



Materialistic Thinking and its Mental-Hygienic Implications among Students of Budapest Business School

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Received: 08.01.2015; Accepted: 04.21.2015

Abstract: *Previous research with extrinsic (“materialistic”) and intrinsic (“non-materialistic”) life goals suggest that intrinsic aspirations (e.g. relationships, community service, personal development) are associated with a better functioning, mentally and physically more healthy personality. In this survey 198 undergraduate students of BBS were examined by the Aspiration Index questionnaire in order to determine the pattern of extrinsic and intrinsic life goals in their personality, to find relationship between personal background-factors and these aspirations, and to compare the attitudes of the young population to a less homogenous reference group. Compared with the reference group, young women of BBS find all goals more important, except for social commitment and general intrinsic aspiration. Both BBS female and male students were found more materialistic. The materialistic attitudes are significantly stronger among the students of business programs, but not among the students of humanities (andragogy). In conclusion, the students of BBS tend to accept more extrinsic life goals than members of the external reference group. These attitudes are influenced by the generational properties of this young population and by the educational program they attend (business or humanities). The extrinsic attitudes do not serve the individuals’ personal development or happiness; neither do they serve the interests of society. The new paradigms of the future business world are not yet interiorized.*

Keywords: aspiration index, students of business and humanities, extrinsic and intrinsic goals, materialistic thinking, mental health

Not only modern psychology but also myths and ancient religions emphasize the dangers of materialistic thinking. Different societies have warned their members: those who find external materialistic values (e.g. wealth, might, possession, beauty, fame, etc.) too important in their

personal life may have to face unhappiness and loneliness. Christianity suggests that rich or materialistic people cannot gain admission to heaven or may have difficulties in salvation.

Due to the technical development of the last century, theoretically every human on Earth could enjoy a secure and comfortable life (Kasser, 2006). Despite this fact, at the beginning of the 21st century, enormous and unprecedented social differences exist between countries, societies and people. Considering the ecological footprint of the nations, the “western” consuming world uses at least 3 to 5 times more resources (hectares per capita) than the amount they would be apportioned to, if the resources were distributed equally. Furthermore, they use 15 to 20 times more resources than the poorest countries (Venetoulis et al., 2004).

As Kasser points out, the hidden message of consuming societies is that material benefits are essential; only possession and consummation can serve one’s personal goals and happiness. These classical materialistic goals are consumption, the possession of prestigious objects or social status, attractive appearance, fame and power (Kasser & Ryan, 1993, 1996). In turn, psychological research has repeatedly confirmed that materialistic orientation and the dominance of “extrinsic” life goals do not serve either the individuals’ needs or their psychological, mental or physical health. The dominance of these extrinsic goals in one’s value system is often associated with depression, anxiety disorders, the feeling of loneliness and uselessness, dependencies and with less satisfying interpersonal relationships (e.g. Kasser & Sheldon, 2000; Kasser, 2006; Pikó & Keresztes, 2006).

As an alternative, the dominance of non-materialistic values or “intrinsic” aspirations in one’s personal goal system is often associated by a higher ordered, more mature personality functioning and a better general health condition. These intrinsic life goals or aspirations are often linked with love (to love and to be loved), community service and affiliation (to serve others, to make the world a better place, family, friendship, relationships), personal development (learning, understanding the world better, self-actualization) and spirituality (religious feelings, turning towards transcendence, the honor of life and living creatures) (Kasser & Ryan, 1993, 1996).

In Kasser’s model extrinsic and intrinsic aspirations together construct a personal goal system (Kasser & Ryan, 1993, 1996). Their relative dominance determines one’s materialistic or non-materialistic orientation, which may have an impact on the person’s mental, psychological and physical health. The individuals’ orientation together determines the dominant attitudes of a society. These attitudes significantly interact not only with the processes of the business world (production, commerce, consuming habits, occupation, employment, time-management etc.) but also with attitudes to life (work, reproduction, health, value of life etc.).

