Degrees and Promoting Factors of Student Engagement at Bangkok Christian College

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Abstract

This research aimed to (1) examine the degrees of student engagement in school operations at Bangkok Christian College in Academic Year 2024, and (2) investigate the promoting factors of student engagement in school operations under study. A multistage quantitative-qualitative methods (Explanatory Design) was used, with a constructed questionnaire on student engagement, followed by a semi-structured interview tool. The participants consisted of 246 Grade 12 students and five school administrators, totaling 251 individuals. The results revealed that the participating students exhibited a high degrees of student engagement, with emotional engagement rated the highest ($\bar{x}$ = 4.04, SD = 0.694), followed by behavioral ($\bar{x}$ = 3.71, SD = 0.667), and cognitive engagement ($\bar{x}$ = 3.67, SD = 0.766), respectively. The promoting factors were categorized into three domains. (i) In the aspect of *personnel*, teachers played a vital role in providing reasoning to guide student behavior rather than give directive commands. (ii) Positive *teacher-student relationships* and individual follow-up were key strengths, and peer influence was found to positively affect learning behaviors. (iii) In terms of *management*, the school provided meaningful and challenging activities that encouraged participation, gave students opportunities to express their opinions, and helped them feel involved in the classroom process. Clear and transparent assessment criteria enabled students to set goals and monitor their academic progress. In addition, *learning resources* support classroom climate; and well-paced learning activities contributed to students' concentration and engagement. Although physical learning tools were not explicitly emphasized, their value was embedded in the meaningful activities designed to foster authentic learning experiences. The obtained findings were expected to generate practical implications for secondary school management in similar contexts in support of students' responsive engagement strategies, positive attitudes, and learning experiences.

Keywords: Student engagement, promoting factors, secondary education

1. Rationale of the Study

Student engagement in school operations has emerged as a pivotal construct in educational research, recognized for its profound influence on students' academic success, psychosocial development, and long-term educational trajectories (Christenson et al., 2012; Reschly & Christenson, 2012). This is particularly critical during the upper secondary level, a transitional stage marked by increased academic demands and identity formation. Engagement is widely understood as a multidimensional phenomenon encompassing cognitive, emotional, and behavioral components, each interwoven and

mutually reinforcing (Fredricks et al., 2004; Fredricks et al., 2011). These dimensions collectively reflect the extent to which students invest intellectually, connect affectively, and participate actively in the learning process. The level of student engagement is not merely an individual trait but a dynamic outcome shaped by various contextual and interpersonal factors, including the quality of teacher-student relationships, peer interactions, school leadership, management practices, and the broader learning environment (Aminpoor & Zare 2025).

According to the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) conducted by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (OECD, 2024), Thai students demonstrated a lower degree of engagement compared to international averages. The average scores for the sense of belonging and classroom participation among Thai students were 469 and 489 respectively which are below the OECD average of 500. Overall, the proportion of Thai students with a low degree of engagement was significantly higher than the OECD average (Willms, 2003). This phenomenon reflects an urgent need for empirical investigation into the conditions that influence student engagement in Thai schools.

Empirical evidence suggests that a high degree of school engagement among students contributes to positive academic and psychosocial outcomes (Wang et al., 2016). At the institutional level, it reinforces school identity and alumni relationships. At the student level, it reduces the risk of dropout, academic burnout, and passive learning while promoting resilience and adaptability (Hazel et al., 2014; Henrie et al., 2015; Virtanen et al., 2016). Thai studies also highlight that teacher influence directly and indirectly affects both student engagement and learning achievement. Teaching practices play a partial mediating role between teacher engagement and student outcomes (Klincumhom & Ruengtrakul, 2014; Aeamtussana et al., 2017).

Bangkok Christian College (BCC) is a prominent private institution with a diverse student population making it a relevant context for examining the degree of student engagement in school operations and its promoting factors. This study focused on two objectives. First, it aimed to explore the degree of school engagement among students at Bangkok Christian College in Academic Year 2024. Second, it was to investigate the promoting factors that enhance student engagement in this context. The obtained results were expected to generate practical implications for secondary school management in similar contexts in support of students' responsive engagement strategies, positive attitudes, and learning experiences.

