Experiences of Academicians at a Faculty of Health Sciences Regarding Students of Generation Z: A Phenomenological Research

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Abstract

Aim: The research was conducted to examine the experiences of academics at a health sciences faculty regarding Generation Z students.

Method: This qualitative phenomenological study was conducted at the faculty of health sciences of a public university in Türkiye with 25 academicians with academic experience ranging from 5 to 35 years. The interviews were semi-structured, face-to-face, in-depth interviews. Colaizzi content analysis was applied in the analysis.

Results: Four themes, nine main categories, and thirty-seven subcategories were discovered from the experiences: Problems Experienced in Activities, Perceived Advantages in Activities, Experience of Anxiety and Stress, and Strategies to Cope with Challenges. Academicians agreed that students had difficulty in educational activities due to their Generation Z characteristics. While academicians appreciated some positive characteristics of students, they complained about students' adaptation, generation gap and style problems, and low academic achievement/productivity. Despite the difficulties, anxiety, and stress, academicians made an effort to understand and support students.

Conclusion: The study concluded that academics generally have difficulty interacting with Generation Z students. Academics working in the health field need to develop appropriate coping strategies to increase educational efficiency and manage anxiety/stress. In addition, positive interactions should be provided with education and supportive approaches appropriate to the characteristics of Generation Z.

Keywords: Academicians, generation Z, health education, students, Faculty of Health Sciences.

Sağlık Bilimleri Fakültesi Akademisyenlerinin Z Kuşağı Öğrencilerine İlişkin Deneyimleri: Fenomenolojik Bir Araştırma

Öz

Amaç: Araştırma, bir sağlık bilimleri fakültesi akademisyenlerinin Z kuşağı öğrencilerine ilişkin deneyimlerini incelemek amacıyla yapılmıştır.

Yöntem: Bu nitel desendeki fenomenoloji araştırması; Türkiye'de bir kamu üniversitesinin sağlık bilimleri fakültesinde, akademik deneyimleri 5-35 yıl arasında değişen 25 akademisyenle gerçekleştirilmiştir. Görüşmeler yarı yapılandırılmış olarak, yüz yüze derinlemesine görüşme tekniğiyle gerçekleştirilmiştir. Analizde Colaizzi içerik analizi uygulanmıştır.

Bulgular: Deneyimlerden dört tema, dokuz ana kategori ve otuz yedi alt kategori keşfedildi: Etkinliklerde Yaşanan Sorunlar, Etkinliklerde Algılanan Avantajlar, Kaygı ve Stres Deneyimi ve Zorluklarla Başa Çıkma Stratejileri. Akademisyenler öğrencilerin Z Kuşağına özgü özellikleri nedeniyle eğitim faaliyetlerinde

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zorlandıkları konusunda hemfikirdi. Akademisyenler öğrencilerin bazı olumlu özelliklerini takdir ederken, öğrencilerin uyum, kuşak çatışması ve üslup sorunlarından ve akademik başarı/verim düşüklüğünden şikâyetçi olmuşlardır. Zorluklara, kaygıya ve strese rağmen akademisyenler öğrencileri anlama ve destekleme konusunda gayret göstermişlerdir.

Sonuç: Araştırmada akademisyenlerin Z kuşağı öğrencileriyle etkileşimde genelde zorluk yaşadıkları sonucuna varılmıştır. Sağlık alanında çalışan akademisyenlerin eğitim verimliliğini arttırmaya ve kaygı/stres yönetimine yönelik uygun başa çıkma stratejileri geliştirmeleri gerekmektedir. Ayrıca Z kuşağının özelliklerine uygun eğitim ve destekleyici yaklaşımlarla olumlu etkileşimler sağlanmalıdır.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Akademisyenler, öğrenciler, sağlık eğitimi, Z kuşağı, Sağlık Bilimleri Fakültesi.

