

# Engagement and Life Satisfaction: Testing the Parallel Mediator of Academic Engagement Among Muslim Students

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## Abstract

Student life satisfaction is a determining variable in academic success influenced by student engagement and academic engagement. However, these two seem overlap, yet are actually distinct. This Study aimed to examine how each type of engagement contributes to students life satisfaction. To do so, 524 students of *Madrasah Aliyah* or Islamic Senior High Schools in Indonesia, aged 15 to 18 years were observed. Their data were collected using three validated instruments, including the Student's Life Satisfaction Scale, the Student Engagement Scale and the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES-9S). In the analysis, hierarchical regression and Sobel's test were used. Based on the analysis, it was found that the contribution of emotional engagement dimension and the absorption dimension resulted a significant positive correlation with student's life satisfaction ( $p < .01$ ), emotional engagement ( $\beta = .440$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and absorption ( $\beta = .966$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Those directly predicted life satisfaction. In addition, parallel mediation of absorption academic engagement fully mediated the relationship between behavioral engagement and student's life satisfaction ( $\beta = .096$ ,  $z = 3.38$ ,  $p < .05$ ) and cognitive engagement and student's life satisfaction ( $\beta = .156$ ,  $z = 4.05$ ,  $p < .01$ ). In addition, absorption partially mediated the relationship between emotional engagement and student's life satisfaction ( $\beta = .210$ ,  $z = 6.90$ ,  $p < .01$ ). In conclusion, student engagement and academic engagement are not overlapping, but are distinct constructs

## INTRODUCTION

Student engagement and academic engagement defined as a relatively similar concept, but actually they have differences in terms of scope and emphasis. Student engagement portrays students' overall involvement in school life, such as behavioral, emotional, cognitive, and agentic dimensions of engagement that range from broader and more complex, starting from student's participation in class activities to emotional engagement and proactive learning behaviors (Fredricks et al., 2004; Jimerson et al., 2003; Reeve & Tseng, 2011). Oppositely, academic engagement specifically highlights students' involvement in academic tasks, noticed from vigor, dedication, and absorption, reflecting sustained effort and emotional investment in learning (Schaufeli, 2012). Even though both concepts focus on engagement, student engagement covers a broader spectrum of school-related experiences, while academic engagement relies on the depth of participation in academic activities.

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In spite of their conceptual similarities, student engagement and academic engagement have debatable theoretical and empirical limitations. Some researchers argue that these two constructs overlap significantly since they both emphasize motivation and effort in the educational context (Eccles & Wang, 2012; Torsney & Symonds, 2019; Torsney et al., 2022). However, several other studies found important differences that require conceptual and operational separation. This ambiguity can have practical implications, especially when instruments developed to measure academic engagement are used to assess student engagement, as in the study by Romero et al. (2022). The use of such inappropriate instruments may result in misinterpretation and inaccurate conclusions so that the distinction between these two constructs needs to be carefully operationalized and empirically tested to ensure the validity of the research findings.

As the improvement, the current research proposed a predictive model in which student engagement served as a predictor, academic engagement served as a parallel mediator, and student's life satisfaction as the outcome variable. Life satisfaction that is understood as an individual's cognitive evaluation of the overall quality of life, is an important indicator of psychological well-being and has been tested to have a significant relationship with motivation and academic success (Datu et al., 2018; Pavot & Diener, 1993; Suldo et al., 2009). Even though several previous studies have explored the relationship between these constructs, few have specifically tested the mediating role of academic engagement, especially in the context of education with its cultural specificities.

*Madrasah Aliyah*, as an Islamic-based senior high school in Indonesia, offers an environment rich in cultural values, but is rarely studied in terms of psychological constructs. Students in these institutions need to meet both academic demands and religious values, potentially shaping unique patterns of engagement and well-being outcomes. Unfortunately, most research on student engagement has focused on secular or non-religious educational settings, leaving a lack of understanding of how this construct functions in a religious-based educational context (Doğan & Çelik, 2014; Burgos et al., 2022).

To fill the previous gap, this research aimed at examining the theoretical overlap between student engagement and academic engagement by applying a mediation model in the context of *Madrasah Aliyah* in Indonesia. By utilizing academic engagement as a mediator in the relationship between student engagement and life satisfaction, the present research was expected to make a significant contribution to the understanding of engagement theory and its application in educational settings rooted in cultural and religious values.