2. Research Objectives

This study was conducted with two objectives:

(1) To examine the degree of student engagement in school operations at Bangkok Christian College in Academic Year 2024

(2) To investigate the promoting factors of student engagement in school operations under study.

3. Research Methodology

This study adopted an explanatory mixed-methods design to investigate both the degree of student engagement in school operations and the promoting factors that influence it. The research was in two phases. The first phase used a quantitative approach to measure key variables, while the second phase used qualitative interviews to deepen the understanding of the findings and identify contributing factors from a real-world perspective.

3.1 Population and Sample

For the first phase, the population consisted of all Grade 12 students enrolled at Bangkok Christian College in Academic Year 2024, totaling 408 students. A simple random sampling method was to select participants, resulting in 246 providing complete responses for data analysis. For the second phase, five key informants were purposively selected based on their administrative roles related to student engagement. These included the Head of Secondary Academic Affairs, Head of the English Immersion Program (EIP), Head of Co-curricular and Student Development Activities, Head of Discipline Affairs for Secondary School, and Head of Educational Innovation. These individuals were chosen on a voluntary basis for their direct involvement in strategies promoting student engagement in the school.

3.2 Research Tools

Two research tools were utilized in accordance with the data types and research objectives. The first tool was the "Student School Engagement Scale," which was a constructed questionnaire containing both checklist items and a 5-point rating scale. This instrument was developed based on theoretical frameworks that cover behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement dimensions. The development process began with drafting items aligned with operational definitions, followed by content validity verification by three experts in educational management. The index of item-objective congruence (IOC) was used to determine the relevance of each item, with the acceptable threshold set at 0.50 or above. Revisions were made based on expert feedback. A pilot test was then conducted with 30 students who had similar characteristics to the target population. Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient. The final version of the questionnaire was distributed through the online survey platform for actual data collection.

The second tool was a set of semi-structured interview questions to gather qualitative insights from five school administrators. The interview guide was developed using preliminary quantitative findings and further refined in consultation with three experts in educational management to ensure clarity and alignment with the research objectives. It aimed to explore multi-dimensional factors influencing student engagement based on the 4Ms concept, which includes Man (personnel), Management, Material, and Money (budgeting resources).

3.3 Data Collection

Data collection was carried out in two phases--quantitative and qualitative. In the quantitative phase, the questionnaire was distributed online to 246 Grade 12 students at Bangkok Christian College. In the qualitative phase, semi-structured interviews were conducted with five school administrators who played strategic roles in engaging students

in school operations. Each interview was conducted individually in an hour and audio-recorded for transcription and subsequent content analysis.

3.4 Data Analysis

Quantitative data from the questionnaire were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequency, mean, and standard deviation, to identify the overall degree of student engagement and breakdowns across various dimensions. Qualitative data from the interviews were analyzed using content analysis. The transcribed responses were coded and categorized into key themes corresponding to four main dimensions of 4Ms. The frequency of recurring themes was also considered to ensure data patterns and in-depth interpretation.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Research Results

The results of this study are presented as responsive to the two identified research objectives. The first section reports the degree of student engagement at Bangkok Christian College in Academic Year 2024, as perceived by Grade 12 students under study. The second section reveals the key factors that promote student engagement based on insights gathered from school administrators. Together, these findings offer both quantitative and qualitative perspectives, contributing to a comprehensive understanding of the conditions and elements that support student-school connection in this context.

4.1.1 The Degree of Student Engagement at Bangkok Christian College in Academic Year 2024

The respondents--246 Grade 12 students at Bangkok Christian College in Academic Year 2024, perceived student engagement *overall* at a high level ($\bar{x} = 3.81$, SD = 0.709). Of all engagement dimensions, the highest average was on *emotional engagement* ($\bar{x} = 4.04$, SD = 0.694), followed by *behavioral engagement* ($\bar{x} = 3.71$, SD = 0.667) and *cognitive engagement* ($\bar{x} = 3.67$, SD = 0.766), respectively, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: The Degree of Student Engagement at Bangkok Christian College in Academic Year 2024

