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The Phenomenon of Sakto Lang Academic Performance: A Grounded Theory of Incongruent Law Academic Outcome and High Academic Self-Concept

Glicerio M. Maningas

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Philippine Normal University
National Center for Teacher Education

The Phenomenon of *Sakto Lang*
Academic Performance: A Grounded Theory of
Incongruent Low Academic Outcome and High Academic Self-Concept

A Dissertation Submitted to
The College of the Graduate School and Teacher Education Research
Philippine Normal University, Manila

In Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy in Curriculum and Instruction

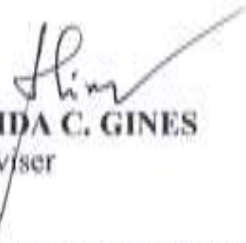
Glicerio M. Maningas
March 2016

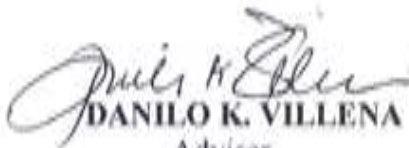


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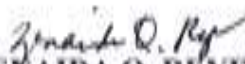
APPROVAL SHEET

This dissertation entitled **The Phenomenon of Sakto Lang Academic Performance: A Grounded Theory of Incongruent Low Academic Outcome and High Academic Self-Concept** prepared and submitted by **GLICERIO M. MANINGAS** in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Curriculum and Instruction is hereby recommended for approval and acceptance.


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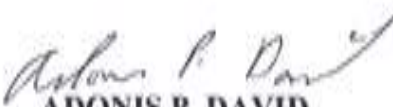

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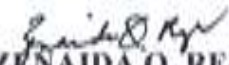

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Dedication

This work is dedicated to my family, my Nanay, a retired public school teacher, my siblings, Kuya Nilo, Ate Kheysie, Ate Nida, Ate Baby, Kuya Jojo, Joey and Vicky. My nephews Patrick and Gino. This is the least I can do for all their love and support.

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To God, Giver of Life, Source of all goodness and blessings, to Him be all the Glory.



Name : Glicerio M. Maningas

Title : The Phenomenon of *Sakto Lang* Academic Performance:
A Grounded Theory of Incongruent Low Academic Outcome and High Academic Self-Concept

Keywords : academic self-concept, academic outcome, downward comparison, selective academic motivation, *sakto-lang* , *petiks*, *hayahay*

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ABSTRACT

Grounded on the lived-experience of the twenty-seven (27) second year college students of economically-disadvantaged families, the present study attempted to construct a theory to describe and explain the high academic self-concept and low academic outcome of participants. In its desire to understand the paradoxical link between high academic self-concept and low academic outcome from the subjective view of the experiencing-students, the study used Qualitative Design specifically employing Grounded Theory.

Participants were purposely selected using the following criteria: (1) with high academic self-concept as measured by the Academic Self-Concept Questionnaire (Liu, Wang & Parkins, 2005); (2) with Low to Very Low Academic Outcome as measured by computed General Weighted Average; and (3) 18 to 20 years old.

Following the belief that people live ‘storied-lives’ and communicated through words, it used Interview, Reflective Writing, and Sentence Completion as the data collection instruments from which it drew the lived experience of the participants. Guided by the methodology of



Corbin and Strauss (2008), it followed the following steps in its analysis: (1) Reading the materials, (2) open coding, (3) exploring context, and (4) theory building.

Anchored on their subjective interpretation of their lived-experience as students with high academic self-concept and low academic outcome, this study found the following themes to describe their experience and presented them as themes/codes: Handicapping the Self, Settling for *Sakto Lang* Academic Performance, Adopting Situational or Selective Academic Motivation, Confronting Domestic Situation, Parenting Styles, Looking for Emotional Connectedness, Attributing Loss of Academic Interest and Motivation, Comparing the Self, and Fearing Negative Evaluation.

Analyzing for **Context** yielded the following problems in the internal environment: poor self-constructs, handicapping the self, no study habit, poor memory and concentration, poor self-regulation, low valuation of self-worth, negative internal statements, and external attribution. Problems in the context of family include: paradox of poverty for academic motivation, powerlessness for self-determination, dysfunctional family, a sense of orphanhood, *basta walang bagsak* mentality of parents, and being overwhelmed by chores. While problems in the classroom are: culture of *petiks*, *hayahay*, *chill-chill lang*, teacher's negative *aura*, patterning academic behavior after friends and classmates, looking for emotional connection with friends and classmates, lack of professional competence and commitment of some teachers, *duga* in grading and favoritism in class, threatening classroom environment, fear of taking risks, and fear of being laughed at.

In response to the existing condition, participants engage in the following **processes**:

- | | | |
|--------|---|---|
| First | : | Losing Academic Interest and Motivation |
| Second | : | Fearing to Fail and Avoiding the Bottom of the Class |
| Third | : | Comparing the Self and Academic Performance with Reference Individual or Group in Class |



Fourth : Adopting Situational or Selective Academic Interest and Motivation

Fifth : Using Downward Comparison

The major processes resulted to the following **outcomes**: acquiring a false sense of self, inflated sense of academic competence, commitment, and involvement (false sense of academic self-concept), downward trajectory of academic performance, strengthening the culture of *hayahay*, *petiks*, and *chill-chill lang*, loss of grit, drifting through without clear sense of purpose, and failing to discover one's strength. In general the outcome of the process in response to the existing condition in the environment is the loss of human potential.

The phenomenon revealed by the participants through their oft-repeated reference to the term *sakto lang or sapat lang*, (just enough to meet the minimum standard) is the phenomenon of *sakto lang* academic performance. The *sakto lang* academic performance is a calibrated exertion of academic effort achieved through the use of upward and downward comparison of one's academic performance with reference individual or group in the school or class. The downward comparison sets the condition for downward trajectory of performance and acts as a self-protective mechanism from low test scores or grades resulting to an inflated sense of academic self-concept. It is highly subjective and ever-changing depending on the performance of the reference individual or group.

The end product is an **Integrative Story** woven around **The Phenomenon of the Sakto Lang Academic Performance**.



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FOREWORD

This paper contains stories of the lived-experience of the participants. They are stories through which we could probably see a piece of ourselves, as a person, a student, a teacher, a parent, school administrator or curriculum planner. Readers are invited to read the stories not as a critique of schools and families but as areas for our reflective practice. The final output of this study which is an **Integrative Story** on the **Phenomenon of Sakto Lang Academic Performance** provides us a new perspective in seeing the problem with the low academic performance among our students.

