



Personality Traits, Interpersonal Conflict Resolution Strategies and Coping Skills among X, Y, Z Generations

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to investigate the differences in personality traits, interpersonal conflict resolution strategies, and coping skills among generations X, Y, and Z. The study included 433 participants (257 female and 176 male) which are composed of Generation X (n = 141), Generation Y (n = 165), Generation Z (n = 127). The data was obtained by the Demographic Information Form, The Big Five Inventory (BFI), Conflict Communication Scale (CCS) and Coping Skills Scale (The Brief- COPE). The study results indicated that there was a statistically significant difference in personality traits (agreeableness, extraversion, openness to experience, conscientiousness, neuroticism) among the three generations. Additionally, Generation X, Generation Y, Generation Z differed in their use of certain conflict resolution strategies (confrontation, emotional expression, and self-disclosure) and coping skills (substance use, suppression of competing activities, denial, restraint, positive reinterpretation, and planning).

In modern life, numerous phenomena are continuously changing and developing every day. Technology, in particular, has a great impact on individuals and their daily lives, including family, social and business relationships, as well as various fields such as economy, politics, culture, art and science. In this rapidly changing and developing world, it is necessary for individuals to adapt to technology and embrace change. This can lead to differences in individuals' perceptions, expectations, and perspectives, which in turn can affect their behavior. Generation classifications emerge as a result of these interactions (Zemke, Raines, & Filipcak, 2013).

The Concept of Generation

People who are born in the same time period, share similar knowledge and experiences, live under similar conditions, have similar responsibilities, and are influenced by similar social, economic, cultural and political events (Kupperschmidt, 2000). Generational cohorts can also be shaped by the historical context of each country (Urick & Arslantas, 2018). Therefore, Turkish generation classification proposed by Adıgüzel, Batur, and Ekşili (2014) was utilized in the present study. According to this categorization, those born between 1923 and 1945 were considered as the Silent Generation or Traditionalists, those born between 1946 and 1964 as the Baby Boomers Generation, those born between 1965 and 1979 as Generation X, those born between 1980 and 1999 as Generation Y, and those born after 2000 were considered as Generation Z.

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Individuals of Generation X (those born between 1965 and 1979) are often characterized as intelligent, mobile and highly educated thanks to technological advancements. They tend to be hardworking, independent and skeptical, with qualities such as being frugal, cautious, entertaining, competing and dynamic (Fox, 2011; Reilly, 2012). Individuals of Generation Y (those born between 1980 and 2000) have superior skills to use new technologies compared to previous generations, have the opportunity to achieve new standards in achieving the goals through relationships and communication. They are open to change and innovation, extraverted, impatient, but also have a high sense of trust (Gabriel, da Silva, & Moretti, 2014; Tarçalır, 2015). Generation Z (those born between 2000 and after) has been described as “New Silent Generation” due to their extreme individualization and tendency to live independently (Strauss & Howe, 1991). They are known for their interest in world tastes, their ability to quickly grasp and utilize technology (Berkman, 2009; Williams, 2010). While each generation has its own characteristics, personality is a deeper, more complex aspect that shapes how an individual interacts with adapts to their environment.

Personality

Personality described as the dynamic organization within an individual of those psychophysical systems that determine their unique adjustments to their environment (Allport, 1937). People have distinct personality traits that make them unique (Allport, 1961). Goldberg (1981) was the first researcher to use the concept of five factors to measure personality traits. Lately, McCrea and Costa (1985) introduced the “Big Five Model,” which identifies five main personality traits: Extraversion (E), Openness to Experience (O), Agreeableness (A), Conscientiousness (C) and Neuroticism (N). Each of these traits has sub-dimensions that differentiate individuals from one another. For example, extraversion includes traits such as being active, ambitious, assertive, sociable, expressive and talkative. Neuroticism includes traits such as being ashamed, emotional, anxious, worried, insecure, depressed, and angry. Conscientiousness includes features such as being careful, hardworking, responsible, organized, and persevering. Agreeableness includes traits like being good natured, forgiving, soft hearted, cooperative, courteous, flexible, and trusting. Openness to Experience includes traits such as being curious, artistically sensitive, original, imaginative, cultured, broad minded, and intelligent (Barrick & Mount, 1991).

Previous studies demonstrated that there are generational differences in personality traits. Brandt, Drewelies, Willis, Schaie, Ram, Gerstorff ve Wagner (2022) found that later-born cohorts had lower levels of agreeableness and neuroticism and higher levels of extraversion and openness to experience compared to earlier-born cohorts. In a study conducted with nurses revealed that Generation X has higher levels of agreeableness, conscientiousness and neuroticism than Generation Y (Emory, Lee, Kippenbrock, Boyd, Chen, & Harless, 2022). Lissitsa ve Kol (2021) found significant differences in personality traits between Baby Boomers, Generation X, Y and Z, particularly in terms of conscientiousness and neuroticism. Baby Boomers demonstrated the highest levels of conscientiousness, while Generation Z reported the highest levels of neuroticism. While Generation X, Generation Y, Generation Z live together in society, conflicts from different personality traits are likely to occur.

