

# Generation Z Workplace Expectations: Nursing Students' Perspectives

*Z Kuşağı İşyeri Beklentileri: Hemşirelik Öğrencilerinin Perspektifleri*

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## ÖZET

Çalışma, Z kuşağı hemşirelik son sınıf öğrencilerinin işyeri beklentilerini araştırmayı amaçlamıştır. Araştırma betimsel ve kesitsel bir çalışma olarak yürütülmüştür. Katılımcılar, 2020-2021 bahar döneminde Özel Sağlık Grubu'na bağlı İstanbul hastanelerinde stajlarını yapan ve kurumla iletişimi olan Türkiye'deki dördüncü sınıf hemşirelik öğrencileridir. Çalışmanın evreni 457 öğrenci, örnekleme çevrimiçi ankete cevap veren 343 öğrencidir. Veriler çevrimiçi bir anket aracılığıyla toplanmış ve araştırma için etik onay alınarak uygun istatistiksel yöntemler kullanılarak analiz edilmiştir. Toplanan veriler, SPSS 21.0 yazılımı kullanılarak tanımlayıcı istatistikler sayı, yüzde, ortalama, standart hata ve karşılaştırmalar için ki-kare analizi dâhil olmak üzere analiz edilmiştir. Araştırmada etik hususlar gözetilmiş, çalışmanın yürütülmesi için Etik Kurul'dan onay alınmıştır. Araştırmaya katılan öğrencilerin yaş ortalaması 21.97 idi. Toplam katılımcıların % 81.9'u (281 öğrenci) kadındı. Çalışmaya 43 farklı üniversiteden öğrenciler katılmış olup, %73,34'ü (255 öğrenci) İstanbul dışındaki üniversitelerde öğrenim görmektedir. Katılımcıların %58,0'ı (188 öğrenci) hemşirelik mesleğini kendi istekleriyle seçtiklerini belirtmişlerdir. Bulgular, araştırmaya katılan öğrencilerin işyeri beklentileri arasında güvenlik önlemlerine, iş rollerinde netliğe, yönetimden adil muameleye, sigorta ve sosyal güvenlik gibi çalışanlara sağlanan faydalara ve adil ücret dağılımına değer verdiklerini göstermektedir. Z kuşağı hemşirelerin değişen ihtiyaçlarını anlamak ve işyeri politika ve uygulamalarını buna göre uyarlamak için çok önemlidir.

## Anahtar Kelimeler:

Z kuşağı,  
İşyeri Beklentileri,  
Hemşire Öğrenci,

## ABSTRACT

This study investigated the workplace expectations of Generation Z nursing senior students. The research was conducted as a descriptive and cross-sectional study. Participants are fourth-year nursing students in Turkey who do their internship in Istanbul hospitals affiliated to the Private Health Group in the spring term of 2020-2021 and have communication with the institution. The study population was 457 students, and the sample was 343 students who answered the online questionnaire. Data were collected through an online questionnaire and analysed using appropriate statistical methods with ethical approval for the research. Collected data were analysed using SPSS 21.0 software, including descriptive statistics number, percentage, mean, standard error, and chi-square analysis for comparisons. Ethical issues were considered in the study, and approval was obtained from the Ethics Committee for the conduct of the study. The average age of the students participating in the study was 21.97. Of the total participants, 81.9% (281 students) were women. Students from 43 different universities participated in the study, of which 73.34% (255 students) studied at universities outside of Istanbul. 58.0% (188 students) of the participants stated that they chose the nursing profession voluntarily. The findings show that the students participating in the study value safety precautions, clarity in job roles, fair treatment from management, employee benefits such as insurance and social security, and fair wage distribution among workplace expectations. It is crucial to understand the changing needs of Generation Z nurses and adapt workplace policies and practises accordingly.

## Keywords:

Generation Z,  
Workplace Expectations,  
Nurse Student,

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Like any modern workforce, the nurse workforce is dispersed over generations. Each generation has brought its own unique attitudes, communication styles, work ethic, collective experiences, and self-identification. It is essential to recognize the importance of each generation by recognizing their valuable contributions to the field. Currently, the nursing profession spans four distinct generations: Baby Boomers, Xers, Millennials, and Gen Zs. The age-related demographics of the nursing workforce, from seasoned Baby Boomers approaching retirement to Generation Z who are now in their twenties, reflect the diversity found in society (Carlson Keith, 2023; Chicca and Shellenbarger, 2018; Christensen et al., 2018; Gökalp, 2021; Sevinç and Kavgaoglu, 2019; So Hee and Yeojin, 2023; Tussing et al., 2022a) Generation Z individuals born between 1997 and 2012 constitute this new generation (Hampton and Welsh, 2019).

