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Academic Grit, Resiliency, and Learning Engagement among Learners in Geographically Disadvantaged School

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Abstract

This study examined the relationships between academic grit, academic resiliency, and learning engagement among learners from Geographically Isolated and Disadvantaged Areas (GIDAs) at Laserna Integrated School, Nabas, Aklan, Philippines. A descriptive-correlational research design was employed involving 65 learners from Grades 7 to 12 during the school year 2025–2026, selected through total enumeration. Data were collected using validated, self-administered questionnaires and analyzed through weighted mean, standard deviation, and Pearson correlation. Findings revealed high academic grit (M = 4.18), very high academic resiliency (M = 4.29), and very high learning engagement (M = 4.43). Perseverance of effort demonstrated a very high mean (M = 4.46), while emotional engagement recorded the highest rating among engagement dimensions (M = 4.46). Statistically significant relationships were established between academic grit and learning engagement ($p < .001$) and between academic resiliency and learning engagement ($p < .001$). These findings indicated that perseverance, persistence, and adaptability were significantly associated with sustained academic participation despite geographical and educational challenges. Strengthening learner-centered instruction, guidance services, peer mentoring, and psychosocial support is recommended to enhance learners' academic engagement. The study was limited to self-reported responses from 65 learners in one school, restricting broader generalizability and causal interpretation. Overall, the findings provide localized empirical evidence supporting responsive educational interventions and inclusive learning practices that promote educational equity and sustainability in geographically disadvantaged communities.

Keywords: Academic Grit, Academic Resiliency, Geographically Disadvantaged Learners, Learning Engagement, Rural Education

1. Introduction

Education is essential to individual development, academic achievement, and socioeconomic progress. However, learners from Geographically Isolated and Disadvantaged Areas (GIDAs) continue to encounter barriers to quality education, including geographical isolation, inadequate learning resources, and socioeconomic difficulties. Despite these challenges, academic grit and resiliency may contribute to learners' motivation, adaptability, and sustained participation in educational activities. Understanding the relationships among these psychological characteristics and learning engagement is important for addressing educational inequalities in geographically disadvantaged communities. This study examined the relationships between academic grit, academic resiliency, and learning engagement among geographically disadvantaged learners at Laserna Integrated School in Nabas, Aklan. It emphasized the relevance of individual psychological strengths, supportive learning environments, and equitable educational opportunities in promoting educational and community sustainability.

1.1 Educational Disadvantage, Academic Grit, and Resiliency among GIDA Learners

Education contributes to personal development, improved living conditions, and national socioeconomic advancement. Nevertheless, access to quality education remains unequal, particularly among learners residing in geographically isolated and socioeconomically disadvantaged communities. The World Bank (2022) emphasized that deficiencies in foundational learning threaten educational development and human capital formation, while the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2023) reported persistent challenges in Filipino learners' academic proficiency. These concerns highlight the importance of addressing educational inequalities that restrict meaningful participation and achievement. In the Philippines, learners from GIDAs experience difficulties associated with geographical isolation, inadequate school facilities, limited instructional materials, and restricted access to educational technology. The Department of Education (2022) identified geographical and socioeconomic barriers as important challenges affecting educational accessibility in remote communities. Similarly, the Second Congressional Commission on Education (2025) emphasized the need to address structural weaknesses, inadequate learning resources, and persistent inequalities within the Philippine education system. These conditions affect learners' opportunities to participate consistently in educational activities and sustain academic progress. Despite these challenges, geographically disadvantaged learners may demonstrate perseverance, adaptability, and commitment to their educational goals. Academic grit refers to sustained perseverance and passion in pursuing long-term objectives despite difficulties or setbacks (Duckworth et al., 2007). Academic resiliency, meanwhile, involves positive adaptation and recovery from challenging circumstances through personal strengths and supportive relationships (Masten, 2001). These psychological characteristics are particularly relevant among learners who experience educational disruptions, financial limitations, and restricted learning opportunities. Recent research has demonstrated the importance of perseverance and adaptability in educational engagement. Obeng et al. (2025) identified relationships among academic grit, motivation, self-regulated learning, and academic engagement, emphasizing the relevance of persistent effort in maintaining educational participation. Similarly, Bolo (2024) described how Filipino secondary school learners demonstrated academic resiliency through adaptation, renewed motivation, and supportive relationships during post-pandemic educational adjustments. These findings suggest that academic grit and resiliency may serve as important psychological resources for learners experiencing unfavorable educational circumstances.

