



Research Paper

Challenges and Coping Strategies of Intermediate Teachers in Handling Generation Z Learners

Ladylou B. Dejacto¹, Francis May S. Valmorida², Genesis B. Naparan³

¹ Department of Education, Philippines

^{2,3} Saint Columban College-Pagadian City, Philippines

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Abstract

The learners as of the present are called Generation Z learners. This study aimed to come up with the common challenges and coping strategies of teachers in handling Generation Z learners in the intermediate level. The study was conducted during the school year 2019-2020. The participants were the intermediate teachers in District 10 of Ozamiz City Division. This study employed a phenomenological qualitative research design. The focus of this study was to gather the common challenges and coping strategies of teachers based on their experiences. The responses were analyzed through the use of thematic analysis. It was found out that the challenges commonly met by the intermediate teachers were learners' difficult behaviors, negative impact of technology/inappropriate use of technology and poor academic performance. The study also revealed that the coping strategies of the teachers were ICT integration in teaching, imposing friendly classroom discipline, parent-teacher partnership, and enhancing teachers' ICT literacy. This study suggested that in planning teachers' training programs, administrators of the Department of Education should also include topics that focus on how to cope up teachers' challenges met in their classrooms. Topics may involve handling Generation Z learners and developing necessary skills in innovative teaching.

Keywords: *challenges, coping strategies, generation Z learners*

INTRODUCTION

Each generation's profile varies from time to time. The new generation of learners means further adjustment for teachers with regards to the approaches imposed for students to learn. There are five recognized generations cited by Rothman (2016): Traditionalists (1925-1944) known as 'silent generation,' Baby Boomers (1945-1964), Generation X (1965-1980), Millennials or Gen Y (1981- 1995) and the recent generation is what we called Generation Z (1995-2010). As mentioned by the Department of Education Secretary Briones, there are 27.2 million students in this school year 2019-2020 (Ramos, 2019). If it is to evaluate, the more significant percentage of learners are Gen Z.

Each generation lives in the same and is able to see the same things, but each person varies, and there is a distinct developmental stage wherein people react to these subjectively (Lyons, et al., 2015). Generation Z learners are more likely to have a short attention span, tech-savvy, and switch-tasker compared to the previous generations (Rothman, 2016). As to have this kind of learner at present, using technologies is part of their daily lives, and mobile phones are more used to communicate with other people rather than face to face communication. According to Cilliers (2017), Generation Z learners acquire more learning through the active teaching-learning process wherein learners can manipulate and work with technologies. The third-year generation Z students already own their personal computers, mobile phones, and have their social accounts on Facebook and WhatsApp, which help improve their social learning. Izzah et al. (2019) revealed in their study that Generation Z learners have a positive perspective of the use of the Internet of Things as part

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Corresponding author's email: ladyloubdejacto@gmail.com

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of higher education information and communication technology to aid learning.

With the kind of learners in this generation, challenges occur among the teachers on different levels. In the Philippines, there are also several technologies, approaches, and policies based on societal changes. Some of these improvements involve a technical solution that typically presents difficulties because, like other developing countries, the nation is ill-prepared and unable to tackle any academic problem as it arises immediately (Acosta, 2016). As mentioned by Hill et al. (2017), teachers in this generation raised the concern where the application of different strategies towards the adjustment on how learners learn effectively, for the fact that Gen Z learners are so much diverse from the previous generations. The manipulation of technology is one of the challenges of teachers (Jansen & Merwe, 2015).

Another challenge that was faced by the beginning teachers in the study of Confait (2015) was enhancing their effectiveness in teaching in adjusting themselves to their schools' desires. The participants are more teacher-centered rather than learner-centered in their approach just to achieve the goal that was set by the school. The physical science teachers are challenged to integrate engineering and physics towards K-12 standards (Dare et al., 2014).

Intermediate learners are the youngest Generation Z learners, and they are now 9-11 years old. This stage serves as the foundation of learning. Since the researcher is a teacher in the last pace of elementary level, a lot of challenging things are encountered in teaching. To mention, things like handling the attitudes and behaviors of the learners in the class, their academic performances, learners' comprehension in English, lack of resources, and even the financial status of the learners. Most of the researcher's pupils are beneficiaries of the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program or known as 4 P's, so they are considered as poor people in society. As Rothman (2016) described the Generation Z learners as technology savvy, well, it is much different from the kind of learners that the researcher has. There are only 2 out of 22 pupils who have their own mobile phones, and even they are not confident to manipulate a computer and projector in class. These things are considered as factors to hinder every pupil's progress from acquiring better learning. It is so much essential to know the different challenges encountered and the way in coping it up by the teachers in District 10 of the Ozamiz City Division in teaching the intermediate level for it can help a lot proving a quality learning for the learners. Intermediate teachers should be able to guide the pupils accordingly for them to have a strong foundation in their education. A good foundation will be helpful for the learners' preparation in moving into junior high school, for they will be dealing with complex lessons compared to the intermediate level. This foundation can be built with the help of the teachers since they are the immediate facilitator of learning. It is essential to know and understand the characteristics of these learners in this stage so that teachers can have their adjustments on the ways in coping with the challenges met in dealing with them to have a better learning acquisition in class.

