



The Relationship Between Social Support and Student Engagement for School Counseling Programs in Elementary Schools

Nurkholis^{1*}, Toto Santi Aji¹, Amanda Maharani², Khusnul Khotimah¹

¹Universitas Muhammadiyah Cirebon

²Institut Prima Bangsa

*Correspondence author : nurkholis@umc.ac.id

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Abstract

Student engagement is a central element of the learning experience in elementary education, reflecting students' behavioral, cognitive, and emotional participation in classroom activities. Rather than developing in isolation, engagement emerges through the interaction between students' individual characteristics and the social support available within their surrounding environment. This investigation addresses the relationship between social support and student engagement among elementary school students, as well as its relevance for the planning of needs-oriented guidance and counseling services. A quantitative survey approach was employed involving 100 students from grades IV to VI. Data were gathered through questionnaires and examined using a SEM-PLS approach with the support of SmartPLS 4. The analysis indicates that differences in students' engagement levels are closely linked to the degree of social support they receive. These findings suggest that guidance and counseling services should adopt a collaborative approach involving families and the school environment to effectively strengthen student engagement.

Introduction

Student engagement describes the degree to which learners invest effort, attention, and emotional involvement in learning activities. Such engagement is evident in students' willingness to participate in classroom tasks, their sustained interest in instructional content, and their commitment to completing academic responsibilities (Nguyen et al., 2025). Existing evidence underscores that student engagement plays an important role in academic outcomes as well as in students' cognitive, social, and emotional development (Wang et al., 2021). Within elementary education, engagement plays a critical role in shaping early learning dispositions and establishing the basis for enduring academic motivation (Guo et al., 2026). At this developmental stage, students are still forming basic learning habits, attitudes toward school, and patterns of academic responsibility (Virtanen et al., 2021). High engagement can help students adapt more positively to classroom routines and learning demands. Conversely, low engagement may become an early signal of learning difficulties that require educational and counseling attention. However, empirical conditions indicate that students' engagement is not always optimal, as reflected in limited focus, low participation, and reduced enthusiasm for learning (Lei et al., 2022). These conditions highlight the need for systematic efforts to identify factors influencing student engagement and strategies to enhance it.

Previous studies have consistently demonstrated strong associations between student engagement, academic performance, self-regulation, and psychological well-being. Integrative models emphasize that student engagement emerges from interactions between individual characteristics and students' social environments, including family and school contexts (Wang et al., 2021; Lei et al., 2022). Within the family context, parental support contributes to students' motivation and engagement through attention to learning activities, positive communication, and academic guidance (Jeynes, 2020; Melisa & Putra, 2021). Within the family context, parental support contributes to students' motivation and engagement through attention to learning activities, positive communication, and academic (Jeynes, 2020; Melisa & Putra, 2021). Family support may also create a sense of emotional security that encourages students

to participate more actively in learning. When students feel supported at home, they are more likely to develop confidence, persistence, and positive attitudes toward academic tasks. In contrast, limited family support may weaken students' motivation and reduce their involvement in classroom activities (Bielousova, 2026). Despite the growing body of research on student engagement and family support, previous studies have mostly examined these variables separately or in relation to academic achievement, motivation, and psychological well-being (AlSaqqaf & Hu, 2025). Limited attention has been given to how family support is associated with student engagement in elementary school students, particularly as an empirical basis for designing needs-based guidance and counseling programs (Ma et al., 2024). This gap is important because elementary students require early preventive and developmental support, yet guidance and counseling services are often designed without sufficient data on students' engagement patterns and family-related learning support.

A comprehensive understanding of student engagement and family support is particularly important in elementary education, as both factors shape the quality of students' learning experiences. This study is anticipated to offer theoretical contributions by extending existing discussions on student engagement in elementary education, and offers practical direction for shaping guidance and counseling services based on identified student needs (Toth et al., 2020). In guidance and counseling practice, information about student engagement can help counselors identify students who need preventive and developmental support (Özmen et al., 2016). Information about family support can also guide schools in strengthening collaboration with parents (Damra et al., 2026). Thus, guidance and counseling programs can be designed more accurately based on students' real academic and psychosocial conditions. However, the interpretation of the findings should take into account possible limitations associated with the school setting and participant characteristics (Carey & Dimmitt, 2021).

