A STUDY ON THE STUDENTS' ENGLISH LEARNING HABITS AT D COLLEGE IN JINAN CITY, SHANDONG PROVINCE, CHINA

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Abstract: This study aimed to understand the current state of students' English learning habits at D College in Jinan city, Shandong province, exploring the differences in students' English learning habits under demographic backgrounds. The study used the students' learning habits scale developed by Zheng & Tian (2012) as a survey tool, conducting a questionnaire survey of 379 students at D College in Jinan city. The quantitative study was conducted through questionnaire surveys. Descriptive statistics and difference analysis were applied for analyzing the data from 372 valid questionnaires. The results showed that: 1) the level of students' English learning habits at D College in Jinan city, Shandong province was high 2) there were no significant differences in students' English learning habit levels of different genders, grades, and places of origin. 3) there was a significant difference in students' English learning habit levels of different majors. 4) there were significant differences in students' English learning habit levels who were class leaders. Based on these findings, the following suggestions were made, the school should strengthen the cultivation of students' habit awareness, optimize English teaching methods, develop differentiated teaching strategies, and enhance student autonomy while playing a leading role in learning demonstration.

Keywords: College Students, English Learning Habits, D College

Introduction

With the development of the knowledge economy era, English has become an indispensable tool on the international stage. As the most widely used language, the status and role of English are undoubtedly essential skills for talents in the 21st century (Yaser, 2021). English learning, as a form of language learning, is a long-term accumulation process that cannot be achieved overnight. To enable students to truly master and use the English language, it is essential to focus on guiding learning methods and cultivating good learning habits (Ren & Feng, 2019). However, China's English teaching focused more on grammar training rather than communication training, emphasizing grammar and

textbook knowledge while neglecting the cultivation of communication skills. To provide a more equitable and open atmosphere for English learning in higher education, attention must be paid to cultivating students' English learning habits (Shen, 2020). For college students at D College in Jinan city, Shandong province, it was necessary to possess a certain level of English application ability in their English learning. Developing good English learning habits is beneficial for improving their professional qualities, better achieving employment and career development, and adapting to social development (Li, 2022). Therefore, this study investigates students at D College in Jinan city, Shandong province to understand the basic status of students' English learning habits, providing theoretical support and practical guidance for the school to cultivate students' lifelong learning habits and enhance their professional skills, as well as offering suggestions for teachers to optimize teaching strategies, thereby promoting educational reform and innovation, and laying a more solid foundation for students' future development.

Research Objectives

(1) To understand the overview of the demographic backgrounds of students at D College in Jinan city, Shandong province.

(2) To investigate the current status of students' English learning habits at D College in Jinan city, Shandong province.

(3) To analyze the differences in students' English learning habits at D College in Jinan city, Shandong province under different demographic backgrounds.

Literature Review

Theory of Self-Regulated Learning

Self-Regulated Learning (SRL) theory was proposed by Zimmerman (1986), emphasizing the learner's initiative in goal setting, strategy use, self-monitoring, and motivation regulation, serving as the core theoretical framework for studying learning habits. This theory posited that effective learning habits were essentially the learner's ability to transform external requirements into autonomous behaviors through a cyclical process of planning, executing, and reflecting (Zimmerman, 2002).

The Concept of English Learning Habits

Learning habits were seen as the frequency and types of actions taken for learning (Gao & Wang, 2020). In a general sense, learning habits referred to the proactive learning tendencies developed by college students through long-term repeated training to achieve excellent learning outcomes. These habits related to learning behaviors gradually formed over time (Zhang et al., 2021). In the field of English learning, Ma (2022) pointed out that English learning habits were automated English learning behaviors that develop through repeated practice during the English learning process.

The content of English learning habits mainly included cognitive habits in English learning,

basic habits in English learning, and self-directed habits in English learning, among which cognitive habits referred to the understanding of the concept and importance of learning habits (Shi, 2017).

