

Attitude and Academic Engagement of Social Sciences Students of Universidad de Zamboanga

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Abstract

This study investigated the relationship between students' attitudes toward Social Science and their academic engagement. It focused on the cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions of attitude, alongside the cognitive, behavioral, emotional, and social aspects of engagement. The primary aim was to assess students' levels of attitude and engagement and determine the correlation between the two. It also considered whether there is a significant difference between attitude and engagement with respect to demographic factors such as age, sex, and department. Research Design A descriptive-correlational method of investigation was used and both descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, mean) and inferential statistical analysis (Pearson correlation, t-tests, ANOVA) were applied. Simple random sampling was used to select 350 students in the study. It was found that the students had a positive attitude for Social Science and their academic engagement was also high for all three domains. Moderate, but statistically significant association was found between students' attitude and their academic engagement. Also, significant differences in attitude and engagement were noticed when it was stratified by age, gender and area study. Thus, the target intervention of the intervention program would aim at enhancing the students' engagement by means of teaching with active learning strategies and institutional support. Based on the results the study concludes that focused promotion of positive aspects can significantly increase academic engagement and hence result in increased learning within Social Science education.

Keywords: Academic Engagement, Affective Dimensions, Attitudes, Behavioral Dimensions, Cognitive Dimensions, Institutional Support, Intervention Program, Social Engagement, Social Science students.

1. Introduction

The Zamboanga A.E. The college was founded by Engineer Arturo Eustaquio Sr. in 1948, and has several decades of activity in the field of education in Region IX. UZ One of the premier universities in Western Mindanao, UZ has built its own reputation as a center of educational excellence over the years through persistent effort of its founding fathers in responding to the dynamic call of time. To provide accessible, high quality education for our students and the community in an environment of academic freedom that encourages learners to develop their full potential and to become positive contributors to an ever changing, increasingly complex society; to serve as a resource for the community, city and state by offering a continuing education program; and to provide educational, cultural, and social experiences for students and for an increasingly diverse population in a rapidly changing world. It was not until it became a University in 2005 that the UZ expanded its horizon of accessibility, most notably being felt in the fields of the Social Sciences, including the Social Sciences, and getting more intimate with students in both their academic and general social lives. By teaching with an emphasis on the values behind learning and by engaging students in many types of community involvement, we provide the conditions for students to reflect on how critical the learning mindset can be to their success. The technique contributed to improving attainment as it applied the principles into the students' curriculum.

These are highly relevant for students in the social sciences, who need to think deeply and commit to teaching, research and addressing social issues. A positive association between positive investor emotions and learning attitudes that promote the process of being educated is mediated by engagement and academic achievement (Wang & Xue, 2022). By contrast, the lack of engagement often acts as a brake on progress in school (Fredrick et al., 2004) and it is important to consider how students "see" their learning, and how far students are involved in carrying out that duty.

Three-dimensional model (cognitive, affective and behavioral) of attitude has been used for a long time as an antecedent to form attitude. This is the cognitive component: Not what students do, but what they believe, perceive and know about the discipline they're learning. These consist of how they construe historical events or correspond information about social systems in the processing of complex ideas (Mitchell & Nebeker, 1973; Shepperd & Taylor, 1999). The affective domain, in contrast, represents feelings (e.g., interest in the content) that could affect motivation, and class behavior specifically (Bryan, DiPerna, & Yeager, 2011; Eccles & Wigfield, 2002). The final behavioral aspect is demonstrated through students'

actions, listening to the lecture every day, involving in academic discussions (highly engaged), to express dedication (Fredricks et al., 2004; Reyes et al., 2012). Cognitive relationships are the beliefs, knowledge and understanding that a student has about a subject. In the social sciences, this includes how students break down complicated ideas or historic contexts and social problems. Positive forms of cognitive attitudes can help in translating knowledge into action by providing more attention or focus on the theme (Mitchell & Nebeker, 1973). If students are involved in their subjects and feel confident they understand what is going on, they are more likely to struggle through difficult periods, to participate and carry on with their studies (Shepperd & Taylor, 1999).

