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General attitude of hotel, restaurant, and tourism students toward the program, future intention, and their academic engagement

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A R T I C L E I N F O

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A B S T R A C T

This study examined the influence of HRT students' general attitude toward their program and their future intentions on their academic engagement. A descriptive–correlational research design was employed, and data were collected from students enrolled in the Hotel, Restaurant, and Tourism program using validated questionnaires. The results showed that students exhibited very high levels of general attitude toward the program, future intention, and academic engagement. Correlation analysis revealed a significant relationship among these variables, supporting the research hypothesis. Despite these findings, the study acknowledged its limited scope. Future studies are recommended to include students from other SVD colleges in Region I to strengthen the generalizability of the results.

JEL Classification: I25

Introduction

Human behavior is shaped not only by the social environment but also by individuals' attitudes toward objects, events, or activities they encounter. As people live within specific contexts, their experiences gradually shape their perceptions, leading to positive or negative attitudes that influence subsequent behavior (Sharma & Gupta, 2024; Rahma & Wantini, 2024). Attitude reflects an individual's evaluation of objects or experiences and their expected outcomes, which in turn influences behavioral intentions. Ajzen and Fishbein (1975) defined attitude as a predisposition to respond favorably or unfavorably to a psychological object.

Guided by attitude–behavior theory, the Hotel, Restaurant, and Tourism (HRT) program is viewed as an object of perception shaped by students' experiences, expectations, and interpretations of program content, teaching

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strategies, and the learning environment. These perceptions significantly influence students' engagement and learning outcomes (Jones et al., 2021; Tudor & Penlington, 2010; Kreber, 2003). Although attitudes often predict behavior, they do not always result in consistent actions, as intentions and plans may intervene. Within the Theory of Planned Behavior, future intention plays a critical role in shaping and reinforcing attitudes and guiding behavior (Maheshwari et al., 2022; Fielding et al., 2022; Gillis & Swim, 2020; Dealy et al., 2024). Strong intentions can influence how individuals process information and sustain positive attitudes over time (Conner & Norman, 2022; Van Ittersum, 2011).

Academic engagement, a key academic behavior, includes active participation, sustained effort, and emotional investment in learning tasks (Perkmann et al., 2021; Hattie, 2003; Amerstorfer & Münster-Kistner, 2021; Alonso-Tappia et al., 2022). Prior studies suggest that students' attitudes toward a program significantly affect their level of engagement, with positive attitudes linked to higher engagement and negative attitudes associated with disengagement (Jimerson et al., 2003; Skinner et al., 2008; Wang & Degol, 2014).

Despite the recognized importance of attitude and future intention, limited research has examined their combined influence on academic engagement. This study addresses this gap by investigating HRT students' attitudes toward their program, their future intentions, and the impact of these factors on academic engagement.

Literature review

The concept of human attitude

Human attitude refers to an individual's thoughts, beliefs, feelings, and behavioral tendencies toward a particular subject, person, object, institution, or event (Cherry, 2019). It reflects a predisposition to evaluate experiences based on personal perceptions, ideas, or emotions (Albarracín et al., 2005; Wood, 2000). Wilson (1976) described attitude as a relatively stable evaluative orientation toward an object or concept that may be positive, negative, or neutral, making it a central construct in understanding human behavior. The object of attitude may vary widely and can include people, institutions, or social groups (Albarracín et al., 2005). Because attitudes are shaped by personal experiences, individuals may develop different evaluations of the same object, leading to favorable or unfavorable dispositions that vary across individuals and groups (De Houwer et al., 2001; Ajzen, 1993).

Attitudes are learned through upbringing, social interaction, and cultural exposure, all of which influence how individuals respond to particular subjects or experiences (Abun et al., 2023; Kim & Lee, 2023; Naneva et al., 2020). Ajzen (1993) emphasized that attitudes develop through both direct and indirect experiences. For instance, positive or negative experiences within the hotel, restaurant, and tourism industries can shape individuals' attitudes toward the industry and those who work within it. Beyond direct experience, culture also plays a significant role in attitude formation. Abun et al. (2018), drawing on Donald (2002) and Hofstede (1984), as cited by Brown (1995), argued that culture influences cognitive processes and value systems. Donald (2002) highlighted the role of culture in shaping brain functioning, while Hofstede (1984) described culture as the collective programming of the mind that differentiates one group from another. Similarly, Armstrong (1996) noted that variations in ethical perceptions across groups are largely influenced by cultural contexts.

