

The Academic Cost of Smoking: A Study on Learners' Smoking Habits and School Performance

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2026.100500258>

Received: 15 May 2026; Accepted: 20 May 2026; Published: 29 May 2026

ABSTRACT

Smoking is considered a significant public health and educational concern, with tobacco use contributing to millions of deaths annually. This study aimed to examine the smoking habits and academic performance of senior high school learners at Banate National High School, Banate, Iloilo, during the school year 2022-2023. Specifically, it investigated the daily cigarette consumption of respondents based on age, sex, and family income and explored whether a significant relationship exists between smoking habits and academic performance. The study employed a purposive sampling technique, with 30 smoker learners as respondents. Data were collected through a validated researcher-made survey questionnaire, with frequency counts and assigned scales used for descriptive statistics, while the Kruskal-Wallis test was applied for inferential analysis. The findings revealed variations in smoking habits among the respondents. Ages 18-19 had the highest cigarette consumption, and all respondents were male. Smoking prevalence was most common among learners from lower-income families. However, statistical analysis indicated no significant relationship between smoking habits and academic performance. Based on these findings, the study recommends promoting extracurricular activities, conducting anti-smoking campaigns, and implementing remedial classes to support learners. The results of this study will serve as a basis for the preparation of a school policy on learners' discipline, particularly regarding smoking prevention and intervention strategies. Future research should explore comparative studies between smoker and non-smoker learners and extend the study to junior high school students.

Keywords — Smoking habits, academic performance, school policy, learners' discipline, educational management, senior high school.

INTRODUCTION

Smoking is the most dangerous behavior that is growing daily. It is rampant in today's society as tobacco kills up to half of its users more than 8 million people each year. More than 7 million of those deaths are the result of direct tobacco use while around 1.2 million are the result of non-smokers being exposed to second-hand smoke according to World Health Organization (WHO, 2022). The most gruesome diseases caused by smoking is lung cancer being at number one. More people died from a lung cancer rather than any type of cancer. Its number one factor is cigarette smoking and it's close to 90% responsible of lung cancer cases. After being diagnosed by it, you only have 1-5 years to live. Furthermore, it can cause terrible diseases and health conditions such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), heart disease, stroke, asthma, reproductive effects in women, premature, diabetes, blindness and over ten other types of cancer according to American Lung Association (ALA, 2023). Tobacco Regulation Act of 2003, or RA 9211, is in place in the Philippines to regulate tobacco consumption. Added three essential measures to combat tobacco use: a minimum legal sales age of 18; text warnings on cigarette packets; and smoke-free public areas (GOVPH., 2003). Researchers found certain stores that allowed children to purchase cigarettes, even though it was stated in point one that only legal locations would sell cigarettes. Even though they have upgraded the packaging to make it clearer what smoking does to one's health, many people continue to smoke despite the warnings. Furthermore, even though number three's

public spaces are smoke-free, there are numerous cigarette butts everywhere, even in schools, in front of hospitals, and any other open public spaces.

This study examines the smoking habits and academic performance of senior high school learners at Banate National High School during the school year 2022-2023. Observations of cigarette smoke in school areas, cigarette butts in restrooms, and hidden smoking spots prompted the researchers to investigate the extent of smoking behavior among students. The study specifically aims to determine the respondents' cigarette consumption based on age, sex, and family income and to assess whether smoking habits significantly affect academic performance. Using a researcher-made survey instrument, data were gathered from 30 smoker learners, with statistical analysis applied to interpret findings.

The study holds significance for various stakeholders. Learners will gain awareness of smoking's impact on their academic and physical well-being, while parents will receive insights to help guide their children's decisions. Teachers can use the findings to better understand students' smoking behaviors and provide necessary support. School administrators may utilize the results to improve school policies and create a safer learning environment. Additionally, future researchers can build on this study to explore broader aspects of smoking in educational settings, contributing to the development of more effective interventions.

The invention of cigarette machines in the 1800s enabled mass production, increasing accessibility and global consumption. However, smoking is now recognized as a major health crisis, causing over 8 million deaths annually, according to the WHO. Studies indicate that most smokers start young. The CDC (2014) reported that over 3,200 children under 18 begin smoking daily, with nearly 90% of smokers starting before adulthood. Children exposed to cigarette toxins before birth face risks like low birth weight, premature birth, and sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS). Smoking rates vary globally, with significant numbers reported among students and young adults. Studies show high smoking prevalence in countries like Nigeria, Cameroon, Pakistan, India, and Saudi Arabia. In Ethiopia, prevalence rates among university students range from 1.8% to 20.6%, with higher rates among males.

Research suggests a strong negative correlation between smoking and academic performance. Smokers tend to have lower grades, higher absenteeism, and increased academic warnings. Studies from Saudi Arabia, Norway, and Pakistan confirm that smoking affects students' academic achievements. A 2023 study found that smoking leads to lower GPA, poor attendance, and reduced academic performance.

Most smokers begin between 13 and 15 years old, with peer influence and family smoking habits being major contributing factors. Research in Saudi Arabia found that 20% of high school students smoked, with most starting around age 13. Efforts to reduce youth smoking require collaborative intervention.

Globally, smoking is more prevalent among men. WHO (2020) reported that 36.7% of men and 7.8% of women use tobacco. While male smokers dominate in most regions, awareness campaigns are needed to address the health risks for both sexes.

Smoking remains a serious public health issue, particularly affecting young people and students. It negatively impacts academic performance, health, and overall well-being. Preventive measures, education, and intervention programs are crucial in reducing smoking rates and its associated harms.

