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Research Article

A Comparative Study on Creative Self-Concept among Millennials and Gen Z

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ABSTRACT

Creativity shapes how individuals solve problems, express themselves, and innovate. How individuals view creativity is vital as it shapes how they adapt, solve problems, and thrive in everyday situations. This study explored the creative self-concept of Millennials and Generation Z in Central Luzon, Philippines. Creative self-concept encompasses both creative self-efficacy and creative personal identity, referring to how individuals perceive their creativity. While generational differences in values and skills are widely studied, little is known about how Filipino Millennials and Generation Z perceive their creativity. Using a cross-sectional survey method, information was gathered from 300 respondents, evenly split between their generation group. The independent sample t-test revealed that there is no significant difference in creative self-concept between the participants' generations ($p = 0.19$). Similarly, a non-significant result was also observed between respondents' geographical locations ($p = 0.12$). However, results from ANOVA revealed that people with more schooling ($F = 7.94$, $p < 0.001$) had more creative ideas about themselves compared to those who had lower educational attainment. These results showed that educational experiences may have a bigger effect on how people think about creativity than their generational group or where they live. The study highlights the importance of incorporating activities that foster imagination in schools, enabling students of all ages to generate new ideas and feel confident in their abilities.

Keywords*: Age group, Comparative, Creative self-concept, Creative self-efficacy, Generational comparison*

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Introduction

Creativity is a well-known factor that drives an individual's self-expression and innovative behaviour. This also shapes how individuals approach life challenges, with self-perception playing a vital role in developing life skills that are essential to live in today's world. This research explores the way generational background influences individuals' creative confidence, using Carl Rogers' Self-Concept Theory, Albert Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory, and the concept of Creative Identity. Rogers describes how individuals build their idea of self from self-knowledge, self-perception, and others' perception. This is how they see themselves, what they believe they can do, and what they would like to do. Bandura goes on to describe how personal efficacy for one's ability to control tasks and to solve problems is a significant motivator and adaptability factor, especially in difficult situations. In the context of creativity, this is the perception that one can come up with ideas, be courageous, and freely speak their thoughts. Creative Identity is concerned with how individuals end up perceiving themselves as creative based on exposure, learning, and the opportunity to experiment and exchange ideas. These views provide insights into how Millennials and Gen Z can build creative confidence differently. While Millennials view creativity as a means to achieve and form, Gen Z is more likely to express creativity freely through online networks. However, even this openness is accompanied by comparison pressures and web presence. As they learn and develop, individuals' creative confidence may shift depending on the experience, support system, and degree of being heard. Along these lines, the study aims to present findings that will help teachers and institutions create learning environments where creativity can be enjoyed and learned at different levels.

The study investigated how generational difference affects creative self-concept. The influence of location, age, and educational level on overall self-identity and their impact on an individual's confidence in solving complex problems is noteworthy. To support the study, the researchers formulated the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the creative self-concept when grouped according to their demographic profile (age group, location, and educational level). Being creative is essential for both personal and social growth. It helps with creativity, problem-solving, self-expression, and flexibility in various areas, such as school, work, and personal life. Creative self-concept, defined as an individual's perception of their creative abilities, constitutes a critical psychological determinant of creative performance. Creative self-efficacy is the belief that a person can come up with creative solutions, especially when they are faced with problems or jobs they have never done before. High creative self-efficacy can make people more persistent, willing to take risks, and interested in creative activities (Beghetto, 2021). Millennials (people born between 1981 and 1996) and Generation Z (people born between 1997 and 2012) have become the most important generations in the workplace and school. The life experiences of these groups are very different, especially when it comes to how much they use digital technologies. Millennials became accustomed to the internet, social media, and computers during their teenage years and young adulthood. Generation Z, on the other hand, often called "digital natives," grew up in a fully connected world with digital tools and platforms around them from birth (Alruthaya et al., 2021). These differences may affect how creative self-efficacy grows and changes in different generations.

People from Generation Z are known for using apps like TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube to show their creativity. These platforms provide opportunities for immediate feedback, public recognition, and the exploration of creativity across diverse formats. According to Jeong and Lee (2023), Millennials and Gen Z are more creative when self-motivated and believe in their ability to be creative. The study found that Millennials need structured support more than Generation Z does. Generation Z is more interested in independence and learning settings that are easy to adapt to. This backs up the idea that both millennials and older people can be creative, but that the way to become creatively confident may be different.

