

BARRERAS PARA LA AUTOFORMACIÓN CONTINUA Y EL DESARROLLO PROFESIONAL DOCENTE

BARRIERS TO CONTINUOUS SELF TRAINING AND TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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RESUMEN: El presente estudio analiza el impacto de las diferencias generacionales en la autoformación continua y el desarrollo profesional de los docentes del Colegio Camilo Ponce Enríquez, en Quito, durante el año 2025. La autoformación, entendida como un proceso autónomo, reflexivo y autorregulado, permite que los docentes asuman un rol activo en su crecimiento como profesionales, favoreciendo la innovación pedagógica y la mejora continua. Sin embargo, su implementación enfrenta barreras estructurales, como la falta de tiempo, recursos limitados y escasa cultura institucional de aprendizaje permanente, así como barreras generacionales, que se reflejan en la resistencia al cambio, la adopción desigual de tecnologías y percepciones distintas sobre la necesidad de actualización profesional. El estudio adopta un enfoque cuantitativo correlacional, con diseño no experimental, descriptivo y de corte transversal, mediante encuestas tipo Likert aplicadas a 54 docentes del colegio. Se busca identificar las barreras percibidas, evaluar el nivel de desarrollo profesional y determinar la relación entre estas variables según la generación docente. Los resultados permitirán comprender cómo las diferencias generacionales influyen en la adopción de recursos digitales, los estilos de aprendizaje y la disposición a la innovación pedagógica. Asimismo, aportarán insumos para fortalecer políticas institucionales que promuevan la autoformación de manera inclusiva y adaptada a las necesidades de cada grupo etario, favoreciendo la cohesión del trabajo colaborativo y el desarrollo profesional sostenido. Reconocer la diversidad generacional como un recurso estratégico constituye un camino para construir una escuela más inclusiva, innovadora y capaz de enfrentar los desafíos educativos contemporáneos.

Palabras clave: Autoformación, barreras, desarrollo, generaciones

ABSTRACT: This study analyzes the impact of generational differences on continuous self-training and professional development among teachers at Colegio Camilo Ponce Enríquez in Quito during the year 2025. Self-training, understood as an autonomous, reflective, and self-regulated process, allows teachers to take an active role in their professional growth, promoting pedagogical innovation and continuous improvement. However, its implementation faces structural barriers, such as lack of time, limited resources, and a weak institutional culture of lifelong learning, as well as generational barriers, reflected in resistance to change, unequal adoption of technologies, and differing perceptions regarding the need for professional updating. The study adopts a quantitative correlational approach, with a non-experimental, descriptive, and cross-sectional design, using Likert-type surveys applied to 54 teachers at the school. It seeks to identify perceived barriers, evaluate the level of professional development, and determine the relationship between these variables according to teacher generation.

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The results will provide insight into how generational differences influence the adoption of digital resources, learning styles, and the willingness to embrace pedagogical innovation. They will also provide inputs to strengthen institutional policies that promote self-training in an inclusive manner, tailored to the needs of each age group, fostering collaborative work cohesion and sustained professional development. Recognizing generational diversity as a strategic resource represents a path toward building a more inclusive, innovative school capable of addressing contemporary educational challenges.

Keywords: Self-training, barriers, development, generations.

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INTRODUCTION

Education in the knowledge society faces new challenges where continuous teacher training constitutes a fundamental strategic axis. In this new educational paradigm, characterized by an accelerated evolution of technologies, changes in pedagogical models and profound social transformations, teachers face the challenge of updating themselves and preparing constantly to respond to the demands of the 21st century. Self-training, understood as an autonomous, self-regulated and reflective process of professional learning, acquires particular relevance by allowing the teacher to be the protagonist in their professional development, beyond formal training instances.

Self-training is a key tool to strengthen educational practice, foster pedagogical innovation and promote a culture of continuous improvement (Marcelo, 2002). However, this process faces obstacles such as structural barriers, the lack of institutional time, the scarce organizational culture of permanent learning, and limitations in access to digital resources. Together with them, generational barriers emerge as a critical component that influences in a significant manner the way in which teachers of different ages approach their self-training processes.

