

Interpersonal Skills towards Academic Performance: A Descriptive-Correlational Study Among First-Year BEED Students

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Abstract. This study investigated the relationship between interpersonal communication skills and academic performance of first-year Bachelor of Elementary Education (BEED) students in selected universities in Zamboanga City. Specifically, it examined students' communication skills, teamwork and collaboration, empathy, and conflict resolution, and determined which dimensions significantly predict their Grade Point Average (GPA). The study was anchored on the assumption that interpersonal communication skills are essential non-cognitive competencies that may influence students' academic success, particularly in collaborative and interactive learning environments common in teacher education programs. A descriptive-correlational research design was utilized, involving 60 first-year BEED students from selected universities in Zamboanga City as respondents. Data were gathered using a structured questionnaire measuring the four dimensions of interpersonal communication skills, while academic performance was obtained through their Grade Point Average (GPA). The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including mean and standard deviation, and inferential statistics through multiple regression analysis. Findings revealed that the respondents exhibited very high levels of communication skills, empathy, and conflict resolution, while teamwork and collaboration were rated high. This indicates that the students generally possess strong interpersonal competencies that support effective communication, cooperation, and classroom interaction. Moreover, regression analysis showed that communication skills, teamwork and collaboration, and conflict resolution significantly predicted academic performance, whereas empathy did not significantly influence GPA. These results suggest that specific interpersonal skills have varying effects on academic achievement. The study concludes that interpersonal communication skills contribute to academic performance among first-year BEED students. It is recommended that educators integrate collaborative learning strategies and communication-enhancing activities to further strengthen students' interpersonal competencies and improve academic outcomes.

Keywords: Academic performance; Communication skills; Grade Point Average; Interpersonal skills; Teamwork and Collaboration

Introduction

Interpersonal skills play an important role in the academic and professional success of students, particularly in teacher education programs. These skills include communication, teamwork and collaboration, empathy, and conflict resolution, which are essential for effective interaction inside and outside the classroom. According to DeVito (2016), interpersonal communication helps individuals build relationships, resolve conflicts, and function effectively in academic and social settings. Likewise, Spitzberg and Cupach (2011) emphasized that interpersonal competence involves effective communication, cooperation, empathy, and appropriate conflict management, all of which contribute to successful relationships and performance. For students enrolled in the Bachelor of Elementary Education (BEED) program, these competencies are important not only for academic collaboration but also for preparing them for their future roles as educators.

In higher education, first-year students often experience academic and social adjustments as they transition from senior high school to college. In selected universities in Zamboanga City, first-year Bachelor of Elementary Education students are expected to interact with diverse peers, participate in collaborative activities, and communicate effectively with instructors. These interactions may influence academic performance, which is often reflected through students' scholastic achievement. According to Tinto (2017), student interaction and engagement significantly influence academic persistence and success in higher education.

In the Philippine educational context, teacher education programs emphasize not only academic competence but also the development of professional skills and values necessary for effective teaching. According to the Commission on Higher Education (2023), teacher education institutions are expected to develop both cognitive competencies and interpersonal abilities among future educators. However, despite the recognized importance of interpersonal skills in education, many studies focus mainly on cognitive abilities, study habits, and instructional strategies as predictors of academic performance. Limited local research has examined the relationship between interpersonal skills and academic performance among first-year Bachelor of Elementary Education students, particularly in selected universities in Zamboanga City.

Therefore, this study aims to determine the relationship between interpersonal skills—specifically communication skills, teamwork and collaboration, empathy, and conflict resolution—and academic performance among first-year Bachelor of Elementary Education students in a selected university in Zamboanga City. The findings of this study may provide valuable information for educators and administrators in designing programs that strengthen students' interpersonal competencies, improve academic performance, and support the professional preparation of future teachers.

Research Questions

This study aims to determine the level of interpersonal skills and academic performance of first-year Bachelor of Elementary Education (BEED) students in selected universities in Zamboanga City, Philippines. Specifically, this study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What is the level of interpersonal skills of first-year BEED students in terms of:
 - 1.1 Communication skills;
 - 1.2 Teamwork and collaboration;
 - 1.3 Empathy; and
 - 1.4 Conflict resolution?
2. What is the level of academic performance of first-year BEED students in terms of their Grade Point Average (GPA)?
3. Which dimensions of interpersonal skills significantly predict the academic performance of first-year BEED students?

