



Relationship between Learning Environment and Quality of Service at University Level

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Abstract- The present study is an intention to investigate the relationship between learning environment and service quality among students at University level. The sample comprised of 86 male and 572 female students. The data were computed using descriptive as well as inferential statistics. The results of the study found a significant and strong positive relationship between learning environment and service quality of students. There is a significant moderate positive relationship of physical, cooperative, academic, presentation and motivation aspects of environment with tangible aspect of service quality. When correlate with different aspects, a significant moderate and positive relationship exists for physical, cooperative, academic, presentation, and motivation aspects of environment with the reliability aspect of service quality. A significant moderate positive relationship of physical, cooperative, academic, presentation and motivation aspects of environment with the responsiveness aspect of service quality. As concerned with the assurance aspect of service quality, all physical, cooperative, academic, presentation and motivation aspects of learning environment have significant moderate positive relationship.

Keywords: Learning environment, Service quality, Students motivation

I. INTRODUCTION

It is an admitted fact that academic learning environment is the key to success for students at any stage. Without the proper implementation of such environment, the objectives of education cannot be achieved effectively and efficiently. In classroom setting the quality is substantial in shaping the emotions of students' and behavior of class fellows, instructors, study subjects along with complete system of education (Zedan, 2010).

A study conducted by Zandvliet and Fraser (2005) showed that physical aspects of learning environment had much contribution to the psychosocial aspects of the classroom. These activities should be equipped with psychosocial atmosphere that is suitable for observed facilities, intellectual stimulation, increased societal contact, promotion of students' development and learning. The human atmosphere is the psychosocial climate of the schoolroom, in which instructor works as facilitator of the learning and play an important role in provide more creative climate for students' learning. During three decades, significant development was made in conceptualizing and measuring aspects of the classroom (Fraser, 1998a) with positive environment in classroom.

The combination of physical and social qualities that create the classroom experience is called a learning environment. It includes management procedures of classroom, organization of space, maintenance and furnishes. According to Baek and Choi (2002), learning environment is a critical factor in the achievement of student.

Services of quality have earned an excessive admiration in recent years. At higher education level, many studies on service quality have stressed on view point of students' for quality. Very little investigation has been made on the administrative staff and for academic perspective. Researches regarding the process of teaching and measuring instruments as well as administrative services that have empirically tested are only few. During 1980s, studies on quality of services began to flourish. It started with the definition of service quality. According to Lewis and Booms, "it is the level of service which delivered and fulfilled the customers' hopes". The thing that customers get is technical quality. Functional quality deals how the customers get. Technical quality is objective while functional quality is subjective in nature.

The student's perceived value is estimated by focusing on students learning and education experience and students being co-creators of value. There must be focus on learning of students that is the soul of quality (Law, 2010). The professors' performance in the classroom is the most important indicator in the student development therefore is a significant feature of enhancing student's satisfaction.

At higher education level the concept of quality is a multifaceted idea, hence, an agreed upon quality definition is rare (Harvey & Green, 1993). So the definition and measurement of service quality (Clewes, 2003) is yet a dream. Every researcher provides his own point of view according to specific requirements. University offered training to students to make them prime customers of academic deeds (Marzo-Navarro et al., 2005). Many researchers like Sander et al. (2000), Gremler and McCollough (2002), and Hill (1995) also perceived scholars as essential clients of services at advanced education level. Other factors have also their own importance. The study of Guolla (1999) explores that students play the role of customers, manufacturers, and products.

In the view point of O'Neill and Palmer (2004), service quality is the variance amid the expectation of students that they receive and the perceptions of genuine distribution”.

The performance of students is a key factor of understanding and learning in all educational institutions. It is an attempt of psychologists who explore the learning outcomes of students and find the answers to questions. The indicators that had impact on the achievement of scholars determine the size of the effect that is important critically to help the students to improve their academic performance. There is a vast literature that makes the relationship between outcomes of learning and academic performance with society, school, family, and inspiration (Aremu & Oluwole, 2001; Ozcinar, 2006). This measurement of achievement goals is another key factor in students' achievement. It is a comprehensive assessment system that has intellectual, passionate and behavioral consequences that students use to understand their performance (Dweck & Legget, 1988; Kaplan & Maehr, 1999).

The learning environment is the psychosocial climate of the school where instructor acts as facilitators of the learning and teacher plays an important role in providing or creating a more conducive climate for student learning. For the last 30 years significant progress was made in conceptualizing, measuring this aspects of the classroom (Fraser, 1998a).

