PAEDAGOGIA
Jurnal Penelitian Pendidikan
http://jurnal.uns.ac.id/paedagogia

DOI : 10.20961/Paedagogia.v29i2.119105
Vol. 29, No. 2, 2026, pp. 221-234
p-ISSN 0126-4109
e-ISSN 2549-6670

Intergenerational Learning Dynamics and the Perspective Transformation of Generation Alpha Students toward Generation Z Student Teachers

Ayu Rahmawati*, Triana Lestari, Dede Margo Irianto
Department of Elementary Education, Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, Bandung, Indonesia

Keywords: *Generation Alpha, Intergenerational Learning, Student Perspective*

Article history
Received: 14 May 2026
Revised: 5 June 2026
Accepted: 6 June 2026
Published: 30 June 2026

*Corresponding Author Email:
ayurhmwt.25@upi.edu

DOI: 10.20961/paedagogia.v29i2.119105

© 2026 The Authors. This open-access article is distributed under a CC BY-SA 4.0 DEED License

Abstract: The interaction between Generation Alpha students and Generation Z student teachers creates new relational dynamics that may influence how students perceive communication, closeness, and authority in learning. Although this phenomenon is becoming increasingly common in elementary schools, it has rarely been studied from the students' perspective. This study aims to explore Generation Alpha students' responses to intergenerational interactions in elementary schools. Using a qualitative Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) approach within an interpretivist paradigm, the study observed six fifth-grade students and involved student teachers as informants. Data were collected through eight weeks of non-participant observation and semi-structured interviews, and were subsequently analyzed using NVivo through the stages of compiling, disassembling, reassembling, interpreting, and concluding. The data analysis yielded three key themes: (1) Generation Z student teachers are perceived as egalitarian, supportive, and approachable figures; (2) social-emotional attachment enhances students' comfort, participation, and engagement; and (3) intensive closeness shifts the boundaries of the formal teacher–student relationship into a friendship-like relationship, thereby transforming the meaning of authority in the classroom. The findings indicate that intergenerational relationships reshape pedagogical relations in elementary schools. Understanding these dynamics is important for schools, student teachers, and teacher education programs in developing mentoring strategies and policies that balance relational closeness with pedagogical authority.

How to cite: Rahmawati, A., Lestari, T. & Irianto, D. M. (2026). Intergenerational Learning Dynamics and the Perspective Transformation of Generation Alpha Students toward Generation Z Student Teachers. *PAEDAGOGIA, 29*(2), 221-234. DOI: 10.20961/paedagogia.v29i2.119105

INTRODUCTION

The presence of student interns in elementary schools creates a space for intergenerational dynamics between Generation Z university students and Generation Alpha pupils in how they perceive closeness, authority, and respectful attitudes throughout the learning process. According to Albar et al. (2023), student teacher internship programs are one effort to strengthen prospective teachers' competencies through real field experience. Although such interactions have the potential to strengthen closeness in learning, they also influence how students interpret authority, instructions, and pedagogical relationships in the classroom. Intergenerational interactions encourage differences in communication patterns as well as responses to authority, which are shaped by social experiences, values, and communication habits formed through societal development, according to Mendez Mendez (as cited in Lase & Daeli, 2020). Intergenerational relationships develop within a digital environment that encourages more interactive, responsive, and flexible communication (Nurul Sukma Lestari & Millenia, 2022). These similarities have the potential to shape new patterns of closeness in learning and influence how students perceive educators.

Research on student interns in elementary schools generally focuses on the development of pedagogical competencies, teaching readiness, contributions to learning, and various challenges encountered during teaching practice (Adilah et al., 2025); Aliyyah et al. 2024; Aniyati, 2024; Yessi Wijayanti, et al., 2021). Other researchers studying teacher–student relationships have shown that warm and supportive relationships contribute to students' engagement, motivation, and well-being (Poling et al.,

2022) The student voice perspective emphasizes the importance of understanding educational experiences from the students' point of view, as those who directly experience the learning process (Caetano et al., 2020).

Although many studies have examined the experiences of student interns as well as teacher–student relationships, previous research has not explained how students develop relational closeness with student interns, nor how these cross-generational interactions shape students' understanding of pedagogical relationships and learning authority. This study places students at the center of the analysis to understand their experiences in intergenerational interactions. The phenomenon was observed in a private elementary school in Bandung City that intensively involved student interns in daily learning activities. The presence of the interns encouraged the formation of closer relationships compared to those between students and their classroom teachers. Teachers continued to be viewed as authoritative figures, while the interns tended to be perceived as more relaxed and non-hierarchical. In the teaching and learning process, respectful attitudes were reflected through various student responses, such as listening to instructions, accepting guidance, responding positively to reprimands, using polite language, and showing attentiveness during learning activities. However, in reality, the relationships established between students and interns encouraged different forms of responses compared to student interactions with classroom teachers (Isbakhi et al., 2025). This condition indicates a shift in how students interpret learning relationships and classroom authority, suggesting that intergenerational interactions in learning are associated with students' social and affective development.

In their study, Nurdian et al. (2025) emphasized that if these interaction dynamics are not deeply understood, the learning process risks focusing solely on academic aspects without paying attention to students' social development and affective dynamics. The importance of this study lies in the position of elementary school students, who are currently in a phase of social and emotional development. Therefore, this research aims to explore the lived experiences of Generation Alpha students in interacting with Generation Z student interns and to understand how these interactions shape relational closeness, communication patterns, and students' interpretations of pedagogical relationships and learning authority in elementary schools. The findings of this study are expected to contribute to the development of internship programs that are more responsive to students' relational needs and to enrich the understanding of cross-generational interaction dynamics in elementary education practices.