Drawing on this rationale, this study seeks to explore student engagement in elementary education and to assess its association with family support as a foundation for designing guidance and counseling programs (Slowik et al., 2023). The study seeks to address how family support is related to student engagement and how this relationship can inform needs-based guidance and counseling planning (Šarić et al., 2020). The findings are expected to provide empirical information regarding the level of student engagement in elementary school contexts. They may also clarify the extent to which family support contributes to students' learning involvement. Furthermore, the results can serve as a practical basis for developing guidance and counseling programs that respond to students' actual needs.

Methods

Design

This research adopted a quantitative survey design to evaluate the construct validity of student engagement among elementary school students and to investigate the structural association between social support and student engagement. Information for this study was obtained through questionnaire-based instruments, which made it possible to examine patterns of association among the study variables and to gain an overall picture of the characteristics of the participants (Gul, 2023). This methodological approach is widely applied in educational research to systematically capture students' perceptions of their learning experiences.

Participants

Convenience sampling was employed, with elementary schools selected based on accessibility and participant availability. The sample included all students from grades IV, V, and VI in the selected schools, resulting in a total of 100 participants, consisting of 34% fourth-grade, 39% fifth-grade, and 27% sixth-grade students.

Data Collection

Data were collected using a self-report questionnaire adapted from the student engagement instrument developed by (Xu et al. 2024). This research conceptualizes student engagement as a multidimensional condition characterized by behavioral, cognitive, and emotional involvement in the learning process. Alongside engagement, the study focused on social support derived from family members, classmates, and teachers. The measurement tool included 15 items evaluated using a five point Likert scale spanning responses from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

Table 1. Instrument Variables, Aspect, Indicators, and Item.

Variable	Aspect	Indicator	Item
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Student Engagement	Behavioral Engagement	Active participation in school activities Compliance with school rules	I actively participate in school activities. I follow the rules and regulations at school.
	Cognitive Engagement	Persistence in completing tasks	I complete my school assignments on time.
		Effort to understand learning materials Use of learning strategies	I try to understand difficult learning materials. I use appropriate learning strategies to understand lessons.
	Emotional Engagement	Learning motivation	I am motivated to learn seriously at school.
Social Support	Teacher Support	Positive feelings toward school	I feel happy when I am at school.
		Sense of belonging to school	I feel that I belong to my school.
		Interest in learning activities	I am interested in learning activities at school.
	Family Support	Teachers' academic attention	Teachers pay attention to my learning difficulties.
		Academic assistance from teachers	Teachers help me when I have difficulties in learning.
		Emotional encouragement from teachers	Teachers encourage me to be confident in my abilities.
		Parental attention to education	My family cares about my educational progress.
Friends Support	Learning support at home	My family helps me with my schoolwork at home.	
	Motivational support from family	My family motivates me to succeed at school.	
	Support from peers	My friends help me when I face learning difficulties.	
	Cooperation with friends	I can work well with my friends during learning activities.	
	Feeling accepted by peers	I feel accepted by my friends at school.	

Data Analysis

An analysis based on Partial Least Squares structural equation modeling was carried out using SmartPLS 4 to assess indicator performance and inter construct relationships within the model. The measurement model was reviewed by considering indicator performance and construct consistency, with acceptable quality reflected in outer loading values above 0.70, Average Variance Extracted values greater than 0.50, and reliability indices including Composite Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha exceeding 0.70 (Hair et al., 2019). Discriminant validity was assessed to confirm construct distinctiveness using the Fornell Larcker criterion and the Heterotrait Monotrait ratio, where HTMT values below 0.85 indicated adequate separation among constructs (Henseler et al., 2015).