Measurement of English Learning Habits

Currently, no standardized measurement tools or methods specifically targeting English learning habits have been found, but there are some general measurement scales for learning habits. Xie (2019) explored the differences in English learning habits between migrant children and urban residents' children. In her research, the scale design categorized English learning habits into three levels: cognitive level, foundational learning habits level and self-directed learning level. Hsu (2024) pointed out that the construction process of English learning habits has not been clearly described. Therefore, based on a cross-theoretical model, a data model for extracting learning habit stages was proposed and applied to self-directed extensive reading learning logs to demonstrate the construction process of learning habits.

English Learning Habits under Different Demographic Backgrounds

The individual factors affecting English learning habits mainly include learning motivation, learning interest and attitude, personality, and willpower.

Song (2021) used a student learning habit questionnaire to assess students' learning habits and analyze the different mechanisms by which students' learning habits and their different dimensions affect academic performance.

Zhang (2006) revealed significant differences in students' English learning habits under different family factors, including parents' (especially mothers') attitudes towards their children's English learning, parents' (particularly mothers') educational levels, and family educational methods.

The differences in teacher characteristics could also affect students' learning habits. Jin (2023) investigated the relationship between college English teachers' teaching styles and students' English learning habits.

Methodology

The research subjects were the enrolled students at D College in Jinan city, Shandong province, with a total of 25,000 students on campus. This survey used a convenience sampling method, and according to the method for determining sample size by Krejcie & Morgan (1970), the sample size needed to reach 379 people.

This study used established scales from existing literature as research tools, referencing the students' learning habits scale used by Zheng & Tian (2012) for the survey of research subjects. The survey questionnaire was divided into two parts: the first part includes information on students' demographic backgrounds; the second part was a survey of students' English learning habits. The study selected students from D College in Jinan city, Shandong province, as the subjects for the questionnaire survey, using an electronic questionnaire format for the online investigation. The questionnaire for this

study was titled "Survey on Students' English Learning Habits," which was mainly distributed by the student counselors of D College in Jinan city, Shandong province.

Results

Demographic Backgrounds of Subjects

This study used a questionnaire titled "Students' English learning habits Survey Questionnaire," which was divided into two parts: demographic background survey and English learning habits survey. A total of 372 valid questionnaires filled out by students were collected during the formal testing phase.

The results showed that among the students who participated in the questionnaire, there were 200 males, slightly more than female students; there were 172 female students. In this study, the ratio of male to female students was relatively close, with male students slightly in the majority. Regarding the grade variable, sophomore students make up the largest proportion, totaling 128; freshman students followed closely with 110; there were 76 junior students, while senior students were the least numerous, with 58. In terms of major distribution, students in Science and Engineering majors were the most numerous, totaling 215; students in Humanities majors number 73; students in Arts majors number 46; and students in other majors were the least numerous, with 38. Regarding the place of origin variable, most students come from towns, with 270, while students from rural areas number 102. Regarding student leadership experience, most students participating in the survey have not held student leadership positions, with 301, while 71 students have held student leadership positions.

Students' English Learning Habit

According to Table 1, the overall mean value of English learning habits for the surveyed students was 3.68, indicating that the students' English learning habit level was high. From various dimensions, the mean values did not differ significantly, with scores ranging from 3.6 to 3.7. Among them, the mean scores for the dimensions of class habits and after-class habits were relatively high, with a mean of 3.69, while the mean score for the dimension of habit awareness was the lowest, with a mean of 3.64. This indicated that students at D College in Jinan city, Shandong province, had good class habits and after-class habits, while their level of habit awareness was relatively low.

Table 1: Overall of Students' English Learning Habits

Dimension	M	SD	Interpretation
Habitual awareness	3.64	1.065	High
Pre-class learning habits	3.68	0.970	High
In-class learning habits	3.69	0.967	High
Post-class learning habits	3.69	0.934	High
Reflective learning habits	3.67	0.981	High
Overall learning habits	3.68	0.885	High

Statistical Analysis Results

In the data analysis, the researchers used SPSS software to explore the differences in students' English learning habits of different genders, grades, majors, places of origin, and class leader.

According to test results in Table 2, the overall p-value for English learning habits was 0.758, which was greater than the standard of 0.05, indicating that there were no significant differences in the students' English learning habits of different genders. There were no significant differences in the levels of habitual awareness, pre-class learning habits, in-class learning habits, post-class learning habits, and reflective learning habits, and reflective learning habits among students of different genders.

