



American Journal of Interdisciplinary Research and Innovation (AJIRI)

ISSN: 2833-2237 (ONLINE)

VOLUME 4 ISSUE 2 (2025)

PUBLISHED BY
E-PALLI PUBLISHERS, DELAWARE, USA

Ethnic Identity, Academic Self-Concept, and Achievement of Blaan Learners Within the Municipality of Tampakan

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Article Information

Received: February 25, 2025

Accepted: March 28, 2025

Published: May 07, 2025

Keywords

Academic Achievement, Academic Self-Concept, Blaan Learners, Ethnic Identity

ABSTRACT

The study provided a deeper understanding of how ethnic identity and academic self-concept influence the academic outcomes of Blaan learners, offering implications for educational policies, culturally responsive teaching strategies, and student support programs. This study looked into the relationship of ethnic identity to academic self-concept and achievement of Blaan learners within the Municipality of Tampakan. As a descriptive-correlational study, this considered 241 full-blooded Blaan learners as respondents. The total enumeration was used as a sampling technique, assuming the population of full-blooded Blaan learners was manageable. The data were analyzed using the mean, standard deviation, and Pearson (r) product-moment correlation. Findings revealed that the overall ethnic identity of Blaan learners was established. Generally, the level of their academic self-concept was well-established. The majority of the Blaan learners in the four schools performed very satisfactorily. There was a significant relationship between ethnic identity and academic self-concept. Although ethnic identity was significantly related to academic achievement, the correlation was minimal. This suggests that other factors may have a greater influence. The primary concern regarding the ethnic identity of Blaan learners centers on the balance between cultural preservation and academic integration in a rapidly modernizing society.

INTRODUCTION

The development of ethnic identity is considered a key part of the overall self-development of minority children. Experts in child development have shown that the search for identity is a common experience for all teenagers, regardless of race or ethnicity. According to Erikson's research, teenagers between 12 and 18 explore their identity as they transition to adulthood. In a global context, Phinney (2007) argues that developing an ethnic identity is more complex for adolescents due to the unique social challenges they face at home, in their communities, and at school. Ethnic identity includes factors like how individuals view their ethnic group, how they see themselves, their importance in their ethnic group, and how they believe their ethnicity affects their social status (Chavous *et al.*, 2003).

Moreover, studying the ethnic identity of Blaan learners in Tampakan District is important because they face challenges in school. They often speak their native language at home, but schools mainly use Filipino or English, making it hard for them to understand lessons and participate. They may also face discrimination, which lowers their confidence and makes them doubt their abilities. It can lead to poor academic performance, as they might feel that education does not represent their identity. Additionally, exposure to different cultures at school can change their identity. They may adopt new values and slowly disconnect from their Blaan traditions to fit in. It shows the need for more research to support their education and help them feel accepted.

On the other hand, while there are available international

studies on how ethnic identity affects the academic success of indigenous students, studies that specifically focus on Blaan learners are still lacking. Most research doesn't consider the unique cultural and educational experiences of Blaan students in the Philippines. Because of this, we don't fully understand how being part of the Blaan community affects their confidence in school and their academic performance. This gap shows that more research is needed to better support Blaan students in their education.

In the Philippines, the Department of Education's (DepEd) Order No. 13 s. 2013 emphasizes "culture-based" education, integrating local and ethnic cultures into learning to promote inclusivity. This approach ensures students from different ethnic backgrounds feel respected and connected to their heritage, fostering a positive ethnic identity. Similarly, the Philippine Teachers Professionalization Act of 1994 (RA 7836) requires educators to respect students' diverse cultural backgrounds. Teachers should create an inclusive environment that values all identities, avoiding stereotypes or behaviors that marginalize ethnic minorities and promoting mutual respect and cultural pride. Also, the Philippine Heritage Law (RA 10066) promotes preserving the country's cultural heritage, emphasizing the importance of ethnic identity by protecting both the tangible and intangible heritage of Indigenous peoples and ethnic communities. It ensures that these identities are recognized, preserved, and passed down.

Thus, this study aims to understand how Blaan students' cultural identity affects their school confidence and

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academic performance. By studying these connections, the researcher hopes to identify the unique challenges and strengths of Blaans learners. This understanding can help create teaching methods and school policies that better support Blaans students and ensure their culture is respected and included in their education.