Introduction

Students of each generation exhibit different patterns of learning behavior that distinguish them from student groups of a previous generation. Understanding intergenerational learning diversity and updating educational approaches entails adapting generation-specific approaches into educational activities[1,2]. Generation Z students in the fields of health and medicine use technology actively, have entrepreneurial characteristics, experience concerns about the future, and do not prefer to work under stress in a tight timeframe[2,3]. It is important to update the educational framework to support student preferences to facilitate learning for different generations in health education[4,5].

Considering the age groups of students in universities in recent years, most individuals are known to be of Generation Z. Accordingly, new challenges and problems specific to Generation Z arise in educational activities[3]. These challenges are mainly challenges regarding adaptation problems, expected success, and efficiency. In this context, adaptation may be facilitated by taking into account effective consultancy services for Generation Z individuals receiving and to receive health education, voluntary orientation activities of academicians, different learning environments, and student expectations[1]. In addition, educators are required to act strategically to increase students' success in online or formal education applications[6].

One study examined the different teaching approaches of three generations of health science educators to Generation Z students[7]. According to this study,[7] Generation Y educators were described as "disciplined empathic," Generation X educators as "flexible," and Generation Z educators as "innovative." Although generational differences affect learning, according to academics' experiences, what is known about Generation Z students is limited[7-9]. In researches conducted, it was understood that Z Generation students experienced conflict of generations with academicians and had communication difficulties[3,8-10]. As far as it is known, even though Generation Y and Z students share similar traits, conflicts between students arise due to their differences as well. The effects of intergenerational conflict can be limited by building a bridge with students from different generations over similar characteristics, as well as adapting technology to learning activities[3]. Research observed an increase in the work efficiency of Generation Z students who were able to make decisions during hospital practice, were given sufficient time to complete a task, received feedback, and received sufficient social support[2]. As can be seen, research on Generation Z focused on exploring the needs, perspectives, and experiences of students in the field of health and medicine[5,6,11,12]. As far

as is known, there is no existing research in Türkiye on the experiences of Generation Z students and academicians in health sciences in educational activities. We anticipate that the results of the findings of this study will provide information to the literature in terms of limiting intergenerational conflicts and perceived difficulties. We carried out this qualitative research to describe the experiences of academicians at the faculty of health sciences at a state university in western Türkiye regarding their Generation Z students. With this purpose, the research seeks answers to the following questions: (I) What are the feelings, opinions, and perceptions of academicians about Generation Z students? (II) What are academicians' experiences with Generation Z students?

Material and Methods

Research Design

Phenomenological qualitative design allows for a deep exploration of the nature of the realities of individuals who experience a situation or event. In this study, the opinions of academics who experienced one-on-one education and training processes with Generation Z students were investigated[13]. A phenomenological qualitative research design was adopted to explore Turkish academicians' experiences and current educational activities of Generation Z students at the faculty of health sciences. The method is inductive. This method enables the description of the details of emotions and perceptions[13].

Research Location and Date

The research was conducted between February 15, 2022 and December 15, 2022 with academicians working at the faculty of health sciences at a state university in western Türkiye.

This research was conducted in a single center. The research location is preferred because the university is a health sciences university, and academics from different branches in the field of health sciences are concentrated in this university.

Study Sample

In this research, purposive sampling was used to reach a wide range of different perceptions. In triangulation, interviews were planned according to gender and department experiences with maximum diversity[14]. Academicians were invited to interviews based on the distribution of the number of academician staff in the departments and their working experiences. Participant inclusion criteria; (a) Academicians who have 5 or more academic experience; (b) have taught for at least two semesters; (c) are willing and willing to participate in research. Table 1 shows the characteristics of academicians.

