

Academic and Social Engagements of Learners in the New Normal

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Abstract

This study examined the academic and social engagement of Senior High School (SHS) learners at a private college in Negros Occidental during the school year 2020–2021, amid the challenges of the new normal. The variables considered were sex, grade level, average family monthly income, and parents' highest educational attainment. Academic engagement was assessed across three areas: study engagement, cognitive engagement, and overall student engagement.

Social engagement was measured through interactions with family members, peers, and teachers or classmates. Findings revealed that SHS learners demonstrated a high level of academic engagement across all three areas, as well as a high level of social engagement in their interactions with family, peers, and teachers. When grouped according to sex, grade level, family income, and parents' educational attainment, no significant differences were found

in either academic or social engagement. These results indicate that, despite the disruptions brought about by the new normal, SHS learners

at this private college remained highly engaged academically and socially, regardless of demographic factors.

Keywords: *Academic Engagement, Social Engagement, Senior High School Learners, New Normal Education, Study Engagement*

INTRODUCTION

Nature of the Problem

Since the novel SARS-CoV2 had infected the whole world in 2020, it has become a major public health challenge for all. The infection must be controlled, so physical distancing must be implemented together with other protocols in many countries, including the Philippines. The policy of physical distancing must be implemented at once, which causes the closure of schools and universities. However, the education of the youth cannot wait, so the schools and universities made some modifications in order to continue delivering classes and sustain the schooling and academic progress of the students at this time of the year (Amir et al., 2020).

Changing classrooms to virtual classes and hard copies is the trend in our education today because of this pandemic. As you can see, the transition is hard for students, teachers, and even parents. Let us hear what other students of Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond have expressed, as noted by O’Keefe (2020), published by *The Associated Press*; here are a few: “We are all frustrated, but we know that our professors are really doing what they can in an unprecedented situation.” “We are having a meeting through Zoom, a video conferencing platform, because we can’t meet physically, but it poses a challenge, especially for those that require hands-on practices like laboratories and arts.” “One of the very frustrating aspects of distance learning through modular learning is not being able to receive feedback from professors and cannot ask questions about what is wrong with the experiment.” “It takes away the motivation to want to make art, not just to complete the assignments.”

The new school year brings a new system of learning, a “new normal” in education created as a safeguard against the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. This new normal, according to Grant Thornton, has affected—and will continue to impact—millions of learners, teachers, and non-teaching staff in our country, the Philippines. As of this year, it is expected that more than 16 million will be using various learning modalities, such as online learning, modular learning, and/or radio- and television-based education (ADEC INNOVATIONS, 2021). The researchers, being teachers themselves, were interested in discovering the academic and social engagement of senior high school learners at this private college in the new normal. Further, the researchers were able to formulate an action plan to help the teachers improve the academic and social engagement of students in this new normal.

Current State of Knowledge

Lim (2016) conducted an experiment on the effectiveness of modular instruction in solving word problems among third-year BEED students at Eastern Samar State University. Using a quasi-experimental design, he compared two groups: one taught using modular instruction and the other through traditional lectures. Results showed that the modular instruction group performed significantly better, indicating that this method is an effective strategy for teaching word problem-solving in math. This suggests that

innovative teaching strategies, such as modular instruction, can significantly improve students' learning outcomes and overall academic performance.

Building on this idea, Espejo (2018) examined differences in academic engagement among college students based on their learning environment, guided by Self-Determination Theory (SDT). Surveying 177 Filipino university students in an Oral Communication class, the study found that those in autonomy-supportive classrooms demonstrated significantly higher academic engagement than those in teacher-controlled settings. These findings highlight that, aside from the instructional method used, the learning environment also plays a crucial role in fostering student engagement and motivation, which are essential for achieving positive learning outcomes.

In connection with these factors, Relucio (2019) investigated the study habits of Grade 11 students at Maticmatic National High School in response to declining academic performance. Using a mixed-method approach, the study revealed that most students had poor study habits, such as infrequent reading, not taking notes, and neglecting homework. Key factors identified were home environment, peer pressure, social media addiction, financial instability, and family stress. This indicates that while teaching methods and classroom environments are vital, external influences—especially those related to home and social contexts—can also impact students' academic behaviors and success.

Related to these external factors, the Philippines, recognized as the top social media user worldwide, has seen a growing dependence on online platforms for information about national issues. Aguilar (2020) found that many Filipinos confidently comment on social media without verifying the accuracy of the information they encounter. This behavior, fueled by the "imaginary truth effect," shows how repeated sharing and commenting create a false sense of credibility. Poverty was also identified as a major factor limiting access to reliable information, making individuals more vulnerable to misinformation. This finding connects to Relucio's (2019) study, as it shows how social media and economic conditions can further influence students' access to accurate information and their overall academic engagement.

