



# The Impact of Student Achievement-Based Assessment Report (SABAR) on Student Learning and Engagement

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**Abstract.** Student achievement-based assessment reports (SABAR) provide information about a student's academic performance, including grades, test scores, and other indicators of academic success. SABAR is an assessment model designed to motivate students to learn so that grades closely mirror learning. The extent to which assessment can predict learning outcomes depend on the student's level of subject knowledge and understanding of the relevance of the assessments. The main objective of this research is to understand the impact of SABAR on student learning and engagement in higher education. The results of this research may inform the development and implementation of SABAR at other institutions and contribute to the broader understanding of effective assessment practices in higher education. A student achievement-based assessment report aims to provide teachers, parents, and other stakeholders with a clear and comprehensive understanding of the student's current academic status. This research used a mixed-methods approach, including qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis. By conducting a mixed-methods study, this research has contributed to the broader understanding of the impact of SABAR on student learning and engagement in higher education. Overall, a student achievement-based assessment report is an important tool for tracking a student's academic progress and identifying areas for improvement.

**Keywords:** Achievement · Assessment · Engagement · Learning · Student

## 1 Introduction

Student achievement-based assessment reports (SABAR) provide information about a student's academic performance, including grades, test scores, and other indicators of academic success. These reports are often used to track a student's progress over time and identify areas for improvement. While some evidence suggests that SABAR may be beneficial for students, more research is needed to fully understand its impact on student learning and engagement. SABAR is an assessment model designed to motivate students

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to learn so that grades closely mirror learning. This model is a grading system that would help students realize that the responsibility for earning a good grade relies on them. The approaches are to help students understand the work they will be doing throughout the semester, explain the expectations of the students, and share information about how educators would support their students' learning. The assessment is the measure of learning, whereas the grade is the reflection of the learning. The objective of education is learning, but students seem to think that the aim of education is grade. Therefore, they focus more on memorizing rather than understanding. As a result, students fail to master much content, gain necessary skills, focus on their cognitive development, and build problem-solving skills. Hence, grades do not reflect the learning outcomes of the students. To meaningfully determine how well students have achieved learning targets, academics must adopt specific assessment techniques.

### **1.1 Problem Statement**

With our current grading system, some students blame their low grades on instructors. Several students went so far as telling their instructors to give them grade A as if the instructor is the giver of whatever grades they wish for. A few students would protest by writing a letter of complaint to the top management to pressure faculty so that they would get a good grade, although there is no justification whatsoever for the high grades that they were asking for. This kind of conflict harms the trust between students and instructors and robs the instructors of productive time having to justify the management of the situation. The extent to which assessment can predict learning outcomes depend on the student's level of subject knowledge and understanding of the relevance of the assessments. Students who care about their studies, value feedback on their learning, which is why they believed that it is imperative that the syllabus is linked to the assessments; and the assessments are linked to how they are going to perform in their jobs in the future. Students expect that they can develop employability skills in higher education, but they do not see the link between the syllabus and assessment that prepare them for their future jobs. Therefore, the syllabus and assessment must be aligned with the needs of the students and potential employers. When assessments are aligned to learning targets, instructional time is focused, maximized, and more likely to have a positive influence on student learning.

In addition, we want the students to be original in their answers during assessment by giving their educated opinion based on their analysis of the subject matter. However, when we evaluate their answers, we are still relying on the answer scheme. The answer is derived from the textbook, and any other answers are considered wrong. For certain subjects that are not supposed to have an issue of "giving the right answer", this is a barrier to students' learning. This is because their answers are not supposed to be easily right or wrong, but more about how they justify their analysis. Therefore, there should be a better grading system that demonstrates students' achievement based on a practical assessment that reflects students' learning.

## 1.2 Objective

The main objective of this research is to understand the impact of SABAR on student learning and engagement in higher education. To achieve this objective, the following specific research questions were addressed:

- a) How do students perceive SABAR? What are their attitudes towards the feedback and how do they use the feedback to track their progress and identify areas for improvement?
- b) What is the relationship between SABAR and student learning outcomes? Do students who receive SABAR show improved grades, test scores, and other indicators of academic success compared to students who do not receive these reports?
- c) How does SABAR impact student engagement in the learning process? Do students who receive SABAR show higher levels of motivation, participation, and other indicators of engagement compared to students who do not receive these reports?

## 1.3 Significance of the Study

This research provides a better understanding of the impact of SABAR on student learning and engagement in higher education. The results of this research may inform the development and implementation of SABAR at other institutions and contribute to the broader understanding of effective assessment practices in higher education. More specifically, this study may be able to demonstrate students' achievement based on a practical assessment that reflects students' learning. The use of SABAR can produce learning that would establish and maintain high standards for students' work, restoring integrity to grades and reflecting their learning. This is because the student's progress was compared to their learning journey, not relative to the other students in the class. In addition, it can motivate students to learn so that grades would closely mirror learning based on the concept of personal growth that builds the students' motivation to be responsible for their learning. This is a practical way to help students realize that the responsibility for earning a good grade relies on them. This is also a good way to build incentives for students to aim high, work hard, and do their best because this method builds students' confidence in their abilities.

