

Teaching Generation Z in English Subject: Accounts on Their Study Habits

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Abstract. This qualitative phenomenological study explored the accounts of English language teachers on the study habits of Generation Z learners. Specifically, it examined the experiences of teachers in teaching English, the ways they coped with challenges related to learners' study habits, and the educational management insights drawn from their experiences. Eight English language teachers from Kinanga Elementary School, Don Marcelino District, Davao Occidental Division, participated in in-depth interviews. Data were analyzed through thematic analysis, with credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability observed to ensure trustworthiness. Findings revealed that teachers' experiences were shaped by growing parental attention, positive peer relationships, increased academic and extracurricular workload, and internet use that contributed to procrastination. Teachers coped by swapping out study strategies, discouraging multitasking, and engaging learners through meaningful learning materials. The study generated three educational management insights: developing learners' self-directiveness, encouraging parent responsiveness, and enriching learning materials. The findings suggest that study habits among Generation Z learners are not developed by students alone but are influenced by the combined support of teachers, parents, peers, learning environments, and responsible technology use.

KEY WORDS

1. Attitude 2. Study Habits 3. Learners 4. English Language 5. Davao Occidental

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1. Introduction

Effective learning requires more than remembering information. It requires repeated practices that help learners organize, understand, retain, and apply knowledge. In English classes, study habits such as reading, taking notes, preparing for tasks, participating in class, managing time, and reviewing lessons have been linked to students' academic performance. Learners with comparable intellectual ability may perform differently because some have developed routines that sustain learning while others

rely only on natural ability or short-term effort. Poor academic performance is often associated with factors other than intellectual capacity. Among these factors are weak study habits, limited parental support, distracting learning environments, excessive use of social media, and the absence of systematic learning routines. Studies cited in the original manuscript note that learners who regularly read, manage time, take notes, and prepare for class tend to demonstrate stronger academic outcomes, while those who

neglect homework, class notes, and independent study often struggle in school. The challenge has become more complex for Generation Z learners, who have grown up with digital access, online content, and rapidly changing modes of communication. Technology can support learning through quick access to information, multimedia resources, and collaborative tools. At the same time, it can encourage procrastination, multitasking, and superficial engagement with schoolwork. For English teachers, this situation raises an important question: how do they understand, manage, and respond to learners' study habits in the current classroom context? This study investigated elementary students' attitudes toward study habits through the lens of their English teachers. It was guided by three questions: (1) What are the experiences of English teachers in teaching Generation Z? (2) How do English teachers cope with the challenges of students' study habits? and (3) What educational insights are drawn from the study?

1.1. Review of Significant Literature—A habit is a repeated practice or usual behavior that becomes difficult to give up. In learning, habits are developed when repeated actions become part of the learner's routine. Thorndike's law of effect and law of exercise support the idea that repeated and reinforced behaviors become stronger over time. Likewise, Hull's drive-reduction theory emphasizes the role of motivation and reinforcement in strengthening associations between stimulus and response. These theories suggest that study habits may improve when learners receive consistent support, appropriate reinforcement, and meaningful learning experiences. Study habits refer to the learner's regular ways of engaging with academic tasks. These include planning study time, organizing materials, reading, taking notes, completing assignments, preparing for examinations, concentrating, and reviewing lessons. Good study habits support comprehension and long-term retention, while poor study habits make

learning burdensome and may contribute to academic failure. The literature cited in the original study emphasizes that effective studying must be regular, focused, and sustained, not limited to last-minute preparation for quizzes or examinations. Individual study allows learners to work at their own pace, minimize distractions, and concentrate on topics they find difficult. It is strengthened by a quiet study environment, proper lighting, good ventilation, clear goals, manageable schedules, and regular breaks. Group study, when properly organized, can also improve learning because it allows learners to compare notes, explain concepts, ask questions, and motivate one another. However, group study must be structured to avoid distractions and off-topic conversations. Several challenges hinder the development of productive study habits. Heavy workload may reduce learners' interest in studying and create the perception that learning is tedious. Procrastination, particularly when linked to internet use and social media, delays academic tasks until learners feel pressured. Limited parental attention may also affect study routines because the home remains one of the strongest sources of academic encouragement, monitoring, and support. For Generation Z learners, teachers need strategies that balance digital opportunities with discipline, focus, and meaningful engagement.