The structural model was subsequently examined through significance testing by applying a t statistic value greater than 1.96 at the 5 percent level (Hair et al., 2021). The explanatory power of the model was interpreted using the coefficient of determination R squared, effect size benchmarks with f squared values of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35, and predictive relevance evaluated through Q squared values greater than zero (Hair et al., 2017). The possibility of multicollinearity was evaluated using Variance Inflation Factor values, and results below 5 indicated that the constructs were not affected by collinearity issues (Hair et al., 2011).

Results

The results of construct validity and reliability testing were obtained from the data analysis conducted in this study. A summary of these findings is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Outer Loadings, Reliability, and Construct Validity Values

Variable	Aspect	Code	Outer Loading	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE
Student Engagement	Behavioral Engagement	BE1	0,882	0,854	0,911	0,774
		BE2	0,898			
		BE3	0,859			
	Cognitive Engagement	CE1	0,906	0,869	0,920	0,792
		CE2	0,878			
		CE3	0,885			
Social Support	Emotional Engagement	EE1	0,797	0,817	0,891	0,733
		EE2	0,874			
		EE3	0,895			
	Family Support	FS1	0,887	0,887	0,930	0,815
		FS2	0,919			
		FS3	0,902			
Friends Support	FRS1	0,892	0,674	0,822	0,616	
	FRS2	0,877				
	FRS3	0,534				
Teacher Support	TS1	0,798	0,778	0,871	0,693	
	TS2	0,839				
	TS3	0,859				

An examination of the measurement indicators revealed that the majority of indicators satisfied the recommended standards, with standardized loading values above 0.70. One indicator within the Friends Support construct did not reach the required outer loading level and was therefore excluded from the analysis. After the indicator was excluded, all constructs showed satisfactory levels of internal consistency, reflected in Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability, and Average Variance Extracted values that met the recommended criteria. These results indicate that the measurement model demonstrated sufficient convergent validity and was suitable for further analysis of the structural relationships. Discriminant validity was then examined to confirm the empirical distinctiveness among constructs using the HTMT criterion, as reported in Table 3.

Table 3. HTMT Values for Discriminant Validity

Konstruk	BE	CE	EE	FS	FRS	Teacher
BE	-					
CE	0.592	-				
EE	0.522	0.878	-			
FS	0.528	0.491	0.365	-		
FRS	0.757	0.793	0.683	0.786	-	
TS	0.493	0.552	0.416	0.926	0.990	-

The results of discriminant validity testing using the HTMT criterion indicated that most HTMT values fell within the recommended range, although several construct pairs approached the threshold value to ensure sufficient distinction among constructs. The Fornell Larcker approach was employed to verify construct separation by contrasting each construct's square root of the Average Variance Extracted with correlation values from the remaining constructs.

Table 4. Fornell-Larcker Values for Discriminant Validity

Konstruk	BE	CE	EE	FS	FRS	TS
Behavioral Engagement	0.880					
Cognitive Engagement	0.510	0.890				
Emotional Engagement	0.441	0.750	0.856			

Family Support	0.458	0.431	0.314	0.903		
Friends Support	0.501	0.599	0.499	0.612	0.785	
Teacher Support	0.409	0.456	0.339	0.779	0.760	0.832

Results from the Fornell Larcker analysis suggest that constructs demonstrated stronger associations with their own indicators compared to correlations with other constructs, as indicated by higher square root Average Variance Extracted values. This result confirms sufficient differentiation among the constructs, allowing the analysis to continue with the evaluation of the structural model.