## 2 Student Achievement-Based Assessment Report (SABAR)

Student achievement-based assessment report (SABAR) is a document that provides information about the academic performance of a student. It is based on a standards-based assessment is a document that provides information about a student's academic performance concerning specific learning standards or benchmarks. SABAR can be used to track a student's progress over time and identify areas for improvement. It can be based on a variety of different assessment approaches, such as grades, test scores, and other indicators of academic success, as well as a summary of their strengths and areas for improvement. A student achievement-based assessment report aims to provide teachers, parents, and other stakeholders with a clear and comprehensive understanding of the student's current academic status. This information can be used to identify areas of

strength and weakness, set goals for improvement, and develop strategies for supporting the student's academic growth. SABAR is a blend of standard-based assessments and authentic assessments. Standards-based assessment is a type of assessment that measures a student's progress toward meeting specific learning goals or standards. These standards may be set by a faculty, a university, or the Ministry of Higher Education, and they outline the knowledge and skills that students should acquire at each level. When creating a student achievement-based assessment report that is based on standards-based assessment, educators typically gather data from a variety of sources, including assignments, continuous assessments, tests, and other assessments. This data is then used to determine the student's level of mastery of each of the relevant learning standards.

Students' engagement with learning, self-confidence, and the sense of "belongingness", is important to their success [1] which SABAR provides in the report. This is because a theoretical consideration of assessment in education is focused on "the need for learning and assessment of learning to be contextualized and meaningful for students [2, 3] Therefore, the assessments should be connected to the skills that the students need to develop so that they can apply them in the workplace. It would be beneficial for the students if they can keep track of their learning progress and identify areas for improvement so that they can be independent and survive in the workplace. In addition, they also need to be actively engaged in their learning process; similar to how they need to be proactively engaged at the workplace. It is important that we help students apply the theory that they learned at the university so that they can apply the knowledge later at their job.

There are five types of assessments; formative, summative, evaluative, diagnostic [4], and authentic [2, 5]. Formative assessments are used to evaluate and determine the level of students' knowledge and skills that they have acquired throughout the semester. Usually, formative assessments are used as an assessment for learning that helps students to understand what they learn and what they should focus on while learning [6]. Studies have demonstrated that formative assessment helps students achieve a higher academic goal [7]. Similarly, SABAR helps educators to gain information about their students' learning, give feedback to their students, and adapt their teaching to the students' levels. Therefore, SABAR is used to recognize and discuss students' achievements so that they can determine the next steps in their learning journey to help students learn better and educators teach better.

The implementation of formative assessment relies on self-regulated learning [8]. This is because both formative assessment and SABAR use feedback to the students so that they know where they stand along their learning journey. Therefore, students have to be proactive and improve their learning to achieve their target goals. Self-regulated students do not rely on their teachers to tell them what to do next. Instead, they would initiate setting their own goals and monitor their progress based on the feedback given by their teachers or lecturers. In addition, authentic assessment requires the application of what the students have learned to a new situation that is realistic so that they can apply it by using the skills that they have learned [5]. The assessment could be in a form of a simulation based on a real work setting.

## 2.1 Components of SABAR

There are several key components that are typically included in a student achievement-based assessment report. These may include:

- a) **Background information:** This may include the student's name, age, grade level, and other basic information.
- b) **Summary of academic performance:** This may include overall grades, test scores, and other indicators of academic success.
- c) **Strengths and areas for improvement:** This section of the report may highlight the student's specific strengths and areas where they may need additional support or guidance.
- d) **Recommendations for improvement:** This may include specific strategies for supporting the student's academic growth, such as additional tutoring or accommodations in the classroom.
- e) **Goals for the future:** This section of the report may include long-term goals for the student's academic performance, such as a target GPA or test score.

## 2.2 Implementation

This is the second phase of the development of SABAR in which the first phase has been done by interviewing students to understand their perception and attitude towards assessments in general. The data collected from the interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis, which is being used later in this second phase of the survey. Based on the first phase study, the student achievement-based assessment report may include a variety of information, such as:

- a) **A summary of the student's overall performance.** This may include an overall grade or score that reflects the student's progress toward meeting the learning standards.
- b) **Detailed information about the student's performance on specific standards.** This may include the student's scores on individual assessments or classwork that measure progress towards specific learning goals.
- c) **Strengths and areas for improvement.** This section of the report may highlight the student's specific strengths and areas where they may need additional support or guidance to meet the learning standards.
- d) **Recommendations for improvement.** This may include specific strategies for supporting the student's academic growth, such as additional tutoring or accommodations in the classroom.

