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The Relationship Between Student Engagement and Academic Performance Among First-Year College Students Under the RA 10533 K–12 Basic Education Curriculum

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Abstract— *This study investigates the relationship between student engagement and academic performance among first-year college students under the K–12 Basic Education Curriculum implemented through Republic Act No. 10533 in the Philippines. Employing a descriptive research design, the study involved 30 first-year Bachelor of Elementary Education students from Basilan State College. Data were collected through a survey questionnaire and analyzed using weighted mean, percentage distribution, and regression analysis. Findings reveal a high level of student engagement and a positive, statistically significant relationship between engagement and academic performance ($R^2 = 0.16$, $p < .001$). The results highlight that increased involvement and motivation contribute to improved academic outcomes. The study concludes that fostering active participation and student-centered strategies enhances performance under the K–12 framework. Recommendations include the integration of engagement assessment tools, teacher training, and institutional programs to sustain engagement and academic success.*

Keywords— *Academic Performance; K–12 Curriculum; Philippines; Student Engagement; Teaching Strategies*

I. INTRODUCTION

The implementation of Republic Act No. 10533, known as the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013, marked a major reform in the Philippine educational system by extending basic education to twelve years. The K–12 Basic Education Curriculum aimed to enhance the quality of education by aligning it with international standards and ensuring that graduates are better prepared for higher education, employment, and lifelong learning. This reform emphasized not only academic excellence but also the development of 21st-century skills such as critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity.

In this new educational landscape, student engagement has emerged as a central element in achieving learning success. Engagement reflects the degree of involvement, motivation, and investment that learners demonstrate in their studies and learning environment. According to Fredricks, Blumenfeld, and Paris (2004), engagement can be understood through three dimensions: behavioral, which pertains to students' participation and effort in academic activities; emotional, which captures feelings of belonging, interest, and enthusiasm; and cognitive, which involves self-regulation, strategy use, and a willingness to master challenging material.

Research indicates that engagement is one of the most powerful predictors of academic performance. Students who are actively involved in their learning processes tend to perform better, persist longer, and display more positive attitudes toward education. Conversely, disengagement often leads to absenteeism, low grades, and eventually school dropout. In the context of the Philippine K–12 curriculum, where teaching approaches are expected to be learner-centered and interactive, it becomes critical to examine how engagement translates into actual academic outcomes.

Despite the program's potential benefits, challenges remain. Many higher education institutions continue to observe varying levels of engagement among first-year college students, especially those who transitioned from the K–12 curriculum. Factors such as teaching strategies, institutional support, learning environment, and socio-economic background may influence students' engagement and, consequently, their academic performance. As the first batch of K–12 graduates progresses through tertiary education, there is a growing need to determine whether the goals of the reform—improved readiness and enhanced academic competence—are being realized in practice.

This study, therefore, focuses on the relationship between student engagement and academic performance among first-year college students under the K–12 Basic Education Curriculum. By identifying the extent of engagement and its correlation with students' grades, the research aims to provide evidence-based insights that can guide educators, administrators, and policymakers in refining teaching methods and institutional practices. Ultimately, it contributes to the ongoing discourse on how educational reforms translate into learning outcomes, offering valuable implications for improving instructional quality and student success.

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical foundation of this study is anchored on the principle that student engagement is a multidimensional construct influencing academic success through behavioral, emotional, and cognitive components. This framework draws

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upon Fredricks, Blumenfeld, and Paris (2004), who conceptualized engagement as the dynamic interplay between participation, emotional involvement, and mental effort in learning. Engagement operates as both a process and an outcome — it not only reflects students' current learning attitudes but also predicts their future academic persistence.

In addition, this study is guided by Astin's (1984) Theory of Student Involvement, which posits that the amount of physical and psychological energy a student invests in the academic experience determines the level of learning and development achieved. Involvement is not merely attendance or participation; rather, it represents an active commitment of attention and effort to educational tasks. When applied in classroom settings, this theory underscores the importance of creating interactive and stimulating environments that motivate students to engage more deeply.