Although attitudes are not directly observable, scholars agree that they can be measured through individuals' responses to attitude objects (Bem, 1970; Edwards, 1957; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). These responses may be favorable or unfavorable and are commonly assessed through cognitive, affective, and behavioral components. Early theorists such as Allport (1954), Hilgard (1980), Rosenberg and Hovland (1960), and Ajzen (1993) proposed that attitudes consist of three interrelated dimensions: cognition, affect, and conation. The cognitive component

involves beliefs, thoughts, and perceptions about an object; the affective component reflects emotional reactions such as liking or disliking; and the behavioral or conative component refers to an individual's readiness to act, including intentions, plans, and commitments toward a particular behavior. Together, these components explain how attitudes influence both intentions and actual behavior.

The role of attitude toward behavior and vice versa

Attitude and behavior are distinct yet closely interconnected constructs that influence one another (Marcinkowski & Reid, 2019). Attitude is commonly defined as a psychological tendency to evaluate a particular object, subject, or situation with some degree of favor or disfavor (Eagly & Chaiken, 1998). It encompasses a combination of emotions, beliefs, and behavioral tendencies toward a specific object, person, or event (Banaji & Heiphetz, 2010). Individuals may hold both positive and negative thoughts or feelings toward the same object, and these mixed evaluations can influence their behavior (Wood, 2000). As Jung (1960), cited by Main (2014), explained, attitude reflects a "readiness of the psyche to act or react in a certain way."

Social psychologists emphasize that attitudes do not develop in isolation but are shaped by individuals' past and present experiences with the object of the attitude (Allport, 1935). Because attitudes are learned through experience, they are dynamic and subject to change over time. Exposure plays a key role in attitude formation, as repeated interaction with an object can strengthen or modify one's evaluation of it. Zajonc (1998) argued that repeated exposure alone can enhance positive attitudes toward an object, even in the absence of deliberate evaluation.

Early theorists strongly supported the view that attitudes influence behavior. This perspective can be traced to the works of Thomas and Znaniecki (1918) and Watson (1925), whose ideas were widely accepted for several decades. However, later empirical studies challenged this assumption. Research by Corey (1937), De Fleur and Westie (1958), Himelstein and Moore (1963), Linn (1965), Freeman and Ataoev (1960), and Wicker (1969) reported weak or nonexistent correlations between attitudes and behavior. For example, Corey (1937) and Freeman and Ataoev (1960), as cited by Ajzen (1993), found no relationship between students' attitudes toward cheating and their actual cheating behavior. Similarly, Dean (1958) reported no correlation between attitudes toward labor unions and participation in union meetings, while Wicker and Pomazal (1971) found no association between attitudes toward participating in a social psychology class and actual participation. These findings suggested that the relationship between attitude and behavior is not always linear and may be influenced by additional factors. As a result, some scholars emphasized the role of social context and norms in shaping behavior (De Fleur & Westie, 1958; Deutscher, 1969), with Wicker (1969) even suggesting that researchers abandon the study of the attitude–behavior relationship altogether.

Despite these criticisms, later scholars defended the predictive role of attitude in human behavior. Ajzen and Fishbein (1977, 2000) reaffirmed that attitude remains a key determinant of behavior, while Allport (1954) viewed attitude as a reliable predictor of future action. Ajzen (1993) argued that inconsistencies in earlier findings were not due to flaws in the attitude–behavior relationship itself but to methodological limitations. These included response biases, failure to account for the multidimensional nature of attitudes, and the influence of moderating variables such as self-efficacy, self-awareness, self-monitoring, experience, knowledge, information, and time pressure. Rosenberg and Hovland (1960) similarly criticized earlier studies for treating attitude as a single construct rather than as a multidimensional construct comprising cognitive, affective, and conative components. Measuring attitude without considering these dimensions, according to Allport (1935), fails to fully capture its complexity.

While attitudes can influence behavior, behavior can also shape attitudes. Bem's (1967) self-perception theory proposed that individuals infer their own attitudes by observing their behavior and the context in which it occurs. From this perspective, repeated engagement in a behavior can lead to the development or modification of attitudes toward that behavior. Individuals form self-knowledge by interpreting their actions in much the same way an external observer would infer internal states from observable behavior. This process is particularly influential when internal emotional or cognitive cues are weak or unclear. Recent studies continue to support this view, suggesting that attitudes often emerge from behavioral inferences rather than preceding behavior (Delei, 2024; Haemmerlie & Montgomery, 1986; Moheby & Bailey, 2020).

Overview of the Hotel, Restaurant, and Tourism Management (HRTM) Program

The Hotel, Restaurant, and Tourism Management (HRTM) program is designed to prepare students for careers in the hotel, restaurant, and tourism industries by equipping them with the knowledge, skills, and competencies needed to succeed in the hospitality sector. The program covers key areas of hospitality operations, including hotel management, food service management, event planning, and tourism management. To operate effectively in the industry, students are also trained in essential business skills, including financial management, marketing, human resources management, and leadership. These competencies are supported by industry literacy, which includes an understanding of global hospitality trends, industry standards, and best practices (Majarocon et al., 2024; Bagon et al., 2023).

