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Unpacking the Influences: A Multidimensional Analysis of School Climate and its Relationship to Learner Performance in Philippine Elementary Education

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Abstract

Aim: This study examined the relationship between school climate and learner performance in selected public elementary schools in the Philippines, focusing on the relational, learning, and physical dimensions of the school environment.

Methodology: A descriptive-correlational design was employed, involving 164 teachers, 10 school heads, and 10 PTCA presidents from ten public elementary schools in Glan 2 District, Sarangani Province. Stratified random sampling was used to ensure representation. School climate was measured across eight domains, while learner performance was assessed through Grade Point Averages in English, Science, and Mathematics, as well as National Achievement Test (NAT) results. Pearson's r was applied to determine statistical correlations.

Results: Findings indicated that school climate was rated very positively across all three dimensions. However, learner performance was only at a satisfactory level, with NAT scores categorized as "moving toward mastery." Pearson's correlation revealed no statistically significant relationships between school climate and learner performance in the relational ($r = -0.323$), learning ($r = -0.806$), and physical ($r = 0.105$) dimensions.

Conclusion: Although the school climate was perceived as highly positive, it did not significantly predict academic performance. This suggests that other systemic or learner-based factors may mediate student outcomes, underscoring the need for multifaceted interventions beyond school climate enhancement. Future research may further investigate these mediating variables to inform educational policy and practice.

Keywords: *school climate, student achievement, learner outcomes, public elementary schools, Philippines*

INTRODUCTION

Creating a supportive and inclusive school environment has become a central priority in global education reform. In the Philippine context, where socio-economic disparities and resource limitations persist, enhancing school climate is recognized as a critical factor in improving learner outcomes (Trinidad, 2020). School climate refers to the overall atmosphere in which students learn and interact, shaped by relational, instructional, and physical conditions (Daily et al., 2019). These elements, though often intangible, strongly influence student engagement, motivation, and academic performance (Pangilinan, 2025).

Drawing on Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, school climate can be viewed as a multidimensional construct embedded in the microsystem of students' daily lives. This perspective highlights how interpersonal interactions, classroom dynamics, and physical environments intersect to shape learning trajectories. Within this framework, three dimensions emerge as especially relevant: relational climate, learning climate, and physical climate. School climate—operationalized here as relational, learning, and physical dimensions—exerts direct effects on student academic performance (GPA in English, Science, Mathematics; NAT results). In addition, climate likely influences achievement indirectly through student engagement, attendance, motivation, and psychosocial well-being. Contextual factors such as socioeconomic status, home academic support, and resource availability may moderate climate–achievement links (Amihan et al., 2023).

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Research consistently underscores the importance of positive teacher-student relationships, respectful communication, and a strong sense of belonging. Studies have shown that relational support fosters emotional security, reduces dropout risk, and enhances engagement (Bernardo & Isidro, 2019; Zullig et al., 2022). In the Philippine setting, these dynamics are particularly critical in multicultural classrooms, where collective identity and inclusivity are valued cultural practices (Dela Cruz, 2022; Bontuyan, 2025).

Instructional support, student engagement, and classroom management form another crucial dimension of school climate. International research highlights that individualized feedback and learner-centered strategies significantly contribute to academic success (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2020). Philippine studies affirm that teacher practices and engagement strategies predict learner achievement, though these are often examined in urban or better-resourced schools (Galamay et al., 2025; Trinidad, 2020). Research also suggests that sustained teacher quality assurance mechanisms are essential to strengthening instruction and fostering consistent student achievement (Amihan et al., 2023).

Equally important are the physical and structural aspects of school climate. Safety, cleanliness, and adequate infrastructure directly affect students' ability to focus and thrive (Reynolds et al., 2017). In rural Philippine schools, limited facilities and resource inequities remain pressing challenges, often offset only by teacher commitment and community support (Flores, 2021). Ensuring safety and orderliness also carries heightened significance in geographically disadvantaged contexts, where emergency preparedness and security protocols protect both physical and psychological well-being (Trinidad, 2020; Carvajal et al., 2025).

Despite the growing body of literature, most Philippine research on school climate has been concentrated in urban areas, with limited studies in rural and Last Mile Schools. This is a critical gap, as schools in Mindanao often serve socio-economically disadvantaged and culturally diverse populations whose educational realities differ from the national norm (Gallego, 2024). Post-pandemic reports further emphasize that Filipino learners in these contexts continue to face learning loss, resource inequities, and psychosocial challenges that hinder achievement (DepEd, 2023; World Bank, 2023; OECD, 2023; Sanchez, 2025).