Furthermore, Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory (1978) provides a complementary lens by emphasizing the role of social interaction in cognitive development. Learning occurs within a "zone of proximal development" where students achieve higher levels of understanding with guidance and collaboration. In this context, teacher-student and peer interactions serve as essential catalysts for engagement.

Empirical studies worldwide affirm the connection between engagement and achievement. Research conducted by Kuh (2009) found that engaged students exhibit higher academic performance, better critical thinking, and stronger retention rates. Locally, studies such as Baloran (2020) and Cahapay (2021) support the same conclusion, noting that Filipino students who actively participate in class discussions, group tasks, and reflective exercises tend to perform better in examinations and overall academic standing.

Thus, the theoretical framework for this research integrates psychological, behavioral, and sociocultural perspectives. It assumes that student engagement positively correlates with academic performance and that fostering engagement within the K–12 curriculum context contributes to effective learning outcomes. This conceptualization provides the foundation for the study's design, variables, and interpretation of results.

III. Objectives Of The Study

This research primarily aimed to determine the relationship between student engagement and academic performance among first-year college students who completed their secondary education under the K–12 Basic Education Curriculum implemented through Republic Act No. 10533. The study sought to evaluate how varying levels of engagement—behavioral, emotional, and cognitive—affect students' academic success within the tertiary setting.

Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Assess the level of student engagement among first-year Bachelor of Elementary Education students in terms of behavioral, emotional, and cognitive dimensions.
2. Determine the academic performance of the respondents as reflected in their general weighted averages (GWA).
3. Examine the significant relationship between student engagement and academic performance.
4. Identify which dimension of engagement (behavioral, emotional, or cognitive) best predicts academic performance.
5. Propose recommendations for educators and administrators to enhance engagement strategies and improve learning outcomes within the K–12 framework.

Through these objectives, the study intended to provide empirical evidence supporting the critical role of engagement in educational achievement and contribute to ongoing efforts to refine the implementation of the enhanced basic education curriculum in the Philippines.

IV. Methodology

A. Research Design

This study employed a quantitative descriptive-correlational research design, which is appropriate for determining the relationship between two or more measurable variables. The descriptive aspect of the study aimed to identify the levels of student engagement and academic performance, while the correlational component examined how these variables were related. This design enabled the researchers to quantify patterns of engagement and determine the strength of their association with students' academic achievement.

B. Research Locale and Participants

The research was conducted at Basilan State College in Isabela City, Basilan, Philippines. The institution serves as the primary center for higher learning in the province and is among the first to implement the K–12-aligned teacher education curriculum. The respondents of the study were 30 first-year students enrolled in the Bachelor of Elementary Education (BEEd) program during the academic year 2023–2024.

The selection of first-year students was purposive, as they were among the first cohorts who had completed senior high school under the K–12 program and were experiencing the transition to tertiary education. Their participation provided relevant insights into how prior exposure to learner-centered instruction and 21st-century competencies shaped their engagement and performance in college.

C. Research Instrument

The primary data collection tool used was a structured survey questionnaire developed by the researchers and validated by experts in education and research methodology. The instrument consisted of two main parts:

1. Part I – Student Engagement Scale: Adapted from validated instruments by Fredricks et al. (2004) and revised for local context. It measured three dimensions—behavioral engagement (e.g., class participation, effort), emotional engagement (e.g., interest, enthusiasm, sense of belonging), and cognitive engagement (e.g., strategy use, self-regulation). Responses were rated on a 5-point Likert scale, where 5 indicated "Very High Engagement" and 1 indicated "Very Low Engagement."
2. Part II – Academic Performance: The respondents' academic performance was determined using their General Weighted Average (GWA) from the preceding semester,

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obtained with proper authorization and confidentiality protocols.

D. Data Gathering Procedure

The researchers first sought approval from the Dean of the College of Teacher Education to administer the survey. After obtaining consent, the instrument was distributed to the respondents during scheduled class hours to ensure full participation. Each respondent was briefed on the purpose of the study, confidentiality of responses, and voluntary nature of participation. Data collection took place over two weeks to allow adequate response time and validation of the returned questionnaires.

