



## Research Article

# Evaluating the Impact of Homogeneous Classrooms on the Persistence of Heterogeneous Academic Achievers: Implications for Developing Effective Support Systems

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### ARTICLE INFO

#### Article History

Date Received: January 22, 2023

Date Accepted: January 22, 2023

#### Keywords

diminishing persistence, heterogeneous academic achievers, homogenous class, support system

### ABSTRACT

This study aimed to determine the factors that affected the diminishing persistence of heterogeneous academic achievers when induced in homogeneous classes as a basis for developing a support system to address the situation. This study identified the common hindrances the heterogeneous academic achievers encountered as they were brought to a homogeneous class. It employed a qualitative approach to research in gathering the pertinent data. The participants of the study were subjected to a two-phase interview method. It was found that the participants experienced hindrances that diminished their academic persistence in class: intimidated feeling, low sense of belongingness, and peer influence and motivation. This study was limited to identifying the reasons behind the diminishing persistence of heterogeneous academic achievers when streamed in a homogenous class and crafting an action plan as the basis for the development support system to address the situation. The key informants were composed of 18 students who were chosen purposively from the classes of grades 8-10 for the school year 2018-2019.

### INTRODUCTION

The Department of Education (DepEd) promotes and prefers heterogeneous sectioning of classes than homogeneous one. The reason is to avoid the stigma and stereotyping of students' academic performance on lower sections. With this, the number of academic proficient students varies from sections to sections. However, DepEd still allows schools to have several homogeneous classes for special programs.

In some regular and/or ordinary public schools like Bukal Sur National High School (BSNHS), Candelaria, Quezon it has been a practice that students who excelled academically should be joined in one class alone. When the students enrolled at BSNHS, they are evaluated on their academic performance

based on their average grade on their School Form 10 or the report card.

Students with considerable high academic standing in their elementary grade are included in the first and only homogenous section. Yet, the section will not be a block class all throughout. At the end of every school year, learners who received honors in the heterogeneous sections in grades 7, 8 and 9 are ranked together with those ones in the pilot section. Then the first 40 students, 20 boys and 20 girls will be promoted to the first section in the succeeding grade level. Meanwhile those who obtain ranks lower than 20 for boys and girls respectively will be distributed to the heterogeneous sections.



As observed, students who came from the heterogeneous sections when induced in the homogenous section of academically advanced students in the school experienced several challenges as the school year began. Since they are mostly considered the new ones in the class, they are not that at ease and still feel frustrations to socialize with their other classmates in the first days of classes. Some even continued to feel such until the end of the academic year for severe cases. Most feel intimidated as they are surprised on the performances, attitudes and behavior of their classmates.

These are the several reasons why the included academic achievers from heterogeneous classes experience difficulties to continue performing well in their classes.

By learning the root cause of the students diminishing academic persistence, schools can develop and provide a support system for them. The support system will enable these students to continue their good performance in class.

The purpose of this research is to determine and address the hindrances the heterogeneous academic achievers faced when streamed in homogenous section which discourage them to continue their good academic performance.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following research questions:

1. What are causes of students diminishing academic persistence? and,
2. What program can be developed in order to provide support system for these students?

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study included identifying the common hindrances the heterogeneous academic achievers encountered as they brought to homogenous class. It employed qualitative approach of research in gathering the pertinent data.

It utilized descriptive method to gather information about the present existing condition and the process of identifying the causes of diminishing academic performance among heterogeneous achievers ending up with developing a support system to address the issues.

Data were gathered utilizing interview method of two sets of questions: (1) open-ended oral and (2) restricted written.

The participants of the study were the 11 heterogeneous academic achievers induced in homogenous classes of grades 8-10 but failed to remain in the honor roll for the school year 2018-2019 in Bukal Sur National High School, Candelaria, Quezon.

The participants of the study were composed of Grades 8-10 who were purposively chosen based on two criteria. Those are (1) was not in the homogenous class on the previous school year and (2) received an honor from the previous grade level but was not able to do so on the current grade level. This is because they are the ones who can share problems, they encountered that discouraged them to continue their good performance in class as they entered homogenous section.



