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MEASURING CAREER EXPECTATIONS OF GENERATION Z: KARABUK UNIVERSITY EXAMPLE

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ABSTRACT

This study seeks to explore the career expectations of Generation Z. To accomplish this goal, it examines the concept of generational distinctions, with a focus on understanding the factors that differentiate generations. Additionally, it delves into the specific career expectations of Generation Z, offering a comprehensive analysis of how these expectations are shaped by their unique characteristics. The research comprises 551 male and 253 female students currently studying at Karabuk University in Türkiye. This study uses an online survey form as the primary data collection tool. The data were analyzed using frequency and percentage distributions, normality and reliability tests, t-tests, and ANOVA. After a thorough analysis, the findings revealed significant differences in the responses between participants from Generation Z and Generation X. While the majority of the respondents expressed confidence in possessing adequate information about their future jobs, most respondents expressed the need for assistance with making informed decisions about their academic and professional futures.

Keywords: Human Resources Management, Generation Z, Career Expectations, Career Services, Organizational Management.

Z KUŞAĞININ KARİYER BEKLENTİLERİ: BİR ÜNİVERSİTE ÖRNEĞI ÖZET

Bu çalışma, Z Kuşağı'nın kariyer beklentilerini derinlemesine incelemeyi hedeflemektedir. Bu bağlamda, kuşaklar arasındaki farklılıklar ve bu farklılıkları belirleyen temel faktörler kavramsal bir çerçeve içinde ele alınmıştır. Ayrıca, Z Kuşağı'nın kariyer beklentileri analiz edilerek, bu beklentilerin kuşağa özgü özelliklerle nasıl şekillendiği detaylı bir şekilde irdelenmiştir. Araştırma, Türkiye'de Karabük Üniversitesi'nde öğrenim gören 551 erkek ve 253 kadın öğrenci üzerinde gerçekleştirilmiştir. Veri toplama aracı olarak çevrimiçi anket formu kullanılmıştır. Veriler, frekans ve yüzde dağılımları,

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normallik ve güvenilirlik analizleri, t-testi ve ANOVA kullanılarak analiz edilmiştir. Kapsamlı analizler sonucunda, Z Kuşağı ile X Kuşağı katılımcıları arasında istatistiksel olarak anlamlı farklılıklar tespit edilmiştir. Katılımcıların çoğunluğu, gelecekteki mesleklerine ilişkin yeterli bilgiye sahip olduklarına inandıklarını ancak akademik ve mesleki geleceklerine dair bilinçli kararlar alabilmek için rehberliğe ihtiyaç duyduklarını ifade etmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İnsan Kaynakları Yönetimi, Z Kuşağı, Kariyer Beklentileri, Kariyer Hizmetleri, Stratejik Yönetim, Örgütsel Yönetim.

1.INTRODUCTION

Employees are an integral part of organizational success, bearing the responsibility of producing goods and services (Henry, 1994, p. 33). In the current dynamic world, the life expectancies, behaviors, hobbies, and personalities of employees are not static and constantly changing. Therefore, human resource management teams are tasked with adapting to the evolving needs of both employees and society. This includes navigating the complexities associated with intergenerational dynamics within the workforce (Sakal, Slavich and Cheretyko, 2013, p. 6). Identifying the distinct characteristics, capabilities, and career expectations of different generations is therefore essential. As Generation Z has begun to enter the workforce in substantial numbers during the 2020s, coinciding with the retirement age of the Baby Boomer generation (Rothman, 2016, p. 1), it has become increasingly important to comprehend their career expectations (Iorgulescu, 2016, p. 51).

Just as young individuals equip themselves with the needed qualifications to meet the future demands of employers, the decision-makers for the labor force should also be aware of the evolving characteristics of their potential employees. It is expected that the new generations give rise to new trends, insights, goals, and demands, that are shaped by the evolving societal dynamics. Attempting to manage the incoming labor force using antiquated and obsolete methodologies and regulations would be inherently impractical and unproductive (Petrov, 2007, p. 50). Consequently, organizations must have a clear understanding of the traits exhibited by entry-level recruits to effectively prepare them to accomplish the goals and objectives of the organizations in the competitive business world (Reisenwitz and Iyer, 2009, p. 91).

The objective of this study is to examine and elucidate the distinctive attributes of Generation Z by analyzing the data obtained from Karabuk University students regarding their future career expectations and perceptions. Given that each generation is influenced by distinct socio-economic conditions, cultural shifts, and technological advancements, understanding Generation Z's career expectations is essential for organizations aiming to effectively manage and integrate this emerging workforce into their organizations. The findings of this study will offer valuable insights into how Generation Z envisions their career paths, which can inform and refine talent management strategies. By aligning these strategies with the specific priorities and expectations of Generation Z, organizations

can better attract, engage, and retain this diverse and dynamic cohort, and universities will be able to tailor their career guidance and counseling services to better meet the needs of Generation Z students. Therefore, universities can enhance their role in preparing their students for successful career paths, fostering a smoother transition from college education into the workforce. Ultimately, this approach will contribute to more robust and adaptable employees, benefiting organizations and the broader economy.

