Educational Engagement Among Public Elementary School Learners

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Abstract

Learners' engagement in learning serves as a goal in and of itself and to achieve positive academic outcomes. On that note, the key purpose of the study was to determine the learners' educational engagement in a public elementary school in an enormous division in the Central Philippines during the school year 2024-2025. The study used a descriptive research design, using a 32-item survey questionnaire to gather data from seventy-two (72) learners. The results revealed that the level of learners' educational engagement was high. Additionally, the cognitive and emotional dimensions of learners' educational engagement significantly differed based on their family economic background. The high level of academic engagement is attributed to learners' motivation to achieve their goals, family and teachers' support, active participation and learning satisfaction, and harmonious relationships in the school community. Moreover, learners with a favorable economic background could influence higher cognitive and emotional engagement in their studies. On the other hand, learners from less economically privileged backgrounds may experience a decrease in their mental and emotional involvement in school-related activities. This calls for teachers, the school, and parents to collaborate in providing more opportunities for learners to maximize their educational engagement in school learning activities.

Keywords: Learner's engagement, educational, cognitive dimension, emotional dimension, negros island region

Bio-note:

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Introduction

Rationale

Bray and McClaskey (2017) asserted that a student's voice implies interaction in which students can contribute meaningfully to settled decisions concerning everyday school operational matters. Teachers also must engage learnerss as partners in the teaching-learning process to enable learner voice. Student engagement in learning is a goal in its own right, but it is also requisite for making progress toward enabling students to achieve good academic outcomes (Fuertas et al., 2023).

Student involvement is one of the key concepts used to analyze how students behave throughout the teaching-learning process. The four components of student educational engagement are social, cognitive, emotional or affective, and behavioral.

Literature Review

Engagement is correlated with educational quality and predicts children's future abilities (Steinbrenner and Watson, 2015). Student educational engagement is considered one of the essential constructs used to understand the student's behavior towards the teaching-learning process. Understanding students' behavior in academic institutions will show how the instructions and educational practices are going on in the university. According to Delfino (2019,) it could be used as a powerful tool by teachers and academic supervisors to design an effective pedagogical technique to maximize students' learning experiences.

Student engagement is the most significant factor in the learning process. Students are empowered to attain their goals since they have greater responsibility for their actions. Their engagement is crucial to achieving academic success (Enerio, 2021).

Montano (2021) defines cognitive engagement as a tendency to surpass requirements and prefer challenges. Cognitive engagement integrates and harnesses students' thoughts (cognitions), feelings, and behaviors to achieve positive learning outcomes or improve academic competencies. According to Ernerio (2021), behavioral engagement is assessed by the measurable academic performance of a student, which includes constructive conduct of the student attendance, effort and time to be on task, ability to contribute, active class participation, curricular and co-curricular activity involvement; and dedication and determination to meet complex tasks. Students who demonstrated behavioral engagement, such as paying attention in class, completing homework, arriving prepared for class, and engaging in academic curricular

activities, reached higher levels than their less behaviorally engaged peers. On the other hand, emotional student engagement is curiosity and wanting to understand what they are to learn. They have practical, positive reactions to classroom activities (Tanhuenco-Tumapon, 2024). Social engagement is defined as the way students engage within their social environment. Relationships with the following groups can impact the sense of belonging, well-being, and academic performance. Social engagement considers the ties and relationships between students and their colleagues, academic staff, administrative personnel, and other figures. It creates feelings of inclusiveness, affiliation, social interaction, and connection with the tertiary institution (Enerio, 2021).

Theoretical Underpinnings

The present study is anchored to Engagement Theory in Learning by Kearsley and Shneiderman (1998) which states that Ability-based learning environments aim to use this aspect of engagement to keep students interested and motivated to keep learning new material. Engagement theory is based on the idea that students must be meaningfully engaged in learning activities through worthwhile tasks by creating collaborative teams working on ambitious projects that have meaning outside the classroom. It involves active cognitive processes like creating, problem-solving, reasoning, decision-making, and evaluation. Additionally, since the learning environment and activities are meaningful, students are intrinsically motivated to learn.

Objectives

The study aimed to determine the level of the learners' educational engagement in a public elementary school in a large division, Central Philippines, during the School Year 2024-2025. Specifically, it sought to determine: 1) the learners' educational engagement level according to cognitive engagement, emotional or affective engagement, behavioral engagement, and social engagement; 2) if there is a significant difference in the learners' educational engagement level when grouped according to demographic variables.