Modern theorists often emphasize the necessity of a paradigmatic change in economy; e.g., in order to maintain a high quality life, they suggest focusing on the personal happiness of the individuals and peoples, instead of forcing economic development and maximizing the profit (e.g. Costanza, 2013). This idea is supported by the previously mentioned psychological findings. In my survey I examined the dominant aspirations of the future experts of the business world.

Aims, Hypotheses

The shortened version of the Aspiration Index (AI) (Martos et al., 2006) measures the importance of life goals: materialistic and non-materialistic values are labeled as “Extrinsic (E)” and “Intrinsic (I)” aspirations. Intrinsic life goals are in a strong positive correlation with indicators of physical and psychological well-being, while the dominance of extrinsic aspirations is associated by weaker mental health. The pattern of personal aspirations is influenced by social and cultural factors; e.g., in our consuming society extrinsic aspirations are accepted and encouraged. Beyond this general cultural impact other socio-demographic factors may also play a determining role in the personal motivation system, such as age, gender, the level of education, and religiosity (Kasser, 2006).

In this survey I examine not only these factors, but other background variables (childhood habitat, parents’ level of education, type of secondary school and the college programs they attend) as modifiers of personal aspirations among the students of BBS. I also examine the relationship between students’ subjective physical and psychological well-being and E/I aspirations. Finally I compare the aspiration pattern of our students with controls, which represent a wilder age group and more varied educational levels.

I assume that the results of the BBS students confirm previous findings: positive personality functioning, subjective life-satisfaction, health and happiness depend on the acceptance of non-materialistic values and intrinsic life-goals. I also assume that in comparison with the control group, our students are more materialistic because of their business-oriented educational programs and their young age.

Methods

Participants

The survey was carried out in 2013 among the students of BBS. 198 undergraduate students (male: 23%; female: 77%; age: 20.4 yrs \pm 1.3) filled in the questionnaire. 79% of the students attend business courses (tourism, catering or commerce), 21% study humanities, attending courses in andragogy.

The Aspiration Index

Life goals were measured by the shortened Hungarian version of the Aspiration Index (Martos et al., 2006), which is based on Kasser’s original Aspiration Index (Kasser & Ryan, 1996). Its 14 items construct seven types of goals and three subscales (aspirations) as follows.

Table 1. The structure of the Aspiration Index questionnaire

Aspirations	Goals	Example (each goal contains 2 of them)
Extrinsic	Financial Success	<i>To be financially successful.</i>
	Social Recognition	<i>To be known by many people.</i>
	Attractive Appearance	<i>To have an image that others find appealing.</i>
Intrinsic	Self-Acceptance	<i>To know and accept who I really am.</i>
	Affiliation	<i>To have deep enduring relationships.</i>
Health	Community Feeling	<i>To work to make the world a better place.</i>
	Physical Fitness	<i>To be relatively free from sickness.</i>

Aspirations motivate individuals' behavior and modify their emotional, behavioral and cognitive self-regulation; consequently, these goals also contribute to the subjective physical and mental well-being of individuals. The AI assesses individuals' personal goal- or motivation system: it distinguishes between Extrinsic (E) and Intrinsic (I) aspirations. Extrinsic aspirations are rather materialistic, as they are oriented to external rewards (e.g. money, reputation, prestige, praise, higher social status, attractive appearance, etc.), while the non-materialistic intrinsic goals serve e.g. personal development, community service, affiliation or good interpersonal relationships. As mentioned above, the dominance of the non-materialistic intrinsic values supports a healthy personality structure and functioning, but excessive extrinsic aspirations may hinder satisfying real human needs. In a consuming culture more extrinsic or materialistic values are offered and accepted, and this fact endangers not only the well-being of people, but also the ecological systems, and ultimately, the whole planet (Kasser, 2006; Kasser & Kanner, 2004).

The AI also contains the "Health" subscale, which expresses the aspiration for physical health. The Health subscale was originally supposed to correlate with Intrinsic aspirations (Kasser & Ryan, 1996), but later investigations revealed its significant associations with extrinsic goals (Martos et al., 2006). Health aspirations may be linked with the existence of aspirations or goals generally.

