

School Climate in Relation to Achievement Emotions of Learners: Bases for Action Plan

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ABSTRACT

This study adds to our knowledge of students' emotional experiences during an important educational transition and shows that a supportive school climate was present but had a limited impact on students' achievement emotions. Other personal, social, or contextual underlying factors might be more relevant to explain students' affect and performance in school settings. The study aimed to determine and compare the achievement emotions of Grade 6 and Grade 7 learners at UB Loon Institute in their transition to junior high school, specifically class-related, learning-related and test-related emotions and to explore the perceived level of school climate in terms of teacher and student behaviors and its association with achievement emotions. The study adopted a quantitative descriptive-correlational research approach. The data were collected from 148 learners, 80(54.05%) males and 68(45.95%) females. Most of the participants were Grade 7 learners (86.49%). Grade 6 learners made up 13.51% of the sample. School atmosphere and accomplishment emotions were measured by standardized questionnaires on a 4-point Likert scale. Data were analyzed using weighted mean, Wilcoxon Rank Sum Test and Multiple Regression Analysis. The study found that the school climate was usually evaluated as "Often occurs" especially in Supportive Teacher Behavior (3.09) and Collegial Student Behavior (2.98). Learners "Disagreed" with negative class-related (2.09) and learning-related (2.20) emotions reflected minimal negative emotional experiences. They "Agreed" with test-related emotions (2.57) such as good feelings of pride and relief and negative responses of exam dread. Statistical analyses showed no significant variations in achievement feelings by grade level ($p = .511$) and gender ($p = .420$). In addition, no meaningful link was identified between school climate and achievement emotions ($p = .837$). The variation accounted for was only 2%. These findings imply that students' feelings are affected by variables other than school atmosphere.

Keywords: Knowledge, Behavior, Performance, Emotions, School Climate, Achievement

INTRODUCTION/RATIONALE

Education is a cognitive and affective process in which learners are continually experiencing feelings of delight, pride, worry, boredom and hopelessness that influence their motivation, involvement and academic achievement. These achievement emotions affect how students approach learning activities, maintain their efforts during hurdles, and succeed in school. Based on Pekrun's Control-Value Theory (2006), emotions are influenced by learners' perceptions of control over academic tasks and value given to these tasks. Positive emotions occur when students see themselves as capable and supported, while negative emotions occur when students see themselves as overwhelmed and without confidence. This hypothesis has been operationalized in the Achievement Emotions Questionnaire (AEQ) which measures students' emotional experiences in class-related, learning-related and test-related contexts.

Furthermore, a key transition point where these feelings commonly alter is between 6th and 7th grade, a time defined by new teachers, higher academic requirements, and greater expectations for independence. Such shifts can be emotionally difficult for students as they adapt to a new academic environment. In these emotional experiences, school atmosphere has an important role, especially in collegial, intimate and disengaged student

conduct. A positive school climate can build confidence, motivation and a sense of belonging, whereas a bad climate can increase anxiety, disengagement and emotional suffering for learners throughout this transition.

Although the relevance of emotions in academic adjustment has been recognized, many schools in the Philippines are still focused on cognitive achievement and little attention is paid to the emotional well-being of learners. Furthermore, there is a dearth of local research that make use of the AEQ, especially those that compare Grade 6 and Grade 7 learners, and consider the influence of school climate in private schools. This study attempts to identify and associate the achievement emotions of learners at UB Loon Institute considering school climate and demographic characteristics in order to fill this gap. The findings are intended to inform teachers, administrators, parents and researchers in order to promote supportive learning environments, improve transition programs and address learners' emotional needs, and ultimately contribute to the promotion of emotional readiness, motivation and well-being, especially in view of growing concerns about student stress and mental health issues linked to academic pressures.

METHODOLOGY

Design. This study employed a non-experimental, correlational-comparative research design to examine the levels of school climate and achievement emotions among Grade 6 and Grade 7 learners of UB Loon Institute, as well as to determine differences across groups and relationships between variables.

