



## Perceptions and Expectations of Generation Z Students Regarding Teachers

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### Abstract

The purpose of this research is to determine the perceptions and expectations of Generation Z students regarding school administrators. The phenomenological pattern was used in this research, which was designed as a qualitative study. Research data was obtained with a semi-structured interview form developed by the researchers. The collected data were subjected to content analysis. Maximum diversity sampling was used to determine the study group in the research. The study group of the research consists of 26 students who continue their education in three secondary education institutions (high schools) at different levels (low-middle-high) in terms of social, cultural and economic aspects. While schools are determined based on the information obtained from the directorate of national education. For the research, care was taken to select students who predominantly showed the characteristics of Generation Z. In the study, the perceptions of Generation Z students about school administrators were gathered under the themes of leader, authority, communication and interaction and support, respectively; it has been determined that the expectations of Generation Z students regarding school administrators are grouped under the themes of communication and interaction, education-training, technology and discipline, respectively.

**Keywords:** Generation Z, Teacher, Student perceptions, Student expectations

## Z Kuşağı Öğrencilerinin Öğretmenlere İlişkin Algıları ve Beklentileri

### Öz

Bu araştırmanın amacı, Z kuşağı öğrencilerinin öğretmenlere ilişkin algılarını ve beklentilerini belirlemektir. Nitel bir çalışma olarak desenlenmiş olan bu çalışmada olgubilim deseni kullanılmıştır. Araştırma verileri, araştırmacılar tarafından geliştirilen yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme formu ile elde edilmiştir. Toplanan veriler içerik analizine tabi tutulmuştur. Araştırmada çalışma grubunun belirlenmesinde maksimum çeşitlilik örnekleme kullanılmıştır. Araştırmanın çalışma grubunu sosyal, kültürel ve ekonomik bakımdan birbirinden farklı (düşük-orta-yüksek) düzeyde olan üç ortaöğretim kurumunda (lise) öğrenimlerini sürdüren 26 öğrenci oluşturmaktadır. Okullar milli eğitim müdürlüğünden edinilen bilgiler dâhilinde belirlenirken; öğrencilerin belirlenmesinde ise rehberlik öğretmenleri başta olmak üzere okulda görev yapan öğretmenlerin görüşleri esas alınmıştır. Araştırma için Z kuşağının özelliklerini baskın olarak gösteren öğrencilerin seçimine özen gösterilmiştir. Araştırmada, Z kuşağı öğrencilerinin öğretmenlere ilişkin algılarının sırasıyla lider, otorite, iletişim ve etkileşim ve destek temaları altında toplandığı; Z kuşağı öğrencilerinin öğretmenlere ilişkin beklentilerinin ise sırasıyla iletişim ve etkileşim, eğitim-öğretim, teknoloji ve disiplin temaları altında toplandığı tespit edilmiştir.

**Anahtar Sözcükler:** Z kuşağı, Öğretmen, Öğrenci algıları, Öğrenci beklentileri

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## **Introduction**

Generation refers to a group of individuals who were born in approximately the same years, experienced the conditions, problems, positive and negative aspects, and basic characteristics of the same period, and acquired similar duties and responsibilities. The word generation, which comes from the Latin root “generire”, is also used in French in the sense of “generation” (lineage, family tree) (Oral, 2013). As a biological term, generation refers to the average time interval between the birth dates of children and the birth dates of their parents (Gündüz and Pekçetaş, 2018). As a sociological term, generation is explained as groups that were born in recent times, felt the effects of similar social, political, cultural, and economic events and phenomena, assumed close responsibilities due to the circumstances, and had common beliefs and values (Süral-Özer, Eriş, & Timurcanday-Özmen, 2013).

In today’s organizations, individuals from each of the generations X, Y and Z can work at the same time (Arslan & Staub, 2015). Because it is not easy to separate and sort out generations with clear lines. It can also be said that generations are intertwined structures in terms of their birth dates and ages. These generations can be listed as; Silent Generation-Traditionalists (birth range: 1925-1945), Baby Boomers (birth range: 1946-1964), Generation X (birth range: 1965-1980), Generation Y (birth range: 1980-2000), Generation Z (birth range: 2000 and later) (Acılioğlu, 2015):

People born between 1925-1945 are called the “silent generation” or “traditionals” (Erden-Ayhün, 2013). In terms of dates, it can be said that this generation consists of those born during the Second World War. The keywords of traditional are “war”, “difficulty”, “famine” and “struggle” (Srinivasan, 2012). This generation, which consists of those born during the period when poverty and economic depression dominated the world, suffered financial difficulties due to the war and their lives were spent in effort and struggle (Oral, 2013). Members of this generation do not change jobs frequently and have difficulty adapting to technology (Adıgüzel, Batur & Ekşili, 2014). This generation is hardworking, does not like waste, is careful and cautious (Demirkaya, Akdemir, Karaman & Atan, 2015). This generation, which is dedicated to their work, is loyal to norms, obeys power, is loyal to the leader and respects him without question, is self-sacrificing and patient (Aka, 2017).

