

**Title: SCHOOL'S PSYCHO – SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT AND PERFORMANCE OF STUDENTS IN THE SCIENCE UNIFIED ACHIEVEMENT TEST OF SELECTED SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ZAMBALES, PHILIPPINES**

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**ABSTRACT**

This study used descriptive method. The respondents involved were the Science teachers and students of three (3) selected public secondary schools in the Division of Zambales.

Results of the study indicate that a majority of teachers and students both perceived that the psychosocial environment of schools was friendly, rewarding and with supportive atmosphere. There is active cooperation of learning through the involvement of parents. Analysis of findings revealed that students demonstrated positive attitudes towards the psychosocial environment. However, teachers and students differ significantly in terms of their perception of physical punishment and violence, bullying, harassment and discrimination, development of creative activities, and equal opportunities and participation in decision-making. Most of the students had above -average performance and followed by excellent. No students had poor performance. The school's psychosocial environment has a moderate relationship with the students' performance in the Division Science Achievement Test.

**Keywords:** Educational Management, Psycho-social Environment, Performance, Descriptive, Zambales, Philippines

**INTRODUCTION**

The Division of Zambales uses written achievement tests yearly to assess students' learning. Specifically in secondary science, the evaluation does not only aim to measure students' performance but also teachers' competence in teaching the subject. However, there are other factors that could affect students' learning other than teachers' competence. One great factor is the psycho-social environment surrounding the students. Sometimes referred to as "school climate," the psychosocial environment is grounded in the attitudes, values, beliefs, and behaviors of all who live and learn in the hallways, athletic venues, and classrooms of a school. The school climate should evoke feelings of inclusion, physical and psychological safety. There should be an accommodating atmosphere and high expectations, including every child's success. The school should invite learning and celebrate individual interests and uniqueness (Frumkin et al, 06).

The advantages of a constructive school environment can be greater well-being and happiness, an improved sense of belonging and better quality of life for those engaged with the organization. Indirectly, it may result in better levels of academic achievement. It can also alter some of the most negative aspects of school life by reducing bullying and harassment, injury, truancy, and absenteeism. It has the potential to diminish stereotyping and prejudice, fear, anxiety, depression and loss of motivation. Furthermore, feelings of well-being during childhood provide sound foundations for positive health in later adolescence and adulthood. Students working in a supportive school environment where they feel a sense of attachment is more likely to respect their surroundings.

A healthy psycho-social environment simultaneously provides support to teachers, students, and their families. Considering how much time most children spend at school, assessing and improving the psycho-social dimensions of one's school is a worthwhile effort.

Students spend a vast amount of time at school. Students therefore certainly have a large stake in what happens to them at school, and students' reactions and perceptions of their school experiences are significant.

This study aimed to relate the psycho – social environment of selected secondary schools to the performance of students in the Science Unified Achievement Test in the Division of Zambales.

## METHODOLOGY

The descriptive method of research was used in the study. This is designed to gather information about the present condition. The description of how the respondents assess their school's psycho – social environment and the students' performance in the Division Science Achievement Test was the primary task of the research work.

The respondents involved in this study were the 28 Science teachers and 1,030 students of the three (3) selected public secondary schools in the Division of Zambales.

The study was conducted in the randomly selected schools of Zambales. These were the Zambales National High School in Iba, Subic National High School in Subic, and San Guillermo National High School in San Marcelino. Data on students' performance and assessment of their school's psychosocial environment were obtained through the administration of questionnaires. Unstructured interviews were also conducted to supplement the data gathered.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 presents the assessment of teacher respondents to the students' psychosocial environment. Of the seven indicators promoting equal opportunities and participation in decision- making was rank one and got the highest rating of 4.58 with an interpretation of always. The result implies that the students are given equal opportunities and participation in decision -making. Students have the chance to speak, and be listened to, in class. There is a procedure that enables all learners to express openly their feelings and thoughts about school work and school life. Girls and boys have the same opportunities to reach their potential. Students' participation in decision- making such as joining field trips, contributions and projects are followed. The provide the students the opportunity to choose their leaders. This is followed by forbidding physical punishment and violence with a rating of 4.36 which was rated as always by the teachers. The teachers hate physical punishment and violence in their school since they themselves are not allowed to give physical punishment to students. One important dimension of the healthy school environment is how students and staff perceive their physical and emotional safety (Frumkin et. al, 2006).Valuing the development of creative activities had the lowest rating of 3.26 or equivalent to often. However, this kind of environment was the same with other indicators. The overall mean was 4.10 with an equivalent of often. This means that the psychosocial environment of students is favorable for learning. In contemporary education, PSFs such as motivation, social interaction skills, and environmental support have been widely acknowledged as being important for academic success (Clouder et al., 2008; Lee & Shute, 2010).