Moreover, parental involvement plays a crucial role in children's academic success. Bartolome et al. (2017) define it as the degree to which parents participate in their children's education through communication with schools, volunteering, and providing learning support at home. However, Ochoa and Torre (n.d.) observed that Filipino families have undergone rapid social changes over the past decade, affecting how parents engage in their children's education. As education evolves to meet the demands of the 21st century, parents are uniquely positioned to create supportive environments that complement school-based learning.

Expanding on this, Garcia (2018) explored the experiences of poor Filipino parents using a phenomenological approach. The study found that parents help their children succeed by assisting with schoolwork, motivating them, and fostering a structured home environment. However, extreme poverty and cultural practices often limit deeper involvement, such as volunteering or regular communication with teachers. Taken together, these studies emphasize that while innovative teaching strategies and supportive school environments are important, parental engagement and socioeconomic conditions are equally critical in shaping students' academic performance and overall success.

Theoretical Underpinnings

The researchers anchored this study to the Socio-Cultural Theory of Cognitive Development by Lev Vygotsky (1934), who is acknowledged to have spearheaded learning in social contexts. He believed that learning happens when there are interactions with others in our communities: peers, adults, teachers, and other mentors. He agreed that teachers could control many factors in an educational setting, including

tasks, behaviors, and responses. As a result, he encouraged more engaging activities and tasks to foster cognitive growth, such as productive discussions, constructive feedback, and collaboration with others (Kurt, 2020).

Another relevant theory in this study is the Social Learning Theory of Albert Bandura (1977). He affirms that observing, modeling, and imitating the behaviors, attitudes, and emotional reactions of others are significant in a child's learning. This theory examines how environmental and cognitive factors interact to affect human learning and behavior (Mclead, 2016).

The current research is situated within Vygotsky's Socio-Cultural Theory and Bandura's Social Learning Theory as it examines SHS learners' academic and social engagement in the new circumstances at this private college. The idea emphasizes social interaction with peers, teachers, and family as an intellectual growth factor; where applied, it relates directly to how the learners could be connected through virtual communication, collaborative engagements, and support systems. So does Bandura's theory, where learners are observed through observation and modeling, as students learn to adapt to learning in an online mode. Under these assumptions, considerable merit accrues to both approaches in understanding the students' engagement during remote learning and modular instruction concerning related environmental and cognitive factors.

Objectives of the Study

This study aimed to determine the degree of academic and social engagement of SHS learners in the new normal at Central Philippine Adventist College, Murcia, Negros Occidental, during the school year 2020–2021. Specifically, this study sought answers to the following questions: What is the profile of the respondents in terms of sex, grade level, average family monthly income, and parents' highest educational attainment? What is the degree of academic engagement of SHS learners in terms of the areas of study engagement, cognitive engagement, and student engagement? What is the degree of social engagement of these learners in the areas of engagement with family members, peers, and teachers and classmates? Is there a significant difference in the degree of academic engagement of SHS learners when grouped and compared according to the aforementioned variables? And is there a significant difference in the degree of social engagement of these learners when grouped and compared according to the aforementioned variables?

METHODOLOGY

This section presents the research design, data-gathering procedure, other instrumentation, and statistical tools. It also discusses the parameters, especially the statistical tools, the respondents, and the study's locality.

Research Design

A descriptive design was employed in this study. According to McCombes (2020), a descriptive research design aims to precisely and fully describe a population, situation, or phenomenon. It answers what, where, when, and how questions, but not the why question. It utilizes a wide variety of research designs to examine a single or multiple variables. Unlike in an experimental study, the researcher does not control or manipulate any of the variables but only observes and measures them.

In this study, the focus was on the academic and social engagement of learners in the new normal. Therefore, the descriptive design is appropriate to answer this inquiry because it helped describe the extent of engagement of the learners in the new normal with their studies, family members, peers, teachers, and classmates.

Study Respondents

The respondents of the study were the senior high school learners at a private college with a population of three hundred sixty-four (364), using the Cochran formula, one hundred eighty-eight (188) were taken as a sample: forty-seven (47) learners from grade eleven and one hundred forty-one (141) learners from grade twelve. To gather the 188 respondents, the researchers used stratified random sampling. Stratified random sampling is a kind of probability sampling in which a research organization can expand the entire population into multiple non-overlapping, homogeneous groups (strata) and randomly select final participants from the various strata for study, which reduces costs and improves efficiency. Respondents in each of these groups should be definite so that each group member gets an equal opportunity to be selected using simple probability. This sampling method is also called “random quota sampling” (QuestionPro Survey Software, 2021).