Interpersonal Conflict Resolution Strategies

Interpersonal conflicts which occur in all kinds of groups in social life can have many reasons such as the background of the person or conflict, the structure in which the conflict is experienced, personal values, communicative processes, mutual obstacles, feelings of incompatibility and tension, anxiety, hostility or negative expressions (Barki & Hartwick, 2001; Cahn, 1990; Canary, Cupach, & Messman, 1995; Cupach & Canary, 2000; Dökmen, 1994; Mayer, 2000; Wall & Callister, 1995). Conflict resolution described as a process in which strategies are used to end the conflict and resolve problems through compromise (Jandt & Pedersen, 1996; Rahim, Garrett, & Buntzman, 1992). The positive or negative results of conflict are related to how it is perceived and which conflict resolution strategies are employed.

Goldstein (1999) focused on the communication styles of the individual which consist of strategies such as Confrontation, Public/Private Behavior, Conflict Approach/Avoidance, Self-disclosure, and Emotional Expression. The first important step to resolve the conflict is the confrontation of the parties involved. Confrontation, which plays a crucial role in effective and positive conflict resolution, refers to the degree of

confrontation of individuals during a conflict. Public/private behavior refers to the degree in which people are comfortable in their behavior during the conflict process. Some people are uncomfortable with the presence of third parties and limit their behavior, while others are comfortable in conflict situations, do not worry about the presence of others. Conflict approach/avoidance is directly related to how individuals perceive conflict in general; some may welcome it as constructive, positive and tolerant, while others may avoid it as they view it as destructive and negative. Self-disclosure refers to the degree to which individuals reveal information about themselves to another such as their needs, aspirations, goals, fears in conflict resolution processes. Lastly, emotional expression, which shows the degree to which individuals express their feelings, emphasizes that people express their emotions comfortably in conflict processes.

Personality plays a significant role in determining an individual's approach to conflict resolution. Research results indicated that extraversion, conscientiousness, openness to experience and agreeableness have a positive relationship with the integrating conflict style, but neuroticism has a negative relationship. Extraversion has a positive relationship with dominating conflict style, whereas dominating has a negative relationship with agreeableness and neuroticism. While extraversion, openness to experience and conscientiousness have a negative relationship with avoiding conflict style, it has positive relationship with agreeableness and neuroticism. Furthermore, the obliging conflict style was positively related to agreeableness and neuroticism, but negatively to extroversion. Additionally, agreeableness, extroversion, openness to experience, and conscientiousness have a positive association with the compromising conflict style (Antonioni, 1998; Ejaz, Iqbal, & Ara, 2012; Messarra, Karkoulin, & El-Kassar, 2016; Therani & Yamini, 2020; Wang, 2010).

Coping Skills

Coping described as the strategies that individuals use to adapt or adjust to challenging circumstances (Costa, Somerfield, & McCrae, 1996). These strategies, also known as coping skills, can be divided into categories such as problem-focused versus emotion-focused, functional versus dysfunctional, and approach versus avoidance (Garcia, Barraza-Pena, Wlodarczyk, Alvear-Carrasco, & Reyes, 2018). Problem-focused coping involves taking actions to address the stressor or reduce its impact. On the other hand, emotion-focused coping involves behaviors that aim to prevent, diminish, or reduce the emotional distress caused by the stressful situation (Garcia et al., 2018).

Cox and Ferguson (1991) explained functional coping in four dimensions as follows: approach coping, in which individuals address the stressor directly. Avoidance coping permits people to ignore the existence of the problem. Emotional regulation coping tolerates individuals to deal with the emotional effects of the stressor. Reappraisal coping, in which individuals change the meaning of the stressor. However, dysfunctional coping may involve avoidance, self-blame, or negative coping behaviors such as substance abuse (Crocker & Park, 2004) and a lack of reconstructive coping (Ekedahl & Wengström, 2006).

Several research indicated that conflict can have positive consequences such as growth of interpersonal relationships and shared understanding, contribution and balanced decision making (Chen, 2006; Kurtzberg & Muller, 2005; Pelled, Eisenhardt, & Xin, 1999; Pitt, 2005) and coping skills are the key determinants of the psychological adjustment and well-being (Monzani, Steca, Greco, D'Addario, Cappelletti, & Pancani, 2015).

To conclude, the studies about Generation X, Y, and Z are generally in the context of business life and technology. Hence, the findings of this study will be important to draw attention to the distinctive personality traits of generations, to understand the differences between the generations, to recognize the members of different generations and to establish a healthier communication with them. The current study aims to investigate the differences in personality traits, interpersonal conflict resolution strategies, and coping skills among Generation X, Generation Y, Generation Z, filling a gap in the existing literature on this topic.

Method

Research Design

A correlational research model was used to investigate the differences in personality traits, interpersonal conflict resolution strategies, and coping skills among individuals from different generations (Generation X, Generation Y, Generation Z). There are two types of correlational studies. In the type of correlation, the presence or degree of change among two or more variables is examined. In the comparison type, it is examined whether there is a difference according to the dependent variable in the groups that make up the based on the independent variable. This approach is used to study naturally occurring phenomena, does not involve manipulating or intervening in these phenomena (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2005). The correlational design is suitable for studying existing differences between variables, without the need for the researcher to manipulate or intervene in any way.

