

Building a Millennial-Friendly School Culture: Through the Lens of the Elementary School Heads

Alicia A. Peñaranda

Abstract. This study investigated the experiences of elementary school heads in establishing a millennial-friendly school culture. Employing a phenomenological approach, the research explored how school leaders adapted educational environments to align with the characteristics and preferences of millennial learners. The study emphasized the integration of technology, personalized learning approaches, and fostering a culture of inclusivity and student empowerment. Findings revealed that school heads prioritized student-centered methodologies, created innovative learning spaces, and developed students' 21st-century skills. Through in-depth interviews with eight elementary school heads from the Mati South District, Division of Mati City, the research uncovered the strategies, challenges, and coping mechanisms employed to build a supportive and dynamic educational culture. The findings provided valuable insights into the transformative leadership practices necessary for fostering a millennial-friendly school environment, highlighting the importance of empathy, diversity, and the integration of technology in enhancing student engagement and academic success.

KEY WORDS

1. Millennial-Friendly 2. School Culture 3. Elementary School Heads

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1. Introduction

Education institutions around the world were actively adapting their practices to build a millennial-friendly school culture- which means creating an educational environment that aligns with the characteristics and preferences of the millennial generation, incorporating innovative teaching methods and technology to support their holistic development. This involved emphasizing technology integration to cater to digital natives, implementing personalized learning approaches that tailor instruction to individual student's interests and pace, and fostering student voice and choice by involving them in decision-making processes. Project-based learning was embraced to develop critical thinking and collaboration skills, while social and emotional learning was prioritized to support students' overall well-being. Inclusive environments that value diversity, global perspectives, and an entrepreneurial mindset were cultivated, and social media and digital communication platforms were leveraged to enhance engagement and communication. In China elementary school leaders build a millennial-friendly school culture through a range of strategies tailored to the needs of the millennial generation. They prioritize technology integration, providing digital resources and interactive tools to en-

gage students in learning (Yin, 2019). Emphasizing student-centered approaches, they tailor instruction, encourage student voices, and offer project-based learning opportunities to develop critical thinking and collaboration skills (Li Chen, 2020; Hu Cheng, 2018). Moreover, they focus on fostering social and emotional learning and implementing programs to promote students' emotional intelligence and well-being (Yang Zhang, 2019). School leaders also prioritize global perspectives, integrating cross-cultural content into the curriculum to prepare students for a globalized world (He Zheng, 2021). Additionally, they encouraged an entrepreneurial mindset, fostering creativity and innovation among students (Shi Zhang, 2018). Engaging parents and the community, they utilize social media and digital communication platforms to foster transparent communication and involvement (Zhang Wang, 2020; Zhou Wang, 2019). These efforts contribute to a millennial-friendly school culture in China, empowering students to thrive academically and personally in a rapidly changing world. In Africa, elementary school leaders build a millennial-friendly school culture by embracing innovative approaches that resonate with the characteristics and needs of the millennial generation. They prioritize technology integration, providing access to digital resources and interactive learning tools to engage students in a technology-driven learning environment (Ogungbire Adetoro, 2019). Additionally, school leaders adopt student-centered teaching methods, tailoring instruction to individual students' interests and abilities, and fostering student agency and autonomy in the learning process (Mwakapenda Makewa, 2020). Moreover, they focus on promoting collaboration and teamwork among students, implementing group projects and collaborative activities to encourage peer-to-peer learning and social interaction (Ticha, 2017). Schools actively emphasize the importance of social and emotional learning

(SEL) to support the overall well-being of millennial students, implementing SEL programs to develop student's emotional intelligence, self-awareness, and empathy (Adeyemi et al., 2021). In Malaysia, elementary school leaders build a millennial-friendly school culture by adopting innovative approaches that cater to the needs and preferences of the millennial generation. They prioritize technology integration, providing access to digital resources and interactive learning tools to create a technology-rich learning environment (Ahmad Yunus, 2019). Emphasizing student-centered teaching methods, they tailor instruction to individual students' interests, fostering active learning and collaborative projects to develop critical thinking and creativity (Hasan Akhir, 2019). Moreover, school leaders focus on promoting social and emotional learning (SEL) and implementing programs that nurture emotional intelligence and resilience among students (Khalek et al., 2020). They also emphasize global perspectives, integrating cross-cultural content into the curriculum to prepare students for a globalized world (Chen Hashim, 2017). Furthermore, elementary school leaders encouraged an entrepreneurial mindset among students, instilling adaptability and initiative in their learning and future careers (Azman et al., 2020). Fostering a safe and inclusive environment is integral to building a millennial-friendly school culture, with school leaders promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion (Idris et al., 2021). They actively involve parents and the community, recognizing the importance of collaboration in supporting millennial students' growth (Shakir Yaacob, 2017). These strategies collectively create a millennial-friendly school culture in Malaysia that equips students with the skills and values needed to thrive in the 21st century. In the Philippines, elementary school leaders build a millennial-friendly school culture by incorporating modern and student-centered teaching methodologies that align with the needs and preferences of

the millennial generation. They prioritize technology integration in the classroom, providing access to digital resources, interactive learning tools, and e-learning platforms to engage and enhance students' learning experiences (Torres Dela Cruz, 2018). Additionally, school leaders encouraged active learning and collaborative activities, empowering students to take an active role in their education and fostering critical thinking and problem-solving skills (Cruz Paguio, 2020). Moreover, they focus on promoting social and emotional learning (SEL), implementing programs that develop emotional intelligence, empathy, and resilience among students, and ensuring their holistic development (Caro, 2019). By creating a safe and inclusive environment that celebrates diversity and fosters a sense of belonging, school leaders build a millennial-friendly school culture where students feel supported and motivated to excel (Gutierrez Tiongco, 2021). In the local scenario particularly in the schools of Mati South District, Division of Mati City, school heads encountered a variety of experiences in building a millennial-friendly school culture. Some of the experiences were enriching, while others negatively affected the leadership styles of some school leaders. It is in this context that this study was conceptualized to collect the experiences of elementary school teachers on how they build a millennial-friendly school culture. By delving into their narratives, we will uncover the multifaceted dimensions of this endeavor, the challenges encountered, and the remarkable impact it had on our millennial learners' academic and emotional growth.

1.1. Purpose of the Study—The purpose of this phenomenological study was to find out the experiences of elementary school heads as they build a millennial-friendly school culture. Furthermore, it served as reference material for future researchers in this area. The results also shed more light on the experiences, mechanisms, and insights drawn from the narratives of the informants.

1.2. Research Questions—The study intended to get the insights and experiences of elementary school heads in building a millennial-friendly school culture. Specifically, the study sought to answer the following questions:

- (1) What are the experiences of elementary school heads in building Millennial-friendly school culture?
- (2) How do elementary school heads cope with challenges in building a millennial friendly school culture?
- (3) What educational management insights gained are drawn from the experiences of the informants?

1.3. Definition of Terms—The following terms were operationally defined to make this study more comprehensive. Building a millennial-friendly school culture- means creating an educational environment that aligns with the characteristics and preferences of the millennial generation, incorporating innovative teaching methods and technology to support their holistic development. School Head - is the person who holds the highest administrative position in a school, responsible for leading and managing the school's operations, staff, and students.

1.4. Significant of the Study—

To clearly determine the outcomes of this study and to whom the findings are addressed, the following persons or agencies were the beneficiaries. First, the Department of Education Officials where findings of this study would give them, particularly in the Mati South district and the nearby schools in the division of Mati City, to be aware of how to build a millennial-friendly school culture. Then, the School Head is significant as they would know the issues

and insights on their experiences as they build a millennial-friendly school culture. This study was also significant to Stakeholders for it would give them insights on how to assist school administrators and capacitate them in building a millennial-friendly school culture. Lastly, the Future Researchers for the findings generated provided comprehensive data in conducting future research with similar or relevant scope.

1.5. Theoretical Lens—This study is anchored on Transformational Leadership Theory by James MacGregor Burns (1978). Transformational Leadership Theory emphasizes the role of leaders in inspiring and motivating their followers to achieve higher levels of performance and personal growth. In the context of building a millennial-friendly school culture, elementary school heads who exhibit transformational leadership qualities can inspire teachers, students, and the wider school community to embrace innovation, take risks, and foster a culture of creativity and growth. Transformational Leadership Theory, proposed by James MacGregor Burns in 1978, emphasizes the role of leaders in inspiring and motivating their followers to achieve higher levels of performance and personal growth. In the context of building a millennial-friendly school culture, elementary school heads who exhibit transformational leadership qualities can inspire teachers, students, and the wider school community to embrace innovation, take risks, and foster a culture of creativity and growth (Bass, 1985). By providing a vision for the future and empowering others to contribute to its realization, transformational leaders can shape a positive and dynamic learning environment that meets the needs and preferences of millennial learners (Wong Campbell, 2018). The second theory used in this study is Social Learning Theory by Albert Bandura (1977). Social Learning Theory posits that in-

dividuals learn from observing the behaviors of others and the consequences of those behaviors. In the context of creating a millennial-friendly school culture, elementary school heads who model risk-taking, innovation, and a growth mindset can influence teachers and students to adopt similar behaviors and attitudes. By providing opportunities for students to observe and participate in innovative and student-centered learning experiences, school heads can foster a culture of continuous learning and improvement. Social Learning Theory, developed by Albert Bandura in 1977, posits that individuals learn from observing the behaviors of others and the consequences of those behaviors. In the context of creating a millennial-friendly school culture, elementary school heads who model risk-taking, innovation, and a growth mindset can influence teachers and students to adopt similar behaviors and attitudes (Bandura, 1977). By demonstrating a willingness to try new approaches and learn from setbacks, school leaders inspire students to view challenges as opportunities for growth and improvement. Moreover, by providing opportunities for students to observe and participate in innovative and student-centered learning experiences, school heads can foster a culture of continuous learning and improvement (Rogoff, 1990). The third theory used in this study is Organizational Culture Theory by Edgar Schein (1985). Organizational Culture Theory examines the shared values, beliefs,

