

# Generational differences in human resources management: a study on generation Y health workers<sup>x</sup>

Özlem BALABAN<sup>xx</sup>

Hamide ERTUĞ<sup>xxx</sup>

Özden YENİCE<sup>xxxx</sup>

Received: 2018-10-31

Accepted: 2018-11-14

## Abstract

*One of the issues that has been frequently researched in the field human management in recent years is generation differences. The aim of this study is to examine the general trends and attitudes towards the institution that they are affiliated with, including the young professionals of today's business world, which is expressed as "Generation Y" in human resources literature, which covers 25% of Turkey's population and was born in 1980-1999.*

*The study was carried out in a public hospital operating in Sakarya province and data were obtained by questionnaire method. In this study, the attitudes towards work, tendency to use technology, the perception of education, communication at work, career management, organizational culture, attitudes in the areas of place attachment and wages in the field of human resources of human health are examined.*

*As a result of the studies carried out, it was revealed that the participants differed within the Generation Y; it had breaks and this affected the perceptions of work style in a different way.*

**Keywords:** Human Resource Management, Generational Differences, Generation Y

**JEL Codes:** J53, M12

---

□ This study is presented as a summary in the ICPESS (International Congress on Politic, Economic and Social Studies) congress.

<sup>xx</sup> Assoc. Prof. [Sakarya University](http://www.sakarya.edu.tr) Business School, adiguzel@sakarya.edu.tr

<sup>xxx</sup> Sakarya University Graduate School of Business PhD Student

<sup>xxxx</sup> Sakarya University Graduate School of Business PhD Student

## **1. Introduction**

Different generations show alterations in business, technology, and even to adaptation to life. When we discuss the features of Generations X, Y, Z evoking like math equations here, we try to understand the Generation Y that identifies especially today's young professionals.

Many different definitions are being developed in most of the studies carried out on Generation Y and the common personality traits of the individuals belonging to the Generation Y are becoming clearer through these definitions.

In light of the definitions, this generation composed of young people who are fond of freedom, marginalized, challenging authority, and admirers of technology, and also who live in a period of increasing globalizing economy and intercultural interaction.

Within the framework of these definitions, it has been found that members of the Generation Y have some breaks within themselves, similar to the differences observed between the other generations. In the framework of the study, the attitudes towards work, the tendency to use technology, the perception of education, communication at work, career management, organizational culture, belonging and wage factors were evaluated and period differences within the generation were compared.

## **2 Conceptual Framework**

Generation is defined as “ a group of people born around the same time in the cycle, who shape their visions and characteristics, and share meaningful history and/or social life experiences” (Kupperschmidt, 2000). Based on literature, it can be said that members of different generations have different perspectives in business life.

According to their emergence in time, there are four generations including Baby Boomers, Generation X, Generation Y and Generation Z, and there are important differences between these four generations; each of them has its own characteristic features.

## **2.1 Baby Boomers**

People who are born between 1946 and 1964 form the generation of Baby Boomers. The generations born in the years of population explosion right after World War II represent this generation.

In this period when economic prosperity had been rising slowly, serious changes in the political and economic structures of the countries also affected the thinking structure of this generation.

There are also countries and intercultural differences in defining the boundaries of this generation (ERC Report, 2011).

## **2.2. Generation X**

This generation is classified as people born between 1965 and 1979 (Alwin, 2002). Generation X members are at peace with technology and knowledge, entrepreneurial, goal oriented and independent (Jianrui, 2011).

The members of generation X put a great effort to keep up with the world's changing conditions. However, those in this generation feel excluded because the effort and the race give them the impression of “not being able to catch up and not being able to keep up with the time” (Dias, 2003).

In the sense used today, the concurrence of the sale of the first personal computer in to this generation’s period gives the impression that this generation forms the infrastructure of developing technology habits. Therefore, when generation X takes the chair in business world, information and communication technologies develop rapidly and the effects led to profound changes on generations (Yelkikalan and Altın, 2010). These changes can also cause conflicts with the generation Y who has the technological wisdom, entrepreneurial personality and promotion expectation in a fast pace and also working as a subordinate.

## **2.3. Generation Y**

According to Lower, the range of birth years of this generation is not limited by any parameters. Most experts use this term for those born between 1980 and 2001. They are known by different names such as Millennials, Generation Next, Digital Generation, Echo Boomers and Nexters (2008).