Future intentions of the HRTM students

Future intention is well explained in Ajzen's (1991) Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) and is also reflected in the Future Time Perspective (FTP) Theory proposed by Lens (1986). According to the Theory of Planned Behavior, behavioral intention is the most immediate predictor of actual behavior. This intention is influenced by three key factors: individuals' attitudes toward the behavior, subjective norms (perceived social pressure), and perceived behavioral control (one's belief in their ability to perform the behavior successfully). Together, these components either motivate or discourage individuals from engaging in a particular action (Ajzen, 1991; Hager & Hamilton, 2025; Suntornson et al., 2022).

Similarly, the Future Time Perspective theory emphasizes how individuals mentally represent, value, and prioritize future outcomes. This future-oriented thinking influences motivation, goal-setting, and self-regulation by integrating future possibilities into present decision-making. As a result, future time perspective plays an important role in shaping behavior, persistence, well-being, and overall motivation (Phan et al., 2020; Kooij et al., 2018; Lens, 1986; Liao & Carstensen, 2018).

Drawing from both TPB and FTP, the future intention of HRTM students refers to their deliberate plans, goals, and willingness to engage in specific career-related behaviors. These may include starting a hotel, restaurant, or tourism business, working in hospitality-related government offices, or pursuing employment in hotels, restaurants, or tourism establishments after completing the program. Such intentions are shaped by students' personal attitudes toward these career paths, perceived social expectations or approval, confidence in their own abilities, and perceived control over achieving desired outcomes (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Ajzen, 1991; Eugenio et al., 2022; Barba-Sánchez et al., 2022). Understanding students' future intentions is therefore essential for educators, institutions, and policymakers, as these intentions can help predict future behavior and guide efforts to better prepare students for their professional roles.

Awareness of students' future intentions also provides valuable insight into their academic engagement. Teachers and institutions can better understand why some students demonstrate strong engagement while others struggle. By helping students connect their present academic tasks to their long-term goals, educators can increase

motivation, promote persistence, and design targeted interventions for students at risk of disengagement (Bowers et al., 2012; Reschly, 2020; Szabo et al., 2024).

Empirical studies consistently show that a strong future-oriented perspective is positively associated with academic engagement, including higher class attendance, improved academic performance, and greater participation in learning activities. When students clearly value their future goals, they are more likely to see the relevance of their current studies, making the learning process more meaningful and motivating (Zimbardo & Boyd, 2014; Oyserman & James, 2012; Pawlak & Moustafa, 2023; Peng & Zhang, 2022). Clear future goals also encourage students to persist through academic challenges, as they view present efforts as essential steps toward long-term success. This future focus further enhances cognitive engagement by strengthening students' commitment, self-regulation, and resilience in the learning process (Burns et al., 2021; Marcia et al., 2023; Mascia et al., 2023; Pawlak & Moustafa, 2023).

The concept of academic engagement

In recent years, academic engagement has gained increasing attention as researchers sought to better understand students' learning behaviors and experiences (Fredricks et al., 2004). As a result, various definitions of academic engagement have emerged. Audas and Willms (2002) defined engagement as students' participation in both academic and non-academic activities, as well as their sense of identification with the school, including its values, rules, and norms. From this perspective, academic engagement extends beyond classroom instruction to include school-initiated activities that support learning. This definition highlights two key components: participation and identification. Participation involves activities such as class discussions, completing assignments, and regular attendance, while identification refers to students' sense of connection with their teachers, subject matter, and the school community.

However, researchers caution against equating academic engagement solely with the quantity of participation. Instead, emphasis should be placed on the quality of students' involvement in learning activities. Engagement reflects how energized, focused, enthusiastic, and emotionally invested students are in their academic tasks. In this regard, Skinner et al. (2009) defined academic engagement as the quality of students' participation in the educational endeavor, encompassing activities, values, relationships, goals, and learning environments. While this definition captures the behavioral aspect of engagement, it remains limited in that it does not fully address the emotional dimension. Social psychologists argue that engagement should not be viewed only in behavioral terms but must also include emotional involvement.

Expanding on this perspective, Newmann et al. (1992) emphasized the psychological aspect of engagement, describing it as students' effort and emotional investment in learning, understanding, and mastering academic skills and knowledge. This view aligns with Wehlage et al. (1989), who highlighted the importance of students' psychological commitment and emotional involvement in achieving meaningful learning outcomes.

