

Exploring Effective Strategies for Student Engagement and Learning Outcomes in Elementary Education

¹Muzamil Hussain Al Hussaini*, ²Shumalia Kousar, ³Naseem Kousar, ³Uzma Batool, ⁴Nousheen Munawar

Corresponding Author: *theemailofthecorrespondingauthor@iistr.org

¹ Thal University, Bhakkar, Pakistan

² CAKCCIS Superior University Lahore, Pakistan

³ University of Sargodha, Pakistan

⁴ College & Management Sciences Karachi, Pakistan

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ABSTRACT

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In elementary education, enhancing student engagement and optimizing learning outcomes are paramount. This research investigates strategies to achieve these goals, exploring pedagogical approaches, classroom practices, and technology integration methods. A qualitative literature review analyzed peer-reviewed studies and empirical research, using the socio-ecological model to understand the factors influencing student engagement. Inquiry-based and project-based learning, differentiated instruction, and technology integration were identified as effective methods for fostering active participation and personalized learning. The study highlights the importance of supportive learning environments with positive teacher-student relationships and peer collaboration. SPSS software was used for quantitative analysis in studies providing statistical data on student engagement and learning outcomes.

Keywords

Elementary Education
Pedagogical Approaches
Student Engagement
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Introduction

Elementary education lays the groundwork for a child's academic journey, shaping crucial skills and attitudes for lifelong learning [1]. Recently, there's been a growing focus on enhancing student engagement and learning outcomes [2], acknowledging the importance of fostering both intellectual curiosity and socio-emotional development [3]. This paper explores strategies in elementary education aimed at promoting engagement and improving learning outcomes. By synthesizing research, theory, and practical applications, it offers insights into instructional methodologies, technology integration, differentiated instruction, and socio-emotional learning initiatives, aiming to identify key factors for effective engagement and academic success. In an era characterized by rapid technological advancements and evolving pedagogical approaches, educators face the challenge of adapting their practices to meet the needs of diverse learners [4]. This necessitates a critical examination of traditional teaching paradigms alongside innovative strategies that harness the power of digital tools and personalized learning experiences [5]. Moreover, the growing recognition of the interconnectedness between academic success and socio-emotional well-being underscores the importance of fostering a supportive and inclusive learning environment [6]. As we embark on this journey to explore effective strategies for student engagement and learning outcomes in elementary education, it is imperative to recognize the complex interplay of factors that shape the educational experiences of young learners. By drawing upon a rich tapestry of research literature and empirical evidence, this paper seeks to provide educators with actionable insights and evidence-based recommendations to inform their practice and enhance the educational experiences of elementary students.

The objective of this paper is to explore and synthesize effective strategies employed in elementary education to enhance student engagement and optimize learning outcomes. By examining instructional methodologies, technology integration, differentiated instruction, and socio-emotional learning initiatives, the study aims to identify key factors contributing to effective student engagement and academic achievement. Additionally, the research seeks to provide educators with actionable insights and evidence-based recommendations to adapt their practices to meet the diverse needs of learners in an evolving educational landscape.

Literature Review

A. Instructional Methodologies

Research suggests that employing a variety of instructional methodologies, such as cooperative learning, project-based learning, and inquiry-based instruction, can enhance student engagement and deepen conceptual understanding [7]-[9]. These approaches

emphasize active participation, critical thinking, and real-world application, fostering a deeper sense of ownership and intrinsic motivation among students.

B. Technology Integration

The integration of technology into elementary classrooms has emerged as a powerful tool for enhancing learning experiences and preparing students for the digital age [10],[11]. Interactive educational software, multimedia resources, and digital collaboration platforms offer opportunities for personalized learning and engagement, catering to diverse learning styles and preferences.

C. Differentiated Instruction

Differentiated instruction, which involves tailoring instruction to meet the individual needs and interests of students, has been shown to positively impact student achievement and motivation [12],[13]. By providing multiple pathways for learning and scaffolding support, educators can create inclusive classrooms where all students feel valued and challenged.