Table 2: Differences in Students' English Learning Habits of Different Genders

	Gender	N	M	SD	t	Sig
Habitual awareness	Male	200	3.65	1.067	.147	.883
	Female	172	3.63	1.065		
Pre-class learning habits	Male	200	3.66	0.957	-.452	.652
	Female	172	3.70	0.987		
In-class learning habits	Male	200	3.67	0.960	-.503	.615
	Female	172	3.72	0.976		
Post-class learning habits	Male	200	3.69	0.941	.001	1.000
	Female	172	3.69	0.930		
Reflective learning habits	Male	200	3.64	0.991	-.644	.520
	Female	172	3.71	0.972		
Overall learning habits	Male	200	3.67	0.882	-.308	.758
	Female	172	3.69	0.890		

According to test results in Table 3, the overall p-value for English learning habits was 0.173, which was greater than the standard of 0.05, indicating that there were no significant differences in the English learning habit levels of students in different grades. In terms of dimensions, there were no significant differences in the levels of habitual awareness, pre-class learning habits, in-class learning habits, post-class learning habits, and reflective learning habits, and reflective learning habits among students in different grades.

Table 3: Differences in Students' English Learning Habits of Different Grades

	Grade	N	M	SD	F	Sig
Habitual awareness	Freshman	110	3.69	1.072	1.847	.138
	Sophomore	128	3.49	1.118		
	Junior	76	3.84	0.874		
	Senior	58	3.60	1.132		
Pre-class learning habits	Freshman	110	3.75	0.919	1.367	.253
	Sophomore	128	3.57	1.084		
	Junior	76	3.82	0.820		
	Senior	58	3.60	0.967		
In-class learning habits	Freshman	110	3.75	0.970	1.514	.210
	Sophomore	128	3.58	0.973		
	Junior	76	3.85	0.936		
	Senior	58	3.61	0.973		
Post-class learning habits	Freshman	110	3.74	0.903	1.714	.164
	Sophomore	128	3.55	0.988		
	Junior	76	3.84	0.867		
	Senior	58	3.68	0.937		
Reflective learning habits	Freshman	110	3.73	1.001	.632	.595
	Sophomore	128	3.59	0.997		
	Junior	76	3.76	0.962		
	Senior	58	3.641	0.942		
Overall learning habits	Freshman	110	3.74	0.873	1.670	.173
	Sophomore	128	3.56	0.938		
	Junior	76	3.83	0.790		
	Senior	58	3.63	0.886		

The test results are shown in Table 4, with an overall p-value of 0.034 for English learning habits, which was less than the standard of 0.05, indicating that there were significant differences in the levels of students' English learning habits from different majors. Comparing the means, it could be seen that students in Humanities majors perform the best in English learning habits, while students in art majors perform the worst.

Table 4: Differences in Students' English Learning Habits of Different Majors

	Major	N	M	SD	F	Sig
Habitual awareness	Humanities	73	3.72	1.014	2.366	.053
	Science and Engineering	215	3.69	1.032		
	Arts	46	3.40	1.169		
	Others	38	3.48	1.191		
Pre-class learning habits	Humanities	73	3.76	0.950	3.243*	.023
	Science and Engineering	215	3.74	0.956		
	Arts	46	3.36	0.981		
	Others	38	3.59	1.025		
In-class learning habits	Humanities	73	3.79	0.976	3.425*	.019
	Science and Engineering	215	3.72	0.927		
	Arts	46	3.44	1.079		
	Others	38	3.63	1.014		
Post-class learning habits	Humanities	73	3.79	0.904	2.805*	.046
	Science and Engineering	215	3.73	0.931		
	Arts	46	3.43	0.993		
	Others	38	3.58	0.906		
Reflective learning habits	Humanities	73	3.76	0.920	1.741	.158
	Science and Engineering	215	3.72	0.958		
	Arts	46	3.42	1.044		
	Others	38	3.52	1.110		
Overall learning habits	Humanities	73	3.77	0.872	3.070*	.034
	Science and Engineering	215	3.72	0.8609		
	Arts	46	3.41	0.949		
	Others	38	3.57	0.926		

**Significantly correlated at the 0.01 level (two-tailed); *significantly correlated at the 0.05 level (two-tailed); and so on.