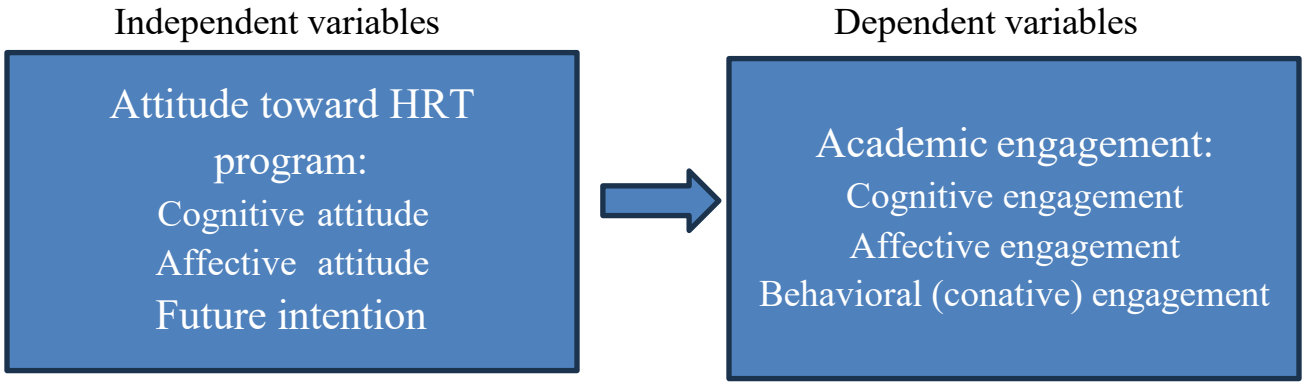
From these definitions, academic engagement is commonly understood as a multidimensional construct consisting of behavioral, cognitive, and emotional dimensions. Although scholars may differ in emphasis, there is general agreement on these three core components. The behavioral dimension includes observable actions such as compliance with classroom norms, active participation in learning tasks, and involvement in school-related activities (Fredricks et al., 2004; Finn et al., 1995; Skinner & Belmont, 1993). These behaviors may include contributing to discussions, completing academic work, and participating in extracurricular activities.

The cognitive dimension refers to students' investment in learning and their willingness to exert effort to understand and master academic tasks. This includes self-discipline, use of learning strategies, persistence in solving difficult problems, asking questions, and seeking a deeper understanding of subject matter (Fredricks et al., 2004). The emotional or affective dimension involves students' positive and negative emotional reactions toward their teachers, peers, academic tasks, and the school environment. These emotions influence motivation, interest, and overall engagement in learning activities (Fredricks et al., 2004).

Overall, academic engagement reflects the integration of an engaged mind, behavior, and emotion. Cognitive engagement involves purposeful and active thinking aimed at understanding complex ideas and tasks (Skinner & Belmont, 1993). Behavioral engagement includes effort, persistence, attention, and concentration, while emotional engagement encompasses positive academic emotions such as interest, enthusiasm, and enjoyment (Meyer & Turner, 2002; Pekrun et al., 2002; Schutz & DeCuir, 2002; Weiner, 1985).

In contrast, academic disengagement may manifest through disaffected behaviors and emotions. Disaffected behavior includes passivity, withdrawal, and giving up on academic tasks, as seen in students who physically disengage from learning activities (Murdock, 1999). Disaffected emotions involve emotional withdrawal, where students may be physically present in class but lack emotional involvement. Such disengagement can be observed in students who appear frustrated, disruptive, or merely going through the motions without genuine interest in learning (Finn et al., 1995).

Conceptual framework



Source: Ajzen (1993) and Skinner et al. (2009)

Figure 1: The conceptual framework describes the purpose of the study. It aims to examine the influence of students' attitudes toward the HRT program on their cognitive, affective, and conative engagement.

Statement of the problems

The study examined the impact of students' attitudes toward the HRT program on academic engagement. It specifically answers the following questions:

1. What is the level of students' attitude toward the HRT program in terms of:
   a. cognitive attitude
   b. affective attitude

2. What is the level of future intention of students after finishing the program?

3. What is the level of academic engagement of HRT students in terms of:
   a. Cognitive engagement
   b. Affective engagement
   c. Conative/behavioral engagement

4. Is there a relationship between attitude toward the HRT program and academic engagement?

5. Is there a relationship between future intention and academic engagement?

Hypothesis

Students' positive attitude toward learning significantly boosts academic engagement, leading to higher achievement, whereas a negative attitude can result in disengagement and poor performance (Chen et al., 2004; Fuentes et al., 2018; Acosta-Gonzaga, 2023). This is also true for students' future intentions (Andre et al., 2018; Worrell et al., 2021). The current study hypothesizes that students' attitudes and future intentions affect their academic engagement.