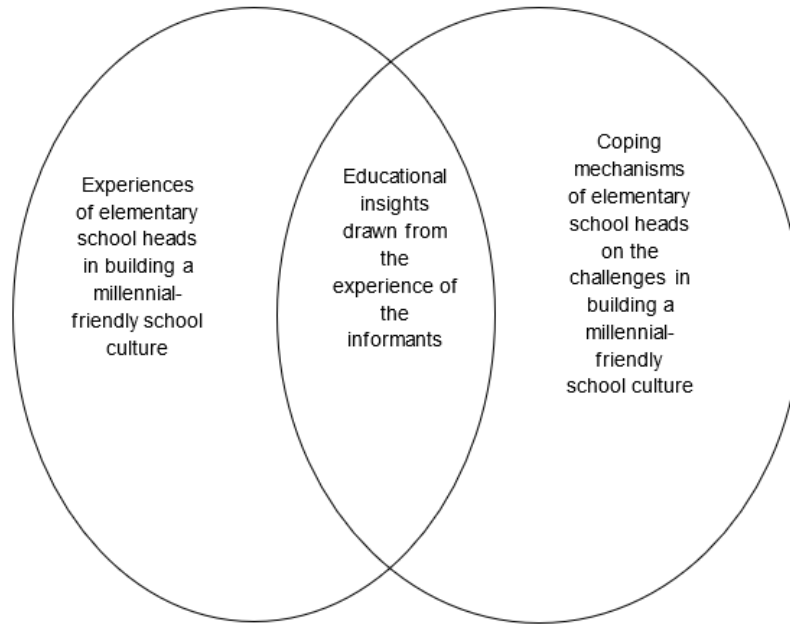


Fig. 1. Conceptual Framework of the study

and norms within an organization that shape its overall culture. In the context of building a millennial-friendly school culture, elementary school heads can focus on developing a positive and inclusive organizational culture that values empathy, diversity, and collaboration. By shaping the school’s culture in line with the needs and preferences of millennial learners, school heads can create a supportive and engaging learning environment. Organizational Culture Theory, proposed by Edgar Schein in 1985, examines the shared values, beliefs, and norms within an organization that shape its overall culture. In the context of building a millennial-friendly school culture, elementary school heads can focus on developing a positive and inclusive organizational culture that values empathy, diversity, and collaboration (Deal Kennedy, 1982). By shaping the school’s culture in line with the needs and preferences of

millennial learners, school heads can create a supportive and engaging learning environment where students feel valued and respected (Johnson Johnson, 2013). This inclusive culture not only enhances students’ academic performance but also promotes their social and emotional well-being, fostering a sense of belonging and connectedness within the school community (Cameron Quinn, 2011). The conceptual framework of the study was presented in figure 1. Based on the figure, there were three interconnected variables. These variables were the (1) Experiences of elementary school heads in building a millennial-friendly school culture; (2) coping mechanisms of elementary school heads on the challenges in building a millennial-friendly school culture; and (3) Educational insights drawn from the experiences of the informants.

2. Methodology

This chapter of the study presented the method, research participants, data collection, role of the researcher, data analysis, trustworthiness of the study, and ethical considerations. Exploring facts and knowledge in this study necessitated the consequent design and implementation, as elaborated

in this chapter. The three most common qualitative methods were participant observation, in-depth interviews, and focus groups. Each method was particularly suited for obtaining a specific type of data. Participant observation was appropriate for collecting data on naturally occurring behaviors in their usual contexts. In-depth Interviews (IDI) was optimal for collecting data on individuals' personal histories, perspectives, and experiences, particularly when sensitive topics are being explored. Focus groups are effective in eliciting data on the cultural norms of a group and in generating broad overviews of issues of concern to the cultural groups or subgroups represented. Patton (2002) defined phenomenology as inquiry which asks the questions, "What is the structure and essence of the experience of his phenomenon for these people?" "the goal of this research worked well with this definition in trying to understand the experiences of elementary school heads in building a millennial-friendly school culture. Giorgi (2007) cautioned researchers to be prepared for an investigation that was greater in both depth and breadth than the offered description implied. He suggested that information be viewed as only the tip of the iceberg.

2.1. Philosophical Assumptions—The philosophical assumption was a framework used to collect, analyze, and interpret the data collected in a specific field of study. It establishes the background used for the coming conclusions and decisions. Typical philosophical assumptions have different types and are elaborated below. Good research involves selecting the topic, problem, or area of interest, as well as the paradigm. Stanage (1987) traces 'paradigm' back to its Greek (paradigm) and Latin origins (paradigm), meaning pattern, model, for example, among examples, an exemplar or model to follow according to which design actions are taken. Differently stated, a paradigm was an action of submitting to a view. This view was supported by Denzin and Lincoln (2000) who defend a research paradigm a "basic set of belief that guide action", dealing with first principles, "ultimate's or the researcher's worldview or philosophy. Ontology. This part of the research pertains on how the issue relates to the nature of reality. According to Creswell (2012), reality is subjective and multiple, as seen by the study participants. The ontological issue addresses the nature of reality for the qualitative researcher. The reality was constructed by individuals involved in the research situation. Thus, multiple realities exist, such as the realities of the researcher, those of individuals being investigated, and those of the reader or audiences interpreting the study. In this study, the experiences of elementary school heads in building a millennial-friendly school culture are discussed by the participants, and try to look into their coping mechanisms in addressing the challenges and educational insights. In this study, I relied on voices and interpretations of the participants through extensive quotes and themes that reflected their words and provided evidence of different perspectives. The participants' answers in the study were coded and analyzed to build and construct the commonality and discreteness of responses. The responses of the participants were carefully coded to ensure the reliability of the result. The researcher upheld the authenticity of the responses and precluded from making personal bias as the study progressed. Epistemology. This referred to the awareness of how knowledge claims are justified by staying as close to the participants as possible during the study to obtain firsthand information. Guba and Lincoln, as cited by Creswell (2012), state that on the epistemological assumption, the researcher attempted to lessen the distance between himself or herself from the participants. He suggests that, as a researcher, he or she collaborates, spends time in the field with participants, and becomes an 'insider'. Based on Davidson (2000) and Jones

(2011). Researchers identified phenomenology using thematic analysis as the best means for this type of study. In this regard, individual researchers “hold explicit belief”. This study intended to gather information from the participants or elementary school heads in Mati South District as to how they build a millennial-friendly school culture. It is assured that close interaction with the participants was established to gain direct information that would shed light on the knowledge behind the inquiry, particularly on the experiences and coping mechanisms used in building a millennial-friendly school culture. Axiology. It referred to the role of values in research. Creswell (2012) avers that the role of values in a study was significant. Axiology suggests that the researcher openly discusses values that shape the narrative and includes their interpretation in conjunction with

2.2. *Qualitative Assumptions*—Methodology was different from method. Methodology was a creative and responsive approach to understand questions and subject matter while method refers to the exact knowledge and procedure (Gerodias, 2013). In this study the experiences of elementary school heads in building a millennial-friendly school culture in Mati South District were gathered through an In-Depth Interview (IDI) as well as their coping mechanisms were extracted from the participants. My drive in knowing the deeper meaning of the experiences of elementary school heads in building a millennial-friendly school culture became the basis for doing qualitative research, a means of which Kalof and Dietz (2008), as cited from Gerodias, (2013) considered helpful in looking for “meanings and motivations that underline cultural symbols, personal experiences and phenomena”. By using phenomenology, this need was hoped to be addressed by bringing the experiences elementary school heads in building a millennial-friendly school culture in a manner that, as David (2005) wrote, the themes, sym-

the interpretation of participants. Upholding the dignity and value of every detail of information obtained from the participants was ensured. I understand the personal and value-laden nature of information gathered from the study. Therefore, I preserved the merit of the participants’ answers and carefully interpreted the answers in the light of the participants’ interpretation. Rhetoric. It means reporting what reality was through the eyes of the research participants. This was important because it means that the research would report objectively on what was observed and heard from the participants. The research used personal voice and qualitative terms and limited definition. In the context of the study, I used the first person in elucidation of the experiences of elementary school heads in building a millennial-friendly school culture.

bolts and meaning of the experiences presented. Phenomenological research was based on two premises. The first was that experience was a valid, rich and rewarding source of knowledge. According to Becker (1992), as cited in Morrissey Higgs, (2006), that experience was a source of knowledge and shaped one’s behavior. From the definition, human experience was viewed as a cornerstone of knowledge about human phenomena and not as an unreliable source. The second premise of phenomenological research lies in the view that the everyday world is a valuable and productive source of knowledge, and that we can learn much about ourselves and reap key insights into the nature of an event by analyzing how it occurs in our daily lives (Morrissey Higgs, 2006). By doing phenomenology, which is concerned with the “what” and the “how” (Moustakas, 1995), I projected that the experiences and coping mechanisms used by the elementary school heads were explored and insights drawn as the basis for possible future research and policy analysis in relation to this research.