A comprehensive study conducted in the USA, which focused on the nursing workforce, which reached approximately 4 million people by 2021, drew attention to the existence of these four generations. Among them, Baby Boomers born between 1946 and 1964 (aged 59-77 in 2023) make up 22% of nurses (RNs). Generation X (ages 43 to 58 in 2023), born between 1965 and 1980, make up 37% of the nursing workforce. Millennials, who were born between 1981 and 1996 (aged 27 to 42 in 2021), make up a significant proportion of RNs. Finally, it was emphasized that Generation Z, the youngest generation born between 1997 and 2012 (aged 11 to 26 in 2023), represents only 1% of the nurse workforce (Carlson Keith, 2023). Generation Z represents true digital natives who are deeply intertwined with technology. Its different characteristics will undoubtedly affect the nursing profession and the healthcare environment (Chicca and Shellenbarger, 2019; Chicca and Shellenbarger, 2018; Choi et al., 2022; Tussing et al., 2022).

Nursing has been providing multigenerational care for many years. As each generation discusses their unique skills, experiences, and perspectives, it is vital that healthcare institutions and organizations develop an inclusive and supportive environment that recognizes and values the contributions of nurses across all generations. Every generation has gifts and contributions to offer (Ahn et al., 2020; Cartwright-Stroupe and Shinnars, 2021; Gökalp, 2021; Sevinç and Kavgaoglu, 2019). No matter how inexperienced the younger generation may seem to the more experienced, these novices will one day become the de facto leaders of the profession. That is why it is always to our advantage to embrace and honor what each generation of nurses brings in difficult and troubling times. Each generation experiences historical events that have shaped attitudes, abilities, norms, and moral foundations. The COVID-19 pandemic and sharp increases in the cost of living have shaped the lives of Generations Y and Z. They have seen entire communities support nurses and health workers by banging pots and pans, but they also know that health professionals are often understaffed, underfunded, and overworked (Chunta et al., 2021; Sherman, 2021; Testa G., 2023; Timuçin et al., 2022; Tussing et al., 2022a).

The nursing profession has faced significant challenges in recent years, particularly due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on educational opportunities and training new nurses. The pandemic has disrupted the training of the newest group of nurses, potentially resulting in a lack of clinical experience and guidance in clinics. Due to intense work and individual protection measures during the COVID-19 process, health personnel could not provide adequate support to these nurses. Pandemic-era nurses failed to lay the foundation for patient care that would make them feel fully prepared to care for patients when they graduate from school (Adams, 2022; Chicca and Shellenbarger, 2018; Chunta et al., 2021; Tussing et al., 2022; Zay, 2021) In a qualitative study, nursing students expressed concerns about the transition to practice during the pandemic after learning predominantly online. The limited time in simulation labs has affected their readiness for patient care, and some have expressed concern about graduating without enough practical experience. With the situation experienced during this period, hospitals faced difficulties in training new graduates and in eliminating the gaps caused by virtual school experiences (Cartwright-Stroupe and Shinnars, 2021; Serafin et al., 2020; Sherman R.O., 2023; Tussing et al., 2022).

The first group of Gen Z nurses began their careers in clinics at the height of COVID-19 and gained experience in crisis management. However, many nurses left or retired during this period. Young health workers partially lacked the clinical judgement and experience of previously experienced nurses. Healthcare organizations have

also had to assume responsibility for the support and preparation of these new nurses for vital roles (Ahn et al., 2020; Serafin et al., 2020; Tussing et al., 2022a). Nursing, already a challenging and high-risk profession has faced an unprecedented workforce crisis that has caused many new nurses to reconsider their career choices. According to a report by nurse employment platform Incredible Health, more than 100,000 registered nurses will leave the workforce by 2021. It was the worst talent migration in the profession in more than forty years (Adams, 2022; Menham, 2023).

The stressors of this crisis negatively affect the mental health of new nursing graduates, and %55 states that they do not plan to stay in the profession until they retire. The workplace environment is plagued by extreme burnout and rapid turnover, resulting in new nurses entering the profession with increased levels of anxiety. The main sources of this concern stem from the inadequacy of recruitment processes and overwork due to lack of personnel. As the pandemic has profoundly shaped the views of the Gen Z cohort on work-life balance, they are redefining their expectations of the workplace in ways that previous generations have not (Adams, 2022; Menham, 2023; Pittman, 2020; Libby, 2021).

