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Poverty and the Learning Engagement among Learners in Selected Schools in Banisilan North District

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to examine the effect of poverty on the learning engagement among grade 4,5& 6 learners in selected schools in Banisilan North District. This study used descriptive-correlational research design. It investigated the effect of poverty on the learning engagement among learners in selected schools in Banisilan North District in terms of class attendance, educational resources and motivation. The result revealed that level of poverty of learners in terms of ownership of consumer durables was in moderate level. On the other hand, level of poverty of learners in terms of vulnerability and isolation was in low level. Moreover, the effects of poverty on the learning engagement among learners in terms of class, attendance and educational resources was in moderate level. However, the effects of poverty on the learning engagement among learners in terms of motivation was in high level. The result also revealed that income has a statistically significant relationship with learners' learning engagement, indicated by a positive correlation coefficient. On the other hand, the variables of ownership of consumer durables, vulnerability, isolation, and physical weakness do not show statistically significant relationships with learning engagement. Therefore, the researcher fails to reject the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between the effects of poverty on the learners learning engagement in selected schools in Banisilan North District. Since poverty can also have a negative impact on learners' self-esteem and motivation. This suggests that schools may create a supportive and inclusive learning environment by promoting a positive school culture, providing counseling services, and offering extracurricular activities that cater to the diverse needs and interests of learners.

Key Words: Poverty, Learning Engagement, Income, Ownership of Consumer Durables, Vulnerability, Isolation, Physical Weakness, Class Attendance, Educational Resources, Motivation

Introduction

Several interventions have been implemented in schools to address the negative effects of poverty on pupils' learning ability. The "No Child Left Behind Act" is one of the most major measures to close the poverty achievement gap. Phillips and Flashman (2018) evaluated the effects of the "No Child Left Behind" statute, which increased student and teacher accountability. The "No Child Left Behind law" has had a positive impact on teacher qualifications, including more teacher experience, increased certification opportunities, and an increase in the number of teachers with advanced degrees. The "No Child Left Behind law" has had a negative impact on teacher qualifications, resulting in a drop in teachers' learning abilities and little or no change in the number of professional development opportunities accessible to teachers (Phillips and Flashman, 2018).

Overall, teachers' time on the job has evolved to include more time spent with students outside of traditional school hours, as well as more time spent on non-instruction tasks such as lesson planning, grading, and so on (Phillips and Flashman, 2018). The No Child Left Behind law has altered the classroom environment, including a reduction in overall class size, allocation of class time per subject based on the amount of testing, and evidence of matching the most experienced and credentialed teachers to testing grades (Phillips and Flashman, 2018). The No Child Left Behind Act has been demonstrated to have major negative consequences, including decreased teacher autonomy and increased teacher turnover (Phillips, 2018).

Thus, the evidence shows that accountability has had both positive and negative consequences, with none of the effects disproportionately affecting poor vs. non-poor schools. State and district policies and resources have a significant impact on classroom instruction, particularly for at-risk students. Policymakers must support administrators and teachers in their efforts to deliver high-quality instruction to all students. De Leon,(2020) says that federal, state, and district policies must be thoroughly evaluated to demonstrate the usefulness and ineffectiveness of various programs in tackling the poverty learning gap. Shields (2019) contends that three major factors influence student learning: the school environment, the family or community environment, and district and state policy.

Conceptual Framework

This study used Fischer et al.'s (1996) Individual Deficiencies Theory. Individual deficiency hypothesis, often known as cultural deprivation theory, blames human flaws for student poverty. This notion blames the person and family for poverty, ignoring socioeconomic and structural issues. It is believed that poor kids lack the cultural capital and values needed for academic achievement. These shortcomings are assumed to be passed down from parents to children, perpetuating poverty and underachievement. According to the hypothesis, low-income children have less opportunities and experiences, limiting their cultural exposure and social outlook. This hinders their study and curriculum interaction, lowering their academic performance. These theories blame individuals for poverty. Individual inadequacies ideas say working harder and making better choices can prevent poverty. They further claim that benefit overuse deters the impoverished from improving their lives. These beliefs have been widely cited in papers on creating clear goals to improve well-being. The schematic below shows the study's independent and dependent variables.