The environment which creates classroom involvement and is also a combination of social and physical qualities is called classroom learning environment. It consist classroom management techniques and the way classroom space is maintained. In the context of classroom, it is the “common perception of the pupils as well as the instructors in that setting” (Fraser, 1986). Commonly, classroom environment has two aspects, the physical environment which includes material setting of the classroom like furniture, lighting and all the objects in the classroom.

In learning environment learners and teachers gather for longer periods to participate in various learning activities. Learning atmosphere is considered prime element of teaching and learning procedure. In learning environment interaction takes place between individual groups and in the situation in which they work. Lewin and Murraray laid the theoretical foundation of learning environment research more than 60 years ago. Kurt Lewin presented the formula of learning environment, $B=f(P, E)$ representing that behavior (B) is a function (f) of the person (p) and his/her environment (E). The equation identifies that “both the individual interaction and environmental characteristics are effective elements of human behavior” (Fraser, 1998).

The environment in academic situation has different tools and evidence assets. This correlation occurs between the teachers students. Pervious research revealed a correlation between environment of classroom and achievement of students. Indeed, research indicates that in comfortable and in positive learning environment students achieve higher scores (Waldrip & Fisher, 2003).

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The idea of 'learning environment' is investigated and used in different ways. Different meanings highlight different learning tasks and capabilities and represents to psychosocial setting of the classroom. Different measuring tools were needed to discover the views of students regarding the setting of classroom. Those surveys revealed effective forecasters towards the effectiveness of scholastic organization.

The environment which reflects students involvement in classroom and promotes social and physical activities is called learning environment. It provides classroom management techniques and better space to maintain. The learning environment plays an imperative role in enhancing the academic achievement of students (Baek & Choi, 2002). There are many facets of environment. When it is specified for classroom, it is the shared perception of students and teachers together. Generally, classroom environment is divided into two broad categories. It is the human environment and physical environment. Human environment is the psychosocial climate of the classroom, in which teacher acts as facilitator of the learning and create a more conducive climate for student learning. Physical environment deals with furniture, lighting and all the objects in the classroom (Fraser, 1998a). Many studies were conducted to trace out the actual learning that was correlated to positive environment of the classroom (Adlophe, 2002).

As behavior is the function of interaction between people and environment, both the environment and its contact with individual features of people are powerful factors of human behavior (Fraser, 1998). The learning environment had different resources and information that interact the learning process between pupils and instructors. Previous research had a relationship between classroom environment and students' achievement. Indeed, research indicates that in comfortable and in positive learning environment students achieve higher scores (Waldrip & Fisher, 2003).

According to Vosko (1984) environment has four elements: Ecology, milieu, social system, and culture. Classroom learning environment consists of both physical and psychosocial learning environment (Galbraith, 1990). According to Pappas (1990), the learning environment of classroom includes components of physical and psychological learning as well as the collaboration among learners.

The emphasis of environment depends on classroom management, students' motivation, methods of teaching, the classroom furniture, and even the color that the classroom is white washed. According to Lunenburg and Ornstein (2004), educational environment and learning environment are synonymous terms like scholastic activities, climate of the school and classroom dispositions. There are two aspects of learning environment. They are sociopsychological aspects and physical aspects that had an effect on the learning of student in traditional settings of classroom. The aspect of psychosocial environment of classroom is the relationship between social and psychological interaction between the pupils and teachers (Rawnsley & Fisher, 1998). According to Owens (2004), the synonymous term of the environment includes the atmosphere of personality aspects in an organization.

Learning Environment

The dynamics of classroom are mostly studied in classroom learning environment. These are the physical, psychological, and social dimensions of the classroom. The environment of the school has its influence on the internal classroom environment. It deals with the perceptions, feelings, and experiences of the students (Dunn & Harris, 1998). The psychosocial relations affect students' achievement in the classroom. These relations sometimes make a difference on the basis of academic goals of students and academic achievement score (McRobbie et al., 1997). Learning environment has emerged as an interesting topic of researchers and in the early 1970s, it has exerted immense influence on students' learning (Soerjaningsih, 2001; Soerjaningsih et al., 2001). The teacher student relationship largely depends on the activities of teacher in the classroom (Shuell, 1996).