2.3. *Design and Procedure*—This study employed a qualitative approach to research specifically a phenomenological research design. According to Creswell, (2012), phenomenology was an approach to qualitative research that focused on the commonality of lived experiences within a particular group. The fundamental goal of the approach was to arrive at a description of the nature of the phenomenon. Typically, interviews were conducted with a group of individuals who have first-hand knowledge of an event, situation or experience. Other forms of data such as documents, observations and art were also used. The data were read and reread and was culled for phrases and themes that was grouped into clusters of meanings. Through this process, the researcher was able to construct the universal meaning of the event, situation or experience and arrived at a more profound understanding of the phenomenon. Moreover, Maxwell (2013) also added that with the roots in philosophy, psychology and education, phenomenology attempt to extract the purest, untainted data and in some interpretations of the approach, bracketing were used by the researcher to document personal experiences with the subject to help remove him or herself from the process. One method of bracketing is taking of notes. According to Corbetta (2003), the phenomenological research design was a qualitative type of research for which interviews provide in-depth method that can grant access to deep knowledge and explanations and help grasp the subjects' perspective. Creswell, (2012) also claimed that interviews were primarily done in qualitative research and occur when researchers ask one or more participants general, open-ended questions and record their answers. Often audio tapes were utilized to allow more consistent transcription. Interviews also useful to follow-up with individual respondents after questionnaires, such as to further investigate their responses. In qualitative research, interviews were used to pursue the meanings of cen-

tral themes in the world of their subjects. The main task in doing interviews was to understand the meaning of what the interviewees say (McNamara, 1999). Withal, based on the statements of Quad (2016), the researcher transcribed and typed the data into a computer file, in order to analyze it after interviewing. Interviews particularly be useful for uncovering the story behind a participant's experiences and pursuing in-depth information around a topic. I collected data, typically via long interviews, from individuals who have experienced the phenomenon under investigation. Next, the data analysis involved triangulation that extracted significant statements from the transcribed interviews. The significant statements were transformed into clusters of meanings according to how each statement fell under specific psychological and phenomenological concepts. Moreover, these transformations were tied up together to make a general description of the experience both the textural description of what was experienced and the structural description of how it was experienced. I incorporated personal meaning of the experiences here. Finally, the report was written such that readers understand better the essential, invariant structure of the essence of the experience. Conversely, several challenges have been pointed out. I was able to require a solid grounding in the philosophical guidelines of phenomenology. The subjects that were selected into the study were individuals who have experienced the phenomenon that needs to bracket their own experiences and observations, which was difficult to do. There was also a need to decide as to how and when my personal observations be incorporated into the study. Epistemologically, phenomenological approaches were based on the paradigm of personal knowledge and subjectivity, and emphasize the importance of personal perspective and interpretation. As such they were powerful tools for understanding subjective experience, gaining insights into people's motivations and actions, and cutting through

the cluster of taken-for-granted assumptions and conventional wisdom. Since the focus of this study is to explore and assess the elementary school heads' experience and feelings in building

a millennial-friendly school culture, I employed the phenomenology type of qualitative method research.

2.4. Research Participants—Qualitative analyses typically require a smaller sample size than quantitative analyses. Qualitative sample sizes should be large enough to obtain feedback for most perceptions. Obtaining most or all of the perceptions would lead to saturation. Saturation occurs when adding more participants to the study does not result in additional perspectives or information. Glaser and Strauss (1967) recommend the concept of saturation for achieving an appropriate sample size in qualitative studies. For phenomenological studies, Creswell (1998) recommends five (5) to 25 and Morse (1994) suggests at least six (6). There are no specific rules when determining an appropriate sample size in qualitative research. Qualita-

tive sample size may best be determined by the time allotted, resources available, and study objectives (Patton, 1990). The participants of this study were Eight (8) elementary school heads from Mati South District, Division of Mati City. The participants were chosen based on the following criteria: (1) must be in the service for at least 5 years; (2) elementary school head; and (3) experienced in building a millennial-friendly school culture. I utilized the purposive sampling design since the participants were chosen based on the criteria or purpose of the study (Creswell, 2014). It is also known as judgmental, selective, or subjective sampling. The selection of the participants was purposefully done to ensure that the findings would be authentic (Marshall, 1996).

2.5. Ethical Considerations—The ethical considerations were significant in the design of this research study. I needed to consider several ethical issues about the research participant in this fieldwork. Ethical considerations could be specified as one of the most important parts of the research. I need to adhere to promote the aimed of the research imparting authentic knowledge, truth and prevention of error. Social Value. Research was essential to the society. In this study, the social value was focused on the experienced of teachers. This study was specifically conducted among the elementary school heads. This study also served as a basis for the higher authorities to create more programs and resolutions where elementary school heads could benefit. Thus, the social problem that pushes the interest of the researcher was the challenges faced by elementary school heads

in building a millennial-friendly school culture. Informed Consent. In the conduct and practice of this study, the Treaty Principle of Participation as cited by McLeod (2009) adhered to. The invitation to the participants ensured that their participation in the research was completely voluntary in nature, and is based on the understanding of adequate information. The participant recruitment and selection lodged in the appendices of this study. Gaining the trust and support of research participants was critical to the informed and ethical academic inquiry and phenomenological research (Walker, 2007 as cited by Pillerin, 2012). All participants were given an informed consent form before scheduling the interviews and participating in the phenomenological research process. Each participant was required to provide a signed personal acknowledgement, consent, and an indication

of a willingness-to-participate-in-the-study release. The purpose of the informed consent letter is to introduce the research effort, provide contact information, articulate the intent of the study, request voluntary participation by the recipients, and anticipate the information that the informants were expected to provide. All participants were required to sign and return the letter of consent to the researcher before participating in the research. Vulnerability of Research Participants. The participants of this study could answer the research instrument for they were all professional teachers in public elementary schools. Thus, the researcher assured them that as the researcher, he or she can easily be reached through the contact number and address in case there are some clarifications or questions regarding the study. Risks, Benefits and Safety. The recruitment of the respondents was free of coercion, undue influence or inducement. Moreover, respondents were provided with the contact numbers of the chair of the panel or panel members in case they have queries related to the study. Furthermore, if respondents would experience potential discomfort and inconvenience while answering the questions, they were not compelling to participate in any manner. Further, the researcher has ensured that the respondents were safe during the conduct of the survey and interview. Thus, the distribution of the questionnaire was conducted in a safe venue and administered during their convenient time. The dominant concern of this study was the Treaty Principle of Protection, as reflected in the respect for the rights of privacy and confidentiality, and minimization of risk. This was done by assigning pseudonyms for each informant so as not to disclose their identity. The possibility of a degree of risk inherent to this was minimized through taking all reasonable steps to guarantee participant confidentiality. Privacy and Confidentiality of Information. This study observed the Data Privacy Act of 2002 to assure that the data cannot be traced back to their real sources

to protect participants' identities. Thus, utmost care was taken to ensure anonymity of the data sources. Hence, any printed output that was carried out from this study was kept in anonymity. Furthermore, all the issues were given consideration so that there will be no conflict of interest among the researcher and the respondents. Any type of misleading information, as well as representation of primary data findings in a biased way and must be avoided. Justice. The respondents were informed of the researcher's role and their corresponding role during data gathering. They were briefed that they must be fully honest in answering the survey questions and that any type of communication related to the research should be done with honesty. Similarly, they were informed that they were the ones to benefit first from the study's results. Transparency. The results of the study were accessed by the respondents and heads of the participating schools because the information was available, and was placed in CD or other storage devices in which could be requested from the researcher to provide. In addition, by learning from the results of the study, classroom teachers were aware of the significance of the study and its contribution to their well-being. Further, each of the participants were be advised that they have the right to withdraw their information at any time up to the completion of the data collection process, and that they could be requested and allowed to verify their individual transcript after the interview is carried out. This provided the participants with the opportunity to amend or remove any information which they feel might identify them. I reserved the right to employ the use of pseudonyms and changing names and or non-significant dates in the interest of the protection of the identity of the participant in all subsequent data analysis and reporting. Qualification of the Researcher. I possessed the needed qualification to conduct the study. I have completed the academic requirements, passed the comprehensive examination prior to thesis writ-

ing which was the last requirement to obtain the masteral degree, and that I should be qualified to conduct the study physically, mentally, emotionally and financially. In addition, the advisee-adviser tandem ensured that the study would reach its completion. Adequacy of Facilities. I strived that the study can be completed successfully on the specified time and I am equipped with the necessary resources. Likewise, the technical committee helped in the enhancement of the paper by giving the needed suggestions and recommendations for the improvement of the study. Also, I ensured that I have enough funds to continue and finish the research. Thus, this study was hoped to be completed on the target time. Community Involvement. With respect to the local tradition, culture and views of the

respondents in this study, this study did not involve any use of deceit in any stage of its implementation, and specifically, in the recruitment of the participants, or methods of data collection. Furthermore, it was necessary to express great pleasure for the wholehearted participation of the interviewees in the conduct of the study. Plagiarism and Fabrication as the researcher. With respect to other works, It was proper to cite the author and rewrite what someone else has said his or her own way. I also used quotes to indicate that the text has been taken from another paper. Similarly, it was assured that honesty was present in working the manuscript and no intentional misrepresentation and making up of data or results was included, or purposefully put forward conclusions that were not accurate.