The original title of this paper was **Free or Shackled? Finding the Truth in the Nakedness of the Self: A Grounded Theory of High Academic Self-Concept and Low Academic Outcome**. Changing it into a new title: *The Phenomenon of Sakto Lang Academic Performance: A Grounded Theory of Incongruent Low Academic Outcome and High Academic Self-Concept* is deemed more appropriate by the Panel of Examiners for we have already found the answer to the question posed in the previous title. We have found the answer. In the nakedness of the self, bared through the stories told, they are not free but shackled by the Context and Process found in the analysis of data. The new title gives this paper the opportunity to highlight the phenomenon found in the study giving it prominence and putting it at the forefront of discussion on curriculum development.

Chapter I: Introduction integrates the background of the study, personal interest of the researcher on the topic, and the related literature that serves as the theoretical frame and underpinning of the study.

Chapter II: Methodology is a discussion on research design following Corbin and Strauss, (2008). *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory*.

Chapter III: Findings is a narration of the stories told by the participants presented under themes and organized according to the sub-problems of the study. It is entitled *The Lived-Experience of Economically-Disadvantaged Filipino Learners in their Psycho-Social Contexts*. The title is attributed to the suggestion of Dean Zenaida Q. Reyes for the need to provide a title which would capture the findings of the study.

Chapter IV: Analysis of data is presented following the design of Grounded Theory – analyzing for Context, Process, and Consequences. Data are analyzed in the light of related literature and interpretation of the researcher. Analysis leads to the identification of the phenomenon around which the Grounded Theory is constructed. This chapter is entitled *Analyzing and Synthesizing Context, Process, Outcomes and the Phenomenon of Sakto Lang Academic Performance*. Reconstruction of this chapter from the previous manuscript is attributed to the suggestion of Dr. Adonis P. David



Chapter V: The Final Output of the Study, An Integrative Story on the Phenomenon found and revealed through the data. Other formats of Grounded Theory papers put the Integrative Story at the end of Analysis. This paper introduces a separate chapter for it. Rationale for making it a chapter of its own is to give it importance in the whole process of theory building and its contribution in knowledge building. This is based on the insight of Dr. Felicia I. Yeban, one of the members of the Panel of Examiners.

Chapter VI: Conclusion and Recommendations are presented.

The paper advocates for the 'liberation of human awareness' as the starting point of curriculum development. It brings to the fore of discussion the need to liberate our students from the self-debilitating thoughts and habits, from the powerless for self-determination created by the condition of economic disadvantage of families, and the existing culture of *petiks*, *hayahay*, and *chill-chill lang* attitude that is found in some classrooms today. Curriculum development requires the restructuring of internal environment or mindset of learners, their family and school/classroom context to set a necessary condition for the successful implementation of any attempts to developing a curriculum that will bring about authentic and meaningful individual and social development.

The writing of this paper has been a collaborative process with my Advisers, Dr. Adelaida C. Gines and Dr. Danilo K. Villena as well as with the Panel of Oral Examiners, Dr. Rene R. Belecina, Dr. Adonis P. David, Dr. Felicia I. Yeban and Dean Zenaida Q. Reyes. The search for and the construction of knowledge has been a collective effort.



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It is necessary to the happiness of man that he be mentally faithful to himself. Infidelity does not consist in believing or disbelieving. It consists in professing to believe what one does not believe.

Thomas Paine (1737 – 1809)

CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM AND ITS BACKGROUND

Introduction

A major component of any professional field like the teaching profession is human capital. As such, it involves 'attracting, selecting, training, and retaining the people who work in the field', (Mehta, J., 2014). According to Mehta (2014), the success of top performing countries like Canada, Finland, Japan, Singapore, and South Korea in the Program for International Student on Assessment (PISA) is attributed to those countries' practice of rigorous selection process from the pool of the most talented teacher education graduates.

In the Philippines, recruitment and selection of the most talented teachers into the profession to address the need of improving the quality of education and the country's attempts in meeting international standards remains a major concern. The Manifesto for Teacher Quality (2015) issued by the Philippine Business for Education (PBE) brings to the fore this concern. PBE recognizes that teacher quality is an integral part in developing well-rounded individuals and an empowered society but they noted an alarming trend in teacher quality at the pre-service level. PBE's study of the performance of colleges and universities in the Licensure Examination for Teachers revealed that: (1) only 60% of all teacher education institutions (TEIs) have less than half of their teacher education students pass the LET, (2) only half of first time takers pass the exam, and (3) more than 60% of the overall LET takers are repeaters and



they only have a 16% chance of passing. According to the manifesto, the appalling results suggest that (1) high school students are ill-prepared when they enter teacher education programs, (2) teacher education students receive inadequate pre-service preparation in TEIs, and (3) a possible disconnect on the LET questions and what is taught by the TEIs. The problem of ill-prepared teachers appeared not to have been successfully addressed since the 2000 Philippine Human Development Report which pointed out that contributing to the low quality of education is the dearth of highly competent teachers. The report cited the inadequate preparation of teachers as the reason for the poor performance of education graduates in the Licensure Examination for Teachers (LET).

As it is, the Philippine educational system is beset with students being ill-prepared for the demands of academic life. The challenge to overcome the poor quality of education becomes even more complex and daunting within the context of CMO 46, series of 2012 or Policy Standard to Enhance Quality Assurance (QA) in Philippine Higher Education Through An Outcomes-Based and Typology-Based QA by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED). The memorandum is anchored on the promotion of the country's human development, productivity, and global competitiveness (CMO 46, series of 2012). The government believes that for the national economy to take off, Higher Educational Institutions must be able to address the lack in the pool of human resource with the necessary knowledge and skills or competencies needed by the market.

Given this problem on the lack of critical pool of college graduates in the country, there exists a need to re-examine existing curriculum and instruction. The present study posits that any attempt to provide answers to "what to teach" and "how to teach" should start with learners



and our understanding of them not only because learners are a valid source in curriculum development but also because what is valuable and meaningful to the learners are intimately linked with their understanding of their *self*. A thing or an experience acquires meaning and value only in relation to the self. Thus, the need to explore the cognitive schema or cognitive structure of learners containing beliefs and interpretations of themselves as a person and as a learner for this study posits that the successful attainment of the country's economic goals through relevant education is intimately linked with self-constructs, beliefs, and feelings. Everything in life begins with the self and our understanding of that self. Such idea can be traced to the classical Socratic dictum *Know Thyself*. Students' understanding of their *self* serves as the foundation of the learners' mindset, psychological readiness and predisposition to learn and tackle the challenges of the paradigm shift espoused by CMO 46, series of 2012. Shifting curriculum paradigms requires shift in the mindset of learners with which they calibrate ensuing attitudes and actions towards academic tasks and academic challenges. The present study shares in the growing consensus that education should not only be focused on the cognitive and instructional aspects of teaching and learning but also on helping students to learn about themselves which in turn will enable students to live with peace in themselves, live peacefully with others. Such kind of education will help them develop into competent, mature, and self-motivated individuals (Liu, Wang & Parkins, 2005).

