
Learning Environment of Higher Secondary Students, East Khasi Hills, Meghalaya

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Abstract

The learning environment plays a crucial role in shaping educational outcomes and fostering students' development. This paper provides an in-depth exploration of some of the facets of developing the best learning environment, which includes physical, social, and technological factors. To begin with, the physical environment entails such factors as classroom design, lighting, temperature, and availability of resources. A good physical environment encourages focus, comfort, and group work amongst students. Secondly, social environment plays a key role in terms of creating good relationships, communication as well as collaboration between students and educators. Moreover, the establishment of a learner-centred environment recognizes different learning styles and interests as well as abilities of the students. Differentiation instruction, adaptive technologies, and individualized learning pathways are individualized along with the needs of individuals which encourages engagement and success. Altogether, the learning environment optimization is a holistic process that takes into account physical, social, technological and pedagogical factors. By creating a conducive environment, educators can facilitate meaningful learning experiences and empower students to reach their full potential.

Keywords: Culture-centered design, Learning Environment, Task Variable, Effective Variable, Competitive Variable, Higher secondary students.

1. Introduction

The culture of a school or classroom is the focus of the name learning environment and encompasses relationships among people that exist within the environment. It is also associated with the way in which teachers structure learning environments to promote learning such as teaching in related natural ecosystems, arranging students based on their ability and interests, classroom decoration using the right learning materials, and the use of audio, visual and digital media. A large number of factors define the nature and attributes of a learning environment and they include the school policies, the governance, the management, and the available resources which as a whole determine the experience of education.

It is generally known that learning environments have both direct and indirect effects on learning of the students. By working in favorable and encouraging conditions, students are likely to learn better than in unfavorable ones. An effective learning management system facilitates interaction, enthusiasm and involvement, which in turn increases the academic performance.

The conventional classroom set up is not the only way of learning. More and more teachers are embracing the out-of-classroom contexts as a way of learning. Schools are the social environments where students communicate with teachers and peers as well as their environment and it leads to both academic and social growth. Therefore, the learning environment is not just limited to the physical classroom setting, but encompasses the larger social and psychological environment of learning. The classroom however is the key context which structuring teaching-learning activities occur, among teachers, students, and the requisite instructional materials.

It is also possible to perceive the learning environment as a mix of both physical and social factors that combined to generate the experience in the classroom. It covers the classroom management practices, space organization, resources availability, and emotional and social atmosphere in the classroom. These social and emotional aspects are commonly known as positive and negative learning environments.

Anita Woolfolk states that the learning environment is a type of ecology in the classroom, with students, teachers and activities engaged with each other in a continuous flow. All these elements of this system have an impact on the rest, and the classroom is a complex and dynamic environment. The classroom tasks, needs of students and teaching strategies are also factors which influence the learning situation. Active participation in constructive and effective learning activities by the students is very important in ensuring a positive classroom environment.

Doyle (1986) has single out a number of significant features of classroom settings. Classrooms are multidimensional and incorporate a variety of people, activities and time constraints. It is also simultaneous where many things happen simultaneously and teachers have to handle a variety of circumstances at a time. Immediacy shows the classroom interactions, which are fast-paced whereas unpredictability demonstrates the unexpected events that could occur during teaching. The classrooms are also open places where behaviors can be seen and can be assessed by others, and they possess history, i.e., an experience in the past affects the current interactions. These features show how complicated classroom settings are and how difficult it is to manage them in a proper way.

1.1 Need and Justification of the Study

The need to consolidate the system of education is increasing to enable the students to attain their educational and professional objectives. Uncertainty is something that most of the young learners face about their future courses, and a positive atmosphere of learning can be very instrumental in directing them as well as motivating them.

Despite the fact that past studies have emphasized the role of school and classroom settings in determining student performance and behaviour, little is known on how learning environments vary among different groups of students especially in geographically and culturally diverse areas. Empirical research studies on the learning environment of students in high school, particularly in Meghalaya, are quite rare.

