

An Ethnographic Probe on the Cultural Values and Symbols of Generation Z Students: Implications for Course Contextualization

Ruben Jr. L. Tagare

University of Southern Mindanao, Kabacan, Cotabato, Philippines

Email: tagareruben@usm.edu.ph

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Abstract

This research aimed to look into the cultural values and symbols of Generation Z Students as implications for contextualizing Physical Education courses in one of the leading State Universities in the Philippines to make learning more engaging and responsive to the needs and interests of students. This research employed a qualitative ethnographic research design with 205 research participants who participated in focus group discussions, extensive field observations, in-depth interviews, and field notes. The findings revealed seven (7) cultural values, namely: bonding, relaxing, able to share, knowing how to get along, updated with trends, being aware of surroundings, and open-mindedness; and three (3) symbols: gadget, online games, and social media were identified as essential implications in the contextualization of Physical Education course. This resulted in the conceptualization of a contextualized course syllabus in Tertiary Physical Education as a potential reference for effective delivery of instruction in Tertiary Physical Education.

Keywords: Course Contextualization, Cultural Values, Generation Z Students, ethnographic research, generation symbols, curriculum enhancement

Introduction

Culture is a shared practice that encompasses a system of language, communication, values, and beliefs that has evolved over time. Sociologists consider culture to be a community's collective contribution, which includes artifacts and images shared by a group and are regarded as distinct representations and identities of their culture. According to Lewis (2010), to fully comprehend why a particular group of people behaves and lives the way they do, it is essential first to investigate their culture. The education sector began studying school culture for few years because it offers tangible solutions to current issues affecting teachers, administrators, and the entire school community. This is empirical for curriculum developers and educators to consider in studying to better understand the culture of today's students as a tool to create a root in designing a better curriculum content tailored with the trends of their generation, responsive to their needs, and matches with the students' preferences (Kennedy, 2010).

Between 1995 and 2010, Generation Z was born (Rothman, 2016). Their age is considered remarkable in many respects, as they regard computers, the internet, and technology as more than just a tool, but as an integral part of their lives. Generation Z students are digital natives adaptable and intelligent yet impatient, immature, and egocentric mammals. Since their first arrival in higher education institutions, they have gained a lot of attention because of their distinct features and prominent behaviors. However, despite being more intelligent, more adaptable, and accommodating to different cultures, they face challenges and issues that will be significant concerns for many industries in the coming years (Singh, 2014).

In the United States, academics made necessary changes to their teaching methods to make it more immersive and experiential. Scholars also discovered that the Generation Z students' distinct and exceptional qualities pose a challenge in the conventional classroom system. Educators now realize that the traditional teaching-learning approach is no longer appropriate or relevant to these students (Skiba and Barton, 2006).

Since 2018, Philippine Higher Education Institutions like the University of Southern Mindanao, a prestigious state university in the Philippines, has admitted Generation Z students to its tertiary programs. Because of the significant Philippine Educational Reform that was first introduced in 2013, they were also the pioneering products of K to 12 curricula. With the arrival of these new waves of students in the classroom, a problem with the growing number of dropouts in Tertiary Physical Education has arisen, and it has been identified as a significant issue that must be tackled. From the First Semester of 2018 to the Second Semester of 2020, the data on the increasing number of dropped-out students in the institution is shown in Figure 1.