The Baby Boomer Generation is a generation that includes those born between 1946-1964 (Erden-Ayhün, 2013). It can be said that the baby boom was caused by people starting to have children in order to increase the human population that decreased due to World War II and the economic development that followed (Demirkaya, Akdemir, Karaman & Atan, 2015). This generation emphasizes gender equality, excludes racism and is sensitive to the environment. Open communication, sharing, joint decision-making and taking joint responsibility are essential in this generation (Çetin, Aydın & Başol, 2014). “Bomers” are individualistic, inquisitive, eager to explore the world, focused on living, positive, open to all kinds of innovations and fond of their freedom (Çinkılıç, 2018). Important struggles against racial discrimination and gender inequality began during the Baby Boomers' era, and they were also very sensitive to the environment (Göksel & Güneş, 2017).

Generation X is a generation formed by those born between 1965-1979. This generation is prone to technology, has an entrepreneurial spirit, acts purposefully and is fond of their independence (Adıgüzel, Batur & Ekşili, 2014). Generation X has also been called the “intermediate generation” or “children of the transition period” (Erden-Ayhün, 2013). This

generation has harsh political views, unusual clothing styles and strong musical understandings. This generation shows respect and wants to be respected both in business and private life (Çetin-Aydın & Başol, 2014). This generation, which likes to hang out individually, questions power, prefers to be independent and is in favor of change, prefers to be free rather than to have a position and money (Gürbüz, 2015). Generation X members, who have developed social responsibilities, are people with developed self-confidence (Akdemir, Konakay & Demirkaya, 2014). Students in Generation X are people who have little patience and are work-centered (Çetin-Aydın & Başol, 2014), obey power, and have high levels of motivation (Öz, 2015).

This generation, Generation Y, who was born between 1980-1999, is called the “post-80s generation” in Turkey. It can be said that this generation is a generation that loves having fun, traveling, pursuing innovations, trying different things, success, material powers such as money, unlimited shopping, dreaming and pursuing their dreams (Erden-Ayhün, 2013). This generation, which has the ability to actively use technology in business life, is a generation that does not accept authority, does not like to work for long periods of time and asks the question “why” very often (Gürbüz, 2015). Members of Generation Y have a structure that challenges authority, criticizes their parents and bosses. This generation, which does not have much sense of loyalty and is selective, is a generation that prefers individual work and is an entrepreneur (Oral, 2013). People in Generation Y are less committed to their jobs, do not accept authority easily, are fond of their freedom (Çetin-Aydın & Başol, 2014), and have a developed team spirit (Uslu & Kedikli, 2016).

People born after 2000 are called Generation Z. Individuals in Generation Z can be defined as people who do not like details, focus on goal-oriented actions, and do their work with enthusiasm and by directing their energy (Çetin & Karalar, 2016). Individuals belonging to Generation Z accept digitalization as a natural part of life, have difficulty being patient, focus on more than one subject at the same time, and have high motor skill adaptation. These are individuals who add variety to their activities and work, are result-oriented, and have high self-confidence (Berkup, 2014). Generation Z also has very developed communication skills (Tuncer, 2016). Generation Z is a generation that is intertwined with digital life. This feature has enabled this generation to master technology, use technology easily in every aspect of their lives, and have open communication (Acılıoğlu, 2015). This generation does their jobs quickly and meticulously due to the high adaptation in their motor skills. This generation, which is fond of freedom, prefers to live individually and values justice, peace, and tolerance. This generation, which is sensitive to environmental problems and social events, is skilled in adapting to economic activities, technological developments, and changes (Çevik & Kırmızı, 2020). Generation Z is a generation that closely follows shopping campaigns, evaluates technological opportunities, loves to research and question, is not obsessed with brands, but cares about quality (Taş, Demirdöğmez, & Küçükoğlu, 2017). Believing that their dreams can come true through work, this generation wants to get a good job and guarantee their future (Özkan & Solmaz, 2015).