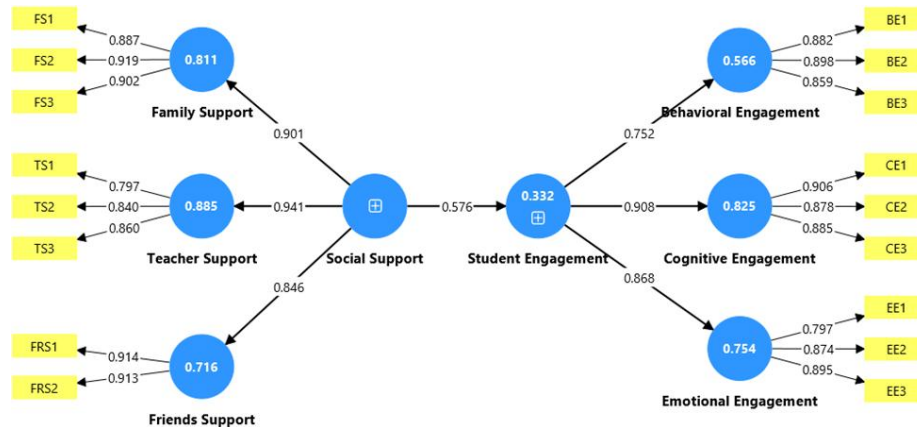


Figure 1. Structural Model Results

The relationships among the study variables and the corresponding R squared values for the endogenous constructs are summarized in the structural model shown in Figure 1. The results demonstrate that Social Support functions as a significant antecedent of Student Engagement, which in turn serves as a predictor of behavioral, cognitive, and emotional engagement. The reported R² values suggest that a substantial proportion of variance in the three engagement dimensions is accounted for by Student Engagement.

Table 5. Path Coefficients of the Structural Model

Relationship	β (Original Sample)	Standard Error	t-statistic	p-value
Social Support-Family Support	0.901	0.016	54.760	0.000
Social Support-Friends Support	0.846	0.029	29.127	0.000
Social Support-Teacher Support	0.941	0.012	81.127	0.000
Social Support-Student Engagement	0.576	0.075	7.719	0.000
Student Engagement-Behavioral Engagement	0.752	0.050	15.135	0.000
Student Engagement-Cognitive Engagement	0.908	0.015	60.007	0.000
Student Engagement-Emotional Engagement	0.868	0.026	33.090	0.000

The results of the structural model analysis reveal that all hypothesized relationships are positive and reach statistical significance. Social Support demonstrates a strong influence on Student Engagement ($\beta = 0.576$), indicating that students who receive greater social support tend to exhibit higher levels of engagement in learning. Furthermore, Student Engagement shows substantial effects on Behavioral Engagement ($\beta = 0.752$), Cognitive Engagement ($\beta = 0.908$), and Emotional Engagement ($\beta = 0.868$). The results suggest that student engagement serves as a key mechanism through which students' behavioral, cognitive, and emotional involvement in learning is developed.

Table 6. Structural Model Evaluation Results

Relationship / Construct	R ²	Q ²	VIF	f ²
Behavioral Engagement	0.566	0.238	1.000	1.305
Cognitive Engagement	0.825	0.286	1.000	4.703
Emotional Engagement	0.753	0.158	1.000	3.052
Student Engagement	0.338	0.324	1.000	0.510

Family Support	0.815	0.809	1.000	4.402
Friends Support	0.737	0.716	1.000	2.808
Teacher Support	0.881	0.884	1.000	7.375

Note. R²=Coefficient of Determination; Q²= Predictive Relevance; VIF = Variance Inflation Factor; f²=Effect Size.

The coefficient of determination (R²) indicates that Social Support plays an important role in explaining the variance in Student Engagement as well as the various forms of support received by students, including family, peer, and teacher support. Student Engagement functions as the main predictor of Behavioral, Cognitive, and Emotional Engagement, confirming its role as a central construct within the research model. Effect size values based on f squared suggest that both the contribution of Social Support to Student Engagement and the contribution of Student Engagement to its related dimensions are of practical relevance. Positive Q² values indicate that the model demonstrates good predictive relevance. Multicollinearity testing shows no collinearity issues among the constructs, indicating that the relationships among variables in the model can be interpreted reliably.