Necessary permits to conduct the study were first secured. The interview was in two phases, first personal oral and next written. Data gathered were analyzed and interpreted through open coding to have an overview on what are to be the features of the support system that will be developed.

In the conduct of this study, the learners were informed that their answers will be used in the research study, their participation is in voluntarily basis. Meanwhile, parents' consents were also secured.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 shows the total number of heterogeneous academic achievers streamed in homogenous class. It also summarizes the percentage consistency of heterogenous academic achievers in the honor roll.

For grade 8 only 42.86 % of the students persisted to remain with honors, less than a half. Grades 8 and 9 even have lesser percentage with 20.00% and 33.33% only respectively. On the average the percentage consistency is only 38.89% which is considerably low inspiring the researchers to pursue this study.

Table 1. Percentage of Heterogenous Academic Achievers Consistency in the Honor Roll

Grade Level	Heterogeneous Academic Achievers from Previous Grades Induced in Homogenous Class		Percentage
	Total	Frequency of Still on Honor Roll	
8	7	3	42.86
9	5	2	20.00
10	6	2	33.33
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>38.89</b>

From the interview of the researchers with the students who have not remained in the honor roll, they

have enumerated similar reasons among the students on why they have not made it.

### Theme 1: Intimidated Feeling

The participants reasoned-out that they are being intimidated with their classmates. They are ashamed to be embarrassed if they answer incorrectly in the recitation. Some feel that they don't belong. Being so, they just don't participate in the discussion and lessen their engagement in group activities even if they have something in their mind to share.

Following this paragraph is a table showing the responses and codes generated from them which became the basis in developing the first theme, intimidated feeling. The two codes persisted were, *committing mistakes* and *embarrassment*. The intimidated feeling of the students rooted from being afraid to commit mistakes and being afraid to be embarrassed when participating poorly.

Table 2. Code and Response of Students Intimidated Feeling

Code	Response
<i>Afraid of...</i>	
Committing mistakes	Afraid to make mistakes(3) Ashamed to be wrong (2)
Embarrassment	Worried to be laugh at (2) Ashamed to be wrong (2)

*"Natatakot po akong magkamali. Kaya kahit alam ko po ang sagot, 'di po ako nagrerecite"-R3*

*"Baka po pagtawanan nila ako kapag mali pa nasa isip ko"-R5*

According to Cherry (2023) people feel intimidated because of their insecurities, lack of confidence,



poor self-esteem, and high anxiety levels. Afraid of committing mistakes and being embarrassed reflects students' low self-esteem and confidence.

In the study of Arshad et al. (2015), they found out that there is a strong positive correlation between self-esteem and academic achievement. While Akbari and Sahibzada (2020), concluded that students 'with self-confidence can lead them improved participation, enjoy learning, reduced test anxiety, increased interest in goal seeking, growth of comfort with their lecturers and classmates.

**Theme 2: Low Sense of Belongingness**

The students shared that they feel outcasts in the class. The sense of belongingness there is less than on their previous sections. Likewise, they find it hard to adjust in the section and be with them as they feel that they are not that warmly welcomed.

Table 3. Code and Response of Students Low Sense of Belongingness

Code	Response <i>Initial feeling of being...</i>
Outcast Feeling	Not belong (4) Different treatment (3) Not welcome (2)

Table 3 summarizes the the responses and code generated from the key informants where theme was generated, low sense of belongingness. The responses were coded to *outcast feeling*. The low sense of belongingness or outcast feeling of the students was developed because they initially feel that they don't belong and not welcomed in their new section and that the way they are treated was different.

*“From the beginning po, parang di po kami kasa-li, kaya kami kami rin po from other sections ang magkakasama”-R1*

*“Pero okay naman po sila kasama. Yung nga lang po siguro kasi dahil matagal na po sila magka-kasama iba na po yung samahan na meron sa kanila” -R7*

*“Mas maliit po yung circle of friend compared po kapag nasa hetero kami. Halos kami from other sections lang din magkakasama at nagtutulungan.”-R11*

There should be conscious efforts to foster student connections and friendships that provide for Belonging. This will assist the social, emotional, and academic development of students during the school transitions (Longaretti, 2020).

The main reason for this is that, according to Korpershoek et al. (2019), the sense of belongingness is a predictor of academic achievement. High sense of belongingness leads to higher academic achievement while low sense leads to poor performance.

