

HOW GENERATIONS PERCEIVE EACH OTHER IN TERMS OF THEIR ATTITUDES TOWARDS WORK: A QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS ON GENERATION X AND GENERATION Y

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Abstract

It is a common belief that generations differ from each other, and the perceptions arising from generational differences are reflected in the individual's attitudes towards work. This is one of the reasons why the management of generations' working in harmony with each other in today's multi-generational workplaces maintains its place on the agenda as an important issue. At this point, besides just putting forward these distinctive attitudes towards work, which are caused by generational differences, putting forward how generations perceive each other in terms of their attitudes towards work is significant as well. Based on this concern, in this study, where qualitative research methodology was adopted and semi-structured interview technique was used, the data was collected from 38 Generation X and Generation Y employees working in two large enterprises operating in the food sector in Turkey. According to the findings, the perceptions of Generation X employees on Generation Y employees' attitudes towards work were gathered under the main themes as "low organizational commitment" and "low power distance expectation" while the perceptions of Generation Y employees on Generation X employees' attitudes towards work were gathered under the main themes as "high organizational commitment" and "high power distance expectation".

Keywords: Work, Work Attitude, Generation X, Generation Y

JEL Codes: L25, M12, M54

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Introduction

With the transition from each social stage, the phenomenon of work has experienced a transformation in terms of its scope and the meaning attributed by individuals. As a result of this transformation, it has changed constantly both in terms of the way it has been carried out and the meaning it has. Behind this change of its scope and meaning over time, there are changes due to socio-economic and technological developments that have left their mark on the historical development process of humanity.

Essentially, these developments are seen as the rationale for the phenomenon of generation as well. Such that, pioneering of generation theory, German sociologist K. Mannheim (1952) dealt the generations in a socio-historical context. Thus, by focusing on the importance of social factors in the developmental stages of individuals in shaping the generations, he explained the phenomenon of generation as “a group that experiences both similar birth intervals and similar social and historically important events in their developmental ages, and therefore develops some unifying common elements”. In this context, it is believed that individuals belonging to the same generation are exposed to common social, historical, cultural, and political events during their development and socialization stages, and therefore they exhibit similar attitudes and behaviors by having common values, beliefs, and expectations. Thus, it is thought that each generation has its specific value judgments, and these value judgments also differ from those of the other generation groups’ value judgments.

On the other side, it is a common belief that perceptions arising from generational differences are reflected in the attitudes of individuals regarding working life. In this context, when we look at today's labor market, we see that three generations, namely Baby Boomers (1946-1964), Generation X (1965-1979), and Generation Y (1980-2000) are prevailing. However, the majority of Baby Boomers are retired and the rest are just about to step into retirement while in a few years Generation Z (2000-after) will enter the labor market.

Considering that this diversity of generations causes conflict and othering many times in today's multi-generational workplaces, working in harmony and management are seen as essential issues. Indeed, in today's multi-generational workplaces, the biggest conflict is being experienced most among Generation X and Generation Y employees. So, giving importance to ensure Generation Y, which is rather in managed positions but rapidly rising in managerial positions, and their colleagues or managers, Generation X, understand each other and work together in harmony is essential for organizations. Thus, creating an organizational climate away from conflict and othering within the organization will help to ensure these. At this point, besides distinctive attitudes towards work caused by generational

differences, how different generations perceive each other in terms of their attitudes towards work needs attention as well. Based on this thought, by keeping these two generations' attitudes towards work in mind, this study focuses on how Generation X and Generation Y perceive each other. In this sense, since there is no study in this context in the literature, the unique value of this study is to put forward how Generation X and Generation Y perceive each other in terms of their attitudes towards work and to analyze these perceptions with the focus on their distinctive attitudes towards work caused by generational differences.

In this study, in which the phenomenological approach is adopted within the scope of the qualitative research method, firstly, the literature review is included. Then, the research methodology is explained and qualitative analysis of the findings obtained from the interviews are presented. Finally, in the conclusion section, where the findings are discussed, there is a general evaluation and recommendations. It is thought that the findings obtained, on the one hand, will contribute to the related literature and further researches, and on the other hand, will be a guide for the practitioners in the field.

Conceptual Framework

In this part of the study, where the conceptual framework is drawn, first of all, the phenomenon of work in terms of the way it is carried out and the meaning it has in the historical process is mentioned. Then, by referring to the related literature, Generation X and Generation Y are conveyed in terms of their attitudes towards work.

The Phenomenon of Work

Transformations as a result of socio-economic and technological developments in the historical period caused the phenomenon of work to get different meanings. This reveals the fact that work has a different scope in each period in history. Therefore, it would be correct to say that work has transformed both formally in terms of the way it is carried out and conceptually in terms of the meaning it expresses for individuals.

First of all, if we look at the primitive society in the pre-industrial period, it is seen that economic activities are just carried out to survive in the natural life process and therefore the work only consists of finding food and being sheltered to survive (Lordoğlu and Özkaplan, 2003; Sombart, 1993). Besides, it is not possible to talk about private property and class differences in primitive society since the work has framed as an activity carried out in cooperation with the participation of all individuals who make up the community (Argyle, 1990). With the transition to the settled order, this common property concept has disappeared, and instead, the private property concept has started to take place in social life. In this period, which

is called slave society in literature, on the one hand, there was the class that cultivates the soil and on the other hand, there was the class that has the right to property on the work done by seizing the product obtained (Ören et al., 1979). While most of the workers in this period were slaves, and captives, the others as nobles, aristocrats and autocrat executives engaged in arts, sports, social and cultural activities (Ören, 2013). Thus, in this period, the phenomenon of work generally found meaning as physical work and was perceived negatively as a contemptuous and humiliating effort by being associated with negative expressions such as “pain”, “hardship”, and “lack of freedom” (Azam and Brauchle, 2003). Following the slave society, with the transition to the feudal society, the basis of production relations was on one side the serfs who have very limited ownership rights over the means of production and on the other side the feudal lords who own the land and the means of production (Bloch, 1983). In this period, serf labor replaced slave labor since the work was attributed to serfs. In a sense, this means that the slaves of the previous society changed names as serfs (Huberman, 2007).