### Student's life Satisfaction

Life satisfaction is a central concept in positive psychology that reflects an individual's cognitive assessment of their overall quality of life based on personal standards and values (Pavot & Diener, 1993; Diener & Seligman, 2004). High levels of life satisfaction are associated with better health, quality interpersonal relationships, and stronger academic motivation (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005). In an educational context, students with higher levels of life satisfaction often demonstrate greater persistence, engagement, and academic achievement (Frisch et al., 2005; Lewis et al., 2011). Thus, life satisfaction holds a role as an important indicator of a student's overall functioning, making it a key variable to study in relation to academic and psychological outcomes.

The relationship between life satisfaction and student engagement is quite complex. Several research have confirmed a positive correlation between life satisfaction and cognitive engagement, but a negative correlation with behavioral and emotional engagement (Lewis et al., 2011). These suggest that different dimensions of student engagement may be differentially affected by student well-being. In this way, a more nuanced model is needed to explore potential mechanisms, such as the role of academic engagement, in explaining how life satisfaction

interacts with different forms of student engagement.

Moreover, most of previous research on life satisfaction in educational setting focused on general high school populations with limited attention to specific cultural contexts (Suldo et al., 2006; Tian et al., 2015). Previous research has highlighted how cultural factors, such as cultural intelligence and social connectedness, significantly influence international student's life satisfaction in multicultural educational environments (Lee et al., 2022). In an Islamic educational setting such as *Madrasah Aliyah*, students life satisfaction may be affected by the integration of academic, social, and spriritual aspects. It emphasizes the importance of generalizing the relationship between student's life satisfaction and student engagement and academic involvement in a religious-based educational setting, which was the primary focus of this study.

### Student Engagement

Student engagement reflects the extent to which students are engaged in the educational process, encompassing several dimensions, namely behavioral (e.g., class participation), emotional (e.g., sense of belonging), cognitive (e.g., investment in learning), and agentic (e.g., proactive contribution) (Fredricks et al., 2004; Reeve & Tseng, 2011). These dimensions influence students' learning experiences, academic success, and long-term educational outcomes (Christenson et al., 2012). In other words, student engagement is a broad framework for understanding how students interact with their school environment at multiple levels.

Students who have higher levels of student engagement often have stronger academic motivation, persistence, and identity formation (Appleton et al., 2008; Fredricks et al., 2016). In contrary, the relationship between student engagement and life satisfaction is not always consistent across all dimensions. For example, while cognitive engagement may enhance life satisfaction through goal attainment and a sense of competence, emotional or behavioral engagement may be influenced by external pressures or institutional environmental conditions (Lewis et al., 2011). This complexity suggests that student engagement alone may not fully explain variation in life satisfaction, warranting investigation of potential mediating variables.

Regarding the above complexity, understanding how student engagement affects life satisfaction requires examining intermediary processes. One example is the role of academic engagement in helping to explain when and how student engagement supports their well-being. This is particularly relevant in the context of *Madrasah Aliyah*, where student engagement is integrated into students' academic and religious lives. This dual influence highlights the importance of investigating the relationship between student engagement, academic processes, and life satisfaction in a culturally specific educational environment.

### Academic Engagement

Academic engagement particularly explains students' psychological investment in academic activities indicated by passion (energy and resilience), dedication (commitment and enthusiasm), and absorption (deep concentration) (Schaufeli et al., 2002; Schaufeli, 2017). These qualities are heavily related to effective learning strategies and academic performance (Salanova et al., 2010; Wolters & Taylor, 2012). Here academic engagement functions as a more focused construct that captures the intensity of students' engagement in academic tasks.

García-Martínez et al. (2021) found that academic engagement mediates the relationship between emotional intelligence and life satisfaction among college students. Students who show higher levels of academic engagement have a tendency to use more effective learning strategies and achieve better academic outcomes, which in turn increases their overall life satisfaction. It has confirmed the importance of improving academic engagement to enhance student well-being and success.