Environment and Respondents. The study was conducted at UB Loon Institute, a private educational institution located in Loon, Bohol, Philippines, which offers elementary, junior high, and senior high school programs. This setting was deemed appropriate for the study as it allowed the examination of learners' emotional experiences during the transition from elementary to junior high school within a consistent academic environment. As the institution follows the K-12 curriculum prescribed by the Department of Education, it provides a structured and standardized learning environment that reflects typical educational practices in the Philippines, thereby making the findings relevant to similar school contexts.

The respondents consisted of 148 learners officially enrolled in Grades 6 and Grade 7 during the conduct of the study. These learners represented the transitional phase between elementary and junior high school, making them suitable participants for examining changes in achievement emotions. Participation was voluntary, and learners were properly informed about the purpose of the study, confidentiality of their responses, and procedures for answering the questionnaires.

Instrument. The study utilized two validated instruments to gather data: the Achievement Emotions Questionnaire (AEQ) and the School Climate Questionnaire (SCQ). The AEQ, developed by Pekrun and colleagues, was grounded in the Control-Value Theory of Achievement Emotions and was used to assess learners' emotional experiences in academic contexts. It consisted of three domains: class-related, learning-related, and test-related emotions, each capturing both positive and negative emotional responses. The instrument included 24 items rated on a 4-point Likert scale, allowing for the systematic measurement of the intensity and frequency of learners' emotions. Cultural adaptations were made to ensure clarity and relevance for Filipino learners, including simplification of language and contextual alignment with local academic experiences.

The SCQ, adapted from the Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire (OCDQ), was used to measure school climate in terms of teacher and student behaviors. It included dimensions such as supportive, directive, and restrictive teacher behavior, as well as collegial, intimate, and disengaged student behavior. The instrument underwent pilot testing, yielding a Cronbach's alpha of 0.79, indicating acceptable reliability. Both instruments demonstrated strong validity and reliability, supported by previous studies and expert validation. Their use ensured that the data collected were accurate, consistent, and appropriate for analyzing the relationship between school climate and achievement emotions.

Procedures. The research procedure began with securing formal approval from the school head of UB Loon Institute through a request letter outlining the study's objectives, participants, and ethical considerations. Upon approval, coordination with class advisers was conducted to schedule the administration of the questionnaires at

convenient times, ensuring minimal disruption to regular classes. Prior to data collection, an orientation session was held to inform the learners about the purpose of the study, the procedures for answering the instruments, and their rights as participants, including voluntary participation and confidentiality of responses.

The data collection process involved administering the AEQ and SCQ to Grade 6 and Grade 7 learners during scheduled class periods. The researcher supervised the administration to ensure proper understanding and independent completion of the questionnaires. After collection, the responses were checked, encoded, and organized for analysis. Ethical standards were strictly observed throughout the process, including safeguarding participants' anonymity and ensuring that all data were used solely for academic purposes. The systematic procedure ensured accuracy, consistency, and completeness of the collected data.

Statistical Treatment. The data gathered in the study were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistical tools to address the research objectives. Frequency and percentage distribution were used to describe the demographic profile of the respondents, providing a clear overview of their characteristics. To determine the levels of school climate and achievement emotions, mean and standard deviation were computed, allowing for the interpretation of the extent to which these variables were experienced by the learners.

For inferential analysis, a one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was employed to determine whether significant differences existed in school climate and achievement emotions when respondents were grouped according to demographic variables. Additionally, a t-test for independent samples was used to compare the achievement emotions of Grade 6 and Grade 7 learners. To examine the relationship between school climate and achievement emotions, the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was applied. These statistical tools were appropriate for identifying differences and relationships among variables, thereby enabling a comprehensive analysis of how school climate and demographic factors influence learners' emotional experiences.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Demographic Profile

Table 1 represents the demographic profile of the learners, providing a clear picture of the learners who participated in the study. A total of 148 students were involved, consisting of 80 males (54.05%) and 68 females (45.95%).