They have high power of adaptation and can perform multitasking. Besides this, they have a nature which is they can be easily bored from the work they do. These people have advanced thinking skills and a fast acquisition process. They have the capacity to embrace change and the capacity to challenge the future in a constant way. In addition, these people have a high standard of living and they also come into prominence in teamwork (Lower, 2008).

## **2.4. Generation Z**

The first members of this generation who have come to the world and/or it is believed that they will come in the future between the years 2000-2020 will have entered the working life within the next five years (Kuran, 2010). Therefore, the behavior of this generation in social and business life has not yet begun to be investigated. There is not much information about this generation yet in the literature.

This generation, which is also called "internet generation ", is always in contact with new technological opportunities, communication and transportation facilities. Unlike previous generations, 'network' youth can become members of various networks. It is argued that they can live and have lived solely because they can develop a relationship from distance. It can be said that they have developed their ability to deal with more than one topic at the same time (Mengi, 2009).

## **3. The Scope, Sampling And The Method Of The Research**

Health workers within the scope of the Y Generation, who are employed in a hospital operating in a public institution located in central Sakarya constitute the population of this research. The sample consists of 128 randomly selected people among these. The questionnaire was distributed to 128 people and precisely collected back.

The birth year interval in the classification of the generations for Generation Y is accepted as between 1980 and 1999.

The starting point of this study is the assumption that "members of the generation Y differ in their business manner and behavior in themselves". From this point, the individuals that comprise the sample are divided into four groups according to the birth year of generation Y. This distinction was in the form of (1980-1984), (1985-1989), (1990-1994), (1995-1999).

The questionnaire has been prepared by examining the literature and generated by the expert opinion, in this way survey validity and reliability are provided. The developed questionnaire was divided into eight main factors and analyzes were carried out on these factors. It comprises of 5-point likert scale and includes 50 Items (1 = Absolutely Disagree, 5 = Absolutely Agree) SPSS for Windows 20.0 program was used to evaluate the data obtained in the study.

#### **4. Research Findings**

Before the testing of research questions, a measurement model was established using confirmatory factor analysis and it was investigated whether there was a high correlation between the variables and the factors. It is necessary that the values of the the parameter estimations found as a result of confirmatory factor analysis using the covariance matrix and Maximum Likelihood Estimation (MLE) should be between 0,50 and 0,99, and also have t values above the theoretical values and being statistically significant.

This study investigates the participants 'attitudes towards work, the tendency to use technology, perception of education, communication at work, career management, organizational culture, place attachment, and wage factors' breakdown on job perception.

In the study, first of all demographic data about participants were explained, then it is followed by differences between groups, independent sample, t-test and ANOVA analysis. With the discrimination of generation Y according to the year of birth, the differences between the factors were evaluated. As a result of this evaluation, discriminatory differences were observed between the defined birth intervals.

According to the gender of the employees participating in the survey, 81 of them are women, 47 are men; According to the education level, 54 of them graduated from high school, 23 of them have associate degrees, 42 of them have a bachelor degree, 6 of them have master degrees, 3 of them have doctor's degree; According to the occupational groups 7 of them are doctors, 54 of them nurse-medical officers, 5 of them are health technicians, 53 of them are interns (health departments), 9 of them are other health professional groups.

According to the years of birth of the members of generation Y, 37 people participated in the survey in the period between 1980 and 1984, the number of people who participated in the period between

1985-1989 is 15, the number of people who participated in the period between 1990-1994 is 23, and the number of people who participated in the period between 1995-1999 is 53.

In accordance with the basic assumption that the members of the generation Y are divided and differentiated among themselves and generation Y is divided into 4 groups in order to reveal the difference of birth years and differences on the factors. In order to avoid the confusion of meaning, those who were born between 1980 and 1984 will be named as Group 1, those who were born between 1985 and 1989 will be named as Group 2, those who were born between 1990-1994 will be named as Group 3, and finally those who were born between 1995-1999 will be named as Group 4.

## 5. Analysis

### 5.1 Work Attitude

When the attitudes towards work are evaluated in generation Y, 2nd group members are more satisfied and trying to do their best, do not include ambiguity in preferences, and are composed of individuals who are self-sacrificing; for the 4th group members, it is concluded that they are in the opposite approach. In the 1st and 3rd group, it is possible to say that they have more moderate approach to work.

As a result of the analysis made in this case, Figure 1 below has been reached.