A second relevant dimension, the affective dimension, is that students feel in a more or less positive way about a subject. The social sciences are fundamentally humanistic in that students are able to form personal connections with the material. The relationship can be positive or negative; such a relationship can promote motivation to process deeply or contrarily inhibit it (Bryan et al., 2011). When things get hard, these affective connections can help to keep interest — and participation — afloat. Furthermore, when topics concern real-world events that attract the interest of students, the body of attention is apt to be larger (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002). This brings us into what you might call the behavioral dimension — or the kinds of things that students actually do while they're sitting through lessons. "For students, it's more than just showing up -- it's participating in their learning with their peers."80 Also, their participation beyond sitting in class may be more than the physical act of showing up; it may involve speaking, discussing, and contributing to group work. Behavioral engagement is particularly salient because it is so visible in terms of how committed a person is to school (Fredricks et al., 2004). In social studies classes in particular--whether discussing ideas informally with one another while contributing efforts on joint projects--the degree to which students enter into, not simply show up to, the educational environment, defines not just attendance but participation (Reyes et al., 2012).

Academic engagement isn't simply a higher-education buzzword - it is fundamental to student success. When students feel emotionally involved with their subjects or develop close relationships with their peers or teachers, they are more likely to achieve better academic performance (Wang & Xue, 2022). But this kind of attachment can't be built overnight. Engagement is diverse among those people, because one size doesn't fit all - there are ways students get involved with lessons and make connections with relevance to their own lives. Contemporary research has directed us to different dimensions of engagement in that we examine the roles of attitude and motivation in students' involvement in their academic major areas (Fredricks et al., 2004; Gan et al., 2023). Scholarly engagement is of particular interest to social science students. This is not a discipline for rote learning, but for developing critical thinking, empathy and social engagement that is needed to address today's complex social problems (King et al., 2020; Peixoto et al., 2022). Yet, despite the importance of the (discipline to society, there are also indications that students are not engaged in it, given the number of students who have low rates of attendance and are disinterested. This is disturbing, especially in that it reflects the students' inability to see the relevance or importance of the subject to their own lives. It seems that feeling disconnected from the content or failing to see the value in it could play a role in these apathetic attitudes (Dietrich et al., 2019).

Meeting academic success is also closely related to socializing, through which people will obtain necessary communication and interaction skills. These skills are essential not only in the Social Sciences but are highly transferable to many fields in which collaborative research figures prominently. Students' levels of academic and personal engagement often increase in supportive learning communities (Virtanen et al., 2014; Neuville et al., 2007). In universities Social Sciences department like at Universidad de Zamboanga, there are students who become very participative and some of them are engrossed-Being-Active while others have low interest and minimal drive as a Anonymous-Passive member. This suggests the question of why some students may be more prone to get involved than others.

Although the literature on student engagement in the academic environment is very heterogeneous, there is still a void in the knowledge of how cognitive, affective and behavioural attitudes of the students influence their engagement in learning Social Sciences. Most such studies concentrate on either STEM or the arts, not accounting for the challenges of Social Science undergraduates in relation to critical thought, emotional connection, and social interaction (Peixoto et al., 2022). The present study seeks to better understand student attitudes towards and engagement in Social Science.

This study will serve to inform universities in promoting student welfare. Understanding the student attitudes and behaviours of the PE content can help to develop teaching strategies and to provide responses from the institutional level to enhance what meets their perceptions, especially those referring to the PE content. For example, if students are having trouble focusing mentally on a topic, instructors could redesign the course to make it more applicable and interesting to their lives outside the classroom. Furthermore, social science concepts may be franchised via real world issues that connect with students' own mindsets and actual experience. Promoting behavioral engagement may require environments of learning in which there is substantial student input into the direction of their education. This work will be able to identify how the reflective attitude of students affects their learning of Social Science. The study will analyze the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral components of these attitudes and will offer important implications that may suggest the creation

of new instructional practices, support structures, or policy recommendations in order to promote the academic engagement and achievement of Social Science students at Universidad de Zamboanga.

This study examined the relationship between students' attitudes toward Social Science and their academic engagement, with particular attention to the cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions of attitude, as well as the cognitive, behavioral, emotional, and social dimensions of engagement. It also considered selected demographic variables—age, sex, and program—to determine how these factors may be associated with variations in students' attitudes and engagement. Overall, the study aimed to clarify how students' perceptions of Social Science relate to their participation and involvement in academic activities and to provide a sound basis for strengthening student engagement and institutional support. Specifically, the study sought to determine the level of students' attitudes toward Social Science in terms of the cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions, and the level of students' academic engagement in terms of cognitive, behavioral, emotional, and social aspects. It further aimed to establish whether a significant relationship exists between students' attitudes toward Social Science and their academic engagement, and whether significant differences in these variables occur when students are grouped according to age, sex, and program. Finally, based on the findings, the study intended to formulate an intervention program that could enhance student engagement and reinforce institutional support mechanisms. To guide the analysis, the study adopted the following null hypotheses: (1) there is no significant relationship between students' attitudes toward Social Science and their academic engagement; and (2) there is no significant difference in students' attitudes toward Social Science and academic engagement when demographic profile (age, sex, and program) is considered.