Table 1. Descriptive description of the academicians

Coder	Gender	Generation	Experience	All department worked
A1	Male	Y	Junior	Physical Therapy and Rehabilitation
A2	Female	X	Senior	Physical Therapy and Rehabilitation
A3	Female	Y	Junior	Nursing
A4	Female	Y	Junior	Ergo Therapy
A5	Male	Y	Junior	Ergo Therapy
A6	Female	Y	Junior	Language Speech Therapy
A7	Female	X	Senior	Nursing
A8	Female	Y	Junior	Ergo therapy
A9	Male	Y	Junior	Physical Therapy and Rehabilitation
A10	Female	X	Senior	Physical Therapy and Rehabilitation
A11	Female	X	Senior	Nursing
A12	Female	Y	Senior	Physical Therapy and Rehabilitation
A13	Female	Y	Senior	Midwifery
A14	Female	Y	Senior	Midwifery
A15	Female	Y	Senior	Nursing
A16	Female	Y	Senior	Nursing
A17	Female	Y	Senior	Nursing
A18	Female	X	Senior	Midwifery
A19	Male	X	Senior	Physical Therapy and Rehabilitation
A20	Female	X	Senior	Nursing
A21	Male	Y	Senior	Physical Therapy and Rehabilitation
A22	Female	Y	Senior	Nursing
A23	Female	Y	Junior	Nutrition and Dietetics
A24	Female	Y	Junior	Nutrition and Dietetics
A25	Female	Y	Junior	Language Speech Therapy

Academician: A, Junior (more than 5 years, less than 10 years), Senior (more than 10 years)

Data Collection Process

The interview guide is a structured form. Researchers made use of literature information to ensure the validity and reliability of the interview form[5,6,15-17]. Later, the guide was revised after the recommendations of four experts in the field of midwifery and nursing. A pilot interview was held with five Generation Z students from each department at the Faculty of Health Sciences to ensure validity. However, the data analyzed from the pilot interview were not included in the results of the research. Semi-structured interview questions are shown in detail in Table 2.

Table 2. Interview Questions

No	Question
1	Tell us a little more about yourself, please. Based on your experience, how would you generally describe your Generation Z students? Why?
2	Please provide information about your work (education, training, practice, laboratory, and internship) and activities (club, seminar, research, social events) with Generation Z students.
3	Based on your observations and experiences, how do you interact with your Generation Z students? What positive and negative aspects do you notice during your work and activity experiences?
4	What problems and obstacles do you encounter? What were your strategies for dealing with these obstacles and problems?
5	What do you think are the main differences between you and Generation Z students compared to individuals in your generation?
6	How do the attitudes of Generation Z students of the faculty of health sciences affect you?
7	Are you satisfied with the Generation Z students at the Faculty of Health Sciences? Why?
8	Based on all your statements, what are your concerns and expectations, if any, regarding Generation Z students?

Appointments were made for all participants, and no academicians left the research. Since the participant academicians were selected from the faculty, in-depth interviews were conducted using a structured interview form in their offices, where they felt safest or in a suitable room within the faculty. No one other than the interviewer and the participant was present during the interviews. The first female researcher conducted the interviews in Turkish. The average duration of the interviews was 38 minutes (33-62 minutes). The interviews were digitally recorded and all statements were converted into documents within 48 hours after the interview. Short notes were taken during the interviews in case of any disruptions in the recordings. Two female researchers have doctoral degrees in midwifery and are experienced and trained in qualitative research. In the deciphered texts, body language expressions and speech tone were noted to support the data. Interviews were continued until the saturation point of answers to the interview questions[13,18]. Data saturation was achieved in interview number 20, but 5 more interviews were conducted for data security. 25 interviews were conducted, once with each participant, and the data were verified[18,19].

Ethical Statement

The research was approved by the Kütahya Health Science University Non-Interventional Ethics Committee Review Board (Number: 2022/01; Date: 18.01.2022). Participants were informed about the research and signed the informed consent statements. Data were collected anonymously by researchers. Records regarding the identity of volunteers are protected in a manner that respects confidentiality rules.