In addition, majority of current literature has addressed general attributes of school climate with little consideration given to such elements of learning environment as task variables, effect variables and competitiveness. There is deficiency in comparative analysis also in terms of gender, tribal and non-tribal population, rural and urban areas.

Thus, the current research paper will set out to analyze the learning conditions of the higher secondary students. The research aims at offering a better insight into the effects of learning environment on a student behavior, engagement and academic performance by investigating variations in demographics and socio-cultural backgrounds.

The findings of the present study are likely to be used to enhance the educational practices and policies by offering information about how it is possible to develop a better and more inclusive learning environment.

1.2 Theoretical Framework

Education system is crucial in the determination of the aspirations of students, their academic growth and the choice of their careers in future. The need to consolidate the system of education is increasing to enable the students to attain their educational and professional objectives. Uncertainty is something that most of the young learners face about their future courses, and a positive atmosphere of learning can be very instrumental in directing them as well as motivating them.

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1.3 Objectives of the study

1. To find out the differences of Learning Environment between Male and Female students.
2. To find out the differences of Learning Environment between Tribal and Non -Tribal students
3. To find out the differences of Learning Environment between Urban and Rural students
4. To find out the differences in the Task Variables of Learning Environment between Male and Female students, Tribal and Non- Tribal students and Urban and Rural students
5. To find out the differences in the Effect Variables of Learning Environment between Male and Female students, Tribal and Non- Tribal students and Urban and Rural students
6. To find out the differences in the Competitiveness Variables of Learning Environment between Male and Female students, Tribal and Non- Tribal students and Urban and Rural students

1.4 Null Hypothesis

1. There is no significant difference in the Learning Environment between Male and Female students

2. There is no significant difference in the Learning Environment between Tribal and Non-Tribal
3. There is no significant difference in the Learning Environment between Urban and Rural
4. There is no significant difference in the Task Variable of learning environment between Male and Female students, Tribal and Non- Tribal, Urban and Rural
5. There is no significant difference in the Effect Variable of learning environment between Male and Female students, Tribal and Non- Tribal, Urban and Rural
6. There is no significant difference in the Competitive Variable of learning environment between Male and Female students, Tribal and Non- Tribal, Urban and Rural

1.5 Delimitation

The study is delimited only to the students of Higher Secondary Schools students in East Khasi Hills District, Meghalaya.

2. Review of Related Literature

2.1 Studies conducted in India

Current researches carried out in India have highlighted the major importance of school climate and learning environment on the academic success, emotional well-being, conduct, and ambitions of students. In a research on the attitudes of the students to the school climate, Musheer et al. (2016) discovered that the attitude of secondary school students towards their school climate mostly had a positive character. It implies that a favorable and properly organized school climate has a positive impact on the adjustment and learning process of students.

Gupta and Bashir (2017) also found in a similar study that parental encouragement and school environment play a significant role in determining the educational aspirations of the secondary school students. As they see it, such learning atmosphere not only promotes current academic interest, but also encourages students to pursue better education. In the same manner, Harinarayanan and Pazhanivelu (2018) discovered that the school environment has a great influence on the academic performance of students in secondary schools, and appropriate school conditions are essential to enhance students.

The SEHER multi-component secondary school intervention in Bihar was a major contribution to the field by Shinde et al. (2018). Their cluster-randomised controlled trial showed that the outcome of health and wellbeing of adolescents can be improved in a significant way with the help of the improvement of the school climate. The research findings presented a good empirical evidence, which provides reinforcement that the school environment should be enhanced to promote holistic development of the students.

At the institutional level, Dutta and Sahney (2022) studied the correlation among the principal instructional leadership and school climate, teacher job performance, and student achievement. Their results showed that school climate has a mediating possibility in relating leadership and teaching efficacy to student achievement, and thus its significance as a crucial determinant of learning consequences.

According to Dewan et al. (2024), the composition of peers especially the gender ratio of a classroom can affect the classroom atmosphere as well as the students academic performance. This implies that the social processes in the classroom are another significant element of the learning environment.

