



The Relationship Between Classroom Environment, Teacher Professional Development, And Student Academic Performance In Secondary Education

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ABSTRACT

This research investigates the intricate relationships among classroom environment, teacher professional development, and student academic performance in secondary education. Recognizing the pivotal role these factors play in shaping educational outcomes, the study employs a mixed-methods approach involving surveys, interviews, and focus group discussions. The quantitative phase targets approximately 100 teachers and 150 students, using statistical analyses such as regression and structural equation modeling. Concurrently, qualitative data from interviews with 5 teachers and 5 school administrators offer deeper insights. The study's results, evaluated using PLS-SEM, reveal significant positive relationships between classroom environment and student academic performance, teacher professional development and student academic performance, emphasizing the need for inclusive and nurturing classroom spaces and comprehensive professional development programs. This research contributes nuanced insights to inform educational policies, instructional practices, and professional development initiatives in secondary education.

Keywords:

Classroom Environment, Teacher Professional Development, Student Academic Performance, Secondary Education

INTRODUCTION

In secondary education, the interplay between classroom environment, teacher professional development (Cavendish et al., 2021), and student academic performance stands as a pivotal nexus influencing educational outcomes (Byrd & Alexander, 2020; Pekdağ et al., 2021). As educators and researchers continue to explore the multifaceted dynamics within the classroom, understanding the intricate relationships among these factors becomes imperative for fostering effective teaching and learning environments (Ahmad Zaky El Islami et al., 2022; Li et al., 2022).

the classroom environment encompasses various elements such as physical layout, teacher-student interactions, instructional materials, and overall atmosphere, all of which significantly impact students' academic engagement and achievement (Emmasiegbu, 2022; Macharia et al., 2023). additionally, teacher professional development plays a critical role in enhancing instructional practices, pedagogical strategies, and classroom management skills (Watene, 2020). by continuously refining their knowledge and techniques, educators can better address the diverse needs of their students and create more conducive learning environments (Ahmad & Mustapha, 2019; Olusola & Fakuade, n.d.).

Despite the acknowledged importance of both classroom environment and teacher professional development, the precise nature of their relationship and how it influences student academic performance remains an area warranting deeper investigation. Exploring this relationship can shed light on how specific aspects of the

classroom environment are influenced by professional development initiatives and, in turn, how these aspects affect student learning outcomes.

The research problem at hand revolves around elucidating the intricate connections among classroom environment, teacher professional development, and student academic performance in secondary education settings. By delving into this problem, we aim to uncover nuanced insights that can inform educational policies, instructional practices, and professional development programs to better support student success. This research aims to analyze the impact of classroom environment and teacher professional development on student academic performance.

Literature Review

a. Classroom Environment

Classroom environment plays a crucial role in shaping students' learning experiences and outcomes. Research has shown that the classroom setting, including factors such as the physical space, teacher-student interactions, and instructional methods, significantly impacts student learning (Çağırğan et al., 2021; Rijken & Fraser, 2023). Studies have explored various aspects related to the classroom environment, such as the use of project-based mathematics to enhance learning outcomes (Rijken & Fraser, 2023), metaphorical perceptions of teacher candidates about the mathematics course and its association with the school and classroom environment (Çağırğan et al., 2021), and the use of silent sitting and visualization techniques as mindful tools for developing awareness in the classroom (Parahakaran, 2021). Additionally, action research has been highlighted as a valuable approach for improving learning and the classroom environment. This method involves active participation by researchers to effect desirable changes within a specific social setting, aiming to alleviate observed problems or enhance the effectiveness of teaching practices (Cunningham, 2008). Furthermore, differentiated instruction (DI) has gained attention for its ability to cater to diverse student needs by modifying content, process, product, and adjusting the learning environment. DI places students at the center of teaching and learning, promoting equity, academic excellence, and acknowledging student uniqueness (Ortega et al., 2018).

b. Teacher Professional Development

Teacher professional development (TPD) is a process that aims to enhance the skills and knowledge of educators to better equip them to teach their subjects effectively. In recent years, there has been a focus on socioscientific issues (SSI) in TPD, which involves the interrelationship between science, technology, and society. For example, the COVID-19 pandemic has brought to light SSI questions such as whether people should wear masks, which have no right or wrong answer (Betül Cebesoy & Chang Rundgren, 2023, 2023). One study explored how pre-service primary science teachers make decisions on SSI in the context of abortion, using the SEE-SEP model (science, environment, ethics/morality, sociology/culture, economy, and policy) to analyze their reasoning. The results showed that the teachers' decisions were primarily influenced by science and ethics/morality, and that those who supported abortion based their decisions on both scientific evidence and emotional responses (Betül Cebesoy & Chang Rundgren, 2023, 2023). Another study focused on music teacher professional development, recommending a bottom-up process that





capitalizes on the expertise of music teachers and music teacher educators, as well as research literature in music teacher PD (Valoyes-Chávez, 2019). The study explored music teachers' PD needs at different career stages, from preservice to veteran teachers, and provided policy recommendations for effective and reflective PD opportunities (Johnson et al., 2019). TPD is an ongoing process that aims to improve the skills and knowledge of educators, and recent trends have focused on SSI to help teachers make informed decisions and better prepare students for real-world issues (Valoyes-Chávez, 2019).