2. CAREER

A career represents the culmination of an individual's chosen occupation or profession, characterized by sustained engagement and involvement in a specific field over an extended period (Onoshakpokaiye, 2023, p. 104). It is not merely a sequence of jobs, but a multifaceted journey encompassing various roles, responsibilities, and experiences undertaken throughout an individual's working life. This conceptualization of a career distinguishes it from a basic short-term job, as the former represents a broader and more enduring trajectory of professional development, encompassing the accumulation of knowledge, skills, and expertise within a particular domain (Wells, 1996, p. 3).

The evolution of a person's career typically unfolds through a series of deliberate and strategic steps, often commencing with formal education or specialized training aimed at acquiring the requisite skills and knowledge required for a specific field (Lo Presti et al., 2022, p. 6). Career development, therefore, is a lifelong and ongoing process and continues throughout an individual's lifespan. This process involves the dynamic interplay of personal aspirations, evolving interests, and the acquisition of competencies, all of which are critical to navigating the complexities of the professional career path (Harriet, 2022, p. 55).

Successful career planning entails strategic decision-making concerning educational choices, skill acquisition, and the pursuit of experiences that contribute to the achievement of long-term career objectives (Zhang, 2023, p. 1006). Academic research emphasizes the importance of deliberate initiatives aimed at charting a well-defined trajectory for both educational and professional development. This includes a mindful and proactive approach to planning and executing the steps necessary to achieve a coherent and purposeful career path (Fernandes et al., 2017, p. 112).

The concept of a career plays a pivotal role in the academic examination of workforce development, organizational behavior, and human resource management (Mulhall, 2014, p. 213). The study of careers extends to exploring various vocational theories that elucidate the factors influencing an individual's vocational choices, progression, and transitions. This exploration encompasses the impact of societal trends, technological advancements, and economic shifts on individual career trajectories, as well as the evolving expectations of the labor market (Baruch, 2004, p. 58). A comprehensive understanding of the concept of a career serves as an essential guiding framework for both individuals and professionals, enabling informed decision-making regarding educational paths, employment opportunities, and personal and professional growth. The selection of a suitable career is

one of the most significant decisions in an individual's life, with long-lasting implications for their overall well-being and satisfaction. Therefore, rather than making arbitrary or uninformed choices, individuals are encouraged to engage in a thorough and reflective decision-making process (Tecau, 2016, p. 172). Embracing this understanding fosters a more intentional and purposeful approach to lifelong career development, ultimately contributing to the creation of a more productive and satisfied workforce.

2.1. Career Expectations

Career expectations refer to the anticipations and aspirations individuals hold regarding their professional journeys, including the roles they expect to assume, the progression they envision, and the rewards they seek to obtain (Xing et al., 2024, p. 453). These expectations are shaped by a multitude of factors, such as personal values, societal norms, educational background, and exposure to various career opportunities. For instance, Generation Z who is currently entering the workforce, tends to prioritize personal and professional life balance, meaningful work, and opportunities for rapid advancement, reflecting the current broader shift in societal values and technological advancements (Kirchmayer and Fratričová, 2020, p. 6021). Understanding these expectations is crucial for both individuals, who must align their goals with realistic career trajectories, and for organizations that need to tailor their talent management strategies to attract, develop, and retain top talent.

Providing new employees with a realistic job overview has been shown to enhance motivation and reduce turnover by aligning employees' expectations with the actual demands and rewards of the role. By gaining a comprehensive understanding of the positive aspects and potential challenges of the job, employees are better prepared mentally to address any obstacles they may face. This approach not only equips them with the required qualifications to handle job-related difficulties more effectively but also aids prospective employees in making more informed decisions regarding job suitability (Schroth, 2019, p. 6).

3. GENERATIONS

The term 'generation' refers to a collective group of individuals who are born and live at around the same time. The concept of a generational cohort is used to delineate a group of individuals born within a comparable timeframe (Jones et al., 2007, p. 15). The study of generational differences and the potential impact of intergenerational conflict in the workplace is a matter of great importance for organizations and decision-makers (Murray, 2011, p. 54). Employing individuals solely from only one generation could impede the organization's ability to adapt to changing societal dynamics. Therefore, organizations must cultivate a diverse workforce that encompasses individuals from various generations. For this reason, having a general understanding of the typical attributes of different generations is essential for successful human resources management.

Although there is no consensus on the exact boundaries that demarcate one generation from another, it is widely acknowledged that various generational groups currently coexist within the workforce (Lieber, 2010, p. 86). Table 1 presents these generational groups, which are commonly accepted by researchers in this field. However, it is crucial to recognize that stereotyping individuals based on their generation or gender is problematic for ethical and legal reasons. It is an oversimplification to assert that all Baby Boomers strive for their utmost potential, all Generation Xers excel as project managers, or all Millennials are diligent optimists, even if these traits generally describe their respective generations (Zemke, Raines and Filipczak, 2013, p. 5). Understanding generational characteristics should be approached with nuance, acknowledging the diversity within each cohort while avoiding reductive generalizations.

Table 1. Chronological Generation Classification Used in the Study

©	Name of the Generation	Age in 2023
1900 – 1945	Silent Generation or Traditionalists	80+
1946 – 1964	Baby Boomers	59-77
1965 – 1979	Generation X	44-58
1980 – 1994	Generation Y or the Millennials	29-43
1995	Generation Z or the Digital Natives	28>

Source: Berkup, 2014, p. 219.