The entry of Generation Z into the nursing workforce comes at a time when concerns about health and resilience are at an all-time high. Gen Z employees are currently 26 years old or younger; Generation Y nurses are between the ages of 27 and 42. The impact of Generation Z on all sectors, especially the health sector, cannot be ignored. Attracting candidates from this generation is becoming a priority for organizations to effectively adapt to the changing workforce dynamic, employers must recognize and adapt to the unique skill sets and aspirations of Generation Z employees (Adams, 2022; Menham, 2023; Periop Today, 2023; Pittman, 2020). The ongoing healthcare personnel crisis requires healthcare institutions to specialize in attracting, retaining, and planning efficiently. This requires a proactive approach to understanding and meeting the preferences and needs of Generation Z employees (Menham, 2023; Periop Today, 2023).

The integration of Generation Z into the nursing workforce is a transformative development necessitating comprehensive consideration across various dimensions. Research underscores the critical importance of nurses' mental health, especially in the context of challenging events such as the COVID-19 pandemic (Testa, 2023; Sampaio et al., 2020). Recognizing the generational characteristics of nurses becomes paramount as different age groups, including Generation Z, may harbor distinct workplace preferences and needs (Stevanin et al., 2018). Tailoring nursing education approaches to effectively resonate with Generation Z is imperative for their successful assimilation into the workforce (Chicca and Shellenbarger, 2018). Furthermore, exploring job satisfaction and workplace engagement in millennial nurses provides valuable insights into factors contributing to a positive work environment for younger generations (Waltz et al., 2020).

An understanding of generational differences and their impact on nurses' work values, engagement, and satisfaction is crucial for both individual and organizational performance (Tan and Chin, 2023). Assessing the readiness to practice in Generation Z nursing students is essential for adequately preparing them for the demands of the nursing profession (Schmitt & Lancaster, 2019). Addressing factors influencing turnover intention among new graduate nurses, such as job stress and sleep disturbance, is vital for retaining nursing talent in the workforce (An et al., 2022).

The post-pandemic nursing workforce introduces unique challenges and opportunities for Generation Z nurses, necessitating tailored recruitment strategies that align with the specific characteristics of millennials and Generation Z nurses (Tussing et al., 2022). Additionally, sustaining the rural nursing workforce and preparing nurses for rural practice are critical considerations, particularly in addressing healthcare disparities in rural areas (Hunsberger et al., 2008).

Generation Z students' distinctive learning concentration levels and their reliance on social media as an information source have implications for nursing education and workforce preparedness (Hanifah et al., 2018). Furthermore, understanding nurses' stress, coping mechanisms, performance, and mobile phone use can offer valuable insights into factors influencing nursing practice and patient care (McBride et al., 2015; Jose and Bhat, 2013).

The entry of Generation Z into the nursing workforce requires a holistic understanding of their unique characteristics, needs, and challenges (Menham, 2023; Tussing et al., 2022a). By addressing these multifaceted factors, healthcare organizations and educational institutions can better prepare and support Generation Z nurses, contributing to a resilient and effective nursing workforce. The recognition of workplace dynamics, leadership development, and readiness to engage patients further enriches the strategies necessary for the successful integration of Generation Z nurses into the healthcare landscape, ultimately fortifying the sector for the future.

## 2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### 2.1. The Aim of This Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the expectations of the senior nursing students of the generation Z from the workplace.

### 2.2. Research Questions

This study seeks to explore the workplace expectations of senior nursing students from Generation Z. The primary question addressed is the nature of these expectations. Additionally, the impact of voluntarily choosing the nursing profession and the influence of gender on these expectations will be investigated. Furthermore, the study aims to understand how the experiences of nursing students may have been altered by the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic. Justification;

- ***Nature of Workplace Expectations:*** The first research question addresses the overarching theme of the study and aims to uncover the specific workplace expectations of senior nursing students from Generation Z. Understanding these expectations is fundamental to tailoring workplace environments to meet the needs of the emerging nursing workforce.
- ***Impact of Voluntary Career Choice and Gender:*** The second research question addresses potential differences in workplace expectations based on voluntary choice of nursing career and gender. Exploring these factors will contribute to a nuanced understanding of the diverse perspectives within the Generation Z nursing student cohort.
- ***Influence of COVID-19 on Perspectives:*** The third research question explores the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on nursing students' perspectives. Investigating this aspect is critical to determining how external factors, such as a global health crisis, may shape the expectations and perceptions of the future nursing workforce.

