

# **Exploring Workplace Relationships and Retention Among Generation Z Teachers: A Transcendental Phenomenological Study**

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# Overview

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# Introduction

## Purpose

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to describe Gen Z teachers' experiences with integrative social contracts within workplace relationships and their effect on retention at K-12 schools in the United States.

**“Communities shape their ethical worlds in such a way that they are not only fair but relevant.”  
(Donaldson & Dunfee, 1999, p. 47)**



# Significance of the Study



Theoretical

“Hypernorms”

Values & Beliefs

(Donaldson & Dunfee, 1999)



Empirical

Add to Knowledge

Aid Education

Professionals

(Aguinis et al., 2020; Dorsey et al., 2022)



Practical

Relationships

Retention

(Bottiani et al., 2019; Dorsey et al., 2022; Herman et al., 2020)

# Research Questions

## Sub-Questions

### Central Research Question

Gen Z Teacher's  
Shared Experiences  
at K-12 Schools



#### Sub- Question 1

Challenges of  
Being Gen Z



#### Sub- Question 2

Changed Values  
Over 1-4 Years



#### Sub- Question 3

Relationships  
& Retention

# Methods

Method	
Moustakas, 1994	Creswell & Poth, 2018
Qualitative Transcendental Phenomenological Method	Manual Coding Triangulation of 3 Data Collection Methods

## Participants & Setting



**Gen Z  
Teacher**  
Born 1997 or later



**K-12**  
School in US

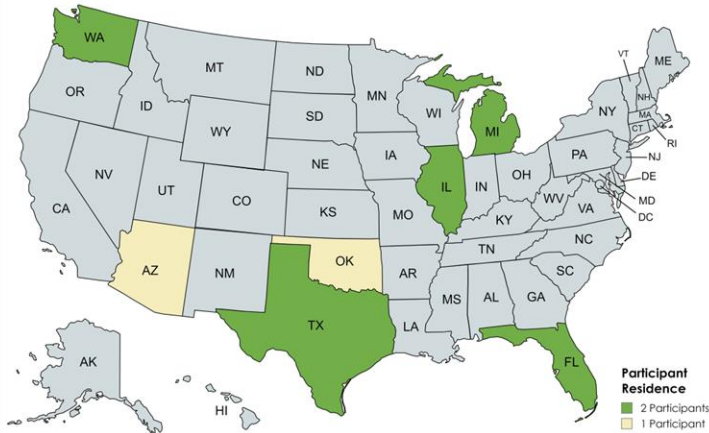


**Experience**  
1-4 years



# Analysis of Data

Figure 1.  
Participants' Residence



Note. From <https://www.mapchart.net/usa.html>

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**11 Questions  
With 12  
Participants**

25–45 min  
(Creswell & Poth, 2018)



**1 Journal  
Prompt  
3 Participants**

60 min  
(Moustakas, 1994)



**1 Session  
10 Questions  
5 Participants**

Emailed  
(Moustakas, 1994)

# Analysis of Data

Table 1.

Teacher and Grade

Grade	Teacher(s)
Elementary	2
Middle	5
High	5

Table 2.

Teacher Age

Age	Teacher(s)
23	5
24	3
25	4



Table 3.

Teacher's Years of Experience

Yrs Exp	Teacher(s)
4	1
3	4
2	3
1	4



# Themes



Relating to the  
Students



Interactions with  
Older Generations



Workplace  
Challenges

**Themes**

**Sub-  
Themes**

(1a) Shared Interests  
and Experiences  
(1b) Emotional  
Awareness

(2a) Learning from Older  
Generations  
(2b) Differences in  
Teaching Styles

(3a) The Need to be Taken  
Seriously  
(3b) Work-Life Balance  
(3c) Effects of COVID-19

# Answers to Research Questions

## Central Research Question

(Shared Experiences)

Teacher-student  
Relationship  
Shared Interests  
Emotional Awareness  
The Need To Feel  
Respected

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## Sub-Questions



### Sub- Question 1

#### Gen Z Teacher Challenges

Be Taken Seriously  
Resistance To DEIB  
Work-life Balance



### Sub- Question 2

#### Changes values over 1-4 years

Initial Openness  
Changed to Caution

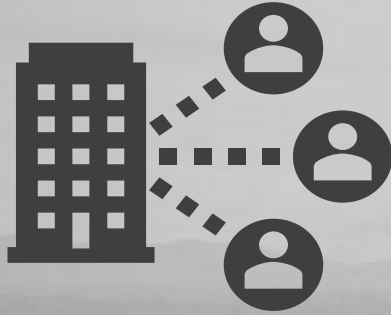


### Sub- Question 3

#### Foster Retention

Advice to New Teachers  
Listen  
Built Connections  
Promote Relationships With  
Older Generations

# Discussion of Findings



## Intergenerational Synergy

**Unique Connection with Students**  
**Bridging Generational Gaps**  
**Values, Concerns, Ambitions Align with Students**

## Supportive Environment

**Support of Administration**  
**Overburdened but Undervalued**  
**Mutual Knowledge Exchange**



# Limitations & Delimitations

Table 1.  
Participants per Grade Taught

Grade	Teacher(s)
Elementary	2
Middle	5
High	5

## Limitations

Mostly middle & high school teachers  
Conflict in recruiting , on Christianity  
No counselors, administrators, or students  
No early childhood or higher education

## Delimitations

Gen Z teachers  
US, K-12 schools  
1-4 years

# Recommendations



## For Practice

Novice & Experienced Teachers Together  
Mentorship Programs



## For Future Research

Longevity, Administrators, & Counselors  
Other Generations  
Early Childhood & Higher Education



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An aerial, grayscale photograph of the Liberty University campus serves as the background. The image shows various university buildings, including a large circular arena on the left, several multi-story academic or administrative buildings in the center and right, and a prominent tall, thin tower in the distance. The word "Questions?" is superimposed in a large, bold, black font with a slight 3D effect and a reflection below it, centered across the middle of the image.

# Questions?

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