

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT AND ACHIEVEMENT IN ENGLISH OF GRADE SIX STUDENTS OF JOSE MARIA COLLEGE

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ABSTRACT

The main purpose of the study was to determine the degree of influence of each of the indicators of learning environment on achievement in English of the students. Learning environment comprises of physical, social, affective and academic environments whereas learning achievement was taken from the general point average of the grade six students of Jose Maria College. Employing descriptive-correlational method with mean, ANOVA, and simple linear regression, it was showed in the study that there was a significant influence signifying that the learning achievement of the students in English were dependent on the learning environment of the students in English. The study proposes that school administrators and teachers should work together to improve the learning achievement of students by providing them an excellent learning environment to attain quality education.

KEY WORDS: *Learning Environment, Achievement in English, Grade Six Students, Jose Maria College*

INTRODUCTION

Students learning outcomes are rapidly taking center stage as the principal gauge of higher education's effectiveness (Marsh, 2007). According to Global Partnership (2012), approximately 200 million children are currently in school but are learning very little because of inefficient and inadequate education, 25 percent and 75 percent of children in poor countries cannot read a single word even after several

years in school. The Education for All Global Monitoring Report (EFAGMR) finds that what students achieve in school is heavily influenced by classroom practices and teacher's skills.

In the same way, in countries where learning outcomes have improved, absolute levels of student achievement are still low. For example in Ghana, only 10 percent of children reached the country's mastery level in Math and 5 percent in English. In India, half of 70 to 10 years old were unable to read fluently a short paragraph of Grade 1 difficulty (World Bank, 2006).

Likewise, in Philippine schools today, schools are failing to teach the competence the average citizen needs to become responsible, productive and self-fulfilling. Schools are graduating individuals who are learning less and less (Meinardus, 2003). Moreover, learning outcomes continues to be alarming low as reflected in students' poor performance in the National Achievement Test (NAT). According to Philippine Institute of Development Studies (PIDS), the Functional Literacy rate among ten-to-fifteen-year-old children is also low at only 62 percent (Rosero, 2012).

In a study of Salaum (1998) in Sta. Ana District, Davao City of Grade VI students, it was revealed that the average NEAT rating obtained by 351 students from seven elementary schools was 60.87 which is interpreted as needing improvement. Among the subject tested, English got the lowest numerical rating of 60.87 percent. In a similar study of Tenerife (2004) of the Grade VI students of the three elementary schools of Dalion District, Davao City, it was showed that the learning achievement of student was poor.

In Jose Maria College, according to Ms. Maritoni L. Saberon, Pre/Grade School Principal, the department needs to strengthen the English instruction since the school is looking forward to have graduates who are globally competitive.

The importance of giving a learning environment that is conducive to learning is the heart of every school. Many reviews were conducted to find out the relationship of learning environment and achievement of students. With all these scenarios, it would be timely to discuss the factors that have an impact on achievement of the students so that schools would be encouraged to strive for assured, consistent, and quality education that would result to outstanding students' achievement. Thus, the researcher decided to investigate and validate these claims so that corresponding recommendations and intervention can be presented to the institution.

This study aimed to find out the relationship between learning environment and achievement in English of Grade Six Students of Jose Maria College, Academic Year 2012-2013.

METHOD

This study used descriptive-correlational method. Lucena (2011) stated that this measure is concerned with conditions, relationships that exist, practices that prevail, beliefs, processes that are going on, effects that are being felt, or trends that are developing and how variables varies with one another that is, to have similar relative positions. The descriptive-correlation method is an appropriate research design employed because it determines the degree of influence of each or a combination of indicators of learning environment on achievement of students in English.

The respondents of this study were the forty-five (45) Grade Six students of Jose Maria College enrolled for the school year 2012-2013. Among the grade levels, the researcher preferred Grade Six as respondents for they were the most matured one who had high level of thinking skills in understanding the questionnaire and the purpose of the study. Universal sampling was used since the respondents were the entire population of Grade Six levels.