Student Engagement	Level		
	$\bar{x}$	SD	Meaning
1. Cognitive Engagement	**3.67**	**0.766**	**High**
1.1 I prepare myself before learning new lessons.	3.63	1.146	High
1.2 I study the content in advance to better understand the lesson.	3.08	1.307	Moderate
1.3 I pay close attention while learning.	3.71	1.020	High
1.4 I dedicate my time to learning.	3.69	1.070	High
1.5 I plan my study sessions before exams.	3.52	1.208	High
1.6 I set my own learning procedures.	3.76	1.007	High
1.7 I am always eager to learn.	3.76	1.100	High
1.8 I constantly strive to improve the quality of my learning.	3.82	0.998	High
1.9 I enjoy solving difficult and challenging problems.	3.37	1.241	Moderate
1.10 I feel good when working on challenging tasks.	3.66	1.105	High
1.11 I seek new methods to solve problems.	3.60	1.204	High
1.12 I am able to invent new solutions to problems.	3.67	1.104	High
1.13 I do not dwell on failures when my academic performance	3.94	1.094	High

Student Engagement	Level		
	$\bar{x}$	SD	Meaning
falls short of expectations.			
1.14) I am ready to solve problems when I make mistakes.	4.24	0.858	High
2. Emotional Engagement	**4.04**	**0.694**	**High**
2.1 I feel a sense of belonging when I come to school.	4.24	0.870	High
2.2 I feel emotionally connected to my school	4.33	0.793	High
2.3 I always put my full effort into assigned tasks.	3.99	0.852	High
2.4 I am determined to complete tasks successfully.	4.40	0.845	High
2.5 I am committed to succeeding in my studies.	4.24	0.858	High
2.6 I consistently pay attention to my learning.	3.85	0.970	High
2.7 I enjoy learning new lessons.	3.74	1.045	High
2.8 I feel happy when studying.	3.57	1.115	High
3. Behavioral Engagement	**3.71**	**0.667**	**High**
3.1 I willingly follow the school's rules and regulations.	3.97	0.981	High
3.2 I believe that following school rules is the right thing to do.	4.07	0.923	High
3.3 I willingly comply with classroom rules.	4.04	0.951	High
3.4 I think I don't necessarily have to follow classroom rules.*	3.32	1.311	Moderate
3.5 I stay focused on the lessons taught by the teacher.	3.67	1.103	High
3.6 I am not easily distracted while studying.	3.50	1.124	High
3.7 I ask the teacher when I don't understand a lesson.	3.27	1.185	Moderate
3.8 I exchange ideas with my peers about the lesson.	3.82	1.121	High
Overall	**3.81**	**0.709**	**High**

* Negative item

Item-level analysis revealed that in the *cognitive engagement* dimension, the participating students demonstrated strong adaptability and problem-solving skills, particularly in recovering from mistakes and maintaining resilience when faced with academic setbacks. This reflects their cognitive flexibility and commitment to continuous learning. Regarding *emotional engagement,* the students exhibited a high degree of intrinsic motivation, academic determination, and a strong sense of belonging within the school community, especially in their confidence in achieving success and feeling connected to their peers and institution. In the *behavioral engagement* dimension, the participating students reported a strong willingness to comply with school regulations and participate in classroom activities. However, the frequency of student-initiated questioning or expression of curiosity during lessons was found to be relatively lower than other behavioral indicators.

Overall, the findings indicate that the participating students at Bangkok Christian College exhibited a high degree of student engagement across all three dimensions. *Emotional engagement* emerged as the strongest dimension, reflecting students' pride and deep connection with their school. Meanwhile, both *behavioral and cognitive* dimensions showed areas for further development, particularly in fostering student motivation to inquire and engage in advanced planning related to their learning process.

4.1.2 The Promoting Factors of Students' Degree of Engagement at Bangkok Christian College

The analysis of the promoting factors of students' degree of engagement at Bangkok Christian College was based on the interview results obtained from five key informants. They were school administrators whose responsibilities were directly related

to student engagement promotion, including: (i) the Head of Secondary Academic Affairs, (ii) the Head of the English Immersion Program (EIP), (iii) the Head of Co-curricular and Student Development Activities, (iv) the Head of Discipline Affairs for Secondary School, and (v) the Head of Educational Innovation.

