EXPLORING THE WORLD OF GENERATION ALPHA: THROUGH THE LENS OF THE TEACHERS

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ABSTRACT

This study explores Generation Alpha, a group of children born after 2010, through the experiences of teachers who interact with them regularly. Generation Alpha, as digital natives, is maturing in an environment marked by shifting social norms, rapid technological advancements, and global connectivity. The study aimed to explore teachers' experiences, challenges, coping mechanisms, and insights while working with Generation Alpha students, as perceived by the teachers themselves. Data was collected through in-depth interviews. Nine selected educators participated in the study. The findings showed that Generation Alpha's early interaction with digital media significantly shaped their learning preferences, making traditional teaching methods such as lectures and chalk talks less effective. To effectively engage these students, educators need to incorporate technology into their personal and classroom experiences. The study reveals three key lessons about teaching today's generation. Generation Alpha's familiarity with digital tools fosters creativity and necessitates the integration of technology in the classroom. Collaborative learning has emerged as a highly effective method due to its alignment with active engagement styles and digital experiences. Third, while they emphasize kinesthetic and visual learning, outcomes are enhanced when group activities are paired with personalized and self-directed instruction. However, there are also disadvantages, including Generation Alpha's limited attention spans, challenges in engaging in non-digital activities, and difficulties with emotional regulation stemming from social media and screen exposure. To tackle these issues, educators should foster open communication, create a positive learning environment, and incorporate physical activities to support emotional balance. The findings emphasize the importance of continuous professional development for educators, aligning with the notion that learning is a lifelong journey. By embracing innovation and adjusting their teaching methods, educators can more effectively address the needs of Generation Alpha while enhancing their own professional skills.

Keyword : - *generation alpha, digital natives, challenges, coping mechanisms traditional teaching, technology integration*

1. INTRODUCTION

It is important for educators to understand how generational differences affect how students learn and how teachers need to change how they teach. These disparities are caused by social ideals, trends, and technology. Five Midwest institutions studied how ideas, trends, and social events impact generational features (Delahoyde 2009). According to a University of Cape Town survey, most teachers are Baby Boomers or Generation X, whereas most pupils are Net Generation and later. Teachers must use technology to create interactive, social, visual, and practical learning environments for Generation Alpha and other digital native students (Johnston 2013).

Ortega-Dela Cruz, 2020 studied net generation learners who preferred multiple learning platforms and engaged more in relevant, applicable, active learning, and performance-based activities while collaborating with other learners or

teachers with similar interests. Magallanes, et al., 2022, suggested that the Philippines government loosen the curriculum, engage in professional teacher development, and create collaborative teacher training programs.

Maureal and Villajos, 2023 found in their phenomenological inquiry into elementary teachers' lived experiences in Davao de Oro that classroom management was difficult, making it harder to teach students good manners. A Pantukan South District study found that digital change and establishing good manners were both issues. Schools needed enough money to adapt to educational changes (Panibon, 2023).

In Manat Central Elementary School, Nabunturan, Davao de Oro, teachers had trouble teaching Generation Alpha because smartphone games had reduced their attention span. Teachers had other problems besides instilling lessons. They had trouble forming values. Perhaps generation alpha was used to devices that made them impatient with everything they did. This may explain why teaching tactics need innovation. Consider gamification and gadgets in teaching and learning. Generation Alpha presented several obstacles while I taught third grade at Manat Central Elementary School. This generation typically felt entitled and resisted authority, ignoring basic corrections and sometimes thinking they were better than the teacher. Their short attention span during talks and easy diversions made classroom management harder. Modern student protection laws limit disciplinary actions, which may have exacerbated intransigence. As expected, Generation Alpha's strong connection to technology affects their behavior and learning preferences.

1.1 Purpose of the Study
The purpose of this phenomenological research was to explore the experiences, challenges, coping mechanisms, and insights of the nine teachers in dealing with Generation Alpha learners in three different schools in Nabunturan East District, namely, Manat Central Elementary School, Mainit Elementary School, and Kao Elementary School. The findings would show how to effectively engage and support this unique generation in the educational setting.