Beliefs, perceptions and feelings in the schema of learners may influence how they will succeed or fail in school. For example, self-concept is widely acknowledged as playing an influential mediator in all learning situations. It has been associated with better academic achievement, perseverance, coursework choice, and attitudes to learning (Arnaiz & Guillen,



2012). Self-concept that is specifically applied in the context of academic setting is the Academic Self-Concept. Wilson (2009) believes that students with low academic self-concept, choose academic and career paths that are less challenging and less fulfilling. For Wilson (2009), such tendencies create loss of skills and advancement for the individual and society. Conversely students with high academic self-concept may choose academic tasks and careers that are challenging, rigorous, and fulfilling and may even facilitate the promotion of the country's human development. Studies support the view that "self-concept is not only an important outcome variable in itself but it also plays a central role in affecting other desirable educational outcomes" (Marsh & Martin, 2011).

Within the Asian context, some scholars tried to contextualize the predominantly-Western definition of the term by integrating into their definition Asian values. For example, Liu, C.W. and Wang, C.K.J. (2005) conceptualized academic self-concept along three (3) dimensions: (1) perceived competence; (2) commitment; (3) involvement; and (4) interest in schoolwork. Liu and Wang (2005) explained that Singaporean students' perception of their academic self is influenced by Confucian values. It conceives of learning as a process of studying extensively, inquiring carefully, pondering thoroughly, sifting clearly, and practicing earnestly (as cited in Liu & Wang, 2005, p. 21). The influence of cultural context in self-definition of individuals is highlighted by Markus and Kitayana, 1991 who expounded that the pattern and interrelatedness of self-thoughts, feelings and behaviors is also called self-construal. They are intimately founded on cultural values, beliefs, norms and practices, (as cited by Batican, 2011, p.18). In the same vein, Tan and Yates (2007) assert the influence of Confucian culture in the beliefs and values of people of Singapore. The Confucian culture high regard for



hard work and effort reflects Singaporean students' pursuit of learning. They work by the motto 'No pain, no gain.' (Tan & Yates, 2007, p. 471).

The researcher's interest in the development of the self of students was borne out of his close and personal encounters with his students. Observing behaviors of students, noticing their academic difficulties, hearing their stories, watching them struggle with coping with the challenges of academic life, the researcher sensed that a possible part of the problem could be the seeming lack of understanding of their self and belief in themselves. Through the researcher's close interactions with his students, he got glimpses of the problem that could potentially and partly explain the problem of poor academic performance among students.

We may get a glimpse of it from the statement of Julius, a second year education student, during one of the class discussions. When asked about the question: "What is in your interactions within the school setting that you interpret as detrimental in your attempt to improve your academic performance? It could be anything that you heard or saw through your interactions with your teachers or classmates?" To which Julius answered: "*Sabi po nila mahihina kami, pero ipinapasá naman po nila kami* (They said that we are academically not good but they keep on passing us)."

Peeling the layers of the boy's reply, he seems to say that while they were perceived and judged to be performing poorly in their academic tasks, teachers kept on promoting them to the next level. Thus they get the idea that even if they do poorly, it does not really matter because nonetheless they will be given a passing mark or be promoted to the next level. Julius' answer was short but loaded with issues related with how self-concept develops and with a practice that poses problems in improving individual academic performance. Some students justify their



being un-participative in class discussion by saying: “*Natatakot akong sumagot, baka mali* (I am afraid to participate, what I say might be wrong).” While others say: “*May alam ako kaso hindi ako sigurado sa sagot* (I know some answers but I am not sure).” Such self-beliefs and feelings form part of the self-concept that can either facilitate or hinder students’ academic performance. When asked why their academic performance and output do not improve even if they were assigned to work in groups, a student replied: “*Hindi nag i-improve ang performance namin kasi pare-pareho ang alam namin at pare-pareho din anghindi namin alam.*” (Our performance does not improve because everyone in the group has the same level of knowledge). Those negative beliefs and feelings implied in the students’ statements are detrimental to students’ motivation in improving their academic performance and lead us in asking the questions: How do we account for the development of self-concept? What is the process involved? How does it lead to poor academic performance among students? It is against those questions that this study is explored.

There is extensive evidence supporting the link between academic self-concept and academic outcome and there are some studies explaining the paradox between high self-construct like self-esteem but low academic outcome. However, there is dearth of studies describing, explaining, and constructing a theory on the link between high academic self-concept and low academic outcome from the perspective of the experiencing persons. Thus this inductive attempt, specifically using the Grounded Theory was conducted for a greater understanding of the phenomenon.



