



## Research Paper

# Study on The Alpha Generation And The Reflections of Its Behavior in the Organizational Environment

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**ABSTRACT:** The purpose of this study was to analyze the Alpha generation's behavior focusing on the family and school environment carrying out a projection of how these characteristics could affect the organizational environment. The statistical information and projections benefited the studies aimed at this theme and the participating members and organization item. The research was applied to three different groups: elementary school teachers, parents and children belonging to the Alpha generation whose 414 members contributed to collect the study data. The presented results have shown that this generation is composed by individuals with behavioral characteristics focused on creativity, dynamism, leadership and a strong connection to technology. It has also shown that this composition will be responsible for their future professional choices and careers, which will be mostly oriented to the leadership professions, decision-making autonomy and technology-related. It has been possible to delineate that the organizational environment, as well as the family and school environment will need to adapt to these new professionals and the traditional hierarchy will no longer have space within the organizations to come. The search for professional appreciation and notoriety will be expanded.

**Keywords:** Alpha generation; Technology; Generations.

## I. INTRODUCTION

### Contextualization of the theme

The word “generation” embraces some meanings even more important than just the connotation itself. A generation is not formed only by people born in the same time period but is built by people who have been molded by a certain period or certain year having the same kind of political or cultural influence. Such experiences in common have made them linked to the same feeling, the sentiment of belonging to that particular generation (FORQUIN, 2003). Organizations are composed by different generations that have also different characteristics and attitudes. These generations are classified as “baby boomers”; born between 1946 and 1964, “X Generation”; born between 1965 and 1977 and “Y Generation” with people born from 1978 on (VELOSO; DUTRA; NAKATA, 2016). Another generation that participates of the current job market is the “Z” generation that for most authors is the one that corresponds to those who were born between 1990 and 2010. The origin of this generation is included on the word “zapping”, that its meaning refers to the fast, energetic enthusiasm present in this generation (TOLEDO; ALBUQUERQUE; MAGALHÃES 2012). The young people of this generation, because they have new practices of sociability and communication are more flexible to the new processes of economic capitalization. Their inclination to technological changes immerses them into a thought-provoking and competitive job market (FILHO; LEMOS, 2008). These individuals are extremely keen on the digital world and therefore it’s imminent to inquire whether digital natives would be more intelligent, agile, independent and self-taught than their teachers, their parents or any other member of previous generation (KAMPF, 2011).

The “Alpha” generation belongs to the group born after 2010. Despite this generation being relatively new, the use of technology, research facilitation and critical vision as characteristics of them can already be highlighted. Due to the appreciation of technological tools and the benefit of facilitated communication, in the future the physical contact will become more valued, since it will be rare (SANTOS; YAMAGUCHI, 2015).

The impact of modern events on the development of these children is identified and the adaptation of the job market to receive this generation is increasingly necessary, in other words, it will require transformations in the job market in terms of technology (VIEGAS, 2015).

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Themes about the relevance of technology in education have become more frequent, new generations have a great facility to use technology and this may counteract with the traditional teaching method that is still imposed on this generation. There are a lot of challenges to be faced, including social, environmental and economic which will require from these individuals the ability to solve problems, creativity, decision-making, critical thinking, flexibility and self-management. The protagonists who have such skills will be the basis and the support for the future society (FURIA, 2015). In this context, it is necessary for the organizations to plan a strategic vision focusing on the younger generations, something that values the professional without disparaging one generation or another, they are rather different, but together they complement each other and this junction can reflect in the company's success or failure (JUNIOR et al., 2016). Corrêa (2015) argues that it is important that the educators develop good teaching activities using technology as an ally offering different tools to acquire information. It's necessary that in addition to making them participants in this new method, teachers guide the learners to discuss and ascertain the quality of each information taken from the digital media.

By understanding all these aspects that describe peculiar characteristics of Alpha generation's behavior, it would be possible to project how this future society will act when it joins in the job market. The present research seeks to understand how the "Alpha" generation will behave in the organizational environment?

It has as its general objective to analyze the behavior of the studied generation in the family and school ambit and how it will be projected to the organization and has as specific objectives the to conduct an exploratory research with parents, teachers and children belonging to this age group; find out what are the behavioral characteristics of this generation in the family and school sphere and discuss the results projecting how the Alpha generation's characteristics can affect the organizational environment; The choice of this topic was made based on the study of this generation. In order to understand the characteristics that make up the "Alpha" generation, it's noticeable the necessity of related research on this subject and for this reason the focus to materialize an article approaching this theme. The purpose of this research is to project how the organizational environment will be when it joins in the job marketplace.

