Ambition of young people - representatives of Y and Z generations

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Abstract. The article presents the results of a comparative analysis of self-assessment of ambition of students - representatives of Y and Z generations. The aim of the study was to identify the similarities and differences in self-esteem of ambition and the degree of its expression among young people of different generations. A cross-sectional survey of young people's ambition was conducted in 2009 (Gen Y youth) and 2020 (Gen Z youth). The study involved 200 young people aged 18-22: 106 young people of generation Y and 94 young people of generation Z. To study ambition, the "Ambition" questionnaire (O.V. Barsukova) was used. Most of the young people of generation Y assess themselves as ambitious or rather ambitious people (70.42%), slightly more than a quarter of students (28.17%) consider themselves to be un-ambitious people or rather un-ambitious than ambitious people. The minimum number of students found it difficult to assess themselves (1.41%). Most of the young people of generation Y rate their ambition as high (45.07%), about a third of them - as moderate (30.99%), about a quarter of them - as low (23.94%). The majority of young people of generation Z (70.22%) consider themselves ambitious people or rather ambitious than un-ambitious people, about a third of them (29.79%) consider themselves un-ambitious people or rather un-ambitious than ambitious people. There were no young people who found it difficult to assess themselves. Most of the young people of generation Z rate their ambition as moderate (51.06%), just over a third of them - as high (36.17%), the minimum number - as low (12.77%). There were no significant differences in the self-esteem of ambition and in the degree of its expression among young people belonging to different generations.

1 Introduction

Psychological research of representatives of different generations - X, Y and Z - is one of the new areas of research. Recall that the theory of generations appeared at the end of the 20th century in the United States. In Russia, this line of research has been and is being conducted, as a rule, within the framework of sociology, anthropology, marketing research, etc. For example, comparative sociological research by V.V. Radaev's intergenerational differences in attitudes towards one's life [1]. The main idea of this theory is that

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representatives of one generation are distinguished from another generation by a number of features (values, ideals, etc.). Those. representatives of one generation have a common, identical set of some characteristics, due, first of all, to the general social situation of life. This can be, for example, as shown in the studies of V.I. Pischik and her colleagues, type of economic mentality, professional mobility of representatives of different generations [2, 3]. In the studies of M. Ozkan and B. Solmaz, attention is paid to the study of the expectations of representatives of generation Z from their future work [4]. Also, these authors analyze the impact of mobile addiction on the social and personal life of generation Z [5]. Research by Paul J. Schenarts is dedicated to finding answers to the following questions: How to educate members of generation Z? What characteristics make generation Z different from previous generations? [6].

One of the psychological areas that, according to the generational theory, distinguishes one generation from another is the motivational area. In the focus of our research is there a phenomenon of the motivational sphere of the individual as ambition [7, 8]. Ambition is one of the motives of a person's social activity [7, 9]. A person has a desire to be different from others, to draw attention to one's personality. This desire can manifest itself as ambition or vanity. These concepts should be distinguished. In the research of O.V. Barsukova the following definitions were proposed [7]: Ambition is a person's desire to become a significant person for other people for real achievements. Vanity is a person's desire to occupy a significant place, a status position in the system of relations with other people. The main difference in the content of these concepts is that an ambitious person claims a well-deserved recognition, recognition of one's real achievements. While the claims of a vain person are undeserved and unfounded. In other words, it is important for an ambitious person to “be”, for a vain person it is enough to “seem”. It seems interesting that in a number of studies, vanity is associated with the appearance, external data of a person, in particular with his size, for example research by N.Z. Aydinoglu and A. Krishna [10]. Brett A.S. Martin investigate vanity as a form of consumption behavior [11].

As E.P. Ilyin noted, in Russian culture, in the Russian mentality there was a period (and in the everyday conscience of people it continues to this day), when in most cases ambition was treated as an unambiguously negative personality trait, identified with vanity [8]. Such an assessment of ambition is typical for representatives of generation X and partially for representatives of generation Y. At present, the Russian society has a positive attitude, as a rule. This assessment of ambition is shared by Generation Y and Generation Z.

The desire of a person to achieve high results, for example, in a profession, in an honest way and with efforts, is useful and noble. This desire mobilizes the internal resources of a person, allows you to reveal and realize your potential, overcome difficulties and ultimately achieve the goal [8]. However, another option is also possible, in which a person's ambitious aspirations are combined with selfishness, pride, when, in order to achieve a goal, a person is ready to commit immoral, unseemly acts that infringe on other people. It is obvious that such ambition is assessed as a negative phenomenon [8, 9].