Instrument

To gather data on the academic and social engagement of learners in the new normal, to senior high school learners of a private college, the researchers used a self-constructed survey questionnaire with two parts. The first part gathers information about the profile of the respondents, which includes average family monthly income, grade level, parents' highest educational attainment, and sex. The second part of the questionnaire consists of two (2) areas, namely academic engagement of learners in the new normal, which has sub-areas, like study engagement, cognitive engagement, and student engagement, composed of 30 items. Then the 2nd area is the social engagement of learners in the new normal, with three sub-areas, including engagement with family members, engagement with peers, and engagement with teachers and classmates, which are composed of 30 items.

Data Gathering and Procedure

After administering the validity and reliability tests, and upon approval of the schools division superintendent, the questionnaires were administered to the target respondents. The questionnaires were gathered, recorded, and analyzed. The data gathered from the responses of the respondents were tallied and tabulated using the appropriate statistical tools. The encoded data was processed using SPSS.

Data Analysis and Statistical Treatment

Objectives 1 to 3 employed a descriptive analytical scheme, using frequency counts and percentages as statistical tools to assess the profile of respondents, mean to assess the degrees of academic and social engagement across the three areas. Lastly, objectives 4 and 5 utilized a comparative analytical scheme, applying the Mann-Whitney U test to determine significant differences in the degrees of academic

and social engagement of SHS learners when grouped and compared according to the aforementioned variables.

Ethical Consideration

By guaranteeing the confidentiality of the respondents' answers and upholding their anonymity during the entire research process, the study made a concerted effort to reduce the possibility of harm to its target respondents in accordance with Republic Act 10173, also known as the Data Privacy Act of 2012. The researchers also requested their free and informed consent upfront.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents, analyzes, and interprets the data gathered to carry out the predetermined objectives of this study.

Profile of Respondents

Table 1. Profile of the Respondents

Variables	Categories	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Sex	Male	79	42.0
	Female	109	58.0
Grade Level	Grade 11	47	25.0
	Grade 12	141	75.0
Average Family Monthly Income	Lower (Below Php10,000)	80	42.6
	Higher (Php10,000 and above)	108	57.4
Highest Educational Attainment	Lower (Elementary and High School Graduate)	106	56.4
	Higher (College Graduate, MA, and PhD)	82	43.6
	Total	188	100.0

Table 1 shows the profile of the respondents in terms of the following variables.

In terms of sex, 79 male respondents, or 42% of the sample, are males, while 109 or 58% of the senior high school respondents, are female. In terms of grade level, 47 of the respondents are in Grade 11 or 25%, while 141 or 75% are in Grade 12. Regarding the average family monthly income of the respondents, 80 of them receive an average monthly income of below 10,000 (Below 10,000) or 42.6%. And 10,000 above, which is higher (10,000 above) average monthly income is 108 or 57% of the respondents. In relation to the highest educational attainment of parents (lower elementary and high school graduate), 106 of the respondents' parents have finished elementary or high school, which is 56.4%, while 82 (higher college graduate, master's degree, and doctorate) have completed college or hold master's and doctorate degrees, which is 43.6% of the sample. This implies that females outnumber males among the

senior high school learners at this private college. Another point is that more parents have a stable monthly income, even though many of these parents have not finished college.

Degree of Academic Engagement

Table 2. Degree of Academic Engagement of SHS Learners in the New Normal According to Study Engagement

Study Engagement Areas	Mean	Interpretation
1. I study my module even during wee hours of the morning.	3.51	High Degree
2. I give all my time and effort to answering the activities and performance task in my module	4.12	High Degree
3. It's easy for me to concentrate on the study of my modules.	3.41	Moderate Degree
4. I have the energy to do my modules every day.	3.56	High Degree
5. I am so absorbed in doing the activities in my modules that I cannot feel hunger and thirst anymore.	3.20	Moderate Degree
6. I am participating in every group or class activity virtually.	3.54	High Degree
7. I try to finish answering the modules and submit them even before the deadline.	3.87	High Degree
8. I give more time to practicing the performance task before finalizing it.	3.85	High Degree
9. I pray to God for wisdom before working on my modules every day.	4.34	High Degree
10. I am dedicated to finishing my studies even though we are in this new normal.	4.41	High Degree
Overall Mean	3.78	High Degree

Table 2 presents the degree of academic engagement of SHS learners in the new normal, showing an overall mean of 3.78, interpreted as a high degree. Item 10, *"I am dedicated to finishing my studies even though we are in this new normal,"* received the highest mean of 4.41, indicating that students remain highly committed to completing their studies despite the challenges of remote learning. This dedication serves as their main motivation to stay academically engaged. Conversely, item 5, *"I am so absorbed in doing the activities in my modules that I cannot feel hunger and thirst anymore,"* had the lowest mean of 3.20, interpreted as a moderate degree. This suggests that while learners are focused on their modules, they still prioritize their health by taking breaks to eat and drink.

