


Comparison of Perceived Fatherhood and Self-Efficacy Across Generations and Gender

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Abstract

A quality father-child relationship is important for the child's social and emotional development, which may affect one's self-efficacy in the future. Research showed that fatherhood attitudes change over time. In the current study, individuals in generations X, Y and Z evaluated their relationships with their fathers retrospectively and their own general self-efficacy and it was examined whether participants' perceived fatherhood attitudes and general self-efficacy levels varied according to their gender and generation they were in. The study data were obtained through survey from 516 participants aged 18-58 living in Türkiye. Participants between the ages of 18–23 were considered as generation Z, 24-43 as generation Y and 44-58 as generation X. The data was collected between April 2023 and May 2023 through scales in an online survey platform. According to the results of MANOVA analyses, perceived fathers' negative emotional approach and father communication attitude differed between generations. Accordingly, perceived fathers' negative emotional approach of generation Z was significantly higher than the score of generation X. On the other hand, the perceived father's communication attitude score of generation Z was significantly lower than the scores of generation X and generation Y. In addition, perceived fatherhood sub-dimensions did not differ by gender. As for self-efficacy, some

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Data Availability Statement included at the end of the article

dimensions of self-efficacy perceptions of generation Z were also found to be lower than generations X and Y. Resistance dimension of self-efficacy was also found to differ by gender. Accordingly, men's resistance scores were significantly higher than women's scores. The results of the study were discussed by considering the general characteristics of the generations and evaluating gender roles. In addition, the possible limitations of the participants' retrospective assessment of their relationship with their fathers were discussed.

Keywords

Father-child relations, gender and fatherhood, self-efficacy, perceived fatherhood according to generations

Introduction

Scientific research on fathers and fatherhood has increased in recent years (Marsiglio et al., 2000). Researchers examined various aspects of fatherhood, such as father involvement, father identity, and how fathers affect their children's development (Cabrera et al., 2000; Coles, 2001; Rane & McBRIDE, 2000; Stone, 2002). Quality of parenting regardless of mother or father has been discussed since the past as a risk and protective factor in the development of psychopathology, self-efficacy, and competence in children (Collins et al., 2000; Serbin & Karp, 2004).

Research shows that fathers today practice a different type of parenting compared to previous times. For example, many fathers are now more involved with their children and they start to move away from the traditional role of breadwinner (Li, 2020). Changes and transformations in fatherhood attitudes highlight the need for different generation-specific interventions, support and policies. However, there is no study comparing the intergenerational differences or similarities of fatherhood in Türkiye. In this context, the present study mainly aimed to compare generations X, Y and Z in terms of perceived fatherhood attitudes.

Generational Comparison in Parenting Attitudes

Defining Generations

Kupperschmidt (2000) defines the concept of generation as a certain group or community of people who were born in the same or close time and have common experiences. In the present article, generation is also defined from a developmental perspective. The generation is a symbolic community that is united by common life experiences, is similar in age group, although it does not have clear chronological boundaries, and reflects the dynamics of the change of traditions, attitudes, and behavioral patterns (Aydm & Başol, 2014; Pishchik, 2020). Although there is some debate about the age range and names of the generations, it is

generally accepted that generation X was born between 1965 and 1979, generation Y was born between 1980 and 1999, and generation Z is the children born between the early 2000s and the present day (Crumpacker & Crumpacker, 2007; Haeberle et al., 2009; Keleş, 2011; Kyles, 2005). When the general characteristics of the generations are examined, generation X lived in a time when radical changes were experienced through which the dynamics and balances of the world were changing and are now at the end of their 40s and 50s (Bekmezci, 2017). Unlike their parents, generation Y can be described as more ambitious, and goal oriented as natives of the digital world. The world started to digitalize during the period when generation Y was living. Generation Z was born in a world where information is immediately accessible and social media is at every turn, where technological innovation is at its peak. For this reason, the technology is native to this generation.

Why Generations are Important?

So why is it important to separate generations? Individuals are affected by the social and cultural changes and technological developments that occur in the period they live in and accordingly exhibit different characteristics. Different periods give rise to different conditions, and this triggers a different perception (Karanfiloğlu et al., 2022). Some differences between generations are often the root causes of troubles in domestic life and professional life. Because there may be differences in decision-making, motivation, family values, communication, living standards and parenting attitudes between generations (Csobanka, 2016; Yıldız & Emecen, 2019). In the present study, perception of father's attitudes, which is one of the possible differences between generations, is emphasized.

Intergenerational Differences in the Perception of Fatherhood Attitudes

While research has often examined different parenting practices between families from different countries and cultural contexts, there has been little interest in analyzing whether parenting practices within the same culture also differ between people from different generations (Garcia et al., 2020). Within the same cultural context, there are some studies that argue that parenting varies across historical periods (Bronfenbrenner, 1985; Elder, 1994; Elder & Modell, 1993; Keller & Lamm, 2005). There are also some other studies showing that parental practices do not differ among different generations (Capaldi et al., 2003; Conger et al., 2003; Hops et al., 2003; Smith & Farrington, 2004; Thornberry et al., 2003). In these studies, it has been shown that there is intergenerational continuity of strict discipline, angry parenting, and parental supervision, which are indicators of authoritarian parenting (Conger et al., 2003; Hops et al., 2003; Smith & Farrington, 2004). Some other studies have also shown continuity in consistent discipline and parental warmth (Capaldi et al., 2003; Thornberry et al., 2003). Many of these studies rely seriously on theories that focus on modeling and aspects of social learning as primary mechanisms for intergenerational continuity in parenting practices (e.g. Capaldi et al., 2003; Scaramella & Conger, 2003).