Table 1

*Assessment of the Teacher – Respondents to the Students' Psychosocial Environment*

Areas	Weighted Mean	Qualitative interpretation	Rank
1. Providing a friendly, rewarding and supportive atmosphere	4.26	Always	3
2. Supporting Cooperation and Active Learning	4.19	Often	4
3. Forbidding physical punishment and violence	4.36	always	2

4. Not tolerating bullying, harassment and discrimination	4.06	Often	5
5. Valuing the development of creative activities	3.26	Often	7
6. Connecting school and home life through involving parents	4.02	Often	6
7. Promoting equal opportunities and participation in decision- making	4.58	Always	1
Overall Weighted Mean	4.10	Often	

Table 2 shows the assessment of student respondents to their psychosocial environment. The overall mean is 3.92 with a rating of often. The students found their psychosocial environment as favorable. The rating ranged from 3.66 to 4.14. Rank 1 was that students are being provided with a friendly, rewarding and supportive atmosphere. This is followed by providing them with supporting a cooperation and active learning. Other indicators of psychological environment being provided to the students where students perceived favorable response include in descending order include promoting equal opportunities and participation in decision- making. Forbidding physical punishment and violence, not tolerating bullying, harassment, and discrimination through involving parents. Analysis of findings revealed that students demonstrated positive attitudes towards the psychosocial environment and moderate level of suitability towards the physical environment.

In school, learning is a social process that often takes place in collaboration with peers and teachers (Zins, et al., 2004). Also, safer school environment improves students' learning (Gronna & Chin-Chance, 1999). Students' perception of both family and school, components of social control, are related to their learning.

Table 2

*Assessment of the Student – Respondents to their School's Psychosocial Environment*

Areas	Weighted Mean	Qualitative Interpretation	Rank
1. Providing a friendly, rewarding and supportive atmosphere	4.14	Often	1
2. Supporting Cooperation and Active Learning	4.08	Often	2
3. Forbidding physical punishment and violence	3.93	Often	4
4. Not tolerating bullying, harassment, and discrimination	3.77	Often	5
5. Valuing the development of creative activities	3.66	Often	7
6. Connecting school and home life through involving parents	3.87	Often	6
7. Promoting equal opportunities and participation in decision- making	4.03	Often	3
Overall Weighted Mean	3.92	Often	

Table 3  
Level of Performance of Students on the Division Science Achievement Test

Score Group	Frequency	Percentage	Descriptive Rating
41 – 50	275	26.70	Excellent
31 – 40	528	51.26	Above Average
21 – 30	220	21.36	Average
11 – 20	7	0.68	Below Average
0 – 10	0	0.00	Poor
Total	1030	100.00	

Table 3 presents the frequency, percentage and descriptive rating of the performance of the student – respondents in the Division Science Achievement Test. Two hundred seventy – five (275) or 26.70 percent obtained scores of 41 – 50, described as excellent, five hundred twenty – eight (528) or 51.26 percent got scores of 31 – 40, described as above average, two hundred twenty (220) or 21.36 percent obtained scores of 21 – 30 which is average, and seven (7) or 0.68 percent got scores from 11 – 20 which is below average. The respondents obtained a mean score of 35.9 which classifies as above average.

The data tells that majority of the students have an above average performance in the Division Achievement Test. Though the test covered the entire lessons taken up for the school year, and the respondents were randomly selected, the result still showed an above average student performance.