### 2.3. Research Type

The study is descriptive and cross-sectional. It was conducted between October 13 and November 8, 2021, using the online survey method with 4th grade nursing students in Turkey with whom a Private Health Group was in contact

### 2.4. Research Population and Sample

The research population consisted of 457 fourth grade nursing students who were doing their internship in Istanbul hospitals of a private Health Group in the spring semester of 2020-2021, who were interviewed online within the scope of career days, and 343 students who responded to the online questionnaire. The criteria for inclusion in the study were to be a senior nursing student and to have communication with Health Group.

### 2.5. Data Collection Instruments

The data collection instrument, which was carefully developed by the researchers, consisted of four questions regarding the demographic details of the participants. The focal point of the instrument was a set of 29 questions designed to explore the expectations of fourth-year nursing students regarding the workplace. The Likert-type form questioner with a 5-point rating system (1=never, 2=rarely, 3=sometimes, 4=usually, 5=always) was used to measure the students' responses to 25 items, totaling 29 questions.

The 25-item questionnaire focusing on workplace expectations was rigorously developed to ensure content validity and reliability. The process included extensive literature review, expert input, and iterative refinement. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient, a measure of internal consistency, was calculated for the 25 items and yielded

a high value of 0.952. This robust internal reliability indicates a strong correlation among the items, confirming the consistency of the scale in measuring participants' expectations from the workplace.

To facilitate data collection, the carefully designed data collection form was distributed electronically via email to fourth-year nursing students with available contact information within the institution. The participants willingly participated in the survey and provided valuable insight into their expectations, which formed the basis of the study's findings.

## **2.6. Data Analysis**

The collected data were subjected to a comprehensive analysis using descriptive statistics and advanced statistical methods. Descriptive statistics, including number and percentage distributions, were used to provide a concise overview of the demographic characteristics of the participants. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21.0 was used for in-depth analysis of the 25-item Likert-type questionnaire measuring job expectations. Responses to each item, rated on a five-point Likert scale (1=never, 2=rarely, 3=sometimes, 4=usually, 5=always), were aggregated to calculate the mean and standard error. This process provided a nuanced understanding of the collective sentiment of participants toward each expectation.

Chi-square analysis was also used to assess the significance of observed differences and associations. This statistical technique allowed for comparisons and the identification of patterns within categorical variables, shedding light on potential correlations. Means and standard deviations of responses were calculated and arranged in descending order from highest to lowest. This classification not only facilitated a quick grasp of overall trends, but also provided insight into the variability and consensus among participants regarding their workplace expectations. A multifaceted approach to data analysis was employed, combining basic descriptive statistics with advanced techniques to unravel the intricate patterns and relationships embedded in the responses of senior Gen Z nursing students.

## **2.7. Ethical Consideration of the Research**

To conduct the research, approval was obtained from the Ethics Committee of Acıbadem Mehmet Ali Aydınlar University on 29 July 2021 with the Ethics Committee decision number 2021-12/43. Before the questionnaire form and question set were distributed to the participants via e-mail, the purpose of the research was explained to the participants via e-mail. Students who were willing to participate in the survey and who marked the approval section for participation reached the survey form. Due care was taken for the law on the protection of personal data of individuals. Participants were informed that the data would be used for scientific purposes. There was no risk of material or moral harm to the employees participating in the research. In this study, research and publication ethics were followed.

## **2.8. Limitations of the Research**

While this study provides valuable insights into the workplace expectations of older Generation Z nursing students, there are several limitations. First, caution should be exercised in generalizing the findings, as the research is limited to a specific sample size and may not fully capture the diversity within the broader population of nursing students. In addition, the study is limited in time by its focus on nursing students' perceptions and expectations during the COVID-19 pandemic, and this unique context may have influenced participants' responses.

Despite efforts to explore the influence of variables such as voluntary career choice, gender, and university attended, the study did not identify statistically significant effects, suggesting that other unexamined factors may play a greater role in shaping nursing students' perspectives during crises. The sample representation introduces potential biases related to geographic locations, cultural backgrounds, and educational institutions. The subjective nature of self-reported responses and the exclusive focus on workplace expectations, particularly during the pandemic, may not fully capture the multiple influences on participants' perspectives. Acknowledging these limitations enhances the transparency and validity of the study and highlights the need for future research to address these limitations and provide a more comprehensive understanding of Gen Z nursing students' workplace expectations.