Apart from various research on academic engagement done at the level of higher

education, research in the context of secondary education and in diverse cultural contexts are still lacking (Carmona-Halty et al., 2019). This urgency was stated in a study by Wang et al. (2025). Recent findings suggest that academic engagement not only predicts achievement but also correlates with student's life satisfaction and psychological well-being (Burgos et al., 2022). This extends the significance of academic engagement beyond performance outcomes to include its role in students' holistic development.

Basically, academic engagement can function as a key mechanism which links broader forms of student engagement to well-being. As a focused dimension of engagement, academic engagement is possible to explain students' general engagement into more concrete academic progress as a means of increasing their sense of purpose and satisfaction (Serrano et al., 2019). However, empirical testing of this mediating role is still limited, especially in Islamic education systems such as *Madrasah Aliyah*. To deal with this gap, the current research positioned academic engagement as the mediator with the aim of clarifying its role in the relationship between student engagement and life satisfaction in a culturally grounded framework.

### Research Aims

The current research aims to investigate the mediating role of academic engagement in the relationship between student engagement and life satisfaction among students of *Madrasah Aliyah* in Indonesia. By focusing on students in religious based schools, this research highlights the importance of considering cultural and contextual factors in educational research.

## METHODS

### Design

A quantitative design was used to assess the relationship between students' engagement, academic engagement, and life satisfaction. It was in line with the aim of this research that to examine the predictive model and the mediating role of academic engagement. Sekaran and Bougie (2013) state quantitative research provides a systematic framework in collecting, measuring, and analyzing data through standardized instruments.

### Participants

There were 524 students participated in this study. All were students at Islamic High School or *Madrasah Aliyah* from several cities in Indonesia. They are 15 to 18 years old. They lived in several large islands in Indonesia, such as Java as many as 290 (55.3%), Sumatra 160 (30.5%), Kalimantan 50 (9.5%) and, West Nusa Tenggara 24 (4.6%). The respondents consisted of 263 (50.2%) males and 261 (49.8%) females.

Table. 1 Participant Distribution

Characteristics	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Province	Java	290	55.3%
	Sumatra	160	30.5%
	West Nusa Tenggara	24	4.6%
	Kalimantan	50	9.5%
Gender	Male	263	50.2%
	Female	261	49.8%

### Instruments

Data were collected using three validated and reliable instruments: the Student Life Satisfaction Scale to assess student life satisfaction, the Student Engagement Scale to evaluate student engagement, and the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale for Students (UWES-9S) to

measure academic engagement. These instruments were adapted from theoretical frameworks developed by experts and, therefore, required adherence to standardized procedures to translate counselling assessments. The adaptation process followed the guideline proposed by Lenz et al. (2017). It includes several stages: forward translation, translation review, back translation, team review and cultural adaptation, pretesting, and revision.

### ***Student Life Satisfaction Scale***

Student life satisfaction scale was developed to measure cognitive assessments of a student life satisfaction (Diener et al., 1985). This instrument uses a 7 point Likert scale ranging from 1 strongly disagree and 7 strongly agree. In the present study, the measurement of validity and reliability were assessed by means of Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and Cronbach's alpha. The CFA results demonstrated good model fit : CFI = 0.985, RMSEA = 0.096, SRMR = 0.030, GFI = 0.998, NFI = 0.983, IFI = 0.985, TLI = 0.975, RFI = 0.971, PNFI = 0.598. The instrument demonstrated high reliability with a Cronbach's alpha of 0,882.

### ***Student Engagement Scale***

The Student Engagement Scale (Reeve & Tseng, 2011) consists of 22 items across four dimensions. These are agentic (e.g., "I tell the teacher what I like and what I don't like"), behavioral (e.g., "I try very hard in school"), emotional (e.g., "When we work on something in class, I feel interested"), and cognitive engagement (e.g., "I try to make all the different ideas fit together and make sense when I study"). Items use a 7-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) results indicated good model fit: CFI = 0.974, RMSEA = 0.071, SRMR = 0.047, GFI = 0.993, NFI = 0.932, IFI = 0.947, TLI = 0.939, RFI = 0.923, and PNFI = 0.870. The reliability was also satisfactory, with Cronbach's alpha values of 0.809 for agentic, 0.874 for behavioral, 0.738 for emotional, and 0.896 for cognitive engagement, indicating the instrument's consistency and validity.