1.2 Research Questions
This study aimed to describe the experiences of the teachers, challenges, coping mechanism and insight gained in dealing with Generation Alpha Learners in Nabunturan East.
1. What were the experiences of teachers in dealing with Generation Alpha Learners?
2. What were the different challenges that the teachers encounter with Generation Alpha Learners?
3. How do teachers cope with the challenges experienced in teaching Generation Alpha Learners?
4. What were the insights gained by the teacher in dealing with Generation Alpha Learners?

2. METHODS
This chapter explains how the study was conducted and how the data were gathered and treated. It was divided into several sections: the research design, research locale, role of the researcher, research participants, data collection procedure, data analysis, trustworthiness and credibility, and ethical consideration.

2. Research Design
Qualitative phenomenological research design was employed in this study. According to Creswell (2012), the goal of qualitative research was to thoroughly examine, comprehend, and explain social phenomena in their natural setting. One benefit of this approach was that it could generate new knowledge by exploring deeper into the complexity of human behavior. It also offered an excellent opportunity to collect accurate data regarding people's beliefs and motives. It sought to get a complete picture of the topic from the perspective of the human being under study.

Furthermore, this study employed phenomenology as a research design, delving into the participants lived experiences or the essence of consciousness, where essence referred to the phenomenon. It was consistent with the idea that one must determine the fundamental meanings of a phenomenon from the shared meanings of other participants. Phenomenology was excellent as a strategy in dealing with experiences (Patton, 2002). As a result, it made it possible for the researcher to examine the experiences, challenges, coping mechanism, and insights of educators who dealt with Generation Alpha learners.

2.2 Research Participants
The research participants were identified through purposive sampling. The participants of this study were the selected elementary teachers of Nabunturan East District, who should have an age over 45 to 60 and who were

currently teaching at the primary grades Kinder to Grade 3. The participants were 3 teachers in Manat Central Elementary School, another 3 teachers in Mainit Elementary School and 3 teachers in Kao Elementary School.
The participants were given an orientation about the study and signed a consent form agreeing to the condition that they were voluntarily participating in this study. The participants were asked to participate through an In-Depth Interview (IDI) as means of data collection.

Moreover, to ensure the anonymity of the participants during data processing and reporting, code names was used. The preliminary stages like validation, participant selection, signing of informed consent, and In-Depth Interviews took place from June to July 2024. The remaining transcription and translation, thematic analysis, presentation, discussion, and any other work that relates to concluding took place from August to October 2024..

2.3 Data Collection Procedure
The study utilized a researcher made interview guide for the in-Depth Interview. The data source obtained from the participants' experiences, challenges they might encounter and insight they gained in dealing with Generation Alpha learners in elementary school.

In every study, achieving accurate results were attainable through following the proper procedures. Therefore, the following procedures should meticulously observe to ensure better results.

First, the participants were identified through purposive sampling. The researcher would ask permission from the School Division Superintendent then, after the approval of the SDS, the researcher will send letter to the Public Schools District Supervisor (PSDS) of Nabunturan East District and to the School Principals of Manat Central ES, Mainit ES and Kao ES. Second, the researcher would ask for consent from the participants and should request them to sign a consent letter to document their voluntary participation. Third, the researcher would explain the purpose of the study and its methodology. The participants would be oriented individually. Fourth, the researcher would prepare the materials needed for the interview which includes the interview guide and audio recorder, then, the In-Depth Interview would be administered. Lastly, the interview would be audio recorded through a mobile phone. Everything that transpired during the interview would put into record. The audio recorded interview shall be transcribed word for word.

3. FINDINGS
3.1 Experiences in Dealing with Generation Alpha Learners in the Classroom
The themes in the section were coming from the specific research question 1.1
'What were your experiences in dealing with Generation Alpha learners in the classroom every day?' The responses generated seven themes: inquisitive, creative and technology knowledgeable, less interested, thrive in hands-on and technology-based lessons, positive experiences, difficult experiences, very challenging and stubborn but hardworking.

