

Independent Learning Practices and Support Services as Correlates of Historical Thinking Skills among Grade 8 Students

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Abstract

The sudden outbreak of the historically deadly disease Covid-19 shook the entire world. This situation challenged the education system around the globe and forced educators to shift to a different learning modality of teaching. Gradually, we can all recover from that situation, especially learners, through different interventions, and one could be through independent learning.

This study aimed to assess the perception of students on independent learning practices and support services and their correlation to historical thinking skills. The participants were 66 students from the Dagatan National High School grader class. The quantitative data were collected from the survey questionnaires and test questions measured by using a rating scale instrument. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were utilized to analyze the data. Pearson r was used to find the correlation among the variables. Independent learning practices include Self-Motoring, Self-Instruction, Goal-setting, and Self-reinforcement, and its Support services include Moral, Material, and financial. These factors got an acceptable mean and standard deviation with an interpretation of “agree”/ “practiced”.

Assessing the Historical thinking skills of the respondents with Understanding Chronology, discovering evidence, Interpretation, Creating Imagination, and Rationalization also resulted in a positive level of proficiency, showing that the respondents can adapt to independent learning. As to the relationship between independent learning practices and support services and historical thinking skills, findings revealed that self-monitoring is significantly relative to Historical Thinking skills in terms of Discovering evidence, creating Imagination, and rationalization, while self-instruction has no significant relationship with each of the Historical thinking skills. However, Goal setting is significantly related to creating Imagination, and to rationalization. No significant relationship was shown between self-reinforcement to historical thinking skills. Generally, support services are not significantly related to historical thinking skills.

Keywords: Independent learning practices; support services; historical thinking skills

1. The problem and its background

1.1. Introduction

“It is not the strongest species that survives, nor the most intelligent, but the most responsive to change “according to Charles Darwin. Change is the only constant in life, which means that the world and people are always changing as stated by Heraclitus. The whole world before the year 2020 ended encountered a big change in every aspect of one's life due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Faced and challenged to do things differently than we were used to. Even the delivery of education has greatly changed. It was perhaps one of the most challenging for educators and students in our nation's history. Unexpected things or events happen when we least expect them, but they always have a reason. If we face another unfortunate event like another pandemic, are we now ready to face it? Many researchers and journalists wrote about the effects of the pandemic on the lives of many, but few are looking for a solution on how we can all be ready if this comes again. Planning is what we do, with the help of society and government here we are starting to move on with great plans for the future of our learners. According to Republic Act (RA) No. 11480, otherwise known as An Act to Lengthen the School Calendar from 200 days to not more than two hundred (220) class days, School Year 2023-2024 will end on June 14, 2024, we are now continuing the service and concern to our learners who have struggled for the past 3 years of blended learning and the learning with little support and guide from teachers and classmates, and possible from parents too.

To be prepared for another pandemic in the education sector, we can create and update emergency action plans, invest in the infrastructure of technology, provide training for educators, value the support of mental health, improve partnerships and collaboration, especially with parents and stakeholders, create adaptable educational models, encourage proactive communication. Implementing these approaches will help educational institutions be better equipped to handle the difficulties presented by a subsequent pandemic and maintain the students' access to quality education.

In line with this 21st century, education is about teaching students the skills they need to succeed in this new world and helping them grow with confidence to practice those skills. Growing up means an individual should sometimes get out of their comfort zone and get out of their shells to be independent. Independence promotes confidence, boosts self-esteem, and develops other qualities that contribute to success. Independent learning could be a suggestion for learners' preparedness for this new and challenging world.

Independent learning can lead to several challenges, such as a lack of organization, motivation, and self-control; restricted access to resources; loneliness; efficient time management; and self-evaluation and feedback. To get past these obstacles, it could be helpful to search for online groups or forums that offer organized educational curricula, tools, chances for collaboration, and professional advice.

Understanding chronology, discovering evidence, making interpretations, imagination, and rationalizing are the historical thinking skills that are central to the study and practice of history. Historical thinking skills help historians and other professionals including students make meaningful conclusions about past events and their effects on the present.

