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NEW GENERATIONS OF PERENNIALS AND BETA: TERRA INCOGNITA

НОВЫЕ ПОКОЛЕНИЯ ПЕРЕННИАЛОВ И БЕТА: ТЕРРА ИНКОГНИТА

Abstract:

The article presents the problem of intergenerational transition and the emergence of a new generation of perennials, people who do not match their biological age, who continue working and leading an active lifestyle. The phenomenon is associated with a sense of subjective well-being. It is proved that the Silver Economy has great potential, reducing the pressure on the demographic situation. There summarized experimental data, proving that the development of vital functions can happen at any age (learning ability, balanced decisions, emotional stability, creativity, empathy, etc.).

On the other hand, there considered unknown problems of the emerging Beta generation, who differs sharply from the previous ones. It requires a deeper study of the intergenerational transition.

Keywords: perennials; silver economy; silver age; subjective well-being; generation Beta; intergenerational transition

Аннотация. В статье представлена проблема межпоколенческого перехода и появление нового поколения перенниалов, людей, не соответствующих своему биологическому возрасту, продолжающих трудовую деятельность и ведущих активный образ жизни, что связано с чувством субъективного благополучия. Доказывается, что Серебряная экономика имеет большой потенциал, снижая давление на демографическую ситуацию. Обобщаются экспериментальные данные, доказывающие,

что развитие жизненно значимых функций может происходить в любом возрасте (способность к обучению, взвешенность решений, эмоциональная устойчивость, творческие способности, эмпатия и др.). С другой стороны, рассматриваются малоизученные проблемы рождающегося поколения Бета, которое резко отличается от предыдущих, что требует более глубокого изучения межпоколенческого перехода.

Ключевые слова: перенниалы; серебряная экономика; серебряный возраст; субъективное благополучие; поколение Бета; межпоколенческий переход

Introduction

Modern living conditions change not only the environment, but also the people who inhabit it. Considering the demographic situation in many countries of the world, the decline in birth rates, the increase in life expectancy, and at the same time the aging of the population, it is necessary to take into account the characteristics and capabilities of the older generation. On the other hand, it is necessary to consider the development prospects of the new Beta generation (born in 2025-2039), who will differ significantly from all previous ones. Thus, the problem of interaction between generations and their traditions and values arises.

The theory of N. Howe-W. Strauss states that it is not only and not so much age that forms and determines a generation, but rather the people's values, which are formed under the influence of social, political, economic, cultural, technological facts and upbringing in the family. It also points that part of society whose values are a priority at the present time.

According to the World Health Organization, the population over 65 will double by 2050. Therefore, we can talk about maintaining both physical and mental well-being, including positive emotions, maintaining cognitive functions and a sense of significance in social life (Helliwell et al., 2024).

At present, the above-mentioned problems are being discussed by experts and researchers in the fields of sociology, gerontology, demography and other fields of knowledge. All active senior people strive to understand and, accordingly, realize their physical and mental capabilities, often contrary to the ingrained stereotypes of their perception as outlived, worn-out and useless ballast for society.

At the same time, as V. Yakovlev notes, civilization has created a rich culture of physical and mental techniques that allow one to stay in shape in old age. And from a business point of view, people over 60 are quite a solvent and promising audience. The market for services for this audience should be no smaller than the market for services and entertainment for children. However, in modern culture there is no idea of the age over 60 as a full-fledged, significant stage of human life (Yakovlev, 2013).

It is also necessary to take into account the new direction of economic development, namely, the knowledge economy. In this regard, the senior generation is the richest bearer of professional knowledge and life experience. According to Japanese researchers I. Nonaka and H. Takeuchi, it is necessary to see the economic effect in informal knowledge. It is necessary to understand the value of what remains hidden and ambiguous. They point out that in the 1990s, for example, American companies carried out extensive layoffs by firing senior employees, who took with them those unspoken ideas, informal experience, leaving a certain vacuum in the companies. Later, they had to be hired again, as consultants (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 2011).

Thus, the problem of rethinking age stereotyping arises. In the conditions of demographic imbalance, identifying the resources and opportunities of the senior generation could help maintain stability in the labor market and in the economy as a whole.

At the same time, the senior generation can have a significant influence on the upbringing of the new Beta generation, transmitting and preserving universal human values that do not depend on time parameters.

Possibilities of Silver Economy

The increasing proportion of senior people worldwide has a significant impact on various economic sectors, therefore it is necessary to take into account the needs and possibilities of this category of society.