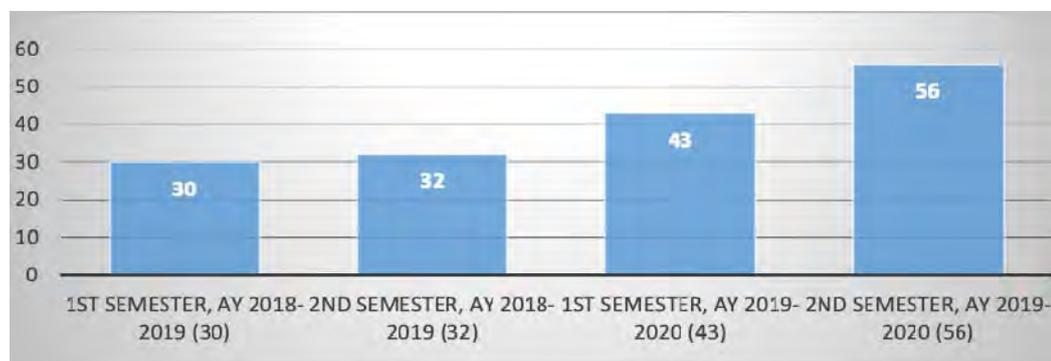


Figure 1. Total number of dropped-outs in Physical Education classes in the University of Southern Mindanao, Philippines. Data source: Information and Communication Technology Office, 2020.

In earlier months of 2020, an investigation was conducted to provide a clear answer to this issue by identifying the flaws in the delivery of Tertiary Physical Education in the said school, as seen through the eyes of Generation Z. The investigation revealed three (3) major concerns that affect students' performance and motivation in Physical Education classes: duplication of learning experiences in their Tertiary Physical Education with their Senior High School Physical Education; Physical Fitness Test standards are too high, making it stressful for them; and Physical Education take-home tasks are very time-consuming. Furthermore, apart from the students' difficulties, the curriculum quality of the current Tertiary Physical Education of the University was found to be one of the leading factors in the rising number of drop-out students. As a result of this research, it is suggested that the existing curriculum be revisited and revised and consider contextualizing the course content by incorporating the local notions of Generation Z students (Tagare & Villaluz, 2021).

Because of the country's geographical context, contextualization is strongly encouraged in the Philippines. The country is known for being the cradle of diverse ethnicity and culture that varies from one island to the next through its bodies of water and rich topographies. Hence, the needs in urban areas differ from the needs in rural areas. The Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST) 2017 and Republic Act 10533 (Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013) strengthened teachers' position in transforming curriculum material into contextually appropriate learning experiences for a more meaningful teaching-learning process through scientific contextualization. The following are excerpts from legal bases that support course contextualization in the Philippines:

Domain 4. Curriculum and Planning of Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (2017)

...This Domain encompasses their ability to translate curriculum content into learning activities that are relevant to students and based on the principles of effective teaching and learning.

Rule II: Curriculum
RA 10533 (Enhance Basic Education Act of 2013)

- c) the curriculum shall be gender and culture-sensitive; and
- d) the curriculum shall be contextualized and global.

With the current problem established, empirical evidence for the need for contextualization, and legal grounds to back it up, this study looked into Generation Z students' cultural values and symbols as a foundation that can be used in improving Physical Education offerings. This study justified how curriculum content can be enhanced by incorporating local knowledge and how learning experiences can be improved by grasping native concepts to tailor education to students' generation patterns, needs, and preferences.

This ethnographic investigation has provided the ideal platform for Generation Z students to express themselves by airing out their thoughts and ideas, which served as the foundation principles for recognizing their cultural values and symbols. Important themes were generated and considered to improve the curriculum content and offering. Curriculum creators, educators, and researchers will use this study as a tool to show how cultural values and symbols can be used for educational enhancement to tailor students' learning experiences to their needs and desires.

Methodology

Research Design

Generation Z students were described as a group of people who shared similar cultural trends and traits. To achieve the goals of this study, the cultural values and symbols of Generation Z Students were investigated using a qualitative ethnographic research design, specifically the realist ethnography, to observe how they act, think, and speak to create a tangible image of them. Realist ethnography is an objective description of the situation, traditionally written in the third-person perspective and based on observational data gathered from participants at a field site (Creswell, 2002).

The researchers spent a significant amount of time in the field for immersion to better observe and explore Generation Z's natural pattern of behavior, which helped them capture Generation Z students' authentic cultural values and symbols.

Research Procedures

The preliminary steps for conducting qualitative ethnographic research were obtaining permission from the head of the schools and getting an informed consent contract from the research participants. After the acquisition of the required documents, the researchers conducted series of orientations to clarify the research's objectives and the risks and benefits of participants' participation. Fieldwork is regarded as the most essential aspect of ethnography. Following the preliminaries,

immersion in the actual study setting provided a more profound and more precise portrait of Generation Z Students' cultural values and symbols.