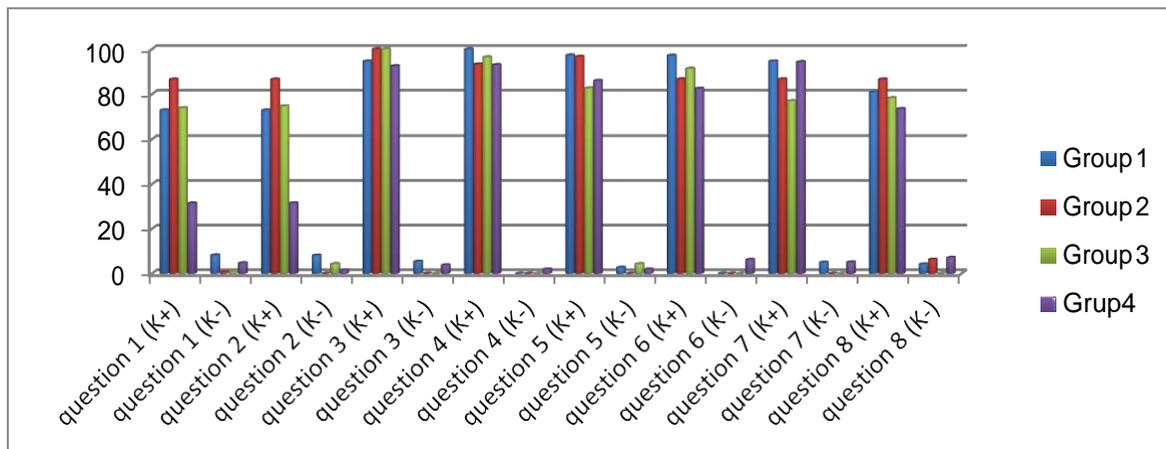


Figure 1: Factor 1 Work Attitude Graph

## 5.2. Tendency in Technology Usage

When the tendency to use technology is examined, the 3rd and 4th Group of Generation Y are observed to have a higher tendency to follow innovations, to use technology in their work and of their usage of internet and computer, while Group 1 and 2 have shown a more withdrawn attitude in terms of these properties.

When social media follow-up behaviors are examined, participants in Group 1, Group 2 and Group 3 are thought to be hesitant to respond to the questionnaire survey. Participants in the 4th group, however, gave answers indicating that they prefer to use social media extremely high for questioning about social media usage.

As a result of the analysis made in this case, Figure 2 below is reached

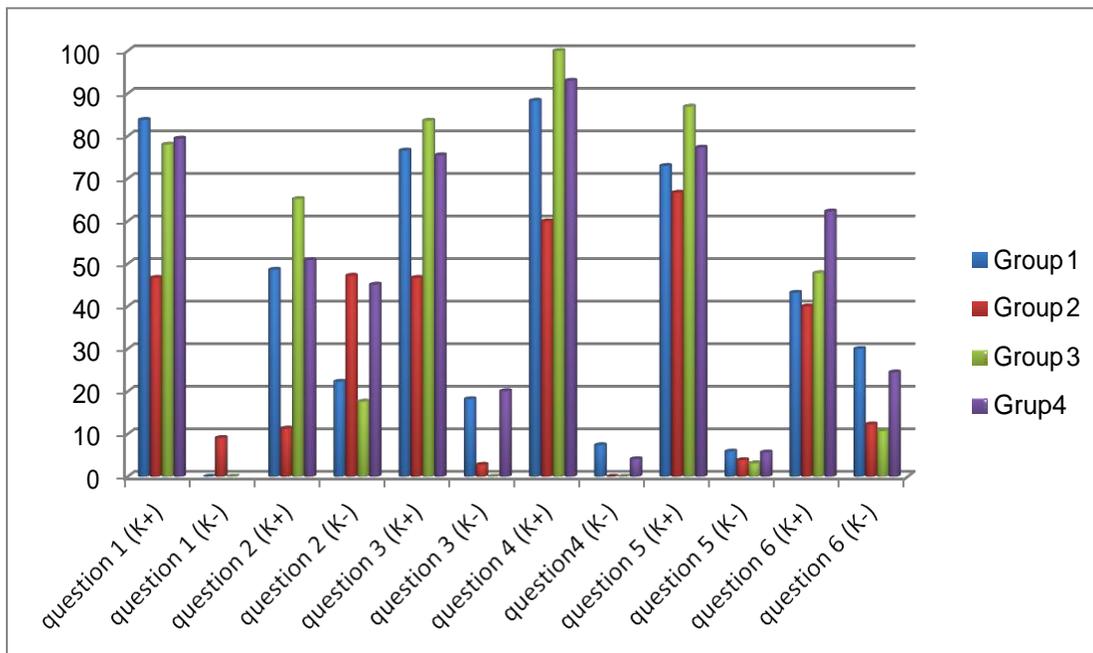


Figure 2:

Factor 2 Technology Tendency Graph

## 5.3. Perceptions of Education

When the perception of education is examined for Generation Y, it was observed that the 5.4% of the participants in the 1st group responded negatively to the questionnaire survey on the fieldwork they were studying. When the reasons for this situation were investigated, it was determined that after the participants in this age group began their business life, they had additionally studied

different departments. As an example, a health professional who starts working in the nursing staff responds to this question based on his / her department that he or she has recently graduated from because he or she has been studying or graduated in that period in departments such as health administration, sociology, laboratory, biology and public administration. When we considered the issue of education-related in-service trainings and the participation of those trainings in the facilitation of business attachments and the trainings organized at workplaces, Group 1 and 4 showed a negative attitude.

It was determined that the reason behind these negative attitudes of Group 1, born between 1980 and 1984, is that the most of participants experience at the sector was high and those who were born between 1995 – 1999 is due to the continuation of their learning life and the fact that they are already integrated with the field of education.

In the 2nd and 3rd group participants, the perception of education is significantly more optimistic than the participants in the 1st and 4th groups. As a result of the analysis made in this case, Figure 3 below is reached.

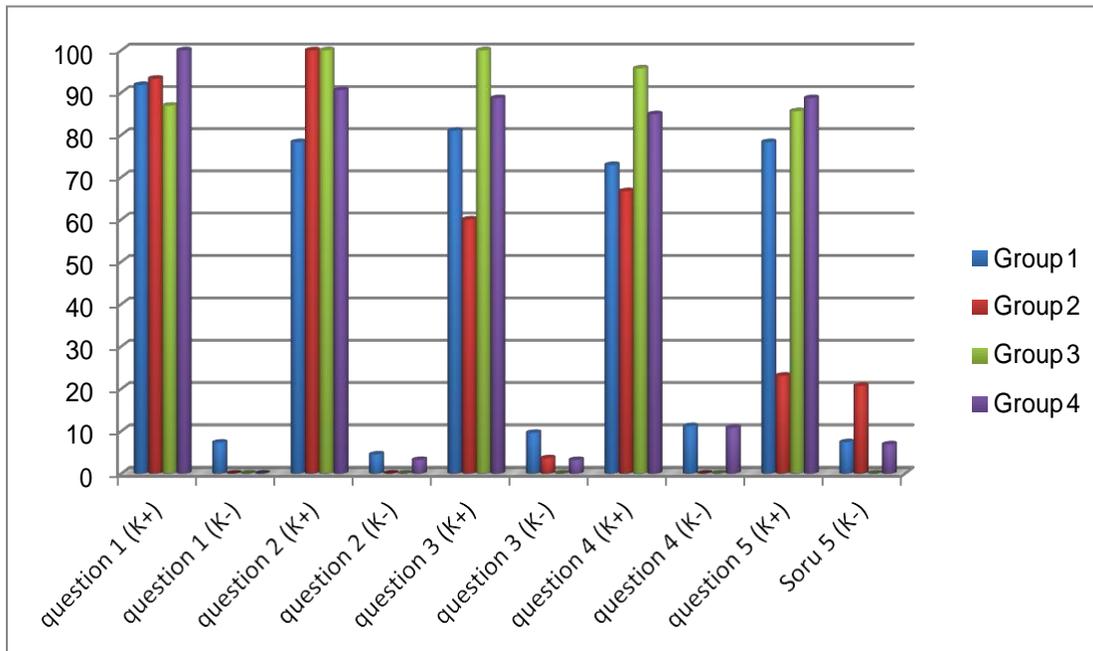


Figure 3: Factor 3 Perceptions of Education Chart

## 5.4. Communication at Work

When communication trends at work are examined, the 1st and 4th group of Generation Y shared negative opinions in the case of expressing their opinions freely, hesitating to take decisions that they would regret, and were preoccupied with the opinions and suggestions of colleagues and managers.

When the reasons behind these are examined, for Group 1 it is seen that it's due to job experience. The reason for this conclusion to the Group 4 is because of age-related self-esteem and inexperience of life brought about by work life.