Statement of the Problem

This study determined the respondents' ethnic identity and the relationship of ethnic identity to academic self-concept and academic achievement of Blaans learners. It answered the following questions:

1. What is the level of ethnic identity of Blaans learners in the following subscales:
 - 1.1. affirmation/belonging;
 - 1.2. ethnic identity achievement;
 - 1.3. other group orientation;
 - 1.4. ethnic behaviors; and
 - 1.5. language expressions?
2. What is the level of academic self-concept of Blaans learners in the following dimensions:
 - 2.1. grade and effort;
 - 2.2. study habits/organizational self-perceptions;
 - 2.3. peer evaluation of academic ability;
 - 2.4. self-confidence in academics;
 - 2.5. satisfaction with school;
 - 2.6. self-doubt regarding ability and
 - 2.7. self-evaluation with external standards?
3. What is the level of academic achievement of Blaans learners in terms of the general weighted average?
4. Is there a significant relationship between ethnic identity and the academic self-concept of the Blaans learners?
5. Is there a significant relationship between ethnic identity and the academic achievement of the Blaans learners?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Ethnic identity is a key part of an individual's self-concept. It involves beliefs about membership in a specific ethnic group, self-identification, knowledge of cultural practices, and a sense of belonging. For Martin and Nakayama (2010), ethnic identity is a set of ideas about one's ethnic group membership involving self-identification, cultural knowledge, and a sense of belonging. Ethnic identity develops through group membership and engagement with shared traditions, shaping how individuals view themselves and interact with society.

Erikson's Identity Formation Theory

Furthermore, ethnic identity is closely tied to Erikson's (1963) identity formation theory and Tajfel's (1981) social identity theory. Erikson emphasizes that identity formation, especially during adolescence, involves exploration and commitment. Adolescents explore various aspects of their identity, including ethnic identity, as they learn about their sense of belonging. In Erikson's "identity vs. role confusion" stage, they consolidate their sense of self by comparing their self-perception with how others see them. This process helps form

a coherent identity, including ethnic identity, which provides a sense of belonging and shapes their overall identity. Similarly, Phinney (1992) views ethnic identity as a social identity developed through attachment to an ethnic group. Research shows that a strong ethnic identity positively correlates with self-esteem, particularly among adolescents from ethnic minority groups, fostering a positive self-concept.

Erikson's (1968) psychosocial development theory highlights that each stage presents a crisis that must be resolved for healthy growth. Failure to resolve these crises can lead to difficulties in later stages. As Miller (2002) notes, successfully navigating all eight stages results in a coherent identity. Each crisis shapes a well-rounded self-concept, emphasizing the importance of early development in forming one's lifelong psychological and social well-being. Erikson's eight-stage development model emphasizes adolescence and early adulthood as crucial for forming ego identity. He views identity creation as occurring at the intersection of the inner self and the broader cultural context. A cohesive identity emerges when an individual's self-concept aligns with how others perceive them. This alignment is key to developing a stable and authentic identity. Erikson also highlights the importance of support from social groups, such as social class, nationality, and culture, in providing continuity and aiding in developing a confident identity.

Phinney's Theory of Ethnic Identity Stages

Jean Phinney's model of ethnic identity, developed in 1989, is widely researched. Phinney (1996) describes the initial stage, unexamined ethnic identity, as lacking exploration into one's ethnic background. Individuals in this stage may show little interest in their ethnicity (diffusion) or accept others' beliefs without reflection (foreclosure). Typically observed in children or early adolescents, this stage involves low awareness of ethnicity as part of their self-concept. They adopt attitudes from their environment without deeper exploration, laying the groundwork for more active engagement with their ethnic identity later. In the second stage of Phinney's (1996) model, Ethnic Identity Search, individuals begin actively exploring their ethnic identity. This phase involves learning about their cultural heritage and traditions, often during adolescence. As they encounter diverse experiences and possibly discrimination, they develop a deeper interest in their ethnicity. This exploration fosters a greater appreciation for their cultural background and a stronger sense of belonging. This stage is crucial for forming a positive self-concept and deeper connection to their ethnic group. Ethnic Identity Achievement, the final stage in Phinney's (1996) model, reflects a strong, secure sense of ethnic identity. Individuals confidently navigate multiple cultural contexts with a deep sense of belonging to their ethnic group. They have a balanced understanding of their cultural background, fostering confidence and pride. People in this stage also tend to be more open and accepting of other cultural groups. According to Cross

(1991), individuals at this stage have likely resolved any resentment toward the majority group and can engage with different cultures more inclusively. It reflects a well-integrated and confident ethnic identity, marking the culmination of their development journey.