## **II. THEORETICAL REVIEW**

### **2.1 Generations: definitions and characteristics**

The present generations which are part of the historical records are known as "veterans", "baby boomers", "X" generation, "Y" generation, "Z" generation and the latest one, the "Alpha" generation. The current organizations face the challenge of dealing with different groups of people who have diverse characteristics in their behavior and this is the result of different generations acting in the same work environment, these are: "baby boomers", "X", "Y" and "Z" (OLIVEIRA et al., 2012, p. 29).

The "baby boomers" generation refers to those who inherited a postwar period which lasted between 1946 a 1964. They extol a generation that appreciate a steady and stable employment, nowadays they occupy leadership and management positions in companies. By exerting leadership functions they collide with younger generations, causing an expressive behavior contrast, in ideals and values. The "X" generation is composed by skeptical, individualistic and independent people who are addicted to work. Born between 1965 and 1977, they are characterized by having an extensive career in the same company (FANTINI; SOUZA, 2015). According to the literature, people from "Y" generation are characterized for being more flexible, more accustomed to change, able to deal with digital technology and with a lot of information. Not so inclined to safety and stability at work, they aim for autonomy and rapid growth within the organization where they work (LEMOS, 2012). The "Z" generation also known as the Internet generation, has certain peculiarities that differ it from the previous ones. Among these peculiarities is present in this generation the freedom of expression making the individuals more flexible in relation to professional and personal life. They are more collaborative, investigative, interactive, fast, instant and innovative (Ceretta; Froemming, 2011).

#### **1. "Alpha" generation**

Searching for the meaning of the word Alpha it was possible to verify that it's the first letter of the Greek alphabet which means: the first of a series of items or categories (OXFORD, 2017). "Alpha" generation: without defined characteristics and with the certainty that they will be immersed in a connected world, this generation refers to those who were born after the year 2010. They can be children from "Y" or "Z" generation (Toledo; Albuquerque; Magalhães, 2012). The "Alpha" is far from being just the next generation's name or the new wave of society's inhabitants. Descending from "Z" generation it represents the crossing of the "Z" generation with this new era, the digital era (Tootell; Freeman; Freeman, 2014).

It's possible to observe that although the generations are different there are characteristics that are inherited. As an example we can highlight the familiarity of the "Z" generation with technology and this has made the "Alpha" generation, its successor, inherit this characteristic but in a potentialized form.

According to Toledo, Albuquerque and Magalhães (2012) the dynamics of the world will depend of the “Alpha” generation for breaking the idiom barrier, for example with a greatest knowledge of the English language. These individuals will have an easy access to foreign countries and cultures due to the growing and global communication and there are a possibility to have a substitution of teachers in the classroom for “avatars” in a world that is increasingly technologically connected.

Today's children are born knowing how to use electronic equipment such as their smartphone, tablet and computer. It is the first generation that is called “digital generation” or “digital natives”. With regard to the educational process, England pioneered the inclusion of digital literacy in school the inclusion of digital literacy in school curriculum since 2014, UK institutions teach computer programming in primary and secondary schools. In Brazil the MóBILE Integral School has been the first school to adopt this discipline in the student's curriculum from the year 2017 onwards. This new curriculum aims to help the formation of creative and questioning students capable to use technology to propose solutions. In addition to the knowledge of technology, students have the necessity to broaden their linguistic communication using another language, in this case the English and Spanish. Nowadays in Brazil, more and more bilingual schools are emerging and this is undoubtedly the result of the globalization's context (CRESER MÓBILE, 2016).

Born in the digital age and patronized by this constant technological evolution, the “Alpha” generation as well as protagonists in the development of technology tend to become the key players in the evolution of thought. This generation indicates a reform of reflection and a critical sense, pointing to a very progressive and transformative generation. Past generations had shown that they are participants in a somewhat hierarchical world, and nowadays this kind of thinking no longer functions as used to be. The work and education's point of view is transformed and this generation becomes adult in an increasingly horizontal world. The changes are becoming so fast that the time between generations has decreased from 20-25 to 15 years. They will live in diversity, will be more original and will be prepared to develop unique skills (HEINZ PAPINHAS, 2013).

A good point to note about this generation is that they were born into a digital environment, technology is already an integral part of their lives. Parents, educators and other social media have a big influence in these technological sharing and the concept of “connection” is nothing more than the central element of this generation. The growing focus of technology access by children from “Alpha” generation demonstrated the need for a connection between an interface and technology which turned to the implementation of the touch-screen devices for an even more dynamic and natural interaction. It's essential that child educators be engaged in these promising changes summing up with a generation that has total control over the digital world (TOOTELL; FREEMAN; FREEMAN, 2014).