## 2.3 Benefits of SABAR

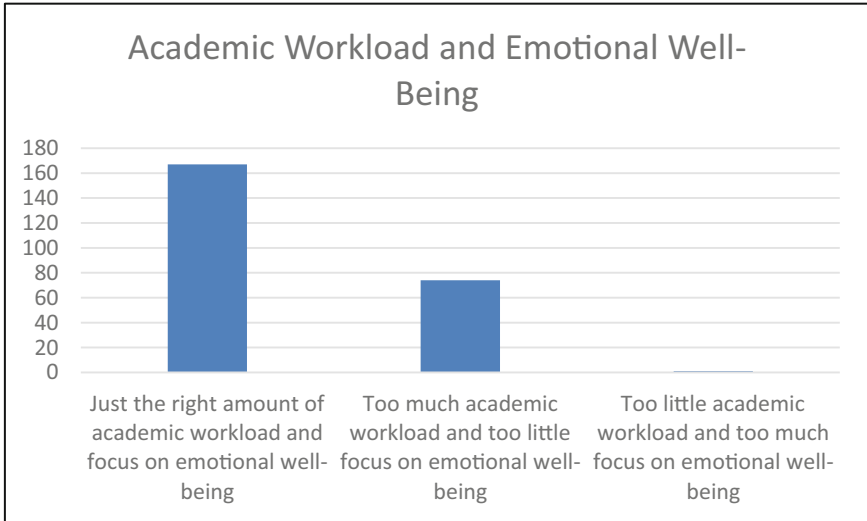
By improving communication between students and educators, they will be able to develop a good understanding of a student's academic status that can help them improve, moving forward. In addition, students will realize that it is important for them to uphold academic integrity because those who have been dishonest, would bring that attitude to the workplace and hence, create a culture of dishonesty in the organization that they work for. Using SABAR also can detect any difficulties early on that be resolved on time.

For example, although the students know that they do not deserve to get an 'A', they would try to ask from lecturer to give them the grade 'A'. It doesn't matter how much the lecturer has explained that students cannot be genuinely successful without integrity, they still would try their luck. If this problem can be identified early, educators can help motivate and ensure that students stay on track to their academic goals by preserving integrity; rather than misleading students that it is okay to be dishonest to achieve a good grade.

Finally, SABAR can also create opportunities for growth by helping students to track their progress to achieve their goals. For example, there has been a situation where a student asked for a review of her exam papers not because she thought that something was wrong with her marks, but because she wanted to increase her grade so that she can get on Dean's list. She was honest by explaining the reason why she wanted a re-check for two of her exam papers. She knew that she was not able to answer the exam she was grateful that the examiners were kind enough to be lenient that she managed to pass the papers. However, she has been receiving good grades previously because she used to copy-paste everything during the online exam. Now that she had to take the exam physically and face-to-face, she was no longer able to search for the answer on the Internet. Therefore, she felt disappointed that she can no longer get on Dean's list when she was in her final semester. Hence, by applying SABAR, educators can help provide the students with a sense of accomplishment and feel more motivated to succeed by putting on their effort without having to be dishonest in their assessment. This can be done by truly implementing academic honesty and integrity, not just on paper. Students need to be taught that working well and producing high-quality results always requires a feeling of accountability as well as integrity, skill, and motivation. Therefore, to be motivated or encouraged to achieve something, a person needs to be determined and persistent in continuing the work that one is doing. This character is a much-needed attribute in a working condition of volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous nowadays.

### **3 Methodology**

This survey was conducted from October 2021 until February 2022 with 263 respondents. As this is a longitudinal study that has been administered at three points in time, there was about a 7% attrition rate. The students were asked to answer the surveys at the start of the semester, in the middle of the semester, and at the end of the semester. This research was conducted using a mixed-methods approach, including both qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis. A survey was administered to a sample of students that gathered data about their attitudes towards SABAR and their use of these reports to track their progress and identify areas for improvement. Interviews were conducted with a subset of students to gather more detailed information about their experiences with SABAR and their perceptions of these reports. Data collected through the surveys and interviews were analyzed using qualitative and quantitative techniques. For the qualitative method, action research is used by reflective practice.



**Fig. 1.** Academic Workload and Emotional Well-Being

## 4 Results and Discussion

### 4.1 Students’ Perceptions and Attitudes

The responses to the survey in terms of the amount of academic workload and emotional well-being are as depicted in Fig. 1.