1.2 Related Literature on Academic Grit, Academic Resiliency, and Learning Engagement

Academic grit is characterized by perseverance of effort and consistency of interest toward long-term goals. Duckworth et al. (2007) established the conceptual foundation of grit by emphasizing sustained effort and commitment despite challenges. More recent evidence supports its relevance to academic engagement. Obeng et al. (2025) examined the relationships among grit, academic motivation, self-regulated learning, and engagement among senior high school students. Their findings indicated that academic motivation and self-regulated learning contributed to explaining the association between grit and academic engagement. These findings suggest that perseverance and consistent commitment are relevant to sustained educational participation. Academic resiliency complements grit by emphasizing learners' capacity to manage difficulties, adapt to changing circumstances, and maintain academic functioning. Masten (2001) explained that resilience develops through adaptive processes supported by individual capacities and environmental resources. Recent investigations have further emphasized the importance of social support and psychological adaptability. Azpiazu et al. (2024) found that teacher support, peer relationships, resilience, and positive affect were associated with adolescents' school adjustment and emotional engagement. Similarly, Tortosa Martínez et al. (2023) identified positive relationships between resilience and academic engagement among secondary school students, with emotional intelligence contributing to these relationships. The importance of supportive educational environments is further reflected in Philippine research. Batoon and Tagadiad (2024) identified significant relationships among school connectedness, classroom management strategies, and academic resilience among senior high school students in Davao del Norte. Likewise, Lobo (2024) reported positive associations among academic resilience, perceived instructor emotional support, and study engagement among Filipino higher education students. Although these investigations involved different educational populations, their findings emphasize the relevance of interpersonal support and school environments in understanding academic resiliency. Mahama et al. (2024) additionally found that academic mindfulness, self-regulated learning, and school engagement were significant predictors of academic resilience among high school learners in Ghana. Learning engagement is a multidimensional concept involving behavioral, emotional, and cognitive participation in educational activities. Wong et al. (2024), through a systematic review and meta-analysis, emphasized the distinct dimensions of engagement and their associations with academic achievement and subjective well-being. Behavioral engagement involves participation and effort in learning activities, emotional engagement concerns learners' feelings and connections toward education, and cognitive engagement reflects psychological investment and the application of learning strategies. These dimensions provide a comprehensive basis for examining learners' involvement in educational experiences. Social and environmental conditions also influence learning engagement. Vargas-Madriz et al. (2024) identified positive associations between teacher support and school engagement, emphasizing the importance of emotionally supportive educational environments. Katsantonis (2025) likewise reported that positive teacher-student relationships and

school belonging were associated with higher levels of engagement among adolescents. Similarly, Chen et al. (2024) demonstrated the protective relevance of positive school climate and school identification to adolescents' mental health and learning engagement. These findings indicate that sustained engagement is associated with both individual psychological characteristics and supportive educational relationships. Other investigations have emphasized the importance of motivation, psychological well-being, and interpersonal relationships. Woreta (2024) found that parental and peer academic socialization, self-efficacy, and motivational beliefs were associated with academic engagement among high school students. Clark et al. (2025) similarly identified relationships between school engagement, academic efficacy, school connectedness, and psychological well-being among adolescents. In the Philippine context, Buenconsejo and Datu (2024) demonstrated that positive youth development was associated with subsequent school engagement and psychological need satisfaction among Filipino secondary school learners. Collectively, the reviewed literature indicates that academic grit and resiliency are related but distinct psychological characteristics associated with learning engagement. Academic grit emphasizes perseverance and consistency toward educational goals, whereas academic resiliency focuses on adaptation and recovery from difficulties. Both characteristics are relevant to behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement, particularly among learners experiencing educational disadvantage. However, their relationships must be examined within specific educational contexts because individual motivation, environmental support, and access to learning resources may influence students' educational experiences.