These studies consistently support the intergenerational continuity of many aspects of parenting (Bailey et al., 2009). Being able to compare parenting attitudes across the generations can be quite intriguing, especially in the context of fatherhood. Because when it comes to perceived fatherhood attitudes, it is obvious that some changes and transformations of gender roles occur from generation X to generation Z (Belli et al., 2021). While fathers used to be the breadwinner, a strict, disciplined, distant figure hiding his emotions, today's fathers have now turned into co-parents who participate in family activities (Lamb, 2000; Li, 2020). Qualitative research has revealed that contemporary fathers define themselves according to the previous generation (i.e. one's own father) and often according to differences from the traditional model ("I am different from my father") (Bosoni & Baker, 2015). However, the relationship between one generation and the next is complex, as the old, internalized model is in tension with the new lifestyle. These changes and transformations in the role of fatherhood in society can affect father-child relationships. In this direction, examining whether there is a difference in fatherhood by comparing perceived fatherhood attitudes of generations will contribute to the literature.

Perceived Fatherhood Attitudes According to the Gender of the Child

Some of the studies investigating whether fatherhood attitudes change according to the gender of the child found that fatherhood attitudes do not change according to gender (Poyraz, 2007; İnci & Deniz, 2015; Özyürek & Tezel Şahin, 2005). In a study conducted by Bayraktar and colleagues (2024), children's perceived fatherhood attitudes did not differ according to gender. However, some studies claim that fatherhood attitudes can change according to the gender of the child because parents' expectations of boys and girls often differ, and so they behave their sons and daughters differently (Clearfield & Nelson, 2006). One study found that parents encouraged boys to achieve, compete, act independently, and take personal responsibility more than girls. In addition, fathers are more authoritarian, stricter and traditional towards their sons and are less tolerant of behaviors that deviate from masculine patterns (Clarke-Stewart & Friedman, 1987). The extensive fatherhood research conducted in Türkiye has also identified a new type of fatherhood that is considered within the dominant masculinity role (Akçınar, 2017). This type of fatherhood is the new traditional fatherhood. Although this type of fatherhood is similar to traditional fatherhood, it differs in some respects. New traditional fathers are more compassionate in their relationships with their daughters than with their sons. Therefore, the data on this issue is contradictory and needs further investigation. In this context, perceived fatherhood was compared according to gender.

Long term Effects of Fatherhood Involvement

Development of children is affected by the amount and quality of paternal involvement at all stages of development (Wilson & Prior, 2011). Father involvement, one of the most important components of effective fatherhood, is significantly associated with

positive physical, cognitive, emotional and social outcomes of children (Sarkadi et al., 2008). Developmental psychologists Lamb and Oppenheim characterized paternal involvement in three dimensions which are direct contact, accessibility, and responsibility for care (Lamb & Oppenheim, 1989). Direct contact with the child includes situations such as giving care, playing with the child, talking, and providing direct contact between the father and the child without another facilitator (such as a mother). Being accessible means that the children know that their father can support them when they need it, and the child can feel their father by their side. Responsibility can be conceptualized as the capacity to plan activities particularly tailored to the age and needs of the child (Lamb et al., 1987).

The present study focused on five dimensions of fatherhood attitudes (Dick, 2004; Uzun, 2020). The first of these dimensions is *responsible father involvement* which means providing financial support to the child, actively participating in the child's care, participating in the child's school activities, and spending time with the child. *Positive father involvement* involves fathers establishing warm and loving relationships with their children. These fathers play more with their children and are closely involved in parenting. *Negative father involvement* is the result of negligent or harmful actions and behaviors that can affect a child's development and mental health, sometimes into adulthood. *Negative emotional approach* in fatherhood includes negative emotional behaviors such as embarrassment, anger and abuse towards the child. Physical abuse by the father (abusing the child) and emotional maltreatment (the father says he doesn't love the child) are the harmful ways in which fathers negatively engage with their children. Lastly, *the father's communication approach* subscale measures the father's attitude in his communication with the child. These dimensions were preferred because they provide a comprehensive conceptualization adapted to Turkish regarding the dimensions of fatherhood used by different researchers.

Children with active, involved fathers during childhood and adolescence have many advantages in terms of development compared to children with uninvolved fathers (Lamb, 2004; Taşkın, 2011). High levels of paternal involvement are associated with higher levels of psychosocial adjustment, sociability, empathy capacity, cognitive performance, self-esteem, and self-control in children (Ehrenberg et al., 2001; Pleck, 1997; Uyanık et al., 2016). While there are many positive sides of paternal involvement, it is not surprising to say that paternal absence can also have harmful effects (Zeybekoğlu, 2013). The absence of the father affects the child negatively in many areas from infancy to adulthood. Many of these children state that they struggle with feelings of abandonment, low self-esteem, and anger problems (Amato & Rivera, 1999; Kelly & Lamb, 2000). Children in families without a father figure show worse academic performance (Sawyer et al., 2001), use drugs and alcohol (Luyckx et al., 2011), engage in risky sexual behavior (Ellis et al., 2003) and form unhealthy romantic relationships (Amato & Gilbreth, 1999) to compensate for the absence of a father. However, studies have typically focused on the behavioral outcomes of fatherhood in childhood or adolescence, and the long-term effects of father involvement on children's outcomes into adulthood are largely under researched (Parke, 2000). That is, whether

the positive effects of father involvement have lasting effects on children's outcomes in adulthood has not been adequately explored, either because it relies on retrospective designs (Finley & Schwartz, 2007) or prospective longitudinal data (Parke, 2000). There are a few exceptional studies on the long-term effects of father involvement. One of these is a study by Flouri and Buchanan (2004) based on the National Child Development Study. They found that father involvement at age 7 (e.g. reading books, going outside together and taking an interest in the child's education) strongly predicted educational achievement when children were 20 years old. Based on the same dataset, Nettle (2008) also found that father's involvement in childhood (at age 11) led to their children's increased social mobility by age 42. These findings suggest that fatherhood involvement is likely to have a lasting impact on a child's adjustment in adulthood. However, the relationship between perceived fatherhood attitude in childhood and the child's self-efficacy in later periods has not been examined to the best of our knowledge. Therefore, the present study examined the relationship between fatherhood attitudes and self-efficacy in adulthood across different generations. Since the literature on this subject was insufficient, the relationship between fatherhood and self-efficacy was evaluated in a correlational context.