Methodology

This chapter presents the study's methodology, including the research design, the study's locale, respondents, data gathering instrument, data gathering procedure, the validity of the research instrument, reliability of the data research instrument, and statistical treatment used.

Research Design

This study employed a descriptive research design to determine the level of the learners' educational engagement in a public elementary school in an enormous division in Central Philippines during the School Year 2024-2025 as the basis for an intervention plan. According to Manjunatha (2020), descriptive research only aims to identify, characterize, or determine what it

is. Through data collecting that allows them to explain the situation more thoroughly than was feasible without using this approach, descriptive research seeks to shed light on present challenges or problems. In essence, it describes various aspects of the phenomenon. In its popular format, descriptive research describes a sample population's characteristics and/or behavior.

Study Respondents

The respondents of the study were 72 grade 6 learners. Purposive sampling was used. Purposive sampling is a form of non-probability sampling in which researchers rely on their judgment when choosing population members to participate in the study. Researchers use purposive sampling to access a particular subset of people, as all survey participants are selected because they fit a specific profile (Ames et al., 2019).

Procedures for Data Gathering

The researcher asked for permission through written communication from the Schools Division Superintendent after establishing the validity and reliability test of the research instrument. A copy of the approved communication from SDS was given to the school head of the concerned school to elicit his permission to conduct the study. After securing approval for the second request, parent consent and learner assent forms were established before gathering their responses on the research instrument. The questionnaire was distributed during learners' free time to avoid disruption of classes. Upon the 100% retrieval of the needed data, it was tallied and presented in tabular form for the researcher to interpret and analyze it straightforwardly.

Data Analysis and Statistical Treatment

Objective No. 1 used the descriptive analytical scheme and mean as a statistical tool to determine the learners' educational engagement level. Objective No. 2 used the comparative analytical scheme and Mann-Whitney U test as statistical tool to determine if there is a significant difference in the learners' educational engagement level when grouped according to demographic variables.

Ethical Considerations

This research paper strives to minimize the risk of harm to its target respondents by assuring them of the confidentiality of their responses and ensuring their anonymity throughout the entire research process. At the onset, this researcher secured their free, prior informed consent and assured them of their right to withdraw from their research participation if deemed necessary. No personal data compromising the respondents' identity was collected in adherence to the Data Privacy Act of 2012, specifically on accessing the data both by the researcher and the

analyst. The respondents were assured that no information that discloses their identity would be released or published without their consent except when extremely necessary.

Results and Discussions

In this section, the data gathered were further treated, presented, analyzed, and interpreted to focus on the specific problems of the study. It presents the study's findings through statistical tools and treatment of descriptive and inferential data.

Learners' Educational Engagement According to Cognitive Engagement, Emotional or Affective Engagement, Behavioral Engagement and Social Engagement

Table 1
Level of the Learners' Educational Engagement According to Cognitive Engagement

Items	Mean	Interpretation
As a learner, I…		
1. try to understand the material better by relating it to things I already know.	3.63	High Level
2. determine how the information might be helpful in the real world.	3.50	High Level
3. try to connect what I am learning with my own experiences.	3.54	High Level
4. make examples to help me understand the essential concepts I learn from school.	3.36	Moderate Level
5. try to see the similarities and differences between things I am learning in the class and things I know already.	3.29	Moderate Level
6. try to understand how the things I learn in the class fit together.	2.93	Moderate Level
7. try to combine different pieces of information from course material in new ways.	3.21	Moderate Level
8. try to match what I already know with things I am trying to learn in the class.	3.32	Moderate Level
Overall Mean	**3.35**	**Moderate Level**

Table 1 displays the cognitive level of learners' educational engagement. The respondents obtained an overall mean score of 3.35, interpreted as a moderate level. The result is supported by Fuertes et al. (2023), who revealed that the intermediate pupils' student engagement level was low. This indicates that the pupils need more engagement in their classes. Moreover, this means that the pupils need help to be engaged in school.