1.3 Local, National, and Global Educational Context of GIDA Learners in Laserna, Nabas, Aklan

Globally, educational inequalities remain significant concerns, particularly among learners from remote and socioeconomically disadvantaged communities. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2023) emphasized that educational technology has the potential to improve learning opportunities, although unequal access to technological resources may reinforce existing educational disparities. The World Bank (2022) similarly highlighted the importance of addressing foundational learning difficulties to strengthen educational development and promote more equitable opportunities. Within the Philippine context, geographical isolation, inadequate infrastructure, and socioeconomic disadvantages continue to create challenges for educational accessibility. The Department of Education (2022) identified remote communities as priority areas for improving educational participation, resource allocation, and access to learning opportunities. The OECD (2023) also documented persistent academic proficiency challenges among Filipino learners, emphasizing the importance of strengthening educational support and addressing learning difficulties. Furthermore, the Second Congressional Commission on Education (2025) identified systemic concerns involving educational resources, school facilities, and learning outcomes that require sustained institutional attention. The country's policy response has also strengthened its recognition of geographically disadvantaged schools. Republic Act No. 12321, enacted on July 22, 2026, institutionalized the Last Mile and GIDA Schools Program to address disparities in educational infrastructure, learning resources, accessibility, and other essential services. Although enacted after the study's data collection, this legislation provides a relevant policy context for understanding the continuing need to support learners in geographically isolated communities (Republic Act No. 12321, 2026). At the local level, this study focused on geographically disadvantaged learners enrolled at Laserna Integrated School in Barangay Laserna, Nabas, Aklan. The participants consisted of 65 learners from Grades 7 to 12 during the school year 2025–2026. Their educational context provided an opportunity to examine academic grit, resiliency, and learning engagement among students residing in geographically disadvantaged communities. By examining these variables within a specific educational setting, the study sought to provide localized evidence regarding the relationships between learners' psychological characteristics and academic participation. The investigation also contributed to understanding how perseverance, adaptability, and sustained engagement relate to educational experiences in communities facing geographical and socioeconomic challenges.

1.4 Theoretical and Conceptual Foundations of Academic Grit, Resiliency, and Learning Engagement

The study was anchored on Grit Theory, Resilience Theory, Social Cognitive Theory, Experiential Learning Theory, and Self-Determination Theory. These theoretical perspectives provide a foundation for understanding how perseverance, adaptability, self-efficacy, motivation, and learning experiences are associated with academic engagement among geographically disadvantaged learners. Grit Theory emphasizes sustained perseverance and commitment toward long-term goals despite difficulties and setbacks. Duckworth et al. (2007) identified perseverance of effort and consistency of interest as the principal dimensions of grit. These dimensions provide the theoretical basis for examining learners' determination and continued commitment to educational objectives. The relevance of this theory is further supported by Obeng et al. (2025), who identified relationships among grit, academic motivation, self-regulated learning, and engagement. Resilience Theory explains how individuals demonstrate positive adaptation despite experiencing adversity. Masten (2001) emphasized that resilience develops through adaptive processes involving individual capacities and supportive environmental systems. This perspective is relevant to geographically disadvantaged learners who encounter financial constraints, limited learning resources, and educational disruptions. Recent findings by Azpiazu et al. (2024) further demonstrate the importance of resilience and supportive relationships in adolescents' school adjustment and emotional engagement. Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (1986) emphasizes the reciprocal relationships among personal characteristics, behavior, and environmental influences. Self-efficacy, motivation, and self-regulation are

important concepts in understanding learners' academic participation. Similarly, Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory (1984) explains learning as a process involving experience, reflection, conceptual understanding, and the application of acquired knowledge. These perspectives highlight the relevance of personal motivation and learning environments to educational engagement. Self-Determination Theory, as explained by Deci and Ryan (2000), identifies autonomy, competence, and relatedness as fundamental psychological needs associated with motivation and positive functioning. This theory provides a basis for understanding how learners maintain educational participation through personal determination and supportive relationships. Its relevance to Filipino learners is reflected in the findings of Buenconsejo and Datu (2024), who identified relationships among positive youth development, psychological need satisfaction, and school engagement. The conceptual framework identified academic grit and academic resiliency as the independent variables and learning engagement as the dependent variable. Academic grit was examined through perseverance of effort and consistency of interest, while academic resiliency was assessed through persistence and adaptability. Learning engagement was examined through behavioral, emotional, and cognitive dimensions. These variables provided the basis for determining the relationships between learners' psychological characteristics and educational participation. Collectively, the theoretical and conceptual foundations support the examination of academic grit and resiliency as characteristics associated with learning engagement. However, the framework does not establish causal relationships, as the study employed a descriptive-correlational research design.

