

Perceived Parental Involvement and Engagement of Students with Learning Difficulties

Jecelle G. Darias-Behemino, LPT^a, Aiza C. Alegrado, LPT^b, Darlen Mae A. Sarsalijo, LPT^c, Wenefredo E. Cagape, EdD, PhD^d,

^ajecelle.darias@hcdc.edu.ph, ^baiza.cayunda@hcdc.edu.ph, ^cdarlenmae.sarsalijo@hcdc.edu.ph, ^dwcagape@ccd.edu.ph

^a*Soli Deo Gloria Christian Academy, Davao City 8000*

^b*Erico T. Nograles National High School, Davao City 8000*

^c*HN Cahilso Central Elementary School II, General Santos City 9500*

^d*OIC-College President, City College of Davao City, Davao City 8000*

Abstract

Parental involvement is crucial in student engagement, particularly for students with learning difficulties. Despite various initiatives by the Department of Education in the Philippines to enhance parental participation, such as through scouting activities, Brigada Eskwela, and Parent-Teacher Associations, parental involvement remains a significant challenge. This study investigates the correlation between parental involvement and student engagement among junior high school students with learning difficulties in Davao City, Philippines. Using a descriptive-correlational research design, the study assessed parental involvement in terms of acceptance, aspiration, attention, encouragement, guidance, influence, decision-making, provision of physical facilities, and care for physical fitness. Student engagement was evaluated across cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions. Data from 115 students with learning difficulties were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The findings revealed a significant positive relationship between parental involvement and student engagement, with parental aspiration and the provision of physical facilities being key predictors. The results underscore the importance of fostering strong parental engagement to enhance student engagement, particularly for students with learning difficulties. Recommendations include enhancing communication between schools and parents, providing resources and training for parents, and focusing on student engagements' emotional and cognitive aspects. Further research should explore additional factors influencing student engagement to support educational outcomes effectively.

Keywords: Parental Involvement, learning difficulties, and student engagement

1. Introduction

In the Philippines, the Department of Education (DepEd) has issued numerous memoranda and department orders intended at strengthening parental involvement such as boys and girls scouting, where parents have to present on some of its activities; the school-community socio-economic projects as manifested in Brigada Eskwela; the disaster volunteer task force, mobilized during challenging times, and school-community workgroups, like the parents and teachers' association (PTA). But despite the efforts made, parental involvement continues a daunting challenge among school administrators and teachers. In many public schools in the Philippines, based on the School Monitoring, Evaluation and Adjustment (SMEA) reports during school years 2016 to 2019, the parents were observed to be least active in collaborating with the schools and a bit passive in supporting their children's academic activities.

In this regard, Nunez et. al. (2015) illuminated that parental homework involvement and academic achievement are significantly related. Li & Fischer (2016) also found out that the effects of parental networking on parental involvement showed a positive impact on student achievement. Locally, there has not been much research about how parental involvement affects students' engagement especially involving students with learning difficulties. Hence, this study mainly focuses on parental involvement, engagement of students with learning difficulties at school, and its relationship. The researchers want to find out if there is a significant correlation between students' engagement at school and parents' involvement.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

This study aims to determine and understand the importance of parental involvement in the school engagement of students with learning difficulties.

1. What is the level of parental involvement as perceived by the students with learning difficulties in terms of:
 - 2.1 Parental Acceptance;
 - 2.2 Parental Aspiration;
 - 2.3 Parental Attention;
 - 2.4 Parental Encouragement;
 - 2.5 Parental Guidance;
 - 2.6 Parental Influence;
 - 2.7 Parental Decision-making;
 - 2.8 Parental Provision of Physical Facilities; and
 - 2.9 Parental Care to Physical Fitness of Child?
2. What is the level of engagement of students with learning difficulties in terms of:
 - 3.1 Cognitive Engagement;
 - 3.2 Affective Engagement; and
 - 3.3 Behavioral Engagement?
3. Is there a significant relationship between the level of parental involvement and the engagement of students with learning difficulties?
4. Is there an indicator of parental involvement that significantly influences the engagement of students with learning difficulties?

1.2 Hypothesis

The study was tested at a 0.05 level of significance.

H01: There is a significant relationship between the level of parental involvement and engagement of students with learning difficulties.

H02: There are indicators of parental involvement that significantly influence the engagement of students with learning difficulties.

1.3 Review of Related Literature

This section provides an overview of the literature that has implications for the findings. The literature and studies cited in this chapter tackle the parental involvement of parents as perceived by a child having learning difficulties which results in the engagement of a student with learning difficulties in the classroom. Thus, this chapter helps in understanding information that is relevant and similar to the study.