Table 1 Demographic Profile of the Learners (n=148)

Grade Level	f	%
Grade 6	20	13.51
Grade 7	128	86.49
Total	148	100
Gender		
Male	80	54.05
Female	68	45.95
Total	148	100

The majority of the learners are Grade 7 pupils which is 128 learners (86.49%) while only 20 learners (13.51%) are from Grade 6. This indicates that the study is mostly focused on kids who have moved to junior high school. Hence, the results better indicate their present adjustment to a new academic environment. The smaller group of

Grade 6 pupils provides insight into individuals about to make this move. In general, the findings seem to be based on a specific set of learners in a major educational transition. Providing a comprehensive context of their demographic features enables a more nuanced interpretation of the findings and underscores the significance of inclusive support systems that cater to the needs of kids across gender and grade levels during this vital transition.

School Climate

Table 2 represents the level of school climate as perceived by the learners, highlighting the overall condition of the learning environment in terms of teacher and student behaviors.

Table 2 Level of School Climate as Perceived by the Learners n= 148

Indicators	Composite Mean	SD	Interpretation
Supportive Teacher Behavior	3.09	0.94	High Presence of Climate Factor
Directive Teacher Behavior	2.96	0.95	High Presence of Climate Factor
Restrictive Teacher Behavior	2.75	0.83	High Presence of Climate Factor
Collegial Student Behavior	2.98	0.89	High Presence of Climate Factor
Intimate Student Behavior	2.96	0.93	High Presence of Climate Factor
Disengaged Student Behavior	2.13	0.95	Moderate Presence of Climate Factor

The composite mean for supportive teacher conduct was 3.09, defined as "Often occurs," with the strongest indicator reflecting that teachers usually listen to and accept students' comments (3.29). This indicates that students perceive recognition and respect from their educators, so fostering a heightened sense of belonging and alleviating the difficulties related to advancing to a higher grade level. This outcome corroborates the stipulations of DepEd Order No. 42, s. 2017, emphasizing the significance of teachers in meeting students' emotional requirements, and is consistent with Reinhard Pekrun's Control-Value Theory (2006), which posits that nurturing environments enhance students' perceptions of control and value, resulting in more favorable emotional experiences.

Regarding student behavior, both collegial (2.98) and intimate (2.96) behaviors were assessed as "Often occurs." Significantly, students indicated that assisting and supporting one another occurs very regularly (3.30), reflecting robust peer relationships. This indicates that students gain advantages from a nurturing social atmosphere, which can alleviate stress and facilitate adaptation to academic requirements. This conclusion is corroborated by the Constructivist Theory of Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky, which underscores that learning is augmented through social interaction and collaboration. Furthermore, research conducted by Santos and Villanueva (2020) confirms that favorable peer interactions enhance engagement and emotional stability in students.

Conversely, disengaged student conduct exhibited a lower composite mean of 2.13, characterized as "Sometimes occurs." For example, children infrequently perceive school activities as futile (1.74), indicating that school programs are predominantly significant and engaging. This suggests that students are actively participating in school life, corroborating the findings of Anderson et al. (2000) that stimulating school environments mitigate disengagement during transitional phases. Despite the presence of directive and restrictive teacher behaviors, these are regarded within a supportive framework, suggesting that students regard structure and monitoring as essential for their learning rather than as detrimental constraints. This interpretation is corroborated by the Organizational Climate paradigm of Hoy and Clover (1986), which asserts that organized leadership, when complemented by support, fosters an effective and positive school climate.

Achievement Emotions

Table 3 represents the level of achievement emotions of the learners, describing their emotional experiences in class-related, learning-related, and test-related situations.