Statistical Analysis Method

The deciphered texts were coded to create the themes. Researchers obtained data through Colaizzi content analysis separately[13] (Table 3). Researchers negotiated to avoid disagreement and reach a consensus. The contact numbers of all participants are kept

(to contact them when necessary) by the first female author. No software programs were used in the analysis.

Table 3. Colaizzi's phenomenological seven-step framework

Step no	Data analysis framework
1	For familiarization, the data were read carefully, line by line, and iteratively.
2	For identifying significant statements, important statements related to the research question were examined, underlined and identified.
3	For formulation meanings repeated meaning expressions were coded and the discovered meanings were classified.
4	For the clustering themes the developed meanings were divided into theme clusters and thematic prototypes were created.
5	For developing a detailed description the phenomenon under investigation was explained in detail.
6	For producing the fundamental structure similar themes and subthemes were explained in detail in determining the basic framework.
7	For verification data was given back to participants, confirming their experiences.

Study Rigor

The COREQ criteria list and SRQR 2.0 checklist was used in reporting this qualitative research[20,21]. This checklist contains 32 suggestions and highlights what information should be written in a qualitative article, step by step. Well-designed qualitative research requires meticulousness and care in reporting studies investigating complex phenomena. The checklist encourages complete, clear and understandable reporting of qualitative research. On the other hand, using this checklist improves the criteria for meticulousness, comprehensiveness and reliability of studies[20]. The research meets the criteria for reliability, credibility, transferability, and confirmability[22]. Only interview questions were asked to ensure validity and reliability in the interviews. An independent experienced researcher checked the data to ensure reliability. For confirmability, three researchers reviewed the analysis results. Triangulation method and participant verification were performed in reliability. For trustworthiness, only interview questions were asked in the interviews. Reliability was ensured through participant verification and participant diversity. Finally, transferability was achieved by defining the data collection and analysis processes in detail[23].

Results

Four themes, nine categories, and 37 subcategories that were considered essential were discovered (Table 4). These four themes are problems experienced in activities, advantages experienced in activities, experience of anxiety and stress, and strategies for coping with difficulties.

Table 4. Themes, main categories, and subcategories explaining academicians' perceptions of and experiences with Generation Z students

Theme and Main Categories	Sub-category
Problems Experienced in Activities	
Problems experienced in theoretical activities caused by perceived negative characteristics	Focus problem Decrease in efficiency Digital addiction Poor academic performance Lack of communication
Problems experienced in application areas due to perceived negative characteristics	Adaptation difficulties Passive performance Decreased empathy Egocentrism Fear
Advantages Experienced in Activities	
Advantages thought to be resulting from perceived positive characteristics	Inquisitive perspective Openness to change Confidence
Gains from positive experiences	Ease of accessing information Technological competencies Information integration Alternative approaches
Experience of Anxiety and Stress	
Consequences thought to be triggered by perceived negative characteristics	Boredom and inability to cope Defying authority Insensitivity Intergenerational conflict
Consequences triggered by negative experiences	Loneliness, Incompatible teamwork, Being free-rider Respect problem (politeness, tone) Communication problems
Strategies for Coping with Difficulties	
Developing an adaptation area for students	Participating in volunteer orientation activities Social support Increasing internal and external motivation sources Awareness of needs
Updating teaching approaches	Adapting Generation Z-specific approaches into activities Diversifying education and training activities Active use of technology
Considering expectations	Allowing sufficient time to complete tasks Being accessible Being empathetic Supporting and appreciating positive traits

Theme 1: Problems Encountered in Activities

The problems experienced by the participants in teaching activities were defined in two categories: 'Problems experienced in theoretical activities caused by perceived negative characteristics' and 'Problems experienced in application areas due to perceived negative characteristics'. Participants acknowledged that the problems they experienced in educational environments were related to the perceived negative characteristics specific to Generation Z students. Participants' perceptions stemmed from negative experiences in theoretical and practical (laboratory and hospital) environments. Academicians explained the components of lack of communication and digital addiction experienced in theoretical activities based on perceived negative characteristics with the following statements:

