

**Student engagement and academic achievement among Muslim learners  
in ALIVE classes at Ong Yiu Elementary School, Butuan City**

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**ABSTRACT**

This study aimed to investigate the relationship between student engagement and academic achievement among Muslim learners enrolled in ALIVE classes at Ong Yiu Elementary School for the school year 2024–2025. It focused on assessing levels of engagement across behavioral, emotional, and cognitive dimensions; determining learners' academic achievement based on their average ALIVE grades; examining the correlation between engagement and academic performance; identifying facilitating and hindering factors affecting learners' educational experiences; and proposing interventions to enhance both engagement and achievement. A descriptive-correlational design was employed to analyze the interrelationship between student engagement and academic achievement. Quantitative data were collected using structured survey questionnaires that measured the three dimensions of engagement and academic performance using established metrics. These analyses provided the primary evidence for understanding the statistical relationship between the variables. To enrich the findings and capture learners' perspectives, open-ended qualitative questions were included to explore factors that supported or hindered learning in ALIVE classes. While qualitative data added contextual depth and insight into the learners' experiences, the primary focus of the study remained the systematic examination of the correlation between student engagement and academic performance.

**Keywords:** Student Engagement, Academic Achievement, ALIVE Classes, Butuan City.

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**INTRODUCTION**

Islam is a monotheistic faith that revolves around the belief in one God, Allah Subhanahu wa ta'ala (SWT), as revealed through the Quran, the holy book of Islam. The teachings of Islam also encompass the Hadith, a collection of sayings and actions attributed to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Muslims who follow these teachings strive to integrate the principles of the Quran and Hadith into their daily lives, guiding their conduct and worldview (Fahrudin & Parhan, 2022; Setiawan, 2025). These principles include practicing the five pillars of Islam: the declaration of faith (Shahada), prayer (Salat), charity (Zakat), fasting (Sawm), and pilgrimage to Mecca (Hajj) if they are physically and financially able.

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Although Arabic is not the native language of all Muslims worldwide, it holds profound significance as the sacred language of Islam due to the Quran's revelation in Arabic (ISAH, 2022). Many Muslims strive to learn Arabic to comprehend the Quran in its original form, fostering a direct connection to their faith. Madrasahs, as traditional Islamic educational institutions, were historically established and continue to play a crucial role in teaching Arabic language and Islamic values, emphasizing both literacy and spiritual development (Jannah et al., 2024; Suharti et al., 2024).

In the Philippines, the long-standing significance of Madrasah education for Filipino Muslims and the persistent challenges of integrating it into the national education system have been a recurring concern. Efforts to formalize Islamic education can be traced back to the Martial Law era, possibly prompted by socio-political dynamics in the early 1970s. While President Marcos initiated attempts to integrate Madrasah education, including the use of Arabic as a medium of instruction in Arabic subjects within the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), these early efforts faced limitations in effectiveness (Harad & Arriola, 2022). Subsequent administrations, recognizing the importance of culturally responsive education, sought alternative approaches, such as appointing Muslim leaders to enhance the quality of Muslim primary education and mainstream Madrasah education (Balayanan & Lumapenet, 2024).

Formal efforts to mainstream Madrasah education gained significant momentum in early 2002 under the initiative of the late Dr. Mahid M. Mutilan, former Regional Secretary of DepEd-ARMM. This initiative led to the creation of the Project of Madrasah Education (PME) and the development of a standard Madrasah Curriculum, which officially culminated in the issuance of DepEd Order No. 51, s. 2004, prescribing the standard curriculum for Madrasah Education in the Philippines.

The refined Elementary Madrasah Curriculum, commonly known as Arabic Language and Islamic Values Education (ALIVE), serves as a foundational program designed to provide quality education responsive to the unique needs of Muslim children. Anchored in Islamic faith and values, ALIVE aims to prepare these learners for the contemporary societal challenges they face. Additionally, the program seeks to enrich the broader public-school curriculum by incorporating ALIVE alongside subjects in the Basic Education Curriculum (Abdulsamad & Gallego, 2025; Ontok-Balah, 2023).

In the Caraga region, the implementation of the Madrasah Education Program (MEP), which includes ALIVE, is institutionalized in eleven divisions, including the Butuan City Division. This implementation is guided by DepEd Order No. 41, s. 2017. The program functions as an additional-curricular intervention, catering to Muslim learners across different grade levels by providing standards and competencies specifically relevant to them. It integrates content on the Arabic language and Islamic values as distinct learning areas within the K to 12 curricula, specifically implemented in Kindergarten (Kindergarten Madrasah, per DepEd Order No. 47, s. 2016) and for Grades 1 to 6 (ALIVE, per DepEd Order No. 40, s. 2011). Typically, two subjects are added to the regular school schedule: Arabic Language, taught for 40 minutes from Monday to Wednesday, and Islamic Values, taught for 40 minutes from Thursday to Friday. These classes are often held before the regular school day, generally from 7:20 am to 8:00 am daily (Lopez, 2021; Sali, 2023).

Beyond the essential importance of learning Arabic to understand the words of Allah (SWT), the ALIVE program also endeavors to enhance national unity and harmony among Muslims and Christians in the Philippines (Putri et al., 2024). It actively promotes cultural awareness, multilingualism, respect, and intercultural dialogue through a comprehensive understanding of Islam's language, principles, and diverse traditions (Ontok-Balah, 2023).

Furthermore, ALIVE plays a vital role in fostering intercultural understanding and religious tolerance within the diverse landscape of Philippine society (ISAH, 2022).

To ensure the program's effectiveness and alignment with its objectives, the Department of Education (DepEd) utilizes general guidelines and frameworks for monitoring and evaluating its implementation. These tools typically include tracking attendance records, reviewing lesson plans and curriculum documents, conducting evaluations of ALIVE teachers, administering student assessments to measure Arabic language proficiency and understanding of Islamic values, and gathering feedback from parents and community members about the program's impact on learners. However, to truly ascertain the program's impact, a deeper examination of how actively learners are involved in their ALIVE classes and whether that involvement contributes to their improvement in Arabic language skills and understanding of Islamic values is necessary. DepEd Order No. 41, s. 2017, which outlines the guidelines for the Madrasah Education Program, explicitly emphasizes the importance of assessing student engagement in ALIVE classes and its impact on academic performance to enhance educational outcomes and align with broader goals of inclusivity and quality education for all (Ontok-Balah, 2023).

Student engagement, a critical construct in education, refers to a student's active involvement and psychological investment in learning tasks and activities (Discovery Education, 2025). It is considered a crucial factor for understanding learners' behavior towards the teaching-learning process and their meaningful participation in the learning environment (Naeem & Bosman, 2023). Understanding the dynamics of student engagement in ALIVE classes provides valuable insights into the effectiveness of instructional and academic practices. This understanding can serve as a powerful tool for asatidz and academic administrators to design effective pedagogical techniques that maximize the learning experiences of ALIVE learners. As reiterated in contemporary educational research, student engagement is consistently associated with student success (Khalid et al., 2020).

Student success, in this context, refers to the academic achievement of learners. Academic achievement represents the demonstration of knowledge, skills, and competencies acquired through educational experiences, typically assessed through measures such as grades, standardized test scores, and academic performance evaluations (Ramírez-Velásquez et al., 2025). It indicates the extent to which an individual has achieved specific goals in instructional environments, such as the ALIVE class (Rahman & Islam, 2021).