In the 18th century, by the replacement of human and/or animal muscle power, which was the main energy source in the previous periods, with the machines driven by steam power, which was a new energy source, the industrial period started (Herzberg et al., 1959). This transition from labor-intense production to machine intense mass production of goods represents the beginning of a period in which both the work and the actors of work were evaluated differently than the previous periods. With the transformation during this period, the phenomenon of work has evolved from physical to intellectual work and has become a business relationship in which an employee in an organization is paid for his/her labor (Ören and Yüksel, 2012).

In the following post-industrial period, there was a transition from goods production to service production. This process continues to manifest itself in the present day by the transition to the information society thanks to information technologies. In this context, there has been a transition from the agricultural sector to the industrial sector, from the industrial sector to the service sector, and eventually from the service sector to the information sector in which production-based on service and information takes place together. Thus, in line with the changes in the scope of the work, a transformation in the scope of the workforce took place as well (Poloma, 1993). At this point, it is worth noting that the understanding of working in factories for the sake of mass production which was the result of industrialization has changed since the information technologies started to be effective in the production process. As a matter of fact, socio-economic and technological developments, which have started to be experienced by the 1970s, formed the beginning of the debates for new meanings regarding work. (Genis and Wallis, 2005). Today, work as being a subject of many disciplines such as

psychology, sociology, social psychology, philosophy, history, and organizational behavior includes social purposes as well (Bozkurt, 2011). Therefore, it can now be inferred that besides the phenomenon of work is considered as a means of earning income for individuals, it is also important in terms of obtaining status and respectability in social life and providing psychological and sociological satisfaction (Samsun, 2017). In addition, as work has moved away from its traditional meaning, its scope as a central life interest has also weakened and new trends such as “leisure time”, “personal development”, “work-life balance” and “social activities” have been replaced by work (İlhan, 2019).

As it may seem, today, work has a further meaning for the individual rather than the physical and intellectual effort wasted to earn income. By covering voluntary and social work as well, it has become to have a meaning that provides multi-dimensional benefits in psychological and sociological terms. In fact, when the predictions of work are taken into consideration, the claim that technological developments will replace the workforce considerably means that it will eliminate many of the current working relationships. Thus, the allegations put forward are at the point that the attention of individuals will continue to focus on non-working life (İlhan, 2019).

Generation X and Generation Y in Terms of Their Attitudes towards Work

Today, while the phenomenon of work is still being redefining, several claims are made about what the work means for the individuals. As it is stated above in the previous sections, one of these claims is that the phenomenon of work has different meanings for each generation group. As a matter of fact, since individuals born in different age ranges experience events affecting their lives differently than others, these events experienced characterize the individuals and determine the attitudes and expectations regarding work (Dencker et al., 2008). Below, with the focus on historical and socio-cultural events that are claimed to be effective during their growth period, perceptions of Generation X and Generation Y towards work are summarized.

Generation X

To define Generation X, most researchers use birth years from 1965 to 1979 (Haeberle et al., 2009; İlhan, 2019; Lyons, 2003) although some sources use birth years beginning as early as 1960 and ending somewhere from 1976 to 1981. They are referred by different names in literature as Baby Bust, Thirteenth Generation, Post-Boomers, Lost Generation, and Transition Generation (Davis, 2016; Licata, 2007).

Generation X has grown up in a period dominated by socio-economic instability, which is a reflection of changing world dynamics (Lemmens, 2010;

Lyons, 2003; Şenbir, 2004). Due to the stagnant labor markets, shrinking of the institutions, and limited labor mobility in this period, they have witnessed the difficulties that their parents faced in finding a job. They have even witnessed that their parents sometimes lost their jobs, although they had devoted so much to their organizations (Kyles, 2005). With Generation X, which has a skeptical and insecure characteristic because of experiencing such instabilities, the importance given on hard work inherited from previous generations began to decrease, the authority within the organizational structure is started to be questioned and more flexibility is started to be expected (Chen and Choi, 2008; Lyons, 2003).

Perhaps because of this, by showing their loyalty to their careers rather than the organizations they work for, they thought they could continue their working life as long as they developed their technical knowledge and skills. This has led them to see each new position as an opportunity to progress in their career (Marcus, 2014). In addition, since they have grown at a time when technological developments have gained momentum, being the first generation using this technology, they have experienced the positive effects of it in many fields and have succeeded in achieving qualified work (Williams and Page, 2011). It is worth to mention that this also led them to think the tasks they have done are worthy of recognition and praise (Yusoff and Kian, 2013). Therefore, when they are choosing a workplace, they are much more concerned with how much their new job can help them find a job next time (Lyons, 2003).