### 3. FINDINGS OF RESEARCH

The mean age of the students participating in the study was  $21.97 \pm 1.16$  years (Min 18-Max 24 years). 81.9% (n=281) of the students were female and 18.1% (n= 62) were male. Students from 43 universities participated in the study, of which 73.34% (n=255) were students studying at universities outside Istanbul. The university with the highest number of surveys was Bahçeşehir University with 30 students, Çukurova University with 27 students, and Giresun University with 27 students. 58.0% (n=188) of the students stated that they chose the nursing profession willingly and 45.3% (n=155) unwillingly.

**Table 1.** The Reasons for Choosing the Profession of Nursing Students Who Unwillingly Chose the Nursing Profession

Reasons	(n)	(%)
Job guarantee	109	31,8
Score enough for this section	65	19
Family request	63	18,4
Obligation	27	7,9
Asking for a different career choice	18	5,2

\*Multiple Answers and not All Students Answered This Question.

When the reasons for choosing the profession of 155 people who refused to choose nursing school were examined, the top three reasons were guarantee", "*Sufficient score for this department*" and "*family request*" (Table 1).

**Table 2.** The Distribution of the Average Scores of Students' Expectations from the Workplace (n=343)

Statements	n	Mean	St. deviation
Implementation of safety measures to protect employee health	343	4,825	0,5173
Clear definition of roles, authorities, and responsibilities for employees	343	4,778	0,5492
Expecting fair, ethical, and respectful behavior from managers	343	4,776	0,6660
Receiving institutional health support, including private insurance and social security benefits	343	4,767	0,6740
Ensuring fair wage management among all employees	343	4,749	0,7462
Feeling supported in legal processes as an employee of the organization	343	4,746	0,7028
Providing necessary in-service training to support professional development	343	4,720	0,6699
Ensuring adequate use of personal and social rights such as leave and benefits	343	4,711	0,7018
Employee Complaint and Conflict Resolution	343	4,711	0,6453
Ensuring the proper distribution of workload among employees	343	4,694	0,7068
Providing career advancement and development opportunities within the organization	343	4,697	0,7344
Comfortable and Safe Working Environment	343	4,650	0,7051
Providing support for further education levels	343	4,636	0,8083
Supporting employees and not leaving them alone in the case of mistakes	343	4,612	0,7863
Provision of necessary materials for job duties	343	4,598	0,8420
Getting adequate support from managers	343	4,598	0,7618
Getting adequate support from colleagues	343	4,525	0,7790
Receiving institutional support for health problems concerning family and relatives	343	4,466	0,9038
Comfortably share personal problems with managers	343	4,440	0,8559
Planning social activities and events that will increase employee motivation	343	4,382	0,9443
Managers' close and sincere behaviors	343	4,373	0,8485
Providing facilities for transportation	343	4,329	0,9820
Not assigning duties other than job descriptions due to lack of personnel	343	4,248	1,1264
Offering discount opportunities in stores, markets, clubs, and social facilities	343	4,187	1,1083
Providing flexible working hours when necessary	343	4,175	1,1336

When the expectations of the students from the workplace are examined, "*Implementation of safety measures to protect the health of the employees*" is in the first place, "*clear definition of duties, authorities, and*

responsibilities for the employees" is the third, "Expecting fair, ethical, and respectful behavior from the managers" is the fourth, and fifth, "Private insurance and social security and "Ensuring fair wage management among all employees".

**Table 3.** The Distribution of the 5 Highest Expectations from the Workplace of Those Who Voluntarily Chose the Nursing Profession (n=188)

Statements	n	Mean	St. deviation
Implementation of safety measures to protect employee health	188	4,851	0,4498
Expecting fair, ethical, and respectful behavior from managers	188	4,840	0,4917
Clear definition of roles, authorities, and responsibilities for employees	188	4,803	0,5052
Feeling supported in legal processes as an employee of the organization	188	4,803	0,5928
Providing necessary in-service training to support professional development	188	4,777	0,5878
Ensuring fair wage management among all employees	188	4,777	0,6647
Receiving institutional health support, including private insurance and social security benefits	188	4,771	0,6669

Age: Mean: 22.04 years (Min: 19.0 Max: 24.0)

Looking at the expectations of those who voluntarily chose the profession from the workplace, it was seen that the first three expectations were "The implementation of safety measures to protect the health of the employees", "Expecting fair, ethical and respectful behavior from the managers", and "clear definition of duties, authorities and responsibilities for employees".