Theoretical Framework

This research is based on the study of Seemiller and Grace (2017) about educating and engaging Generation Z learners. Their generational research focuses on the characteristics of college students and one of them is to find out their learning preferences. The variation of attitudes, behavior, and characteristics of the learners from one generation to the other generation is based on the Generational Theory of William Strauss and Neil Howe. The different generations' logic and knowledge can help make the learning process more efficient and effective (Nagy & Kolcsey, 2017). Learners' new characteristics make teachers adjust and even become a challenge, especially if the teacher is still applying traditional ways in teaching. Since intermediate teachers are dealing with the youngest Generation Z learners, technology literacy should always take place towards teachers' skills since learners enjoy best manipulative learning and prefer learning associated with

technologies like mobile phones, iPad, and more. This generation communicates more through the use of social media (Rothman, 2016; Torocsik et al., 2014; Carter, 2018). The level of understanding of the learners will more likely raise through appropriate usage of technology (Rajabion, 2018).

This study anchored to the mission of the Department of Education in imposing a pupil-centered classroom. With this, the teacher's challenges faced in the class and the techniques and coping strategies applied help to handle and facilitate the Generation Z learners effectively. Teachers with high self-efficacy devote more classroom time to academic learning, praise learners for accomplishments, and helps them to succeed (Khan et al., 2015).

The concept of the study showed that there were different concerns among different teachers from the previous studies in handling this type of learners in teaching. Challenges like the characteristics of the learners, scarcity of resources (Olgan, 2015; Metto & Makewa, 2014), technology literacy, school's curriculum standard, and the generation gap between the teacher and learners (Swanzen, 2018) are the everyday things encountered by the teachers in the field.

Statement of the Problem

The study focused on answering this question, "What are the challenges encountered and coping strategies of teachers in handling Gen Z learners?". The participants of this study were the intermediate teachers in District 10 of the Ozamiz City division of the school year 2019-2020.

More specifically, it seeks to find answers to the following questions:

1. What are the challenges encountered by the intermediate teachers in handling Generation Z learners at the intermediate level?
2. What are the strategies used by the intermediate to cope with the mentioned challenges?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Generational Theory

The generational model made by Strauss and Howe (1991) has had a high impact on the study of different generation characteristics, even up to this time. The theory talks about the evolution of the population every 20 years in our culture, with some signs of cyclicity (Nagy & Kolcsey, 2017). They added that the different generations' logic and knowledge could help make the learning process more efficient and effective. According to Tung and Comeau (2014), the generational theory is a remarkable transformation that has taken place in each generation. It has faced distinct concrete realities that sometimes reflect fundamental differences in people's lives.

The five recognized generations mentioned by Rothman (2016) are, Traditionalists (1925-1944) known as 'silent generation,' Baby Boomers (1945-1964), Generation X (1965-1980), Millennials or Gen Y (1981- 1995) and the recent generation is what we called Generation Z (1995-2010). At the same time and context, different generation groups coexist. Each generation lives in the same and is able to see the same things but also remembered that each person varies, and there is a distinct developmental stage wherein people react to these subjectively.

Characteristics of Generation Z Learners

Generation Z learners are more likely to have a short attention span, tech-savvy, and switch-taskers compared to the previous generations. Gen Z learners immediately receive information yet quickly lose interest. They enjoy the best manipulative learning and prefer learning associated with technologies like mobile phones, iPad, and more. This generation communicates more with social media (Rothman, 2016; Torocsik et al., 2014; Carter, 2018). The study shows that teenagers in this generation had uplifting mentalities towards utilizing cell phones in performing pervasive learning. They saw that cell phones could be utilized for gaming, diversion just as learning

since they are advantageous, quick reactions, and simple to use to access to the learning of data (Kee & Samsudin, 2014). Gen Z learners are observers, strive for equal human rights yet have this “we-centered mentality”, innovative and prefer to explore by their own (Seemiller and Grace, 2017).

According to Cilliers (2017), Generation Z learners acquire more learning through the active teaching-learning process wherein learners can manipulate and work through the use of technologies. The third-year generation Z students already owned their personal computers, mobile phones, and have their social accounts on Facebook and WhatsApp, which help improve their social learning. Izzah et al. (2019) revealed in their study that Generation Z learners have a positive perspective of the use of the Internet of Things (IoT) as part of higher education information and communication technology to aid learning.

Generation Z can lead much, for they possess excellent leadership skills (Sladek & Grabinger, 2014). As mentioned by Carter (2018) in his study, generation Z has indicated a desire to engage in their world's transformation rather than transactional activities. He also added that these learners in this generation tend to be more financially conservative, pragmatic, and would prefer to address root causes rather than symptoms of problems that mirror Generation X features. Gen Z learners are self-confident, happy, team-fit, and enjoy social service operations as well as interested in activities than previous generations (Ozkan & Solmaz, 2015).