The 14 self-descriptive items of AI were scored 1 to 5 (1 = least important; 5 = most important), and the summarized score of the seven goal-types and three aspirations were calculated. The aspiration index (ai) was also calculated following this formula:

$$ai = \sum I - \sum E.$$

This formula "ai" expresses the difference between the person's intrinsic and extrinsic aspirations, so it demonstrates individuals' dominant attitudes in their personal goal system.

Personal data

Socio-demographic variables and other personal beliefs were also asked in order to reveal background variables which may also influence individuals' personal aspiration systems. Participants were asked to indicate their gender, age, childhood location (Budapest, city or town, village), secondary school studies (grammar school or vocational school), the college program they attend (business or humanities) and the highest educational degree their parents have achieved (primary, vocational or secondary school, college or doctoral degree). They also had to estimate their first salary after getting their degree and 5 years later. Finally they had to score 1 to 4 the importance of religion in their personal life, and their perceived health status 1 to 5. General personal satisfaction with life and personal happiness variables were scored 1 to 10.

Procedure

Descriptive statistics characterize the mean \pm standard deviation (SD) values of the main variables. Independent sample t-tests were carried out in order to compare answers of students of business and andragogy, students arriving from different secondary schools and to determine gender differences. I have found significant differences between the goal systems and personal attitudes of BBS students and control groups of previous research using one sample t-tests. ANOVA was performed in order to reveal differences among groups arriving from different childhood environments (parental level of education; habitat). Correlation coefficients were also calculated among the main variables (E, I, H aspirations, goal types and personal data). Significant differences were accepted if $p < 0.05$. The statistics were calculated applying "StatSoft Statistica 10" software.

Results

Description of the sample

198 undergraduate students have answered the questionnaire. Male: 45; female: 153; students of business: 157; students of andragogy: 41. Table 2 demonstrates their mean \pm SD and the minimum/maximum values of their answers.

Students represent a young sample. The most significant SD values were observed in connection with their salary expectations. The data suggest that students' extrinsic and intrinsic goals and aspirations are both elevated. As we will see it later, compared with a less homogenous sample, the elevated level of goals and aspirations is more significant among women.

Table 2. Mean \pm standard deviation (SD), minimum and maximum values of the respondents

N=198	Variable	Mean \pm SD	Min.	Max.
	Age (yrs)	20.37 \pm 1.25	18	25
	Salary as a beginner (x1000 HUF)	169.75 \pm 79.64	30	800
	Salary 5 years later (x1000 HUF)	297.66 \pm 174.54	80	1000
	Importance of religiosity (1-4)	1.68 \pm 0.73	1	4
Subjective personal data	Subjective general health (1-5)	3.73 \pm 0.83	1	5
	Subjective general well-being (1-10)	7.44 \pm 1.51	2	10
	Subjective general happiness (1-10)	7.53 \pm 1.63	2	10
	Financial Success (2-10)	7.75 \pm 1.34	3	10
Extrinsic goals	Social Recognition (2-10)	5.36 \pm 1.62	2	10
	Attractive Appearance (2-10)	7.52 \pm 1.37	3	10
	Self-Acceptance (2-10)	8.91 \pm 1.06	5	10
Intrinsic goals	Affiliation (2-10)	9.43 \pm 0.90	6	10
	Community Feeling (2-10)	7.70 \pm 1.48	3	10
	Physical Fitness (2-10)	8.99 \pm 1.19	4	10
Aspirations	Σ Extrinsic aspirations: E (6-30)	20.62 \pm 3.31	12	30
	Σ Intrinsic aspirations: I (6-30)	26.05 \pm 2.65	18	30
	Health aspiration (2-10) aspiration index (I-E)	8.99 \pm 1.19 5.42 \pm 3.73	4 -6	10 16

Gender differences

Significant differences were revealed between men and women. As Table 3 demonstrates, men would like to get significantly more money and would like to achieve a higher salary rise in the first years of their career. Young men at BBS seem to be more ambitious than women.