"I have a hard time in verbal communication, they are very closed off. I try to communicate through official channels, mostly by writing." (A1)

"They are glued to their phones. They seem to be getting stressed because they can't turn their phones on during class. The phone and the internet are like a part of them now... (sarcastic laugh)." (A5)

"They can't even find their way without GPS (he laughs), they can't read the handwriting on the claims. They do not use wristwatches. They mostly count the pulse with a phone meter. Bla Bla..." (A11)

In the section on the problems experienced in theoretical activities caused by the perceived negative characteristics of this theme, academicians complained of focusing problems, decreased productivity, and poor academic performance of Generation Z students. One academician expressed his experience when talking about negative characteristics and the resulting disappointment:

"They have problems in focusing. Most of the time, I cannot get the results I want from classes. Contrary to their behavior, their academician performance is not sufficient... (deep sigh)." (A11)

In the category of problems experienced in application areas related to perceived negative characteristics, academicians reported that Generation Z students' had adaptation difficulties, passive performance, egocentrism, fear, and decreased empathy for changing situations during laboratory and hospital applications. Three participants shared the following experiences related to perceived characteristics:

"They cannot understand the needs of patients due to the weakness of their empathy skills." (A1)

"I'm not sure they can improve themselves, especially as they are afraid of making mistakes. There is no undo or pause button in life like in games." (A11)

"They seem confident on the surface, but when it is their turn to practice, their breathing accelerates and they shake. They have difficulty adapting, especially in hospital practices." (A14)

Another academician made a similar statement, emphasizing egocentrism:

"They only think about themselves and the grade they will get. This fear causes them to remain passive in their practice areas." (A9)

Theme 2: Advantages Experienced in Activities

This theme includes two categories: 'gains from positive experiences' and 'advantages thought to be resulting from perceived positive characteristics'. In their statements, some of the participants conveyed the positive characteristics of their Generation Z students with positive emotions. Academicians appreciated the inquisitive perspective, openness to change, and self-confidence of Generation Z students in the category of gains from positive experiences, mostly in theoretical courses.

"They are open to change and self-confident, and I think they follow the developments in the world closely through social media and question everything." (A3)

"They can express themselves better in theoretical courses that interest them." (A7)

While conveying the gains from positive experiences, some academicians appreciated the Generation Z-specific characteristics and stated that different approaches were discovered with ease of access to information, technological competencies, and information integration. Two academicians shared the following experiences:

"They have a strong knowledge of technology and do not have difficulty accessing information." (A17)

"The majority knows how to use information. They have quick and alternative approaches to some situations." (A9)

Theme 3: Experience of Anxiety and Stress

This theme covers two categories: 'consequences thought to be triggered by perceived negative characteristics' and 'consequences triggered by negative experiences'. The general opinion among academicians was that some Generation Z-specific characteristics triggered negative outcomes and that negative experiences developed as a result of these characteristics. Based on academicians' observations, students were characterized as easily bored, resistant to authority, and indifferent to events. The majority of academicians stated their intergenerational conflict through these characteristics. Generation Z attitudes and characteristics in theoretical and practical fields are a source of stress for academicians. The stress experienced by academicians has become an increasingly ongoing problem. According to the answers given by three participants with tension and grimace:

"I believe they think they can do anything because they were raised as free spirits. Therefore, they are in constant conflict with authority. Many of them do not realize that they threaten the freedom of others…" (A18)

"They get bored of everything. They are quite insensitive even when discussing important social issues and public health issues. I get stressed and anxious about losing control in classes." (A13)

"They do not spend much effort on practical and theoretical tasks. They tend to give up quickly. This situation makes me exhausted." (A6)

