EMPOWERING TEACHERS THROUGH CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAMMES - A STUDY AMONG TEACHERS OF GEN ALPHA

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ABSTRACT

This research investigates the demographic characteristics, preferences for professional development, and instructional methodologies utilized by educators interacting with Generation Alpha students. It uncovers a substantial involvement in professional development endeavours, including workshops on pedagogy and the integration of technology, demonstrating educators' commitment to refining their instructional practices. Furthermore, the study identifies diverse instructional techniques employed to effectively engage Generation Alpha learners, ranging from interactive lessons to collaborative projects. However, the research also underscores areas warranting further exploration, particularly regarding the enduring impact and sustainability of professional development initiatives. In essence, this study emphasizes the importance of ongoing professional development in addressing the evolving needs of educators and students in the digital age. It sets the stage for a deeper understanding of educational approaches within the Generation Alpha context, laying the foundation for continued research and advancement in instructional practices.

KEY WORDS: Gen Alpha, Capacity building programme, Digital literacy and its usage.

INTRODUCTION

Generation Alpha, primarily offspring of millennial and younger members of Generation X, is experiencing rapid global growth, with over 2.8 million new members estimated weekly. Projections indicate that by 2025, their population will surpass 2 billion. Being in their early years, Generation Alpha is greatly influenced by their millennial parents, known for their pervasive use of social media. As a result, a significant portion of Generation Alpha is expected to be online from infancy. They are the first cohort to encounter remote learning, tablet technology, and widespread streaming services from a very young age. Additionally, their upbringing is marked by exposure to artificial intelligence (AI) through voice assistants like Siri or Alexa and language processing tools like ChatGPT.

The distinctive circumstances of Generation Alpha, especially their formative years during the COVID-19 pandemic, are anticipated to shape their behaviours, attitudes, and habits significantly. Referred to by some as "Gen C" or "Generation COVID," they are the initial generation to mature in a world profoundly impacted by the pandemic. The global health crisis accelerated technological trends, fostering increased digital communication, notably through video calls, virtual meetings, and remote education. The pandemic has led Generation Alpha to spend more time at home with their parents than under typical circumstances. The theoretical underpinnings of this topic provide a foundation for understanding the principles and framework that guide the design, implementation, and evaluation of such programs.

OBJECTVES

- To identify the need for capacity building program for teachers for Gen Alpha
- To analyse the impact of capacity building program for teachers for Gen Alpha
- To examine the importance of digital literacy for Gen Alpha teachers.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

1. **Elisabeth Öhlböck et all.., (2023):** "The increasing presence of autistic students in mainstream classrooms has led to challenges for teachers who often express frustration due to a lack of training in managing the specific needs of these students. This study aimed to assess the impact of an online training program centred around the Zones of Regulation™ curriculum on teachers' self-efficacy in handling the self-regulation needs of autistic pupils in mainstream primary school settings. Primary 5, 6, and 7 teachers with at least one autistic pupil were purposefully sampled. An online training session, lasting

2.5 hours, was conducted by an occupational therapist with post-graduate qualifications in autism and sensory processing. The Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES) was administered before and after training, as well as at a two-month follow-up. The Usage Rating Profile-Intervention Revised was completed post-training, and a survey exploring participants' experiences with implementing the Zones of Regulation™ curriculum was conducted at the two-month follow-up. Results indicated a significant improvement in teachers' TSES scores post-training ($p < 0.001$), suggesting the efficacy of online training in the Zones of Regulation™ curriculum. The curriculum was found to be acceptable, understandable, and feasible for mainstream primary school teachers. The study emphasizes the importance of education authorities offering training opportunities on the Zones of Regulation".