METHOD

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative approach within an interpretivist paradigm, selected to understand the subjective meanings constructed by participants based on their experiences and interactions between Generation Alpha and Generation Z. The study applied Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), which focused on exploring participants' lived experiences and how they interpret those experiences in the context of everyday life (Shahzad et al., 2025).

Participants

The study was conducted at SD Laboratorium UPI Cibiru, Bandung Regency, West Java. Participants were selected using a purposive sampling technique based on considerations of active involvement in intergenerational interactions, consisting of six fifth-grade students representing Generation Alpha, while student interns served as supporting informants. The selection of students was based on the intensity of their interactions with the student interns during the learning process, thereby enabling a more in-depth exploration of experiences related to the dynamics of intergenerational relationships in the classroom.

Data Collection

Data collection began with obtaining permission from the school, classroom teachers, and students' parents, with participant identities anonymized to maintain data confidentiality. Subsequently, observations were conducted over eight sessions to document patterns of interaction, communication, participation, and student responses during the activities. Afterward, semi-structured interviews were carried out to explore their subjective experiences, emotional responses, and interpretations of their

interactions with the student interns (Figure 1).

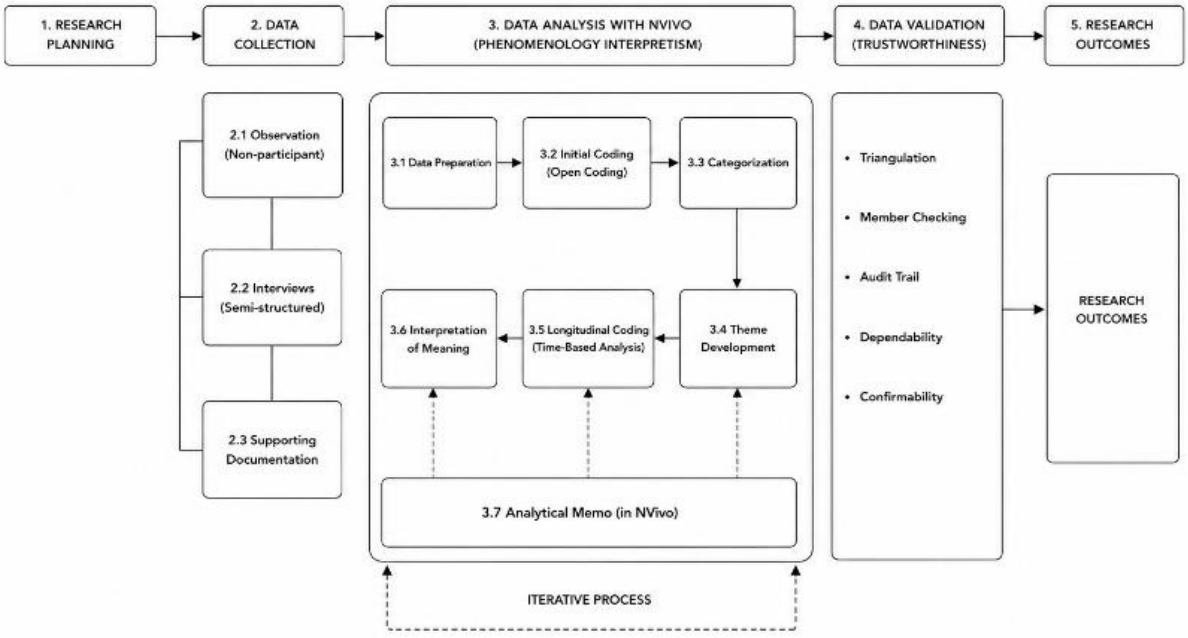

Figure 1. Research Method Flow

Research Instruments

The research instruments consisted of an observation guide and a semi-structured interview guide developed based on the research focus to identify communication patterns, forms of participation, responses to instructions, emotional expressions, and relationship dynamics. The interview guide was designed to explore students' perceptions, and the research instruments underwent a validation process by three experts according to their respective areas of expertise. Data credibility was strengthened through triangulation, member checking, analytical memos, audit trails, and peer debriefing throughout the research process.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted iteratively using NVivo software through the stages of compiling, disassembling, reassembling, interpreting, and concluding, adapted from a qualitative data analysis approach (Waruwu, 2024). During the compiling stage, all observation, interview, and documentation data were transcribed verbatim and organized as an analytical database. The disassembling stage was carried out through open coding to identify units of meaning representing students' socio-emotional experiences and behavioral changes that emerged in intergenerational interactions based on interview and observational data. During the reassembling stage, the generated codes were grouped into categories and themes using the node feature in NVivo. Analysis of the development of interactions over time during the observation period was applied to identify changes in relationships, participation patterns, and interaction dynamics according to Miles (as cited in Shahzad et al., 2025). Subsequently, the interpreting stage was conducted to interpret the essential meanings of participants' experiences. The interpretation process was strengthened through analytical memoing as a means of analytical reflection, examining relationships among themes, and tracing conceptual development throughout the research process, according to Miles (as cited in Shahzad et al., 2025). The concluding stage was carried out through thematic synthesis to formulate the essence of students' experiences in intergenerational interactions comprehensively. Data credibility was strengthened through data triangulation between observations and interviews, supported by member checking, analytical memos, and an audit trail as proposed by (as cited in Shahzad et al., 2025).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The findings indicate that the presence of student teachers introduced a distinctive new dynamic

in the form of social interactions that shaped different types of relationships between students and teachers, as well as between students and student teachers. This finding supports Lopez et al. (2023), who argued that Generation Z tends to prefer interactive, multimodal, and game-based learning approaches, thereby facilitating the development of interpersonal relationships within learning interactions. These occurrences highlight the importance of educators' classroom management competencies in fostering the quality of interpersonal relationships in the classroom (Jennings et al., 2020). The findings further revealed that interpersonal closeness developed into a more egalitarian socio-emotional understanding, which subsequently influenced the transformation of behavioral responses and classroom learning dynamics, leading students to perceive student teachers as friends or older siblings. This is consistent with research suggesting that both Generation Z and Generation Alpha demonstrate adaptive and collaborative communication tendencies that are shaped by a more informal digital interaction culture (George et al. 2024).