Discussion

Student engagement is understood as a multidimensional concept that reflects learners' behavioral, emotional, and cognitive participation in educational activities (Gong & Cen, 2020). This form of engagement is not formed in isolation but evolves through the interplay between students' personal attributes and the social contexts in which they are embedded (Hong et al., 2026). The results of this study emphasize the central role of the family as a key social environment influencing learning dispositions, academic focus, and engagement tendencies among elementary school students (Gao et al., 2021). Family conditions may determine whether students receive sufficient encouragement, structure, and emotional reinforcement to participate actively in learning (Kea et al., 2025). In elementary school contexts, such support is especially important because students are still developing basic habits of responsibility and academic persistence. Therefore, understanding student engagement requires attention not only to school-based factors but also to the quality of support students receive at home. This perspective aligns with integrative models of student engagement emphasizing the interplay between personal and environmental factors in fostering students' learning involvement (Wang et al., 2021).

Family support serves a strategic function in creating psychological conditions that facilitate students' engagement in learning (Qiu & Ye, 2023). Parental attention to learning activities, emotional encouragement, and academic guidance contribute to students' feelings of being valued and supported during the learning process. These conditions promote a sense of security, self-confidence, and intrinsic motivation, which in turn enhance active engagement in learning (Lara et al., 2025). Students who feel supported by their families tend to show greater willingness to complete tasks and respond positively to classroom demands. This support also helps reduce feelings of anxiety or discouragement when students encounter academic difficulties. As a result, family support becomes an important protective factor that strengthens students' learning motivation. The present finding supports meta analytic evidence suggesting a positive link between parental involvement and both academic motivation and student engagement (Jeynes, 2020). Family support thus operates not only as emotional reinforcement but also as a source of external regulation that fosters persistence and responsibility in learning.

Further analysis indicates that family support significantly contributes to students' behavioral engagement at school (Guo et al., 2024). Home-based academic supervision, assistance with homework completion, and parental monitoring of academic responsibilities encourage students to demonstrate greater discipline and active participation in classroom activities (Wilcox et al., 2026). Such forms of parental involvement help students build consistent learning routines that are reflected in their behavior at school (Fute et al., 2025). Students who receive regular supervision at home are more likely to attend to instructions, complete assignments, and participate in classroom tasks. This indicates that behavioral engagement is closely connected to the continuity of learning support between home and school. Behavioral engagement seems to function as an initial driver for other engagement dimensions, a pattern that has also been documented in studies linking family involvement to students' engagement in routine learning activities (Yang et al., 2023; Ansong et al., 2017). In this context, family involvement plays an instrumental role by directly influencing students' learning habits and classroom participation.

Family support also contributes to students' emotional engagement in learning. Emotional support received at home helps students develop positive attitudes toward school, teachers, and learning activities (Yang, 2025). Feelings of acceptance and support within the family enhance students' interest and enthusiasm for learning. When students experience warmth and encouragement at home, they are more likely to perceive school as a safe and meaningful environment (Samuilik et al., 2025). This emotional foundation can strengthen students' sense of

belonging and willingness to engage with teachers and peers (Thomas & Allen, 2021). Conversely, lack of emotional support may reduce students' enthusiasm and weaken their emotional connection to learning activities. These positive emotional states strengthen students' attachment to academic and social activities at school (Wester et al., 2024). This finding aligns with prior research demonstrating significant associations between parental support and students' emotional engagement in learning.

Cognitive engagement is also shaped by the presence of family support. When families provide a supportive learning environment, students are more likely to employ effective study strategies, such as managing their time efficiently, maintaining concentration, and completing academic tasks independently (Shaked & Altarac, 2025). Academic support from family members assists students in coping with increasingly complex learning demands at the elementary school level (Hascoët & Audrin, 2025). This support encourages students to think more deeply about learning tasks rather than merely completing them as obligations. Family guidance may also help students develop problem-solving skills and persistence when facing difficult subject matter (Zhou et al., 2025). Thus, cognitive engagement can be strengthened when the home environment promotes independence, curiosity, and reflective learning habits. The findings of this study support prior evidence suggesting that family support is closely connected to student engagement, which has been associated with academic outcomes and self-regulation processes in earlier studies (Lei et al., 2022).