Furthermore, conducting ethnographic research is said to require the use of an interview. As a result, series of Focus Group Discussions and In-depth Interviews were used as fundamental data collection instruments. To complement the primary data, non-intrusive participant observation and journal writing were used. Speech recorders, video cameras, and journal writing were used to record the responses of the participants. Observing them in their natural habitat and allowing them to openly share their emotions were the most effective methods for capturing the participants' attitudes and thoughts.

Furthermore, in this study, informal and semi-structured guide questions were used in the interviews. These approaches appear to be casual discussions, but they have a clear and implied goal: to learn how Generation Z Students conceptualize and organize their ideas into concrete categories.

Research Participants

Since there are so many Generation Zs in the research community, a purposive sampling approach was used to select the participants. The key participants for this study were 51 Gen Zs from the Laboratory School's Grade 12 Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Strand; 44 Gen Zs from a public secondary school's Grade 12 Humanities and Social Sciences Strand; and 110 Gen Zs from the University of Southern Mindanao. The three (3) schools were all in the same municipality in the Philippines. Thus, for this study, a total of 205 Generation Z Students were used as research participants.

Research Instrument

Since this study relied heavily on informal and semi-structured interviews, open-ended guide questions were used to help capture the participants' responses. In addition, the guide questions were subjected to an ethics review to ensure that no derogatory comments were used that could affect the participants' emotional well-being.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Word analysis, coding, and thematization of concepts were used to analyze and interpret the data. Open codes were created to classify the most important and often discussed words and ideas by the Research Participants. Axial coding was used after the open codes were produced to establish the relationship between concepts and to exclude outlier ideas and words. As a result, essential themes were able to produce. Validation and triangulation were also done to ensure the data's trustworthiness and reliability.

Research Ethics Consideration

The researchers guaranteed that this study strictly followed the necessary ethical standards and the establishment of conformity throughout the process. Furthermore, the involvement of human subjects should strictly adhere to the three (3) principles relevant to research ethics as mentioned in the 1979 Belmont report. These principles are respect to person, beneficence, and justice.

In relation to Respect to Person, the Generation Z Students involved in this study were treated with the highest respect. Their participation in this study is voluntary, as proven in the signed consent form. They will be granted the discretion to withdraw their involvement at any time without any demands of explanation. Aside from that, the privacy and confidentiality of the research participants will be assured. The responses of the participants will be treated with utmost anonymity.

Beneficence is an ethical standard that protects the research participants from any harm. The researchers ensured that the guide questions used in data gathering do not contain derogatory, discriminating, or unacceptable language that could be offensive to the research participants. The researchers did not undergo any activities that would expose them to any physical nor psychological dangers.

Finally, in promoting justice, the researchers conducted orientations to explain the objectives and all undertakings of this research before gathering data.

Results and Discussion

This study aimed to investigate the Generation Z students' cultural values and symbols to use as implications for contextualizing the Physical Education to make it more engaging by making the learning experiences tailored with the learners' needs and interests. The answers of Generation Z Students are illustrated in the discussion below, which was conducted with enough time in the actual study setting for both fieldwork and extensive immersion.

Generation Z Students' Cultural Values

Data gathered from interviews revealed seven (7) frequently dominant cultural values. These are “*bonding*,” “*relaxation*,” “*able to share*,” “*knowing how to get along with others*,” “*being up-dated with the trends*,” “*being aware of your surroundings*,” and “*Open-mindedness*”. The discussions below explain the cultural values of Generation Z Students.

1. Bonding

When the researcher asked the participants about their free time activities in their social spaces or areas where they often congregate, the word “*bonding*” came up repeatedly. According to them, being in the company of their peers creates a supportive environment that helps them to feel healthy, relaxed, and joyful. Based on the participants, bonding provides emotional fulfillment because it allows them to do things that they cannot do at home with their families. In addition, bonding creates real-life learning opportunities for Generation Z students, allowing them to interact more with one another and gradually become more empathetic.