Also, when assessing ambition as a positive or negative personality trait, one should take into account the degree of its expression. W. Pfister, for example, considers ambition as an internal resource [12]. J. Chai considers ambition as one of state variables: ambition captures the net influence of the past situations to the present [13]. Ashley Bell Jones and others try to understand the “place” of ambition in the model of personality [14]. M.Ć. Dražić et al study career ambition and its relationship with other psychological characteristics [15].

As O.V. Barsukova and E.P. Ilyin noted, a moderate degree of expression of ambition is necessary for a person who takes an active socially oriented position [7, 8]. In addition, E.P. Ilyin noted, that the ambition of an educated person is outwardly imperceptible and can only be judged by a psychological analysis of one's actions and behavior [8].

2 Purpose of the study

The aim of the study is to investigate the ambition of young people - representatives of Y and Z generations. Identify the similarities and differences in self-esteem of ambition, in the degree of its expression among young people belonging to different generations.

3 Methodology

The study was conducted using the cross-sectional method in 2009 and 2020. The research was carried out using the author's questionnaire "Ambition" (OV Barsukova). Mathematical and statistical processing was carried out using Fisher's ϕ -test.

The study involved 200 students aged 18-22 years, including: 106 students of generation Y (2009) and 94 students of generation Z (2020).

4 Results

A study on the self-esteem of ambition of young people in generation Y found the following results:

The majority of young people (70.42%) assess themselves as ambitious people (28.17%), or as more ambitious than non-ambitious people (42.25%).

Slightly more than a quarter of young people (28.17%) consider themselves to be un-ambitious people (9.86%) or rather un-ambitious than ambitious people (18.31%).

The minimum number of students found it difficult to assess themselves (1.41%).

A study of the severity of ambition among young people of generation Y yielded the following results:

Most of the young people who consider themselves ambitious rate their ambition as high (80.00%), the fifth part of these young people think that their ambition is moderate, average (20.00%).

Slightly younger people, who consider themselves more ambitious than non-ambitious people, rate their own as high (53.33%), about half of them - as moderate (43.33%), the minimum amount - as low (3.33%).

More than half of the young people who consider themselves to be rather un-ambitious than ambitious rate their ambition as low (69.23%), about a third of them as moderate (30.77%).

In assessing the level of their ambition among young people of generation Y, the prevailing assessment of ambition is high (45.07%). About a third of them rate their ambition as moderate (30.99%), about a quarter of them - as low (23.94%).

All young people who do not consider themselves ambitious rate their ambition as low (100%).

Young people who found it difficult to rate themselves as ambitious or un-ambitious people nevertheless rated their ambition as moderate (100%).

So, most of the young people in generation Y consider themselves ambitious, or rather ambitious, and rate their ambition high.

A study of the self-esteem of generation Z students revealed the following results:

The majority of students (70.22%) consider themselves to be ambitious people (21.28%) or rather ambitious than un-ambitious people (48.94%).

About a third of the students (29.79%) consider themselves to be un-ambitious people (4.25%) or rather un-ambitious than ambitious people (25.53%).

There were no students who found it difficult to assess themselves.

A study of the severity of ambition among young people of generation Z yielded the

following results:

Most of the young people who consider themselves ambitious rate their ambition as high (80.00%), a fifth of these young people think that their ambition is moderate, average (20.00%).

More than half of young people who consider themselves more ambitious than non-ambitious people rate theirs as moderate (60.87%), a little more than a third of them - as high (34.78%), the minimum number - as low (4, 35%).

All young people who do not consider themselves ambitious rate their ambition as low (100%).

More than half of young people who consider themselves to be rather un-ambitious than ambitious rate their ambition as moderate (66.67%), a quarter of them - as low (25.00%), the minimum number of young people - as high (8.33 %).

In assessing of the level of their ambition among young people of generation Z, the prevailing assessment of ambition is moderate (51.06%). About the third part of them rate their ambition as high (36.27%), the minimum number - as low (12.77%).

So, young people in generation Z consider themselves to be ambitious or rather ambitious people and rate their ambition as moderate.

A comparative analysis of the self-esteem of ambition of young people - representatives of the Y and Z generations yielded the following results:

A large number of students - representatives of generation Y (28.17%) assess themselves as ambitious as compared to students of generation Z (21.28%). But these differences are not significant ($\varphi = 0.856$, $p = 0.05$).