2.6. Role of the Researcher—I understand my responsibility to uncover, transfer, and exploit knowledge for the benefit of educational institutions. To do so, I took up the following roles in the course of the study: Facilitator and Promoter of Unbiased Research. I interviewed with the participants and guided them in the process. Ideas were interpreted, and responses were based on existing literature and related studies and not on the researcher's own knowledge, thoughts, and feelings to avoid the intrusion of bias. Expert in qualitative methods. To implement the qualitative method correctly, I assess myself and seek help from the research adviser and other research professionals. These help him exhibit competence in explaining the study without biasing the participants, conducting interviews properly according to the design, making appropriate field observations, selecting appropriate artifacts, images, and journal portions, and employing Environmental Triangulation and Thematic Content Analysis precisely. Collector and Keeper of data. I ensure different ways of making a record of what was said and done during the interview and Focus Group

Discussion, such as taking handwritten notes or audio and/or video recording. The recordings were transcribed verbatim before data analysis could begin. Records done by the researcher are properly secured as they contain sensitive information and were relevant to the research. However, as the data were being collected, my primary responsibility was safeguarding participants and their data. Mechanisms for such create a more in-depth picture of the phenomenon; the researcher employed an environmental triangulation board before the research began. Analyst of data. When I see the phenomenon or problem from the participants' perspective, I interpret data, transcribe and check, reading between the lines, code, and theme. I ensured that the findings were accurate to the participants and that their voices were heard. I organize and present data. I present the problem and the related literature and studies that support it. The study's findings were also presented by research question, stating the results for each one using themes to show how the research questions were answered. Moreover, future directions and implications of the study were given for improving educational policy and practices.

2.7. *Data Collection*—The following was the step-by-step process of gathering the data needed. Securing endorsement from the Dean of Graduate School. I asked for an endorsement from the Dean of the Graduate School of Rizal Memorial Colleges as one of the documents needed for submission to the office of the Schools Division Superintendent in asking permission to conduct the study. Asking permission from the Schools Division Superintendent. I send a letter of permission from the Schools Division Superintendent to conduct the study in the identified school. I also sent a letter addressed to the Schools Division Superintendent with the attached Chapters 1 and 2 together with the research instrument, which explains the study's objectives and the identification of the participants. I waited for the response of the SDS before the conduct of it. I asked permission from the school heads. After securing the SDS's approval, I sent letters to the principals explaining the study to be conducted in their schools. I obtained consent from the participants and asked their parents/guardians for permission. They were formally oriented about

2.8. *Data Analysis*—In this study, thematic analysis was utilized to analyze the gathered data. I analyzed the answers of the participants from the interviews using Creswell's Model, specifically the identifying of themes approach. According to Creswell (2012), themes in qualitative research are similar codes aggregated together to form a significant idea in the database. Familiarization with the data was common to all forms of qualitative analysis. The researcher immersed herself in and became intimately familiar with their data, reading and re-reading it and noting any initial analytic observations. Coding was also a common element of many approaches to qualitative analysis, involving generating pithy labels for essential features of the data relevant to the (broad) research

the study and the process they would undergo as participants. Conducting the interview. I conducted the in-depth interview using the interview questionnaire. I took the participants' profiles, jotted down notes, and recorded conversations using a sound recorder for ease of transcription. The researcher carefully listened and responded actively during the interviews. I was transcribing the interviewees' responses. I transcribed their responses precisely by recalling their answers from the sound recorder. Since the participants used their vernacular language, the researcher translated it into English. Data Coding and Thematic Content Analysis. After the transcription, the data would then be categorized and coded. Then, themes were extracted, and individual participant data was compared and contrasted. I conducted a second round of interviews (FGD) to corroborate any data that needed further explanation and input from the participants; additional information gathered was examined thoroughly and integrated into the existing body of data. After this, data were compared among the participants in order to come up with patterns and trends.

question guiding the analysis. Coding was not simply a data reduction method but also an analytic process, so codes capture a semantic and conceptual reading of the data. The researcher coded every data item and ended this phase by collating all their codes and relevant data extracts. Searching for themes was a coherent and meaningful pattern in the data relevant to the research question. The researcher ended this phase by collating all the coded data relevant to each theme. I was reviewing themes. I reflected on whether the themes told a convincing and compelling story about the data and began to define the nature of each theme and the relationship between the themes wherein Thematic Content Analysis was employed. Thematic Content Analysis was a descriptive pre-

sentation of qualitative data in which a detailed analysis of each theme was made by identifying the ‘essence’ of each theme and constructing a concise, punchy, and informative name for each theme (Andersen, 2013). In addition, to enhance validity and to create a more in-depth picture of the phenomenon, Environmental Triangulation was also employed by the researcher. It was a technique to analyze the same study’s results using different data collection methods. The key was identifying which environmental factors, if any, might influence the information that is received during the study. These environmental factors were changed to see if the findings are the same across the settings (David, 2015). This type of triangulation uses different settings, locations and other factors such as time,

day, season in which the study took place. The idea was to determine which of these factors influence the information received, these factors are then changed to see if the findings are the same. If the findings remained unaltered under varying environmental factors, then validity can be established (Naeem, Saira, 2019). In this study, such triangulation was used considering that the requirements as mentioned was the use of environmental triangulation best suited the environment of the research being conducted. Writing-up involves weaving together the analytic narrative and data extracts to tell the reader a coherent and persuasive story about the data, and contextualizing it in relation to existing literature.

2.9. Framework of Analysis—The framework analysis employed in this research was designed with a high degree of flexibility. This allowed for two distinct approaches: collecting all the data and then proceeding to analysis or conducting the analysis concurrently with data collection. In the analysis stage, the data was meticulously sifted, charted, and sorted in alignment with key issues and themes. This process, as Ritchie Spencer (1994) outlined, involves five key steps: familiarization, thematic framework identification, indexing, charting, and mapping and interpretation. The process of familiarization was a meticulous and thorough one, during which I became intimately acquainted with the transcripts of the data collected, such as interview or focus group transcripts, observation, or field notes, and gained a comprehensive overview of the collected data (Ritchie Spencer, 1994). This involves immersing myself in the data by listening to audiotapes, studying the field, or reading the transcripts. Throughout this process, I become aware of critical ideas and recurrent themes and make a note of them. Due to the sheer volume of data that could be

collected in qualitative research, a selection of the data set would be utilized. The selection would depend on several aspects of the data collection process—for example, mixed methods were used, such as interviews, documents, and observations. The second stage, thematic framework identification, was pivotal in the analysis process. It occurs after the familiarization stage when the researcher begins recognizing emerging themes or issues in the data set. These themes or issues may have been anticipated, but it was at this stage that the researcher must allow the data to guide the identification process. The notes taken during the familiarization stage serve as a critical resource. The key issues, concepts, and themes expressed by the participants form the foundation of a thematic framework used to filter and classify the data, as per Ritchie and Spencer (1994). Indexing means identifying data portions or sections corresponding to a particular theme. This process is applied to all the textual data gathered from transcripts of interviews. For convenience, Ritchie and Spencer recommend using a numerical system to index references and annotate them in the