Furthermore, Generation Z Students claimed that everyone wants a decent partner to share both good and bad times in life. As a result, bonding with friends would inspire and enable them to be relieved of personal pressures, personal problems, and academic concerns. Furthermore, bonding gives them a sense of identity and allows them to articulate who they are completely. As a result, they value bonding and spending time with their mates, as shown by the following responses:

“...friends give an individual's emotional fulfillment by bonding because a person learns a lot of things that are beyond what they learned in school...” (GZP - 30)

“...because in bonding, there is the discovery in the identity of an individual. Through bonding, we develop empathy and sympathy towards each other in any way possible.” (GZP - 67)

In general, literature claims that Gen Zs value their friendships and relationships more than previous generations because they are more focused on virtual gatherings, enabling them to become more connected to one another through various social media platforms. It also explains how having a good relationship with trusted friends will improve a person's life and health because it increases their sense of purpose and belonging, reduces their stress, improves their self-worth and self-esteem, helps them cope with traumatic experiences, and influences them to avoid unhealthy lifestyles by motivating them (Kanowitz, 2018).

Furthermore, making time to reconnect with trusted friends is beneficial to a person's overall wellbeing because it acts as a reference in making decisions and a stress reliever during periods of

breakdown. According to studies, individuals with a rich social life are often more likely to live longer than those with fewer friends, according to studies (McCloskey, 2015).

2. *Relaxing*

“*Relaxing*” was frequently mentioned by the research participants every time they were asked about the activities they usually do in their social spaces. According to the Gen Z students, they are experiencing different hardships that caused them stress and restlessness in their daily lives. That includes the bulk of academic tasks and other school-related demands and responsibilities. These reasons made them anxious about things they need to prioritize due to plenty of functions to perform at home and other social obligations. They are also pressured because family and the people that surround them expect too much from them.

With these leading factors causing worries and burdens, Generation Z Students habitually do things and go to places where they can find relaxation and tranquility to escape from the worries of life. Gen Z students also ascertained that they need to be engaged in relaxation, which will help them make their mental, social and emotional health more functional in fighting negativity and boosting optimism. Thus, mental health should always be a priority as it is known to be one of the foundations of good health and a good life. The significance of having activities that can be the source of relaxation for the research participants is illustrated in their responses below.

“...I got free from stress and felt relaxed. My stress is usually caused by academic-related, especially when the requirements are given simultaneously by teachers. Hence, it causes so much pressure.” (GZP -1)

“...despite all the activities that we are doing in school that cause us stress and anxiety, as youths, we also need to relax our minds by unwinding ourselves with things that will relax our minds. Causes of our stresses include unclear schedules and bombarded tasks making us confused on what to prioritize.” (GZP - 74)

The American Psychological Association reported an alarming increase in mental health concerns among Generation Zs over the years. Their being accessible to the internet have caused them to quickly get information and news headlines such as mass shootings, territorial wars, climate change and global warming, rise in suicide rates, separation and deportation of immigrants and migrant families, and widespread sexual harassment and assault reports which considered to be the factors that cause them stresses (Bethune, 2019). A survey conducted by Evans in 2019 revealed that Only half of Gen Zs feel that they are doing good to manage their stresses because nine out of 10 Gen Zs (91 percent) have experienced at least one emotional or physical symptoms of anxiety, such as lacking of interest, motivation or energy (55 percent) and feeling depressed or sad (58 percent).

Global Studies further reveal that Generation Z Students are busy, intelligent, multi-taskers, ambitious, digitally literate, and ethnically diverse (Howe & Strauss, 2003). With this, stress and anxiety are very evident to this generation as they are constantly pressured with the expectations from them coming from their family, peers, and the entire society. Gen Zs were considered exam-obsessed and very much concerned about getting good grades as they perceived this to be their best passport into landing a better job amidst the very competitive workplace.