In Group 2 and Group 3, communication tendencies were observed to be more positive. As a result of the analysis made in this case, Figure 4 below is reached.

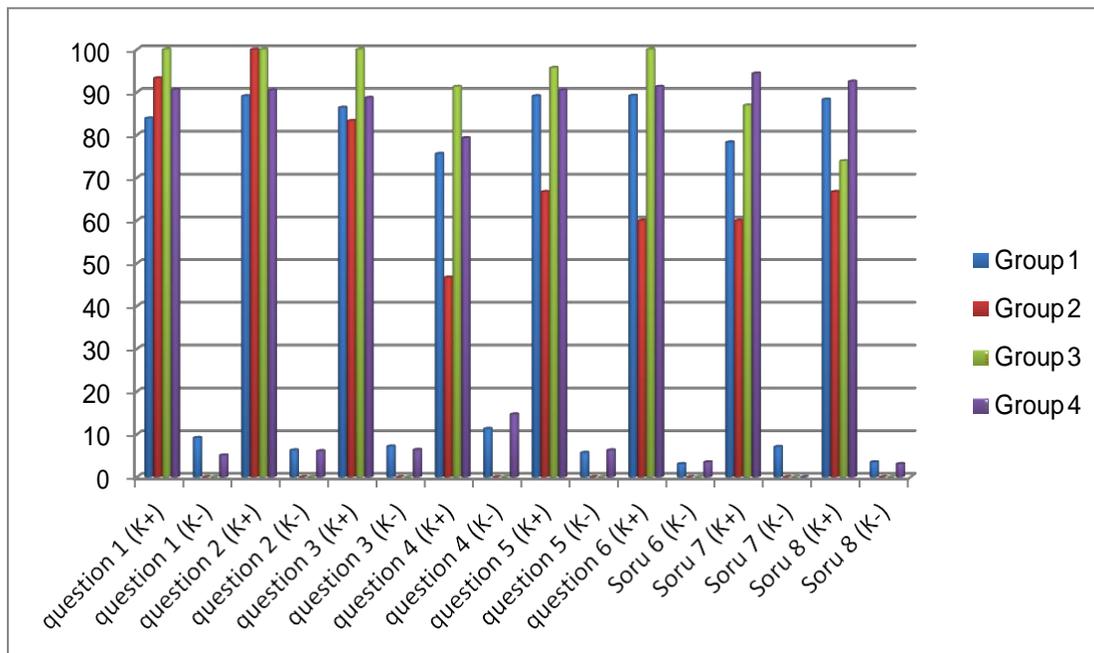


Figure 4: Factor 4 Communication at Work Graph

## 5.5. Career Management

When career tendencies are examined according to the grouping in Generation Y, career and future plans are evaluated and it is observed that the 1st and 4th group show the same characteristics. These groups have made statements that career and future plans are not a priority for them. Groups 2 and 3, on the other hand, paid more attention to the subjects that were case than the other groups

and responded to the questions by the statements indicating that they were doing their planning accordingly.

As a result of the analysis made in this case, Figure 5 below is reached.