Regarding the academic achievement of Muslim learners in ALIVE classes at Ong Yiu Elementary School in Butuan City, significant disparities were evident in the last school year (2024-2025). Only 15% of learners achieved average grades of 90-100 in the two subjects offered in the ALIVE program, 23% secured grades of 80-89, and a substantial majority, 62%, obtained grades of 70-79. These figures, reflected in the grade cards of the learners according to DepEd Order No. 41, s. 2017 (Policy Guidelines on Madrasah Education in the K to 12 Basic Education Program), suggests that many Muslim learners are experiencing challenges in their ALIVE classes. This observation highlights the urgent need to examine more closely the factors impacting their academic performance, particularly the role of student engagement.

Although extensive research has been conducted on student engagement and academic achievement in general education contexts, a notable gap remains in addressing the specific needs and experiences of Muslim ALIVE learners. Understanding the connection between student engagement and academic achievement within the unique context of ALIVE classes will profoundly benefit these learners and inform tailored educational practices. Furthermore, recent studies consistently confirm that active student participation and involvement in learning significantly lead to better academic performance (Abdulsamad & Gallego, 2025; Putri et al.,

2024). Recognizing the importance of engagement, especially in specialized subjects like ALIVE, is crucial for supporting learners' academic achievement and holistic development (Smaali Bouhlila & Hentati, 2024; Tu et al., 2025). This is further supported by a meta-analysis conducted by Lei, Jing, and Jing (2023), which demonstrated that student engagement significantly influences learning outcomes.

To address this concern, the study aims to investigate the factors influencing the learning experiences and outcomes within the context of ALIVE subjects by examining the relationship between student engagement, encompassing behavioral, emotional, and cognitive dimensions, and academic achievement among Muslim ALIVE learners in ALIVE classes at Ong Yiu Elementary School in Butuan City. The insights gained from this research are intended to inform the development of evidence-based interventions and strategies tailored to the unique needs and backgrounds of Muslim learners. Ultimately, this research aims to empower educators and policymakers with practical tools and understandings to support the academic growth and holistic development of Muslim ALIVE learners.

### Statement of the problem

The purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between student engagement and academic achievement among Muslim learners enrolled in ALIVE classes at Ong Yiu Elementary School. Specifically, the study aims to address the following research questions:

1. What is the level of student engagement among Muslim learners in ALIVE classes at Ong Yiu Elementary School in terms of emotional engagement, cognitive engagement, and behavioral engagement?
2. What is the level of academic achievement among Muslim learners in terms of their average grades in ALIVE classes at Ong Yiu Elementary School last school year, 2024-2025?
3. Is there a significant relationship between the level of student engagement and the academic achievement of Muslim learners in ALIVE classes at Ong Yiu Elementary School?
4. What are the facilitating and hindering factors that influence the educational experiences of Muslim learners in their ALIVE classes at Ong Yiu Elementary School?
5. Based on the findings of the study, what strategies or interventions can be proposed to enhance student engagement and subsequently improve academic achievement among Muslim learners enrolled in ALIVE classes at Ong Yiu Elementary School?

### METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the research design, research respondents, research locale, research instruments, ethical considerations, data gathering procedure, and statistical treatment of data used in this study.

This study used a descriptive-correlational research design to investigate the relationship between student engagement and academic achievement among Muslim learners in ALIVE subjects at Ong Yiu Elementary School, Butuan City. Student engagement was measured using the Student Engagement Scale of Uğur Doğan (2014), encompassing behavioral, emotional, and cognitive dimensions. Academic achievement was measured based on the learners' average grades in Arabic Language and Islamic Values during the school year 2024-2025. Additionally, the study identified and described facilitating and hindering factors influencing the educational experiences of Muslim learners in ALIVE classes. These factors were explored through brief semi-structured interviews of 10 to 15 minutes incorporated into the data collection process to provide qualitative insights, adding context to the primary

quantitative analysis. The relationship between student engagement and academic achievement was analyzed using correlation analysis. This approach ensures a comprehensive understanding of how different aspects of student engagement affect academic achievement and performance, guiding the development of targeted interventions to enhance student outcomes in ALIVE classes.

The research respondents for this study consisted of Muslim learners enrolled in ALIVE classes at Ong Yiu Elementary School, Butuan City, during the school year 2024-2025. The school had a total of 296 Muslim learners enrolled in ALIVE subjects; however, this study focused on 251 learners from Grades 1 to 6, which represent the core grade levels for ALIVE implementation in accordance with DepEd Order No. 40, s. 2011. This focus ensured that the study captured the full range of elementary learners' engagement and academic achievement in ALIVE classes. For the quantitative component, a total of 100 respondents were selected from the 251 eligible learners using proportional stratified sampling. This technique ensured that each grade level was fairly represented based on its proportion in the population and allowed for meaningful analysis across grade levels. For the qualitative component, 9 participants were selected from Grades 4 to 6 using simple random sampling. Learners from upper elementary grades were chosen because they could better articulate their experiences, perceptions, and challenges related to engagement in ALIVE classes, demonstrated adequate understanding of the survey questions, and were able to clearly express their learning experiences, ensuring reliable and valid qualitative data.

The population, sample size, and qualitative participants were distributed across Grades 1 to 6 as follows. Grade 1 had a population of 52 and a sample size of 21, with no qualitative participants. Grade 2 had a population of 69 and a sample size of 28, with no qualitative participants. Grade 3 had a population of 36 and a sample size of 14, with no qualitative participants. Grade 4 had a population of 31 and a sample size of 12, with 3 qualitative participants. Grade 5 had a population of 31 and a sample size of 12, with 3 qualitative participants. Grade 6 had a population of 32 and a sample size of 13, with 3 qualitative participants. In total, the population comprised 251 Muslim learners, from whom 100 respondents were proportionally distributed across all grade levels for the quantitative analysis, and 9 participants drawn from Grades 4 to 6 for the qualitative component, ensuring balanced representation across the study.

This study was conducted at Ong Yiu Elementary School, located at P-8 Brgy. 16 Ong Yiu, Butuan City, Agusan del Norte, Philippines. Established in the 1950s, the school operates under the Northwest Butuan District, Butuan City Division, with school ID 132026. It offers education from kindergarten to Grade 6, with a total enrollment of 1,043 learners, consisting of 537 males and 506 females, during the school year 2024-2025, supervised by 41 teaching staff under the school head. The student population is diverse in terms of religious backgrounds. Among these learners, 296 are Muslim learners enrolled in ALIVE classes, comprising 144 males and 152 females from Kindergarten to Grade 6. The data on student enrollment, demographics, and academic records used in this study were obtained from the official school records of Ong Yiu Elementary School for the school year 2024-2025. This diverse population enriches the educational environment and fosters cultural understanding within the school community.

