



Career stress in the Covid-19 process: Research on generations y and z

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Abstract

In this study, it was aimed to reveal the current situation by determining the career anxiety levels and career stress, together with the restrictions during the Covid-19 pandemic process in the Y and Z generations. The study consists of 346 (Ageaverage= 22.47±3.31) volunteers who study in the Faculties of Sports Sciences and Health Sciences located in 3 different provinces of Turkey. Data from the study was collected online via 'Google Forms' using the 'Personal Information Form' and 'Scale of Career Stress' using a screening model from quantitative research methods. Data were examined through SPSS 21.0 program by using percent (%), frequency (f), arithmetic average, Independent samples test and pearson chi-square were applied. According to the findings, the participants' scores on the career stress scale based on career "uncertainty and lack of knowledge" ($p < 0.001$, Cohen's $d = 0.56$), "external conflict" ($p < 0.001$, Cohen's $d = 0.47$), "Pressure to find employment" ($p < 0.002$, Cohen's $d = 0.33$) and "career stress scale total" ($p < 0.001$, Cohen's $d = 0.52$) scores were found to be statistically significant. There is a relationship between the career anxiety felt by the generation Y during the Covid-19 Pandemic ($p = 0.20$; $p < 0.05$). As a result; Career stress is a situation that may arise at every stage of the career ladder. Career stress can also be a driving force for career advancement. Hence, career stress has its positives as well.

Keywords: Covid-19, generation y and z, career anxiety, career stress

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1. Introduction

This study, it was mainly aimed to examine career stress in generations Y and Z during the Covid-19 process. Within the framework of this main purpose, answers were sought for the following sub-problems:

- What are the anxiety levels felt by the participants?
- Do the career stress levels of the participants differ according to the Y and Z generations?
- Do the career stress levels of the participants differ according to the branch of science?
- Do the career stress levels of the participants differ by gender?
- Is there a significant relationship between the anxiety felt of the participants and their career stress levels according to the Y and Z generations?

The concept of career, which is very important in professional working life, is of French origin and means the continuous progress of the individual in any business branch. The word career has entered our language from the French word "carrier". Word, the profession in French, diplomatic career; are used in meanings such as the stages to be overcome in a profession and the chosen direction in life (Bingöl, 2006). It is defined as a path that individuals who deal with the concepts of life and profession and follow in their lives or a professional process that must be achieved (Acar and Özdaşlı, 2017). Career stress, people come at different stages of their career journey and occur in several ways. Individuals may face various difficulties in the career selection and planning process, as well as under the influence of various stress factors such as various role conflicts, communication problems, role ambiguity, excessive workload, leadership problems, etc. in their professional life (Saka and Gati, 2007).

People who were born in a certain period and possess close characteristics such as responsibility, action, perspective and meaning of life are called generation. Provides information about the social and cultural situation of an era (Bengtson, 2017; Glass, 2007; Zhang and Bonk, 2010). Y (born between 1981- 1999) and Z (2000 and post-birth) (Belhan ve ark., 2020; Tulgan, 2013; Postolov, Magdincheva Shopova, 2017). Sheahan (2005) Y the generation that can easily express their feelings and thoughts, loving social relationships and emotional intelligence were identified as having high generation. Individuals of generation Y want to experience the concept of freedom, oppose all kinds of traditional authority, have an entrepreneurial mentality and want to have a job of their own (Kolnhofer-Derecskei et al., 2017). Duzenli, Alpak & Yilmaz (2019) stated that they are

expected to have a few degrees about Generation Z, to be experts, to be innovative, dissatisfied and indecisive. Research on generations and the differences between them continues unabated (Costanza & Finkelstein, 2017). Focusing on the differences between generations also helps us to understand the expectations of individuals from life (Meijers, 2018). When we look at the characteristics of the Y and Z generations, the views of the generations about career and profession will inevitably differ.