Table 2

Level of the Learners' Educational Engagement According to Emotional or Affective Engagement

Items	Mean	Interpretation
As a learner, I…		
1. pay attention during classroom instruction.	3.64	High Level
2. actively participate in all class activities.	3.44	Moderate Level
3. asked questions to contribute to class discussion.	3.04	Moderate Level
4. do all the assignments and homework.	3.54	High Level
5. actively participate in the school's curricular and extracurricular activities.	2.82	Moderate Level
6. come early to school every day to prepare myself for classroom activities.	3.31	Moderate Level
7. try hard to do well in all subject areas.	3.40	Moderate Level
8. go over it again until I understand the lessons and topics.	3.22	Moderate Level
Overall Mean	**3.30**	**Moderate Level**

Table 2 shows the level of learners' educational engagement in terms of emotional or affective, which obtained an overall mean score of 3.30, interpreted as a moderate level. The result implies that the respondents showed average emotional or affective engagement in school activities. The study by Ohamobi and Ezeaku (2016) support the result. The results revealed that the higher the emotional engagement, the better the academic scores.

Table 3
Level of the Learners' Educational Engagement According to Behavioral Engagement

Items	Mean	Interpretation
As a learner, I…		
1. am very interested in learning all my lessons.	3.71	High Level
2. feel satisfied with the outputs of our class discussion.	3.56	High Level
3. am hopeful to have a brighter future in life.	4.42	High Level
4. am pleased with the amount of time the teacher spent with us.	3.79	High Level
5. feel excited to learn more in our future lessons.	3.78	High Level
6. enjoy learning new things in my class.	4.31	High Level

7. am proud and happy to be at this school.	3.99	High Level
8. am determined to finish elementary level	4.82	Very High Level
Overall Mean	**4.05**	**High Level**

Table 3 displays the level of learners' educational engagement regarding behavior, achieved an overall mean score of 4.05, which is considered a high level. The result implies that some respondents were not fully satisfied with the outputs during class discussion. DeVito's (2016) study supports this finding, revealing that students learn when they clearly understand the teacher's expectations and have the chance to participate in decision-making.

Table 4

Level of the Learners' Educational Engagement According to the Dimension of Social Engagement

Items	Mean	Interpretation
As a learner, I…		
1. work cooperatively with classmates during group performance tasks.	3.71	High Level
2. share my dreams and ambitions with my classmates.	3.68	High Level
3. join various school organizations or clubs to gain more friends.	3.32	Moderate Level
4. talk with classmates about our daily lives.	3.89	High Level
5. follow the guidance and advice of my teachers.	4.92	Very High Level
6. join community-based activities.	3.50	High Level
7. handle problems properly among classmates.	3.76	High Level
8. strictly follow the rules and regulations of the school.	4.42	High Level
Overall Mean	**3.90**	**High Level**

Table 4 reveals the level of learners' educational engagement in terms of social. The respondents obtained an overall mean score of 3.90, which was interpreted as high. The result implies that most respondents rarely participate in or join various school organizations or clubs. The respondents' low participation in school organizations stems from some activities not aligning with their potential, needs, or interests. Enerio (2021) revealed that social engagement considers the ties and relationships between students and their colleagues, academic staff, administrative personnel, and other figures. It creates feelings of inclusiveness, affiliation, social interaction, and connection with the institution. Social engagement strengthens the sense of achievement students gain from their school experience. Students who lack social engagement

are more likely to experience loneliness and isolation, reducing well-being (McIntyre et al., 2018).

Comparative Analysis in the Level of the Learners' Educational Engagement According to Cognitive Engagement, Emotional or Affective Engagement, Behavioral Engagement, and Social Engagement when grouped according to Profile Variables

Table 5
Difference in the Level of the Learners' Educational Engagement in Cognitive Engagement According to Variables

Variable	Category	N	Mean	Mann-Whitney U Test	p-value	Sig. level	Interpretation
Sex	Male	25	38.52	537.00	0.546		Not Significant
	Female	47	35.43				
Average Family Monthly Income	Lower	29	44.19	400.50	0.010	0.05	Significant
	Higher	43	31.13				
Number of Siblings	Few	37	39.27	545.00	0.243		Not Significant
	Many	35	33.57				

Table 5 presents the comparative analysis of learners' educational engagement level regarding cognitive when grouped and compared according to profile variables. The hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the level of learners' educational engagement in terms of cognitive when compared to sex and number of siblings is accepted. However, the computed p-value for the variable average family monthly income is 0.010, which falls below the 0.05 significance level and is therefore considered significant. Thus, the hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the level of learners' educational engagement in terms of cognitive when compared to average family monthly income is rejected.

The result suggests that the respondent's cognitive and educational engagement level differs depending on the average family income. This is because respondents from higher income groups may have higher resources to utilize to solve their classroom-related problems. Wara et al. (2018) support this result, showing that cognitive engagement significantly predicts learners' achievement. Learners with higher cognitive engagement typically have access to abundant learning resources.