Generational gaps, in particular, manifest themselves in the differences in digital skills, in the resistance to methodological change and in the perception of the utility of continuous training. While some teachers, especially the younger ones, tend to adopt new technologies with greater fluency and naturalness, others, with greater professional trajectory, may face difficulties to integrate them into their teaching practice. These differences impact the effectiveness of training programs and the cohesion of collaborative work within educational institutions.

In the context of Colegio Camilo Ponce Enríquez, the existence of intergenerational tensions is evident. The teaching community is very diverse in ages, formative trajectories and levels of experience, which enriches the institutional climate, but also presents challenges for the implementation of homogeneous formative processes. It has been possible to identify that some teachers present difficulties in the use of educational digital platforms, others do not completely recognize their own formative needs, and there exist various points of view with respect to the role that continuous training plays in professional improvement. These conditions limit the consolidation of

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a culture of self-training, necessary to face the challenges of an inclusive, updated and contextualized education.

Faced with this scenario, the present research poses as general objective to analyze how generational differences impact continuous self-training of the teachers of Colegio Camilo Ponce Enríquez, considering both the perceived barriers and the strategies used to confront them. A quantitative approach of correlational type is proposed, with the purpose of identifying significant relationships between the generational variable and the commitment to self-training, as well as evaluating the factors that influence this relationship.

The choice of this approach responds to the need to generate empirical evidence that allows better understanding this problematic and offering inputs that orient institutional decision-making. In addition, it seeks to contribute to the design of educational policies that foster teacher professional development from a generationally sensitive perspective, capable of recognizing the needs and motivations that vary according to the age group and the previous experiences of the teachers.

The present study frames itself in the line of research on teacher professional development, educational inclusion and use of technologies in education. Theorists such as (2) have highlighted the importance of promoting processes of contextualized, flexible formation centered on the subject who learns. Under this perspective, self-training is a mechanism to acquire new competencies, but beyond that, it is a strategy of professional empowerment that allows the teacher to be protagonist of their growth and to adapt to the constant changes of their environment.

The findings of this research will allow understanding with depth the incidence of generation in the styles of teacher learning, in the adoption of digital resources, and in the disposition to pedagogical innovation. At the same time that they will contribute to the strengthening of the institutional practices of accompaniment and formation, benefiting directly the teachers in their process as professionals of education and, in an indirect form, the educational community in general. The recognition of generational diversity as a richness and not as a barrier can convert itself into a key strategy to construct a more inclusive, collaborative school adapted to the contemporary challenges.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research design

The purpose of the present research work is to analyze how the generational differences among the teachers of an educational institution influence the adoption of practices of continuous self-training and in their professional development.

The study frames itself in a non-experimental design of descriptive type and of cross-sectional cut, since it seeks to describe and analyze the phenomenon without manipulating variables, observing the facts just as they present themselves in the natural context of the teachers.

Likewise, the same authors point out that the cross-sectional designs “collect data in a single moment, with the purpose of describing variables and analyzing their incidence and interrelation in a determined time” (p. 247).

Therefore, this study will center itself on identifying the barriers that obstruct teacher self-training, analyzing the level of professional development and determining the existing relationship between both variables considering the generational differences present in Colegio Camilo Ponce.

Research approach

The study will develop under a quantitative approach, since it pretends to collect and analyze numerical data that allow describing tendencies and relationships between the variables of the study.

The quantitative approach, according to (3), “uses numerical measurement and statistical analysis to establish patterns of behavior and test theories” (p. 4).

The quantitative approach is ideal for the present work, allowing quantifying the perceptions of the teachers and establishing objective associations between the studied factors.

Research methods

The methods applied in the research are the following:

- Deductive method: It will allow starting from the theoretical concepts about self-training, professional development and generational differences to interpret the empirical results obtained from the questionnaire applied to the teachers.
- Inductive method: It will be employed in the observation and analysis of the results, allowing deriving general conclusions about the studied phenomenon from the data collected from the sample.
- Analytical method: It will be key to decompose the data into categories (self-training, barriers, professional development and generation), compare them and identify patterns, tendencies or correlations between the variables.