The findings are grounded in the Intergenerational Learning (IGL) framework developed by Matthew Kaplan, which encompasses reciprocal knowledge exchange, collaborative engagement, mutual respect, empathy, and perspective taking, and attitude change (Rahimi et al., 2023; Le & Pham, 2025; Aznar-Díaz et al., 2023). However, the IGL framework underwent a reconceptualization into a new relational construct that is more contextualized to the findings of this study. This study is further supported by the concepts of social presence and relational pedagogy. A visualization illustrating the relationships among these findings comprehensively is presented in Figure 2.

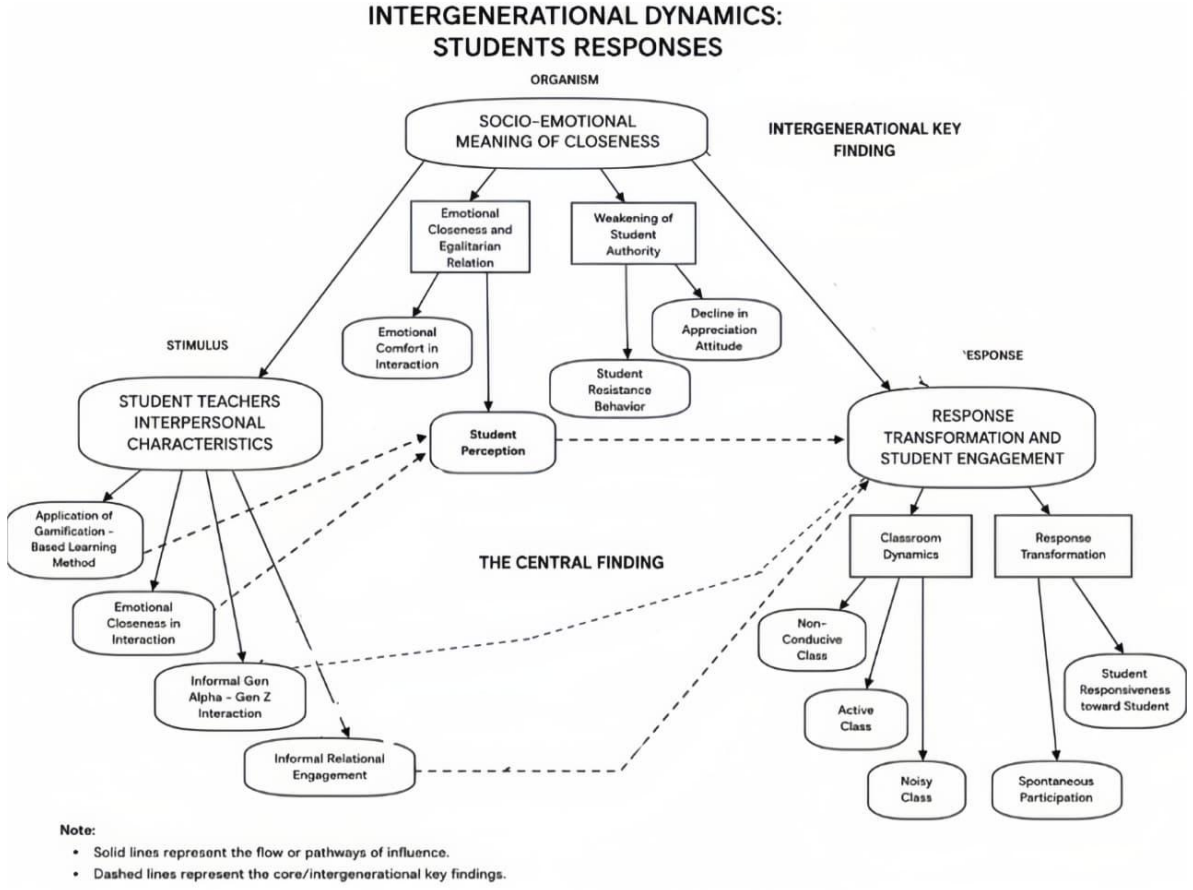

Figure 2. Framework Research IGL Dynamics by NVivo

Figure 2 illustrates the process of student transformation that emerged through three major findings: Student Teachers' Interpersonal Characteristics, Socio-Emotional Meaning of Closeness, and Student Response Transformation, which form a continuous sequence. First, students responded to the interpersonal characteristics of student teachers through the development of emotional and relational closeness. This closeness evolved into socio-emotional meanings that influenced students' perceptions of the role of student teachers in the classroom, subsequently leading to changes in students' attitudes,

engagement, and behaviors during the learning process. This process represents the stages of student response transformation within intergenerational interactions in the classroom environment.

Student Teachers' Interpersonal Characteristics

Addressing the research objective of exploring intergenerational interactions, this theme describes students' interpretations of the interpersonal characteristics of student teachers during the learning process. The findings indicate that interpersonal dimensions consistently fostered relational closeness through four primary forms of interaction: the use of gamification-based learning methods, emotional closeness, informal cross-generational interactions, and more relaxed relational engagement (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Hierarchical Student Teachers' Interpersonal Characteristics

a. Application of Gamification-Based Learning Method

Five of the six participants stated that the use of games, interactive quizzes, and challenge-based activities was the aspect they enjoyed most in learning with student teachers. Observational data collected over several weeks also indicated increased student participation when game elements were integrated into the learning process. One student stated, "It was fun because we usually started with a game first" (Interview, Student 1). This statement was supported by observational findings showing that "Students appeared more active, and the classroom atmosphere became more lively" (Observation, 4).

