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Cultivating Effective Learning Skills and Positive Learning Attitudes: Voices of Elementary Learners in Rural Philippine Education

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Abstract

Learning skills and attitudes toward learning are essential determinants of learners' academic success and lifelong educational development. In rural educational settings, understanding how learners develop effective learning habits and positive dispositions toward learning is critical for designing responsive educational interventions. This study explored the experiences of elementary learners regarding the development of learning skills and positive learning attitudes at Villa Fuerte Elementary School, a rural public elementary school in the Philippines. Using a qualitative case study design, the study involved fifteen (15) elementary learners, six (6) teachers, three (3) school administrators, and ten (10) parents selected through purposive sampling. Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, classroom observations, and document analysis. Findings revealed that learners developed effective learning skills through teacher guidance, parental support, peer collaboration, and self-regulated learning practices. Positive attitudes toward learning were fostered through supportive classroom environments, meaningful learning experiences, recognition of achievement, and strong school-community relationships. The study highlights the importance of creating learner-centered educational environments that nurture both cognitive competencies and positive learning dispositions. The findings provide insights for educators, school leaders, and policymakers seeking to enhance learner engagement and academic success in rural elementary schools.

Keywords: learning skills, learning attitudes, elementary learners, rural education, learner engagement, self-regulated learning, Philippines

Introduction

The development of effective learning skills and positive attitudes toward learning is fundamental to academic achievement and lifelong educational success. Learning skills encompass a broad range of competencies including study habits, time management, problem-solving abilities, critical thinking, communication skills, and self-regulation. These skills enable learners to acquire, process, and apply knowledge effectively across various learning contexts. Equally important are learners' attitudes toward learning, which influence motivation, persistence, engagement, and willingness to participate in educational activities.

Educational research consistently demonstrates that learners who possess strong learning skills and positive attitudes toward learning tend to achieve higher academic outcomes, exhibit greater resilience, and demonstrate stronger engagement in school activities. Positive learning attitudes contribute to learners' willingness to embrace challenges, seek assistance when necessary, and persevere despite academic difficulties. Conversely, negative attitudes toward learning often result in reduced motivation, disengagement, and lower academic performance.

In rural educational settings, the development of learning skills and positive attitudes may be influenced by unique contextual factors such as family socioeconomic conditions, community resources, educational opportunities, and school culture. Rural schools frequently face challenges related to limited instructional resources and geographic isolation. However, they also benefit from strong community relationships and close-knit educational environments that can positively influence learner development.

Villa Fuerte Elementary School, located within the San Mateo South District, serves learners from predominantly agricultural households and rural communities. Teachers have observed varying levels of learner motivation, study habits, and engagement, highlighting the importance of understanding how learning skills and attitudes are developed within this context. Exploring learners' experiences provides valuable insights into the factors that support or hinder effective learning.

This study sought to explore the voices of elementary learners regarding their experiences in developing learning skills and positive learning attitudes. Understanding these experiences contributes to the broader discourse on learner development and educational quality in rural Philippine schools.

Objectives of the Study

This study aimed to explore the experiences of elementary learners regarding the development of effective learning skills and positive attitudes toward learning at Villa Fuerte Elementary School.

Specifically, it sought to:

1. Explore learners' perceptions of effective learning skills.
2. Examine factors that contribute to the development of positive learning attitudes.
3. Identify the role of teachers, parents, and peers in supporting learning.
4. Investigate challenges encountered by learners in developing effective learning habits.
5. Determine educational practices that promote learner motivation and engagement.

Theoretical Framework

This study was anchored on Social Cognitive Theory and Self-Regulated Learning Theory. Social Cognitive Theory emphasizes the reciprocal interaction among personal factors, behavior, and environmental influences. According to the theory, learners develop skills and attitudes through observation, experience, feedback, and social interactions. The learning environment therefore plays a significant role in shaping learner behaviors and dispositions.

The study was also guided by Self-Regulated Learning Theory, which posits that successful learners actively manage

their learning processes through goal setting, self-monitoring, reflection, and strategic learning behaviors. Learners who develop self-regulation skills are more likely to exhibit positive attitudes toward learning, academic persistence, and achievement. Together, these theories provide a framework for understanding how learners acquire effective learning skills and cultivate positive attitudes toward education.

Methodology

The study employed a qualitative case study research design to explore the experiences of elementary learners regarding learning skills and attitudes toward learning at Villa Fuerte Elementary School. A qualitative approach was appropriate because it enabled an in-depth examination of learners' perspectives, experiences, and meanings attached to their learning processes. The case study design facilitated a comprehensive exploration of the phenomenon within its natural educational setting.

The study was conducted at Villa Fuerte Elementary School, a rural public elementary school located in the San Mateo South District. The school serves learners from predominantly farming families and reflects the educational realities commonly found in rural Philippine communities.