Table 6
Difference in the Level of the Learners' Educational Engagement in Emotional or Affective Engagement According to Variables

Variable	Category	N	Mean	Mann-Whitney U Test	p-value	Sig. level	Interpretation
Sex	Male	25	35.40	560.00	0.742		Not Significant
	Female	47	37.09				
Average Family Monthly Income	Lower	29	46.60	330.50	0.001	0.05	Significant
	Higher	43	29.69				
Number of Siblings	Few	37	39.51	536.00	0.203		Not Significant
	Many	35	33.31				

Table 6 presents the comparative analysis of learners' educational engagement level regarding emotional or affective engagement when grouped and compared according to profile variables. The computed p-values for sex and number of siblings are 0.742 and 0.203, more significant than 0.05 and thus interpreted as insignificant. Therefore, the hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the level of learners' educational engagement in terms of emotional or affective when compared to sex and number of siblings is accepted. However, the computed p-value for the variable average family monthly income is 0.001, less than the 0.05 significance level and therefore interpreted as significant. Thus, the hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the level of learners' educational engagement in terms of emotional or affective when compared to average family monthly income is rejected.

The result implies that the respondent's emotional or affective educational engagement level varies depending on the average family income. Learners with financially stable parents may receive higher educational support than their counterparts. Delfino (2019) supports the result, stating that educationally engaged students typically have a strong family support system.

Table 7
Difference in the Level of the Learners' Educational Engagement Behavioral Engagement According to Variables

Variable	Category	N	Mean	Mann-Whitney U Test	p-value	Sig. level	Interpretation
Sex	Male	25	39.80	505.00	0.322		Not Significant
	Female	47	34.74				
Average Family Monthly Income	Lower	29	38.76	558.00	0.445	0.05	Not Significant
	Higher	43	34.98				
Number of Siblings	Few	37	38.30	581.00	0.447		Not Significant
	Many	35	34.60				

Table 7 shows the comparative analysis of learners' educational engagement level regarding behavior when grouped and compared according to profile variables. The computed p-values for sex, average family monthly income, and number of siblings are 0.322, 0.445, and 0.447. These values exceed the 0.05 significance level and are therefore interpreted as insignificant. Hence, the hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the level of learners' educational engagement in terms of behavior when compared to the abovementioned variables is accepted.

The result implies that the respondents' level of behavioral educational engagement remains consistent, irrespective of their backgrounds. The respondents demonstrated consistent behavioral engagement in their studies. This indicates that factors such as sex, average family monthly income, and the number of siblings does not significantly influence how actively the respondents participate in their learning.

Table 8
Difference in the Level of the Learners' Educational Engagement in Social Engagement According to Variables

Variable	Category	N	Mean	Mann-Whitney U Test	p-value	*Sig. level*	Interpretation
Sex	Male	25	41.46	463.50	0.134		Not Significant
	Female	47	33.86				
Average Family Monthly Income	Lower	29	41.36	482.50	0.098	0.05	Not Significant
	Higher	43	33.22				
Number of Siblings	Few	37	40.34	505.50	0.102		Not Significant
	Many	35	32.44				

Table 8 summarizes the comparative analysis of learners' educational engagement level regarding social when grouped and compared according to profile variables.
The computed p-values for the variables sex, average family monthly income, and number of siblings are 0.134, 0.098, and 0.102, all more significant than the 0.05 significance level and thus interpreted as insignificant. Therefore, the hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the level of learners' educational engagement in terms of social when compared to the abovementioned variables is accepted. The result implies that the respondents' social and educational engagement levels do not differ, irrespective of their backgrounds.

Conclusion

Based on the foregoing findings of the study, the researcher arrived at the following conclusions: The demographic variables of the learners provide evidence of their educational engagement in school. The high level of educational engagement is attributed to learners'

motivation to achieve their goals, family and teachers' support, active participation and learning satisfaction, and harmonious relationships in the school community.

Learners with a favorable economic background could influence higher cognitive and emotional engagement in their studies. On the other hand, learners from less economic backgrounds may experience a decrease in their mental and emotional involvement in school-related activities.

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Conflict of Interest

The author declares the absence of any conflict of interest that could have influenced the content or conclusions of this study. She affirms that no financial, personal, or professional relationship with other individuals or organizations has compromised the research work's objectivity, integrity, or impartiality. Finally, no external parties influenced the study design, data collection, analysis, or interpretation.

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