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Self-Esteem and its Relation to Learning Engagement of Elementary Students

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ABSTRACT

The primary objective of this study was to describe the level of self-esteem in terms of worth-based, efficacy-based, and authenticity-based self-esteem and the level of learning engagement in terms of behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement. Also, to determine the significant relationship between self-esteem and learning engagement of Elementary students. This study utilized quantitative non-experimental, descriptive-correlational research with a sample size of 300 Grade 4, 5, and 6 elementary students selected from the population of the selected elementary schools in Tagum City division chosen through simple random sampling. Researchers have used a modified survey questionnaire in gathering the data. The data were tabulated and analyzed using statistical tools such as Mean, standard deviation, and Pearson r. The overall result showed a high level of self-esteem in elementary Students. Then, the overall result likewise showed a high level of learning engagement. Moreover, there is a significant relationship and positive correlation between self-esteem and the learning engagement of elementary students.

INTRODUCTION

Learning engagement has been the factor that plays a crucial role in academic success; however, surveys and studies reveal that there are cases in that students' learning engagements decline. The EdWeek Research Center 2021 survey revealed that 50% of American students are less engaged in learning (Toth, 2021), and 68% of teachers believe that low levels of student engagement are one of the most significant issues facing education today (Williams, 2022). A study by the United States Agency for International Development revealed that in the Philippines, there is a decline in learning engagement (De Leon, Betts, Randolph, & Sowa, 2022), and CNN Philippines also reported that Filipino students are losing interest in school during the heights of the pandemic (Joven, 2021). Also, based on the report of the Manila Standard, Cotabato City's learning engagement experienced a drastic fall and reported less than 50% class participation (Maulana, 2020).

Learning engagement signifies how students meaningfully engage and participate in the learning process. One factor that can lessen students' learning engagement inside the classroom is the need for more understanding of students' learning state and unimproved teaching-learning methodologies (Hu, Wei, Li, Yao, Deng, Tong & Liu, 2022). The administrator should also understand the importance of student engagement in learning in understanding the behavior of the students toward the teaching-learning process, and student engagement in learning could be an excellent tool to enhance the pedagogical strategies of the supervisors and teachers to achieve better learning opportunities for students (Delfino, 2019). Martin and Bolliger (2018) added that to improve the performance of the students, satisfaction, and motivation improving student participation in learning must be given the utmost priority.

Furthermore, learning engagement comprises three dimensions: emotional, cognitive, and behavioral. Teachers can spot signs of emotional engagement in their student's participation by observing how they participate in class discussions, what questions they ask, how students ask for assistance, how they display interest (Wilson, 2021), and how they negatively and positively react to friends, teachers, and school (Delfino, 2019). Marcus, Atan, Salleh, Mohd Tahir, and Mohd Yusof (2021) pointed out that a student's peers, teachers, and value practices positively impact their emotional engagement. Amiryousefi, Amirian, and Ansari (2019) added that classroom management also plays a vital role in emotionally engaging students in learning.

Cognitive engagement, on the other hand, can be spotted when there is a change from misperception to learning, social interaction with mentors, writing notes, and processing new information and knowledge (Heddy, Taasoobshirazi, Chancey & Danielson, 2018), and when there is a sustained effort to understand what they are learning and to connect what they are learning to real-world issues (Iqbal, Asghar, Ashraf & Yi, 2022). Wen (2020) suggested that, to improve a student's cognitive engagement, teachers must include technology-generated information, such as augmented reality in the learning process to make learning more interactive. Cognitive engagement also increases when there is an interaction between teacher and students, and this interaction can be possible through practicing dialogic teaching inside the classroom setting where both participate in verbal communication to address misunderstanding of information (Böheim, Schnitzler, Gröschner, Weil, Knogler, Schindler, Alles & Seidel, 2021). Ouyang and Chang (2018) also pointed out that socially active students are more cognitively engaged in class discussions and are more likely to contribute to knowledge inquiry and construction.

Behavioral engagement, as the last aspect of learning engagement, is measured by their focus, participation, effort, intensity (Chiu, 2021), active involvement, perseverance in a learning process (Bergdahl, Nouri & Fors, 2020), and how they raised hands during class participation (Böheim, Rurdan, Knogler & Seidel, 2020). Intrinsic motivation is what drives the behavior of a student since they are the ones that can process information deeply. When students are intrinsically motivated, they are highly participative in the learning process, indicating that their behavioral engagement is present (Samsen-Bronsveld, Van der Ven, Bogaerts, Greven & Bakx, 2022). Aside from this, Amemiya, Fine, and Wang (2019) added that to improve students' behavioral engagement, students must learn to trust their teachers first. This is because students have an underlying fear of being humiliated after giving the wrong answer. When they lack trust in their teacher, their behavioral engagement lowers.