After retrieval, the data were carefully checked for completeness and accuracy. The responses were encoded and tabulated using Microsoft Excel and subsequently analyzed using statistical software. Ethical research practices were strictly followed throughout the process, ensuring transparency and anonymity.

E. Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics, including frequency, percentage, and weighted mean, were used to interpret the levels of engagement and academic performance. To determine the relationship between the two main variables, simple linear regression analysis was conducted. This method identified the predictive power of engagement dimensions (behavioral, emotional, and cognitive) on academic performance.

The following interpretation scale was used for student engagement:

Weighted Mean	Description	Interpretation
4.20 – 5.00	Very High	Students are highly engaged
3.40 – 4.19	High	Students are engaged most of the time
2.60 – 3.39	Moderate	Students are somewhat engaged
1.80 – 2.59	Low	Students are seldom engaged
1.00 – 1.79	Very Low	Students are disengaged

For the regression analysis, an alpha level of 0.05 was used to determine the significance of the relationship between student engagement and academic performance.

F. Ethical Considerations

Ethical principles guided the conduct of this study. Respondents participated voluntarily and were assured that their identities and responses would remain confidential. No coercion or incentives were used, and data were utilized solely for academic purposes. The study adhered to the ethical guidelines set by Basilan State College and followed standard practices for educational research.

V. Results And Discussion

This section presents the findings of the study on the relationship between student engagement and academic performance among first-year Bachelor of Elementary Education students at Basilan State College. The discussion integrates statistical results with relevant interpretations to highlight how behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement affect academic success under the K–12 Basic Education Curriculum.

A. Level of Student Engagement

The results indicated that the respondents demonstrated an overall high level of engagement, with a composite mean of 4.12. Among the three engagement dimensions, behavioral engagement obtained the highest mean score of 4.25, followed by emotional engagement (4.10) and cognitive engagement (4.01).

These findings suggest that first-year BEEd students actively participated in academic activities such as attending classes regularly, completing assignments, and collaborating with peers. Emotional indicators showed that students generally felt motivated, enthusiastic, and connected to their learning community. Cognitive engagement, though slightly lower, still reflected a strong desire to understand lessons, apply learning strategies, and think critically.

The results affirm Fredricks, Blumenfeld, and Paris (2004), who emphasized that behavioral participation is often the most observable aspect of engagement. This high behavioral involvement may be attributed to the structured and participatory nature of education courses, where students engage in group tasks, teaching demonstrations, and community-based learning. Additionally, the findings are consistent with Baloran (2020), who found that Filipino students exhibit high behavioral engagement when classroom environments are interactive and teacher feedback is supportive.

B. Academic Performance of the Respondents

The academic performance of students, based on their General Weighted Average (GWA), showed that most respondents performed above average, with a mean GWA of 1.89, corresponding to a Very Satisfactory performance level. This indicates that students not only demonstrated consistent engagement but also translated their effort and motivation into tangible academic achievement.

The results support the assumption that the K–12 curriculum, which encourages learner-centered and activity-based instruction, may have positively influenced students' academic readiness for tertiary education. Students who had undergone the curriculum were more accustomed to collaborative learning, performance-based assessments, and reflective tasks—all of which foster engagement and achievement.

This outcome aligns with Kuh (2009), who emphasized that engagement contributes to learning gains and personal development. Likewise, Cahapay (2021) reported that when students are given meaningful learning opportunities and clear performance feedback, their academic achievement significantly improves.

C. Relationship Between Student Engagement and Academic Performance

The correlation and regression analyses revealed a positive and statistically significant relationship between student engagement and academic performance, with a computed R^2 value of 0.16 ($p < 0.001$). This means that approximately 16%

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of the variance in students' academic performance can be explained by their level of engagement.

Although this figure suggests a modest predictive power, the relationship remains substantial, especially in the educational context where numerous external factors—such as socio-economic status, personal circumstances, and institutional support—may also affect performance. The positive correlation validates the premise that engagement enhances academic success.