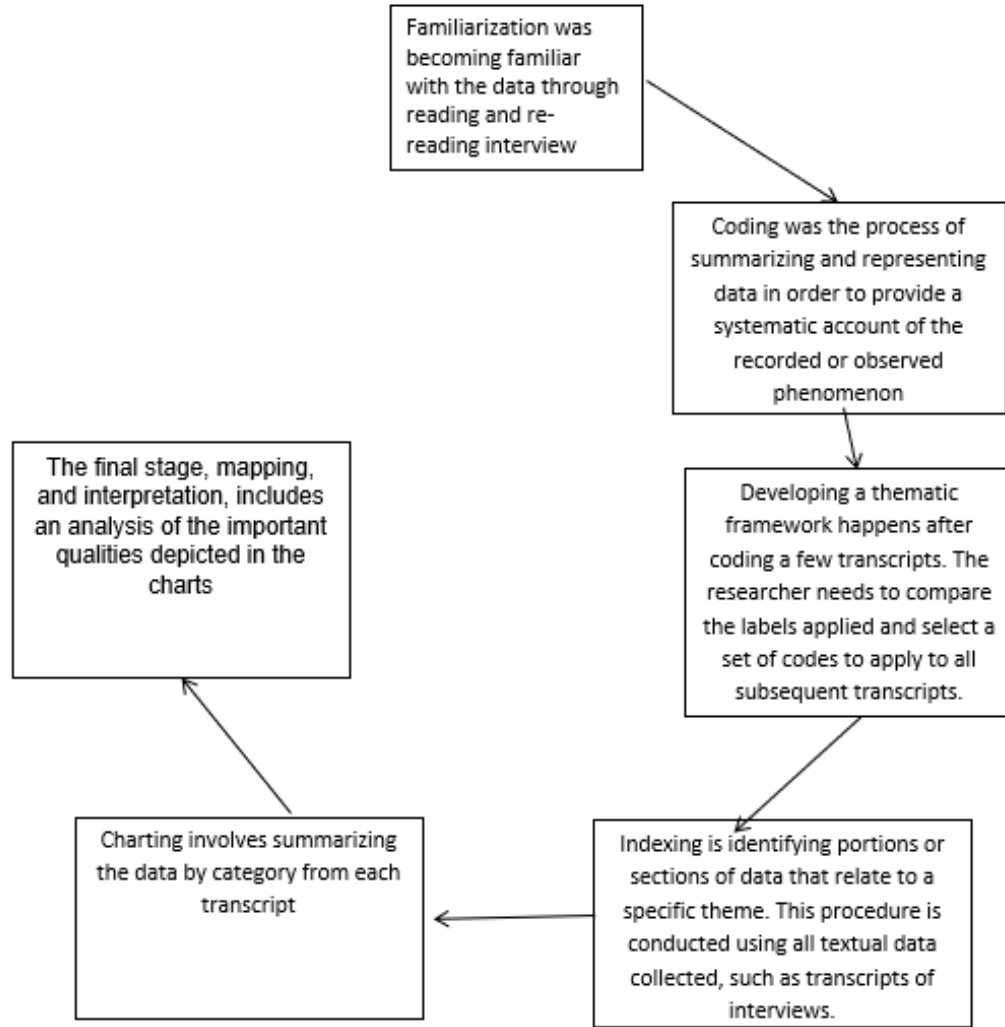


Fig. 2. Analytical Framework of the Study

margin beside the text (1994). Qualitative data analysis tools were ideal for such a task. The final stage, mapping and interpretation, involves the analysis of the key characteristics as laid out in the charts. This analysis should be able to provide a schematic diagram of the event/phenomenon, thus guiding the researcher in their interpretation of the data set. At this point, the researcher was cognizant of the objectives of qualitative analysis: “defining concepts, map-

ping range and nature of phenomena, creating typologies, finding associations, providing explanations, and developing strategies” (Ritchie and Spencer, 1994). Therefore, any strategy or recommendations made by the researcher echo the participants’ attitudes, beliefs, and values. Figure 2 shows the steps in the study’s analytical framework, which involves familiarization, coding, developing a thematic framework, indexing, charting, mapping, and interpretation.

2.10. *Trustworthiness of the Study*—Trustworthiness was all about establishing credibility, transferability, confirmability and dependabil-

ity. In qualitative study, trustworthiness was significant because the result and finding of the research study would depend on how it was

being conducted by the researcher. The trustworthiness of a research study was important for evaluating its worth. Due to the nature of the qualitative study, honesty in all the data and details was required. Trustworthiness makes the researcher's study worthy to read, share, and be proud of. Credibility was how confident the qualitative researcher was in the truth of the research study's findings. The researcher in this study believed that honesty in everything you do was essential to attain worthwhile success. The researcher has no derogatory records or administrative issues that ruin her integrity. Lincoln and Guba (2000) stated that credibility refers to the idea of internal consistency, where the main issue was "how we ensure rigor in the research process and how we communicate to others that we have done so." Transferability was how the qualitative researcher demonstrated that the research study's findings were applicable to other contexts. In this case, "other contexts" can mean similar situations, similar populations, and similar phenomena. The researcher has already studied the effects of using graphic organizers to teach reading comprehension. Using graphic organizers as a strategy for teaching reading comprehension is effective in the domains of analysis and creation. With this, the researcher is interested to know the students' perspective on using this strategy. Gasson (2004) emphasized transferability as the extent to which the reader could provide a generalization of the study based on his context and could address the core issue of "how far a researcher may make claims for a general application of the theory." Confirmability was the degree of neutrality in the research study's find-

ings. In other words, this means that the findings are based on participants' responses and not the researcher's potential bias or personal motivations. This involves ensuring that researcher bias does not skew the interpretation of the research participants' statements to fit a particular narrative. The information used in the audit trail in this situation was thoughtfully recorded by the researcher, which highlights every step of data analysis that was made in order to provide a rationale for the decisions made. This helps establish that the research study's findings accurately portray participants' responses. Gasson (2004) states that confirmability was based on the acknowledgment that research is never objective. Dependability was the extent to which the study could be repeated by other researchers and that the findings would be consistent. In other words, if a person wanted to replicate your study, they should have enough information from your research report to do so and obtain similar findings as your study did. A qualitative researcher used an inquiry audit to establish dependability, which required an outside person to review and examine the research process and the data analysis to ensure that the findings were consistent and could be repeated. In this component, the use of a database was essential in backing up information collected and noting changes for all types of research studies. All the data collected was kept correctly for future use as references. Gasson (2004) stated that dependability deals with the core issue that "how a study is conducted should be consistent across time, researchers, and analysis techniques."

3. Results and Discussion

This part of the research dealt with the research questions about the study. The participants disclosed their experiences in building a millennial-friendly school culture, their coping mechanism as well as insights. All these themes were discussed here.

3.1. Experiences of Elementary School Heads In Building a Millennial-friendly School Culture—

In the dynamic landscape of education, elementary school heads played a pivotal role in creating a millennial-friendly school culture that aligns with the characteristics and preferences of the millennial generation. As leaders of educational institutions, elementary school heads are at the forefront of shaping the learning environment, curriculum, and policies to cater to the needs of millennial learners. This introduction explores the experiences of elementary school

3.1.1. Prioritized student-centered teaching methodologies— Elementary school heads prioritized student-centered teaching methodologies to create an inclusive and empowering learning environment. By encouraging collaborative projects, project-based learning, and hands-on experiences, they have empowered students to take an active role in their education (Elam Huerta, 2020). This student-centered approach has nurtured critical thinking, problem-solving, and creativity among young learners, allowing them to explore their interests and talents. By giving students more control over their learning, school heads have instilled a sense of ownership and motivation, fostering a positive attitude towards education and enhancing academic performance. Elementary school heads recognized the importance of prioritizing student-centered teaching methodologies as a crucial aspect of building a millennial-friendly school culture. This approach places students at the heart of the learning process, emphasizing their active participation, interests, and individual strengths. School heads have encouraged teachers to adopt a student-centered approach by designing flexible and differentiated instructional strategies that cater to the diverse learning needs of millennial students. Through project-based learning, collaborative group work, and hands-on activities, students are empowered to explore their interests, develop critical thinking skills, and take ownership of their education

heads in their endeavors to establish an inclusive and innovative educational space that embraces technology integration, student-centered methodologies, social and emotional learning (SEL), and fosters a sense of diversity and inclusivity (Elam Huerta, 2020). By delving into these experiences, we gain valuable insights into the strategies and approaches employed by school heads to empower millennial students and nurture their holistic development.

(Elam Huerta, 2020). This student-centric focus not only enhances engagement and motivation but also cultivates a sense of empowerment and self-directed learning among millennial learners. Furthermore, school heads had championed inquiry-based learning methodologies to promote a deeper understanding of concepts and foster curiosity among millennial students. By encouraging students to ask questions, conduct investigations, and seek answers independently, school heads have nurtured their analytical and problem-solving skills. In an inquiry-driven classroom, students are encouraged to explore their own learning paths, aligning with their interests and learning styles (Bhatt Sankar, 2019). This pedagogical shift has not only increased students' motivation but has also cultivated a growth mindset, where learners perceive challenges as opportunities for growth and development. Additionally, school heads had emphasized the significance of formative assessment practices to gauge students' progress and adjust instruction accordingly. By providing timely and constructive feedback, school heads have encouraged a growth-oriented mindset, where students view mistakes as part of the learning process. Formative assessment strategies, such as peer evaluation, self-assessment, and goal setting, have enabled students to take ownership of their learning and track their academic growth (Nguyen Phan, 2018). Through this ongoing assessment approach, school heads have fos-

tered a culture of continuous improvement and academic excellence among millennial learners. Based on the participants, P1, P2, P3, P5, and P7, teachers discuss the importance of opportunities in child-centered methodology. The shared way to develop a student-centered classroom is to use various instructional strategies. For example, you might use cooperative learning activities, hands-on projects, and problem-based

3.1.2. Fostered a culture of inclusivity and diversity—Elementary school heads fostered a culture of inclusivity and diversity by promoting awareness and understanding of various cultures and backgrounds. They have organized cultural events, celebrations, and exchange programs, creating opportunities for students to appreciate and respect different traditions and perspectives. This approach has helped create a sense of belonging and acceptance among millennial learners, fostering a welcoming and supportive school environment (Gutierrez Tiongco, 2021). Elementary school heads have played a pivotal role in fostering a culture of inclusivity and diversity as part of their experiences in building a millennial-friendly school culture. Recognizing the importance of creating a welcoming and supportive environment for all students, school heads have implemented initiatives that promote understanding, empathy, and acceptance of diverse cultures and backgrounds. Through organizing cultural events, celebrations, and exchange programs, school heads have provided opportunities for students to learn about different traditions and perspectives, fostering a sense of appreciation and respect for diversity (Gutierrez Tiongco, 2021). This inclusive approach has created a sense of belonging among millennial learners, where they feel valued and accepted for who they are, contributing to a positive and harmonious school community. Furthermore, school heads have encouraged teachers to incorporate diverse perspectives and experiences into the curriculum. School heads

learning. You would also provide opportunities for students to share their ideas and work with their peers. Prioritized student-centered teaching methodologies are essential to ensure that learning is in place for the students and teachers. On the other hand, another theme visible during the intense discussions is the foster culture of inclusivity and diversity.

