Factors Influencing The Use Of Slang Language Among Generation Z Students

Aubrey Ann B. Germe, Carlos E. Carado, PhD

Cor Jesu College, Sacred Heart Avenue, Digos City, Davao Del Sur
Cor Jesu College, Sacred Heart Avenue, Digos City, Davao Del Sur
South Philippine Adventist College, Matanao, Davao Del Sur

Abstract:

Background: Slang language has become a prevalent feature of Generation Z students' communication, influencing both their formal and informal language use. Understanding the factors that contribute to this linguistic shift is crucial for educators, linguists, and policymakers. This study examines the influence of cultural trends, mass and social media, prestige considerations, and societal influences on the use of slang language among Generation Z students in a sectarian secondary school.

Materials and Methods: Employing a descriptive-regression research design, the study surveyed 80 students from Grades 7 to 10, using a proportional quota sampling method. A structured questionnaire was utilized to assess the respondents' level of slang usage and the degree of influence exerted by the identified factors. Data were analyzed through descriptive statistics and multiple linear regression using SPSS software.

Results: Results indicate that mass and social media exert the most significant influence on students' slang usage, followed by societal influences and cultural trends, while prestige considerations have the least impact.

Conclusion: These findings highlight the dominant role of digital platforms in shaping students' linguistic preferences and underscore the need for educational interventions that promote awareness of formal and informal language distinctions.

Key Word: Education, Slang Language, Generation Z Students, Quantitative Study, Philippines

I. Introduction

The increasing prevalence of slang language usage among Generation Z students necessitates an in-depth exploration of the factors influencing this linguistic phenomenon. Modern communication channels, cultural trends, mass and social media, and peer interactions play significant roles in shaping the language habits of young individuals. In today's globalized society, younger generations are more influenced by social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and messaging apps, where informal language and slang are pervasive. Social media has notably influenced how people express themselves, including their writing and speaking patterns, emotions, and ideas. These platforms allow users to employ informal language, such as slang, emoticons, and acronyms, which can blur the lines between casual and academic writing. As a result, students may struggle to differentiate between social and academic language, leading to challenges in punctuation, grammar, and overall writing quality. Thus, an urgent need to conduct this study to uncover the underlying factors and their potential impacts on Generation Z students.

The global community provides valuable insights into the factors influencing slang usage among Generation Z such as societal influence, prestige considerations, social media slangs, and cultural trends such as slangs in music. For instance, In the United States, Thurlow and Brown (2014) highlight how digital communication, particularly texting and social media, significantly shape slang usage among American teenagers, reinforcing peer influence and societal trends. Similarly, Tagg (2020) and Squires (2016) emphasized that in online spaces, slang serves as a tool for identity formation and group belonging, particularly among youth navigating digital communities. In Canada, Tagliamonte (2016) demonstrates that social media platforms facilitate the rapid dissemination of slang, with peer networks playing a central role in its adoption among Canadian adolescents.

Beyond North America, research in Europe further confirms the widespread influence of digital and cultural trends on slang usage. In the United Kingdom, Zappavigna (2018) explains how hashtags and social media meta discourse contribute to identity construction, making slang a key marker of group affiliation among British youth. Meanwhile, Androutsopoulos (2015) examines how online interactions on platforms like Facebook shape multilingual and slang practices among European teenagers. In Norway, Cutler and Røyneland

(2018) highlight how youth incorporate slang and other linguistic variations into digital communication, reflecting cultural trends and the influence of globalized media.

Additionally, music genres like hip-hop and rap have been identified as significant sources of slang vocabulary, such as the slang word "stan" from Eminem's song "Stan" which entered the lexicon later on due to its popularity (Vanlalawmpuia, 2023). This phenomenon reflects the influence of social media and the exposure to diverse linguistic communities that interact on these platforms (Tait, 2019; Mehmood, 2013). In Pakistan, for example, slang has become a common feature among university students, infiltrating both their speech and writing, raising concerns about its impact on academic language standards (Khan & Perwaiz, 2010; Saeed, 2013 as cited in Sikandar & Riaz, 2022).

This trend is alarming as it signifies a shift from formal to colloquial language in contexts where a formal tone is required, such as academic settings. Students are increasingly forgetting the distinctions between informal and formal language, which is crucial in educational institutions (Shah, 2018). The pervasive use of slang in academic writing compromises the expected formal tone and word choice, leading to a degradation of writing quality (Melikian, 2002). Frequent exposure to social networking sites and text messaging also exacerbates this issue, as students adopt the informal language used on these platforms (Titanji, Patience, & Ndode, 2017).