The implications of these findings for guidance and counseling services underscore the importance of designing interventions based on students' actual needs (Woodliff & Coll, 2023). Variations in family support levels indicate differences in counseling needs among elementary school students. Students who receive limited family support are more likely to experience learning challenges, such as low motivation, underdeveloped independent learning habits, and reduced classroom engagement (Abood et al., 2025). Therefore, school counselors need to identify students whose engagement difficulties may be related to insufficient support from the home environment. Counseling services should not only focus on students' academic behavior but also consider the family factors that shape such behavior (Kelchner et al., 2020). This perspective enables counselors to design interventions that are more preventive, developmental, and responsive to students' learning conditions (Isawi et al., 2025). Such conditions necessitate preventive and developmental counseling services to prevent the escalation of learning difficulties (Fredricks et al., 2004; Slameto, 2015).

Needs-based counseling analysis that considers students' external factors, including family support conditions, allows school counselors to design more contextualized and targeted interventions. Mapping students' needs facilitates the identification of those requiring intensive support, reinforcement, or developmental services (Slover et al., 2020). This mapping can help counselors determine whether students need individual counseling, classroom guidance, parent consultation, or collaborative support from teachers (Hidayah et al., 2022). By using assessment data, counseling programs can be arranged according to the intensity and type of student needs. Such an approach also supports more accountable guidance and counseling services because program planning is based on empirical evidence. This approach is consistent with the view that effective guidance and counseling services should be tailored to students' real characteristics and needs rather than implemented uniformly (Prayitno & Amti, 2013; Yusuf & Nurihsan, 2019).

The contribution of this study lies in strengthening empirical evidence regarding the role of family support in shaping student engagement among elementary school students and its implications for counseling program development. The findings extend previous research by positioning family support as a critical foundation for needs-based guidance and counseling services (Varol & Oz, 2024). This study also highlights the importance of integrating family-related data into the planning of elementary school counseling programs (Sari & Setiawan, 2023). Such integration may help schools develop more comprehensive strategies to increase students' behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement (Teke & Avcıoğlu, 2024). In practical terms, the findings encourage schools to strengthen communication with parents as part of efforts to improve students' learning participation. Collaboration among school counselors, classroom teachers, and parents emerges as a relevant strategy for creating a learning environment that sustainably supports students' engagement (Gysbers & Henderson, 2012; Epstein, 2011; Hill & Tyson, 2009).

Conclusions

This study reveals that differences in engagement levels among elementary school students are strongly associated with the social support available to them. Assistance provided by families, peers, and teachers is closely associated with students' behavioral, cognitive, and emotional participation in learning activities. Student engagement

emerges as a key mechanism through which social support enhances the quality of students' learning involvement. These results suggest that learning engagement is shaped not only by individual factors but also by the presence of supportive social contexts. This study highlights the importance of needs oriented guidance and counseling services that consider family involvement and broader social conditions, with coordinated efforts among schools, counselors, teachers, and parents playing a crucial role in supporting long term student engagement. This study provides empirical contributions to the literature on student engagement at the elementary education level; however, limitations related to contextual factors and sample characteristics suggest that caution is required when generalizing the findings to broader populations.

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Author Contributions

Wasiu Olasunkanmi Adeniyi: Conceptualization, Methodology, Data Curation, Writing Original Draft; **Gloria Aghogho Okunola:** Formal Analysis, Writing review, Supervision, Validation; **Nurkholis:** Conceptualization, Methodology, Supervision, Writing – review & editing; **Amanda Maharani:** Investigation, Data curation, Writing – original draft, Visualization; **Ratu Mas Zahra Nuraini Nawang Wulan:** Investigation, Formal analysis, Validation, Writing – original draft; **Bagus Prayogo:** Data curation, Formal analysis, Visualization, Writing – review & editing; **Yeni Novelina Manek:** Project administration, Resources, Investigation, Writing – review & editing.

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Conflicts of Interest

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

Ethical Approval

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