Finally, Generation X is thought to have higher social responsibility awareness. For this reason, they are sensitive about being employed in organizations that care about social responsibilities. This makes it possible to conclude that companies that harmonize their corporate social responsibility fields with their employees' individual needs are more attractive for Generation Xs (Exner, 2017).

Generation Y

To define Generation Y, most researchers use birth years from 1980 to 2000 (Cennamo and Gardner, 2008; İlhan, 2019; Zemke et al., 2000) although some sources use birth years beginning as early as 1977 and ending somewhere from 1994 to 2003. They are referred by different names in literature as Millennials, Generation Next, Digital Generation, Nexters, Generation www, and Net Generation (Davis, 2016; Licata, 2007).

The most prominent feature of Generation Y is that they have grown up by experiencing a period in which the internet and other technological developments accelerated. It would even be correct to say that the internet and communication technologies are integral parts of their lives (Lyons et al., 200; Behrstock-Sherratt and Cogshall, 2010). This means that they live in a more global world compared

to previous generations and in many ways it causes them to be seen as a turning point in both social and working life (Zemke et al., 2000).

In this context, Generation Y employees do not want to wait for many years to progress in their careers, as they are accustomed to rapid results in this rapid movement process (Saxena and Jain, 2012). So, they do not hesitate to change jobs as long as they are not satisfied with working conditions and do not prefer to work for a single organization in the long term waiting for the conditions to change over the years (Dhevabachachai and Muangasama, 2013).

Moreover, Generation Y employees, who like cognitively challenging tasks place great importance on acquiring new skills at work for their professional development (D'Amato and Herzfeldt, 2008; Ng et al., 2010). Regarding this, Generation Y can be said to be expecting to work with mentors and leading managers (Lyons, 2003). This can also be associated with their family relationships. Because the parents of Generation Y control over many aspects of their children's lives while also support them by education opportunities and encourage them to believe that they have better qualifications (Pinzaru et al., 2016). So, Generation Y employees are thought to be in need of the advice of role models that they consider to be more experienced and knowledgeable in their working life because being influenced by such behaviors of their parents (Behrstock-Sherratt and Cogshall, 2010). This does not mean that they are always waiting to be guided by their managers, but they are expecting qualified mentoring and leadership that will contribute to their professional development (Eisner, 2005). On the other hand, it is believed that the reason for Generation Y's high self-confidence is related to their constant encouragement from their families in this way as well. In addition to this, it is also emphasized that they will expect to have decision-making responsibilities in their working lives because they are participating in the decisions at home even from a young age (Pinzaru et al., 2016).

Generation Y employees, who do not respect the titles and positions within a traditional hierarchical organizational structure, prefer working environments where there is a fun workflow. In this sense, they prefer project-based and flexible work programs where there are no strict rules and a vertical hierarchy (Pinzaru et al., 2016). Since they have not grown in a hierarchical structure in their families, they have difficulty in understanding the hierarchy in working life (Adigüzel et al., 2014). For them, wearing formal clothes is also a projection of authoritarian behavior so they prefer casual clothes instead of formal clothes (Twenge and Campbell, 2008).

In addition to above, this generation, which is very sensitive about work-life balance, expects to be able to manage this balance personally by themselves

(Zeeshan and Iram, 2012) As long as a job is done, it does not matter for them whether it is done in an office or another environment (Zemke et al., 2000).

Finally, it is believed that the sensitivity of social responsibility expands further with Generation Y. Accordingly, social responsibility awareness has developed together with an egalitarian society understanding and resulted in Generation Y's being more tolerant of diversity in age, ethnicity, and gender orientation (Pinzaru et al., 2016; Yusoff and Kian, 2013).

Methodology

In this part of the study, the purpose of the research, participants, data collection strategy, and data analysis strategy are detailed.

Purpose

The purpose of this research is to put forward how different generations perceive each other in terms of their attitudes towards work and to analyze these perceptions with the focus on the distinctive attitudes of generations towards work which are thought to be caused by generational differences. In this context, the study focuses on the perceptions of Generation X on Generation Y and the perceptions of Generation Y on Generation X.

Participants

In this research, the data was collected from 38 employees in two large enterprises operating in the food sector in Turkey. The criterion sampling, one of the purposive sampling techniques, was used in the selection of the participants. Criterion sampling involves selecting cases that meet some predetermined criterion of importance (Patton, 2001). The basic criteria determined within this framework was “age range” and “occupational position”. The age range was thought to be necessary to classify the participants according to their generational groups, and the participants of the same generation were grouped considering the possibility of their having discussions when expressing their perceptions about each other. In the grouping according to the occupational position, individual interviews were conducted with the participants selected from the managerial positions, and group interviews were conducted with the focus groups of 2-5 people with the participants selected from other occupational positions. The reason for disaggregating both individually and as a group was to eliminate the possibility of subordinate employees' not expressing their views frankly in the face of the top employees. Thus, individual interviews were conducted with 11 people, and group interviews were conducted with 28 people. The demographics of the participants can be traced from Table 1:

Table 1: Demographics of the Participants

| Variable | Category | Number (N) | Ratio (%) |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------|--------------|
| Age | Between 1965-1979 (Generation X) | 20 | 52,7 |
| | Between 1980-2000 (Generation Y) | 18 | 47,3 |
| Gender | Female | 16 | 42,1 |
| | Male | 22 | 57,9 |
| Marital Status | Married | 26 | 68,4 |
| | Single | 12 | 31,6 |
| Education Level | Primary School | 5 | 13,1 |
| | High School | 11 | 28,9 |
| | Associate Degree | 4 | 10,5 |
| | Bachelor's Degree | 12 | 31,7 |
| | Master's Degree | 6 | 15,8 |
| Occupational Position | Worker | 13 | 34,2 |
| | Foreman/Shift Officer | 4 | 10,5 |
| | Responsible | 6 | 15,8 |
| | Expert | 7 | 18,5 |
| | Manager | 8 | 21,0 |