Additionally, Generation Z's approach to creativity is influenced by cultural trends that

value authenticity and empowering individuals. Wired wrote a story in 2023 about how Gen Z views creativity as a means to achieve personal goals, boost emotional well-being, and connect with others in a meaningful way. They often express themselves through artistic work to show who they are and what they believe in. At the same time, research like Cenita and De Guzman (2023) has shown that structured feedback, clear expectations, and guided learning environments help Millennials improve their creative self-efficacy. These different tastes suggest that the environment a person grows up in affects their artistic confidence.

Creative self-concept has two parts that work together: creative self-efficacy (CSE), which refers to the belief in one's capacity to be creative, and creative personal identity (CPI), which reflects the extent to which creativity is integral to one's self-concept (Karwowski, 2011). Based on Bandura's idea of self-efficacy, people who have a high CSE tend to be more resilient and flexible in uncertain situations, which can lead to more creative work. Findings from our study show that CPI is the most important factor in defining creative self-concept. This means that how people incorporate creativity into their identity may have a bigger impact on their confidence and willingness to engage in creative activities than efficacy beliefs alone. Ginns et al. (2023) recently published a study that validated a three-part model of creative self-beliefs: growth-creative mindset, fixed-creative mindset, and critical self-efficacy. This model was tested with a wide range of youths, showing how reliable and important it is to distinguish between self-efficacy and mindset in creative development.

Chen and Cheng (2023) studied this in China and found that emotional intelligence raises CSE through self-esteem, with gender acting as a mediator. Liu et al (2025) found that in another Chinese study, CSE acted as a bridge between creative self-beliefs and psychological well-being outcomes like life happiness and psychological richness. Cross-cultural studies also show how culture and the surroundings can have an effect. According to Fang and Chang (2023), innovation-friendly environments made CSE's effect on creativity stronger in higher education. In the same way, He and Zhang (2024) found that cultural orientation changes the link between growth mindset and self-efficacy. This shows how important it is to be sensitive to cultural differences in educational approaches.

Even with these insights, there is still a clear need for more academic study that compares the creative self-efficacy of Millennials and Generation Z. Most of the studies that have been done so far only look at one generation at a time or broad traits like drive, learning styles, or digital behavior without specifically looking at creative self-belief. Not much is known about how differences between generations in upbringing, schooling, and access to technology affect how people think about creativity. Also, not many studies have been done on the internal psychological factors, like self-efficacy, that make people creative across generations.

This study examines how Millennials and Generation Z perceive creative individuals, with a focus on creative self-concept, which is primarily influenced by creative self-efficacy. This study aims to contribute to educational psychology and generational studies by examining how each group perceives its artistic skills and confidence. It also aims to provide valuable guidance to teachers, institutions, and companies seeking to foster creativity through personalized support systems. Understanding how the creative self-concept factor of self-efficacy varies by generation can help create learning spaces, job programs, and policies that encourage creativity in a wide range of people.

Methodology

Research Design

A cross-sectional quantitative research design was employed to investigate how Millennials and Generation Z in Northern Luzon perceive their creative selves and how they differ from one another. It used Maciej Karwowski's (2011) approved Creative Self-Concept Questionnaire to look at creative self-efficacy (CSE) and creative personal identity. The design allows it to compare groups without changing any of the factors. An online survey with Likert-scale questions about how creative people thought they were, how often they did creative activities, and how much help they had in their

environment (like mentorship, tools, and feedback) was used to gather the data. Culturally appropriate items were added to show how Filipino kids use technology to be creative and start their businesses. This design made it possible to find patterns across generations and things that affect CSE.

Research Locale

The study was conducted in many parts of the Philippines, such as Metro Manila, Cebu City, Davao City, and rural areas in Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao, to make sure that all parts of the country were represented. Participants were chosen on purpose based on their generation: Millennials (born 1981–1996) and Generation Z (born 1997–2012). An online poll was sent out through Facebook, Messenger, email, and Viber to gather information. This method worked for participants who were very active online and made sure that everyone could access it, even in rural places. People who answered the survey self-reported information about themselves, like their age, level of education, and where they lived (rural or urban). This information was used to create subgroup analyses based on region and education level.

