



## EXAMINING COLLEGE PREPAREDNESS, MOTIVATIONS, AND EXPECTATIONS AMONG GRADE 12 SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS: A MIXED-METHODS ANALYSIS UTILIZING A LEARNING COURSE CATALOG

LESTER E. ELAYDA

ORCID No. 0009-0002-8885-3659

lester.elayda@deped.gov.ph

Pamibian Integrated School

Pamibian, Candelaria, Zambales, Philippines

**Abstract:** This study aimed to assess college preparedness, motivations, and expectations among Grade 12 Senior High School (SHS) students in Zambales during the 2023-2024 school year. The objective was to explore factors influencing college readiness, motivations for higher education, and expectations regarding college life and future careers. Utilizing a mixed-methods approach, the study involved 364 respondents selected through purposive sampling to ensure diversity. Data were collected using surveys and analyzed to examine hypotheses related to student profiles, the relationship between various factors affecting college readiness, and the effectiveness of informative materials. Results indicated that students exhibited commendable preparedness for college, demonstrating strong self-motivation and a clear understanding of their academic and career paths. Recommendations included integrating the Learning Course Catalog (LCC) into transition programs, providing personalized guidance, aligning the curriculum with college expectations, and facilitating informed decision-making. The conclusion emphasized that these measures would significantly enhance students' readiness for higher education. This research provides valuable insights for stakeholders to improve educational policies, guidance services, and support systems, ultimately fostering student success in higher education and emphasizing holistic approaches to prepare Grade 12 SHS students for college and beyond.

**Keywords:** Holistic approaches, Mixed-methods approach, Learning course catalog

### INTRODUCTION

Transitioning from Grade 12 Senior High School to higher education is a critical phase in students' lives, necessitating a thorough exploration of factors influencing their college preparedness, motivations, and expectations. Globally, college readiness has been extensively studied, revealing multidimensional aspects that include academic mastery, socio-emotional factors, and personal motivations. Adelman (2006) emphasizes the importance of rigorous high school coursework in preparing students for college. Robbins et al. (2004) highlight the role of socio-emotional skills and personal motivations in academic success. In Europe, the Bologna Process aims to ensure comparable, compatible, and coherent systems of higher education (Witte, 2006), while in North America, the focus has been on developing college and career readiness standards (Conley, 2008). Alqudah & Khasawneh (2023) investigated the effects of virtual reality field trips on student engagement and learning outcomes. Their findings indicate a positive correlation between immersive learning experiences and student outcomes, reinforcing the importance of integrating advanced technological support systems to bolster student readiness. The intricate dynamics of academic and psychological preparedness are also examined in the work of (Nieuwenhuis, 2024), where qualitative data from South African students reveal that emotional and social support systems significantly contribute to students' adaptive mechanisms for tackling academic challenges.

Regionally, the context within the ASEAN countries, including the Philippines, reflects similar concerns. Ning & Downing (2012) explored the influence of student learning experiences on academic performance and found that factors such as teaching quality, clear goals, and effective assessment practices directly affect student motivation and self-regulation. Similar themes have emerged in studies within other contexts, reinforcing the significance of self-regulatory skills and motivation as pivotal components of effective learning. For example, Sohrabizadeh et al. (2019) highlight the



necessity of preparing students for life's challenges through comprehensive educational frameworks, suggesting that self-regulation and intrinsic motivation are vital for cultivating resilience and adaptability in students. Moreover, a study by Yu et al. (2018) investigates the role of well-being in student engagement and learning achievement over time. Their results signal that academic environments supportive of student well-being enhance engagement and improve academic performance.

discuss the impact of socioeconomic factors on educational attainment. The Philippines faces its unique challenges, with Santiago (2022) highlighting low college completion rates despite various academic initiatives. Research by Uy, Kim, and Khuon (2019) points out the financial constraints and inadequate preparation that many students face. These studies collectively underscore the need for a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing college readiness within the ASEAN region.

Despite extensive research, gaps remain in understanding the specific factors that influence college preparedness among Grade 12 students in the Philippines, particularly in the context of utilizing learning course catalogs. Existing studies have primarily focused on broader educational policies and socioeconomic factors, with limited attention to the practical tools and resources that can directly aid students in their transition to college. This study aims to fill this gap by examining the influence of a learning course catalog on students' preparedness, motivations, and expectations. Unlike previous research, this study adopts a mixed-methods approach, integrating quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews to provide a nuanced understanding of the factors at play. The innovative use of learning course catalogs as a tool for academic preparation and progression planning is a unique aspect of this research. By shedding light on these intricacies, the study aims to inform educational policies and support mechanisms, ultimately empowering Grade 12 students in the Schools Division of Zambales to transition successfully to higher education.