Gen Z learners different characteristics and way of learning let teachers in the 21st century adjust and apply such strategies that best suited for these types of learners yet because these learners are digitally dependent and inclined, there is a generation gap between students and teachers. Teachers' ability to use technological tools for learning in the classroom effectively incorporate technology into their pedagogy (Lisenbee, 2016). Teachers are not experts in a wide range of technological tools that's why learner's expectations in this matter gives a gap between the teacher and students.

Challenges of Handling Generation Z Learners

Generation Z challenges society with the most radical views about the way a person works over all ages. And one of the six forces mentioned by Koulopoulos & Keldsen (2016) is the adaptation of the world as a classroom wherein Gen Z pushes worldwide accessibility of training in different levels of learning. In ways that often make them challenging to engage, they are profoundly different from previous generations, and this challenge includes the application of different strategies to be applied (Hill; et.al, 2017). 21st Century learning stresses learners to be dynamic and responsive, and Coggle turns into a venturing stone in the capacity to give change in outlook in the instruction framework (Arulchelvan et al., 2019)

In the Philippines, there were also several technologies, approaches, and policies based on societal changes. Some of these improvements involve a technical solution that typically presents difficulties because, like other developing countries, the nation is ill-prepared and unable to tackle any academic problem as it arises immediately (Acosta, 2016).

One of the concerns of today's educational concept is the application of new approaches due to emerging devices and digitally enhanced cognitive and social skills of the new generation. With this, Taleb et al. (2015) used mobile learning. It was found out that m-learning was a sufficient motivation and can increase the performance of the learners academically, especially in Mathematics subject. The teachers should learn literacy in the usage of technology because of the nature of the Generation Z learners. Still, it was found out that practice teachers don't have confidence in manipulating technologies, and it affects their attitude in the use of technology in teaching (Jansen & Merwe, 2015).

In Iran, one of the severe issues of language learning is that a large portion of high school

learners can't convey what needs to be in the unknown dialect smoothly in the wake of examining English. It was found out that there were factors affecting learning through English Foreign Language (Akbari, 2015).

Another challenge that was faced by the beginning teachers in the study of Confait (2015) is enhancing their effectiveness in teaching in adjusting themselves to their schools' desires. With this, participants are more likely teacher-centered rather than learner-centered in their approach just to achieve the goal that was set by the school. Physical science teachers were challenged to integrate engineering and physics towards K-12 standards (Dare et al., 2014).

As per specialist, to help and continue significant changes in instructing and learning, educator training projects ought to proceed aptitudes improvement and execute the accompanying three segments: building cooperative structures, displaying great innovation use, furthermore, considering current practices and convictions (Philomina & Amutha, 2016).

There was a significant achievement gap that was faced by the United States due to poor test scores of the learners. Factors were teachers face more poverty, large class size and spent long days in school (Darling-Hammond, 2015). With the study conducted by Gaikhorst et al., (2017), urban primary teachers also in European countries faced the challenge of having a high workload, stress, and insufficient guidance and support. They added the following significant concerns in teaching the learners wherein failure to give enough time for the learners would lead to academic disappointment, an adaptation of the variation in terms of language and cognitive development, and parents' different cultural orientation.

According to Ntumi (2016), the teachers at the preschool level faced the dilemma of teaching without knowing the curriculum well. There was a lack of instructional materials that can be used in implementing the preschool curriculum and parents who are not doing their part in nurturing the learners to excel educationally.

Based on the articles about the challenges faced by the teachers in teaching, Gen Z learners mostly focus on the undergraduate learners and few in the lower levels, especially at the primary level. From the researcher's point of view, there should also be further researches about the recent challenges faced by the teachers at the level, for it is essential to discuss and give remedies towards teaching-learning failure. Learners in this stage will be given attention as well for the preparation sooner in junior high school level. The learners at this level are the youngest generation Z learners, and it is necessary to know the recent attitudes and behaviors that they have. Aside from the characteristics of these learners, it is also essential to know on how teachers handle the challenges that they met like literacy in the manipulation of technology (Taleb, 2014; Jansen & Merwe, 2015), culture diversity and language barrier (Akbari, 2015), standardization of the curriculum and most notably large achievement gap (Gaikhorst, et al., 2017).

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

This study utilized existential qualitative phenomenological research design. The researcher conducted a semi-structured interview with the participants about the challenges in handling generation z learners and the coping strategies that they imposed based on their experiences with the situation they were comfortable with. This method helps draw up participants' thorough views and experiences by strengthening their responses (Jamil & Isiaq, 2019).