According to Bennett (2008), digital natives are those who have sophisticated knowledge and skill in technology and this differs them from previous generations. These differences are strongly perceived in education, experience and expectations.

## **2.2.1 Education, technology and behavior**

Since the end of the nineteenth century, after the proclamation of the Republic of Brazil, education was highlighted. The role of the school was to be necessarily institutionalized place with the objective to prepare the new generations (MORTATTI, 2006). The acceleration of globalization marked the end of the twentieth century. A predominant factor in this process is the fast and constant evolution of technology. Since 1980s technology has contributed to the improvement of knowledge, communication facilities and rapid access to information (SILVA, 2017). The “Alpha” generation has a strong connection with technology, making it part of their daily lives. Observing the ease that children have with this tool, it is important to bring it to the school environment, adopting the educational purpose and preparing the society for this new educational format (FARIAS, SILVA, 2015).

It is important to know this digital generation from its inception to the aspects that constitute its profile, to understand their behavior, because only with this type of vision teachers will be able to modify the teaching posture (SILVA, 2014). Based on the sociologist Zygmunt Bauman, the computer age has produced a new human being, so the way of thinking has also been influenced, it is cited the lack of attention, the less ability to devote a long time to a task. According to him, the new scenario defies and transforms the secular position of the teacher, also says that the teacher today is not limited to being the only source, the only guide (CRESER ESCOLA, 2015). Faced with this new reality, educators need to renew the methodological proposals. It's necessary to propose new mode of teaching the inherited content, developing competences to include the new methodologies that aim at technological procedures (TOLEDO; ALBUQUERQUE; MAGALHÃES, 2012).

Learning allied to technology will be increasingly expanded. The teacher will become a facilitator and a consultant and the classroom will have its degree of importance increased, being a multi-pronged environment for the attainment of knowledge (SILVA, 2014).

According to Nogueira (2017), with regard to the Western family, there have been great changes over the decades, such as: decreasing marriages and rising marriages, new types of families as single parents, recluses, limitation of the number of children due to changes in mentality regarding contraceptive methods and

female work. Over the years the family moved from unit of production to unit of consumption. Parents today have as their primary objective to offer to their children the best opportunities possible and looking for this point of view they invest more and more in their children. In accordance with Reis (2017), these parents work to obtain more resources and provide greater comfort to their children resulting in a short time with family.

The child's home is the responsible environment for the child's first experience during the socialization process. By this understanding, it begins to reproduce the family's culture and its parents have the fundamental responsibility in the learning process, passing on their values in order to educate them (OLIVEIRA, 2014).

In the study of Cia, Pamplin and Prette (2006) as authors confirm the importance of communication between parents and children and the participation of parents in child's life for a healthy socio-emotional development. Looking for the parental supervision when the topic is technology access at home, knowing the importance of this subject for being a considerable influence on the "Alpha" generation's life, a study by the British Internet Matters organization with 1500 families found that nowadays 48% of 6 year-olds use technology and 41% of them access the internet without parental supervision. The survey also showed that 44% of these children use the internet inside their bedroom and 72% are online outside the home (CRESER CURIOSIDADES, 2017).

Today there are so much more generations living together than previously seen and this is not settled in a social hierarchy, family or corporate only by age, but by an interaction that is encompassing all levels and generations (MCCRINDLE; WOLFINGER, 2010). Relating to the process of professional choice, Almeida and Silva (2011) report that they are superimposed on a wide network of factors involving influences from the family environment, peer group, social context, politics, work and education ambience. From this point on, we can understand that family and school are two important factors that can have an impact on the professional life of a child, since they support and give them knowledge about the different aspects of social and school life.

### **III. METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Case to be studied**

The survey was randomly applied, the data was collected through the online *Survey Monkey* system and the questionnaires were sent digitally, using emails and even social networks like *WhatsApp* and *Facebook*, aiming to have a wider range of participants. With this, we managed to reach several regions of the country, something that allowed us to have a vision regarding the peculiarities of each locality. The focus was directed to groups of elementary school teachers, parents and children belonging to the Alpha generation.

#### **3.2 Methods**

The research is composed, as the means and the ends, as exploratory, aiming at gaining greater familiarity with the problem, constructing projections and providing data base, verifying the necessity of studies related to the subject in question (GIL, 2002). As for the means, bibliographic research methods were used based on scientific articles, books, journal articles, documentaries and field research aiming to collect database about the groups surveyed (GIL, 2002).