The socio-economic milieu in which a specific generation was nurtured holds paramount importance for the formation of certain traits of the generations. The stimuli, influences, and elements that molded their environment, combined with the defining experiences of their lives, profoundly affect their labor market performance and their perspectives on work and careers (Fodor et al., 2017, p. 25).

3.1. Traditionalists

The Traditionalist generation refers to the individuals born between 1900 and 1945, constituting the oldest living generation. They prefer to work in conservative, hierarchical environments that possess a clear chain of command (Wiedmer, 2015, p. 52). Additionally, traditionalists often had a parent or family member at home to care for them when they grew up, leading them to value consistency and a top-down management approach (Eisner, 2005, p. 5). On the other hand, clashes may arise between management, younger employees, and the members of other generations if they disregard, or underestimate the historical knowledge possessed by these older workers. The traditionalists may also disengage if they feel that the organization, management, or coworkers fail to appreciate the wealth of experience they have accumulated over a lifetime (Lieber 2010, p. 87).

3.2. Baby Boomers

Baby boomers are people who were born between 1945 and the early 1960s. After World War II, their birth rates significantly increased. Known for their strong drive to achieve success in all aspects of life, baby boomers often dedicate long hours to their work, exhibit loyalty, and remain determined when

facing challenges. While baby boomers generally respect authority, they also desire to be treated as equals (Eisner, 2005, p. 5). Depending on the country-specific retirement age; currently, the oldest baby boomers are nearing their retirement age, while the youngest are still in their prime working years. It is important to note that baby boomers born at different times within this generation have encountered varying social, economic, and occupational circumstances (Bowman and Kimberley, 2011, p. 3).

3.3. Generation X

Generation Xers are individuals born between 1965 and 1980 (Santos and Cox, 2000, p. 7). As the children of Boomers, they witnessed the layoffs and divorces of their workaholic parents, which instilled in them a motivation to prioritize work-life balance (Wallace, 2006, p. 138). Generation X is the first age group in which both parents were likely to work outside their homes. Additionally, divorce rates were twice as high for this generation compared to Baby Boomers (Bickel and Brown, 2005, p. 206; Romanelli and Ryan, 2003, p. 72). Many Xers' parents were too preoccupied or fatigued from work to dedicate quality time to their children in the evenings. It is believed that their classrooms were often overcrowded, making it challenging for them to garner the needed attention at school, contributing to their apparent need for recognition as adults, which they tend to seek in the workplace (Losyk, 1997, p. 41).

In terms of their vocational settings, Generation X individuals are inclined to exhibit lower levels of loyalty toward their employers and are more likely to request flexible work arrangements. They approach work pragmatically, anticipating and embracing change, while also requiring some degree of flexibility in workplace rules and regulations (Wiedmer, 2015, p. 54). This inclination towards flexibility may stem from their early experiences of becoming independent at younger ages due to the absence of parents at home, as many Xers had to mature quickly and navigate various changes that happened in their lives. Additionally, their earlier independence, often due to familial responsibilities or part-time jobs, has instilled in them a strong sense of individualism, self-focus, and a value for personal freedom (Losyk, 1997, p. 40).

3.4. Generation Y

The Millennial Generation, commonly referred to as Generation Y, is the first generation to have grown up in a technology-driven environment. They were born between 1981 and 1995. The term 'millennial generation' was coined by William Strauss and Neil Howe in 1991 (Strauss and Howe 1991, p. 538). Millennials possess proficient skills in digital technology, which enables them to easily adapt to new tools and devices in the IT industry (Bencsik et al, 2016, p. 92). They are attracted to companies that embrace technological advancements, which have revolutionized the global business environment (Wiedmer, 2015, p. 55). Because they prefer collaborative work environments, millennials tend to challenge established workplace norms and structures (Miller, 2018, p. 55). Furthermore, they place

great value on personal growth and find fulfillment in self-improvement and healthy competition (Tulgan, 2009, p. 50).

The Millennials are more inclined to seek new opportunities when the current work conditions are unfavorable (Lipkin and Perrymore, 2009). Consequently, this perception has led to the notion that Millennials are overly confident and self-centered. Additionally, Millennials face greater difficulty in maintaining a clear separation between their professional and personal lives when compared to the previous generations (Lieber, 2010, p. 88).

3.5. Generation Z

According to demographers, this generation started in the early 1990s and ended in the mid-2000s. Nonetheless, trend analysts and marketers frequently classify them as an approximately 15-year group beginning in 1996 (Williams, 2015, p. 2). One distinguishing factor of Generation Z is their proficiency in technology and preference for social media as a means of communication, as opposed to direct interpersonal contact. They are the first generation to have been born into a globally connected world, where the internet has always been readily available (Rothman, 2016, p. 2). Consequently, some perceive members of Generation Z to possess greater intelligence, self-direction, and a heightened ability to quickly process information compared to preceding generations. However, there is one aspect that they may lack, which is not being good team players (Igel and Urquhart, 2012, p. 16). Table 2 below lists the ten traits that define Generation Z.

Table 2. Characteristics of Generation Z

Consistently remains well-informed.

Has embraced the individualism and

Has embraced the individualism and skepticism of Gen X.

Is financially driven.

Entrepreneurial.

Connected to other members of the generation.

Demands social media interaction.

Works best on their own.

