).

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-7998-1591-4.ch012
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Since Gen Z has been studying in higher education, there has been no comprehensive research on motivation in our country, in Hungary. In a 3 years long project the authors wanted to identify the challenges faced by teachers and students in the field of economic higher education. The research was based on analysis of students’ and teachers’ motivation in several institutions of economic higher education. This chapter wishes to contribute to the development of the quality of teaching in economics and business education by discovering different aspects of motivation, especially motivation connected to information communication technologies.

BACKGROUND

The year 2013 was a turning point in higher education when Generation Z started his education in colleges and universities. Smart devices, internet access everywhere provides access more information for them than any other generations at their age. In the 21st century in an information-based society the basis of social differentiation is information. This differentiation starts already in schools so the future is determined from school. Information Communication Technologies can enhance knowledge sharing in many different ways. Knowledge sharing connected to communication which requires two parts. Two acts can be distinguished in this process, externalization and internalization. The owners of knowledge performing actions based on their knowledge, explaining or codifying it during the externalization process. On the other hand during internalization other kind of act are needed, including learning by doing, reading books, or trying to understand the codified knowledge (Hendriks, 1999). ICT tools can promote both actions effectively. There are many other aims to implement ICT into education (Kaka, 2008):

1. To implement the principle of life-long learning / education.
2. To increase a variety of educational services and medium / method.
3. To promote equal opportunities to obtain education and information.
4. To develop a system of collecting and disseminating educational information.
5. To promote technology literacy of all citizens, especially for students.
6. To develop distance education with national contents.
7. To promote the culture of learning at school (development of learning skills, expansion of optional education, open source of education, etc.)

Gen Z likes regular and technology-enhanced learning opportunities and looks for educational opportunities that use visually enhanced methods of teaching (Cook, 2015). Many references in research literature underline the positive effect of ICT in education which can be realized in learning outcomes, behavior, school attendance, etc. Passey et al. (2004) listed the following positive motivational impact on learning processes:

- Engagement (through visual, kinesthetic and auditory means).
- Research (access to a wide range of resources from which to search and select);
- Writing and editing (through offering pupils ways to commit ideas more readily and edit to far greater extents than before).
- Presentation (through enabling them to present work neatly and professionally).