The Conceptual Framework

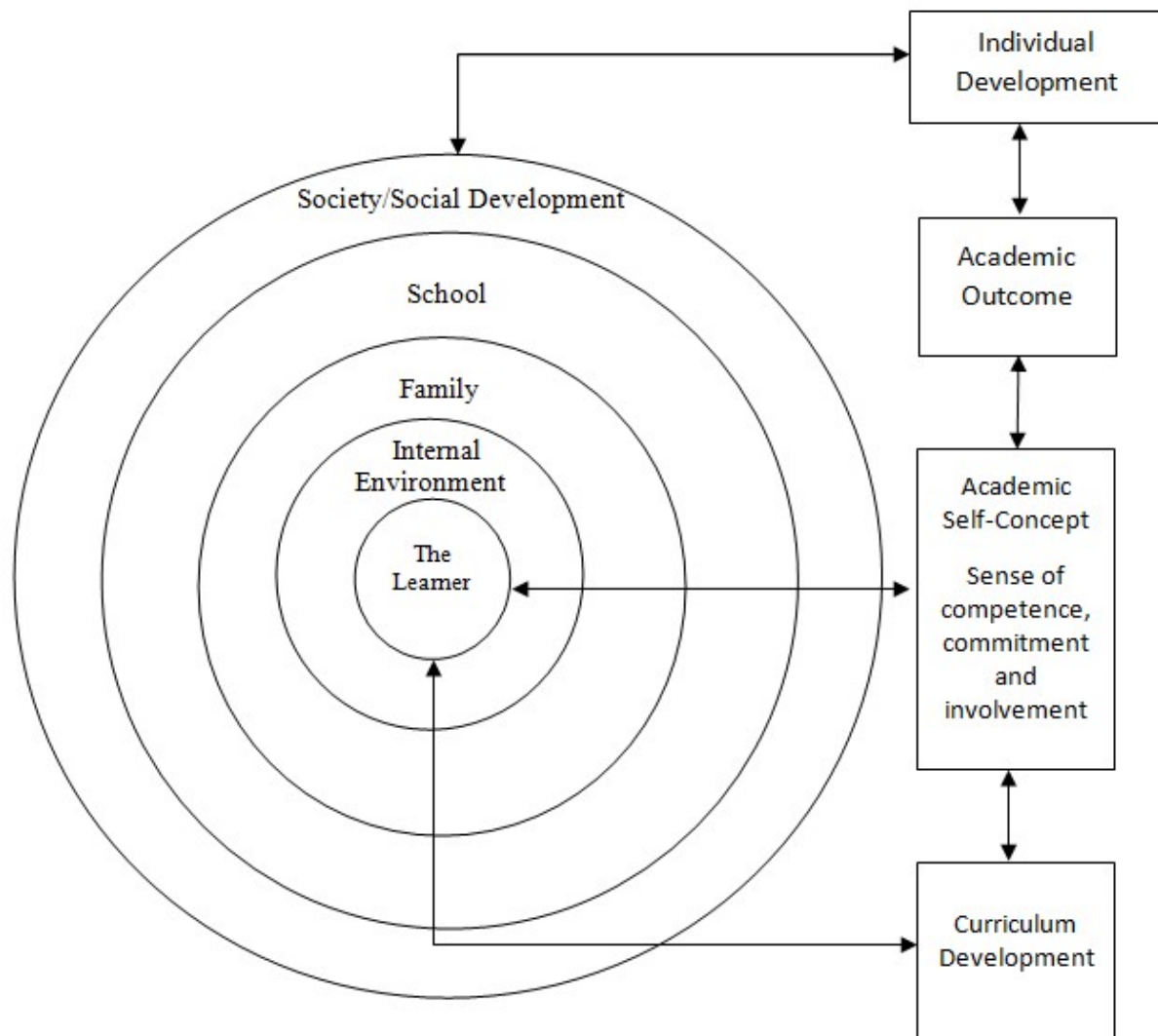


Illustration 1: The Conceptual Framework Showing The Learner Within the Interdependent Systems in his/her Environment influencing the Formation of Academic Self-Concept

This study brings to the fore of academic discussion that development in curriculum and instruction should include an examination of the self-concepts or cognitive schema that includes



self-beliefs and feelings constituting the students' mindset in approaching academic tasks. Beliefs, feelings, perceptions of their experiences contained in the schema of learners may influence whether they will succeed or fail in their academic life. Self-concept or one's understanding about him/herself is formed within the context of the individual's interaction in family and school settings and in the environment in general. Individuals interpret what they hear, what they see, and everything they experience within their social contexts – family and school settings. Therefore, actions or behaviors of others whether verbal or non-verbal, are subject to their interpretations which in turn depend on an already existing cognitive structure. Interpretations of personal encounters that constitute cognitive structure could either facilitate or hinder academic motivation and approaches to dealing with academic tasks and demands as contained in DepEd's Enhanced Basic Education Program and CMO 46, series of 2012. Thus success or failure of students within the context of new directions in Philippine education and attempts to address our students being ill-prepared to enter college significantly depends on the mindset of individuals as dictated by their existing beliefs and feelings about themselves. To improve the quality of education necessitates the modification of their existing self-beliefs and feelings.

Theoretical underpinnings of the study are found in social cognitive theories which believe that human beings with their purposeful and goal-directed behaviors have the ability to influence his/her behaviour and the environment. Within the social-cognitive perspective, persons are viewed neither as totally autonomous nor mechanical beings in a social context. But they are able to influence the environment by making causal contribution to their own motivated behavior within a system of triadic reciprocal causation where action, cognitive, affective



factors and environmental events all operate as interacting determinants, (Bandura, A., 1989, p. 1175). Along the same vein of personal, behavioral and environmental triadic reciprocity, Denler, Wolters, and Benzon (2013), view human behavior as the product of a continuous interaction between cognitive, behavioural and contextual factors.

Social Comparison assumes that “there exists in human organisms a drive to evaluate his opinions and his abilities” (Festinger, L., 1954). Corcoran, K., Crusius, J., and Mussweiler, T. (2011) explained Festinger’s view that when people engage into social comparison, they will seek out similar others. However, when individuals compare their abilities with those of others, they will select individuals who are slightly better. This comparison may lead to a possible change in one’s opinion or ability. When it happens it is most likely that the change will go to the direction of uniformity or assimilation. The authors clarifies that sometimes people do not actually seek accurate feedback about themselves or their abilities but they intentionally try to create and maintain positive self-image by engaging into a downward social comparison whereby they acquire a false sense of advantage. This human need to maintain positive self-view runs the risk of selecting inferior standards but has the potential of protecting or enhancing one’s self-view. The theory holds the view that individuals with a negative perception of self are inclined to engage in downward social comparison (Corcoran, K., Crusius, J., & Mussweiler, T. 2011).

Along the line of socio-cultural theory on cognitive development of Lev Vygotsky, Scott and Palincsar (2013) explained that the mental functioning of the individual mental functioning resulting from the child’s socio-cultural development has two stages: (1) social or through interaction with others, also described as intermental category; (2) within the child or



intramental category. This gives us the idea that existing beliefs, feelings and perceptions of individuals about themselves is the result of one's interaction with others, and it is then integrated into the individual's cognitive schema or mental structure. Vygotsky was concerned with the unity and interdependence of learning and development.

Bronfenbrenner (1977) proposes in his study that there is a need for a wider and multi-approach and multi-perspectives in the investigation of the developing child and the ever-changing environment. Bronfenbrenner (1997) sees both as living and growing together giving us the idea that growth of one necessary requires the growth of the other for the two to co-exist and grow in a mutually beneficial interaction. He conceptualized the "ecology of human development." In a more recent study by Bronfenbrenner (1994), he likewise argued for deeper understanding of the whole ecological systems and sub-systems that support and guide human growth and development. The different systems are identified and described as:

(1) microsystem which refers to the relationship between a developing person and the immediate environment (i.e. school and family), (2) macrosystem which refers to institutional patterns of culture (i.e. economy, customs and bodies of knowledge, (3) chronosystem, which refers to the change or consistency over time not only in the characteristics of the person but also of the environment in which that person lives (Bronfenbrenner, 1994).

