

TEACHING FRAMEWORK FOR THE MILLENNIALS IN MALAYSIAN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES

(600-RMI/FRGS 5/3 (140/2013))

A fully-funded research by;

FAIZAH ABD MAJID (PhD)

SHARIFAH MUZLIA SYED MUSTAFA

KAARTHIYAINY SUPRAMANIAM (PhD)

ISMIE ROHA MOHD JAIS (PhD)

WAN NURUL ELIA HASLEE SHAHRIL

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TITLE PAGE	
TABLE OF CONTENTS	
ABSTRACT	
CHAPTER ONE	1
CHAPTER TWO	9
CHAPTER THREE	21
CHAPTER FOUR	32
CHAPTER FIVE	71
REFERENCES	77

Abstract

This research addresses an emerging issue on the new and latest addition to the cohorts of adults learners studying in higher education institutes; the millennials. There are various terms used to describe this generation such as Generation Y, Nexters, Echo Boomers, Net Generation and Generation Me. Born between the years 1980-1994, the millennials are claimed to be innovative and prone to changes. Much research conducted on adult learners studying in higher education institutes have focused on the adult learners' characteristics. This study on the other hand aimed at investigating the characteristics of the millennials studying in selected public universities in Malaysia and determining how their characteristics could suggest relevant innovation in teaching, particularly in developing a suitable teaching framework. The samples for the present study involved 650 social sciences students and 17 academics from the selected Malaysian public universities. The students' age range is between 18 and 20 years old whereas the academics' age groups are below and above 40 years old. A mixed method research design was employed involving a survey method which resulted in the administration of 650 questionnaires, a focus group interview with the students and the administration of survey form to the academics which were all completed and returned. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics software whereas qualitative data was analyzed thematically. Findings include the confirmation of some millennials' characteristics as reported in the literature. The salient findings include the millennials' strong relationship with their parents, their need to depend on their parents for decision-making and their need for constant feedback. The findings suggest several aspects of teaching innovation deem necessary in order for the educators to stay relevant to the millennials. Since data also include the millennials web technologies use and preferences as well as their perceptions of their lecturers' teaching approaches, practical suggestions on relevant teaching innovation are offered based on these findings. The top management of higher education institutes could also reconsider the curriculum they provide for the millennials based on the new findings. The present study concludes with a proposed teaching framework for the millennials.

Keywords: millennials' characteristics, higher education, teaching innovation, millennials teaching framework

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The 21st century is an interesting era for higher education. With the advancement of democratization of education and globalization, the higher education landscape has witnessed a shift particularly on the recruitment of students and mode of education delivery. Since early 2000s, many higher education institutes have enrolled adult learners as many working adults made a comeback to continuing education. The factor behind this force is the industry's need for k-workers. Relentlessly, as many adult learners are working full-time, the mode of delivery has transcended into e learning and of late m-learning.

Currently, the student population in higher education has continued to receive more cohorts of adult learners and the latest is known as the Millennials. The Millennials are those born between 1982 and 2003. The generational theories have purported potential differences between the Millennials and other cohorts of adult learners such as the Baby Boomers and Generation X. One stark difference is the Millennials' heavy use of the web technologies in their daily routines. While researchers are still debating the different purposes of web technologies to the Millennials, they agree on one common characteristic pertinent to the Millennials – exposed to a wide range of digital devices and proficient in using them.

1.2 Background of the study

One of the seven thrusts of the National Higher Education Strategic Plan is improving the quality of teaching and learning. The last five decades have seen growing research efforts in addressing the needs of adult learners including those in higher education institutes. The 21st century adult learners, primarily those who were born after 1990 are known as the 'millennials'. Most literature on andragogy (Knowles, 1990; Rogers, 2002; Jarvis, 1993) were written by educationists who researched on the traditional adult learners who are mainly the Baby Boomers and Generation X.

This resulted in theories on the teaching of adult learners based on the researches done on the 'traditional adult learners'.

The current student enrolment in higher education institutes comprise the Millennials. Other names associated to the Millennials include Digital Natives, Net Generation, Generation Y and generation C (Hong and Norazila, 2014). As these students grew up in an era of digital technologies, there have been claims that they are exposed to a wide range of digital devices. Several studies (Brown and Czerniewicz, 2008; Corrin, Bennett and Locker, 2010 and Bullen, Morgan and Qayyum, 2013) have concluded that the millennials frequently use digital technologies for learning purposes. Other studies also confirmed that the millennials have good skills in basic communication and Web 2.0 tools (Corrin et al, 2010; Jones and Ramanau, 2009). Nonetheless, a study by Kennedy and Fox (2013) discovered that the millennials in their study used a range of technologies for entertainment but seldom to support learning. However, Nagler and Ebner (2009) and Bbner, Nagler and Schon (2012) also pointed that the millennials are still in the process of learning to use digital technologies for formal learning.

1.3 Statement of the problem

As discussed, the current higher education landscape across the globe is witnessing more and more millennials enrolment. It is safe to also assume that some of the young lecturers are also the millennials.

Studies on generation have identified the series of generations which include WWII Generation (born between 1901-1924); Silent Generation (born between 1925-1942); Baby Boomer Generation (born between 1943-1960); Generation X (born between 1961-1981), Millennial Generation (born between 1982-2003) and the newest born since 2004 is yet to be named (Strauss and Howe, 1991). Interestingly, each generation has what researchers called as 'peer personality' (Strauss and Howe, 1991; 2007; Sandeen, 2008). According to Sandeen (2008),

peer personality is essentially a caricature of its prototypical member. It is a sum of attributes, a distinctively personlike creation. A generation has collective attitudes about family life, sex roles, institutions, politics, religion, lifestyle and the future" (p.13).