In particular, the increase in the share of the senior generation and the size of their income are becoming especially significant in the context of the consumer crisis. The senior generation is no longer considered as a threat of additional social costs, but as a source of greater commercial opportunity based on stable income, savings levels and special types of needs. The Silver Economy is still underestimated in many countries, especially those with potentially high demand. The implementation of the Silver Economy could help improve the quality of life of the senior generation, initiate the creation of new jobs and help support economic growth (Páleník, 2015).

The few studies in the Silver Economy make an economic assessment of the increase in the senior population, in particular taking into account purchasing power, savings, consumption, new opportunities for innovation and provision of goods and services. It may affect the level of demand, consumer spending and lead to changes in the structure of production and employment in various sectors of the economy.

The European population is considered to be the most senior. However, countries on other continents are currently facing a demographic transition. By 2050, the share of the senior population in East Asia will be higher than in Europe. Moreover, half of the senior population (over 65 years) already lives in Asia. It is assumed that in the future, countries with the largest senior population will be China, India, the United States, Indonesia and Brazil. Data on the size of the senior population, the economic stability of countries (purchasing power and standard of living), and the openness of the economy (share in world trade) provide the basis for assessing the potential demand for silver production. The economies of the BRICS countries are recognized as having the greatest potential for the silver market, taking into account the high growth of GDP and the level of exports and imports (Páleník, 2015).

It is expected that the demand of the senior generation will increase for various types of organic and dietary products that maintain health and prevent diseases (especially telemedicine and telecare); transportation services; lifelong learning (universities of the third age); restaurant, hotel, recreational, financial and insurance services.

An important finding of the research is the confirmation of the intergenerational transition from young households to senior ones, which brings to the fore the importance of the issue of intergenerational solidarity.

Therefore, it is necessary to pay attention to a new assessment of age, age characteristics and possibilities. We are talking about a new age category – perennials. The term “perennials” was introduced by Jean Pell in 2016. Thus, she has designated a new ageless way of thinking.

Perennials are a category of people whose mental age does not correspond to their biological age, who strive to go beyond age stereotypes, using the advantages of their age and remaining active (Sociologists..., 2025).

The concept of “perennials” includes people of different ages who are interested in what is happening in the world, understand technologies, interact with different age groups. They are active, creative, self-confident, share their experience, and are mentors to others. In this situation, the onset of retirement age does not mean the end of, for example, professional activity, since people of the silver age remain socially active and in demand.

Sociologist Mauro Guillén points out that activity is not determined by age, the younger generation strives more for social development, and not just professional; people can change their field of activity even at an senior age; different generations study in the same online groups; the senior generation continues working. M. Guillén concludes that there is a

shift towards the senior generation: labor force, consumption, social and political influence (Sociologists..., 2025).

On the other hand, the concept of “staying younger” is more related to an internal sense of self-perception, which is associated with a sense of subjective well-being.

Subjective well-being measures how people define their situation in life and their various activities, which can help control for both economic and social living conditions (Dolan et al., 2013). Subjective well-being is also related to emotional state, sense of meaning in life, positive and negative experiences (Panek & Zwierzchowski, 2023).

There are various parameters that characterize subjective well-being. Some studies show a strong relationship with demographic variables.

Results from large population surveys have found a U-shaped relationship between subjective well-being and age. Subjective well-being is shown to be higher in younger and senior adults and lower in people in between (Clark, 2019). Educational attainment can provide advantages not only in the labor market but also in health, higher status and self-esteem (McMahon, 2017). Interpersonal relationships (family, friends, etc.), the environment in which one lives, and social institutions have the greatest impact on subjective well-being (Godefroy & Lollivier, 2014).

It has been proven that people in their 80s and 90s who actively communicate with the younger generation live longer. The best way to achieve intergenerational understanding is to change the sequential life pattern (education – work – retirement). For example, many senior people continue working, which can reduce the tax burden on younger people. At the same time, the opportunity for intergenerational communication and cooperation in the workplace increases. Constant learning something new also increases interaction between generations and the level of subjective well-being.