Their predisposition to technology and their intertwinedness with technology have also led to this generation being called the “Internet Generation”, “Next Generation” or “iGen”. This generation, which is constantly online, is a generation where individualization and loneliness are at a high level (Çetin-Aydın & Başol, 2014). Generation Z, as a generation that has managed to fit all kinds of technology into its pocket, continues its life intertwined with digital life

(Demirkaya, Akdemir, Karaman & Atan, 2015). The lifestyles of this generation, which is constantly online, are shaped according to their technological devices and internet speeds. Therefore, it can be said that this generation, which is the technology generation, lives life at a fast pace in general. This generation, also called the “Internet Generation”, can be members of various networks, unlike the previous generations. Since this generation can access and communicate remotely thanks to technology, they do not care much about face-to-face communication and being together. This situation may cause this generation to prefer living alone and hanging out individually. As a versatile generation, Generation Z is a generation that can deal with more than one subject, event and phenomenon at the same time (Adıgüzel, Batur & Ekşili, 2014).

Small digital devices, computers, music players, iPods, mobile phones, tablets, video players, and game devices are indispensable for this generation (Oral, 2013). It may be correct to define this generation as people who care about worldly pleasures, internalize technology, and are meticulous and fast in business life (Erden-Ayhün, 2013). Generation Z can also be considered as a generation whose future is not yet fully known. The fact that this generation has a history of 22 years does not provide enough clues about what kind of a generation they will evolve into in the future. Generation Z prefers to be “online” rather than face to face. They prefer meetings and solidarity on social media instead of real social solidarity. This generation prefers virtual friendships rather than real friendships, and they are free, stubborn, and self-interested (Erden-Ayhün, 2013). Generation Z is a generation that is ahead of other generations in terms of healthy living due to the developments in the field of health (Çetin-Aydın & Başol, 2014). The generation born after 2000 in our country is also called the "Crystal Generation" (Adıgüzel, Batur & Ekşili, 2014).

The strengths of Generation Z are that they have higher living standards compared to previous generations, use technology very well, have a planned education from an early age, have high visual perception, can do more than one job at a time, can be motivated to do more than one job, have the ability to focus on complex information and analyze this information, can benefit from the internet instantly, can communicate easily, have high hand, eye and ear skills, can think globally, are entrepreneurs, have high self-confidence, are result-oriented and can produce practical solutions to difficulties (Bayraktar, 2020). The weaknesses of Generation Z are being overly individualistic and preferring loneliness, being emotional and fragile, having a very short attention span, being dissatisfied, getting bored easily and giving up quickly, being hasty, not appreciating what they have, having low commitment to family and social norms, not being a good team member, being a bad listener and having low verbal and face-to-face communication skills (Halisdemir, 2015).

Different generations differ not only in the time period they were born in, but also in their perception of life, values, attitudes and communication styles. In order to avoid intergenerational harmony problems, it is important for individuals to know and understand each other closely. Therefore, perceptions that cause problems should be determined and constructive solutions should be produced. What is important here is to allow different generations to increase their strengths by supporting each other's strengths (Angeline, 2011). It is necessary for all generations to listen to each other and try to understand each other in order to make healthy decisions (Taş, Demirdöğmez & Küçüköğlü, 2017). Knowing and understanding each other can be considered as the first step to prevent intergenerational conflicts.

Knowing how Generation Z students, equipped with different values, who have embraced technology and integrated with digital life, perceive teachers and what they expect from them has an undeniable importance in terms of teachers having good educational attitudes and behaviors (Taş & Minaz, 2024). It is clear that students and teachers from different generations in the same educational environment will have different values. In this case, it is always possible for the roles of teachers to conflict with the roles that students assign to them. Determining the perceptions and expectations of Generation Z students, who can be informed about the changes and developments in the world through the internet and computer technology, regarding teachers is important in terms of establishing mutual effective communication and providing positive guidance.

Generation Z is a generation that does not like traditional methods in education, works with a creativity orientation, likes to be active, is in favor of activity-oriented education, is not happy with being passive, and is against memorization and is in favor of games (Oral, 2013). Since Generation Z has the opportunity to benefit from educational opportunities at a high level, it also has the characteristic of having many diplomas. This generation is a result-oriented generation, and likes to specialize and make inventions. It can also be said that this generation, which does not care much about authority, will be an emotional generation. Therefore, it is important for schools to appeal to the emotions of this generation in order for them to achieve success (Erden-Ayhün, 2013).

In order for this generation to receive a good education, schools need to actively use technology and create electronic environments. Virtual libraries, virtual laboratories, databases, animation shows, video recordings, interactive teaching methods, online programs are the teaching materials, methods and techniques that this generation wants (Beyers, 2009). This generation, which prefers electronic books instead of printed books, handles all of its school-related work and transactions over the internet. This generation is a generation that loves and manages to learn in a virtual environment on its own rather than with a teacher. Therefore, virtual opportunities need to be offered to the service of children belonging to this generation. Since this generation can actively use internet trends, internet networks, social media tools and loves to use these opportunities, education and training activities need to be provided in this manner. Traditional schools, traditional principals and teachers are the reason why Generation Z is disillusioned with school. This generation expects their teachers and administrators to be as technologically prone as they are.