When people learn independently, they actively seek out information and understanding and assume responsibility for their education. Critical thinking, knowledge analysis, and evaluation are frequently needed in this process, all of which are crucial historical thinking abilities. People can grow and improve their historical thinking skills by autonomously investigating historical subjects, gathering evidence, and formulating their interpretations.

1.2. Background of the Study

“Just as mathematics is more than a collection of theorems, history is more than a collection of facts. It’s an intellectual enterprise that requires piecing together a cogent and accurate story from partial scraps of faded words. And the process never ends. Its destination leads to a new beginning” (Sam Wineburg). To unearth overlooked historical accounts and maintain the relevance of history, upcoming generations of historians must cultivate and apply historical thinking abilities. We will be failing the next generation of lifelong learners if we do not adequately prepare students for historical thought. Although teaching students about historical events gives them context, this approach encourages pupils to accept the material at face value rather than delving further into the subject using critical thinking abilities. When we do not use skills, we can lose the skills, and serious consequences in interpreting history emerge.

Historical Thinking Skills (HTS) have already been introduced in the syllabus of history subjects (Ministry of Education, 2003). Nevertheless, understanding of the HTS is still at a low level (Othman Md. Johan and Lukman Dinyati, 2011).

Introducing students to historical concepts that are easy to understand, such as cause and effect, chronological occurrences, and interpretive techniques, is crucial to drawing them into the history lesson. Giving pupils relevant examples that are connected to their prior knowledge and experience is one way to accomplish this. In addition to imparting knowledge, education serves as a forum for students to learn about society and values. Since history is a subject rich in human history, there are many questions and avenues for inquiry to be investigated.

Learning History requires teachers’ commitment to teaching by involving students’ thinking skills, and the use of relevant multimedia and stimulating teaching aids (Twells, 2015).

Education is not excluded from what we call now the “New Normal”. But “Education cannot wait” (2020), which is why Distance Learning came out as an ideal substitute for a regular classroom setup during this crisis due to the pandemic. Most families chose Modular Distance Learning based on surveys made along with the enrollment. It involves individualized instruction that allows learners to use self-learning modules (SLMs) in print or digital format/electronic copy, whichever is applicable in the context of the learner, and other learning resources like Learner’s Materials, textbooks, activity sheets, study guides, and other study materials. The learners may ask for assistance from the teacher via email, telephone, text message/instant messaging, etc. Where possible, the teacher shall do home visits to learners needing remediation or assistance, or in other ways any member of the family can assist their learners. A different face of the environment is served to all of us now.

In these situations’ teachers, parents, and the community must inculcate in learners a sense of responsibility and teach students skills that they bring outside school life. They must face the ability of independent learning. Independent learning brings out every single ability a learner may be able to discover in themselves, may result in a learner's sense of trust in themselves, and most especially may result in good outcomes in their academics and life ahead.

Some strategies for learning independently include self-management, understanding the fundamentals, taking charge, individual planning, resources, and assistance. Strong reading and writing abilities are just as important as motivation, independent thought, initiative, time management, organization, and multitasking when it comes to independent study.

During high school or college, students are usually prepared for more responsibility in their careers and education through the development of autonomous learning. It gives pupils the power to decide for themselves and make informed decisions about what they must do to learn. To do this, pupils need to: 1. Feel at ease creating and implementing decisions. 2. It is well-known how important learning reflection is. Therefore, independent learning involves students making decisions

about their education rather than depending on their teachers. Many students first find it challenging to concentrate on their needs and consider their preferred method of learning independently.

1.3 Objective of the study

Specifically, the study aimed to 1. Determine the mean level of perception of the respondents to the practices that promote Independent Learning, 2. The mean level of perception of the respondents to the support services helps in learning independently; 3. Determine the scores of the respondents on Historical thinking skills test 4. Evaluate the significant relationship between independent learning practices and Historical thinking skills. of the respondents, and 5) evaluate the significant relationship between the independent learning support services and the Historical thinking skills of the respondents.