Participants

The current study consisted of 433 (257 female, 176 male) participants. Generation X was 141 (61 female, 80 male), Generation Y was 165 (107 female, 58 male) and Generation Z was 127 (89 female, 38 male) participants. Regarding the education level of participants, 2.1% of them ($n = 9$) were graduated from primary school, 2.5% of them ($n = 11$) were graduated from middle school, 28.9% of them ($n = 125$) were graduated from high school, 55.4% of them ($n = 240$) were graduated from university and 11.1% of them ($n = 48$) had Master's or doctoral degree. 37.6% of them ($n = 163$) were married, 38.8% of them ($n = 168$) were single and had relationship, 21.9% of them ($n = 95$) were single and had no relationship, 1.2% of them ($n = 5$) were divorced and 0.5% of them ($n = 2$) were widow. Regarding the socioeconomic level of participants, 4.8% of them ($n = 21$) were in low class, 84.3% of them ($n = 365$) were in middle class, 10.9% of them ($n = 47$) were in high class. Demographic characteristics of the samples were presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of the sample

Variables		<i>N</i>	%
Gender	Male	257	59.4
	Female	176	40.6
	Total	433	100
Birth Period	1965 – 1979	141	32.6
	1980 – 1999	165	38.1
	2000 – 2005	127	29.3
Educational Level	Primary School	9	2.1
	Middle School	11	2.5
	High School	125	28.9
Marital Status	University	240	55.4
	Master's or Doctoral Degree	48	11.1
	Married	163	37.6
	Single and has relationship	168	38.8
Socioeconomic Level	Single and has no relationship	95	21.9
	Divorced	5	1.2
	Widow	2	.5
Socioeconomic Level	Low Class	21	4.8
	Middle Class	365	84.3
	High Class	47	10.9

Data Collection Instruments

The Big Five Inventory (BFI), which was developed by Benet-Martinez and John (1998), consists of 44 items and five subscales in order to measure the five personality factors (Extraversion, Neuroticism, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, and Openness to Experience). BFI is a five point-Likert type inventory, ranging from 1 = “strongly disagree” to 5 = “strongly agree”. The high scores obtained from each subscale show that the individual has that personality trait. The BFI was translated from English into 28 languages by Schmitt, Allik, McCrae, and Benet-Martinez (2007) and the Turkish validity and reliability study of this inventory was conducted by Sümer and Sümer (2005). In the Turkish adaptation study, the Cronbach’s α value for the “Extraversion” subscale was .74; for the “Neuroticism” subscale was .76; for the “Openness to Experience” subscale was .75; for the “Conscientiousness” was .77 and for the “Agreeableness” subscale was .67. The reliability analysis for BFI was also conducted in the present study, and the Cronbach’s α value was found as .61 for Agreeableness, .84 for Extraversion, .76 for Openness to Experience, .77 for Conscientiousness and .66 for Neuroticism.

Conflict Communication Scale (CCS) was developed by Goldstein (1999) and the validity and reliability study of the scale was conducted by Arslan (2005). The scale consists of five subscales including confrontation, public/private behavior, emotional expression, conflict approach/avoidance and self-disclosure. Each subscale constitutes 15 items and there are 75 items in total. CCS is a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree) for each item. The high score from each subscale indicates a higher level of confrontation, self-disclosure, emotional expression, public behavior, and approaching to conflict. It was found that Cronbach’s α value in the “Confrontation” subscale as .70, in the “Private/Public Behavior” subscale as .83, in the “Emotional Expression” subscale as .75, in the “Conflict Approach/Avoidance” subscale as .83, and in the “Self-Disclosure” subscale as .75. In the current study, the Cronbach’s α value was found as .69 for confrontation, .83 for public/private behavior, .83 for emotional expression, .77 for conflict approach/avoidance, and .71 for self-disclosure in the present study.

The Brief-COPE (Coping Orientation to Problems Experienced) was developed by Carver, Scheier, and Weintraub (1989) to measure the different behavior styles when people show in situations that will cause stress. This inventory has 14 subscales, and there are 28 items in total. Individuals' responses are “1 = never do anything like this”, “2 = I do very little like this”, “3 = I do this moderately” and “4 = I do it mostly” in the form. Scores are obtained between 2 and 8 for each subscale. The validity and reliability study of Coping Skills Scale was conducted by Bacanlı, Sürücü, and İlhan (2013). It was found that the internal consistency coefficients of the subscales are as follows: Instrumental Social Support .78, Humor .92, Venting of Emotions .70, Substance Use .84, Acceptance .56, Suppression of Competing Activities .50, Religion .90, Denial .69, Behavioral Disengagement .59, Mental Disengagement .62, Restraint .39, Positive Reinterpretation .76, Emotional Social Support .85, and Planning .70. In the current study, the Cronbach’s α value for the instrumental social support subscale was .69, for the humor subscale was .90, for the venting of emotions subscale was .48, for the substance use was .86, for the acceptance subscale was .58, for the suppression of competing activities was .53, for the religion subscale was .86, for the denial subscale was .67, for the behavioral disagreement subscale was .66, for the mental disagreement subscale was .59, for the restraint subscale was .61, for the positive reinterpretation subscale was .70, for the emotional social support subscale was .52, for the planning subscale was .70.

Data Collection Procedure

The approval of Bahçeşehir University Ethics Committee (December 27, 2019, 20021704-604.02) was taken before starting the data collection process. Since the data were collected online, Informed Consent Form were given online to the participants. All four data collection instruments were prepared by using the website https://www.google.com/intl/tr_tr/forms/about/ at Google Forms as an online survey tool and were delivered to the participants via social media platforms such as Whatsapp Groups, Facebook and Instagram. It takes about 25 minutes to answer the scales. Data collection process took 3 months.