Data Collection Strategy

In this research, in which the phenomenological approach is adopted within the scope of the qualitative research method, a semi-structured interview technique was used and an interview form including the questions planned to be asked was prepared. The semi-structured interview form, which is preferred to get comparative results to understand how generations perceive each other in terms of their attitudes towards work was designed by taking the opinions of the experts in the field and by reviewing the related literature. This interview form, administered through face-to-face interviews, includes open-ended questions such as: “What are your expectations from working life?”, “What motivates you to work?”, “What is your opinion on the harmony of your work values with the other generations you are working with?”. In addition, depending on the flow of the interview, different sub-questions were directed for participants to able to exemplify their answers. In this way, the interviews were conducted within the framework of open-ended and exploratory questions. Moreover, data collection was conducted in an environment where participants could express themselves freely. The interview questions were asked to each participant with the same words and intonations that evoke the same meaning as well. In the interviews conducted with a moderator and a rapporteur, voice recording, note-taking, and observation techniques were used together.

Data Analysis Strategy

The analysis of the data was performed by decoding the data collected during the interviews. These decodes can be summarized as follows: Transcribing the data, ensuring the accuracy of the transcripts, identifying the themes, coding and processing the data according to the identified themes, and interpreting the findings with direct quotations.

Table 2: Codes Given to the Participants

| Code | Gender | Marital Status | Education Level | Occupational Position | Seniority |
|-------------|---------------|-----------------------|------------------------|------------------------------|------------------|
| X1 | Male | Single | Bachelor's Degree | Expert | 29 years |
| X2 | Female | Married | Associate Degree | Responsible | 22 years |
| X3 | Female | Married | Bachelor's Degree | Responsible | 11 years |
| X4 | Male | Married | Primary School | Responsible | 21 years |
| X5 | Male | Single | Primary School | Worker | 21 years |
| X6 | Female | Single | Associate Degree | Responsible | 13 years |
| X7 | Male | Single | High School | Worker | 13 years |
| X8 | Female | Single | Master's Degree | Expert | 4 years |
| X9 | Male | Married | Bachelor's Degree | Expert | 20 years |
| X10 | Male | Married | Associate Degree | Shift Officer | 17 years |
| X11 | Male | Married | Primary School | Foreman | 31 years |
| X12 | Male | Married | Bachelor's Degree | Manager | 17 years |
| X13 | Male | Married | Bachelor's Degree | Manager | 14 years |
| X14 | Male | Married | Bachelor's Degree | Manager | 19 years |
| X15 | Male | Married | Master's Degree | Manager | 30 years |
| X16 | Male | Married | Master's Degree | Manager | 17 years |
| X17 | Male | Single | Bachelor's Degree | Manager | 25 years |
| X18 | Male | Married | Primary School | Worker | 5 years |
| X19 | Male | Married | Primary School | Worker | 30 years |
| X20 | Male | Married | Bachelor's Degree | Manager | 32 years |
| Y1 | Female | Married | High School | Worker | 10 years |
| Y2 | Female | Married | High School | Worker | 13 years |
| Y3 | Female | Married | Bachelor's Degree | Responsible | 12 years |
| Y4 | Male | Married | Bachelor's Degree | Expert | 4 years |
| Y5 | Male | Married | Master's Degree | Expert | 7 years |
| Y6 | Female | Single | Associate Degree | Responsible | 3 years |
| Y7 | Female | Single | High School | Worker | 2 years |
| Y8 | Female | Single | High School | Worker | 2 years |
| Y9 | Female | Single | High School | Worker | 7 years |
| Y10 | Male | Single | High School | Worker | 2 years |
| Y11 | Female | Married | High School | Worker | 6 years |
| Y12 | Female | Single | High School | Worker | 7 years |
| Y13 | Male | Married | High School | Shift Officer | 19 years |
| Y14 | Male | Married | High School | Shift Officer | 10 years |
| Y15 | Female | Single | Bachelor's Degree | Responsible | 5 years |

| | | | | | |
|------------|--------|---------|-------------------|---------|----------|
| Y16 | Female | Married | Bachelor's Degree | Expert | 9 years |
| Y17 | Male | Married | Master's Degree | Manager | 10 years |
| Y18 | Female | Married | Master's Degree | Expert | 7 years |

Besides, during the interpretation of the findings obtained from the analysis, to keep the participants' personal information hidden, codes were determined and the direct quotations were indicated by pointing to these codes. Thus, 20 participants representing Generation X were given the codes in the range of "X1" to "X20" and 18 participants representing Generation Y were given the codes in the range of "Y1" to "Y18". The codes given to the participants can be traced from Table 2.

