

Chapter 10

The Correlation between Students' Learning Engagement and Their Academic Achievement: Elevating Inclusion in English Language Education

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ABSTRACT

The inclusion in English language education was evaluated by examining the relationship between academic achievement and high school students' engagement in EFL classrooms in this study. The grade point average (GPA) of students and the four components of their involvement—the cognitive, behavioral, affective, and agentic—were explored by the mixed-methods approach. The GPAs of 188 eleventh graders and levels of engagement in the EFL classrooms, were gathered through a closed-ended questionnaire. In-depth information was also obtained through a semi-structured interview. The results revealed that students frequently engaged in all four aspects of learning in EFL classes; however, the agentic component had the least impact on students' engagement. There was a noticeable correlation between the students' academic achievement and their learning engagement. The agentic dimension was closely linked to the affective aspect, which experienced the greatest

DOI: 10.4018/979-8-3693-6497-0.ch010

influence. The study also offers some recommendations for teachers and learners to improve the quality in teaching and learning English.

INTRODUCTION

Inclusive education has been increasingly concerned in the world these days. This concept is related to tasks which aim to equally provide comprehensive education for every learner regardless of whom they are. Students' characteristics and involvement are required to be respected and recorded. To evaluate the inclusion in English language education, students' learning engagement in EFL classrooms that reveal students' own features need to be examined. Actually, Student engagement has been concerned throughout centuries in different contexts in the world. There have been studies showing consistent results of correlations between this issue and developments in students' outcomes including general and practical competence, skills, and improved grades (Birch & Ladd, 1997; Kuh, 2003; Ladd & Dinella, 2009). In the setting of Vietnam, where pressure is put on the school education system to undergo a fundamental change to raise the standard of educational services, student engagement is an essential focus for Vietnamese researchers, educators, and learners. From the theories, it is obvious that student engagement is very important to learning outcomes or academic achievement. However, there is little evidence for this correlation in the Vietnamese high school context. In addition, the extent of student engagement affecting their learning outcomes has not been clarified so far. This research was an attempt to fill the above-mentioned gap in Vietnamese high school literature.

A number of English teachers who work at high schools in many provinces in Vietnam have reported on student engagement, especially the influences of learning engagement on student's scores (Tran & Duong, 2018a, 2018b, 2020; Tran, Duong, & Nguyen, 2023; Tran & Ngo, 2024; Tran & Tran, 2020, 2021; Tran & Tran, 2022). It seems that the more they are involved, the better their academic achievement is (e.g., Duong & Nguyen, 2021; Duong & Tran, 2024). Unfortunately, there has been a fact that some students try hard to engage in the lessons, but they cannot improve their scores (Tran, Duong, & Le, 2023; Tran, Duong, & Nguyen, 2022; Tran & Nguyen, 2020; Tran & Nguyen, D.M.T., 2023; Tran & Nguyen, T.N., 2023; Tran & Nguyen, V.L.T., 2023) Therefore, the correlation between student engagement in EFL classrooms and their academic achievement needs to be investigated to help policymakers, teachers, and researchers pay more attention to high school students' learning engagement because it may influence their achievement.

The study aims to clarify the answer to the following questions:

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