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EMPLOYEE PERCEPTION OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES SUPPORTING LOYALTY AND RETENTION

The current study examines employees' loyalty and intention to change jobs through their perceptions of human resource management (HRM) practices. Although retention and loyalty are considered as key contributors to economic performance and competitiveness of organizations, little is known about how employees perceive organizational practices in their loyalty, intention to leave and in their choice of workplace selection. Therefore, current research intends to deepen the available knowledge regarding how members of various generations consider intention to stay or leave at a workplace in the context of HRM practices. The survey has been conducted on the sample of 1369 employees in 2023–2024 in Hungary. Quantitative analysis of data has been conducted with statistical methods. Results supported to define that loyalty and intention to change jobs depend on the respondents' age and position, but gender and educational level have no influence on them. The study confirmed that generational affiliation determines which HRM, and onboarding practices are considered important for employees when choosing or staying at a workplace. Results might support further studies of employee perceptions and support organizations in designing HRM practices of integration and retention, thus contributing to the sustainability of labor and economic competitiveness of organizations.

Introduction

The presence of several age groups at workplaces calls attention to the various needs of employees which might be captured in their different perceptions regarding workplaces. Job seekers' perception on workplace characteristics might be important inputs for organizations in their successful hiring strategy in the highly competitive labor market of Hungary (Csehné Papp et al., 2018; Kozák, 2023; Molnár, & Csehné Papp, 2024b). Out of the six identified generations typically four is present actively in the Hungarian labor market providing not only diversity at workplaces, but also challenges of integration, loyalty and retention. Therefore, practices of attracting employees, gaining their loyalty during acquisition and retention is essential for employers (Molnár, & Csehné Papp, 2023).

Beyond the factors of hiring decision, the way employees are becoming part of a workplace and fit into the organization determines their satisfaction. On the contrary, if new employees are not integrated into the organization, they may not foresee their well-being guaranteed at the new workplace. The fluctuation during onboarding is costly for the organization and might cause deterioration of morale within the existing workforce. Therefore, accurate recruitment and

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selection is essential, but not the sole remedy of workforce stability (Kozák, 2023; Pózner, & Kozák, 2024). As losing already hired employees can be costly, retention is key to turnover reduction.

Therefore, current paper examines loyalty and intention to leave in relation to HRM practices as perceived by employees (Molnár, & Csehné Papp, 2024a). The purpose of research is to examine how employees' personal characteristics relate to loyalty and to intention to leave, and what is their perception of organizational characteristics and HRM practices of onboarding. The study intends to reveal whether age – in the form of generational groups – is a decisive factor in choosing a workplace, being loyal or intending to change jobs.

Literature review

Generations at workplaces

Presence of different generations at workplaces (Bejtkovský, 2016; Knight, 2014) represents challenges in designing HRM practices (Molnár et al., 2024) for attracting and retaining workforce of all ages. From the various definitions of generational groups (Oh, & Reeves, 2011; Zemke et al., 2000), the following categorization has been applied in the research *(Table 1)*.

TABLE 1. GENERATIONS

Generational categories	Year of birth
Silent generation	1925–1943
Baby boomer	1943–1960
X generation	1961–1979
Y generation	1980–1999
Z generation	after 2000
Alfa generation	from 2010

Source: Oh, & Reeves (2011)

To attract potential new candidates and to retain employees, organizations need to consider generational preferences. A differentiated approach is recommended when dealing with generations Y and Z et workplaces (Bencsik et al., 2016; Chillakuri, 2020; Czeglédi, & Juhász, 2014; Musinszki et al., 2020).

However, according to Rudolph and others (2021), numerous studies reveal a contradictory approach when arguing for the existence or non-existence of generations and generational differences. The study examines the phenomena of generational theory and concluded in describing and integrating two major aspects of approaching generational differences, the social constructionist and the lifespan development perspectives. The study suggests that generations exist, and generations are proper research units for investigating differences of age groups. To avoid determinism, stereotypes and ageism, consideration of generational differences does not suggest the negligence of individual, social and contextual factors. A careful approach is required to support the age-related inclusiveness of organizations. For the question, whether different generations need to be managed differently at work, the study suggests no differentiation to be applied on an individual basis, but organizations are rather encouraged to manage the perceptions of generations when designing strategies and HRM practices.

Therefore, current study directs the attention to perceptional approach when applying generations as units of study and does not suggest differential treatment. Indeed, considering that several

generations work together at workplaces, it suggests an inclusive approach when designing HRM practices of workforce attraction, retention and well-being (Kozák, 2023; Molnár et al., 2024).

Human resource management practices supporting loyalty and retention

The resource-based approach (Barney, & Wright, 1998) suggests that human capital plays a significant role in achieving competitive advantage for organizations (Guest, 2017). A higher level of employee well-being and a positive working relationship might appear in organizational outcomes of employee engagement (Judge et al., 2001; Schaufeli et al., 2009; Saks, 2022) or lower turnover (Proudfoot et al., 2009). HRM practices have negative effect on intention to leave (Al Kurdi, 2021; Zamanan et al., 2020). Employees' perceptions are important in understanding their relation towards the organization (Mohammed, 2021; Wang et al., 2020). Recruiting, selecting, and integrating new employees is costly and time-consuming in a competitive labor environment, therefore, engaged employees are important resources for the organization (Cooper et al., 2019). Although fluctuation is a determining factor for economic efficiency (OECD, 2017) and for success of future labor market (Csehné Papp et al., 2018), it appears little in the focus of examining the employee perception on HRM tools.