According to the graph, 69% of the students indicated that they have just the right amount of academic workload and focus on emotional well-being, whereas 31% said that they have too much academic workload and too little focus on emotional well-being. This could be due to their inability to manage their time properly. Regarding well-being, students’ perceptions of the factors that contribute to their well-being can be seen in Fig. 2.

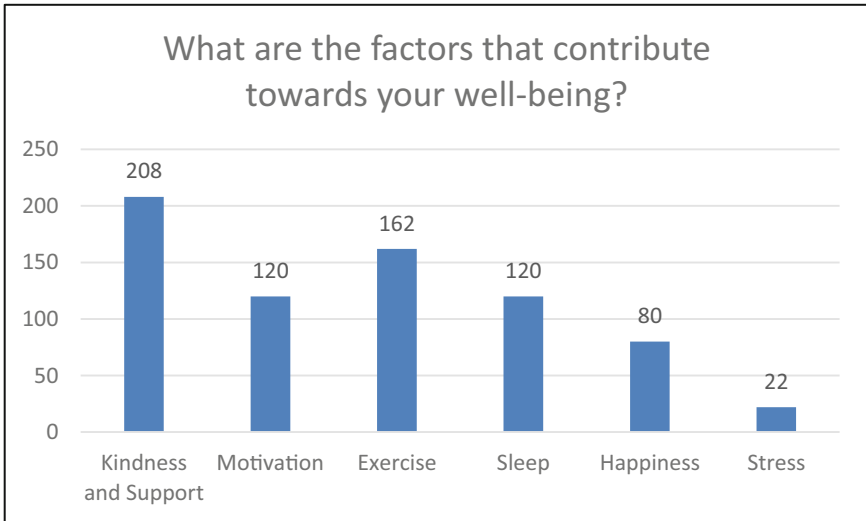
In terms of their attitude toward the feedback, it can be seen from the graph below that the students can track their progress and identify areas for improvement based on individual needs (Fig. 3).

The perceptions towards the factors that students think could promote success can be seen in the graph in Fig. 4.

In terms of students’ attitudes toward people and the current situation, most of the students have a positive view of life as shown in the graph in Fig. 5.

### 4.2 Students’ Learning Outcomes

When asked about how confident are the students in carrying out each of the assignments for a particular course, about 9% indicated that they are very confident, 47% said that they are confident, 39% indicated that their confidence level is moderate, 4% said that they are not confident, while only 1% said that they are not at all confident that they are confident to carry out each of the assignments for the course (Fig. 6).



**Fig. 2.** Factors that Contribute towards Well-Being



**Fig. 3.** How students use SABAR to track their progress and identify areas for improvement

The results obtained for student learning outcomes indicated that most of the students were able to achieve good grades, except for a few students who have been consistently answering in the survey that they are not having a positive view of life generally. These students did not submit any of the assignments and never switch on their cameras during online classes; therefore, it was difficult to determine whether they attended the online class or not (Fig. 7).