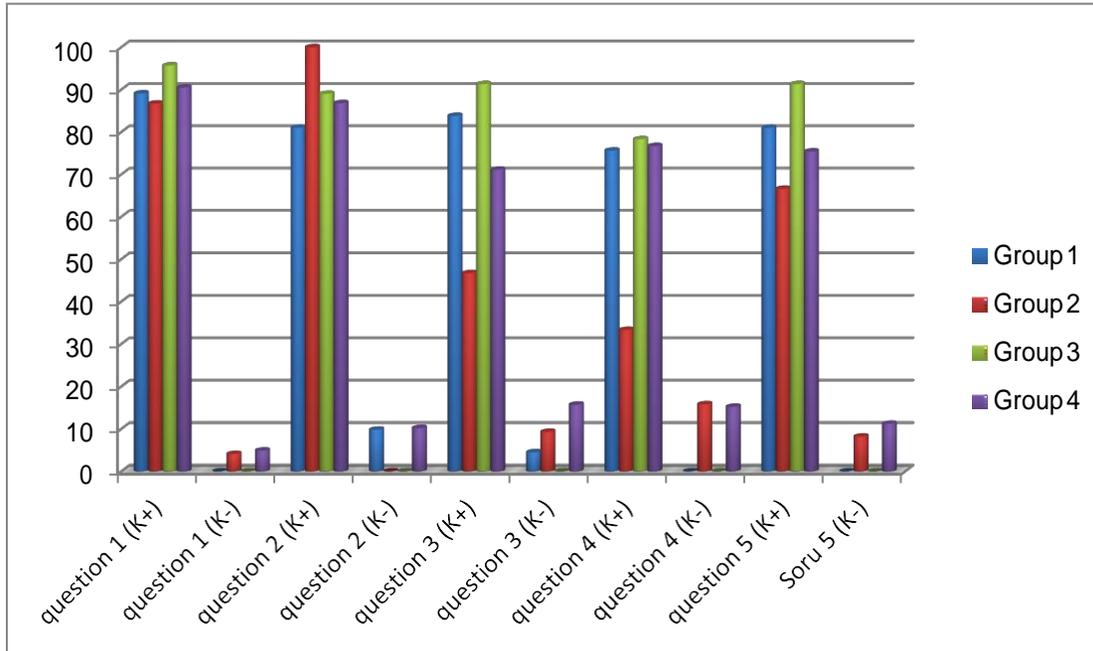


Figure 5: Factor 5 Career Management Graph

## 5.6 Organizational culture

In the organizational culture approach to Generation Y, has also shown breaks in itself. Analyzing organizational culture and examining teamwork, the value given to colleagues, co-workers friendships outside of the Office and trends of spending time in working hours at the Office, Groups 1 and 4 have shown common features and have been observed to give less importance to colleagues' relations in the context of organizational culture. The 2nd and 3rd groups are at the optimal level of adaptation to the organizational culture.

As a result of the analysis made in this case, Figure 6 below is reached.

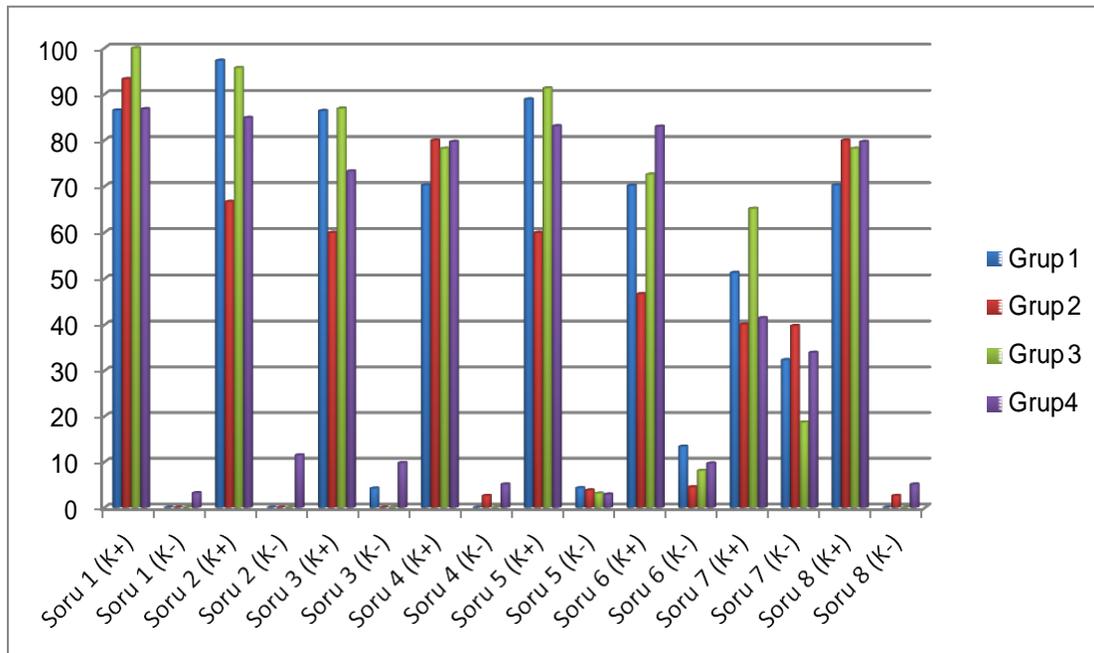


Figure 6: Factor 6 Organizational Culture Graph

### 5.7. Place Attachment

Members of Generation Y whose place attachment characteristics are observed, when it was examined the characteristics of changing work, evaluating more attractive conditions on behalf of job change and being affected by workplace negativity, the 4th Group exhibited a variable attitude compared to the other 3 Groups. It is observed that Group 4 can not clarify the sense of place attachment. the reason of this is due to the average of the overall age of the participants, either they are already students or they can't work full-time.