The test results are shown in Table 5, where the overall p-value for English learning habits was 0.309, indicating that there were no significant differences in the students' English learning habits from different origins. In terms of dimensions, the p-values for habitual awareness, pre-class learning habits, in-class learning habits, post-class learning habits, and reflective learning habits were all greater than the standard of 0.05. This indicated that there were no significant differences in these dimensions.

Table 5: Differences in Students' English Learning Habits of Different Places of Origins

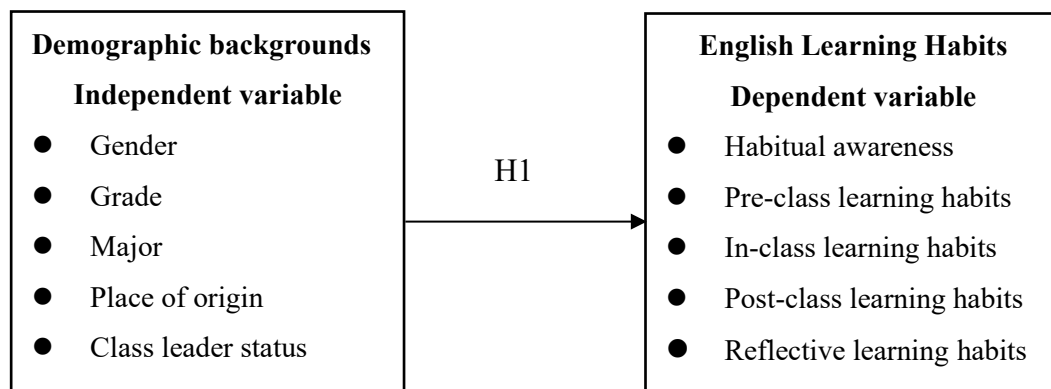|	Place of Origin	N	M	SD	t	Sig
Habitual awareness	Urban	270	3.69	1.062	1.671	.095
	Rural	102	3.49	1.063		
Pre-class learning habits	Urban	270	3.70	0.944	.810	.419
	Rural	102	3.61	1.036		
In-class learning habits	Urban	270	3.73	0.933	1.266	.206
	Rural	102	3.59	1.048		
Post-class learning habits	Urban	270	3.70	0.910	.352	.725
	Rural	102	3.66	0.999		
Reflective learning habits	Urban	270	3.71	0.965	1.077	.282
	Rural	102	3.58	1.0236		
Overall learning habits	Urban	270	3.71	0.857	1.018	.309
	Rural	102	3.60	0.953		

The test results are shown in Table 6, with an overall p-value of 0.022 for English learning habits, indicating that there were significant differences in the students' English learning habits who were class leaders. Comparing the means, it could be seen that students who were class leaders have a higher average score for English learning habits, while students who were not class leaders have a lower average score. This indicated that students who were class leaders performed better in their English learning habits, while those who were not class leaders performed worse.

Table 6: Differences in Students' English Learning Habits of Different Class Leader Status

	Class leader status	N	M	SD	t	Sig
Habitual awareness	Class leader	71	3.86	0.936	2.133 *	.035
	Non-class leader	301	3.59	1.088		
Pre-class learning habits	Class leader	71	3.96	0.848	2.745 **	.006
	Non-class leader	301	3.61	0.986		
In-class learning habits	Class leader	71	3.90	0.850	2.067*	.039
	Non-class leader	301	3.64	0.987		
Post-class learning habits	Class leader	71	3.90	0.805	2.161*	.031
	Non-class leader	301	3.64	0.957		
Reflective learning habits	Class leader	71	3.81	0.876	1.278	.202
	Non-class leader	301	3.64	1.003		
Overall learning habits	Class leader	71	3.90	0.761	2.308*	.022
	Non-class leader	301	3.63	0.905		

The conceptual framework of this study is shown in Figure 1.