Despite the lack of structure and personal interaction with teachers, which Emma (2020) identified as challenges for students dealing with distractions at home, the learners remain committed to their studies. They strive to concentrate on their modules while balancing home responsibilities and self-care. According to Nardo (2017), modules promote independent learning by encouraging responsibility and self-discipline. With minimal teacher guidance, students develop the ability to direct their own learning, demonstrating that they are not only adapting to the new normal but also becoming empowered, self-reliant learners.

Table 3. Degree of Academic Engagement of SHS Learners in the New Normal According to Cognitive Engagement

Cognitive Engagement Areas	Mean	Interpretation
1. I am actively learning everyday as I work on the activities in the module.	3.89	High Degree
2. I keep on mastering the skills I have learned in the module.	3.66	High Degree
3. I use different types of graphic organizer in order to explain certain concepts	3.43	Moderate Degree
4. I process the data learned in the module in my mind before I give answers to make sure I have correct responses to the questions in the quizzes/exams.	3.97	High Degree
5. I perform the laboratory experiment independently in the house.	3.36	Moderate Degree
6. I summarize what I have learned in every lesson in the module.	3.66	High Degree
7. I take notes every time I read articles from the internet that has something to do with the assignment in the module.	3.78	High Degree
8. I try to interact with the characters in the story in the module I am reading by imagining that I am one of the characters.	3.70	High Degree
9. I give my opinion and insights in our virtual think pair share activity.	3.61	High Degree
10. I readily adapt the learning strategies employed by my teachers in this new normal.	3.76	High Degree
Overall Mean	3.68	High Degree

Table 3 shows the degree of cognitive engagement of SHS learners in the new normal, with an overall mean of 3.68, interpreted as a high degree. The highest mean of 3.97 was for item 4, *"I process the data learned in the module in my mind before I give answers to make sure I have correct responses to the questions in the quizzes/exams."* This indicates that students carefully analyze questions before answering to ensure accuracy, reflecting active learning even at home. The lowest mean of 3.36 was for item 5, *"I perform the laboratory experiment independently in the house,"* interpreted as a moderate degree. This suggests that students struggle with conducting experiments alone, often needing guidance or lacking laboratory subjects in their strand, such as Humanities.

Barlow et al. (2020) emphasized that learners who are actively engaged with their learning materials gain more knowledge, highlighting cognitive engagement as a key element of educational success. While the students show mental engagement by processing information before answering exams, Sincuba and John (2017), citing Kinsley (2002), stressed the need for reflective observation, concrete experience, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. This implies that for students to fully succeed in remote modular learning, they must develop higher-order thinking skills alongside independent study habits.

Table 4. Degree of Academic Engagement of SHS Learners in the New Normal According to Student Engagement

Student Engagement Areas	Mean	Interpretation
1. I am committed to do everything for my studies.	4.23	High Degree
2. I find pleasure to participate in the activities and programs of the school.	3.88	High Degree
3. I help promote and advertise the school in my community and friends.	3.98	High Degree
4. I love to help the school in every way I can even after graduation.	4.14	High Degree
5. I give suggestions of strategies/activities to my teachers so that our class would be more engaged.	3.55	High Degree
6. I am motivated to do more if I see the progress of my work.	4.15	High Degree
7. I invest all my time and effort in making my projects/performance task in order for it to be perfect and beautiful.	4.04	High Degree
8. I get more interested to discuss what learning I can get in the next module.	3.89	High Degree
9. I am proud to be called a student of this college.	4.43	High Degree
10. I am optimistic that this new normal will soon end so that we can have the face-to-face classes and go back to our normal life.	4.52	Very High Degree
Overall Mean	4.08	High Degree

Table 4 shows the degree of academic engagement of SHS learners in the new normal based on student engagement, with an overall mean of 4.08, interpreted as a high degree. The highest mean of 4.52 was for item 10, *"I am optimistic that this new normal will soon end so that we can have face-to-face classes and go back to our normal life,"* which reflects a very high degree. This indicates that students remain hopeful and motivated, believing that life and schooling will eventually return to normal. Their optimism serves as inspiration to diligently complete their modules despite the challenges brought by remote learning.