Generally our students cannot be characterized by deep religiosity, but men seem to be influenced by religious ideas more than women. In comparison with men, previous surveys found attractive appearance more important and intrinsic aspiration dominant among women, but extrinsic values are more frequent among men (Martos et al., 2006). The students of BBS do not differ from each other in these parameters. As we will see it later, our male students pay more attention to their appearance, and women are more materialistic than representatives of the control group.

Affiliation, health aspiration and higher "ai" (aspiration index, which expresses the dominance of intrinsic values within the personal goal system) are reported to be typical female characteristics (Martos et al., 2006). I have found the same pattern in my sample.

Subjective perceived parameters (health, satisfaction, happiness) did not differ among men and women.

Table 3. Gender differences

Variables	Mean \pm SD (men) N=45	Mean \pm SD (women) N=153	t	p
First salary (1000 HUF)	208.29 \pm	157.55 \pm 49.06	-3.82	0.00
	130.84			
Salary 5 years later (1000 HUF)	390.68 \pm	267.78 \pm 117.35	-4.25	0.00
	268.84			
Importance of religiosity (1-4)	1.87 \pm 0.81	1.62 \pm 0.70	-2.00	0.05
Subjective general health (1-5)	3.87 \pm 0.81	3.69 \pm 0.83	-1.29	0.20 n.s.
Subjective general well-being (1-10)	7.62 \pm 1.50	7.39 \pm 1.51	-0.92	0.36 n.s.
Subjective general happiness (1-10)	7.51 \pm 1.71	7.53 \pm 1.60	0.06	0.95 n.s.
Financial Success (2-10)	7.91 \pm 1.66	7.70 \pm 1.30	-0.90	0.37 n.s.
Social Recognition (2-10)	5.67 \pm 1.87	5.27 \pm 1.54	-1.45	0.15 n.s.
Attractive Appearance (2-10)	7.36 \pm 1.52	7.56 \pm 1.32	0.89	0.38 n.s.
Self-Acceptance (2-10)	8.71 \pm 1.32	8.97 \pm 0.97	1.43	0.16 n.s.
Affiliation (2-10)	9.09 \pm 1.14	9.54 \pm 0.79	2.98	0.00
Community Feeling (2-10)	7.58 \pm 1.82	7.74 \pm 1.37	0.64	0.52 n.s.
Physical Fitness (2-10)	8.64 \pm 1.40	9.10 \pm 1.10	2.28	0.02
Σ Extrinsic aspirations: E (6-30)	20.93 \pm 3.73	20.53 \pm 3.19	-0.72	0.47 n.s.
Σ Intrinsic aspirations: I (6-30)	25.38 \pm 3.50	26.24 \pm 2.33	1.93	0.05 n.s.
Health aspiration (2-10)	8.64 \pm 1.40	9.10 \pm 1.10	2.28	0.02
aspiration index (I-E)	4.44 \pm 3.97	5.71 \pm 3.62	2.02	0.04

Significance level was determined as $p < 0.05$. Significantly higher scores are indicated with **bold** letters.

Comparison of students attending business or andragogy courses

Students of BBS attend different educational programs. Most of them attend business courses: tourism, catering or commerce (N = 157), but some respondents study humanities (andragogy, N = 41). I assumed that students of andragogy have different – less materialistic – attitudes, and consequently, their personal goal system also differs from the aspirations of the business students.

As Table 4 demonstrates, my original assumptions were correct. Students of humanities are less materialistic: intrinsic goals (community, affiliation and self-acceptance) and intrinsic aspiration scores were significantly higher among them. Only “attractive appearance”, which is an extrinsic goal, seems to be more important for andragogy students. As most of them are women (90%), this fact can explain this attitude. Health

aspirations and the significance of physical fitness also seem to be more important for andragogy students.