In a more current study, Podiya et al. (2025) have in a systematic review found that school climate is strongly related to the emotional well-being and education performance of school going adolescents in India. The paper has highlighted the fact that positivity issues like teacher support, peer relationships, and school connectedness play a significant role.

is a multidimensional construct and includes physical, social and psychological aspects of schooling. It is important in determining the academic performance, emotional health, behavior and ambitions of students. As such, the learning environment of students in higher secondary

is important to study and enhance educational performance.

2.2 Studies conducted abroad

The recent research in the foreign countries has widely explored the connection between classroom and school climate in affecting the students academic performance, behavior, motivation and psychological wellbeing. The results of the extensive systematic review and meta-analysis conducted by Wang et al. (2020) demonstrate that a positive classroom climate is closely related to better academic and social competence as well as lower internalizing and externalizing behavioral issues.

In the same vein, Verner-Filion et al. (2023) found that the perceived school climate has a significant impact on the academic performance of the students, and self-determined motivation mediated these effects. This shows that intrinsic motivation is tapped by a favorable and interesting school atmosphere, and it leads to improved academic performance by students.

Karasova and Nehyba (2023) found that the behaviour of students was linked to less behavioral issues and more student engagement when teachers reacted positively to students and provided classroom supportive practices through a systematic review. Their results highlight the significance of teacher-student interaction so as to ensure a positive and productive learning environment in the classroom.

Besides, Bas (2025) investigated the effect of positive classroom climate on academic performance and discovered that peer-social interactions and motivation to learn are significant mediators. It implies that the climate allows achievement to be indirectly dependent on social and motivational mechanisms in the classroom, which supports the significance of positive and supportive learning conditions.

Adding the conceptualism of the classroom climate, Alonso-Tapia and Ruiz-Diaz (2025) confirmed a multidimensional model of classroom climate that incorporates the elements of academic, emotional, disciplinary, and social relationships. Their analysis showed that classroom climate has a great impact on motivation of students, their emotions, behavior, and overall learning results.

When combined, these foreign conducted studies suggest that classroom climate is a multidimensional construct that is critically important in determining the academic performance of students, their behavior, motivation as well as psychological wellbeing. The results continuously underline the importance of a favorable and conducive learning environment that increases the enthusiasm of students and enables them to learn effectively.

The study sample is made up of 41 Higher Secondary schools students in East Khasi Hills District. The Higher Secondary school students in the state of Meghalaya include Classes XI and XII and belong to the various categories of management namely; Government schools, Deficit schools, Adhoc schools, Unaided or Private schools and Unaided or Purely Private.

There are schools that are equipped with only boys or girls only and those that are co- ed. There are Nine Blocks in East Khasi Hills District comprising of Shillong Municipality, Mawsynram Block, ShellaBholaganj, Myllem Block, Mawryngkneng Block, Mawphlang Block, Pynursla Block, Khat- Ar- ShnongLaitkroh Block at the time of collecting data. Thus, these Development blocks have been cited in the population of the study.

3. Methodology of Research

Best J W and Kahn J V added that to do any kind of research investigation each some form of data must be gathered on which to test out the hypothesis. The other techniques and processes that have been developed to facilitate the data acquisition process are many. These tools contain peculiar phrases of explaining and quantifying the information. They both are applicable to certain kinds of data sources, acquiring information of the kind, and of the kind, which can most effectively be exploited. The research is aimed at identifying the Learning Environment of Higher Secondary School students of East Khasi Hills District in Meghalaya, India.

Population:

Table No 1: Showing the number of Higher Secondary schools in East Khasi Hills District

District	Government.	Deficit	Adhoc	or Unaided Private	Unaided or Purely Private	Total
East Khasi Hills	2+1	9	18	8	3	41

Sources: District Education School Officer, East Khasi Hills, Meghalaya.

Table No. 2: Showing the population of the study according to the Enrolment of Students at the Higher Secondary Level in Higher Secondary Schools in East Khasi Hills.