Berry's Model of Acculturation

An individual's ethnic behavior, including identity, is shaped by their cultural and political environment. Bernal and Knight (1993) highlighted that cross-cultural psychology focuses on how people develop differently within their cultures. The ecological approach suggests that various factors, like acculturation and long-term adaptation, influence individuals. Cultural transmission through enculturation and socialization plays a key role, with influences coming from institutions and adults (oblique), peers (horizontal), and parents (vertical).

Multicultural Theory suggests that positive ethnic identity and acceptance of other groups stem from pride and affirmation of one's ethnicity (Sue *et al.*, 1996). A strong ethnic identity fosters greater respect for other cultures. Fowers and Davidov (2006) describe multiculturalism as advocating for the equitable treatment of all cultural groups, emphasizing diversity as essential for enriching society. This approach values every group equally, promoting inclusivity, empathy, and a more respectful and harmonious society. Phinney *et al.* (1997) stated that adolescents with a more established sense of their ethnic identity tend to exhibit moderate openness and positive attitudes toward other ethnic groups. These individuals are more likely to engage in intergroup socialization, fostering cross-cultural interactions without losing connection to their heritage.

Academic Self-Concept

The study of self-concept, rooted in psychology and education, examines how social and academic roles affect emotional well-being. According to Vaughn *et al.* (2001), self-concept is vital for understanding how experiences influence one's emotional state and overall identity. It significantly impacts academic outcomes, reflecting an individual's comprehensive view of their surroundings and self-understanding developed through personal experiences. This self-perception influences motivation, performance, and psychological health, affecting how individuals engage with their academic and social roles.

Research, including a study by Kumari and Chamundeswari (2013), shows that scholastic self-concept strongly correlates with academic achievement, indicating that self-awareness influences students' behavior and performance. A well-developed self-concept can enhance motivation, boost confidence, and improve academic outcomes. Adler (1930) argued that a strong self-concept helps individuals set and achieve goals while fostering a positive outlook on life.

In addition, Zimmerman (2002) pointed out that students who take charge of their learning tend to do better in school. These students set clear goals and make a plan to

reach them. They continuously monitor their progress, identifying areas for improvement and making necessary adjustments along the way. Additionally, they strategically manage their time and resources, ensuring they prioritize tasks and use effective study techniques. Keeping track of their progress and staying focused, these students understand the material better, stay motivated and handle challenges more effectively. Moreover, Credé and Kuncel (2008) highlights in their study the important connection between students' study habits and their academic performance. The results suggest that students who develop structured study routines such as setting specific study times, organizing materials, and following a consistent schedule tend to achieve higher academic success.

Self-concept is a crucial factor influencing personal development and achievement. Psychologists have long established that a positive self-concept contributes significantly to success in various life areas. It encompasses the attributes, skills, and beliefs individuals associate with their identity (Berk, 2000). Gabriel *et al.* (2009) argue that a person's self-concept, which reflects their feelings about themselves, significantly shapes behavior and learning. Success or failure, academically and in life, hinges on individuals' perceptions of their traits and abilities. A student's self-perception is as crucial as their actual abilities. Positive self-perceptions can enhance motivation, engagement, and resilience, fostering academic and personal success, while negative self-perceptions can hinder performance and limit opportunities. Thus, fostering a positive self-concept is essential for optimizing student outcomes and promoting effective learning and achievement. Consequently, Kurtz and Puhr (2018) suggests that a well-developed academic self-concept positively impacts motivation, learning strategies, and overall academic performance. When students perceive themselves as competent, they are more likely to engage in academic tasks with confidence, persist through challenges, and take ownership of their learning. Conversely, a low academic self-concept may lead to decreased motivation and avoidance of difficult tasks.

Self-Worth Theory

The self-worth theory is the foundation of the self-concept, suggesting everyone can cultivate a positive self-image and sense of pride. Research indicates that students spend much time learning and are evaluated in school to develop their abilities (Covington, 2000). According to this theory, maintaining optimistic self-worth is essential for fostering voluntary learning and a positive academic self-concept. Students with this mindset show a positive attitude toward learning without competition. A cooperative learning environment benefits all students by helping them avoid academic failure and enhancing their self-awareness (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002).

Shavelson's Hierarchical Model of Self-Concept

Shavelson *et al.* (1976) provided the most extensively observed empirical model of self-concept, which they

called the Shavelson hierarchical model. The general self-concept aspect is positioned at the top of their model and is further divided into academic and non-academic self-concepts. The academic self-concept is divided into domains such as English, mathematics, and so forth. The three categories of non-academic self-concept are social (communal), emotional (expressive), and physical. These categories are further subdivided into specific and distinct dimensions and features. This model was highly appreciated at one point in time since it served as the foundation for the most significant subfields within self-concept. The model's self-concept constructs vary gradually from top to bottom. While each construct can be examined independently, all constructs or facets of the overall self-concept are connected (Byrne, 2002).