Generation Alpha is a digital native who is naturally curious, good with technology, and creative. kids do well in lessons that use technology and hands-on activities because kids are used to digital encounters that are interactive. But using social media can make it harder for them to pay attention and focus on one lesson. Generation Alpha's creativity and imagination can help teachers in the classroom since they can use art, writing, and presentations to show how they feel.

It can be hard to teach Generation Alpha because of the global digital world and the urge to keep their language and cultural identity. English is generally the most important language, which can make it hard for pupils to appreciate their own cultures. To deal with these problems, teachers need to be patient and open-minded.
Generation Alpha's bad personalities can be turned into positive ones by giving them different kinds of activities and recognizing that they learn in different ways. Teachers can make the learning environment for Generation Alpha more effective and welcoming by knowing and dealing with these problems.

3.2 Describing Generation Alpha in Schooling Today
This section presented the results to the specific research question 1.2 'How would you describe Generation Alpha in schooling today? under the 1st major research question, 'What were the experiences of the teachers in dealing with Generation Alpha Learners?' The following themes were technology dependent, persistent and stable, unique characteristics, values interactive and personalized experiences, fast and visual learners, digital natives, need more

innovation, has a lot of energy, need to balance use of technology and traditional teaching, has Short Attention Span, responsive in interactive learning

Generation Alpha, a group of young people knowledgeable about technology, has had a big impact on education since they use it so much. They like interactive and personalized experiences, such as hands-on learning and activities that are made just for them. They learn quickly because they can get information and feedback through digital means. They are digital natives; therefore, they excel at using technology. They like multimedia content and virtual simulations. They need more creativity and active learning since they like to learn by doing. They are adept at solving problems since they have a lot of energy. They need discipline and help to keep track of their time and responsibilities. They also need to find a balance between using technology and conventional teaching approaches, such as hands-on activities and visual aids. They have short attention spans, so they need activities that are fun and creative. They learn better when they can participate, and they like creative and new activities more than lectures.

3.3 Unique Characteristics Observed among the Learners of this Generation Compared to Previous Generations

The themes in the section were coming from the specific research question 1.3 'What unique characteristics have you observed among the learners of this generation compared to previous generations? under the 1st major research question, 'What were the experiences of the teachers in dealing with Generation Alpha Learners?' The responses generated eleven themes: more interactive to digital and technology, more persistent and stable, nature lover, digitally dependent and more impatient, more adaptable, technologically savvy, hyper connectivity to technology and social media, love exploring and more curious, more visually oriented, has shorter attention span, more outspoken and has strong personalities.

Generation Alpha grew up in a world where digital technology came first. They are great at using interactive digital platforms and enjoy learning through apps, multimedia presentations, and games. They are more stable and persistent, which helps people become more resilient, patient, and good at solving problems. They are more flexible, can study in a way that works for them, and know how to use technology. They are very connected to technology and social media, and they are more aware of and knowledgeable about the world since they can get information quickly and have many friends online. They love to learn new things and are always looking for ways to solve problems and be innovative outside of school. They are visually oriented since they were exposed to digital media at a young age, where visuals are used to communicate and learn. Digital platforms contain a vast amount of content and change rapidly, which causes children to lose focus more easily. They are outspoken and have strong personalities because they have access to information and have worked with others to learn. But kids need help finding a balance between being honest about their own feelings and respecting other people's ideas to have good, welcoming relationships.

3.4 Challenges in Dealing with Generation Alpha Learners in the Classroom

The themes derived from the responses of the research informants to the specific research question 2.1 'What were your challenges in dealing with Generation Alpha learners in the classroom?' were presented in this section. The themes were: different characteristics, lack of attention and focus, challenge in adapting experiential and visual learning, learner's being dependent on technology, think strategically and be more flexible, lots of pressure, to help them become independent and responsible learners, very curious, no social skills, emotionally sensitive

Generation Alpha exhibits traits including independence, curiosity, shorter attention spans, and a love of digital interaction. These traits are a result of how quickly technology, culture, and knowledge change. They have trouble paying attention and staying focused, and they depend on technology a lot for convenience and involvement. Teachers need to find a balance between planning ahead and being flexible so that they can meet the needs of all their students. Teachers are under a lot of pressure to try out new ways of teaching, but they don't have enough money or time to do so. Teachers should teach Generation Alpha how to plan their work, manage their time, and be responsible so that they may learn on their own. Gen Alpha's desire to learn is strong, but teachers need to set up regulated situations that encourage questioning. They don't know how to interact with others and have trouble with empathy, teamwork, and talking to people in person. Their emotional growth is affected by both digital and real-world stimuli, so they need close supervision to stay healthy without interfering with their learning.