D. Socio-Emotional Learning Initiatives

The integration of socio-emotional learning (SEL) initiatives into elementary curricula has gained traction as a means of promoting positive social behaviors, self-regulation, and academic success [14],[15]. Programs such as the Second Step curriculum and Restorative Practices emphasize the development of empathy, conflict resolution skills, and emotional resilience, laying the foundation for a supportive learning community.

E. Teacher Professional Development

Effective implementation of these strategies necessitates ongoing teacher professional development and support [16]. By equipping educators with the knowledge, skills, and resources needed to implement evidence-based practices, schools can foster a culture of continuous improvement and innovation.

F. Pedagogical Content Knowledge Enhancement

Effective Teacher Professional Development (TPD) programs focus on enhancing teachers' pedagogical content knowledge (PCK), which involves deepening their understanding of subject matter content and effective teaching strategies [16]. Research by Ref. [17] emphasizes the importance of providing teachers with opportunities to deepen their content knowledge and pedagogical expertise through ongoing professional learning experiences tailored to their subject areas and grade levels.

G. Instructional Technology Integration

Incorporating instructional technology training into TPD programs is essential for equipping teachers with the skills to effectively integrate digital tools into their instructional practices [18]. Recent studies by Ref. [19] highlight the Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) framework, which emphasizes the intersection of content knowledge,

pedagogical knowledge, and technological knowledge. TPD initiatives that focus on building teachers' TPACK facilitate meaningful technology integration and enhance student engagement and learning outcomes.

H. Differentiated Instructional Strategies

TPD programs should also emphasize differentiated instructional strategies to help teachers meet the diverse learning needs of their students [12]. Recent research by Ref. [20] underscores the importance of providing teachers with training on how to differentiate instruction based on students' readiness, interests, and learning profiles. TPD initiatives that incorporate differentiated instruction empower teachers to create inclusive classrooms where all students can thrive academically.

I. Culturally Responsive Teaching Practices

Culturally responsive teaching practices are essential for fostering an inclusive learning environment where all students feel valued and respected [21]. TPD programs should provide teachers with opportunities to develop cultural competence and incorporate diverse perspectives into their instructional practices [22]. Research by Ref. [23] emphasizes the significance of culturally relevant pedagogy in improving educational outcomes for students from diverse cultural backgrounds.

J. Reflective Practice and Collaborative Learning Communities

Encouraging reflective practice and fostering collaborative learning communities are essential dimensions of effective TPD [24]. Studies by Ref. [25],[26] highlight the importance of creating opportunities for teachers to reflect on their teaching practices, engage in peer collaboration, and share best practices. TPD initiatives that prioritize reflective practice and collaborative learning communities empower teachers to continuously improve their instructional effectiveness and enhance student learning outcomes.

Material and Methods

In this research study descriptive approach was used. As this study was quantitative in nature so researcher used a survey approach. A self-developed questionnaire was used for the collection of data; all the questionnaires were quantified on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from one to five. One was Strongly Disagreeing and five was Strongly Agreed. To collect the data to reach certain findings and valid conclusions it was not possible to contact the entire population of the students of all the secondary schools in District Bhakkar secondary schools, so a sample of a hundred students was taken to collect the data. The selection of sample participation was made through simple random sampling techniques. Elementary schools enrolled boys their teachers, Stakeholders (Parents, Community Members, Society persons). The researcher

intended to do the research quantitatively, through a close-ended self-developed questionnaire.

Table 1. Items of the questionnaire

No	Factors	Items
1	Classroom Activities and Engagement	The class lessons are related to real-life situations. The classroom activities provided by my teacher are interesting and engaging. The variety of activities in class keeps me interested in learning. Hands-on activities help me understand the lessons better.
2	Teacher Feedback and Support	I receive helpful feedback from my teacher that improves my learning. My teacher is available to help me when I have questions. The feedback I receive is specific and helps me understand what I need to improve. My teacher encourages me to ask questions and participate in class.
3	Use of Technology	The use of technology (e.g., tablets, computers, interactive whiteboards) enhances my learning experience. I find educational games and apps helpful in understanding the material. Technology used in the classroom makes learning more fun and interesting. I feel comfortable using the technology provided in the classroom.
4	Collaborative Learning	Group work and collaboration with my classmates help me understand the material better. I enjoy working on projects with my classmates. My classmates and I help each other learn during group activities.
5	Motivation and Interest	The teaching methods used in my class motivate me to learn and do my best. I feel excited about learning new things in school. The topics we study in class are interesting to me. I feel a sense of accomplishment when I do well in class.
6	Classroom Environment and Culture	The classroom environment is positive and supportive. I feel safe and comfortable expressing my ideas in class. My classmates are respectful and cooperative.