Additionally, mass media, including television and the internet, play a significant role in shaping the linguistic habits of students. These media sources are often detrimental to formal language usage, promoting regional irrelevance and hindering the development of formal language skills (Mahmood & Parveen, 2015). The influence of K-pop culture and social media platforms in South Korea has also permeated the global media landscape (Jin & Yoon, 2017). Within the K-pop fandom, specialized slang terms such as *'deokhu (덕후)'*, *'meogeul (머글)'*, and *'ilko (일코)'* have emerged as unique markers of identity and belonging, further illustrating the global impact of media on youth language trends (Lee, 2019 as cited from Megarani & Dini, 2021). Moreover, the incorporation of English loanwords into Korean slang showcases the blending of global and local influences, a process examined by studies on word formation in Korean slang (Megarani & Dini, 2021). These trends reflect how media, particularly pop culture, shapes not only local but also global linguistic practices among youth.

Within Southeast Asia, several studies have examined these factors affecting slang usage among Generation Z students. In Indonesia, Sari (2018) identified the influence of local dialects and internet culture on the development of slang among teenagers. In Malaysia, Nasir, et. al., (2023), found that social media and peer interactions play a pivotal role in the adoption of slang. Furthermore, a recent study by Rianto and Juliarta (2024) revealed that excessive exposure to social media has led to the proliferation of slang, abbreviations, and unique emojis among teenagers. While this enriches their vocabulary and language expression, it also negatively affects their critical and evaluative skills, particularly when exposed to inaccurate information on social media.

Additionally, Malaysian pop culture, including local movies and television shows in American channels, has been recognized as a significant influence on the slang vocabulary of Malaysian youth (Namvar, 2014). Similarly, in Thailand, Thongprayoon, (2015) demonstrated that the influence of English, particularly through the phenomenon known as 'Thinglish' or 'Thailish,' highlights the significant impact of cultural assimilation and exposure to Western media on the slang vocabulary of Thai students. The development of English as a global language, along with the rise of the internet and mass media, has led to noticeable changes in the Thai language. There is ongoing debate within Thai society about whether the use of "chatspeak", a social media app, by the new generation represents a decline in language standards or merely a passing trend. This situation raises concerns, especially as many students incorporate this Thai variety into their written assignments, indicating the importance of understanding local and cultural influences on slang usage. These regional studies especially highlight the importance of understanding local and cultural influences on slang usage.

Consequently, such language assimilation caused several problems in these young generation's overall language competence such as the erosion of formal language skills (Zulkhaeriyah's, 2023) more specifically on difficulties in academic performance such as using of short form of words, incorrect grammar and sentence structure in their formal writing and speaking activities (Belal, 2014). Zulkhaeriyah's (2023) also revealed three factors that influenced Indonesian's Generation Z students to use slang rather than their traditional Bahasa language naming: Societal influences, Prestige Considerations, and Advertisements on Online Platforms. In Malaysia, students struggle with code-switching between informal and formal language during class recitations, affecting their oral communication skills (Namvar, 2014).

In the Philippines, research by Gime (2020), explored significant influence of peer interactions and digital environments, particularly social media, in shaping the slang vocabulary of Filipino youth. A study by Jeresano and Carretero (2022), concluded that the digital and social media slang influence among high school students in Sorsogon impede their language fluency, vocabulary and communication skills. It has also revealed language teachers' negative perception towards its impact in their writing skills. This pervasive language change

is indeed disturbing to language teachers, especially among faculty members in Batangas, stating that it affects students' language learning (Gonzaga, et al., 2023), thus confusing the teachers with what triggers these language preferences. Aside from that, the researcher herself, observed how her students' struggle in often mixing slang abbreviations and spellings formal academic writing contexts such as these slang words "OMG", "forda", and "ferson". She has also noted their difficulty in expressing thoughts without using slang words during academic oral discussions.