This study addresses these gaps by examining multiple dimensions of school climate—interpersonal relationships, sense of belonging, academic support, student engagement, classroom environment, safety, orderliness, and infrastructure quality—in selected public elementary schools in Sarangani, a province identified with Last Mile Schools. This study offers a fresh perspective by being one of the first in the Philippines to closely examine school climate in Last Mile Schools through the lens of multiple stakeholders—teachers, school heads, and PTCA presidents. By capturing voices from those directly involved in rural education, it provides a grounded and practical view of how relationships, learning environments, and school conditions affect learner performance in hard-to-reach areas like Glan 2 District, Sarangani Province. It also analyzes whether statistically significant relationships exist between climate dimensions and learners' academic performance in core subjects and national assessments. By situating the analysis in a post-pandemic context, this study aims to provide grounded insights that can inform both school-level interventions and broader policy directions for basic education in the Philippines.

Statement of the Problem

Despite growing recognition of the importance of school climate in shaping learner outcomes, there remains a paucity of research examining its multidimensional nature in rural and Last Mile Schools in the Philippines. Existing studies have largely focused on urban or better-resourced schools, leaving significant gaps in understanding how relational, learning, and physical aspects of the school environment influence academic performance in socio-economically disadvantaged contexts. Post-pandemic reports further highlight that learners in these areas continue to face learning loss, limited resources, and psychosocial challenges that impede achievement. Moreover, while positive school climates are known to enhance engagement, motivation, and overall student well-being, the extent to which these dimensions are linked to measurable academic performance in core subjects and national assessments has not been fully investigated. This study addresses these gaps by examining the multidimensional school climate and its relationship to learner performance in selected public elementary schools in Sarangani Province, providing evidence-based insights for both school-level interventions and broader policy initiatives in basic education.

Research Objectives

General Objective:

To examine the multidimensional nature of school climate and its relationship to learner performance in selected public elementary schools in the Philippines.

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Specific Objectives:

1. To assess the extent of school climate in selected public elementary schools across the following dimensions:
   1.1 Interpersonal relationships
   1.2 Sense of belonging
   1.3 Academic support
   1.4 Student engagement
   1.5 Classroom environment
   1.6 Safety
   1.7 Orderliness
   1.8 Infrastructure quality
2. To determine the level of academic performance of elementary pupils based on:
   2.1 General Point Average (GPA) in English, Science, and Mathematics
   2.2 National Achievement Test (NAT) results
3. To examine the significant relationship between the dimensions of school climate and the academic performance of pupils in selected public elementary schools.

Research Questions

1. What is the extent of school climate in selected public elementary schools in terms of:
   a. Interpersonal relationships
   b. Sense of belonging
   c. Academic support
   d. Student engagement
   e. Classroom environment
   f. Safety
   g. Orderliness
   h. Infrastructure quality?
2. What is the level of academic performance of elementary pupils in selected public schools in terms of:
   a. General Point Average (GPA) in English, Science, and Mathematics
   b. National Achievement Test (NAT) results?
3. Is there a significant relationship between the dimensions of school climate and the academic performance of pupils in selected public elementary schools?

METHODS

Research Design

This study employed a descriptive-correlational research design using surveys to assess the extent of school climate in public elementary schools and to examine its relationship with pupils' academic performance. The descriptive component focused on determining the levels of school climate in terms of relational, learning, and physical dimensions. The correlational component examined the significant associations between these dimensions and students' academic outcomes, specifically their Grade Point Averages (GPA) in English, Math, and Science, as well as their performance in the National Achievement Test (NAT). This design was considered appropriate because it allowed the researcher to describe prevailing conditions and identify potential relationships among variables without manipulating the environment—making it suitable for natural educational settings (Pangilinan, 2025).

Population and Sampling

The study was conducted in ten public elementary schools within Glan 2 District, Sarangani Province, involving 10 school heads, 164 teachers, and 10 PTCA presidents. Stratified random sampling was used to ensure representation across all schools, with respondents selected based on official designation, tenure, and direct involvement in school operations and community engagement.

School selection was purposive, guided by criteria that reflect institutional diversity and relevance to the study. These criteria included variations in enrollment size, resource availability, infrastructure, and levels of community participation—key indicators of school climate in underserved areas (Bontuyan, 2025). All ten schools had

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consistent participation in national assessments such as the NAT, enabling reliable academic performance comparisons.