##### **3.1.2. Research Process**

To substantiate the arguments proposed in the study, we used field research and as a research tool, three objective questionnaires specifically addressed to three groups, being 8 questions for parents, 7 for educators in the state of São Paulo, Paraná and Tocantins, and 3 for students of the UNASP Hortolândia Institution totaling 18 questions. The following order for parents: (1) personal information as year of birth, for the framing of the generations and age of the child; (2) information on technology and social networks, to find out the children's access to these aspects, (3) information to understand and map the type of professional profile projected by their view of their children, and (4) information to verify knowledge of the alpha generation. The following order for educators: (1) personal information such as year of birth, for background of generations, (2) information to ascertain knowledge about alpha generation, (3) information about the inclusion of technology in the classroom and traditional methodology, in order to identify if the methods currently used are effective, (4) information about students' behavior regarding collaboration and teamwork, in order to be able to form expectations about the future work environment. The following order for children, IASP students: (1) personal information such as gender, to check the amount of current girls and boys, (2) information on the profession of most interest and (3) social networks.

The data collection process was carried out through *Survey Monkey*, an online application used to elaborate and analyze the questionnaire. Parents, children and educators had access to the questionnaires through a link sent through emails and social networks, *WhatsApp* and *Facebook*. With this method we acquired ease in the process of data collection and greater reach of the researched public. We found 414 members who contributed to our database.

#### IV. DATA ANALYSIS

This chapter consists in analyzes and discussion of the results obtained from the data collection that was performed with the groups of parents, children and educators. Some analyzes were conjunct, aiming the comparison regarding the positioning of the groups.

##### **4.1 Generation Analysis**

The following results are related to the generation of higher incidence between parents and educators and the knowledge of these groups about the "Alpha" generation. Table 1, with an amount of 231 researched, shows the percentage of individuals belonging to the parent groups and educators of the "X", "Y" and "Z" generations.

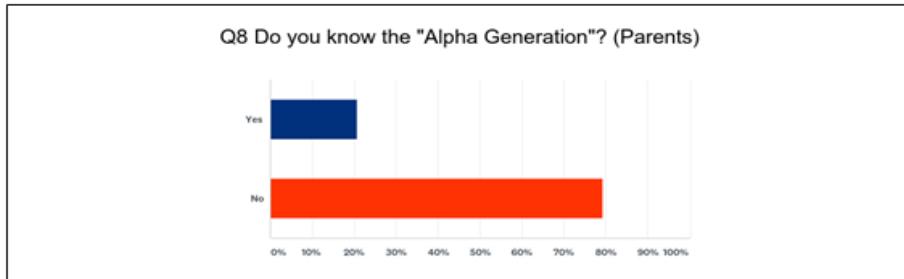
**Table 1:** Framing parents and educators generations

Year of birth	Generation	Parents Percentage	Educators Percentage
1965 a 1977	X	24,48%	36,11%
1978 a 1997	Y	71,35%	63,89%
from 1998	Z	4,17%	0%

Source: Own elaboration.

In the referenced groups, 71.35% of parents and 63.89% of educators composed the "Y" generation, while only 3.66% of parents made up the "Z" generation. The result found with regard to parents, reaffirms the database found in Tootell's research; Freeman; Freeman (2014) on the progeny of the alpha generation. According to Lemos (2012), the "Y" generation is much more familiar with the digital era and with the implementation of technology in the workplace and has greater flexibility to changes. Below, in graphs 1 and 2 we will demonstrate the knowledge of these two groups, parents and educators, regarding the "Alpha" generation.

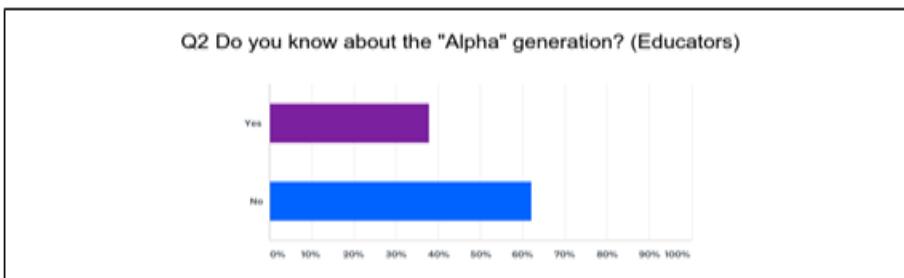
**Graph 1:** Parents' knowledge about Alpha generation



Source: Prepared by the authors.