Scope and Delimitation of the Study

This study will be conducted in selected universities in Zamboanga City, Philippines. It will focus on the interpersonal skills and academic performance of first-year students enrolled in the Bachelor of Elementary Education (BEED) program. The respondents of the study will consist only of first-year BEED students of the said university during the academic year 2025–2026. The study will examine selected aspects of interpersonal skills such as communication skills, teamwork and collaboration, empathy, and conflict resolution, and determine their relationship with the students' academic performance. This research will be limited only to the selected respondents from the BEED program and will not include students from other programs or year levels. Therefore, the findings will apply only to the participants involved in the study.

Literature Review

This study is anchored on theories and previous studies that explain the importance of interpersonal skills in students' academic performance. Interpersonal skills, including communication skills, teamwork and collaboration, empathy, and conflict resolution, are considered essential competencies that influence students' ability to interact effectively and succeed in academic environments. Social Learning Theory by Albert Bandura (1977) explains that individuals learn behaviors through observation, imitation, and interaction with others. In academic settings, students develop communication and social skills by observing peers, instructors, and classroom interactions. This theory supports the present study by explaining how interpersonal skills are developed and strengthened through social experiences within educational environments. Similarly, Emotional Intelligence Theory developed by Salovey and Mayer (1990) and popularized by Daniel Goleman (1995) highlights the importance of understanding and managing emotions in building effective relationships. Emotional intelligence contributes to empathy, communication, and conflict management, which are necessary for successful interpersonal interaction. Students with stronger emotional intelligence are more likely to cooperate with peers, communicate effectively, and maintain positive classroom relationships that may contribute to academic success. In addition, Constructivist Learning Theory by Lev Vygotsky (1978) emphasizes that learning occurs through social interaction and collaboration. Vygotsky argued that students learn more effectively when they engage in communication and cooperative activities with others. This theory supports the role of teamwork and collaboration in improving academic performance among students. Several studies have highlighted the relationship between interpersonal skills and academic performance. According to DeVito (2016), effective communication skills

improve students' participation, confidence, and classroom engagement. Likewise, Johnson and Johnson (2019) found that teamwork and collaboration enhance problem-solving abilities and academic achievement through cooperative learning. Eisenberg (2018) emphasized that empathy promotes positive relationships and supportive learning environments, while Thomas and Kilmann (2017) explained that conflict resolution skills help students manage disagreements constructively and maintain productive academic relationships. Although previous studies recognized the importance of interpersonal skills in education, many focused primarily on cognitive abilities, study habits, and instructional strategies as predictors of academic performance. Limited studies have specifically examined how communication skills, teamwork and collaboration, empathy, and conflict resolution influence academic performance among first-year Bachelor of Elementary Education students, particularly in selected universities in Zamboanga City. This gap justifies the need for the present study to determine the relationship between interpersonal skills and academic performance among first-year Bachelor of Elementary Education students.

Methodology

Research Design

This study utilized a descriptive-correlational quantitative research design to determine the relationship between interpersonal skills and academic performance among first-year Bachelor of Elementary Education students. This design was appropriate because it described the level of interpersonal skills and examined whether significant relationships exist among communication skills, teamwork and collaboration, empathy, conflict resolution, and academic performance. A structured questionnaire was used to collect quantitative data from the respondents, while academic performance was measured using students' Grade Point Average (GPA). Descriptive research systematically describes characteristics of a population, while correlational research determines the degree of relationship between variables without implying causation (Trochim, 2006). The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) and inferential statistics, particularly Pearson correlation and multiple regression analysis.

Sampling Design

This study employed total enumeration sampling, a non-probability sampling technique in which all members of the population were included in the study. All sixty (60) first-year Bachelor of Elementary Education students enrolled during the Academic Year 2025–2026 were selected as respondents. This approach ensured full representation of the population and allowed for reliable interpretation of results.

Research Locale

The study was conducted in a selected university in Zamboanga City. The university offers teacher education programs, including the Bachelor of Elementary Education program, which prepares students for future careers in education. The locale was selected because it provided direct access to the target respondents of the study.