Importantly, the schools were accessible to the target respondents, ensuring rich, multi-stakeholder data from the microsystem (classroom practices) to the mesosystem (school–home–community relationships). The inclusion of schools identified as Last Mile Schools further strengthened the study's relevance to marginalized educational contexts in rural Mindanao. While the findings provide valuable insights, their generalizability is limited to the Glan 2 District context. Future studies should include a broader set of schools across districts and provinces to support comparative and regionally responsive analyses of school climate and learner performance (Amihan et al., 2023).

Instrument

A structured survey questionnaire served as the primary data collection tool for this study. The instrument, adapted from established school climate frameworks, was validated through a two-stage process. Six experts in education and research reviewed the items for content validity, focusing on clarity and alignment with study objectives. A pilot test with 15 teachers from another school not included in the sample was also conducted, and reliability analysis using Cronbach's alpha indicated that all subscales exceeded 0.70, confirming internal consistency (Abenojar et al., 2025).

Data Collection

Data were gathered from January 11 to February 23, 2025, in ten public elementary schools within Glan 2 District, Sarangani Province. Respondents—comprising teachers, school heads, and PTCA presidents—answered the structured and validated survey questionnaires during non-teaching hours in designated areas such as faculty rooms or school offices.

With prior approval from school principals, selected teachers from each school assisted the researcher by distributing and collecting the forms and ensuring participants clearly understood the instructions. All procedures followed ethical guidelines, ensuring voluntary participation and strict confidentiality throughout the process.

Treatment of Data

To address the first objective, descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation were used to determine the extent of school climate in terms of interpersonal relationships, sense of belonging, academic support, student engagement, classroom environment, safety, orderliness, and infrastructure quality. For the second objective, pupils' academic performance was described using mean scores from their Grade Point Averages (GPA) in English, Science, and Mathematics, as well as their National Achievement Test (NAT) results. To address the third research objective, Pearson's r correlation analysis was applied to examine the relationship between the dimensions of school climate and the academic performance of learners. This method was deemed appropriate because both variables—school climate scores and academic performance indicators (GPA and NAT results)—are continuous and approximately normally distributed, allowing for a reliable assessment of the strength and direction of linear associations.

Ethical Considerations

Before data collection, informed consent was obtained from all participants—including teachers, school heads, and PTCA presidents. They were fully briefed on the study's purpose, the nature of their participation, and their right to withdraw at any time without penalty.

Participation was entirely voluntary, and respondents were assured that their answers would remain confidential and anonymous. To protect their identities, all survey forms were coded, and no personal names or identifying information were recorded.

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RESULTS and DISCUSSION

Extent of the School Climate in the Different Public Elementary Schools

Table 1. Extent of the School Climate in the Different Public Elementary Schools in terms of Relational Climate Dimensions

	Statements	Mean	SD	Verbal Description
	A. Interpersonal Relationship			
1	Teachers and students maintain respectful communication in this school.	4.73	.53	Very High Extent
2	Teachers show genuine care and concern for the well-being of students.	4.43	.67	Very High Extent
3	Students in this school collaborate effectively with their peers.	4.44	.68	Very High Extent
4	School staff resolve conflicts constructively and professionally.	4.68	.47	Very High Extent
5	Parents and community members actively support the relationships in the school.	4.66	.51	Very High Extent
	Section Mean	**4.59**	**.46**	**Very High Extent**
	Sense of Belonging			
1	Everyone feels valued and included as a member of this school community.	4.69	.46	Very High Extent
2	Students feel proud to be part of this school.	4.66	.51	Very High Extent
3	Teachers and staff foster a welcoming environment for all students.	4.68	.47	Very High Extent
4	Diverse cultural and social backgrounds are respected and celebrated in this school.	4.69	.46	Very High Extent
5	The school provides equal opportunities for every student to participate and succeed.	4.68	.47	Very High Extent
	Section Mean	**4.68**	**.48**	**Very High Extent**

Scale Range: 1.00 – 1.80-Very Low Extent; 1.80 – 2.59-Low Extent; 2.60 – 3.39-Moderate Extent; 3.40 – 4.19-High Extent; 4.20 – 5.00-Very High Extent

Table 1 presents the results on the extent of the school climate in terms of relational climate, which includes two major components: interpersonal relationships and sense of belonging. The findings show that both components were perceived to a very high extent, with a section mean of 4.59 (SD = .46) for interpersonal relationships and 4.68 (SD = .48) for sense of belonging.