## FRAMEWORK

The transition from senior high school to higher education is a critical phase in a student's academic journey. This study aims to explore the perceptions, expectations, and motivations of Grade 12 Senior High School (SHS) students in Zambales regarding college preparation. The variables of this study include Interpersonal Engagement, Cognitive Fitness, Affective Wellness, Health and Fitness, and Monetary Preparedness. These variables are examined within the context of the Social Cognitive Theory by Albert Bandura, which emphasizes the interaction of personal factors, behavior, and environmental influences in shaping an individual's actions and decisions.

Interpersonal Engagement refers to the student's ability to interact effectively with peers, teachers, and others in their social environment. It includes communication skills, teamwork, and social networking abilities. Cognitive Fitness encompasses the students' mental abilities, such as critical thinking, problem-solving skills, and academic proficiency, assessing how well students can understand and apply knowledge. Affective Wellness pertains to the emotional and psychological well-being of students, including aspects such as stress management, self-esteem, and emotional regulation. Health and Fitness covers the physical health and fitness of students, impacting their energy levels, concentration, and overall academic performance. Monetary Preparedness involves the financial readiness of students for college, including understanding tuition costs, budgeting, and access to economic resources or scholarships.

This study is anchored in Albert Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, which posits that learning occurs in a social context and can be facilitated by observing others, imitating behaviors, and modeling





actions. The theory highlights three core components: personal factors, behavioral factors, and environmental factors. Individual factors include cognitive, affective, and biological events that influence learning and behavior. In this study, personal factors are represented by the variables of mental fitness and affective wellness. Behavioral factors involve the actions and reactions of individuals, with interpersonal engagement and health and fitness being behavioral factors in this context. Environmental factors include the physical and social environment that can affect behavior, with monetary preparedness falling under this category as it pertains to the financial climate influencing students' readiness for college.

In the context of this study, the Social Cognitive Theory suggests that the interaction of personal, behavioral, and environmental factors shapes students' perceptions, motivations, and expectations regarding college readiness. Effective social interactions and relationships enhance students' support networks, which can positively impact their motivation and readiness for college. Cognitive solid skills enable students to perform well academically, fostering confidence and preparedness for the rigors of higher education. Maintaining emotional and psychological well-being is crucial for managing the stresses associated with college preparation and transition. Physical well-being supports cognitive functions and overall stamina, contributing to better academic performance and college readiness. Understanding financial aspects and being prepared financially reduces stress and allows students to focus more on their educational and personal development.

A learning Course Catalog is proposed as a strategic tool to enhance college readiness by providing comprehensive information on academic programs, prerequisites, and career pathways. By integrating this catalog into transition programs, schools can offer personalized guidance, align curricula with college expectations, and facilitate informed decision-making.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study aims to comprehensively assess the college preparedness, motivations, and expectations of Grade 12 Senior High School (SHS) students in Zambales for the 2023-2024 school year. By collecting and analyzing data from 364 purposively selected respondents, the study will explore how various factors such as interpersonal engagement, cognitive fitness, affective wellness, health and fitness, and monetary preparedness influence students' readiness for higher education. Through surveys and qualitative interviews, the research will evaluate the current state of students' preparedness, identifying key areas where they exhibit strong readiness and areas that require improvement. Additionally, the study will investigate the effectiveness of the Learning Course Catalog as a strategic tool in enhancing students' understanding of academic programs, prerequisites, and career pathways, thus facilitating informed decision-making. The insights gained from this research will inform recommendations for integrating the Learning Course Catalog into transition programs, providing personalized guidance, and aligning high school curricula with college expectations. Ultimately, the study aims to empower educational stakeholders to implement strategies that significantly enhance the college readiness of Grade 12 SHS students, fostering a more prepared and motivated student body poised for success in higher education.

## METHODOLOGY

### Research Design

This study utilized a mixed-method sequential explanatory design, beginning with the collection and analysis of quantitative data followed by qualitative data. This approach was chosen to



provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing college preparedness, motivations, and expectations among Grade 12 Senior High School (SHS) students in Zambales. The initial quantitative phase involved descriptive statistics in evaluating general trends and relationships, while the subsequent qualitative phase aimed to delve deeper into the contextual and personal experiences of the students. This design allowed for the verification of quantitative findings and provided richer, contextual insights through qualitative analysis.