Findings

In line with the data analysis of the participants' perceptions of each other's attitudes towards work, the perceptions of Generation X employees on Generation Y employees' attitudes towards work were gathered under the main themes as "low organizational commitment" and "low power distance expectation". On the other side, the perceptions of Generation Y employees about Generation X employees' attitudes towards work were gathered under the main themes as "high organizational commitment" and "high power distance expectation". These main themes and the sub-themes can be seen in Figure 1:

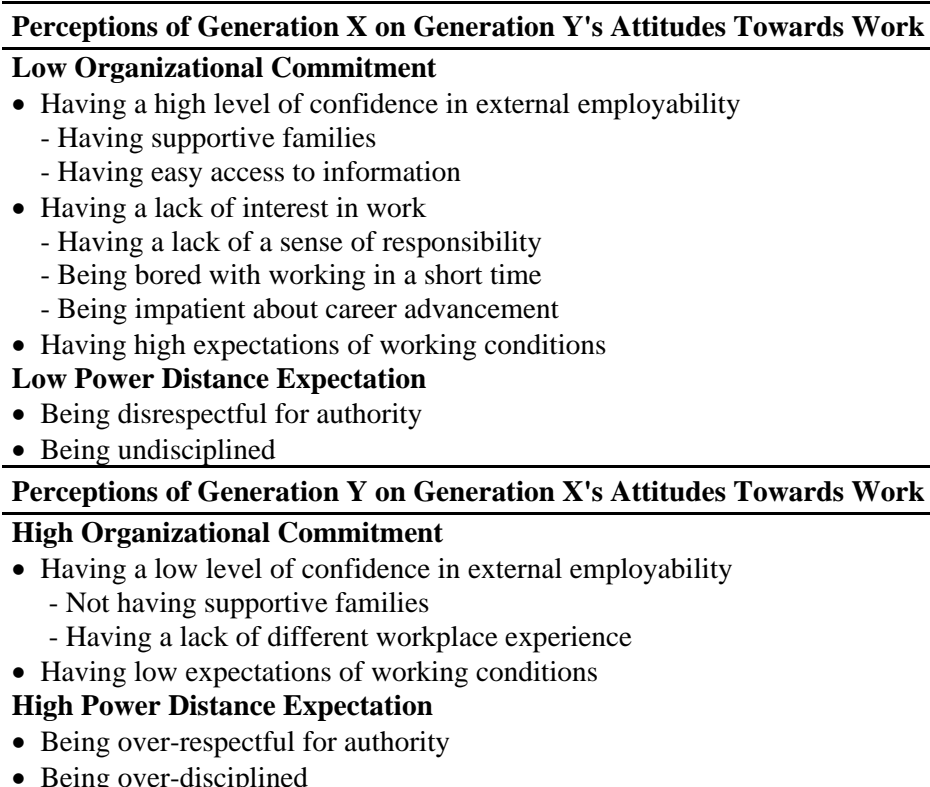


Figure 1: Main Themes and Sub-Themes Resulted from the Data Analysis

Perceptions of Generation X on Generation Y's Attitudes towards Work

In this part of the study, the sub-themes that support the main themes as “low organizational commitment” and “low power distance expectation”, which are the perceptions of Generation X on Generation Y’s attitudes towards work, are summarized.

Low Organizational Commitment

When the first main theme, low organizational commitment is analyzed, first of all, it is seen that by drawing attention to Generation Y employees’ having supportive families and their having easy access to information, Generation X employees conclude that Generation Ys have a high level of confidence in their external employability. In addition, Generation X employees think that Generation Y employees do not have an interest in work by noting that they do not have a sense of responsibility, are bored with working in a short time, and are impatient about career advancement. Lastly, having high expectations of working conditions is another attitude that Generation X emphasizes about Generation Y employees. Thus, under the main theme of low organizational commitment, related to the perceptions of Generation X on Generation Y’s attitudes towards work, the sub-themes are grouped as “having a high level of confidence in external employability”, “not having an interest in work”, and “having high expectations of working conditions”. Table 3 shows these sub-themes, specifying the frequency of emphasis of the participants.

Table 3: Perceptions of Low Organizational Commitment

| Sub-themes | Frequency (f) |
|---|----------------------|
| Having a high level of confidence in external employability | 19 |
| Not having an interest in work | 10 |
| Having high expectations of working conditions | 9 |

Accordingly, the number of participants of Generation X, who assert that Generation Y employees have a low organizational commitment and concerning this they have a high level of confidence in their external employability is quite high (f=19). This perception is justified by Generation Y employees’ having supportive families and their having easy access to information. For example, one of the participants who emphasizes family support, the X3 coded expresses his opinion as: “Families provided to their children what they could not have. Generation Y is waiting for everything to come ready. Even if they quit the job, their families

support them.” The X2 coded participant supports the X3 coded, and uses the following expression: “Yes, they think that this support will come anytime so they can easily quit the job.” Similarly, the X11 coded participant draws attention to the same point as: “Look at the social life of Generation Y. If we lived like them, we would not be able to own a house, nor could we marry and have children. We would either save the money we earned or give it to our parents. But now, even though they are working, they still want money from their families, and the families give them. So they rely on this support.” On the other hand, one of the participants who emphasizes easy access to information, the X12 coded expresses his opinion as: “The difference of the new generation is that they have easy access to everything. Actually, that's a problem. They can see a wide range of diversity, and they can become aware of their future choices earlier. They have easy access to information as well. This eliminates the necessity of staying at the same job for a long time.” The X17 coded participant expresses a similar opinion by saying: “Nowadays as the flow of information is much more, the new generation is in contact with opportunities and knows the labor market better. This was not the case in our time.” Moreover, with the expressions as “Since they have easy access to information, they can make radical decisions and change jobs very easily.” the X2 coded participant also emphasizes that Generation Y employees have easy access to information and relates this with their high confidence in their external employability.