Research by Kozák and Dajnoki (2019) focused on how effective and attractive the measures are aimed at retaining workforce according to respondents' assessment. Results show that in the groups of respondents created based on age, position and job role, the opinion about the measures of retention differ in terms of importance.

Interpersonal relationships are decisive factors for employee experience (Kozák, & Szabó, 2025) and engagement (Frögéli et al., 2023; Gelencsér et al., 2020). Study (Godinho et al., 2023) highlights the utilization of onboarding handbook as a set of structured documents, conveying basic and useful information to new entrants when navigating in the complexity of a new organization.

Literature about a caring HRM approach and employee engagement (Saks, 2022; Houghton et al., 2015) describes employees' perception about organizational care for employee well-being.

Loyalty is often identified with the concept of staying with the organization or with the intention of leaving the organization (Otto, & Mamatoglu, 2015).

Based on literature review, current research intends to reveal employee perceptions on assumed organizational care to support the decision of joining and leaving workplace.

Research methodology

Research objectives and research design

The research goal is to examine the relationship between perceived HRM practices of onboarding and employees' loyalty and intention to leave. The following hypotheses derive from the research objective:

> *H1: Employees' loyalty and the intention to change jobs are in relation to the personal characteristics of employees (gender, generation, education, position).*
>
> *H2: Employees with higher levels of loyalty do not intend to change job.*
>
> *H3: Employees' generational group determines which HRM practices employees consider important when choosing a workplace.*
>
> *H4: Employees' generational group determines what practices of onboarding employees consider important at a workplace.*

Data collection. The study has been conducted in the period of 2023 September – 2024 June. The sample of respondents have been contacted with access-based and snowball method. The participation in the survey was voluntary and anonymous. According to ethical and GDPR regulations, personal information suitable for respondents' identification was not included in the questionnaire. The survey was carried out online. To check the interpretability of the questionnaire, 10 respondents have been requested to answer the questions. Since there were no interpretability problems, the survey has been launched without changes.

Method. A self-developed online questionnaire has been designed based on literature review and prior research. The questionnaire consisted of three sections. The structure is presented in *Table 2*. Current study focuses on the generational aspect of the sample in terms of loyalty, intention to change job and evaluating organizational characteristics and HRM practices when choosing a workplace.

TABLE 2. STRUCTURE OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Section 1	Section 2	Section 3		
Sample speci-fication	Employees' relation to workplace	Employee perceptions		
		Characteristics of organization	HRM practices	Other
Gender Generation Education Position Time spent at current workplace	Intention to change workplace Loyalty	Size of the company Reputation and image of the company Green workplace Aesthetic, well-equipped, modern work environment Distance from residence of living	Wage and remuneration system Benefit system Career management and development Occupational health and safety Equal opportunities Flexible work schedule Availability of home office and distant work Onboarding	Task Diverse, challenging tasks Team A team that one can easily fit into Employees with professional experience

Source: Authors' own editing

Respondents had to answer 19 questions in total. Questions were closed questions and were based on metric and categorical variables. For metric variables, Likert-scale has been used. To test the reliability of the questionnaire, a random group of 10 respondents answered the questions. As they gave comparable results to the other respondents, reliability of the questions was accepted.

Results and discussion

Sample. The total number of respondents was 1486 heads. 117 respondents have been excluded as self-employment, individual entrepreneurship or working with assignment contracts are not suitable for the research purpose of examining loyalty and HRM processes. Therefore, the survey sample was 1369 participants.

In the first section, there were questions about respondents' characteristics of gender, age, education, position, and time spent at current workplace *(Table 3)*.

TABLE 3. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SAMPLE (N: 1369 HEADS)

Specifics	Categories	N=1369	%
Gender	Male	456	33.31
	Female	913	66.69
Generation (born)	Baby boomer (Before 1960)	20	1.46
	Generation X (1961–1979)	406	29.66
	Generation Y (1980–1999)	783	57.2
	Generation Z (after 2000)	160	11.69
Education	Secondary school or below	17	1.24
	High school	109	7.96
	Vocational school	93	6.79
	Vocational secondary school	109	7.96
	Technical high school	40	2.92
	Higher vocational qualification	172	12.56
	College (BA/BSc)	586	42.8
	University (MA/MSc)	225	16.44
	Postgraduate degree	18	1.31
Position	Subordinate	1097	80.13
	Lower–level leader	81	5.92
	Middle–level leader	136	9.93
	Senior leader	55	4.02
Time spent at current workplace	Less than 3 months	97	7.09
	3–6 months	96	7.01
	6–12 months	161	11.76
	1–2 years	213	15.56
	2–3 years	171	12.49
	More than 3 years	631	46.09

Source: Authors' own editing

In the sample there were no representatives of the 'Silent generation', born between 1925–1943 and of the 'Alfa generation' born after 2010, therefore not indicated in the analysis. Majority of respondents identified themselves as women (913 heads), representing 66.69% and 456 as men, representing 33.31%. The age distribution shows that the majority, 57.2% (783 heads) belongs to 'Y generation'. It is followed by 'generation X' with 29.66% (406 heads). While there were significantly less respondents of 'generation Z' (11.69%) and of 'baby boomer' generation (1.46%). The majority have higher level education, either college (42.8%) or university (16.44%) degree. Regarding the position, 80.13% of the sample are in subordinate positions, while middle-level leaders (9.93%), leaders in lower-level team- or group-leader positions (5.92%), and senior leaders (4.02%) are less represented in the sample. The service time of respondents shows that the majority (46.09%) has been at the current workplace for more than 3 years.