These findings suggest that gamification functioned not only as a learning strategy but also as a means of fostering interpersonal closeness between student teachers and students. This interpretation is consistent with Mahmubi et al. (2025), who explained that gamification can enhance interactive learning. The game-based activities implemented by student teachers helped reduce interactional distance, allowing learning relationships to become less hierarchical and evolve into more collaborative and participatory interactions, with gamification serving as a medium of intergenerational relational engagement.

b. Emotional Closeness in Interaction

Interactions between student teachers and students developed into closer emotional relationships. This closeness was established through casual communication, warm responses, and informal interactions during the learning process. Five of the six participants reported feeling happy, comfortable, and more open when interacting with student teachers. Observational findings also indicated that, beginning in the third week, students actively approached student teachers to talk about various topics beyond academic learning (Observation, 3). These findings were supported by interview data, in which one student stated, "I was happy because there was someone new" (Interview,

Student 1).

These data demonstrate that the interactions evolved into socio-emotional relationships. Within the IGL framework, this phenomenon can be understood through the dimension of empathy and perspective-taking, which emphasizes the ability to understand emotional needs and social perspectives in intergenerational interactions. The findings suggest a more flexible and responsive approach toward students, creating a sense of comfort throughout the interaction process. This is consistent with Social Presence Theory developed by John Short, which posits that individuals with a high level of social presence tend to be perceived as warmer, closer, and more emotionally real in social interactions, reflecting the position of student teachers in this study. Furthermore, (Rezeki & Sari 2025) emphasized that the quality of emotional relationships between educators and students influences learning comfort and student engagement in the classroom, indicating that student teachers contributed to creating a sense of safety and comfort for students throughout the learning process.

c. Informal Gen Alpha–Gen Z Interaction

All participants demonstrated informal interactions with student teachers that extended beyond the context of formal learning. These informal interactions developed through generational cultural similarities and the influence of digital culture, resulting in communication that was more fluid than the formal pedagogical relationship typically found between teachers and students. Communication occurred through informal conversations about everyday digital activities, as reflected in the observation notes stating that "Students initiated conversations about trends and learning beyond school" (Observation, 2). This evidence was further supported by interview data, in which a student stated, "Often, we talk about Roblox games" (Interview, Student 1).

The findings indicate that communication between student teachers and students evolved from a formal academic context into a more informal relationship. From the perspective of IGL, this phenomenon represents reciprocal exchange, a process of two-way interaction that enables both generations to develop more egalitarian communication. These findings can also be understood through the communication characteristics of both groups, which share relatively similar social references and digital cultural backgrounds. Lopez et al. (2023) explained that similarities in digital culture contribute to shaping intergenerational communication throughout the learning process.

d. Informal Relational Engagement

Relational closeness that extended beyond formal pedagogical relationships fostered more intensive interactions between student teachers and students, as reflected in students' increasing sense of comfort when interacting with student teachers. Five of the six students reported that they felt more comfortable asking questions to student teachers because the communication felt more relaxed and less intimidating. One student stated, "Sometimes I ask the student teacher because it feels more relaxed" (Interview, Student 5). This statement was supported by observational data indicating that "Interactions between students and student teachers appeared more relaxed compared to the first week" (Observation, 2). The findings demonstrate a transformation from a formal academic relationship into a closer interpersonal relationship.

Based on Social Presence Theory proposed by John Short, student teachers were perceived by students as figures who created a more emotionally accessible interactional space, thereby reducing psychological distance between generations. These findings are consistent with the idea that relational closeness can enhance communication comfort within the learning process (Hahn et al. (2020).

Socio-Emotional Meaning of Closeness

In line with the research objective of examining how intergenerational interactions foster relational closeness and shape students' interpretations of pedagogical relationships, this theme illustrates how interpersonal closeness generated complex socio-emotional meanings. Five of the six participants described student teachers as figures who were emotionally close and more egalitarian than formal teachers, thereby creating a greater sense of comfort during the learning process, including learning behaviors within a dynamic learning environment (Edmondson & Bransby., 2023). However, the egalitarian relationship that developed between them also resulted in a weakening of student teachers'

academic authority in the classroom (Karyadi et al., 2026). Figure 4 shows that this theme was formed through two main dimensions: (1) the development of emotional closeness and egalitarian relationships, and (2) the weakening of student teachers' authority within the learning process.

Figure 4. Socio-Emotional Meaning of Closeness

Emotional Closeness and Egalitarian Relation

a. Emotional Comfort in Interaction

Almost all participants reported feeling more comfortable during learning activities with student teachers than when learning with regular teachers. Observational data from the third to the eighth week also indicated that students increasingly approached student teachers to ask questions, joke, and engage in informal conversations. One student stated, "So it doesn't feel too serious" (Interview, S2), while observational data showed that students began to treat student teachers like friends in certain learning situations (Observation, 7).

These conditions indicate the presence of emotional safety in the learning environment, where students felt more confident to participate, speak, and express themselves throughout the learning process. Emotional safety enabled students to engage more actively because interactions were not dominated by formal pressures (Edmondson & Bransby., 2023). This study also demonstrates the presence of social presence, in which student teachers were perceived as personally and emotionally present, allowing interactions to become closer and positioning them as sources of emotional support.

b. Student Perception toward Student Teacher

Four of the six participants demonstrated a shift in their perceptions of student teachers, viewing them as older siblings or friends with whom they shared a closer emotional connection. One student stated, "It feels like having a friend" (Interview, S1), while observational data indicated that students began interacting with student teachers using more relaxed and egalitarian communication patterns (Observation, 7).