The results were synthesized and categorized into four key dimensions based on the 4Ms framework: Man (personnel), Management, Material (resources), and Money (budget). The summarized findings are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: The Promoting Factors of Students' Degree of Engagement at Bangkok Christian College Based on Interview Findings

4M Factors	Promoting Factors		
	Cognitive Engagement	Emotional Engagement	Behavioral Engagement
Man	Frequency of Data Occurrence: 5 Key Themes from the Interviews: - Teachers, parents, and caregivers play a crucial role, particularly when they adopt a growth mindset that encourages students not to fear making mistakes. - Internal motivation (intrinsic motivation) and metacognitive skills are emphasized as essential traits to be cultivated in students. - Providing students with autonomy in their thinking and decision-making, fosters internal drive and personal initiative.	Frequency of Data Occurrence: 4 Key Themes from the Interviews: - Promoting the value of empathy is central to fostering emotional engagement. - Teachers' ability to inspire and provide psychological support plays a critical role. - A positive attitude toward teachers, peers, and the school serves as the foundation of emotional engagement.	Frequency of Data Occurrence: 5 Key Themes from the Interviews: - Teachers play a key role by explaining the reasons behind behavioral guidance, helping students understand rather than merely comply. - Strong teacher-student relationships and individualized follow-ups are critical strengths. - Peer influence has a positive impact on students' learning behavior.
Management	Frequency of Data Occurrence: 3 Key Themes from the Interviews: - Teachers should design activities or instructional formats that emphasize student participation, encouraging them to ask questions, reflect on their thinking, and engage in self-correction. - Providing opportunities for students to learn from their mistakes is regarded by informants as a highly effective approach.	Frequency of Data Occurrence: 4 Key Themes from the Interviews: - Designing meaningful activities and real-life learning experiences helps create a sense of connection. - Classroom and school management that emphasizes safety, warmth, and emotional security effectively fosters trust.	Frequency of Data Occurrence: 4 Key Themes from the Interviews: - Designing challenging and meaningful activities encourages students to participate actively. - Allowing students to express their opinions helps them feel a sense of agency in the classroom. - Clear assessment criteria give students a sense of direction and allow them to recognize their own progress.

4M Factors	Promoting Factors		
	Cognitive Engagement	Emotional Engagement	Behavioral Engagement
Material	Frequency of Data Occurrence: 2 Key Themes from the Interviews: - A learning environment that fosters opportunities for thinking, analyzing, and exchanging ideas is essential. - Educational media and tools that support the development of thinking skills play a significant role in enhancing engagement.	Frequency of Data Occurrence: 2 Key Themes from the Interviews: - A friendly and safe classroom or school environment contributes to emotional participation and connection.	Frequency of Data Occurrence: 2 Key Themes from the Interviews: - Classroom climate and the pacing of activities influence students' participation and concentration. - Equipment or resources in the classroom were rarely mentioned, but they may be implicitly included under the concept of meaningful activities.
Money	Frequency of Data Occurrence: 0 Key Themes from the Interviews: - No respondents directly mentioned budget or financial resources. - This suggests that the development of cognitive engagement may not require significant funding if effective management strategies and qualified personnel are in place.	Frequency of Data Occurrence: 0 Key Themes from the Interviews: - Budget or financial support was not explicitly mentioned in relation to emotional engagement. - This suggests that emotional engagement relies more on interpersonal relationships and effective management than on financial resources.	Frequency of Data Occurrence: 0 Key Themes from the Interviews: - None of the interviewees mentioned budget-related issues. - This reflects that behavioral engagement depends more on structured processes and interpersonal interaction than on financial resources.

Table 2 presents the promoting factors of student engagement across three dimensions: cognitive, emotional, and behavioral. It was found that Man (personnel) and Management are the most influential contributors to students' engagement within the school. These two elements were repeatedly emphasized and demonstrated as a systematic connection across all engagement dimensions.

In the *Man* category, the roles of teachers, parents, peers, and caregivers were highlighted as vital in shaping students' attitudes and behaviors. Key aspects included the development of a growth mindset, the fostering of intrinsic motivation, and the establishment of trusting and empathetic relationships. Such interpersonal dynamics were essential in cultivating a sense of belonging, which lies at the heart of emotional engagement.

