Original Article

Impact of Learning Experience on Perceived Program Relevance of BA English Language Studies

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Abstract. The Philippine higher education system requires outcomes-based education that emphasizes critical competencies in programs such as the Bachelor of Arts in English Language Studies (BAELS). However, a gap often exists between regulatory objectives and students' intrinsic perceptions of program value. This study assessed the extent to which BAELS students' learning experiences influence their perceived relevance of the program to their academic and career goals. Employing a descriptive quantitative correlational research design, this study involved sixty (60) BAELS students as respondents. Findings revealed that respondents reported a high satisfaction with their overall learning experience (M=4.49) and a very high perception of program relevance (M=4.56). Crucially, learning experience emerged as a robust predictor, explaining approximately 91.7% of the variance in perceived program relevance. While the overall learning environment (β=.371) and course materials (β=.353) were strong positive predictors, the analysis identified significant negative coefficients for faculty support (β=-.310) and technology/facilities support (β=-.254). The study concludes that although the program is highly valued by its students, its quality assurance is demonstrably hampered by resource and mentorship deficits. It is recommended that the program craft and implement a Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) plan structured by Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle to reinforce these transformation stages and ensure sustained program excellence and relevance.

Keywords: Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI); English language studies; Learning experience; Program relevance; Outcomes-Based Education.

The enduring challenge for higher education globally is ensuring that academic programs not only meet regulatory standards but also resonate meaningfully with students' professional aspirations (Alam & Mohanty, 2023). This imperative is particularly critical within the Philippine Higher Education System, which faces the dual challenge of fostering global competitiveness while catering to local socio-cultural needs, especially in humanities programs such as the Bachelor of Arts in English Language Studies (BAELS).

The Commission lays the foundation for program quality in higher education in the Philippines through the Higher Education (CHED) Memorandum Order (CMO) No. 24, series of 2017. This policy mandates outcomes-based education (OBE) for BAELS, emphasizing core competencies such as critical analysis, cross-cultural communication, and literary engagement. Though CMO No. 24 provides comprehensive curricular guidance, a critical empirical gap persists: the disconnect between these regulatory objectives and students' intrinsic

perceptions of program value and career relevance.

Existing literature underscores the pivotal role of the learning environment. For instance, Vizconde's (2022) study found that experiential learning and institutional support systems accounted for 68% of the variance in communication students' perceived program relevance. Furthermore, while studies show that collaborative learning can significantly improve language performance (Alzubi et al., 2024), the same research found no significant correlation between these pedagogical interventions and students' long-term perceptions of the program's applicability to their career paths (Alzubi et al., 2024). This suggests that compliance-focused assessments, which often prioritize curricular mandates over quality student experiences, frequently overlook an accurate measure of program success.

Despite the comprehensive curricular guidelines set forth by CHED (2017), they tend to focus predominantly on curricular compliance rather than on systematically evaluating how learning environments and pedagogical support influence students' perceptions of relevance. Standardized program evaluation forms are often underutilized in strategic academic planning, leading to a failure to integrate student feedback into curriculum enhancements (Hoare et al., 2024). Moreover, there remains a scarcity of empirical research that quantitatively links the quality of curriculum delivery components to students' perceptions of workforce alignment in the Philippine context. While national data indicate many humanities graduates pursue non-aligned careers (Kovačević et al., 2024), statistics on the proportion of English language studies graduates facing this disconnect are limited, necessitating further localized investigation. Given these gaps, this study seeks to quantitatively explore the relationship between BAELS students' learning experiences and their perception of program relevance within the framework of CMO No. 24. By doing so, it aims to provide evidence-based insights that can inform program assessment practices and curricular improvements, ensuring that academic offerings comply with regulatory requirements while meaningfully fulfilling students' professional aspirations.

Methodology

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative correlational research design to examine the relationship between BAELS students' learning experiences and their perceived program relevance. A correlational design was utilized to determine the strength and direction of the association between two naturally occurring variables: student learning experiences (predictor variable) and perceived program relevance (criterion variable). Since this study sought to determine whether specific experiential components predict students' valuation of the program, this design enables quantification of this link. Data were collected via surveys to provide a robust quantitative foundation for exploring this dynamic relationship.