This pattern of differences between the two groups suggests that business students accept and follow more materialistic attitudes than students of humanities. This can be explained by their educational program, which focuses on the common paradigms of the business world: material benefit, the maximization of profit and the enhancement of consumption. The type of educational programs, as well as students' personal predispositions can explain the extrinsic orientation of business students. Original materialistic attitudes can also determine the students' career choices. As I could not reveal any difference in childhood or other personal parameters between the two groups (parental level of education, secondary school type or childhood habitat), I think that educational factors determine the extrinsic aspirations of business students. The dominance of extrinsic aspirations does not serve the real needs of people, so education is responsible for the long lasting mental and psychological well-being of our students and the business world. But as higher education "only" transmits and reflects values and expectations of our society, the entire social environment should change paradigms in order to achieve a healthier, friendlier and less materialistic world.

Table 4. Comparison of the attitudes of business and andragogy students

Variables	Mean \pm SD (business; N=157)	Mean \pm SD (andragogy; N=41)	t	p
First salary (1000 HUF)	173.72 \pm 85.58	154.61 \pm 48.97	1.32	0.19 n.s.
Salary 5 years later (1000 HUF)	314.17 \pm 185.39	235.53 \pm 106.20	2.50	0.01
Importance of religiosity (1-4)	1.67 \pm 0.74	1.71 \pm 0.72	-0.30	0.76 n.s.
Subjective general health (1-5)	3.75 \pm 0.78	3.63 \pm 0.99	0.81	0.42 n.s.
Subjective general well-being (1-10)	7.44 \pm 1.46	7.44 \pm 1.69	0.00	1.00 n.s.
Subjective general happiness (1-10)	7.53 \pm 1.62	7.51 \pm 1.65	0.06	0.95 n.s.
Financial Success (2-10)	7.73 \pm 1.43	7.83 \pm 1.22	-0.42	0.67 n.s.
Social Recognition (2-10)	5.30 \pm 1.60	5.59 \pm 1.70	-1.00	0.32 n.s.
Attractive Appearance (2-10)	7.43 \pm 1.35	7.83 \pm 1.41	-1.66	0.10 tend.
Self-Acceptance (2-10)	8.84 \pm 1.08	9.17 \pm 0.97	-1.78	0.08 tend.
Affiliation (2-10)	9.35 \pm 0.96	9.76 \pm 0.54	-2.60	0.01
Community Feeling (2-10)	7.59 \pm 1.49	8.15 \pm 1.33	-2.18	0.03
Physical Fitness (2-10)	8.89 \pm 1.24	9.41 \pm 0.84	-2.58	0.01
Σ Extrinsic aspirations: E (6-30)	20.46 \pm 3.34	21.24 \pm 3.18	-1.35	0.18 n.s.
Σ Intrinsic aspirations: I (6-30)	25.78 \pm 2.74	27.07 \pm 2.04	-2.83	0.01
Health aspiration (2-10) aspiration index (I-E)	8.89 \pm 1.24	9.41 \pm 0.84	-2.58	0.01
	5.32 \pm 3.86	5.83 \pm 3.21	-0.78	0.44 n.s.

Significance level was determined as $p < 0.05$. Two variables (Attractive Appearance and Self-Acceptance) were different only at the level of tendency ($p < 0.1$). Significantly higher scores are indicated with **bold** letters.

Comparison of students arriving from different childhood environment

Students were grouped according to their childhood location: Budapest (capital), big city, small town and village. Another factor of grouping was the highest educational level their parents represent: primary school, secondary school, vocational school, college or university and doctoral (PhD) level. Using ANOVA, no significant differences were found among these groups.

Secondary school studies were also categorized. I have compared scores of students arriving from grammar schools and from vocational secondary schools. ANOVA did not reveal significant differences between the two groups. Differences were observed only in the level of tendency ($p < 0.1$). Those who obtained their maturity exam in a vocational secondary school tend to have parents with lower educational attainments ($M_{\text{grammar school}} \pm SD = 3.64 \pm 0.78$; $M_{\text{vocational school}} \pm SD = 3.4 \pm 0.65$; $t = 1.82$; $p = 0.07$), and they tend to feel deeper commitment for community values ($M_{\text{grammar school}} \pm SD = 7.59 \pm 1.46$; $M_{\text{vocational school}} \pm SD = 8.07 \pm 1.47$; $t = -1.90$; $p = 0.06$). This pattern suggests that childhood socialization factors do not play a crucial role in the aspiration structure of young adults. As I have mentioned above, higher educational studies (business oriented or not) may have a deeper influence on it than anything else.