Human has to make various choices throughout his life, and his career choice, which covers most of his life, is one of the most important of these choices (Kuzgun, 2000). The individual wants to find a place in the social life (Jenkins & Curtis, 2005), so it is necessary to be included in that professional group as a business owner to continue their lives (Wong and et al., 2021). The profession provides a social identity in the social structure to the individual, helping her to maintain her livelihood and plan her future. In addition, the profession has a significant impact on the individual's personality (Arıca and Dilmaç, 2003). At the end of the student period, people generally need to find an emotionally satisfying job that will provide financial income. Even if people work in a job that meets this criterion, they have expectations in the process. Meeting these expectations may result in negative consequences such as anxiety, stress, and burnout (Barnes and Slate, 2013). With Covid-19, concerns about the profession have increased in most occupational groups (Afshari, 2021).

Along with the changing world, the modern education system supports students not only to learn knowledge, but also to achieve their goals by determining their own abilities and goals, realizing their future plans and gaining skills (Aydemir, 2017; Brown 2002). The Covid-19 epidemic, which started to spread around the world at the end of 2019, affected the whole world and brought the activities of many institutions and businesses to a halt. However, it suggests that there will be various changes in human resources management activities. This situation has begun to have a negative effect on people, and the fact that the Covid-19 virus is very easy to transmit and there is no treatment, drug or vaccine yet can cause anxiety in people. Studies carried out in past epidemic periods show that public anxiety rises during epidemics (Taylor et al., 2008; Çırakoğlu 2011; Serino, 2011). In addition, some studies reveal that the anxiety levels of individuals increase with the Covid-19 outbreak (Çölgeçen & Çölgeçen, 2020; Göksu & Kumcağız, 2020). It is inevitable for university students, who are preparing to start their professional life, to worry about their profession during the period of Covid-19. It is a fact supported in the literature that sports have positive effects not only on physical health but also on psychological and social health. The fact that the students of the Faculty of Sports Sciences, who constituted the sample

group in our study, were away from applied courses during this period is one of the most important reasons that pushed us to research their profession.

In this context, together with the limitations during the Covid-19 pandemic process in the Y and Z generations, their feelings are important in terms of revealing the current situation by determining career anxiety levels and career stress. Also, as a result of academic publication reviews; Since the studies that measure career anxiety and career stress felt together in this process are almost nonexistent in our country, it is thought that, within the scope of this study, determining the career anxiety and career stress felt by the Y and Z generations in Turkey and examining the relationship between them can contribute to the development of the relevant literature.

2. Method

A screening model from quantitative research methods was used in the research. Screening models are research approaches that aim to describe a situation that exists either in the past or in the present. The event, individual or object that is the subject of research, is attempted to be defined in its circumstances and as such (Karasar, 2007).

2.1. Participants

It consists of 346 (Ageaverage= 22.47±3.31) volunteers who study in the Faculties of Sports Sciences (*physical education teaching, recreation, coaching education, sports management*) and Health Sciences (*nursing, midwifery, social services*) located in 3 different provinces of Turkey.

Table 1. Research group distributions

Variables		n	%
Generations	Generation Z	181	52.3
	Generation Y	165	47.7
Gender	Male	222	64.2
	Woman	124	35.8
Branches of science	Sports Sciences	203	58.7
	Healtly Sciences	143	41.3
Total		346	100.0

2.2. Measures and covariates

General Information Form: As data collection tools in the study, a "General Information Form" was created by the researchers to determine the independent variables (e.i., age,

gender, department). The level of career anxiety felt before and during the Covid-19 pandemic was measured with a 10-point likert type (e.g., “What is the career anxiety level felt before the Covid-19 pandemic?” 1-10; “What is the career anxiety level felt during the Covid-19 pandemic?” 1-10).

Scale of Career Stress: As a measuring tool, Choi et al. (2011) developed the "Korean Career Stress Inventory", Özden and Sertel Berk's (2017) "Career Stress Scale" was used, which was adapted to Turkish and tested its psychometric properties. The scale consists of three sub-dimensions "career uncertainty and lack of information", "external conflict" and "pressure to find a job" and a 5-point likert type. High scores from the scale indicate that career stress is also high.