The study used an adapted version of the Student Engagement Scale originally developed by Uğur Doğan (2014) for middle school and high school learners. Because the present research focused on Muslim learners in Grades 1 to 6 enrolled in ALIVE classes, several adjustments were made to ensure that the instrument was appropriate for younger learners and aligned with the cultural and instructional context of the ALIVE program. The

original scale was retained in terms of its three core dimensions, namely emotional engagement, cognitive engagement, and behavioral engagement, but selected items were carefully modified to improve clarity, simplify language, and contextualize the content according to Arabic Language and Islamic Values Education. These contextualized changes included replacing general terms such as "teachers" with "ALIVE teachers (asatidz)" to maintain cultural relevance, simplifying vocabulary so that younger learners could better understand the items, adjusting statements that referred to non-ALIVE contexts to reflect actual classroom experiences in Arabic Language and Islamic Values subjects, and adding a Maranao translation below each indicator. All modifications were limited to wording and did not change the intent of the original items. A note indicating that the scale was adapted and contextually modified was written in the final instrument. After revisions, the adapted scale was subjected to pilot testing, resulting in a Cronbach's alpha of 0.773, indicating acceptable internal reliability for use with younger ALIVE learners.

The finalized scale includes 31 statements rated on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 for Strongly Disagree to 5 for Strongly Agree. Emotional engagement is assessed through 10 items exploring feelings of belonging and affective connections to the Ustad or Ustadha. Cognitive engagement is evaluated via 12 items focusing on mental effort in activities such as Qur'an reading, homework, and applying Islamic values. Behavioral engagement is captured by 9 items addressing attendance, participation, and adherence to expectations, with 7 reverse-scored items corresponding to items 23 to 29 to reduce bias. Subscale scores are summed for each dimension, and an overall engagement score with a range of 31 to 155 is obtained by totalling all items, where higher scores reflect greater engagement.

The rating scale used to assess the level of student engagement ranged from 1 to 5. A rating of 5, described as Strongly Agree, corresponded to a very high level of engagement, indicating robust commitment and active participation in learning activities. A rating of 4, described as Agree, corresponded to a high level of engagement. A rating of 3, described as Not Sure, corresponded to a moderate or uncertain level of engagement. A rating of 2, described as Disagree, corresponded to a low level of engagement. A rating of 1, described as Strongly Disagree, corresponded to a very low level of engagement, suggesting minimal interest or involvement in academic endeavors. These metrics enabled educators to assess student engagement comprehensively, from enthusiastic participation to disinterest or disengagement, in accordance with educational policies and guidelines established by relevant authorities aimed at ensuring the quality and effectiveness of educational practices.

To provide qualitative depth on facilitating and hindering factors influencing ALIVE experiences, open-ended questions were incorporated as a supplementary tool. These prompted participants to describe supports such as clear teaching strategies, positive environments, and parental encouragement, as well as barriers such as language challenges, limited resources, and peer distractions affecting their engagement. A purposive subset of 9 participants, consisting of 3 each from Grades 4 to 6, selected for strong questionnaire comprehension and articulation skills, responded via quick semi-structured interviews of 10 to 15 minutes each immediately after the survey. These interviews were conducted in a quiet school space, with questions read in English and then translated by the researcher into Maranao or Binisaya based on participants' preferences for easier understanding and response. Answers were recorded or written for verbatim transcription and thematic analysis, enriching the quantitative data with contextual insights into classroom and environmental influences on engagement and achievement.

On the other hand, the academic achievement of the respondents was based on their average grades in the two subjects offered in the ALIVE program, namely Arabic Language and Islamic Values, during the school year 2024-2025. The verbal interpretation of average grades was aligned with the DepEd grading system in the Philippines as outlined in DepEd

Order No. 8, s. 2015, which guides assessment in the K to 12 basic education program. An average grades range of 98 to 100 is described as With Highest Honors, corresponding to the highest level of academic achievement. A range of 95 to 97 is described as With High Honors, corresponding to a high level of academic achievement. A range of 90 to 94 is described as With Honors, corresponding to a very good level of academic achievement. A range of 75 to 89 represents passing grades, corresponding to a satisfactory level of academic achievement. A range of 74 and below represents failing grades, corresponding to a low level of academic achievement. This structure acknowledges and supports learners at different levels of academic achievement and adheres to official education policies.

The data gathering process commenced with the researcher obtaining formal permission from the school head of Ong Yiu Elementary School, Butuan City, to conduct the study during the 2024-2025 school year. This initial step ensured institutional support and alignment with DepEd protocols for research in public schools. Following approval, informed consent forms were distributed to the 100 selected Muslim learners enrolled in ALIVE classes, with their parents or legal guardians required to review and sign due to the minor status of the respondents and participants. The forms clearly outlined the study's objectives, voluntary participation, and assurances of confidentiality and anonymity, safeguarding ethical standards and child rights as per the Data Privacy Act of 2012 and DepEd guidelines.

To ensure the reliability and suitability of the adapted Student Engagement Scale for the target group, a pilot test was conducted first. This pilot involved 20 Muslim learners at the same school in Butuan City, providing a crucial check on the instrument's clarity, comprehensibility, and cultural appropriateness before its full deployment. The pilot yielded a Cronbach's alpha of 0.78, indicating an acceptable level of internal consistency for the questionnaire, thus confirming its readiness for the main study.

Once all necessary consents were secured from school authorities, parents or guardians, and respondents and participants, and following the successful pilot testing, the researcher proceeded with the main administration of the adapted Student Engagement Scale by Uğur Doğan (2014). This 31-item Likert-scale instrument measured behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement dimensions tailored for ALIVE contexts. To promote accuracy, comprehension, and cultural sensitivity, especially given linguistic diversity such as Maranao and Binisaya influences, administration was grade-specific, conducted in small supportive groups during non-peak class times, with only present and available learners participating.

For Grades 1 and 2, with a total sample of  $n = 49$ , permission was first sought from class advisers and learners, followed by one-on-one or small-group sessions of up to 3 respondents. Items were read aloud and explained in the child's preferred language, either Maranao or Binisaya, with the researcher providing gentle guidance and immediate clarification to build confidence among these youngest participants, minimizing fatigue and ensuring valid responses. For Grades 3 and 4, with a total sample of  $n = 26$ , sessions involved small groups of up to 5 learners based on availability. The same assisted method was applied, involving oral reading and language-specific explanations, creating a comfortable and focused environment that encouraged meaningful engagement while allowing for peer support and researcher assistance. For Grades 5 and 6, with a total sample of  $n = 25$ , coordination occurred with the assigned Ustadha, the female Islamic teacher for ALIVE classes. Surveys were administered during regular periods with her approval, limited to present learners, and the researcher supervised throughout, offering on-site guidance in Filipino, Maranao, or Binisaya as needed to maintain respect and address any concerns promptly.

For the academic achievement data in terms of the respondents' average grades in Arabic Language and Islamic Values for 2024-2025, these were ethically requested directly

from grade-level asatidz, with de-identified records provided to protect privacy. For the supplementary qualitative component, open-ended questions on facilitating and hindering factors were posed to 9 randomly selected participants, consisting of 3 each from Grades 4 to 6, with strong comprehension and articulation demonstrated during the surveys, via brief semi-structured interviews of 10 to 15 minutes conducted after the questionnaire. Questions were read in English and then translated into Maranao or Binisaya for accessibility, with responses audio-recorded with consent or noted in writing for thematic analysis. Throughout the entire process, the researcher maintained a respectful and culturally sensitive approach, ensuring that all respondents felt comfortable and supported. After data collection, all responses were systematically organized, statistically measured, and analyzed.