The changes and transformations that have occurred in every field in the twenty-first century have made it inevitable for there to be changes in the perceptions and expectations of teachers. In the past century, it was considered sufficient for effective teachers to mostly deal with issues such as protecting the system, maintaining classroom order, and providing security; however, it is stated that teachers today have more critical duties related to education and training (Halisdemir, 2015). Today, teachers are expected to lead learning, focus on education and training, create environments that support development, make decisions based on data, and use resources effectively and efficiently (King, 2002). Good teachers are expected to set clear goals for students, draw a new horizon, and focus on the multifaceted development of students. Teachers need to guide activities that increase the effectiveness of education and training activities, motivate learners to learn collaboratively, create a good learning environment,

provide trust, care for and support learners, and have open communication skills that achieve results (Stronge, Richard & Canato, 2008).

In the study conducted by Güleç-Bekman and Gündüz (2022), it was determined that Generation Z students and educational administrators need to adapt. In the study conducted by Tunç-Şahin, Turan, and Karadeniz (2021), it was determined that Generation Z defines education in the context of social relations, states that teachers should be patient, and wants students to be respectful. In the study conducted by Bayraktar (2020), it was concluded that teachers have strong communication with Generation Z students and understand this generation. In the study conducted by Halisdemir (2015), it was concluded that Generation Z students seriously challenge school principals and Generation Z needs good mentoring. It is important for teachers to know the characteristics of Generation Z students in terms of creating a happy and successful classroom environment. Similarly, knowing the perceptions and expectations of Generation Z students regarding teachers makes it easier to understand the teacher's practices, attitudes, and actions. This is important in terms of creating mutual understanding and resolving conflicts.

Generation Z students are individuals who can go beyond details, focus on their goals and direct their actions according to these goals (Çetin & Karalar, 2016). Generation Z, who have internalized digital life, do not like to be patient, can focus on more than one subject, can add variety to their work, enjoy getting results and are confident in themselves (Berkup, 2014). The interpersonal communication skills of Generation Z are also very developed (Tuncer, 2016). In order to prevent intergenerational incompatibility, it is important for individuals to be aware of each other's perceptions and expectations. It is important for both students to know their teachers and teachers to know their students in order to create a positive and successful classroom environment and climate.

Obtaining information about how Generation Z students, who have adopted different values compared to other generations, perceive teachers and what they expect from them is important, especially in terms of teachers exhibiting an effective educational approach. It should be considered natural for students and teachers from different generations to have different values in the same educational environment. In fact, it should be considered normal for the roles that teachers assign to themselves to conflict with the roles that students assign to them. Determining the perceptions and expectations of Generation Z students regarding teachers is important in terms of establishing effective mutual communication, resolving problems and channeling conflicts in a positive way. This is necessary in terms of creating an effective classroom climate and culture, exhibiting effective educational leadership and balancing organizational goals with individual needs. It can be said that this requirement adds special importance to the study.

The fact that teachers are an important element that affects schools in many ways makes it important to understand what teachers mean to students. This importance also makes the research important. In addition, the idea that the perception and expectation of teachers revealed by students, who are important stakeholders in education, can provide undeniable information and perspective to all educators and decision-makers in education has also paved the way for this study. At the same time, the limited number of qualitative studies in the literature that reveal the perceptions and expectations of Generation Z students about teachers also adds originality and importance to this study.

It is thought that the results obtained in this study will contribute to the reduction of generational conflicts between teachers and Generation Z students. This study also aims to create awareness in teachers about the generation they are educating and in Generation Z students about teachers. In light of this purpose/objective, it is aimed for teachers and Generation Z students to get to know each other with scientific data and evidence, to reveal their expectations, to review their paradigms regarding education, to conduct performance evaluations regarding themselves, to capture the emotional attachment between generations and, as a result, to increase the quality and efficiency of the education provided. It is hoped that the data obtained regarding the perceptions and expectations of teachers and Generation Z students regarding each other will contribute to future research and therefore to the literature.

The aim of this study is to determine the perceptions and expectations of Generation Z students regarding teachers. For this aim, the following questions were sought.

1. What are the perceptions of Generation Z students regarding teachers?
2. What are the expectations of Generation Z students from teachers?