It is perceptible that 79.38% of the parents surveyed do not know the "Alpha" generation, while a small percentage of 20, 62% have knowledge of it.

**Graph 2:** Educators' knowledge about Alpha generation



Source: Prepared by the authors.

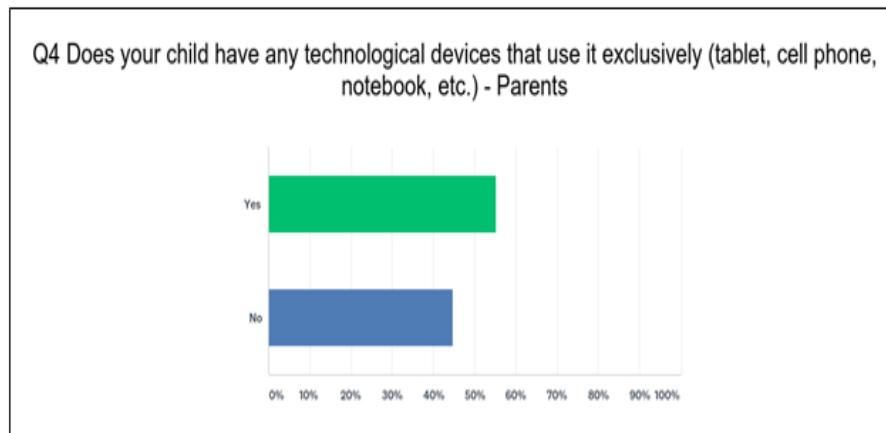
In the results for educators there was also a higher percentage that did not know the "Alpha" generation that is 62.16%, while 37.84% declared to know it. According to Toledo, Albuquerque and Magalhães (2012,

p.6), this generation still doesn't have defined characteristics and it is not known either, so it is possible to understand the results evidenced in the two groups of individuals. It's evident that, although neither group presented results with a greater percentage for the knowledge of this generation, educators know more the researched generation than the parents themselves.

#### **4.2 Technology and social networks**

After identifying the generations present in the groups of parents, educators and the knowledge about the generation studied, an analysis based on the access to technology and social networks takes place, using data from the parents and children groups.

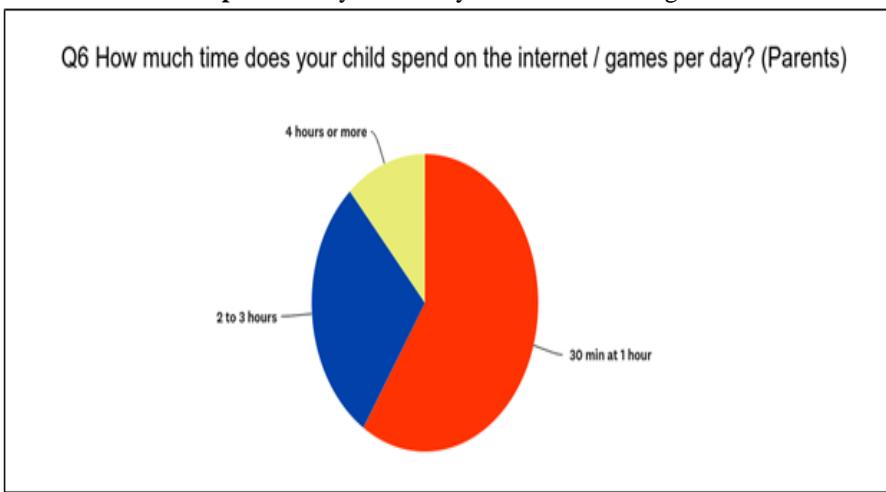
**Graph 3:** Analysis of technological device of exclusive use



Source: Prepared by the authors.

The sample above refers to the percentage of children who have some electronic device of exclusive use, demonstrating that 55.15% of the respondents stated that their child has. It is due to these and other aspects that the definition of "digital generation" or "digital natives" for this group has become increasingly common (GROWING MOBILE, 2016). Figure 4 shows the time in which the children of the participating individuals have access to the internet / games per day.

