

# The Influence of Academic Goal Orientation on Students' Engagement in Multidisciplinary Learning at Higher Education viz a viz NEP 2020

Evangelyn Snaitang<sup>1</sup>, Prof. Ibadani Syiem<sup>2</sup>  
<sup>1,2</sup> North Eastern Hill University

**Abstract**—The influence of academic goal orientation on student engagement in higher education is a critical area of research that has an increasing attention in recent years. In line with the multi-disciplinary approach advocated by the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, educational institutions are encouraged to offer a diverse range of subjects to students. However, this approach may pose challenges for some students who struggle with multitasking across various disciplines. In such contexts, understanding and fostering academic goal orientation among students become crucial. Academic goal orientation encompasses the individual's beliefs, attitudes, and strategies towards learning and achievement. By promoting a clear sense of purpose and direction, academic goal orientation can empower students to navigate the complexities of multi-disciplinary learning environments more effectively. This paper synthesizes existing literature to examine the relationship between academic goal orientation and student engagement, drawing upon various theoretical frameworks and empirical studies. Through a comprehensive analysis, the paper explores how different goal orientations, including mastery, performance approach, and performance avoidance, impact students' cognitive, behavioral, and emotional engagement in academic tasks and activities. Furthermore, the paper examines the implications of academic goal orientation for student learning outcomes, motivation, persistence, and overall academic success. By integrating insights from the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, the paper also discusses how understanding and promoting diverse academic goal orientations can align with the policy's objectives of fostering holistic development, promoting flexibility in education, and nurturing critical thinking skills among students.

**Index Terms**—Academic Goal Orientation, Students Engagement & Multidisciplinary learning

## I. INTRODUCTION

In the landscape of current education, the dynamics of academic goal orientation, student engagement, and multidisciplinary learning have become increasingly significant areas of inquiry and discourse. As educators and policy makers strive to cultivate environments that foster holistic development and prepare students for complexities of the modern world, understanding the interplay between academic goal orientation, students' engagement, and multidisciplinary learning is essential. This conceptual paper aims to explore the theoretical foundation and practical implications of academic goal orientation on students' engagement in multidisciplinary learning, with a particular focus on aligning these concepts with the principles outlined in the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.

At its core, academic goal orientation refers to the beliefs, attitudes and behaviour that students adopt in pursuit of educational objectives. Grounded from the theories of motivation and achievement, academic goal orientation encompasses a spectrum of orientations, including mastery approach, performance approach and performance avoidance, each has a unique influence on students' approaches to learning and academic achievement. Students' participation in learning can differ from the reasons behind their perception, emotions, and behaviour (Urduan & Midgley, 2003). When it comes to students' engagement, Student engagement is defined and operationalised in many ways (Skinner 2016; Wigfield et al. 2015). It encompasses the cognitive, behavioural and emotional investment in academic activities. Student engagement includes very generic behaviours like attending school or participating in different school activities. (Cents-Boonstra et al.

2020). On the other hand, multidisciplinary learning, also referred to as interdisciplinary or cross-curricular learning, involves the integration of knowledge, concepts, and skills from multiple subject areas to address complex real-world problems and promote interconnected learning experiences to foster holistic understanding and critical thinking skills among students.

Having established the significance of academic goal orientation in shaping students' approaches to learning, it is essential to explore how these orientations intersect with student engagement and, in turn, influence their experiences in multidisciplinary learning environments. The dynamic interplay between academic goal orientation, student engagement, and multidisciplinary learning underscores the complexity of educational experiences and the need for a holistic approach to fostering student growth and development. By examining how academic goal orientation influences student engagement and exploring the implications of these dynamics for multidisciplinary learning environments, educators can design pedagogical strategies that cultivate a culture of inquiry, collaboration, and lifelong learning among students.

## II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The influence of Academic Goal Orientation on students' Engagement.

Academic goal orientation refers to the cognitive orientations or mindsets that students adopt towards their academic pursuits. Academic goal orientation is often categorized into three different types: mastery goals, performance-approach goals, and performance-avoidance goals. Whereas, Student engagement refers to the degree of involvement, interest, and participation that students demonstrate in their learning activities, both inside and outside the classroom. It encompasses cognitive, emotional, and behavioral aspects, reflecting students' investment in and commitment to their learning experiences.