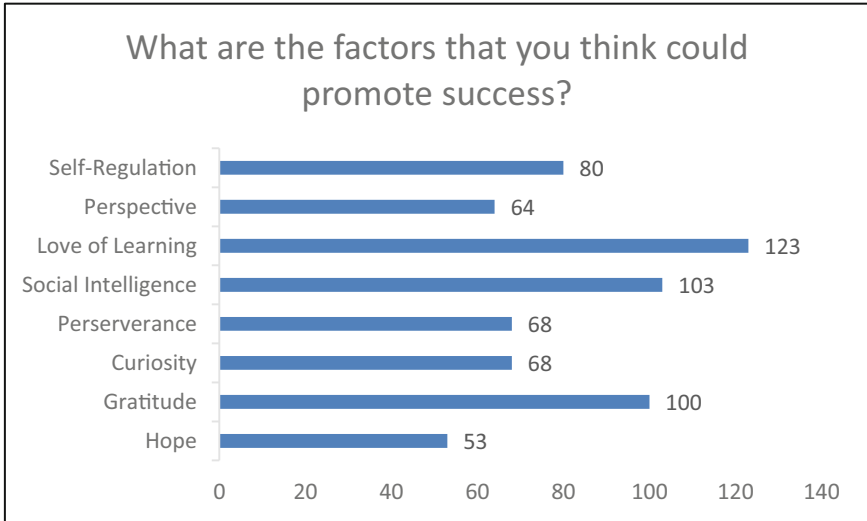


Fig. 4. Students' Perception of the Factors that could Promote Academic Success

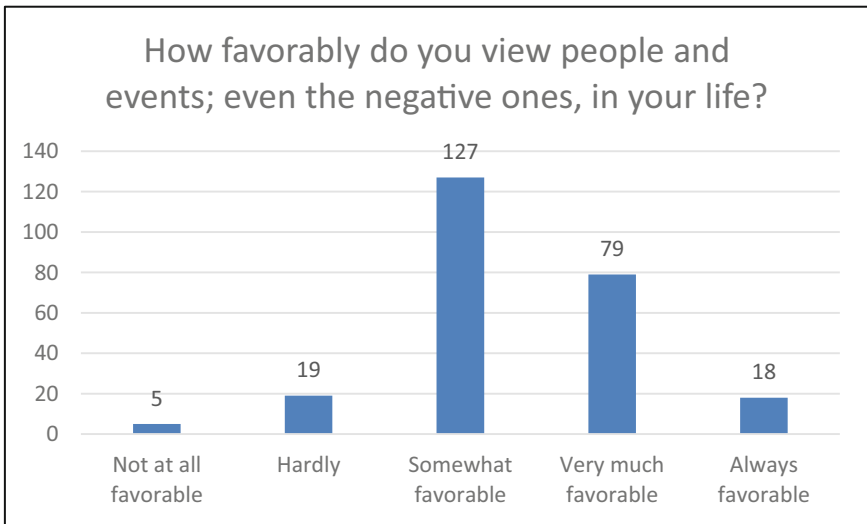


Fig. 5. Attitude

### 4.3 Students' Engagement in the Learning Process

In terms of engagement, when students were asked the degree that they become absorbed in and focused on their studies, half of the respondents (51%) indicated that they are engaged a great deal of the time (Fig. 8).

In terms of perseverance, 61% of the students indicated that they mostly have a high degree of perseverance; as shown in the graph in Fig. 9.

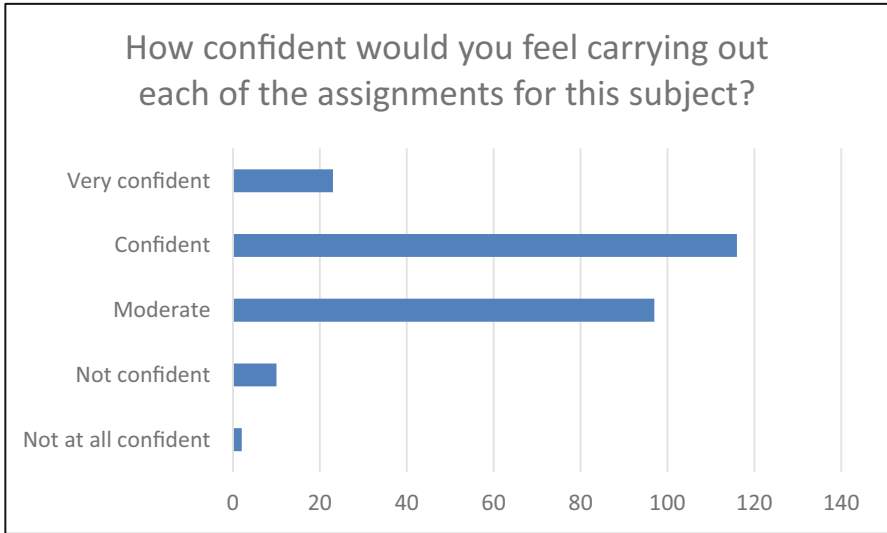


Fig. 6. Confidence

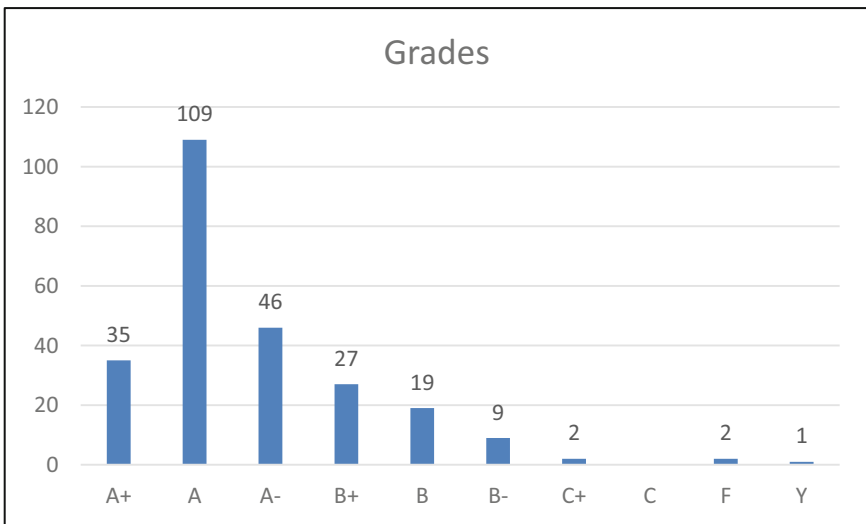


Fig. 7. Grades

Similarly, about 51% of the students indicated that they could stick with the assignments that they have to complete to a great extent; as shown in the graph in Fig. 10.