### Research Site

The research was conducted in the Division of Zambales, Philippines, which is located in Central Luzon. Zambales, with its capital in Iba, borders Pangasinan, Tarlac, Pampanga, and Bataan and is flanked by the South China Sea to the west. The province covers an area of 3,830.83 square kilometers and is known for its mango cultivation. The study focused on Grade 12 students from the 58 schools in Zambales equipped with senior high school facilities, ensuring a diverse representation of the student population across various geographical and cultural contexts within the region.

### Participants

The study involved a sample size of 364 Grade 12 SHS students from Zambales, determined to achieve a 95% confidence level with a  $\pm 5\%$  margin of error. These participants were selected through purposive sampling to ensure a diverse representation of students across different academic tracks and strands. This approach ensured that the sample was reflective of the broader population of Grade 12 students in the Division of Zambales, encompassing various socioeconomic backgrounds, academic achievements, and personal circumstances.

### Instrumentation

The primary instrument for data collection was the "Strategic Career Pathways: Empowering Batch 2024 for Professional Success Questionnaire," which included both survey and interview components. The survey was designed to collect demographic information and assess students' perceptions, motivations, and expectations regarding college preparation. The survey addressed vital areas such as interpersonal engagement, cognitive fitness, affective wellness, health and fitness, and monetary preparedness. To ensure the reliability and validity of the questionnaire, a pilot test was conducted with a sample of 40 respondents from a nearby division in Zambales. This preliminary testing phase involved administering the survey using paper and pencil, along with conducting ten qualitative interviews. The inter-rater reliability measure was utilized for the qualitative component to ensure consistency in the interpretation of responses. If the reliability index fell below 0.70, the questionnaire was meticulously revised to enhance its robustness.

### Data Collection

The data collection process was meticulously organized to ensure comprehensive coverage. Permission was first obtained from relevant educational authorities. Surveys were distributed to the selected sample of 364 students, with physical surveys administered in nearby schools and online surveys for remote locations. The researcher ensured the confidentiality and anonymity of all respondents. Following the survey distribution, the data were collected, verified, and stored securely. Additionally, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were conducted to gather qualitative insights on the students' feedback regarding the use of the learning course catalog and their college preparedness, motivations, and expectations.



## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study examined the demographic profiles of Grade 12 Senior High School (SHS) students in Zambales to ensure a comprehensive and inclusive understanding of college preparedness, motivations, and expectations. The diverse sample encompassed a range of ages and genders, reflecting the broader student population. This inclusivity is essential for accurately assessing and addressing the varied needs and perspectives of students as they prepare for higher education.

The findings revealed that the majority of Grade 12 students exhibited a cheerful disposition towards mental and emotional wellness, aligning with the emphasis on holistic well-being highlighted in the literature (Robbins et al., 2004). Most students prioritized self-care practices and established robust support systems, which are crucial for managing the stresses associated with transitioning to college. However, the study also identified areas for improvement, particularly in seeking professional mental health assistance and developing strategies to mitigate negativity. (Nienhusser et al., 2023) highlight the specific needs of undocumented college students in their study on mental health services.

The study highlighted the significance of physical well-being in college preparedness. While many students engaged in healthy lifestyle choices, targeted interventions to further promote physical fitness remain needed. This finding aligns with existing research that emphasizes the role of health and wellness in supporting cognitive functions and overall academic performance (Adelman, 2006).

The study uncovered a diverse spectrum of motivations driving students toward higher education. Professional success emerged as a primary motivator, reflecting the students' aspirations for career advancement and financial stability. Additionally, personal growth and the desire to make a societal impact were significant motivators, highlighting the students' awareness of the broader benefits of higher education beyond mere academic achievements (Conley, 2008).

The findings indicated that students had high expectations for their college experience, with a strong emphasis on personal and intellectual growth. This readiness to confront challenges and seize opportunities for advancement is indicative of a well-prepared student body. The expectation of personal and intellectual growth is consistent with the aims of higher education systems worldwide, such as those outlined in the Bologna Process (Witte, 2006).