3. *Able to share*

“*Able to share*” is another concept that the research participants identified as significant. Research participants confirmed this term as a way of expressing their desire to alleviate the burden. They frequently receive valuable pieces of advice every time they disclose problems, which enables them to think logically and critically about possible solutions. It is by sharing that they can cope with the emotional stress they are experiencing; it provides them with a sense of worth since someone is listening to them.

Additionally, the research participants acknowledge their fragility and vulnerability. That people are easily influenced by what the world offers them without considering the consequences of their actions. Hence, they must have someone with whom they can discuss their views, as this acts as a catalyst for self-improvement by offering psychological support and recognizing that they are not alone.

Additionally, the Research Participants are encouraged by the significant experiences of individuals who overcame a more severe ordeal. This demonstrates to them that they, too, are capable of overcoming the same hardship as others. More importantly, through sharing, they make friends and learn how to listen and talk appropriately. Their replies below demonstrate the benefits of sharing:

“... it is critical for us to be able to communicate [our thoughts and feelings] since today's youngsters are fragile, incompetent, and easily affected. It is critical to have someone willing to listen to you since they will serve as your anchor to re-establish your self-esteem. It is indeed quite difficult to confront a challenge alone, and as individuals, we must seek assistance since no man is an island, and we should not keep our troubles to ourselves...” (GZP - 68)

The current data indicate that most countries are currently experiencing an epidemic of loneliness, with the United States topping the list. A survey shows that 50% of American teenagers appeared to be lonely, misfortunate, and dissatisfied with life. While social media is widely seen as a significant benefit to today's students in simplifying their duties, it appears to be the critical component contributing to the lonely emotion of Gen Zs. Jean Twenge, a San Diego University psychology professor, emphasized that Gen Z spends more time online and on social media. As such, studies demonstrated that an emotional disturbance could have a direct effect on an individual's well-being, as science constantly indicates that loneliness is highly associated with poor overall health (Hilliard, 2019).

Being able to express their emotions and listen attentively to their worries will enable the Gen Zs to overcome any obstacles they face. Jager et al. (2015) evaluated the communication needs of adolescents with psychological difficulties and discovered that affective communication is critical in addressing psychological disorders in adolescents. Someone must be able to express their emotions to avoid self-isolation.

4. *Knowing how to get along with others*

Generation Z students enjoy socializing. As a result, their inclination for bonding is based on the value placed on their capacity to get along with persons, situations, events, and occasions with their peers. According to them, students must understand how to interact appropriately with people

because this is the best approach to demonstrate respect and contribute valuable experiences that will build their relationships. The experiences they gained through learning how to get along with others paved the way for them to gain a more in-depth understanding of one another's characteristics and provide positive real-life lessons to apply in the future. As expressed, Generation Z Students demonstrate the ability to get along with their peers:

“I am a Gen Z because I understand how to get along with others. I'm also interested in where and what my pals find pleasurable. You must learn how to get along with your pals since they will also be there to assist you whenever you need assistance.” (GZP - 2)

“...you must learn how to get along with others to avoid being detached from the group. It's beneficial to interact with others since you'll gain experiences, lessons, or something that will make you happy...” (GZP - 81)

According to literature, “*knowing how to get along with others*” is one of the principles taught at home from early childhood to the Filipino people. In the modern era, Filipinos define this as sincere intrinsic gratitude for valuing unity and peace. Instead, they would cooperate with others to ensure that no one is left behind and to help one another than to stand out alone. The Filipino people viewed this value as a practical characteristic necessary for collective advancement and survival by sharing simple items to save money and share information, experience, and networks (Mil, 2012).

Additionally, Filipinos are known worldwide for their hospitality and welcoming nature, with “*knowing how to get along*” serving as a method for Filipinos to demonstrate social acceptance and respect for their neighbors. It is also related to “*bayanihan*” (team spirit), a Filipino concept that refers to communal togetherness and mutual assistance in times of need (Garcera, 2012). For the research participants, the idea of “*knowing how to get along*” connotes the capacity to deal with others appropriately. For them, being able to get along with peers also entails respecting one another's desires, ideas, and views.