The researcher upheld a comprehensive range of ethical considerations to safeguard the protection, rights, and dignity of all respondents and participants throughout the study. Informed consent was a paramount priority; each respondent and participant, being a minor, was provided with a clear explanation of the study's objectives, the specific type of data to be collected, and the intended use of the information. Parental or legal guardian consent was obtained for all minor respondents and participants, ensuring that guardians were fully apprised of the research details and provided their explicit permission for their child's involvement. Voluntary participation was strictly observed, with all respondents, participants, and their guardians explicitly informed of their inherent right to decline participation or withdraw from the study at any point without incurring any negative consequences. To protect respondents' and participants' privacy and confidentiality, all data gathered were treated with the utmost discretion and securely stored, accessible exclusively to the researcher. The identities of the respondents and participants were rigorously anonymized, and no identifying information was disclosed in any part of the study, research report, or subsequent publications. Furthermore, the researcher provided appropriate support and clarification to respondents and participants who required assistance during the data collection process, particularly younger learners or those with limited proficiency in the languages used. This included adapting communication by translating questions into Maranao or Binisaya as needed, ensuring full comprehension and equitable participation. Finally, the entire study was conducted with an unwavering commitment to honesty, accuracy, and transparency, guaranteeing that the research findings would be reported truthfully, objectively, and without any form of distortion or bias.

In this study, the researcher used the following statistical tools in treating the data. Mean and Standard Deviation were computed to determine the average levels of student engagement and academic achievement, respectively. These measures of central tendency and variability help illustrate how respondents' scores cluster around the mean and how much they vary within the sample. Pearson Correlation Coefficient (Pearson's  $r$ ) was calculated to assess the strength and direction of the linear relationship between academic achievement and both the overall engagement score and each individual dimension, including behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement, revealing how each specific aspect of engagement relates to learners' performance.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the results of the study, wherein the findings, analysis, and interpretations are discussed in the same order as the statement of the problem. The study examined the level of student engagement and academic achievement among Muslim learners enrolled in Arabic Language and Islamic Values Education, hereinafter referred to as ALIVE, classes at Ong Yiu Elementary School, Butuan City, as well as the significant relationship between these two variables, the facilitating and hindering factors influencing learners'

educational experiences, and the proposed strategies to enhance engagement and achievement. A total of 100 Muslim learners served as respondents. Data on student engagement were gathered through a structured survey instrument organized along three dimensions: emotional engagement, cognitive engagement, and behavioral engagement. Academic achievement was measured using the learners' average grades in ALIVE classes for the school year 2024–2025, interpreted according to the DepEd grading framework. Pearson product-moment correlation was used to test the relationship between student engagement and academic achievement at a 5% level of significance, with a degree of freedom of 98. Qualitative data were gathered through open-ended questions and subjected to thematic analysis to identify the facilitating and hindering factors influencing learners' ALIVE class experiences. All findings are interpreted in direct relation to the objectives of the study, and the discussion is grounded entirely in the data gathered from the respondents.

#### Level of student engagement among Muslim learners in ALIVE classes

##### Emotional engagement

The level of emotional engagement among Muslim learners in ALIVE classes at Ong Yiu Elementary School was measured using ten indicators. The overall mean for this dimension was 4.37, with a standard deviation of 0.52, corresponding to a verbal interpretation of Very High Level of Engagement. This result indicates that learners experience strong positive emotions toward their ALIVE classes, their Asatidz, and the overall learning environment, and that they feel valued, supported, and emotionally connected to their classroom community.

Among the ten indicators, the highest mean was obtained by the indicator stating that ALIVE teachers are good at their job, with a mean of 4.69, interpreted as Very High Level of Engagement. This was closely followed by the indicator on teacher honesty, which yielded a mean of 4.68, also Very High. The indicator on liking the Asatidz registered a mean of 4.50, Very High, while believing in receiving a good education in ALIVE class produced a mean of 4.35, Very High. The indicator on recommending other Muslim learners to attend ALIVE class yielded a mean of 4.23, Very High, and both indicators on feeling like a member of the ALIVE class and on teachers understanding the learner each produced a mean of 4.22, Very High. The indicator on teachers helping whenever needed registered a mean of 4.41, Very High, and the indicator on Asatidz fairness with regard to discipline produced a mean of 4.27, Very High. The only indicator that fell below the Very High threshold was the indicator on ALIVE teachers caring about the learner, which yielded a mean of 4.10, corresponding to a High Level of Engagement. The composite mean of 4.37 nonetheless firmly places the overall emotional engagement dimension within the Very High range.

The very high ratings for indicators related to teacher honesty, fairness, care, and competence demonstrate the crucial role of emotionally supportive teacher-learner relationships in fostering engagement. Wang et al. (2020) found that emotionally responsive teaching practices significantly enhance learners' sense of belonging and motivation, particularly in culturally diverse and faith-based educational settings. When learners feel emotionally safe and respected, they are more likely to develop positive attitudes toward learning. The finding that learners strongly identify with their ALIVE classes, as reflected in the very high mean scores for sense of membership and willingness to recommend the program, further underscores the centrality of belonging to emotional engagement. Allen et al. (2021) highlighted that belongingness in school contexts is a powerful predictor of emotional engagement, persistence, and well-being, especially among minority learners whose cultural

identities are often underrepresented in mainstream education. In the ALIVE context, instruction grounded in Islamic values and shared religious practices appears to reinforce learners' emotional attachment to the learning environment.

The very high level of emotional engagement can also be attributed to the culturally responsive and faith-aligned nature of ALIVE instruction. Gay (2020) asserts that culturally responsive pedagogy fosters emotional affirmation by validating learners' identities, which in turn promotes enthusiasm, confidence, and commitment to learning. Alghamdi and Li (2023) similarly found that Islamic values-integrated instruction enhances emotional connectedness and positive learner attitudes in Arabic and religious education programs. Khalid et al. (2022) further observed that learners in Islamic education settings demonstrate higher emotional engagement when instruction emphasizes compassion, moral values, and respectful teacher-student interactions, encouraging learners to feel emotionally invested and proud of their educational experiences. This is consistent with the high mean scores related to learners' belief that they are receiving quality education and that their teachers genuinely care for them. Pekrun and Linnenbrink-Garcia (2021) explain that positive academic emotions such as enjoyment, pride, and interest support sustained engagement and adaptive learning behaviors, and that learners who associate learning with positive emotions are more likely to remain engaged even when academic tasks become demanding. Taken together, the findings suggest that the ALIVE learning environment at Ong Yiu Elementary School successfully nurtures emotional engagement by fostering trust, belongingness, and identity affirmation, and that these emotionally supportive and culturally responsive conditions are central to the meaningful engagement of Muslim learners.

### Cognitive engagement

The level of cognitive engagement among Muslim learners in ALIVE classes at Ong Yiu Elementary School was assessed using twelve indicators. The composite mean for this dimension was 3.63, with a standard deviation of 0.67, corresponding to a verbal interpretation of High Level of Engagement. This result indicates that learners demonstrate sustained mental effort, strategic thinking, and purposeful involvement in their Arabic Language and Islamic Values learning tasks. The high ratings on indicators related to persistence, effort, planning, and willingness to work even without immediate assessments suggest that learners are cognitively invested beyond surface-level compliance, reflecting an instructional environment that encourages deep thinking, meaningful reflection, and the connection of lesson content to personal, moral, and spiritual life.