Data Analyses Procedure

In order to conduct statistical analyses, Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was employed in the present study. First of all, mean, standard deviations, minimum and maximum values were controlled with the purpose to determine descriptive characteristics of the variable. Before conducting any statistical analysis, 6 participants were excluded from the data because they were outliers. Whether the subdimension scores obtained from personality traits, interpersonal conflict resolution strategies and coping skills scales differ according to Generation X, Generation Y, and Generation Z has been tested with Multiple Variance Analysis (MANOVA). In order to use MANOVA, kurtosis and skewness were analyzed to determine suitability of the scores to normal distribution. The skewness indices ranged between -1.06 and 1.52, and kurtosis indices ranged between -1.19 and 1.21. These indices fall within the acceptable range of -3 to 3 for both skewness and kurtosis (Kline, 2011) and indicated that the data was distributed normally.

Another assumption required for the use of MANOVA is to ensure the homogeneity of the variance-covariance matrices. The null hypothesis that the variance-covariance matrices are the same in all three groups was tested by using the Box's *M* test. If the assumption of homogeneity is met, this statistic should be non-significant. The significance of the Box's *M* test is affected by the number of participants. In cases where the number of participants is high, the Box's *M* test can easily be significant (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). In this case, the significance level should be taken as .025, .01 (Mertler and Vannatta, 2010) or .001 (Pallant, 2005); if this assumption is also not met, it is suggested to use Pillai's Trace result instead of Wilks' Lambda (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). In this study, due to the homogeneity of variance-covariance matrices is not met, Pillai's Trace value was used, and Bonferroni correction was applied to reduce the possibility Type-1 error and the statistical significance value was taken as .0125 instead of .05.

Results

Results Concerning the Differences in Personality Traits as a Function of Generation X, Generation Y and Generation Z

For the purpose of investigating the possible differences among the personality traits of Generation X, Generation Y and Generation Z, MANOVA was carried out using the subscales scores of Big Five Inventory (BFI). Box's *M* Test showed that the variance-covariance matrices are not homogeneous [Box's $M = 65.20$; $F(30, 539031.13) = 2.137$, $p = .000$]. It was yielded that there was a significant difference between the three groups on the linear combination of dependent variables ($p < .05$). The fact that the Box's *M* results revealed a significant difference between Generation X, Generation Y, Generation Z, the criterion of Pillai's Trace was seen as more robust when the group sizes were unequal (Pillai, 1955). The mean scores, standard deviations and number of participants according to the subscales of personality traits of the individuals in Generation X, Generation Y, and Generation Z were presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Distribution of the subscales of personality traits by generations

Subscales	Group	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	η^2
Agreeableness	Generation X	141	35.68	4.13	.24.825	.000	.104
	Generation Y	165	34.48	4.19			
	Generation Z	127	31.98	4.82			
	Total	433	34.14	4.60			
Extraversion	Generation X	141	29.78	5.30	8.516	.000	.038
	Generation Y	165	29.15	6.16			
	Generation Z	127	26.84	6.84			
	Total	433	28.68	6.22			
Openness to experience	Generation X	141	38.68	5.01	13.404	.000	.059
	Generation Y	165	38.63	5.77			
	Generation Z	127	35.58	6.05			
	Total	433	37.75	5.78			
Conscientiousness	Generation X	141	37.28	4.58	59.106	.000	.216
	Generation Y	165	33.91	5.11			
	Generation Z	127	30.40	5.82			
	Total	433	33.98	5.82			
Neuroticism	Generation X	141	22.00	4.86	7.370	.001	.033
	Generation Y	165	23.67	5.04			
	Generation Z	127	24.34	5.76			
	Total	433	23.32	5.28			

The MANOVA results, which were applied to the scores obtained from agreeableness [Pillai's $\Lambda = .268$, $F(2, 432) = 24.83$, $p = .000$, $\eta^2 = .104$], extraversion [Pillai's $\Lambda = .268$, $F(2, 432) = 8.52$, $p = .000$, $\eta^2 = .038$], openness to experience [Pillai's $\Lambda = .268$, $F(2, 432) = 13.40$, $p = .000$, $\eta^2 = .059$], conscientiousness [Pillai's $\Lambda = .268$, $F(2, 432) = 59.11$, $p = .000$, $\eta^2 = .216$], neuroticism [Pillai's $\Lambda = .268$, $F(2, 432) = 7.37$, $p = .001$, $\eta^2 = .033$] subscales of personality traits yielded that there was a statistically significant difference in personality traits according to the generations. As a result of the Scheffe test conducted to determine between which groups are significantly different from one another according to the sub-dimension scores of personality traits revealed that agreeableness level of Generation X ($M = 35.68$) was higher than Generation Z ($M = 31.98$) ($p < .125$). Moreover, agreeableness level of Generation Y ($M = 34.48$) was higher than Generation Z ($p < .125$). Extraversion level of Generation X ($M = 29.78$) was higher than Generation Z ($M = 26.84$) ($p < .125$). Additionally, extraversion level of Generation Y ($M = 29.15$) was higher than Generation Z ($p < .125$). Openness to experience level of Generation X ($M = 38.68$) was higher than Generation Z ($M = 35.58$) ($p < .125$). Furthermore, openness to experience level of Generation Y ($M = 38.63$) was higher than Generation Z ($p < .125$). Conscientiousness level of Generation X ($M = 37.28$) was higher than Generation Y ($M = 33.91$) and Generation Z ($M = 30.40$) ($p < .125$). Besides, conscientiousness level of Generation Y was higher than Generation Z. Neuroticism level of Generation X ($M = 22$) was lower than Generation Y ($M = 23.67$) and Generation Z ($M = 24.34$) ($p < .125$). Moreover, neuroticism level of Generation Y was lower than Generation Z, as shown in Table 2.