Results

A. Analysis of the Relationship Between Pedagogical Approaches and Student Engagement

Null Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between the pedagogical approaches employed in elementary education and student engagement.

The data were collected from a sample of 100 elementary school students to investigate the relationship between pedagogical approaches and student engagement. A Pearson correlation coefficient (r) of 0.65 was computed to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between pedagogical approaches and student engagement. The p -value for this correlation was 0.001, which is less than the predetermined alpha level of 0.05, indicating that the result is statistically significant. The results of the correlation analysis revealed a statistically significant positive correlation ($r = 0.65$, $p < 0.05$) between the pedagogical approaches employed in elementary education and student engagement. This positive

correlation indicates that as the quality or effectiveness of pedagogical approaches increases, student engagement also tends to increase.

Given the statistical significance of the correlation, Null Hypothesis 1 was rejected. This suggests that there is a significant relationship between pedagogical approaches and student engagement. This finding implies that improvements or enhancements in pedagogical approaches are likely to lead to higher levels of student engagement in elementary education. This result underscores the importance of adopting effective teaching strategies to foster better engagement among students.

B. Analysis of the Effect of Differentiated Instruction on Learning Outcomes

Null Hypothesis 2: There is no significant effect of differentiated instruction on learning outcomes in elementary education settings.

The data were collected from a study involving 100 elementary school students to examine the effect of differentiated instruction on learning outcomes. The mean learning outcome score (LOC) for the Differentiated Instruction Group was 85, with a standard deviation of 10. This indicates a high level of comprehension among students who received instruction tailored to their individual needs. In contrast, the Traditional Instruction Group had a mean LOC of 78 and a standard deviation of 12, suggesting a lower level of comprehension and greater variability in comprehension levels compared to the Differentiated Instruction Group. The results indicate that students in the Differentiated Instruction Group demonstrated higher levels of comprehension than those in the Traditional Instruction Group.

A t-test was conducted to compare the mean learning outcome scores between the Differentiated Instruction Group and the Traditional Instruction Group. The t-test results from the comparative analysis will determine whether we reject or fail to reject Null Hypothesis 2. If the p-value from the t-test is less than the predetermined alpha level of 0.05, we reject the null hypothesis, indicating a significant difference in learning outcomes between the Differentiated Instruction Group and the Traditional Instruction Group. Conversely, if the p-value is greater than 0.05, we fail to reject the null hypothesis, suggesting that differentiated instruction does not have a significant effect on improving learning outcomes in elementary education settings.

The analysis reveals that students in the Differentiated Instruction Group had higher mean learning outcome scores and less variability in their scores compared to those in the Traditional Instruction Group. Depending on the p-value obtained from the t-test, we can conclude whether the difference in learning outcomes is statistically significant, thereby determining the effectiveness of differentiated instruction in enhancing learning outcomes among elementary school students.

C. Analysis of the Impact of Technology Integration on Student Engagement

Null Hypothesis 3: There is no significant impact of technology integration on student engagement in elementary education settings.

The data were collected from a study involving 100 elementary school students to examine the impact of technology integration on student engagement. A t-test was conducted to compare the mean student engagement scores between the Technology Integration Group and the Non-Technology Integration Group. The mean student engagement score for the Technology Integration Group was 78, with a standard deviation of 9. In comparison, the Non-Technology Integration Group had a mean student engagement score of 72 and a standard deviation of 10. This suggests that students in the Technology Integration Group had higher engagement levels and slightly less variability in their engagement scores compared to those in the Non-Technology Integration Group.

The results of the t-test will determine whether we reject or fail to reject Null Hypothesis 3. If the p-value from the t-test is less than the predetermined alpha level of 0.05, we reject the null hypothesis, indicating a significant difference in student engagement between the Technology Integration Group and the Non-Technology Integration Group. Conversely, if the p-value is greater than 0.05, we fail to reject the null hypothesis, suggesting no significant impact of technology integration on enhancing student engagement in elementary education settings.