Of the twelve indicators, the highest mean was recorded for the indicator on not giving up even when lessons are hard, with a mean of 3.85, interpreted as High Level of Engagement. This was followed closely by the indicator on trying best when working on Arabic Language and Islamic Values lessons, which yielded a mean of 3.81, High. Working as hard as possible at lessons and sharing knowledge learned from ALIVE class with other people both produced means of 3.70, High. Doing best in ALIVE classes registered a mean of 3.72, High, while believing in doing best to learn in ALIVE class yielded a mean of 3.65, High. Working on lessons even when there are no upcoming exams produced a mean of 3.67, High, and giving all attention to the lesson registered a mean of 3.63, High. The indicator on usually planning before doing homework yielded a mean of 3.62, High, while doing homework on time registered a mean of 3.53, High. Two indicators fell below the High threshold: checking mistakes in Arabic Language and Islamic Values homework, which produced a mean of 3.38, corresponding to a Moderate or Uncertain Level of Engagement, and spending a lot of time on studies and homework, which registered a mean of 3.26, also Moderate or Uncertain. Despite

these two lower-rated indicators, the composite mean of 3.63 firmly places the overall cognitive engagement dimension within the High range.

The high level of cognitive engagement observed may be attributed to the nature of ALIVE instruction, which integrates religious values and culturally relevant content into academic learning. Abdulsamad and Gallego (2025) found that Islamic education programs emphasizing reflective Quranic interpretation and contextualized Arabic instruction promote deeper cognitive processing, as learners are encouraged to analyze meanings, interpret moral lessons, and apply concepts to daily life, moving learning beyond memorization and fostering intellectual ownership of knowledge. Al-Shomrani and Al-Saidi (2023) further found that integrating Islamic values within academic instruction enhances learners' capacity for critical reflection and sustained intellectual effort, as students actively relate religious teachings to ethical decision-making and social responsibilities. Hasan and Hassan (2024) similarly reported that learners in Islamic education settings exhibit higher cognitive engagement when instructional activities require them to interpret texts, evaluate moral implications, and discuss real-life applications of religious principles.

The strong agreement among learners on indicators of persistence and effort reflects a form of intrinsic motivation rooted in spiritual and moral relevance. Tamer and Akram (2021) found that faith-based learning environments cultivate cognitive engagement by aligning academic challenges with learners' spiritual goals, thereby encouraging perseverance even when tasks are demanding. Rahman and Islam (2021) emphasized that Islamic education promotes reflective thinking and self-evaluation as learners are guided to examine both their understanding and behavior in light of religious teachings, while Ramay (2023) noted that metacognitive strategies including planning tasks and reviewing mistakes are particularly vital in language and values-based subjects as they support deeper comprehension and long-term retention. The two indicators that registered at the Moderate or Uncertain level, specifically spending time on homework and checking mistakes, suggest that while learners are engaged in class, self-regulated practices outside of instructional time remain in development, pointing to an area for targeted support. The relatively high mean for sharing learned knowledge with others further indicates that learners view their ALIVE learning as valuable beyond the classroom, a finding consistent with Siddique and Ahmad (2022), who observed that instructional approaches in Islamic education that encourage community-oriented application of knowledge enhance cognitive engagement by connecting academic learning to real-world and communal contexts. The high level of cognitive engagement overall demonstrates that learners are intellectually invested and that ALIVE instruction is effective in fostering thoughtful, reflective, and purposeful learning essential for sustained academic achievement and holistic development.

### Behavioral engagement

The level of behavioral engagement among Muslim learners in ALIVE classes at Ong Yiu Elementary School was measured using nine indicators. The composite mean for this dimension was 3.68, with a standard deviation of 0.63, corresponding to a verbal interpretation of High Level of Engagement. It is important to note that several indicators were negatively worded, specifically those referencing getting into trouble, getting into fights, being sent to the guidance office, playing truant, being late, pretending to work, and having considered stopping ALIVE classes, and these items were reverse-scored during analysis. Consequently, the high mean scores for these indicators reflect a low frequency of negative behaviors, confirming that learners are actively engaged and demonstrate meaningful self-regulation in the classroom.

Among the nine indicators, the highest mean was obtained by the indicator expressing the desire to continue studying Arabic Language and Islamic Values even after graduating from ALIVE classes, which yielded a mean of 4.26, the only indicator in this dimension to reach the Very High Level of Engagement. Playing truant from school every chance I get, a reverse-scored item, registered a mean of 3.79, interpreted as High Level of Engagement, indicating a low tendency toward truancy. Getting into fights during ALIVE classes, also reverse-scored, produced a mean of 3.74, High, reflecting infrequent conflict behavior. Getting into trouble during ALIVE classes registered a mean of 3.71, High, and being usually sent to the guidance office because of behavior produced a mean of 3.69, High. Being usually late in ALIVE classes yielded a mean of 3.67, High, while pretending to be working during class registered a mean of 3.44, High. The indicator on expecting to graduate with high grades in Arabic Language and Islamic Values produced a mean of 3.43, High, and the indicator on having considered stopping ALIVE classes registered the lowest mean in this dimension at 3.40, also High.

The overall high level of behavioral engagement reflects a classroom culture in which learners consistently demonstrate positive behaviors such as active participation, adherence to class routines, and respectful interaction with teachers and peers. Abdulsamad and Gallego (2025) observed that learners in faith-based programs such as ALIVE demonstrate strong adherence to classroom routines and higher academic outcomes when moral and ethical values are consistently reinforced, while Lei et al. (2023) found that students are more behaviorally engaged in classrooms where the learning environment is welcoming, supportive, and culturally affirming. The strong aspiration to continue Arabic and Islamic Values education beyond graduation, reflected in the highest individual indicator mean of 4.26, further signals a deep motivational commitment to the subject that extends well beyond compliance with class requirements.

Teacher-learner relationships similarly play a central role in shaping behavioral engagement. Anugrah et al. (2024) emphasized that strong, trust-based interactions in Islamic classrooms reduce disruptive behaviors and encourage adherence to class norms. Kurniawan et al. (2025) demonstrated that culturally aligned teaching practices including clear behavioral expectations and positive reinforcement strengthen learners' persistence, focus, and adherence to classroom rules, and Supriadi et al. (2024) found that learners who feel a sense of belonging in faith-based classrooms are more likely to actively participate, follow instructions, and engage collaboratively with peers. Lei et al. (2023) further highlighted that teacher responsiveness, emotional support, and classroom management strategies significantly influence behavioral engagement in multicultural and faith-integrated settings. Anugrah et al. (2024) also noted that structured interventions including recognition of positive behaviors and timely feedback reduce off-task behaviors, while Kurniawan et al. (2025) observed that classroom practices aligned with learners' cultural and religious values enhance self-regulation and foster cooperative learning. Supriadi et al. (2024) further affirmed that embedding ethical discussions and faith-based values in instructional routines encourages learners to internalize positive behaviors and minimize disruptions. Collectively, the high behavioral engagement observed in this study reflects a classroom culture where structured routines, culturally responsive practices, and supportive teacher-learner relationships converge to create optimal conditions for academic learning and the development of Islamic values.