These findings suggest the occurrence of relational reframing, referring to a shift in how students perceived the position of student teachers, from a vertical relationship toward a more horizontal one. This transformation indicates that interpersonal closeness altered the relational structure within the learning process. Consistent with IGL theory, the relatively close age range and intergenerational characteristics foster relational proximity, resulting in more egalitarian relationships. This finding is also in line with the idea that such relationships emerge as hierarchical boundaries in learning become less pronounced due to increased emotional closeness (Fitzpatrick, 2024). This phenomenon reflects relational reframing, whereby students redefined student teachers from figures of formal pedagogical authority to more horizontal interpersonal figures.

Weakening of Student Authority

a. Student Resistance Behavior

Four of the six participants reported that the relaxed learning atmosphere caused students to become less focused and engage in more frequent conversations during the learning process. Observational findings also indicated that students did not always respond immediately to instructions given by student teachers (Observation, 8). One student stated, “Sometimes it makes us less focused as well” (S6), while another explained that “My friends talk more often” (S4).

These findings indicate the presence of ambivalence, whereby the relationships that developed contributed to a reduction in student teachers’ social control. From a Classroom Management perspective, instructional authority is established not only through interpersonal relationships but also through the maintenance of appropriate relational boundaries (Wolff et al., 2021). In practice, however, comfortable relationships generated an ambivalence between engagement and control.

b. Decline in Appreciation Attitude

The findings indicate that these relationships influenced students’ attitudes toward respect and compliance. Three to four participants reported that, in this context, rules and instructions were not always followed immediately. This is reflected in the observation data, which state that “Some students did not always follow student teachers’ instructions directly” (Observation, 5). These findings suggest a shift in students’ patterns of compliance with the directions provided. The observational data were supported by interview findings, in which one student stated, “It’s pretty nice because with student teachers we have more freedom” (Interview, Student 1).

These findings suggest that egalitarian relationships may blur pedagogical boundaries within the learning process. As student teachers were increasingly perceived as friends, their instructional legitimacy also began to weaken in certain situations (McHugh & Igou, 2025). The findings indicate that the dimension of reciprocal engagement within IGL was transformed into a more informal and egalitarian interactional space. Consequently, students’ respect and compliance declined, demonstrating how intergenerational relationships can influence relational structures and patterns of compliance within the social context of learning.

Response Transformation and Student Engagement

Figure 5. Conceptual Map of Response Transformation and Student Engagement

Regarding the impact of relational closeness and communication patterns on students’ learning experiences, this section examines how the socio-emotional relationships that developed influenced students’ responses, engagement, and participation throughout the learning process. Figure 5 illustrates

that, on one hand, the classroom became more active and open, while on the other hand, close relationships had the potential to create a noisier and less conducive learning environment. This finding is consistent with research on self-disclosure among Generation Z, which emphasized that interpersonal openness, a sense of safety, and positive responses serve as the foundation for the development of trust and emotional closeness in long-term relationships (Febrina & Taryono, 2025). This process contributed to the transformation of students' responses during the learning process.

Classroom Dynamics

Five participants described the classroom atmosphere as more active, communicative, and open compared to learning with regular teachers. Field data revealed that students tended to be more active during the learning process, with several observation sessions showing that "Students appeared more active in responding to student teachers' questions than during formal classroom instruction" (Observation, 6). Meanwhile, interview data indicated that students felt "more relaxed with student teachers," which made them "more confident in answering questions" (Interview, Student 3).

These findings demonstrate that students' responses changed not only in terms of participation frequency but also in their confidence during classroom interactions. This phenomenon reflects student engagement that developed through relational engagement, as explained in Intergenerational Learning (IGL) theory. Similarity in age and communication styles fostered more horizontal communication and reduced formal pressures within the learning environment. This finding is consistent with the concept of relational pedagogy, which emphasizes that meaningful learning engagement develops through pedagogical relationships that are inclusive, participatory, and built upon relational closeness between educators and students (Hickey & Riddle, 2024). The pedagogical informality observed in this study appeared to make students more comfortable and willing to participate actively throughout the learning process.

a. Active Class

Four of the six participants demonstrated increased engagement during learning activities with student teachers. Observational findings confirmed that "Students competed to answer questions posed by the student teachers" (Observation, 4). These findings indicate a shift in students' response patterns from passive to competitive-participatory. Most participants associated this engagement with a learning atmosphere that was enjoyable and non-threatening. In the interviews, students explained that learning with student teachers was "more fun" because "there were lots of games and the conversations were enjoyable too" (Interview, Student 2).

These findings confirm that student engagement emerged because learning was perceived as an enjoyable social experience. This reflects student engagement that developed through the affective experience of interacting with student teachers, driven by students' enthusiasm. Such enthusiasm was fostered through a gamification-based learning approach, which functioned as a relational medium that strengthened social connections. This finding provides evidence that intergenerational learning becomes more effective when learning experiences are built through interactions that are relevant to the characteristics of the students' generation.

b. Non-Conducive and Noisy Class

Although it increased student engagement, the more relaxed classroom dynamics also created challenges in learning management. Four of the six participants reported that learning with student teachers felt more relaxed and less restricted than learning with regular teachers. Observational findings indicated that "The classroom atmosphere became quite noisy on several occasions when student teachers implemented game-based learning activities" (Observation, 5; 7). Interview data further confirmed that students felt "more free with student teachers," which meant that they "talked more often as well" (Interview, Student 4). These findings suggest that increased engagement was not always accompanied by improved classroom order and demonstrate that overly flexible learning approaches may shift students' focus away from learning tasks.

These findings confirm that highly horizontal intergenerational relationships are closely associated with shifts in the meaning of authority. Consistent with relational pedagogy, communication openness serves as an indicator of student engagement while also having the potential to become a source of social distraction (Hickey & Riddle, 2024). Ultimately, these findings

indicate that engagement in intergenerational learning is complex and is not always synonymous with classroom order.