Loyalty and intention to change job according to sample specifics

To test 'Hypothesis 1', respondents' loyalty, and intention to change job have been analyzed considering their personal characteristics. Respondents have been asked about their intention to change jobs on a five grade Likert-scale, where one meant 'Not at all', and five meant 'Absolutely'. Results have been re-coded into a 3-point scale for easier interpretation and three categories have been formed: 'Would change job', 'Does not know' and 'Would not change job'. Based on the level of loyalty values, respondents have been categorized into 3 groups, where clusters were named as 'Loyal', 'Moderately loyal' and 'Not loyal'.

According to generations, 75% of the 'Baby Boomer' generation has no intention of changing jobs, while this proportion is constantly decreasing for generation X (41.87%), Y (39.46%) and Z (39.38%). The intention to change jobs is the highest among members of generation Y (34.36%), followed by generation X (31.53%) and generation Z (29.38%). The highest level of uncertainty regarding leave can be seen in generation Z (31.35%). Based on generational groups the intention to stay in the workplace increases with age.

The highest rate of staying at current workplace is among employees with education at 'Secondary school or below' (47.06%), and those with postgraduate degree (44.44%), followed by employees with 'University (MA/MSc)' (42.22%). The intention to change jobs is the highest at those with 'Technical high school' (40%), followed by 'Vocational secondary school' (34.86%) and 'College (BA/BSc)' (34.47%) degree. Therefore, employees in the sample with the lowest and highest educational qualifications do not intend to change jobs.

The positional differences show that members of senior management (58.18%) and middle-level leaders (41.18%) do not want to change jobs. At lower hierarchical levels, the ratios differ, as 38.27% of lower-level leaders would stay and 34.57% consider leaving. Similarly, 39.93% of subordinates would stay with their current organization, while 33.91% want to change jobs.

Table 4 shows the obtained results.

TABLE 4. LOYALTY AND INTENTION TO CHANGE JOB BY SPECIFICS OF THE SAMPLE

Specifics	Categories	Intention to change job (%)			Loyalty (%)		
		Would change job	Does not know	Would not change job	Loyal	Moderately loyal	Not loyal
Total		32,58	26,73	40,69	38,86	50,26	10,88
Gender	Male	31,58	27,85	40,57	39,47	48,25	12,28
	Female	33,08	26,18	40,74	38,55	51,26	10,19
Generation (born)	Baby boomer (Before 1960)	10	15	75	55,00	40,00	5,00
	Generation X (1961–1979)	31,53	26,6	41,87	49,51	40,89	9,61
	Generation Y (1980–1999)	34,36	26,18	39,46	34,23	55,68	10,09
	Generation Z (after 2000)	29,38	31,25	39,38	32,50	48,75	18,75
Education	Secondary school or below	29,41	23,53	47,06	41,18	41,17	17,65
	High school	29,36	35,78	34,86	31,19	60,55	8,26
	Vocational school	32,26	27,96	39,78	49,46	43,01	7,53
	Vocational secondary school	34,86	24,77	40,37	33,03	50,46	16,51
	Technical high school	40	27,5	32,5	25,00	65,00	10,00
	Higher vocational qualification	30,23	27,91	41,86	38,95	48,26	12,79
	College (BA/BSc)	34,47	24,23	41,30	38,22	49,49	12,29
	University (MA/MSc)	30,22	27,56	42,22	43,11	51,11	5,78
	Postgraduate degree	16,67	38,89	44,44	61,11	33,33	5,56
Position	Subordinate	33,91	26,16	39,93	53,14	35,28	11,58
	Lower-level leader	34,57	27,16	38,27	41,98	50,61	7,41
	Middle-level leader	25,00	33,82	41,18	50,00	41,91	8,09
	Senior leader	21,82	20,00	58,18	78,18	12,73	9,09
Time spent at current workplace	Less than 3 months	25,77	27,84	46,39	35,58	46,15	18,27
	3–6 months	31,25	23,96	44,79	34,31	49,02	16,67
	6–12 months	31,06	24,84	44,10	36,9	48,22	14,88
	1–2 years	33,33	25,82	40,85	35,07	48,48	16,45
	2–3 years	37,43	24,56	38,01	32,22	56,11	11,67
	More than 3 years	32,65	28,37	38,99	47,79	46,65	5,56

Source: Authors' own editing

Generational affiliation in relation to the intention to change job and loyalty

As an objective of the study further analysis has been conducted regarding the importance of age as a determining factor considering intention to change job and loyalty.

Generation and intention to change job

Variance analysis has been applied to examine the relationship between age as a categorized variable and intention to change jobs *(Table 5)*.