During the interviews, various emotional reactions were received from academicians about the consequences triggered by negative experiences. Academicians reported their negative experiences with Generation Z students using common terms such as 'incompatible teamwork', 'loner', 'being a free-rider', 'respect problems', and

'communication problems'. Two academicians frowned and shared their negative experiences as follows:

"Their best friends are their phones. They cannot act in coordination in teamwork and hospital practices. They want everything to come to them ready." (A7)

"I think they don't pay any attention to their behaviors and actions. I have serious problems with tone and politeness." (A13)

Other academicians, shaking their heads in a strained tone, noted similarly:

"They definitely don't listen...(pupils widened). They are very distracted, they just want to talk, it seems like other people's opinions do not matter." (A22)

"They are disrespectful by sleeping in class. For example, some students play with their phones during my class. They do not even feel the need to lower the volume of the phone." (A19)

Theme 4: Strategies for Coping with Difficulties

The last theme covers three categories: "developing an adaptation area for students", "updating teaching approaches", and "considering expectations". Academicians developed different strategies to solve the problems experienced. Academicians tried to overcome negative experiences with multidimensional strategies. It was understood that academicians participated in voluntary orientation activities, made an effort to provide social support when needed, increased students' motivation resources, and understood student needs in the category of increasing students' adaptation to the university. Academicians defined the facilitating factors in developing students' adaptation areas as follows:

"Adaptation must be ensured from the first years, so I organize a volunteer orientation program for students every year, starting from the first year." (A21)

"I help them access social support resources. This generation loves to be appreciated. Using this feature, I do my best to help them reach motivational sources." (A13)

"I sometimes conduct surveys to understand students' expectations and needs. Sometimes I use the brainstorming technique." (A23)

The second coping strategy for academicians to deal with difficulties is to update their teaching approaches to agree with students in the same way. Academicians thought that the internet and technology were integral parts of the lives of Generation Z students. According to the academicians' statements, they took precautions to adapt Generation Z-specific approaches to their activities, diversify their teaching activities, and actively use technology:

"Since they actively use technology, I started to use technology more often in lessons." (A12)

"I researched activities that would attract the attention of Generation Z and applied alternative teaching techniques integrated with technology in lessons." (A16)

Finally, it was understood from the academicians' statements that they took some precautions in their teaching approaches by taking student expectations into account. Academicians stated that they gave students enough time for routine homework/tasks,

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tried to be accessible, be empathetic, support positive traits, and appreciate positive attitudes:

"I'm trying to understand them. I try to develop empathy to keep an open communication, even if sometimes things don't suit me." (A18)

"I make myself accessible to them. Thus, I try to communicate more effectively." (A15)

"I constantly remind them of their homework, but when the due date comes, they keep saying that they have forgotten the homework. I'm stretching the time." (A6)

"I support and reward their positive traits if it will improve them." (A22)

Discussion

Academician and student interactions in the field of health can affect the quality of educational activities[24]. Therefore, pedagogy updates should be carefully planned according to the characteristics and preferences of each generation[5,25]. However, the limited number of qualitative studies focused on the expectations and needs of Generation Z students[1-3,5,11,12]. In this context, contrary to the evidence obtained in Shorey et al.[5] research, we focused on academician experiences in meeting the expectations appropriate to the learning and teaching styles of each generation in the findings of this study. This research provides information to the literature about the experiences of Turkish academicians at a faculty of health sciences towards Generation Z students during their educational activities and how to update the pedagogy.