have promoted a more comprehensive and representative educational experience for millennial students by integrating multicultural literature, history, and contributions from various communities. This approach helps students develop a broader worldview and cultivates their critical thinking skills by encouraging them to question stereotypes and biases (Lee Kim, 2019). By creating an inclusive curriculum, school heads have prepared millennial learners to become open-minded and empathetic global citizens who value diversity and embrace differences. Moreover, school heads have actively sought to promote inclusivity by addressing issues related to bullying and discrimination. They have implemented anti-bullying programs and initiatives that emphasize kindness, empathy, and tolerance among students. By creating a safe and supportive environment, school heads have ensured that all students can fully participate in the learning process without fear of discrimination or harassment (Wu Chou, 2018). This emphasis on inclusivity and respect has resulted in a positive and nurturing school culture where millennial learners can thrive academically and emotionally. Based on the participants, P2, P3, P5, and P7, teachers discuss the importance of fostering diversity and inclusion in the workplace as a commitment required of company leaders, managers, and employees in all positions. Education and acceptance are essential, as well as implementing official policies and processes that enforce the importance of a diverse and inclusive workplace. According to

the teacher's participants, in order to achieve diversity and inclusion, organizations need to create an inclusive culture where all employees are respected and appreciated, have equal access

3.1.3. Emphasized the development of students' 21st-century skills—Elementary school heads prioritized the development of students' 21st-century skills, such as communication, creativity, and collaboration. By incorporating activities that promote these skills, school heads have prepared millennial learners for the demands of the modern workforce and equipped them to be influential global citizens (Choi Lee, 2018). Elementary school heads have demonstrated a solid commitment to prioritizing developing students' 21st-century skills as part of their experiences in building a millennial-friendly school culture. Recognizing the ever-evolving demands of the modern world, school heads have emphasized acquiring critical skills such as communication, creativity, collaboration, and critical thinking among millennial learners. They have encouraged teachers to integrate these skills into the curriculum and instructional strategies, fostering an environment that prepares students for the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century (Choi Lee, 2018). By prioritizing the development of 21st-century skills, school heads have ensured that millennial students are equipped with the necessary tools to become adaptable, innovative, and effective problem-solvers in the future. Moreover, school heads have actively sought to integrate technology and digital literacy into the educational experience of millennial learners. They

3.2. Mechanisms of Elementary School Heads on the Challenges in Building a Millennial-friendly School Culture—Building a millennial-friendly school culture presented a unique set of challenges for elementary school

to workplace opportunities, and are fairly compensated. On the other hand, another theme was observed during the process of the discussions.

have invested in modern infrastructure, such as computer labs, interactive whiteboards, and e-learning platforms, to enhance students' technological competency and prepare them for the digital age (Bhatt Rajesh, 2018). By prioritizing digital literacy skills, school heads have enabled millennial students to navigate the vast sea of information, engage in online collaboration, and utilize technology as a powerful tool for learning and problem-solving. Furthermore, school heads have encouraged project-based and experiential learning activities that emphasize applying knowledge in real-world contexts. Engaging in hands-on projects allows students to develop their creativity, critical thinking, and collaboration skills (Kumar Tan, 2019). These immersive learning experiences deepen students' understanding of concepts, cultivate their problem-solving abilities, and enable them to work effectively in teams. Through these experiences, school heads have prepared millennial learners to thrive in environments that require adaptability and innovative thinking.

Figure 3 shows the Experiences of elementary school heads on the challenges in building millennial-friendly school culture and the emergence of the three themes: Prioritized student-centered teaching methodologies, fostering a culture of inclusivity and diversity, and emphasized the development of students' 21st-century skills.

heads (Lee Smith, 2021). As educational leaders, they play a crucial role in shaping an environment that caters to the millennial generation's diverse needs, preferences, and characteristics. The millennial cohort is characterized by

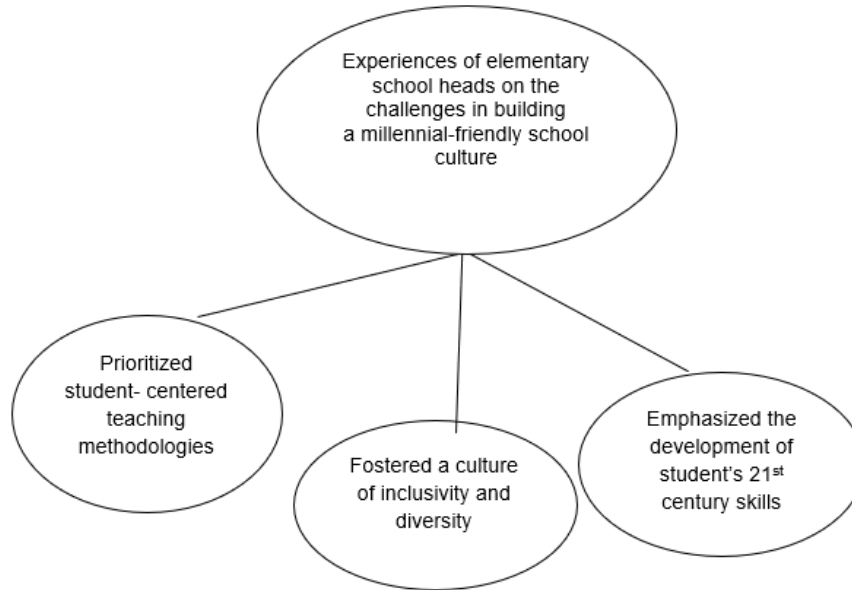


Fig. 3. The emerging themes on the experiences of elementary school heads on the challenges in building a millennial-friendly school culture

their exposure to technology from an early age, their affinity for collaborative learning, and their desire for personalized and relevant educational experiences (Brown Wilson, 2019). To address these challenges, elementary school heads have employed various mechanisms to create a cul-

ture that fosters student engagement, motivation, and success (Johnson Williams, 2020). This paper explores the experiences of elementary school heads and the mechanisms they have utilized to overcome challenges in building a millennial-friendly school culture.

3.2.1. Integrating technology in the classroom—Integrating technology in the classroom has emerged as a crucial coping mechanism for elementary school heads in building a millennial-friendly school culture. The millennial generation is characterized by their constant exposure to technology and digital devices from an early age, making them naturally inclined towards technology-enhanced learning experiences. To address this, school heads have embraced various educational technologies, including interactive whiteboards, tablets, educational apps, and online resources (Johnson Smith, 2019). By leveraging these tools, teachers can create dynamic and engaging lessons that cater to the diverse learning styles and preferences of millennial students. Technology integration in the classroom also fosters personalized learning

experiences, allowing students to progress at their own pace and explore topics of interest in more depth (Nguyen Le, 2020). Elementary school heads recognize the importance of individualized instruction in keeping millennial learners motivated and invested in their education. Moreover, technology facilitates data-driven decision-making, providing educators with insights into students' progress and areas of improvement (Huang Chen, 2019). School heads can use this data to identify specific learning needs and adjust instructional strategies accordingly, ensuring that each student receives appropriate support. Furthermore, integrating technology in the classroom nurtures essential 21st-century skills, such as digital literacy and critical thinking, that are vital for success in the modern world (Smith Patel, 2017). Millen-

nial learners are exposed to an increasingly digital and interconnected society, and their ability to navigate and harness technology is integral to their future success. By incorporating technology into the learning process, school heads help students develop relevant digital competencies in the workplace and beyond. Additionally, technology-enabled learning experiences foster collaboration and communication skills as students engage in online discussions, collaborative projects, and virtual teamwork (Lee Tan, 2020). This prepares them for the collaborative

3.2.2. Creating Innovative Learning Spaces—Creating innovative learning spaces has become a strategic coping mechanism for elementary school heads in building a millennial-friendly school culture. Traditional classrooms may not fully engage millennial learners accustomed to dynamic and interactive environments. To address this, school heads have reimaged classroom layouts and design to foster creativity, collaboration, and active learning (Lee Tan, 2020). Innovative learning spaces incorporate flexible furniture arrangements, designated areas for group work, and interactive technology tools. School heads empower millennial students to take ownership of their learning journey by creating environments that inspire curiosity and exploration. Innovative learning spaces also promote personalized and experiential learning approaches, catering to the diverse needs and learning styles of millennial learners (Johnson Smith, 2019). These spaces allow for differentiated instruction, where students can engage with content in ways that best suit their individual preferences. For instance, some students may prefer hands-on activities, while others may thrive in collaborative projects. By offering a variety of learning opportunities, school heads ensure that each student can flourish and achieve their full potential. Moreover, innovative learning spaces encourage the integration of

nature of the global workforce and equips them to become influential team players. Based on the participants, P1, P2, P3, P5, and P7, teachers discuss the importance of Integrating technology in the classroom. The shared way to develop a theme is by collaborating learning: technology enables collaboration among students within the classroom and across distances. Online tools, discussion boards, and virtual classrooms allow students to collaborate on projects, share ideas, and learn from their peers.

technology and multimedia tools, enriching the learning experience (Huang Chen, 2019). Interactive whiteboards, virtual reality simulations, and other technological resources open new avenues for engaging millennial learners and making abstract concepts more tangible. These technologies also facilitate global connections, enabling students to collaborate with peers from different cultures and gain a broader perspective on global issues (Smith Patel, 2017). Furthermore, innovative learning spaces extend beyond the physical classroom, embracing outdoor and community-based learning environments (Choi Wu, 2018). School heads have recognized the value of nature and the community as enriching contexts for learning. By incorporating outdoor learning spaces, such as gardens, outdoor classrooms, and nature trails, school heads provide millennial students with opportunities to connect with the environment, fostering a deeper appreciation for nature and ecological awareness. On the other hand, community-based learning initiatives enable students to engage with local businesses, organizations, and experts, bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and real-world applications. These experiences not only enhance the relevance of education but also encourage students to become active and responsible members of their communities. Based on the participants, P1, P3,

P5, and P7, teachers discuss the importance of creating innovative learning spaces. The shared way to develop a theme is by greeting students when they enter the class, making yourself available before and after class, and setting up office

hours. Share your enthusiasm about the course and relevant personal experience—this can humanize you and increase students' connection to the material.