2. **M. Anand Shankar Raja, A. V. Akshay Kumar et all..,(2022):** "This article seeks to examine the factors contributing to the growth of the gig economy in both the present and future contexts. The emergence of the gig economy can be traced back to the aftermath of the 2008 economic recession, marked by a surge in unemployment and voluntary job exits. More recently, the COVID-19 pandemic has played a pivotal role in the compelled expansion of the gig economy. Analyzing it from an economic standpoint, the gig economy is currently dominated by Generation Y and Generation C, with Generation Alpha poised to take over in the near future. Despite subtle differences among these generations, such as Gen Y, C, and Alpha, they are united by their common traits of being "tech-savvy" and seekers of flexibility. This article underscores the influence of technological generations on the rise of the gig economy, shedding light on a relatively underexplored area. While there is limited research focusing exclusively on Gen Y, C, and Alpha, this work contributes original insights by examining the gig economy in the context of both the great economic recession and the COVID-19 pandemic. Future researchers delving into the roles of digital technologies in the lives of Gen Alpha and Gen C can explore how these technologies impact their daily lives, personal lives, and careers. While technology has significantly contributed to the proliferation of gig jobs, it is essential to recognize and investigate potential adverse outcomes, providing a foundation for further exploration. Consequently, this research serves as a catalyst for future studies along similar lines".

3. **Alan Bhekisisa Buthelezi et all.., (2022): "C**apacity building programmes play a vital role in teachers' competence and development. While several studies have been conducted on the impact of capacity building of industrial workers on productivity, few research exists on the university capacity building programme for school teachers.Thus, this paper explores capacity building initiative of the University of Zululand in the teaching of Economics at Ilembe district in South African schools. In this regard, quantitative investigation methodology was followed. A case study approach was adopted to gather data from respondents. Questionnaires were administered to elicit information from respondents. Data gathered from questionnaires were triangulated with information provided by document analysis so that conclusions could be made. The findings of this investigation revealed that there should be ongoing capacity building workshop for teachers of Economics in Grades 10, 11 and 12. The investigation further revealed that teachers' qualifications in the subject must be improved by the KZNDBE Ilembe District".

4. **B Munoz Cherea, M Ehren et all (2021):** "Examining and comparing the inspection regimes across the four nations of the UK is pertinent, particularly as each country operates its own system and has recently introduced new inspection frameworks, notably in England and soon in other nations like Wales. This study critically assesses how both longstanding and new inspection regimes aim to drive improvements in schools. The research questions guiding this study include: 1. What is the theory of change for each of the four education inspectorates in the UK (England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland)? 2. What are the perspectives and experiences of stakeholders regarding inspections? The methodology involves three phases: Phase 1 reconstructs the program theory of each inspectorate's inspection framework through the analysis of 60 policy documents. Phase 2 validates Phase 1 through engagement with 12 experts. Phase 3 explores stakeholders' views and experiences through fieldwork, including 24 surveys and 7 semi-structured interviews with 31 individuals, including head teachers, governors, local authority school improvement staff, and teachers. The findings highlight both similarities and differences across the four inspection frameworks in the UK. The analysis reveals substantial differences between school inspection regimes across the UK. While there is some convergence in the intended mechanisms for inspections to contribute to school improvement, there are significant divergences not only in the mechanisms but also in the intended effects at both the school and system levels. For system-level effects, England focuses on social mobility and enabling young people to reach their potential, while other regimes emphasize inclusivity, high-quality provision (Northern Ireland), the highest standards of learning for all (Scotland), and creating conditions for all".

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research methodology entails the systematic methods used to investigate, gather, process, and analyse data. In academic writing, particularly in research papers, the methodology section is pivotal for readers to assess

a study's validity and reliability. It details research design, sampling methods, data collection tools, and analysis techniques, providing transparency into the study's rigor. Selection of an appropriate research design, sampling method, data collection tools, and analysis techniques is critical to ensure accurate findings. Overall, methodology serves as a framework guiding researchers to effectively address research questions and contribute to scholarly knowledge.

This survey was conducted in Coimbatore city only and respondents were teachers of Gen Alpha students in Coimbatore. This survey helps us to know the level of efficiency of capacity building programme that helps teachers to handle Gen Alpha students in education and also to promote the importance of digital literacy.