From the perspective of Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, these interpersonal and belongingness factors reflect the microsystem, where daily interactions between teachers, students, and staff directly shape learners' immediate experiences. The strong scores suggest that the microsystem is functioning positively in these schools, providing a foundation for potential academic resilience. Specifically, interpersonal interactions within the school community were marked by mutual respect and positive rapport. Respondents reported that teachers and students maintain respectful communication (M = 4.73), and conflicts are resolved constructively and professionally by school staff (M = 4.68). These findings are consistent with research asserting that healthy teacher-student relationships foster emotional security and increase students' classroom participation and behavioral engagement (Wang et al., 2020; Zysberg & Schwabsky, 2020).

Moreover, the data suggest a strong culture of inclusivity and support across stakeholders. A high rating was given to items such as "Everyone feels valued and included as a member of this school community" (M = 4.69) and "Diverse cultural and social backgrounds are respected and celebrated" (M = 4.69). These results affirm the role of a welcoming and respectful school climate in promoting student well-being and equity (Daily et al., 2019; Bernardo & Isidro, 2019).

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High scores in the sense of belonging dimension reflect that learners feel pride in being part of their school, and that school personnel actively cultivate a positive atmosphere. According to Zullig et al. (2022), a strong sense of belonging is not only linked to emotional well-being but also correlates with reduced dropout rates and improved learning behaviors. In the Philippine context, where public schools often serve culturally diverse and economically vulnerable populations, these findings highlight the critical importance of relational climate as a foundation for inclusive and effective education.

Overall, the data underscore that public elementary schools in Glan 2 District demonstrate a very strong relational climate. This environment appears to be reinforced by positive communication patterns, community involvement, and inclusive practices—all of which are essential for fostering student engagement and long-term academic resilience (Trinidad, 2020).

Learning Climate

Table 2. Extent of the School Climate in the Different Public Elementary Schools in terms of Learning Climate Dimensions

	Statements	Mean	SD	Verbal Description
	Academic Support			
1	Teachers provide constructive feedback that helps students achieve their academic goals.	4.71	.47	Very High Extent
2	The school offers programs and resources to address diverse student learning needs.	4.73	.45	Very High Extent
3	Lesson plans are designed to cater to students with varying academic abilities.	4.73	.45	Very High Extent
4	Teachers ensure students receive individual support when needed.	4.69	.46	Very High Extent
5	The school provides opportunities for professional development to enhance teaching quality.	4.66	.48	Very High Extent
	Section Mean	**4.70**	**.46**	**Very High Extent**
	Student Engagement			
1	Teachers actively involve students in learning activities to keep them engaged.	4.66	.47	Very High Extent
2	School activities encourage student participation and creativity.	4.65	.48	Very High Extent
3	Classrooms provide an environment where students feel confident to share ideas.	4.67	.47	Very High Extent
4	Students show enthusiasm for participating in both academic and extracurricular activities.	4.67	.47	Very High Extent
5	Teachers use innovative strategies to maintain student interest and motivation.	4.60	.56	Very High Extent
	Section Mean	**4.65**	**.49**	**Very High Extent**
	Classroom Environment			
1	Classrooms are well-organized and conducive to learning.	4.63	.52	Very High Extent
2	Teachers effectively manage classroom behavior to minimize disruptions.	4.66	.47	Very High Extent
3	The learning environment encourages students to collaborate with their peers.	4.60	.53	Very High Extent
4	Classrooms are equipped with the necessary resources to support learning.	4.54	.62	Very High Extent

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5	Classroom arrangements are flexible and inclusive of all students' needs.	4.59	.54	Very High Extent
	Section Mean	**4.60**	**.48**	**Very High Extent**

Scale Range: 1.00 – 1.80-Very Low Extent; 1.80 – 2.59-Low Extent; 2.60 – 3.39-Moderate Extent; 3.40 – 4.19-High Extent; 4.20 – 5.00-Very High Extent

As shown in Table 2, the learning climate in the selected public elementary schools was rated to a very high extent across all three components: academic support (M = 4.70, SD = .46), student engagement (M = 4.65, SD = .49), and classroom environment (M = 4.60, SD = .48). These results underscore the schools' consistent efforts to create learning spaces that are responsive, inclusive, and conducive to meaningful academic experiences. In Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems model, these results reflect the strength of the microsystem, where learners directly experience academic support, engagement opportunities, and classroom management. A well-functioning microsystem provides learners with immediate scaffolds that encourage persistence and participation in learning activities.