The lowest mean of 3.55, still interpreted as a high degree, was for item 5, *"I give suggestions for strategies/activities to my teachers so that our class would be more engaged."* This suggests that many students feel comfortable sharing ideas with teachers, likely due to the supportive and friendly environment in this private college. While Keziel (2020) noted the negative effects of isolation on students' mental health, private college learners show resilience and positivity. Similarly, Latheef (2020) emphasized that providing opportunities for real-time interaction and encouraging students to share suggestions can enhance engagement and foster stronger connections in both synchronous and asynchronous classes.

Degree of Social Engagement

Table 5. Degree of Social Engagement of SHS Learners in the New Normal According to Engagement with Family Members

Engagement with Family Members Areas	Mean	Interpretation
1. I inform my parents about my academic standing/progress in school regularly.	4.28	High Degree
2. I urge my parents to attend virtual PTA meeting.	3.86	High Degree
3. My parents and siblings attend virtual school activities and programs	3.61	High Degree
4. I enjoin my parents to communicate with my adviser/teachers/principal to check my progress in the class.	3.82	High Degree
5. I ask help from my parents or siblings to assist me accomplish the assignments, projects or performance tasks in my modules.	3.49	Moderate Degree
6. I solicit the financial support of my parents or relatives on my online or modular classes by providing me gadgets, internet connection or loads in order for me to work on my modules.	3.49	Moderate Degree
7. I can easily express what I feel and the difficulties I am experiencing in online/modular classes to my parents and siblings.	3.75	High Degree
8. When I feel bored, discourage, and exhausted from my modular learning, I ask some words of encouragement, gifts, prayer or anything that would inspire me to go on and try harder from my parents.	3.75	High Degree
9. I suggest that we, as a family must have regular meeting in order for us to plan on how we can survive especially our schooling in this pandemic.	3.88	High Degree
10. I say sorry to my parents if I cannot do the house chores assigned to me because of my modules.	3.97	High Degree
Overall Mean	3.79	High Degree

Table 5 shows the degree of social engagement of SHS learners with family members, with an overall mean of 3.79, interpreted as a high degree. The highest mean of 4.28 was for item 1, *"I inform my parents about my academic standing/progress in school regularly,"* indicating that most students consistently update their parents about their performance. In contrast, the lowest means were for items 5 and 6, which involve seeking help from parents or siblings for school tasks and requesting financial support for gadgets, internet, or other needs, both interpreted as a moderate degree. This suggests that many college students work independently on their modules and, in some cases, are self-supporting, relying less on parents for academic and financial assistance.

Griffith (2021) highlighted that remote learning has strengthened the home-school connection, with parents becoming direct partners in their children's education. This shift emphasizes the importance of parental involvement, especially when students are learning from home. Despite the challenges of the new

normal, it is encouraging to see college students maintaining strong communication with their families, showing that family engagement remains a key factor in their academic success.

Table 6. Degree of Social Engagement of SHS Learners in the New Normal According to Engagement with Peers

Engagement with Peers Areas	Mean	Interpretation
1. I hang-out with my friends in our place even in this pandemic.	3.17	Moderate Degree
2. I call a friend when I feel bored and discourage.	3.61	High Degree
3. My friends and I have our chat group where we can express our joy and frustration without hesitation even we are far from each other.	4.06	High Degree
4. This pandemic helps me connect with my old friends and classmates anywhere in the world.	3.74	High Degree
5. I never missed a friend or a classmate because he or she is just a chat or call away during this pandemic.	3.40	Moderate Degree
6. I help my friends adapt this new normal by teaching them some activities that promote mental health.	3.72	High Degree
7. Our relationship as friends grew deeper during this new normal.	3.84	High Degree
8. I am satisfied to see my friends even virtual only.	3.97	High Degree
9. I have supportive friends during this pandemic.	4.21	High Degree
10. I influence my friends for good.	4.24	High Degree
Overall Mean	3.80	High Degree

Table 6 shows the degree of social engagement of SHS learners with peers, with an overall mean of 3.80, interpreted as a high degree. The highest mean of 4.24 was for item 10, "*I influence my friend for good*," indicating that most students have a positive impact on their peers. The lowest mean of 3.17 was for item 1, "*I hang out with my friends in our place even during this pandemic*," interpreted as a moderate degree. This suggests that while the college students focus on being good influences, they also follow health protocols by limiting in-person gatherings to protect themselves and others during the pandemic.