2. Literature Review

Independent learning is a process in which students take responsibility for their learning according to Robinson, J. D., & Persky, A. M. (2020). They set their own goals, develop their learning strategies, and monitor their progress. Independent learning is an important skill for students to develop, as it will help them to be successful in school and life according to Loeng, S. (2020).

Historical thinking skills are the skills that historians use to study and understand the past. These skills include the ability to:

- Gather and evaluate evidence according to Awang, M. M., (2016)
- Analyze and interpret evidence according to Luís, R., & Rapanta, C. (2020)
- Construct and support arguments according to Anis, M. Z. (2020)
- Communicate historical understandings according to Suddaby, R., (2020). Independent learning practices and support can help students to develop their historical thinking skills Allender, T. (Ed.). (2020). When students can learn independently, they are more likely to be engaged in their learning and to take ownership of their learning according to Abidin, Z., & Saputro, T. M. E. (2020 June). They are also more likely to be able to think critically about the information they are learning and to develop their historical understandings according to Blevins, B., Magill, K., & Salinas, C. (2020). There are many different independent learning practices that students can use. Some common practices include Self-monitoring: Students monitor their learning by paying attention to their understanding of the material and by identifying areas where they need additional support according to Van Gog, T.(2020). Self-instruction: Students teach themselves new information and skills by using resources such as textbooks, websites, and online courses according to Rogers, M., Hodge, J., & Counts, J. (2020). Goal setting: Students set specific, achievable, measurable, relevant, and time-bound goals for their learning according to Estrapala, S., & Reed, D. K. (2020). Self-reinforcement: Students reward themselves for making progress toward their goals according to Amuaful, G. A. (2020). Students need support from their teachers and parents to be successful independent learners. Teachers can support independent learning by: Providing students with opportunities to learn independently, such as through independent study projects and research assignments according to Kim, Y. (2021). Teaching students how to use independent learning practices according to Umaralieva, M. (2021). Providing students with feedback on their independent learning according to Morris, T.

H., & Rohs, M. (2021). Creating a supportive classroom environment where students feel comfortable asking for help McClintock, A. H., Fainstad, T. L., & Jauregui, J. (2022).

In addition to teacher support, parental involvement plays a significant role in promoting independent learning Shao, M., He, W., Zhao, L., & Su, Y. S. (2022). Parents can create a conducive learning environment at home, provide access to resources, and encourage their children to adopt self-directed learning habits according to Toh, W., & Kirschner, D. (2020). Regular communication between teachers and parents can further enhance support for students' independent learning endeavors Bubb, S., & Jones, M. A. (2020). Providing students with a quiet place to study. Helping students to set and achieve goals according to Love, J. S. (2022). Monitoring students' progress and providing support when needed Archambault, L., Leary, H., & Rice, K. (2022) and Encouraging students to be independent learners Khan, R., Ali, A., & Alourani, A. (2022). Providing students with a quiet place to study can help them to focus and to avoid distractions. This can be especially important for students who have learning disabilities or who are easily distracted. A quiet place to study can also help students to feel more comfortable and relaxed, which can lead to improved learning outcomes Hanif, M. (2020).

Helping students to set and achieve goals can help them to stay motivated and on *track* Hira, A., & Anderson, E. (2021). When students have specific goals in mind, they are more likely to put in the effort necessary to achieve them Schmidt, S. J. (2020). Teachers can help students to set and achieve goals by providing them with guidance and support Rapanta, C., (2020 Monitoring students' progress and providing support when needed can help to ensure that students are successful according to Borup, J.,(2020). Teachers can monitor students' progress by checking their assignments, giving them quizzes and tests, and observing them in class Sanchez, D. R., Langer, M., & Kaur, R. (2020). When teachers identify students who are struggling, they can provide them with additional support, such as tutoring or extra help during class Fagell, P. L. (2020).

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Encouraging students to be independent learners can help them develop the skills they need to be successful in school and life Yean, L. S. (2019). Independent learners can take responsibility for their learning and set their own goals Cirocki, A., Anam, S., & Retnaningdyah, P. (2019). s

They are also able to manage their time effectively and to seek help when they need it. Teachers can encourage students to be independent learners by providing them with opportunities to learn independently, such as through independent study projects and research assignments. They can also teach students how to use independent learning strategies, such as self-monitoring and self-instruction.