The highest-rated indicators under academic support were: "The school offers programs and resources to address diverse student learning needs" (M = 4.73) and "*Lesson plans are designed to cater to students with varying academic abilities"* (M = 4.73). These findings suggest that teachers actively differentiate instruction and utilize learner-centered strategies. This aligns with the findings of Wang et al. (2020), who emphasized that individualized support and scaffolding are pivotal to student success, especially in diverse classrooms.

Teachers' commitment to feedback and student-centered interventions was also evident, with high ratings for *"Teachers ensure students receive individual support when needed"* (M = 4.69) and *"Teachers provide constructive feedback that helps students achieve their academic goals"* (M = 4.71). These affirm the presence of what Darling-Hammond et al. (2020) describe as a "culture of support," where instructional practices are tailored to students' academic and emotional needs.

In terms of student engagement, responses revealed a highly active and encouraging learning atmosphere. High scores were observed in items like *"Students show enthusiasm for participating in both academic and extracurricular activities"* (M = 4.67) and *"Classrooms provide an environment where students feel confident to share ideas"* (M = 4.67). These ratings indicate that learners not only feel welcomed but are empowered to participate and express themselves—an essential condition for developing higher-order thinking and creativity (Zullig et al., 2022).
Lastly, the classroom environment was also perceived as very conducive to learning. The indicators *"Teachers effectively manage classroom behavior to minimize disruptions"* (M = 4.66) and *"Classrooms are well-organized and conducive to learning"* (M = 4.63) support this interpretation. "Classroom arrangements are flexible and inclusive" (M = 4.59). Also, "Classrooms are equipped with necessary resources" (M = 4.54) received slightly lower mean scores. However, both remain in the very high range, indicating overall satisfaction despite some resource limitations. Flores (2021) noted similar patterns in rural Philippine schools, where high teacher commitment often compensates for infrastructural gaps.

Taken together, the data suggest that schools in Glan 2 District have established a robust learning climate, characterized by proactive teaching practices, strong engagement, and well-managed classrooms. These findings echo the work of Zysberg and Schwabsky (2020), who argue that such environments not only enhance academic outcomes but also foster learner resilience and long-term educational equity.

Physical Climate

Table 3. Extent of the School Climate in the Different Public Elementary Schools in terms of Physical Climate Dimensions

	Statements	Mean	SD	Verbal Description
	A. Safety			
1	The school has clear and effective safety policies in place.	4.68	.47	Very High Extent
2	Students feel safe within the school premises at all times.	4.62	.56	Very High Extent
3	Teachers and staff are trained to handle emergencies and ensure student safety.	4.59	.60	Very High Extent

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4	Bullying and harassment are addressed promptly and effectively.	4.65	.50	Very High Extent
5	The school ensures that entry and exit points are secure during school hours.	4.61	.49	Very High Extent
	Section Mean	**4.63**	**.52**	Very High Extent
	B. Orderliness			
1	Rules and regulations are consistently enforced by school staff.	4.61	.49	Very High Extent
2	Daily schedules and routines are followed to maintain order.	4.61	.56	Very High Extent
3	The school environment is clean, organized, and free from distractions.	4.63	.51	Very High Extent
4	Teachers and staff collaborate to maintain discipline and order.	4.65	.55	Very High Extent
5	Procedures for addressing disruptions are effectively communicated and implemented.	4.62	.56	Very High Extent
	Section Mean	**4.62**	**.53**	Very High Extent
	C. Infrastructure Quality			
1	School facilities, including classrooms, are well-maintained and functional.	4.49	.65	Very High Extent
2	The school provides adequate resources such as textbooks, technology, and laboratory equipment.	4.53	.63	Very High Extent
3	Restrooms and drinking water facilities are clean and accessible.	4.46	.64	Very High Extent
4	The school infrastructure supports innovative teaching and learning practices.	4.43	.64	Very High Extent
5	Regular maintenance ensures that the school remains conducive to learning.	4.50	.63	Very High Extent
	Section Mean	**4.48**	**.64**	Very High Extent

Scale Range: 1.00 – 1.80-Very Low Extent; 1.80 – 2.59-Low Extent; 2.60 – 3.39-Moderate Extent; 3.40 – 4.19-High Extent; 4.20 – 5.00-Very High Extent

Table 3 illustrates the extent of school climate in terms of physical climate, encompassing three core dimensions: safety, orderliness, and infrastructure quality. All three dimensions were rated to a very high extent, with mean scores of 4.63 for safety, 4.62 for orderliness, and 4.48 for infrastructure quality. These findings reflect the schools' strong commitment to providing a safe, structured, and physically supportive learning environment for all pupils. From an ecological systems perspective, these findings illustrate the strength of the microsystem, where learners directly experience safety, order, and infrastructure in their daily school lives. Such conditions are essential because they form the immediate environment within which learning and development occur.