Self-Efficacy, Fatherhood, Generations and Gender

Self-efficacy is defined as individuals' thoughts and judgments about their own abilities to perform the necessary behaviors in any situation (Bandura, 1982). It is a person's belief in their capacity to cope with various difficult demands and stressful life events (Luszczynska et al., 2010). In other words, the concept of general self-efficacy is people's perceptions about their own performance in challenging situations in many areas such as academics, business life and relationships (Ferla et al., 2009). Self-efficacy is not a genetic trait but a belief that develops over time and through experience (Uysal, 2013). That is, self-efficacy beliefs are the result of learning processes. It has a very important place in every aspect of people's lives. Individuals with high self-efficacy can initiate and successfully sustain a task that has direct effects on their performance. This general perception of self-efficacy influences people's goals, as it has an impact on the choices a person makes and the course of actions they take (Bandura et al., 1996). People who have a strong sense of self-efficacy can cope better with depression and stress and because they accept difficult tasks as a challenge and believe they can do it (Keshavarz & Mounts, 2017). These people often set goals and take steps towards their goals and do not give up immediately in the case of failure.

The relationship between fatherhood and self-efficacy has been studied in many studies in the context of academic self-efficacy rather than general self-efficacy (Kara & Sümer, 2022; Suizzo et al., 2017). For example, a study by Suizzo et al. (2017) showed that fathers' warmth had a positive effect on adolescents' academic development. In this study, positive father behaviors such as father warmth were found to affect adolescents' academic performance by increasing their positive belief levels such as optimism and academic self-efficacy (Suizzo et al., 2017). In a study conducted by Smith (2007), the effect of family on self-efficacy and self-esteem in adolescence and how these factors affect school adjustment

were investigated. As a result of the study, it was found that children who had authoritarian parents had lower self-esteem and self-efficacy than children who had other parent types. According to a study conducted in Iranian adolescents, boys were found to display more self-efficacy than girls in general (Keshavarz & Mounts, 2017). In another study, it was found that the self-efficacy of female university students was lower than that of males, despite similar previous success stories (Robinson et al., 2002). Expectancy value theory (Eccles et al., 1983), one of the social cognitive theories, argues that social messages about gender shape people's beliefs about their competence in various endeavors. Within this social structure, there are also roles that society expects from men and women. In Turkish society, people expect women to be more dependent, submissive, compliant, agreeable, and emotional, while they expect men to be more powerful, strong, independent, and assertive (Dökmen, 2009). In line with these expectations, it is not surprising that women's self-efficacy is lower. In the present study, women and men who took place in X, Y and Z generations were compared in terms of self-efficacy. A study comparing different generations in terms of their self-efficacy is not found in the literature. In this context, it is expected to contribute to literature.

Fatherhood in Türkiye

Until recently, studies examining the importance of the parent-child relationship focused particularly on the role of the mother in the child's life in Türkiye (Mercan & Şahin, 2017). As a result of this approach, researchers have given little attention to the role of the father and the importance of the father-child relationship in the child's development in Türkiye. However, with the changes in social structure and gender roles, the father's attitudes and especially his participation as a parent have also changed. When we look at fatherhood models from the past to the present, the meaning and responsibilities of the fatherhood role have changed significantly over time. In this historical transformation process, the roles of fathers have moved beyond being a disciplined, distant and strict role figure who meets the financial needs of the household, and have transformed into caregiving, and co-parenting with their spouses (Belli et al., 2021). Especially after the 1980s, fathers spent more time with their children, and in the 2000s, it became a joint parenting style that involved caregiving and participation in the child's life (Adamsons & Johnson, 2013). Social factors were effective in the change of the fatherhood role. The industrial revolution in the 19th century and the entry of women into working life, the transformation of large families into nuclear families, and the increase in nurseries and kindergartens are among the most important social factors that facilitated the change in fatherhood (Kocatepe & Bilgi, 2018).

With the understanding of the importance of fatherhood roles, there have been changes in social policies in many countries, including Türkiye. Until the 1980s, the role of fatherhood was not given much importance in social policies, except for surnames, but after the 1980s, legal regulations were made to grant paternity leave to fathers (Belli et al., 2021). These legal changes indicate that policymakers accept that not only mothers but also fathers have roles in childcare (Uludağlı, 2017). Although the roles of fathers in childcare have

increased and the importance of these roles has been understood, mothers are still seen as the main person responsible for childcare in Türkiye.

AÇEV, one of the largest organizations in Türkiye that conducts many studies on parenting, published a comprehensive report about fatherhood in 2017 (Akçınar, 2017). To understand fatherhood in Türkiye, the findings of this report, which investigates family structures and the concept of masculinity in Türkiye and their relationship with fatherhood behaviors are important. In this study, various indices of fatherhood were created, and five different categories of fatherhood were obtained from these indices. Accordingly, the most common and dominant category is “traditional fatherhood” in Türkiye, which constitutes 35% of the fathers participating in the study. It represents a fatherhood that is close to change, authoritarian and distant from children. These values are basically identified with dominant masculinity, which is unquestionable, the head of the family, powerful and prone to violence. “New traditional fathers”, who are like traditional fathers in their attitudes towards masculinity but have started to overcome this traditionalism in their relationships with their daughters and try to establish close relationships with them, constituted 28% of the participants. That is, this type of father is different from typical traditional fatherhood in displaying more kindness towards daughters in their relationships (Kara & Sümer, 2022). On the other hand, there are fathers who have a traditional perception of fatherhood but who have begun to exhibit compassionate fatherhood behaviors by their own choice and who also play an important role in the transformation of society. These fathers are evaluated in the “keen fatherhood” category and are defined as masculinity in transition. These fathers constitute 23% of the participants. The “diligent fatherhood” group consists of fathers who behave contrary to traditional gender roles but do so out of necessity. This group constitutes 12% of the participants. On the other hand, there are also “exceptional fathers” who are not very common in society and who care about the experience of fatherhood and strive to improve themselves in terms of raising children. These fathers are evaluated in the category of egalitarian masculinity. The proportion of these fathers among the total participants is only 0.9%. To conclude, this report states that patriarchal and authoritarian traditional fatherhood is still prevalent in Türkiye. However, it is also possible to see the relational fatherhood type, focused on affection, attention and control, in egalitarian families in metropolitan areas. Although there have been some changes in fatherhood attitudes in Türkiye in parallel with the changes in gender roles in Western countries, the person who is primarily responsible for the child’s care is still seen as the mother. Lastly, when making assessments and generalizations about fatherhood in Türkiye, it is very important where in Türkiye the data is collected (e.g. east, west or metropolis, rural area) and from which socioeconomic status individuals are recruited (Topçu, 2018). Accordingly, fatherhood attitudes may also change.