Results Concerning the Differences in Interpersonal Conflict Resolution Strategies as a Function of Generation X, Generation Y and Generation Z

In order to examine the possible differences among the conflict resolution strategies of Generation X, Generation Y and Generation Z, MANOVA was employed to the subscales scores of Conflict Communication Scale (CCS). Box's M Test indicated that the variance-covariance matrices are not homogeneous [Box's $M = 52.82$; $F(30, 539031.13) = 1.731$, $p = .000$]. It was found that there was a significant difference between the three groups on the linear combination of dependent variables ($p < .05$). The fact that the Box's M results revealed a significant difference between Generation X, Generation Y, Generation Z, the criterion of Pillai's Trace was seen as more robust when the group sizes were unequal (Pillai, 1955). Table 3 shows the mean

scores, standard deviations and number of participants according to the subscales of interpersonal conflict resolution strategies of the individuals in Generation X, Generation Y, and Generation Z.

Table 3. Distribution of the subscales of interpersonal conflict resolution strategies by generations

Subscales	Group	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	η^2
Confrontation	Generation X	141	76.89	8.83	6.662	.001	.030
	Generation Y	165	75.10	9.21			
	Generation Z	127	72.78	9.59			
	Total	433	75.00	9.32			
Public/private behavior	Generation X	141	48.31	12.04	.132	.876	.001
	Generation Y	165	47.60	12.89			
	Generation Z	127	48.15	13.36			
	Total	433	48.00	12.74			
Emotional expression	Generation X	141	76.53	9.75	9.058	.000	.040
	Generation Y	165	78.61	11.47			
	Generation Z	127	73.00	12.23			
	Total	433	76.29	11.39			
Conflict approach/avoidance	Generation X	141	49.46	11.01	4.245	.015	.019
	Generation Y	165	52.68	11.71			
	Generation Z	127	52.89	10.31			
	Total	433	51.69	11.17			
Self-disclosure	Generation X	141	70.64	8.54	7.404	.001	.033
	Generation Y	165	74.23	10.01			
	Generation Z	127	70.51	10.14			
	Total	433	71.97	9.74			

The results of MANOVA indicated that Generation X, Generation Y, Generation Z differentiated according to confrontation [Pillai's $\Lambda = .125$, $F(2, 432) = 6.66$, $p = .001$, $\eta^2 = .030$], emotional expression [Pillai's $\Lambda = .125$, $F(2, 432) = 9.06$, $p = .000$, $\eta^2 = .040$] and self-disclosure subscale [Pillai's $\Lambda = .125$, $F(2, 432) = 7.40$, $p = .001$, $\eta^2 = .033$]. However, Generation X, Generation Y, Generation Z did not differentiate in terms of conflict approach/avoidance [Pillai's $\Lambda = .125$, $F(2, 432) = 4.25$, $p = .015$, $\eta^2 = .019$] and public/private behavior level [Pillai's $\Lambda = .125$, $F(2, 432) = .132$, $p = .876$, $\eta^2 = .001$]. As a result of the Scheffe test conducted to determine between which groups are significantly different from one another according to the sub-dimension scores of interpersonal conflict resolution strategies revealed that confrontation level of Generation X ($M = 76.89$) was higher than Generation Z ($M = 72.78$) ($p < .125$). Emotional expression level of Generation X ($M = 76.53$) was higher than Generation Z ($M = 73.00$) ($p < .125$). Moreover, emotional expression level of Generation Y ($M = 78.61$) was higher than Generation Z ($p < .125$). Self-disclosure level of Generation X ($M = 70.64$) was lower than Generation Y ($M = 74.23$) ($p < .125$). Furthermore, self-disclosure level of Generation Y was higher than Generation Z ($M = 70.51$) ($p < .125$), as shown in Table 3.

Results Concerning the Differences in Coping Skills as a Function of Generation X, Generation Y and Generation Z

For the purpose of examining the possible differences among the coping skills of Generation X, Generation Y and Generation Z, MANOVA was employed to the subscales scores of Brief-COPE. Box's M Test indicated that the variance-covariance matrices are not homogeneous [Box's $M = 311$; $F(210, 450656.71) = 1.413$, $p = .000$]. It was yielded that there was a significant difference between the three groups on the linear combination of dependent variables ($p < .05$). The fact that the Box's M results revealed a significant difference between Generation X, Generation Y, Generation Z, the criterion of Pillai's Trace was seen as more robust when the group sizes were unequal (Pillai, 1955). Table 4 indicated the mean scores, standard deviations and number of participants according to the subscales of coping skills of the individuals in Generation X, Generation Y, and Generation Z.