Some participants (f=10) who believe that Generation Y employees have low organizational commitment relate this to their not having an interest in work. Furthermore, their not having an interest in work is also related to their “not having a sense of responsibility”, “being bored with working in a short time”, and “being impatient about career advancement”. Among the participants who express their view by drawing attention to these reasons, the X8 coded participant, emphasizing the sense of responsibility, states as: “In my opinion Generation Y is irresponsible. They don't give themselves to any work.” Similar to the X8 coded participant, the X9 coded participant states as: “New generation does not take responsibility.”; the X10 coded participant states as: “They seem less interested in work.”; the X10 coded participant states as: “They have no sense of responsibility”; the X5 coded participant states as: “Their minds are in the clouds.”; the X20 coded participant states as: “They want an hour off as soon as possible.”; the X19 coded participant states: “They don't care if the task is completed or not, and just want their shift to be completed as soon as possible.” In addition, with a detailed expression, the X16 coded participant uses the following statements: “Our generation was more willing to take responsibilities, we can't observe it in the new generation. They are not very demanding about taking responsibility. Only a few of them ask for more work.” Moreover, one of the participants who emphasizes on being bored with working in

a short time, the X1 coded participant states as: “They get bored easily when they are working.” and the X16 coded participant states as: “We grew up in more competitive working conditions. We can motivate ourselves. We have more ambition and drive for success than the young generation has. They wait for someone to poke them to get motivated and unfortunately prefer to give up when they face even a little challenge.” In addition, one of the participants, who emphasizes being impatient about career advancement, the X17 coded participant, on the one hand, approaches his attitude with suspicion, while on the other hand, does not hesitate to criticize Generation Y employees’ being impatient about their career advancement and changing their workplaces easily by stating as: “They want to rise faster in their careers, they are not patient. They afford to change their jobs frequently. I have never looked for a job in my life, this was my first job application and I don’t have any other work experience. I received other job offers but refused them by making excuses. I think I was scared..., hmmm?” And the X16 coded participant expresses his view as: “When they are not satisfied with their jobs when they cannot match their jobs with their career plans they easily quit. They don’t think that they should be patient and should keep going. They are very impatient...”

Some other participants (f=9) who believe that Generation Y employees have low organizational commitment relates this to their having high expectations about working conditions. For example, the X14 coded participant gives a long statement as: “We experience this, especially in recruitment interviews. Their expectations are a bit more in terms of wages and side rights, and they can clearly state their expectations in the beginning. I didn’t even talk about wages when I got my job. There is a very deep gap between us. They also pay more attention to working conditions. For example, if one has an old desk, he expresses his unhappiness and forces management to change it. They are more demanding and relax in expressing their expectations. They also express their career expectations very often after a certain period.” Similarly, the X15 coded participant points out his view as: “After a while, they start to wonder about other workplaces. They start thinking that their wages are low and therefore they can even move to different cities. When they’re stuck even a little, they’re looking for another workplace to escape. And they position themselves as ‘we’re transferring’, but they’re just changing their workplaces. Furthermore, Generation Y employees give great importance to work-life balance.”

Low Power Distance Expectation

When the second main theme, low power distance expectation, is analyzed, it is seen that Generation Y employees are thought to be in an expectation of low power distance due to their being disrespectful for authority and being undisciplined. Thus, under the main theme as low power distance expectation, related to the perceptions of Generation X on Generation Y’s attitudes towards

work, the sub-themes are grouped as “being disrespectful for authority” and “being undisciplined”. Table 4 shows these sub-themes, specifying the frequency of emphasis of the participants.

Table 4: Perceptions of Low Power Distance Expectation

| Sub-themes | Frequency (f) |
|-----------------------------------|---------------|
| Being disrespectful for authority | 20 |
| Being undisciplined | 18 |

Accordingly, the number of participants of Generation X, who asserts that Generation Y employees have low power distance expectation and concerning this, they are disrespectful for authority is quite high (f=20). For example, the X5 coded participant points out as: “The previous generation was more rigid and disciplined than we are, and there was always a power distance between us. We have experienced it and naturally applying it now. In return, we are expecting the same behavior but unfortunately, we can’t see it.” And the X2 coded participant expresses a similar view as: “We have always worked in coordination with our supervisor, and that supervisor worked with his superior as well. So we've always worked in a hierarchy. The new generation doesn't want it; they are against it.” Another participant, the X7 coded, says: “When my foreman asks me to tell the manager about the problem I face with, I never tell, I’m afraid. But the new generation is not shy about it. The previous generation was scared, we are scared a little, and the new generation is not scared at all.” Finally, the X8 coded participant expresses his view as: “When the general manager entered the factory, we were all shivering, they don't even care now.”

On the other hand, the number of participants of Generation X, who asserts that Generation Y employees have low power distance expectation and concerning this they are undisciplined is also quite high (f=18). In this regard, the X11 coded participant draws attention to his view as: “I'm a little strict, there should be discipline in a work. I want seriousness in my workplace, but the young generation is not like this. What is important for them is just to fill the working hours.” Similar to the X11 coded participant, the X12 coded participant states as: “I cannot say that the new generation is disciplined and hardworking. Very few of them are hard-working and disciplined.”

Perceptions of Generation Y on Generation X's Attitudes towards Work

In this part of the study, the sub-themes that support the emergence of the main themes as “high organizational commitment” and “high power distance

expectation”, which are the perceptions of Generation Y on Generation X’s attitudes towards work, are summarized.