In conclusion, although there is a significant increase in studies on fatherhood in Türkiye, studies are new when compared to studies abroad and many important issues related to fatherhood still await research. In this direction, the present study aimed to meet this need in the field and evaluated fatherhood attitudes retrospectively from the

child' perspective. For this purpose, the participants' perceptions of their fathers' fatherhood attitudes were compared according to X, Y and Z generations and gender of the participants. Understanding how generations perceive fatherhood attitudes is particularly important to address the need for different interventions, support and policies specific to generations. In addition, the self-efficacy levels of participants were also compared according to generations they belong to and participants' gender. Research questions of the study are presented below:

- Do the perceived fatherhood attitudes of participants from generations X, Y and Z differ?
- Do male and female participants differ in their perceived fatherhood attitudes?
- Do gender and generation have an interaction effect on participants' perceived fatherhood attitudes?
- Do the general self-efficacy levels of generation X, Y and Z participants differ?
- Do the general self-efficacy levels of male and female participants differ?
- Do gender and generation have an interaction effect on participants' general self-efficacy levels?
- What is the relationship between fatherhood attitudes and general self-efficacy levels of the participants from generation X, Y and Z ?

Method

Participants

The result of the power analysis conducted on G*Power v.3.1.9.7 with a medium effect estimation showed that 235 participants would be required to detect interaction effects in the 3 (generations: X, Y, and Z) x 2 (gender: female, male) factorial pattern MANOVA (Faul et al., 2007). In this direction, considering the possible data loss and similar distribution in the groups, the data was collected from a total of 516 adults aged between 18 and 58 years. While 58.9% ($n = 304$) of the sample consisted of women, 41.1% ($n = 212$) of them were men. 138 (26.7) of the participants were from generation X, 206 (%39.9) from generation Y and 172 (%33.3) from generation Z. All information regarding the demographic characteristics of the participants is given in [Table 1](#).

Instruments

Demographic information form, Fatherhood Scale and General Self-Efficacy Scale were used in the research to collect data from the participants. The scales were applied to the participants online via the Google forms.

Table I. Demographic Characteristics of Participants.

		n	%		
Sex	Woman	304	58.9		
	Man	212	41.1		
Generation	X	138	26.7		
	Y	206	39.9		
	Z	172	33.3		
Education level	Below high school	21	4.1		
	High school	137	26.6		
	Above high school	358	79.4		
Marital status	Single	237	45.9		
	Married	251	48.6		
	Widow	6	1.2		
Education level of mother	Below high school	333	64.5		
	High school	92	17.8		
	Above high school	91	17.6		
Education level of father	Below high school	261	50.6		
	High school	107	20.7		
	Above high school	148	28.7		
Parental relationship status	Alive and together	349	67.6		
	Mother death	22	4.3		
	Father death	77	14.9		
	Mother-father death	30	5.8		
	Divorced	38	7.4		
Main place of residence	Metropol	291	56.4		
	City center	126	24.4		
	District center	78	15.1		
	Village	21	4.1		
		Min	Max	M	SD
Frequency of mother contact	1 (none)	3 (always)	2.71	.60	
Frequency of father contact	1 (none)	3(always)	2.52	.74	
The number of siblings	1	9	3.00	1.37	

Demographic Information Form

Participants' age, gender, education level, fathers' and mothers' education level, number of siblings and frequency of meeting with their parents were asked to evaluate sociodemographic characteristics.

Fatherhood Scale (FS)

FS was developed by [Dick \(2004\)](#) to measure the type of relationship among adults with their father while they were growing up. The original scale consists of

9 sub-dimensions and 64 items scored in a five-point Likert type (1 = never and 5 = always). The sub-dimensions of the scale are positive engagement, positive emotional responsiveness, negative engagement, moral father, gender role model, good provider, androgynous role (father with traditional or modern perspective), responsible father and accessible father. The internal consistency coefficient for the sub-dimensions of the scale ranges from .80 to .96, and the internal consistency coefficient for the total of the scale is .98. The Turkish adaptation study of the scale was carried out by Uzun (2020) on adolescents aged 14-18 to evaluate the relationships of young people with their fathers while they were growing up. The results of the exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis showed that the scale had a 6-factor structure and consisted of 52 items. The dimensions of the scale included positive paternal involvement (e.g., “There were/were many things we did with my father.”), responsible father role (e.g., “My father showed interest/shown interest in matters related to my education.”), negative paternal involvement (e.g., “When I made a big mistake, my father would physically punish/punish me.”), negative emotional approach (e.g., “I have warm feelings for my father.”), mentor father role (e.g., “My father goes with me to the mosque/prayer center.”) and father communication attitude (e.g., “My father used to say things to hurt my feelings.”). Cronbach’s alpha internal consistency coefficient was .97, .91, .84, .85, .72 and .70 for the sub-dimensions of the scale, respectively and .97 for the total scale. Mentor Father Role was not included in the analyses as it was not considered to reflect a general fatherhood role due to the differentiation of fathers in terms of religious beliefs in Turkish society. Since FS were applied to individuals over the age of 18 in the current study, reliability of the scale was conducted in these groups in the current study. Cronbach alpha values of FS according to generations is below in Table 2.