Symbolic interactionism is one of the three major perspectives in sociology. Blumer (1969) defines symbolic interactionism as an approach to the study of human group life and human conduct. Symbolic interactionism sees people's actions and behaviours as guided by the meanings they derived from their interaction with others. These meanings are assigned to objects within the individual's world, with the self considered as an object also subject to interpretations. These meanings are acquired and modified through the process of giving



meaning by the individual in dealing, knowing, understanding, and acting upon all objects within the purview of his/her awareness. Thus, the individual is recognized as active interpreters of meanings and decision-makers of their actions. Considering this, the phenomena of social life must be explored and investigated using the meanings the actors attribute to them (Blumer, 1969).

Grounded on these theories, this study emphasizes that the individual in his or her interaction with others in the contexts of family and school and interprets the meanings of the latter's words and actions. His or her interpretation influences what s/he thinks or feels which in turn influences the formation of his or her self-concept and understanding of the world in general (cognitive schema). It is generally believed that human behavior is anchored on the individual's schema. The individual enters a classroom bringing with him/her a self-concept feelings and general view that were formed through the early interactions with parents. The classroom context provides a new opportunity for the development of the self through his or her intimate or close encounter with his/her teacher. Through the words and actions of the teacher, the learner interprets the things the teacher does or says leading to the formation of new meanings that could either strengthen or modify and even totally alter previously formed self. Here we find an indirect interaction between home and school that provides conflicts or congruence in the child's cognitive schema.

The learner interprets his/her personal encounters with his/her parents and teachers acquiring subjective meanings that become his/her reality. It is the subjective reality that influences the formation of his/her beliefs and understanding or cognition. It is the subjective reality that influences how s/he feels or the affective aspect in the individual. The combined



cognitive and affective elements in the individual will eventually influence actions and decisions of the individual. Considering other possible social influences and maturation as a result of experience in the formation of beliefs, the individual may consciously or deliberately form a different interpretation independent of the influences of parents and teachers. This is in line with the view that human beings are not passive recipients of environmental influences but are actively making their own choices. Through the process of interaction, interpretation and action, individuals develop their cognitive schema about themselves and the world. The cognitive schema becomes the guiding principle in how they view themselves, how they relate with others, and how they approach and deal with academic tasks.

Contradictory findings on the link between academic achievement and self-esteem are found in Baumeister, Campbell, Krueger, and Vohs, 2003 (in Marsh & Craven, R, 2006). Baumeister, et al. (2003) claimed that self-esteem has no benefits beyond the pleasure of holding on to positive sense of self-worth and may even be detrimental to subsequent performance. Their study challenges the optimistic view of positive self-beliefs by claiming that “self-esteem per se is not the social panacea that many people hoped it was and that efforts to boost people’s self-esteem are of little value in fostering academic achievement” (Marsh & O’Mara, 2008: 542). Bong, Cho, Ahn, and Kim (2012) explain that studies are quite unsuccessful in arriving at a conceptual distinction between them thus researchers still struggle to separate them empirically. Marsh and O’Mara (2008) explain that the conflicting findings of Baumeister, et al. (2003) need not sound the death knell for the relevance of self-beliefs to achievement. Marsh and O’Mara (2008) offered the view that self-concept must be considered from a multidimensional perspective. They noted that the study of Baumeister’s group applies



only to global self-esteem and not to specific components of self-concept (Marsh & O'Mara, 2008). Supporting the claim that self-esteem has no benefit to academic achievement is Muijs, R. (2011). The author claimed: (1) that global self-esteem was not a significant predictor of achievement; and (2) that self esteem enhancement in itself cannot be a solution to the problem of academic failure (Mujis, R., 2011).

Research literature on self-concept established the significant role of “frames of reference” individuals use in the development of academic self-concept, (Byrne, 2002; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2002, in MacGrew 2008). Skaalvik, E.M. and Skaalvik, S. (2010) explained that frames of reference are at play in the development of academic self-concept. They explained that students evaluate their own achievements against the achievements of others who serve as their frame of reference. The two identified four possible external frames, namely, school average ability, class average ability, selected students in class, and selected students outside of class (Skaalvik, E.M. & Skaalvik, S., 2010). The internal frames used for school work includes the following: (1) comparison of achievements in different school subjects at a given time, (2) comparison of achievements in the same subject across time, (3) comparison of achievements against goals and aspirations, and (4) comparison of achievements in different school subjects with applied efforts in those subjects (Skaalvik, E.M. & Skaalvik, S., 2010).

The use of external and internal frames of reference is within the frame of the Social Comparison Theory of Leon, Festinger, (1954). Social Comparison assumes that “there exists in human organisms a drive to evaluate his opinions and his abilities” (Festinger, L., 1954). Corcoran, K., Crusius, J., and Mussweiler, T. (2011) explained Festinger’s view that when people engage into social comparison, they will seek out similar others. However, when



individuals compare their abilities with those of others, they will select individuals who are slightly better. This comparison may lead to a possible change in one's opinion or ability. When it happens it is most likely that the change will go to the direction of uniformity or assimilation. The authors clarified that sometimes people do not actually seek accurate feedback about themselves or their abilities but they intentionally try to create and maintain positive self-image by engaging into a downward social comparison whereby they acquire a false sense of advantage. This human need to maintain positive self-view runs the risk of selecting inferior standards but has the potential of protecting or enhancing one's self-view. The theory holds the view that individuals with a negative perception of self are inclined to engage in downward social comparison (Corcoran, K., Crusius, J., & Mussweiler, T. 2011).

All the previously cited literature support the link between academic self-concept and other self-constructs to academic performance of students not only in Western context but Asian context as well with Confucian Heritage Culture. However, the high academic performance of students within the Confucian Heritage Culture can also be traced to their lived beliefs and values. The cross cultural studies of Chen, Lee, and Stevenson (1996 as cited by Tan & Yates, 2007,) asserted that intelligence was not a factor in explaining the superior performance of students from a Confucian Heritage Culture background but factors as:

- (1) high value placed on education,
- (2) value of hard work, with effort emphasized over ability,
- (3) family involvement and high parental expectation,
- (4) students' realistic self-evaluation of their academic performance; more accurate self-perception because of frequent, explicit evaluation both at the classroom and school levels, (p. 471).

Leung and Choi, (2010) observed that there is a dearth of studies on low-achieving children and adolescents. They believe that there is a need to investigate further the students'



socio-emotional aspects that includes self-esteem, peer affiliation and interpersonal relations among others. Akos and Galassi, (2004 as cited by Leung & Choi, 2010) identified students with academic difficulties in terms of the following areas:

(1) academic aspect as having difficulties in studying, completing assignment and organizing information, (2) socio-emotional aspect as experiencing difficulties in interpersonal relationships with peers and adults and are likely to engage in rule-breaking behaviors, and (3) motivational aspect where students do not see the benefits of their efforts and have difficulty in setting and attaining goals, (p. 23).