Participants and Sampling Technique

A total of sixty (60) students currently enrolled in the BA English Language Studies program at Sulu State College were selected as the respondents for this study. This study employed stratified random sampling. The BAELS student population was divided into four strata by year level (1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th). This stratification was necessary to ensure that the diversity of learning experiences, from early program exposure to near-graduation experience, was adequately represented in the final sample. Within each stratum, respondents were then randomly selected proportional to the stratum's size relative to the entire BAELS population. This ensured that the collected data accurately reflected the varied perceptions of program relevance across the entire academic life cycle.

Research Instrument

The primary data collection tool was a self-reported questionnaire that consisted of twenty (20) items utilizing a 5-point Likert scale (1=Strongly Disagree to Agree 5=Strongly) designed to measure the two primary constructs: Learning Experience and Perceived Program Relevance. This was developed by researchers specifically for this study. The items were grounded in a comprehensive review of the literature focusing on: OBE principles in higher education; competency requirements for the BAELS program, as outlined in CMO No. 24, series of 2017; and established dimensions of student satisfaction and program applicability.

To establish the instrument's content validity, the questionnaire underwent a rigorous review by a panel of experts in the college with specialization and expertise in the program and curriculum development. Their assessment ensured the items were clear, unambiguous, and accurately represented the constructs under investigation. To ensure reliability, the instrument was pilot tested, and the data were analyzed using Cronbach's alpha. The

resulting coefficient (alpha = 0.94) indicated high consistency and confirmed the questionnaire's ability to measure the intended constructs across the student population.

Data Gathering Procedure
The data-gathering procedure was strictly adhered to, in accordance with ethical and institutional standards, commencing with the submission of a formal request letter to the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at Sulu State College to secure administrative approval. Following authorization, the researchers addressed ethical compliance by obtaining informed consent from all sixty (60) BAELS student participants, ensuring transparency, confidentiality, and voluntary participation. Data collection was conducted personally by the researchers over the specified time frame, February 3 to 21, 2025, using the researcher-developed self-reported questionnaire. The collection was conducted face-to-face in the students' respective classrooms during their free time to minimize disruption. Once collected, the questionnaires were meticulously checked for completeness, tallied, and subjected to statistical analysis and interpretation to address the study's objectives.

Data Analysis Procedure
Data were subjected to both descriptive and inferential statistical analyses. Weighted means and standard deviations were used to assess perceived learning experiences and program relevance. Meanwhile, Pearson's correlation and multiple regression analyses were used to examine the significant relationship between learning experiences and program relevance and to identify the strongest predictors.

Ethical Considerations
Upholding ethical standards in research would safeguard the participants' dignity and rights. This study sought voluntary participation, the right to withdraw, confidentiality of responses, and transparency through informed consent regarding data storage or disposal. The researchers ensured that the data were used exclusively for academic research and improvement.

Results and Discussion

BAELS Learning Experiences
Table 1 reflects the BAELS learning experiences within the institution. This table indicates that the respondents had a weighted mean of 4.49 and a standard deviation of 0.437, indicating high or better satisfaction with their learning experiences in the BAELS program.

Table 1. *BAELS Learning Experiences*

No.	Indicators	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1	The teaching methods used in my courses enhanced my learning.	4.65	.481	Very High
2	Faculty members were knowledgeable in their subject areas.	4.53	.676	Very High
3	Faculty members were approachable and provided helpful support.	4.57	.621	Very High
4	Course materials (readings, textbooks, etc.) were relevant and useful.	4.48	.651	High
5	The workload in my courses was manageable yet challenging.	4.60	.527	Very High
6	Assessment methods (exams, papers, projects) accurately measured my learning.	4.48	.596	High
7	I received timely and constructive feedback on my academic performance.	4.38	.613	High
8	The program provided sufficient opportunities for active participation and discussion.	4.47	.536	High
9	My communication skills (oral and written) improved significantly through the program.	4.45	.565	High
10	My critical thinking and analytical skills developed well in the program.	4.55	.502	Very High
11	The program encouraged independent learning and research.	4.55	.534	Very High
12	The available library resources for ELS were adequate for my needs.	4.35	.577	High
13	The available technology and facilities supported my learning.	4.33	.655	High
14	The overall learning environment in the program was positive and supportive.	4.58	.561	Very High
	Column Mean	**4.49**	**.437**	**High**

Legend: *4.50-5.00 = Very High; 3.50-4.49 = High; 2.50-3.49 = Moderate; 1.50-2.49 = Low; 1.00-1.49 = Very Low*

The highest-rated component was teaching method enhanced learning (*M*=4.65), which strongly underscores the students' valuation of engaging and effective pedagogy. This outcome aligns with prior findings that quality instruction is among the most influential factors in satisfaction with higher education (Judith, 2025). Other indicators of support and environment also received high endorsement, including workload balance (*M*=4.60), supportive learning environment (*M*=4.58), and faculty support and approachability (*M*=4.57). These results support the argument that students thrive in learning environments in which structure, challenge, and support are well balanced (Bahaw et al., 2024; Saputra & Kurniawan, 2025). Additionally, the mean scores for technological

and library support were 4.55 and 4.35, respectively, highlighting the institutional role of resource adequacy in supporting modern language education, a recurring theme in program quality assessment (Kim et al., 2019).