## Method

### Research Model

In this study, which aimed to determine the perceptions and expectations of Generation Z students regarding teachers, the phenomenology design, one of the qualitative research designs, was preferred. Phenomenology, a research strategy designed to determine human experiences about a phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2018), focuses on events, experiences, concepts, perceptions and orientations encountered in daily life, allowing people to better understand phenomena they are familiar with but do not have detailed information about (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018).

### Study Group

In this study, the maximum variation sampling method was preferred. In maximum variation sampling, which is one of the purposeful sampling methods, it is aimed to reach common facts between different situations (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018). The study group of the research consists of 26 students studying in three secondary education institutions that are socially, culturally and economically different from each other (low-medium-high). While the schools were determined within the information obtained from the district national education directorate; the opinions of the school teachers, especially the guidance teachers, were taken as basis in determining the students. Based on this, care was taken to select students who showed the characteristics of Generation Z students dominantly. Personal data regarding the study group are given in Table 1.

**Table 1.** *Personal Information of the Participants*

	<b>Variables</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>
Gender	Female	12	46,15
	Male	14	53,85
Age	15 Years	4	15,38
	16 Years	7	26,92
	17 Years	6	23,08
	18 Years	9	34,62
Grade Level	High School 1 (9th grade)	4	15,38
	High School 2 (10th grade)	7	26,92
	High School 3 (11th grade)	6	23,08
	High School 4 (12th grade)	9	34,62
Schools	Low	7	26,92
	Medium	10	38,46
	High	9	34,62

According to Table 1; 46.15% of the participants were female and 53.85% were male; 15.38% of the participants were 15 years old, 26.92% were 16 years old, 23.08% were 17 years old, and 34.62% were 18 years old; 15.38% of the participants were in the first year of high school, 26.92% were in the second year of high school, 23.08% were in the third year of high school, and 34.62% were in the fourth year of high school; it was seen that 26.92% of the participants were selected from low, 38.46% were selected from medium, and 34.62% were selected from high school.

### **Data Collection Tools**

The data in the study was obtained through a semi-structured interview form. This form was developed by the researchers. The semi-structured interview form consists of a certain number of questions, and the participants in the study express their personal opinions and thoughts through the answers they give to these questions (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018). Before developing the semi-structured interview form, the literature was reviewed and possible questions that would serve the purpose of the study were determined. The determination of the questions was followed by obtaining the opinions of 3 experts on the subject. In addition, the interview form that was created was checked by 2 Turkish teachers in terms of language and comprehensibility. The prepared form was tested on 5 students who were not within the scope of the study.

### **Data Collection**

In this study, where face-to-face interviews were conducted, students were asked open-ended questions about how they perceived teachers, what their expectations were from teachers. Open-ended questions are questions that allow participants to express their opinions and views (Ekiz, 2016).

In this study, scientific ethical principles were meticulously followed and the authors signed the Ethics Declaration Form for this purpose. The real names of the participants were not used in the study, and the student names were coded as S1, S2,... S26. In the study, audio and video recordings could not be made due to the participants' lack of permission, only notes were taken by the researchers.



## Data Analysis

The data obtained from the interviews were subjected to content analysis. Content analysis enables the obtained data to be subjected to a detailed analysis process and to identify themes and categories that cannot be determined through descriptive analysis. This analysis method is an analysis technique in which a text can be summarized with smaller content categories by coding (Büyüköztürk, Kılıç-Çakmak, Akgün, Karadeniz & Demirel, 2022). The research data were analyzed by focusing on the steps of coding, theming, organization, definition and interpretation. The findings obtained as a result of the analyzes were tabulated and the frequencies of the categories in the table were determined. In the research, direct quotes from the participants' views were also included here and there.

## Findings

### 1. Findings Regarding the Perceptions of Generation Z Students Regarding Teachers

The perceptions of Generation Z students regarding teachers are given in Table 2.

**Table 2.** *Perceptions of Generation Z Students about Teachers*

Theme	Code	<i>f</i>	Total
Leader	Managing	24	167
	Protecting	23	
	Exemplary person	21	
	Problem solving	20	
	Fair	18	
	Charismatic	17	
	Guiding	16	
	Hardworking	15	
	Stylish and handsome	13	
Authority	Overly strict	23	100
	Strong	20	
	Hard	20	
	Disciplined	18	
	Stimulating	16	
	Robot	13	
Communication and interaction	Sociable	19	91
	Explaining	18	
	Understanding	16	
	Empathizing	14	
	Humane	10	
	Humble	8	
Support	A lot of talkative	6	77
	Guiding	20	
	Advising	17	
	Guiding	15	
	Helping	13	
	Collaborating	12	