Scope and delimitation of the study

The current study limits its investigation to only two dimensions of attitude — namely, cognitive and affective attitudes — and their effects on academic engagement and future intentions. The respondents are only third- and fourth-year students from the Hotel, Restaurant, and Tourism program.

Research methodology

The study was conducted using appropriate research methodologies, including research design, data collection instruments, population, study locale, data collection procedures, and statistical data analysis.

Research design

As a quantitative study, this research employed a descriptive-correlational research design. Descriptive research focuses on presenting and interpreting data gathered through questionnaires and statistical analysis. It is commonly used to describe profiles, frequency distributions, and the characteristics of individuals, situations, phenomena, or related variables. In essence, descriptive research explains “what is” based on the collected data (Ariola, 2006, as cited in Abun, 2018).

Consistent with this approach, the study used a descriptive–correlational method to assess students’ attitudes toward the HRT program and examine their relationship with academic engagement. Specifically, the study sought to identify the dominant attitudes students hold toward the HRT program and to determine which of these attitudes significantly influence their level of academic engagement.

Locale of the study

The study was conducted at Divine Word College of Laoag. Divine Word College of Laoag is located in Laoag City, Ilocos Norte.

Population

The study population consisted of all third- and fourth-year HRT students enrolled at Divine Word College of Laoag. Given the limited number of students in the population, total enumeration was employed as the sampling design for this study.

Data Gathering instruments

The study utilized validated questionnaires, which were adapted from Abun et al (2023) and the Motivational Perspective on Engagement and Disaffection questionnaires by Skinner et al. (2009)

Data gathering procedures

During data collection, the researcher sent letters to the College President requesting permission to distribute his questionnaires on campus. The researcher personally met with the President and the students and asked them to complete the questionnaires.

The collection of questionnaires was arranged between the President's representative and the researcher, with assistance from college employees and faculty.

Ethical review

As part of the ethical review requirement, the researcher ensures that the study does not involve sensitive issues, such as vulnerable participants or individual participants' rights.

Statistical treatment of data

Consistent with the study's descriptive research approach, both descriptive and inferential statistics were used. The weighted mean was used to assess attitudes toward higher education and academic engagement. In contrast, Pearson's r was used to measure the correlation between attitudes toward the HRT program and academic engagement.

The following ranges of values with their descriptive interpretation will be used:

Statistical Range	Descriptive Interpretation
4.21-5.00	*Strongly agree/Very High (VH)*
3.41-4.20	*Agree/High(H)*
2.61-3.40	*Somewhat agree/Moderate (SWA/M)*
1.81-2.60	*Disagree/Low (D/L)*
1.00-1.80	*Strongly disagree/very low (SD/VL)*

Data presentation and analysis

The study aimed to examine the impact of students' attitudes toward the HRT program and future intention on academic engagement. It specifically answers the following questions:

Problem 1: What is the level of students' attitude toward the HRT program in terms of:

a. Cognitive attitude

b. Affective attitude

Table 1: L*evel of students' attitude toward the HRT program in terms of cognitive attitude*

Indicators	Mean	DR
1. The hotel, restaurant, and tourism program is helpful for my future employment.	4.80	SA/VH
2. An HRT program is necessary to improve the quality of life.	4.51	SA/VH
3. The HRT program is indispensable in updating my knowledge and skills to work in the hospitality industry.	4.49	SA/VH
4. An HRT program should prepare students for the knowledge and skills required.	4.72	SA/VH
5. The HRT program is the only way to get a faster and better job.	4.41	SA/VH
6. An HRT program is necessary for a person to succeed in today's workplace.	4.42	SA/VH
Composite Mean	4.56	**SA/VH**

Source: Abun, et al (2023)

Legend:

4.21-5.00	*Strongly agree/Very High (VH)*
3.41-4.20	*Agree/High(H)*
2.61-3.40	*Somewhat agree/Moderate (SWA/M)*
1.81-2.60	*Disagree/Low (D/L)*
1.00-1.80	*Strongly disagree/very low (SD/VL)*

Students' cognitive attitude toward the HRT program had a composite mean rating of 4.56, indicating a very high level. This finding indicates that students have a strong, consistently positive cognitive evaluation of the program. All individual indicators likewise received very high mean ratings, reflecting a shared perception among students that the program is beneficial for future employment, enhances quality of life, updates relevant skills and knowledge for industry work, provides better job opportunities, and supports success in future careers.