TABLE 5. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AGE AND THE INTENTION TO CHANGE JOB

Generational groups	N	Amount	Mean	Variance
Born before 1960	20	40	2	1,263158
Born between 1961–1979	406	1130	2,783251	1,859077
Born between 1980–1999	783	2291	2,925926	1,738752
Born after 2000	160	453	2,83125	1,663168

Variance analysis						
Factors	SS	df	MS	F	p-value	F crit.
Between groups	20,71753	3	6,905842	3,925942	0,008362	2,611422
Within groups	2401,074	1365	1,759028			
Total	2421,791	1368				

Source: Authors' own editing

The obtained p-value is <0.05, therefore it is concluded that the population averages can be significantly separated from each other in the case of the generational groups. Since the averages are not equal, there is a difference between age as a categorized variable and the intention to change jobs, therefore, that part of 'Hypothesis 1' is accepted which refers to the relationship between generational affiliation and intention to change job.

Generation and loyalty

Variance analysis was used to examine the relationship between age as a categorized variable and the level of loyalty *(Table 6).*

TABLE 6. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AGE AND LOYALTY

Generational groups	N	Amount	Mean	Variance
Born before 1960	20	80	4	1,473684
Born between 1961–1979	406	1542	3,79803	1,731947
Born between 1980–1999	783	2727	3,482759	1,541582
Born after 2000	160	524	3,275	1,986792

Variance analysis						
Factors	SS	df	MS	F	p-value	F crit.
Between groups	44,54244	3	14,84748	9,004046	6,62E-06	2,611422
Within groups	2250,856	1365	1,648979			
Total	2295,398	1368				

Source: Authors' own editing

The obtained p-value is <0.05, therefore it is concluded that the population averages can be significantly separated from each other in all four generational groups. The averages are not equal, therefore, that part of 'Hypothesis 1' is accepted that refers to the relationship between generational affiliation and loyalty.

Examining loyalty as a variable

Correlation analysis has been performed to examine the relationship between gender, age, position, education of respondents and loyalty and intention to change jobs. The examination of loyalty as a variable concluded in the following result. At the significance level of p = 0.05, the degree of freedom is f = n -1 = 9, so given p and f, the t-distribution is 1.833. value, which is tp=t0.05=1.833. Correlations between loyalty and gender (p .3579 |t| .3163) as well as between loyalty and education (p .9223 |t| .9223) are not significant, since the p-value is above 0.05, and the |t| <1.833. As the one-sample t-test does not reveal a significant difference between the sample mean of the variable loyalty and the respondents' gender and educational level (with a significance level of .005). Therefore 'Hypothesis 1' is partially rejected considering the relationship of loyalty with gender and education.

In the context of loyalty and position (|t| 5.7069) as well as loyalty and age (|t| 5.1479), the study shows that the correlations are significant, since the p-value is below 0.05, and |t| ≥ 1.833, i.e. |t| ≥ tp is satisfied. Although weak, there is a correlation between position and loyalty as well as between loyalty and age. According to the one-sample t-test, loyalty differs significantly (at a significance level of p = 0.05) in terms of age and position, thus, 'Hypothesis 1' is partially accepted for the relationship of loyalty with age and position.

Examining the intention to change jobs as a variable

Examining the same factors (age, gender, education, position) regarding the intention to leave the workplace yielded similar results. The correlations between the intention to change job and gender (p .3222 |t| .4616) and as well as between loyalty and education (p .4706 |t| .0737) are not

significant, as the p-value is above 0.05 and |t | <1.833. As the one-sample t-test does not reveal a significant difference between the variable sample mean of the intention to change job and the gender of the respondents and their current position (with a significance level of .005), therefore the relevant part of 'Hypothesis 1' is rejected.

In the context of intention to change job and position (|t| 2.6507) as well as regarding intention to change job and age (|t| 1.8853), the study shows that the correlations are significant, since the p-value is below 0.05, and the | the |t| ≥ 1.833; i.e. |t| ≥ tp is satisfied. According to the one-sample t-test, the intention to change jobs differs significantly (with a significance level of p = 0.05) in terms of age and position, thus the relevant part of 'Hypothesis 1' is accepted. Although weak, there are correlations between position and the intention to change job, as well as between generation and the intention to change job. Testing 'Hypothesis 1', the results show that neither loyalty, nor intention to change job depend on the respondents' gender and education level, however, both loyalty and intention to change job depend on the respondents' generation and position in the given sample.

__Thesis 1.__ Employees' loyalty and intention to change job does not depend on their gender and education level but depend on respondents' age and position.

Consequently, being in higher level position and with the increase of age, employees are more loyal and less intending to change job, irrespective of their gender or education. Therefore, the following thesis has been formulated.

Relationship between loyalty and intention to change jobs

The relationship between loyalty and intention to change job has been examined with cluster analysis, correlation and variance analyses as defined in 'Hypothesis 2'. Based on the level of loyalty values, respondents have been categorized into 3 groups, where clustering variables were named as "Loyal", "Moderately loyal" and "Not loyal". Respondents have been asked about their intention to change jobs on a five grade Likert-scale, where one meant 'Not at all', and five meant 'Absolutely'. The Likert-scale has been re-coded into a 3-point scale for easier interpretation and three categories have been formed: 'Would change job', 'Does not know' and 'Would not change job'.

- Cluster 1: Loyal employees: the intention to leave the current workplace is very low.
- Cluster 2: Moderately loyal employees: A high number of employees would like to change workplace or do not know, the intention to stay is moderately low.
- Cluster 3: Not loyal employees: the intention to leave is high.