On the contrary, while still indicating satisfaction, the lowest-rated items were independent learning (*M*=4.33) and library resources (*M*=4.35). This contrast suggests a potential area for strategic quality improvement. Specifically, the lower rating for independent learning may reflect a need for more explicit instructional design that fosters student autonomy and self-directed research skills (Cullen & Oppenheimer, 2024). The relative dip in perceived quality of library resources, a foundational element for linguistically focused programs, points directly to potential institutional constraints or resource allocation deficits. According to Bahaw et al. (2024), environments that promote autonomy while maintaining institutional support tend to yield better long-term learning outcomes. Overall, the descriptive findings suggest that the BAELS program is succeeding in delivering a high-quality learning experience. However, continuous improvements in independent learning structures and library resource provision may further optimize students' academic development and satisfaction.

Perceived Program Relevance
Table 2 presents the respondents' perceived relevance of the program. This table shows a weighted mean of 4.56 and a standard deviation of 0.423, indicating a very high level of relevance of the program to respondents' career and academic goals.

Table 2. *Perceived Program Relevance*

No.	Indicators	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1	The program's curriculum is relevant to potential career paths in fields that require English-language skills.	4.57	.563	Very High
2	The program has equipped me with the necessary skills for my future career goals or further studies.	4.50	.537	Very High
3	The program's focus areas (e.g., linguistics, literature, language teaching) are relevant to current trends and demands.	4.55	.534	Very High
4	The program has helped me understand the role of English in various professional contexts in the Philippines and globally.	4.65	.515	Very High
5	I understand how the skills and knowledge gained in this program can be applied in real-world situations.	4.58	.530	Very High
6	The program has met my expectations regarding its relevance to my academic and professional aspirations.	4.53	.536	Very High
	Weighted Mean	**4.56**	**.423**	**Very High**

Legend: *4.50-5.00 = Very High; 3.50-4.49 = High; 2.50-3.49 = Moderate; 1.50-2.49 = Low; 1.00-1.49 = Very Low*

The highest-rated item, "I understand the role of English in professional and global contexts" (*M*=4.65), clearly reflects students' awareness of the international applicability and market value of their acquired competencies. This supports previous research suggesting that language-based programs gain greater perceived value when linked to global and real-world applications (Judith, 2025; Saputra & Kurniawan, 2025). Students also strongly agree that the curriculum helped them apply skills in real-world situations (*M* = 4.58) and that the program is relevant to potential career paths (*M* = 4.57). These findings are consistent with Bahaw et al. (2024), who emphasized the importance of curriculum alignment with labor market needs and employability outcomes.

The other items, acquisition of academic and career skills (*M* = 4.50), alignment with current trends (*M* = 4.55), and fulfillment of academic/career goals (*M* = 4.53), also received consistently high ratings. These results indicate that the BAELS program not only meets students' expectations but also equips them with relevant skills for professional growth and academic progression. Overall, these findings highlight that students perceive the BAELS curriculum as highly appropriate and purposeful. Such results underscore the value of continuous curriculum evaluation and industry-informed pedagogical alignment in ensuring program relevance (Bahaw et al., 2024).

Predictors of Program Relevance
These tables yielded a statistically significant result, $F(14, 45) = 35.675$, $p < .001$, with an R^2 of .917 and an adjusted R^2 of .892. These values indicate that approximately 91.7% of the variance in perceived relevance was explained by students' learning experience. Such a high predictive value aligns with literature asserting the centrality of learning environments in shaping academic perceptions (Bahaw et al., 2024).