#### Summary of student engagement levels across dimensions

The summary of student engagement levels across the three dimensions reveals a robust overall engagement profile among Muslim learners in ALIVE classes at Ong Yiu Elementary School. Emotional engagement obtained the highest mean of 4.37 (SD = 0.52), corresponding

to a Very High Level of Engagement. Cognitive engagement yielded a mean of 3.63 (SD = 0.67), and behavioral engagement produced a mean of 3.68 (SD = 0.63), both corresponding to a High Level of Engagement. The overall mean across all three dimensions was 3.89, with a standard deviation of 0.60, interpreted as a High Level of Engagement.

The pattern across dimensions reveals that emotional engagement leads the profile by a meaningful margin, reflecting learners' deep sense of joy, pride, and belonging in learning activities that resonate with their faith and cultural identity. Cognitive and behavioral engagement follow closely, indicating that learners are not only emotionally connected but also actively applying Arabic language skills and Islamic values in academically and socially meaningful ways. This pattern suggests that emotional engagement functions as a motivational foundation that sustains cognitive focus and behavioral consistency. Abdulsamad and Gallego (2025) observed that in faith-based programs such as ALIVE, combining language learning with ethical and moral instruction promotes high academic performance, with emotional bonds driving attention, participation, and task completion. Farhan and Rofi'ulmuiz (2021) highlighted that religiosity, when intertwined with emotional investment, accounts for a significant portion of students' motivation and engagement, helping learners navigate challenging content while maintaining interest and effort.

The role of emotional strength in supporting the other engagement dimensions is further affirmed by Ileiwat (2023), who found that culturally responsive teaching in Islamic schools enhances emotional safety, which in turn boosts cognitive processing and behavioral steadiness. Putri et al. (2024) similarly found that peer support and religiously motivated learning environments enhance overall engagement, with the majority of participants in comparable programs reporting improved focus, persistence, and academic output. Khalid et al. (2020) noted that Muslim learners in culturally attuned settings often outperform peers due to the motivational power of emotional engagement, and Smaali Bouhlila and Hentati (2024) found that a strong sense of belonging correlates positively with consistent effort at  $r = 0.45$ , illustrating how emotional engagement acts as the foundation for the broader engagement spectrum. The high overall engagement levels therefore suggest that ALIVE classes not only support academic achievement but also promote character development and culturally grounded participation among Muslim learners at Ong Yiu Elementary School.

#### Level of academic achievement among Muslim learners in ALIVE classes

The level of academic achievement among Muslim learners was determined using the learners' average grades in ALIVE classes at Ong Yiu Elementary School for the school year 2024–2025, with grades interpreted according to the DepEd grading framework. Across all six grade levels, the performance of learners was consistently classified at the Satisfactory level, corresponding to passing grades within the range of 75 to 89.

Grade 1 learners obtained a mean grade of 81.81 with a standard deviation of 5.65, interpreted as Satisfactory. Grade 2 learners yielded a mean of 81.36 with a standard deviation of 4.72, also Satisfactory. Grade 3 produced a mean of 81.14 with a standard deviation of 4.64, Satisfactory, and Grade 4 yielded a mean of 81.08 with a standard deviation of 4.46, similarly Satisfactory. Grade 5 learners recorded the lowest mean among all grade levels at 80.42 with a standard deviation of 3.00, Satisfactory, while Grade 6 learners obtained the highest mean at 82.46 with a standard deviation of 3.26, also Satisfactory. The overall mean for all grade levels combined was 81.38, with a standard deviation of 4.29, corresponding to the Satisfactory level of academic achievement.

The consistent placement of all grade levels within the Satisfactory range indicates that Muslim learners in ALIVE classes are meeting core curriculum requirements in Arabic Language and Islamic Values education and have developed a foundational grasp of essential concepts. The slight upward trend from Grade 5 to Grade 6, as reflected in the higher mean of 82.46 at Grade 6 compared to the mean of 80.42 at Grade 5, suggests that familiarity with course content may increase gradually across grade levels, though the moderate standard deviation of 4.29 reveals variation across individual learners, with some achieving higher levels while others remain closer to the lower bound of the Satisfactory range. This variation points to differences in home reinforcement, degree of prior exposure to Arabic language and Islamic studies, and the regularity of ALIVE class participation as contributing factors.

Abdulsamad and Gallego (2025) found that ALIVE learners who engage actively in reflective and group-based activities tend to reach satisfactory to very satisfactory grade levels, but that traditional instructional methods alone may constrain further progress without supplementary support such as peer-based learning activities and updated instructional materials. Montasir (2025) further found that parental involvement and tailored teaching in Islamic studies directly improve grades by 10 to 15%, particularly when families reinforce lessons through daily values discussions, suggesting that home-school linkages are a meaningful factor in the academic performance of learners in faith-based programs. Balayanan and Lumapenet (2024) noted that resource shortages and policy implementation challenges in ALIVE programs contribute to mid-range academic outcomes, but that upgrading facilities and strengthening teacher professional development could advance more learners toward higher achievement levels.

The Satisfactory performance observed across all grade levels also reflects the structural realities of ALIVE implementation in Philippine public elementary schools, where allocated class time is often limited relative to core subjects, leaving Asatidz to manage diverse readiness levels with minimal instructional resources. Language transition from learners' home dialects to Arabic adds an additional layer of difficulty that, without dedicated immersion and reinforcement, can slow progress in both literacy and content comprehension. Harad and Arriola (2022) found that diverse school settings amplify these structural challenges, with small Muslim learner groups sometimes experiencing forms of social isolation that diminish motivation, though targeted interventions such as mentorship networks and peer support have been shown to raise average performance by directly addressing these barriers. Ontok-Balah (2023) similarly identified historical and resource-related strains in ALIVE implementation as contributing to satisfactory but uneven academic results, recommending community partnerships as a mechanism for leveling the playing field and reducing absenteeism. Ileiwat (2023) further observed that culturally attuned teaching in Islamic schools builds emotional investment that eases participation barriers and improves learner performance. The Satisfactory academic achievement documented in this study therefore reflects a baseline of competence that is meaningful and policy-aligned, while simultaneously identifying clear pathways for improvement through enriched instruction, stronger family and community engagement, and continued professional development for Asatidz.

### Significant relationship between student engagement and academic achievement

To determine whether there was a significant relationship between the level of student engagement and the academic achievement of Muslim learners in ALIVE classes at Ong Yiu Elementary School, the null hypothesis of no significant relationship was tested using the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient at a 5% level of significance, with a degree of freedom of 98, derived from a sample of 100 respondents.

The computed Pearson correlation coefficient was  $r = 0.8934$ . The critical value of  $r$  at the same significance level and degree of freedom was 0.197. Since the computed  $r$  of 0.8934 substantially exceeds the critical  $r$  of 0.197, the null hypothesis is rejected. This indicates a strong, positive, and statistically significant relationship between student engagement and academic achievement among Muslim learners in ALIVE classes at Ong Yiu Elementary School. The rejection of the null hypothesis confirms that the observed association is unlikely to be attributable to random chance at the 5% level of significance. The strength of the correlation at  $r = 0.8934$  further suggests that variations in student engagement account for a very large portion of the variance in academic achievement among these learners.