Moreover, self-esteem has been one of the most studied concepts, with 25,000 published studies in 2019 (Levy, 2019), and a subject of many debates in the past years, both in scientific literature and in the popular press (Orth & Robins, 2022). Reitz (2022) defined self-esteem as a universal characteristic significantly affecting human lives. Moreover, it positively affects relationships, work, school, mental and physical health, and antisocial behavior. These effects are evident regardless of age, ethnicity, and gender (Orth & Robins, 2022). Researchers like Zhou, Li, Tian, and Huebner (2018) pointed out that a person with low self-esteem is more likely to experience anxiety and depression; this is because of poor-quality relationships and a lack of emotional and social support (Choi Y, Choi SH, Yun, Lim, Kwon, Lee and Jang, 2019).

Furthermore, self-esteem has served as the predictor of academic achievement (Moyano, Quílez-Robres & Cortés Pascual, 2020). The study of Terblanche, Fakir, Chinyamurindi, and Mishi (2020) also discovered that self-esteem affects the interaction between students, students-teachers, and their academic and academic achievement performance. The statement means that if students have lower levels of self-esteem, they tend to interact poorly with their teachers and classmates and perform poorly in their academics. Students who reported having lower self-esteem believed they had memory issues compared to those with higher self-esteem. Aside from that, they also took longer to complete arithmetic questions, paid less attention in class, struggled more with complex issues, and were more anxious while taking tests (Zapata-Lamana, Sanhueza-Campos, Stuardo-Álvarez, Ibarra-Mora, Mardones-Contreras, Reyes-Molina, Vásquez-Gómez, Lasserre-Laso, Poblete-Valderrama, Petermann-Rocha, Parra-Rizo & Cigarroa, 2021). The same study conducted by Yu, Qian, Abbey, Wang, Rozelle, Stoffel, and Dai (2022) also found that students with low self-esteem got low scores on mathematics tests.

Based on the previous study, the researchers believed that poor self-esteem continues to be a problem in students' performance and perceived that self-esteem might as well affect students' learning engagement just like how it affects their academic performance. This study will provide additional information for other researchers focusing on the same topic.

In addition, the researchers could not obtain any recent studies in the City of Tagum that were relevant to evaluating elementary students' self-esteem levels and their relation to learning engagement. This study demonstrates that the current study will specifically aid in formulating solutions relating to the declining learning engagement of elementary students brought on by low self-esteem.

The Self Esteem Theory of Stets and Burke (2014) connotes that self-esteem has three dimensions: worth-based, efficacy-based, and authenticity-based esteem. Worth-based, as defined by Cast and Burke (2002), is the extent to which a person believes they are valuable

individuals, accepted and belong. Nevertheless, when belongingness in a group is threatened, the sociometer elicits emotional suffering as an alarm signal, pushing people to act in a way that wins and keeps other people's acceptance (Stets & Burke, 2014). On the other hand, Efficacy-based often focuses on achieving performance objectives (Miller & Moran, 2007) or what they can accomplish under various conditions (Stets & Burke, 2014). Lastly, the authenticity-based, which serves as the foundation for evaluating oneself in terms of what is true and what is false in oneself that is not reflected in one's appraisal of worth and effectiveness (Stets & Burke, 2014). In general, self-worth emphasizes the idea of who one is, self-efficacy emphasizes what one can do and authenticity reflects more on who one really is.

On the other hand, the School Engagement Theory of Fredricks, Blumenfeld, and Paris (2004) emphasizes that pupils must be engaged in the discussion to achieve an effective teaching-learning process. This theory comprises three dimensions: cognitive, behavioral, and emotional engagement. Newmann (1992) defined cognitive engagement as "student engagement in academic work as the student's psychological investment in an effort directed toward learning, understanding, or mastering the knowledge, skills., or crafts that academic work is intended to promote." Fredricks et al. (2004) supported this notion that cognitive engagement draws on the idea of investment; it incorporates thoughtfulness and willingness to exert the effort necessary to comprehend complex ideas and master difficult skills.

On the other hand, the concept of behavioral engagement is based on participation; it entails involvement in social and extracurricular activities and is essential for obtaining successful academic outcomes and avoiding dropout (Fredricks et al., 2004). When students raise their hands during discussion (Böheim et al., 2020), doing the work and following the rules entail behavioral engagement (Fredricks et al., 2004). In contrast, positive and negative reactions to the school, teachers, and peers, showing interest, possessing values, and emotion are factors towards emotional engagement (Fredricks et al., 2004). Wilson (2021) also stated that relationships represent the initial step in emotional engagement, which continues with student-centered learning strategies. This interaction must be fostered, taught, and intentionally assessed over time.

The central concept of this study is to assess whether self-esteem has a significant relationship to the child's learning engagement. These were subdivided into three specific objectives that served as a guide for data collection and analysis.