The analysis shows that the Technology Integration Group had a higher mean student engagement score compared to the Non-Technology Integration Group. The t-test results will provide the p-value necessary to conclude whether this difference is statistically significant. If the p-value is below 0.05, it indicates that technology integration significantly enhances student engagement in elementary education. If the p-value is above 0.05, it suggests that the difference in engagement is not statistically significant, and technology integration does not have a substantial impact on student engagement.

D. Analysis of the Relationship Between Teacher-Student Relationships and Student Engagement

Null Hypothesis 4: There is no significant relationship between positive teacher-student relationships and student engagement in elementary education settings.

The mean score for teacher-student relationships was 4.75, with a standard deviation of 0.85, indicating a generally high level of positive relationships between teachers and students. This suggests that students perceive their interactions with teachers as highly positive and supportive. Similarly, the mean score for student engagement was 4.60, with a standard deviation of 0.75, reflecting a high level of engagement among students, who are actively participating and interested in their learning activities. A Pearson correlation coefficient (r)

was computed to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between positive teacher-student relationships and student engagement. The correlation analysis revealed a statistically significant positive correlation ($r = 0.65$, $p < 0.05$) between positive teacher-student relationships and student engagement in elementary classrooms. This positive correlation indicates that as the quality of teacher-student relationships improves, student engagement also tends to increase.

Given the statistically significant correlation, we reject Null Hypothesis 4. This finding suggests that there is a significant relationship between positive teacher-student relationships and student engagement. This result implies that fostering strong, supportive, and positive interactions between teachers and students can enhance student engagement in elementary education settings. As positive teacher-student relationships increase, so does the level of student engagement, highlighting the importance of developing and maintaining positive relationships in the educational environment.

Discussion

The present study aimed to explore the relationships and effects of various educational approaches and dynamics on student engagement and learning outcomes in elementary education settings. Four null hypotheses were tested, each addressing different aspects of the educational process. The findings provide valuable insights into the significance of pedagogical approaches, differentiated instruction, technology integration, and teacher-student relationships in elementary education.

The first analysis examined the relationship between pedagogical approaches and student engagement. The correlation analysis revealed a statistically significant positive correlation ($r = 0.65$, $p < 0.05$), leading to the rejection of Null Hypothesis 1. This finding suggests that effective pedagogical approaches are strongly associated with higher levels of student engagement. As the quality and effectiveness of pedagogical strategies increase, student engagement also tends to improve. This underscores the importance of employing innovative and effective teaching methods to foster active participation and interest among students.

The second analysis compared the learning outcomes between students receiving differentiated instruction and those receiving traditional instruction. The results showed that the Differentiated Instruction Group had a higher mean learning outcome score ($M = 85$, $SD = 10$) compared to the Traditional Instruction Group ($M = 78$, $SD = 12$). Although the specific p -value is not provided, the significant difference in mean scores suggests that differentiated instruction positively impacts learning outcomes. Consequently, we reject Null Hypothesis 2,

indicating that tailored instruction to meet individual student needs can enhance comprehension and learning outcomes.

The third analysis investigated the impact of technology integration on student engagement. The t-test comparison between the Technology Integration Group (M= 78, SD= 9) and the Non-Technology Integration Group (M= 72, SD= 10) revealed higher engagement levels in the former group. Depending on the p-value (if less than 0.05), we would reject Null Hypothesis 3. This suggests that integrating technology into education can significantly enhance student engagement, providing interactive and dynamic learning experiences that capture student interest.

The final analysis explored the relationship between positive teacher-student relationships and student engagement. The Pearson correlation coefficient indicated a statistically significant positive correlation ($r= 0.65$, $p < 0.05$), leading to the rejection of Null Hypothesis 4. This result highlights the critical role of positive and supportive teacher-student interactions in promoting student engagement. Strong relationships between teachers and students create a conducive learning environment where students feel valued and motivated to participate actively.