### ***Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES-9S)***

The Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES-9S; Schaufeli et al., 2006) measures academic engagement across three dimensions. They are vigor (e.g., "When I'm doing my work as a student, I feel bursting with energy"), dedication (e.g., "My studies inspire me"), and absorption (e.g., "I am proud of my studies"). Items are rated on a 7-point Likert scale from 0 (never) to 6 (always). Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) showed good model fit: CFI = 0.974, RMSEA = 0.079, SRMR = 0.025, GFI = 0.993, NFI = 0.968, IFI = 0.975, TLI = 0.952, RFI = 0.952, and PNFI = 0.645. The Cronbach's alpha values for each dimension were as follows: vigor, 0.851; dedication, 0.833; and absorption, 0.824 indicating good reliability and a good model fit.

### ***Data Analysis***

The whole data analysis process of this study was carried out in three stages. First, descriptive analysis was carried out to analyze the mean, standard deviation, and correlation of all those involved in the study. Second, path analysis was carried out in two stages of hierarchical regression analysis by controlling gender and age. The first regression analysis was conducted to test the relationship between the dimensions of student engagement and academic engagement. The second regression analysis was employed to test the relationship among all dimensions of student engagement and academic engagement with life satisfaction. Finally, data analysis was done to test the mediator role of all dimensions of academic engagement on the relationship between student engagement and life satisfaction by the Sobel test technique (Preacher, & Hayes, 2008).

All descriptive and regression analyses were done using SPSS 25 (IBM, 2017), while the



Sobel test was carried out by using the online Sobel test calculator (Soper, 2025). The first regression analysis was conducted by correlating the variables and then by doing a regression analysis using SPSS 25. Moreover, to determine the mediation effect of the indirect effect, the Sobel z-test was used to measure whether the relationship between student life satisfaction and student engagement with the mediating variable, i.e. academic engagement. To test the significance of mediation, the Sobel z-test was applied.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Results

#### *Descriptive statistics and correlational analysis*

The descriptive data and intercorrelation matrix of student engagement, academic engagement, as well as life satisfaction along with age and gender are presented in Table 2. Based on the bivariate correlation analysis, all dimensions of students' engagement, academic engagement, and student life satisfaction had a significant positive correlation ( $p < .01$ ), age was not correlated with students' engagement, academic engagement and life satisfaction. The results of the bivariate correlation analysis also implied that female respondents tended to have higher dedication, absorption, agentic, emotional, and cognitive engagement than the male ones. However, there was no relationship between gender and life satisfaction behavioral engagement

Table 2. Descriptive statistic and correlation analysis on the variable

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1 Student Life Satisfaction										
2 Vigor	.58**									
3 Dedication	.61**	.78**								
4 Absorption	.68**	.73**	.79**							
5 Agentic Engagement	.45**	.63**	.63**	.53**						
6 Behavioral Engagement	.54**	.63**	.68**	.69**	.51**					
7 Emotional Engagement	.62**	.71**	.71**	.69**	.62**	.73**				
8 Cognitive Engagement	.56**	.76**	.82**	.78**	.66**	.74**	.72**			
9 Age	-.01	.03	-.02	.01	.05	.01	.05	.06		
10 Gender	.01	.10*	.19**	.18**	.07	.24**	.14**	.19**	.01	
M	32.26	14.39	15.35	15.85	21.31	27.58	20.82	40.37	1.81	1.50
SD	7.04	3.73	3.49	3.43	5.80	5.39	4.25	8.44	.77	.50

\*\* . Correlation Is Significant at the 0.01 Level (1-Tailed)

\*. Correlation Is Significant at the 0.05 level (1-Tailed)

#### *The direct correlation between student engagement, academic engagement and life satisfaction*

Based on Table 3, student engagement was generally related to all dimensions of academic engagement including vigor ( $r = .803$ ,  $p < .01$ ), dedication ( $r = .845$ ,  $p < .01$ ), and absorption ( $R = .809$ ,  $p < .01$ ). All dimensions of student engagement explained the variance of academic engagement dimensions between 64.5% and 71.4%. Agentic, emotional and cognitive engagement correlated with the increase in vigor ( $\beta = .094$ , .236, .200,  $p < .01$ , respectively) and dedication ( $\beta = .065$ ,  $p < .05$ ;  $\beta = .151$ , .232,  $p < .01$ , respectively). On the contrary, absorption was positively predicted by behavioral engagement ( $\beta = .100$ ,  $p < .01$ ), emotional engagement ( $\beta = .162$ ,  $p < .01$ ), and cognitive engagement ( $\beta = .218$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Interestingly, life satisfaction was only positively predicted by emotional engagement ( $\beta = .440$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and absorption ( $\beta = .966$ ,  $p < .01$ ).