The unanimous recognition of the Learning Course Catalog's effectiveness underscores its pivotal role in preparing students for college. The catalog provided comprehensive information on academic programs, prerequisites, and career pathways, facilitating informed decision-making and aligning curricula with college expectations.

The study's results validate Albert Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, which posits that learning occurs within a social context and is influenced by personal, behavioral, and environmental factors. The findings demonstrated that the interplay of these factors indeed shapes students' perceptions, motivations, and expectations regarding college readiness. Personal factors such as cognitive fitness and affective wellness, behavioral factors like interpersonal engagement and health, and environmental factors, including monetary preparedness, were all found to influence students' readiness for higher education significantly.

While the mixed-method sequential explanatory design provided a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing college preparedness, there are areas for methodological improvement. The reliance on self-reported data may introduce bias, and future studies could benefit from incorporating more objective measures of readiness and wellness. Additionally, while Social Cognitive Theory effectively framed the study, integrating other theoretical perspectives, such as Ecological Systems Theory, could provide a more holistic understanding of the environmental





influences on college readiness. Despite these limitations, the study offers valuable insights that can inform educational policies and support mechanisms to enhance student success in higher education.

## CONCLUSION

The analysis indicates a generally positive outlook on Grade 12 students' preparedness for college, underscoring their robust interpersonal engagement. This engagement highlights opportunities for further collaboration, inclusivity, and respect, essential skills for navigating higher education and the workforce. The findings reveal that students demonstrate proactive approaches to maintaining cognitive fitness, signaling their readiness to manage stress and emotional challenges during the transition to college. While students exhibit commendable engagement with affective wellness practices, there remains a need for continued support in addressing deeper emotional issues through professional avenues.

Additionally, the data reflects students' awareness of physical well-being and financial responsibility, underscoring their overall readiness for college. Notably, perspectives on the Learning Course Catalog emphasize the significance of its content, organization, and presentation style in facilitating college preparedness. Students' motivations and expectations for college, along with their perceptions of transition tools like the Course Catalog, highlight the intricate interplay between individual aspirations and academic success.

This study made discoveries, including the specific influence of the Learning Course Catalog on students' preparedness. This finding contributes to new knowledge by demonstrating how structured academic guidance tools can significantly impact students' readiness for higher education, a nuance not extensively covered in existing literature. Additionally, the study highlights the importance of professional mental health support and strategic interventions in promoting holistic well-being, reinforcing the necessity for comprehensive support systems within educational institutions.

Overall, the research validates Albert Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, affirming that the interaction of personal, behavioral, and environmental factors shapes students' perceptions, motivations, and expectations regarding college readiness. The findings support previous conclusions regarding the importance of holistic preparation for college and contribute to the broader understanding of how specific tools and practices can enhance this readiness. These insights provide a valuable basis for targeted interventions aimed at improving the transition and success of Grade 12 students in higher education, thereby fostering a more prepared and motivated student body.

## TRANSLATIONAL RESEARCH

The findings of this study on college preparedness, motivations, and expectations among Grade 12 Senior High School students in Zambales can be effectively communicated through various forms of popular and innovative media to ensure the information is accessible and engaging for students, educators, policymakers, and the broader community. Policy briefs and brochures can be developed to inform educational stakeholders and policymakers, highlighting key findings such as the importance of holistic well-being, cognitive fitness, and the effectiveness of the Learning Course Catalog and providing actionable recommendations for educational policies and transition programs. Illustrational books and posters can visually depict the journey of students preparing for college, emphasizing interpersonal engagement, cognitive fitness, and financial preparedness through engaging graphics and narratives and serving as constant reminders in schools. Drama and storytelling sessions can dramatize the challenges and successes of transitioning to college, making the information relatable



and memorable. Video clips and radio segments featuring interviews with students, teachers, and experts can discuss the study's findings and be disseminated through social media and school websites to reach a wider audience and encourage engagement. Songs and dance routines incorporating the study's key messages can engage students by focusing on themes like motivation, personal growth, and holistic well-being, making the information entertaining and educational during school events. Artistic exhibits featuring paintings and visual arts can express the emotional and cognitive journey of students, fostering a deeper understanding of the factors influencing college readiness. Interactive workshops simulating real-life scenarios can provide hands-on learning about stress management, financial planning, and effective use of academic resources, reinforcing the study's findings and equipping students with practical skills. By utilizing these diverse media forms, the research insights can be effectively translated, retained, and applied, ultimately enhancing the college preparedness of Grade 12 Senior High School students.

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