2.3. Data Collection Procedure

It consists of volunteers who study in the Faculties of Sports Sciences (physical education teaching, recreation, coaching education, sports management) and Health Sciences (nursing, midwifery, social services) located in 3 different provinces of Turkey. The consents who participated in the study were obtained. The data were obtained online between 15 December 2020 - 15 April 2021 of the questionnaire of the research prepared through the ‘Google Form’ application.

2.4. Statistical Analysis

SPSS 21.0 statistical program was used for the data obtained in the research. As a result of the tests of normality (Kurtosis and Skewness), Kurtosis and Skewness values are between -1.5 and +1.5 it has been accepted to be suitable for normal distribution. Therefore parametric tests were used. The significance level was considered as $p < 0.01$ and $p < 0.05$. The data were analyzed by percentage (%), frequency (f), arithmetic average, Independent samples test and pearson chi-square. In addition, Cohen's d formula was applied to calculate the effect size. Cohen's d is determined by calculating the mean difference between your two groups, and then dividing the result by the pooled standard deviation. For the Cohen d value, .20 and below are small-low; medium between .20 and .80; .80 and above, large-large level effect size values were taken as basis.

3. Results

Generally, while the average career anxiety of the participants was before the Covid-19 pandemic ($\bar{x} = 3.81$), it was determined to occur during the Covid-19 pandemic ($\bar{x} = 7.68$). It is seen that career anxiety rises in this period. The average score that the participants got from the career stress scale was found to be ($\bar{x} = 54.84$) (Table 2).

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of the participants according to the career anxiety level and career stress scale

		n	Mean	Std. Deviation	Min.	Max.
Perceived Career Anxiety	Before Covid-19 Pandemic	346	3.81	1.72	1	8
	During Covid-19 Pandemic	346	7.68	2.13	1	10
Scale of Career Stress	Career uncertainty and lack of information sub-dimensions	346	26.93	10.82	10.00	50.00
	External conflict sub-dimensions	346	10.32	4.84	4.00	20.00
	Pressure to find employment sub-dimensions	346	17.58	7.45	6.00	58.00
	Scale Total Score	346	54.84	20.73	20.00	100.00

Table 3. T-test results of career stress scale scores according to gender variable

sub-dimensions	Gender	n	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	p	Effect size**
Career uncertainty and lack of information	Male	222	28.74	10.98	4.417	0.001*	0.49
	Woman	124	23.69	9.74			
External conflict	Male	222	11.10	4.64	4.116	0.001*	0.46
	Woman	124	8.91	4.88			
Pressure to find employment	Male	222	17.87	7.44	.949	0.340	-
	Woman	124	17.08	7.48			
CAREER STRESS	Male	222	57.72	21.32	3.648	0.001*	0.40
	Woman	124	49.69	18.63			

*p<0.01

**Cohen's d = (M2 - M1)/SDpooled

SDpooled = $\sqrt{((SD1^2 + SD2^2)/2)}$

According to gender, the scores of the participants on the career stress scale "Career Uncertainty and Lack of Information" ($p < 0.001$, Cohen's $d = 0.49$), "External Conflict" ($p < 0.001$, Cohen's $d = 0.46$) and "Career Stress Scale Total" ($p < 0.001$, Cohen's $d = 0.40$)) scores were found to be statistically significant. This difference appears to be in favor of men. In this context, career stresses of men are higher than women. On the other hand, when the effect size values of the significant differences (Cohen d) are examined, it is seen that the sub-dimensions and the total scale score are at a medium level.