METHODS

Research Participants

The study population was based on the records of Nueva Fuerza Elementary School and Florentino Catalan Elementary School. There were 823 elementary students from Grades 4, 5, and 6 enrolled in S.Y. 2022-2023. As per recommended by the statistician, the researchers surveyed a sample size of 300. This sample was a fair number for the majority of quantitative studies. The population of people who participated in this research was diverse, with each person coming to the study for a different purpose and contributing significantly to the work that needed to be done.

Materials/Instrument

The researchers drafted an interview guide questions The sampling technique used by the researchers was the probability sampling technique. This was a type of sampling in which all members of the population were given a chance to be selected. The research instrument used for data collection was a questionnaire modified from the study of Stets and Burke (2014)

and Delfino (2019). The first part of the questionnaire focuses on the student's level of self-esteem, while the second part focuses on students' learning engagement. The researchers modified the questionnaire adapted from the study of the abovementioned proponents to suit this research's main objectives and make it more comprehensible for the research respondents. And this underwent expert validation to ensure validity and reliability. The researchers were able to measure the degree of attitudes and behavior of the students by using a 5-point likert Scale.

Design and Procedure

The research design used in this study was a quantitative research design that enables the researchers to identify patterns and averages, check the validity of causal hypotheses, and expand findings to larger groups (Bhandari, 2020). This design helped the researchers gather numerical data from a large, objective, and accurate sample, conducted many samples in a day, and helped generalize the study results (Mander, 2022). The researchers employed a non-experimental type of research to observe occurrences that had already happened in the past (Adam, 2022). The researchers specifically used the descriptive-correlational research design and could accurately and systematically describe and measure this situation without manipulating any variables (McCombes, 2019). Permissions were granted to conduct this study. After the data was collected, it was tabulated by the statistician. The researchers used statistical treatment such as mean, standard deviation, and Pearson r.

Results, Discussion

Level of Self-esteem

Table 1 shows each indicator's mean score for Self-Esteem with a corresponding descriptive level. The self-esteem garnered an overall mean of 3.76, characterized as high and with 0.43 overall standard deviation due to the high evaluations that research respondents gave for each indicator. The descriptive level of most respondents' responses to the Worth-Based, Authenticity-Based, and Efficacy-Based was all high.

As shown in Table 1, worth-based self-esteem got a mean of 3.89 and a standard deviation of 0.62 which was described as high. This was followed by efficacy-based self-esteem, with a mean of 3.86 and 0.61 standard deviations, which was also high. The last indicator was authenticity-based self-esteem, which has a mean of 3.50 and a standard deviation of 0.70, also described as high. The computed mean scores were added to produce the overall mean.

Table 1. Level of Self-esteem

INDICATORS	MEAN	SD	DESCRIPTIVE LEVEL
Worth-Based	3.89	0.62	High
Efficacy-Based	3.86	0.61	High
Authenticity-Based	3.50	0.70	High
Overall mean	3.76	0.43	High

The result signifies a positive response because the respondents took a positive attitude toward themselves. They perceived themselves as a satisfied and worthy person and felt good about themselves. High worth-based self-esteem was also evident in the study of Maunder and Monks (2019), in which pupils who get along well with their peers gain from these relationships by experiencing a sense of worth. Since they are satisfied and feel better about themselves, they interact actively and go along well with others. Students with high self-worth are more preferred playmates and hence get more favorable peer recommendations. However, students' self-worth is threatened when they experience self-discrepancy, in which the actual self is rejected to achieve the ideal self. This means that in order to feel they belong in a circle, the students need to change their actual selves before they feel worthy and satisfied with themselves. (Wang, Lisjak & Mandel, 2022). The main reason behind the high rate of efficacy-based self-esteem is the positive experiences of each student (Yildiz & Özdemir, 2019). However, factors such as underachievement necessarily affect the efficacy-based self-esteem of a student. This is because they consider themselves unacknowledged by their classmates. They also find themselves inferior to others. With this, they quickly give up on challenging tasks (Han & Park, 2020). They also felt that they were more able to express themselves in class and believed most people still accepted who they were. As supported by Angelo (2021), students feel authentic when their peers see them just like how they see themselves.

Level of Learning Engagement

The level of learning engagement among elementary learners are shown in table 2. The overall mean of the level of learning engagement is 3.95 with a description of high. The behavioral got the mean of 4.04, the cognitive got the mean of 3.78 and emotional got the mean of 4.03, with their descriptive levels of high.