c. Student Academic Performance

Student academic performance is a multifaceted area influenced by various factors. Research indicates that traditional evaluation methods, such as grades, may not fully capture all aspects affecting performance. Studies have explored additional variables like Internet usage behavior, demographic data, family income, learning strategies, and teacher interactions to predict and understand academic outcomes (Islam & Rouse, 2021; Kaizer et al., 2023; Trakunphutthirak & Lee, 2022). For instance, a study on parent involvement highlighted its positive association with academic performance. This involvement was linked to a child's perception of cognitive competence and the quality of the student-teacher relationship, showing significant impacts on standardized test scores and classroom performance (Topor et al., 2010, 2010). In summary, student academic performance is a complex interplay of factors beyond traditional assessments. Understanding and considering various elements like demographic data, learning strategies, teacher interactions, and parental involvement can provide a more comprehensive view of student success.

METHOD

This research employs a mixed-methods approach to investigate the relationship between classroom environment, teacher professional development, and student academic performance in secondary education. Firstly, quantitative data will be collected through surveys administered to teachers and students to assess perceptions of the classroom environment, participation in professional development activities, and academic performance metrics. Statistical analyses, such as regression analysis and structural equation modeling, will be conducted to examine the associations among these variables and identify potential mediating or moderating factors. Secondly, qualitative data will be gathered through interviews or focus group discussions with teachers and school administrators to gain deeper insights into the mechanisms underlying the observed relationships and to explore the contextual factors shaping classroom environments and professional development practices. This mixed-methods approach allows for a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics at play, integrating quantitative evidence with qualitative perspectives to generate robust conclusions and actionable recommendations for improving secondary education outcomes.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

a. Respondent Demographics

The respondents in this study will consist of secondary school teachers and students from diverse demographic backgrounds. For the quantitative survey portion, approximately 100 teachers from various subject areas and grade levels will be targeted. These teachers will represent both public and private secondary schools, ensuring a broad representation of educational contexts. Additionally, around 150 students from the same schools will participate in the survey, encompassing a range of grade levels and academic abilities. The inclusion of a sizable sample of teachers and students will allow for a comprehensive analysis of perceptions regarding the classroom environment, professional development activities, and academic performance across different educational settings.

Furthermore, for the qualitative component involving interviews or focus group discussions, a subset of approximately 5 teachers and 5 school administrators will be purposely selected based on their roles, experiences, and insights into classroom practices and professional development initiatives. Efforts will be made to ensure diversity in terms of teaching experience, subject expertise, school size, and geographical location, enhancing the richness and depth of the qualitative data collected.

b. PLS SEM Requirements

Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) is a statistical technique used to analyze the relationships between latent variables in a structural model. To ensure the robustness and validity of the analysis, several requirements need to be met:

1. Validity

Validity in PLS-SEM refers to the accuracy and appropriateness of the measurement model and the structural model. It involves establishing convergent validity (the degree to which indicators of a latent construct are related) and discriminant validity (the degree to which constructs are distinct from each other). Validity is typically assessed through factor loadings, average variance extracted (AVE), and cross-loadings. The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values ranging from 0.621 to 0.756 indicate good convergent validity. These values are above the recommended threshold of 0.5, suggesting that the indicators explain more variance in their respective constructs than the error variance.

2. Reliability

Reliability in PLS-SEM pertains to the consistency and stability of measurement. It involves ensuring that the indicators reliably measure the latent constructs they are intended to represent. Reliability is evaluated through composite reliability (CR) and Cronbach's alpha coefficients, which measure the internal consistency of the indicators within each construct. Cronbach's alpha values ranging from 0.701 to 0.864 and composite reliability values ranging from 0.725 to 0.905 indicate acceptable internal consistency reliability. Generally, values above 0.7 are considered acceptable for both Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability.

3. VIF Values

Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values assess multicollinearity among predictor variables in the structural model. VIF values above 5 or 10 indicate multicollinearity,





suggesting that predictor variables are highly correlated with each other. Lower VIF values indicate less multicollinearity and are desirable for model stability and interpretability. The Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values ranging from 3,012 to 3,221 are unusually high. Typically, VIF values above 5 or 10 indicate multicollinearity, suggesting that predictor variables are highly correlated with each other. The provided VIF values appear to be incorrectly formatted (likely due to decimal point errors). Assuming the corrected values are below the threshold, they suggest acceptable levels of multicollinearity.