3.2.3. Building a Student-Centered Learning Environment—Creating student-centered learning environments is a strategic coping mechanism elementary school heads employ to overcome the challenges of building a millennial-friendly school culture. Millennial students seek personalized and meaningful learning experiences that cater to their interests, strengths, and learning styles. School heads recognize the importance of tailoring instruction to meet these diverse needs, and thus, they design student-centered classrooms that empower students to take an active role in their learning (Lee Tan, 2020). By incorporating choice and autonomy into the curriculum, students are encouraged to explore topics that resonate with their passions, fostering a deeper sense of engagement and motivation. Student-centered learning environments prioritize collaborative activities, allowing millennial learners to work together and share their perspectives (Nguyen Le, 2020). School heads implement group projects, discussions, and peer-to-peer teaching methods, enhancing students' social skills and fostering a supportive and inclusive learning culture. Such environments encourage students to participate actively in their education, leading to a sense of ownership and responsibility for their learning outcomes. Furthermore, student-centered learning environments encourage teachers to serve as facilitators and guides rather than the sole source of knowledge (Smith Patel, 2017). Educators empower students to ask questions, explore solutions, and develop critical thinking skills. By shifting the traditional teacher-centered paradigm, school

heads embrace a pedagogy that aligns with the millennial generation's desire for meaningful and relevant learning experiences. Student-centered classrooms promote a growth mindset, where mistakes are viewed as opportunities for learning, and feedback is encouraged to support continuous improvement (Johnson Smith, 2019). Moreover, creating student-centered learning environments extends beyond the traditional classroom setting and extends to various facets of school life. Elementary school heads implement student-centered practices in co-curricular activities, school governance, and decision-making processes, ensuring students have a voice and influence in shaping their educational experiences (Huang Chen, 2019). These inclusive and participatory approaches build a strong sense of community and belonging among millennial learners, fostering a positive school culture that values each student's unique contributions. By prioritizing student agency and actively involving them in school initiatives, school heads demonstrate their commitment to building a millennial-friendly school culture that nurtures the holistic development of every student. In doing so, they lay the foundation for a thriving educational environment where students feel valued, supported, and empowered to reach their fullest potential. Figure 4 shows the coping mechanisms of elementary school heads on the challenges of building a millennial-friendly school culture. Moreover, the three themes emerged: integrating technology in the classroom, creating innovative learning spaces and diversity, and building student-centered learning.

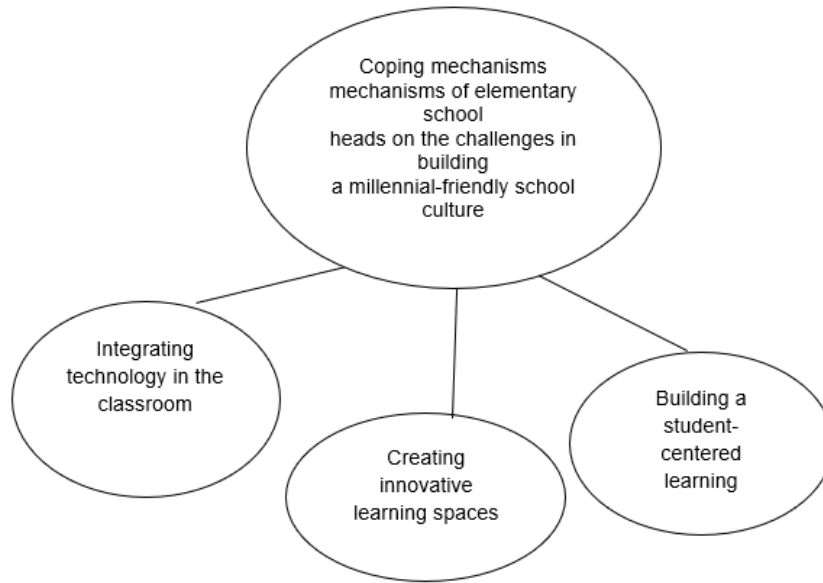


Fig. 4. The emerging themes on the coping mechanisms of elementary school heads on the challenges of building a millennial-friendly school culture

3.3. Insights Gained from The Experiences Of Elementary School Heads In Building A Millennial-Friendly School Culture—

The insights gained from the experiences of elementary school heads in building a millennial-friendly school culture offer valuable knowledge and strategies to meet the unique needs and preferences of the millennial generation. As educational leaders navigate the challenges of fostering an environment that resonates with millennial learners, their experiences provide essential lessons and best practices for creating dynamic and engaging learn-

ing spaces. These insights encompass a range of coping mechanisms, including integrating technology in the classroom to create innovative learning spaces (Lee Tan, 2020; Nguyen Le, 2020), prioritizing student-centered teaching methodologies to foster a culture of inclusivity and diversity (Smith Patel, 2017), and developing students' 21st-century skills through interactive and experiential approaches (Johnson Smith, 2019).

3.3.1. Promoting a culture of empathy and understanding— Promoting a culture of empathy and understanding is a pivotal insight gained from the experiences of elementary school heads in building a millennial-friendly school culture. School leaders recognize the importance of fostering a compassionate and supportive learning environment that values diversity and inclusivity (Nguyen Le, 2020). By prioritizing empathy, school heads encourage students to develop a deep understanding of one another's perspectives and experiences, creating a sense of belonging and emotional safety. This empathetic culture not only enhances students' social and emotional well-being but also fosters a positive school climate where kindness and respect are celebrated. Furthermore, elementary school heads implement various initiatives to promote empathy among students, such as peer mentoring programs, restorative justice practices, and community service projects (Smith Patel, 2017). By engaging students in activities that encourage them to step into others' shoes and consider different viewpoints, school heads nurture empathy as a core value. These experiences empower students to become caring and responsible individuals who are equipped to navigate diverse and complex social contexts. Additionally, promoting a culture of empathy and understanding goes beyond the confines of the school environment. Elementary school heads actively engage parents, caregivers, and

the wider community in cultivating empathy as a shared value (Smith Patel, 2017). Through parent workshops, community outreach programs, and collaborative initiatives, school leaders create a cohesive network that reinforces the importance of empathy in all aspects of a student's life. In doing so, school heads bridge the gap between the school and the community, forming a united front in nurturing empathetic and socially conscious young citizens. Moreover, elementary school heads recognize the need to address conflicts and challenges with an empathetic approach (Huang Chen, 2019). By incorporating restorative justice practices, conflict resolution programs, and proactive interventions, school heads provide a safe space for students to express their emotions and resolve conflicts in a constructive manner. This approach helps students understand the impact of their actions on others and encourages them to take responsibility for their behavior, fostering a culture of accountability and empathy. Teachers discuss the importance of creating innovative learning spaces based on the participants, P2, P3, P5, and P6. The shared ideas and develop new ones promote a culture of empathy and understanding. It is like active listening is an important component of empathy. It occurs when the listener truly hears what the speaker has to say, what they believe in, what they are experiencing, and what their background is. Teaching students active listening skills can help them

develop empathy. On the other hand, the discussions became intense and resulted in a new

*3.3.2. Leveraging community partnerships—*Leveraging community partnerships is a valuable insight gained from the experiences of elementary school heads in building a millennial-friendly school culture. School leaders recognize that collaboration with local organizations, businesses, and community members enhances the educational experience for students (Johnson Smith, 2019). By forming meaningful partnerships, schools can offer students opportunities for real-world learning experiences, guest speakers, and access to resources beyond the traditional classroom setting. These partnerships enrich the curriculum and foster a sense of belonging and connection to the broader community, reinforcing the importance of civic engagement and social responsibility. Furthermore, community partnerships provide students with exposure to diverse career pathways and experiences, helping them make informed decisions about their future (Smith Patel, 2017). School heads understand the significance of connecting classroom learning to real-life applications and actively seek collaborations that align with students' interests and aspirations. By tapping into the expertise of community partners, school leaders create a holistic learning environment that nurtures the development of well-rounded and future-ready millennial learners. Moreover, leveraging community partnerships empowers schools to address specific needs and challenges within the student population (Lee Tan, 2020). Collabora-

3.3.3. Fostering a culture of innovation and risk-taking— Fostering a culture of innovation and risk-taking is a crucial insight gained from the experiences of elementary school heads in building a millennial-friendly school

theme of Leveraging community partnerships.