Research Environment

The research was conducted in selected District 10 schools of Ozamiz City Division, Misamis Occidental. There were three (3) schools that participated in this research. Schools A, B, and C were

chosen since these schools were quite far from the city proper and located about 9.8 – 14.3 kilometers from it. The schools are situated in the three neighboring barangays of Ozamiz City wherein there is ample access to technology, yet it became limited due to the economic status of the families of the learners. Aside from it, these schools are located within the proximity of the researcher to avoid constraints of the schedule of the participants and the researcher itself during the conduct of the interview.

Participants

The participants of the study were twelve (12) intermediate teachers of the selected schools of District 10 of the Ozamiz City Division, Misamis Occidental. Only those teachers who handled grades 4-6 levels in District 10 of Ozamiz City were interviewed based on the challenges that they encountered and their coping strategies. They were handling generation Z learners not beyond three (3) years. Eight (8) teachers were from small schools and five (5) from a medium school. They were also advisers and subject teachers of their respective schools.

Table 1. The Research Participants

Schools	No. of Teachers
School A	4
School B	5
School C	3
Total	12

Research Instruments

The main instrument of the study was the researcher herself with the aid of an interview guide questions. The interview guide was composed of five (5) questions, one (1) in engaging, two (2) in exploratory, and another two (2) in exit questions. In conducting the interview, the researcher used an audio-recorder to record the responses of the intermediate teachers. The interviews were accomplished through the use of an interview schedule.

After the interview, teachers' responses were transcribed to allow for a preliminary analysis of data. The research then extracted the characteristics of generation Z learners, challenges encountered, and different strategies of the teachers to cope with the problems they faced in handling Generation Z learners.

Sampling Technique

Purposive Sampling was applied in this research. This sampling was developed by Patton (1990 - 2002). The participants were selected accordingly. Only intermediate teachers of the three (3) schools of District 10 of Ozamiz City Division participated. These twelve (12) teachers were also handling intermediate learners for more than three (3) years and as of the present they are advisers and subject teachers. Also, none of the teachers belong to Generation Z.

Data Gathering Procedure

The researcher made a letter for the approval to conduct the study at District 10 of the Ozamiz City Division from Saint Columban College (Graduate School). After retrieving the approved letter, another letter of approval was submitted in the Division of Ozamiz City to conduct the said study in District 10. The researcher also asked permission from the PSDS of district 10 and the school principals.

In administering the interview/questionnaire, the researcher used the vacant time of the teacher participants to avoid distractions from the class discussions. After gathering the responses

from the participants, they were analyzed according to the usual challenges mentioned by them. The ways in coping with the problems were given weight as an action plan towards the concerns they have met in teaching the Generation Z learners at the intermediate level.

Data Analysis

The researcher used thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns within data (Braun & Clarke, 2012). The transcript of each of the research participants were analyzed properly and collect the important and common thoughts among the shared live experiences of the twelve (12) teachers. Also, the common responses of the participants were classified in a theme from the most to least common responses.

Ethical Considerations

The following ethical guidelines were put into place for the research period:

Voluntary Participation

When conducting research, the participants are recognized and assured that their participation was voluntary, and withdrawal was possible at any time in this study. There were (12) teacher participants who willingly showed eagerness to participate in the study.

Issue of Consent

Participants were given time to read the consent for participation. The researcher further clarified any aspects of the letter that were unclear. The participants signed each informed consent.

Respect the Right

When conducting the research, the researcher respects the rights of the participants. There were four (4) out of twelve (12) participants who asked the researcher to reschedule the date and time of the interview for their convenience. All the participants were interviewed during their vacant time in their respective stations.

Justice

Despite the hardship of the participants in their workplace, the results of the study were given justice. In this sense, the responses received from the participants are accurate and not transcribed with another thought.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality was given to the participants in this study. The names of the participants are not mentioned. Still, instead, they were categorized as teacher participants 1 to 12, and identifying information was not associated with any part of the written report as well as in the interview process of the research. The participant's respective station was not mentioned, as well. Still, it was described based on the categorized as school A, School B, and School C. Ethical issues consider there was privacy to protect them from avoidable harm and honored their contributions to research.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Challenges of Intermediate Teachers in Handling Generation Z Learners

Based on the data gathered from the participants' challenges, there were three (3) themes created name: Learners' Difficult Behaviors: *Hyperactive, Disrespectful, Violent* (8), wherein it turned out as the main challenge that they were facing in handling Generation Z Learners. While there were seven (7), teachers mentioned the problem of having technophile learners and six (6) of learners' low academic performance.

Table 2. Challenges of Intermediate Teachers in Handling Generation Z Learners

Themes	No. of Teachers
Learners' Difficult Behavior	8
Hyperactive/Restless	
Disrespectful	
Rowdy	
Violent	
Negative Impact of Technology to Learners/ Learners'	6
Inappropriate Use of Technology	
Learners' Poor Academic Performance	5

The first theme cited by 8 intermediate teachers is *Learners' Difficult Behaviors*. As the responses of the teacher-participants were reviewed and analyzed, it turned out that majority of the intermediate teachers who were interviewed about the challenges that they met were about the difficult behaviors of the learners. They describe learners as hyperactive/restless, disrespectful, rowdy and violent.