Poverty affects students' class attendance, educational resources, and motivation in selected Banisilan North District schools. Independent variable: respondents' poverty measures. According to some definitions, poverty is a complicated and varied issue that impacts all aspects of life, including education. Income, consumer variable ownership, vulnerability, isolation, and physical impairments describe poverty. These measures are linked and can affect a learner's engagement. Income is often used to quantify poverty.

Low-income students may struggle to pay tuition, textbooks, and transportation. They may struggle to get a good education and be less engaged in studying. Consumer attributes like technology and resource ownership can also affect a learner's engagement. Students from low-income homes may struggle to study due to a lack of computers, the internet, and other resources. Lack of access can lead to emotions of inadequacy and loneliness, which can lower learning engagement.

Another aspect of poverty that may affect learning is vulnerability. Poverty can lead to food insecurity, unstable housing, and restricted healthcare. These difficulties may induce uncertainty and fear, hurting a student's focus and participation.

Isolation and poverty might affect a learner's engagement in learning. Because of their financial situation, low-income students may feel isolated and guilty, lowering their self-esteem. This may demotivate and disengage learners. Poor health and nutrition can affect a learner's participation (Cleioe, 2020).

Motivation. Poverty can also cause isolation, low self-esteem, depression, and a lack of study motivation in youngsters. Children in poverty may also experience bullying, prejudice, and social isolation, which can harm their mental health and academic performance. Thus, these youngsters lack the courage to finish school (Viola, 2019). Figure 1 shows the research schematic.

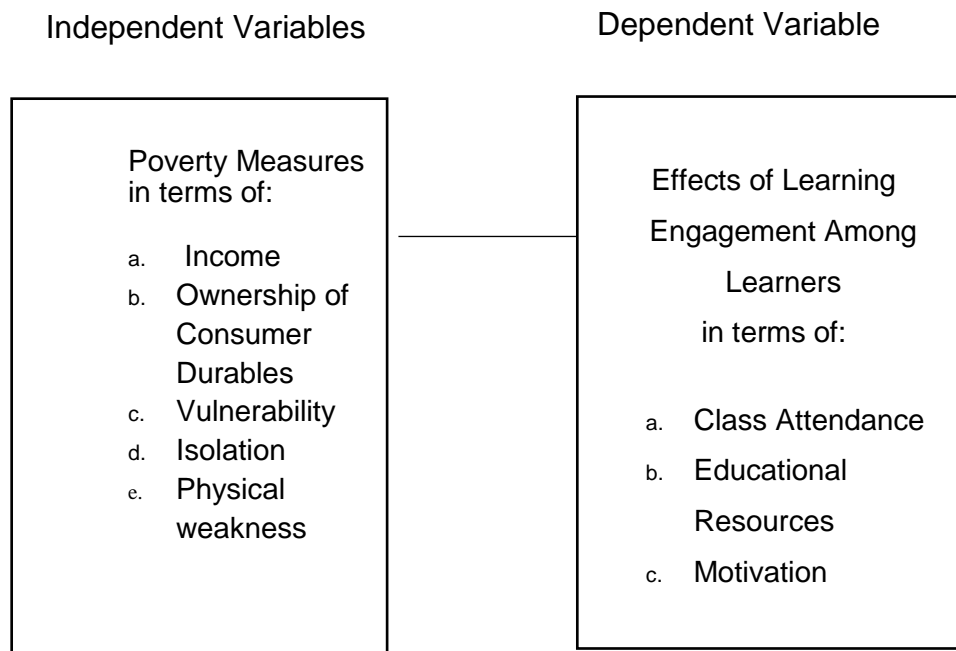


Figure 1. A Schematic Presentation showing the Variables between the Independent and Dependent Variables of the Study

Scope

This study focused on the effect of poverty on the learning capabilities of students in selected schools in Banisilan North District. The independent factors were limited to poverty levels measured by income, consumer durables ownership, vulnerability, and isolation. The dependent variable was the effect of learner engagement in selected schools in Banisilan North District on class attendance, educational resources, and motivation. The data was evaluated using descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviation, and Pearson's product moment correlation coefficient.