**Graph 4:** Analysis of daily time on internet / games

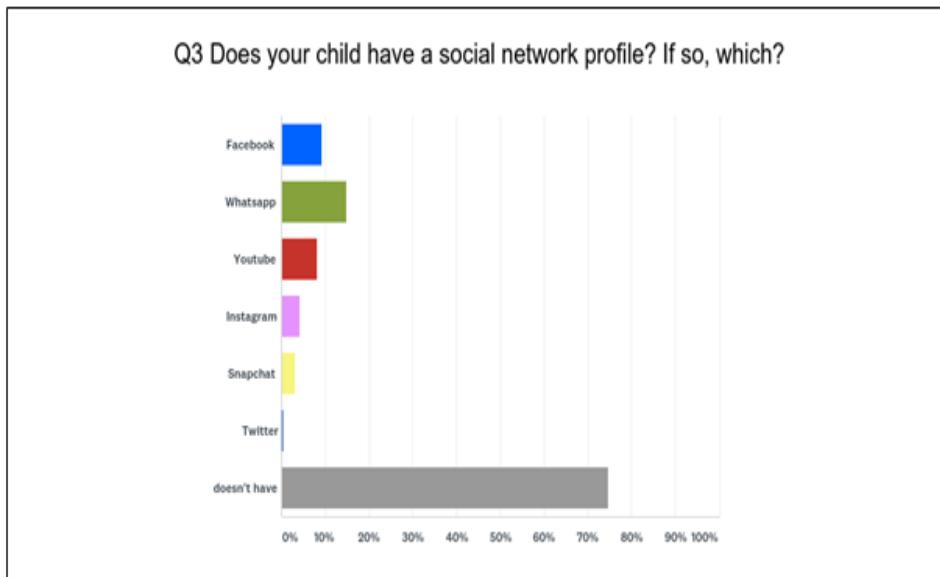


Source: Prepared by the authors.

It was verified that the percentage was 59.16% for 30 min to 1 hour, 29.32% for 2 to 3 hours and 11.52% for 4 hours or more. The result shows that the Alpha generation has a greater experience with the use of technology, showing that the digital world is already an integral part of its daily life (BENNETT, 2008).

In sequence we have a conjunct analysis regarding the incidence of profile in social networks and the knowledge of alpha generation on the applications. The objective was to discover with the result below the percentage of children who currently have some profile in social networks.

**Graph 5:** Incidence of profile in social networks “Alpha” Generation

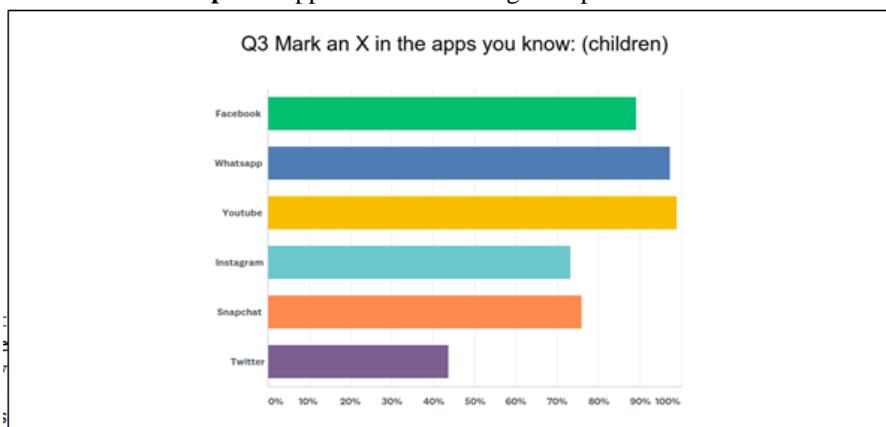


Source: Prepared by the authors.

It was found that 74.74% of the respondents stated that the children doesn't have social profile on these digital platforms.

In sequence we have graph 6, which states the children's knowledge about the applications below.

**Graph 6:** Application Knowledge - Alpha Generation



Source: Prepared by the authors.

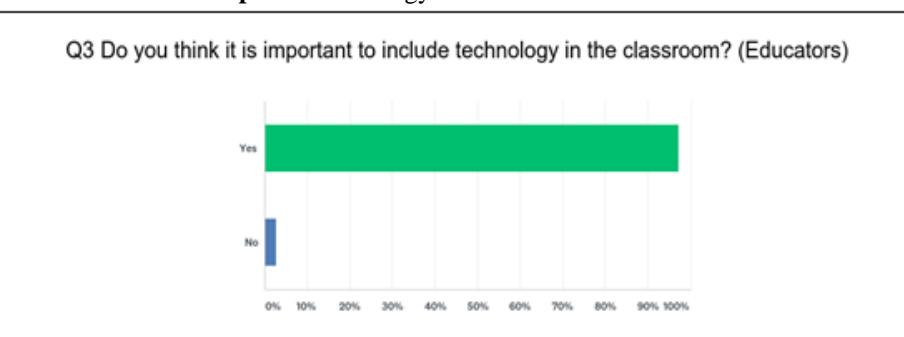
On the other hand, analyzing the results obtained, it is noticeable that, although most of the children doesn't have a profile in social networks, they have knowledge and contact with the applications described above. With the highest percentage we have *YouTube* with 98.91%, while only 43.72% know about *Twitter*. The results demonstrate the strong relationship between “Alpha” generation and technology (FARIAS, SILVA, 2015), as stated by Santos and Yamaguchi (2015) the valorization of these tools will make that contacts in virtual environment exceed the physical contact in the future, a reality that will affect even the organizational environment.