According to Gest (UVA Education, 2020), peer influence is not always negative; it can also encourage positive behaviors, such as discouraging risky actions or motivating friends to participate in meaningful activities. Research shows that having friends who value studying can improve academic performance, as students are motivated by their peers' habits and attitudes (Cornwall, 2020). These findings align with the college students' experiences, showing that positive peer relationships can foster both personal growth and academic success, even amidst the challenges of remote learning.

Table 7. Degree of Social Engagement of SHS Learners in the New Normal According to Engagement with Teachers and Classmates

Engagement with Teachers and Classmates Areas	Mean	Interpretation
1. I can ask questions about the lesson anytime to my teachers.	3.98	High Degree

2. During group activities, my classmates and I find it easy to work together and distribute task to anyone in the group.	3.78	High Degree
3. I reach out to my teachers via messenger, phone call, email and even visit the school in order for me to understand the lesson well or to check if my understanding and answer is right before I pass the requirements.	4.04	High Degree
4. I trust my teachers and my classmates that they loved me and they only do what is good for me and my future.	4.16	High Degree
5. My classmates and I are helping each other do our requirements during this new normal schooling.	4.18	High Degree
6. I am inspired to do my best in my studies because my teachers are kind, and they believe in my capacity.	4.31	High Degree
7. The teachers, staff, and administrators of my school are considerate, and patient with me.	4.41	High Degree
8. I am motivated to open our virtual classroom not only because I can see my classmates there but also, because our teachers put all their creativity in order for us to have the interest in the lesson for that day.	3.88	High Degree
9. I volunteer to help my classmates if some of them have difficulty in the activities in the module.	3.95	High Degree
10. My teachers and classmates can count on me every time they need my help.	4.09	High Degree
Overall Mean	4.08	High Degree

Table 7 shows the degree of social engagement of SHS learners with teachers and classmates, with an overall mean of 4.08, interpreted as a high degree. The highest mean of 4.41 was for item 7, “*The teachers, staff, and administrators of my school are considerate and patient with me,*” showing that college educators are approachable and supportive. The lowest mean of 3.78 was for item 2, “*During group activities, my classmates and I find it easy to work together and distribute tasks,*” still interpreted as high, but reflecting the challenges of collaborating remotely without face-to-face interaction. Despite these challenges, the overall high mean suggests that strong relationships between teachers and students have been maintained throughout remote learning.

According to Dejene and Chen (2019), as cited by Manlove and David (1985), dedicated teachers who provide personal guidance foster independent learning and help students develop self-reliance. Similarly, Espejo (2018) highlighted that a sense of belonging grows when teachers offer timely feedback and encouragement. This type of positive teacher-student relationship creates a motivating environment where learners become more self-directed and actively engaged, even without physical classroom interactions.

Comparative Analyses in the Degree of Academic Engagement

Table 8. Difference in the Degree of Academic Engagement of SHS Learners in the New Normal According to Study Engagement When Grouped and Compared According to the Aforementioned Variables

Study Engagement

Variables	Categories	N	Mean Rank	Mann Whitney U - test	Sig. Level	p-value	Interpretation
Sex	Male	79	90.79	4012.500		0.426	Not Significant
	Female	109	97.19				
Grade Level	Grade 11	47	94.73	3302.50	0.05	0.973	Not Significant
	Grade 12	141	94.42				
Average Monthly Family Income	Lower	80	99.61	3911.500		0.267	Not Significant
	Higher	108	90.72				
Highest Educational Attainment	Lower	106	99.32	3835.00		0.167	Not Significant
	Higher	82	88.27				

Table 8 shows the difference in the degree of study engagement of SHS learners in the new normal when grouped according to sex, grade level, average family monthly income, and parents' highest educational attainment. Results revealed no significant differences, as all p-values were above 0.05. This means that these variables do not influence students' study engagement. Regardless of sex, grade level, family income, or parents' education, these college learners can maximize their study engagement if they choose to, showing that personal motivation plays a bigger role than demographic factors.

Hedin and Viggo (2019) studied how combining a study skills module with repeated reflection seminars could improve learning at the Royal Institute of Technology in Sweden. Their three-year course began with a learning-to-learn module, followed by peer discussions aimed at promoting self-regulated learning. Initially, there was little change in students' satisfaction with their study techniques, but over time, 78% reported improved ability to analyze and adapt their study habits. This suggests that developing a variety of study skills helps learners adjust to different learning situations and enhances long-term academic engagement.