They are so distinct that traditional notions of diversity may not fully capture it.

Acknowledges change.

Seeks to be heard.

Source: Miller, 2018, pp. 51-56

It is also anticipated that this particular group will be the most ecologically conscious when compared to the other generations (Lemy, 2016, p.11). However, they are generally expected to have a higher level of distrust towards corporations, and a greater tendency to abandon their careers or jobs earlier than the other generations (Montana and Petit, 2008, p. 140). Organizations, employing this group of people, must be aware of the characteristics of this generation and take proactive measures to address their needs, expectations, and motivational cues. Failure to do so may lead to frequent job changes among younger employees, who are often more willing to transition to new jobs. Consequently, this may increase turnover rates and higher employee-related costs, as well as challenges in fostering

organizational commitment and developing a cohesive company culture (Metin and Kızıldağ, 2017, p. 359).

Generations İn Türkiye

Table 3. Population Distribution in Türkiye

ACE CROUD	POPULAT	TİON	
AGE GROUP	N	%	
0-4	5.348.054	6.26	
5-9	6.566.486	7.69	
10-14	6.397.093	7.49	
15-19	6.396.519	7.49	
20-24	6.475.520	7.59	
25-29	6.543.061	7.66	
30-34	6.267.165	7.34	
35-39	6.329.246	7.41	
40-44	6.564.638	7.69	
45-49	5.826.791	6.83	
50-54	5.272.666	6.18	
55-59	4.626.522	5.42	
60-64	4.035.810	4.73	
65-69	3.240.413	3.80	
70-74	2.345.341	2.75	
75-79	1.542.928	1.81	
80-84	904.423	1.06	
85-89	451.810	0.53	
90+	237.891	0.28	
TOTAL	85.372.377	100	

Source: Turkish Statistical Institute (TURKSTAT) 2023.

As illustrated in Table 3, the number of Traditionalists in Türkiye is 1.594.124, comprising 1.87% of the total population. The Baby Boomers 11.164.492, representing 13.08%. Generation X consists of 15.725.979 individuals, making up 18.42% of the total population. Generation Y accounts for 19.161.049 people, which is 22.44% of the total. Lastly, Generation Z is the largest cohort, with 37.726.733 individuals, constituting 44.19% of the Turkish population. These figures indicate that Generation Z is the most populous group, and when combined with Generation Y, they represent over 66% of Türkiye's total population. This significant proportion underscores Türkiye's substantial potential in terms of workforce development. Consequently, understanding the general characteristics, desires, and expectations of Generation Z is critical, as they are poised to become the major portion of the future workforce.

Career Expectations Of Generation Z

While there is limited research on Generation Z's career expectations, it is important to effectively address and manage these expectations. This is because members of this generation often have high

aspirations when entering the workforce. By understanding their expectations, employers can better integrate new employees into their organizations and ensure mutual success (Schroth, 2019, p. 6).

A global study on workplace expectations conducted in 2014, which included 1.005 participants from ten countries, explored the workplace preferences of Generation Y and Generation Z. The results revealed that Generation Z demonstrates a greater entrepreneurial spirit, favors face-to-face communication, and is largely driven by opportunities for career advancement (Lalić et al., 2019, p. 54).

In another study, researchers found that Generation Z employees anticipate engaging and meaningful work, expect their managers to listen to and act upon their ideas, and assume they will have flexible schedules and positive relationships with their colleagues (Schroth, 2019, p. 7). Additionally, they seek jobs that provide internal satisfaction, opportunities for skill development, and, most importantly, a strong emphasis on work-life balance (Abeyrathna and Pathirana, 2022, p. 11).

Recognizing the limitations in prior research concerning Generation Z, this study proposes the following research questions:

RQ₁: What are the career expectations of Generation Z students at the beginning of their university education?

RQ₂: How well-informed are Generation Z students about their employment opportunities?

RQ₃: Do Generation Z students have clear job expectations?

RQ₄: Are Generation Z students adequately informed about their educational paths?

4. METHODOLOGY

Researchers have found that generational differences significantly influence individuals' expectations and aspirations. (Gibson et al., 2009, p. 2). This study aims to distinguish the profile and expectations of the Z generation, regarding their prospective careers following their university education. The significance of this study lies in its provision of empirical data that can inform predictions about the needs and demands of future employees, thereby contributing to more effective workforce planning and management strategies.

An online survey form was used to collect data from the participants. The questionnaire was sent to the participants via e-mail. The data collection process took place in November 2023. The Career Information and Job Expectations Scale (CIJES), employed in this study, was developed by Petrovic, Bogicevic ve Curic (2011, p. 4). The scale consists of 16 items, but 2 of these items were excluded from our questionnaire because they were not relevant to our study. The scale is a Likert-type scale consisting of five points, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree, and encompasses three dimensions: seven items, employment-related information; four items, clarity of job expectations, and three items

education-related information. Participants were also asked four demographic-related questions about gender, age, department, and their faculties.

The questionnaire was sent to 1,358 students registered at different faculties of Karabuk University, taking courses from the School of Foreign Languages at the time of this study. From this total population, a representative sample of 804 students partook in the study who were actively engaged in their educational activities.

5. DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

5.1. Reliability Analysis

As shown in Table 4, the Cronbach Alpha coefficients for the dimensions of the CIJES scale are as follows: Employment-related information is 0.914, clarity of job expectations is 0.869, and education-related information is 0.897. The Cronbach Alpha coefficient for the entire scale is 0.929.

Table 4. Reliability Analysis of the Career Information and Job Expectations Scale

DIMENSIONS	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
Employment Related Information	0.914	7
Clarity of Job Expectations	0.869	4
Education Related Information	0.897	3
Total	0.929	14

5.2. Demographic Characteristics

The demographic characteristics of the participants are depicted in Table 5 below.

Table 5. Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

	Variables	N	%
Candan	Female	253	31
Gender	Male	551	69
	17–19 years old	518	64
A ===	20–22 years old	253	31
Age	23–25 years old	20	3
	24 years old and over	13	2
	Faculty of Letters	86	11
	Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences	22	3
Faculty or Junior College	Faculty of Business	3	0,5
·	Faculty of Engineering	607	75
	Safranbolu Junior College	82	10
	Faculty of Technology	4	0.5
	English Language and Literature	86	10.7
	International Relations	22	3
	Public Relations and Promotion	3	0.4
Departments	Computer Engineering	163	20
	Biomedical Engineering	54	6.7
	Electrical and Electronic Engineering	157	20
	Industrial Engineering	6	0.7

Civil Engineering	3	0.4
Mechanical Engineering	151	19
Automotive Engineering	51	6
Railway Systems Engineering	16	2
Applied English and Translation	on 82	10
Mechatronics Engineering	4	0.5
Medical Engineering	6	0.7
	Total 804	100

As illustrated in Table 5, the demographic composition of the respondents reveals that 69% of them were identified as male, 64% fell within the age bracket of 17 to 19 years, 75% were affiliated with the Faculty of Engineering, and 20% were specifically enrolled in the Computer Engineering department.

5.3. Findings

The examination of group differences utilized mean scores, with the independent sample t-test and one-way ANOVA employed to analyze variations in age, gender, faculty, and department among the respondents. Table 6 displays the results of the one-sample t-test for the CIJES.

Table 6. One-Sample T-Test Scores of Career Information and Job Expectations Scale

Dimension	Variables	Sig.
	I have enough information about the jobs that I could get with an undergraduate diploma.	0.000***
	I am informed about the content of various jobs that I could do after graduating.	0.162
	I am informed about employment possibilities after completing my studies.	0.000***
Employment	I have a clear idea about jobs I can do after graduating.	0.903
Related Information	I am informed about the knowledge and abilities that are necessary for my future profession.	0.927
	I am informed about possible earnings after graduating (and working in my profession).	0.491
	I know what I have to do (additional training, practice work, etc.) to get the job I would like to do.	
Classita of Lab	I am absolutely confident in my decision about my studies and future profession.	0.000***
Clarity of Job Expectations	I precisely know what I want to do after graduation.	0.001***
Expectations	After graduating I think I will work on a job in my field.	0.000***
	I believe there will be no problem to get the job that I want.	0.000***
Education	I have information about postgraduate studies.	0.000***
Related	I have all the information I need to choose a master's education.	0.000***
Information	I have all the information I need to choose elective courses and/or modules on undergraduate studies.	0.000***

Notes: *p<0.05, *** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

Table 6 delineates the outcomes of the analysis of the Career Information and Job Expectations Scales. Regarding the 'Employment Related Information' dimension, the statements indicate a robust understanding, such as the 1st and 3rd statements were found to be highly significant with p<0.001 value. These results show a strong consensus among predominantly Generation Z respondents, regarding their awareness of job prospects and employment paths associated with their academic qualifications. The presence of a high level of statistical significance suggests a collective confidence in their understanding

of their employment prospects, underscoring the importance of these specific dimensions in shaping their career-related knowledge. However, 2nd, 4th, 5th, 6th, and 7th statements failed to obtain statistical significance of p>0.05 value. These statements address complex features. Therefore, respondents' perspectives vary widely in these specific areas. This is an indication of a lack of consensus on the adequacy of the information.

As can be seen from Table 6, according to the test results of the respondents' 'Clarity of Job Expectations' dimension, all the statements were found to be highly significant with a p<0.001 value. This is an affirmation of confidence regarding their decisions, studies, and future professions.

For the 'Education Related Information' dimension results, all the corresponding statements were found to be highly significant at p<0.001. This scientifically significant value demonstrates a notable level of awareness and information access concerning postgraduate studies. Additionally, their ability to make well-informed decisions about their master's education and selections of undergraduate elective courses stands out as a salient aspect of their educational experiences.

The independent one-sample t-test results of the respondents' gender and the average CIJES scores are shown in Table 7.

Table 7. Gender and CIJES Mean Scores

Gender	N	X	T	Sig.
Male	551	3.3689	0.252	0.117
Female	253	3.3854	-0.233	0.117

Notes: *p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

As can be seen from Table 7 there is no statistically significant difference between the CIJES means of male and female respondents (p>0.05). Therefore, there is no significant evidence to indicate that gender affects CIJES scores in this sample.

The results of the one-way ANOVA followed by Tukey's Honest Significant Difference (HSD) post hoc test for the ages and CIJES mean scores of respondents are shown in Table 8.