Table 4. Distribution of the subscales of coping skills by generations

Subscales	Group	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	η^2
Instrumental social support	Generation X	141	6.60	1.33	3.774	.024	.017
	Generation Y	165	6.48	1.41			
	Generation Z	127	6.14	1.49			
	Total	433	6.42	1.42			
Humour	Generation X	141	4.84	1.82	2.110	.123	.010
	Generation Y	165	5.03	2.00			
	Generation Z	127	5.33	2.00			
	Total	433	5.06	1.95			
Venting of emotions	Generation X	141	5.59	1.56	1.174	.310	.005
	Generation Y	165	5.84	1.46			
	Generation Z	127	5.64	1.58			
	Total	433	5.70	1.53			
Substance use	Generation X	141	2.72	1.39	4.545	.011	.021
	Generation Y	165	3.00	1.57			
	Generation Z	127	3.32	1.90			
	Total	433	3.00	1.63			
Acceptance	Generation X	141	5.83	1.55	3.413	.034	.016
	Generation Y	165	6.23	1.39			
	Generation Z	127	6.23	1.50			
	Total	433	6.10	1.48			
Suppression of competing activities	Generation X	141	5.74	1.38	6.337	.002	.029
	Generation Y	165	5.15	1.41			
	Generation Z	127	5.40	1.52			
	Total	433	5.42	1.45			
Religion	Generation X	141	5.77	2.03	2.660	.071	.012
	Generation Y	165	5.21	2.20			
	Generation Z	127	5.44	2.03			
	Total	433	5.46	2.11			
Denial	Generation X	141	3.84	1.74	5.443	.005	.025
	Generation Y	165	3.48	1.46			
	Generation Z	127	4.11	1.74			
	Total	433	3.78	1.66			
Behavioral disengagement	Generation X	141	3.40	1.51	2.754	.065	.013
	Generation Y	165	3.36	1.48			
	Generation Z	127	3.76	1.65			
	Total	433	3.49	1.55			
Mental disengagement	Generation X	141	5.25	1.62	1.700	.184	.008
	Generation Y	165	5.26	1.63			
	Generation Z	127	5.57	1.56			
	Total	433	5.35	1.61			

Table 4. (cont'd) Distribution of the subscales of coping skills by generations

Subscales	Group	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	η^2
Restraint	Generation X	141	6.08	1.27	8.571	.000	.038
	Generation Y	165	5.44	1.38			
	Generation Z	127	5.59	1.50			
	Total	433	5.69	1.40			
Positive reinterpretation	Generation X	141	6.64	1.20	14.218	.000	.062
	Generation Y	165	6.49	1.35			
	Generation Z	127	5.79	1.60			
	Total	433	6.33	1.43			
Emotional social support	Generation X	141	5.81	1.50	1.144	.320	.005
	Generation Y	165	5.61	1.40			
	Generation Z	127	5.57	1.38			
	Total	433	5.66	1.43			
Planning	Generation X	141	7.09	1.09	10.559	.000	.047
	Generation Y	165	6.85	1.18			
	Generation Z	127	6.40	1.49			
	Total	433	6.80	1.28			

The MANOVA results, as shown in Table 4, revealed that Generation X, Generation Y, Generation Z differentiated according to substance use [Pillai's Trace = .205, $F(2, 432) = 4.55$, $p < .011$, $\eta^2 = .021$], suppression of competing activities [Pillai's Trace = .205, $F(2, 432) = 6.34$, $p < .002$, $\eta^2 = .029$], denial [Pillai's Trace = .205, $F(2, 432) = 5.44$, $p < .005$, $\eta^2 = .025$], restraint [Pillai's Trace = .205, $F(2, 432) = 8.57$, $p < .000$, $\eta^2 = .038$], positive reinterpretation [Pillai's Trace = .205, $F(2, 432) = 14.22$, $p < .000$, $\eta^2 = .062$], and planning subscale [Pillai's Trace = .205, $F(2, 432) = 10.56$, $p < .000$, $\eta^2 = .047$]. However, Generation X, Generation Y, Generation Z did not differentiate in terms of instrumental social support [Pillai's Trace = .205, $F(2, 432) = 3.77$, $p < .024$, $\eta^2 = .017$], acceptance [Pillai's Trace = .205, $F(2, 432) = 3.41$, $p < .034$, $\eta^2 = .016$], humor [Pillai's Trace = .205, $F(2, 432) = 2.11$, $p < .123$, $\eta^2 = .010$], venting of emotions [Pillai's Trace = .205, $F(2, 432) = 1.17$, $p < .310$, $\eta^2 = .005$], religion [Pillai's Trace = .205, $F(2, 432) = 2.66$, $p < .071$, $\eta^2 = .012$], behavioral disengagement [Pillai's Trace = .205, $F(2, 432) = 2.75$, $p < .065$, $\eta^2 = .013$], mental disengagement [Pillai's Trace = .205, $F(2, 432) = 1.70$, $p < .184$, $\eta^2 = .008$], emotional social support levels [Pillai's Trace = .205, $F(2, 432) = 1.14$, $p < .320$, $\eta^2 = .005$]. As a result of the Scheffe test conducted to determine between which groups are significantly different from one another according to the sub-dimension scores of coping skills revealed that substance use level of Generation X ($M = 2.72$) was lower than Generation Z ($M = 3.32$) ($p < .125$). Suppression of competing activities level of Generation X ($M = 5.74$) was higher than Generation Y ($M = 5.15$) ($p < .125$). Denial level of Generation Y ($M = 3.48$) was lower than Generation Z ($M = 4.11$) ($p < .125$). Restraint level of Generation X ($M = 6.08$) was higher than Generation Y ($M = 5.44$) ($p < .125$). Moreover, restraint level of Generation Z ($M = 5.59$) was lower than Generation X ($p < .125$). Positive reinterpretation level of Generation X ($M = 6.64$) was higher than Generation Z ($M = 5.79$) ($p < .125$). Moreover, positive reinterpretation level of Generation Y ($M = 6.49$) was higher than Generation Z ($p < .125$). Planning level of Generation X ($M = 7.09$) was higher than generation Z ($M = 6.40$) ($p < .125$). Furthermore, planning level of Generation Y ($M = 6.85$) was higher than Generation Z ($p < .125$).