#### *The parallel mediation of academic engagement*

The results of the mediation analysis of the three dimensions of academic engagement,

including vigor, dedication, and absorption indicated that only the absorption had a mediator role in the relationship of student engagement with life satisfaction. In particular, the results of the mediation analysis presented in Table 4 have confirmed that absorption fully mediated the relationship between behavioral engagement and life satisfaction ( $\beta = .096$ ,  $z = 3.38$ ,  $p < .05$ ) as well as cognitive engagement and life satisfaction ( $\beta = .156$ ,  $z = 4.05$ ,  $p < .01$ ). In addition, absorption partially mediated the relationship between emotional engagement and life satisfaction ( $\beta = .210$ ,  $z = 6.90$ ,  $p < .01$ ).

Table 3. The Regression aquin of chain mediation

Predictor	$\beta$	T	P	R	R <sup>2</sup>	F	P
Criterion: Vigor				.803	.645	156.9	<0.01
Agentic Engagement	.094	4.01	<0.01				
Behavior Engagement	.028	.939	>0.05				
Emotional Engagement	.236	6.16	<0.01				
Cognitive Engagement	.200	9.85	<0.01				
Criterion: Dedication				.845	.714	215.5	<0.01
Agentic Engagement	.065	3.29	<0.05				
Behavior Engagement	.046	1.81	>0.05				
Emotional Engagement	.151	4.71	<0.01				
Cognitive Engagement	.232	13.61	<0.01				
Criterion: Absorption				.809	.655	163.2	<0.01
Agentic Engagement	-.016	-.764	>0.05				
Behavior Engagement	.100	3.64	<0.01				
Emotional Engagement	.162	4.67	<0.01				
Cognitive Engagement	.218	11.87	<0.01				
Criterion: Students Life Satisfaction				.726	.527	63.68	<0.01
Agentic Engagement	.009	.172	>0.05				
Behavior Engagement	.031	.457	>0.05				
Emotional Engagement	.440	5.03	<0.01				
Cognitive Engagement	-.099	-1.83	>0.05				
Vigor	.136	1.29	>0.05				
Dedication	.176	1.36	>0.05				
Absorption	.966	8.38	<0.01				

Table 4. Sobel test of The Mediation Indirect Effect

Indirect Effect	Coef	Z	P	CI 95%	
				LL	UL
AE – Vigor – SLS	0.012	1.24	>0.05	-0.186	0.212
BE – Vigor – SLS	0.003	0.75	>0.05	-0.135	0.142
EE – Vigor – SLS	0.032	1.26	>0.05	-0.279	0.343
CE – Vigor – SLS	0.027	1.28	>0.05	-0.258	0.312
AE – Dedication – SLS	0.011	1.25	>0.05	-0.175	0.198
BE – Dedication – SLS	0.008	1.09	>0.05	-0.160	0.176
EE – Dedication – SLS	0.026	1.31	>0.05	-0.252	0.305
CE – Dedication – SLS	0.040	1.35	>0.05	-0.299	0.380
AE – Absorption – SLS	-0.015	-0.75	>0.05	-0.250	0.264
BE – Absorption – SLS	0.096	3.38	<0.05	89.953	103.246
EE – Absorption – SLS	0.156	4.05	<0.05	148.032	164.951
CE – Absorption – SLS	0.210	6.90	<0.01	200.775	220.401

Notes: AE = Agentic Engagement; BE = Behavior Engagement; EE = Emotional Engagement; CE = Cognitive Engagement; SLS = Students Life Satisfaction

## Discussions

This study aimed to investigate the mediating role of academic engagement in the relationship between student engagement and life satisfaction among Madrasah Aliyah students in Indonesia. The findings revealed inconsistencies in how different dimensions of student and

academic engagement relate to life satisfaction. Behavioral engagement significantly predicted absorption but showed no significant relationship with vigor and dedication. Meanwhile, agentic, emotional, and cognitive engagement positively influenced vigor and dedication, although their relationships with absorption varied. Importantly, only emotional engagement and absorption demonstrated a positive and direct correlation with student life satisfaction.