Academic Achievement

Academic achievement encompasses exceptional performance across various academic subjects within and beyond the classroom. It serves as a key indicator of how effectively educational objectives are being met by students, teachers, curricula, and educational institutions. Academic achievement reflects the culmination of educational efforts and is assessed through various evaluations. These evaluations typically include exams that measure declarative knowledge, facts, information learned by students, and procedural knowledge, skills, and competencies developed through learning experiences (Bennett, 2003).

In any formal educational setting, academic achievement is often used interchangeably with academic performance, a fundamental aspect of evaluating educational effectiveness. It encompasses the outcomes of both classroom and extracurricular activities and measures how well students, educators, curricula, and educational institutions meet established learning objectives. Academic achievement is commonly assessed through exams, which evaluate both declarative knowledge (factual information) and procedural knowledge (skills and applications) (Bennett, 2003). Testing, a global core component of educational systems, provides a systematic way to gauge student progress and success. Assessments in education are crucial, as they offer measurable indicators of students' cognitive, emotional, and psychomotor development. Evaluating academic achievement through tests is not merely a formality but a practical necessity for effective education, formal or informal (Kpolovie & Obilor, 2013). This process includes acquiring and applying knowledge and a range of affective, motivational, and stylistic factors that influence students' performance (Kaplan & Saccuzzo, 2005).

As a significant and enduring behavioral outcome, academic achievement is both a measure of learners' performance and a reflection of their educational experiences. It results from subjective evaluations, such as teacher assessments, and objective measures, such as standardized tests or self-study achievements. More specifically, academic achievement can be characterized

by average performance in various subjects or as a comprehensive learning record throughout schooling (Cao *et al.*, 2018). Achieving academic success is crucial in a student's educational journey, reflecting the knowledge and skills acquired during their studies. For educators, student achievement offers valuable insights into the effectiveness of their teaching methods. It highlights areas where instruction may need improvement, enhances teaching strategies, and provides an opportunity to adjust approaches to better meet students' needs (Komarraju & Nadler, 2013). By analyzing academic performance, teachers can refine their instructional techniques, adapt their teaching styles, and ultimately improve the quality of education provided. In addition, Alqahtani *et al.* (2023) underscores the importance of effective teaching practices, strong leadership, a positive school culture, and active parental involvement, highlighting that schools with well-structured leadership, dedicated teachers, and a collaborative learning atmosphere consistently yield higher student achievement outcomes. This research emphasizes that fostering a holistic educational environment where students receive both academic and emotional support significantly enhances learning experiences and overall performance.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Design

This study used descriptive and correlational research designs. The designs were appropriate because they describe the ethnic identity, academic self-concept, and achievement of B'laan learners within the Municipality of Tampakan. Also, it is correlational because it studies the relationship between ethnic identity and academic self-concept and ethnic identity and academic achievement. Calderon (2006) defines descriptive research as a deliberate process of collecting, analyzing, and organizing data about current conditions, practices, and trends. This method helps researchers accurately interpret the data, sometimes using statistical methods. Descriptive research provides a detailed understanding of the group's characteristics. Correlational research, on the other hand, allows researchers to predict outcomes and understand the relationship between variables. According to Creswell (2005), this type of research involves collecting two sets of data, one of which looks back at past information to determine the relationship between them. He added that correlational research uses statistical tests to measure and describe how strongly two or more variables are related.

Locale of the Study

This study was conducted in the Municipality of Tampakan, South Cotabato, focusing on four key educational institutions. The first is Danlag National High School, located in Barangay Danlag, which plays a crucial role in providing secondary education to students in the area, many of whom come from indigenous communities. The second school is Datal Biao Integrated School, situated in the remote Sitio Datal Biao, also within

Barangay Danlag. The third school is Lampitak National High School, located in Barangay Lampitak. While similar to Datal Biao in serving a rural population, it faces its own unique set of circumstances shaped by the specific needs of its learners and community. Lastly, Tampakan National High School, located in Dao Street in Barangay Poblacion, represents a more urbanized educational setting. As a central hub for education in the municipality, Tampakan National High School serves a diverse student body with better access to resources, contrasting the rural schools in the study. The researcher chose these four schools because they have the highest percentage of Blaan learners among all the Municipality of Tampakan secondary schools.