Population

According to (4), the population is defined as “the set of persons or objects of which something is desired to be known in a research” (p. 4).

The population object of this study is constituted by 54 teachers who work in Colegio Camilo Ponce, including personnel of distinct areas and educational levels during the 2025 school year.

Sample and sampling

According to (4), “the sample is the unit of analysis that can be conformed by persons, organizations or objects, and must be in concordance with the objectives of the study” (p. 122).

A non-probabilistic sampling by convenience will be employed, considering the availability and voluntariness of the teachers to participate.

Therefore, all the active teachers of Colegio Camilo Ponce will be invited to participate, seeking to reach a representative coverage of the distinct generations present in the institution.

Data collection techniques

(5) defines the techniques of data collection as “mechanisms and instruments that are utilized to reunite and measure information in an organized form and with a specific objective” (p. 31).

In this research, the survey technique will be employed, administered in digital form by means of Google Forms, which will allow compiling structured information in an efficient, secure and anonymous manner.

The survey will be applied in an individual manner, in an approximate time of 15 minutes, during the work day, previous institutional authorization.

Data collection instrument

The designed instrument consists of a structured questionnaire of 20 closed items, elaborated under the Likert-type scale of five options:

- Strongly disagree,
- Disagree,
- Neutral,
- Agree,
- Strongly agree.

Each item corresponds to one of the five principal dimensions of the study:

- Teacher self-training,
- Barriers to self-training,
- Professional development,
- Digital competencies,
- Generational differences.

According to (5), the Likert scale “consists of a set of items under the form of affirmations or judgments before which the favorable or unfavorable reaction of the individuals is requested” (p. 10).

The instrument was designed specifically for this research, guaranteeing its validity by means of the review of experts in education and methodology; its reliability could be verified through a pilot test applied to a reduced group of teachers.

Data techniques and processing

The analysis of the information will be carried out by means of descriptive statistics, understood as “a set of procedures destined to present masses of data by means of tables, graphs and measures of summary” (6).

The processing of the data will be carried out in Microsoft Excel and Google Forms, tools that will facilitate the tabulation, calculation of frequencies, averages and standard deviations.

In addition, tests of comparison of means and correlation will be applied to identify significant relationships between the variables (barriers, self-training, professional development and generational differences).

RESULTS

The results obtained in the research reflect a majority positive valuation toward continuous self-training and teacher professional development. In general, the participants show a clear disposition to assume the responsibility of their own learning; nevertheless, structural, organizational and personal limitations persist that hinder the consolidation of an institutional culture of permanent formation. In the results it could be evidenced that the teacher professionals recognize the importance of updating their knowledge, improving their pedagogical practices and remaining updated with the demands of the contemporary educational context. However, it is also observed that many of these individual efforts face adverse labor conditions that restrict the participation in formative activities.

In the component of teacher self-training, corresponding to items 1 to 4 of the survey, a percentage superior to 80% of the surveyed expressed that they seek academic resources in an independent form and digital bibliography to strengthen their professional practice. Likewise, the majority indicated that they plan personal learning goals and apply the acquired knowledge directly in their teaching labor. This behavior denotes a proactive attitude facing autonomous learning and a necessity to remain in constant updating. Among the most mentioned strategies are found the reading of scientific articles, the participation in virtual seminars, the consultation of educational platforms and the collaboration with colleagues to exchange experiences and knowledge. Nevertheless, around 10% of the participants manifested insufficient motivation or disagreement with the idea of realizing self-training processes, signaling as principal reasons the lack of time, the overload of administrative work and the absence of institutional incentives to recognize the individual efforts of updating.