Results indicate *(Table 7)* that 72% of employees who reported themselves as being loyal would not like to change their workplace. Employees who would not like to change job (12%) and those who are uncertain about their intentions (16%) are represented less in 'Cluster 1'. Employees in 'Cluster 2' report about themselves as moderately loyal to their workplace, however employees who do not intend to change workplace are the highest represented (41%). In 'Cluster 3' the employees who have the intention of leaving their workplace are represented by 68%.

TABLE 7. CROSS-TABULATION ANALYSIS BETWEEN INTENTION TO CHANGE JOBS AND LOYALTY

Intention to change job	Level of loyalty					
	Cluster 1		Cluster 2		Cluster 3	
	Loyal		Moderately loyal		Not loyal	
	heads	%	heads	%	heads	%
'Would change workplace'	62	12%	283	41%	101	68%
'Does not know'	87	16%	246	36%	33	22%
'Would not change workplace'	383	72%	159	23%	15	10%
Total	532		688		149	

Source: Authors' own editing

Based on the analysis the conclusion can be drawn that those employees who are loyal to their workplace are more likely to stay there, while those who do not feel themselves loyal to their current workplace are more likely to change their job. However, the number of hesitant employees – described with moderate loyalty – is high.

Variance analysis has been applied to examine the relationship between the intention to change job as a categorized variable and the level of loyalty *(Table 8)*.

**TABLE 8. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LOYALTY AND INTENTION TO CHANGE JOB**

Categories	N	Amount	Mean	Variance
Would change workplace	446	1260	2,825112	1,434514
Does not know	366	1206	3,295082	1,227757
Would not change workplace	557	2407	4,321364	1,114165

Variance analysis						
Factors	SS	df	MS	F	p-value	F crit.
Between groups	589,4324459	2	294,7162	235,985	9,32561E-89	3,002312
Within groups	1705,965655	1366	1,248877			
Total	2295,398101	1368				

Source: Authors' own editing

The obtained p-value is <0.05, therefore, in case of intention to change job, the averages can be significantly separated from each other, showing that there is a difference, the averages are not equal. As a result of correlation analysis, the relationship between the two factors – loyalty and intention to change jobs – is stronger than average (k -.5285), its correlation is significant, as the p-value is below 0.05, and $|t| = 23.01$, i.e. $|t| \geq 1.833$; i.e. $|t| \geq tp$ is satisfied. There is a moderate correlation between the two factors of the relationship between intention to change job and loyalty, which is visualized in *Figure 1*.

FIGURE 1. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LOYALTY AND INTENTION TO CHANGE JOB
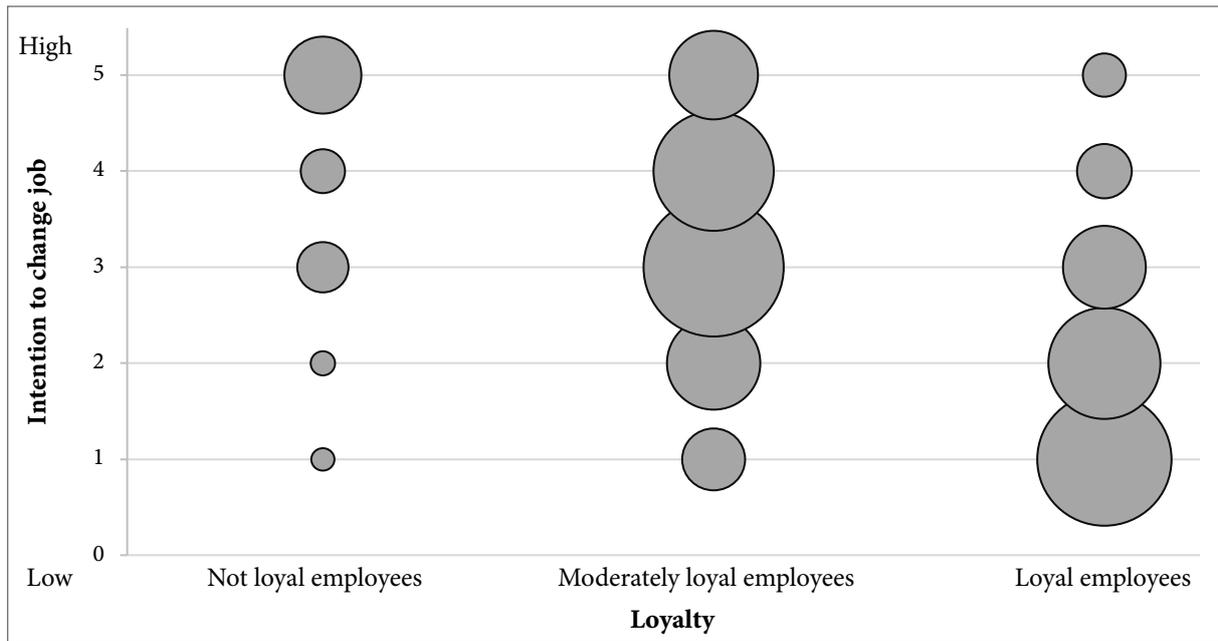
Source: Authors' own editing

There is a moderate correlation between loyalty and the intention to change jobs. The more loyal employees are, the less they want to change jobs in the given sample. Therefore, 'Hypothesis 2' has been accepted, and the following thesis has been formulated.

Thesis 2. Employees with higher level of loyalty do not intend to change job.

It might be interpreted that employees with higher level of loyalty want to stay at their current workplace, consequently loyalty might be considered as a good predictor of retention.