In terms of motivation, 54% of the students indicated that they were always hopeful of the future, whereas 37% said that they were very hopeful of their future; as can be seen in the graph in Fig. 11.

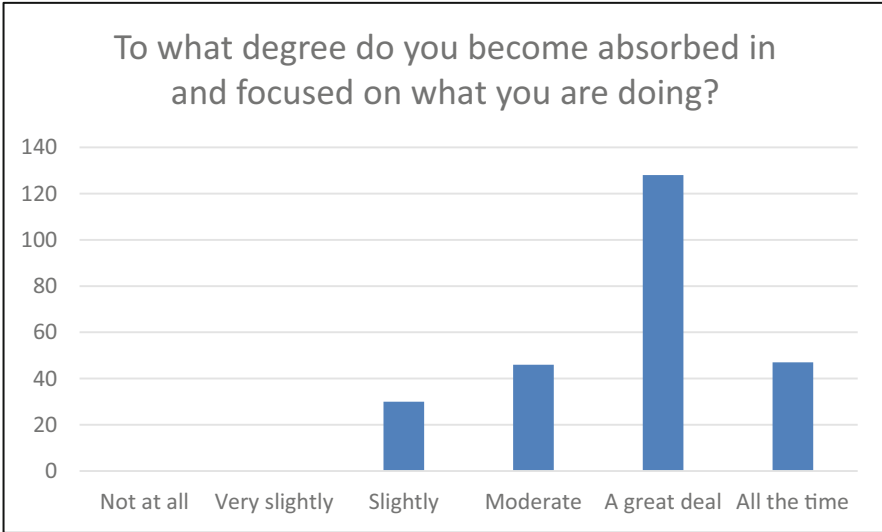


Fig. 8. Engagement

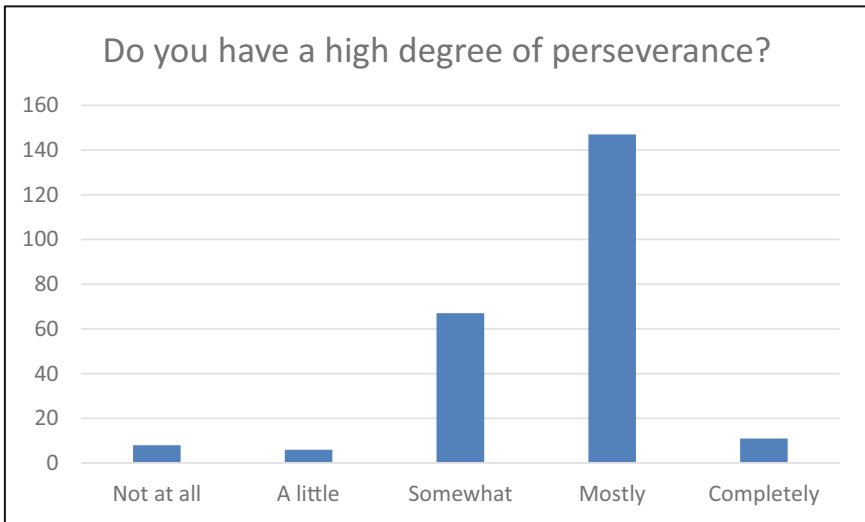
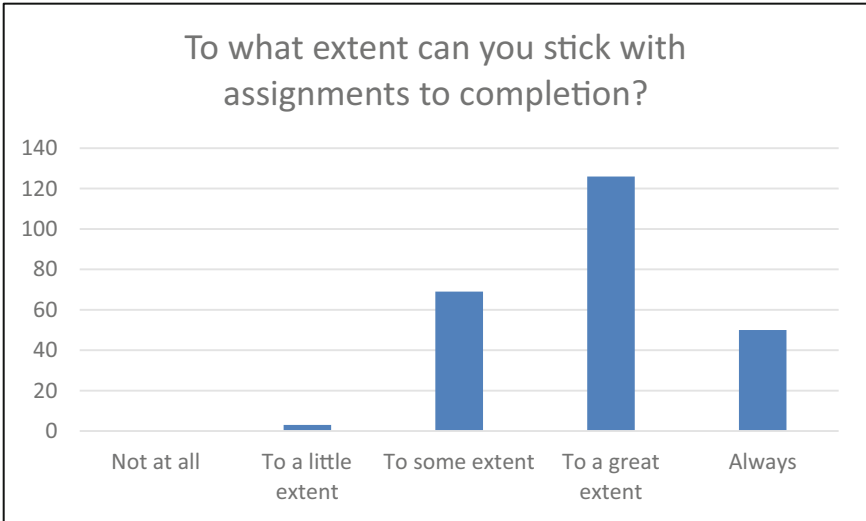
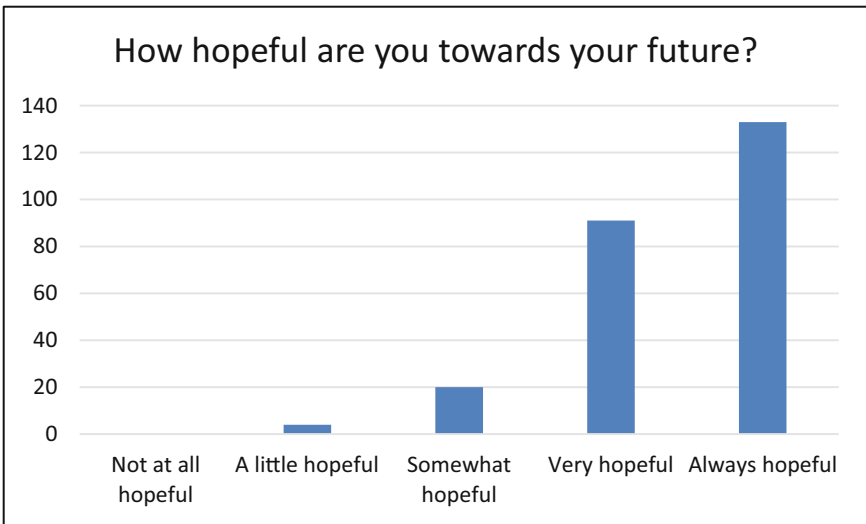