In relation to the personal and organizational barriers (items 5 to 9), the results confirm that 61.9% of the teachers consider that the lack of available time and the labor load constitute the principal obstacles to involve themselves in processes of continuous formation. This group signals that, although the institution occasionally offers spaces or training courses, there exists an incompatibility with the labor schedules and the institutional responsibilities impede the sustained participation in this type of activities. Another 33.4% could identify the limited offer of pertinent courses and the scarce institutional support as factors that restrict the access to new formative opportunities. In a complementary form, 61.9% reported not presenting difficulties related with connectivity or the handling of technological tools, which

indicates that the barriers are not associated with technical limitations, but rather with structural conditions of the labor environment. Some teachers mentioned that the institutional formation centers itself on administrative aspects and not on the pedagogical or investigative development, which diminishes the motivation toward the participation.

With regard to the impact of continuous formation (items 10 to 13), 80.9% of the responses confirm that there exists a significantly good professional performance thanks to the participation in updating activities. Among the benefits stand out a development in the planning of classes, the adoption of new didactic strategies and the strengthening of the competencies with regard to communication and technology. Likewise, 71.4% manifested feeling prepared to apply innovative methodologies and approaches centered on the active learning of the students. However, a 23.8% recognized that in the institutions there is not counted with sufficient spaces to share experiences or to reflect collectively on the acquired learnings. This group considers that the lack of collaborative work limits the possibility of transferring the knowledge to an institutional or community level, reducing the global impact of the formation.

In the section of digital competencies and use of educational technologies (items 14 to 17), the results reveal that 71.4% of the teachers feel competent in the use of digital platforms and technological resources in their teaching process. Of this group, 57.1% apply with frequency digital tools in the development of their classes, these being interactive presentations, virtual learning environments and applications of formative evaluation. The majority unfolds with facility in virtual environments and recognizes the utility of the technologies to guarantee a quality teaching and to improve the communication with the students. However, a 19% showed themselves neutral with respect to the use of digital tools, signaling the absence of training in the area or the resistance to change as the principal motives. This tendency is observed principally among teachers of greater age, who prefer to use traditional methodologies facing the technological resources.

The results of items 18 and 19 allowed identifying significant differences in the generational perceptions about continuous formation. 61.9% of the participants consider that the younger teachers adapt with greater facility to the innovative methodologies and to the integration of technologies in the educational practice. In contrast, 28.6% recognize that age influences directly in the disposition toward self-training, since some teachers with greater trajectory show themselves less interested facing the technological and pedagogical changes. These generational differences influence the participation in formative processes, and in the adoption of practices of teaching and evaluation. The data reflect a perceptive gap between generations, the same which could influence the dynamics of institutional work, the pedagogical updating and the construction of learning communities.

Finally, in the component of intergenerational collaboration (item 20), 85.7% of the teachers confirmed valuing the collaborative work between generations as strategy to strengthen the professional formation. The participants highlight that the interaction between experienced and young teachers allows combining the acquired pedagogical wisdom with the emerging digital competencies. This interchange is perceived as an opportunity to enrich the teaching work, innovate in the educational practice and

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reduce the generational gaps identified in the previous sections. Some surveyed mentioned that the collaborative work not only favors the apprehension of new knowledge, but also strengthens the sense of academic community and the institutional commitment with continuous improvement. In general terms, the results evidence that intergenerational collaboration represents a potential resource to consolidate a culture of collective and sustained self-training within the educational environment.

In synthesis, the quantitative and descriptive findings obtained in this study allow affirming that, although there exists a clear disposition of the teaching staff toward self-training and professional updating, personal and institutional factors persist that limit its full development. The principal limitations relate themselves with the lack of time, the overload of work, the scarcity of incentives and the scarce opening of institutional spaces of shared learning. Even so, the results also reveal solid strengths in the personal commitment, the technological domain and the valuation of the collaborative work, aspects that can constitute the base for the strengthening of institutional policies oriented to the permanent formation of the teaching staff.

DISCUSSION

The results obtained confirm a favorable tendency toward continuous self-training among the teachers, but still there exist factors that obstruct its full development. The elevated percentage of professors who demonstrate initiative to learn in an autonomous manner reflects the growing consciousness about the importance of professional updating. This finding coincides with what is exposed by (2), who signals that professional learning is a self-regulated process that requires internal motivation and personal planning.