Exploration of relationship between loyalty and HRM practices and organizational characteristics

Employees' perceptions in choosing a workplace have been investigated by questions about organizational characteristics, HRM practices, the tasks and about the team *(Table 9)*.

TABLE 9. IMPORTANCE OF ORGANIZATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS
IN LOYALTY AND INTENTION TO CHANGE JOBS

Categories	Organizational characteristics	Loyalty		Intention to change job		Overall		
		Mean	Ranking	Mean	Ranking	Mean	SD	Ranking
Team	A team that one can easily fit into	4,44	1.	4,30	2.	4,32	0,927	1.
HRM practices	Wage and remuneration system	4,35	2.	4,32	1.	4,28	0,982	2.
HRM practices	Flexible work schedule	4,22	3.	4,19	3.	4,14	1,101	3.
Task	Diverse, challenging tasks	4,14	4.	3,90	7.	3,98	1,016	4.
Team	Colleagues with professional experience	4,12	5.	3,92	6.	3,97	1,020	5.
HRM practices	Benefit system	3,98	7.	3,94	5.	3,92	1,123	6.
HRM practices	Equal opportunities	4,01	6.	3,88	8.	3,91	1,183	7.
Organization	Distance from residence of living	3,85	10.	3,96	4.	3,88	1,151	8.
Organization	Aesthetic, well-equipped, modern work environment	3,87	9.	3,75	9.	3,77	1,031	9.
HRM practices	Occupational health and safety	3,88	8.	3,71	10.	3,71	1,116	10.
HRM practices	Career management and development	3,72	11.	3,52	11.	3,59	1,226	11.
Organization	Reputation and image of the company	3,55	12.	3,26	13.	3,34	1,142	12.
HRM practices	Availability of home office and distant work	3,25	13.	3,42	12.	3,33	1,532	13.
Organization	Green workplace	3,24	14.	3,05	14.	3,16	1,170	14.
Organization	Size of the company	3,04	15.	2,81	15.	2,91	1,156	15.

Source: Authors' own editing

Respondents had to value the items on a 5-point Likert-scale, and they were asked to rank the items according to their perceived importance. When comparing which characteristics are considered important in the workplace of choice by loyal employees and those who intend to change jobs, the following results are obtained.

According to the answers *(Table 9),* the most important factors for respondents were 'A team that one can easily fit into', 'Wage and remuneration system', 'Flexible work schedule', while the 'Availability of home office and distant work', a 'Green workplace ', and the 'Size of the company' are not attractive factors in this aspect. In terms of importance, there is no difference between loyalty and intention to leave, as in both cases the same organizational characteristics are the first three places, the team, the wage and remuneration system and working time flexibility. From the values obtained, it can be seen, that while 'Diverse, challenging tasks' are important for loyal employees as ranked in the 4th place, the same factor is in the 7th place for respondents who are considering changing jobs. However, the 'Distance from residence of living' is more important for respondents with intention to leave than for loyal employees.

Authors have examined whether there was difference between the judgements of each factor based on the age groups. Therefore, ANOVA test has been applied and significant differences have been found in case of the following factors at the level of 0.05 significance: 'Wage and remuneration system' (F: 2.392 sign .067), 'Career management and development' (F: 2.264 sign .079), 'Benefit system' (F: 1.071 sign .36), 'Flexible work schedule' (F:2.305 sign .075), 'Availability of home office and distant work' (F:4.036 sign .007) and 'A team that one can easily fit into' (F: 3.16 sign .024).

Based on the average values, it could be concluded that 'Career management and development' is getting less important with age, as being the most important for Generation Z and less important for Baby boomers. Similar results had been found regarding the 'Availability of home office and distant work', 'Flexible work schedule', 'A team that one can easily fit into' and 'Wage and remuneration system', while they are important for generations Z, Y and X, they are less important for the Baby boomer generation.

Relationship between generational groups and the perceived HRM practices

When further deploying the ranking results according to the generational groups of respondents, the following results emerged *(Table 10)*. Respondents have been asked to rank HRM practices according to their perceived importance when choosing a workplace.

TABLE 10. RANKING THE IMPORTANCE OF ORGANIZATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS WHEN CHOOSING A WORKPLACE ACCORDING TO GENERATIONAL GROUPS

Categories	Organizational characteristics	Ranking results								
	Generation	Baby boomer		X		Y		Z		All ages
	Born	before 1960		between 1961–1979		between 1980–1999		after 2000		
		Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Rank	Mean
Team	A team that one can easily fit into	4,20	1.	4,22	1.	4,35	2.	4,42	2.	1.	4,32
HRM practices	Wage and remuneration system	3,80	4.	4,06	2.	4,41	1.	4,24	1.	2.	4,28
HRM practices	Flexible work schedule	3,10	11.	4,06	3.	4,18	3.	4,31	3.	3.	4,14
Task	Diverse, challenging tasks	3,55	6.	3,90	6.	4,03	4.	3,96	4.	4.	3,98
Team	Colleagues with professional experience	3,95	2.	3,99	4.	3,98	6.	3,93	6.	5.	3,97
HRM practices	Benefit system	3,25	9.	3,84	8.	3,99	5.	3,89	5.	6.	3,92
HRM practices	Equal opportunities	3,50	7.	3,87	7.	3,90	7.	4,09	7.	7.	3,91
Organization	Distance from residence of living	3,85	3.	3,95	5.	3,85	8.	3,85	8.	8.	3,88
Organization	Aesthetic, well-equipped, modern work environment	3,50	8.	3,77	10.	3,77	10.	3,84	10.	9.	3,77
HRM practices	Occupational health and safety	3,80	5.	3,79	9.	3,67	11.	3,67	11.	10.	3,71
HRM practices	Career management and development	2,70	14.	3,14	13.	3,79	9.	3,85	9.	11.	3,59
Organization	Reputation and image of the company	2,85	13.	3,38	11.	3,34	13.	3,27	13.	12.	3,34
HRM practices	Availability of home office and distant work	2,00	15.	3,10	14.	3,50	12.	3,22	12.	13.	3,33
Organization	Green workplace	3,25	10.	3,25	12.	3,11	14.	3,18	14.	14.	3,16
Organization	Size of the company	2,95	12.	2,98	15.	2,89	15.	2,84	15.	15.	2,91