Here are some specific examples of how parents and teachers can support students' independent learning: Parents: Provide students with a quiet place to study; Help students to set and achieve goals; Monitor students' progress and provide support when needed; Encourage students to be independent learners by providing them with opportunities to learn independently and by teaching them how to use independent learning strategies.

Teachers: Provide students with opportunities to learn independently, such as through independent study projects and research assignments; Teach students how to use independent learning strategies, such as self-monitoring and self-instruction; Give students feedback on their independent learning; Create a supportive classroom environment where

students feel comfortable asking for help according to Borg, S., & Alshumaimeri, Y. (2019). By providing students with the support they need, parents and teachers can help them to become successful independent learners.

Learning materials are also important for supporting independent learning Curran, V., (2019). Students need access to a variety of learning materials, such as textbooks, websites, and online courses Todorinova, L., & Wilkinson, Z. T. (2019). They also need access to technology, such as computers and tablets, to help them to learn independently according to Danovitch, J. H. (2019).

The availability of high-quality learning materials is particularly crucial for developing historical thinking skills among Grade 8 students. Well-designed textbooks, interactive websites, and engaging online courses can provide students with opportunities to analyze historical evidence, construct interpretations, and evaluate historical narratives according to Anderson, S. L. (2019). Technology can further enhance the learning experience by offering interactive simulations, virtual field trips, and access to primary sources, allowing students to immerse themselves in historical contexts and develop a deeper understanding of the past according to Cheng, K. H. (2022).

Moreover, learning materials should be tailored to students' learning styles and preferences according to Hu, J., Peng, Y., Chen, X., & Yu, H. (2021). Some students may prefer traditional textbooks, while others may benefit from multimedia presentations or interactive online modules Akhter, S., Javed, M. K., Shah, S. Q., & Javaid, A. (2021). Providing a variety of learning materials caters to diverse learning needs and ensures that all students have the opportunity to engage effectively with historical content Veluvali, P., & Suriseti, J. (2022). There is a growing body of research on the relationship between independent learning practices and historical thinking skills, Dielemans, R., & Coppen, P. A. (2020). Students who used self-monitoring and self-instruction strategies were more likely to develop their historical thinking skills than students who did not use these practices Wehmeyer, M. L (2017). Students who set specific and challenging goals for their learning were more likely to develop their historical thinking skills than students who did not set goals Bertram, C., Weiss, Z., Zachrich, L., & Ziai, R. (2021).

The teacher's support is important for supporting independent learning Adinda, D., & Mohib, N. (2020). Students who received more support from their teachers were more likely to use independent learning practices according to Daar, G. F., & Nasar, I. (2021) and to develop their historical thinking skills according to Jay, L. (2021). A parent support is also important for supporting independent learning Lau, E. Y. H., Li, J. B., & Lee, K. (2021). Students who received more support from their parents were more likely to use independent learning strategies according to Goudeau, S., Sanrey, C., (2021) and to develop their historical thinking skills Bertram, C., Weiss, Z., Zachrich, L., & Ziai, R. (2021).

3. Methodology

The study employed the descriptive correlational method design. Its application in the study was on the teachers' assessment of the perception of learners in independent learning practices and support services as correlates of the historical thinking skills of the learners.

A purposive sampling was used in data collection, a total of 66 Junior High school students are the respondents of the study who belong to the sections of Generosity and Helpfulness with the year level and sections of Grade 8 .

Two instruments were used in this research. The teacher-made test for historical thinking skills and the independent learning practices and support services perception survey questionnaires.

To show that the practice factors are fully utilized a Daily Lesson Log was exhibited by the researcher, highlighting the activities for every lesson being discussed on that day. For further understanding of the survey questionnaire administered by the researcher, Indicators were translated into vernacular/Tagalog language to ensure easy comprehension on the part of the respondents.

4. Findings And Discussion

The findings were interpreted and discussed according to the purpose of the study reflected on the specific questions and the statement of the problem.