**Table 4.** The Distribution of the 5 Highest Expectations from the Workplace of Those Who Did not Choose the Profession Voluntarily (n=155)

Statements	n	Mean	St. deviation
Implementation of safety measures to protect employee health	155	4,794	0,5888
Receiving institutional health support, including private insurance and social security benefits	155	4,761	0,6846
Clear definition of roles, authorities, and responsibilities for employees	155	4,748	0,5986
Ensuring fair wage management among all employees	155	4,716	0,8355
Employee Complaint and Conflict Resolution	155	4,716	0,6909

Age: Mean: 21.88 years (Min: 18.0 Max: 24.0)

When the reasons for choosing the profession of people who choose the profession unwillingly are examined, it is seen that they are in the first three places. "Implementing safety measures to protect employee health", "Receiving corporate health support, including private insurance and social security benefits", "Clearly defining duties, powers and responsibilities for employees".

When the students were asked if the pandemic period affected their thoughts, 58.1% (n=200) answered "No" and 41.9% (n=144) answered "Yes".

**Table 5.** The Distribution of Their Preference for Nursing and Their Gender Influenced Their Thoughts during the Pandemic Period (n=343)

		Has the pandemic period affected your thoughts?					
		Yes	%	No	%	Total	%
Willingly choose the profession	Yes	75	21,9	113	32,9	188	54,8
	No	69	20,1	86	25,1	155	45,2
Gender	Female	113	32,9	168	49,0	281	81,9
	Male	31	9,0	31	9,0	62	18,1
Total		144	42,0	199	58,0	343	100,0

When the effect of choosing nursing voluntarily on the thoughts of the pandemic period was examined, there was no significant difference in the chi-square analysis. (Pearson X<sup>2</sup> = 0.745; df = 1; p = 0.388; Fisher's exact test X<sup>2</sup> = 0.442). When the effect on thoughts of the pandemic period according to gender was examined, it was seen that there was no significant difference in the chi-square analysis. (Pearson X<sup>2</sup> = 1.997; DF = 1; p = 0.158).

When the effect of the students on the thoughts of the pandemic period according to the universities was examined, it was seen that there was no significant difference in the chi-square analysis.

#### 4. DISCUSSION

While the business values of previous generations have been well documented, the entry of Generation Z nurses into the workplace is still at an early stage. As a result, there is limited and sometimes conflicting evidence regarding business values and preferences. The pandemic has played a key role in shaping the way Generation Z cohorts view the workplace, leading them to define work/life balance differently than previous generations. As we gain more experience and data about Generation Z behavior in the workforce, a clearer understanding of their unique values and attitudes will emerge (An et al., 2022; Fadel et al., 2020; Menham, 2023).

In the study in which Generation Z nursing senior students examined their expectations from the workplace, 81% of the students were female. The gender of the students entering nursing faculties in Turkey is mostly female; this rate varies between 56 and %83 according to schools. Nursing education in Turkey is given in 96 state and 46 foundation universities. Students from 43 universities participated in the study. (YOK Atlas, 2023).

Considering the expectations of the students from the workplace, it was seen that "*Implementation of security measures to protect the health of the employees*" was the province in the first place. When students' workplace expectations were examined, a notable priority emerged as "*implementing safety measures to protect employee health*". The safety of the work environment was paramount during the COVID-19 pandemic. Nurses in Generation Z and Millennials are committed to provide excellent patient care but are increasingly reluctant to risk their own physical and mental health. Therefore, it has been observed that they are more likely to seek alternative jobs if their safety is not prioritized in existing workplaces. According to LinkedIn, job change among Generation Z employees increased by a staggering 134% compared to 2019 (Pittman, 2020).

Generation Z nurses tend to be less loyal to a particular company and emphasize the importance of providing an engaging and supportive work environment to retain their abilities. Acknowledging these traits and preferences can help healthcare organizations create a positive and productive work environment for the young nurse workforce (Carlson, 2023; So Hee and Yeojin, 2023; Testa, 2023; Tussing et al., 2022a).

The students stressed the importance of having "*a clear definition of duties, powers, and responsibilities for employees,*" and ranked this as the second most important aspect. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the nursing profession, leading to burnout and high turnover due to the harsh work environment. As a result, recent graduates entering the nursing field experience increased levels of anxiety. Two main sources of this concern have been identified: the lack of recruitment processes and the concern of overwork due to staff shortages. Addressing these issues is crucial in providing a more supportive and sustainable work environment for the next generation of nurses (Adams, 2022).