Summarizing the experimental data of various studies, the following conclusions can be made (Kozlova & Kuprina, 2014):

1. Learning. With age, the interaction of brain neurons improves, which promotes learning at an senior age, focusing on specific material and choosing appropriate learning strategies.
2. Decision-making with age is more balanced and focused on the long-term perspective.
3. Emotional stability is associated with the development of emotional intelligence (EQ), that is, the ability to manage emotions and avoid conflict situations.
4. The reaction to criticism with age is less acute, which is associated with developed EQ.
5. Youth of spirit. According to research, many people over 65 feel younger than their years.
6. Creative abilities in senior people often demonstrate an unconventional and innovative approach to solving problems, focusing on the needs of others.
7. Level of happiness. Research shows that happiness levels start to rise after age 55, and the percentage of people who consider themselves happy increases with age.
8. Empathy. With age egocentrism decreases and empathy increases: it is easier for people to understand others. Twenty-year-olds, when generating ideas, often base on their own needs. A mature brain can better connect the needs of others and their own.
9. Ability to speak foreign languages. With age, the brain understands grammatical and word-formation structures better, and life experience and motivation help to progress faster. What was previously considered the inability of senior people to learn is in fact simply a consequence of using educational materials that are inappropriate for this audience: they must be adapted to the age-related features of vision and hearing.
10. Memory. A person is able to maintain a good memory, despite their age. If at the initial stage of testing, young people show better results, then after memory training is conducted with the senior group, it shows the same good results as the young one.

Generation Beta: Unknown world

In order to imagine the difference in the values of generations, it is necessary to refer to their classification:

1. Boomers (1944-1967) valued the very opportunity to obtain knowledge and education.

2. Generation X (1967-1984) the choice of education depended on prestige and the possibility of subsequent good employment. However, the further development of society has shown that throughout life, education alone may not be enough, it is necessary to acquire new skills, improving professional skills.

3. Generation Y / millennials (1984-2000) is a complex generation that went through a change in the structure of the state in Russia, faced with an unstable world trying to build its own system of values.

4. Generation Z (2000-2011), many of whom do not see the value in education, which does not guarantee employment and it is transmitted to their children. But if an alternative grading system is not offered, then children can get lost in the coordinate system.

5. Generation A / Alpha (2011-2024) is already adapted to the virtual environment. They instantly find information, want to receive an instant answer and are greatly influenced by bloggers. They question the values that are important to their parents, so it is difficult to motivate them. Being the generation of TikTok and social networks, they have difficulty in concentrating, so short formats in the presentation of information and fast communication are important to them. Learning through gamification is ideal for them, when they immediately earn points and coins for completed tasks.

6. Generation B / Beta (2025-2039). What are the forecasts for its development? They will live in an even greater digitalization. It is the first generation that will live in the metaverse. Socialization will occur both offline and online, i.e. networks and games. If we compare with the modern generation, we can note that negotiations and meetings are increasingly taking place online. The distinctive features of generation B will be multi-education, creating their own educational track, interaction with artificial intelligence is more important for them than retelling the text from a textbook. Therefore, the education system should take these trends into account, give the new generation the opportunity to demonstrate their skills, teach them to use tools that will help preserve their identity.

Representatives of earlier generations, who have other social and motivational guidelines, teach and will teach generations A and B. Therefore, senior generations need to develop critical thinking in new generations when analyzing extensive information, distinguishing fake information created by artificial intelligence from truthful information, the ability to express their opinions based on logical argumentation.

To overcome the conflict of values, the education system must create an intergenerational “bridge” that transmits experience, meanings, values. It implies respect for the individual regardless of age.

A. Newmayer asking a number of questions: Which teachers are remembered the most? Does their age matter? – Answers are: the teacher who paid attention to you, helped you take the first steps in the area of interest to you, played a special role in the formation of values (Nyumayer A., 2025).

Conclusion

Thus, to conclude a brief overview of the problem under discussion, we can say that age boundaries are currently blurring, professional activity and an active lifestyle do not end upon reaching retirement age, since the level of subjective well-being is different for everyone. A generation of perennials has emerged who do not correspond to their biological age, continue their professional activity, lead an active lifestyle and have their own advantages. However, society significantly underestimates the potential of the silver age and

the possibilities of the silver economy, which could contribute to improving the demographic situation, reducing the burden on the younger generation.

We can agree with the research of Lomonosov Moscow State University and the Russian Academy of Sciences that social policy measures can help to form a positive perception of the silver age: the opportunity to continue professional activity without demotion, active participation in public life, monitoring the health of the population.

On the other hand, a new generation B is being born, which will be significantly different from other generations. Consequently, new goals are being set for the education system, aimed at developing new programs and teaching methods that correspond to the mentality of the new generation and unite all generations.

A promising study could be to identify the maximum potential of the silver generation of perennials and develop new methods based on digital technologies. On the other hand, there is a need to develop potential strategies for training the Beta generation.

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