Responses Transformation

a. Student Responsiveness toward Student Teacher

Five of the six participants demonstrated increased responsiveness toward student teachers throughout the observation period. Field observations indicated that "Students responded more quickly to student teachers' questions and instructions compared to the early weeks of observation" (Observation, 6). This finding was supported by interview data, in which one student explained that they had "already felt comfortable" with the student teachers, making it "easier to talk and answer questions" (Interview, Student 2). This suggests that students' openness emerged through emotional experiences during interactions with student teachers and developed gradually as their sense of comfort increased.

This condition reflects intergenerational responsiveness within the IGL perspective, particularly in relation to relational presence in learning, whereby student teachers functioned as social figures whose presence in the learning environment was perceived as close and enjoyable by students. This responsiveness was influenced by the quality of the interpersonal relationships established between student teachers and students. Consequently, the findings clearly demonstrate that transformation was formed and developed throughout the process of intergenerational interaction.

b. Spontaneous Participation

Four of the six participants demonstrated greater spontaneity during learning activities with student teachers. Field observations indicated that "Students spontaneously joked with student teachers on several occasions during the learning process" (Observation, 7). In addition, "Interactions were more relaxed compared to learning activities with the classroom teacher" (Observation, 8). Supporting evidence from the interviews revealed that students perceived interactions with student teachers as "like talking to an older sibling" and that they felt "more free with student teachers" (Interview, Student 3).

These findings suggest that student teachers were perceived as part of students' social space, fostering more horizontal communication. Within the IGL framework, this condition can be understood as the development of informal relationships, in which intergenerational connections evolve through interpersonal relationships with minimal hierarchical boundaries. This occurred because students perceived it as easier to establish informal social connections with student teachers. The findings indicate that student engagement is developed through emotional connections. Therefore, the response transformation observed in this study demonstrates that engagement in intergenerational learning was shaped through personal relationships.

Relational Transformation in Intergenerational Classroom Interaction

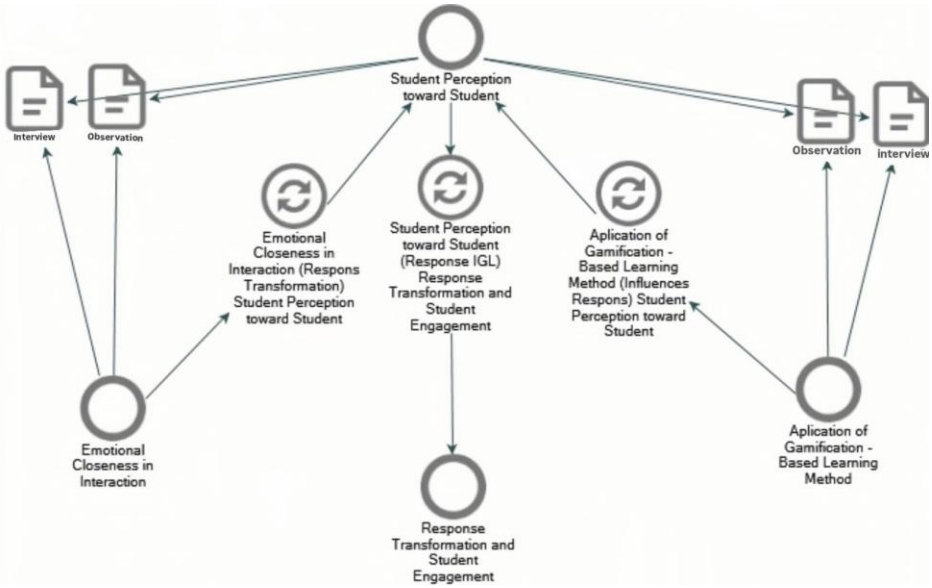

Figure 6. Thematic Relationship Map

As a synthesis of all findings, this theme directly addresses the research objective of understanding how Generation Alpha students perceive pedagogical relationships and instructional authority in their interactions with Generation Z student teachers. The findings indicate the emergence of a more flexible and enjoyable intergenerational learning experience. The study found that students' perspectives were manifested in two primary forms: student teachers as friend-like interpersonal figures and as egalitarian relational figures. Both findings emerged from repeated interpersonal interactions throughout the learning process, which shaped communication patterns and transformed students' perceptions, as illustrated in the following figure.

Figure 6 shows that the intensity of informal interactions, emotional closeness, and flexible communication contributed to the formation of students' perceptions of student teachers as relational figures who were closer and more egalitarian. This relationship indicates that changes in students' perceptions are developed gradually through everyday learning experiences. The thematic relationship pattern is further reflected in the dominant terms that emerged from students' experiences, as visualized in the following word cloud.

Figure 7. Word Cloud by NVivo

Figure 7 demonstrates the prominence of terms such as *familiar*, *relaxed*, *joking*, and *comfortable*, indicating the relational closeness between students and student teachers. The

emergence of the terms *instruction* and *following* suggests that pedagogical functions remained present within the learning interactions. These findings indicate that, over time, pedagogical relationships were no longer perceived as purely hierarchical but were instead shaped through relational experiences developed throughout the learning process. This is consistent with the study by Aspelin (2021), which argued that pedagogical relationships are constructed through relational closeness and interpersonal connectedness between educators and learners. Furthermore, other findings suggest that intergenerational learning is facilitated by similarities in age, social experiences, digital culture, and more flexible intergenerational communication patterns (Fitzpatrick, 2024).

The next transformation identified was the emergence of student teachers as egalitarian relational figures. This relationship led students to perceive themselves as equal individuals within learning interactions, resulting in more horizontal communication patterns. Horizontal communication reflects the development of reciprocal engagement and participatory interaction, enabling relationships to become more flexible and collaborative (Kaplan & Henkin, 2025). This finding is supported by Tunnajah & Saputra, (2026), who explained that changes in communication patterns can shift learning relationships from formal-hierarchical structures toward more informal and egalitarian interactions, thereby creating a more open space for participation.