Parental Involvement

Parents play a major role in challenging the dynamic inclusion process that starts with the parent's decision to place their child. One of the main aspects of a parent's involvement in the educational process is related to their participation in drafting the IEP, not simply by signing a document prepared by the teacher. It is the parents' right to be part of every decision-making that affects the welfare of their children. Another important component that influences the parent's involvement in school is teachers' commitment. Parental involvement has expanded to examine the relations between parental involvement and students'

motivation, such as engagement. According to Faradina (2016), parents' acceptance of disabled children will lead to positive development.

Learning Difficulties

Learning difficulties can vary in depth, and can be temporary or permanent (Schults et al., 2018). A characteristic of students with learning difficulties is that their academic performance is lower than that of their peers. This can occur in most subjects or subjects that require the application of certain specific skills. Students with learning disabilities mostly have difficulties in reading, writing or calculating (AUSPELD Supporting People with Learning Disabilities, 2014). In previous studies that have analyzed the performance or opinions of students with learning difficulties, the definition of participants with learning disabilities has mostly been based on clinical diagnoses (Sakiz et al., 2015; Gaspar et al., 2016; Ben-Naim et al., 2017; Veni and Merlene, 2022) or the participants have been students who have obtained low results in tests of learning competencies (Alesi et al., 2014). There was a need for a scale that evaluates learning difficulties perceived by the student's own perspective and that can be used in surveys. In this sense, the creation of the Perceived Learning Difficulties questionnaire was justified, as it is not a diagnostic tool, but examines frequency of learning difficulties from the student's point of view. The difficulties that occur more often in learning, were also used as a basis for creating the Perceived Learning Difficulties scale (Seema et al., 2022).

Student Engagement

The Glossary of Education Reform's (2016) definition supports the feeling or affective component of student engagement, as follows: "In education, student engagement refers to the degree of attention, curiosity, interest, optimism, and passion that students show when they are learning or being taught, which extends to the level of motivation they have to learn and progress in their education. Generally speaking, the concept of "student engagement" is predicated on the belief that learning improves when students are inquisitive, interested, or inspired, and that learning tends to suffer when students are bored, dispassionate, disaffected, or otherwise "disengaged." (Para. 1). There is increasing agreement that student engagement can be conceptualized as a multidimensional construct. The view that there are three primary dimensions or subtypes of student engagement—cognitive, emotional, and behavioral—is now widely embraced (Ryu & Lombardi, 2015; See Fredricks, Wang, Schall, Hofkens, & Snug, this issue).

1.4 Theoretical Lens

This research study is anchored primarily on three major theories related to parent involvement. Piaget's cognitive development Theory, explains and supports the idea that parental involvement creates opportunities for children to interact meaningfully with their environments, particularly that their parents are a vital part of children's environments and construct their own knowledge within both a social and physical environment (Mcleod, 2024). Vygotsky's sociocultural Theory emphasized the relationship between human beings and their environment, both physical and social. Children's interaction with their family members in the community is so important for their learning and development since their first teacher is the family and their first learning takes place in the community. For this reason, children gain knowledge about the world through this interaction (Tekin, 2011). According to Guy-Evans (2024), Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems Theory assumes that an individual's development is influenced by a series of interconnected environmental systems, ranging from the immediate surroundings (e.g., family) to broad societal structures (e.g., culture). Therefore, child development is a complex system of relationships affected by multiple levels of the surrounding environment, from immediate family and school settings to broad cultural values, laws, and customs.

2 Methodology

2.1 Respondent

The respondents were taken from the Junior High School Students in one of the public schools in Region XI, Davao City, Philippines. The stratified group sampling consisted of 115 students with learning difficulties particularly difficulties in speech and hearing.

2.2 Research Design

The research study employed a non-experimental quantitative research design utilizing a descriptive-correlational approach to get the level of parental involvement in the aspects of school engagement of students with learning difficulties. The descriptive-correlational research approach involves observing and collecting data on a given topic and provides a comprehensive and accurate picture of the population or phenomenon being studied. Thus, it describes the relationships, patterns, and trends that exist within the data (Sirisilla, 2023).

The researchers utilize validated and reliability-tested survey questionnaires primarily anchored in Gafoor et al. (2001), the Parental Involvement Rating Scale (PIRS), and Hart et al. (2011), the Students Engagement in School Questionnaire. Hence, researchers ensure the data privacy and confidentiality of each respondent's personal information as well as written informed consent are obtained. Moreover, the adapted survey questionnaire was designed with the Likert scale, one as the least and five as the highest possible answer. The gathered data will be analyzed, measured, and interpreted through descriptive and inferential statistical analysis such as weighted mean, standard deviation, independent sample t-test, Pearson R, and analysis of variance to make predictions about the data and calculate it using JASP.