The sense of place attachment of the 1st, 2nd and 3rd group participants was evaluated optimistic.

As a result of the analysis made in this case, Figure 7 below is reached.

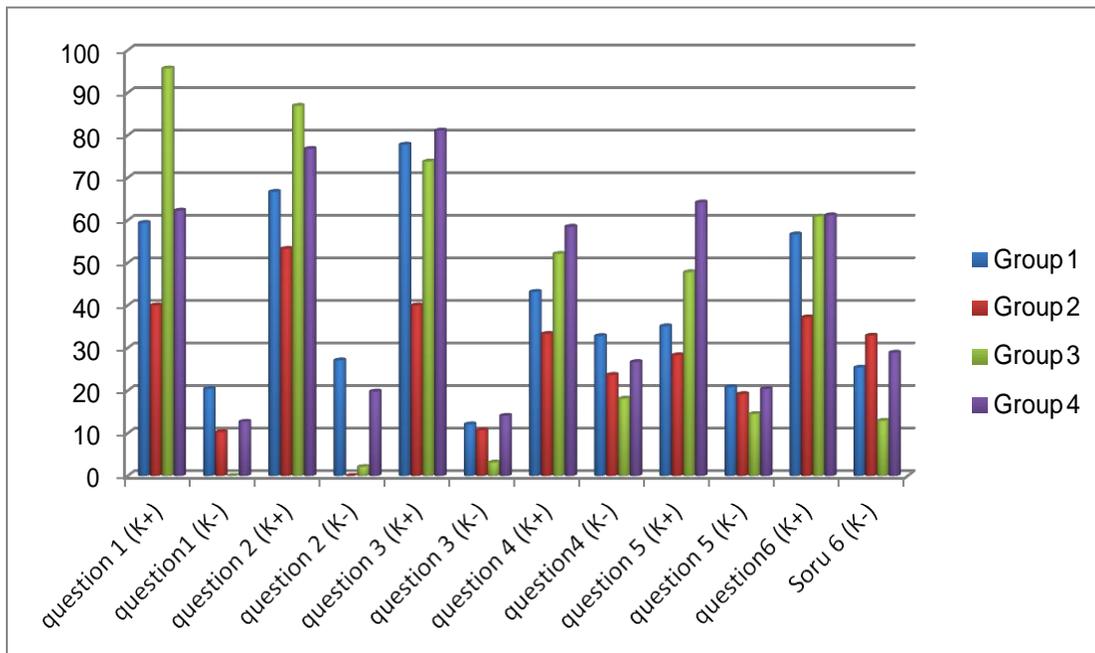


Figure 7: Factor 7 Place Attachment Graph

### 5.8. Wage

Members of Generation Y were examined at the wage factor level including seeing the wages enough to carry out his or her life, evaluation of additional opportunities to earn more money and satisfaction with overtime wages and the results are;

While Groups 1 and 4 declare that they are not satisfied with the conditions they are in the present situation, Groups 2 and 3 have higher levels of satisfaction. As a result of the analysis made in this case, Figure 8 below is reached.