Location	No of Schools	No of Students		Total
		Male	Female	
Urban	19	2954	1680	4634
Rural	22	1481	1925	3406
Total	41	4435	3605	8040

Sample

Simple random sampling was used to select a sample of 25 institutions and 804 students who belonged to various categories (10 percent of the sample was picked out of the whole population).

Table No. 3: Showing the Total sample of the study

Location	No of Schools	No of Students		Total
		Male	Female	
Urban	11	295	168	463
Rural	14	148	193	341
Total	25	443	361	804

Tools

In the selection of the data, the tool that is to be applied by the investigator is the Learning Environment Inventory (LEI) which is developed by Dr. Rampal Singh.

4. Procedure for Data collection

The researcher pursued the method of description in order to establish the disparities between the learning environment of Higher Secondary School students in East Khasi Hills District, Meghalaya. The investigator must have sample the objectives in mind as she gathers the data.

4.1 Analysis of Data:

Mean, standard deviation and independent samples t-test were used to analyze the data collected to test the differences in learning environment and its variables with reference to gender, tribal status, and location. Table 4 shows the statistical methods that are employed.

Table No. 4: Statistical Techniques Used

Sl. No	Statistics Used	Purpose
1	Mean, SD, t-test	To examine differences in learning environment and its variables

4.2 Analysis and Interpretation

Table 5: Gender-wise Comparison of Learning Environment

Gender	N	Mean (M)	SD	t-value	df	p-value
Male	443	278.18	33.07			
Female	361	281.31	34.81	1.30	802	> .05

Interpretation:

Table 5 depicts that female students (M = 281.31, SD = 34.81) scored a little higher than male students (M = 278.18, SD = 33.07). The difference was however, not significant $t(802) = 1.30$, $p > .05$. This implies that there is a similarity in the perception of the male and female students of the learning environment indicating the delicate and equitable classroom atmosphere.

Table 6: Tribal and Non-Tribal Comparison of Learning Environment

Group	N	Mean (M)	SD	t-value	df	p-value
Tribal	604	278.88	32.94			
Non-Tribal	200	281.70	36.58	1.01	802	> .05

Interpretation:

The non-tribal students were slightly higher than the tribal students as shown in Table 6. Nonetheless, that was not statistically significant $t(802) = 1.01$, $p > .05$. This implies that the two groups are exposed to similar learning environments.

Table 7: Urban and Rural Comparison of Learning Environment

Area	N	Mean (M)	SD	t-value	Df	p-value
Urban	463	280.55	35.61			
Rural	341	278.27	31.37	0.94	802	> .05

Interpretation:

Urban students had a little higher score as compared to rural students as indicated in Table 7. Nevertheless, this was not found to be significant $t(802) = 0.94$, $p > .05$; which means that location has no significant impact on the learning environment.

Table 8: Task Variable of Learning Environment

Category	Group	N	Mean (M)	SD	t-value	df	p-value
Gender	Male	443	2.07	.516			
	Female	361	1.94	.537	3.50	802	<.05
Tribe	Tribal	604	2.04	.528			
	Non-Tribal	200	1.92	.524	2.90	802	< .05
Area	Urban	463	1.94	.516			
	Rural	341	2.12	.530	4.83	802	< .05

Interpretation:

The showing results in Table 8 indicated that the difference in the task variable in all the categories was significant. The male, tribal and rural students were higher than their counterparts and the differences were statistically significant ($p < .05$). This means that learners vary in their classroom activity which is an indication of the effect of social cultural

and situational factors.

Table 9: Effect Variable of Learning Environment

Category	Group	N	Mean (M)	SD	t-value	df	p-value
Gender	Male	443	2.09	.510			
	Female	361	1.99	.535	2.54	802	< .05
Tribe	Tribal	604	2.05	.530			
	Non-Tribal	200	2.02	.501	0.73	802	> .05
Area	Urban	463	2.02	.529			
	Rural	341	2.07	.513	1.39	802	> .05

Interpretation:

According to Table 9, the effect variable had a significant difference between male and female students, $t(802) = 2.54, p < .05$, where the males scored somewhat higher. Nevertheless, there were no significant differences in tribal and non-tribal students and urban and rural students. This implies that emotional reactions are gender sensitive yet other aspects are not.