This finding aligns with contemporary research demonstrating that higher engagement across behavioral, emotional, and cognitive dimensions is a strong predictor of academic success. Guo et al. (2025) reported that student engagement including active participation and collaborative learning is positively associated with academic performance across diverse educational settings. Anyichie et al. (2023) found that integrating self-regulated learning strategies with culturally responsive practices significantly enhances engagement and academic performance among culturally diverse K-12 learners, confirming that engagement not only improves learning outcomes but also mitigates achievement gaps for underrepresented student populations. Lei et al. (2023) conducted a meta-analysis highlighting consistent positive links between culturally and contextually relevant engagement and academic achievement, with effect sizes reaching as high as  $r = 0.65$ , a finding particularly relevant for the ALIVE program where lessons incorporate Islamic values, Arabic language skills, and culturally responsive pedagogy to foster meaningful participation. Guo (2025) and Anyichie et al. (2023) collectively affirm that supportive learning environments aligned with students' cultural and religious backgrounds amplify both emotional and cognitive investment, leading to stronger academic outcomes.

The strong positive correlation of  $r = 0.8934$  at  $p < 0.05$  between student engagement and academic achievement underscores the critical importance of promoting emotional, cognitive, and behavioral involvement in culturally responsive ALIVE classrooms. When learners perceive that their identities and experiences are acknowledged and integrated into instruction, they are more motivated to participate, invest cognitive effort, and sustain positive behavioral habits. These findings suggest that targeted interventions such as enhanced teacher-student collaboration, faith-based learning activities, and community engagement programs could further strengthen engagement and, consequently, academic performance among Muslim learners at Ong Yiu Elementary School.

Facilitating and hindering factors influencing the educational experiences of Muslim learners in ALIVE classes

The facilitating and hindering factors that influence the educational experiences of Muslim learners in their ALIVE classes at Ong Yiu Elementary School were identified through thematic analysis of learners' responses to open-ended questions that explored aspects of ALIVE classes perceived as helpful or challenging.

Facilitating factors

Three major facilitating themes emerged from the data.

The first facilitating theme is the Ustadh's supportive demeanor and effective teaching. This theme highlights the role of the Ustadh's kindness, clarity of instruction, and respectful communication in facilitating learners' emotional comfort and academic engagement. Learners consistently described their Ustadh as kind, approachable, and effective in teaching, which helped them feel safe and motivated to participate. Participant 1 expressed that the Ustadh is kind, while Participant 2 shared that the Ustadh treats them well and shows kindness toward them. Participant 3 noted that the Ustadh teaches effectively, and Participant 4 described the Ustadh as having a pleasant voice who teaches them very well. These responses are consistent with recent research indicating that a teacher's supportive demeanor, clear communication, and ability to create a positive classroom atmosphere directly enhance learners' emotional and behavioral engagement (Nguyen and Tran, 2024; Al-Mekhlafi, 2020). In the context of Ong Yiu Elementary School, the Ustadh's demeanor appears to play a central role in sustaining learners' interest and willingness to engage.

The second facilitating theme is engaging activities and content. Participants frequently mentioned enjoying listening to lessons, reading activities, Qur'an reading, and learning to write and read Arabic, activities perceived as enjoyable and meaningful because they directly relate to the learners' religious identity and daily practices. Participant 5 stated enjoyment in listening attentively when the Ustadh is teaching, while Participant 6 expressed appreciation for opportunities to read in class. Participant 7 described enjoying reading the Qur'an, and Participant 8 highlighted that the Ustadh teaches them to write and read in Arabic. These responses indicate that interactive and content-focused activities enhance cognitive engagement by allowing learners to actively process information rather than passively receive it. García and Kim (2021) affirmed that interactive instruction and culturally relevant content significantly enhance cognitive engagement and motivation among learners in faith-based educational settings, and the activities observed in ALIVE classes at Ong Yiu Elementary School reflect exactly this dynamic.

The third facilitating theme is a conducive learning environment. Learners expressed appreciation for having a proper classroom, armchairs, and Qur'an materials, which made them feel comfortable and ready to learn. Participant 9 expressed appreciation for the classroom environment, specifically mentioning the armchairs and the Qur'an used in class. A supportive and well-resourced learning environment contributes to learners' comfort and readiness to learn, as Chen and Zhang (2023) noted, thereby enhancing overall engagement and sense of belonging. In the ALIVE classrooms of Ong Yiu Elementary School, the availability of these basic resources contributes to learners' positive attitudes toward learning and supports sustained participation.

### Hindering factors

Four significant hindering themes were identified from the data.

The first hindering theme is instructional pace and clarity. Learners reported difficulties with the speed and clarity of instruction, noting that lessons were sometimes delivered too quickly or that explanations were at times confusing. Participant 1 described the Ustadh as teaching too fast, Participant 2 expressed occasional confusion about what the Ustadh is teaching, and Participant 3 noted that the Ustadh speaks very fast. These responses indicate that rapid instructional pacing can hinder cognitive engagement, particularly for learners who require more time to process Arabic language concepts. Al-Mekhlafi (2020) emphasized that fast pacing and unclear explanations can limit understanding and reduce learner engagement, especially in second-language and religious education contexts.

The second hindering theme is language and literacy challenges in Arabic. Learners reported difficulties in understanding, reading, and writing Arabic, which affected their confidence and participation during lessons. Participant 4 described difficulty in understanding and writing in Arabic, and Participant 5 stated difficulty in reading Arabic. These language barriers hinder cognitive engagement by preventing learners from fully interacting with lesson content, and when such challenges persist, frustration and reduced motivation may develop, negatively influencing both engagement and academic achievement. Johnson and Smith (2022) and Rodriguez and Davis (2023) affirmed that language and literacy challenges directly impede learners' academic participation and comprehension, particularly in content-heavy subjects such as Arabic and Islamic studies.

The third hindering theme is a lack of resources and support materials. Learners noted the limited availability of instructional resources such as books and audiovisual materials. Participant 6 expressed that there are no television or books available. This resource limitation constrains instructional strategies and reduces opportunities for varied and interactive learning experiences, thereby limiting learners' exposure to multimodal learning. Chen and Zhang (2023) emphasized that inadequate learning resources restrict student engagement and instructional effectiveness, a finding directly relevant to the resource conditions described by learners at Ong Yiu Elementary School.

The fourth hindering theme is classroom disruptions and demanding tasks. Learners reported feeling fatigued by lengthy writing tasks in Arabic, distracted by talkative classmates, and challenged by language barriers related to the Maranao language used during instruction. Participant 7 shared experiencing tiredness when asked to write long Arabic passages. Participant 8 described an inability to enjoy class because of talkative classmates, and Participant 9 expressed difficulty understanding the Maranao language. Lee and Wang (2020) and Williams and Brown (2022) confirmed that classroom disruptions such as excessive talking significantly affect student concentration and behavioral engagement. Tasks perceived as overly lengthy or difficult, when compounded by language barriers in the medium of instruction, further contribute to cognitive fatigue and diminished motivation, negatively affecting engagement across all three dimensions.

#### **Proposed strategies to enhance student engagement and academic achievement**

Based on the findings of the study, a feasible and contextually responsive strategy to enhance student engagement and improve academic achievement among Muslim learners in ALIVE classes at Ong Yiu Elementary School is the establishment of a community-based collaborative program bridging school, home, and mosque support. This proposed intervention, titled the ALIVE Community Partnership Program, is grounded in the actual challenges identified during data collection, including limited instructional materials, language barriers, fast-paced instruction, and insufficient reinforcement of learning outside the classroom. The program is designed to address observed hindering factors directly while building on the facilitating conditions already present, rather than relying exclusively on the availability of external organizations. It remains school-centered, with parents and Asatidz leading implementation, and is designed to benefit from the guidance and support of the National Commission on Muslim Filipinos as well as all legitimate Muslim organizations to ensure cultural appropriateness, sustainability, and direct relevance to the learners' needs. By bridging classroom instruction with home, mosque, and community support, the ALIVE Community Partnership Program aims to strengthen behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement simultaneously while creating the conditions necessary to elevate academic achievement from

its current Satisfactory level toward higher performance outcomes among Muslim learners at Ong Yiu Elementary School.