Research Participants

The respondents of the study consisted of sixty (60) first-year Bachelor of Elementary Education students enrolled during the Academic Year 2025–2026 in a selected university in Zamboanga City. The participants were chosen because they are in the early stage of their academic transition to higher education, where interpersonal skills such as communication, teamwork and collaboration, empathy, and conflict resolution are important in adapting to academic and social demands.

Research Instrument

This study utilized an adopted and modified questionnaire to measure the level of interpersonal skills among first-year Bachelor of Elementary Education students in a selected university in Zamboanga City. The instrument was adapted from established measures of interpersonal competence, emotional intelligence, social skills, and conflict management developed by Buhrmester et al. (1988), Goleman (1998), Riggio (1986), and Rahim (1983). The original items were modified to suit the context of college students in teacher education programs while maintaining the core constructs of the original instruments. The questionnaire consisted of two parts. The first part measured the respondents' interpersonal skills in terms of communication skills, teamwork and collaboration, empathy, and conflict resolution. Each dimension was represented by statements describing behaviors commonly observed in academic and social interactions. The respondents expressed their level of agreement to each statement using a five-point Likert scale, where five indicates strong agreement, four indicates agreement, three indicates neutrality, two indicates disagreement, and one indicates strong disagreement. Higher mean scores indicate a higher level of interpersonal skills, while lower scores indicate weaker interpersonal competence. The responses were computed by obtaining

the mean score of each item and each dimension in order to determine the overall level of interpersonal skills. The resulting mean scores were interpreted using a standard scale ranging from very low to very high levels of interpersonal competence. The second part of the questionnaire gathered data on the respondents' academic performance, which was measured through their General Weighted Average (GWA). The GWA was obtained either from official school records or through self-reported data with institutional approval, ensuring proper data handling and accuracy. To ensure the validity of the instrument, it was reviewed by three experts in the field of education and research methodology. Their evaluation focused on the clarity, relevance, and appropriateness of each item, and all suggested revisions were incorporated into the final version of the questionnaire. In addition, the reliability of the instrument was tested using Cronbach's alpha to determine internal consistency. A pilot test was conducted among students who were not included in the actual respondents, and the results indicated that the instrument achieved acceptable reliability for research use.

Data Gathering Procedure

Before conducting the study, the researcher secured permission from the appropriate authorities of the selected university in Zamboanga City. After approval was granted, the researcher distributed the questionnaire to the selected respondents who were first-year Bachelor of Elementary Education students. The respondents were informed about the purpose of the study and assured that their responses would remain confidential and be used solely for academic purposes. Sufficient time was provided for respondents to complete the questionnaire. After data collection, the responses were organized, tabulated, and analyzed using appropriate statistical methods to answer the research questions.

Results and Discussions

Research Question 1: What is the level of interpersonal skills of first-year BEED students in terms of Communication skills, Teamwork and collaboration, Empathy and Conflict resolution?

Table 1. The Level of Interpersonal Skills of the Respondents in Terms of Communication Skills

	Communication Skills	Mean Response	Remarks
1.	I express my ideas clearly during class discussions.	4.5	High
2.	I listen attentively when others are speaking.	4.7	Very High
3.	I feel confident speaking in front of my classmates.	4.4	High
4.	I can adjust my communication style depending on whom I am talking to.	4.7	Very High
5.	I ask questions when I do not understand a lesson.	4.6	Very High
	Grand Mean	4.6	Very High

Table 1 shows that the statement "I listen attentively when others are speaking" and "I can adjust my communication style depending on whom I am talking to" obtained the highest mean of 4.7, both interpreted as Very High, indicating that students demonstrate strong active listening and adaptability in communication, allowing them to effectively engage in different classroom interactions. On the other hand, the statement "I feel confident speaking in front of my classmates" obtained the lowest mean of 4.4, interpreted as High, suggesting that while students generally have strong communication skills, some still experience hesitation in public speaking situations. Overall, the grand mean of 4.6, interpreted as Very High, indicates that respondents possess well-developed communication skills that support academic interaction. These findings are supported by DeVito (2016), who emphasized that effective communication involves active listening and message adaptation, while Goleman (2020) noted that communication skills enhance confidence and academic engagement among students.