When viewed solely through these direct relationships, student engagement and academic engagement appear to overlap, especially in affective dimensions such as emotional engagement and absorption. This aligns with previous research suggesting significant conceptual overlap between these constructs (Eccles & Wang, 2012; Torsney & Symonds, 2019; Torsney et al., 2022). However, this study emphasizes the importance of theoretically and operationally distinguishing the two constructs, as they exhibit unique patterns of association with different facets of student well-being.

When absorption was examined as a mediator between student engagement and student life satisfaction, as intended in the second research objective, the findings indicated that student engagement is conceptually distinct from academic engagement. Behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement showed indirect relationships with life satisfaction through absorption. Ideally, if student engagement and academic engagement were overlapping constructs, absorption would only mediate the relationship between emotional engagement and student life satisfaction; yet this was not the case.

Deep concentration in learning, reflected by absorption, appears to be simultaneously influenced by emotional, behavioral, and cognitive engagement. Under these circumstances, student life satisfaction is enhanced through this combined engagement process. Viewed from multiple dimensions of student engagement, absorption plays a significant role in explaining student life satisfaction. Therefore, academic engagement and student engagement should be regarded as distinct constructs in explaining student life satisfaction.

The difference took place on the scope and focus of each construct, namely student engagement covered a broad spectrum of student involvement in school life, including behavioral, emotional, cognitive and agentic engagement dimensions, reflecting proactive participation in various school contexts (Fredricks et al., 2004; Reeve & Tseng, 2011). Oppositely, academic engagement specifically referred to students' psychological investment in their academic pursuits characterized by vigor, dedication and absorption reflecting the intensity and persistence of learning efforts (Schaufeli et al., 2002; Schaufeli, 2017). Hence, these two constructs needed to be further separated to attain more detailed differences in the context of education.

This study found that emotional engagement plays a significant role in students' academic success and overall well-being. Khan, Gul, and Zeb (2023) revealed that emotional engagement and cognitive engagement directly contributed to academic achievement and productivity. Then, Liu et al. (2024) identified that intrinsic motivation and emotional engagement are positively correlated with academic performance and help strengthen behavioral and cognitive engagement. Accordingly, this present research has confirmed the importance of prioritizing emotional engagement before strengthening cognitive engagement and behavioral engagement. Additionally, research by Jimerson et al. (2003) and Skinner et al. (2009) indicates that emotional engagement is closely related to increased motivation, reduced dropout risk, and enhanced psychological well-being among students.

One possible explanation for the dominance of emotional engagement is its direct connection to students' affective experiences during the learning process, which can more effectively enhance motivation and commitment compared to behavioral or cognitive engagement alone. This aligns with the findings of Fredricks, Blumenfeld, and Paris (2004), who emphasize the importance of emotional engagement in motivating students and maintaining their commitment to learning. Furthermore, in educational contexts deeply



integrated with spiritual and cultural values, such as in *Madrasah Aliyah*, emotional engagement is further strengthened by students' sense of belonging, identity, and meaning derived from their educational experiences (Abu-Raiya & Pargament, 2015; Yazid et al., 2020). This cultural context likely differentiates the engagement profiles of *Madrasah Aliyah* students from those in general schools, where academic engagement may be more focused on cognitive and behavioral dimensions (Wang & Eccles, 2012).

Moreover, the role of absorption as a mediator underscores the interaction between affective and cognitive-behavioral domains, suggesting that optimal student life satisfaction arises when emotional, cognitive, and behavioral engagements are harmoniously integrated. This integration likely facilitates sustained concentration and intrinsic motivation in academic tasks, ultimately supporting students' well-being and academic success.

### Implications

This research offers provided theoretical and practical contributions. Theoretically, it clarifies the conceptual distinction between student engagement and academic engagement, emphasizing the mediating role of absorption in linking the engagement dimension to student's life satisfaction. It also, underscores the importance of precise measurement and contextual sensitivity in engagement research. Practically, the findings offer insights for designing educational strategies that align with students lived experiences in culturally and religious rooted learning environments such as *Madrasah Aliyah*.