Review of Literature

Poverty has a huge impact on learning engagement, with one of the most common repercussions being a lack of financial resources. Low-income families often struggle to meet their fundamental needs, such as food, shelter, and healthcare. This leaves little or no room for educational expenses including book purchasing, school transportation, and extracurricular activities. As a result, children from low-income households may not have the same educational opportunities as their wealthier counterparts, resulting in lower levels of learning engagement (Rheo, 2019).

Furthermore, poverty might limit access to educational resources and opportunities. Students from low-income families may attend schools that have minimal resources, such as outdated textbooks, inadequate facilities, and insufficient technology. This may hamper their learning and participation in class. Moreover, low-income students may lack access to educational opportunities outside of school, such as tutoring or summer programs, compounding the learning gap between them and their wealthier peers (Gabson, 2020).

Children from low-income homes may face social and cultural barriers that hamper academic success. For example, they may lack access to role models who have pursued higher education, or they may come from families that place little emphasis on education. This can lead to a loss of excitement and interest in learning, limiting students' participation in school (Cheng, 2019).

Poverty has a huge impact on a person's vulnerability and willingness to learn. This is because poverty can create a vicious cycle of disadvantage by limiting access to resources and opportunities, making people more vulnerable to negative outcomes and reducing their ability to learn (Shunny, A., 2019). Poverty, at its most basic, can limit a person's access to necessities such as food, shelter, and healthcare. This can lead to poor health, malnutrition, and greater susceptibility to illness and disease, making people more vulnerable to physical and mental health issues. As a result, their ability to learn may decrease, as poor health can cause absenteeism and difficulty concentrating in class (Shunny, A., 2019).

Philip, (2019) stated that, poverty can impede a person's access to education. Children from low-income families may not have the financial means to attend school on a regular basis or may be compelled to leave out in order to support their families. This lack of access to education may limit their learning opportunities and affect their future prospects. Poverty can also harm a person's mental and social well-being. Living in poverty can lead to feelings of embarrassment, isolation, and low self-esteem, all of which can affect a person's confidence and ability to learn. Furthermore, children from low-income families may face social stigma and prejudice, which can increase their vulnerability and learning engagement (Glotia, G., 2020).

Research Methodology

The study used a descriptive-correlational research design. It investigated the effect of poverty on student learning engagement in selected Banisilan North District schools, taking into account class attendance, educational resources, and motivation. The researcher employed a questionnaire to collect information about the impact of poverty on student learning engagement. This study was conducted during the school year 2023-2024 at selected elementary schools in the Banisilan North District, particularly Gastav Elementary School and Kalawaig Elementary School. The study's respondents were one hundred (100) grade 4, 5, and 6 students from Banisilan North District in the school year 2023-2024. The researcher personally chose only two schools for safety concerns, as most of the schools in Banisilan were deemed high risk and unsafe because of fighting between family or party members, also known as redo. This study used a total enumeration sampling procedure.

Findings

The results revealed that learners' poverty levels in terms of consumer durable ownership were moderate. On the other hand, the amount of poverty among students in terms of vulnerability and isolation was minimal.

The findings demonstrated that poverty had a moderate impact on student involvement in terms of class attendance and educational resources. Poverty, on the other hand, has a significant impact on learners' motivation to engage in learning.

Moreover, Table 1 presents the results of a test assessing the relationship between various factors related to poverty (income, ownership of consumer durables, vulnerability, isolation, and physical weakness) and learners' learning engagement in selected schools in Banisilan North District. The variables are examined for their correlation (r) and significance level (p -value).