Participants and Sampling

The sample consisted of 300 participants, with equal representation from two generational cohorts: 150 Millennials (born 1981–1996) and 150 Generation Z individuals (born 1997–2012). A priori power analysis using G*Power 3.1.9.7 indicated that a minimum of 105 participants per group was required to detect small to medium effect sizes (tails = 2, α = 0.05, power = 0.95, effect size d = 0.5). Quota sampling was employed to ensure equal representation of the respondents based on their generational group. This approach allowed the study to capture balanced perspectives and make meaningful comparisons across generational cohorts.

Research Instrument

The Creative Self-Concept Questionnaire (CSC-Q) was utilized to measure the perception of Filipino Gen Z and Millennials' creativity, encompassing both their confidence in their creative abilities and the value they place on being creative (Karwowski, 2011). The scale has two subdomains: creative self-efficacy and creative personal identity. No revision was made as a previous study had cross-culturally validated the instrument. This scale is valid among Filipinos as it was reviewed by experts in creativity, educational psychology, and Filipino culture, who made some word changes (like "generate original solutions" to "come up with unique ideas"). These experts added examples that were more relevant to Filipino culture, such as creating digital content, starting an online business, and collaborating on projects. These changes were based on new studies from the Philippines on digital innovation among young people (Cueto et al., 2022) and Gen Z communication norms (Jeresano & Carretero, 2022). It was reported that forty-five pilot tests proved clearness and cultural fit. It appeared that the scale had a good internal consistency with 0.84 Cronbach's alpha. The scale has 11 items rated on a 5-point Likert scale and scores ranging from 11 to 55, with a higher score indicating a higher creative self-concept.

Data Gathering Procedure

The research followed a systematic and well-organized data collection process to maintain accuracy, ethical guidelines, and reliability. The research instrument was carefully chosen following its relevance to the study objectives. Official permission was received from its author to modify it into an electronic format for broader use. The online version had an introduction section, outlining the informed consent form, the objective of the study, the procedures to be followed, participants' rights, as well as the researchers' contact information in case of clarification. Recruitment of the respondents involved network-based approaches across various channels such as universities, community groups, and workplace networks, which ensured respondents from different backgrounds were included. Confidentiality was maintained by keeping all the information in a password-protected device that could only be accessed by the research team. Voluntary participation was encouraged; respondents are free to withdraw at any point without negative consequences. Data were gathered over a stipulated timeframe to ensure consistency before

coding and processing using statistical software for analysis. Findings are proposed for dissemination via scholarly publication in a peer-reviewed journal to advance the academic literature on the subject.

Ethical Considerations

This study adhered to the ethical principles outlined in the APA Code of Ethics, such as doing good and not causing any harm to the participants. All respondents provided informed consent after being informed about the purpose, methods, and their right to quit at any time without penalty. Following the 2017 Code of Ethics of the Psychological Association of the Philippines (PAP) and the 2012 Philippine Data Privacy Act (RA 10173), the study was conducted following ethical standards and abiding by confidentiality. All responses were kept anonymous, with no identifying information collected that could reveal the participants' identities. The data were only used for academic purposes, and the participants were kept safe throughout the research process. The data was kept in a password-protected device, which is only accessible to the researchers and will be deleted upon the publication of this research.

Data Analysis

The data from the online survey (n = 300) were cleaned and coded using Google Sheets to remove incomplete or duplicate responses. Descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations) were generated using SPSS v27 and Microsoft Excel. Normality assumptions were assessed using Shapiro-Wilk and Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests, all of which suggested no violation of the normal distribution ($p > 0.05$). Hence, parametric tests were applied based on the central limit theorem. Independent sample t-tests compared Millennials vs. Gen Z and urban vs. rural respondents, while one-way ANOVA with Tukey's HSD assessed differences by educational level. Effect sizes (Cohen's d, partial η^2) were reported to complement p-values.

Results and Discussion

The Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Table 1 presents the demographic profile of 300 respondents, providing useful information on how individuals' creative selves may differ by age, location, and level of schooling. Having an equal number of Gen Z and Millennials is crucial because differences between generations can impact mental traits related to creativity. Yehya et al. (2025) discovered that psychological traits like Openness and Conscientiousness are influenced by age, and these traits are important for creative behaviour. Gen Z may have a different artistic view of themselves than Millennials because they are younger and still figuring out who they are. This supports the study's method of comparing how creatively these age groups perceive themselves.