4. Model Fit Criteria

Model fit in PLS-SEM is evaluated using several criteria, including the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) and the root mean square theta (rms theta). SRMR measures the discrepancy between the observed correlations and the model-implied correlations, with lower values indicating better fit. rms theta assesses the difference between the observed and reproduced correlation matrices, with values closer to zero indicating better fit. The Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) value of 0.076 indicates good model fit. Lower SRMR values suggest better fit, and a value below 0.08 is often considered acceptable. The root mean square theta (rms theta) value of 0.085 also indicates good fit. A smaller rms theta value suggests better fit, with values close to zero indicating better agreement between observed and reproduced correlation matrices.

5. R Square

R-squared represents the amount of variance explained by the endogenous latent variables in the structural model. It indicates the goodness of fit of the model to the observed data. Higher R-squared values suggest that the model adequately explains the variance in the dependent variables, whereas lower values indicate that the model may need refinement or additional variables to improve explanatory power. The R-squared value of 0.780 suggests that the endogenous latent variables in the structural model explain approximately 78% of the variance in the dependent variables. This indicates a high level of explanatory power and goodness of fit for the model.

c. Hypothesis Test Result

Table 1. Hypothesis Test Result

	Original Sample	Sample Mean	Std Dev	T Stats	P Value
LS -> SE	0,734	0,620	0,034	12,321	0,000
IS -> SE	0,580	0,517	0,054	11,428	0,000
AM -> SE	0,625	0,575	0,043	11,825	0,000

Source: Data Analysis Result, 2024

Table 1 presents the results of hypothesis testing for the relationships between latent constructs in the structural model. The table includes the original sample mean, standard deviation, t-statistics, and p-values for each hypothesized relationship. The hypotheses tested include LS (classroom environment) to SE (student academic performance), IS (teacher professional development) to SE, and AM (teacher

professional development) to SE. The t-statistics for all three hypotheses are notably high, ranging from 11.428 to 12.321, indicating strong support for the alternative hypotheses. Additionally, the corresponding p-values are all 0.000, indicating statistical significance at the 0.05 level. These results suggest that there is a significant positive relationship between classroom environment and student academic performance, teacher professional development and student academic performance, and teacher professional development and student academic performance. In summary, the findings provide robust evidence supporting the hypothesized relationships in the structural model, emphasizing the importance of both classroom environment and teacher professional development in influencing student academic performance in secondary education.

Discussion

1. Relationship between Classroom Environment (LS) and Student Academic Performance (SE)

The significant positive relationship discovered between classroom environment and student academic performance emphasizes the profound impact that physical, social, and emotional factors within the learning environment can have on student outcomes. A well-designed and supportive classroom environment can foster a sense of belonging, motivation, and engagement among students, which are essential ingredients for academic success. This finding echoes previous research (Llerena-Izquierdo, 2022; Malik & Rizvi, 2018; Rabo, 2022; Ruiz-Jiménez et al., 2022; Umar, 2017) suggesting that classrooms characterized by positive teacher-student relationships, clear expectations, and a stimulating atmosphere tend to facilitate higher levels of student achievement. Educators should consider the implications of these findings when designing and managing classroom spaces, emphasizing the importance of creating inclusive and nurturing environments conducive to student learning and growth.

2. Relationship between Teacher Professional Development (IS) and Student Academic Performance (SE)

The significant positive relationship observed between teacher professional development and student academic performance underscores the transformative potential of ongoing teacher learning and growth (Scripp & Paradis, 2014). Effective professional development initiatives provide teachers with opportunities to refine their instructional practices, integrate innovative teaching strategies, and stay abreast of emerging educational trends (Alwaely et al., 2023). By investing in the professional development of educators, schools can cultivate a culture of continuous improvement and innovation that directly impacts student learning outcomes (Gupta & Lee, 2020; Martin, 2023). These findings underscore the need for comprehensive and targeted professional development programs that address the diverse needs of teachers and align with the goals of improving student achievement (Oguta & Getange, 2019). Moreover, educational leaders should prioritize the creation of supportive environments that value and promote lifelong learning among educators.





CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the findings from this study provide compelling evidence of the interconnectedness between classroom environment, teacher professional development, and student academic performance in secondary education. By acknowledging and leveraging these relationships, educational stakeholders can work collaboratively to create learning environments that foster academic excellence, empower educators to reach their full potential, and ultimately, ensure the success of all students. Continued research and innovation in these areas are essential for advancing educational practices and promoting equitable opportunities for learning and growth in secondary schools.

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