Table 3 *Multiple Regression Analysis*

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	SD Error of the Estimate
.958	.917	.892	.13927

a. *Predictors (Learning Experience);* **b.** *Dependent Variable (Program Relevance)*

Table 4. *Multiple Regression Analysis*

	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	9.688	14	.692	35.675	.000
Residual	.873	45	.019		
Total	**10.561**	**59**			

a. *Predictors (Learning Experience);* **b.** *Dependent Variable (Program Relevance)*

Table 5. *Predictors of Program Relevance*

No.	Predictors	β (Std.)	t	Sig.	Interpretation
3	Faculty members were approachable and provided helpful support.	-0.310	-3.76	.000	Significant Negative Predictor
4	Course materials (readings, textbooks, etc.) were relevant and useful.	0.353	4.73	.000	Strong Positive Predictor
6	Assessment methods (exams, papers, projects) accurately measured my learning.	0.176	2.07	.044	Moderate Positive Predictor
11	The program encouraged independent learning and research.	0.307	2.89	.006	Strong Positive Predictor
12	The available library resources for ELS were adequate for my needs.	0.270	3.09	.003	Strong Positive Predictor
13	The available technology and facilities supported my learning.	-0.254	-2.84	.007	Significant Negative Predictor
14	The overall learning environment in the program was positive and supportive.	0.371	4.13	.000	Strongest Positive Predictor

Among the significant predictors, learning environment (No.14) emerged as the strongest positive factor (β = .371, $p < .001$), affirming previous research that supportive, inclusive, and resource-rich environments significantly enhance students' engagement and perceived value of academic programs (Bahaw, Mack, & Stephens, 2024). Similarly, course materials (No. 4) and learning infrastructure, namely technology and facilities (No. 11) and library resources (No. 12), demonstrated strong positive associations, consistent with findings by Saputra and Kurniawan (2025), who emphasized the role of material and infrastructural adequacy in curriculum relevance. This aligns with Tenedero & Pacadaljen (2021), who found that interactive learning design, instructional feedback, and environment quality were strong predictors of students' perceived relevance and satisfaction. Furthermore, Barrot et al. (2023) reinforced this finding that learning experiences directly influence perceived learning relevance and career readiness.

Interestingly, faculty support (No. 3) and independent learning (No. 13) had statistically significant negative coefficients (β = –.310 and –.254, respectively), suggesting that, while these areas are emphasized in pedagogy, students may perceive them as less effective or insufficiently supported in practice. This aligns with the literature, which highlights that unsupported autonomy can alienate learners, particularly in programs where mentoring is essential (Judith, 2025). Overall, the findings confirm that students' perception of program relevance is significantly influenced by both academic inputs (teaching and materials) and institutional support structures. These insights reinforce the idea that enhancing the impact of language-based programs such as BAELS requires integrated improvements across pedagogy, environment, and student services.

Conclusion

The findings of this study provide robust empirical evidence supporting Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory in the context of outcomes-based program assessment. The study confirmed a significant, strong positive relationship between the quality of students' learning experience and their perceived program relevance. Specifically, the learning experience accounted for approximately 91.7% of the variance in perceived relevance, indicating that, in outcomes-based education, outcomes are indeed validated by the transformation of experience. The sense of learning gain is an essential manifestation of the educational work in universities (Jiang et al., 2023).

The regression analysis also highlights a crucial disparity between the program's ability to grasp experience and its capacity to transform it. On one hand, a supportive overall learning environment and quality course materials emerged as strong positive predictors, suggesting effective delivery of foundational concepts and a positive affective context. On the other hand, the significant negative coefficients for technology/facilities support and faculty support point to structural deficits in the transformation axis of Kolb's model.

The inadequacy of technology and facilities hinders active experimentation, preventing students from effectively applying and testing their conceptual knowledge in practical settings. Similarly, the negative association with faculty support indicates a perceived gap in the guided dialogue needed for reflective observation, during which students process and synthesize their experiences into conceptual models. This structural flaw impedes the closing of the learning loop, thereby undermining the full realization of OBE's transformational goals for language programs.

To systematically address the findings, elevate program quality, and ensure sustained relevance, as mandated by CMO No. 24 s. 2017, the BAELS program should institute a Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Plan that explicitly uses Kolb's four-stage cycle as its organizational framework. The CQI should target initiating an immediate infrastructure investment through a dedicated language/speech laboratory and upgraded classrooms, optimizing faculty development, and integrating student-generated data into the curriculum through exit interviews, tracer study results, and program/course evaluation feedback. Longitudinal tracer studies of BAELS graduates, correlating their initial perceived program relevance with actual career success and job alignment five years post-graduation, may be considered for future research in this field.

Contributions of Authors

Every author contributed significantly from conceptualization to finalization of the research output.

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Conflict of Interests

There is no conflict of interest in this study.

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