The learning of students' is influenced by perception, interpretation and information in academic circumstances. The perceptions of students are used to evaluate in learning setting and explore the attitude and achievement of students (Clausen, 2002). When the perceptions of students enhanced in the classroom, more stable judgments appear and reduces the result of situational factors and individual liking (Baumert & Kunter, 2006).

The learning environment makes a difference among schools as well as instructors and the students (Hoy & Miskel, 2005). The factors within the classroom also affect students' achievement and attitudes. The learning satisfaction of the learners, independence in classroom, participation and activities, behaviors of teachers, teaching tasks, learning setting and procedure are different factors that promote learning environment (Zandvliet & Fraser, 2005).

Learning environment is an instructional design where teacher create an environment that is suitable for teaching and learning. The learning environment is a setting where the learner has to act. A learner gathers and interpret information them by interacting with others (Wilson, 1996). The teaching design based on the principles and ideas to support teaching and learning activities.

Service Quality

Service is the benefit that consumer avails (Mucuk, 2004). Kotler (2003) states that a service is any performance or act that a person can suggest to other person regardless of ownership. It is not a physical product. The fulfillment of customer's prospects is quality of service (Jabonoun & Al tamimi, 2003; Kang & Bradley, 2002).

The quality of service is the top most priority of consumers on the basis of evaluation, standards, and situations. According to Odabas (2004), service quality is the capability of a business firm to encounter or exceed the prospects of customers.

According to Parasuraman et al. (1985), service quality is the comparison between the perceptions and expectations. If there is opposite variance between perceived and expected quality it is understandable that consumer negatively interpret the quality of service. If outcome show positive result it is said that customer keep a positive point of view about service quality.

Service quality has four types. They are desired and expected service, and predicted service. Expected services referred are customers' intention to get from the provider of the service. Desired service is the extent of service that customers want to receive. Adequate service is the service of lowest level that a service

provider provides. Predicted service is the perceptions of the customers' trust the company will perform. According to O'Neil and Palmer (2004), service quality is the difference between the assumptions of student and real distribution of service provider.

Modern organizations are determined to provide superior quality of service to their clients. They also get feedback from the customers about their service performance. The perception of clients towards providing the quality services is essential for the success of organizations (Mukesh et al., 2009). According to Oakland (1993), service quality is the degree to which a service fulfills customer's wants or prospects. Service quality is the discrepancy between buyer service expectation and the perceived service, when the expectations exceeds than the performance, the consumer will not satisfied (Parasuraman et al., 1985). The service quality is essential for the appropriate feedback from purchasers' needs when they use that service and share the views of customers about the delivery of service (Kong & Muthusamy, 2011).

The investigators have defined the common dimensions of service quality (Jain et al., 2011). The quality of service is assessed by a scale (SERVQUAL). The scale had a variety of items under the ten dimensions. It was made by Parasuraman et al., in 1985. They reviewed the new SERVQUAL scale into five factors. They are "Tangibles, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance and Empathy". Carman (1990) suggested seven factors to investigate the quality of service. Mels et al. (1997) determined two dimensions to measure service quality. In addition, Cronin and Taylor (1992) determined that quality of service is multi-dimensional instead of uni-dimensional.

Unfortunately, in the context of Pakistan there are many indicators which affect the quality of educational institutions. Lack of healthy learning environment as well as low service quality resulted in poor performance of students which in turn makes the loss of resources. Hence the present study is an intention to explore the relationship between learning environment, service quality and performance of students in public sector universities of Punjab.

Objectives of the Study

Following objectives were kept in mind while conducting this research:

- i. To investigate the learning environment of students at university level.
- ii. To inspect the service quality of students at university level.
- iii. To trace out the relationship between learning environment and service quality of students at university level.
- iv. To trace out the relationship among indicators of learning environment and indicators of service quality of students at university level.

Hypotheses

The hypotheses drawn on the basis of the objectives were as under:

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between learning environment and service quality at university level.

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship of physical, cooperative, and academic aspects of learning environment with tangible aspect of service quality.

H₀₃: There is no significant relationship of presentation and motivation aspects of learning environment with tangible aspect of service quality.

H₀₄: There is no significant relationship of physical, cooperative, and academic aspects of learning environment with aspect of reliability and service quality.

H₀₅: There is no significant relationship of presentation and motivation aspects of learning environment with reliability aspect of service quality.

H₀₆: There is no significant relationship of physical, cooperative, and academic aspects of learning environment with responsiveness aspect of service quality.