The Department of Education is aware of this existing language form as it emphasized valuing students' existing language competence, including non-standard forms like slang, while extending their language skills in its K-12 curriculum (https://www.deped.gov.ph). Although this approach aims to foster critical literacy, the recent widespread use of Generation Z slang among students poses significant challenges among language teachers and undermines essential language development among learners. By focusing on the specific factors influencing this slang adoption, this research aims to fill the existing knowledge gap in understanding how cultural, social, and technological factors converge to shape the language habits of Filipino students. With this, language learning designs and strategies can be developed addressing these pressing issues. Additionally, while factors such as music and dramas have been extensively studied in other countries, there is a lack of research on how these cultural trends influence Filipino students' use of slang language in the Philippines. Conducting this study will be imperative to find if these factors contribute to the pervasive slang language use of Filipino Generation Z students.

The goal of the study is to gain a comprehensive understanding of the factors that influence the use of slang language among Generation Z students, which eventually contribute to the development of more refined language strategies and practices. This study is anchored in the following theories which are Sociolinguistic Theory by Labov (1972); Communication Accommodation Theory by Giles and Coupland (1971), Social Identity Theory by Tajfel and Turner, (1979) and Media Dependency Theory by Sandra Ball-Rokeach and Melvin DeFleur (1976).

First, Sociolinguistic Theory by William Labov (1972) posits that language variation, including the adoption of slang, serves as a marker of social identity and group belonging. For Gen Z students, slang functions not only as a means of asserting individuality but also as a tool for fitting in with peer groups and expressing cultural solidarity (Labov, 1972). This theory explains why students prefer to use slang as a way to navigate their social environments and differentiate themselves from older generations, despite potential drawbacks in formal language contexts.

In relation to this, Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) by Giles and Coupland (1971) offers insights into how individuals adjust their speech patterns to align with or distinguish themselves from their interlocutors. CAT posits that people modify their language to either converge with or diverge from the speech of others based on social and communicative goals. In the context of Generation Z, this theory explains how students adapt their slang to fit in with peer groups, signaling affiliation and solidarity or to stand out and assert their distinctiveness. This adaptive use of slang is particularly pronounced in online environments where rapid shifts in language use are common and often driven by the desire to align with trending digital communities.

Furthermore, Social Identity theory by Tajfel and Turner (1979) provides a framework for understanding how slang contributes to constructing and reinforcing social identities. According to this theory, individuals derive a sense of self from their membership in social groups, which influences their behavior and language use. For Generation Z students, slang functions as a linguistic badge that signifies membership within specific social or cultural groups, reinforcing in-group identity while differentiating them from others, particularly older generations or out-group members. This theory is instrumental in examining how Filipino Generation Z students use slang to navigate their social environments, express group affiliations, and manage their identities within diverse and multicultural settings.

Media Dependency Theory by Sandra Ball-Rokeach and Melvin DeFleur (1976) can also offer insights in explaining the impact of music, television dramas, and online advertising on slang language usage. This theory posits that the more a person depends on media to meet their needs, the more important the media becomes to that person. In the context of Gen Z students, heavy reliance on media for information, entertainment, and social connections can significantly influence their language use, including the adoption of slang. This dependency is particularly relevant in a digital age where media consumption is pervasive, and cultural products like music and dramas are powerful vectors for slang dissemination. By drawing on media dependency theory, this study explored how media exposure shaped the slang language of Filipino Gen Z students.

By integrating these theoretical perspectives, the study aimed to comprehensively understand the factors driving slang use among Filipino Generation Z students. These theories offered a framework for analyzing how and why these students engaged with slang, providing valuable insights into their communication patterns and the broader implications for language learning and social interaction.

II. Material And Methods

This study focused on the factors influencing the use of slang language among junior high students. Specifically, it was conducted in a secondary school located in Matanao, Davao del Sur. The respondents of the study were grades 7, 8, 9, and 10 students, at least 10 per section, enrolled in the academic year 2024-2025.

Study Design: The study employed a descriptive-regression research design, specifically using Multiple Regression Analysis, to explore and analyze the factors influencing the use of slang language among Generation Z students in a sectarian school.

Study Location: This was conducted in a secondary school located in Matanao, Davao del Sur.

Study Duration: November 2024 to December 2024

Sample size: 80 participants.

Subjects & selection method: This study's respondents were students in grades 7, 8, 9, and 10, with at least 10 students per section, with 2 sections each grade level, totaling 80 participants. A proportional quota sampling design, a non-probability sampling method, was used to select the respondents. This ensured that each grade level was represented proportionally based on the set inclusion criteria, enhancing the reliability of research findings.

Inclusion criteria:
1. Respondents were students born between 2007 and 2012.
2. Identified as users of slang language in both formal and informal contexts through their language teachers' observations of students' written and oral communication in classrooms.
3. Officially enrolled in the school year 2024-2025 to ensure that they were current students during the study.