Respondents of the Study

The respondents were the full-blooded Blaan secondary (Junior and/or Senior High School) learners who were officially enrolled for the school year 2024-2025. The term “full-blooded Blaan” refers to a learner with both parents of Blaan descendants. The researcher considered a population of 22 Junior High School and 6 Senior High School full-blooded Blaan learners in Danlag National High School, 40 Junior High School full-blooded Blaan learners in Datal Biao Integrated School, 75 Junior High School and 22 Senior High School full-blooded Blaan learners in Lampitak National High School and 42 Junior High School and 34 Senior High School full-blooded Blaan learners in Tampakan National High School for a total of 241.

Sampling Technique

This study employed complete enumeration, specifically targeting respondents who meet predefined criteria. The selected respondents were full-blooded Blaan learners, meaning both parents were Blaan descendants. Given that the total population of full-blooded Blaan learners in four public secondary schools is 241, all identified respondents were included in the study, as the sample size was sufficiently manageable.

Research Instruments

The questionnaire on the respondents' Ethnic Identity was adapted and modified from Phinney's (1992) work. This tool comprises 30 items that measure affirmation/belonging (8 items), ethnic identity achievement (7 items), other group orientation (6 items), ethnic behaviors (4 items), and language expressions (5 items). In measuring the academic self-concept of the respondents, the questionnaire adapted and modified from the work of Reynolds *et al.* (1980) was used. The Academic Self-Concept Scale (ASCS) is a 45-item scale that measures the grade and effort dimension (8 items), study habits/organizational self-perceptions (8 items), peer evaluation of academic ability (4 items), self-confidence in academics (5 items), satisfaction with school (6 items), self-doubt regarding ability (8 items), and self-evaluation with external standards dimension (6 items) among the respondents.

The questionnaire statements were translated into Blaan's native language so the respondents could become comfortable and proficient in providing accurate answers. In addition, scoring and interpretation were provided as a basis for the analysis and interpretation of the data. In determining the respondents' academic achievement, the researcher formally requested the General Weighted Average (GWA) for the previous academic year 2023-2024 from the class advisers. This process ensured that the academic data obtained was accurate and officially documented. The contents were subject to the validation of six (6) experts who were also research enthusiasts from the Department of Education in the Division of South Cotabato. They were acknowledged authorities in educational management and test construction. The researcher used the validation tool of Polit and Beck (2006) with an acceptable CVI of 0.83.

Statistical Treatment

The data were computed using the appropriate statistical tools. The mean and standard deviation were used to describe and interpret the result of the ethnic identity, academic self-concept, and achievement of full-blooded Blaan learners. The Pearson Product-Moment Correlation (PPMC) was then employed to analyze the relationships between ethnic identity and academic self-concept and ethnic identity and academic achievement. These were used to summarize all the study's results.

Pearson (1896) defined the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation (the Pearson correlation) as a statistical measure that evaluates the strength and direction of a linear relationship between two continuous variables. It is used to determine how changes in one variable are associated with changes in another and is commonly used to test hypotheses about relationships between variables.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

SOP 1: What is the Level of Ethnic Identity of Blaan Learners?

The first research problem determined the level of ethnic identity of Blaan learners. Table 1 provides the complete data on the level of ethnic identity as evaluated by the respondents. Generally, the level of ethnic identity is established ($M=3.16$, $SD=0.312$). The result means that Blaan learners have a solid understanding and pride in their Blaan culture. They regularly engage in cultural practices and traditions, reflecting a clear and stable Blaan identity. They balance their cultural pride with positive interactions with other cultural groups. Additionally, they recognize the Blaan language as a vital tool for preserving traditions, fostering cultural pride, and enhancing communication with elders, further reinforcing their sense of identity and belonging.

If we examine each indicator separately, the Blaan learners show a strong connection to their culture, as reflected in their integrated identity, especially in areas like affirmation/belonging, ethnic behaviors, and language expressions. The result means they feel proud of their

Table 1: Summary of the Level of Ethnic Identity of Blaan Learners

Indicators	N	Mean	SD	Qualitative Description
Affirmation/Belonging	241	3.37	0.446	Integrated Identity
Ethnic Identity Achievement	241	3.02	0.400	Established Identity
Other Group Orientation	241	2.56	0.527	Established Identity
Ethnic Behaviors	241	3.39	0.476	Integrated Identity
Language Expressions	241	3.31	0.485	Integrated Identity
Grand Mean	241	3.16	0.312	Established Identity

heritage, actively participate in cultural events, and use their language to express themselves and strengthen their cultural identity. However, some areas still offer room for growth. Their established identity in ethnic identity achievement suggests that they are still exploring and learning more about their Blaan heritage. Encouraging them to dive deeper into their traditions and history could help them feel more confident in their identity. Regarding other group orientations, the learners are moderately open to interacting with people from different backgrounds. While they may feel comfortable around others, they may not fully embrace close friendships or deeper interactions. Providing more opportunities for positive social interactions with other groups could help them become more open while still feeling connected to their culture.