3.5 Behavioral Challenges Faced When Dealing with Generation Alpha Learners

The themes in the section were coming from the specific research question 2.2 'What behavioral challenges have you faced when dealing with Generation Alpha Learners?' After subjecting the responses to content analysis, the following themes were drawn: rebellious, defiant and technologically dependent, disrespectful and impulsive, difficult to control, difficulty in following rules and instructions, conflict, hyperactive, mood swings

Generation Alpha's learning environment includes their rebellious conduct, dependence on technology, tendency to be rude, trouble following rules and directions, conflict, hyperactivity, and susceptibility to mood swings. They are impolite, impetuous, resistant to discipline, and energetic, and they think for themselves. They may not like tight rules and authority since they value their freedom and individuality. They might also have trouble with managing their emotions, dealing with conflict, and making friends. To deal with these tendencies and make sure Generation Alpha has a positive learning environment, teachers need to be understanding and patient.

3.5 Ways to Handle Behavioral Issues in the Classroom

The themes in the section were coming from the specific research question 2.3 'How do you handle these behavioral issues in the classroom?' After subjecting the responses to content analysis, the following themes were drawn: open communication and understanding, giving support and guidance, collaboration effort of parents and teacher, incorporating technology enhanced activities, giving clear instructions/rules, using collaborative activities, positive reinforcement, injected good moral lessons and values, having empathy, listen and be sensitive, patience, engaging activities, stay calm

Generation Alpha children do best in environments where they are active, understood, and respected. These situations need open communication, support, direction, collaboration between schools and families, technology-enhanced activities, clear instructions, and activities that require working together. They need help and direction to build their confidence, independence, and resilience. Parents and teachers need to work together since they both give kids emotional support and teach them values at home. Learning is exciting and interactive when you use technology to develop things like instructional games and multimedia content. Generation Alpha students want surroundings that are interactive and dynamic; therefore, it's important for them to have clear rules and directions. Working together on group problem-solving tasks helps people get along and be successful. To get people to do the right thing, you need to use positive reinforcement. To be a good teacher, you need to be able to listen, understand, and be sympathetic. Students stay engaged and remember things better when they do fun activities like games, role-playing, and creative arts. Keeping calm in tough classroom situations is essential for making the learning environment healthy.

3.6 Ways in Adapting Teaching Methods to Better Suit Generation Alpha Learners

In this section, the themes created were from the responses to the specific research question 3.1 'How have you adapted your teaching methods to better suit Generation Alpha learners?' The following were the themes: technology integration, giving priority on learners' needs and interests, embracing technology in teaching, focusing on shorter varied tasks, promoting inclusivity tasks, promoting critical thinking, integrate engaging activities with shorter lesson.

Integrating technology into teaching has helped Generation Alpha students a lot since it connects their digital skills to more traditional ways of teaching. Teachers employ educational applications, multimedia presentations, and interactive platforms to make their classes more engaging and help students learn in a way that works best for them. To keep teaching methods up-to-date and useful, this method needs professional development, workshops, and reflective practices. Dividing lessons into shorter, more varied activities keeps things engaging and stops them from being boring. Tasks that encourage inclusivity help people work together, understand each other, and respect each other. Tasks that promote critical thinking help people become more independent and learn how to evaluate information. Teachers employ interactive simulations, problem-solving software, and online debates to make learning more engaging. Finally, fun, interesting, and activity-based methods cater to Generation Alpha's short attention spans and love of hands-on learning.