Participants consisted of fifteen (15) elementary learners, six (6) classroom teachers, three (3) school administrators, and ten (10) parents selected through purposive sampling. Participants were chosen based on their direct involvement in the educational experiences being examined. Learners provided firsthand accounts of their learning experiences, while teachers, parents, and administrators offered complementary perspectives regarding learner development.

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, classroom observations, and document analysis. Interviews explored learners' perceptions of learning, study habits, motivation, challenges, and sources of support. Classroom observations documented learner participation, learning behaviors, and teacher practices. Relevant school documents were reviewed to provide contextual information and support data triangulation.

Data were analyzed using Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis framework. The process involved familiarization with the data, coding, theme generation, theme review, and interpretation. Trustworthiness was established through member checking, triangulation of data sources, prolonged engagement, and peer debriefing. Ethical principles including voluntary participation, informed consent, confidentiality, and anonymity were strictly observed throughout the research process.

Results and Findings

Theme 1: Teacher Guidance Strengthens the Development of Effective Learning Skills

A dominant theme that emerged from the study was the significant role of teachers in helping learners develop effective learning skills. Participants consistently described their teachers as primary facilitators who guided them in improving study habits, classroom participation, organization, and academic responsibility. Learners emphasized that teacher support enabled them to become more disciplined and confident in managing their learning tasks.

One learner shared:

"Mas natututo po akong mag-aral nang maayos dahil tinuturuan kami ng aming guro kung paano magbasa, gumawa ng takdang-aralin, at maghanda para sa pagsusulit."

Another learner explained:

"Kapag nahihirapan kami, hindi kami pinapabayaang ng aming guro. Tinutulungan niya kaming maintindihan ang aralin."

Teachers acknowledged that developing learning skills requires intentional instruction and continuous monitoring.

One teacher stated:

“Hindi sapat na ituro lamang ang mga aralin. Kailangan ding turuan ang mga bata kung paano matuto nang epektibo.”

Classroom observations revealed that teachers regularly modeled study strategies, encouraged note-taking, provided feedback, and promoted active participation. Such practices enabled learners to develop habits associated with effective learning.

The findings support Social Cognitive Theory, which emphasizes the importance of observation, modeling, and guided practice in learning. Research by Albert Bandura suggests that learners acquire skills and behaviors through interactions with significant individuals such as teachers. Similarly, studies on effective teaching practices indicate that teacher guidance significantly influences learner engagement and academic success.

Theme 2: Positive Attitudes toward Learning Emerge from Meaningful Learning Experiences

Another important theme centered on how meaningful and enjoyable learning experiences contribute to positive attitudes toward learning. Learners reported that they became more interested in learning when lessons were interactive, relevant, and connected to their daily lives.

One learner remarked:

“Mas gusto kong mag-aral kapag masaya ang mga gawain at naiintindihan ko kung bakit mahalaga ang aralin.”

Another participant shared:

“Kapag may mga laro, group activities, at mga halimbawa na malapit sa aming karanasan, mas ginaganahan kaming matuto.”

Teachers likewise observed that learners demonstrated higher levels of participation when instructional activities were engaging and learner-centered.

One teacher explained:

“Mas nakikilahok ang mga bata kapag nakikita nilang may kaugnayan ang aralin sa kanilang buhay.”

The findings indicate that meaningful learning experiences foster intrinsic motivation and positive attitudes toward education. Learners become more invested in learning when they perceive educational activities as relevant and enjoyable.

These findings align with Constructivist Learning Theory, which posits that learners construct knowledge through meaningful experiences and active participation. Research further suggests that engaging instructional practices enhance learner motivation, enjoyment, and academic engagement.

Theme 3: Parental Support Enhances Learning Motivation and Persistence

The study revealed that parental involvement plays a crucial role in developing both learning skills and positive attitudes toward learning. Learners frequently described their parents as important sources of encouragement, guidance, and emotional support.

One learner stated:

“Mas ginaganahan akong mag-aral kapag tinutulungan ako ng aking mga magulang sa aking mga gawain.”

Another learner explained:

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“Kapag pinupuri ako ng aking magulang sa aking mga natutunan, lalo akong nagsisikap.”

Parents also acknowledged their role in supporting learner development.

One parent shared:

“Sinisikap naming gabayan ang aming anak sa kanyang pag-aaral kahit abala kami sa trabaho.”

Teachers observed that learners whose parents were actively involved in their education demonstrated stronger study habits and greater academic responsibility.

One teacher remarked:

“Kapag may suporta ang pamilya, mas nakikita namin ang interes ng bata sa pag-aaral.”

The findings support the work of Joyce Epstein, who emphasized that family involvement positively influences learner achievement, motivation, and educational outcomes. Strong home-school partnerships provide learners with consistent support that reinforces positive learning behaviors.

Theme 4: Peer Collaboration Promotes Learning Confidence and Engagement

Participants consistently highlighted the importance of peer relationships in supporting learning. Learners reported that collaboration with classmates enhanced their understanding of lessons and increased their confidence in participating in academic activities.