3 Results and Discussion

This section presents the results of the statistical analysis. A detailed discussion follows the presentation of the result to provide meaning and implications for numerical data.

Level of Parental Involvement as Perceived by the Students with Learning Difficulties

Table 1 presents the result of parental involvement as perceived by the students with learning difficulties. This provides a comprehensive analysis of the data of the students with learning difficulties involved in the study.

Table 1. Summary of the Level of Parental Involvement as Perceived by the Students with Learning Difficulties

Indicators	Mean	SD	Descriptive Level
Parental Acceptance	3.97	0.67	High
Parental Aspiration	4.01	0.61	High
Parental Attention	3.58	0.81	High
Parental Encouragement	4.00	0.68	High
Parental Guidance	4.02	0.60	High
Parental Influence	3.19	0.88	Moderate
Parental Decision-making	2.57	0.89	Low
Parental Provision of Physical Facilities	2.08	0.97	Low
Parental Care to Physical Fitness of Child	3.47	0.74	High
Total	3.43	0.36	High

Table 1 shows the result of the statistical analysis of parental involvement as perceived by the students with learning difficulties. Among all the indicators of parental involvement, six have a high level of parental involvement as shown in their mean score. The Parental Guidance mean score is 4.02; the Parental Aspiration mean score is 4.01; the Parental Encouragement mean score is 4.00; The Parental Acceptance mean score is 3.97; the Parental Attention mean score is 3.58; and the last indicator that has a high level of parental involvement is the Parental Care to Physical Fitness of Child having a mean score of 3.47. This means that the level of these indicators as perceived by the students with learning difficulties are often manifested. Hence, implies that parental guidance, parental aspiration, parental encouragement, parental acceptance, parental attention, and parental care for the physical fitness of a child have been frequently demonstrated to them by their parents.

On the other hand, the next important indicator which has a moderate level of parental involvement as perceived by the students with learning difficulties is Parental Influence having a mean score of 3.19. This means that the level of parental involvement as perceived by the students with learning difficulties is sometimes manifested. Thus, it implies that parents of a child with learning difficulties lack enough support when it comes to influencing their child to thrive at school.

The last indicators that have low levels of parental involvement as perceived by the students with learning difficulties are Parental Decision-making with a mean score of 2.57 and Parental Provision of Physical Facilities with a mean score of 2.08. This would only mean that parental decision-making and parental provision of physical facilities as perceived by the students with learning difficulties are rarely manifested. This implies that their parents don't show much concern regarding the welfare of their child.

Overall, the level of parental involvement as perceived by the students with learning difficulties can vary widely from parents' internal and external support. As shown in its mean score of 3.43, it means that there is a high level of parental involvement perceived by students with learning difficulties and that it is often manifested. Therefore, it typically indicates beneficial outcomes in the student's engagement at school.

Level of Engagement of Students with Learning Difficulties

Table 2 provides the result of the engagement of students with learning difficulties.

Table 2. Summary of the Level of Engagement of Students with Learning Difficulties

Indicators	Mean	SD	Descriptive Level
Cognitive Engagement	3.50	0.52	High
Affective Engagement	4.37	0.55	Very High
Behavioral Engagement	3.37	0.53	Moderate
Total	3.75	0.36	High

Table 2 exhibits the level of engagement of students with learning difficulties. Among all the indicators of engagement of students with learning difficulties, affective engagement has a very high level of engagement among students with learning difficulties as shown in its mean score of 4.37. This means that the level of engagement of students with learning difficulties is always manifested. This implies that students with learning difficulties effectively engage at school. In addition, students with learning difficulties would actively engage themselves at school when they sense that they are involved and connected in the education context.

The second indicator of engagement of students with learning difficulties is cognitive engagement which has a high level of engagement among students with learning difficulties as shown in its mean score of 3.50. This means that the level of cognitive engagement of students with learning difficulties is often manifested. This implies that this type of student willingly participates and engages themselves in the learning process.

Therefore, frequent engagement of students with learning difficulties in the learning process is essential for learning and retention of knowledge.

The last indicator of engagement of students with learning difficulties is behavioral engagement having a mean score of 3.37. This indicates that it has a moderate level of engagement among students with learning difficulties and would imply that the behavioral engagement of students with learning difficulties is sometimes manifested. Hence, it entails an occasional engagement of individuals particularly those with learning difficulties to interact and participate in classroom activities.

In general, the level of engagement of students with learning difficulties is high as shown in its mean score of 3.75. This means that the level of engagement of students with learning difficulties is often manifested. This illustrates that this type of student usually engages to participate and be involved in classroom activities especially when they feel a sense of belonging. Thus, they would be fully immersed in the teaching and learning process.