Fig. 9. How Figure 9: Perseverance

In terms of participation with their classmates, 36.29% of the students indicated that they were very much connected with their classmates, 35.48% said that they were connected with their classmates when they need to ask something, 23.79% of the students said that they were connected with their classmates only for assignments, whereas another 4.44% students indicated that they hardly connected with classmates (Fig. 12).



**Fig. 10.** Engagement & Perseverance

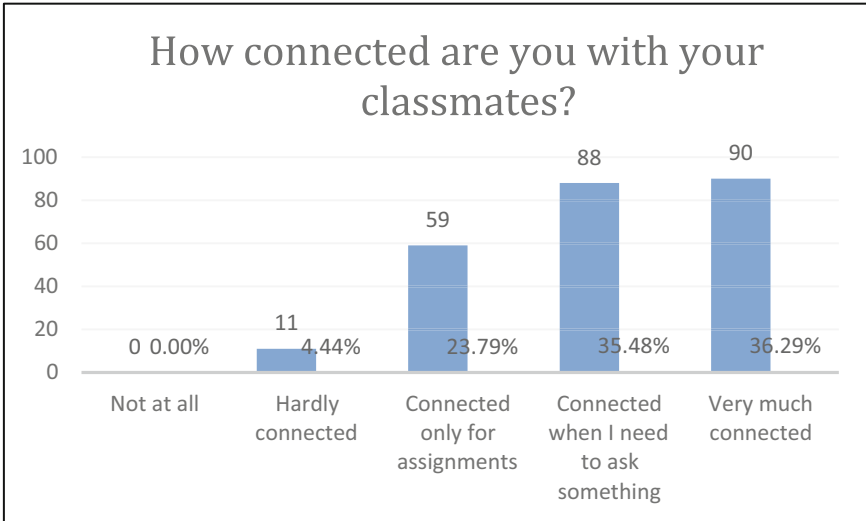


**Fig. 11.** Motivation

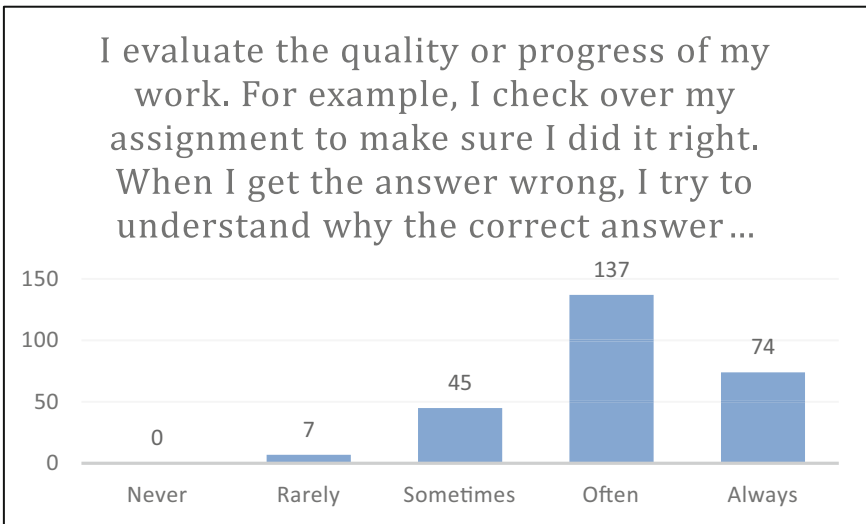
#### 4.4 Learning Strategy

In terms of the learning strategy, 52% of the students said that they often evaluate the quality or progress of their work; whereas 28% of students indicated that they always check over their assignments to make sure that they did it right (Fig. 13).