Relationship between aspirations, goals and background variables

Correlation coefficients were determined in order to identify associations among variables. All correlations indicated below are significant at $p < 0.05$ level. Usually the Pearson r -values are not high, but significant. As I have measured a sample of 198 participants, the results can be taken seriously.

Results suggest that personal goals, such as self-acceptance ($r = 0.16$) and health ($r = 0.16$), become more important with age. This is a remarkable result, because even though I could examine only a narrow age group (18-25 years), my results correspond to findings published in scholarly literature. Literature data also suggest that personal goals and aspirations may change by age. Adolescents' dominant aspirations are rather extrinsic, and these goals are linked with their subjective well-being (Szondy, 2004).

Ambitions are not independent from the place of growing up. Although initial salary expectations seem to be independent from socializational factors, those who were living in bigger cities or in Budapest during their childhood expect significantly higher salaries after 5 years of early career ($r = 0.15$). Living in a complex environment may suggest more diverse opportunities for young people.

Extrinsic goals and aspirations are not independent from each other. Students who have higher salary expectations after 5 years of career express more extrinsic goals, e.g. financial success ($r = 0.16$) or social

recognition ($r = 0.22$), and their aspiration index is also significantly lower ($r = -0.16$). These people whose financial expectations are elevated after a short (but successful) career report significantly higher subjective personal health ($r = 0.15$) and satisfaction ($r = 0.21$) values.

I think it is important to remark that these materialistic aspirations, goals and personal parameters are not linked with the subjective personal happiness value. Materialistic students may feel satisfaction, but not happiness. Both extrinsic ($r = 0.15$) and intrinsic ($r = 0.27$) aspirations may cause general satisfaction with their life, but not happiness. Happiness seems to be independent from all these materialistic values.

Subjective personal happiness is independent from all extrinsic goals and aspirations. Happiness is basically associated with intrinsic or non-materialistic values. E.g. happiness correlates with religiosity ($r = 0.21$), community feeling ($r = 0.25$), self-acceptance ($r = 0.26$) and intrinsic aspirations ($r = 0.25$). This finding is well-known in literature (Kasser, 2006), and my results confirm previous results.

Religious feelings are strong indicators of non-materialistic thinking. Those who take religious ideas seriously report more personal satisfaction ($r = 0.19$) and happiness ($r = 0.21$). They find community service more important ($r = 0.23$), and generally they can be characterized by more intrinsic aspirations ($r = 0.19$). A similar pattern was observed in a Hungarian research performed by Martos and his colleagues (Martos et al., 2006).

Health aspiration correlates with both extrinsic and intrinsic goals. Its correlation with the extrinsic aspirations scale ($r = 0.25$) and with the intrinsic aspirations scale ($r = 0.37$) suggests that any kind of aspiration, motivation, need, and desire can promote health-conscious attitudes and behavior.

Finally I would like to remark that significant correlations between extrinsic and intrinsic goals were also observed. There is also a correlation between the intrinsic aspirations scale and the extrinsic aspirations scale ($r = 0.27$). Of course within-scale correlations are always higher. This fact does not reflect only the psychometrical characteristics of the AI questionnaire. My sample consists of young adults, and generally they have more goals and aspirations, both extrinsic and intrinsic. In the next section I will compare the results of my students with the control group.

Comparison of the attitudes of BBS students and those of an external control group

I assumed that students of BBS tend to be more materialistic than the general Hungarian population. In order to examine this question, I used a control group whose scores were published previously by Martos (Martos et al., 2006).

Martos constructed and determined the psychometrical characteristics of the Aspiration Index in Hungarian. During this procedure he measured hundreds of people using the questionnaire. Males' and females' mean \pm SD values were published, and I could use these data as reference values in one-sample t-tests.