In terms of Management, the findings highlighted the importance of learning environments that encourage student participation, critical thinking, and open expression. Classroom strategies that support reflection, autonomy, and learning from failure were seen

as effective. Clear assessment criteria and defined goals also enhanced students' awareness of their progress and strengthened behavioral engagement.

Although the *Material* factor was mentioned less frequently, it played a supportive role in creating an engaging atmosphere. These included environments that encouraged discussion and interaction, the use of practical learning tools, and settings that provided students with a sense of safety and freedom to express themselves.

Notably, the *Money* factor was not mentioned by any informant. This suggests that effective engagement promotion relies less on financial resources and more on meaningful relationships, effective pedagogy, and school culture.

4.2 Discussion of Major Findings

The findings of this study reveal insights into both the degree of *student engagement* and the key *promoting factors* that influence engagement in school operations among students at Bangkok Christian College. The discussion presented in this section synthesizes these findings in light of previous studies and theoretical concepts, offering interpretations and implications that reflect the academic and practical significance of the results. The discussion is structured according to the two research objectives: first, the degrees of engagement across cognitive, emotional, and behavioral dimensions; and second, the supporting factors categorized under the 4Ms concept.

To the participants under study, *the overall degree of student engagement* at Bangkok Christian College in Academic Year 2024 was high, with emotional engagement as the highest, followed by behavioral and cognitive engagement, respectively. This pattern indicates a strong sense of school belonging and emotional loyalty among students. The top-rated items, such as "I am committed to succeeding in my work," "I feel a sense of attachment to the school," and "I feel like I belong when I come to school", illustrate deep student identify with the learning environment.

These outcomes reflect a *value-based management approach* consistently promoted by the school, as seen in its guiding vision of a "School of Happiness" and the integration of meaningful experiences, such as religious activities, service clubs, and school history education. This aligns with the theoretical concepts proposed by Fredricks et al. (2004) and Skinner & Pitzer (2012), which emphasize that a sense of belonging is central to emotional engagement. At Bangkok Christian College, such belonging is reinforced by strong teacher-student relationships, under the leadership of the Deputy Director for Student Affairs. Wang et al. (2016) supported such belonging further with the use of Fredricks' original model of the multidimensional nature of student engagement in measuring cognitive, emotional, and behavioral components across academic contexts. The findings are also consistent with the study by Aeamtussana et al. (2017), which highlights the importance of positive self-concept and perceived membership in predicting student engagement.

In terms of *behavioral engagement*, the participating students demonstrated high degrees of adherence to school rules and classroom expectations. This suggests the presence of a clearly communicated school culture and the effective implementation of positive discipline strategies. Initiatives as in constructive discipline programs and structured student activities with clear evaluation criteria contribute to this behavioral commitment.

These findings correspond with Finn's model (1989), which identifies active behavioral participation, such as focus during lessons, rule compliance, and peer collaboration, as key indicators of engagement. Similarly, Reschly & Christenson (2012) supported behavioral engagement as entailing observable participation in academic, social, and extracurricular activities in accordance with institutional expectations and student perceptions of belonging.

Behavioral engagement was found to be influenced by factors, such as positive role models among teachers, peer influence, goal clarity, and a classroom climate that encourages participation. Teachers who clearly explain the rationale behind school rules help foster internal discipline rather than relying on external enforcement. Furthermore, activities designed with explicit learning outcomes reflect the principles of Outcome-Based Activity Design, which align with Deming's PDCA cycle in education management. These observations are supported by Finn's (1989) in that behavioral engagement is grounded in active participation and visible achievement. This is validated by the quantitative findings, especially the item "I believe that following school rules is the right thing to do," which received the highest behavioral engagement score, highlighting the strength of the school's culture and behavioral systems.