5. *Updated with trends*

Being “*updated with trends*” is seen as one of Generation Z's cultural values. Because Gen Zs were born into a world where technology is pervasive and they view the internet and computer as integral parts of their lives rather than as tools (Skiba and Barton, 2006), they need to stay updated with trends because it provides fulfillment and sense of not being left out of current events. Additionally, it enhances their self-confidence by allowing them to feel more at ease in front of others by allowing them to express themselves authentically without violating the styles of the majority. Finally, it is via staying updated with trends that they can adapt to a rapidly changing society. As such, keeping up with the latest inventions, knowledge, and entertainment is believed to be a cultural value for the research participants' generation, as evidenced by the following responses:

“I am a Gen Z because I am updated with trends and have a social media presence. As a result, I can keep up with them.” (GZP - 13)

“I need to be updated with trends to keep up with the rapidly changing society. Because if you are out of step and behind the times, it appears as though you are not doing your part as a youth to socialize and are missing out on opportunities to demonstrate it to yourself.” (GZP - 8)

According to the literature, staying updated on trends is a significant advantage since it raises people's efficiency, boosts their existing skills, helps them become more competitive, and informs them of important early warnings to better plan for the future. In addition, updating oneself with community trends results in increased awareness; it also provides them with the learning necessary to win respect, and following trends will inform people about what will occur tomorrow (Rathore, 2018).

On the other hand, Gen Zs are more trend-savvy due to their familiarity with technology, which enables them to access pertinent information at the tip of their fingers. According to a prior survey, Generation Z is particularly ready and receptive to new experiences, in contrast to earlier generations, which tend to adhere to the classics. Moreover, Generation Z, as the next group emerging to take a more significant role in industries today, recognizes the importance of being informed about what is occurring, providing them with new opportunities for growth and development (Crawley, 2019). For the research participants, *“updated with trends”* refers to keeping abreast of technological advancements with social media platforms and other technologies.

6. *Being aware of your surroundings*

“Being aware of their surroundings” is also included as one of the research participants' cultural values. According to their responses throughout the interview, Generation Z students are aware of their critical position in the community. They are considered one of the nation's hopes and are soon to be the society's next leaders.

Additionally, because they possess fresh thoughts and concepts, being conscious of their surroundings significantly impacts the overall social system. They must open their eyes to see clearly what is good and wrong and develop into more responsible individuals who take responsibility for their own decisions and actions. Thus, being aware of their surroundings demonstrates concern and wants to be mindful of what is going on around them. Their awareness and engagement with social problems are reflected in the following replies from research participants:

“...we must be mindful of our surroundings, particularly those things that we are aware of yet choose to ignore. Additionally, some issues need to be addressed, and we must stand up and fight for what we believe is right.” (GZP - 147)

“.. We must develop an awareness of our surroundings because we recognize that we have significant voices in society and take ownership of our place and rights within it. As a result, increasing our awareness of society's concerns using our voices may significantly impact or change. Not everything can be learned from our elders, as elders may also learn a great deal from today's youth.” (GZP - 85)

According to scholars, Generation Z students have the most significant potential to improve the planet. 77 percent of high school students in the United States are highly interested in volunteer-

ing to gain work experience than only 63 percent of college students. According to labor data, 60% of Gen Zs seek employment with a social impact, compared to 31% of millennials. This indicates that Generation Z is committed to assisting the community in resolving contemporary concerns, even if it requires additional effort. They now have a voice in the country's political system even before they can cast their votes formally (Karpiak, C. and Baril, G., 2008).

Their technological sophistication contributes to their awareness of their surroundings, where news, articles, and blogs are available with a single click. Additionally, they communicate their thoughts and ideas via numerous social media platforms and are enthusiastic advocates for critical societal issues such as violence, education, government policies, and human rights. The concept of being aware of their surroundings suggests that people are mindful of community issues and concerns with various social media platforms and modalities.