The responses were generated as follows.

"Ang usual gyud kay kanang bata nga restless. Dili sila maka stay or mag sit down while mag work...mo ki-at gyud sila, kinahanglan pa madako ang imong tingog". [The usual problem is the restlessness of the children. They do not stay in their seats while doing the activity. They don't behave accordingly, and there's a need to modulate your voice for them to listen.] – TP1

"..medyo nabug-atan na sa kina-iya sa mga bata kay lahi gyud kayo ang deperesiya sa mga kina-iya sa mga bata karon kaysa sa mga niaging years...ako gyud silang ma describe nga hyper-active.." [I have difficulty in handling them since their attitude is much different from the attitudes of the children before. I can describe them as hyper-active.] – TP3

"Kuan sila karon pasayon, dili na kayo sila respectful. Ang ilang behaviors ng different gyud kay sa akong nakita, hyper-active maning mga bataa uy..magbuot ug ila, magbangag ug lahi." [Learners are easy-going lucky, and they are not that respectful. Their behaviors re much different, they are hyperactive, and they use to do things not related to the task given.] - TP2

"ang ilang behavior karon kay lahi..langas sila. Ang behavior nga kung unsa ilang gustong buhaton, buhaton gyud" [Their behavior nowadays is different..they are rowdy. They will really do what they wanted to do.] – TP4

"Lahi ra gyud ang ilang attitude ug behavior kay ang mga bata karon kay alampuonon..need gyud ug enough time para ma mold ilang character kay very active then sugu-on murag wala lang." [Their attitude and behavior are much different. I think, only prayer can change them. There should be enough time allotted to mold their their character because they are so much active and if you ask something for them to do, they are not taking it seriously.] – TP7

"It's their behavior, kabala ka anang mga kuan bitaw..violent kayo ilang Makita so madala nila sa ilahang klase..kanang magsinumbagay. Magsinumbagay pud ni sila base sa ilang nakita pud...ilang awaton bitaw" [It's about their behavior. They bring in school the violent actions that they saw on the television like punching, and they will also imitate it and do it in school.] – TP11

"Behavior problem sa mga bata because sa karon, lahi nagyud kayo ang mga bata." [It is the behavior problem since the children nowadays are so much different.] – TP5
"Kana gyung ilang behavior." [It's their behavior.] – TP9

Based on the data gathered, teachers at the intermediate level viewed learners' behaviors as the main challenge in handling the generation Z learners. Since teacher participants' length of service was not less than three years, they more likely compared the learners before and as of these days. They evaluated learners nowadays having challenging behaviors in class and described them as hyper-active/restless, inattentive, disrespectful, and rowdy yet two of the teacher-participants considered the behavior of the learners as their challenges but did not mention specifically the kind of behavior problem that they encountered among their learners as of the present.

In a school environment, unproductive behaviors of the learners are tough to handle (Sullivan et al., 2014), and this challenging behavior has immediate effects on learners' performances (Flower et al., 2014).

Another challenge that was raised by the participants in which got the second-highest response was all about the *Negative Impact of Technology to Learners/Learners' Inappropriate Use of Technology*. The responses were generated as follows.

"..kusog kayo sila mogamit ug gadgets." [The learners extremely use gadgets.] – TP1

"Balewala na nila ang effort sa teacher nga mag lesson kay ang ilang mind naa sa gadgets." [They do not see the effort of the teacher teaching because they are more focus on gadgets.] – TP4

"Ang mga bata karon kay more on gadgets." [The children in this generation are more on gadgets.] – TP5

"...kanang ilang routine nga inig uli cellphone ug tv..." [They have this routine of using cellphone and watching tv shows when they get home.] – TP10

"...pag-abot sa balay, kwaon ang cellphone ni mama, kwaon ang cellphone ni papa, naana silay kaugalingong computer sa ilaha..ang attention na divert sa gadget." [When they got home, they will use the cellphone either of their mother or father, and they also have their own computer, so the attention is already diverted to gadgets.] – TP11

"...they (learners) are more on gadgets.." – TP12

Based on the responses of the teacher participants, they consider learners' manipulation of gadgets, especially cellphones, as a challenge for it turned out as one of the factors of the diversion of attention instead of focusing on their studies. It was found out that generation Z learners have more interest in the manipulation of technology, and with this, they were considered as technophile learners. Technophiles are those who pay keen attention to the new technology (Bazeley & Shrimplin, 2014). The theory "technological determinism" explains the attraction of the learners towards technology. The approach emphasizes that human society does not have the power to resist technological forces (Osiceanu, 2015). Learners' fascination with gadgets became one of the concerns in handling the Gen Z learners.

Another difficulty in handling Gen Z learners was about *Learners' Poor Academic Performance*. Below are the responses that were generated.