Table 2. The Level of Interpersonal Skills of the Respondents in Terms of Teamwork and Collaboration

	Teamwork and Collaboration	Mean Response	Remarks
1.	I actively participate in group activities.	4.4	High
2.	I respect the ideas of my group members.	4.6	Very High
3.	I fulfill my assigned responsibilities in group tasks.	4.5	High
4.	I cooperate well with classmates from different backgrounds.	4.6	Very High
5.	I help my group members when they are struggling.	4.6	Very High
	Grand Mean	4.5	High

Table 2 reveals that the statement "I respect the ideas of my group members," "I cooperate well with classmates from different backgrounds," and "I help my group members when they are struggling" obtained the highest mean of 4.6, all interpreted as Very High, indicating strong cooperation, inclusiveness, and mutual support among students in group activities. Meanwhile, the statement "I actively participate in group activities" obtained the lowest mean of 4.4, interpreted as High, suggesting that although students are generally cooperative, some still need encouragement to participate more actively in group tasks. Overall, the grand mean of 4.5, interpreted as High, shows that respondents demonstrate strong teamwork and collaboration skills that support group learning. These findings align with Johnson and Johnson (2019), who emphasized that cooperative learning improves participation, responsibility, and academic achievement.

Table 3. The Level of Interpersonal Skills of the Respondents in Terms of Empathy

	Empathy	Mean Response	Remarks
1.	I try to understand how others feel.	4.6	Very High
2.	I show concern when a classmate is having difficulties.	4.6	Very High
3.	I consider others' perspectives before making judgments.	4.6	Very High
4.	I am sensitive to the emotions of people around me.	4.4	High
5.	I avoid saying things that may hurt others.	4.5	High
	Grand Mean	4.6	Very High

Table 3 shows that the statements "I try to understand how others feel," "I show concern when a classmate is having difficulties," and "I consider others' perspectives before making judgments" obtained the highest mean of 4.6, all interpreted as Very High, indicating that students demonstrate strong emotional understanding and compassion toward others. On the other hand, the statement "I am sensitive to the emotions of people around me" obtained the lowest mean of 4.4, interpreted as High, suggesting that while empathy is highly developed, emotional sensitivity in some situations may still need improvement. Overall, the grand mean of 4.6, interpreted as Very High, indicates that respondents possess strong empathy that promotes positive relationships and a supportive learning environment. This is supported by Eisenberg (2018), who stated that empathy enhances prosocial behavior and strengthens interpersonal relationships among students.

Table 4. The Level of Interpersonal Skills of the Respondents in Terms of Conflict Resolution

	Conflict Resolution	Mean Response	Remarks
1.	I remain calm when disagreements arise.	4.5	High
2.	I try to solve misunderstandings through discussion.	4.5	High
3.	I am willing to compromise to settle conflicts.	4.6	Very High
4.	I avoid escalating arguments with classmates.	4.7	Very High
5.	I seek help from instructors when conflicts cannot be resolved.	4.7	Very High
	Grand Mean	4.6	Very High

Table 4 reveals that the statements "I avoid escalating arguments with classmates" and "I seek help from instructors when conflicts cannot be resolved" obtained the highest mean of 4.7, both interpreted as Very High, indicating that students are responsible in handling conflicts and know when to seek guidance from authority figures. Meanwhile, the statements "I remain calm when disagreements arise" and "I try to solve misunderstandings through discussion" obtained the lowest mean of 4.5, interpreted as High, suggesting that while students demonstrate good conflict management skills, emotional control during disagreements may still be improved. Overall, the grand mean of 4.6, interpreted as Very High, shows that respondents have strong conflict resolution skills that help maintain harmony in academic settings. These findings support Thomas and Kilmann (2017), who emphasized that effective conflict management promotes cooperation and positive relationships.

Research Question 2: What is the level of academic performance of first-year BEED students in terms of their Grade Point Average (GPA)?

Table 5. Results of Regression Analysis on the effect of interpersonal skills on GPA
Model Coefficients - GPA

Predictor	Estimate	SE	t	p	Interpretation
Intercept	3.6971	1.261	2.933	0.005	Significant
Communication Skills	-0.3570	0.138	-2.591	0.012	Significant
Teamwork and Collaboration	0.3001	0.141	2.132	0.037	Significant
Empathy	0.0840	0.132	0.636	0.527	Not Significant
Conflict Resolution	-0.4413	0.171	-2.578	0.013	Significant