7. *Open-mindedness*

The final cultural attribute that Generation Z students associate with their generation is "*open-mindedness*". Generation Z research participants defined open-mindedness as the capacity to be considerate, understanding, and adaptable in their interpretation of concepts to achieve greater insight. They are open-minded individuals because they believe they are still at an age when they need to learn more about life; they need to be teachable, patient and driven to dig for greater wisdom. Additionally, the Gen Zs emphasized that they are not always correct. Thus, people must be receptive and not resistant to avoid being stagnant in life, as they will never grow if they are unable to learn.

Similarly, if one has a linear method of thinking, they will be unable to comprehend the thoughts of others. Being open-minded encourages people to broaden their horizons and establish more profound realizations, paving the way for effective communication and maintaining a harmonious connection with one another. Being open-minded contributes to one's continued education about social trends; it also allows them to experience a greater comprehension level and develop them into more natural individuals. Additionally, they believe that being receptive is a requirement for their generation today. They live in a varied culture where concerns of gender, identity, facts, and information are no longer debatable. Therefore, they regard "*open-mindedness*" as a cultural value, as seen by the excerpts from their comments below:

“...Because we are still at an age where there are many unknowns in life. To learn, we must be teachable and receptive. We are not always correct, and being closed-minded can keep you static as life progresses; you cannot grow if you are unwilling to learn. (GZP - 97)

“...Apart from assisting us in comprehending the viewpoints of others, it also assists us with broadening our thinking and maturing in different areas. To make life calmer and more enjoyable, the way we connect and communicate with others must be open-minded to encourage one another's ideas.”
(GZP - 104)

Current research indicates that Gen Zs are recognized for having wide-open eyes that enable them to share, serve, and make an impact on society and that they have had their eyes open from the start, having grown up in the aftermath of those cataclysms during the war on terror and the Great Recession. Their exposure to various global events and the accessibility of information in front of

their screens were two of the primary reasons they were such open-minded individuals (Spiegel, 2012).

Generation Z's Symbols

Symbols are critical for comprehending the culture of Generation Z Students. Symbols provide hints, indirect indications, and validations as to neither why certain events occur nor why a particular culture behaves in a specific way. Symbols are the basis of human comprehension and serve as a conceptual tool for both knowledge and learning. Symbols aid human understanding of the universe by conveying meanings within a particular culture-sharing group. As evidenced by data acquired, the most meaningful symbols to Generation Z Students are Gadgets, Online Games, and Social Media.

1. Gadgets, Online Games, and Social Media

According to their comments, they view electronics, online gaming, and social media as primary symbols of their generation. Given that they were born into a world where technology was widely available, they value gadgets, online games, and social media equally, as these tools could transform a person and improve their way of life. It enables contact across boundaries and distances, allows them to explore even the most improbable things inside their rooms, can be utilized to expand their creativity and perspective, provides them the opportunity to be innovative and romantic, and has made education accessible globally.

According to the current statistics, Generation Z students spend more time manipulating their mobile phones, notably monitoring their social media accounts, and playing online games for entertainment. The goods of technology, such as electronics, have been so integrated into their lives that even taking a break from their mobile phone would leave them feeling unsatisfied and uneasy. Thus, to pass the time between academic assignments, manipulating their smartphones for social media applications such as online games and Wattpad has become their go-to. As a result, their reliance on devices and social media are reflected in the following responses:

“I am a member of Generation Z because I was born during an industrial era filled with electronic gadgets. I am a member of Generation Z since I utilize my cell phone to acquire much information. Additionally, I utilize social networking and gaming programs.” (GZP - 23)

“...everything we desire is now accessible through our electronics and social media profiles, including our employees, particularly in terms of communication with others. Even nowadays, the online market or shop is convenient, and even if you are simply sitting, you can acquire new items. And now, if you have any queries or encounter something new, Google and the internet are always willing to assist.” (GZP - 64th)

The data corroborates Whiting and Williams' (2013) claim that regardless of ethnic origin, most youths have access to gadgets and that 77% of persons aged 18–24 years old reach for their phones whenever they have spare time, including when they wake up and before going to sleep at night. Facebook was one of the most popular free social media platforms available to teenagers and was the generation's go-to site (Twenge, 2017). Other social media platforms such as Twitter, Insta-

gram, and Snapchat have also grown in popularity and influence among Generation Z. They used these platforms for a variety of reasons; for example, Gen Zs prefer Twitter since it is a social media platform that most parents and guardians do not have and thus allows Gen Zs to express themselves freely (Seemiler & Grace, 2017).