"Ang mga bata murag wala lang...maskin zero ra ang makuha, mukatawa lang gihapon." [The children this days do not mind getting low scores, even getting zero in class activities.] – TP4

"Very short gyud ang ilang attention span especially kung mag chalk -talk lang ka or chart lang gigamit kay dili na sila ma arouse...dili na sila maminaw kayo" [They have a short attention span, especially if the teacher is more on chalk-talk or only chart is used

in the discussion.] – TP6

“Ang ilang reading kay inig abot sa Grade 5, kinahanglan pagyud silang tudluan ug basa..kay ug mag remedial mi nga mag sulat2x lang, wala kayo silay retention pero pag gamitan ug laptop, ganahan kayo sila mobasa.” [Reading skill of the earners in the fifth grade needs remedial, and during the remedial time, they are much eager to read with the use of laptop than barely using printed or traditional materials.] – TP8

“Ang comprehension kay dili kayo sila active in reading” [It's with their comprehension because they are not that active in reading.] – TP9

“Sauna ang mga bata naa pay retention, dayon inig magklase attentive pa sila pero pagkadugayan nawala na...nawala pud ilang study habit.” [The children before have this retention and attention in class, but these were no longer observed at present...as well as their study habit.] – TP10

The above responses of the participants typically addressed the challenge of having learners in this generation with difficulty in comprehension, retention, reading, and study habits were no longer observed. Teacher-participant 6 also emphasized that due to the traditional way of teaching (chalk-talk teaching) learners are no longer interested and they no longer listen to the teacher during the discussion. Attention span was also stressed out with the study of Rothman (2016) wherein the attention span of this generation will just last for 7 to 10 minutes compare to previous generations. It was also emphasized that because of this, they usually get information through "key spotting," in which they barely read texts but simply scan the hypertext.

The reading comprehension also was affected because of the inactiveness of learners in reading. This situation was mentioned by teacher participant 9, wherein the participant observed the phenomenon among learners in this generation.

Based on the data gathered, challenges encountered by the intermediate teachers in handling Gen Z learners are common focus among researchers. In the study of Trussel et al. (2016) and DiPerna et al.; (2015) wherein the behavior problem of learners is given importance to resolve. Dealing with learners' diversity was also supported by the study of Gaikhorst, et al., (2017) wherein the character, behavior, norms and values and attitude' were acknowledged and perceived as a challenge. It was mentioned by Hill et al. (2017) that learners made them challenging to engage since they are profoundly different from previous generations.

Since this generation was described as techno-savvy, innovations of classroom instruction were the focus of the participants to deal with the poor academic performance of learners. In fact, in the Philippines, there were also several technologies, approaches, and policies based on societal changes. Some of these improvements involve a technical solution that typically presents difficulties because, like other developing countries, the nation is ill-prepared and unable to tackle any academic problem as it arises immediately (Acosta, 2016).

The study revealed as well that teacher participants have this difficulty in handling generation Z learners' poor academic performance. The same thing was revealed by Darling-Hammond (2015) that a significant achievement gap was faced by the United States due to poor test scores of the learners.

Based on the data gathered, challenges encountered by the intermediate teachers in handling gen Z learners are common focus among researchers. In the study of Trussel et al. (2016) and DiPerna et al.; (2015) wherein the behavior problem of learners is given importance to resolve. Dealing with learners' diversity was also supported by the study of Gaikhorst, et al., (2017) wherein the character, behavior, norms and values and attitude' were acknowledged and perceived as a challenge. With this, strategies and approaches are studied to address these difficult behaviors.

Coping Strategies

The responses gathered from the participants' coping strategies were *ICT Integration in Teaching* (5), *Imposing Friendly Discipline* (4), *Teacher-Parent Partnership* (3), and *Enhancing ICT Literacy* (2).

The first coping strategy of intermediate teachers in order to address learners' needs in enhancing learners' poor academic performance is *ICT integration in Teaching*. There were five (5) participants who responded on this. The generated responses were as follows.

"Kuan gyud ma'am, mo enroll gyud sa SEMEO, para sa akon SEMEO is very effective kay ma discuss man gud kung unsaon pag deal ang mga bata nga 21st century learners...kinahanglan pud maningkamot ug being computer literate..kinahanglan gyud mo adapt sa new trend karon." [I think, there is a need to enroll courses related in handling generation Z learners like SEMEO. It is very much effective since that course discusses on how to deal with 21st century learners. There's a need also to be computer literate and adapt new trends.] – TP2

"Magklase mi more on powerpoint kay mas interesado saila maminaw kung ang teachers maggamit ug ICT gani, so ma arouse ilang interest kaysa libro lang." [I use PowerPoint presentation, for they are much attentive in class than barely using the book.] – TP5

"Kuan..gi apply nako ang mga bag-o nga gipang introduce nga methods sa teaching nga more on ICT kay engagement gyud sa mga bata ang gi focus." [I apply the newly introduced methods of teaching, which is on the use of ICT to maximize the engagement of the pupils in the class.] – TP6