General Self-Efficacy Scale

This scale was developed by Sherer et al. (1982) to measure the self-efficacy levels of individuals over the age of 18. The scale consists of 23 items and is scored on a five-point Likert type (1 = none and 5 = very good). The original scale has a two-factor structure: General Self-Efficacy (explained variance 26.5%, Cronbach alpha = .86) and

Table 2. Cronbach Alpha Values of Sub-dimensions of Fatherhood Scale Among Generations.

	X	Y	Z
Positive paternal involvement	.98	.98	.98
Responsible father role	.91	.92	.91
Negative paternal involvement	.86	.87	.89
Negative emotional approach	.48	.72	.78
Father communication Attitude	$r = .59$	$r = .68$	$r = .69$

Social Self-Efficacy (explained variance 8.5%, Cronbach alpha = .71). The Turkish adaptation of the General Self-Efficacy Scale was carried out by [Yıldırım and İlhan \(2010\)](#). The scale, which has different versions in the literature, was adapted into Turkish on the 17-item General Self-Efficacy Scale ([Magaletta & Oliver, 1999](#)), which is widely used. As a result of the exploratory factor analysis, the Turkish form of the scale was found to have a 3-factor structure which are trying to start (e.g., “I avoid trying to learn new things that seem difficult for me), not giving up (e.g., “If I can’t do a job at the first try, I will try until I succeed.”) and persistence (e.g., “I will try to do something that I can’t do in the first attempt.”). It was observed that the Cronbach alpha internal consistency coefficient of the whole scale was .80, and the internal consistency coefficient of the sub-dimensions ranged between .78 and .81. An increase in the scale score indicates an increase in the self-efficacy belief of participants.

Research Design and Data Analysis

First, the participants were assigned to generations according to their age as reported in the demographic form. The design of the research is 3 (generations: X generation, Y generation, Z generation) x 2 (gender: female, male) factorial design. The data to be obtained in the research was analyzed using SPSS, Statistical Package Program for Social Sciences (IBM SPSS Statistics for Windows, Version 23.0. Armonk, NY: IBM Corp). No missing data was observed in the dataset. Descriptive statistics were reported by giving frequency and percentage values for continuous quantitative variables (mean, standard deviation, median) and categorical variables. Intergenerational and gender-related differences in fatherhood roles were analyzed using two-way MANOVA. Relationships between variables were analyzed by correlation analysis.

Process

Firstly, permissions for the scales used in the research were obtained from their authors. Then, the ethics committee approval of the study was obtained from the Science, Mathematics and Social Sciences Ethics Committee of the relevant university on 12.04.2023 with meeting number 31. Data collection tools were shared with the participants on an online survey platform (Google Forms) over internet sources such as LinkedIn and Instagram by researchers of the study between April 2023 and May 2023. In addition, the data collection tools were disseminated via Google Forms link in the university classes of the researchers. Participation in the study was voluntary and no information that could reveal the identities of the participants was requested. In the research link where the data was collected, the participants were first informed about the subject and purpose of the study with the “Informed Consent Form”, the ethics commission permission, the duration of the study, that participation was completely voluntary, that they could leave the study at any time, that the information obtained would be kept confidential and would only be used for scientific purposes. Participants

who read the informed consent form and agreed to participate in the study were provided with the demographic information form prepared by the researchers and other data collection tools which are Fatherhood Scale (FS) and General Self-Efficacy Scale were presented. Data collection continued until the number of participants in each cell in a 2x3 factorial design was at least 50. The forms took approximately 20 minutes to complete.

Results

Investigation of Perceived Fatherhood Attitudes and Self-Efficacy According to Participants' Gender and Generation

A 2 x 3 multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted to determine whether perceived fatherhood attitudes differed according to the participants' gender and generation. In these analyses, gender (female and male) and generation (X, Y and Z) were included as independent variables, while fatherhood attitudes (positive father involvement, responsible father role, negative father involvement, negative emotional approach, and father communication attitude) and general self-efficacy (initiation, resistance, and persistence effort) were included as dependent variables. When the data were analyzed, it was seen that the assumption of normal distribution for the dependent variable measurement was not met in some groups. In addition, Box's M test showed that the assumption of homogeneity of variances and covariances (Box's $M = 2.05, p = .001$) was not met. Therefore, Pillai's Trace values were used to increase the robustness of the analyses when comparing group mean scores and the alpha value was reduced to .025 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2014).

As a result of the analysis, it was found that the interaction effect of gender and generation (Pillai's Trace = .03, $F(8, 503) = 1.10, p = .352, \eta^2 = .02$) was not statistically significant. However, the main effects of gender (Pillai's Trace = .04, $F(8, 503) = 2.39, p = .02, \eta^2 = .04$) and generation (Pillai's Trace = .13, $F(8, 503) = 4.48, p = .000, \eta^2 = .07$) were significant. Subsequent analyses showed that fatherhood attitudes did not differ by gender. However, the self-efficacy dimension of resistance ($F(1, 510) = 9.81, p = .002, \eta^2 = .02$) was found to differ by gender. Accordingly, men's resistance scores ($M = 19.58, SD = .25$) were significantly higher than women's scores ($M = 18.54, SD = .21$).

When the results in terms of generation were analyzed, it was observed that negative emotional approach ($F(2, 510) = 4.25, p = .015, \eta^2 = .02$) and father communication attitude ($F(2, 510) = 12.41, p = .000, \eta^2 = .05$) differed between generations. Accordingly, the negative emotional approach score of generation Z ($M = 5.38, SD = .17$) was significantly higher than the score of generation X ($M = 4.66, SD = .18$). On the other hand, the father communication attitude score of generation Z ($M = 6.91, SD = .17$) was significantly lower than the scores of generation X ($M = 7.98, SD = .17$) and generation Y ($M = 7.88, SD = .14$).