Demographic backgrounds **Independent variable**		**English Learning Habits** **Dependent variable**
● Gender		● Habitual awareness
● Grade	H1	● Pre-class learning habits
● Major	→	● In-class learning habits
● Place of origin		● Post-class learning habits
● Class leader status		● Reflective learning habits

Figure 1: Research Concept Framework

Discussion

Descriptive Statistics of Students' English Learning Habits

This study found through a questionnaire survey of students at D College in Jinan city, Shandong province that the sample distribution exhibits certain characteristics: in terms of gender, the number of male students was slightly higher than that of female students; in terms of grade distribution, sophomore students account for the largest proportion, while senior students were the least numerous; in terms of major composition, students from Science and Engineering majors exceed half and dominate in number; regarding the source of students, over seventy percent come from towns. In terms of student leadership positions, only a small number of students hold such roles. Overall, students at D College in Jinan city, Shandong province had a high level of English learning habits, with good classroom and after-class habits, indicating that students show good behavioral performance in classroom participation and after-class review and consolidation, actively engaging in various aspects of English learning. However, the average score in the dimension of habitual awareness was relatively low, indicating that students have certain deficiencies in recognizing the importance of English learning habits, assessing their own English learning habits, and understanding how to improve them. This may reflect that the school needs to pay more attention to guiding students to establish correct concepts of English learning habits and enhance their self-awareness and reflective ability regarding good learning habits.

Differences in Students' English Learning Habits under Different Demographic Backgrounds

This study analyzed the differences in students' English learning habits of different genders, grades, majors, place of origin, and class leader status. The research findings indicate:

(1) There were no significant differences in the levels of English learning habits between students of different genders. This result may differ from previous studies regarding the habits or abilities related to English learning among different genders. In this study, male students' overall and

dimensional scores in English learning habits may be slightly higher than those of female students, but this difference did not reach statistical significance. This may be due to the balanced educational strategies adopted by D College in Jinan city, Shandong province, in English teaching, which resulted in no significant differences in the cultivation of English learning habits between male and female students.

(2) There were no significant differences in the levels of students' English learning habits of different grades. This result indicated that at D College in Jinan city, Shandong province, from freshman to senior year, students' English learning habits do not show significant differentiation or improvement as their grade increases. College English education performs well in terms of the coherence and stability of English teaching, with relatively consistent teaching goals and requirements across grades, which does not significantly impact the cultivation of students' English learning habits.

(3) There were significant differences in the levels of students' English learning habits from different majors, with students in Humanities majors having the highest levels of English learning habits, followed by those in Science and Engineering, and the lowest in the Arts. This result was closely related to the professional characteristics and training objectives of different majors, as well as student preferences (Hyland, 2006). In English teaching, personalized teaching plans could be developed based on the characteristics of different majors to strengthen the guidance and cultivation of English learning habits for students in science, engineering, and Arts majors.

(4) There were no significant differences in the levels of students' English learning habits from different places of origin. This indicated that at D College in Jinan city, Shandong province, students from both urban and rural areas do not show significant differences in their English learning habits (MOE, 2020). The school adopted the same selection criteria for students from urban and rural areas during the enrollment process.

(5) There were significant differences in the levels of students' English learning habits who were class leaders, with class leaders performing better in their English learning habits (Zhang, 2018). This result was closely related to the responsibilities and characteristics of class leaders. The school could further leverage the exemplary role of class leaders to encourage more students to actively participate in class management, thereby improving the English learning habits of all students.

Conclusions

This study reached the following conclusions:

The survey results showed that the number of male students was slightly higher than that of female students, with sophomores accounting for the largest proportion, while seniors had the fewest students. More than half of the students were from Science and Engineering majors, and over seventy percent of the students came from urban areas, with only a small number of students serving as student leaders.

Overall, the English learning habit level of students at D College in Jinan city, Shandong province was high, among which students' class habits and after-class habits were relatively good, while the level of habit awareness was relatively low.

The analysis results of the differences in students' English learning habits with different demographic backgrounds were as follows:

1) There were no significant differences in students' English learning habits under different genders.

2) There were no significant differences in students' English learning habits under different grades.

3) There were significant differences in students' English learning habits under different majors, with students in Humanities majors having the highest English learning habit levels, followed by those in Science and Engineering, and the lowest in the Arts.

4) There were no significant differences in students' English learning habits under different places of origin.

5) There were significant differences in students' English learning habits who were class leaders, with class leaders demonstrating better English learning habits.

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