Area of study: Coimbatore

Type of reseach: Descriptive research

Tools used: Simple frequency, Chi- square, Crosstabs, Rank analysis.

Type of sampling: Probability sampling

Sampling method: Simple random sampling

Sample size: 76

CHAPTER IV: ANALYSIS

Table 1: DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS ANALYSIS

TABLE SHOWING (AGE, GENDER, EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION, MARITAL STATUS, EMPLOYMENT STATUS & INCOME STATUS) OF THE RESPONDENT			
BASIC	**VALID**	**FREQUENCY**	**PERCENT**
AGE	BELOW 25	11	14.5
	25-35	26	34.2
	36-45	29	38.2
	46-55	10	13.2
	TOTAL	76	100.0
GENDER	MALE	17	22.4
	FEMALE	59	77.6
	TOTAL	76	100
EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION	BACHELOR'S DEGREE WITH B.Ed.	16	21.1
	MASTER'S DEGREE WITH B.Ed.	37	48.7
	Ph.D. WITH B.Ed.	23	30.3
	TOTAL	76	100
YEARS OF EXPERIENCE	LESS THAN 1 YEAR	8	10.5
	1-5 YEARS	50	65.8
	6-10 YEARS	8	10.5
	11-15 YEARS	7	9.2
	16 YEARS OR MORE	3	3.9
	TOTAL	76	100.0
ATTENDING CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAMME	YES	73	96.1
	NO	3	3.9
	TOTAL	76	100
	PEDAGOGICAL TRAINING WORKSHOPS	9	11.8
	TECHNOLOGY INTEGRATION WORKSHOPS	24	31.6

TYPE OF CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAMME	LITERACY AND NUMERACY PROGRAMS	8	10.5
	PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES	26	34.2
	PARENT AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT WORKSHOPS	9	11.8
	TOTAL	76	100

Interpretation:

The data illustrates the demographic distribution of respondents across various age categories. Among the surveyed individuals, the majority fall within the 25-45 age range, with 34.2% aged 25-35 and 38.2% aged 36-45. Also 14.5% of respondents are below 25, while 13.2% are between 46-55 years old, representing smaller segments of the sample.

Among the surveyed individuals, 22.4% are male, while 77.6% are female, indicating a significant majority of female respondents in the sample.

In the sample, 21.1% of individuals hold a Bachelor's degree with B.Ed., while 48.7% have a Master's degree with B.Ed., and 30.3% possess a Ph.D. with B.Ed. This indicates a majority of individuals in the sample hold Master's degrees with B.Ed., followed by Ph.D. holders with B.Ed., and a smaller proportion with Bachelor's degrees with B.Ed.

The majority of respondents (65.8%) have been in their current position for 1-5 years, followed by 10.5% each for less than 1 year and 6-10 years. Only a small percentage of teachers are between 11-15 years (9.2%) and 16 years or more (3.9%).

The vast majority of respondents (96.1%) answered "Yes," while only a small fraction (3.9%) answered "No," indicating strong agreement or affirmation among the surveyed individuals.

Among the professional development options, Professional Learning Communities (34.2%) and Technology Integration Workshops (31.6%) are the most utilized, followed by Pedagogical Training Workshops (11.8%) and Parent and Community Engagement Workshops (11.8%). Literacy and numeracy programs constitute 10.5% of the response indicating varied preferences and emphasis on collaborative learning and technology integration among respondents.

H_0: There is no association between professional development and continuous reflective practices
H_1: There is an association between professional development and continuous reflective practices

Table 2: Professional development activities and Integration of technology into teaching.