Exclusion criteria:
1. Grade 11 students
2. Grade 12 students
3. College students

Procedure methodology

During the data collection the following processes and procedures were religiously followed and observed:
1. The researcher secured an endorsement letter from the Graduate School of Cor Jesu College to conduct the study in a sectarian secondary school. A formal letter outlining the purpose, scope, and objectives of the research was submitted for approval.
2. After securing initial permission, clearance from the Review and Ethics Committee (REC) was obtained by complying with their requirements, ensuring the study adheres to ethical standards.
3. Once REC clearance was granted, the researcher sent a formal letter to a private sectarian school, with conditions similar to the main target school, to request permission to conduct a pilot test of the validated questionnaire. This pilot testing helped ensure the questionnaire's clarity and reliability before the main study was conducted.
4. After the successful pilot testing, the researcher sent the data to the statistician for a reliability test.
5. Once the self-made questionnaire passed the test, another letter was sent to the target school seeking authorization to proceed with the full study. The letter contained the detail of the research process, the sample questionnaire, and the proposed time and date.
6. Participant selection was then taken place using proportional quota sampling, with ten students selected per section from two sections of each grade level by their language teachers.
7. Each participant from each grade level was excused from their classes to complete the questionnaire. They were guided to a designated room, where a brief orientation was conducted.
8. Participants were then given the freedom to decide whether to take part in the study by signing an assent form. A letter explaining the study's purpose, the confidentiality of responses, and the participants' right to withdraw at any time were provided to each student. This process ensured the study was conducted in a responsible and ethical manner, and the researcher declared no conflict of interest in conducting this study.
9. Retrieval of instruments then followed, and all data gathered were tabulated, processed, and analyzed using the most appropriate statistical tool; and

10. Once the analysis and interpretation of data gathered were done, findings were presented back to the study respondents for data confirmation, validation, and for their immediate information on the findings of the study.
11. The presentation of the study outcomes for the participants will be conducted through a school or division-wide research forum. This forum will be organized to provide a platform for sharing the research findings with the academic community, including faculty members, administrators, students, and other relevant stakeholders. In addition to the school or division-wide research forum, the researcher will be publishing this study to international peer-reviewed academic sites.

Statistical analysis

To comprehensively interpret and analyze the data gathered on factors influencing the usage of slang language among Gen Z students, the following statistical tools were employed:

Mean Scores. The researcher used this statistical tool to measure and describe the respondents' level of Slang Language Usage and level of influence from Cultural Trends, Mass and Social Media, Prestige Considerations, and Societal Influences. This was used specifically to answer statement of the problem number 1 and number 2.

Multiple Linear Regression Analysis. To determine the statistically significant influence of societal influences, prestige considerations, and online advertisements on slang language usage, the researcher conducted a multiple linear regression analysis using SPSS software. This tool was used to specifically answer statement of the problem number 3. It facilitated the analysis by efficiently calculating the relationships and significance levels between the independent variables (cultural trends, mass and social media, societal influences, and prestige considerations) and the dependent variable (slang language usage) among Gen Z students (Pallant, 2020). This approach thoroughly examined the factors impacting slang usage, providing valuable insights into the dynamics at play.

III. Result

Respondents' Level of Usage of Slang Language

Language plays a crucial role in communication, and slang has become an integral part of Generation Z's linguistic habits. Understanding the extent to which students use slang in both formal and informal settings provides valuable insights into their language preferences and potential implications for academic and social interactions. Table 8 presents the respondents' level of slang language usage, offering a quantitative measure of their engagement with slang in everyday communication.

Table 8. *Results and Interpretation on the Level of Slang Language Usage Among Generation Z Students*

Variable	Mean	Descriptive Rating	Interpretation
Usage of Slang Language	3.09	Moderately Agree	Respondent demonstrates a moderate level of slang language usage, indicating occasional use of slang in formal and informal contexts.

As shown in Table 8 above, the result of the study has indicated that Generation Z students generally hold a moderate agreement on the usage of slang language both in formal and informal context, with a mean agreement score of 3.09 on a 5-point Likert scale, indicating that the respondents occasionally use slang in formal and informal contexts. This suggests that while slang is present in their communication, it is not excessively dominant.

This finding aligns with Ugoala (2024) which highlights that slang usage among young people is common in both online and offline interactions and is considered creative and indicative of popular culture. This study also observed that slang facilitates social bonding and self-expression within peer groups, though it typically aligns with informal contexts.