High Organizational Commitment

When the first main theme, high organizational commitment, is analyzed, first of all, it is seen that by drawing attention to Generation X employees’ having family support less and not having different workplace experience, Generation Y employees conclude that Generation Xs have a low level of confidence in external employability. Besides, Generation Y employees think that Generation X employees have low expectations of working conditions. Thus, under the main theme of high organizational commitment, related to the perceptions of Generation Y on Generation X’s attitudes towards work, the sub-themes are grouped as “having a low level of confidence in external employability”, and “having low expectations of working conditions”. Table 5 shows these sub-themes, specifying the frequency of emphasis of the participants.

Table 5: Perceptions of High Organizational Commitment

| Sub-themes | Frequency (f) |
|--|----------------------|
| Having a low level of confidence in external employability | 29 |
| Having low expectations of working conditions | 9 |

Accordingly, the number of participants of Generation Y, who assert that Generation X employees have high organizational commitment and concerning this they have a low level of confidence in their external employability is almost four-thirds of the whole (f=29). This perception is justified by “having family support less” and “not having different workplace experience.” For example, one of the participants who emphasized family support, the Y12 coded participant, states her view as: “We're lucky. They did not get financial support from their families and had to work regardless of the circumstances.” while the Y17 coded participant states his view as: “They always say that they had to help their families and that they had to work in order not to burden them. They didn't get financial support from their families.” On the other hand, one of the participants who emphasized different workplace experiences, the Y14 coded participant states his view as: “I know some of them have been working here for 25 years, they haven't even seen another workplace. How can they think about changing their workplace? Of course, they will have high organizational commitment.”; the Y8 coded participant states as: “In which organization Generation X members opened their eyes, they continued their lives there. Since they lived in an unsafe environment, they didn't want to leave that safe harbor.” and the Y16 coded participant states as: “They are people who are

trying to stay on the safe side because they have experienced the harsh conditions that Turkey has lived. They don't like uncertainties much. So they have hardly any different workplace experience. This has resulted in their commitment to the organization they work for.”

Moreover, some of the participants of Generation Y (f=9) assert that because their having low expectations of working conditions, Generation X employees have a high level of organizational commitment. For example, the Y4 coded participant states as: “X stay in the same position for 10-15 years and expect a promotion, we don't.”; the Y7 coded participant states as: “The previous generation continued to work, no matter what their job, as long as their salaries and insurance were paid. They thought they should shut up, keep their voice down and work. Now they don't think of anything different. For them, it doesn't matter whether you are happy or unhappy, you just have to work”; the Y8 coded participant states as: “At that period, it was necessary to behave in that way, and in this period it is necessary to behave in this way. I don't have to keep the necessities of old times”; the Y4 coded participant states as: “They've sacrificed a lot. They've stolen from their lives and their families”; the Y6 coded participant states as: “They aimed to work and maintain their lives. We think differently. What separates us from the previous generation is perhaps our desire to devote more time to social activities.”

High Power Distance Expectation

When the second main theme, high power distance expectation is analyzed, it is seen that Generation X employees are thought to be in an expectation of high power distance due to their being over-respectful for authority and being over-disciplined. Thus, under the main theme of high power distance expectation, related to the perceptions of Generation Y on Generation X's attitudes towards work, the sub-themes are grouped as “being over-respectful for authority” and “being over-disciplined”. Table 6 shows these sub-themes, specifying the frequency of emphasis of the participants.

Table 6: Perceptions of High Power Distance Expectations

| Sub-themes | Frequency (f) |
|-------------------------------------|---------------|
| Being over-respectful for authority | 20 |
| Being over-disciplined | 18 |

Accordingly, most of the participants (f=20) who think that Generation X employees have high power distance expectation relates this to their being over-respectful for authority. For example, the Y4 coded participant states: “Compared to us, Generation X is completely submissive and they do not express their ideas,

apart from the strategies that the top management directs.” Similarly, the Y 12 coded participant states as: “We call Generation X directors as ‘big brother’, whereas Generation X would button their jackets in front of their managers.” And the Y7 coded participant states as: “If we ask them, they say ‘we didn't object at all, and when we asked for something to do, we were doing it right away.” Lastly, the Y7 coded participant supports their generations’ attitude at this point as follows: “In any case, we can reject something we do not want to accept.”

In addition, some of the participants who think that Generation X employees have high power distance expectation ($f=18$) relates this to their being over-disciplined. For example, the Y10 coded participant states: “They think we're undisciplined and rebellious, but actually they're over-disciplined. We are as disciplined as it should be.” Similarly, Y16 coded participant states: “I do not understand their discipline concepts. They think we can act undisciplined at any moment and do not deal with our tasks. They do not accept that we can finalize the work without working according to their working style.” By pointing out his manager, the Y1 coded participant states as: “Why does one ever have the feeling to come and check what is going on? Every ten minutes he comes and asks questions about the process. They don't trust us because they think we're undisciplined. What are they doing? They're expecting extreme discipline.” And the Y17 coded participant points out Generation X employees’ being over-disciplined with the following statement: “Even when we go to the bathroom, they don't believe us. They think we're going to shirk our duty. They actually believe we're undisciplined, as Y1 says. If this is being undisciplined, I believe they are over-disciplined.”