2. Materials and methods

2.1 Research Design

The study employed a quantitative, descriptive-correlational research design to examine the relationship between students' attitudes toward Social Science and their academic engagement. The descriptive component focused on determining the level of students' attitudes in terms of the cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions, as well as the level of their academic engagement in terms of cognitive, behavioral, emotional, and social engagement. The correlational component determined whether a significant relationship exists between students' attitudes toward Social Science and their academic engagement. In addition, comparative procedures were used to test whether significant differences in attitudes and engagement exist when respondents are grouped according to demographic variables such as age, sex, and academic program.

2.2 Locale of the Study

The study was conducted at Universidad de Zamboanga, specifically in the School of Liberal Arts and Sciences at the Tetuan (Main) Campus. This locale was selected because it offers direct access to students enrolled in General Education Curriculum (GEC) courses, including Social Science subjects. The setting also enabled systematic data collection while ensuring adherence to institutional policies and applicable data privacy requirements.

2.3 Respondents of the Study

The respondents consisted of students enrolled in General Education Curriculum courses, specifically GEC 1, GEC 2, GEC 3, GEC 6, and GEC 8, during the second semester of SY 2024–2025. A total population of 350 students served as the basis for the selection of participants. Demographically, the majority of respondents were aged 19–20 years (72.6%) and predominantly female (54.9%). In terms of academic program, the largest group came from the School of Arts and Management (42.9%), followed by SEICT (22.9%) and SCJ (14.3%). These characteristics provided context for interpreting differences in attitudes and academic engagement across groups.

2.4 Sample and Sampling Procedure

The sample size was determined using Yamane's formula at a 95% confidence level with a 5% margin of error to ensure adequate representation of the student population. Respondents were drawn from students enrolled in the identified GEC courses during the data-collection period. The sampling approach ensured that participants were included across age, sex, and academic program categories, allowing comparisons of attitudes and engagement based on demographic profiles.

2.5 Research Instrument

A researcher-made survey questionnaire was used as the main data-gathering instrument. The tool consisted of two parts. Part I gathered the respondents' demographic profile, including age, sex, and academic program. Part II contained items measuring (a) students' attitudes toward Social Science in three dimensions—cognitive, affective, and behavioral—and (b) students' academic engagement in four dimensions—cognitive, behavioral, emotional, and social. The cognitive attitude dimension consisted of five Likert-type items rated from Strongly Agree (Very Important) to Strongly Disagree (Not Very Important). The affective attitude dimension used five items phrased as questions to capture students' emotional responses toward Social Science. The behavioral attitude dimension consisted of five Likert-type items assessing students' actions or

intentions related to learning. Academic engagement was measured using items rated on a six-point scale to assess cognitive, behavioral, emotional, and social engagement.

2.6 Data Gathering Procedure

Prior to data collection, the study underwent review and approval by the research panel, and the questionnaire was subjected to content validation by two experts. Permission to conduct the study and access respondents was secured from the Dean of the College. Data were collected through both online and offline administration to increase participation. Online distribution was conducted through Google Classroom, while printed copies were administered during face-to-face classes. Respondents were informed of the purpose of the study and their rights as participants. Participation was voluntary, and confidentiality and anonymity were ensured. Respondents were also informed that they could withdraw from the study if they chose to do so. Completed responses were coded and stored securely in password-protected files. Data were retained for up to three years and then disposed of securely in accordance with institutional and data protection guidelines.

2.7 Data Analysis Techniques

Data were coded, tabulated, and analyzed using SPSS version 23.0. Descriptive statistics, including frequency, percentage, and mean, were used to summarize demographic characteristics and determine the levels of attitudes and academic engagement. To test differences in students' attitudes and engagement across demographic groups, an independent samples t-test was applied for sex, while one-way ANOVA was used to determine differences across age groups and academic programs. Pearson's correlation coefficient was computed to assess the relationship between students' attitudes toward Social Science (cognitive, affective, behavioral) and their academic engagement.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Cognitive Attitude Toward Social Science