One learner stated:

“Kapag may hindi ako naiintindihan, humihingi ako ng tulong sa aking kaklase.”

Another learner shared:

“Mas masaya at mas madaling matuto kapag nagtutulungan kami.”

Teachers observed that collaborative activities encouraged learners to communicate ideas, solve problems collectively, and support one another academically.

One teacher explained:

“Malaki ang naitutulong ng group work sa paglinang ng kumpiyansa at pakikipagkapwa ng mga bata.”

Classroom observations showed that learners frequently engaged in peer discussions, cooperative tasks, and group problem-solving activities.

The findings align with the sociocultural perspective of learning advanced by Lev Vygotsky, which emphasizes the role of social interaction in cognitive development. Peer collaboration provides opportunities for learners to construct knowledge collectively and strengthen learning skills through shared experiences.

Theme 5: Self-Regulated Learning Develops Responsibility and Independence

A significant theme emerging from the data was the development of self-regulated learning behaviors. Participants described efforts to manage their time, complete assignments independently, and monitor their academic progress.

One learner shared:

“Sinisikap kong tapusin agad ang aking mga gawain para may oras pa akong mag-review.”

Another learner explained:

“Kapag may pagsusulit, gumagawa ako ng paraan para makapag-aral nang maaga.”

Teachers observed that learners who demonstrated self-regulation exhibited greater responsibility and academic persistence.

One teacher stated:

“Ang mga batang marunong magplano at mag-monitor ng kanilang pag-aaral ay mas matagumpay sa klase.”

The findings suggest that self-regulated learning contributes significantly to the development of effective learning skills and positive attitudes. Learners who take ownership of their learning become more confident and motivated to achieve their goals.

These findings support Self-Regulated Learning Theory, which highlights the importance of goal-setting, self-monitoring, and reflection in promoting academic success and lifelong learning.

Theme 6: A Positive School Environment Cultivates Motivation and Love for Learning

The final theme emphasized the influence of a positive school environment on learner motivation and attitudes toward learning. Participants consistently described Villa Fuerte Elementary School as a supportive environment where they felt safe, respected, and encouraged to learn.

One learner remarked:

“Masaya akong pumasok sa paaralan dahil mababait ang aming mga guro at mga kaklase.”

Another learner stated:

“Pakiramdam ko ay mahalaga ako sa paaralan kaya gusto kong mag-aral nang mabuti.”

Teachers highlighted the importance of creating nurturing classroom environments that encourage participation and build learner confidence.

One teacher shared:

“Kapag positibo ang kapaligiran, mas nagiging bukas ang mga bata sa pagkatuto.”

School administrators likewise emphasized the importance of maintaining a school culture that values learner well-being and achievement.

The findings indicate that positive school environments foster emotional engagement, academic motivation, and positive attitudes toward learning. Learners who feel connected to their school community are more likely to participate actively and persist in their educational pursuits.

These findings support research on school climate, which demonstrates that supportive educational environments enhance learner engagement, well-being, and academic achievement.

Conclusion

The study concludes that the cultivation of effective learning skills and positive attitudes toward learning among elementary learners at Villa Fuerte Elementary School is shaped by multiple interconnected factors. Teacher guidance, meaningful learning experiences, parental support, peer collaboration, self-regulated learning behaviors, and a positive school environment collectively contribute to the development of learners who are motivated, engaged, and academically responsible. The findings reveal that learning skills extend beyond cognitive competencies and are strengthened through supportive relationships and positive educational experiences.

Furthermore, positive attitudes toward learning emerge when learners feel valued, supported, and empowered within their educational environment. Learners who experience encouragement from teachers, parents, peers, and school leaders demonstrate greater enthusiasm for learning, stronger persistence in overcoming challenges, and increased confidence in their abilities. The study underscores the importance of holistic educational approaches that nurture both academic competencies and positive learning dispositions among rural elementary learners.

Implications of the Study

1. Schools should prioritize the development of learning skills alongside academic content instruction
2. Teachers should employ learner-centered and engaging instructional practices that promote positive attitudes toward learning.
3. Parent involvement programs should be strengthened to support learner motivation and academic development.
4. Schools should create opportunities for collaborative learning that encourage peer support and engagement.
5. Educational leaders should cultivate positive school environments that promote learner well-being, confidence, and participation.
6. Rural schools should develop programs that strengthen self-regulated learning and learner independence.

Recommendations

1. Implement school-wide initiatives focused on developing study habits, time management, and self-regulated learning skills.
2. Provide professional development programs that equip teachers with strategies for fostering learner motivation and engagement.
3. Strengthen home-school partnerships through regular communication and parental involvement activities.
4. Increase opportunities for collaborative and experiential learning activities.
5. Establish learner support programs that promote positive attitudes toward education and lifelong learning.
6. Conduct future studies involving multiple schools and larger participant groups to further examine factors influencing learning skills and attitudes among elementary learners.

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