Among the three dimensions of engagement, cognitive engagement emerged as the strongest predictor of academic performance, followed by behavioral and emotional dimensions. This indicates that students who invest mental effort, use learning strategies, and strive for mastery tend to achieve higher grades. Behavioral and emotional engagement complement these efforts by maintaining motivation and persistence throughout the learning process.

The findings are consistent with Carini, Kuh, and Klein (2006), who found that cognitive engagement correlates strongly with higher-order learning outcomes, and Fredricks et al. (2004), who highlighted that deep learning processes depend on mental investment and self-regulated learning strategies. Locally, similar patterns were observed by Cahapay (2021), who found that self-directed students in higher education settings achieved better academic outcomes due to sustained cognitive effort.

D. Implications of the Findings

The study's findings have several implications for teaching practice and educational policy. First, they highlight the importance of creating interactive and student-centered learning environments that sustain engagement through varied instructional methods such as collaborative projects, discussions, and inquiry-based activities. Teachers play a crucial role in fostering engagement by using feedback, recognition, and scaffolding strategies that connect lessons to students' real-life experiences.

Second, the results emphasize the need for teacher training and professional development programs that strengthen educators' skills in motivating students, managing classroom dynamics, and integrating technology for engagement. Finally, at the institutional level, colleges and universities must establish monitoring mechanisms and engagement assessment tools to identify disengaged students early and provide targeted interventions.

Overall, the results affirm that student engagement is a vital driver of academic performance within the K–12 educational framework. The findings provide empirical evidence supporting the continued emphasis on learner-centered instruction and engagement-based approaches in teacher education programs.

VI. Conclusion

The findings of this study demonstrated that student engagement plays a significant role in enhancing academic performance among first-year college students under the K–12 Basic Education Curriculum. The results revealed that students generally exhibit a high level of engagement in their studies, particularly in behavioral and emotional aspects, which directly contribute to satisfactory and very satisfactory levels of academic performance.

The positive and significant relationship between engagement and performance confirms that active involvement in learning processes, sustained motivation, and effective cognitive strategies collectively promote better academic outcomes. Although the relationship accounted for 16% of the variance in performance, this figure is substantial within the educational context and underscores engagement as an essential factor for student success.

This conclusion supports the theoretical assumptions of Astin's Theory of Student Involvement and Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory, emphasizing that learning is optimized when students participate actively and interact meaningfully with peers, instructors, and academic content. Hence, improving engagement mechanisms within higher education institutions can directly translate into improved learning efficiency, knowledge retention, and academic achievement.

The findings further validate the goals of the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013 (RA 10533), which highlights learner-centered instruction as a means to develop well-rounded individuals equipped with 21st-century competencies.

VII. Recommendations

Based on the results and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. For Teachers:
   Educators should continue to design interactive and learner-centered teaching strategies that sustain behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement. Incorporating technology, collaborative learning, and reflective activities can make learning more participatory and meaningful.
2. For Administrators:
   School administrators should implement institutional programs that promote student involvement, such as mentoring systems, peer-support programs, and co-curricular activities that align with academic goals.
3. For Curriculum Planners:
   Curriculum designers should continuously align content and pedagogy with engagement principles to strengthen learning relevance and authenticity. Performance-based assessments and inquiry-based tasks can be emphasized to deepen cognitive engagement.
4. For Students:
   Students are encouraged to take personal responsibility for learning, manage their study time effectively, and actively seek opportunities for academic collaboration and self-improvement.
5. For Future Researchers:
   Further studies may include larger sample sizes, comparative analyses, or mixed-methods approaches to provide deeper insights into how engagement evolves across different academic disciplines and grade levels.

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These recommendations highlight the importance of sustaining engagement as a cornerstone of effective learning and teaching. By fostering engagement-oriented practices, educators and institutions can enhance student success and fulfill the vision of the K–12 Basic Education Curriculum for a globally competitive Filipino learner.

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