Table 3 Level of Achievement Emotions of the Learners n= 148

Achievement Emotions	Composite Mean	SD
Class-Related Emotions	2.09	0.77
Learning-Related Emotions	2.20	0.79
Test-Related Emotions	2.57	0.87
Overall Mean	2.29	0.83
Interpretation	Low Negative Achievement Emotions	

Class-related emotions (2.09) and learning-related emotions (2.20) are categorized as "Disagree," indicating that learners typically do not encounter intense negative feelings such as boredom, rage, or hopelessness throughout their everyday classroom and study activities. This indicates that the transition to junior high school has not substantially interrupted their regular learning experiences. This discovery corroborates Reinhard Pekrun's Control-Value Theory (2006), which posits that when learners perceive adequate control over tasks and value their education, they are less prone to negative emotions. Research conducted by Reinhard Pekrun et al. (2002) and Bieleke et al. (2020) corroborates that pleasant or mildly negative emotions improve involvement and perseverance in educational endeavors.

Conversely, a distinct pattern arises in test-related emotions, yielding a composite mean of 2.57, read as "Agree." Learners expressed positive emotions, including pride (2.96) and relief (2.88), however they also encountered worry, notably feelings of fear during examinations (2.71). This signifies that despite students' capabilities and motivation, tests continue to be a significant source of emotional stress. This outcome corresponds with the research of Putwain et al. (2018), who recognized exam anxiety as prevalent among secondary pupils, and Lowe and Lee (2018), who observed heightened stress during school transitions. Moreover, Nancy Schlossberg's Transition Theory (1981) elucidates that alterations in academic requirements and anticipations can elicit emotional adaptations, particularly in high-stress contexts such as examinations.

The composite mean of 2.29, translated as "Disagree," signifies that negative achievement emotions are not prevalent among the respondents. This indicates that learners are typically emotionally resilient and capable of managing daily academic challenges. This conclusion is corroborated by Santos and Villanueva (2020), who indicated that learners with favorable emotional experiences exhibit enhanced engagement and flexibility. The prevalence of elevated test-related emotions underscores a particular area of concern. This indicates that although learners generally exhibit a good emotional state, certain treatments, especially those focused on alleviating test anxiety, are essential to enhance their emotional well-being during assessment periods.

Difference in Achievement Emotions

Table 4 represents the difference in achievement emotions of the respondents when grouped according to grade level and gender, determining whether these variables significantly differ learners' emotional experiences during the transition to junior high school.

Table 4 Difference in Achievement Emotions in terms of Grade Level and Gender n=148

Group		Mean Rank	W	α	p-value	Interpretation	Decision
Grade Level	6	68.63	1162	0.05	.511	Not significant	Do not reject H ₀
	7	75.42					

Gender	Male	77.13	2510	0.05	.420	Not significant	Do not reject H ₀
	Female	71.41					

There is no significant change in achievement emotions between Grade 6 and Grade 7 pupils, $W=1162$, $p=.511$. The outcome is that the null hypothesis is not rejected. The average ratings of Grade 6 (68.63) and Grade 7 (75.42) further support the fact that both groups experience similar emotional patterns despite variances in academic expectations. This shows that the move to junior high school does not greatly change the emotional reactions of students to schoolwork.

This observation is backed by Transition Theory of Nancy Schlossberg (1981) which argues that individuals adjust to transitions depending on their coping mechanisms and support systems, notwithstanding the challenges. Also, Anderson et al. (2000) and Dela Cruz (2021) suggest that while changes may raise academic pressure, emotional reactions may be consistent with proper assistance.

Moreover, this finding is in line with the Control-Value Theory of Reinhard Pekrun (2006) that achievement feelings are determined by learners' perceived control and value of activities, not grade level. This suggests that emotional patterns are probably already established before the transfer and are consistent across grade levels. Hence, emotional support programmes can be developed to serve both Grade 6 and Grade 7 learners in a cohesive and seamless way.