METHODOLOGY

This study utilized a descriptive-correlational research design to examine the relationship between smoking habits and academic performance among senior high school learners at Banate National High School. Descriptive-correlational research aims to identify links between variables without establishing causation (Bhat, 2023). The researchers employed purposive sampling, selecting 30 smoker-learners based on personal knowledge and inquiries. A researcher-made survey questionnaire was used to collect data on the respondents' demographic profile, daily cigarette consumption, and academic performance for the school year 2022-2023. Prior to data collection, the questionnaire was validated by experts, and permission was secured from the school's Officer in Charge.

Data analysis involved several statistical tools. The mean was used to assess the respondents' academic performance, providing a measure of central tendency (Bhandari, 2023). The Kruskal-Wallis test determined whether significant differences existed in smoking habits based on academic performance (Zach, 2022). Additionally, the Mann-Whitney U test compared smoking habits between male and female respondents, given the small sample size and non-normal data distribution (Zach, 2022). The study was conducted at Banate National High School, located in Taft Street, Bularan, Banate, Iloilo, and targeted smoker-learners in the senior high school department during the academic year 2022-2023.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study examined the daily cigarette consumption of senior high school learners from Banate National High School in relation to their age, sex, family income, and academic performance. The results revealed that the average daily consumption of cigarettes was higher among respondents aged 18-19 (mean of 2.43), compared to those aged 16-17 (mean of 2.15) and 19 and above (mean of 2.00). This supports prior research indicating that most individuals begin smoking at an early age (Action in Smoking and Health, 2019; Sana Ullah et al., 2019). The study also found that all respondents were male, with 59% of male students smoking, aligning with previous findings that men are more likely to smoke than women (Kharma MY et al., 2022; Sana Ullah et al., 2019). Regarding family income, smokers from very poor and poor families consumed more cigarettes daily, with the highest average consumption observed in the very poor group (mean of 2.30). This supports research indicating that lower-income families tend to have higher smoking rates (CDC, 2004; Armour et al., 2008).

Regarding academic performance, the study revealed a negative trend between smoking habits and academic achievement. Respondents with lower academic performance (e.g., failing or fairly satisfactory) tended to consume more cigarettes, while those with higher academic performance had a relatively lower consumption. For instance, the student with the lowest academic performance consumed 10 or more sticks per day, while those with the highest academic performance had varied but generally lower cigarette consumption. This suggests that smoking habits may impact academic performance, with heavier smokers tending to have lower grades. The findings emphasize the relationship between socioeconomic factors, smoking habits, and academic outcomes, contributing to a broader understanding of the factors influencing student health and performance.

Table 1. Chi-Square Result on Relationship Between Grades and Daily Cigarette Consumption

Test Statistic	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	9.99	12	.61
Likelihood Ratio	10.73	12	.55
Linear-by-Linear Association	0.18	1	.67
N of Valid Cases	30		

Note: $p \leq .05$

A chi-square test was conducted to examine the relationship between grades and daily cigarette consumption among senior high school learners at Banate National High School. The results revealed no significant relationship between smoking habits and academic performance, with a p-value of 0.617, which is greater than the 0.05 level of significance. As a result, the null hypothesis was accepted, suggesting that smoking habits do not significantly impact academic performance for the school year 2022-2023.

Although previous studies have found a link between smoking and poor academic outcomes (Gaffar AM et al., 2013; Alkhalaf M et al., 2021; Stea TH et al., 2014; Sana Ullah et al., 2019), this study did not replicate those findings. The lack of a significant relationship in this study highlights the need for further investigation into the complex factors that may influence both smoking habits and academic performance.

The respondents exhibited varying smoking behaviors, with significant differences observed across age, sex, and family income. The highest cigarette consumption was reported among respondents aged 18-19 years, followed by those aged 16-17 years, and then those over 19 years. All 30 participants were male. In terms of family income, smokers from poor families consumed the most cigarettes, followed by those from very poor,

lower middle class, middle class, and wealthy families. Despite these observed differences in smoking habits, the study found no significant correlation between smoking behavior and academic performance among senior high school students at Banate National High School for the 2022-2023 school year.

These findings carry important implications both for theory and practice. From a theoretical perspective, the results challenge the assumption that smoking behavior directly impacts academic performance, which is often supported in the literature. While previous studies have suggested that smoking negatively influences academic outcomes, the current study highlights that other factors may contribute to academic performance, and smoking may not be as strongly correlated as previously thought. This raises the need for further exploration into other variables that may influence student performance, such as study habits, social environment, or mental health.

In practice, the lack of a significant relationship between smoking and academic performance suggests that smoking interventions in schools may need to focus on a broader set of issues, including lifestyle choices, mental health, and social support. It implies that school policies should consider the role of family income and the social context in shaping students' smoking behaviors. Additionally, there is a need for targeted interventions that address the root causes of smoking, such as stress, peer pressure, and socio-economic factors, rather than solely focusing on the academic outcomes. This study calls for a more comprehensive approach to addressing student well-being, considering a range of factors that may influence both health and academic success.

Based on these findings, several recommendations are proposed. First, students should be encouraged to engage in extracurricular activities such as sports during school intramurals or local basketball leagues, as well as participate in church activities. These activities can offer healthier alternatives to spending time and can potentially reduce cigarette consumption. Second, the school should organize a symposium or awareness campaign focused on the harmful effects of smoking. This initiative could include the establishment of an anti-smoking club to further raise awareness and engage students in the fight against smoking. Third, remedial or make-up classes should be implemented to assist students in improving their academic performance, allowing them to stay on track with their studies. The school management could consider implementing a policy that abhors smoking on school grounds and educates students on the consequences of smoking for both their health and academic success. Finally, future research could extend the study to include comparisons between smokers and non-smokers' academic performance, expanding the scope to junior high school students and adopting a Casual-Comparative research design to better understand the long-term effects of smoking on students' academic achievements.

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