1.2. Theoretical Lens—The study was anchored on Thorndike's Theory of Reinforcement and Hull's Theory of Learning. Thorndike emphasized that learning occurs when connections between stimulus and response are strengthened through satisfying consequences and repeated exercise. Applied to study habits, this means that learners are more likely to repeat study behaviors when these behaviors are supported, rewarded, and practiced consistently. Hull's theory also explains habit formation through reinforcement and motivation. When learners experience support, encouragement, and success from their study efforts, pro-

ductive habits become stronger. These theories frame study habits as learned behaviors shaped by home, school, peers, teachers, and learning resources.

2. Methodology

This study employed a qualitative phenomenological research design. Phenomenology was appropriate because the study sought to describe the lived experiences of English language teachers in relation to the study habits of Generation Z learners. The design focused on how teachers experienced the phenomenon, how they interpreted learners' behaviors, and what insights they developed from daily classroom encounters. The participants were eight English language teachers from Kinanga Elementary School, Don Marcelino District, Davao Occidental Division. They were selected through purposive sampling. The criteria included teaching English, being in the position for at least five years, and obtaining at least a very satisfactory rating in the Individual Performance Commitment and Review Form. These criteria helped ensure that participants had sufficient teaching experience and direct knowledge of the phenomenon being studied. Data were gathered through an in-depth interview guide developed by the researcher and validated by experts. The interviews focused on teachers' experiences in teaching Generation Z, the challenges they encountered in relation to students' study habits, their coping practices, and the educational insights they gained. Participant responses were recorded, transcribed, translated when needed, coded, and analyzed thematically. Thematic analysis followed the processes of familiarization, coding, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and writing the analytic narrative. Trustworthiness was supported through credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Ethical considerations included informed consent, voluntary participation, confidentiality, anonymity through pseudonyms, respect for participant welfare, and careful handling of data.

3. Results and Discussion

The findings are presented according to the three research questions. The first area focused on teachers' experiences in teaching Generation Z learners, the second on their coping ways in dealing with study habit challenges, and the third on educational management insights drawn from the study.

3.1. Experiences of English Teachers in Teaching Generation Z—Four themes emerged from the teachers' experiences: growing parental attention, positive peer relationships, increased academic and extracurricular workload, and internet use on procrastination. Growing parental attention appeared as a facilitating factor in the formation of study habits. Teachers observed that learners became more motivated and confident when parents supported study routines at home. Parental attention was not limited to checking assignments. It included providing learning resources, encouraging children, communicating with teachers, and creating a home environment that values learning. One participant explained that when pupils were encouraged to practice good study habits at home, their drive and self-confidence improved because they had more time to interact with their families. "I found that by fostering good study habits at home, kids are better equipped to manage their time, pursue learning on their own,

and assume ownership of their work.” (P6) Positive peer relationships also influenced learners’ study habits. Participants shared that peers could act as role models, especially when learners joined classmates who were focused on academic goals. Peer influence became helpful when learners encouraged one another to read, discuss lessons, ask questions, and complete tasks. Teachers noted that pupils often felt more comfortable communicating with classmates, which made peer support a meaningful part of learning. Increased academic and extracurricular workload emerged as a hindering factor. Some teachers observed that heavy tasks reduced learners’ interest and weakened compliance. When assignments accumulated, learners tended to submit fewer outputs or treat study as a burdensome requirement. The findings suggest that workload must be purposeful, age-appropriate, and manageable. Study habits are strengthened not by the quantity of tasks alone but by the quality, clarity, and learning value of the activities assigned. Internet use on procrastination was another major challenge. Participants recognized that technology provides access to information, but they also observed that learners may delay schoolwork because of online distractions. For Generation Z learners, digital access can support research, reading, and enrichment, yet it can also promote divided attention when students spend excessive time on entertainment, games, or social media. Teachers therefore viewed self-control and guided technology use as necessary parts of study habit formation.