The very high level of cognitive attitude suggests that students demonstrate strong cognitive understanding and appreciation of the program content and objectives. This indicates a high level of cognitive sophistication, in which students are capable of engaging in deep, analytical, and effortful thinking when evaluating information and making decisions about their program. Such cognitive engagement reflects a strong capacity to process information meaningfully and align their academic experiences with future professional goals (Norris & Epstein, 2011; Stanovich, 2012; Marin et al., 2024).

Table 2: *Level of students' attitude toward the HRT program in terms of affective attitude*

Indicators	Mean	DR
1. The HRT program is enjoyable.	4.82	SA/VH
2. HRT program excites me.	4.58	SA/VH
3. HRT program makes me great.	4.64	SA/VH
4. The HRT program is interesting.	4.78	SA/VH
Composite Mean	**4.70**	**SA/VH**

Source: Abun, et al (2023)

The data revealed a composite mean rating of 4.70, interpreted as *strongly agree* or *very high*. This result indicates that students demonstrate a very strong affective attitude toward their program. When examined individually, all

indicators received very high ratings, indicating that students genuinely enjoy their program and feel it contributes positively to their personal growth.

A very high level of affective attitude toward an academic program suggests that students experience positive emotions, interest, and satisfaction in their learning. These positive feelings play a crucial role in enhancing academic engagement, as they motivate students to actively participate in learning activities and sustain effort in academic tasks (Valiente et al., 2012; Ng et al., 2025; Villavicencio & Bernardo, 2012).

Problem 2: What is the level of future intention of students after finishing the program?

Table 3: *Level of future intention of students after finishing the program*

Indicators	Mean	DR
1. I will apply the knowledge and skills I have to my future work in the hospitality industry.	4.74	SA/VH
2. I have the knowledge and skills to establish a restaurant and a hotel business in the future.	4.51	SA/VH
3. I will use the knowledge and skills that I have to open a travel and tour business.	4.52	SA/VH
4. With the knowledge and skills that I have learnt, I can apply to work in well-known hotels and restaurants.	4.68	SA/VH
5. After my graduation, I will start my own restaurant and tour business.	4.04	A/H
Composite Mean	**4.50**	**SA/VH**

Source: Abun, et al (2023)

Regarding future intentions, the data revealed a composite mean rating of 4.50, interpreted as *strongly agree* or *very high*. This finding indicates that students' future intention to apply what they have learned is very high, not low or moderate. When the indicators were examined individually, all items likewise obtained very high ratings. Students strongly agreed that they intend to apply the knowledge and skills they gained in the hospitality industry and that their program motivates them to establish their own business in the hotel, restaurant, and tourism sectors.

A very high level of future intention reflects students' strong determination and readiness to translate their learning into practical application. Consistent with this result, previous studies have shown a positive relationship between business-related knowledge and skills and individuals' intentions to engage in entrepreneurial or professional activities in the future (Pham et al., 2023; Valencia-Arias et al., 2025; Mujtaba et al., 2025).

Problem 3: What is the level of academic engagement of HRT students in terms of:

- ***a. Conative/behavioral engagement***
- ***b. Affective engagement***
- ***c. Cognitive engagement***

Table 4: Level of academic engagement of HRT students in terms of behavioral engagement

Indicators	Mean	DR
1. I try hard to do well in school.	4.61	SA/VH
2. In class, I work as hard as I can.	4.54	SA/VH
3. When I am in class, I participate in class discussions.	4.34	SA/VH
4. I pay attention in class.	4.46	SA/VH
5. When I am in class, I listen carefully.	4.46	SA/VH
Composite Mean	**4.48**	**SA/VH**

Source: Skinner et al. (2009).

Academic engagement among HRT students obtained a composite mean rating of 4.48, interpreted as *strongly agree* or *very high*. This result indicates that students demonstrate a very high level of behavioral engagement overall. When the items were analyzed individually, all indicators likewise received very high mean ratings. Students strongly agreed that they exerted effort to perform well and work toward academic success, as reflected in their attentiveness, careful listening, and active participation in class discussions.

A very high level of behavioral academic engagement suggests that students are motivated and actively involved in their learning process. Previous studies have shown that strong behavioral engagement is influenced by positive teacher–student relationships, a supportive learning environment, students' intentions and attitudes, intrinsic interest, and the use of active learning strategies (Li et al., 2023; Gomes et al., 2023; Lai, 2021).