Table 8. Comparison of Age and CIJES Mean Scores

	Age	Age	Mean Difference	Std. Error	Sig.
	17-19	20-21	-0.07155	0.06505	0.690
		22-23	-0.18897	0.19328	0.762
		24+	-0.89281*	0.23816	0.001***
	20-21	17-19	0.07155	0.06505	0.690
Turkey's HSD		22-23	-0.11742	0.19700	0.933
		24+	-0.82127*	0.24120	0.004**
	24+	17-19	0.89281^*	0.23816	0.001***
		20-21	0.82127^{*}	0.24120	0.004**
		22-23	0.70385	0.30216	0.092

Notes: *p<0.05, *** p<0.01, **** p<0.001

As shown in Table 8, through the application of Tukey's HSD post hoc test to compare the CIJES mean scores of the respondents, a statistically highly significant difference emerges between the Yönetim ve Ekonomi Araştırmaları Dergisi / Journal of Management and Economics Research

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respondents ages 17-19 and those aged over 24. The same situation is visible between the respondents aged 20–21, and those aged over 24 with the value of p<,001. A quite significant difference was also observed between the respondents between the ages of 22-23 and over 24 with the significance level of p<0.01. Overall, the analysis highlights that significant differences in CIJES mean scores are primarily associated with older age groups, particularly those aged over 24, compared to younger respondents. This indicates that generational differences have a substantial effect on the career expectations of the respondents.

The results of the one-way ANOVA tests followed by the Least Significant Difference (LSD) post hoc test for the faculties and CIJES mean scores of respondents are shown in Table 9 below.

Table 9. Comparison of Faculty and CIJES Mean Scores

	Faculty/High School	Faculty/High School	Mean Difference	Std. Error	Sig.
T CD	Faculty of Economics	Faculty of Letters	-0.44511*	0.20410	0.029*
LSD	and Administrative	Faculty of Engineering	-0.38628*	0.18540	0.038^{*}
	Sciences	, ,			

Notes: *p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

As can be seen from Table 9, after comparing the mean scores of the respondents' CIJES using the LSD post hoc test, a statistically significant difference was observed between respondents studying in the Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences and the Faculty of Letters. A similar significant difference is also visible between respondents studying in the Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences and the Faculty of Engineering with a significance level of p<0.05. This may indicate disparities in academic experiences or perceptions related to CIJES across these faculties.

The results of the one-way ANOVA followed by Tukey's HSD post hoc test for the departments and CIJES mean scores of respondents are shown in Table 10.

Table 10. Comparison of Department and Career Information and Job Expectations Scale Mean Scores

	Department	Department	Mean Difference	Std. Error	Sig.
	English Language and Literature	International Relations	0.44511*	0.20397	0.029*
		English Language and Literature	-0.44511*	0.20397	0.029^{*}
		Computer Engineering	-0.46425*	0.19391	0.017^{*}
	International Relations	Electrical and Electronic Engineering	-0.38951*	0.19435	0.045*
LSD		Automotive Engineering	-0.46963*	0.21776	0.031*
	Camanatan En ain aanin a	International Relations	0.46425^*	0.19391	0.017^{*}
	Computer Engineering	Railway Systems Engineering	0.51457^*	0.22366	0.022^{*}
	Electrical and Electronic	International Relations	0.38951*	0.19435	0.045*
	Engineering	Railway Systems Engineering	0.43983^*	0.22404	0.050^{*}
	A damenti a Essimania	International Relations	0.46963*	0.21776	0.031*
	Automotive Engineering	Railway Systems Engineering	0.51996^*	0.24463	0.034*
		English Language and Literature	-0.49543*	0.23244	0.033*

	Computer Engineering	-0.51457*	0.22366	0.022^{*}
Railway Systems Engineering	Electrical and Electronic Engineering	-0.43983*	0.22404	0.050*
Engineering	Automotive Engineering	-0.51996*	0.24463	0.034*

Notes: *p<0.05, *** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

As shown in Table 10, a statistically significant difference is observable comparing the mean scores of the respondents from various departments using the CIJES and LSD post hoc tests. Significant differences were found between the respondents studying in the English Language and Literature Department and the International Relations Department. The same significance can be seen among participants from the International Relations Department, Computer Engineering, Electrical and Electronic Engineering, and Automotive Engineering Departments. Similarly, statistically significant differences are apparent between the Computer Engineering Department, the Railway Systems Engineering Department, the Electrical and Electronic Engineering Department, and the Railway Systems Engineering Departments with a significance value of p<0.05. Overall, these findings indicate that CIJES scores vary significantly across different departments, suggesting that departmental affiliations may influence respondents' CIJES perceptions and experiences.

Table 11 below presents the items, means, and percentages of the CIJES.