CHI-SQUARE TESTS			
	VALUE	**DF**	**Asymptotic significance (2-sided)**
Pearson chi-square	**11.641[a]**	**9**	**.234**
Likelihood ratio	**13.537**	**9**	**.140**
Linear-by-linear association	**.360**	**1**	**.549**
N of valid cases	**76**		

INTERPRETATION:

The significant value is greater than 0.050. Hence, we reject the null hypothesis. It is concluded that there is no association between professional development and continuous reflective practices

CROSS TABULATION:

Table 3: THE AGE AND WHO ATTENDED THE CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAMME CROSSTABULATION

		HAVE YOU ATTENDED ANY CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAMME BEFORE?		TOTAL
		YES	**NO**	
AGE	**BELOW 25**	9	2	11
	25-35	26	0	26
	36-45	28	1	29
	46-55	10	0	10
TOTAL		73	3	76

Interpretation:

The data presents a comprehensive view of participation in capacity building programs across various age groups. Notably, respondents aged 25-35 exhibit the highest attendance rate, with all 26 individuals having engaged in such programs. Additionally, the majority of respondents across all age brackets have participated, highlighting a general acknowledgment of the value and relevance of capacity building initiatives. Even in the older age groups, where attendance rates are slightly lower, a significant portion of respondents have still availed themselves of these developmental opportunities. Overall, the findings underscore a widespread commitment to continuous learning and skill enhancement across different age demographics within the surveyed population.

FINDINGS:

Descriptive analysis:

- ❖ Majority of respondents fall within the 25-45 age range, suggesting the need for tailored approaches to accommodate generational perspectives and preferences in teaching methodologies.
- ❖ A significant majority of respondents are female, highlighting the importance of addressing gender-specific needs and opportunities in educational support programs.
- ❖ Most respondents hold Master's or Ph.D. degrees with B.Ed., indicating a highly educated workforce that requires advanced professional development opportunities.
- ❖ The majority of respondents have 1-5 years of experience, indicating a relatively young workforce and emphasizing the importance of mentorship and leadership development.
- ❖ High attendance rates underscore the importance of continuous professional development and educators' willingness to enhance their skills.

Chi-square analysis:

- ❖ The chi-square tests indicate that there is no significant association between engagement strategies for keeping Gen Alpha students actively involved and the types of assessments that are effective in evaluating their understanding. The p-values for all three chi-square tests (Pearson chi-square, likelihood ratio, and linear-by-linear association) are greater than 0.05, suggesting that we fail to reject the null hypothesis. Therefore, there is no evidence to support a relationship between these variables.

Cross tabulation analysis:

- ❖ The data shows that respondents aged 25-35 have the highest attendance rate at capacity building programs, with all 26 individuals in this age group having participated. Across all age brackets, there is a considerable presence of attendees, indicating a widespread recognition of the importance of capacity building initiatives across different age demographics. Even among older age groups, a significant proportion of respondents have participated, albeit at slightly lower rates.

SUGGESTION:

- ❖ To improve the study, we should compare different programs and teaching methods to see which ones work best.

❖ We need to involve school leaders and policymakers to make sure our study matches the big goals in education. It's important to make sure everyone, no matter who they are, has equal access to learning resources and opportunities.

❖ We also need to check if schools have enough technology for teachers to use in their lessons.

❖ Working together with both researchers and teachers can help us create programs that really work.. We should also see how well these programs work over a long time, not just at the start.

CONCLUSION:

In summary, this study offers comprehensive insights into the dynamics of professional development, instructional strategies, and the evolving educational landscape in the context of Generation Alpha students. The demographic analysis illuminates key trends in educator profiles, highlighting the predominant age groups, gender distribution, and educational qualifications within the surveyed population. Moreover, the data on professional development preferences sheds light on educators' receptiveness to capacity-building programs and their perceived importance in enhancing teaching effectiveness. The study underscores the prevalent engagement in various forms of professional development, ranging from pedagogical workshops to technology integration sessions, indicating a commitment to continuous learning and skill development among educators. Furthermore, the analysis of instructional practices provides valuable insights into the strategies employed to engage Generation Alpha students effectively. From interactive lessons to collaborative projects and virtual field trips, educators demonstrate a diverse repertoire of instructional methodologies tailored to meet the unique needs and preferences of contemporary learners.

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