Source: Authors' own editing

Regarding the preferences of the various generational groups in choosing workplace 'A team that one can easily fit in' is in the first place for Baby boomers and Generation X and on the second places for Gen Y and Z. 'Wage and remuneration system' is more important for Generation Y and Z as ranked on the first place and for Generation X as their representatives ranked it on the second place, while for Baby boomers it is ranked only on the fourth place. For the Baby Boomer generation, in addition to the social expectations towards the team and colleagues, distance from the place of living has a higher average value than for the other generations. 'Flexible work schedule' is only in 11th place for them, while it is 3rd in the order of importance for all other generations.

Variance analysis has been applied to examine the relationship between generational groups as a categorized variable and the mean of the perceived importance of HRM practices and organizational characteristics *(Table 11)*.

TABLE 11. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GENERATIONS AND AVERAGE IMPORTANCE OF ORGANIZATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

Generational groups	N	Amount	Mean	Variance
Born before 1960	20	67	3,35	0,249298
Born between 1961–1979	406	1496,662	3,686359	0,481179
Born between 1980–1999	783	2961,91	3,782771	0,360658
Born after 2000	160	603,2	3,77	0,376844

Variance analysis						
Factors	SS	df	MS	F	p-value	F crit.
Between groups	5,73113	3	1,910377	4,815034	0,002437	2,611422
Within groups	541,5672	1365	0,396753			
Total	547,2983	1368				

Source: Authors' own editing

As the obtained p-value is <0.05, therefore, it can be concluded that the population averages can be significantly separated from each other in the case of the four generational groups. The averages are not equal, thus there is a difference, consequently 'Hypothesis 3' is accepted, and the following thesis has been formulated.

Thesis 3. *Employees' generational group determines which HRM practices*
employees consider important when choosing a workplace.

Relationship between generational groups and practices of onboarding as perceived by employees

The study also intends to highlight the aspect of onboarding practices as perceived by respondents. The results regarding the importance of onboarding information and its channels are presented in *Table 12*.

TABLE 12. IMPORTANCE OF ONBOARDING PRACTICES AND INFORMATION
AS PERCEIVED BY EMPLOYEES

Onboarding factors	Ranking of importance (% of respondents)					Mean	Std Deviation
	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.		
Direct supervisor and the information received from them	45.94	28.7	17.16	6.06	2.16	4,10	1,03
Direct colleagues and the information received from them	31.26	35.13	26.51	5.55	1.53	3,89	0,96
Workplace mentor and the information received from them	18.04	27.75	37.03	10.88	5.91	3,42	1,09
Written documentation and materials of the organization	2.33	4.45	12.56	47.47	33.16	1,95	0,92
Information received from HR department	2.04	3.94	6.72	30.02	57.26	1,63	0,92

Source: Authors' own editing

Results show that 45.94% of employees consider the role of direct supervisors, and the information received from them as the most important for their successful integration, followed by direct colleagues and their information (31.26%). Information received from the HR department is considered the least important in onboarding as being ranked on the 5th place. Similarly, written documentation is not perceived as supporting new hires with 47.47% ranked in fourth place.

To examine how generational groups evaluate onboarding practices, respondents were asked to rate the importance and usefulness on a scale from 1 to 5 *(Table 13)*.

TABLE 13. IMPORTANCE OF ONBOARDING FACTORS BY GENERATIONAL GROUPS

Onboarding factors	Ranking of importance (avg of responses)				
Generation	Baby boomer	X	Y	Z	All age groups
Born	before 1960	between 1961–1979	between 1980–1999	after 2000	
Direct supervisor and the information received from them	3,70	4,07	4,12	4,18	4,10
Direct colleagues and the information received from them	4,05	3,98	3,88	3,70	3,89
Workplace mentor and the information received from them	3,60	3,29	3,46	3,50	3,42
Written documentation and materials of the organization	2,00	2,13	1,88	1,87	1,95
Information received from HR department	1,65	1,53	1,66	1,76	1,95

Source: Authors' own editing

Results highlight the overall importance of direct supervisors' role during onboarding, especially for members of Generation X, Y and Z. It is followed by the information and support received from direct colleagues, which is valued by the Baby boomer generation the most. In terms of relying on mentors, there is no difference between generations. Written documents and information provided by HR are perceived as the least important and useful during onboarding. From the results obtained, it can be concluded that personal relationships are in the first place for all age groups. The supervisors' role is more important for younger generations, while respondents consider colleagues' role more important as age increases.