Table 9. Difference in the Degree of Academic Engagement of SHS Learners in the New Normal According to Cognitive Engagement When Grouped and Compared According to the Aforementioned Variables

Cognitive Engagement							
Variables	Categories	N	Mean Rank	Mann Whitney U - test	Sig. Level	p-value	Interpretation
Sex	Male	79	93.13	4197.00	0.05	0.768	Not Significant
	Female	109	95.50				

Grade Level	Grade 11	47	93.98	3289.00	0.939	Not Significant
	Grade 12	141	94.67			
Average Monthly Family Income	Lower	80	95.49	4241.00	0.830	Not Significant
	Higher	108	93.77			
Highest Educational Attainment	Lower	106	100.53	3707.00	0.084	Not Significant
	Higher	82	86.71			

Table 9 shows the difference in cognitive engagement of SHS learners in the new normal when grouped by sex, grade level, average family income, and parents' highest educational attainment. Results revealed no significant differences, as all p-values were above 0.05. This means that these factors do not influence cognitive engagement, indicating that the learners consistently show similar levels of cognitive engagement regardless of demographic differences.

Wara et al. (2018) explored the relationship between cognitive engagement and academic achievement among secondary school students in Kenya using a mixed-method design. Findings revealed that cognitive engagement is a significant predictor of academic success. The study recommended that teachers and guidance counselors use cognitive-behavioral strategies to help students enhance their cognitive engagement and, in turn, improve academic performance.

Table 10. Difference in the Degree of Academic Engagement of SHS Learners in the New Normal According to Student Engagement When Grouped and Compared According to the Aforementioned Variables

Student Engagement							
Variables	Categories	N	Mean Rank	Mann Whitney U - test	Sig. Level	p-value	Interpretation
Sex	Male	79	86.84	3700.50		0.100	Not Significant
	Female	109	100.05				
Grade Level	Grade 11	47	95.52	3265.50	0.05	0.882	Not Significant
	Grade 12	141	94.16				
Average Monthly Family Income	Lower	80	99.42	3926.50		0.285	Not Significant
	Higher	108	90.86				
Highest Educational Attainment	Lower	106	97.38	4040.50		0.408	Not Significant
	Higher	82	90.77				

Table 10 shows the difference in student engagement of SHS learners in the new normal when grouped by sex, grade level, average family monthly income, and parents' highest educational attainment. All p-values were above 0.05, indicating no significant differences among the groups. This means that student engagement at this private college remains high and consistent, regardless of demographic factors.

Rajabalee et al. (2019) examined the relationship between student engagement and academic performance in an e-learning environment. Results revealed a small but significant positive correlation between engagement and overall performance, with a stronger correlation observed in continuous learning activities. Highly engaged students consistently outperformed those with lower engagement, highlighting the importance of active participation in improving academic outcomes.

Comparative Analysis in the Degree of Social Engagement

Table 11. Difference in the Degree of Social Engagement of SHS Learners in the New Normal According to Engagement with Family Members When Grouped and Compared According to the Aforementioned Variables

Engagement with Family Members							
Variables	Categories	N	Mean Rank	Mann Whitney U - test	Sig. Level	p-value	Interpretation
Sex	Male	79	87.96	3789.00	0.160	0.160	Not Significant
	Female	109	99.24				
Grade Level	Grade 11	47	103.66	2883.00	0.05	0.182	Not Significant
	Grade 12	141	91.45				
Average Monthly Family Income	Lower	80	96.32	4174.00	0.692	0.692	Not Significant
	Higher	108	93.15				
Highest Educational Attainment	Lower	106	95.40	4250.50	0.796	0.796	Not Significant
	Higher	82	93.34				

Table 11 shows the difference in social engagement of SHS learners with family members when grouped by sex, grade level, average monthly family income, and parents' highest educational attainment. All p-values were above 0.05, indicating no significant differences among the groups. This means that these variables do not affect learners' engagement with their families during the new normal.

The findings imply that college learners maintain strong family connections regardless of sex, grade level, economic status, or parents' education. Previous tables also show consistent family engagement, with parents remaining supportive of their children's school activities despite the challenges brought by the pandemic.

According to Artigas (2021), a growing “parental gap” exists, where professional parents invest significantly more time and resources in their children’s education compared to those without a college degree. Family relationships, however, remain the most important factor in a child’s education. Schools must, therefore, partner with families and support them in their role as primary educators, recognizing that parental love is a vital yet often underutilized resource in education.

Table 12. Difference in the Degree of social engagement of SHS Learners in the New Normal According to Engagement with Peers When Grouped and Compared According to the Aforementioned Variables

Engagement with Peers							
Variables	Categories	N	Mean Rank	Mann Whitney U - test	Sig. Level	p-value	Interpretation
Sex	Male	79	88.53	3834.00		0.200	Not Significant
	Female	109	98.83				
Grade Level	Grade 11	47	88.39	3026.50	0.05	0.374	Not Significant
	Grade 12	141	96.54				
Average Monthly Family Income	Lower	80	96.04	4196.50		0.737	Not Significant
	Higher	108	93.36				
Highest Educational Attainment	Lower	106	99.06	3862.50		0.191	Not Significant
	Higher	82	88.60				

Table 12 shows the difference in social engagement of SHS learners with peers when grouped by sex, grade level, average monthly family income, and parents’ highest educational attainment. All p-values were above 0.05, indicating no significant differences among these groups. This suggests that peer engagement among these college learners remains consistent regardless of demographic factors.