In our results, based on the perceptions of academicians, we discovered the difficulties experienced by the characteristics of Generation Z during all activities in the first theme. The reason for these difficulties may be academicians' not being able to cooperate with result-oriented students in complex courses. Ensuring cooperation between Generation Z students and academicians as well as identifying the educational environment that will attract the attention of Generation Z can facilitate encouraging learning[4,26]. In the theoretical activities, we revealed in the findings of this study, academicians' complaints about the components of focus problems, low productivity, and poor academic performance, especially digital addiction were compatible with statements of students in other qualitative studies. The students in these researches reported to have experienced the same or similar problems in the courses as well[1,5,12,24]. Two studies determined the negative effects of digital addiction on academic success and sleep comfort in Generation Z nursing students[27,28]. Another research emphasized the poor communication styles as well as mental problems due to digital addiction in Generation Z[29]. According to these results, academicians can support awareness studies in preventing digital addiction. Additionally, activities suitable for Generation Z characteristics can be organized such that they do not disrupt theoretical activities in order to increase efficiency, interaction, and academic success.

Other components of difficulty that academicians complained about were mainly adaptation problems and passive performance in application areas. These problems were probably related to students' self-centeredness, decreased empathy, and fear of failure coming to light due to grade anxiety. Decreased empathy, adaptation problems, and

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future anxiety of Generation Z students receiving health education were discovered in two studies[1,3,6]. Adaptation problems in the work environment were also detected in a research conducted on newly graduated Generation Z nurses[30]. In two other similar studies, students were less productive than expected and had difficulty adapting to practice areas[5,24]. It has been understood that the most preferred application activities suitable for the learning styles of Generation Z students are auditorily/ visually enriched videos, simulations, case studies, and games. According to the students, these activities facilitated fast, interesting, effective, and permanent learning in gaining application skills[4]. In this context, in order to increase compliance and competence, simulation/model techniques and application videos can be used predominantly in laboratory applications before going to hospital applications.

In the second theme of the findings of this study, the advantages thought to be resulting from perceived positive characteristics by the academicians and the gains from the positive experiences arising from these advantages were defined. The majority of academicians experienced the inquisitive perspective, self-confidence, and openness to change of Generation Z students not in the assigned tasks, but in the students' active learning styles in theoretical courses. These perceptions may have arisen from the positive experiences of Generation X and Y academicians that facilitate learning for Generation Z. The behavior and learning styles expected from Generation Z have shaped education in the field of health[2,24,31]. Generation Z students are generally known as natives of the digital age[31]. Similar to the observations of the academicians in the findings of this study, some studies identified the technological competencies and entrepreneurial characteristics of students in the health/medical field[2,3]. The advantages perceived by the academicians in the findings of this study overlapped with the positive Generation Z students-specific characteristics in another research[17,32]. In various studies, it was discovered that appreciating and supporting the positive characteristics of the generation in the fields of health and medicine would strengthen professional commitment[2,32,33]. In this context, supporting positive characteristics and providing positive feedback can facilitate student development in teaching activities in the field of health.

In other theme, the reactions to the negative characteristics perceived about Generation Z students were psychological and cognitive. The anxiety was probably caused by stress triggered by the challenges. In the findings of this study, academicians complained about students' boredom and inability to cope, defying authority and insensitivity. On the other hand, academicians frequently experienced conflicts with Generation Z students who opposed authority. In the studies, Generation Z students conflicted with the authority in their field of practice (health professionals, practice mentors, academicians, etc.)[3,8,10]. In a research, it was understood that Generation Z nursing students generally had short attention spans and were prone to boredom[31]. In two other studies, it was understood that students did not want to work under stress[2,3]. In the context of these results, preventive support approaches suitable for academician and student expectations can be used to prevent intergenerational conflict.

In the second category of the third theme, academicians' negative experiences were a source of stress and anxiety. The loner patterns, the inability to adapt to teamwork, and the free-rider nature of Generation Z students were problematic. Additionally, the

academicians in the findings of this study complained about the students' disrespectful attitudes and communication problems. In one research, it was stated that nursing students preferred independent learning in assigned tasks, and therefore academicians should try different ways of contact with students to encourage student participation, taking into account Generation Z learning styles[6]. As for being free-riders, one research found that what is known about how being a free-rider affects Generation Z undergraduate nursing students' turnover intention is limited[34]. In another research, the communication problems of newly graduated Generation Z nurses stood out[30]. Based on this information, current pedagogical approaches may be effective in improving the adaptation and communication skills of future health professionals. It is clear that more studies are needed on this subject.