In addition, the initiation ($F(2, 510) = 11.19, p = .000, \eta^2 = .04$), resistance ($F(2, 510) = 7.82, p = .000, \eta^2 = .03$) and persistence effort ($F(2, 510) = 12.40, p = .000, \eta^2 = .05$) dimensions of general self-efficacy also differed between generations. Accordingly, the initiation score of generation Z ($M = 32.72, SD = .52$) was significantly lower than the scores of generation X ($M = 36.12, SD = .52$) and generation Y ($M = 35.05, SD = .43$). Similarly, the resistance score of generation Z ($M = 18.15, SD = .30$) was significantly lower than the scores of generation X ($M = 19.82, SD = .30$) and generation Y ($M = 19.20, SD = .25$). Finally, the persistence effort score of generation Z ($M = 10.50, SD = .17$) was significantly lower than the scores of generation X ($M = 11.69, SD = .17$) and generation Y ($M = 10.97, SD = .14$), and the persistence effort score of generation Y ($M = 10.97, SD = .14$) was significantly lower than the score of generation X ($M = 11.69, SD = .17$). The mean and standard deviation values of the dependent variables according to gender and generation are presented in [Table 3](#).

Relationships between perceived fatherhood attitudes and general self-efficacy

The relationships between fatherhood attitudes and general self-efficacy were examined by correlation analysis based on generation and the results are presented in [Table 4](#). As seen in [Tables 4](#) and in **generation X**, there is a significant positive correlation only between father's communication attitude and self-efficacy: resistance ($r = .20, p < .05$). In **generation Y**, positive father involvement has a significant positive relationship with self-efficacy: initiation ($r = .21, p < .01$), self-efficacy: resistance ($r = .18, p < .01$) and self-efficacy: persistence effort ($r = .14, p < .05$). In addition, the relationship of responsible father role with self-efficacy: initiation ($r = .14, p < .05$) and father communication attitude with self-efficacy: initiation ($r = .17, p < .05$) and self-efficacy: persistence effort ($r = .16, p < .05$) was positively significant. It was found that positive father involvement was associated with self-efficacy: persistence effort ($r = .16, p < .05$) and father's communication attitude was associated with self-efficacy: initiation ($r = .21, p < .01$) in **generation Z**.

Discussion

The main purpose of the current study was to compare perceived fatherhood attitudes and general self-efficacy according to generations and gender. Over time, there may be changes in the structure of families due to environmental factors like gender roles. These changes may lead to changes in fatherhood attitudes. From past to present, there have been various changes in father-child relationships and the responsibilities of fathers ([Zeybekoğlu, 2013](#)). The father's role as an authoritarian and ethical teacher in the past has evolved into that of a father caring for his child ([Güngörmüş-Özkardeş, 2010](#)). By comparing the fatherhood attitudes of

Table 3. Comparison of Perceived Fatherhood Attitudes and Self-Efficacy According to Participants' Gender and Generation.

Dependent variables	Independent variables		M	SD	N	F
Positive father involvement	Sex	Woman	90.56	1.91	304	.51
		Man	88.44	2.28	212	
	Generation	X	90.48	2.73	138	.80
		Y	91.16	2.25	206	
		Z	86.85	2.71	172	
Responsible father	Sex	Woman	35.29	.52	304	0.11
		Man	35.02	.62	212	
	Generation	X	35.55	.74	138	0.44
		Y	35.30	.61	206	
		Z	34.61	.75	172	
Negative father involvement	Sex	Woman	8.04	.23	304	3.22
		Man	8.69	.28	212	
	Generation	X	8.73	.33	138	2.43
		Y	7.85	.27	206	
		Z	8.51	.33	172	
Negative emotional approach	Sex	Woman	4.94	.12	304	0.59
		Man	5.09	.15	212	
	Generation	X	4.66	.18	138	4.25*
		Y	5.02	.14	206	
		Z	5.38	.17	172	
Father communication	Sex	Woman	7.69	.12	304	1.13
		Man	7.49	.14	212	
	Generation	X	7.97	.17	138	12.41***
		Y	7.88	.14	206	
		Z	6.91	.17	172	
Self-efficacy: Initiation	Sex	Woman	34.08	.37	304	3.71
		Man	35.18	.44	212	
	Generation	X	36.12	.52	138	11.19***
		Y	35.05	.43	206	
		Z	32.72	.52	172	
Self-efficacy: Resistance	Sex	Woman	18.54	.21	304	9.81**
		Man	19.58	.25	212	
	Generation	X	19.82	.30	138	7.82***
		Y	19.20	.25	206	
		Z	18.15	.30	172	
Self-efficacy: Persistence effort	Sex	Woman	11.07	.12	304	0.01
		Man	11.05	.14	212	
	Generation	X	11.69	.17	138	12.40***
		Y	10.97	.14	206	
		Z	10.50	.17	172	

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Table 4. Correlations, Mean and Standard Deviation Values Between Fatherhood Attitudes and General Self-Efficacy ($n = 516$).

	X Generation								Y Generation								Z Generation							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Pos father invol																								
2. Resp father	.78**								.82**								.74**							
3. Neg. father invol.	-.51**	-.48**							-.40**	-.37**						-.28**	-.25**							
4. Neg. emot. appr	-.49**	-.55**	.59**						-.51**	-.56**	.52**					-.23**	-.24**	.66**						
5. Fach.com	.51**	.37**	-.59**	-.52**					.53**	.45**	-.60**	-.66				.42**	.26**	-.54**	-.55					
6. Inic	.06	.08	-.06	.02	.15				.21**	.14*	.03	-.08	.17*			.14	.07	-.06	-.13	.21**				
7. Reais	.12	.10	-.09	.02	.21*	.76**			.18**	.12	-.01	.02	.08	.83**		.12	.02	.11	.02	.03	.70**			
8. Pers effort	.11	.07	-.07	.03	.12	.47**	.52**		.14*	.09	.04	-.09	.16*	.58**	.50**		.16*	.04	.05	.10	.05	.55**	.66**	
M	90.43	35.54	8.75	4.66	7.97	36.13	19.85	11.69	9.19	35.27	7.84	5.03	7.87	34.94	19.15	10.98	87.50	34.70	8.30	5.29	7.02	32.65	18.02	10.42
SD	31.03	8.65	4.05	1.39	1.86	5.92	3.65	1.86	32.86	8.77	3.62	2.09	2.00	5.95	3.54	1.98	31.74	8.81	4.07	2.43	2.19	6.62	3.64	2.13
Min-Max	29-145	10-45	5-25	4-11	2-10	17-45	7-25	7-15	29-145	10-45	5-25	4-11	2-10	17-45	7-25	7-15	29-145	10-45	5-25	4-11	2-10	17-45	7-25	7-15
N	138	138	138	138	138	138	138	138	206	206	206	206	206	206	206	206	206	206	172	172	172	172	172	172

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

generations X, Y and Z, the differences in father-child communication can be seen more easily. The fact that this intergenerational comparison of fatherhood in the current study was conducted through a form in which the participants evaluated their fathers' attitudes is important in terms of emphasizing the child's perception. In other words, fatherhood was not actually measured through self-assessment. Studies on the effect of parenting attitudes on children show that the child's perception of the parent has more influence on the outcome variable than the parent's self-evaluation (Rohner et al., 2005).