Generation Z Students are also referred to as the iGeneration since they have never known a period without the internet. In the United States, two-thirds of teenagers own an iPhone and check it roughly 80 times a day. While this simplified their life, there are evident drawbacks, including health risks and addiction (Twenge, 2017). In addition, while the Internet allows unlimited access to information that might be beneficial, specific programs and websites teach Gen Zs about self-harm, violence, and abuse, which, if left unsupervised by parents, poses a danger to the Gen Zs (Turner, 2015).

On the other hand, Gen Zs exploited the internet and social media to build their personal brands. They choose to use various social media platforms to establish themselves as young professionals, bloggers, public speakers, and young entrepreneurs by developing a robust online persona (Vitelar, 2019). Internet, social media and gadget use also contribute significantly to meeting social and psychological needs (Taskiran, 2019), as they provide opportunities for relaxation and entertainment (Khan, 2017), facilitate social interaction, provide information, and provide a means of passing the time, as well as serve as a means of communication, a venue for the expression of opinions, and information sharing (Whiting and Williams, 2013). Additionally, it aids in the individual's relaxation, leisure, social interaction, and happiness with everyday activities (Asutin-McCain, 2017).

Conclusions

According to the findings and discussions, this study shows that Generation Z Students value their friends' presence the most, as evident by their interest in bonding, sharing, and knowing how to get along with people. These social components supported them in escaping the stress and assisting them through times of need and life's hardships. Additionally, this study concludes that anxiety and pressure are prevalent among Generation Z Students, causing them to scream for relaxation and time to unwind because of their grade-oriented learning style, the abundance of academic tasks, other school-related responsibilities, and the expectations of their family and society. Additionally, this research concludes that Generation Z Students prioritize being updated with trends as a means of self-fulfillment. They are also keen observers and active participants in societal issues that immediately affect them, as evidenced by their awareness of what is going on in their immediate surroundings.

Additionally, this study reveals that Generation Z Students considered Gadgets, Online Games, and social media as their generation symbols. Their being technological savvy enabled them to generate information and news, which facilitated their hunt for knowledge. However, if left unchecked and unmonitored, they can cause dangers. Finally, this study shows that contextualization is achievable by incorporating Generation Z Students' cultural values and symbols. Their indigenous concepts can be used to inform the enhancement of the curriculum content and overall delivery of the Tertiary Physical Education Program, as well as a powerful tool for tailoring learning experiences to their generation's trends, interests, preferences, and needs.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made considering the study's results and conclusions:

1. Contextualization of courses is essential in today's educational system, notably because they are acquiring a new culture of students with distinct characteristics;

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2. Since Generation Z Students are experiencing stress and pressure, learning experiences in Tertiary Physical Education must incorporate activities that foster bonding, sharing, and relaxation. When developing new course content, curriculum developers must minimize overly competitive learning challenges to alleviate students' anxieties and stresses;

3. To stay updated with trends, curriculum developers could explore incorporating innovative activities for Tertiary Physical Education, such as gamification, adventure education, dynamic exercise, and others well-timed and appropriate to Gen Zs' interests and preferences. Educators may also use community-based activities to keep students informed about what is happening in their immediate environment;

4. Given that Generation Z Students view gadgets, online games, and social media as significant symbols of their generation, Tertiary Physical Education must incorporate learning activities that will support technology as platform for learning;

5. Retooling or skill enhancement is essential for Tertiary Physical Education Instructors to gain the required abilities to deliver a contextualized course in Physical Education. This also enables them to acquire updated competencies and information to satisfy the needs, interests, and preferences of Generation Z Students more effectively; and

6. It is recommended that a functional Instructional Manual be developed and utilized as the official reference for Tertiary Physical Education.

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