The final theme from the interviews was challenge-coping strategies. The limited number of studies in the literature focused mostly on the reactions to the difficulties experienced by Generation Z students.[5-7] However, the effective coping strategies experienced by the academicians in the findings of this study were similar to the expectations of the students in these studies[1,2,5-7]. In one research, the pedagogical approaches to challenges (orientation activities, individualized support, counseling, and awareness of needs) of healthcare academicians of different generations were similar to the strategies of the academicians in the findings of this study[7]. In the findings of this study, the majority of academicians organized volunteer orientation activities, provided social support, and researched motivation sources and student needs in order to prevent the difficulties that Generation Z students would experience. The aim of these efforts was generally to develop an adaptation area for Generation Z students. In studies, Generation Z students suffered from adaptation problems, and their motivation and social support systems were limited[6,33]. For this reason, researches recommended orientation activities in line with student expectations, effective social support, and activating motivational resources in the educational guidelines for academicians in the field of health[1,2,6,7]. In the majority of research, it was found that the effectiveness and expected efficiency of education increased in case of the identification of the needs of Generation Z students and careful planning of courses appropriate to their learning styles[5,25].

Another effective intervention was for academicians to update their teaching approaches with challenge-coping strategies. Academicians adapted Generation Z-specific activities, organized different activities, and tried to use technology actively. In order to cope with the challenges of the new generation of students in the field of health, some studies often suggested adapting teaching approaches to the learning styles of Generation Z in facilitating learning[2,5]. This recommendation was similar to the effective pedagogical approaches and characteristics of Generation X, Y, and Z academicians in a research[7]. In a research, it was understood that developing nursing students' leadership skills was effective in preventing conflict during clinical decision-making[10]. In this context, approaches of academicians from different generations can be integrated into health education.

In this study, academicians in Generation X took student expectations into consideration. For this purpose, they kept the time flexible for each task, were more accessible, more empathetic, and supported the positive characteristics of the students.

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In general, in a research examining the learning styles of Generation Z students in the literature, students expected to receive feedback and be given sufficient time for the tasks[2,5,11,12]. In a research, innovative positive characteristics were defined such as the flexibility of Generation X academicians, the empathic skills of Generation Y academicians, and the technological competencies of Generation Z academicians[7]. According to these data, education activities planned in collaboration with academicians from different generations may be effective in the academic success of students in the field of health.

Limitations

This was a qualitative research conducted with a phenomenological approach at a state university in Türkiye. Therefore, academicians' teaching experiences regarding Generation Z students may vary in other regions. This research can be repeated in other studies examining the experiences of academicians and Generation Z students. More studies are needed to explore a global perspective and increase the positive experiences of academicians interacting with Generation Z students.

Conclusion

This research clarified the teaching experiences of academicians at the faculty of health sciences through their perspectives on Generation Z students. Academicians appreciated the limited number of perceived positive characteristics of the students in this research, while they thought that other Generation Z-specific characteristics caused some problems. According to the results, although academics appreciated some positive characteristics of Generation Z, they experienced difficulties that triggered stress in theoretical activities and application areas due to the unfamiliar characteristics of Generation Z. Academics mostly saw intergenerational incompatibilities as a disadvantage and thought that caring about student expectations and updating teaching approaches were priorities in order to provide harmony with students. Academicians developed effective coping strategies to prevent and solve problems. According to the experiences of academicians from different generations regarding Generation Z students, alternative approaches are required to be developed in all activities. In this context, activities in the field of health sciences should be discussed interactively in collaboration with students and faculty members. When choosing student-centered educational activities, Generation Z-specific characteristics should be taken into account. Academicians should carefully plan alternative techniques and technological interaction methods in updating educational activities.

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