1.5 Research Gaps and Rationale for Examining GIDA Learners at Laserna Integrated School

Existing literature has established important relationships among academic grit, resiliency, motivation, and learning engagement. However, the educational circumstances of geographically disadvantaged learners require further contextual examination. Although previous investigations have identified associations between psychological characteristics and academic participation, these findings cannot automatically be generalized to learners experiencing geographical isolation, socioeconomic difficulties, and restricted educational resources. Recent studies have examined grit and academic engagement (Obeng et al., 2025), academic resiliency and supportive school environments (Batoon & Tagadiad, 2024), and psychological characteristics associated with educational participation among Filipino adolescents (Buenconsejo & Datu, 2024). Nevertheless, further investigation is necessary to understand how these relationships are manifested among learners residing in geographically disadvantaged communities. Specifically, the relationships between perseverance of effort, consistency of interest, persistence, adaptability, and the behavioral, emotional, and cognitive dimensions of learning engagement remain relevant areas of inquiry. To address this research gap, the study employed a descriptive-correlational research design involving 65 geographically disadvantaged learners from Grades 7 to 12 at Laserna Integrated School, Barangay Laserna, Nabas, Aklan, during the school year 2025–2026. Total enumeration was employed, and data were collected through a survey questionnaire from January to February 2026. The study specifically determined the levels of academic grit in terms of perseverance of effort and consistency of interest; academic resiliency in terms of persistence and adaptability; and learning engagement in terms of behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement. It also examined whether significant relationships existed between academic grit and learning engagement and between academic resiliency and learning engagement. The corresponding null hypotheses assumed that no statistically significant relationships existed between these variables. By addressing these objectives, the study sought to provide localized evidence regarding the relationships between psychological characteristics and educational participation among geographically disadvantaged learners. Its findings were intended to inform educational support initiatives, instructional practices, and institutional programs responsive to the circumstances of learners in remote communities.

1.6 Alignment with Sustainable Development Goals on Quality Education and Reduced Inequalities

The study aligns primarily with Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4), Quality Education, which emphasizes inclusive, equitable, and accessible learning opportunities. Its focus on geographically disadvantaged learners reflects the importance of addressing educational barriers associated with geographical isolation, inadequate resources, and socioeconomic difficulties. The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2025) emphasized the continued need to accelerate progress toward equitable educational opportunities, particularly among disadvantaged populations. By examining academic grit, academic resiliency, and learning engagement, the study contributes to understanding psychological characteristics associated with sustained educational participation. Its findings may provide a basis for strengthening learner-support initiatives, including mentoring, counseling, and instructional assistance intended to promote perseverance, adaptability, and academic involvement. These implications are consistent with the importance of responsive educational leadership and supportive learning environments emphasized by UNESCO (2024). The study also relates to Sustainable Development Goal 10 (SDG 10), Reduced Inequalities, because geographically disadvantaged learners experience educational barriers that may restrict their opportunities compared with learners in more accessible communities. Examining their psychological characteristics and educational engagement provides information relevant to understanding participation inequalities and identifying appropriate support mechanisms. These connections emphasize that educational sustainability requires attention to both learners' psychological strengths and the structural conditions influencing educational accessibility. Consequently, the study contributes to discussions

concerning educational inclusion, equitable learning opportunities, and sustained academic participation among geographically disadvantaged learners.

1.7 Contribution of Academic Grit and Resiliency Research to Multidisciplinary Sustainability

The study contributes to multidisciplinary sustainability through its relevance to educational, socioeconomic, community, and institutional sustainability. By examining the relationships among academic grit, academic resiliency, and learning engagement, it connects educational psychology with the broader socioeconomic and environmental circumstances influencing learners' educational participation. In terms of educational sustainability, the study emphasizes the importance of perseverance, adaptability, and continued engagement in maintaining educational participation despite challenging circumstances. Understanding these characteristics may assist teachers in strengthening instructional support and addressing learners' motivational and emotional needs. The importance of supportive educational environments is reinforced by Vargas-Madriz et al. (2024), who identified positive relationships between teacher support and school engagement. From a socioeconomic and community sustainability perspective, the study recognizes the relevance of individual motivation, family relationships, community involvement, and educational resources in sustaining learning engagement. These factors highlight the importance of coordinated support among learners, families, teachers, and school communities in addressing educational disadvantage. The study also has implications for institutional sustainability by providing information that may assist educational administrators and policymakers in reviewing learner-support programs and strategies for geographically disadvantaged communities. The Second Congressional Commission on Education (2025) emphasized the importance of strengthening educational foundations, institutional resources, and equitable access to learning opportunities. Similarly, UNESCO (2024) highlighted the relevance of educational leadership, collaboration, and institutional responsiveness in improving educational outcomes. Furthermore, the research provides a foundation for subsequent investigations into psychological, educational, and contextual characteristics associated with learning engagement. Its multidisciplinary contribution lies in integrating educational psychology, school administration, community support, and educational equity within the context of geographically disadvantaged learners. Overall, the study highlights the relevance of academic grit and resiliency to sustained learning engagement while recognizing that equitable educational opportunities also depend on adequate resources, supportive institutions, and responsive educational policies. By examining these relationships at Laserna Integrated School, the research contributes to understanding how psychological strengths and educational support may promote more inclusive and sustainable learning experiences among geographically disadvantaged learners.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1 Research Design