However, contrasting evidence exists. For example, Jeresano and Carretero (2022) suggest that while slang use is prevalent among Generation Z, its integration into formal settings is often minimal due to societal and educational norms that emphasize standard language. This perspective indicates that the moderate agreement observed in the current study might be influenced by external factors, such as the specific cultural or educational environment of the respondents, which either promotes or limits slang usage in formal contexts.

The study's finding that Generation Z students moderately agree on their use of slang language in both formal and informal contexts, with a mean score of 3.09, reflects insights from global and regional studies. Thurlow and Brown (2014) highlight the role of digital communication, particularly social media and texting, in shaping teenage slang usage in the United States as well as in Canada (Tagliamonte, 2016), reinforcing peer influence and societal trends. Similarly, Squires, (2016) as well as Tagg (2020) noted that slang serves as a tool for identity formation and group belonging, particularly among youth navigating online communities.

This aligns with Sari (2018), who identified the intersection of local dialects and internet culture in shaping slang usage among Indonesian teenagers, suggesting a balance between traditional and modern influences.

Contrastingly, study like Shah (2018) cautions against the frequent use of slang, especially in formal settings. They argue that such practices can erode distinctions between informal and formal language, leading to challenges in academic performance and professional communication. In the Philippines, Gime (2020) and Jeresano and Carretero (2022) found that digital slang influences among Filipino youth impede language fluency and writing skills, highlighting the mixed implications of slang adoption.

This nuanced picture of moderate agreement reflects the interplay of cultural, social, and technological factors, suggesting that Generation Z's use of slang is not merely a linguistic choice but also a social and cultural phenomenon influenced by identity, media, and peer dynamics.

Generation Z Students' Perceived Influence of Cultural Trends, Mass and Social Media, Prestige Considerations, and Societal Influences Factors

Table 9 illustrates the perceived level of influence of cultural trends, mass and social media, prestige considerations, and societal influences on Generation Z students. It also provides the corresponding interpretation for the average mean of each factor.

Table 9. *Results and Interpretation on the Level of Generation Z Students' Perceived Influence of Cultural Trends, Mass and Social Media, Prestige Considerations, and Societal Influences Factors*

Indicator	Mean	Descriptive Rating	Interpretation
Cultural Trends	3.38	Moderately Agree	Respondents are moderately influenced by cultural trends, occasionally adopting slang from cultural sources.
Mass and Social Media	3.57	Agree	Respondents are significantly influenced by mass and social media slang, regularly adopting slang terms from various digital communication platforms.
Prestige Considerations	2.98	Moderately Agree	Respondents are moderately influenced by prestige considerations, occasionally using slang to seek social acceptance and recognition.
Societal Influences	3.41	Agree	Respondents are significantly influenced by societal factors, regularly using slang in alignment with societal norms and family attitudes.

The findings in Table 9 indicate that mass and social media exert the greatest influence on slang usage among Generation Z students, with a mean score of 3.57, while prestige considerations have the least impact, scoring a mean of 2.98. Respondents generally agreed that mass and social media, along with societal influences, play a significant role in their use of slang. In contrast, cultural trends and prestige considerations were perceived as moderately influential. A detailed discussion of each factor follows in the succeeding paragraphs.

Cultural Trends

Generation Z students moderately agree that cultural trends influence them in using slang language. With a mean of 3.38, the respondents occasionally adopt slang from cultural sources such as music, films, and traditional customs infused with modern twists. For instance, research highlights that music genres like hip-hop and K-pop often introduce slang terms into everyday language, such as the term 'stan' from Eminem's song ***Stan***, which evolved into a widely recognized slang term (Vanlalawmpuia, 2023). Additionally, the global influence of K-pop culture, as demonstrated by slang terms like 'deokhu' and 'meogeul,' reflects the integration of cultural and social elements into youth language trends (Lee, 2019, as cited in Megarani & Dini, 2021).

Cultural assimilation through media also shapes slang usage, as seen in Southeast Asian studies. For example, the phenomenon of 'Thinglish' in Thailand underscores how cultural trends blend with Western media influences to form unique slang expressions (Thongprayoon, 2015). Similarly, in the Philippines, Filipino youth have been observed to adopt slang influenced by their digital environments, peer interactions, and exposure to local and international pop culture (Gime, 2020). Films, music, and social media platforms further amplify this trend, enabling slang terms to cross cultural boundaries and establish themselves as linguistic norms in informal contexts (Namvar, 2014).