This study made use of an adapted questionnaire from Best Practice Briefs (2004). This was submitted to the adviser, Dr. Marilou T. Lozarita for corrections and modifications to suit the content of this study and was subjected to the validation experts. The consolidated results from the expert validators, Dr. Eugenio S. Guhao Jr., Dr. Gloria P. Gempes, Dr. Minerva T. Fabros and Dr. Sharo R. Lao obtained an average weighted mean of 3.57 (very good). It consisted of indicators such as physical environment, social environment, affective environment and academic environment. It has five- item questions with total of 20 items. For the learning achievement in English the general point average of the students was considered.

To determine the level of learning environment, the following scale was used:

Range	Descriptive	Level Interpretation
4.20-5.00	Very high	The learning environment is excellent.
3.40-4.19	High	The learning environment is very high.
2.60-3.39	Moderate	The learning environment is satisfactory.
1.80-2.59	Low	The learning environment is fair.
1.00-1.79	Very low	The learning environment is poor.

The scoring guide in evaluating the learning achievement in English was taken from the result of the general point average and is the basis in computing the classroom performance level.

To determine the level of learning achievement in English of Grade Six students, the following scoring guide was used:

Range	Descriptive	Interpretation
95-100	Outstanding	This means that the learning achievement of student in English is excellent. The respondents can demonstrate a masterful grasp of subject content and its implications.
85-94	Above Average	This means that the learning achievement of student in English is very good. The respondents can demonstrate a reasonably good grasp of subject content but an occasional lack of depth of discernment.
75-84	Average	This means that the learning achievement of student in English is good. The respondents can demonstrate satisfactory grasp of basic elements of the subject content but frequent lapses in detailed understanding.
65-74	Below Average	This means that the learning achievement of student in English needs improvement. The respondents can demonstrate inadequate grasp of some basic competency of the subject content.
Below 65	Poor	This means that the learning achievement of student in English needs much improvement. The respondents can demonstrate little evidence of even basic competency in the subject content.

The following steps were undertaken in the gathering of data:

Seeking permission to conduct the study. The researcher wrote a letter of request signed by the adviser asking permission to conduct a study entitled “Learning Environment and Achievement in English of Grade Six Students of Jose Maria College” to the school administrator, Dr. Nelia Q. Canada.

Administration and retrieval of the Questionnaire. Upon the approval of the request to gather data from the respondents, the questionnaire was administered to the students. The researcher personally administered and facilitated the gathering of data. The researcher also asked for the final grades of students from first grading to third grading period from the English teacher last January 1, 2013.

Collation and Tabulation of Data. After the retrieval of the questionnaire, collation which involved tabulation and tallying was done.

Analysis of Data. Data were subjected to statistical computation and presented into tables for analysis and interpretation and implication were provided.

The following statistical tools were used in the computation and interpretation of the data obtained: Mean - this was used to determine the level of learning environment and achievement in English of grade six students of Jose Maria College; One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) - this was used to determine significant difference among weighted mean; Simple Linear Regression - this showed the linear relationship between one normally distributed interval predictor and one normally distributed interval outcome variable.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The indicators in determining the level of learning environment of the students are as follows: Physical Environment, Social Environment, Affective Environment and Academic Environment.

Physical Environment. Presented in Table 1 is the level of learning environment of students in terms of physical environment. The mean ratings range from 3.98 to 4.67 with an overall mean rating of 4.39 or *high* indicating that the learning environment in terms of physical environment is very satisfactory. Moreover, this signifies that the school is trying its best to provide a better condition of the physical scenery conducive for learning.

Table 1. Level of Learning Environment in terms of Physical Environment

	Item	Mean	SD	Level
1.	Classroom accommodating a limited number of students	4.51	0.73	Very High
2.	Safe and comfortable classroom	4.67	0.60	Very High
3.	Properly ventilated classroom	4.56	0.59	Very High
4.	Clean and well-maintained classroom	3.98	0.94	High
5.	Classroom having colored charts and pictures	4.24	0.83	High
	Overall Mean	4.39	0.40	High

Based on evaluation, three items are rated very high, the mean ratings are: 4.67 for safe and comfortable classroom; 4.56 for properly ventilated and 4.51 for classroom accommodating a limited number of students indicating that the learning environment is excellent. While two items have been rated high: 4.24 for classroom having colored charts and 3.98 for clean and well-maintained classroom indicating that the learning environment is very satisfactory.