The study's findings align closely with the second stage of Phinney's (1996) model of ethnic identity development, known as ethnic identity search. This stage marks a critical period of exploration and self-discovery. Individuals, particularly adolescents, become more interested in learning about their cultural background, traditions, and values during this stage. This interest is often triggered by new life experiences or facing discrimination, which makes them more aware of their ethnic identity. By exploring and engaging with their culture, they develop a stronger connection to their heritage, build confidence, and feel a greater sense of belonging to their ethnic group. This study examines how different stages of ethnic identity development influence adolescents' daily experiences by integrating research on identity progression and its impact on everyday life. The findings suggest that adolescents at

various stages of ethnic identity development experience their cultural identity differently. Those in the early stages may have limited awareness or connection to their ethnic background, while those actively exploring their identity are more likely to engage in cultural activities, seek information, and reflect on their heritage. In contrast, individuals with a well-established ethnic identity tend to experience a stable sense of pride and belonging, which shapes their social interactions and responses to cultural experiences. Additionally, Yip (2014) examines how different stages of ethnic identity development influence adolescents' daily experiences by integrating research on identity progression and its impact on everyday life. The findings suggest that adolescents at various stages of ethnic identity development experience their cultural identity differently. Those in the early stages may have limited awareness or connection to their ethnic background, while those actively exploring their identity are more likely to engage in cultural activities, seek information, and reflect on their heritage. In contrast, individuals with a well-established ethnic identity tend to experience a stable sense of pride and belonging, which shapes their social interactions and responses to cultural experiences.

SOP 2: What is the Level of Academic Self-Concept of Blaan Learners?

The second research problem deals with the level of academic self-concept of Blaan learners in the Municipality of Tampakan. Table 2 provides the complete data on the level of academic self-concept as evaluated by competent respondents.

Table 2: Summary of the Level of Academic Self-concept of Blaan Learners

Indicators	N	Mean	SD	Description
Grade and Effort Dimension	241	3.29	0.401	Highly Developed
Study Habits/Organizational Self-Perceptions	241	2.93	0.360	Well-Established
Peer Evaluation of Academic Ability	241	2.99	0.439	Well-Established
Self-Confidence in Academics	241	3.11	0.499	Well-Established
Satisfaction with School	241	3.10	0.406	Well-Established
Self-Doubt Regarding Ability	241	2.58	0.425	Well-Established
Self-Evaluation with External Standards	241	2.92	0.398	Well-Established
Grand Mean	241	3.00	0.296	Well-Established

Generally, the level of the academic self-concept is well-established ($M=3.00$, $SD=0.296$). The result means that

Blaan learners have stable confidence and a balanced view of their academic abilities. They manage school

challenges with moderate resilience, participate regularly in academic activities, and generally feel satisfied with their performance. They may occasionally struggle with motivation. They might feel unmotivated or lose interest in school, especially when things get hard or frustrating. They may need support, like encouragement from teachers or friends, to stay focused and keep going. Although most ratings are well-established, it is evident that the grade and effort dimension obtained the highest rating ($M=3.29$, $SD=0.401$).

The study's overall findings support the claim of Gabriel *et al.* (2009) that how students perceive their abilities and traits is just as important as their actual skills. For example, a student with a positive self-concept is more likely to believe they can handle challenges and succeed, which leads to greater motivation, higher engagement in learning activities, and stronger persistence when faced with setbacks. When students feel good about their abilities, they are more likely to set high goals, try new things, and

recover from failures more easily. Consequently, Kurtz and Puhr (2018) suggests that a well-developed academic self-concept positively impacts motivation, learning strategies, and overall academic performance. When students perceive themselves as competent, they are more likely to engage in academic tasks with confidence, persist through challenges, and take ownership of their learning. Conversely, a low academic self-concept may lead to decreased motivation and avoidance of difficult tasks.

SOP 3: What is the Level of Academic Achievement of Blaen Learners?

The third research problem concerns the level of academic achievement of Blaen learners within the Municipality of Tampakan. The respective teachers were requested to provide data, particularly the general weighted average for the previous academic year 2023-2024. Table 3 highlights the learners' achievement results.