Research Design

It was a descriptive research study based on survey to explore the relationship among learning environment, service quality and Students' performance at university level.

Population of the Study

The study consisted of the students enrolled in Government College University Faisalabad, and University of Education Faisalabad Campus. The students were taken from these universities who were enrolled in BS Honors.

Sample of the Study

As the study explored with the relationship between learning environment and service quality of students at university level. Due to gender and location of the respondents, they were distributed in male, female category. A total of six hundred and fifty eight students were selected randomly from those universities. From which 86 male and 572 were female.

Instrument of the Study

Self-constructed instrument named Learning Environment and Service Quality Survey [LESQS] was used by the researcher herself for this purpose. Data were collected using an instrument of LESQS. The independent variable was learning environment and service quality. The dependent variable was performance of students. The instrument was pilot tested for this study to check the reliability, validity and suitability. The instrument was developed in English language keeping in view the literature review and different questionnaires already used for different researchers about learning environment and service quality.

Learning Environment and Service Quality Survey (LESQS)

The instrument was developed by the researcher herself. It was a Likert type close ended questionnaire. There were 51 items having 5 factors related to Learning Environment and 5 factors related to Service Quality.

Factors of Learning Environment were: Physical 6 items; Cooperation 5 items; Academic 8 items; Presentation 6 items and Motivation 5 items. Factors of Service Quality were Tangible 4 items; Reliability 4 items; Responsiveness 4 items Assurance 5 items; and Empathy 3 items. The items distribution of LESQS is given as under:

Table 1

Item Breakup of Learning Environment and Service Quality Survey

S.No	Statements	Item Numbers
1	Learning Environment	1-30
2	Service Quality	31-51

The table 1 showed that learning environment has thirty items and service quality had twenty one items.

Pilot Testing of Instrument

The research instrument was administered to 150 students which were not included in the sample. Among them 80 were males and 70 students belonged to female category. They were also further subdivided into science and arts category. Forty male students belonged to science subjects and 40 belonged to arts subjects. The responses of the respondents were entered in SPSS version 22 and the factor analysis was made. Internal consistency coefficient (using Cronbach Alpha) was used to check the reliability and its value was 0.521. This value was low for conducting a research. After deleting the item numbers 12, 21, and 34 that have low correlation, the value of Alpha was raised to 0.625. So they were rephrased and pilot tested again. After second factor analysis, the new value of Alpha raised to 0.80 which was appropriate for research study.

Validity of the Instrument

The instrument was pilot tested for its validity. This instrument was validated independently by the panel of experts in the field. The experts belonged to the field of education and research. They verified the face as well as content validity of instrument.

Reliability of the Instrument

The reliability of Learning Environment and Service Quality Survey instrument was 0.899.

Table 2.

Reliability of the LESQS Survey Factor Wise

Sr. no.	Factors of the scale	Reliability
1	Learning Environment	0.857

2	Service Quality	0.853
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The table 2 showed the reliability of factors of the LESQS survey. The reliability of the learning environment was 0.857 and Service quality was 0.853.

Table 3.

Reliability of Learning Environment Factor Wise

S. No	Factors of the Scale	Reliability
1	Physical	0.857
2	Cooperative	0.861
3	Academic	0.850
4	Presentation	0.858
5	Motivation	0.860

The table 3 showed the reliability of factors of Learning Environment. These were Physical 0.857; Cooperation 0.861; Academic 0.850; Presentation 0.858 and Motivation was 0.860.

Data Collection Procedure

The researcher herself collected the data conducting a survey technique. Verbal and printed instructions were delivered to respondents to fill the questionnaire. It was the perception of the researcher that it reduces biased feedback from the respondents. The researcher herself collected the completed questionnaires. So a very small number of questionnaires were lost. Out of 750, 658 questionnaires were found correct for data entry. Incomplete questionnaires were wasted. So the response rate was 88%.

Data Analysis

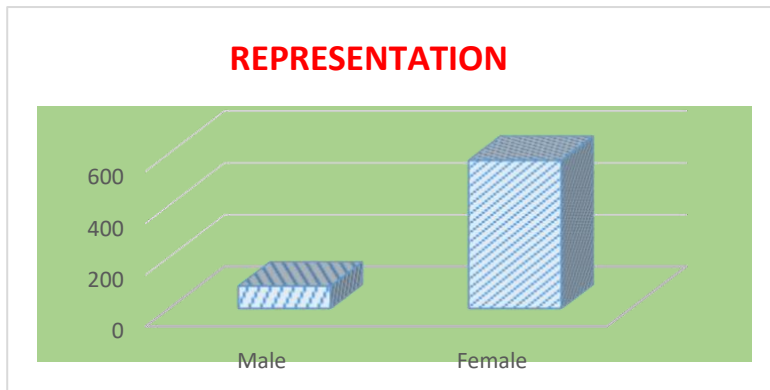
Data were analyzed by using SPSS version 22.0. Pearson “r” was applied to test the relationship among the variables of the hypotheses. The data were computed using descriptive as well as inferential statistics.