Table 10: Competitiveness Variable of Learning Environment

Category	Group	N	Mean (M)	SD	t-value	df	p-value
Gender	Male	443	1.98	.78			
	Female	361	1.95	.77	0.57	802	> .05
Tribe	Tribal	604	1.99	.78			
	Non-Tribal	200	1.90	.74	1.48	802	>.05
Area	Urban	463	1.95	.77			
	Rural	341	1.99	.76	0.85	802	> .05

Interpretation:

As Table 10 shows, there was no significant difference in competitiveness between any category. This implies that no difference can be found among the students in terms of their competitiveness based on their gender, tribal affiliation or location.

The results suggest that there are no significant differences in general aspects of learning atmosphere between gender, tribal status and location (see Tables 5, 6 and 7). Nonetheless, certain dimensions (task engagement and emotional response) are not homogeneous (see Tables 8 and 9) whereas competitiveness is the same across groups (see Table 10).

The findings imply that students can be very alike in classroom settings and yet vary in their approaches to learning activities as well as their responses in the emotional level. This shows the necessity to attend to individual and socio-cultural differences in order to provide a more inclusive and effective learning environment.

5. Findings

5.1 Findings according to Differences of Learning Environment between Male and Female students Tribal and Non-Tribal students and Urban and Rural students

The results of the current research indicate that no significant differences exist in the overall learning environment, in terms of gender, tribal, non-tribal, as well as urban and rural population. This means that there is a fairly homogenous classroom atmosphere among the students regardless of their socio-demographic backgrounds. This consistency implies that the schools in the study location offer a inclusive and balanced learning environment where students can acclimatize to classroom expectations, socialize and engage in classroom academic tasks to a significant degree without any significant differences.

These results are consistent with previous studies that indicated that there was no differences in classroom climate in terms of gender and location (Mistry, 1986; Rao, 1977). But the current research can extrapolate these findings by placing them in a modern educational background, in which elevated access to learning materials and uniform schooling operations might have

been utilized in minimizing unequal learning conditions.

The fact that there are no major differences between urban and rural students also hints upon the fact that the access to educational infrastructure and classroom activities has become more uniform over the years creating more uniformity in the conditions in which students learn. This helps in agreeing that fair access to resources, instruction methods, and classroom management tools are very important in providing equal learning opportunities to students in various environments.

Regarding behavioral dimension, the results suggest that the students can adapt and respond favorable to classroom expectations and show adaptability, cooperation, and engagement. Being in a common classroom setting, with well defined rules and being able to interact with each other seems to create a sense of belonging and involvement. It is consistent with the current studies that demonstrate that a positive and well-organized classroom climate promotes student engagement, motivation, and behavioral achievements (Wang et al., 2020; Verner-Filion et al., 2023).

Besides, the results indicate that the students have a healthy level of academic competitiveness and motivation and strive to excel in their studies. This is in line with how the learning environment determines the behavioral orientation of students towards achievement and participation. This seems to be brought about by a positive classroom climate where there is mutual respect, clarity of objectives and structured activities.

Generally, the results indicate that although demographic variables like gender, tribal affiliation, and place are not significant determinant factors of the overall learning environment, classroom environment is a decisive factor with respect to the behavior, relation, and orientation of students towards their studies. That is why the need to ensure that learning environments are inclusive, supportive, and well-structured in order to encourage effective learning in every student.

5.2 Recommendations

The results of the current research point at the necessity of developing an inclusive and conducive learning atmosphere that encourages academic involvement of students, their behavior, and wellbeing in general. Schools need to aim at providing an open, respectful, safe and emotionally supporting classroom climate because under such conditions, active participation and positive student behavior are likely to occur.