The data indicates that the overall mean of the general

Table 3: Level of Academic Achievement of Blaen Learners in terms of the General Weighted Average

SCHOOL	N	Mean	SD	Qualitative Description
Danlag National High School	28	83.00	3.63	Satisfactory
Datal Biao Integrated School	40	86.10	3.70	Very Satisfactory
Lampitak National High School	97	86.00	4.86	Very Satisfactory
Tampakan National High School	76	85.40	4.33	Very Satisfactory
Grand Mean	241	85.13	4.39	Very Satisfactory

weighted average of the Blaen learners is very satisfactory ($M=85.13$, $SD=4.39$). This means that the typical Blaen learners in four schools within the Municipality of Tampakan achieve very satisfactory in the general weighted average. The proficiency of the learners frequently meets and occasionally exceeds expectations. Learners have a strong understanding of the subject matter and perform well in most areas. Their work is consistently above average, showing good effort and reliability. The result suggests they have strong academic abilities and receive enough support from their teachers and schools to succeed. However, there is a noticeable gap between the achievement of Danlag National High School and the other schools. This difference may reflect varying factors, such as differences in available resources, teaching approaches, or levels of student engagement at Danlag National High School compared to the other schools.

The result is related to Komarraju and Nadler's (2013) assertion that academic achievement is a crucial goal in a student's educational journey, reflecting the knowledge and skills acquired during their studies. For educators, student achievement offers valuable insights into the effectiveness of their teaching methods. It highlights areas where instruction may need improvement, enhances teaching strategies, and provides an opportunity to adjust approaches to better meet students' needs. In addition, Alqahtani *et al.* (2023) underscores the importance of effective teaching practices, strong leadership, a positive school culture, and active parental involvement,

highlighting that schools with well-structured leadership, dedicated teachers, and a collaborative learning atmosphere consistently yield higher student achievement outcomes. This research emphasizes that fostering a holistic educational environment where students receive both academic and emotional support significantly enhances learning experiences and overall performance.

SOP 4: Is there a Significant Relationship between Ethnic Identity and Academic Self-Concept of Blaen Learners?

The fourth research problem investigates the relationship between Blaen learners' ethnic identity and academic self-concept. Table 4 shows the correlational analysis between sub-scales of ethnic identity and academic self-concept. As revealed from the data, the affirmation/belonging and self-doubt regarding ability have no significant relationship ($r=0.041$, $p>.05$). This means that how connected and proud Blaen learners feel about their ethnic identity does not appear to affect the level of doubt they have about their academic abilities. Even if learners have a strong sense of belonging and pride in their ethnic identity, it does not necessarily mean they will be free from self-doubt about their performance or abilities in school. It is also evident that ethnic behaviors and self-doubt regarding ability have no significant relationship ($r=-0.022$, $p>.05$). This means that how actively Blaen learners participate in cultural activities or express their cultural identity does not have a noticeable effect on how much they doubt

their academic abilities. Regardless of whether learners are highly engaged in cultural traditions or activities, this engagement does not necessarily reduce or increase their self-doubt about school performance. The negative sign signifies that the other decreases slightly as one variable increases. Similarly, language expressions and self-doubt regarding ability show no significant relationship

($r=0.023$, $p>.05$). This conveys that how frequently or confidently Blaen learners use their ethnic language does not have a meaningful impact on how much they doubt their academic abilities. Although learners take pride in speaking their native language and use it regularly, this does not necessarily influence their confidence in their academic skills.

Table 4: Correlational Analysis Between the Blaen Learners' Ethnic Identity and Academic Self-Concept

Variables	Affirmation/ Belonging	Ethnic Identity Achievement	Other Group Orientation	Ethnic Behaviors	Language Expressions	Overall Ethnic Identity
Grade and Effort Dimension	0.567*	0.394*	0.102*	0.447*	0.462*	0.696*
	< .001	< .001	0.116	< .001	< .001	< .001
Study Habits/Organizational Self-Perceptions	0.299*	0.321*	0.267*	0.254*	0.285*	0.456*
	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001
Peer Evaluation of Academic Ability	0.258*	0.313*	0.220*	0.291*	0.235*	0.401*
	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001
Self-Confidence in Academics	0.363*	0.312*	0.141*	0.414*	0.321*	0.480*
	< .001	< .001	0.028	< .001	< .001	< .001
Satisfaction with School	0.463*	0.387*	0.144*	0.334*	0.434*	0.548*
	< .001	< .001	0.025	< .001	< .001	< .001
Self-Doubt Regarding Ability	0.041	0.155*	0.323*	-0.022	0.023	0.135*
	0.527	0.016	< .001	0.735	0.724	0.036
Self-Evaluation with External Standards	0.177*	0.214*	0.272*	0.198*	0.142*	0.315*
	0.006	< .001	< .001	0.002	0.027	< .001
Overall Academic Self-Concept	0.445*	0.440*	0.297*	0.395*	0.379*	0.621*
	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001