Under the safety dimension, respondents acknowledged that *"The school has clear and effective safety policies in place"* (M = 4.68) and that *"Bullying and harassment are addressed promptly and effectively"* (M = 4.65). These perceptions indicate that learners feel protected both physically and emotionally while in school. Recent literature supports this, showing that perceived safety is a vital precondition for cognitive engagement and psychological well-being (Daily et al., 2019; Wang et al., 2020). Particularly in rural settings where resources may be limited, ensuring safety through clear protocols and staff preparedness becomes even more critical (Trinidad, 2020).

The orderliness dimension was also perceived very positively. Items such as *"The school environment is clean, organized, and free from distractions"* (M = 4.63) and *"Teachers and staff collaborate to maintain discipline*

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and order" (M = 4.65) suggest that these schools maintain a high degree of operational discipline. A clean and orderly school environment has been linked to improved student concentration, decreased behavioral issues, and overall learning effectiveness (Reynolds et al., 2017; Zullig et al., 2022).

Though slightly lower than the other dimensions, infrastructure quality still received a rating of very high extent (M = 4.48), with items like *"School facilities, including classrooms, are well-maintained and functional"* (M = 4.49) and *"Regular maintenance ensures that the school remains conducive to learning"* (M = 4.50). "Restrooms and drinking water facilities are clean and accessible" (M = 4.46) and "The school infrastructure supports innovative teaching and learning practices" (M = 4.43) received slightly lower ratings. These results indicate that while the facilities are functional, they may still require enhancement. As emphasized by Flores (2021), infrastructure investment remains a crucial area for development in public schools, particularly in geographically disadvantaged regions like Sarangani.

In sum, the findings indicate that public elementary schools in Glan 2 District provide a physical climate that supports safety, structure, and functionality—key elements in fostering an environment where learning can thrive. While the infrastructure component reveals areas for possible improvement, the overall positive ratings affirm that students benefit from an environment conducive to both personal development and academic engagement.

Level of Academic Performance of Elementary Pupils

Table 4. Level of the Academic Performance of Elementary Pupils

	Indicators	**GPA (in %)**	
1	English	83.00	Satisfactory
2	Science	81.00	Satisfactory
3	Mathematics	80.00	Satisfactory
	Overall Mean	82.00	Satisfactory

GPA Interpretation Scale: 90 – 100- Outstanding; 85 – 89- Very Satisfactory; 80 – 84- Satisfactory; 75 – 79- Fair; Below 75- Did Not Meet Expectations

Table 4 presents the general point average (GPA) of learners in English, Science, and Mathematics. Pupils achieved mean scores of 83.00% in English, 81.00% in Science, and 80.00% in Mathematics. The overall GPA was 82.00%, which falls under the "Satisfactory" performance level based on standard grading metrics. From Bronfenbrenner's ecological perspective, these performance results highlight the interaction between the microsystem (classroom experiences) and the exosystem (school- and community-level supports). While learners receive direct exposure to supportive school climates, their achievement scores also reflect the influence of broader systemic conditions beyond the immediate classroom.

Although satisfactory, these results suggest room for improvement, especially in Mathematics and Science, where scores are slightly lower. In alignment with earlier findings from the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), Filipino learners have consistently faced challenges in applying conceptual understanding to problem-solving tasks in these subjects (Trinidad, 2020). This underscores the importance of not only evaluating curriculum delivery but also examining learning conditions and support systems that might influence performance outcomes.

The relatively higher score in English reflects possible strengths in foundational literacy skills, potentially supported by effective instructional strategies and engagement practices within the school climate. Research by Bernardo and Isidro (2019) found that language performance in elementary education tends to improve in schools where students report higher levels of academic support and classroom interaction—both of which were rated very highly in this study.