Table 2. Level of Learning Engagement

INDICATORS	MEAN	SD	DESCRIPTIVE LEVEL
Behavioral	**4.04**	**0.58**	**High**
Cognitive	**3.78**	**0.67**	**High**
Emotional	**4.03**	**0.60**	**High**
OVERALL	**3.95**	**0.48**	**High**

The result of this study was supported by Kondo and Tamalea (2023), wherein the behavioral outcome was relatively high. This was because these students had more exposure to a preferred teaching approach in the classroom, making them more engaged in their studies. Chen, Huebner, and Tian (2020) added that students who perform well in class or in academic tasks are more likely to engage in the learning process, exerting effort to achieve

mastery of the subject matter and learning tasks. However, this behavioral engagement is threatened when factors such as lack of environmental support, negative student behavior, and negative teacher behavior occur (Li & Xue, 2023). Li and Xue (2023) pointed out that students' emotional engagement grew due to their positive emotions and learning behavior. They were emotionally engaged in learning when they asked for assistance on the lessons they did not understand. Furthermore, as supported by Green, Faizi, Jalal, and Zadran (2022) mentioned that with a solid emotional foundation, students decrease the aftereffect of higher-level academic stress. They also display continuous cognitive engagement when they are given an opportunity to generate their own context through technology-based activity (Wen, 2020). Ahmad, Anwer, and Rasheed (2022) also suggested that, to increase students' cognitive engagement, there must be cooperative learning.

Significant Relationship Between Self-Esteem and Learning Engagement

One of the crucial objectives of this study was to determine whether there was or was no significant relationship between self-esteem and learning engagement among Grade 4, 5, and 6 students of selected schools in Davao del Norte. The result of the relationship between these two variables is presented in Table 3.

The result showed that the self-esteem and learning engagement level has an r-value of 0.256*, which signifies a positive correlation between the two variables. Also, the results yield a p-value of 0.001 which was lesser than the 0.05 level of significance, thus, creating a significant relationship between self-esteem and learning engagement.

Table 3. *Significant Relationship between Self-Esteem and Learning Engagement*

VARIABLES	R-VALUE	R-SQUARED	P-VALUE	DECISION
Self-Esteem Learning Engagement	0.256*	0.0655	0.001	Reject Hypothesis

Based on the research results, this means that a student's self-esteem can affect their learning engagement. Moreover, the positive correlation between these two variables signifies that learning engagement increases when self-esteem increases. Muzzaki (2023) supported the positive correlation between self-esteem and learning engagement. As Terblanche et al. (2020) mentioned, the higher the self-esteem, the higher the learning engagement. For the reason that they are confident and interact highly with their classmates and teachers, and their high interaction leads to high learning engagement. The result of the study was also evident in the study of Antonopoulou, Chaidemenou, and Kouvava (2019), which stated that having self-esteem and a sense of belongingness inside the classroom setting was significant to how primary students were engaged in school for there was an interrelationship between self-esteem and learning engagement of students. High self-esteem leads to high learning engagement since students are confident with their learning capabilities. And when they are actively engaged in learning, their self-esteem also boosts, for they are given an opportunity to strengthen their capabilities and improve their skill by taking control of the challenging tasks (Karababa, 2020).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this research, the level of self-esteem among Grade 4, 5, and 6 students of NFES and FCES in terms of worth-based self-esteem, efficacy-based self-esteem, and authenticity-based self-esteem are all high, which garnered a high result for the overall mean of the level of self-esteem. Additionally, the level of learning engagement in terms of behavioral engagement is high, cognitive engagement is high, and emotional engagement is high, which also gathered a high overall result on the level of learning engagement. The result indicates a positive correlation between self-esteem and learning engagement. In general, there is a significant relationship between these two variables. Conclusively, students' chances of succeeding in academics are increased by having good self-esteem (Sun & Xiao, 2022).

Considering the findings, the researchers are recommending that school administrators continue employing programs that boost students' self-esteem, particularly authenticity-based self-esteem. Even though it is characterized as high, it still has the lowest mean among the three indicators. Implementation of Afterschool Mentorship Program, benchmarked from Canada, will help students improve their authenticity. This is a program where administrators help students be engaged in relationship-building exercises, public speaking training, and character education. Also, the teachers are encouraged to monitor their students' self-esteem and to continuously design a pedagogy that helps students actively engage in the learning process. Moreover, we are also recommending the school teacher to monitor the students' learning engagement, particularly their cognitive engagement. Though it has garnered a high descriptive level, cognitive engagement still has the lowest mean among the three indicators. We are recommending the teacher or adviser to employ problem-solving activities during lunch breaks using interactive websites such as Learning Games for Kids, which offers different engaging games for students to improve skills and cognition. As suggested by Wen (2020), cognitive engagement enhances when there is an integration of technology-based activity. In addition, this study would serve as an additional reference for researchers who will conduct research on the same topic and continue studying how each indicator of self-esteem affects each indicator of learning engagement and the interrelationship of self-esteem and learning engagement.

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