The study employed a descriptive-correlational research design to examine the relationships among academic grit, resiliency, and learning engagement among GIDA learners. This design enabled the researcher to describe the variables and determine their statistical associations without establishing causal relationships (Andal-Saniano et al., 2024; Casinillo et al., 2025). Academic grit and resiliency served as the independent variables, while learning engagement was the dependent variable. The approach was consistent with recent research examining the relationships between grit and school engagement among secondary school learners (Hoferichter & Raufelder, 2023; Obeng et al., 2025). Descriptive and inferential statistical techniques were utilized to assess the learners' psychological characteristics and their relationships with learning engagement.

2.2 Locale of the Study

The study was conducted at Laserna Integrated School, located in Barangay Laserna, Nabas, Aklan, Philippines. The school operates under the Department of Education and serves learners from Kindergarten to Senior High School. Situated in a rural and mountainous area approximately seven kilometers southwest of Barangay Poblacion, it accommodates learners from remote communities, including Botong, Ginab-an, Malindog, Nabasan, Napatag, and Sinungayan. These communities experience transportation difficulties, limited technological accessibility, and economic challenges that influence educational participation. The geographical and socioeconomic characteristics of the area provided an appropriate setting for investigating academic grit, resiliency, and learning engagement among geographically disadvantaged learners.

2.3 Respondents of the Study

The respondents consisted of 65 learners from Grades 7 to 12 enrolled at Laserna Integrated School in Nabas, Aklan. They resided in geographically isolated communities where accessibility, transportation, and limited educational resources presented challenges to their learning experiences. The respondents included 15 Grade 7 learners and 10 learners each from Grades 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12. Their participation provided information regarding academic grit, resiliency, and learning engagement within the GIDA educational context.

2.4 Sample and Sampling Procedure

The study utilized total enumeration sampling, involving all 65 identified learners from Grades 7 to 12 who resided in geographically isolated communities served by Laserna Integrated School. This procedure allowed the researcher to include the entire identified population of eligible respondents rather than select a smaller sample. Total enumeration has also been employed in recent descriptive-correlational educational research involving clearly defined student populations (Casinillo et al., 2025). The approach ensured representation of all identified eligible learners across the six grade levels.

2.5 Research Instrument

Data were gathered using a self-administered questionnaire consisting of four parts. The first part collected the respondents' demographic information, while the remaining sections measured academic grit, resiliency, and learning engagement. The use of structured questionnaires was consistent with contemporary quantitative research practices emphasizing systematic instrument development and appropriate measurement of research variables (Ranganathan & Caduff, 2023). The Academic Grit Questionnaire consisted of 25 adopted and modified items based on Duckworth and Quinn (2009), measuring perseverance of effort and consistency of interest. These dimensions remained relevant to recent investigations of grit and school engagement among Filipino adolescents (Buenconsejo et al., 2025). The Resiliency Questionnaire contained 25 adopted and modified items based on Martin and Marsh (2006), focusing on persistence and adaptability. Recent educational research has likewise examined the relationship between academic resilience and student engagement (Mahama et al., 2024). The Learning Engagement Questionnaire consisted of 25 items developed from Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory (Kolb, 1984), assessing behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement. These dimensions were consistent with contemporary conceptualizations of student engagement (Wong et al., 2024; Miranda, 2026). The questionnaires utilized a five-point Likert scale ranging from 5 (Strongly Agree) to 1 (Strongly Disagree), interpreted as Very High, High, Moderate, Low, and Very Low, respectively. This response format was consistent with established practices in the development and application of self-report measurement scales (Jebb et al., 2021). The instruments were prepared with guidance from the research adviser and submitted to research experts for content validation. The original methodology described pilot testing involving 10 nonparticipant Grade 8 learners and reported a Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of 0.89, indicating good internal consistency. The interpretation of this coefficient was consistent with contemporary guidelines for questionnaire reliability and psychometric evaluation (Ranganathan et al., 2024; Stefana et al., 2025).