These findings imply that peer interaction is essential for students’ well-being, especially during the pandemic. Connecting with classmates helps prevent feelings of boredom and isolation in an online learning environment. Creating activities that foster collaboration and communication is crucial to building a supportive and engaging virtual learning community.

According to Revere and Kovach (2011) and Banna et al. (2015), tools such as discussion boards, chat sessions, blogs, wikis, group tasks, and peer evaluations effectively promote student interaction online (Martin & Bolliger, 2018). These college learners demonstrate strong peer engagement by reaching out to friends or classmates for help with lessons and tasks, enabling them to stay motivated and successfully complete their modules despite the challenges of remote learning.

Table 13. Difference in the Degree of Social Engagement of SHS Learners in the New Normal According to Engagement with Teachers and Classmates When Grouped and Compared According to the Aforementioned Variables

Engagement with Teachers and Classmates							
Variables	Categories	N	Mean Rank	Mann Whitney U - test	Sig. Level	p-value	Interpretation
Sex	Male	79	86.77	3695.00		0.097	Not Significant
	Female	109	100.10				
Grade Level	Grade 11	47	98.20	3139.50	0.05	0.590	Not Significant
	Grade 12	141	93.27				
Average Monthly Family Income	Lower	80	98.39	4009.00		0.398	Not Significant
	Higher	108	91.62				
Highest Educational Attainment	Lower	106	96.30	4155.00		0.605	Not Significant
	Higher	82	92.17				

Table 13 shows the difference in social engagement of SHS learners with teachers and classmates when grouped by sex, grade level, average monthly family income, and parents' highest educational attainment. All p-values were above 0.05, indicating no significant differences. This means that these variables do not affect how learners connect with teachers and classmates during the new normal.

The findings imply that the college students maintain strong relationships with teachers and peers regardless of demographic factors. This suggests that family background, economic status, or educational attainment of parents does not hinder students' ability to engage academically and socially. Overall, the relationship between teachers and students, as well as among classmates, remains commendable despite the challenges of remote learning.

Similarly, Wanders et al. (2019) studied Dutch high schools and found that positive teacher-student and peer relationships significantly improve students' societal involvement. While parental background influenced societal involvement, strong connections with teachers and classmates helped lessen these differences. This highlights the importance of nurturing supportive relationships in schools to promote student engagement and development.

Conclusion

The study revealed that the overall academic engagement of SHS learners in a private college during the new normal was consistently high across three areas, with **student engagement** ranking the

highest. This suggests that learners remained committed to completing their studies despite the challenges of remote learning. Their optimism about returning to face-to-face classes served as motivation to stay focused. Meanwhile, **cognitive engagement** scored the lowest, likely because students were still adjusting to independent learning and at times hesitated to seek help from teachers or peers when they struggled with instructions or tasks.

In terms of social engagement, learners also demonstrated a uniformly high level of involvement, with the strongest engagement observed with teachers and classmates. The college teachers actively reached out to students through various means—messaging, phone calls, tutorials, and home visits—creating a supportive and encouraging environment. This nurturing relationship motivated students to reach out when they needed academic help. Engagement with family members ranked slightly lower, as many students had become more independent, with some even working part-time to support their families, and preferred seeking academic assistance from peers rather than parents or siblings.

When grouped by sex, grade level, family income, and parents' educational attainment, academic engagement remained consistently high, especially in student engagement. This indicates that regardless of socioeconomic status or background, learners were determined to excel academically as part of their efforts to secure a better future.

Similarly, social engagement results showed no variation when grouped according to the same variables. Engagement with teachers and classmates remained the highest, while engagement with peers and family members was nearly equal. These findings reflect the college teachers' dedication to staying connected with students and the students' willingness to interact and collaborate despite physical distance.

Finally, the study found no significant differences in both academic and social engagement when comparing groups by demographic variables. This suggests that factors such as sex, grade level, family income, and parents' educational attainment do not determine students' levels of engagement. Instead, engagement appears to be driven by intrinsic motivation, strong community ties, and the supportive culture of this private college, where learners are naturally inclined to connect with others and persevere through challenges.

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