"Para ma meet ilang mga needs, during my daily teaching, I use powerpoints, videos then collaborative learning mostly para mo participate para ma meet ang ilang pagka 21st century learners." [In order to meet the needs of the 21st learners, I use PowerPoint presentations, videos, and collaborative learning for them to participate well.] – TP7

"Ni adapt ko sa generation ICT kay abtik kayo sila sa PowerPoint." [I adapt this generation on the use of ICT through using PowerPoint presentation.] – TP9

The responses of the participants focused on the interest of the learners in technology. They have coped up the challenge of poor academic performance by adapting innovations through the use of technology. Participants mentioned the active participation of Gen Z learners when it comes to PowerPoint, videos, and any form of technology integration in class activities. The study conducted by Philomina & Amutha (2016) mentioned that displaying powerful usage of innovations is one of the segments to cater to the changes in instructing and learning.

The participants of this study adapted the learner-centered approach wherein they dealt with the poor academic performance of the learners through using technologies to aid the dilemma. With the use of innovative instructional materials, they have observed that there was a wide range of participation of the learners in the class. In this case, literacy in the usage of technology of the teachers should be imposed to adapt to the nature of generation z learners' way of learning (Jansen & Merwe, 2015). Another coping strategy is *Imposing Friendly Discipline*. Generated responses were as follows:

"Kinahanglan gyud sila e reprimand. Maong para nako dili gyud e tolerate ang ilang gi buhat nga dili mao." [There is a need to reprimand them. For me, those bad deeds should not be tolerated.] – TP1

Dili ko mo syagit nila, magtudlo ko nga settle down na sila...moingon pud ko nila nga

iwas2x lang sa pag use ug gadgets" [I don't shout at them, and I make sure that they are settled down before starting my teaching...I also tell them to minimize their use of gadgets.] – TP4

"Discipline. Gi allow lang sila mag cellphone inig wala'y klase." [I impose discipline also through allowing them to use cell phones only if there's no class.] – TP5

"...sa other subjects, e integrates gyud and mga good values and manners para ma guide sila." [There should be an integration of good manners and values in other subjects so that they will be guided accordingly.] – TP8

Based on the responses of the participants, they addressed the dilemma of handling learners with challenging behavior through integrating moral values in different subject areas and not only in Edukasyon sa Pagpapakatao subject. Aside from that, teacher participant 1 mentioned that reprimanding was one of her coping strategies wherein she corrected the behavior through communicating the importance of practicing good values inside and outside the class. Imposing friendly discipline among learners was the coping strategy as well of teacher participants 4&5 so that Gen Z learners will act appropriately in class.

Another response that came out as a coping strategy addressing behavior and poor-academic performance was a *Teacher-Parent Partnership*. The responses of the participants were as follows.

"...pag talk sa ilang parents about sa ilang behavior" [I talk to their parents about their behavior in class.] – TP4

"Gi apil sa homeroom meeting nay rules gi impose sa klase." [I communicate the rules imposed in the class in our homeroom PTA meeting.] – TP9

"Sa katong una nga akong gimention nga study habit, dili man na makaya nako nga akon ra. Kinahanglan nga naa jud ang Ginikanan so nangayo kog tabang sa ginikanan pinaagi sa pagmeeting so akong gi explain sa ilaha nga ang study habit sa mga anak nga kinahanglan nga naa jud sa mga bata kay nay activities nga buhaton man sa balay." [The one that mentioned a while ago about the study habit of the learners, I cannot do it on my own that's why I communicated the parents during the Homeroom PTA meeting and explain to them the importance of study habit of their children since there are also activities that should be done at home.] – TP11

The participants emphasized the importance of teacher-parent partnership in molding the learners in academics and even in the behavior aspect. For them, the involvement of the parents will help the learners be more efficient in class. The idea of the contribution of the parents towards their children's success was emphasized by the participants. As what as teacher Participant 11 mentioned that there were activities that were done at home, and with that, the involvement of the parents in assisting the learners contributed a lot for the learners' better performance in school. Most of the participants communicated the behavior concerns and rules imposed in class during the Homeroom PTA meeting.

The response in which appeared two (2) out of twelve (12) participants' strategy in handling the challenges that they met was *Enhancing ICT Literacy*. The responses generated as follows:

"Kinahanglan ang pagpaningkamot ug being computer literate...kinahanglan gyud mo adapt sa mga new trend karon." [There's a need to persevere to be computer literate, and there's a need to adapt the trends.] – TP2

"...pag apil sa seminar kay daghang innovations dira ug kaning kuan pag enhance sa skill sa paggamit ug ICT" [It is through joining seminars since there are lots of innovations learned of it and also through enhancing my skill in using ICT.] – TP3

The responses of these participants focused on the enhancement of their skills in manipulating technologies. With the first question asked by the researcher in which it talked about the generation where they belong, it was revealed that these teachers both belong to baby boomers' generation and was born between 1946 and 1964. It was discussed by Swanzen (2018) that the attributes of each generation vary, and different strategies should be applied. Flipped classroom strategy wherein it focuses on the learners' new trend of learning. It minimizes the traditional way of handling the learners to address the gap between the teacher and learner (Gillispie, 2016).