#### 4.3 Educators' point of view on the implementation of technology and about the traditional methodology

Next, in order to identify the educators' point view on the inclusion of technology within the classroom and verify the opinion of the respondents about the effectiveness of the traditional methodology, we will do a conjunct analysis of the results found.

The graph below demonstrates the opinion of educators from different regions of the country through the use of technology in the classroom.

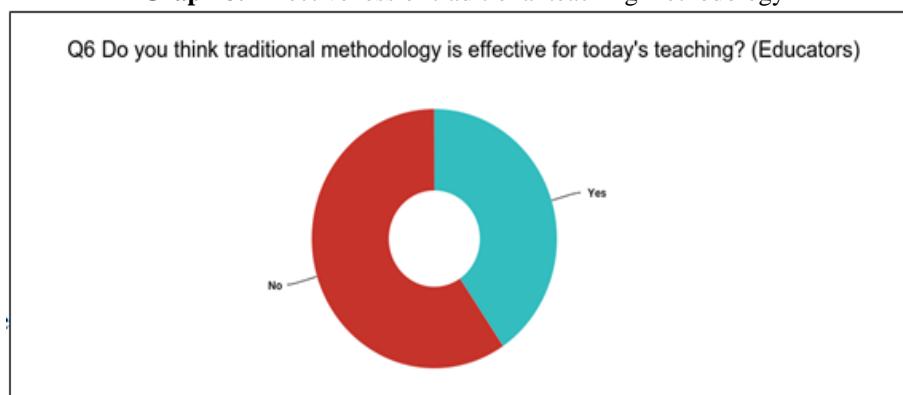
**Graph 7:** Technology inclusion in the classroom



**Source:** Prepared by the authors.

Analyzing the educators' opinion about the inclusion of technology within the classroom, it was found that 97.30% stated that this aspect is important. Regarding the effectiveness of the traditional methodology for teaching in the present days, the following percentages were verified:

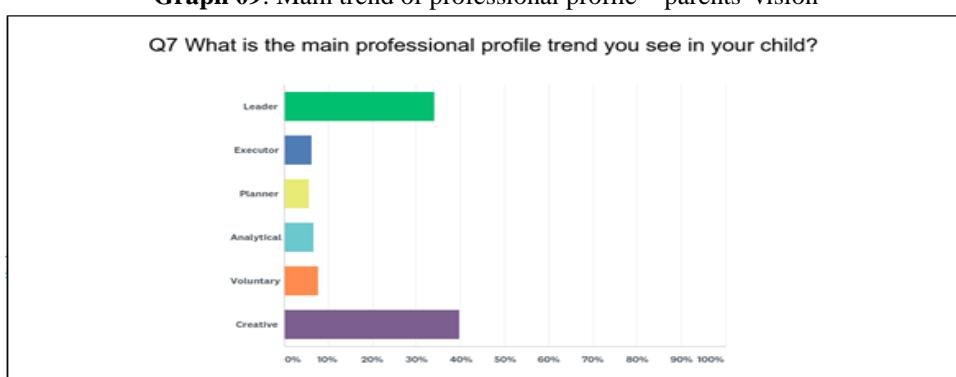
**Graph 8:** Effectiveness of traditional teaching methodology



**Source:** Prepared by the authors .

59.46% of the respondents believe that the traditional methodology is not effective for today's teaching, as opposed to the 40.54% that confirmed its effectiveness. The technology has an important role for the school environment being a tool that will awaken in the students a greater interest in the research obtaining diversified knowledge. In addition, Silva (2014), complement that learning allied to technology will be increasingly expanded; it's notorious that teachers have already realized that current teaching methodology needs to be modified and this result reaffirms the importance described by Toledo, Albuquerque and Magalhães (2012) on the renewal of methodological proposals.