Numerous studies have shown a clear relationship between task goal orientation and academic engagement (Granero, Gómez, Abalde, and Baena). Self-determined goal orientation is closely related to other variables, such as academic engagement and performance (Schaufeli, and Salanova). Academic engagement presents a strong positive correlation

with (task) goal orientation (Supervia, P & Salavera, C, 2020). Students who possess a strong academic goal orientation tend to exhibit a high level of engagement in their academic task. For instance, research findings suggest quite unequivocally that mastery goals are an adaptive motivational orientation. When mastery goals are perceived to be emphasized in an achievement context and when students endorse them as an orientation, the quality of engagement in tasks is higher: students are likely to invest in the task, seek challenge, persist longer, feel more positively about it, and be more productive. (Kaplan, A., Maehr, M.L. 2007). However, it can also be observed that students with a performance goal tend to engage less in academic tasks. For instance, performance-avoidance orientation generally showed a negative relationship with students' engagement (Miller, Fassett, and Palmer, 2021).

However, the nature of academic work is especially an important determinant of motivation and engagement in the academic tasks students undertake in the classroom (Newmann, King, & Carmichael, 2007; Newmann et al., 1992; Wigfield et al., 2006). Furthermore, the provision of hands-on experiences, project-based learning, and integration of subject matter emerges as a significant facilitator in promoting students' academic goal orientation and engagement. Research findings suggest that active participation, engagement, and effort are increased when tasks are designed to be hands-on, heads-on, project-based, and integrated across subject matter. Deci 1992b, 1998 & Renninger (2000), argue that tasks characterized by intrinsic motivation, inherent interest, and enjoyment foster a sense of autonomy and competence, thereby stimulating students' academic goal orientation. In conclusion, the relationship between student engagement and academic goal orientation is a crucial area of inquiry in educational research, with significant implications for pedagogical practice and policy formulation. The literature reviewed highlights the importance of understanding students' cognitive orientations towards their academic pursuits and the impact it has on their level of involvement, interest, and participation in learning activities.

Thus, we can say, the influence of academic goal orientation on students' engagement is a crucial area of inquiry in educational research. The literature

reviewed highlights the importance of understanding students' cognitive orientations towards their academic pursuits and the impact it has on their level of involvement, interest, and participation in learning activities.

The influence of Students' engagement on Multidisciplinary learning

Student engagement is the level of effort, interest, and attention that students invest in the learning process (Klem & Connell, Citation2004; Marks, Citation2000). In general, student engagement has three dimensions: behavioral, cognitive, and emotional (Klem & Connell, Citation2004; Smith, Sheppard, Johnson, & Johnson, Citation2005; Tinio, Citation2009; Trowler, Citation2010).

Multidisciplinary education is a form of educational strategy that brings together multiple disciplines to create a holistic learning experience. It is designed to foster an understanding of the interconnectedness of various fields and how they can be integrated for better problem-solving (Bordia 2023).

The NEP (2020) recognizes the importance of multidisciplinary learning and focuses on hands-on experiential learning methods, including project-based learning to enhance students' engagement and understanding. In line with the NEP 2020's emphasis on the significance of hands-on experiences and project-based learning at the secondary level, the findings suggest that project-based learning improves student engagement by enabling knowledge and information sharing and discussion (Almulla, 2020).

With technological advancements and shifting industry trends, workers need to be adaptable, curious, and equipped with a diverse set of skills. This is where a multidisciplinary education comes in – an educational approach that combines insights and methods from multiple academic fields to provide students with a holistic learning experience. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020's emphasis on multidisciplinary learning at the secondary level aligns with the objective of preparing students to make informed choices regarding their future career paths. This aligns with the finding from the Parliament of Victoria in 2019, which suggests that students should have the ability to explore how jobs and careers are evolving, understand the nature of work, and identify the diverse range of opportunities available to them.

Multidisciplinary learning is essential as it encourages students to engage with a diverse range of academic tasks, thereby activating various parts of the brain. This holistic approach fosters cognitive development by preventing overreliance on one area of expertise and ensuring balanced stimulation across different disciplines. For instance, a study shows that students reported a multitude of positive experiences with multidisciplinary learning. These experiences included easily understanding lessons, which suggests active engagement with the material, and the development of critical thinking skills (Alibagon & Dilag 2019).