Table 1 Summary Table on Independent Learning Practices as to:

Independent Learning Practices	Mean	Standard Deviation	Verbal Interpretation
Self-Monitoring	3.25	0.85	Agree /Practiced
Self-Instruction	3.04	0.93	Agree /Practiced
Goal-Setting	3.21	0.81	Agree /Practiced
Self-Reinforcement	3.38	0.82	Agree /Practiced
Overall	3.22	0.85	Agree /Practiced

Legend: 3.50 – 4.00 strongly agree/Highly practiced, 2.50 – 3.49 agree/Practiced, 1.50 – 2.49 moderately agree/Moderately practiced, 1.00 – 1.49 Disagree/less practice

The summary mean distribution of the respondents' Perceptions of Independent Learning Practices with its sub-variables such as self-monitoring, self-instruction, goal-setting, and self-reinforcement, shows that Self-reinforcement with a mean value of **3.38 and standard deviation of 0.82** was interpreted as “Agree”/”practiced” while Self-Instruction with a mean value of **3.04 and standard deviation of 0.93** was also interpreted as “agree”/”practiced”.

The overall computed mean of exploration was **3.22 and a standard deviation of 0.85**, interpreted as “Agree”/”Practiced”. The results indicate that Self Reinforcement received the highest mean score and standard deviation among the independent learning practices assessed, while Self-Instruction obtained the lowest mean score and standard deviation.

The higher meanscore and standard deviation Self-Reinforcement suggest that grade 8 students may find this practice more effective in enhancing their independent learning skills compared to Self-Instruction. The variability in responses indicated by the standard deviation also highlights differences in how students perceive and engage with these two practices.

Overall, the survey results suggest that while both Self Reinforcement and Self-Instruction are valuable practices for promoting independent learning among grade 8 students, there may be variations in how individual students perceive and utilize these practices based on their unique learning preferences and experiences.

Table 2 Summary Table on Independent Learning Support Services

Independent Learning Support Services	Mean	Standard Deviation	Verbal Interpretation
Moral	3.23	0.94	Agree/To a great extent
Material	3.10	0.89	Agree/To a great extent
Financial	3.26	0.86	Agree/To a great extent
Overall	3.19	0.89	Agree /To a great extent

Legend: 3.50 – 4.00 strongly agree/To a very great extent, 2.50 – 3.49 agree/To a great extent, 1.50 – 2.49 moderately agree/To a Moderate extent, 1.00 – 1.49 Disagree/To a lesser extent

The summary mean distribution of the respondents' Perceptions of Independent Learning support services with its sub-variables such as moral, materials, and financial. It shows that Financial support with a mean of **3.26** and **standard deviation of 0.86** was interpreted “Agree”/To a great extent, while Material support with a mean of **3.10** standard deviation of **0.869** was interpreted “Agree”/to a great extent.

The overall computed mean of exploration was **3.19** and a **standard deviation of 0.89**, interpreted as “Agree”/to a great extent. The results indicate positive feedback regarding the independent learning support services offered in terms of moral, material, and financial assistance. Consequently, Financial support received the highest mean score and standard deviation among the independent learning practices assessed, while Material support obtained the lowest mean score and standard deviation.

The higher mean score and standard deviation for Financial Support suggest that grade 8 students may find this support more important in enhancing their independent learning compared to Material Support. Financial support plays a crucial role in enabling students to pursue their education without facing financial constraints. The availability of financial support can impact students' ability to engage in independent learning activities outside of the classroom. Brown and Davis (2017) highlight the importance of financial support in facilitating independent learning outcomes. Students who have access to adequate financial resources are more likely to engage in independent learning activities that enhance their academic performance and overall educational experience. According to Johnson et.al, financial constraints often pose significant challenges to independent learners, highlighting the need for targeted financial support programs.

Overall, the findings suggest that providing financial support, materials even moral support to students can have a positive impact on their independent learning outcomes. Institutions and policymakers should consider implementing strategies to ensure that all students have equal access to these support resources to support their educational goals.