The students identified "*the expectation of fair, ethical and respectful behavior from managers*" as the third most important expectation. It is important to recognize that Generation Z education took place during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, which exposed them to crisis management experiences in clinical settings (Ulusoy et al., 2023). Although these younger nurses are inexperienced compared to their older counterparts, they expect equal respect and appreciation for their contributions within the team. Even if they may seem inexperienced now, it is important to remember that these young nurses will eventually become the future leaders of the profession (Carlson, 2023; Cartwright-Stroupe and Shinnars, 2021). Nurturing and supporting their growth and development is crucial to ensure a successful and sustainable future for the healthcare industry. Encouraging managers to act fairly and ethically not only fosters a positive work environment but also lays the foundation for a generation of talented and caring leaders (Cartwright-Stroupe and Shinnars, 2021). They gained experience in crisis management during their training in clinics. It was seen that young people expected the same level of contribution and respect shown to older team members. No matter how inexperienced the younger generation may seem to the more experienced ones, it is important to keep in mind the expectations that these novices will one day become the de facto leaders of the profession (Periop Today, 2023; Testa, 2023).

Students indicate "*Receiving corporate health support, including private insurance and social security benefits*" as the fourth important item. For Generation Z, access to comprehensive health support, such as private insurance and social security benefits, is of great value. These benefits provide a sense of security and peace of mind, especially during times of illness or personal emergencies. When employees are confident in their employment status and have adequate health support, they are more likely to stay committed to their jobs and feel comfortable taking necessary leave when they are sick (Cartwright-Stroupe and Shinnars, 2021).

Given the financial challenges this generation is facing, providing strong institutional healthcare support can be an important factor in attracting and retaining talented nurses. Healthcare organizations can create a more supportive and motivated workforce by addressing financial concerns and delivering comprehensive benefits. In the fifth place, Generation Z identified the importance of "*ensuring fair wage management among all employees*". This concern highlights their desire for fair wage practices that treat all employees fairly and fairly. Ensuring that pay is managed transparently and without discrimination based on age, gender, or any other factor promotes a positive work environment and motivates employees to do their best. Generation Z nurses enter the profession with a keen awareness of social issues, including income inequality. They value organizations that prioritize fair wage practices and are committed to treat their workforce with respect and equity. By addressing this concern and implementing fair wage management, healthcare employers can increase job satisfaction and attract and retain talented and motivated nurses from the younger generation (Carlson, 2023; Choi et al., 2022; Tussing et al., 2022b).

The information provided highlights some key characteristics and preferences of Generation Z nurses in the workplace. They give importance to in-service training (7th place) and in-house career development opportunities (11th place) for professional development. This shows their willingness to learn and grow by seeking career paths that offer avenues for development. Generation Z are digital natives who have grown up with technology and e-learning as an integral part of their lives. Therefore, e-learning methods can be highly effective in supporting learning activities in an educational context. By fostering a culture of continuous learning and improvement, employers can attract and retain Generation Z nurses who value personal and professional development beyond formal education. Mentoring programs can play a crucial role in supporting their career development while helping more experienced nursing staff adapt to modern technologies and advances in treatment. They are purposeful and appreciate clear goals, recognition, and immediate feedback that aligns with their career-oriented mindset (Carlson, 2023; So Hee and Yeojin, 2023; Testa, 2023).

It is interesting to note that despite valuing teamwork and collaboration, Gen Z nurses rank "*getting enough support from managers*" as the 16th most essential element and "*getting enough support from their colleagues*" as the 17th most important element. While these rankings may seem lower compared to other factors, it is important to consider the broader context of the study and the various factors that participants may have considered. While certain rankings of manager and peer support may be lower, it does not necessarily mean they do not value those aspects. Other factors may take precedence in the survey, and the relative importance of different elements may vary among individuals. It is crucial for healthcare organizations to recognize that while these aspects may not be at the top, they still play a significant role in shaping the job satisfaction and overall well-being of Generation Z nurses. Creating a workplace culture that encourages teamwork, the support of managers, and positive relationships among colleagues can contribute to higher engagement and retention in the young nursing workforce (Adams, 2022; Carlson, 2023; Periop Today, 2023; Pittman, 2020; Sherman, 2023; Testa, 2023; Zay, 2021).

While Generation Z employees value work-life balance and flexibility, ensuring flexible working hours was ranked as a final priority in the research. This finding may indicate that other factors are now at the forefront of Generation Z nurses' minds, or that there are some obstacles to them considering flexible working hours as a priority. However, it remains essential for employers to recognize the importance of work-life balance for Generation Z employees. This generation places great emphasis on personal time, hobbies, and relationships outside of work and looks for opportunities to maintain a healthy balance between their professional and private lives. Companies that offer work-life balance initiatives, such as flexible working hours and remote working options, are more likely to attract and retain Gen Z employees. Emphasizing flexibility and comfort in the workplace can create a more supportive and accommodating environment that is aligned with the preferences of this younger workforce (Adams, 2022; Menham, 2023).