Based on the graph below, 39% of the students said that they often set goals and a timeline for studying, 34% of students said that sometimes they plan how to meet their

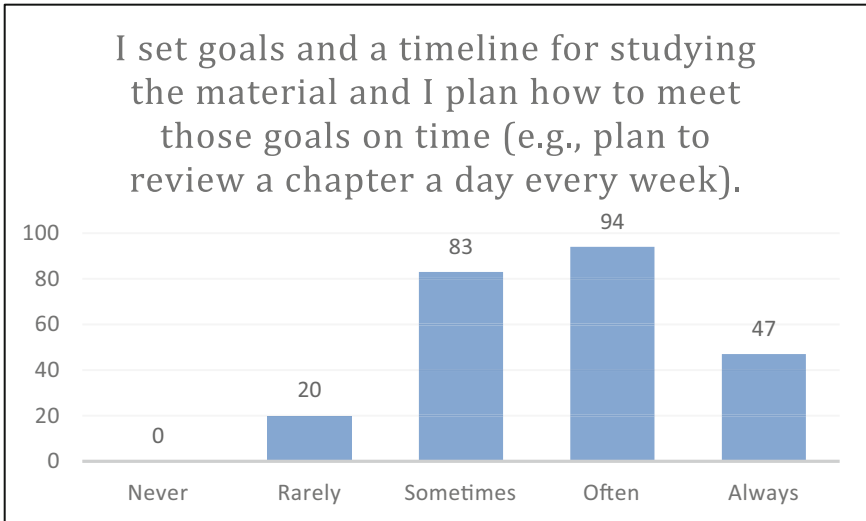


**Fig. 12.** Participation



**Fig. 13.** Quality of Assignments

goals on time, whereas 19% indicated that they always plan to review a chapter a day every week, and 8% of the students indicated that they rarely set goals and timeline for study (Fig. 14).



**Fig. 14.** Goals and Timeline for Study

## 5 Conclusion

Student achievement-based assessment reports (SABAR) can be used in higher education to track student progress and identify areas for improvement. However, more research is needed to fully understand the impact of this report on student learning and engagement. By conducting a mixed-methods study, this research has contributed to the broader understanding of the impact of SABAR on student learning and engagement in higher education. Overall, a student achievement-based assessment report is an important tool for tracking a student's academic progress and identifying areas for improvement. Providing clear and comprehensive information about a student's strengths and weaknesses can help teachers, parents, and other stakeholders work together to support the student's academic success.

In addition, a student achievement-based assessment report that is based on standards-based assessment is a valuable tool for tracking a student's progress and identifying areas for improvement. It provides a clear and comprehensive understanding of the student's current academic status and can help educators, parents, and other stakeholders work together to support the student's academic success. It is sometimes disheartening to think that some students were bold enough to ask for an increase in their marks because they thought that grade is everything, yet they have lost the meaning of understanding the subject matter. The reason for this could be due to the policy of students as our customers and thus the students believe that they are entitled to ask for full marks although they realize that they have not done their best to receive full marks. When they were asked, why did they ask for full marks; they simply answer that they need to get good grades for their future. They aim to get a good job with good pay to secure their future. Therefore, it is imperative that everybody (students, parents, and educators) play their

roles in ensuring that, to achieve what they want, they have to work hard for it; there is no shortcut to achieving a good grade.

SABAR is a valuable tool for tracking student performance and supporting academic growth. By providing clear and objective information about a student's academic status, they can help ensure that everyone is working together to support the student's success. The meaning of SABAR itself in the Malay language is 'patience', so in line with the meaning, all parties should implement patience for students to achieve academic success, and for educators be support their students' academic growth. This alternative assessment method is beneficial to develop assessment practices that enable educators and students to measure the progress that focuses on growth and taking informed action. It is also important that all parties are equally responsible and accountable in teaching and learning. Students should work collaboratively with educators in the assessment process so that they can monitor their learning progress. Educators should help students to find methods to assist students in self-reflection so that students can set goals for the next progress.

In addition, students should be able to learn to respect deadlines so that educators would have ample time to provide feedback to students. This is because we need to work together towards a supportive teaching and learning environment, whether it is face-to-face or ODL. Moreover, educators and students are both responsible, to be honest when communicating with each other to collaborate constructively. Educators can also look at students' learning habits to foster success by collecting evidence to provide feedback to students on their engagement, attitude, resilience, and collaboration. This feedback should be ongoing throughout the semester so that students have ample time to improve their learning progress.

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