Moreover, the consistency in GPA scores across subjects indicates a balanced academic experience. However, none of the averages reached the "Very Satisfactory" or "Outstanding" level. This gap may reflect contextual challenges, including limited instructional materials, heavy teaching workloads, or infrastructural constraints often reported in rural public schools (Flores, 2021). These findings suggest a need to strengthen differentiated instruction and learning reinforcement activities, particularly in STEM areas, to elevate academic outcomes.

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In conclusion, while the academic performance of pupils remains within the satisfactory range, the results call for more targeted and sustainable interventions—both curricular and environmental—to help learners progress beyond proficiency thresholds and toward academic excellence.

National Achievement Test (NAT) Performance of Elementary Pupils

Table 5. Result of the National Achievement Test (NAT) of Elementary Pupils

	Indicators	GPA (in %)	Verbal Description
1	National Achievement Test	82.00	Moving Toward Master

MPS Range (%): 90 – 100- Advanced; 85 – 89- Closely Approaching Mastery; 80 – 84- Moving Toward Mastery; 75 – 79- Developing; Below 75- Beginning

Table 5 presents the result of the National Achievement Test (NAT) for elementary pupils, with a reported average score of 82.00%, categorized as "Moving Toward Mastery." This performance level reflects a moderate to high grasp of competencies in core subject areas but also signals the need for strengthened instructional interventions to help learners fully master expected learning outcomes.

The NAT serves as a standardized measure of educational effectiveness across schools in the Philippines. According to the Department of Education (DepEd, 2020), scoring within the "Moving Toward Mastery" range indicates that learners demonstrate partial understanding of key concepts and require further enrichment and remediation to reach proficiency. This performance aligns with recent PISA reports, which revealed that many Filipino learners lag behind international benchmarks, especially in reading comprehension, mathematical reasoning, and scientific literacy (Trinidad, 2020).

Despite these challenges, the NAT score of 82.00% demonstrates encouraging progress, especially within a rural district context like Glan 2, Sarangani. Schools operating in geographically disadvantaged areas often contend with limitations in learning resources, internet access, and infrastructure (Flores, 2021). In this light, achieving a moving-toward-mastery level reflects the resilience of both teachers and students in creating meaningful learning experiences despite systemic barriers.

Moreover, this result complements earlier findings on the high extent of academic support, student engagement, and positive classroom climate within the schools. As Wang et al. (2020) emphasized, a well-managed learning environment can mitigate the negative effects of poverty and resource scarcity on student performance. The observed NAT outcome supports the idea that when relational and instructional conditions are supportive, students are more likely to perform better even in constrained settings.

In summary, while the NAT results affirm that learners are on the right track, they also reinforce the need for targeted capacity-building programs, enhanced teacher training, and regular assessment feedback mechanisms to push learners beyond transitional mastery and into full academic proficiency.

Relationship Between School Climate and Academic Performance of Pupils

Table 6. Results of Pearson's-r Analysis between the Dimensions of School Climate and the Academic Performance of Pupils

School Climate Dimension	School Performance	Interpretation
Relational Climate	-.323 *(.677)*	Not Significant
Learning Climate	-.806 *(.194)*	Not Significant
Physical Climate	.105 *(.895)*	Not Significant

**Significant at the .05 level (two-tailed).*

Note. *Pearson's r values range from –1.00 to +1.00. Positive values indicate a direct relationship; negative values indicate an inverse relationship.*

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Table 6 presents the results of Pearson's r correlation analysis between the three dimensions of school climate—relational, learning, and physical—and the academic performance of pupils, measured through their GPA and NAT results. The findings revealed no statistically significant relationships between any of the school climate dimensions and academic performance, with all p-values exceeding the .05 threshold: relational climate *(r = –.323, p = .677)*, learning climate *(r = –.806, p = .194)*, and physical climate *(r = .105, p = .895)*. Within Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, these null results indicate that the microsystem conditions of relational, learning, and physical climates, though rated highly, may be overshadowed by exosystem and macrosystem influences such as socio-economic pressures, policy demands, and post-pandemic disruptions. This underscores the idea that proximal environments are necessary but not sufficient in producing measurable academic outcomes.

Although the results might seem surprising, especially since the school climate was rated very positively in all areas, they offer an important insight. The lack of a clear link between school climate and academic performance suggests that even in a safe and supportive environment, better test scores don't automatically follow. This supports what other studies have shown—that the impact of school climate on learning isn't always direct. Instead, it's often shaped by other factors like how motivated students feel, the quality of teaching, family background, and how involved parents are (Zullig et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2020).