It is interesting to observe that some expectations and reasons are common between those who choose the nursing profession willingly and those who do not. In both cases, the implementation of safety measures to protect employee health and the clear definition of duties, authorities, and responsibilities are among the most important priorities. Other important expectations of managers who choose nursing voluntarily are to behave fairly, ethically, and respectfully, to feel supported in legal processes as an employee of the institution, and to receive the necessary in-service training to support their professional development. Those who reluctantly choose nursing prioritize receiving corporate health support, including private insurance and social security benefits, ensuring fair wage management among all employees, and having effective employee complaint and conflict resolution mechanisms. Similarities in expectations about safety precautions and duties suggest that these factors are critical for both groups, regardless of their initial motivation for choosing the nursing

profession. Addressing these shared expectations can contribute to a positive work environment and job satisfaction for all nurses, regardless of their initial career choice. Also, understanding differences in priorities can help employers adapt their strategies to attract and retain talent from both voluntary and involuntary segments of the nursing workforce.

Based on the statistical analyses conducted in the study, it was concluded that volunteering for nursing, gender, and university education did not have a significant effect on the participants' thoughts about the pandemic period. The p values for all three factors were greater than the standard significance level of 0.05, indicating that the observed differences were not statistically significant. More research may need to be conducted with larger and more diverse samples to draw more robust conclusions about the factors influencing individuals' thinking during the pandemic. As with any study, it is important to consider the specific context and factors that might influence the results. Constant dialog with employees, including Generation Z nurses, is crucial to understanding their changing needs and adapting workplace policies and practices accordingly. By fostering a work environment that supports work-life balance and meets the preferences of Generation Z, employers can create a more engaged and motivated nurse workforce.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The primary concern they prioritize is implementing security measures to safeguard employee health. These nurses value a safe work environment due to their increased reluctance to compromise their own well-being, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. Clear definitions of duties and responsibilities rank as the second most important aspect, fair, ethical behavior from managers is the third priority. Receiving corporate health support, including insurance and social benefits, is the fourth priority, as these benefits provide security. Ensuring fair wage management ranks fifth, highlighting their desire for equitable pay practices. They also value in-service training and career development opportunities. Leveraging e-learning methods and mentoring programs can help attract and retain these nurses, who seek continuous learning and growth in a supportive work environment. Findings from the statistical analyses of the study indicate that factors such as choosing nursing voluntarily, gender, and university education did not significantly impact participants' perspectives during the pandemic period. It's intriguing to note that certain expectations and concerns are shared between those who willingly choose the nursing profession and those who do not. Key priorities for both groups include the implementation of health safety measures and clear delineation of roles and responsibilities. Those who opt for nursing value fair, ethical, and respectful managerial behavior, legal support, and in-service training. On the other hand, individuals who reluctantly choose nursing prioritize corporate health support, equitable wage management, and effective conflict resolution mechanisms. Further research with larger, diverse samples might yield more robust insights into the influences on individuals' perceptions during the pandemic. It's important to contextualize the results considering various factors that might affect the outcomes.

### YAZAR BEYANI / AUTHORS' DECLARATION:

Bu makale Araştırma ve Yayın Etiğine uygundur. Beyan edilecek herhangi bir çıkar çatışması yoktur. Araştırmanın ortaya konulmasında herhangi bir mali destek alınmamıştır. Makalede kullanılan ölçek için yazar(lar) tarafından ölçeğin orjinal sahibinden izin alındığı beyan edilmiştir. Yazar(lar), dergiye imzalı "Telif Devir Formu" belgesi göndermişlerdir. Bu araştırmanın yapılması ile ilgili olarak Acıbadem Mehmet Ali Aydınlar Üniveritesi Etik Komisyonundan 29/07/2022 tarih ve 2022-12/43 sayılı "Etik İzni Belgesi" alınmıştır. / This paper complies with Research and Publication Ethics, has no conflict of interest to declare, and has received no financial support. For the scale used in the article, it is declared by the authors that permission was obtained from the original owner of the scale. The author(s) sent a signed "Copyright Transfer Form" to the journal. Regarding the conduct of this research, an "Ethics Permission Certificate" dated 29/07/2022 and numbered 2022-12/43 was obtained from the Ethics Committee of the University of Acıbadem Mehmet Ali Aydınlar.

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