By giving students a chance to engage in classroom activities and decision-making, one might increase a sense of responsibilities, motivation, and engagement. Moreover, the classroom regulations and conventions must be mutually formulated, effectively conveyed, and established to be in place every day so as to have a measure of discipline and the perception of fairness.

They should also be schools that promote structured and well organized classroom practices to enable effective task engagement among students. The learning environment can also be reinforced by having adequate teaching-learning materials, interactive teaching methods and facilitative teacher-student relationships. Policy wise, there should be an effort to create equal access to the resources and the same standard of education in various territories and various groups of students.

In general, the need to enhance the learning environment should be holistic, which means that physical, social, and psychological aspects need to be incorporated to ensure a positive outcome of behavior and achievement among the students.

5.3 Findings and Discussion on Task, Effect, and Competitiveness Variables

According to the results of the current research, it can be concluded that the gender, tribal and non-tribal groups, and urban and rural students considerably vary in the aspect of the learning environment task variable. This indicates that the general learning environment is similar in every group; however, the student varies in the manner in which they interact with the classroom activities and tasks. Such differences can be determined by socio-cultural

background, learning opportunity and differences in classroom practices.

There was also a considerable disparity in effect variable between male and female students, and it shows that gender is involved in forming emotional responses and experiences of students in the learning environment. There was however no significant differences in the effect variable that existed between the tribal and non tribal students and urban and rural students. This implies that there are relatively similar aspects of the learning environment in terms of the emotional elements in these groups.

Conversely, there were no significant differences in competitiveness variable in relation to gender, tribal status, and place. This suggests that all the students regardless of their background demonstrate similar competitiveness and motivation in the classroom environment. Findings of this nature would imply that there is a common academic culture that motivates students to work hard to attain success.

Although the previous literature (Patel, 1987; Shah, 1988; Pradhan, 1991; Ramana, 1997) noted the differences in classroom environment in the different categories, the current results show that there is a tendency towards a more homogeneous learning situation which might be explained by the fact that the educational practice has improved and more resources are available to students. Simultaneously, the witnessed differences in the engagement with tasks imply the necessity to pay attention to the manner, in which students engage with the learning activities as opposed to paying attention to the overall classroom climate.

These findings in behavioral terms indicate variations in the capacity of students to adjust to the classroom requirement and complete tasks effectively as well as in response to structured learning setups. There are students who can adequately manage time, participate and adapt to classroom organization whereas others can have problems with motivation, clarity of learning objectives, or classroom management practices.

These results may be compared to the recent studies that highlight that classroom climate impacts student behavior, motivation, and engagement by involving them in tasks, interacting with peers, and supporting them by teachers (Wang et al., 2020; Karasova and Nehyba, 2023; Bas, 2025). Thus, teachers need to provide classroom setups to positive learning environments where different learners can interact, learn and perform with active participation, good task engagement, and positive behavior results.

6. Conclusion

The current research reveals that learning environment is very important in influencing behavior, engagement, and academic orientation of the students in the higher secondary level. The results reveal that although a general environment of learning is relatively the same between gender, tribality and place, certain dimensions like engagement of tasks and emotional reaction are different among students. This implies that even though students are exposed to similar classroom conditions they do not behave the same with the learning activities and respond to classroom dynamics in the same way. These results bear significant implications on the part of the teachers in ensuring effective learning environments. Educators should cease their conventional teaching methods and become more of facilitators who encourage student learning. Through facilitation, interaction, and guidance instead of giving instructions, teachers can create a more inclusive and interesting classroom environment. Moreover, the research states that the flexible, inclusive, and responsive classrooms to individual differences among learners are needed. Offering personalized learning opportunities and enabling students to go at their own pace and adjust the teaching method to various learning needs can help improve the academic experiences and outcomes of students to a significant degree. Positive student behavior should be maintained by a supportive classroom environment that does not hold strict standards but encourages fairness, cooperation and respect among students. Further studies can be conducted in the future to investigate the dynamic association between classroom atmosphere and student conduct in various educational scenarios to improve the efficiency of teaching-learning activities.

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