In the light of the need for connectedness and support, Leung and Choi (2010) suggested the promotion of peer support program for students' academic success for the development of self-esteem, and social competence. Some empirical evidences suggested that a high self-construct linked with low academic outcome may appear paradoxical as what this study is trying to explore.

The paradox of high academic self-concept and low academic outcome is explained within the concept of the Big-fish-little-pond effect (BFLPE). Marsh and Hau (2003) explained that BFLPE is an application of social comparison theory to educational settings. BFLPE holds the view that students will have lower academic self-concept in an academically selective school than in a non-selective school (Marsh & Hau, 2003).

The final output of the paper is a grounded theory to illuminate the underlying process involved in the development of incongruent low academic outcome and high academic self-concept of the participants. Specifically it attempts at building "a set of well-developed categories (themes, concepts) that are systematically interrelated through statements of relationship to form a theoretical framework that explains some phenomenon" (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 55).



Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of this paper is to present a grounded theory of incongruent low academic outcome and high academic self-concept of the participants using Grounded Theory Design. At this stage in the research, Academic Self-Concept (ASC) is defined as the 'students' perception of their academic competence, commitment, involvement and interest in school-work' Liu, Wang and Parkins, (2005). ASC is formed through one's interaction with peers, teachers, and parents, (Yorke, 2013).

The Research Question

In its attempt to discover a grounded theory of the incongruent low academic outcome and high academic self-concept among participants, this research is guided by the major question: What theory describes and explains the incongruent low academic outcome and high academic self-concept of education students?

The sub-research questions are:

- (1) What are the experiences (action/interaction/emotions) of a student with incongruent low academic outcome and high academic self-concept?
- (2) What are experiences (action/interaction/emotions) of the participants in their family that may be the foundation of their incongruent low academic outcome and high academic self-concept?



- (3) What are the experiences (action/interaction/emotions) of the participants in their school settings that may be the foundation of their incongruent high academic self-concept low academic outcome?
- (4) What are the major processes involved in the development of incongruent high academic self-concept and low academic outcome of the participants?

Definition of Terms

Academic Outcome or academic performance is measured by the General Weighted Average of the participants in the last four (4) semesters of their enrollment in the College of Education.

Academic Self-Concept (ASC) refers to the students' perception of their academic competence, commitment, involvement and interest in school-work.

Adopting a Situational or Selective Academic Motivation refers to the participants exertion of academic effort and persistence in doing tasks depending on their perception of the following (1) ability and interest, (2) difficulty, novelty, interestingness of academic tasks, (3) personal and professional attributes of the teacher/professor, (4) motivation of the class, (5) attitude of the class towards classmates performing well, and (6) likelihood of failing.

Adopting a Situational Mastery and Performance Goal Orientations is the disposition of the participants towards either studying to master or learn a task for the sheer pleasure of knowing or understanding the task. It also refers to Performance-Approach which is a disposition towards studying to show others what one knows for the sake of receiving positive feedback or good grades or Performance-Avoid, the conscious, deliberate



avoidance and withdrawal from doing tasks for fear of appearing incompetent and be perceived by others as “bobo”, or hearing negative feedback from performing well and be perceived as threat to others in class, “nag-mamagaling” “pa-star” “buwaya.”

Attribution refers to students pointing to people or events as reason for their academic interest and motivation or loss of it.

Calibrating Exertion of Academic Effort is the participants’ estimation of how much effort they need to exert based on their perception of the teacher/professor, classmates’ performance and motivation, probability of passing or failing, personal standard, other people’s expectations. It is generally based on their desire to maintain what they consider as “sakto lang” academic performance, wanting neither to be the top nor the bottom in the class hierarchy.

Counteracting Negative and Self-Debilitating Thoughts and Habits is the use of cognitive strategies to counteract the effect of negative thoughts and habits. It is mostly found among participants with High Academic Self-Concept and High Academic Outcome.

Disengaging the Self refers to the participants’ habit of going out of the classroom when they find the teacher/professor boring or the lesson uninteresting, too easy or too difficult. It also refers to participants withdrawing mentally from the lesson by resorting to daydreaming, doodling, sleeping, chatting with seatmate, pretending to listen, doing assignment in other subjects, or simply waiting for the lesson to end. Then the physical disengagement follows.

Drifting Through refers to the tendency among the participants to “go with the flow” or simply go through the motion of coming to class and what is required of the situation simply for



compliance with the idea that even if they do not study well they will pass anyway. It also refers to patterning their academic behavior after the majority in class.

Duga is an in-vivo code, a term used by the participants to describe a person, or an action perceived as dishonest. In this study, the term is used in reference to grades given without objective basis and generally believed to be based on a *hula* a guess.

Employing Defense Mechanisms, providing excuses, rationalizations for their lack of resolve to do better or improve their academic performance.

Fear of Negative Evaluation (FNE) or the apprehension about what others might say, think, or do when they commit mistakes in class.

Handicapping the Self refers to the deliberate and unconscious adoption of thoughts and habits that tend to weaken the self, motivation to study and achieve in academic situations. It refers to the participants' themes like Fearing Negative Evaluation, Employing Defense Mechanisms, Looking-Down on Self, Lacking in Determination, Procrastinating, Having no Study Habits and Studying Skills, Wanting Certainty . . .Unwilling to take Risks of Failing, Preferring the Easy and Comfortable . . . Unwilling to Go Through Academic Difficulties.

Hayahay is an in-vivo code used by the participants to describe a state or condition of individuals seen as being complacent in their academic behavior. Similar terms used include **Petiks** and **Chill-chill lang**.

Looking for Emotional Connectedness to Friends, Classmates, and Teachers/Professors refers to behaviors seeking for love, sense of belongingness, emotional support, praise



and recognition in friends, classmates, teachers/professors. It represents unfulfilled emotional needs in the family which they seek to find in school.

Making Attributions is pointing to, identifying the reason for academic success or academic failure. Attributions are either internal to the participants (effort, ability/intelligence, personal goals) or external attributions (teacher factor, friends' influence, luck).

Pasada lang or **Basa-basa lang** is an in-vivo code used by the participants to describe how they study and prepare for an examination. It means reading repeatedly a material (book, notebook, handout) or simply skimming or scanning. Checking for one's learning or mastery of the material through *pasada lang* depends on a gut-feel.

Sakto lang or **sapat lang academic performance** is a calibrated exertion of academic effort achieved through the use of upward and downward comparison of one's academic performance with reference individual or group in the school or class. The downward comparison sets the condition for downward trajectory of performance and acts as a self-protective mechanism from low test scores or grades resulting to an inflated sense of academic self-concept. It is highly subjective and ever-changing depending on the performance of the reference individual or group.