Perceived Fatherhood According to Generations

In the present study, perceived negative emotional approach, a sub-dimension of fatherhood, was found to be higher in generation Z compared to generation X. Negative emotional approach means that children think that their fathers are ashamed of them, see their fathers as bad people and feel that their fathers do not like them (Yıldırım & İlhan, 2010). In addition, generation Z's perceptions of father communication attitude are more negative than generation Y's. Negative father communication attitudes include fathers saying things that hurt their children's feelings and fathers yelling at their children when their children do something wrong. When these sub-dimensions are evaluated together, it is possible to evaluate generation Z's emotional relationship with their fathers as more negative compared to generations X and Y. The results of this study could be interpreted as counterevidence to the recent positive change in fatherhood attitudes, and if there is a positive change it's not reflected in the perception of children. As a matter of fact, there are still certain doubts in the literature about whether fatherhood has changed (Topçu, 2018). It is also possible that generation Z has higher expectations of fathers that are more difficult for fathers to meet. While interpreting these findings, it is also necessary to consider that fatherhood attitudes vary according to socioeconomic level. For example, in the research on fatherhood, Topçu (2018) emphasizes that despite the assumed change in fatherhood, the perceptions of fatherhood are characterized by an emotional indefinability and concern about responsibility. However, this indefinability decreased as the socioeconomic status of the fathers increased, but this time a concern about doing what is right for their children, namely a stronger sense of responsibility, emerged. In addition, fathers from higher socioeconomic groups showed a higher level of involvement in the lives of their children, albeit less than their spouses. Although these results indicate relatively positive improvements in the fatherhood attitudes of fathers at higher socioeconomic levels, they also suggest that fathers still face certain challenges in terms of defining their fatherhood emotionally, responsibility and involvement. Accordingly, in future studies on intergenerational differences in fatherhood attitudes, the inclusion of fathers' socioeconomic status as a factor for sample grouping will yield more explanatory results.

Generation Z individuals' negative perceptions of their fathers' fatherhood attitudes may also be influenced by the decrease or loss of importance of interpersonal communication in parallel with the recent development in communication technologies. In recent years, studies examining family structure have revealed that sharing and communication in home environment has decreased with the increasing use of social media (Erol, 2022). The differentiated emotions, thoughts and attitudes of Generation Z with the increasing use of social media may be one of the reasons for conflicts and negative communication between parents and children in the family environment.

Although this negative picture in the father-child relationships of Generation Z may serve as a warning to Generation Z' fathers and it may be very important to include these fathers in intervention programs, it may also be a limitation of the study. In the current study, the generations were asked to evaluate their relationships with their fathers retrospectively (childhood). Generation Z, which is between the ages of 18–23, may remember details about their childhood better because of the shorter time that has passed. Generation X, aged between 44–58, may have more difficulty in remembering their childhood and early youth as a lot of time has passed since then. When autobiographical memories are evaluated in terms of time, it has been observed that those recalled within the last five years are more than those recalled before the last five years (Conway & Holmes, 2005; Conway et al., 2000). In addition, there may be differences between age groups in the recall of positive and negative experiences. In the literature, it has been observed that when older individuals are compared with younger individuals, this group recalls negative emotional experiences less and positive emotional experiences more (Carstensen & Mikels, 2005; Charles & Carstensen, 2008; Gross et al., 1997; Mather & Carstensen, 2005). In the present study, generations X and Y may have recalled more positive memories and showed a positivity effect in their relationships with their fathers compared to generation Z.

Perceived Fatherhood According to Gender

It has also been a matter of curiosity whether fatherhood attitudes vary according to gender. While many studies have found that fatherhood attitudes do not differ according to the gender of the child (İnci & Deniz, 2015; Özyürek & Tezel Şahin, 2005; Poyraz, 2007), some studies show that fathers treat boys and girls differently in a way that affects the psychological outcomes of children (McIntyre & Edwards, 2009; Paquette & Dumont, 2013; Pellegrini & Smith, 1998). The current study supports the findings showing that the perception of fatherhood attitudes does not change according to the gender of the children. In recent years, with the replacement of the economic value of the child with its emotional value (Kağıtçıbaşı, 2010), it seems possible to say that the priority given to the male child in the past has now evolved towards equality (Topçu, 2016).

Self-Efficacy According to Generations

When intergenerational differences in general self-efficacy were examined, it was seen that the perception of initiation of generation Z was lower than the perception of initiation of Generations X and Y. Initiation, which is a sub-dimension of general self-efficacy, includes issues such as the courage to try things that seem complicated, the belief in being able to cope with the problems encountered in life, and the belief that one will not leave things half way even if one fails. To explain this result, it would be useful to examine the characteristics of generations. The social breakdown inherited by the baby boomers, the generation preceding generation X, has an important role in generation X. Those in this generation were exposed to parental divorce, witnessed crises and political conflicts in their countries, and were negatively affected by factors such as an inadequate education system (Kupperschmidt, 2000). According to Lancaster and Stillman (2002), individuals in generation X have grown up under the influence of suddenly changing processes all over the world; they have been affected by radical changes in economic, political, and socio-cultural dimensions. In general, they tend to solve their own problems and have high self-confidence (Tulgan & Martin, 2001).