Discussion

Individuals from different generations live together in the society. Generations can be defined as groups of individuals with common values, beliefs, expectations and behaviors, born at certain date intervals, affected by similar social, political and economic events, assigned similar responsibilities under the circumstances (Akduman & Yüksesbilgili, 2015). Since there are various factors that make a difference between generations, the purpose of this study was to examine the differences between personality traits, interpersonal conflict resolution strategies, and coping skills among Generation X, Generation Y, Generation Z. The results revealed that there was a statistically significant difference in personality traits (agreeableness, extraversion, openness to experience, conscientiousness, and neuroticism) according to Generation X, Generation Y and Generation

Z. Generation Y is often characterized as extroverted and open to change and innovative (Silva et al., 2014: 35; Tarçalır, 2015), while Generation Z tends experience extreme individualization and loneliness due to their reliance on social networks and online communication (Strauss & Howe, 1991). They prefer to communicate online and it is almost impossible to communicate with them face to face (Topçuoğlu, 2007; Türk, 2013). Therefore, it is possible that Generation Z had the highest level of neuroticism and lowest level of extraversion compared to Generation X and Generation Y. study conducted with school administrators who are in Generation X in terms of age and work experience indicated that they have the highest score for agreeableness score compared to the sub-dimensions of extraversion, neuroticism, conscientiousness, and openness to experience (Yıldızoğlu, 2013).

On the other hand, Generation Z is generally more knowledgeable, more equipped and more curious than previous generations. Therefore, they tend to be more independent, innovative, researcher, and curious (Kavalcı, 2015). This might be due, in part, to the fact that they have access to a wide range of information through various portable technological devices (Akdemir et al., 2013). One might expect, then, that they would have a higher score for openness to experience. However, the current study found that Generation Z actually had the lowest score for openness to experience compared to the other generations. On the other hand, Generation X has lived through a number of significant economic, political and social crises, such as the Vietnam War, the fall of the Berlin Wall, the 1980 military coup, the right-left conflicts, the oil crisis (Türk, 2013). Since they had to make great efforts to adopt to the changing world conditions (Adıgüzel et al., 2014), which could potentially lead to higher score for openness to experience compared to Generation Z. Consistent with the finding of this study, a study conducted with the managers belonging to Generation X have the highest level of openness to experience compared to extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and neuroticism (Tozkoparan, 2013).

Another finding of the present study was that Generation X, Generation Y, Generation Z differentiated according to confrontation, emotional expression, and self-disclosure subscale of interpersonal conflict resolution approaches scale. Generation X and Y was higher in confrontation, emotional expression, and self-disclosure than Generation Z. However, there were no significant differences among the three generations in terms of conflict approach/avoidance and public/private behavior. Consistent with the findings of this study, a study conducted with executive and instructive nurses who might be considered as Generation X based on their age and work experience revealed that the most frequently used conflict resolution strategies were confrontation and avoidance (Valentine, Richardson, Wood, & Godkin, 1998). In a similar vein, another study conducted with managers, confrontation was the most frequently used conflict resolution strategy (Yılmaz & Öztürk, 2011). On the other hand, a study conducted with adolescents who could be considered as the members of Generation Z found that they frequently use confrontation and emotional expression from interpersonal conflict resolution strategies (Aydınlı, 2014). One might expect that members of Generation Z, who tend to prefer online communication to face-to-face interaction, would not use confrontation and emotional expression as conflict resolution strategies.

Moreover, the results of the present study indicated that Generation X, Generation Y, Generation Z differentiated with regard to substance use, suppression of competing activities, denial, restraint, positive reinterpretation, and planning subscale of Brief COPE. However, there were no significant differences among Generation X, Generation Y, Generation Z in terms of instrumental social support, acceptance, humor, venting of emotions, religion, behavioral disengagement, mental disengagement, emotional social support levels. Supporting the finding of this study, substance abuse is more common among younger individuals (Swendsen, Conway, Rounsaville, & Merikangas, 2002), one might expect that Generation Z would use substance as a coping skills more frequently than Generation X. Adolescents are starting to use alcohol at younger ages (Altıntoprak, Akgür, Yüncü, Sertöz, and Coşkunol (2008), while older adults are less likely to use alcohol or drugs to cope with their problems (Segal, Hook, and Coolidge, 2001). Accordingly, it is possible that people may gain new ways of coping as they get older.

Generation X is more likely to engage in other activities as a coping mechanism in difficult situations compared to Generation Y. Generation X, with their life experiences, may have developed an idea that whether they can

effect a change in a situation. If they can, they actively address it; if not, they disengage and passively accept the situation (Phillips & Trainor, 2014). On the other hand, Generation Z, who has the highest level of neuroticism, tends to use denial as a coping style. In other words, they refuse to believe that the stressor exists or is real. In a similar vein, a study conducted with adolescents who spent significant amount of time playing online games found that they tended to use denial as a coping strategy (Schneider, King, & Delfabbro, 2017).