Social Environment. Presented in Table 2 is the level of learning environment in terms of social environment. The mean rating ranges from 4.36 to 4.78 with an overall mean rating of 4.49 or high indicating that the learning environment in terms of social environment is very satisfactory. This means that the teachers and students are able to promote and exhibit healthy and effective social interaction and relationship.

Table 2. Level of Learning Environment in terms of Social Environment

The teacher is ...	Mean	SD	Level
1. Encouraging	4.42	0.66	High
2. Actively communicating to students	4.56	0.66	Very High
3. Giving students opportunities to participate in decision making	4.36	0.77	High
4. Being open to suggestions	4.36	0.86	High
5. Having good sense of humor	4.78	0.52	Very High
Overall Mean	4.49	0.49	High

Based on evaluation, two items were rated very high, the mean ratings are; 4.78 for teacher having a good sense of humor; then followed by 4.56 for teacher actively communicating to students indicating that the learning environment is excellent. Three items have been rated high are as follows: 4.42 for teacher encouraging interaction; 4.36 for teacher giving students opportunities to participate in decision making; 4.36 for teacher being open to suggestions indicating that the learning environment is very satisfactory.

Affective Environment. Presented in Table 3 is the level of learning environment in terms of affective environment. The mean rating ranges from 4.04 to 4.53 with an overall mean rating 4.30 or high indicating that the learning environment in terms of affective

environment is very satisfactory. This entails that the students feel the sense of belongingness in the school.

Based on evaluation, one item was rated very high with the mean rating 4.53 for teacher being supportive and caring indicating that the learning are as follows: 4.40 for teacher making students feel that they belong in to the class; 4.33 for teacher maintaining rapport with students; 4.20 for teacher giving rewards and praises for good achievements and performance of students and 4.04 for teacher considering feelings of students indicating that the learning environment is very satisfactory.

Table 3. Level of Learning Environment in terms of Affective Environment

The teacher is ...	Mean	SD	Level
1. Supportive and caring	4.53	0.73	Very High
2. Making students feel that they belong to the class	4.40	0.86	High
3. Considering feelings of students	4.04	1.02	High
4. Giving rewards and praises for good achievements and performance of students	4.20	1.14	High
5. Maintaining rapport with students	4.33	0.64	High
Overall Mean	4.30	0.69	High

Academic Environment. Shown in Table 4 is the level of learning environment in terms of academic environment. The mean rating ranges from 4.42 to 4.64 with an overall mean rating of 4.51 or very high indicating that the learning environment in terms of academic environment is excellent. This connotes that the school is doing good in addressing the academic aspects of the students.

Based on evaluation, two items were rated very high, the mean ratings are: 4.64 for teacher monitoring students' progress regularly and 4.56 for teacher respecting the different ways students learn. These two items mean that the learning environment is described as excellent. Three of the items were rated high are as follows: 4.49 for teacher setting high expectations for all students; 4.44 for teacher demonstrating the lesson properly and 4.42 for teacher relating the lesson to student daily experiences indicating that the learning environment is described as very satisfactory.

Table 4. Level of Learning Environment in terms of Academic Environment

The teacher...	Mean	Descriptive Equivalent	Level
1. Relating the lesson to student daily experiences	4.42	0.69	High
2. Respecting the different ways students learn	4.56	0.72	Very High
3. Setting high expectations for all students	4.49	0.81	High
4. Demonstrating the lesson properly	4.44	0.86	High
5. Monitoring student progress regularly	4.64	0.57	Very High
Overall Mean	4.51	0.49	Very High

Summary. Illustrated in Table 5 is the summary on the level of learning environment of students. The mean ratings ranges from 4.30 to 4.51 with an overall mean rating of 4.42 or high indicating that the quality of learning environment is very satisfactory. This denotes that the school is providing a learning environment that is necessary for learning to take place.

Analyzing further, the indicator on academic environment has the highest mean rating of 4.51 or very high. The indicator on social environment followed with the mean rating of 4.49 or high.

Table 5. Summary on the Level of Learning Environment

Item	Mean	SD	Level
Physical Environment	4.39	0.40	High
Social Environment	4.49	0.49	High
Affective Environment	4.30	0.69	High
Academic Environment	4.51	0.49	Very High
Over-all Mean	4.42	0.42	High

The indicator on physical environment has a mean rating of 4.39 or high. And the indicator on affective environment has the lowest mean rating of 4.30 or high.