**Graph 09:** Main trend of professional profile – parents' vision

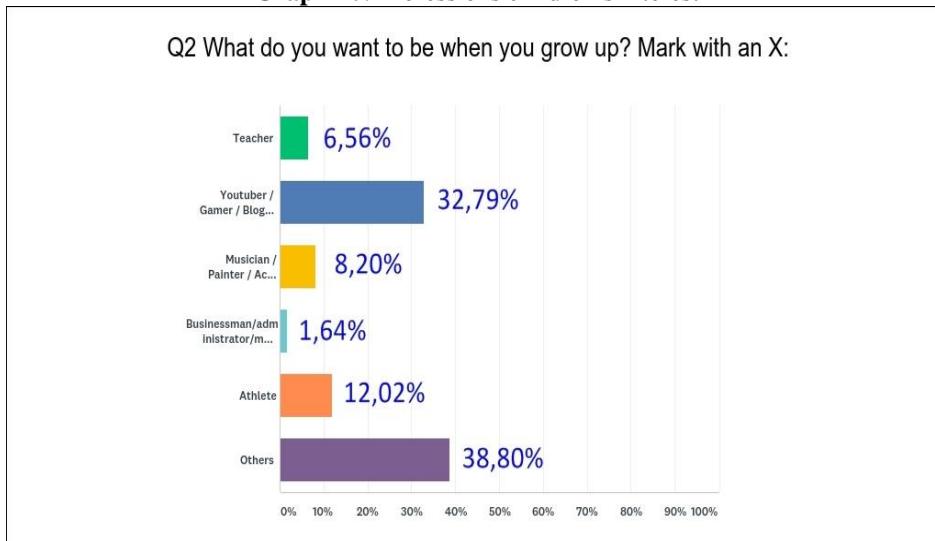


**Source:** Prepared by the authors.

The most prominent profiles were: creative with 39.69% and leader with 34.02%. It's notorious that today's children have a greater range of access to information and consequently broaden their worldviews by increasingly instilling their creativity. Regarding leadership, the critical sense of this generation is already

highlighted (HEINZ PAPINHAS, 2013). Next, in figure 10, we have the percentages related to the professions that arouse greater interest in the generation studied.

**Graph 10:** Professions children's interest



**Source:** Prepared by the authors

The two highest percentages were others (with emphasis on veterinarian, doctor and police) with 38.80% of the answers and Youtuber / Gamer / Blogger / Computer Technician with 32.79% of interest. It's evident that the professions related to technology were highlighted by this generation, due to the familiarity developed through this tool. The results show that throughout the research carried out by this article, the strong relationship between technology and the "Alpha" generation is due to the fact that it was already born in the digital world (TOOTELL, FREEMAN, FREEMAN, 2014). These professions will facilitate the global access of these future professionals and will have as a consequence the breakdown of language barriers and the ease of information exchange among the different cultures of the countries (TOLEDO, ALBUQUERQUE, MAGALHÃES, 2012).

### III. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Currently defined as "digital natives", those belonging to the "Alpha" generation as early as their first years of life are immersed in the digital world where technology is an integral part of their daily lives influencing their ways of life and their behaviors. We concluded with this study that the "Alpha" generation consists of individuals with behavioral characteristics focused on creativity, dynamism, leadership and that their influence will be responsible for choosing their careers in the future, which will be mostly directed to the leadership professions, autonomy for decision-making and in large part technology-related professions. Digital influencers, bloggers and "Youtubers" are among the most sought after by this generation.

Analyzing the family and school environments, it's noticed that the changes that have occurred in the world over the years in relation to technology and speed have changed some values and concepts of family and school. These two environments are undergoing significant modifications to be able to attend and transmit knowledge to this new generation, because they understand that they are responsible for their formation and development. Through the research it was possible to note that the traditional methods teachers have already realized the need to change in education area to receive this generation that increasingly becomes more acquainted with the digital world. It has been possible to delineate that the organizational environment, as well as the family and school environment will need to adapt to these new professionals and the traditional hierarchy will no longer have space within the organizations to come. The search for professional appreciation and notoriety will be expanded. The research revealed the lack of knowledge of parents and teachers about this generation and it's indispensable to have more scientific analysis aimed to the "Alpha" generation. The difficulty in finding materials and bibliographic sources related to this subject evidences that the theme proposed by this article is fertile and needs research.

For future research, we suggest analyzing the alpha generation and the question of authority, how these individuals will behave when dealing with superior figures within an organizational environment still hierarchically structured.

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