The students' cognitive attitude toward Social Science was generally High, with a grand mean of 4.05. The strongest indicators were students' belief that Social Science provides valuable knowledge for their future career ($M = 4.36$, High) and their confidence in understanding key concepts ($M = 4.26$, High). Students also reported that they recognize Social Science as important in shaping society's values ($M = 4.22$, High) and that they often critically analyze theories and principles in the discipline ($M = 4.02$, High). However, the statement "*I find social science concepts difficult to understand*" obtained an Average rating ($M = 3.41$), implying that despite generally strong cognitive engagement, some students still encounter difficulty with particular concepts. These results indicate that students demonstrate a well-developed cognitive attitude toward Social Science in terms of perceived relevance, critical thinking, and conceptual understanding. While some content areas remain challenging, the overall pattern suggests meaningful intellectual interaction with the subject. This implies that teaching strategies are broadly effective in supporting cognitive engagement, but targeted academic support (e.g., concept reinforcement and confidence-building activities) may be needed for topics that students perceive as difficult. The findings support Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behavior (1985), suggesting that favorable attitudes toward Social Science can sustain students' effort and persistence in learning. In the same way, students' expectations of success and perceived value of outcomes—key elements in Eccles & Wigfield (2000)—appear to reinforce cognitive engagement. Although cognitive attitudes are generally positive, structured interventions for difficult concepts remain necessary, aligning with the study's multi-theoretical stance emphasizing the role of attitudes and motivation in academic engagement. More broadly, these outcomes highlight cognitive engagement as essential not only for academic success but also for building analytical reasoning, critical thinking, and social awareness. Students' recognition of Social Science as career-relevant suggests the importance of responsive curricula and instructional design. Consistent with Ajzen (1985) and Eccles & Wigfield (2000), the results also reinforce the idea that perceived value and self-efficacy beliefs are central predictors of engagement—supporting an educational approach that strengthens intellectual growth and social responsibility beyond mere content transmission.

3.2 Affective Attitude Toward Social Science

Students' affective attitude toward Social Science was also interpreted as High, with a grand mean of 4.03. Respondents expressed strong interest in learning Social Science ($M = 4.34$, High), reported feeling engaged while studying the subject ($M = 4.15$, High), and indicated excitement in participating in Social Science discussions ($M = 4.10$, High). They likewise agreed that learning Social Science helps them understand their own emotions better ($M = 4.17$, High). Similar to the cognitive dimension, the item "*I find it hard to understand the concepts taught in social science classes*" was rated Average ($M = 3.39$), reflecting some emotional strain linked to comprehension challenges. Overall, the findings show that students hold a positive affective attitude characterized by interest, emotional involvement, and personal relevance. Even when students struggle with certain concepts, the overall emotional orientation remains positive—suggesting a learning environment conducive to motivation and sustained participation. This pattern is consistent with the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1985), where positive affective beliefs (e.g., enjoyment, emotional relevance) support stronger behavioral intentions toward academic tasks. The results also align with Eccles and Wigfield's (2002) Expectancy-Value Theory, emphasizing the influence of task value and emotional cost on motivation. The consistently high affective ratings indicate

that students continue to value Social Science despite difficulties, supporting continued cognitive and behavioral engagement. These results highlight the role of emotional connection in sustaining motivation and interest. When students experience learning as meaningful and emotionally relevant, engagement can remain high even when tasks become difficult. This underscores the need for teaching strategies that strengthen emotional connection, relevance, and enjoyment to promote long-term academic commitment.

3.3 Behavioral Attitude Toward Social Science

In terms of behavioral attitude, students again demonstrated a High level, with a grand mean of 3.79. Students reported engaging in discussions or debates about Social Science topics outside class ($M = 3.88$, High) and participating in Social Science-related extracurricular activities ($M = 3.84$, High). They also indicated that they read additional materials to expand their knowledge ($M = 3.79$, High) and actively engage in projects or assignments related to Social Science ($M = 4.00$, High). The only item rated Average was *"I find it difficult to stay focused during social science lessons"* ($M = 3.45$), suggesting occasional attention difficulties during instruction. These findings suggest that students demonstrate a strong willingness to participate in Social Science tasks and activities, reflecting positive academic behavior and practical application of learning. Although concentration challenges occur at times, overall behavioral commitment remains strong, indicating that students generally show diligence and follow-through. The results are consistent with the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1985), indicating that students' behavioral involvement is influenced by their positive attitudes and perceived behavioral control. The findings also align with Expectancy-Value Theory (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000), where students are more likely to invest effort in activities they value and believe they can succeed in. In addition, Fredricks et al. (2004) identify active participation as a key feature of behavioral engagement, while Wang and Xue (2022) reinforce the role of task value and self-efficacy in academic motivation. Beyond frequency of participation, the results emphasize that behavioral engagement in Social Science reflects deeper competencies—such as organization, collaboration, and problem-solving—which are essential for future learning and community involvement.