Level of Learning Achievement in English of Students

Shown in Table 6 is the level of learning achievement of students in English. The overall general point average of 45 students is 84 or average with a descriptive equivalent of good. This means that the respondents can demonstrate satisfactory grasp of basic elements of the subject content but frequent lapses in detailed understanding.

The highest frequency of students has grades of 75 to 84 or average. There are twenty-three (23) students who obtain these grades which mean that the learning achievement in English of these students is good. This means that the respondents can demonstrate satisfactory grasp of basic elements of the subject content but frequent lapses in detailed understanding. This is followed by twelve (12) students who obtain the grades of 65 to 74 or below average which mean that the learning achievement in English of these students needs improvement. This means that the respondents can demonstrate inadequate grasp of some basic competency of the subject content. There are seven students who obtain the grades of 85-94 or above average which mean that the learning achievement in English of these students is very good. This means that the respondents can demonstrate reasonably good grasp of subject content but an occasional lack of depth of discernment. Only three students obtain the grades of 95-100 or outstanding which mean that the learning achievement in English of these students is excellent. This means that the respondents can demonstrate a masterful grasp of subject content and its implications.

Table 6. Level of Learning Achievement of Students in English

Grade Point Average	Number of Students	Descriptive Equivalent
95-100	3	Outstanding
85-94	7	Above Average
75-84	23	Average
65-74	12	Below Average
Below 65	0	Poor
Overall 84	45	Good

The Grade Point Average in English is regressed on the Domains of Learning Environment

Shown in Table 7 is the Model Summary table that provides the R and R² value. The R value is .534^a, which represents the simple correlation and, therefore, indicates a high degree of correlation. The R² value indicates how much of the dependent variable, learning achievement, can be explained by the independent variable, learning environment. In this case, 28.5% can be explained while 71.5% of the variation can be explained by variables not covered in the study.

The next table is the ANOVA table. This table indicates that the regression model predicts the outcome variable significantly. This indicates the statistical significance of the regression model that was applied. Here, $p < 0.008^a$ which is less than 0.05 indicates that, overall, the model applied is significant. The coefficient of each of the indicators of learning environment is underscored in the coefficient table. It could be noted that the four domains of learning environment significantly influence the learning achievement of students in English. Of the four domains the social environment has the greatest positive contribution to learning achievement with a coefficient of 14.037 compared to physical environment of 5.174 and academic environment of 4.338. On the other hand affective environment negatively contribute to learning achievement of students in English with a coefficient of -16.570. This could mean that learning achievement of students does not rely on its affective environment.

Table 7. Grade Point Average Regressed on the Domains of Learning Environment

Model Summary			
Model	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
	R		
1	.534 ^a .285	.213	5.09702

a. Predictors: (Constant), ACAD, PHY, SOC, AFF

ANOVA^b

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	414.014	4	103.504	3.984	.008 ^a
	Residual	1039.186	40	25.980		
	Total	1453.200	44			

a. Predictors: (Constant), ACAD, PHY, SOC, AFF

b. Dependent Variable: GPA

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta			
1	(Constant)	52.485	11.091			4.732	.000
	PHY	5.174	3.649	.358		1.418	.164
	SOC	14.037	4.927	1.199		2.849	.007
	AFF	-16.570	7.130	-1.302		-2.324	.025
	ACAD	4.338	1.967	.372		2.206	.033

The findings do not conform to the claim of Noddings (2005), that students who feel supported and cared for in the classroom are more likely to be successful academically. Likewise to William (2012), that a caring classroom environment is a key factor in students' success in school.

The new knowledge that can be generated from the study is that affective environment negatively influenced the learning achievement of students. While a number of studies or literatures explain that affective environment promotes motivation and achievement among students, these were not proven or supported by the findings of the study. The null hypothesis was rejected.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions are drawn:

1. The level of learning environment of Jose Maria College is high.

2. The level of learning achievement in English of Grade Six Students of Jose Maria College is average.
3. There is a significant influence of each or a combination of the indicators of learning environment on the learning achievement in English of the students. This implies that the learning environment is dependent to the learning achievement in English of the students.
4. Affective environment negatively influences the learning achievement in English of students.

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