**Theme 3: Peer Influence and Motivation**

Peer influence and motivation of the students from the heterogenous class was lessened when they were transferred to the homogenous section. They have smaller size of peer group and most of them feel the same of being less motivated to perform well in class.

Table 4 on the right presents the generated re-





sponses which suggested the code and theme, peer influence and motivation. The students felt that that most of their classmates do not encourage them to perform well and since most of their friends in the group of newbies in the section feels the same, they tend to have less motivation in exerting effort to have good performance.

**Table 4. Code and Response of Students Peer Influence and Motivation**

Code	Response
Peer Influence and Motivation	Not encouraged (2) Similar feeling (4)

*“We are being encourage po by our teachers, yung buong klase po na makakuha ng high grades at makasama sa honors. But not with our classmates po”-R4*

*“Dahil pare pareho po kaming magkakasama ng nararamdaman, parereho po kaming nawawalan ng drive”-R9*

*“Iba pa rin po kapag may mga kaklase ka na kaibigan mo at nagpupush sa’yo na maging honor.”-R10*

According to the research (Bankole Adeyemi, 2019), a student is influenced by peer, it affects his or her academic performance. When the peer group influence a student to be timid in class, the student will most likely be low performing. Meanwhile peer motivation can have a significant impact on academic performance. When students are surrounded by motivated and high-achieving peers, it can positively influence their own motivation and academic outcomes.

The support, competition, and collaboration among peers can create an environment that fosters academic engagement and achievement (Wentzel & Ramani, 2016).

With this, teachers as well as administrators should develop a support system to encourage these heterogeneous academic achievers to continuously perform well in their classes. The academic achievers should be encouraged and be warmly welcomed in the homogenous section so that they will be able to feel they are part of their new section and be able to participate in class interactions and on homeroom group socialization. In these practices they will remain active in the class discussion that will enable them to perform well continuously. Hence, may result them to be consistently in honor roll if not stay in the homogenous class at least.

The table below presents the action plan for the development of the support system. The contents were based on the results of this study

**Table 5. Action Plan for Support System Development**

Phases of Institutionalization	Goals/Objectives	Persons Responsible/Involved	Timeframe	Outputs
<b>I. Pre-Implementation Phase</b> <b>A. Community of Practice (COP) &amp; Focus Group Discussion (FGD)</b> (Conceptualization of Support System to deal with the Diminishing Persistence of Heterogeneous Academic Achievers)  <b>B. Orientation</b> (Orientation and Introduction of the support system)	To distribute and delegate individuals responsible for certain tasks.  To orient the heterogeneous academic achievers, participants on the nature, scope and rationale of the support system to be developed	Principal, Head Teachers, Guidance Counselors/teachers, Grade Level Coordinators, Non-advisers, Students, and Parents	May-June 2019	1. Committee Delegation 2. Documentation
<b>II. Implementation Phase</b>  <b>A. Help Desk</b> (immediate response for emergency needs)  <b>B. Fellowship</b> (regular weekly consultation and sharing with friends/peer group)	To provide a learner support system for the learners experiencing diminished academic persistence	Guidance Counselors/teachers, Grade Level Coordinators, Non-advisers, and Students	June 2019- March 2020	1. Help Desk Hotline 2. Fellowship Groups 3. Documentation or Quarterly Reports
<b>III. Post Implementation Phase</b>	To evaluate the support system provided	Principal, Head Teachers, Guidance Counselors/teachers, Grade Level Coordinators, Non-advisers, Students, and Parents	March-May 2020	1. Analytics 2. Improvement Plan



## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From the results of the study, it was found out that there are three main cause of the diminishing persistence of the heterogenous academic achievers when induced in homogenous class. Those are: (1) intimidated feeling, (2) low sense of belongingness, and (3) peer influence and motivation. Based from these an action plan was develop suggesting actions can be taken to help the students overcome the challenges and difficulties they faced to remain in the honor roll. The researchers recommended to develop a support system for the academically good performing students to continue their persistence in class through COP under the School Based Management based on the action plan. And that, similar and parallel studies be conducted in different locales as the subjects of the research to further improve the reliability of the findings.

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