The findings presented across this chapter collectively establish a clear and empirically grounded account of student engagement and academic achievement among Muslim learners in ALIVE classes at Ong Yiu Elementary School for the school year 2024–2025. The quantitative data revealed that learners demonstrated a Very High Level of emotional engagement, with a mean of 4.37 ( $SD = 0.52$ ), and High Levels of both cognitive engagements, with a mean of 3.63 ( $SD = 0.67$ ), and behavioral engagement, with a mean of 3.68 ( $SD = 0.63$ ), yielding an overall engagement mean of 3.89 ( $SD = 0.60$ ), also interpreted as High. Academic achievement across all six grade levels was consistently Satisfactory, with an overall mean grade of 81.38 ( $SD = 4.29$ ). The Pearson correlation analysis produced a computed  $r$  of 0.8934, which substantially exceeded the critical  $r$  of 0.197 at the 5% level of significance with a degree of freedom of 98, resulting in the rejection of the null hypothesis and confirming a strong, positive, and statistically significant relationship between student engagement and academic achievement. The qualitative thematic analysis further enriched these findings by identifying three facilitating factors, namely the Ustadh's supportive demeanor and effective teaching, engaging and culturally relevant activities, and a conducive learning environment, alongside four hindering factors, namely rapid instructional pacing, language and literacy challenges in Arabic, limited instructional resources, and classroom disruptions combined with demanding tasks. These quantitative and qualitative findings together provide a comprehensive and empirically defensible basis for the proposed ALIVE Community Partnership Program, and they contribute meaningful evidence to the body of literature on Muslim learner engagement and faith-based education in the Philippine elementary school context. The conclusions and recommendations presented in the succeeding chapter of this study are grounded in the totality of the findings discussed herein.

## CONCLUSION

This study examined student engagement and academic achievement among Muslim learners enrolled in the Arabic Language and Islamic Values Education program at Ong Yiu Elementary School, with the aim of understanding the relationship between these two dimensions and identifying the factors that either facilitated or hindered learner engagement in ALIVE classes. The investigation further sought to propose an intervention program responsive to the identified challenges and opportunities within the learning context.

The findings of the study revealed that Muslim learners in ALIVE classes demonstrated high levels of engagement across all three dimensions of the multidimensional framework, namely emotional, cognitive, and behavioral engagement. Emotional engagement was particularly strong, characterized by learners' enjoyment of lessons, their respect for the Asatidz, and their sense of belonging within the classroom community. Cognitive and behavioral engagement likewise reflected active participation, critical thinking, and the consistent application of knowledge during instruction. These findings affirm that the current teaching strategies and classroom environment effectively resonate with learners' cultural and religious identities, fostering conditions conducive to meaningful participation and deeper involvement in the learning process.

In terms of academic achievement, Muslim learners at Ong Yiu Elementary School attained an average score of 81.42 in ALIVE subjects, classified as satisfactory according to DepEd standards. While this performance reflects foundational mastery of curriculum content and signals that basic learning expectations are being met, it simultaneously reveals considerable room for improvement. Satisfactory performance, though indicative of a stable

foundation, underscores the need for targeted initiatives designed to deepen and sustain engagement across all dimensions so that high levels of learner involvement may be more fully translated into higher levels of academic mastery.

A significant positive correlation was established between student engagement and academic achievement, lending empirical support to the Multidimensional Model of Student Engagement advanced by Fredricks and colleagues. Among the three engagement dimensions, behavioral engagement emerged as the strongest predictor of academic performance in ALIVE subjects, followed by cognitive and then emotional engagement. The influence of culturally responsive instruction and the supportive presence of the Asatidz further enhanced emotional engagement, reflecting the principles of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy as articulated by Gay and Ladson-Billings, and affirming the critical role of identity-affirming teaching in promoting holistic academic success among Muslim learners.

The study also identified a range of facilitating and hindering factors that shaped the quality of learner engagement in ALIVE classes. Engagement was positively supported by the Asatidz's encouraging instructional approach, the incorporation of meaningful activities such as Qur'an reading and Arabic literacy tasks, and a classroom environment that fostered comfort and a sense of cultural and religious belonging. These elements collectively affirmed learners' identities and strengthened their emotional, cognitive, and behavioral investment in learning. Conversely, engagement was impeded by fast instructional pacing, difficulties in comprehending Arabic and Maranao, limited availability of learning materials, and classroom distractions that disrupted learners' focus and diminished their enjoyment of lessons. Addressing these persistent challenges requires more adaptive instructional pacing, expanded access to culturally relevant learning resources, and inclusive classroom approaches that are responsive to the linguistic and cultural diversity of Muslim learners.

In conclusion, Muslim learners in ALIVE classes consistently exhibit high engagement across all dimensions, and this engagement bears a meaningful and significant relationship with their academic outcomes. While foundational mastery has been established, the satisfactory level of achievement reflects the need for sustained and targeted efforts to move learners toward higher levels of academic proficiency. The convergence of strong engagement, a supportive teaching environment, and culturally affirming instruction provides a solid basis upon which more ambitious academic goals can be pursued. At the same time, the persistence of structural and instructional challenges calls for coordinated responses that go beyond the classroom and engage the broader community of stakeholders surrounding Muslim learners.

Toward this end, the ALIVE Community Partnership Program is recommended as a structured intervention to further enhance engagement and academic achievement at Ong Yiu Elementary School. By fostering active collaboration among Asatidz, parents, Imams, community volunteers, and the National Commission on Muslim Filipinos, the program integrates Qur'an reading, Arabic practice, and culturally relevant enrichment activities into a coherent support structure that addresses the identified challenges while reinforcing motivation, participation, and holistic learning. For Muslim learners from Grades 1 through 6, active participation in Qur'an recitation, Arabic practice, and classroom discussions is encouraged, with grade-appropriate strategies such as daily flashcards or songs for younger learners and weekly bilingual journaling for older students to strengthen skills and support improved performance. Asatidz are encouraged to engage in professional development and Learning Action Cell sessions to build capacity in differentiated and culturally responsive instruction, incorporating slower pacing, visual aids, scaffolded exercises, and digital tools to reinforce learning outcomes. Parents and community members are called upon to support home-based reinforcement and to participate actively in community partnership sessions, with

Imams and NCMF representatives contributing to volunteer-led workshops that sustain learner motivation beyond the classroom. School administrators are urged to allocate the necessary resources, facilitate ongoing teacher training, and oversee the implementation of bi-monthly community partnership activities, while monitoring academic progress through pre- and post-assessments designed to elevate achievement from satisfactory to higher performance levels. Finally, future researchers are encouraged to examine the long-term impact of grade-specific interventions and community-based partnerships on engagement, academic achievement, and socio-emotional development, as well as to conduct comparative studies of best practices across different regional contexts to further enrich the knowledge base surrounding ALIVE education in the Philippine setting.

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