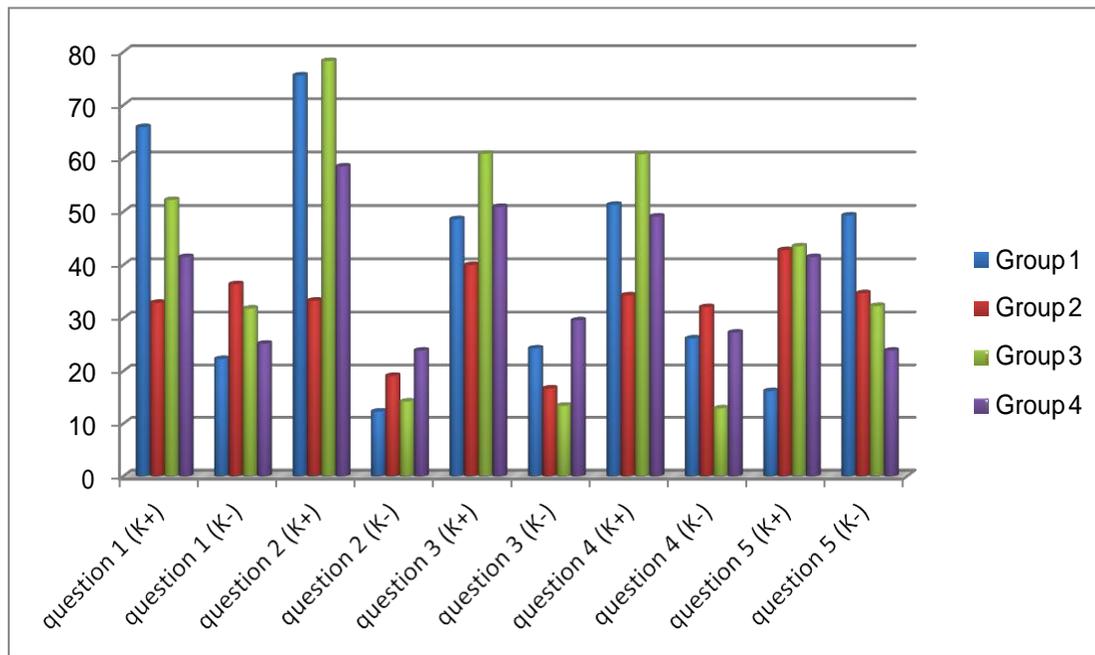


Figure 8: Factor 8 Wage Graph

## 6. Conclusion

As Generation Y includes the young professionals of business world, we examined Generation Y in this study. The reason for choosing the healthcare industry as a universe in the scope of the research is because it covers all ranges of age of the Generation Y. In order to observe the different attitudes in the age ranges, Generation Y is divided into 4 main groups. When examining the general trends of these groups, eight main factors were evaluated. When we looked at these factors in the general framework, it was observed that they had different attitudes for all the 4 group of age ranges. For all the analyzed factors, all the characteristics of the group we call 2nd Group (born in 1985-1989) are similar to the characteristics of the group we called 3rd Group (1990-1994). In addition to this, apart from the Place Attachment Factor, the characteristics of the Group 1 (born in 1980-1984) and the group named as the 4th group (born in 1995-1999) show similarities.

From this point of view, the characteristics of the Generation Y have already been described in the literature since currently it is the period the beginning of the generation.

By looking at this definition, the participants who are in the 1980-1984 age range were carrying these features and responded accordingly to the survey questions they were asked. The

characteristic features of Y Generation become more moderate and stable in Groups 2 and 3, which are the continuation of Group 1. The group that we call Group 4 which includes the ones born in the last period of the Generation Y have the characteristics of this generation, contrary to expectations. We can name the periods as the middle era that the Generation Y have refractions within. This era covers those who born between the years 1985 and 1994 which is Group 2 and 3. These people have different tendencies due to the fact that they have less features of the characteristics of Generation Y than that of the 1st and 4th groups. From this point, we can refer to the people who are in the age period we mentioned as 2nd and 3rd Group as 'Stable Generation Y'.

As a result of the refractions discussed in this study, we gave the participants of Group 4, who followed by suppressing the features of the Group 2 and 3 and shadowed by the participants of Group 1 of Generation Y, which comes right after Generation X to the foreground with its distinctive characteristics, the opportunity to show the features of characteristics of their generations and to express themselves better.

As a result of this study, it is necessary to carry out studies consisting of different variables on a wider sample, where participants of the Generation Y have a fracture and difference within themselves.

## References

ALWIN, D.F., Generations X, Y And Z: Are They Changing America, American Sociological Association, Contexts, 42(1), 2002, ss. 42- 51.

JIANRUI,J, The Y Factor: Managing The New Generation Of Soldiers, Journal Of The Singapore Armed Forces, 39(4), 2011, ss.53-59.

KURAN, E., Bir Kuş ağı Anlamak, <http://isyasami.yenibiris.com/yri--.aspx?pageID=238&nlD=70364&NewsCatID=327&AuthorID=152> (10.05.2017)

LOWER, J., Brace Yourself Here Comes Generation Y, Critical Care Nurse, 28 (5),2008, ss. 80-85.

MENGI, Z., Yazan: Zeynep Mengi Kaynak: [www.Yenibiris.Com/Hurriyetik](http://www.Yenibiris.Com/Hurriyetik)) 2011

YELKIKALAN, N., Altın E.. Farklı kuş akların Yönetimi, Yönetim Bilimleri Dergisi, 2010, ss. 13-17.

YÜKSEKBİLGİLİ, Z. Türk Tipi Y Kuş ağı, Elektronik Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi, (12) 2013, ss 342 - 353