2.6 Data Gathering Procedure

The researcher requested authorization from the Schools Division Superintendent, Public Schools District Supervisor, and School Principal of Laserna Integrated School before conducting the study. Following approval, coordination with the school administration was undertaken to identify the 65 respondents, secure parental consent, and establish the schedule for questionnaire administration. The validated questionnaires measuring academic grit, resiliency, and learning engagement were administered in classrooms under researcher supervision to ensure clarity and completeness of responses. English and Tagalog versions were provided to accommodate the respondents' language preferences. Completed questionnaires were collected, checked for completeness, and encoded for statistical analysis.

2.7 Data Analysis Techniques

The collected data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Frequency and percentage distributions were used to summarize the respondents' demographic characteristics, including age, gender, and grade level. Weighted mean determined the levels of academic grit, resiliency, and learning engagement based on the five-point Likert scale, while standard deviation measured the variability of responses. Pearson's correlation coefficient (Pearson's r) was employed to determine the significance, strength, and direction of the relationships between academic grit and learning engagement and between resiliency and learning engagement. Multiple regression analysis was also identified in the original methodology to examine the predictive contribution of academic grit and resiliency to learning engagement. These statistical approaches were consistent with recent correlational investigations examining relationships among educational and psychological variables (Casinillo et al., 2025; Obeng et al., 2025).

2.8 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations were observed throughout the research process. Participants were informed about the study's objectives and significance to promote transparency and informed participation. Parental consent was secured before administering the questionnaires, and respondents were informed that no monetary or in-kind compensation would be provided. Confidentiality measures were implemented to protect participants' identities and the information collected during the study. The responses were handled responsibly and utilized for research purposes.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Academic Grit and Resiliency of GIDA Learners

3.1.1 Level of Academic Grit

The findings revealed that GIDA learners demonstrated a high level of academic grit, with an overall mean of 4.18. Perseverance of effort obtained the highest mean of 4.46, interpreted as very high, while consistency of interest recorded a mean of 3.91, interpreted as high. These results indicated that learners demonstrated strong perseverance and sustained interest in accomplishing their academic goals despite educational challenges. The findings suggest that GIDA learners remained determined to accomplish academic tasks, with perseverance more evident than consistency of interest. Buenconsejo et al. (2025) emphasized the distinct contributions of grit dimensions to school engagement among Filipino adolescents, highlighting the stronger benefits of perseverance and adaptability compared with consistency of interest. This supports the importance of sustained effort in maintaining learners' academic commitment despite challenging circumstances.

3.1.2 Level of Academic Resiliency

The findings showed that GIDA learners demonstrated a very high level of academic resiliency, with an overall mean of 4.29. Both persistence and adaptability obtained identical mean scores of 4.29, interpreted as very high. These results indicated that learners demonstrated determination, sustained academic effort, and adaptability in responding to academic demands and challenges. The findings suggest that GIDA learners possessed the capacity to overcome academic difficulties and adjust to changing learning conditions. Honra (2022) emphasized the relevance of protective factors in understanding academic resilience among Filipino learners, particularly those experiencing educational disadvantages. Similarly, Romano et al. (2021) highlighted academic resilience as an important resource associated with students' capacity to manage academic challenges and maintain school engagement.

3.2 Learning Engagement of GIDA Learners

3.2.1 Level of Learning Engagement

The findings revealed that GIDA learners demonstrated a very high level of learning engagement, with an overall mean of 4.43. Emotional engagement obtained the highest mean of 4.46, followed by behavioral engagement at 4.43 and cognitive engagement at 4.41. All three dimensions were interpreted as very high, indicating strong emotional involvement, active classroom participation, and cognitive investment in academic activities. These findings suggest that GIDA learners maintained positive connections with their teachers, classmates, and school while actively participating in educational activities and applying learning strategies. Wong et al. (2024) emphasized the multidimensional nature of student engagement and its association with academic achievement and subjective well-being. Similarly, Buenconsejo et al. (2025) identified the importance of behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement among Filipino adolescents, highlighting the contribution of personal and psychosocial characteristics to students' school involvement.