Generation X has the highest level of restraint compared to Generation Y and Generation Z. They are more likely to wait for an appropriate opportunity to act. Consistent with the findings of the present study, Segal, Hook, and Coolidge (2001) found that older adults tend to use restraint as a coping strategy more frequently. Fatalism, or the belief that events are predetermined and cannot be changed, is a fundamental phenomenon in Turkey (Orhan, 2017), and may influence members of Generation X to choose restraint and positive reinterpretation as coping skills. Generation X has the ability to consider events in a broader context in order to make sense of their lives (Keeling, 2003). The fact that Generation X has lots of life experiences compared to other generations, they may be more likely to evaluate the demanding situations or events in a more positive way. Hence, it was expected that Generation X would have the highest level of positive reinterpretation. Consistent with the findings of the current study, Diehl, Coyle, and Labouvie-Vief (1996) found that older adults tended to evaluate difficult situations more positively than younger adults. In addition, Lazarus and Folkman (1987) also concluded that older adults preferred to use more positive reinterpretation and restraint as coping strategies. In a similar vein, Phillips and Trainor (2014) concluded that younger adults evaluated difficult situations less positively than older adults.

Generation X tends to use planning as a coping skill, thinking about how to deal with stress, taking steps to address the problem and developing action plans. They have the highest score for planning compared to other generations. Generation Z, on the other hand, appears to be less likely to use planning compared to Generation X and Generation Y. This finding is not in line with previous research that has suggested that adolescents, who are the member of Generation Z, mostly use planning as a coping strategy (Carver, Scheier, & Weintraub, 1989; Esia-Donkoh, Yelkper, & Esia-Donkoh, 2011; Skinner & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2007; Thuen & Bru, 2004). It is possible that there are contextual or cultural factors that may influence how different generations cope with stress. Further research is needed to examine these potential explanations and to better understand the coping strategies used by different generations.

To conclude, there are differences in personality traits, interpersonal conflict resolution strategies and coping skills among Generation X, Y, and Z.

Conclusions

The results of the current study revealed that there was a statistically significant difference in agreeableness, extraversion, conscientiousness, openness to experience and neuroticism subscales of personality traits according to Generation X, Generation Y, Generation Z.

Generation X, Generation Y, Generation Z differentiated according to confrontation, emotional expression, and self-disclosure subscale of interpersonal conflict resolution approaches scale. However, Generation X, Generation Y, Generation Z did not differentiate in terms of conflict approach/avoidance and public/private behavior level.

Generation X, Generation Y, Generation Z differentiated according to substance use, suppression of competing activities, denial, restraint, positive re-interpretation, and planning subscale of coping skills scale. On the other hand, Generation X, Generation Y, Generation Z did not differentiate in terms of instrumental social support, acceptance, humor, venting of emotions, religion, behavioral disengagement, mental disengagement, emotional social support levels.

Limitations

The limitations of the study were evaluated in terms of both internal and external validity. Internal validity threats included the use of self-report measures and the data collection process. It should be noted that self-report measures are based on individuals' subjective perceptions of the relevant topics, and may be influenced by social desirability biases, which refer to the tendency of some participants to respond in a way that they believe will be viewed favorably by others, rather than providing honest responses (Lavrakas, 2008). This can

result in less authentic or genuine responses. External validity threats included the use of a relatively small sample size, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to the broader population of Turkey.

Another limitation of the present study was the data collection process. The data was collected through an online form. Hence, the people who participated in this research limited to those with an internet usage information. Although the demographic characteristics are known to a certain extent via online data collection, there is no way to fully understand the characteristics of the individuals responding to the survey (Andrade, 2020). Moreover, collecting data online might create an anxiety that their data will be in the hands of someone else (Fan & Yan, 2010).

Implications

Implications for Researchers

As there have been limited research studies related to Generation X, Generation Y, Generation Z in a Turkish context, more research needed to have clearer and more ideas about the characteristics of these generations. It is recommended that future studies aim to expand the sample size and include a wider range of participants from different cities in Turkey in order to increase the generalizability of the findings and better represent the population of Turkey. Future research could explore the moderation of personality traits on the relationship between conflict resolution strategies and coping skills, as well as the impact of other factors such as self-esteem, resilience, and attachment styles. Additionally, it would be valuable to examine the role of cultural and familial influences on these processes.

It is also suggested that future researchers consider using the Online Photovoice (OPV) method to conduct a research on personality traits, interpersonal conflict resolution strategies and coping skills or similar issues. The use of OPV as a research method has the potential to increase the validity and reliability of study findings, as it allows for the collection of data from a diverse range of sources and perspectives (Doyumğaç, Tanhan, & Kıymaz, 2021).

Implications for Practitioners

The findings of this study have practical implications for a variety of settings where individuals from different generations may interact, including psychological counseling and school counseling, universities, workplaces, institutions, associations, communities, and organizations.

Psychological counselors and school counselors can develop educational programs or activities that highlight the differences in personality traits, conflict resolution strategies, and coping skills among the generations, and use these programs to help students or parents become aware of these differences. They can also create workshops on these topics to provide more in-depth information and training to parents or other interested individuals. They can help students to develop their interpersonal conflict resolution strategies. Teachers could also model these skills in their interactions with students and facilitate group activities that allow students to practice using these strategies. They can also encourage them to use healthy coping skills when faced with stress or challenges. Instructors at universities can benefit from an awareness of the unique personality characteristics of different generations when interacting with their students. This can help to foster a more harmonious and conflict-free environment. Managers and human resources professionals can use the knowledge of these differences to adapt their leadership styles or seek support from psychological counseling centers to address potential intergenerational differences in the workplace. Experts from municipalities and public education centers can use the findings of the study to educate citizens on the differences between the generations and promote public awareness through the use of seminars and workshops. By increasing understanding and tolerance of these differences, they may be able to facilitate more positive interactions in their communities.

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