

## The association between students' learning engagement and their achievement in psychology

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### Abstract

This paper has examined an association between achievement in psychology and engagement of students in learning. Data was gathered by using self-reported measurements of engagement in learning and achievement in psychology. The quantitative data gathered by the tools used in the study was analyzed through descriptive statistics and Pearson correlation was utilized to examine the association between the two variables. Findings of the study indicated significant positive association between students' engagement and achievement in psychology.

**Keywords:** Engagement, Achievement

### 1. Introduction

Engagement is a fascinating term to many of the educators these days because engagement of students in learning is important for them to achieve better. Engaged learners do not merely aim to accomplish the set standards such as taking good ranks or grades in the academic examination, but they have enthusiasm and motivation to understand the concept to its greater depth. Hence, it is student's willingness and their desire to participate in learning activities engage them to an utmost extent and in spite of the obstacles and barriers, if they are continuously engaged, they achieve good outcomes too in a formal academic assessments.

Engagement is multi-dimensional (Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004) as it is measured in its three aspects such as cognitive, affective and psychomotor which means students should be engaged through their mind, emotions and body. However, Baines and Romano (2015) have explained that engagement is not so complex to define by the respective teachers as they know when their students are engaged by merely looking at their faces in the class or when they approach their classes at time and totally immersed in learning. It is termed as behavioral engagement. There are learners who work in the class as per their teacher and finish all tasks on time as well, but, they may be disengaged in learning because they are emotionally or psychologically disengaged and behaviorally engaged.

Therefore, for higher achievements, student's engagement through all of its aspects is necessary. The critical problem is students' disengagement as they disrupt learning environment in the class and disengage their peers as well. Hence, this issue need considerable attention to be resolved. Disengaged students in class should be motivated and inspired by their teachers to engage them. They should be informed the purpose of learning as they assume that whatever they learn in class is of no use to them. The boredom in the class should be removed by giving them some challenging tasks to do, arousing their curiosity and excitement on the topic can engage them. It is all dependent on teachers to engage them as they can support their students, use technology for

engagement and collaboration among students and students of other schools or colleges can be done for improving their engagement. The intrinsic motivation, dedication to immerse completely in learning and classroom activities enhance students' engagement and thus academic and general achievements are escalated as well.

### 2. Objective of the Study

The objective of the study was to study the correlation of engagement in learning and achievement in psychology.

### 3. Review of the related literature

The review of the literature was done on the association of achievement and engagement of students.

Holgado *et al.* (2013) <sup>[3]</sup> evaluated the association between academic engagement and achievement of students in health sciences and positive correlation was observed between the two variables.

Lee (2013) <sup>[5]</sup> showed that engagement specifically emotional and behavioral predict reading performance of school students.

Heng (2014) <sup>[4]</sup> reported that student engagement added significant value to their achievement.

Wonglorsaichon, Wongwanich and Wiratchai (2014) <sup>[8]</sup> indicated that school engagement of students had a significant effect on their achievement.

Maroco, Maroco, Campos and Fredricks (2016) <sup>[6]</sup> showed that engagement significantly increased perceived academic achievement.

The studies have proved that achievement and engagement are significantly correlated. The present study is a verification of the previous studies and it was done particularly on first semester undergraduate psychology students of private college of Chandigarh, India.

### 4. Hypotheses

The null hypothesis of the study: 'There is no significant relationship between engagement in learning and achievement in psychology'.

**5. Method and Procedure**

**5.1 Research Design**

The survey research method was employed where questionnaires were given to the volunteered students and then relationship by Pearson correlation was computed between achievement test in psychology and engagement in learning scores.

**5.2 Sample**

The sample of 150 BA first semester psychology students from one private college of Chandigarh volunteered to fill the questionnaires. They were administered two questionnaires such as achievement in psychology test and engaged learning index.

**5.3 Tools**

The following two tools were utilized for collecting the data:

- **Engaged Learning Index:** The engaged learning index by Schreiner and Louis (2006) was tested to check its reliability. It was computed on 40 private college students of Chandigarh. The reliability coefficient was 0.71.
- **Achievement test in psychology:** The achievement test from the current syllabus of psychology was prepared and reliability (Kuder Richardson 20) of the test was

0.84. The data for item analysis and reliability of the test was collected from students of various colleges of Chandigarh.

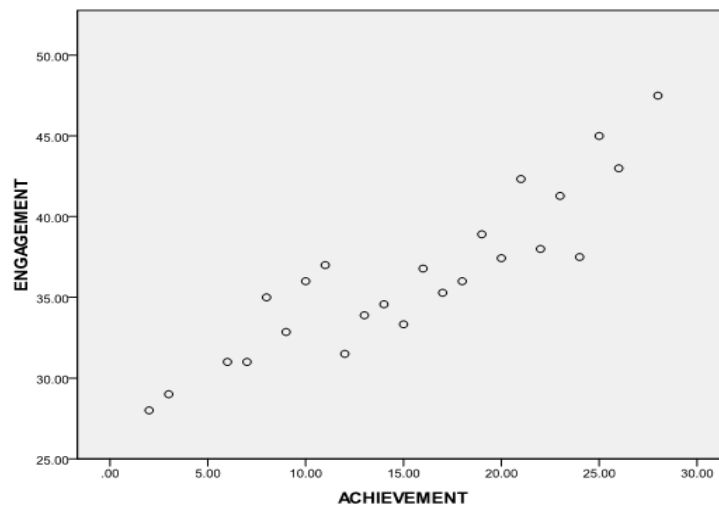
**6. Discussion of Results**

The analysis of the gathered data was done in SPSS. The assumptions which needs to be satisfied before using Pearson correlation were checked by evaluating descriptive statistics (skewness and kurtosis) on the scores and liner relationship between the variables. The descriptive statistics of the engagement and achievement scores has been depicted following (Table 1):

**Table 1:** Descriptive statistics of achievement and engagement scores

Achievement in Psychology score N, Mean, SD, Sk, Ku	Engagement in Learning scores N, Mean, SD, Sk, Ku
150, 15.7, 5.8, -0.308, -0.446	150, 36, 5.5, 0.413, -0.458

Table 1 has indicated acceptable values of skewness and kurtosis which follows standards of normal distribution. The assumption of linear relationship between the variables for using Pearson correlation was checked by employing scatter plot which is shown in Fig. 1.



**Fig 1:** Relationship between achievement and engagement scores

The scatter plot (Fig. 1) depicts positive correlation between the two variables which authenticate to use Pearson correlation on the variables.

The test of Pearson correlation was then applied on the scores of two variables after satisfying its assumption of the liner relationship between the variables. Table 2 elaborates the results:

**Table 2:** Correlations of achievement and engagement scores

		Achievement	Engagement
Achievement	Pearson Correlation	1	0.58
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.00*
	N	150	150
Engagement	Pearson Correlation	0.58	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.00*	
	N	150	150

\* Correlation is significant at 0.01 alpha level of significance.

The results (Table 2) signify significant relationship between achievement and engagement scores (0.58,  $p = 0.00 < 0.01$

alpha level of significance). It rejects null hypothesis and indicates significant positive correlation between

achievement of undergraduate students in psychology and their engagement in learning scores.

## 7. Conclusion

The study has reported significant relationship between achievement and engagement of students which guide teachers to emphasize on engagement of students particularly while teaching psychology because their achievements will be enhanced if they are engaged with their learning.

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