Table 4 shows the result of the analysis using the t – test to determine if there is no significant difference in the different psychosocial areas as perceived by the two groups of respondents.

The result of the t – test with regard to the first quality area indicates that the null hypothesis had to be accepted as the computed t- value that is -2.1078 is less than the critical value of 2.1604. Hence, the obtained value is not significant.

The implication of the result points out to the positive perception of both the teachers and students towards their school. Both regard their school as a place where friendly, rewarding and supportive atmosphere is provided.

Table 4  
Differences in the Assessment of the Two Groups of Respondents in the Different Psychological Areas using T-test

Parameters	Students	Teachers	t value	critical value	Decision	interpretation
a. Providing a friendly, rewarding and supportive atmosphere	4.1405	4.2582	-2.1078	2.1604	Accept	Not Significant
b. Supporting cooperation and active learning	3.9939	4.0888	-2.0411	2.3060	Accept	Not Significant
c. Forbidding physical punishment and violence	3.9251	4.3591	-6.2757	2.1009	Reject	Significant
d. Not tolerating bullying, harassment and discrimination	3.7654	4.0595	-4.0786	2.1788	Reject	Significant
e. Valuing the development of creative activities	3.6604	3.2643	4.8691	2.5706	Reject	Significant
f. Connecting school and home life through involving parents	3.8711	4.0214	-1.3838	2.2281	Accept	Not Significant

g. Promoting equal opportunities and participation in decision – making	4.0286	4.6049	-7.1117	2.2622	Reject	Significant
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As to the second quality area, the result of the t – test suggests the acceptance of the null hypothesis. Since the computed t- value that is -2.0411 is less than the critical value, 2.3060, the obtained value is not significant.

This proves that there is no significant difference in the school's second psychosocial area as perceived by the two groups of respondents. The two groups considered the support of cooperation and active learning.

With the third quality area, Forbidding physical punishment and violence, the computed t- value of -6.2757 is greater than the critical value of 2.1009. This entails that the null hypothesis is rejected and that the obtained t value is significant.

This result implies that there is a significant difference in the perceptions of the students and teachers in terms of physical punishment and violence in the school. Since the overall weighted mean of the teachers' perception is greater than that of the students', it tells that the teachers believe that the school always forbids physical punishment and violence while the students think otherwise. There is a need to reconcile these views of the teachers, and students so that each action they perform is communicated well and no discrepancy arises.

Schools should strive for a school environment with a balance of warmth, positive interest and involvement from adults on the one hand, and the enforcement of firm limits to unacceptable behavior, on the other. Where limitations and rules are violated, non-hostile, non-physical sanctions should be consistently applied. Implicit in the success of this strategy is the monitoring of student activities in and out of school. Adults at school and home must also act as authority figures in some respects. Having clear, fair rules and applying them consistently, is vital to good order. Students themselves often agree that a better reason for having discipline is to make the school a safe place and can be encouraged to share the responsibility of preventing violence from occurring. Staffs need the opportunity to acquire knowledge and skills so that they know how to deal with a loss of discipline and violence at all levels, ranging from verbal aggression like name-calling and rumors, to intervening in fights.

In the fourth quality area, the result of the t – test leads to the rejection of the null hypothesis. Since the computed t value of -4.0786 is greater than the critical value which is 2.1788, this means that the obtained value is significant.

Students have a fundamental right to feel safe in school and to be spared the oppression and repeated, intentional humiliation and potential danger caused by bullying and harassment. Although much of the research in this area has tended to focus on the personalities of bullies, victims and mobs, much can be done to change the way the school is organized and to adjust its collective attitude and atmosphere with the aim of preventing bullying.