Characteristics of the control group

The reference group I used is not a representative sample, but it is not as homogeneous as the group of my students. 341 persons (male: 164; age: 33.1 yrs \pm 14.0; female: 178; age: 33.0 \pm 15.2) filled in the AI. The youngest person was 14; the eldest person was 89 years old. Their highest educational level shows the following distribution: 12.8 % - primary school; 59.3 % - secondary school; 26.2 % - college or university; 1.7 % did not answer this question. The reference values can be seen in Table 5 below.

Comparison of BGF students' goals and aspirations with the reference values

As Table 5 demonstrates the young adults of BBS differ significantly from the reference group. Especially women tend to be more goal-oriented. They find all extrinsic and intrinsic goals more important, except for "community feeling". Women of BBS feel significantly less urge to serve the society or to make the world a better place. In this comparison both the BBS women's and men's aspiration indexes are lower; consequently the students' personal goal systems are more dominated by materialistic aspirations than those of the reference group. The male students of BBS are more interested in financial success and attractive appearance than the average of the control group, but generally they do not differ from the average men in the reference group.

Female college students tend to be more ambitious and would like to achieve more goals than the average women of the control group. I was interested in whether the business educational program they attend forms their personality in this way, or whether this pattern is characteristic of the young female generation generally. In order to clarify this question, I have selected male and female students of business and andragogy programs, and made the same comparison with the reference group. Students of business programs (both men and women) reproduced the same pattern demonstrated in Table 5 and as discussed above. Andragogy students have produced almost the same pattern, but they were a bit different. Male andragogy students were not more dominated by extrinsic aspiration than the control group, and female andragogy students got higher intrinsic aspiration scores than the average. These differences are all indicated in Table 5.

We can conclude that the female students of BBS seem to be different; they seem to represent new attitudes and a new female-generation. In comparison with the reference group (which contains various age-groups and more variegated educational levels), these young women are more ambitious, would like to experience more and achieve both extrinsic and intrinsic goals. Minimal differences exist among the female students of business and humanities: the latter group does not seem to be so materialistic than business students, but they also have similar aspirations

and desires. This finding underpins the fact that female roles in society have undergone an overwhelming change; consequently, elder and younger women's attitudes and personal goal systems may differ from each other more than those among men.

Table 5. Comparison of all BBS students' goals and aspirations with the reference values

	Variables	Mean \pm SD (BBS)	Reference constant	t	p	
MEN	Financial Success (2-10)	7.91 \pm 1.66	6.92	4.00	0.00	
	Social Recognition (2-10)	5.67 \pm 1.87	5.16	1.82	0.08	
	Attractive Appearance (2-10)	7.36 \pm 1.52	6.22	5.00	0.00	
	Self-Acceptance (2-10)	8.71 \pm 1.32	8.46	1.27	0.21	
	Affiliation (2-10)	9.09 \pm 1.14	8.88	1.22	0.23	
	Community Feeling (2-10)	7.58 \pm 1.82	7.54	0.14	0.89	
	Health aspiration (2-10)	8.64 \pm 1.40	8.26	1.84	0.07	
	Σ Extrinsic aspirations: E (6-30)	20.93 \pm 3.73	21.00	-0.12	0.91	
	Σ Intrinsic aspirations: I (6-30)	25.38 \pm 3.50	24.90	0.92	0.36	
	aspiration index (I-E)*	4.44 \pm 3.97	6.60	-3.64	0.00	
	<i>*This variable doesn't differ from the reference value among students of andragogy.</i>					
WOMEN	Financial Success (2-10)	7.70 \pm 1.30	6.46	11.81	0.00	
	Social Recognition (2-10)	5.27 \pm 1.54	4.70	4.56	0.00	
	Attractive Appearance (2-10)	7.56 \pm 1.32	6.54	9.60	0.00	
	Self-Acceptance (2-10)	8.97 \pm 0.97	8.70	3.41	0.00	
	Affiliation (2-10)	9.54 \pm 0.79	9.24	4.60	0.00	
	Community Feeling (2-10) *	7.74 \pm 1.37	8.02	-2.55	0.00	
	<i>*This variable doesn't differ from the reference value among students of andragogy.</i>					
	Health aspiration (2-10)	9.10 \pm 1.10	8.48	6.96	0.00	
	Σ Extrinsic aspirations: E (6-30)	20.53 \pm 3.19	17.70	10.99	0.00	
	Σ Intrinsic aspirations: I (6-30) *	26.24 \pm 2.33	25.98	1.39	0.17	
	<i>*Compared to the reference group, this variable is significantly elevated among students of andragogy.</i>					
aspiration index (I-E)	5.71 \pm 3.62	8.22	-8.57	0.00		