Table 5: Level of academic engagement of HRT students in terms of emotional/affective engagement

Indicators	Mean	DR
1. When I am in class, I feel good.	4.47	SA/VH
2. When we work on something in class, I am interested.	4.43	SA/VH
3. Class is fun.	4.65	SA/VH
4. I enjoy learning new things in class.	4.65	SA/VH
5. When we work on something in class, I get excited	4.46	SA/VH
Composite Mean	**4.53**	**SA/VH**

Source: Skinner, et al (2009)

In terms of affective engagement, the data show that students obtained a composite mean rating of 4.53, interpreted as *very high*. This result indicates that students' affective academic engagement is clearly very high, not low or moderate. When the indicators were examined individually, all items likewise received very high ratings. Students strongly agreed that they felt good, excited, and interested during class and that they genuinely enjoyed their learning experiences.

A very high level of affective academic engagement reflects students' positive emotional connection to their learning. Such engagement is often influenced by a combination of personal psychological factors, including self-efficacy, positive attitudes toward academic subjects, and a supportive and encouraging learning environment (Chen et al., 2023; Acosta-Gonzaga, 2023; Singhi & Kumar, 2025).

Table 6: ***Level of academic engagement*** **of** ***HRT students in terms of cognitive engagement***

Indicators	Mean	DR
1. I organize my study time well for this class.	4.31	SA/VH
2. I memorize the steps for solving problems presented in the text or in class.	4.39	SA/VH
3. I have a clear idea of what I am trying to accomplish in this class.	4.36	SA/VH
4. Even when I do not want to work on math, I force myself to do the work.	4.37	SA/VH
5. When I do math, I ask myself questions to help me understand what to do.	4.40	SA/VH
6. If I have trouble understanding a problem, I go over it again until I understand it	4.48	SA/VH
Composite Mean	**4.39**	**VH**

Source: Skinner, et al (2009)

As shown in the table, students' cognitive academic engagement obtained a composite mean rating of 4.39, which is interpreted as *very high*. This finding indicates that, overall, the cognitive engagement of HRT students is very high rather than low or moderate. When the indicators were examined individually, all items likewise received very high ratings. Students strongly agreed that they effectively organized their study time, understood the steps needed to solve classroom problems, had clear academic goals, persisted in completing difficult tasks, and repeatedly reviewed complex topics until they achieved understanding.

A very high level of cognitive academic engagement reflects students' deep psychological and intellectual investment in learning. It is characterized by sustained effort, persistence, strategic thinking, and a strong motivation to master challenging content. Rather than relying on rote memorization, cognitively engaged students actively use problem-solving strategies and self-regulation to understand and apply complex ideas meaningfully (Corno & Mandinach, 1983; Richardson & Newby, 2006; Walker et al., 2006).

Table 6: Summary of academic engagement

	Indicators	Mean	DR
1	*Behavioral engagement*	4.48	SA/VH
2	*Emotional engagement*	4.53	SA/VH
3	*Cognitive engagement*	4.39	SA/VH
Overall Mean		**4.47**	**SA/VH**

Source: Skinner, et al (2009)

In summary, the academic engagement of HRT students obtained an overall mean rating of 4.47, which is interpreted as *very high*. This result indicates that students demonstrate a consistently high level of academic engagement. When examined separately, all dimensions of academic engagement likewise achieved very high composite mean ratings.

A very high level of academic engagement suggests that HRT students are deeply invested, committed, and actively involved in their learning process. This level of engagement is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption in academic tasks. It goes beyond mere class attendance and reflects a holistic approach to learning that contributes to improved academic performance and personal development (Al-Rashidi, 2025; Loyola-Carrillo et al., 2025; Ashwin & McVitty, 2015).

Problem 4: Is there a relationship between attitude toward HRT and academic engagement?

Table 7*: Relationship between attitude toward the HRT program and academic engagement*

Attitude toward the HRT program	Pearson's r	Interpretation	p-value	Interpretation	Decision (Ha)
Behavioral engagement	0.501***	+Moderate relationship	<.001	Significant	Supported
Emotional engagement	0.705***	+ Strong relationship	<.001	Significant	Supported
Cognitive engagement	0.624***	+ Strong relationship	<.001	Significant	Supported
As a whole	0.678***	+ Strong relationship	<.001	Significant	Supported

Note. *p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

Source: SPSS

The correlational result reveals that attitude toward the HRT program significantly influenced academic engagement ($r = 0.678$, $p < 0.001$); This study examined the influence of students' general attitudes toward the HRT program and their future intentions after completing the program on their academic engagement. The

findings revealed that students' general attitudes, future intentions, and academic engagement were all rated very highly. Correlation analysis further indicated a significant relationship among these variables, supporting the study's hypothesis. The results suggest that students' attitudes toward the program and their future intentions play an important role in shaping variations in academic engagement.

Despite these positive findings, the study acknowledges its limitation in focusing solely on HRT students from Divine Word College of Laoag. Future research is recommended to include a wider, more diverse group of respondents, which may yield broader insights and enhance the generalizability of the results.