Despite the creative aspects of slang derived from cultural trends, educators and linguists have raised concerns about its impact on formal language skills. Zulkhaeriyah (2023) noted a decline in the ability to distinguish between formal and informal language among students who frequently use slang. This shift is also evident in Filipino classrooms, where teachers report challenges in maintaining linguistic standards in academic contexts due to the pervasive use of slang (Jeresano & Carretero, 2022; Gonzaga et al., 2023). By understanding

the nuanced influence of cultural trends on slang usage, this study aimed to provide insights that could inform educational strategies to address these linguistic challenges.

Mass and Social Media

With the emergence of different mass and social media platforms, Generation Z students generally agree on its lasting impact on their use of slang language. With a mean score of 3.57, respondents indicate significant influence from digital and media slang, regularly adopting terms from various digital communication platforms. This finding aligns with studies emphasizing the role of social media and digital networks in shaping linguistic behavior. For example, Tait (2019) and Mehmood (2013) documented how social media fosters the creation and widespread adoption of slang, highlighting the platform's capacity to blend linguistic norms across cultures.

Studies in the Philippines further underscore the transformative influence of digital media on slang usage. Research by Gime (2020) noted that Filipino youth actively incorporate slang derived from their online interactions into their daily communication. Similarly, Jeresano and Carretero (2022) observed that social media slang, prevalent among high school students, hinders their ability to articulate ideas fluently in formal academic contexts. Teachers from Sorsogon also highlighted this trend's negative implications for students' vocabulary and communication skills, echoing concerns raised by Gonzaga et al. (2023) regarding the linguistic challenges faced by educators in Batangas.

Globally, the pervasive use of platforms like Twitter, TikTok, and Instagram has led to an explosion of slang terms tied to specific cultural and social phenomena. In South Korea, Jin and Yoon (2017) explored how K-pop fandom communities created a lexicon of specialized slang, such as "stan" and "deokhu," which has since transcended linguistic and cultural barriers. Similar trends in the United Kingdom, documented by Zappavigna (2018), noted that online interactions and social networks significantly popularize youth slang, embedding these terms into mainstream discourse.

The rapid proliferation of digital slang presents challenges in educational contexts. Zulkhaeriyah (2023) highlighted the difficulty Indonesian students face in transitioning between informal and formal language due to their reliance on digital slang. Similarly, Belal (2014) observed a decline in grammatical accuracy and sentence structure among students frequently exposed to informal language through text messaging and social media. These findings are consistent with Titanji, et. al., (2017), who argued that habitual use of digital slang affects academic writing quality, underscoring the broader educational implications of this linguistic trend.

In this context, understanding the nuanced impact of digital media on language development among Filipino Generation Z students is essential. By bridging the gap between formal and informal language skills, educators can develop strategies to address the challenges posed by the widespread use of digital slang while fostering critical literacy and communication competencies.

Prestige Considerations

The examination of Generation Z students' perceived influence on prestige considerations showed an average score of 2.98, moderately agreeing that they use slang language to seek social acceptance and recognition. This aligns with global studies that emphasize the role of prestige and peer influence in the adoption of slang. In the United Kingdom, Zappavigna (2018) explains how hashtags and social media metadiscourse contribute to identity construction, making slang a key marker of group affiliation among British youth. Meanwhile, Androutsopoulos (2015) examines how online interactions on platforms like Facebook shape multilingual and slang practices among European teenagers. In Norway, Cutler and Røyneland (2018) highlight how youth incorporate slang and other linguistic variations into digital communication, reflecting cultural trends and the influence of globalized media.

In the context of Southeast Asia, Zulkhaeriyah's (2023) study of Indonesian Generation Z students identified prestige considerations as a key factor influencing their use of slang. The research revealed that students are not only influenced by societal norms but also by the desire to emulate trends that are seen as fashionable and socially acceptable within their peer groups. Likewise, research by Nasir et al. (2023) in Malaysia showed that slang usage is closely linked to a desire for social recognition, particularly through social media platforms where linguistic trends are rapidly disseminated among youth.

In the Philippines, the studies by Gime (2020) and Jeresano and Carretero (2022) corroborate this finding, showing that Filipino youth use slang to maintain social standing within their peer groups, often influenced by the dynamics of online interactions. The widespread use of slang on platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and TikTok enables students to align themselves with prevailing digital trends, enhancing their social capital and positioning them as part of the "in-group" (Tait, 2019; Mehmood, 2013).