3.4 Overall Level of Students' Attitudes Toward Social Science

Across dimensions, students maintained consistently positive attitudes toward Social Science: cognitive ($M = 4.05$, High), affective ($M = 4.03$, High), and behavioral ($M = 3.79$, High), producing an overall grand mean of 3.96 (High). This indicates that students demonstrate solid understanding, positive emotional involvement, and active participation in Social Science—although behavioral involvement is slightly lower than cognitive and affective ratings. These outcomes suggest that students' attitudes reflect appreciation for Social Science and willingness to engage intellectually, emotionally, and behaviorally. Such orientations are likely to enhance learning experiences and sustain interest in Social Science activities and potential career pathways. This pattern is consistent with the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1985), where positive attitudes across domains can explain or predict intentions and learning behaviors. It also aligns with Wigfield and Eccles' Expectancy-Value Theory (2000), emphasizing that perceived success and perceived value increase engagement. Furthermore, Fredricks et al. (2004) highlight the multidimensional nature of engagement, meaning high scores across domains suggest more authentic involvement. Supporting this, Bryan et al. (2011) found that students with strong self-efficacy and intrinsic motivation often perform better and sustain interest longer. These findings have implications for curriculum development and student support, as strong positive attitudes toward Social Science can contribute to producing socially conscious learners who are prepared to engage with societal issues and contribute meaningfully to community welfare.

3.5 Cognitive Academic Engagement in Social Science

Students' cognitive academic engagement was rated High, with a grand mean of 3.89. The highest-rated indicator was critical thinking about course material ($M = 4.04$, High), followed closely by applying Social Science concepts to real-world situations ($M = 4.03$, High) and going beyond required readings ($M = 4.02$, High). Students also reported making connections between Social Science and other subjects ($M = 3.94$, High). The lowest-rated item—though still notable—was *"The material in social science is too complicated to grasp"* ($M = 3.44$, Average), indicating that complexity remains a barrier for some learners. Overall, students show strong cognitive investment through analyzing, encoding, and applying learning, including higher-order thinking beyond the classroom. While some students perceive certain topics as difficult, the general pattern reflects a learning environment supportive of deep thinking and inquiry. These findings align with the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1985), suggesting that attitudes and knowledge can predict academic behaviors. The results are also supported by Expectancy-Value Theory (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000), which proposes that students invest more cognitively when they value learning and expect success. Fredricks et al. (2004) emphasize cognitive engagement as essential to overall involvement, while Bryan et al. (2011) connect strong self-efficacy and intrinsic motivation with deeper immersion in learning. In broader terms, high cognitive engagement supports the development of reflective, analytical, and socially responsible thinking—skills central to democratic citizenship, ethical decision-making, and lifelong learning.

3.6 Behavioral Academic Engagement in Social Science

Behavioral engagement produced a High overall rating with a grand mean of 4.07. Students most strongly agreed that they complete assignments/projects on time ($M = 4.31$, High) and attend Social Science classes regularly ($M = 4.29$, High).

Active participation in class discussions was also high ($M = 4.24$, High), alongside consistent note-taking during lectures ($M = 4.04$, High). The lowest rating was “*I get distracted or disengaged during social science classes*” ($M = 3.49$, Average), suggesting occasional distraction but not enough to reduce the overall engagement rating. These results indicate strong student responsibility, discipline, and participation—suggesting genuine commitment rather than compliance. Though distraction appears at times, it does not substantially undermine overall behavioral engagement. The results are consistent with Ajzen (1985) in that consistent academic behaviors reflect positive attitudes and perceived control. They also align with Wigfield & Eccles (2000), where valuing a task and believing in one’s capability predicts persistence. In addition, Fredricks et al. (2004) define behavioral engagement as effortful participation, and Bryan et al. (2011) support the role of self-efficacy and intrinsic motivation in strengthening academic responsibility. More broadly, high behavioral engagement signals a school culture that builds self-regulation and responsible habits—skills that extend into workplace readiness and civic life.