tions with social service agencies, mental health organizations, and other community resources enable schools to provide targeted support and intervention for students facing various barriers to learning. In doing so, school heads create a caring and supportive ecosystem that prioritizes student well-being and academic success. Additionally, community partnerships strengthen family engagement in the educational journey (Garcia Martinez, 2021). By involving parents, caregivers, and community members in school activities and decision-making processes, school heads promote a culture of shared responsibility for students' learning and development. Family and community involvement also enriches the school experience, as parents and community members contribute their unique perspectives and experiences to enhance the learning environment. Teachers discuss the importance of creating innovative learning spaces based on the participants, P2, P4, P6, and P6. The shared ideas and develop new ones promote a culture of empathy and understanding. According to them, the first step to leveraging community partnerships is to identify who your potential allies and collaborators could be. Innovative learning environments should provide more opportunities for students to organize themselves and engage in learning. Consider how you can plan for learners to have more agency to plan what they need to work on, how they will do this, and where they will do this. collaboration between students.

culture. Risk-taking plays a crucial role in successful startup innovation by fostering creativity, encouraging experimentation, and pushing boundaries. Startups often face uncertainty, and calculated risks could lead to breakthroughs, dif-

ferentiation, and competitive advantage. School leaders recognize the importance of cultivating an environment where students feel encouraged to explore new ideas, think critically, and take calculated risks (Garcia Martinez, 2021). By promoting a culture of innovation, school heads nurture creativity and problem-solving skills among millennial learners, preparing them to thrive in a rapidly changing and technologically driven world. To foster a culture of innovation, elementary school heads implement various strategies, such as providing opportunities for project-based learning and design thinking (Lee Tan, 2020). These approaches encourage students to tackle real-world challenges, work collaboratively, and develop creative solutions. By allowing students to experiment, fail, and learn from their mistakes, school leaders create an atmosphere where risk-taking is seen as a valuable part of the learning process rather than a source of fear. Moreover, school heads play a crucial role in modeling a growth mindset and embracing innovation (Huang Chen, 2019). By demonstrating a willingness to try new approaches and learn from setbacks, school lead-

ers inspire students to adopt a similar mindset and view challenges as opportunities for growth and improvement. Creating a safe space for students to express their ideas and experiment without fear of judgment or failure is essential in nurturing a culture of innovation. Furthermore, school heads recognize the importance of incorporating technology and digital tools into the learning process to enhance innovation (Johnson Smith, 2019). By integrating technology in the classroom, school leaders enable students to access vast information, collaborate with peers beyond the school's physical boundaries, and engage in interactive learning experiences. This exposure to technology empowers students to think critically about the impact of technology on society and encourages them to become responsible digital citizens. Figure 5 shows the educational management insights gained from the informants' experiences. Moreover, three themes emerged: Promoting a culture of empathy and understanding, leveraging community partnership, and fostering a culture of innovation and risk-taking.

4. Implications and Future Directions

In this chapter, the summary of the study was presented, and from the summary of the findings, the implications and future directions. My study aimed to solicit elementary school heads' experiences on the challenges in building a millennial-friendly school culture in Mati South District, Division of Mati City. To achieve the research objectives, a qualitative phenomenological method was utilized with thematic analysis. In adherence to Cresswell's (2006) guidelines, open-ended interview questions were applied to get an authentic understanding of people's experiences. Furthermore, this interview approach encouraged participants to present their own definition or meaning of the phenomenon being explored.

4.1. Findings—The study's findings on school heads' experiences of the challenges in building a millennial-friendly school culture were revealed as follows: prioritized student-centered teaching methodologies fostered a culture of inclusivity and diversity and emphasized the development of students' 21st-century

skills. In terms of the coping mechanisms of school heads on the challenges of building a millennial-friendly school culture, it was revealed that they cope by integrating technology in the classroom, creating innovative learning spaces, and building student-centered learning environments. The school heads cited the fol-

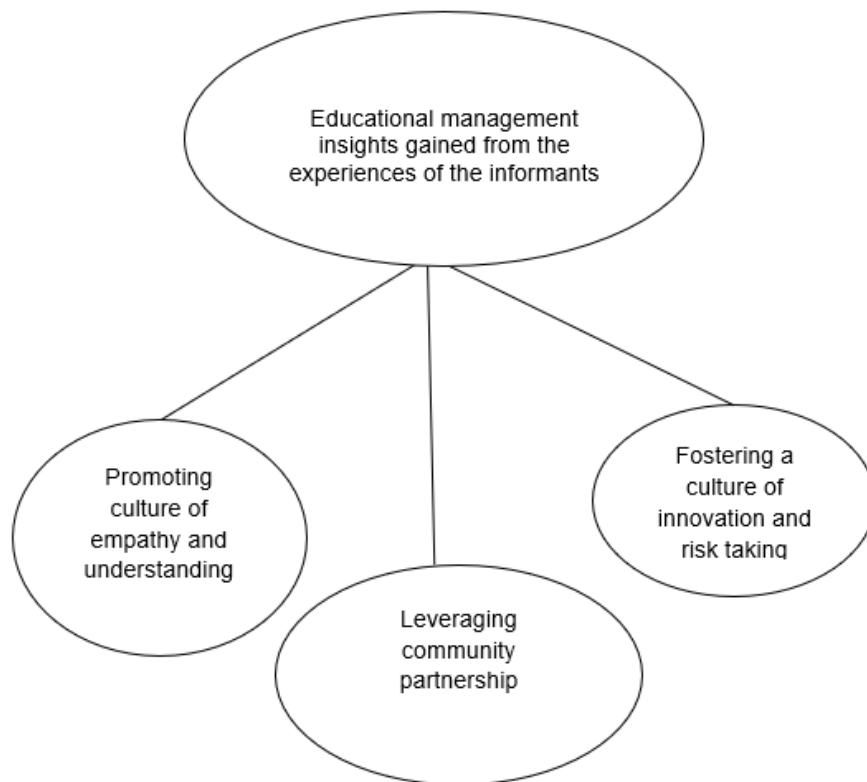


Fig. 5. Educational management insights gained from the experiences of the informants

lowing educational management insights gained from the participants: promoting a culture of empathy and understanding, leveraging com-

munity partnerships, and fostering a culture of innovation and risk-taking.

4.2. Implications—The results of my analysis revealed the following significant findings. Based on the experiences of school heads on the challenges in building a millennial-friendly school culture, the results of the interview revealed the following themes: First, prioritized student-centered teaching methodologies. School heads prioritized student-centered teaching methodologies to create an inclusive and empowering learning environment. The student-centered approach has nurtured critical thinking, problem-solving, and creativity among young learners, allowing them to explore their interests and talents. Second, it fostered a culture of inclusivity and diversity. The culture of inclusivity and diversity is shown by promoting awareness and understanding of various cultures and backgrounds, cultural events, celebrations, and exchange programs, creating opportunities for students to appreciate and respect different traditions and perspectives. Third, it emphasizes the development of students' 21st-century skills. School heads prioritized the development of students' 21st-century skills, such as communication, creativity, and collaboration. These prepared millennial learners for the demands of the modern workforce and equipped them to be effective global citizens. One of the themes that was shown was integrating technology in the classroom, the coping mechanisms of school heads, and the challenges in building a millennial-friendly school culture. The millennial generation is characterized by their constant exposure to technology and digital devices from an early age, making them naturally inclined towards technology-enhanced learning. The second theme identified was creating in-

novative learning spaces. Innovative learning spaces incorporate flexible furniture arrangements, designated areas for group work, and interactive technology tools. The third theme identified was creating student-centered learning environments. Millennial students seek personalized and meaningful learning experiences that cater to their interests, strengths, and learning styles. School heads recognize the importance of tailoring instruction to meet these diverse needs. The educational management insights the school heads gained on the challenges of building a millennial-friendly school culture. The first theme identified was promoting a culture of empathy and understanding. Promoting a culture of empathy and understanding goes beyond the confines of the school environment. By incorporating restorative justice practices, conflict resolution programs, and proactive interventions, school heads provide a safe space for students to express their emotions and resolve conflicts in a constructive manner. The second theme identified was leveraging community partnerships. Collaboration with community or local organizations, businesses, and community members enhances the educational experience for students. It provides students with exposure to diverse career pathways and experiences. The third theme was fostering a culture of innovation and risk-taking. Innovation nurtures creativity and problem-solving skills among millennial learners, preparing them to thrive in a rapidly changing and technologically driven world. By allowing students to experiment, fail, and learn from their mistakes, school leaders create an atmosphere where risk-taking is seen as a valuable part of the learning process rather than a source of fear.

4.3. Future Directions—

This study may enlighten school heads to explore innovative strategies to bridge the generation gap. Understanding how digital natives, such as millennials, engage with technology both in and out of the classroom can provide insights into creating an educational environment that aligns with their preferences and learning styles. Additionally, research could delve into the development of professional development programs for school leaders, equipping them with the skills to navigate the unique challenges and opportunities presented by the millennial generation. This may involve fostering a culture of continuous learning among school heads to adapt leadership styles, communication methods, and decision-making processes to resonate with millennial values and expectations. First, the Department of Education Officials, the findings of this study would give them, particularly in the Mati South district and the nearby schools in the division of Mati City, to be aware of how to build a millennial-friendly school culture. This study was also significant to stakeholders because it would give them insights on how to assist school administrators and capacitate them in building a millennial-friendly school culture. Moreover, future studies could explore the role of collaboration and inclusivity in fostering a millennial-friendly school culture. Investigating strategies to actively involve students in decision-making processes and creating platforms for open dialogue between school heads and the millennial student body could be vital. Understanding how to leverage the diverse perspectives, values, and aspirations of millennials in shaping school policies, curriculum design, and extracurricular activities could contribute to the development of a more inclusive and engaging educational environment.

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