Significant Relationship Between the Level of Parental Involvement and the Engagement of Students with Learning Difficulties

Table 3 reveals the relationship between the level of parental involvement and the engagement of students with learning difficulties.

Table 3. Significant Relationship Between the Level of Parental Involvement and the Engagement of Students with Learning Difficulties

Perceived Parental Involvement				
Engagement of Students with Learning Difficulties	r	p-value	Decision on Ho	Interpretation
	0.690	< 0.001	Reject	Significant

*p < 0.01

The results show a significant relationship between parental involvement, as perceived by students with learning difficulties, and student engagement, with an overall p-value of 0.001. This p-value is below the 0.01 threshold, making the findings significant at the 0.01 alpha level, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. Additionally, the correlation coefficient of 0.690 indicates a moderately strong relationship, suggesting that changes in one variable are associated with changes in the other.

Significant Influence of the Indicator of Parental Involvement on the Engagement of Students with Learning Difficulties

Table 4 shows the significant influence of an indicator of parental involvement and the engagement of students with learning difficulties.

Table 4. Regression Analysis on the Singular Significant Influence of Parental Involvement on the Engagement of Students with Learning Difficulties

Parental Involvement	Engagement of Students with Learning Difficulties						
	Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardized Coefficient				
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Decision On Ho	Interpretation
Constant	0.994	0.261		3.805			
Parental Acceptance	0.098	0.063	0.153	1.572	0.119	Fail to Reject	Not Significant
Parental Aspiration	0.215	0.065	0.306	3.298	0.001	Reject	Significant
Parental Attention	0.066	0.052	0.117	1.264	0.209	Fail to Reject	Not Significant
Parental Encouragement	0.098	0.062	0.151	1.570	0.119	Fail to Reject	Not Significant
Parental Guidance	0.067	0.059	0.096	1.130	0.261	Fail to Reject	Not Significant
Parental Influence	-0.042	0.041	-0.079	-1.018	0.311	Fail to Reject	Not Significant
Parental Decision-making	0.086	0.069	0.162	1.248	0.215	Fail to Reject	Not Significant
Parental Provision of Physical Facilities	0.120	0.056	0.243	2.144	0.034	Reject	Significant
Parental Care to Physical Fitness of Child	0.074	0.051	0.120	1.437	0.154	Fail to Reject	Not Significant

$R = .738$; $R^2 = .544$; $F\text{-value} = 14.194$; $p\text{-value} = <.001$

The use of the model predicts the indicators of parental involvement in the engagement of students with learning difficulties as indicated with an F-value of 14.194 and p-value of <0.01 . This would mean that the engagement of students with learning difficulties is significantly influenced by parental involvement of parents to their child. Among all the indicators, there are two that significantly influence the engagement of students with learning difficulties, namely parental aspiration with $B = 0.215$, $t = 3.298$, $p\text{-val} = 0.001$, and parental provision of physical facilities with $B = 0.120$, $t = 2.144$, $p\text{-val} = 0.034$. In other words, this would mean that the null hypothesis is rejected, and therefore, the indicators mentioned above influence the engagement of students with learning difficulties. The r-square value of 0.544 suggests that approximately (54.4%) variance of parental involvement can be attributed to the engagement of students with learning difficulties.

Conclusion

The results of this study demonstrate a significant relationship between parental involvement and the engagement of students with learning difficulties in Junior High School. The data indicates that students perceive various aspects of parental involvement differently, with overall high levels of involvement contributing positively to student engagement. This suggests that students frequently experience supportive behaviors from their parents, which likely enhances their engagement in school activities. Thus, these findings emphasize the vital role of parental involvement in fostering engagement among those with learning difficulties. Enhancing parental engagement, especially in areas perceived as low, could further enhance student engagement and overall educational outcomes. Schools and educators should consider strategies to better support parents in these roles, such as providing resources, workshops, and regular communication to strengthen the home-school connection.

Recommendations

Based on the study results, the researchers found out that there are still 45.6% that could influence the engagement of students with learning difficulties. Therefore, the researchers recommend looking for other indicators that might probably influence the engagement of students with learning difficulties.

Furthermore, the research findings may be applied to improve student engagement. Thus, the researchers further recommend facilitating better communication with parents to keep them well-informed and actively involved in their children's education. As well as to provide parents with the necessary resources and training to effectively support their children's education, especially in decision-making and the provision of physical facilities. Additionally, prioritize efforts to engage students with learning difficulties in emotional and cognitive aspects, exploiting strong parental support in these areas.

Moreover, educators and parents can collaborate to create a supportive and effective learning environment for students with learning difficulties, ultimately enhancing their educational experiences and outcomes

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