Similarly, the degree of resistance of generation Z was lower than the degree of resistance of generations X and Y. To explain this result, it would be appropriate to explain some characteristics of generation Z. It would not be wrong to say that generation Z, whose ages range between 18 and 23 in the current sample, was born with a tablet and a smartphone. Generation Z frequently uses the internet at home, in their education and socialization (Feiertag & Berge, 2008). This generation's mastery of technology may lead them to neglect their face-to-face interpersonal relationships more. This generation likes to get everything they want immediately and often fails to persevere because of the digital world they live in. For these reasons, it is expected that generation Z perceives itself as low in the trait of perseverance, which is a part of self-efficacy. It is understandable that a generation that can access the information it desires with a single click may get frustrated quickly and try different alternatives in a situation that requires effort.

Finally, the persistence effort score of generation Z was significantly lower than the scores of generations X and Y, and the persistence effort score of generation Y was significantly lower than the score of generation X. Persistence effort means forcing oneself to complete something when one must do something one does not like. An example of this would be starting to read a book and then not liking it, but not leaving it unfinished and trying to finish it. In the current study, as age increases, that is as we move towards generation X, the effort to sustain increases. Looking at generation Z and generation Y today, it is seen that these people can change jobs and even sectors. Unlike their parents, generation X, generations Y and Z are digital natives, and they can clearly see that there are many options in their lives with the opportunities provided by the internet (Türk, 2013). For this reason, it is easier for them to leave a job or an environment that they are not satisfied with

because there are other options. When generation X is evaluated, it is possible to say that the lives of this generation are not easy (Demirkaya et al., 2015). Working and producing is the life philosophy of this generation and ambition, work addiction or being a workaholic are the values they grew up with (Altuntuğ, 2012). Therefore, it is much easier to understand the sustainability efforts of this generation with the characteristics of the environment in which they grow up. Generation Y individuals who have children are also stingier in showing patience, result-oriented, impetuous, and often on the agenda to leave their jobs compared to generation X (Kavak, 2020). To sum up, it is an understandable result that the effort to sustain decreases as the generations get younger.

Self-Efficacy According to Gender

It was observed that participants' self-efficacy perceptions differed according to gender. The attitude of resistance, which is one of the sub-dimensions of self-efficacy perception of men, is higher than that of women. A review of the literature reveals that women's self-efficacy is lower than men's (Pintrich & de Groot, 1990). The reinforcement process gains importance in the acquisition of self-efficacy. Gender roles gain importance in terms of which behaviors will be reinforced and which ones will be restricted by parents. While boys' self-efficacy behaviors are reinforced more by their parents and close circles, it is difficult for girls to gain this ability because they can stay away from this experience (Başerer- Berber & Karakuş-Umar, 2022). In addition, when the reflections of the masculinity role in society are evaluated, certain characteristics such as being dominant, fighting, not giving up, being self-sufficient, being strong, and going after one's bread come to the fore (O'Grady et al., 1979). For this reason, the fact that men are higher in the resistance dimension of self-efficacy compared to women may play a role in reinforcing this as it is perceived as a part of the masculinity role.

Relationship Between Self-efficacy and Fatherhood Attitudes

When the relationship between self-efficacy and fatherhood attitudes was examined, it was seen that there is a positive relationship between positive father involvement and self-efficacy in generation Y in the dimension of initiation (courage to try things that seem complicated, belief in coping with the problems encountered in life). In other words, as positive father involvement increased, children's ability to start increased. In generation Z, there was a positive relationship between father's communication attitude and initiation. As the father's communication attitude becomes more positive, children's ability to initiate increases. Fathers' constructive and positive communication is particularly important for self-efficacy in generation Z. In a study, students with high self-efficacy are more likely to set higher goals and make more effort to achieve their goals (Bassi et al., 2007). Self-efficacy is often influenced by parent-child communication (Mulyadi et al., 2016). Support from parent-child interaction is important in forming a positive attitude and developing the ability to make judgments, especially in the learning process (Chen et al., 2018). For these

reasons, generation Z parents need to have a positive communication attitude to increase their children's self-efficacy. Although the relationships between self-efficacy and other sub-dimensions of fatherhood attitudes are significant, they are not discussed because the effect is very weak.

Limitations and Conclusion

One of the limitations of the study is that in some groups the assumption of normal distribution for the dependent variable measurement was not met. To eliminate this limitation, some statistical methods were used to increase the robustness of the analysis. Another limitation is the possible differences in recalling the autobiographical memories mentioned above and, in this respect, in evaluating the participants' relationship with their fathers. There are differences between the time elapsed since the childhood of generation Z and the time elapsed since the childhood of generations Y and X. Generation X may have some difficulties remembering the details of their relationship with their fathers and may have more positive memories. Lastly, Cronbach's alpha value of negative emotional approach, a dimension of fatherhood attitude, was found to be low in generation X. This can be considered a limitation of this study. Since the reliability of this sub-dimension is low in generation X, it is necessary to be cautious in comparisons and generalizations about this dimension.

In conclusion, the present study provides a detailed picture of the similarities and differences between generations X, Y and Z in their relationships with their fathers and their perceptions of self-efficacy and evaluates the effect of gender on this. Although there are many studies comparing various characteristics of generations (Göksel & Güneş, 2017; Karanfiloğlu et al., 2022; Raslie & Hie Ting, 2020), the current study is unique in that it is the first study that makes a comparison in the context of relationships with fathers and general self-efficacy. In the training and intervention programs to be planned about fatherhood and communication with generation Z, it is thought that it may be useful to include the fathers of generation Z.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

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Ethical Statement

Ethical Approval

Ethical approval has taken from Çankırı Karatekin University on **12th April 2023**.

Informed Consent

Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

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Data Availability Statement

The datasets generated during and/or analyzed during the current study are available in the [BABALIK ARAŞTIRMASI] repository, [<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1487aPzO5H6xXfDOkyzUixHskJ786OO9zLXvjLFRdTvS/edit?resourcekey#gid=694952827>].

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