Table 4

Frequency and Percentage of Respondents with respect to Gender

S. no	Gender	F	%
1	Male	86	13.1
2	Female	572	86.9
	Total	658	100

It was evident from the table 4 that number of male students was 86 (13.1%) and number of female students was 86.9 (86.9%). So the females were in higher numbers.



Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between learning environment and service quality at university level.

Table 5

Correlation between Learning Environment and Service Quality

	Service Quality	P-Value
Learning Environment	.661	.000**

**P<0.01 & 0.05

The findings from the table 5 depicted that there was a noteworthy correlation between learning environment and service quality. So the null hypothesis about the correlation between learning environment and service quality was rejected. It was concluded that when learning environment increases, service quality also increases. The result of "Pearson r (.661, P<0.01 & 0.05 levels)" showed the strong positive relationships between learning environment and service quality of students. The p-value is also significant at 0.01 and 0.05 levels of significance.

Ho₂: There is no significant relationship of physical, cooperative, and academic aspects of learning environment with tangible aspect of service quality.

Table 6

Correlation of Physical, Cooperative, and Academic Aspects with Tangible Aspect

	Tangible aspect	P-Value
Physical	.383	.000**
Cooperative	.275	.000**
Academic	.406	.000**

**P<0.01 & 0.05

Correlation was run to see the relationship of physical, cooperative, and academic aspects of learning environment with the tangible aspect of service quality. It revealed from the table 6 that there was a significant relationship of physical, (.383) cooperative (.275) and academic aspects of environment (.406) with reliability aspect of service quality. So the null hypothesis about the correlation of physical, cooperative, and academic aspects of learning environment with reliability aspect of service quality was rejected. It was concluded that when the aspects like physical, cooperative and academic environment increases, the reliability aspect of service quality also increases. The result of "Pearson r (.383, .275, and .406, p<0.01 & 0.05 levels)" showed the moderate positive relationships of physical, cooperative, and academic aspects of learning environments with reliability aspects of service quality of students.

Ho₃: There is no significant relationship of presentation and motivation aspects of learning environment with tangible aspect of service quality.

Table 7.

Correlation of Presentations and Motivation Aspects with Tangible aspect

	Tangible aspect	P-Value
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Presentation	.273	.000**
Motivation	.330	.000**

**P<0.01 & 0.05

When Pearson 'r' was applied to see the relationship of presentation and motivation aspects with the tangible aspect of service quality, it revealed from the table 7 that there was a significant relationship of presentation (.273) and motivation aspects (.330) with the tangible aspect of service quality. So the null hypothesis about the correlation of presentation and motivation aspects with tangible aspect of service quality was rejected. It was concluded that when the learning environment aspects like presentation and motivation increase, the tangible aspect of service quality also increases. The result of "Pearson r (.273, .330, P<0.01 & 0.05 levels)" showed the moderate positive relationship of presentation and motivation aspects of learning environments with tangible aspect of service quality of students.

Ho4: There is no significant relationship of physical, cooperative, and academic aspects of learning environment with reliability aspect of service quality.

Table 8.

Correlation of Physical, Cooperative, and Academic Aspects with Reliability Aspect

	Reliability aspect	P-Value
Physical Aspects	.345	.000**
Cooperative	.345	.000**
Academic	.429	.000**

**P<0.01 & 0.05

Correlation was run to see the relationship of physical, cooperative, and academic aspects of learning environment with the reliability aspect of service quality. It showed from the table 8 that there was a significant relationship of physical (.345) cooperative (.345) and academic aspects of environment (.429) with reliability aspect of service quality. So the null hypothesis about the correlation between physical, cooperative, and academic aspects with reliability aspect was rejected. It was concluded that when the aspects like physical, cooperative and academic environment increase, the reliability aspect of service quality also increases. The result of "Pearson r (.345, .345, and .429, P<0.01 & 0.05 levels)" showed the moderate positive relationships of physical, cooperative, and academic aspects of learning environment with reliability aspects of service quality of students.