When Table 2 is examined, it is seen that the perceptions of Generation Z students about teachers are gathered under the themes of leader, authority, communication and interaction, and support; the perceptions of Generation Z students about teachers are mostly gathered under the

theme of leader ( $f=167$ ); the student perceptions are united under the themes of authority ( $f=100$ ), communication and interaction ( $f=91$ ), and support ( $f=77$ ), respectively. According to the perceptions of Generation Z students, the main characteristics of teachers under the theme of leadership are listed as managing, protecting, exemplary person, problem solver, fair, charismatic, directing, hardworking, stylish, and handsome; while the characteristics under the theme of authority are listed as overly prescriptive, strong, tough, disciplined, stimulating, and robot. The communication and interaction theme consists of the codes of sociable, explanatory, understanding, empathizing, humane, modest, and talking too much; while the support theme consists of the codes of guiding, advising, guiding, helping, and collaborating.

## 2. Findings Regarding Generation Z Students' Expectations from Teachers

Data on Generation Z students' expectations from teachers are given in Table 3.

**Table 3.** *Generation Z Students' Expectations From Teachers*

Thema	Code	<i>f</i>	Total
Communication and interaction	He/she should establish good communication with students	25	163
	He/she should be easily accessible	23	
	He/she should know how to listen	21	
	He/she should meet with students frequently	19	
	He/she should be understanding	18	
	He/she should be empathetic	15	
	He/she should be patient	13	
	He/she should be respectful	11	
	He/she should be an example	9	
	He/she should have good communication with parents	7	
Education	He/she should renew and improve himself/herself	21	131
	He/she should provide educational tools	20	
	He/she should provide a good educational environment	18	
	He/she should beautify the physical structure of the school	16	
	He/she should give a lot of space to social-sports activities	15	
	He/she should reward successful students	13	
	He/she should check the homework he/she gives	11	
	He/she should meet with parents frequently	9	
He/she should renew and improve himself/herself	8		
Technology	He/she should provide all kinds of technology to the school	24	99
	He/she should provide unlimited internet access	23	
	He/she should provide electronic educational tools	21	
	He/she should use social media actively	18	
	He/she should educate himself/herself in technology	13	
Discipline	He/she should be tolerant	25	84
	He/she should be fair and consistent	20	
	He/she should solve problems by talking	18	
	He/she should not call the parents to the school for discipline	10	
	He/she should abolish the disciplinary board	8	
	He/she should not be in favor of punishment	3	

When Table 3 is examined, it is seen that Generation Z students are gathered under the themes of communication and interaction, education-training, technology and discipline from teachers; Generation Z students' expectations from teachers are mostly gathered under the theme of communication and interaction ( $f=163$ ); student expectations are united under the themes of education-training ( $f=131$ ), technology ( $f=99$ ) and discipline ( $f=84$ ), respectively.

The expectations of Generation Z students under the communication and interaction theme are listed as establishing good communication with students, being easily accessible, knowing how to listen, getting together with students frequently, being understanding, showing empathy, being patient, being respectful, being a role model and communicating well with parents; while the expectations under the education-training theme are listed as renewing and improving oneself, providing educational tools and equipment, providing a good educational environment, beautifying the physical structure of the school, giving much space to social and sporting activities in the school, rewarding successful students, entering and checking teachers' lessons and meeting with parents frequently. The technology theme consists of the codes of providing all kinds of technology to the school, providing unlimited internet access, providing electronic games and educational tools, using social media actively and educating oneself on technology; while the discipline theme consists of the codes of not being pro-punishment, being tolerant, being fair and consistent, solving problems by talking, not calling parents to school for discipline and abolishing the disciplinary board.

## Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendations

### Conclusion and Discussion

In the study, it was determined that the perceptions of Generation Z students about teachers were gathered under the themes of leader, authority, communication and interaction, and support, respectively; the leadership theme consisted of the codes of managing, protecting and trusting, exemplary person, problem solver, fair, charismatic, directing, hard-working, stylish, and handsome; the authority theme consisted of the codes of overly prescriptive, strong, tough, disciplined, stimulating, and robot; the communication and interaction theme consisted of the codes of sociable, explanatory, understanding, empathizing, humane, modest, and talking too much; and the support theme consisted of the codes of guiding, advising, guiding, helping, and cooperating.