3.2. Teachers’ Coping Ways with the Challenges of Students’ Study Habits—Three themes emerged on how English teachers coped with challenges: swapping out study strategies, discouraging multitasking, and engaging learners with the learning materials. Swapping out study strategies meant helping learners discover more effective ways to study instead of relying only on reading and rereading notes. Teachers en-

couraged learners to use varied approaches such as summarizing, asking questions, discussing concepts, answering practice exercises, and reviewing in manageable portions. This approach helped learners understand that studying should involve active engagement with ideas rather than passive exposure to text. “I always encourage learners to try a lot of different study strategies. Trying different study strategies helps the learners determine what strategy fits for them.” (P1) Discouraging multitasking was another coping practice. Teachers emphasized that learners should focus on one academic task at a time, especially during prime study periods. Participants also involved parents by asking them to observe whether children were studying while simultaneously using gadgets for unrelated activities. The finding affirms that concentration is central to study habits and that attention divided across several activities weakens retention and task quality. Engaging learners with the learning materials was the third coping strategy. Teachers recognized that learning materials must capture attention, support comprehension, and motivate learners to think more deeply. Multimedia, online resources, teacher-made materials, and varied reading tasks were used to make lessons more meaningful. However, the findings also imply that learning materials must be carefully selected and connected to objectives so that technology becomes a tool for learning rather than a source of distraction.

3.3. Educational Management Insights Gained from the Study—The study generated three educational management insights: developing self-directiveness, encouraging parent responsiveness, and enriching learning materials. Developing self-directiveness means helping learners take responsibility for their own learning. Teachers believed that Generation Z learners need guidance in planning study time, setting goals, monitoring progress, and choosing appropriate strategies. Self-directed learning does not mean leaving learners alone. Rather,

it means gradually training them to make decisions, manage tasks, seek help when needed, and reflect on their learning habits. Encouraging parent responsiveness highlights the shared responsibility between school and home. Participants stressed that parents play a crucial role in reminding children, providing a conducive study environment, helping them understand school expectations, and reinforcing positive routines. The study suggests that teachers and school leaders should communicate learning

goals clearly to parents so that home support becomes aligned with classroom instruction. Enriching learning materials is also important because learners are more likely to study when materials are meaningful, accessible, and suited to their interests and abilities. Participants recognized the value of using varied resources, including books, worksheets, multimedia, and research activities. Enriched materials can help learners explore lessons more deeply and make study sessions more enjoyable and memorable.

4. Implications and Future Directions

4.1. Implications—For DepEd officials, the findings point to the need for seminar-trainings that help teachers address study habit formation among Generation Z learners. These trainings may include strategies for active learning, attention management, digital responsibility, and parent partnership. For school administrators, the findings may guide programs that promote structured study routines, parent orientation, reading support, and technology-balanced learning activities. For teachers, the study provides insight into the common experiences of English language teachers and the practical strategies they use to support students' study habits. Teachers may strengthen instruction by designing manageable tasks, varying study strategies, discouraging multitasking, and creating learning materials that are engaging but purposeful. For parents and other stakehold-

ers, the findings emphasize that learners' study habits improve when home and school work together consistently.

4.2. Future Directions—Teaching Generation Z in English requires attention not only to content but also to the study behaviors that shape learning. The study found that students' study habits are influenced by parental attention, peer relationships, workload, and internet use. English teachers responded by varying study strategies, discouraging multitasking, and creating more engaging learning materials. The major insight is that productive study habits are formed through shared support. Learners need to become self-directed, parents need to be responsive, and teachers need to provide enriched and meaningful materials. When these elements work together, Generation Z learners are better supported in developing study habits that strengthen their performance in English.

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