Table 4. T-test results of career stress scale scores according to branches of science variable

sub-dimensions	Branches of science	n	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	p	Effect size**
Career uncertainty and lack of information	Sports Sciences	203	29.31	11.18	5.189	0.001*	0.56
	Healtly Sciences	143	23.56	9.33			
External conflict	Sports Sciences	203	11.23	4.66	4.272	0.001*	0.47
	Healtly Sciences	143	9.02	4.80			
Pressure to find employment	Sports Sciences	203	18.61	7.10	3.072	0.002*	0.33
	Healtly Sciences	143	16.13	7.72			
CAREER STRESS	Sports Sciences	203	59.15	21.34	4.875	0.001*	0.52
	Healtly Sciences	143	48.73	18.22			

*p<0.01

**Cohen's d = (M2 - M1) / SDpooled

SDpooled = $\sqrt{((SD1^2 + SD2^2) / 2)}$

According to the science branch of the scores of the participants on the career stress scale "Uncertainty and Lack of Knowledge" ($p < 0.001$, Cohen's $d = 0.56$), "External conflict" ($p < 0.001$, Cohen's $d = 0.47$), "Employment Pressure" ($p < 0.002$, Cohen's $d = 0.33$) and "Career Stress Scale Total" statistically significant difference was found in the scores ($p < 0.001$, Cohen's $d = 0.52$). In this context, career stresses of sports sciences participants are higher than their health sciences participation.

On the other hand, when the effect size values of the significant differences (Cohen d) are examined, it is seen that the sub-dimensions and the total scale score are at a medium level.

Table 5. T-test results of career stress scale scores according to the generation variable

sub-dimensions	Generations	n	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	p	Effect size**
Career uncertainty and lack of information	Generation Z	181	26.60	10.53	-.591	0.555	-
	Generation Y	165	27.29	11.15			
External conflict	Generation Z	181	10.22	4.70	-.401	0.689	-
	Generation Y	165	10.43	5.00			
Pressure to find employment	Generation Z	181	17.23	7.60	-.934	0.351	-
	Generation Y	165	17.98	7.29			
CAREER STRESS	Generation Z	181	54.06	20.17	-.738	0.461	-
	Generation Y	165	55.70	21.35			

**Cohen's d = (M2 - M1) /

SDpooled

SDpooled = $\sqrt{((SD1^2 + SD2^2) / 2)}$

The scores of the participants on the career stress scale are based on the sub-dimensions of "CareerUncertainty and Lack of Knowledge" ($p > 0.555$), "External Conflict" ($p > 0.689$), "Pressure to Find a Job" ($p > 0.351$) and "Career Stress Scale Total". There was no statistically significant difference in ($p > 0.461$) scores.

In this context, we can say that there is no difference between generations since the Covid-19 pandemic affects all generations from 7 to 70.

Table 6. The results of anxiety and career stress chi-square analysis according to the generational variable

Generations	Perceived Career Anxiety	n	Mean	Std. Deviation	CAREER STRESS		
					Pearson Chi-Square		
					Value	df	p
Generation Z	Before Covid-19 Pandemic	181	3.78	1.800	509.428	476	0.140
	During Covid-19 Pandemic	181	7.53	2.284	644.796	612	0.174
Generation Y	Before Covid-19 Pandemic	165	3.85	1.636	469.899	434	0.113
	During Covid-19 Pandemic	165	7.84	1.944	496.466	434	0.020*

* $p < 0.05$

When looking at the relationship between the career anxiety scores of the participants on the career stress scale and the career anxiety level felt, there is a relationship between the career anxiety felt by the Generation Y during the Covid-19 Pandemic ($p = 0.20$; $p < 0.05$).

4. Discussion and Conclusions

This research has been tried to examine the career anxiety and career stress perceived by generations Z and Y during the Covid-19 process. Sharing experience online, on social media sites, and following others' posts is becoming increasingly popular amongst generations Y and Z these days. This generations Internet community of (more consumers) rely on the opinion, very active in them trust and social media networks that idea leader, so this networks main and becoming the most important and reliable sources. This is especially true for generation Z, who are digital natives, so they no longer need to learn how to use the Internet as it has been a part of their daily lives since childhood (Süli & Martyn-Csamangó, 2020).