In terms of the fifth quality area, the computed t value of 4.8691 is greater than the critical value of 2.5706 which means rejection of the null hypothesis. The computed value is therefore significant. The teachers and the staff may not see it, but students find ways on how they can be involved in relaxation and play within the school premises, thus the significant difference in their perceptions. Imagination and creativity are often expressed on the playground. When children play with their peers, play is less concerned with the ends and more with the means. It connected with a higher level of creativity than more structured situations because thinking about ways of doing things leads children to attempt more novel solutions to their problems. By playing games, children discover more about who they are and how they behave in different situations. Through play, children can learn life skills necessary for independence, organization, negotiation and arbitration. Activities outside school time have the additional benefit of enabling staff and students to get to know each other better. High cost equipment is not essential for stimulating play. Simple, low-cost and easy ideas, such as using stones, logs, or paint to mark out popular games on the playground, can be just as much fun and equally effective for this purpose.

With quality area no. 6, the result of the t – test suggests that the null hypothesis has to be accepted. The computed t value, -1.3838 is less than the critical value, 2.2281. Thus, the obtained value is not significant.

There is no significant difference in the perception of the teachers and students in terms of connecting school and home life through involving parents. The family and school are two of the most important institutions that influence

children. However, in many cases, they take little notice of each other and pay limited attention to how much they depend on each other to secure children's well-being and provide opportunities for learning and development. Most families cannot educate their children without the assistance of schools, while education in schools requires the collaboration of families. An important function of schooling is to assist families to help their young become emotionally and socially secure and productive members of the community. Although teaching is primarily about helping children to learn, it is not possible to ignore the family from which the child comes without risks to effective learning.

The last quality area, the result indicates rejection of the null hypothesis. The computed t value, -7.1117 is greater than the tabular t value, 2.2622. This implies that the obtained value is significant.

There is a significant difference between the perception of the respondents in terms of promoting equal opportunities and participation in decision – making. An important component of emotional and social well-being is feeling accepted for who you are. Feeling excluded or less than equal (especially for reasons that are beyond your control) is damaging to self-esteem and dignity. Students who believed that the chance of success is as accessible to them as to the next person. They are not only more likely to reach their intellectual potential but will value their school for its friendly and supportive environment and be more tolerant of others who are 'different'. Schools need to find ways to acknowledge and welcome ethnic, religious and cultural diversity, as well as those who have special needs due to disability, poverty or being orphaned.

Table 5

*Relationship of the Psycho – social Environment and Performance of Students in the Division Science Achievement Test*

	<i>Psycho-Social Environment</i>	<i>Performance</i>
Mean	4.0938	4.0408
Pearson r	0.4505	
t -Stat	0.5989	
t- Critical two-tail	2.4469	
Decision	Accepted	
Interpretation	Not Significant	

Table 5 shows the relationship between the two variables. With a correlation coefficient equal to 0.4505, the variables have a moderate relationship. This means that the academic performance of the respondents is not affected by their school's psychosocial environment. From the result of the PSE Profile, the school should identify which characteristics of a positive psychosocial environment are in place and which distinctiveness need strengthening. To further examine the reasons for any shortcomings identified by the PSE Profile, discussions should follow, and to propose suitable solutions that are appropriate to the school and the community. This will form the basis for policy – making and other actions. Through this, it is expected that the students' performance will grow as the psychosocial environment of the school is enhanced.

### CONCLUSION

The following conclusions are drawn based on the findings of the study, .

1. The respondents both perceive their schools as a place that provides a friendly, rewarding and supportive atmosphere and forbids physical punishment and violence.
2. The level of performance of the students was above average.
3. There is no significant difference between the school's psychosocial environment and the students' performance in the Division Science Achievement Test.
4. The school's psychosocial environment has a moderate relationship with the students' performance in the Division Science Achievement Test.

## RECOMMENDATION

Based on the findings and conclusions arrived at in this study, the following recommendations are herein posited:

1. Results shown in the psychosocial environment profile of a school may be maintained and sustained to encourage learning.
2. The teacher should recognize his role in taking care of his students' academic as well as psychological welfare.
3. Teachers should promote small group work in class that will help create a more child – friendly atmosphere, thus leading to a more productive learning.
4. Further studies should be conducted to determine other factors that affect the school's psychosocial profile and student's performance in Science.
5. Replication of the present study can be made using a more heterogeneous group and another academic subject in the secondary school.

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