Cognitive engagement, while still rated at a high degree, showed comparatively lower average scores, particularly in the areas involving strategic and long-term academic planning. Statements, such as "I study in advance to better understand the lesson" and "I plan my reading before exams" received relatively lower agreement. This implies a gap in students' capacity for self-regulated learning, despite their positive mindset and resilience. These results are consistent with the conceptual framework of Zepke & Leach (2010), arguing that cognitive engagement requires the development of learning awareness and metacognitive skills. Henrie et al. (2015) also highlighted that cognitive engagement encompasses not only persistence and effort but also the use of metacognitive strategies, such as planning, reflection, and goal-setting. Supporting this dimension may involve providing students with more opportunities to plan their learning, set personal goals, and engage in reflective practices.

The results on cognitive engagement indicate that key promoting factors include fostering a growth mindset, encouraging autonomy in thinking and decision-making, and creating opportunities for students to learn from mistakes. These factors are closely linked with the development of self-regulated learning behaviors, which are significantly influenced by an open learning environment. The presence of instructional designs that promote active participation, formative assessment, and reflective practices align with behavioral management theory (Jones & George, 2015) and are supported by Fredricks et al. (2004) and Zepke & Leach (2010), who emphasized the necessity of learner autonomy and metacognitive awareness in developing cognitive engagement. These findings are also consistent with the highest-rated cognitive indicators from the quantitative phase of this study, such as "I am ready to solve problems when I make mistakes" and "I do not dwell on problems when my academic performance does not meet expectations."

For *emotional engagement*, the study identified warm and secure environments, meaningful learning experiences, and positive relationships with teachers and peers as central contributing factors. The cultivation of empathy, a core value promoted at Bangkok

Christian College, was shown to play a critical role in fostering a sustainable emotional bond between students and the school. The practice of psychological leadership through teacher-student bonding is deeply embedded in the school's activities and classroom management. These findings are congruent with the psychological engagement model proposed by Appleton et al. (2008), which highlights sense of belonging and affective commitment as foundational elements of emotional engagement. Christenson et al. (2012) also asserted that belonging, positive affect, and supportive interpersonal relationships form the foundation of emotional engagement. The obtained data evidently support such viewpoints, particularly for the items "I am determined to succeed in my work" and "I feel a strong connection with the school."

As discussed so far, the *promoting factors* of student engagement at Bangkok Christian College reveal that support mechanisms for enhancing engagement, across cognitive, emotional, and behavioral dimensions, can be comprehensively categorized using the 4Ms framework: Man, Management, Material, and Money. These elements reflect the critical roles played by human capital and strategic organizational practices in cultivating meaningful student involvement. Their recurring presence across data sources suggests that student engagement is fundamentally anchored in relational dynamics and pedagogical leadership rather than material resources or financial inputs alone.

5. Conclusion, Implications, and Future Research

This study explored two key dimensions of student engagement at Bangkok Christian College: the degree to which students demonstrated engagement in cognitive, emotional, and behavioral domains, and the underlying factors that promote such engagement. The findings revealed that students exhibited a high overall degree of engagement, particularly in emotional aspects, reflecting a strong sense of belonging and commitment to the school. In particular, the study identified that the most influential promoting factors were rooted in the quality of school personnel (Man) and strategic management (Management), supported by conducive learning environments (Material), rather than financial resources (Money). These results affirm that the school's value-driven culture, pedagogical strategies, and relationship-centered leadership play a vital role in shaping students' meaningful connections with their learning journey and school operations as a whole.

The case of Bangkok Christian College in fostering student engagement can evidently generate technical or procedural implications for educational management regarding student engagement promotion. In particular, enhancing students' intellectual involvement can challenge educators and student affairs leaders by integrating instructional approaches in support of autonomy and metacognitive growth, such as project-based learning, inquiry-based strategies, and opportunities for self-reflection. Providing formative feedback and scaffolding long-term learning goals can further strengthen students' strategic thinking and resilience.

As for future research, interested scholars may consider pursuing a specific or deliberate design for an integrated system that cultivates a school culture conducive to meaningful intellectual, emotional, and behavioral growth. This is to help identify more relevant integral factors in support of student learning autonomy and positive personality development at the secondary school level. Future studies can explore the long-term impact

of identity, value-based school activities on students' emotional engagement, or even qualitative or longitudinal designs to uncover how students internalize school values over time. These suggested issues are meant to provide insights into sustaining student engagement in secondary education contexts nationwide.

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