3.7 Emotional Academic Engagement in Social Science

Students demonstrated High emotional engagement with a grand mean of 4.05. The strongest emotional indicator was pride in achieving good results ($M = 4.24$, High). Students also reported caring about doing well ($M = 4.22$, High) and being satisfied with their performance ($M = 4.22$, High). Emotional investment in topics studied was likewise high ($M = 4.00$, High). The lowest mean appeared in the item reflecting discouragement (“*I feel discouraged when learning social science topics*”), though it still received a High rating ($M = 3.59$), indicating occasional emotional difficulty without undermining the overall positive emotional profile. These results suggest that students possess strong emotional attachment to learning Social Science, characterized by motivation, pride, and satisfaction. While moments of discouragement occur (as in most academic contexts), the overall emotional climate remains positive. The findings support studies using the TPB (Ajzen, 1985) that emphasize emotional attitudes—such as pride, satisfaction, and motivation—in shaping learning intentions and behaviors (Ajzen, 1985). The results also align with Expectancy-Value Theory (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000), where expectancy and value contribute to active involvement. Fredricks et al. (2004) identify affective engagement as a core dimension of academic engagement, and Wang et al. (2011) further report that emotional investment and academic success are associated with intrinsic motivation and self-efficacy. Collectively, these findings underscore the importance of learning contexts that support students emotionally as well as cognitively. When students feel recognized and capable, they are more likely to sustain motivation and actively participate in learning.

3.8 Social Academic Engagement in Social Science

Students’ social engagement was High, with a grand mean of 3.84. The highest mean indicates students’ comfort in asking questions and sharing opinions in class ($M = 4.07$, High), followed by discussing Social Science topics with classmates outside class ($M = 4.03$, High). Participation in group work was also high ($M = 3.87$, High) and students reported attending Social Science-related events/workshops outside class ($M = 3.83$, High). The lowest mean was for “*I prefer working alone rather than collaborating with others in social science projects*” ($M = 3.40$, Average), suggesting a moderate preference for independent work among some students. Overall, the results indicate strong social engagement through communication, cooperation, and peer interaction, both inside and outside the classroom. Although some students remain more comfortable working alone, the dominant pattern supports collaborative learning and classroom participation. This aligns with the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1985), where empowerment-oriented attitudes and positive social norms strengthen intentions to collaborate and communicate. It also supports Wigfield & Eccles (2000), suggesting that students interact more socially when they value tasks and believe collaboration supports their academic self-concept. Fredricks et al. (2004) include peer interaction as part of total academic engagement, while Bryan et al. (2011) connect classroom participation and group contribution to self-efficacy and perceived teamwork value. Beyond the classroom, these findings emphasize that social engagement builds transferable skills—listening, flexibility, compromise, and teamwork—needed in diverse workplaces and civic life, and particularly relevant to Social Science, where understanding multiple perspectives is essential.

3.9 Overall Level of Students’ Academic Engagement Toward Social Science

Across dimensions, academic engagement toward Social Science remained High: cognitive ($M = 3.89$), behavioral ($M = 4.07$), emotional ($M = 4.05$), and social ($M = 3.84$), yielding an overall grand mean of 3.96 (High). Behavioral engagement ranked highest, indicating strong participation, punctuality, and attendance, while social engagement ranked lowest but still remained high, suggesting that collaboration is strong overall but may be improved further. These results show that students are engaged across cognitive, behavioral, emotional, and social domains, reflecting meaningful commitment to learning and shared growth in a student-centered environment. The findings align with Ajzen’s Theory of Planned Behavior (1985), supporting the influence of attitude, perceived control, and subjective norms on academic behaviors. They also support Wigfield & Eccles (2000), indicating that motivation increases when students expect success and value learning. Moreover, emotional and social engagement patterns align with Fredricks et al. (2004), emphasizing engagement as multidimensional. Although social engagement is slightly lower, the overall pattern suggests that when students see learning as valuable, achievable, and socially supported, motivation across domains strengthens. Broadly, these findings support a

comprehensive model of engagement in Social Science that not only improves academic performance but also cultivates lifelong skills in collaboration, communication, critical thinking, and emotional intelligence.

3.10 Relationship Between Students' Attitudes Toward Social Science and Academic Engagement

The results show a statistically significant relationship between students' attitudes toward Social Science and their academic engagement. The correlation coefficient was $r = 0.733$ with a p -value = 0.000, indicating a moderate positive correlation that is statistically significant at $p < .01$. This means that students who report more positive attitudes toward Social Science also tend to show higher levels of academic engagement. Because the relationship is significant, the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant relationship between the two variables is rejected. This supports the conclusion that promoting positive attitudes toward Social Science can contribute to increased student engagement. This result is consistent with the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1985), where favorable attitudes strengthen intentions and behaviors. It also aligns with Wigfield and Eccles (2000), suggesting that students who perceive success as attainable and regard the subject as valuable are more likely to engage actively. Together, these frameworks reinforce the role of attitudes as leverage points for improving cognitive, emotional, behavioral, and social engagement. The implications extend to curriculum development, teaching methods, and support services. Strengthening students' positive perceptions of Social Science—through relevance, meaning, and personal connection—may help address disengagement and improve academic outcomes by motivating greater investment of time and effort.