The pressure to conform to these linguistic norms is also reflected in the challenges faced by students in maintaining a balance between informal slang and formal academic language. Teachers, as noted by Gonzaga et al. (2023), express concerns over the erosion of academic language standards, with students frequently mixing

slang terms with formal academic writing. This reflects a broader societal shift where the desire for social acceptance and the prestige associated with digital slang can sometimes conflict with the academic demands for formal language proficiency.

Societal Influences

Generation Z students showed a more favorable perception of the influence of society on their slang language usage, with a mean score of 3.41, indicating that they are significantly influenced by societal factors and regularly use slang in alignment with societal norms and family attitudes.

The influence of societal factors on Generation Z's language use, including slang, is indeed significant. Research suggests that social norms, media exposure, and family dynamics shape their linguistic choices (Merriman, 2023). In the 2022 EY Gen Z International Research Report for instance, expressed Generation Z as highly interconnected through networks of family, friends, and digital platforms, creating an environment where societal values and attitudes play a key role in shaping behaviors like slang usage. This generation's communication style is influenced not just by immediate family but also extended social networks, fostering a shared cultural experience and an alignment with societal norms.

Moreover, the constant exposure to media and digital platforms further reinforces these trends. Media, especially social media, serve as a powerful tool in shaping Generation Z's perceptions and behaviors. Platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook contribute significantly to how language, including slang, is used in social interactions (Tiroochi, 2024). This interconnectedness within the digital landscape supports the idea that their language, including slang, is a reflection of the social environment around them, with trends often spreading rapidly through these channels and further highlighting the importance of societal and familial attitudes in the shaping of Generation Z's language.

Influence of Cultural trends, Mass and Social Media, Prestige Considerations, and Societal Influences on the Usage of Slang Language among Generation Z students

Table 10 shows that when regression equation Usage of Slang Language (USL) = βo + β1(Cultural Trends) + β2(Mass and Social Media Slang) + β3(Prestige Considerations) + β4(Societal Influences) + $\mathcal{E}$1 was tested using multiple regression analysis, results from the ANOVA table show that the sig-value is .000 which is found to be below the .05 level of significance set for this study. This implies that overall, the model is considered to be significant and that the model fits the data.

Table 10. *Results of the Multiple Regression Analysis*

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig
(Constant)	.947	.270		3.504	.001
Cultural Trends	.223	.088	.296	2.520	.014
Mass and Social Media Slang	.142	.085	.179	1.676	.098
Prestige Considerations	.237	.080	.337	2.986	.004
Societal Influences	.051	.101	.056	.508	.613

However, when looking at the regression coefficient of each of the independent variables, only two (2) of the four (4) factors tested were found to be significant, namely: (1) Cultural Trends (p-value = .014); and (2) Prestige Considerations (p-value = .004). These results imply that of all the factors included in the model, only two can be able to explain the variations in the dependent variable which is Usage of Slang Language. Thus, the estimated regression model can be mathematically presented as:

USL = .947 (constant) + .223 (Cultural Trends) + .237 (Prestige Considerations) + $\mathcal{E}$i

The value of the beta coefficient for Cultural Trends implies that holding all other variables in the regression constant, its coefficient indicates that for every 1-unit change in the respondents' perception towards Cultural Trends would give a corresponding .223 unit increase in the respondents' level of Usage of Slang Language. This implies that the higher the level of respondents' perception towards cultural trends, the higher it would be for the level of their usage of slang language. The high positive beta coefficient with p-value of .014 for cultural trends confirms the empirical findings which claimed that cultural trends can significantly influence the usage of slang language.

Research has shown that cultural phenomena, including shifts in media, fashion, and youth subcultures, play a crucial role in shaping language. For instance, Thurlow and Brown (2014) emphasized how youth cultures, driven by media exposure, significantly alter the slang vocabulary of teenagers. Zappavigna (2018) similarly noted that slang is often adopted as part of a youth's search for social identity and belonging, aligning with the influence of cultural trends. Cultural trends, amplified by media, significantly influence the adoption of new slang. As digital platforms provide immediate exposure to cultural shifts, younger generations like Gen Z integrate these influences into their language. For example, slang terms originating from popular music or

memes often become widespread through their relevance in shared cultural contexts (Krycha, 2024). Furthermore, studies have demonstrated how cultural trends in music genres such as hip-hop and rap introduce new terms and expressions that quickly permeate slang usage (Vanlalawmpuia, 2023). These findings suggest that the dynamic nature of cultural trends can directly correlate with how and why slang is used by Generation Z.