3.7 Ways to Maintain Balance between Using Traditional Approaches and Digital Approaches in Discipline and Teaching

Presented in this section were the themes drawn from the responses to the specific question 3.2 'How do you maintain balance between using traditional approaches and digital approaches in discipline and teaching?' The following themes were created: setting objectives and teaching tools, identified students' needs, technology

integration, blend traditional teaching methods, using clear and consistent rules, incorporating stories and hands-on activities.

Setting clear goals and leveraging current technology are two important parts of the strategy for teaching and learning well for Generation Alpha learners. Teachers need to be aware of what their pupils need and change their education to meet those requirements. It's important to find a balance between old and new ways of doing things. For discipline and a regulated learning environment, there must be clear rules and fun digital rewards. Adding stories and hands-on exercises is also beneficial for Generation Alpha students since it combines old and new ways of teaching.

3.8 Classroom Management Strategies Developed to Deal with the Challenges Generation Alpha Learners Present

The themes in the section were coming from the specific research question 3.3 'What classroom management strategies have you developed to deal with the challenges Generation Alpha learners present?' The responses generated eleven themes: social activities, collaborative learning activities, engaging activities, clear communication, adaptation of differentiated instruction, establish clear expectations, technology integration, seating arrangements, project and choice-based learning, setting clear rules, positive reinforcement.

To help Generation Alpha students learn how to work together, get along with others, think critically, and be together, they need structured social activities, collaborative learning activities, fun activities, clear communication, adapted instruction, clear expectations, flexible seating arrangements, and positive reinforcement. They like clear directions and quick feedback; therefore, teachers should change their lessons to fit the different ways that their students learn. For an effective, organized, and predictable learning environment, it's important to have clear expectations and seating configurations that can be changed. In Generation Alpha classrooms, positive reinforcement is especially important for getting kids to do their best and behave well.

3.9 Learning Gained about Generation Alpha Learners that Surprised or Changed Perspective on Teaching

The results in this section were taken from the responses to the specific research question 4.1 'What have you learned about Generation Alpha learners that has surprised you or changed your perspective on teaching?' under the 4th major research question, The following were the themes drawn from the responses: unique characteristics, support and understand, quickly adapt to new technology, go with the flow, they value empathy and self-awareness, collaboration over competition, understanding their learning preferences.

Students in Generation Alpha are different from other generations, which has changed how teachers think and teach. They need help and understanding, can quickly learn how to use new technology, and prefer visual and interactive content to text. They show emotional and social intelligence by valuing empathy and self-awareness. They value working together more than competing, and they do better in groups than alone. Teachers need to know how to use technology, social media, and the internet to connect with people all over the world. They also need to come up with hands-on, individualized, and interesting ways for students to learn.

4.CONCLUSION

Given that this study focuses on understanding generation alpha, it seemed that teachers could take action to address the obstacles and issues they face in the classroom. In the context of comprehending generation alpha, the results of this study could help identify areas in which teachers' professional growth could be improved. As a researcher, I believed that the adage "learning is a lifetime process" holds true in this context.

Before anything else, educators should embrace technology in both their classrooms and personal lives. This was because traditional methods of instruction, such as lectures and chalk-talk, were no longer effective.
Firstly, in the digital world's reality. Alpha generation members were exposed to the digital world at a young age. This changed the way people learn. They all knew how to use digital devices. They used a variety of digital tools and applications to showcase their creative abilities. Second, because students could participate actively in the learning process, collaborative learning emerged as the most successful teaching strategy in this study as a result of the modified learning style. Because it contrasted with their experiences in the digital world, they adored collaborative learning. Lastly, people of generation alpha were usually visual and kinesthetic learners. They loved

group projects, but these teaching methods would work better for them if they were paired with individualized and self-directed instruction.

Moreover, these unfavorable characteristics of generation alpha should be managed by teachers. They struggled to focus and had a short attention span as a result of their continuous exposure to the digital world. Teachers should also communicate clearly because students don't pay attention to rules and expectations that don't align with their digital experiences. They might also find it difficult to engage in non-screen activities. Last but not least, educators should support students by fostering a positive learning atmosphere and giving them chances to engage in physical activities that promote emotional control and help them avoid mood swings brought on by social media and screen time.

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