3.11 Differences in Attitudes and Academic Engagement According to Age

A statistically significant difference was found in both attitudes and academic engagement when respondents were grouped by age. For attitudes toward Social Science, the ANOVA produced $F = 7.621$ with $p = 0.000$, indicating a significant difference across age groups. The highest attitude mean was recorded among those aged 25 and above ($M = 4.38$), while the lowest mean was among those aged 18 and below ($M = 3.71$). Likewise, academic engagement (labeled as "Academic Achievement" in the results table) also differed significantly across age groups ($F = 3.262$, $p = 0.012$). The highest engagement mean again appeared in the 25 and above group ($M = 4.18$), while the lowest engagement mean was observed among younger respondents (notably 18 and below, reported as $M = 3.78$ in the narrative interpretation). As a result, the null hypothesis stating no significant age-based differences is rejected, confirming age as a meaningful factor influencing both attitudes and academic engagement. This aligns with the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1985), suggesting that beliefs and attitudes shape intentions and actions. Older students may show stronger engagement due to clearer goals and stronger perceived control. It is also consistent with Expectancy-Value Theory (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000), where motivation increases when students value the subject and believe they can succeed—factors that may strengthen with maturity and experience. Further, Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1986) emphasizes that self-efficacy and learning experiences differ across developmental stages, shaping academic behaviors in Social Science as students progress through life stages. In practice, this suggests instructional planning and engagement strategies should be sensitive to age-related differences, with additional scaffolding and motivation-building supports potentially benefiting younger learners.

3.12 Differences in Attitudes and Academic Engagement According to Sex

The analysis shows statistically significant differences in both attitudes toward Social Science and academic engagement when grouped by sex. For attitudes, male students had a higher mean ($M = 4.00$) than female students ($M = 3.92$), with $t = 2.101$ and $p = 0.036$, indicating a significant difference. For academic engagement (again labeled "Academic Achievement" in the table), male students also scored higher ($M = 4.06$) than female students ($M = 3.89$), with $t = 4.167$ and $p = 0.000$, confirming a statistically significant difference. Thus, the null hypothesis of no significant differences by sex is rejected. These results are consistent with the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1985), where attitudes and perceived behavioral control influence intentions and behaviors—and these mechanisms may operate differently across genders due to socialization and context. The findings also align with Expectancy-Value Theory (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000), which notes that self-beliefs and task values can differ across sexes and influence motivation. In addition, Bandura (1986) highlights how person variables such as sex can shape expectations, self-perceptions, attributions, and efficacy beliefs, which then influence academic motivation and learning behaviors. The broader implication is the need for inclusive and gender-responsive instruction. While males scored slightly higher in this sample, the results should not be used to generalize ability by gender; instead, they point to the importance of identifying and addressing gender-linked motivational factors and learning conditions to ensure equitable engagement.

3.13 Differences in Attitudes and Academic Engagement According to Program

There were statistically significant differences in attitudes and academic engagement when categorized by academic program. For attitudes, the ANOVA produced $F = 25.151$ with $p = 0.000$, confirming significant program-based differences. Mean attitude scores ranged from $M = 3.73$ (SAM) to $M = 4.33$ (SED), with other programs also reporting relatively high means (e.g., ITE $M = 4.24$, SBM $M = 4.25$, SLAS $M = 4.26$, SOD $M = 4.19$, SCJ $M = 4.12$, SEICT $M = 4.04$). For academic engagement ("Academic Achievement" in the table), the ANOVA showed $F = 33.083$ with $p = 0.000$, indicating significant differences across programs. Engagement means ranged from $M = 3.68$ (SAM) to $M = 4.39$ (SED), with relatively strong engagement in other programs as well (e.g., SLAS $M = 4.24$, SBM $M = 4.23$, SEICT $M = 4.16$, SCJ $M = 4.14$, ITE $M =$