However, the structural barriers such as the labor overload and the lack of institutional incentives continue limiting the participation in formation programs, in line with the observations of (7). The absence of institutional policies that guarantee time, resources and recognition to the formative effort reduces the sustainability of these processes, even when there exists an individual disposition.

In relation with the impact of continuous formation, the teachers perceive a professional development in their educational performance, which evidences the effectiveness of these experiences to promote innovative pedagogical practices; however, the deficit of spaces for the professional interchange reveals the necessity to strengthen the communities of teacher learning, aspect emphasized by (8) upon signaling that professional development consolidates itself through a permanent accompaniment and institutional collaboration.

The analysis of the digital competencies demonstrates advances in the technological domain of the teaching staff, although differences associated with age persist. The insecurity that some older teachers manifest confirms the existence of a generational gap, coinciding with the approaches of (9) about the differential adaptation to the technologies between generations. This phenomenon requires inclusive training strategies that promote digital literacy without excluding any age group.

Intergenerational collaboration presents itself as a primordial opportunity to integrate traditional knowledge with new digital competencies. The positive valuation of this aspect on the part of the teachers backs the proposal of (10), who defines professional development as a collective process of construction and shared reflection. In the same manner, (11) highlight the importance of the cooperation between generations as means to overcome the formative gaps and consolidate a culture of sustained self-training.

In conjunction, the results allow concluding that, although the teaching staff demonstrates that it disposes itself constantly to self-training and professional perfectioning, a structured institutional intervention is required that guarantees adequate conditions for its development. The consolidation of a culture of permanent learning will depend on the equilibrium between the individual motivation, the institutional support and the impulse to create collaborative and inclusive environments.

CONCLUSIONS

The study allowed understanding that teacher self-training is an autonomous, self-regulated and continuous process, oriented to the strengthening of the professional identity of the educator and to the adaptation facing the demands of the current educational context; self-training transcends technical training and configures itself as a critical reflection and of self-management of knowledge. The results evidence that the principal barriers for its development are not solely personal, but also institutional and structural, related with the organizational culture of the institutions, the labor overload and the generational differences.

The research, of quantitative approach and non-experimental descriptive design, was applied to 54 teachers of the educational institution Camilo Ponce Enríquez by means of a Likert-type survey. This instrument allowed identifying different perceptions about self-training, the existing limitations and the relationship between age, digital competencies and disposition toward continuous learning. The analysis of the data contributed empirical evidence about the current situation of teacher professional development, highlighting the coexistence of a high motivation with the presence of structural obstacles that limit its sustained practice.

The findings showed that the majority of the teaching staff recognizes the importance of continuous formation, but faces difficulties associated with the lack of time, the scarce institutional accompaniment and the weak articulation between generations. These factors confirm the existence of a gap between the theoretical recognition of self-training and its practical application within the educational centers. Likewise, it was evidenced that the generational differences influence the adoption of innovative methodologies: the younger teachers present greater familiarity with the educational technologies, while those of greater age manifest insecurity or resistance facing the change. Nevertheless, the majority values positively the intergenerational work as an opportunity to strengthen collective learning.

In the institutional ambit, it was verified that the absence of support policies, incentives and pertinent formative programs limits the sustained development of self-

training. This result highlights the necessity of the educational institutions to promote spaces of pedagogical reflection, professional accompaniment and recognition of the autonomous formation as essential part of teacher development. Self-training requires, therefore, the individual commitment and the backing of organizational structures.

Among the limitations of the study, the reduced size of the sample stands out, the cross-sectional character of the research and the dependence on the instrument of self-perception, which can introduce subjective biases. However, these aspects do not invalidate the findings, but rather suggest the necessity of more ample, comparative and longitudinal studies.

As future lines of research, it is recommended to explore the relationship between self-training, labor well-being and teacher motivation; to analyze the intergenerational digital competencies and their impact on pedagogical innovation; and to design models of accompaniment based on communities of practice and collaborative mentoring.

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