More students of generation Z (48.94%) consider themselves to be more ambitious than non-ambitious people compared to students of generation Y (42.25%). These differences are also not significant ($\varphi = 0.707$, $p = 0.05$).

An assessment of oneself as an undemanding person prevails among students of generation Y (9.86%) compared to students of generation Z (4.25%). These differences are not statistically significant ($\varphi = 1.147$, $p = 0.05$).

More students of generation Z (25.53%) than students of generation Y (18.31%) consider themselves to be rather unambitious than ambitious people. These differences are not statistically significant ($\varphi = 0.931$, $p = 0.05$).

So, there were no significant differences in self-esteem of oneself as an ambitious person among young people of different generations.

Table 1. Self-esteem of ambition.

Ambition	Generation Y	Generation Z	
Ambitious people	28.17%	21.28%	$\varphi=0.856$. $p=0.05$
Ambitious rather than unambitious people	42.25%	48.94%	$\varphi=0.707$. $p=0.05$
Rather an unambitious than ambitious person	18.31%	25.53%	$\varphi=0.931$. $p=0.05$
An unambitious person	9.86%	4.25%	$\varphi=1.147$. $p=0.05$
I can't answer	1.41%	-	-

Comparative analysis of self-assessment of the level of ambition of young people - representatives of Y and Z generations allowed to obtain the following results:

More young people of generation Y (45.07%) rate their ambition as high as compared to young people of generation Z (36.17%). These differences are not statistically significant ($\varphi = 0.968$, $p = 0.05$).

More than half of young people in generation Z (51.06%) rate their ambition as moderate (average) compared to young people in generation Y (30.96%). These differences are in the

zone of uncertainty ($\varphi = 2.191$).

A quarter of young people in generation Y (23.94%) and a small number of young people in generation Z (12.77%) rate their ambition as low. These differences are not statistically significant ($\varphi = 0.968$, $p = 0.05$).

So, there were no significant differences in assessing of the level of their ambition among young people of different generations.

Table 2. Self-assessment of the intensity of ambition.

Expression of ambition	Generation Y	Generation Z	
High	45.07%	36.27%	$\varphi=0.968$, $p=0.05$
Moderate (medium)	30.96%	51.06%	$\varphi=2.191$
Low	23.94%	12.77%	$\varphi=1.542$, $p=0.05$

Summing up the results obtained, we note:

In general, the majority of young people in generation Y assess themselves as ambitious or rather ambitious people, just over a quarter of students consider themselves un-ambitious people or rather un-ambitious than ambitious people. The minimum number of students found it difficult to assess themselves. About half of young people in generation Y rate their ambition as high, about a third of them - as moderate, about a quarter of them - as low.

Most of the young people of generation Z consider themselves to be ambitious people, or rather ambitious than unambitious people, about a third of them consider themselves unambitious people, or rather unambitious than ambitious people. Half of the young people of generation Z rate their ambition as moderate, just over the third part of them - as high, the minimum number - as low

However, it should be noted that young people in generation Z are more cautious in assessing themselves as ambitious or undemanding people. They rate themselves "as soon as possible" as ambitious or un-ambitious. While young people - representatives of generation Y are more confident in assessing themselves as ambitious or undemanding people.

Also there are minor differences in the assessment of the level of their ambition by young people. More young people in Generation Y rate their ambition as high and low. More young people in Generation Z rate their ambition as moderate. In this case, young people in Generation Z also avoid extreme evaluations compared to young people in Generation Y.

5 Discussion

In our research, we proceeded from the assumption that there will be differences both in the self-esteem of ambition and in the degree of its expression among young people - representatives of different generations. However, as the results of the study show, there were no statistically significant differences.

Summarizing the obtained results, it can be indicated that young people - representatives of generation Y are more confident in assessing of their ambition and the degree of its expression, while young people of generation Z are more cautious. But we repeat that no significant differences were found.

Probably, the similarity in self-esteem of ambition can be explained, at least, by the need of society for ambitious, independent, purposeful, active people who can and want to achieve success in various spheres of social life, climb the social ladder.

6 Conclusion

So, most of the young people in generation Y consider themselves ambitious, or rather ambitious, and rate their ambition high. The young people in generation Z consider themselves to be ambitious or rather ambitious people and rate their ambition as moderate. There are no statistically significant differences in the self-esteem of ambition among young people of different generations – Y and Z generations.

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