The research findings show that Generation Z students perceive teachers as people who have an important position in the school. The words of one participant (T2), *“Our teacher was born to manage. He wants to manage the school, everyone and everything. He is actually good at this job.”* are remarkable in this sense. The research findings show that Generation Z students perceive teachers as effective leaders, take as an example the administrator who values and understands, and can adjust student-administrator relations appropriately. While Generation Z students have the perception that teachers should not adopt an authoritarian attitude in order to strengthen their authority, it is also clear that they are influenced by charismatic, stylish and authoritative teachers. The words of a participant (S16), *“The teacher is a very strong person in every way. He has the national education behind him and that is why everyone in the school is afraid of him.”* are of a nature to clarify the issue. In the study conducted by Halisdemir (2015), our research findings are also supported, and it was concluded that Generation Z students perceive teachers as leaders, supporters, helpers, guides, strong and problem solvers. In the study conducted by Tunç-Şahin, Turan and Karadeniz (2021), it was determined that Generation Z students perceive teachers as reliable, patient and caring.

Although schools prefer to focus on the similarities of all their students, the biggest obstacle to this is interpersonal differences. It should not be forgotten that each generation has

different expectations and perceptions (Angeline, 2011). In this case, there will always be a situation where people cannot understand each other, cannot communicate, and have wrong perceptions (Altimier, 2006). What is important here is the fact that Generation Z students generally have positive perceptions about teachers. The study conducted by Önen and Eryılmaz-Ballı (2020) and supporting our research findings concluded that Generation Z students mostly have positive perceptions about teachers. Of course, it is also natural for some students to perceive teachers as a source of authority and power, as a disciplinarian and a rule enforcer. The words of one participant (T19), *“Our teacher is a very disciplined man. He cares a lot about order and discipline and never wants discipline to be disrupted at school. Sometimes he thinks that the school is a military barracks.”* summarize the issue. In their study, Yalçın and Erginer (2014) concluded that students have an overly prescriptive perception of teachers.

The research results show that the Z generation students perceive teachers as people who manage, protect and inspire trust, are exemplary people, solve problems, are fair, charismatic, direct, hard-working, stylish and handsome, sociable, explain, understanding, empathic, humane, modest, guiding, giving advice, providing guidance, helping and cooperating. The fact that the same students perceive teachers as overly prescriptive, strong, tough, disciplined, stimulating and robotic is important for teachers to be aware of their perceptions and to provide a good education-teaching environment by taking these perceptions into account in their attitudes and behaviors. The finding in the study conducted by Helvacı and Aydoğan (2011) that teachers are perceived as leaders who care about justice, develop positive relationships, are stable, behave with understanding, can empathize, suggest solutions, are open to change, approach events and situations with sensitivity, and are well-dressed and well-groomed also supports our research findings.

The fact that Generation Z students perceive teachers as leaders, sources of authority and support providers can be considered as a reflection of teachers' multifaceted duties and responsibilities. The fact that teachers' attitudes and behaviors are shaped according to the tasks, orders and instructions they receive can cause students to perceive the administrator in different ways. What is important is that teachers provide the necessary innovations, changes and developments based on students' perceptions. Indifference to students' perceptions can lead to the elimination of a healthy education-training environment and irreparable problems. In studies conducted (Güleç-Bekman & Gündüz, 2022), it is a noteworthy result in this sense that the vast majority of administrators state that Generation Z's perceptions are important to them.

In the research, it was determined that the expectations of Generation Z students from teachers were gathered under the themes of communication and interaction, education-training, technology and discipline, respectively; the communication and interaction theme consisted of the codes of establishing good communication with students, being easily accessible, knowing how to listen, getting together with students frequently, being understanding, showing empathy, being patient, being respectful, being an example and communicating well with parents; the education-training theme consisted of the codes of renewing and improving oneself, providing educational tools and equipment, providing a good educational environment, beautifying the physical structure of the school, giving much space to social and sportive activities in the school, rewarding successful students, entering and checking teachers' lessons and meeting with parents frequently; the technology theme consisted of the codes of providing all kinds of technology, providing unlimited internet access, providing electronic games and educational tools, using social media actively and educating oneself about technology; and the discipline

theme consisted of the codes of not being in favor of punishment, being tolerant, being fair and consistent, solving problems by talking, not calling parents to school for discipline and abolishing the disciplinary board.

Having high living standards, using technology very well, having high visual perception, being versatile, having high motivation, having the ability to focus on complex information and analyze this information, being able to benefit from the internet instantly, being able to communicate easily, having high hand, eye and ear skills, being able to think globally, being entrepreneurial, having high self-confidence, being result-oriented and being able to produce practical solutions to difficulties also differentiate the expectations of Generation Z students from teachers. Being children of the technology age brings their expectations from teachers regarding technology to the forefront. The words of a participant (S9), *“There should be unlimited internet in school. This is a must so that we can research topics in lessons. In fact, this is also needed for social media. Social media is not a bad thing, actually.”* express their expectations regarding technology. Perhaps one of the most important expectations regarding technology is their expectation that teachers should train themselves in using technology. A participant (S20) said, *“Teachers should be able to use technology actively. In this age, who does not use technology and does not follow social media?”* His words are noteworthy in this sense.