According to the analysis results of the Career Stress Scale in terms of gender variable, there was no significant difference in the Job-Finding Pressure sub-dimension but a significant difference was found in favor of men in the total scores of Lack of Information and Career Uncertainty, External Conflict and Career Stress. This situation brings us the perspective of a patriarchal society "Men have to make a living for the house under all conditions" stemming from the idea that men have reason to feel pressured suggests that

in this period of uncertainty. When the literature is reviewed, a study on teacher candidates found that a significant difference occurred in the sub-dimensions of "Career Uncertainty and Lack of Knowledge", "External Conflict", and the sub-dimensions of Career Stress according to the gender variable, and this significant difference was found in the "Career Uncertainty, Lack of Knowledge, and External Conflict" sub-dimensions (Tican, 2020). It has been stated that male teacher candidates have higher career stress than female teacher candidates. In the study of Bozkurt et al. (2020) they stated that the career stress of male students was higher than that of female students (Bozkurt, et al.2020).

In another study conducted on university students, when they examined career stress in terms of gender variable, no significant difference was found, but when the average scores from the scale were examined, it was seen that men had higher career stress levels than women in all sub-dimensions (Bozyiğit & Gökbaraz, 2020). It shows that; this situation is supported by our findings on the gender variable. However, in another study conducted on pre-service teachers, there was no difference in terms of gender change in "Career Uncertainty / Lack of Knowledge" and "External Conflict" sub-dimensions; In the dimension of "Job Finding Pressure", a significant difference was found in favor of female teacher candidates (Yılmaz, 2019). In an other study, the relationship between gender and career stress was examined; there was a significant relationship between gender and career uncertainty and lack of information sub-dimensions, and according to this relationship, women stated that they had higher levels of career uncertainty and lack of information than men (Üzüm et al.2018).

In the study, a statistically significant difference was found in all sub-dimensions of "Career Uncertainty and Lack of Information", "External Conflict", "Pressure to Find a Job" and "Career Stress Scale Total" scores of the participants based on the department variable. This difference appears to be in favor of sports sciences. In this context, it is seen that sports science participants have higher career stress compared to their health sciences participation. This situation made us think that the shortage of healthcare workers in our country and the need for them is greater and that the economy of the health sector in our country is wider in terms of sports sciences, and therefore, it is natural for sports science students to live higher in career stress and job-finding pressure than health science students.

When we do a literature search, there are no studies comparing health sciences and sports sciences students yet. However, Bozyiğit & Gökbaraz found a significant difference in terms of the department variable in their study and stated that this significant difference is that the "career uncertainty and lack of knowledge" sub-dimension of the sports management students is higher than the students of the physical education and teaching and recreation departments (Bozyiğit & Gökbaraz, 2020). According to his research, Yılmaz 2019 stated that the career stress of pre-school and psychological

counseling teachers who study in Preschool and Guidance and Counseling departments is higher than that of physical education teacher candidates, and that the primary reason for the career anxiety of physical education teacher candidates about their profession is the fear of not being appointed (Yılmaz, 2019).

In Yaşar & Turgut 2019's study, in terms of the department variable, there was a significant difference in the External Printing sub-dimension of the students of the School of Physical Education and Sports, the Faculty of Fine Arts and Architecture and Engineering against the students of the Faculty of Education, and according to the total career stress of the students of Architecture and Engineering, the School of Physical Education and Sports stated that there was a significant difference between the students of the Faculty of Education (Yasar & Turgut, 2019).

When we look at Career Stress according to the variables Z and Y generations in the study, there was no significant difference, but when we look at the relationship between the career stress and career anxiety level of the Z and Y participants, it was seen that there was a relationship between the career anxiety felt by the Generation Y during the Covid-19 pandemic. The fact that he is closer to his life than Generation Z, suggesting that they may have more life experiences and at the same time, career anxieties felt when they are considered to be working during their education affect career stress.

As a result; Career stress is a situation that may arise at every stage of the career ladder. Career stress can also be a driving force for career advancement. Hence, career stress has its positives as well. Of course, these positives will emerge as long as you can manage this stress. In this study, it has been evaluated and analyzed in relation to the Z and Y generations, especially for university students at the beginning of their career. It should be known that successful societies will emerge and reach high levels only through successful individuals. In this context, the necessity of the importance of research emerges.

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