Table 11. Career Information and Job Expectations Scale: Items, Means, and Percentages

Dimension 1 - Employment Related Information	Mean	'Agree' and 'Strongly Agree' (%)
Variable 1	3.2923	49
Variable 2	3.5560	63
Variable 3	3.2873	48
Variable 4	3.5050	57
Variable 5	3.5037	58
Variable 6	3.5286	60
Variable 7	3.5299	60
Dimension 2 - Clarity of Job Expectations	Mean	'Agree' and 'Strongly Agree' (%)
Variable 1	3.6928	61
Variable 2	3.6480	60
Variable 3	3.7649	67
Variable 4	3.6629	63
Dimension 3 - Education Related Information	Mean	'Agree' and 'Strongly Agree' (%)
Variable 1	2.8818	31
Variable 2	2.6841	24
Variable 3	2.7002	26

The results from Table 11 highlight several key areas related to career information and job expectations of the respondents. The data regarding Employment Related Information reveals a notable discrepancy between the level of information available to respondents about various aspects of their future careers since 51% of the respondents feel they lack sufficient information about the job prospects associated with their undergraduate degrees. This gap suggests that while many students have access to some career-related information, there is a significant portion of them who remain uncertain about their

future employment opportunities. Conversely, 63% of respondents are well-informed about the content of various jobs they could pursue after their graduation. This indicates that a majority of the subjects have some understanding of potential career paths; though, the specific details about employment possibilities still leave room for improvement. Notably, 57% of the respondents have a clear idea about the jobs that they can pursue following their graduation, while 58% are aware of the knowledge and abilities required for the profession that they pursue. Additionally, 60% of the correspondents are informed about potential earnings and the practical steps needed to secure the desired jobs. This suggests that while there is substantial awareness about certain career aspects, there are still gaps, particularly in understanding specific job requirements and career steps.

The findings are relatively positive in terms of clarity of job expectations. 61% of the subjects express confidence in their decisions regarding their studies and future professions. Similarly, 60% of the respondents have a clear understanding of what they want to do after graduation. Furthermore, 67% of the students who responded to our questionnaire expect to work in jobs aligned with their fields of study, and 63% of them believe there will be no significant obstacles in obtaining their desired jobs. These results suggest that many students have a well-defined vision of their career paths and a strong belief in their ability to achieve their career goals.

The data concerning education-related information reveal some critical gaps that need to be mentioned. 69% of respondents lack sufficient information about postgraduate study options, and 76% of them do not have all the necessary information to make an informed decision about a master's program. Additionally, 74% of subjects feel they do not have comprehensive information for selecting elective courses or modules during their undergraduate studies. These findings indicate a significant need for improving career guidance and counseling services aimed at the professional development of Generation Z to help students make informed decisions about further education and course selections.

6. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Effective career planning involves making strategic decisions related to education, skill development, and the acquisition of experiences that support the attainment of long-term career goals (Zhang, 2023, p. 1006). Given that each generation possesses distinct experiences, lifestyles, values, and demographic characteristics that shape their career expectations (Williams and Page, 2011, p. 39), this study seeks to explore the career expectations of Generation Z as they anticipate entering the workforce after completing their university education.

Analyzing the career expectations of each generation is crucial because each cohort is influenced by different distinct socio-economic conditions, cultural norms, and technological advancements that shape their work values and career priorities. By understanding these generational differences, organizations can effectively tailor their talent management strategies to attract, engage, and retain a diverse workforce. Such analysis is crucial for fostering a responsive work environment and anticipating

future workforce trends, which ultimately contributes to long-term organizational success. Given the fact that Generation Z is poised to become the most populous generation in the world and will play a significant role in the labor market very soon (Grishaeva et al., 2023, p. 275), it is essential to recognize this reality and address their specific career expectations (Petrovic et al., 2011, p. 6).

The implications underscored that a substantial proportion of respondents exhibit concordance, either agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statements delineating the 'Employment-Related Information and Clarity of Job Expectations' dimensions. This alignment is indicative of their confidence in possessing adequate insights into their prospective careers. On the other hand, in the dimension of 'Education Related Information,' a minority of respondents expressed a sense of adequacy in information, rationalized by their earlier stage in their university life. It is anticipated that the detailed analysis of the findings related to the CIJES will shed light on the critical areas where universities need to support their students further. The data points to the necessity of enhancing career-related resources and guidance, particularly in the realm of educational choices, to better support students in making informed decisions about their academic and professional futures. This deeper understanding will enable educators and policymakers to develop targeted strategies that address the unique needs of Generation Z, ultimately facilitating a more effective transition from university education to employment fostering long-term career success.

As a result of the analysis of the CIJES, in the 'Employment-Related Information' dimension, 51% of respondents lack sufficient information about job prospects associated with their undergraduate degree poses a significant concern. This indicates that while students may be receiving some guidance about career developments, there is a substantial gap in their understanding of how their education will translate into real-world employment opportunities. This lack of clarity can lead to uncertainty and prevent them from making informed career decisions. Universities need to focus more on eliminating this information gap, providing students with clear insights about job markets, employment trends, and the specific career opportunities available to them based on their academic qualifications.

According to our findings, 63% of respondents are well-informed about the content of various jobs they could pursue after graduation. This suggests that while there may be some gaps in understanding job prospects by some students, most of them have a reasonable grasp of what different job roles they may pursue. This awareness is critical as it helps students align their academic efforts with the requirements of potential careers. However, the fact that this is not a universal understanding suggests a need for more comprehensive career counseling and real-world exposure, such as internships or job shadowing, which can provide deeper insights into different professions for college students.

The finding suggests that 57% of students have a clear idea of the jobs they can pursue post-graduation is encouraging, yet it also highlights that nearly half of the respondents still face uncertainty. This uncertainty could stem from a lack of detailed information about specific job roles or confusion

about how their degrees apply to various industries. Career services should aim to provide tailored advice that helps students map their educational background to specific career paths, thereby increasing their confidence in pursuing their specific job opportunities.