Moreover, the weak to moderate correlation results—especially the negative link found in the learning climate (r = –.806)—deserve closer attention. These results reflect the complex realities of rural schools in the Philippines. In such contexts, even a supportive learning environment may not be enough to overcome poverty, poor nutrition, or the lack of academic support at home (Flores, 2021). These outside factors can make it harder to see the real impact of school-based efforts on students' academic performance.

The absence of statistically significant correlations carries several important implications. First, it suggests that the effects of school climate on academic outcomes may be indirect, operating through mediators such as motivation, attendance, and self-efficacy rather than directly influencing test scores. Second, the null results highlight the weight of external factors—such as socio-economic conditions, family support, and systemic inequities—that may dilute or overshadow the benefits of a positive climate. Finally, these findings indicate the need for multi-layered interventions that address not only classroom and school environments but also the broader ecological systems that shape student achievement. In practical terms, this underscores the importance of integrating school climate initiatives with academic support programs, parental involvement, and community-based interventions.

It's important to note that just because the results didn't show a statistically significant link doesn't mean school climate has no value. In fact, a positive school climate plays a crucial role in students' well-being, regular attendance, active participation in class, and their long-term commitment to learning (Daily et al., 2019; Zysberg & Schwabsky, 2020). These findings highlight the need for more in-depth studies—such as long-term tracking or multi-layered research methods—that can better explore how school climate and student learning influence each other over time.

Finally, although the correlations between school climate and academic performance in this study were not statistically significant, the findings reinforce the importance of viewing school climate as a necessary—though not solely sufficient—condition for learner success. These results serve as a reminder that while academic performance is influenced by many variables, the school environment still plays a crucial role in shaping holistic educational experiences.

CONCLUSION

This study explored the extent of school climate and its relationship to learner performance in selected public elementary schools in Glan 2 District, Sarangani Province. Results revealed that school climate across all dimensions—relational, learning, and physical—was perceived to a very high extent by stakeholders, indicating the presence of respectful relationships, strong instructional support, and safe, orderly, and functional learning environments. Despite these favorable conditions, the academic performance of pupils remained within the satisfactory level, and statistical analysis showed no significant relationship between the school climate dimensions and learners' GPA and NAT scores.

These findings suggest that while a positive school climate contributes meaningfully to students' holistic development, it may not directly and immediately translate to measurable gains in academic scores. The lack of significant correlation also highlights the complexity of academic performance, which is likely influenced by a multitude of other factors such as home support, socioeconomic conditions, teaching effectiveness, and individual

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learner differences. Nevertheless, the consistently high ratings in school climate indicate a stable and nurturing foundation for sustained learning and well-being.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the findings, several concrete recommendations are advanced to address key areas of concern. Teachers may strengthen instruction in Science and Mathematics, where pupil outcomes were notably lower, by adopting differentiated and evidence-based strategies such as peer tutoring, problem-based learning, and the use of localized instructional materials that connect abstract concepts to real-life situations. School heads are likewise encouraged to integrate school climate initiatives into school improvement plans in ways that directly support academic enrichment, ensuring that safe and inclusive environments translate into stronger content mastery. For learners who are at risk of not reaching proficiency, systematic remediation classes, tutorial programs, and mentoring schemes may be institutionalized, complemented by stronger home–school partnerships that engage parents in supporting literacy and numeracy at home. Professional development for teachers may also be prioritized, with training focused on learner-centered instruction, classroom management, and innovative assessment practices. These efforts may be supported by local government units and DepEd divisions through sustained funding and logistical support. At the policy level, further investments in rural infrastructure—such as classrooms, laboratories, sanitation facilities, and access to technology—are urgently needed to address gaps in infrastructure quality, which were rated slightly lower compared to other aspects of school climate.

For future research, it is recommended that longitudinal studies may be undertaken to capture how school climate influences academic performance over time, as well as more advanced approaches such as structural equation modeling or multilevel analysis to test indirect effects and mediating variables like motivation, attendance, and self-efficacy. Comparative studies across multiple districts or provinces may also be conducted to enhance generalizability, particularly contrasting urban, rural, and Last Mile School contexts. Mixed-methods designs that integrate surveys with interviews or focus groups can provide richer insights into how school climate interacts with socio-economic and cultural factors that shape learner achievement. Finally, post-pandemic recovery studies are needed to examine how learning losses, workload pressures, and community support continue to moderate the relationship between school climate and performance in Philippine basic education.

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