Table 3 Relationship Between Independent Learning Practices and Historical Thinking Skills

Independent Learning Practices	Historical Thinking Skills				
	Understanding Chronology	Discovering Evidence	Making Interpretation	Creating Imagination	Rationalization
Self-monitoring	-0.211	0.332*	0.058	0.299*	0.253*
Self-instruction	-0.124	0.099	0.106	0.132	0.202
Goal Setting	-0.076	0.081	0.053	0.325*	0.279*
Self-reinforcement	-0.042	0.229	0.128	0.207	0.191

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The correlation coefficients indicating the relationship between independent learning practices and historical thinking skills among the respondents. Correlation coefficients range from -1 to 1, with values closer to 1 indicating a stronger positive relationship, values closer to -1 indicating a stronger negative relationship, and values close to 0 indicating no relationship.

Self-monitoring: There is a significant positive correlation between self-monitoring and discovering evidence ($r = 0.332^*$, $p < 0.05$) and creating imagination ($r = 0.299^*$, $p < 0.05$). This suggests that individuals who engage in self-monitoring practices are more likely to excel in discovering evidence and imagining historical contexts.

Self-instruction: No statistically significant correlations exist between self-instruction and historical thinking skills. The correlations range from -0.124 to 0.132, indicating weak or negligible relationships.

Self-reinforcement: There is no significant correlation between self-reinforcement and historical thinking skills.

Overall, the results suggest that independent learning practices, such as self-monitoring, and goal setting, are positively associated with specific historical thinking skills, particularly discovering evidence, creating imagination, and rationalization. However, the strength and significance of these relationships vary across different independent learning practices and historical thinking skills.

Table 4 Relationship Between Independent Learning Support System and Historical Thinking Skills

Independent Learning Support Services	Historical Thinking Skills				
	Under standing Chronology	Discovering Evidence	Making Interpretation	Creating Imagination	Rationalization
• Moral	-0.153	0.120	-0.120	0.093	0.155
• Material	-0.139	0.101	-0.077	0.044	-0.058
• Financial	-0.249	0.142	0.013	0.075	-0.014

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 4 presents the correlation coefficients indicating the relationship between the independent learning support services and historical thinking skills among the respondents.

Moral Support: There are no statistically significant correlations between moral support and historical thinking skills. The correlations range from -0.153 to 0.155, indicating weak or negligible relationships. This suggests that moral support, such as support from teachers and parents, may not have a significant impact on the development of historical thinking skills among the respondents.

Overall, the results suggest that there is no significant relationship between independent learning support services, and historical thinking skills among the respondents. In terms of independent learning practices, it was found that there is a significant relationship between self-monitoring, and Historical thinking skills in terms of discovering evidence, Creating, and rationalization, while goal setting, is also significantly related to creating imagination and rationalization.

4.1 Conclusions

Based on the findings, the following conclusions were drawn, the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant relationship between the independent learning support system, and historical thinking skills among the respondents was not sustained.

The hypothesis stating that there is no significant relationship between independent learning and support services and the student's Historical thinking skills was sustained.

4.2 Recommendation

1. Firstly, interventions should be implemented to improve independent learning practices and support services within the educational setting. These interventions could include targeted resources, teacher training programs, and workshops aimed at fostering historical thinking skills among students.

2. Additionally, there is a need to enhance teacher training to equip educators with the necessary knowledge and skills to facilitate independent learning practices effectively. Professional development opportunities such as workshops and

seminars can help teachers integrate historical thinking skills into their instructional practices and create a supportive learning environment for students.

3. Promoting student engagement in independent learning practices is essential. Educators may encourage curiosity, exploration, and self-directed inquiry among students, providing opportunities for them to explore topics of interest and collaborate with peers in historical investigations.

4. Regular evaluation and monitoring of interventions are necessary to assess their effectiveness in improving historical thinking skills among students. Collaboration with stakeholders, including school administrators, teachers, students, and parents, is essential to ensure support for initiatives aimed at enhancing historical thinking skills.

5. Finally, sharing research findings with the broader educational community through conferences, publications, and presentations is vital. By disseminating findings, educators can contribute to the collective knowledge base on the relationship between independent learning practices, support services, and historical thinking skills, ultimately informing educational practices and policies

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