There was no significant difference in achievement emotions between male and female learners, $W=2510$, $p=.420$. The mean rank of males (77.13) is quite close to the mean rank of females (71.41). It implies that both males and females experience academic emotions in a comparable way. This finding is consistent with the study of Santos and Villanueva (2020) that emotional engagement and reactions to academic activities are less likely to be affected by gender and are more influenced by learning experiences and environmental factors. The lack of large gender disparities suggests that attitudes about learning, engagement in the classroom, and testing are shared by learners in this situation. This is also in line with the Constructivist views of Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky, who emphasized that learning and emotional development are influenced by contact and experience, rather than innate gender differences.

The results indicate that neither grade level nor gender have a significant effect on accomplishment emotions in general. This has crucial implications for educational practice, since it means schools can put in place inclusive and school-wide emotional support programmes without major differentiation on the basis of these variables. Thus, a holistic approach to emotional literacy, resilience and stress management can be effectively applied to all learners to assist their academic and emotional development during the transition phase.

Relationship Between School Climate and Achievement Emotions

Table 5 represents the relationship between school climate and achievement emotions of the respondents, examining whether the perceived learning environment significantly influences students' emotional experiences.

Table 5 Relationship Between School Climate and Achievement Emotions $n=148$

F	R ²	df	p-value	Interpretation	Decision
0.46	.02	6 & 141	.837	Not significant	Do not reject H ₀

This means that perceptions of supportive teachers or collegial peers themselves do not directly or meaningfully influence learners' accomplishment emotions. This research underscores the fact that emotional experiences in learning are complicated and cannot be reduced to environmental settings in school. This result can be interpreted through Pekrun's Control-Value Theory (2006), which argues that achievement emotions are mostly determined by learners' perceived control over academic tasks and the value they place on them, and not solely by external variables. So even in a favorable school climate children may still feel anxious or other emotions based on their self-beliefs, motivation and personal expectations. In this regard, research by Bieleke et al. (2020) points out that

internal factors like self-regulation and cognitive assessment have a greater influence on emotional outcomes than environmental ones.

Moreover, local research like Navarro (2022) indicated a strong correlation of achievement emotions, academic self-efficacy and personal confidence, while Dela Cruz (2021) cited the effect of individual anxiety levels in academic assignments. The results support the view of a strong connection between learners' emotions and personal and psychological characteristics. In addition, Nancy Schlossberg's Transition Theory (1981) says that people react to changes in different ways depending on their coping resources and personal qualities, which contributes to the weak connection between environmental influences and emotional consequences.

In summary, the results show that a positive school climate is associated with overall well-being and support, but is not the main factor determining achievement emotionally. This reiterates the need for a holistic approach to meeting learners' emotional needs. Future treatments should aim not only to maintain a supportive school climate, but also to enhance learners' emotional resilience, self-efficacy and coping techniques to better affect their achievement emotions during the transition to junior high school.

CONCLUSIONS

The individual coping methods, resilience and amount of support that students receive at home seem to impact their emotional experiences more than just the school setting. Even in classes that are generally cheerful and helpful, children respond differently to academic demands depending on how effectively they handle stress, regulate their emotions, and receive encouragement or assistance outside of school. Some would be better able than others to meet obstacles with calmness, including those who had steady support at home. It is also important to note that the testing periods are the most emotionally demanding and often induce worry, fear or pressure that are not as visible during normal classroom activities. This implies that a positive school climate is vital but not enough to meet the emotional requirements of pupils. Instead, there is an obvious need for particular intervention measures such as test taking tactics, anxiety management approaches and emotional resilience training that directly target test related stress and allow students to perform with greater confidence during assessment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are organized numerically to address each specific area of the research findings, offering practical steps for school improvement and future study.

1. The school administrators and teachers may implement the Calm-Assessment Protocol by conducting a mandatory 5-minute relaxation activity before every major examination.
2. The teachers may establish a Transition Peer-Pal mentorship program between Grade 6 and Grade 7 students.
3. The school administrators may conduct faculty training on emotional intelligence strategies to better manage student anxiety.
4. The guidance counselor and teachers may implement inclusive, gender-neutral resilience and emotional support programs for all students.
5. The school research coordinator may conduct follow-up studies on internal and external factors affecting student emotions.

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