These findings suggest that school counselor and educator should prioritize emotional engagement as a foundation component in fostering student well-being. Strengthening emotional engagement can, in turn enhance cognitive and behavioral engagement, ultimately leading to deeper academic engagement through absorption. This progression facilitates greater academic motivation, sustained concentration, and psychological well-being.

Research by Greco et al. (2025) concludes that high levels of academic engagement are in line with better psychological well-being, while low engagement may lead to more severe psychological symptoms. Similarly, Vizoso et al. (2018) found that absorption in learning acts as a mediator between adaptive coping strategies and academic performance. Both researches further strengthen the assumption that deep academic engagement improves students' mental health and academic success, this may because deep academic engagement, especially through absorption supports focus and motivation, which in turn enhance emotional wellbeing and academic performance. Therefore, it is important for school counselors to provide interventions that focus sequentially on the formation of emotional, cognitive, and behavioral engagement as an effective strategy in improving students' well-being and academic achievement.

### Limitations and Future Directions

Apart from its contributions, several limitations do exist in this research. First, the sample consisted only of students from *Madrasah Aliyah* in Indonesia, a religious-based secondary education system. Even though this provided valuable insights into the influence of culture and religion on student engagement, it limited generalizability to students in secular educational settings or other cultural contexts. Future researchers are recommended to involve larger and more diverse samples, including students from different educational backgrounds and geographic regions, to examine whether similar engagement patterns persist across learning environments.

Second, the present research relied on self-report measures, which, while widely used in educational research, may be subject to response biases such as social desirability or subjective interpretation. To strengthen the validity of the findings, future researchers are suggested to incorporate multiple assessment methods, such as observational techniques, teacher evaluations, or longitudinal tracking of student engagement over time. These would share a

more comprehensive understanding of the dynamic relationships between student engagement, academic engagement, and life satisfaction.

Third, while this research highlighted the mediating role of engagement, it did not investigate potential moderating factors that might influence the strength of these relationships. Variables such as teacher-student relationships, peer interactions, learning environment, or personality traits may further shape how engagement dimensions contribute to life satisfaction. Follow-up research may integrate moderation analyses to determine contextual and individual differences that may influence engagement outcomes. Lastly, quantitative analyses employed in this research somehow overlooked the nuance of qualitative insights into how students experienced and interpreted engagement in their everyday academic lives. The next researchers can use a mixed-methods approach by combining quantitative modeling with qualitative interviews or case studies to deepen our understanding of how students navigate academic engagement, emotional engagement, and personal well-being.

Above all, dealing with these limitations in future research will not only refine engagement theory but also improve educational interventions, ensuring that student engagement strategies are tailored to diverse real-world learning contexts. By expanding the scope of investigation, integrating multifaceted research approaches, and considering both individual and environmental variables, future investigation can advance knowledge about how engagement promotes well-being and academic success among students worldwide.

## CONCLUSIONS

Student engagement and academic engagement are conceptually different, but each contributes to student's life satisfaction. Among three dimensions of academic engagement, only absorption significantly mediates the relationship between emotional, cognitive, and behavioral engagement and student's life satisfaction. In contrast, vigor and dedication show no consistent mediation effects, underscoring their limited role in supporting student well-being. What is implied from the finding is deep engagement in learning is essential to enhancing student life satisfaction, especially in educational environments with specific cultures such as *Madrasah Aliyah*. Moreover, emotional engagement and absorption, meaningful focus and immersion in the learning process, play an important role as a link between general student engagement and student life satisfaction. Finally, the present research accentuates the importance of distinguishing between general student's engagement and academic engagement. Educational approaches that take into account students' culture and experiences could potentially be more effective. By understanding the role of each dimension of engagement, teachers, policymakers, and counselors can design programs that help students feel more academically engaged to improve students' well-being and achievement.

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SS and SN conducted an in-depth literature review on student engagement, academic engagement, and students' life satisfaction. They also designed the research methodology,

collected the data, performed data analysis, and drafted the introduction, discussion, and conclusion sections of the study. Meanwhile, DYP and AA were responsible for establishing collaborative partnerships with professors, psychologists, and translators to support the instrument adaptation process. They also contributed to data analysis and the writing of the introduction, discussion, and conclusion sections.

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