Using Social Comparison is the action of the participants to compare their academic performance with others in class. It is either an **Upward Social Comparison** where the reference individual or individuals are those with higher performance or a **Downward Social Comparison** where the reference individual or individuals are those with lower academic performance. Through social comparison, they get a positive or negative sense



of self and competence. It also gives them an idea of their relative position in the class hierarchy.

Delimitation and Limitations

The participants' sense of 'academic competence, commitment, and involvement is based on perception and therefore subjective in nature. Their academic outcome is based on grades in the last 4 semesters and they are not necessarily actual measure of their intelligence. They can only mirror the participants' degree of academic commitment and involvement. Imposing limitations in the study are time available for the researcher, the availability of participants, and their readiness to answer follow-up questions sent via our Facebook group account. Readiness and willingness of the participants to provide answers to the questions are fully respected as part of the Informed Consent. Only a handful of participants with high perception of their sense of competence, commitment, and involvement that is consistent with their outcome were gathered providing limitations in comparing the data. While there is extensive literature on Grounded Theory, there is limited access to actual samples of Grounded Theory papers. Future researchers are advised to build on the limitations of this study.

Significance of the Study

The study finds its general significance for Curriculum and Instruction in the words of Corbin and Holt (2005), "In disciplines such as education, it is difficult to imagine building a practice that is not based on theoretical knowledge, imperfect though it may be. Where else would insight and understanding into situation come from (p. 49)." Within the echoes of their



words, this study may serve as a building block in the formulation of new educational policies and provide an impetus in the re-examination of underlying beliefs and principles governing educational practices that directly influence the lives of our students. The significance of this study is on the promotion of the development of students' individual "self-concept which should be valued as an outcome in its own right" (Liu, Wang & Parkins, 2005).

To teachers and curriculum planners, this may serve as a starting point in developing theories of learning and teaching influencing content of curriculum and methods of teaching. Likewise, it can be used in the formulation of practical suggestions for the teaching and learning processes.

To parents and caregivers, insights gathered from the accounts of the participants on how children interpret their personal encounters with the former may form a basis for strengthening or modifying parenting practices. This may also serve as point for reflection in developing a more meaningful relationship with their children.

For education students and most especially the participants in this exploration, insights and generalizations that may emerge here may facilitate a deeper understanding of their behavior. More so, the acquired new understanding will enable or empower them in having a better control of those enabling or disabling behaviors. This in turn may help them facilitate their own development and achieve their fullest potential.



Telling our stories is hard. The uncertainty surrounding the point of encounter screams at us to hold back, to keep the tales to ourselves. Better to bury the story within than to risk the unknown. But without this risk, there is no growth.

Simon Hole, Storytelling and the Art of Reflective Practice

CHAPTER II

METHODOLOGY

Design

The design of the study is Qualitative Design specifically Grounded Theory. As Corbin and Strauss, (2008) put forward: “the most important reason for choosing to do qualitative research is the desire to step beyond the known and enter into the world of participants, to see the world from their perspective and in doing so make discoveries that will contribute to the development of empirical knowledge”, (p. 16). Creswell (1993) defined qualitative design as an “inquiry process of understanding a social or human problem based on building a complex, holistic picture formed with words, and reporting detailed views of informants.” As qualitative research is geared toward a better understanding of human experiences, the present study lends itself to such a design considering that the object of its investigation are the personal encounters of learners in family and school settings from the perspective of the participants that may have played a role in the development of their high academic self-concept and low academic outcome.

Grounded Theory is the specific methodology by Glaser and Strauss, (1976). It is for the purpose of building theory derived from qualitative analysis of data, (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p.1). The end product of this type of design is an integrated theoretical framework that gives



understanding about how the participants experience and respond to events that occur (Corbin & Holt, 2005).

Selection and Study Site

This study was conducted at a local university in Metro Manila. The school is a locally-funded tertiary educational institution established in March 2000 to provide almost free education for the children of economically disadvantaged families of the city. The choice of local university for college is for obvious reason, this is the only school their family can afford for its low tuition fee and accessibility, lessening the burden for their daily transportation expenses. The mean institutional ratings of the school in the Licensure Examination for Teachers from August 2004 to January 2014 for the BEED Program is sixty seven point zero one (67.01) while fifty three point seventy (53.70) for BSSED.

Participants are third year education students enrolled during the first semester of Academic Year 2014-2015. The selection of participants is based on the following inclusion criteria: high to very high academic self-concept, low academic outcome, and must be between 18-20 years old. High academic self-concept is measured by the Academic Self-Concept Questionnaire by Liu, Wang & Parkins, (2005) (Appendix D p. 307). It consisted of two subscales, namely, academic confidence and academic effort. The academic confidence subscale measures students' perceptions toward their academic ability while the academic effort subscale measures students' commitment to and involvement and interest in schoolwork. The internal consistency estimates of reliability for the 19-item ASC scale, 9-item AC subscale, and the 10-item AE subscale are .89, .87 and .83, (in Liu, H., 2009, pp.417-418). Yorke, (2013) cited succeeding studies using the same instrument put the Cronbach's alpha between 0.71 and



0.89. Item No. 5 was re-worded from “If I work hard, I think I can enter a Polytechnic or a University.” to “If I work hard, I think I can pass the Licensure Examination for Teachers.” The use of the Academic Self-Concept Questionnaire is with permission from Dr. Woon-Chia Liu, Dean of Teacher Education and Associate Professor, Psychological Studies Academic Group, National Institute of Education, Singapore. Permission was obtained via e-mail (woonchia.liu@nie.edu.sg) on 21 April 2015. (Appendix E, p.308). The Academic Outcome is based on the General Weighted Average of the participants in the last four (4) semesters. Criteria used is Low to Very Low Academic Outcome or a computed General Weighted Average (GWA) of 1.85 and above in the last four (4) semesters. To determine the level of Academic Self-Concept, the researcher is guided by the range of scores and verbal interpretation adopted for the study, (See Appendix I. p.322).

Meeting all the criteria are nineteen (19) participants. However, to provide possible variations and richness of data, other participants were included, three (3) participants with high ASC and high AO, two (2) participants with low ASC and low AO, two (2) participants with very high ASC and low AO and one (1) participant with high ASC and very low AO. Total number of participants is twenty seven (27). Others who initially agreed to join the study eventually withdrew their participation and such decision is part of the Informed Consent stating that participants can withdraw anytime and in any phase of the study. Participants in the study have freely chosen for themselves a 3-letter-3-number-code to represent them. They are codes that have meanings for them. The total number of participants is twenty seven (27) which is within the range of suggested number by De Guzman (2015) of 20 to 30 participants. The sample size of PhD studies using qualitative interviews in grounded theory according to Mason



(2010) vary from a maximum of eighty seven (87) participants and minimum of four (4) participants. Mean sample size is thirty-two (32).