With 60% of the result of respondents being informed about potential earnings and the steps that they needed to secure their desired jobs, is evident that many students are aware of the practical aspects of career planning. This is also indicative that 40% of them are not as informed as the others, which means they may have some unrealistic expectations or make missteps in their career planning. Universities should enhance the transparency of career progression, salary expectations, and the steps necessary for achieving career goals, possibly through workshops, career fairs, and interaction with professionals from the appropriate industries.

In the 'Clarity of Job Expectations' dimension, the fact that 61% of respondents express confidence in their decisions regarding their studies and future professions is a strong indicator of self-assurance among most of the students. This confidence is likely rooted in a clear understanding of their interests and how these expectations align with their chosen fields of study. However, it's essential to consider that nearly 40% of students might still be questioning their decisions, which could impact their motivation and career outcomes. Universities and career advisors should continue to support students in exploring their career options early and often, helping them to build confidence in their academic and professional choices.

With 60% of respondents having a clear understanding of what they want to do after graduation, it's evident that a majority of them have a well-defined vision of their future careers. This clarity is crucial for guiding their educational choices and preparing them for post-graduation life. However, it also highlights that 40% of students are either undecided or unclear about their career paths, suggesting a need for more robust career planning resources. Universities could benefit from introducing more personalized career planning tools and counseling services that help students clarify their career objectives early on.

The finding that 67% of respondents expect to work in jobs aligned with their fields of study indicates a strong belief in the relevance of their education to their future careers. This is an encouraging sign that students perceive their academic programs as directly applicable to their future jobs. The other 33% may have concerns about the applicability of their education to their future jobs, possibly due to a lack of connection between their studies and available job opportunities. Universities should consider reinforcing the link between academic programs and career outcomes by providing more industry-specific education by partnering with employers and using career-oriented curricula that are aligned with industry expectations.

63% of respondents believe that there will be no significant obstacles in obtaining their desired jobs upon their graduation, reflecting a strong sense of optimism among the majority of students. This

belief is likely fueled by their perceived clarity on career paths and confidence in their education. This optimism might also mask potential challenges that students are not fully aware of, such as economic shifts, competitive job markets, or the need for additional skills beyond their current education. Universities should help students align their optimism with realistic assessments of the job market, ensuring they are prepared to overcome potential challenges.

In the 'Education Related Information' dimension, 69% of respondents lack sufficient information about postgraduate study options. This suggests that students may be ill-prepared to make informed decisions about their further education, which may limit their career advancement opportunities. The lack of postgraduate information might stem from insufficient guidance from academic advisors or a lack of emphasis on the importance of further education. To address this, universities should provide more accessible resources and counseling on postgraduate opportunities, including the benefits of advanced degrees, application processes, and potential alternative career outcomes.

The finding that 76% of respondents do not have all the necessary information to make informed decisions about a master's program is particularly troubling. This uncertainty could lead to missed opportunities for further education, or conversely, to students pursuing advanced degrees that do not suit their career goals. There is a clear need for more detailed and personalized advice on graduate programs, including information on the relevance of these programs to specific career paths, financial considerations, and the long-term benefits of obtaining a master's degree.

The fact that 74% of respondents feel they lack comprehensive information for selecting elective courses or modules during their undergraduate studies points to insufficiencies in academic advising. Elective courses can play a pivotal role in shaping a student's academic and career trajectory, and this lack of information may result in students making suboptimal choices that do not align with their career goals. Universities should enhance the guidance provided to students in selecting electives, ensuring that these choices are well-informed and strategically aligned with the academic interests and career aspirations of the students.

In our research, no significant differences were observed between female and male participants. This lack of significance suggests that both genders perceive career-related information equally. Furthermore, there was a highly significant difference between the respondents enrolled in different faculties of Karabuk University. This disparity draws attention to the respondents' proficiency with career-related information. It is possible to claim that the respondents in some programs lack adequate information concerning certain aspects of their careers. This insight could help develop strategies to improve communication channels and targeted information dissemination to address the discrepancies. Universities might consider customized university-wide approaches to offer detailed insights into the

complex world of employment-related information for individuals who are about to begin their career paths at the beginning of their educational endeavors.

Overall, while there is a general understanding among respondents about their career paths and job expectations, there are clear areas where more information and support are needed, such as information on postgraduate studies and detailed career planning. Addressing these shortcomings could help improve students' readiness for the job market and their overall educational and career satisfaction.

Limitations and Suggestions

Most of the respondents in our study are still in the preliminary stages of their career paths. Their current level of understanding of career development and future professions may be minimal. Therefore, it is recommended that this study be broadened to include only final-year students, or individuals who just entered the workforce recently. This strategic adjustment could facilitate gathering valuable insights and perspectives from people who just entered or are about to enter the workforce. Therefore, a more detailed and thorough understanding of their career-related needs and expectations information can be obtained.

One limitation that needs to be mentioned here is the imbalance between the number of female and male participants who partook in this research. As we can see from Table 7, the female and male distribution of subjects is not even. There are 551 males and 253 females who contributed to this research. This undesirable imbalance was not due to the researchers' preference but was rather the result of random sampling. Although there was no difference in the results of our male and female subjects in the research, still equal numbers of participants are advised for future scientifically reliable studies.

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