Significance level was determined as $p < 0.05$. Significantly higher scores are indicated with **bold** letters. *Business students can be characterized by the same pattern of significant differences. Andragogy students' pattern differs minimally from the pattern of all BBS students at the indicated variables. Reference values were published previously by Martos (Martos et al., 2006).

Conclusions

198 undergraduate students of BBS were examined by the Aspiration Index questionnaire in order to determine the pattern of extrinsic (materialistic) and intrinsic (non-materialistic) goals and aspirations in their personality, to find relationships between personal background factors and these goals or aspirations, and to compare the attitudes of the young population to a less homogeneous reference group.

My results suggest that students of BBS are basically goal-oriented persons; they find both extrinsic and intrinsic goals important. Compared with the reference group, the most remarkable differences were observed between BBS female students and the control group women. Young women of BBS find all goals and aspirations more important than women in the reference group, except for social commitment and general intrinsic aspiration. Compared with the reference group, both BBS female and male students were found more materialistic. These materialistic attitudes are more significant among the students of business programs, but not so strong among the students of humanities (andragogy). I think the general goal-oriented attitude is a generational property of this young population, especially among young women, but their materialistic orientation is at least partially the consequence of their educational program which reflects the ideas and paradigms of the modern business world.

In comparison with an external reference group, the BBS students were found more materialistic and, especially women, more goal-oriented. But within the group of BBS students I could reveal more differences in attitudes:

- Men of BBS tend to be more materialistic than women of BBS. Men have higher salary expectations and would like to make a quicker and more successful career than women. Contrarily, women's intrinsic aspirations dominate more their personal goal system, and physical health seems to be more important for them than among men.
- Students of business educational programs tend to be more materialistic than students of humanities (andragogy). Andragogy students' career and salary expectations are not so ambitious either, and they find intrinsic goals more important.
- As I could find only one significant difference among students arriving from different childhood environments (different habitats or different levels of education of their parents or different types of secondary school), I tend to believe that higher educational experiences fundamentally influence young adults' materialistic or non-materialistic attitudes. (Growing up in a bigger city inspires young people for a more ambitious career and a higher salary expectation.)
- Age correlates positively with intrinsic aspirations. "Older" students have more matured attitudes; they find personal development, self-acceptance and health more important than their younger fellows.

- Materialistic parameters are not independent from each other. The association between salary expectations and extrinsic goals (e.g. financial success, fame) are significant. In my sample extrinsic orientation does not exclude subjective physical health or general well-being (as it has been reported in Kasser's papers), but subjective happiness is associated only with intrinsic goals and aspirations. Satisfaction and happiness are different: a materialistic person can feel satisfaction, but happiness seems to belong to non-materialistic students.
- Those who find religiosity more important in their everyday life report more intrinsic aspirations, more personal satisfaction and happiness. As it was reported previously, religiosity is a strong protective factor against materialistic thinking and promotes intrinsic goals.

In conclusion, the students of BBS tend to accept more extrinsic life goals than the members of the external reference group. These attitudes are influenced by the generational properties of this young population and by the educational program they attend. The extrinsic attitudes do not serve the individuals' personal development and happiness; neither do they serve the interests of society or the global ecological systems. The new paradigms of the future business world are not interiorized or known yet.

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