Table 1

Test of significant relationship between the effects of poverty on the learners learning engagement in selected schools in Banisilan North District.

Variable	r	p -value	Interpretation
Income	.199	.048	Significant
Ownership of Consumer Durables	-.107	.228	Not Significant
Vulnerability	-.088	.385	Not Significant

Isolation	-.132	.191	Not Significant
Physical Weakness	.097	.339	Not Significant
Overall	.017	.868	Not Significant

Table 1 reveals a positive correlation coefficient of 0.199 and a p-value of 0.048, indicating a statistically significant relationship between income and learners' participation in learning. The results show that this association exists. This suggests that there is a link between increased revenue and increased levels of learning engagement among students at the chosen institutions. This result highlights the importance of economic issues in affecting students' educational experiences, as well as the need for personalized interventions to address income-related gaps in learning engagement. On the other hand, the variables for consumer durables ownership show a correlation coefficient of -.107 and a p-value of .228. The variables for vulnerability had a mean of -.088 and a p-value of .385. The isolation variables had a p-value of .191 and a correlation coefficient of -.132. Physical weakness measures have a correlation coefficient of .097 and a p-value of .339. However, there are no statistically significant correlations between them and learning engagement. A very small correlation coefficient ($r = 0.017$, $p = 0.868$) demonstrates that the overall relationship between poverty-related variables and learning engagement is not significant.

This link is represented by the variable "Overall," indicating that it is not significant. As a result, it can be concluded that the parameters analyzed have no significant influence on the level of learning engagement among students enrolled in the selected institutions. For this reason, the null hypothesis, which states that there is no significant relationship between the effects of poverty on learners' learning engagement in selected schools in the Banisilan North District, is accepted.

This finding suggests that ownership of consumer durables, vulnerability, isolation, and physical weaknesses have no direct impact on student learning engagement in the institutions under review. As a result, it is critical to recognize that these variables may have an indirect impact on learning engagement due to the influence of other factors. Learners from low-income households, for example, may have limited access to resources such as books, educational equipment, and extracurricular activities, reducing their participation in the learning process. For the same reason, kids who are vulnerable, isolated, or physically weak may face issues in their personal lives, affecting their motivation and ability to concentrate in school.

Moreover, the link between income and learning engagement is stronger for students who are actively involved in their education. Students may have fewer opportunities and resources accessible to them, which could explain this issue. The positive relationship between income and learning engagement should not come as a surprise. Individuals with a higher socioeconomic status (SES) are more likely to have access to a wider range of resources and learning opportunities, which can lead to better engagement with academic content (Bandura, 1986).

Conclusion and Recommendation

Poverty has a significant effect on student learning engagement. While the effects vary depending on the aspect of learning, poverty generally hinders learners' ability to fully participate and contribute to their education. This can lead to reduced academic performance, higher dropout rates, and fewer opportunities for future success.

Income has a positive effect on learners' learning engagement. This demonstrates that students from higher-income homes are more likely to participate in their studies than those from lower-income households. However, ownership of consumer durables, vulnerability, isolation, and physical weaknesses had no discernible effect on learning engagement. Individual qualities, learning environments, and other external elements may all play a role in this.

Quality education can help break the cycle of poverty by providing students with the necessary skills to obtain better jobs in the future. Furthermore, government and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) can provide financial aid to low-income students to help cover educational expenditures such as tuition, books, and supplies.

Schools and communities can create events and programs that promote social contact and inclusion, allowing children to feel more connected and supported. Improve access to educational materials. To reduce the negative impact of poverty on learning engagement, provide access to educational resources including books, technology, and school supplies. This can be accomplished through government initiatives, partnerships with non-governmental organizations, and community contributions.

Furthermore, poverty may reduce learners' self-esteem and motivation. Schools can create a supportive and inclusive learning environment by establishing a positive school culture, offering counseling services, and providing extracurricular activities that cater to students' diverse needs and interests. To ensure equitable access to quality education, schools and policymakers may prioritize providing equal opportunities for students from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds.

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