With regards to Prestige Considerations, holding all other variables in the regression constant, its coefficient indicates that for every 1-unit change in the respondents' perception towards prestige considerations would give a corresponding .237 unit increase in the respondents' level of Usage of Slang Language. This finding implies that as the respondents' perception of prestige considerations increases, so does their usage of slang. The high positive beta coefficient with p-value of .004 for prestige considerations validates the empirical findings which claimed that prestige considerations can significantly influence usage of slang language.

Slang often serves as a marker of in-group identity or exclusivity, which is particularly appealing to Generation Z, who value individuality and group belonging. Labov's (1972) Sociolinguistic Theory observed that individuals adapt linguistic choices, such as slang, to align with socially prestigious groups, signaling cultural alignment and upward mobility. Similarly, Zulkhaeriyah's (2023) emphasized that the adoption of slang by younger generations serves as a tool for creating generational identity and securing social approval, particularly in peer groups.

Moreover, digital spaces have amplified the prestige associated with slang, especially in contexts where linguistic trends emerge through memes, hashtags, and online communities. Nasir, et. al. (2023) highlighted that slang linked to internet culture enhances trendiness and social recognition within these digital spaces. Additionally, slang tied to cultural capital—originating from influential hubs like hip-hop or social media—elevates its status among users (Vanlalawmpuia, 2023). Collectively, these findings underscore how prestige considerations drive slang adoption, as individuals use language to gain recognition, project modernity, and establish connections within their social environments.

The remaining factors, namely (1) Mass and Social Media Slang and (2) Societal Influences, were found to have no significant influence on the usage of slang language, as indicated by significance values of .098 and .613, respectively, both of which exceed the .05 threshold set for this study. This suggests that while these factors may contribute to respondents' perceptions of slang, they do not significantly explain variations in its usage within this specific model. This outcome aligns with Mahmood and Parveen's (2015) argument that societal norms may encourage or discourage slang usage, but their influence is often mediated by personal preferences and specific cultural frameworks. Consequently, while these factors are perceptible in shaping attitudes toward slang, they do not emerge as significant predictors in the regression model.

While societal influences provide a backdrop for slang development, personal experiences, regional dialects, and exposure to different social groups also contribute to an individual's linguistic choices. For instance, a study on American slang highlights those individual factors such as gender, occupation, and age, alongside social factors like drug settings and subcultures, significantly influence slang usage (Zhou & Fan, 2015).

All of these findings strongly affirm the theoretical framework, demonstrating how slang serves as a vital social and communicative tool among Generation Z students. Labov's Sociolinguistic Theory is supported by evidence that slang reinforces social identity and group belonging, particularly through cultural trends and prestige considerations. Communication Accommodation Theory is validated by the way students adapt their slang usage to align with peer norms in digital spaces while also diverging in formal settings to assert individuality. Social Identity Theory is reflected in how slang helps students distinguish themselves from out-groups and strengthen their sense of belonging within specific communities. Additionally, Media Dependency Theory is affirmed by the influence of digital platforms on slang adoption. These combined perspectives provide a comprehensive understanding of slang's role in shaping identity and communication.

IV. Conclusion

This study conclude that in terms of the use of slang language, Generation Z students moderately agree on occasional use of slangs both in formal and informal context. Additionally, Generation Z students are significantly influenced by mass and social media slang, regularly adopting slang terms from various digital communication platforms. As well as societal factors, students respondents are regularly using slang in alignment with societal norms and family attitudes. Further, cultural trends and prestige considerations are the primary drivers of slang language usage among Generation Z students. These factors significantly shape their linguistic practices, with cultural trends linking slang usage to wider social movements and prestige considerations driving students to adopt language that enhances their social status. While mass and social media, as well as societal influences, are perceived to play a role, their impact on slang usage was not as pronounced as initially expected. Finally, the moderate level of slang usage among Generation Z students highlights the balancing act between embracing contemporary linguistic trends and maintaining formal language standards,

which is especially important in academic contexts. The findings of this study are consistent with existing literature on language change, suggesting that the evolution of language among younger generations is closely tied to broader cultural and social factors.

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