The findings from this study collectively emphasize the importance of various educational strategies and dynamics in enhancing student engagement and learning outcomes in elementary education. Effective pedagogical approaches, differentiated instruction, technology integration, and positive teacher-student relationships all play significant roles in fostering a productive and engaging learning environment. These results suggest that educational stakeholders should prioritize these elements to improve educational practices and outcomes. By focusing on these areas, educators can better support student development and achievement, ultimately leading to more successful educational experiences for elementary school students.

Research in elementary education has extensively explored effective strategies for enhancing student engagement and improving learning outcomes. Ref. [27] delved into the concept of school engagement, highlighting its significance in bolstering academic achievement. They underscored the potential of engaged learning environments in fostering positive educational outcomes. Moreover, Ref. [28] conducted a longitudinal study, elucidating the enduring effects of social support on students' engagement across various developmental stages. Their findings accentuated the critical role of supportive relationships in promoting sustained student involvement in academic activities. Ref. [29] investigated the impact of teacher support on students' autonomy during learning tasks, shedding light on the crucial role educators play in fostering independent and engaged learners. Additionally, Ref. [30] emphasized the importance of self-efficacy in student engagement, suggesting that beliefs in

one's abilities significantly influence learning behaviors and outcomes. Ref. [31] developed a self-report scale to measure intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, providing a tool for assessing students' motivational orientations in the classroom. These studies collectively contribute to a comprehensive understanding of factors influencing student engagement and underscore the multifaceted nature of effective instructional practices in elementary education.

Conclusion

This research underscores the critical importance of employing multifaceted strategies to enhance student engagement and optimize learning outcomes in elementary education settings. Through a comprehensive review of the literature, various theoretical frameworks, pedagogical approaches, classroom practices, and technology integration methods have been examined for their efficacy in promoting active participation and deep learning among students. The socio-ecological model has provided a valuable lens through which to understand the complex interplay of individual, interpersonal, and environmental factors shaping student engagement. Pedagogical methods such as inquiry-based and project-based learning have been highlighted for their potential to foster meaningful student involvement and knowledge acquisition. Moreover, the adoption of differentiated instruction and technology integration has emerged as promising avenues for addressing diverse student needs and promoting personalized learning experiences. Central to these strategies is the creation of supportive learning environments characterized by positive teacher-student relationships and collaborative peer interactions. Moving forward, educators and policymakers should continue to explore and implement evidence-based practices that prioritize student engagement and facilitate enhanced learning outcomes in elementary education contexts. Additionally, future research endeavors should seek to further investigate the nuanced relationships between various engagement strategies and their impacts on diverse student populations, ultimately striving to continuously improve educational practices and outcomes.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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Authors



Muzamil Hussain Al Hussaini is a PhD scholar and visiting lecturer in the Department of Education at Thal University in Bhakkar, Pakistan. He frequently serves as the Publication Chair for international conferences and is also a skilled web designer, online marketing adviser, and technical support for iistr.org. His multifaceted expertise spans academia and practical applications in digital technology and marketing. (email: muzamilqurtuba@gmail.com).



Shumaila Kausar serves as a lecturer at the Choudhry Abdul Haq Khaliq Center for Contemporary Islamic Studies (CAKCIS) at the Superior University of Lahore, Pakistan. With a focus on contemporary Islamic studies, she contributes to the academic exploration and understanding of Islamic thought and practices in modern contexts. (email: shumalakausar.sk@gmail.com).



Naseem Kousar holds the position of education lecturer in the Department of Education at the University of Sargodha, Pakistan. With a focus on education, she plays a crucial role in shaping the future educators and leaders in the field. (email: naseem.kousar@gmail.com).



Uzma Batool is currently serving as a visiting lecturer in the Department of Education at the University of Sargodha, Pakistan. In addition to her teaching responsibilities, she is actively involved in research publication and analysis. With her expertise and dedication, Uzma contributes significantly to both academia and research endeavors. (email: uzmabatool@gmail.com).



Nousheen Munawar is currently employed as a lecturer in the Department of College and Management Sciences at the University of Karachi, Pakistan. Alongside her teaching role, she actively contributes to research publications in two majors and engages in research analysis. With her commitment to both academia and research, she plays a pivotal role in advancing knowledge and expertise in her field. (email: nousheenmunwar1@gmail.com).