Implications of the Study

The study focused on the challenges and coping strategies of intermediate teachers in handling Generation Z learners. This study revealed that there were three (3) common challenges faced by the intermediate teachers namely: students' difficult behaviors, having technophile learners, and learners' poor academic performance. With this, the Department of Education must heed to the mentioned challenges that most of the teachers in the intermediate level handling Generation Z Learners were having these dilemmas in their respective classes that hinder learner's success in achieving quality and meaningful learning.

This research emphasizes that in order for the teachers to overcome the challenges met in the classroom in handling Generation Z intermediate learners, a teacher should understand the nature of these learners nowadays. Imposing positive discipline in the class to mold learner's unwanted behaviors, attitudes, and practices. This positive discipline involves reminding learners calmly on the appropriate behaviors, being the model by consistently practicing the values that are learned in their *Edukasyon sa Pagpapakatao* learning area.

Teachers must also remember that the usage of technology has both negative and positive impact on the learners. The usage of educational technology in a classroom allows the learners to be interactive and showed effectiveness in acquiring a better concept or idea. On the other hand, technology, specifically cellular phones, television, and computers captivated much interest of the learners that led to excessive usage not educationally related (e.g. using mobile phones for their Facebook status update). Their attention was diverted to these technologies just for entertainment.

In addition, parents and guardians also take a big role in helping teachers cope-up the mentioned challenges above. Parents and guardians' support for the betterment of their child's performance academically through guiding them in the proper usage of technologies (e.g. cellphone is used for educational purposes only) and correcting their unappropriated behaviors and attitudes. Teacher-parent partnership should be strengthened in order to overcome the said challenges met by the teachers in the class.

Summary of Findings

This study focused on the challenges and coping strategies of intermediate teachers in handling Generation Z learners in District 10, Ozamiz City Division, Ozamiz City. Stated below are the important findings of the study: the first question is what are the challenges encountered by the teachers in handling Generation Z learners at the intermediate level? Based on the responses of the teacher participants, the challenges that they met vary from time to time depending on the set of learners. Yet nowadays the common challenges were about handling generation Z's *Difficult Behavior, Negative Impact of Technology to Learners/Learners' Inappropriate Use of Technology and Poor Academic Performance*. These challenges hinder learners' active engagement in class.

The second question is what are the strategies used by the teachers in order to cope with the mentioned challenges? According to the experiences of the participants in resolving the challenges, the following themes were found out common answers among the statements of the participants.

The themes are namely: *Imposing friendly discipline; ICT integration in teaching; teacher-parent partnership; and enhancing ICT literacy.* These strategies were applied by the participants in coping up the dilemmas in handling Gen Z learners and they added that the strategies mentioned were effective enough to address the difficulties in handling such situations.

CONCLUSIONS

There are several challenges faced by the teachers in handling today's learners' generation. Students' difficult behavior was the main problem raised by them. It was found out that learners are most likely not behaving appropriately on school premises. There were different behaviors observed like being restless, rowdy, hyper-active, disrespectful, and inattentive in class. Aside from difficult behaviors, challenges like the negative impact of technology to learners as they inappropriately use the technology, and their poor academic performance were encountered by the participants.

The coping strategies that were accumulated in this study were the following: (1) imposing friendly discipline among learners wherein participants emphasized to have proper approach in disciplining learners' difficult behavior. They highlighted the importance of being calm and using a natural talking voice when reprimanding or correcting them because doing the opposite one will make the learners behavior worse. (2) ICT integration in Teaching. It is so helpful to catch learners' attention and engage more in the class activities. And lastly (3) Teacher-parent partnership would greatly help mold the totality of the learners not just only in school but also practice at home. Through this, there will be consistency of right practice with the guidance of both parents and teacher.

Looking at these different challenges and coping strategies, teachers handling generation Z learners will be guided and be aware of the possible challenges to face in the field.

LIMITATION & FURTHER RESEARCH

The limitations of the study are those characteristics of design or methodology that impacted or influenced the interpretation of the findings from your research. Further research should suggest the number of gaps in our knowledge that follow from our findings or to extend and further test of the research.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based from the findings, the researcher endorses the following recommendations:

1. In planning teachers training programs, administrators of the Department of Education should also include topics that involve handling Gen Z learners and developing necessary skills in innovative teaching. It can be done during School Learning Action Cell of teachers.
2. School heads should give thorough attention to teachers who have difficulties in handling learners to give more technical assistance in order to address the problems.
3. Teachers should be flexible and open minded to the innovations introduced and apply it the classroom setting.
4. Teacher-parent partnership should be strengthened in order to enhance learners' academic performance and as well as develop their values, appropriate attitudes and behaviors.
5. Future researchers may conduct additional studies related to the challenges of the teachers and their coping strategies since the current study is just teachers from grade 4 to grade 6

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