Thus, the integration of multidisciplinary learning into education, as advocated by the NEP 2020, offers a dynamic approach to fostering student engagement and cognitive development. By emphasizing hands-on, project-based learning methods, students are better equipped to navigate the complexities of the modern workforce and make informed career choices. This holistic approach not only enhances academic understanding but also cultivates essential skills for lifelong learning and adaptation in an ever-evolving world.

### III. THE INFLUENCE OF ACADEMIC GOAL ORIENTATION ON STUDENTS' ENGAGEMENT IN MULTIDISCIPLINARY LEARNING VIZ-A-VIZ NEP (2020)

Even before the advent of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, students at the school level have been accustomed to multidisciplinary learning, as they engage with various subjects in their curriculum. However, with the implementation of NEP 2020, which emphasizes four years of multidisciplinary study coupled with greater flexibility and critical thinking skills, the educational landscape has undergone a significant transformation. The policy not only encourages students to explore diverse subjects but also empowers them to make informed choices regarding vocational courses, thereby fostering holistic development and character building alongside cognitive growth. This is where academic goal orientation comes, because it serves as a guiding force for students, influencing their choices and behaviours within the educational landscape. With clear academic goals in mind, students are more inclined to engage with diverse subjects offered by

multidisciplinary curricula, as highlighted in the National Education Policy of 2020 (NEP 2020).

Furthermore, academic goal orientation intricately influenced student engagement and interest in academic subjects. Research has consistently shown that when students have a clear sense of purpose and direction, they are more likely to develop a genuine interest and engagement in academic topics. As noted by Hidi and Harackiewicz (2000), when students are genuinely interested in an academic topic, they demonstrate greater attendance, attentiveness, engagement, and course enrolment. Moreover, they are better equipped to process information effectively and ultimately perform well academically. Some research also found that self-determined goal orientation is closely related to other variables, such as academic engagement and performance.

The dynamic interplay between academic goal orientation, student engagement, and multidisciplinary learning underscores the complexity of educational experiences and the need for a holistic approach to fostering student growth and development. By examining how academic goal orientation influences student engagement and exploring the implications of these dynamics for multidisciplinary learning environments, educators can design pedagogical strategies that cultivate a culture of inquiry, collaboration, and lifelong learning among students.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

By understanding how academic goal orientation influences student engagement in multidisciplinary learning, educators can effectively implement the transformative vision outlined in NEP 2020. For instance, fostering a mastery goal orientation among students can promote a deep and intrinsic motivation to engage with diverse subject matter, aligning with NEP 2020's emphasis on promoting a joyous and stress-free learning environment.

#### REFERENCES

[1] Kaplan & Maehr (2007) The Contributions and Prospects of Goal Orientation Theory. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-006-9012-5>

[2] Skinner, E.A., Pitzer, J.R. (2012). Developmental Dynamics of Student Engagement, Coping, and Everyday Resilience [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4614-2018-7\\_2/](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4614-2018-7_2/)

[3] Harackiewicz JM, Smith JL & Priniski SJ (2016) Interest Matters: The Importance of Promoting Interest in Education. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/29520371/>

[4] Vera., et al. (2017) Patterns of engagement: the relationship between efficacy beliefs and task engagement at the individual versus collective level [https://www.want.uji.es/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/2014\\_Vera-LeBlanc-Taris-Salanova.pdf](https://www.want.uji.es/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/2014_Vera-LeBlanc-Taris-Salanova.pdf)

[5] Dr Saad Odeh (2018) Multidisciplinary teaching: an approach to active learning. <https://learningandteaching-navitas.com/multidisciplinary-teaching-approach-active-learning/>

[6] Donald, Ashleigh & Baruch (2018) Students' perceptions of education and employability: Facilitating career transition from higher education into the labor market. <https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/CDI-09-2017-0171/full/html>

[7] Supervia, Salavera & Lorente (2020) The Mediating Role of Goal Orientation (Task) in the Relationship between Engagement and Academic Self-Concept in Students. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7698132/>

[8] Boonstra, M. C., et al. (2021) Fostering student engagement with motivating teaching: an observation study of teacher and student behaviors. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/02671522.2020.1767184>

[9] Miller, Fassett & Palmer (2021) Achievement goal orientation: A predictor of student engagement in higher education <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11031-021-09881-7>

[10] Bordia (2023) A Multidisciplinary Approach to Education in India. <https://blog.teachmint.com/nep-2020-a-multidisciplinary-approach-to-education-in-india/>