Conclusion and Recommendations

When the findings of this study, which aims to put forward how Generation X and Generation Y perceive each other in terms of their attitudes towards work and to analyze these perceptions with the focus on these generations' distinctive attitudes towards work, is summarized, two main themes are determined for each generational group. Such that, the perceptions of Generation X employees on Generation Y employees’ attitudes towards work were gathered under the main themes as “low organizational commitment” and “low power distance expectation” while the perceptions of Generation Y employees on Generation X employees’ attitudes towards work were gathered under the main themes as “high organizational commitment” and “high power distance expectation”.

Detailing these main themes in terms of Generation X, it draws attention that Generation X employees define Generation Y employees by emphasizing on their "having a high level of confidence in external employability”, “not having an interest in work”, “having high expectations of working conditions”, “being

disrespectful for authority”, and “being undisciplined”. On the other hand, when the same main themes are detailed in terms of Generation Y, it draws attention that Generation Y employees define Generation X employees by emphasizing on their “having a low level of confidence in external employability”, “having low expectations of working conditions”, “being over-respectful for authority”, and “being over-disciplined”. However, analyzing these findings in the light of the historical events and socio-economic conditions of each generation's growth period, the situation encountered is that perceptions arising from attitudes and behaviors regardless of the effects of the growth period would not be very realistic.

In this respect, turning back to the findings, regarding the first main theme, organizational commitment, by drawing attention to Generation Y employees' having a high level of confidence in external employability, not having an interest in work, and having high expectations of working conditions, Generation X employees conclude that Generation Ys have low organizational commitment. Generation Y employees, on the other hand, by drawing attention to Generation X employees' having a low level of confidence in external employability, and having low expectations of working conditions, conclude that Generation Xs have high organizational commitment. However, when each generation is evaluated in the light of its growth period, regarding this theme, it should be taken into consideration that Generation Y employees primarily expect to achieve rapid results as they have grown at a time when technological developments are accelerating even more. Thus, it will be considered that they may be individuals who cannot afford to wait many years for progress in their careers and therefore do not prefer to work for a single organization in the long term. It may also be another conclusion that the technological advancement level they are in may cause Generation Y to constantly question the working conditions and compare them with those of others. On the other hand, the importance they give to their social lives has resulted in being sensitive about work-life balance to allow time for social activities as well. In this sense, Generation Y employees, who are regarded as not interested in work, are expected to be perceived as individuals who deal with the work within the working hours and do not want to reflect work to their private lives. Similarly, Generation X is expected to be considered as individuals who are committed to their existing organizations, rather than seeking alternative organizations, because of the economic and social instability that prevailed both in the previous period and partly in their growth period. Actually, this does not mean that they have low expectations of working conditions as well.

On the other hand, regarding the second main theme, power distance expectation, by drawing attention to Generation Y employees' being disrespectful for authority and being undisciplined, Generation X employees conclude that Generation Ys have low power distance expectations. Generation Y employees, on

the other hand, by drawing attention to Generation X employees' being over-respectful for authority and being over-disciplined, conclude that Generation Xs have high power distance expectations. When each generation is analyzed in the light of their growth period, regarding this theme, it should be taken into consideration that Generation Y employees do not respect a traditional hierarchical organizational structure because they grow in a family environment where they feel constantly special and are always being asked for their opinions in making decisions. On the contrary, Generation Y is expected to be considered as individuals who prefer working environments with fun workflow. Similarly, it should be taken into consideration that Generation X employees have disciplined attitudes because on one hand, they are under the influence of the previous generations, Baby Boomers, which has adopted a hierarchical management approach, and on the other hand, they were raised in families who sacrificed much for working life. Besides, since Generation X witnessed that their parents were unemployed despite all these sacrifices, it should not be ignored that they are the individuals who also started questioning the authority and expect more independence and flexibility.

One of the issues that draw attention about generations is that in today's organizations where several generations work together, the biggest conflict is experienced most among Generation X and Generation Y employees. The conventional working life cycle, in which the individual completing his/her education, started to work and retired after a maximum of one or two career changes, changed in the 21st century. Nowadays, Generation Y employees give importance to lifelong education and view this cycle as the mosaic of different roles and careers. At this point, their being the individuals who were born at a higher level of welfare, are surrounded by good education opportunities, have high self-confidence and have easy access to information thanks to technological developments are seen as the main factors that differentiate their expectations in terms of work conditions from those of other generations. Thus, organizations need to ensure Generation Y, which is rather in managed positions but rapidly rising in managerial positions, and their colleagues or managers, Generation X, work together in harmony. It is also of great importance for organizations to understand the reason that lay behind the attitudes of the employees and their expectations from each other to keep the qualified human resources and attract new ones.

In this context, it would be correct to say that all managers, especially human resources managers have to put this perceptual dispute on a meaningful basis and to better manage the conflicts caused by disputes. In this sense, the managers have to develop several practices that will allow employees to get to know and make sense of each other's attitudes towards work. Thus, the created organizational climate will positively affect the motivation of the employees by creating a positive atmosphere away from conflict and othering within the organization, will contribute

to the establishment of the corporate culture by reinforcing the sense of commitment to the organization and will enable the organization to progress with sustainable momentum.

While discussing the findings of this research, several limitations can be considered. Firstly, because a limited number of participants (N=38) could be reached to save cost and time, the generalizability of the research findings becomes more difficult. Another limitation is that, although qualitative research method, which makes it possible to analyze the research subject in more detail, was adopted, with this method a limited number of participants could be reached and the opportunity to reach more participants within the framework of quantitative research method could not be caught. On the other hand, the fact that the participants have the potential to conceal themselves during the interviews is another limitation of this research, and it is assumed that they have answered the questions sincerely and frankly.

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