Ho5: There is no significant relationship of presentation and motivation aspects of learning environment with reliability aspect of service quality.

Table 9.

Correlation of Presentation and Motivation with Reliability Aspect

	Reliability aspect	P-Value
Presentation	.382	.000**
Motivation	.328	.000**

**P<0.01 & 0.05

While calculating the relationship of presentation and motivation with the reliability aspect of service quality of students, it revealed from the table 9 that there was a significant relationship of presentation (.382) and motivation (.328) with the reliability aspect of service quality. So the null hypothesis about the correlation between presentation and motivation with reliability aspect was rejected. It was concluded that when the aspects like presentation and motivation increases, the reliability aspect of service quality also increases. The result of "Pearson r (.382, .328, P<0.01 & 0.05 levels)" showed the moderate positive relationships of presentation and motivation aspects of learning environments with reliability aspect of service quality of students.

Ho6: There is no significant relationship of physical, cooperative, and academic aspects of learning environment with responsiveness aspect of service quality.

Table 10.*Correlation of Physical, Cooperative and Academic Aspects with Responsiveness Aspect*

	Responsiveness aspect	P-Value
Physical	.482	.000**
Cooperative	.362	.000**
Academic	.453	.000**

**P<0.01 & 0.05

Pearson r was applied to see the relationship of physical, cooperative, and academic aspects of learning environment with the responsiveness aspect of service quality of students. It revealed from the table 10 that there was a significant relationship of physical, (.482) cooperative (.362) and academic aspects of learning environment (.453) with reliability aspect of service quality. So the null hypothesis about the correlation between physical, cooperative, and academic aspects of learning environment with reliability aspect of service quality was rejected. It concluded that when the aspects like physical, cooperative and academic environments increase, the responsiveness aspect of service quality also increases. The result of "Pearson r (.482, .362, .453, P< 0.01 & 0.05 levels)" showed the moderate positive relationships of physical, cooperative, and academic aspects of learning environments with responsiveness aspect of service quality of students.

III. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The study revealed a significant and strong positive relationship between learning environment and service quality of students. The results of the study supported the study of Dunn and Harris (1998) who claimed that environment of the school has its influence on the internal classroom activities which in turn increase the service quality of students. These are the feelings, experiences and perception of the students. The psycho-social interactions that happen in the classroom affect students' achievement. These interactions sometime make a difference with reference to students' achievement and their academic goals (McRobbie et al., 1997).

The results of the study found a significant and strong positive relationship between learning environment and service quality of students. It was justified on the basis that when learning environment of the students' increases, the quality of services also increases. According to Zandvliet and Fraser (2005), different aspects that promote learning environment are the learning satisfaction of the learners, independence in classroom, involvement and task orientation, teachers' behaviors, instructional practices, learning setting and learning process.

As it was evident that learning environment has also positive relationship with service quality, its aspects have also significant correlation on quality of service. Hence, it was found that a moderate positive relationship of physical, cooperative, academic, presentation and motivation aspects of environment with tangible aspect of service quality. The results of the current study supported the study of Rawnsley and fisher (1998) who explored that sociopsychological as well as physical aspects have an effect on the student' learning with respect to classroom settings. Psychosocial environment aspect of classroom is the psychologically and socially related to students achievement.

When correlate with different aspects, a significant moderate and positive relationship exists for physical, cooperative, academic, presentation, and motivation aspects of environment with the reliability aspect of service quality. A significant moderate positive relationship of physical, cooperative, academic, presentation and motivation aspects of environment with the responsiveness aspect of service quality. As concerned with the assurance aspect of service quality, all physical, cooperative, academic, presentation and motivation aspects of learning environment had significant moderate positive relationship. While applying Pearson "r" significant moderate positive relationship found for physical, cooperative, academic, presentation and motivation aspects of learning environment with the empathy aspect of service quality. A learner collected information and interprets them by interacting with others (Wilson, 1996).

There was a significant strong positive relationship between learning environment and service quality of students. The study results favored the all aspects of learning environment with learning quality of students by Wilson, et al., (2005), especially in the first school years (Nye et al., 2004). Students show positive motivation and learning patterns on the directive behavior of teachers (Sachs, 2003), when they stimulate mastery and improve skills and knowledge (Meece et al., 2006).

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