Taking into account the expectations of Generation Z students is important for teachers to evaluate themselves. The existence of students' expectations from teachers who belong to a different generation and the fulfillment of these expectations are important for a successful and qualified education (Taş & Kiroğlu, 2018). Indifference to student expectations will pave the way for problems such as student dissatisfaction, disciplinary problems, increased absenteeism, and decreased communication. Focusing on students' legitimate expectations such as being listened to, understood, accepted, respected, helped, guided, shown, and having solutions produced for their problems will also enable teachers to develop more effective and result-oriented management approaches and strategies. In the study conducted by Halisdemir (2015), the expectations of Generation Z students to be loved, valued, treated fairly, to ensure their participation in decisions, to communicate, not to be pressured, to be treated sincerely, not to be punished immediately, to be seen as an individual, to be cared for, to be treated equally and not to be insulted are similar to our research results. In the study conducted by Güleç-Bekman and Gündüz (2022), similar to our research results, the expectations of Generation Z from teachers were listed as caring about private life, being pro-student, not seeing mistakes, valuing, being respectful, being polite and relevant, not humiliating, being able to manage, being reliable, patient, cheerful, disciplined, questioning and researching.

Failure of teachers to take into account the expectations of Generation Z students can lead to disagreements and conflicts, especially between Generation Z students and teachers, on issues such as leadership style, motivation, teamwork, communication, and social interaction (Gabriellova & Buchko, 2021). Because, as seen in our research results, Generation Z students expect teachers not to pressure them, to respect them, to show understanding, and not to immediately involve the disciplinary committee or call families to school every time a problem occurs. The words of one participant (S24), *“When a disciplinary incident occurs, it is a humiliation for the student to be called to school...”* can clarify the issue. In the study conducted

by Halisdemir (2015), it was determined that students who encountered disciplinary problems at school expressed that informing their parents about the issue caused them uneasiness.

It is known that students who are appreciated, understood, valued and cared for by teachers are more productive and efficient. Teachers play a critical role in ensuring harmony among students. However, it can be said that many teachers do not receive any training on generational problems, which can lead to differences turning into conflict environments. Teachers correctly identifying students' interests, desires and needs and producing effective solutions will reduce intergenerational conflicts. In this case, it is important for teachers to learn the expectations of Generation Z students, adopt these expectations as a roadmap and develop solutions. Because being understood, respected, accepted, loved, valued and communicated with by teachers is very important for students. The words of one participant (S26), *“Teachers need to empathize in order to understand us. In other words, they should think like us and put themselves in our shoes. Otherwise, this will not work.”* and the words of another participant (S7), *“Teachers should establish good communication with students. This is very important for us.”* support our inferences on this subject.

## **Recommendations**

1. In order to achieve the goals set in education, it is important for teachers to analyze generations and the period they belong to well, and to observe the differences/diversity that can inevitably exist between generations, so teachers should be given training on the interests, desires and characteristics of generations.

2. Teachers should avoid exhibiting authoritarian, harsh, degrading and exclusionary attitudes and behaviors in their communication with students; they should create channels where students can share freely and communicate without hesitation, and they should be aware of the changing expectations and needs of students.

3. The understanding of obeying rules based on authority and fear should be ended, and the rules that will make living together easier should be determined with a common understanding and harmony with teachers and students, taking into account the characteristics, demands and needs of Generation Z, and the problem of discipline and punishment in schools should be eliminated.

4. Students' participation in decisions taken at school should be ensured, students' expectations of democratic participation in school should be met, and thus the perception that rules are unilateral impositions should be destroyed.

5. Teachers who cannot adapt to the age and change, ignore technological developments, and stay away from social media will have difficulty perceiving Generation Z, so effective and practical in-service training should be provided to teachers so that they can use technology and social media effectively.

6. Bureaucratic obstacles should be eliminated and democratic and scientific environments should be created where teachers and Generation Z can get to know each other better and socialize, and guidance services of schools should be utilized to a high level in this regard.

7. This research was conducted in public schools. Conducting similar studies in private schools and comparing the results with public schools could contribute to the literature.

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*Perceptions and Expectations of Generation Z Students Regarding Teachers*

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### **Ethical Declaration**

In this study, scientific ethical principles were meticulously followed and the authors signed the Ethics Declaration Form for this aim.