Table 1. Demographic Profile of Students in terms of Program and Year Level

Age Group	**Frequency**	**Percentage (%)**
Gen Z	150	50
Millennial	150	50
Geographic Location		
Urban Area	217	72.3
Rural Area	83	27.7
Educational Level		
Elementary Graduate	17	5.7
High School Graduate	118	39.3
College Graduate	124	41.3
Post-Graduate	41	13.7
Total	**300**	**100.0**

Geographically, most respondents (72.3%) resided in urban areas, a factor which may have significant implications. People who live in cities usually have access to more educational

institutions, a wider range of cultural experiences, and more creative stimuli. Hwang and Wu (2025) stated that these kinds of enriched settings can improve creative thinking by raising self-efficacy and lowering anxiety, which are two crucial things for building a strong creative self-concept. Because of this, people who live in cities may think they are more creative because they have more opportunities and outward support. How people perceive their artistic skills is also strongly influenced by the amount of schooling they have. The group is mainly made up of high school and college graduates, which suggests that these cohorts have had structured training in solving problems and have been exposed to curricula that are focused on new ideas. This finding aligns with Tian et al. (2025), who identified a strong connection between schooling level and self-efficacy, which in turn boosts creativity and the desire to start a business. Higher education not only helps people think critically and come up with creative solutions to problems, but it also enhances their confidence in their creative abilities through consistent encouragement and recognition from teachers and peers. Hence, the respondents' ages, location, and levels of schooling are all in line with recent studies that show how important these factors are in shaping creative self-concept. These characteristics change over time, which suggests that differences in how creative people see themselves are probably caused by both developmental and environmental factors.

Comparative Analysis of Creative Self-Concept based on Age Group

Table 2 presents the difference between Gen Z and Millennials in terms of creative self-concept. It revealed a p-value of 0.19, indicating no significant difference in how creative Gen Z (M = 4.19, SD = 0.60) and Millennials (M = 4.10, SD = 0.67) perceived themselves. This implies that age alone does not have a significant influence on how people see their creative skills.

Table 2. Independent Sample T-tests on Age Groups

Age Groups	M	SD	*t*	*p*	Decision	Remarks
Gen Z	4.19	0.60	1.31	0.19	Fail to Reject Ho	Not Significant
Millennials	4.10	0.67				

While a study conducted by Tirocchi (2024) highlights that Gen Z's creative identity is deeply connected with digital media, which differs from Millennials' more analog upbringing, this result agrees with Patel (2024), who found that there are no significant differences in self-concept dimensions based on age. This suggests that age may not be the main factor that affects how people think about their creative or personal identities. Also, Krishna and Agrawal (2024) said that both Gen Z and Millennials' creative success is affected more by external and internal motivators rather than the generational identity. There were some subtle differences between generations in how creative people were. These differences often depended on the situation, like how work was rewarded and how important it was seen morally. Niu et al. (2024) also stated that aspects such as the clarity of self-concept and emotional mediators like envy may be more important in shaping individuals' creative self-perception than age. Considering all these studies together, it seems that generational identity based on age (e.g., Gen Z vs. Millennials) may affect how people act or what they like at work. However, it does not statistically affect levels of creative self-concept on its own. In addition, a study on understanding Millennials and Gen Z by Wandhe et al. (2024) shows that Gen Z seeks autonomy and authenticity. On the other hand, millennials value collaboration and flexibility. These findings support the idea that social context and technological environment influence generational creative self-concept. Personal traits, motivation, and environment play a significant role than generational identity.

Comparative Analysis of Creative Self-Concept based on Geographic Location

Table 3. Independent Sample T-tests on Geographic Location

Location	M	SD	*t*	*p*	Decision	Remarks
Urban	4.18	0.64	1.56	0.12	Fail to Reject Ho	Not Significant
Rural	4.05	0.61				

Table 3 illustrates the independent sample t-test, which compared creative self-concept between respondents in urban areas (M = 4.18, SD = 0.64) and respondents in rural areas (M = 4.05, SD = 0.61); the result showed a p-value of 0.12, which is higher than the usual level of 0.05. The difference is not significant, indicating that living in a city or the countryside does not have a substantial impact on how people perceive their creativity. Although city residents scored higher, the findings do not indicate a clear link between place of residence and creative self-concept. This result aligns with findings from other research, such as Leng et al. (2025), while urban residents may benefit from greater access to resources, rural inhabitants often develop compensatory skills fostered by the resilience required in their environment. The study concluded that even though socioeconomic status and access to materials are different, the cognitive and motivational aspects of development, which are important for having a creative self-concept, can be strong in both groups, shaped by various factors. In the same way, Gerfanova et al. (2025) examined the quality of education in Kazakhstan's urban and rural schools, finding that while urban schools typically have better technology and teaching, this does not necessarily translate to improved subjective learning outcomes, such as self-concept, unless paired with practical engagement. Finally, Ragab et al. (2025) talked about the importance of social values and educational interventions in different geographical areas. The researchers mentioned that differences in behaviour patterns are often caused by education and awareness rather than geography alone. These findings imply that psychological, social, and educational influences play a more significant role in shaping a person's creative self-concept than their physical living environment.