Note: r marked with asterisk (*) is significant; $p<.05$

Remarkably, while some subscales show no significant relationships, the overall findings reveal that the relationship between ethnic identity and academic self-concept is statistically significant ($r=0.621$, $p<.05$). This result corresponds with the study of Rivas-Drake *et al.* (2014) which highlighted that a strong and well-developed ethnic identity plays a crucial role in shaping positive academic outcomes. When students have a clear understanding and pride in their cultural background, they are likelier to feel a sense of belonging and purpose within the school environment. This connection can boost their confidence in their abilities, reinforcing a positive academic self-concept. As a result, students become more engaged, motivated, and resilient in their studies, leading to improved academic performance. Subsequently, Smith *et al.* (1999) asserted that adolescents with a strong sense of ethnic identity tend to have higher self-esteem and greater confidence in their abilities (self-efficacy). Since both self-esteem and self-efficacy are key elements of academic self-concept, the study suggests that a well-developed ethnic identity can contribute to students' overall confidence in their academic abilities and their willingness to engage in learning.

SOP 5: Is there a Significant Relationship between Ethnic Identity and Academic Achievement of Blaen Learners?

The fifth research problem examines the relationship between Blaen learners' ethnic identity and academic achievement using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (Pearson r). Table 5 shows the correlational analysis between the ethnic identity and academic achievement of Blaen learners.

The result reveals that the ethnic identity of Blaen learners is statistically significant to their academic achievement ($r=0.129$, $p<.05$). This suggests that even though most aspects of ethnic identity do not have a direct significant impact on academic achievement, language expressions ($r=0.130$, $p<.05$) and overall ethnic identity show small but meaningful positive correlations. The result indicates that cultural pride and identity integration may help learners develop confidence and motivation that indirectly support academic success. However, the generally weak correlations imply that academic achievement is influenced more by other factors, such as study habits, teaching quality, socioeconomic status, and school resources. Although having a strong ethnic

Table 5: Correlational Analysis Between the Blaan Learners' Ethnic Identity and Academic Achievement

Variables	Affirmation/ Belonging	Affirmation/ Belonging	Ethnic Identity Achievement	Other Group Orientation	Ethnic Behaviors	Language Expressions	Ethnic Identity
Academic Achievement	Pearson's r	0.078	0.078	0.027	0.090	0.130*	0.129*
	p-value	0.228	0.226	0.682	0.163	0.045	0.046

Note: *r* marked with asterisk (*) is significant; $p < .05$

identity can enhance the learning experience, it is not the main factor determining academic success.

Kim's study (2023) validates its outcome by confirming that while a strong ethnic identity was positively associated with students' attitudes toward school and a higher academic self-concept, its direct impact on academic performance was minimal. The result suggests that ethnic identity plays a more indirect role in shaping academic success by fostering a sense of belonging, confidence, and motivation, which, in turn, may contribute to better engagement and persistence in learning. Furthermore, Branch (2020) conveyed that students who actively engage in exploring their cultural heritage and identity within educational environments tend to demonstrate higher academic achievement. This suggests that fostering opportunities for ethnic identity exploration in schools can contribute to improved academic motivation, confidence, and overall performance.

CONCLUSIONS

The following conclusions were drawn in light of the findings and the hypotheses that were put to the test. This study emphasized the important influence of ethnic identity on the academic self-concept and achievement of Blaan learners within the Municipality of Tampakan. The Blaan learners generally have an established ethnic identity, with a stronger connection in areas such as affirmation/belonging, ethnic behaviors, and language expressions. Their academic self-concept is also well-developed, especially regarding grade and effort dimensions and academic self-confidence. Additionally, their academic achievement was mostly very satisfactory, except for one school, which achieved a satisfactory rating. Ethnic identity is associated with academic self-concept, indicating that a deeper cultural connection boosts students' confidence and perception of their academic abilities. However, some aspects, such as affirmation/belonging, ethnic behaviors, and language expressions, were not significantly correlated to self-doubt regarding ability, suggesting that cultural pride does not necessarily affect feelings of uncertainty in learning. Furthermore, ethnic identity can positively attribute to academic achievement. Notably, language expressions have something to do with academic achievement, highlighting the potential impact of language in learning.

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