Table 5 presents the results of the multiple regression analysis conducted using JAMOWI to determine the effect of interpersonal skills on academic performance (GPA). The findings show that communication skills ($p = 0.012$), teamwork and collaboration ($p = 0.037$), and conflict resolution ($p = 0.013$) significantly predict academic performance, while empathy ($p = 0.527$) does not have a significant effect. Among the predictors, teamwork and collaboration demonstrated a positive significant relationship with GPA, indicating that students who actively engage in cooperative learning tend to achieve better academic performance. This finding supports Tinto (2017), who emphasized that student engagement and interaction are key factors in academic success in higher education. On the other hand, communication skills and conflict resolution showed significant negative relationships with GPA, suggesting that higher levels of these skills do not necessarily guarantee higher academic performance. This may be influenced by other unmeasured factors such as study habits, time management, and academic workload. As explained by Creswell (2018), regression results can be affected by variables not included in the model, which may influence the direction of relationships. Overall, the findings indicate that interpersonal skills have varying effects on academic performance, with teamwork and collaboration emerging as the strongest positive predictor.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical clearance and approval were secured from the appropriate authorities of the selected university in Zamboanga City prior to the conduct of the study. The research strictly adhered to institutional and ethical standards in conducting studies involving human participants. Throughout the course of the study, the researchers ensured that all participants were fully informed about the purpose of the research, their rights as respondents, and the voluntary nature of their participation. Informed consent was obtained from all respondents before data collection, and they were assured that they could withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. The confidentiality and anonymity of the respondents were strictly observed. No names or identifying information were collected or disclosed in any part of the study, and all data were coded and used solely for academic purposes. To ensure data privacy and security, all collected information was stored in password-protected electronic devices accessible only to the researchers. Printed materials were securely kept in locked storage, and all electronic communications related to the study were conducted through secure channels. Data was anonymized and aggregated during analysis to prevent identification of individual respondents. After the completion of the study, all collected data were permanently deleted or properly disposed of in accordance with data retention and privacy policies to prevent unauthorized access or misuse.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, the respondents showed a very high level of interpersonal skills in communication, empathy, and conflict resolution, while teamwork and collaboration were rated high. This means that the students generally have strong skills in interacting and working with others in academic settings. Their academic performance, as reflected in their GPA, was satisfactory among first-year Bachelor of Elementary Education students. The results also showed that communication skills, teamwork and collaboration, and conflict resolution significantly predict academic performance, while empathy does not have a significant effect on GPA. Among the predictors, teamwork and collaboration had a positive effect on academic performance, meaning students who work well in groups tend to achieve higher grades. However, communication skills and conflict resolution showed negative relationships with GPA, which may be influenced by other factors such as study habits, time management, workload, and learning strategies. Overall, the study concludes that interpersonal skills affect academic performance in different ways, with teamwork and collaboration being the strongest positive predictor. Future studies are

recommended to include other factors such as motivation, study habits, self-regulated learning, and learning environment to better understand academic performance.

Reccomendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, several recommendations are proposed. School administrators are encouraged to strengthen institutional programs that enhance students' interpersonal skills, particularly in communication, teamwork, and conflict resolution, through structured training programs, capacity-building workshops, and the integration of interpersonal skills development activities within student support services to promote better academic engagement and collaborative learning. The Dean is encouraged to initiate programs that promote meaningful interaction between faculty and students, such as seminars, mentoring programs, and experiential learning activities that emphasize effective communication, collaboration, and emotional understanding to support a more holistic academic environment. The Program Chair is advised to review and enhance the curriculum by integrating activities that develop interpersonal competencies across subjects, including group-based tasks, reflective exercises, and collaborative projects that allow continuous practice of teamwork, communication, and conflict management skills. Teachers are encouraged to adopt student-centered and collaborative teaching strategies such as group discussions, cooperative learning, and peer interaction activities while fostering an open and supportive classroom environment that promotes active listening, empathy, and respectful communication to strengthen students' interpersonal development and academic participation. Students are encouraged to actively apply and further develop their interpersonal skills in academic and social contexts by practicing effective communication, demonstrating empathy, managing conflicts constructively, and actively participating in group activities to enhance both interpersonal growth and academic performance. Finally, future researchers are encouraged to extend this study by including additional variables such as study habits, motivation, time management, learning environment, and self-regulated learning, and by conducting similar studies in different academic programs, institutions, or regions to improve generalizability and deepen the understanding of the relationship between interpersonal skills and academic performance.

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