3.3 Significant Relationships with Learning Engagement

3.3.1 Relationship Between Academic Grit and Learning Engagement

The findings revealed a statistically significant relationship between academic grit and learning engagement among GIDA learners. Academic grit obtained an overall mean of 4.18, while learning engagement recorded an overall mean of 4.43. The reported p-value of .000 was below the 0.05 significance level, indicating a statistically significant result. The findings suggest that academic grit is associated with learning engagement among GIDA learners. Obeng et al. (2025) established a positive relationship between academic grit and academic engagement, emphasizing the mediating roles of academic motivation and self-regulated learning. Similarly, Wu et al. (2026) reported that academic grit significantly predicted academic engagement, with academic self-efficacy and educational expectations contributing to this relationship. These studies support the relevance of perseverance and sustained academic commitment to learners' engagement in educational activities.

3.3.2 Relationship Between Academic Resiliency and Learning Engagement

The findings also revealed a statistically significant relationship between academic resiliency and learning engagement among GIDA learners. Academic resiliency obtained an overall mean of 4.29, while learning engagement recorded 4.43, resulting in a mean difference of 0.14. The reported p-value of .000 was below the 0.05 significance level, indicating a statistically significant result. These findings suggest that academic resiliency is associated with learners' continued participation and involvement in educational activities despite academic difficulties. Lobo et al. (2025) established a significant relationship between academic resilience and school engagement among Filipino students, emphasizing the role of perceived instructor emotional support. Similarly, Romano et al. (2021) found that academic resilience was associated with school engagement, with perceived teacher emotional support partially mediating the relationship. These findings support the importance of persistence and adaptability in sustaining learners' academic engagement.

4. Conclusion & Recommendations

The study concluded that learners from Geographically Isolated and Disadvantaged Areas (GIDA) at Laserna Integrated School demonstrated high academic grit (M = 4.18), very high academic resilience (M = 4.29), and very high learning engagement (M = 4.43). Learners exhibited strong perseverance, persistence, adaptability, and commitment to their academic responsibilities despite geographical and educational challenges. Emotional, behavioral, and cognitive engagement were consistently rated very high, indicating active participation and sustained involvement in learning activities. Furthermore, significant relationships were established between academic grit and learning engagement ($p < .001$) and between academic resilience and learning engagement ($p < .001$). These findings indicated that learners who demonstrated greater perseverance, commitment, and resilience tended to exhibit higher levels of learning engagement. Overall, academic grit and resilience were significantly associated with sustained learning engagement among GIDA learners.

Based on the findings, GIDA learners are encouraged to strengthen their academic grit and resilience through realistic goal-setting, self-discipline, active participation, and positive coping strategies. Teachers should adopt learner-centered instructional approaches, provide timely feedback, recognize students' efforts, and promote collaborative learning and self-regulation. School administrators should strengthen guidance services, peer mentoring, leadership activities, and professional development programs that support learners' academic and psychosocial needs. The Department of Education should enhance existing educational interventions, including Last Mile Schools initiatives, learning recovery programs, teacher training, and psychosocial support services. Parents and community stakeholders are encouraged to maintain active collaboration with schools to reinforce learners' motivation and commitment. Local government units and policymakers should improve access to educational resources, transportation, digital connectivity, and learner support services. Future researchers are encouraged to examine additional factors influencing learning engagement and conduct similar studies involving larger samples, different educational settings, and mixed-methods approaches.

The study was limited to 65 learners from Grades 7 to 12 residing in Geographically Isolated and Disadvantaged Areas and enrolled at Laserna Integrated School in Nabas, Aklan. Its findings were based on self-administered survey questionnaires measuring academic grit, academic resilience, and learning engagement. Consequently, the results primarily reflected the experiences and perceptions of the selected learners within a specific educational setting. The study focused on relationships among the identified variables and did not establish causal relationships. Furthermore, its limited geographical coverage and participant population may restrict the applicability of the findings to other schools, grade levels, and disadvantaged communities. Future studies involving larger and more diverse populations, additional variables, and mixed-methods approaches may provide a broader understanding of the factors associated with learning engagement among GIDA learners.

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