Comparative Analysis of Creative Self-Concept based on Educational Level

Table 4 reveals a significant variation in individuals' perceived creativity based on their educational attainment (F = 7.941, p < .001). Tukey's post hoc test shows where these changes are. The creative self-concept scores of elementary school graduates were significantly lower than those of high school (p = .001) and college graduates (p = .004). This suggests that early exposure to education may not be enough to build creative confidence on its own. Also, high school graduates were very different from postgraduates (p = .003), and college graduates were also very different from postgraduates (p = .029). This shows that more formal education is linked to more positive views of creative ability.

Table 4. ANOVA Results of Creative Self-Concept Based on Educational Level

ANOVA Test				Tukey's HSD Test			
Group	**df**	***F***	**p-value**	**Educational Level**	**HG**	**CG**	**PG**
BW	3	7.94	< 0.001	EG	.001*	.004*	.564
WG	296			HG	-	.761	.003*
Total	299			CG	-	-	.029*
				PG	-	-	-

Note. BW – between groups; WG – within groups; EG – Elementary Graduate; HG – High School Graduate; CG – College Graduate; PG – Post Graduate; *significant at p < 0.05

These findings align with those of Gill and Prowse (2021), who concluded that higher educational attainment is associated with greater creativity and better career prospects. Creative individuals tend to have practical skills that enable them to excel in dynamic work environments. Moreover, cooperative learning interventions in higher education can significantly enhance creative thinking abilities (Catarino et al., 2019). More than that, Granello et al. (2025) stressed that structured interventions and learning environments that promote self-regulation and cognitive engagement greatly enhance self-concept, especially when individuals are presented with increasing levels of academic difficulty. In the same way, Hwang and Wu (2025) showed that educational settings that boost self-efficacy and lower anxiety, qualities that get better with more education, are essential for encouraging creative thinking. These studies highlight that higher educational attainment not only facilitates the acquisition of new skills but also fosters a stronger creative self-concept, likely due to the increased opportunities for achievement, constructive feedback, and problem-solving provided at each educational level.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Creative self-concept (CSC) is a strong contributor to self and career growth. CSC influences individuals' coping with adversity, interpersonal communication, and problem-solving. This research investigated the variations in CSC among Filipino Millennials and Gen Z, and how these variations also depend on educational attainment. The findings indicated that individuals with higher levels of education feel more assured of their creative ability. This illustrates the significance of learning in institutional settings to develop creativity. There were no significant variations, however, based on age cohort or place of residence. This implies that creativity is encouraged more by experience and education than by one's generation or location. While the research offers beneficial information, it should be remembered that it has its constraints. The sample would not likely represent the greater population, especially those beyond formal education or urban living. The cross-sectional structure limits the ability to observe change in CSC over a period, and self-reported responses are susceptible to personal or social desirability bias. These findings suggest the need for programs that foster creativity across diverse contexts. To follow United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 on quality education, universities and schools should incorporate activities that foster creativity, such as hands-on projects, collaborative initiatives, and regular feedback sessions, to enhance students' skills. The business sector can promote creative thinking by embracing teamwork, mentoring, and continuous learning. Teachers and policymakers have the primary task of acknowledging CSC as a vital skill in the modern world. It is essential to invest in programs specifically designed to bridge the gap between formal education and the creative demands encountered in everyday life. Future studies should explore the dimensions of how CSC evolves and grows at different stages of life. It would also be helpful to study the non-academic factors involved in this growth, such as the role of family life and media exposure. In addition, research needs to study effective methods that can develop and nurture creative growth, especially among the underprivileged sectors of society and within a non-formal learning environment. By strongly emphasizing the role of CSC, educational institutions can become a determining force in empowering individuals to gain the confidence and creativity to succeed in their individual lives as well as in their professional lives.

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