4.12, $SOD\ M = 4.13$). Therefore, the null hypothesis stating no significant differences across programs is rejected. These results suggest that program affiliation influences how students perceive Social Science and how strongly they engage with it—likely due to differences in curricular alignment, relevance to professional goals, learning culture, and perceived applicability. This pattern aligns with the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1985), where beliefs about relevance and perceived control influence intentions and engagement, potentially explaining why Education students (SED) show stronger attitudes and engagement if they see Social Science as central to their discipline. It also supports Expectancy-Value Theory (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000), which emphasizes that motivation varies based on perceived value and self-efficacy, both of which can differ by program. Further, consistent with Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1986), contextual environments such as academic programs shape attitudes, efficacy beliefs, and engagement behaviors—supporting the need for program-specific strategies that cultivate Social Science engagement. Overall, these results underline the importance of tailoring engagement initiatives to disciplinary contexts. For instance, programs that naturally connect Social Science to future professional practice may generate higher engagement, while programs perceiving weaker relevance may need strengthened contextualization and application-based teaching strategies.

3.14 Proposed Intervention Program

Based on the study's overall findings—particularly the consistently high but variable patterns of attitudes and engagement, the significant relationship between attitudes and engagement, and the significant differences across demographic groups—an intervention program is recommended to enhance student engagement and strengthen institutional support. The proposed program focuses on promoting active learning strategies in Social Science and improving institutional support through added resources, faculty development, and targeted academic assistance. The intervention is designed to foster a more supportive learning environment that sustains positive attitudes, strengthens motivation, and increases engagement across cognitive, behavioral, emotional, and social domains.

4. Conclusion & Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study and anchored on the objectives, research questions, conceptual framework, and theories adopted, the following conclusions were derived. Students exhibited a high level of attitude toward Social Science across the cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions, indicating strong perceived value, interest, and willingness to participate in Social Science-related learning experiences. In the same manner, students demonstrated a high level of academic engagement across the cognitive, behavioral, emotional, and social dimensions, reflecting consistent effort, investment, and involvement in academic activities connected to Social Science. The analysis further established that the relationship between students' attitudes toward Social Science and their academic engagement is statistically significant, confirming that more positive attitudes tend to be associated with higher engagement. Additionally, there were significant differences in both students' attitudes and academic engagement when demographic variables such as age, sex, and academic program were considered, implying that engagement patterns vary across student groups and should not be addressed using a one-size-fits-all approach. Finally, an intervention program was developed to enhance student engagement through active learning strategies and to strengthen institutional support by equipping faculty and staff with appropriate resources and training.

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are forwarded for consideration. For the Universidad de Zamboanga Academic Council, it is recommended that the study's findings be used to implement targeted interventions and data-driven policies—such as active learning initiatives, mentorship programs, faculty development and training, and curriculum improvements—to further enhance student engagement and performance in Social Science. For the General Education Curriculum Developers, it is recommended that evidence-based strategies and culturally relevant learning materials be integrated to promote engagement across the cognitive, affective, and behavioral domains, thereby supporting deeper learning and fostering a more inclusive learning environment. For the Students of the General Education Curriculum, students should be encouraged to develop positive learning attitudes by setting academic goals, practicing self-reflection, and adopting a growth mindset; active participation in academic support programs should also be promoted to strengthen motivation, engagement, and academic success. For the Scholars, continued inquiry is encouraged to further investigate factors affecting student engagement, while strengthening research capability through training, collaboration, and publication to support academic and professional growth. For Future Researchers, it is recommended that future studies explore additional variables that may influence student engagement, such as teaching styles, learning environments, and socio-emotional factors, using diverse research methodologies to produce deeper insights and inform more responsive and practical interventions.

The findings of the study should be interpreted in light of certain limitations. The study focused only on students enrolled in selected General Education Curriculum courses (GEC 1, GEC 2, GEC 3, GEC 6, and GEC 8) at Universidad de Zamboanga during the second semester of SY 2024–2025; therefore, the results may not be fully generalizable to students from other institutions, semesters, or curricular contexts. In addition, the study relied on self-reported survey responses, which may be affected by response bias such as social desirability, overestimation, or underestimation of attitudes and

engagement. Lastly, the study examined attitudes and engagement primarily through demographic variables (age, sex, and program), and did not include other potentially influential factors (e.g., teaching strategies, classroom climate, learning resources, or socio-emotional conditions), which future research may incorporate to provide a more comprehensive understanding of student engagement in Social Science.

Compliance with ethical standards

This study followed ethical guidelines for research with human participants. Participation was voluntary, informed consent was obtained, and confidentiality and anonymity were maintained in compliance with the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (RA 10173). Respondents could withdraw at any time, and data were securely stored and will be disposed of after the retention period.

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