It has been examined whether there was a difference between the judgements of each factor based on the age groups. The ANOVA test found significant differences in case of the following factors at the level of 0.05 significance: 'Direct colleagues and the information received from them' (F: 3.508 sign .015), 'Written document and materials of the organization' (F: 6.982 sign .0012), 'Information received from HR department' (F: 2,763 sign .041), 'Workplace mentor and the information received from them' (F:2.810 sign .038). The ANOVA test did not find significant differences based on the factor at level of 0.05 significance in connection with 'Direct supervisor and the information received from them'.

To examine the relationship between the respondents' generation and the assessment of the importance of the onboarding activities, correlation test has been performed. The correlation between generational group and direct supervisor's role in onboarding (|t| 1.6685) is not significant, since |t| <1.833. The one-sample t-test did not reveal a significant difference between the variable sample mean of belonging to a specific generational group and the respondents' perception of their direct workplace supervisor in the onboarding process (with a significance level of .005). In the context of the relationship between generational affiliation, and direct colleagues (|t| 3.1568), the mentor (|t| 2.1940), the HR department (|t| 2.6750), and the organization's written documents (|t| 3.8566), the investigations show that that the correlations are significant, since the p-value is below 0.05, and |t| ≥ 1.833 i.e. |t| ≥ tp is satisfied. According to the one-sample t-test, generation differs significantly (at a significance level of p = 0.05) from the perceived role that is played during onboarding by the colleagues, the work mentor, the HR department and the written materials of the organization.

Summarizing the results of analyses on onboarding processes, it can be concluded that 'Hypothesis 4' has been partially accepted, and the following thesis is formulated.

> ***Thesis 4.*** *Employees' generational group does not determine the importance of the role of direct supervisor, but determines the importance of direct colleagues, work mentor, HR department and the written documents of the organization as practices of onboarding.*

It can be interpreted in the following way. Although the role of direct supervisor during onboarding is ranked in first place, there is no significant difference according to generational affiliation in evaluating its importance. On the other hand, the importance of onboarding processes depends on the generational group in case of direct colleagues, work mentor, HR department and the written documents of the organization.

Summary of results

As a result of testing the defined hypotheses, the following Hypothesis-Thesis table has been concluded *(Table 14)*.

TABLE 14. HYPOTHESIS-THESIS TABLE

Hypotheses	Acceptance / Rejection	Theses
Employees' loyalty and the intention to change jobs are related to the personal characteristics of employees (gender, education, position, generation).	Partially accepted	Employees' loyalty and intention to change jobs do not depend on their gender and education level but depend on respondents' age and position.
Employees with higher levels of loyalty do not intend to change job.	Accepted	Employees with higher level of loyalty do not intend to change job.
Employees' generational group determines which HRM practices employees consider important when choosing a workplace.	Accepted	Employees' generational group determines which HRM practices employees consider important when choosing a workplace.
Employees' generational group determines what practices of onboarding employees consider important at a workplace.	Partially accepted	Employees' generational group does not determine the importance of the role of direct supervisor, but determines the importance of direct colleagues, work mentor, HR department and the written documents of the organization as practices of onboarding.

Source: Authors' own editing

Conclusion

Current study has examined how characteristics of the sample relate to loyalty, intention to leave and to HRM practices (Wang et al., 2020). Since in recent times four generations work at the same time at workplaces (Bejtkovský, 2016; Knight, 2014), following previous studies (Czeglédi, & Juhász, 2014; Kozák, 2023; Rudolph et al., 2021), current research also suggests that employers might consider generational preferences not only in the HRM practices of recruitment, onboarding, retention and communication. Based on generational preferences (Bencsik et al., 2016) in workplace choice explored in current study, it is advisable for HR practitioners to consider these

differences in developing brand image and targeting various segments of labor market (Csehné Papp et al., 2018).

The factors of team, remuneration and flexibility of working time are considered the most principal factors for employees supporting their loyalty and intention to stay. Therefore, it is recommended that organizations investigate employees' preferences regarding retention, intention to leave and loyalty (Otto, & Mamatoglu, 2015; Veres, & Malzenicky, 2006).

In contrast to literature about onboarding manuals (Godinho et al., 2023), current research emphasized the perceived usefulness of supervisors' and colleagues' support. Therefore, organizations might utilize the scarce resources on the development of leaders' and coworkers' skills for integration of new hires. It might be advisable to find the right balance between written documents and relationship-driven integration. Leaders' role during onboarding might bring a return in retention and lower fluctuation. As studies indicated, lower fluctuation (OECD, 2017; Proudfoot et al., 2009), and better social well-being (Judge et al., 2001; Schaufeli et al., 2009) of employees could support organizational efficiency and competitiveness (Guest, 2017; Peccei et al., 2019).

The limitation of current study is the access-based method of data collection. Therefore, collected data is not representative for organizations in the Hungarian labor market. However, results could supplement the limited existing studies conducted in the Hungarian labor market focusing on the onboarding and integration from the perspective of employees.

Results might support future research in investigating organizational practices of promoting workplace of choice and employees' integration. It might be valuable to contrast current results with employers' practices to study the adaptability of HRM practices to the needs of employees. Results might be considerable for practitioners and decision makers in strategizing HRM in increasing retention, reduction of early fluctuation, improving employee well-being, organizational competitiveness and sustainability of workforce.

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