This condition supports the emergence of blurred pedagogical boundaries between interpersonal relationships and formal pedagogical positions, as described by Aspelin (2021). As a result, the instructional legitimacy of student teachers began to weaken in ambivalent intergenerational situations, potentially reducing pedagogical control and students' compliance with instructional directions. This transformation developed as interpersonal interactions and socio-emotional closeness gradually reconstructed how students perceived student teachers, shifting them from formal pedagogical figures to relational figures who were emotionally and socially closer. Consequently, intergenerational pedagogical relationships evolved into participatory, egalitarian, and ambivalent forms of interaction throughout the learning process, influencing students' attitudes toward respect and compliance.

Research Limitations

This study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, the study was conducted in a single private elementary school; therefore, the interaction dynamics identified in this study should be interpreted with caution when applied to different school contexts. Second, the interview data were obtained from six fifth-grade students selected as research participants, while observational data were collected across eight observation periods. Consequently, the limited number of participants may have influenced the breadth of perspectives captured in the study.

Third, this study specifically focused on the perspectives of Generation Alpha students in interpreting their interactions with Generation Z student teachers. Although this focus was chosen to address the research objectives, future studies could broaden the understanding of intergenerational learning by incorporating the perspectives of classroom teachers, student teachers, and other relevant stakeholders. Furthermore, longitudinal research designs may provide a more comprehensive understanding of the development of intergenerational relationships and the transformation of students' perspectives over time. Therefore, further exploration of the relationship between relational closeness and pedagogical authority in intergenerational learning is needed.

CONCLUSION

This study explored the experiences of Generation Alpha students in interacting with Generation Z student teachers, which were characterized by relationships that were closer, more informal, and more egalitarian than conventional teacher–student relationships. Such closeness was fostered through flexible communication, the use of game-based learning, and shared digital cultural references, which made student teachers more approachable and easily accepted by students. The findings also indicate that intergenerational interactions fostered more open and relational communication patterns, contributing to students' socio-emotional experiences throughout the learning process. This relational closeness transformed the way students perceived pedagogical relationships and instructional authority, leading them to view student teachers as figures who were personally closer, while simultaneously increasing student engagement and responsiveness and making pedagogical authority boundaries more

flexible.

Therefore, this study demonstrates that interactions between Generation Alpha and Generation Z not only foster relational closeness but also transform communication patterns, learning engagement, and students' perceptions of educators in elementary school settings. The findings highlight the importance of student teachers' ability to establish positive interpersonal relationships while maintaining a balance between relational closeness and pedagogical authority. Future research is recommended to examine these findings across different school contexts, educational levels, and subject areas in order to expand understanding of the dynamics of intergenerational learning.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The authors would like to acknowledge Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia and SD Laboratorium UPI Cibiru for their institutional support and permission to conduct this study. The authors also appreciate the professional input provided during the instrument validation process and thank all participants who contributed to this research.

REFERENCES

Adilah, Y. N., Julia, J., & Karlina, D. A. (2025). Keselarasan Pengalaman Magang Mahasiswa PGSD Dengan Pengembangan Kompetensi Pedagogik: Perspektif Mahasiswa Program Magang. *PEDAGOGIKA: Jurnal Pedagogik Dan Dinamika Pendidikan, 3*(2), 29–39. https://doi.org/Doi.Org/10.30598/Pedagogikavol13issue1page108-119

Albar, J., Wibowo, D., & Seran, E. (2023). Program Optimalisasi Mbkm Magang Kependidikan Terhadap Kesiapan Mahasiswa Prodi Pgsd Stkip Melawi Dalam Praktik Mengajar. *Bestari: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Kebudayaan , 4*(1), 47–55. https://doi.org/Doi.Org/10.46368/Bjpd.V4i1.1262

Aliyyah, RR., Cantika Nurfaidah, Castara, TI, & Rahayu, R. (2024). Magang Mahasiswa: Persepsi Guru Sekolah Dasar. *Karimah Tauhid*, *3*(1), 127–143. https://doi.org/doi.org/10.30997/karimahtauhid.v3i1.11598

Aniyati, K. (2024). Pendampingan Magang Pendampingan Magang Mahasiswa Di Sekolah Dasar Islam Terpadu Mutiara Hati Dalam Pengembangan Media Pembelajaran. *Jepkm (Jurnal Pengabdian Kepada Masyarakat) , 05*(02), 89–99. https://doi.org/doi.org/10.30997/karimahtauhid.3i1.11598

Ari Fajar Isbakhi, Widiyatmoko Widiyatmoko, & W. I. (2025). Machine Translated by Google Machine Translated by Google efektif di SD Negeri Taraban 06 . Tujuannya adalah untuk menghasilkan peserta didik yang. *Katalis Pendidikan : Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan Dan Matematika*, *2*(4), 255–262. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.62383/katalis.v2i4.2752

Aspelin, J., & Aspelin, J. (2021). Teaching As A Way Of Bonding: A Contribution To The Relational Theory Of Teaching. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, *53*(6), 588–596. https://doi.org/10.1080/00131857.2020.1798758

Caetano, A. P., Freire, I. P., & Machado, E. B. (2020). Student voice and participation in intercultural education. *Journal of New Approaches in Educational Research*, *9*(1), 57–73. https://doi.org/10.7821/naer.2020.1.458

Edmondson, A. C., & Bransby, D. P. (2023). *Psychological Safety Comes Of Age: Observed Themes In An Established Literature.* Annual Review Organizational Psychology And Organizational Behavior.