The alternative hypothesis is accepted/supported. The finding indicates that students with very high cognitive and affective attitudes toward the HRT program tend to be more engaged academically across behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement dimensions. This strongly significant positive relationship confirms that attitude toward the program plays a substantial role in students' overall academic functioning. The alternative hypothesis (Ha) is supported in all cases.

Problem 5: Is there a relationship between future intention and academic engagement?

Table 8: Relationship between future intention and academic engagement

Future intention	**Pearson's r**	**Interpretation**	**p-value**	**Interpretation**	**Decision (Ha)**
Behavioral engagement	0.557***	+Moderate relationship	<.001	Significant	Supported
Emotional engagement	0.633***	+ Strong relationship	<.001	Significant	Supported
Cognitive engagement	0.623***	+ Strong relationship	<.001	Significant	Supported
As a whole	0.673***	+ Strong relationship	<.001	Significant	Supported

Note. *p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

Source: SPSS

The correlational results reveal that future intention has a positive and significant relationship with all dimensions of academic engagement ($r = 0.673$, $p < 0.001$); thus, the alternative hypothesis is accepted/supported. The finding indicates that students with very high future intentions to apply what they have learnt in school to the business or hospitality industry tend to be more engaged behaviorally, emotionally, and cognitively in their academic activities. The finding indicates that students' future intentions influence the variation in academic engagement.

Results and discussion

The results of the study indicate that students' general attitude toward the program, particularly their cognitive and affective attitudes, future intentions after completing the program, and academic engagement, were all rated very highly. These findings suggest that students have a strong understanding of their program, genuinely enjoy what they are doing, and are actively engaged in their academic experiences. Given the consistently very high ratings across these variables, the Pearson *r* correlation analysis revealed a significant relationship between students' general attitude toward the program (both cognitive and affective) and their level of academic engagement. Similarly, future intention was significantly correlated with academic engagement.

The significant correlation between students' general attitude toward the program and academic engagement implies that students who enjoy and value their program are more likely to actively participate in class discussions, invest greater effort in studying and completing assignments, persist through academic challenges, and demonstrate positive engagement behaviors that may also influence their peers (Janifer et al., 2024; Fredricks et al., 2016; Jaidumrong et al., 2023). These findings highlight the importance of instructional practices that foster

positive student attitudes. Teachers are encouraged to make subject content relevant to real-life contexts, employ interactive and student-centered teaching strategies, design collaborative group activities, demonstrate empathy and encouragement, and identify disengaged students early to provide timely interventions (Cents-Boonstra et al., 2019; Xie & Derakhshan, 2021; Han, 2021).

Likewise, the significant correlation between students' future intentions after graduation and their academic engagement suggests that students with a clear vision of their goals tend to be more engaged in their academic work. These students are more likely to participate actively in class, complete academic requirements, and persist despite difficulties (Pawlak & Moustafa, 2023; Peng & Zhang, 2022; Li & Bin Hashim, 2025). The findings further indicate that a strong future orientation enhances students' motivation, resilience, and commitment to achieving academic goals (Lin et al., 2024; Pawlak & Moustafa, 2023; Zhao & Ma, 2025). To strengthen students' future orientation, teachers should encourage goal-setting, support the development of concrete plans, promote self-reflection on strengths and interests, and emphasize the value of effort and progress. By fostering future-oriented thinking, educators and parents can help students develop a more positive, motivated, and resilient approach to learning (Camp, 2017; Ertem, 2024).

Overall, the findings of this study support both the Theory of Planned Behavior and Self-Determination Theory. The Theory of Planned Behavior posits that positive attitudes enhance behavioral intentions, which in turn lead to higher levels of engagement (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). Meanwhile, Self-Determination Theory posits that when students experience autonomy, feel competent, and receive environmental support that satisfies their need for relatedness, intrinsic motivation is strengthened, leading to higher academic engagement (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Together, these theoretical frameworks provide strong support for the observed relationships among attitude, future intention, and academic engagement in this study.

Conclusion

This study examined the influence of students' general attitudes toward the HRT program and their future intentions after completing the program on their academic engagement. The findings revealed that students' general attitudes, future intentions, and academic engagement were all rated very highly. Correlation analysis further indicated a significant relationship among these variables, supporting the study's hypothesis. The results suggest that students' attitudes toward the program and their future intentions play an important role in shaping variations in academic engagement.

Despite these positive findings, the study acknowledges its limitation in focusing solely on HRT students from Divine Word College of Laoag. Future research is recommended to include a wider, more diverse group of respondents, which may yield broader insights and enhance the generalizability of the results.

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