Febrina, C., & Taryono, R. (2025). Self-Disclosure Dan Pembentukan Trust Dalam Relasi Interpersonal Mahasiswa Generasi Z. *Dialogia*, *2*(2), 215–228. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.26623/Dialogia.V2i2.13677

Fitzpatrick, A. (2024). *Generations Growing Together: Intergenerational Learning as a Pedagogical Strategy in Early Childhood Education and Care Services. A Handbook for Practitioners and Trainers*. https://doi.org/10.21427/CF3M-SV64

George, A. S., Baskar, T., & Srikaanth, P. B. (2024). Bridging The Generational Divide: Fostering Intergenerational Collaboration And Innovation In The Modern Workplace. *Partners Universal International Innovation Journal*, *2*(June), 198–217. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.12348084

Hahn, S. J., Kinney, J. M., & Heston, J. (2018). (2000). "So We Basically Let Them Struggle": Student Perceptions Of Challenges In Intergenerational Service-Learning. *Gerontology & Geriatrics Education, 41*(2), 142–155.

Hickey, A., & Riddle, S. (2024). Proposing A Conceptual Framework For Relational Pedagogy: Pedagogical Informality, Interface, Exchange And Enactment. *International Journal Of Inclusive Education*, *3116*(28), 14. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2023.2259906

Jennings, PA, Jeon, L., & Roberts, A. (2020). Pendahuluan Untuk Edisi Khusus Tentang Kesejahteraan Sosial Dan Emosional Para Profesional Perawatan Dan Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini. *Pendidikan Dan Pengembangan Anak Usia Dini,* *31*(7), 933–939. https://doi.org/https://Doi.org/10.1080/10409289.2020.1809895

Kaplan, M. S., & Henkin, N. Z. (2025). Creating Intergenerational Connections: A Multilevel Approach For Enriching Lives And Addressing Vital Community Issues. *Journal Of Human Sciences And Extension, 13*(2), 14. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.55533/2325-5226.1559

Lase, D. (n.d.). *Sebuah Kajian Literatur*. *18*.

Lopez, EN, & Abadiano, M. (2023). Memahami Generasi Z, Generasi Pembelajar Baru: Teori Pembelajaran Motivasi Teknologi. *Jurnal Universitas Teknik Harbin*, *44*(10), 770–784. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.71242/wf9q5253

Mahmubi, M. (2025). Analisis Implementasi Pembelajaran Berbasis Gamifikasi Pada Peningkatan Motivasi Belajar Siswa. *Al-Abshor: Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam, 2*(1), 1–9. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.71242/wf9q5253

McHugh, C., & Igou, E. R. (2025). The Moral Dilution Effect: Irrelevant Information Influences Judgments of Moral Character. *Journal of Behavioral Decision Making*, *38*(4). https://doi.org/10.1002/bdm.70034

Nadia Bintang Karyadi, Zahra Nabila Permatahati, Abdillah Ramdani Chadiatno, Vanyadifa Brillianesti Zamzami, Irfan Adhi Nugroho, Lilis Wuri Listriyani, & N. I. W. (2026). Pengaruh Kondisi Lingkungan Keluarga Terhadap Sikap Saling Menghargai Dan Kedisiplinan Siswa Dalam Menerapkan Norma Dan Aturan Pada Siswa Kelas Iv Sd N Pendrikan Kidul Kota Semarang. *Didaktik : Jurnal Ilmiah Pgsd Stkip Subang, 11*(04), 395–405.

Nurdian, N., Sauri, MS, & Fani, A. (2025). Strategi Guru Mengelola Kelas untuk Meningkatkan Disiplin dan Motivasi Belajar Siswa di Sekolah Dasar. : *: Jurnal Pemikiran Pendidikan*, *31*(1), 38–45. https://doi.org/10.30587/didaktika.v31i1.9470

Nurul Sukma Lestari, & Millenia, E. (2022). Minat Berkarier Di Industri Perhotelan Dipengaruhi Oleh Pengalaman Magang. *Jurnal Manajemen Perhotelan Dan Pariwisata*, *5*(3), 400–407. https://doi.org/10.23887/jmpp.v5i3.51789

Poling, D. V., Van Loan, C. L., Garwood, J. D., Zhang, S., & Riddle, D. (2022). Enhancing teacher-student relationship quality: A narrative review of school-based interventions. *Educational Research Review*, *37*, 100459. https://doi.org/10.1016/J.EDUREV.2022.100459

Rezeki, W. R. W., & Sari, I. R. (2025). Transfer Rasa Dalam Komunikasi Bahagia: Kunci Membangun Hubungan Positif. *Jurnal Komunikasi Dan Media, 2*(1), 14–21.

Shahzad, F., Avunduk, Z. B., Ullah, Z., & Arslan, A. (2025). Understanding management educators' perspectives on AI adoption: A qualitative study. *International Journal of Management Education*, *23*(3), 101274. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijme.2025.101274

Tunnajah, S., & Saputra, E. (2026).). Benturan Nilai Generasi Z Dan Guru: Tentang Pergeseran Akhlak Dalam Interaksi Kelas Di Kelas Ix Madrasah Tsanawiyah Al-Munawwarah Kota Jambi. *Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Dasar,* *11*(1), 37–48. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.23969/jp.v11i01.42682

Wolff, C.E., Jarodzka, H. & Boshuizen, H. P. A. (2021). Classroom Management Scripts: A Theoretical Model Contrasting Expert And Novice Teachers' Knowledge And Awareness Of Classroom Events. *Educ Psychol Rev*, *33*, 131–148. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1007/S10648-020-09542-0

Yessi Wijayanti, A., Pristiwati, R., & Subyantoro, S. (2021). Problematika Pelaksanaan Magang Bagi Mahasiswa PGSD Secara Daring Pada Mata Pelajaran Bahasa Indonesia Masa Pandemi Di SD Sidomulyo 04. . . *Paramasastra : Jurnal Ilmiah Bahasa Sastra Dan Pembelajarannya, 8*(2), 17–35. https://doi.org/doi.org/10.26740/paramasastra.v8n2.p111-128