The data are deeply entrenched in the lived experience of the 27 education students who are generally from the economically disadvantaged families. Giving a glimpse of their family condition, they listed their father's educational attainment with only 9 of them reaching college and only 4 successfully graduated, 3 are vocational course graduates while the rest are either high school graduates or under-graduates. Their occupations include printing shop owner, utility worker, jeepney driver, tricycle driver, vendor, kitchen helper, taxi driver, bill courier, service trike driver, driving instructor, forklift operator, welder, security guard, security supervisor, businessman, and contractor. Average monthly income for those with regular work and pay is PhP 12, 100.00. The mothers, while more of them have college degree compared with the fathers, they have lower monthly average income at PhP 10,000.00. Majority of them are housewife while others work as teacher, factory worker, day care worker, house helper, domestic worker abroad, food vendor, handicraft-maker, beautician, and a carinderia owner. Combined monthly income of parents is PhP 11, 042.00 that will have to be budgeted for the daily needs of the family from food to daily allowance of members who go to school or work excluding school expenses of children, monthly house rent, water and electricity bills. Family size ranges from 3 to 9 family members living in either owned or rented house. Rooms in the house available for family members are two at the average while a couple of the participants reported to be having no room in the house.



Instrumentation and Data Collection

People use words to tell their stories and they select particular words to reflect best their experience. According to Hanlon and Davis (as cited in Capetto, 2008), “the words chosen carry with them certain connotations for the speaker.” Through the particular words that the participants use, they are able to reveal their subjective experiences and the meanings of those experiences for them. Given the nature of the data needed for this study, the methods in data collection are written reflective exercises, sentence-completion exercise, repeated semi-structured and open-response interviews.

Interview

Interview serves the following purposes: “(1) it is used as a means for exploring and gathering of narratives or stories of lived experiences; (2) it is a vehicle by which we develop a conversational relationship about the meaning of an experience with the participant; (3) allows participants to share their stories in their own words” (Ajjawi& Higgs, 2007). A semi-structured interview is chosen in this research to provide greater breadth in the description of the participants’ subjective experience. (See Appendix A, p. 298).

Reflective Writing

Reflection is a form of “mental processing and is largely based on further processing of knowledge and understanding that we already possess”(Moon, 2012). The use of reflection in this study serves as starting point during the interviews. Reflection or reflective writing helps



the researcher and participants in generating data for the phenomenon under study. (See Appendix B, p. 300). Below are the sample points for reflection:

Reflective Writing Theme 1

My Lived Experience in My Family: Stories, Images, Thoughts and Feelings From My Personal Encounters

Reflective Writing Theme 2

My Lived Experience in School: Stories, Images, Thoughts and Feelings from My Personal Encounters with My Teachers, Professors, Classmates, & Friends

Reflective Writing Theme 3

Reflection on PBed's Manifesto on Teacher's Quality

Sentence Completion

Sentence completion is the presentation of an incomplete sentence. Only the beginning of the sentences are given to the participants and requests them to complete the sentence anyway they would like. (See Sentence Completion Appendix C, p. 302). This method is based on the idea that 'it will reveal more about thoughts, feelings, and conflicts than testing with direct questions' (Rabin & Zltogorski, 1985). Below are the sample items in sentence completion:

1. My mother gave me the feeling that I
2. My classmates treat me like
3. I think my teacher thinks of me as
4. When I pass an examination or a quiz, my classmates tell me that
5. When I receive a failing mark, I usually



Field Notes

Another source of data in qualitative research is field notes or memoing (Groenewald, 2004; Ajjawi & Higgs, 2007). Groenewald (2004) describes memoing as the “researcher’s field notes, recording what the researcher’s hears, sees, experiences and thinks in the course of collecting and reflecting on the process.” (See Sample Memo. Appendix G, p.314).

Role of the Researcher

The role of the researcher in qualitative research is focused on the researcher as the primary data collection instrument who must be guided by ethical responsibility. Ethical practice is defined as “doing no harm and aspires to do good, to conduct research that benefits participants in positive ways”, (Piper & Simons, 2005). The researcher was guided by the Ethical Principles of respect for people, beneficence, and justice, (Orb, Eisenhauer, & Wynaden, 2000). As Piper and Simons (2005) advised, this researcher adheres to the concept of Informed Consent, confidentiality and providing access to participants to the research report.

This section also requires the ‘identification of personal values, assumptions and biases at the outset of the study’ (Creswell, 1993). Along this line, this researcher identifies his personal beliefs, values, including biases formed by his personal encounters with his students and influenced by theories, principles, and assumptions of psychology and education. This section is written from the subjective view of the researcher.

My educational background is in Psychology, Philosophy, and Education. In those fields I find my influences, shaping what I believe and the values I hold dear.

This interest in self-concept and other self-constructed beliefs and feelings was borne out of a personal conviction that everything starts with the “self” and our



understanding of who we are and who we are not; what we have and do not have; what we are capable of and not capable of. The “self” as we know and believe it is and is not is the force that fuels our actions or inactions influencing our life’s direction and those of others. It is our understanding of that “self” that leads us to decisions or indecisions shaping who we become. Even the question of whether we will be happy or lonely in this life is to a great extent determined by that “self.”

I have been a teacher for more than twenty years now. In those years of encounters with my students, I heard their stories of brokenness of the “self”, a broken self that they bring into the classroom, a “self” that needs to be re-constructed, a “self” that needs to be freed from self-handicapping, self-debilitating, and self-sabotaging beliefs and feelings. It is because of the broken “self” that they are unable to move towards developing themselves to their fullest potential and unable to see their possibilities offered by education.

However, being broken or not is not the determining factor in our life but that very self that decides whether to continue being so or liberate the self from the state of being so. The “self” while admittedly to a greater or lesser extent is influenced by the world around itself but in the final analysis “it” interprets everything that comes into contact with it, the “self” engages itself into a dialogue with its very own self and from that dialogue comes ensuing actions or inactions and decisions or indecisions. The “self” is not totally passive unthinking and powerless agent in this life but the “self” being its own agent, free and willing, can initiate the process of its own liberation from itself and self-imprisoning beliefs and feelings.

Self is a mechanism by which we see the self as the end and means of all human actions. It was but natural that I am drawn to understanding the “self” that when I had my master’s thesis on goal orientation, self-efficacy and academic performance. Now for my dissertation I am still pursuing the same theme but this time I would like others to hear their voices through this qualitative study.

Data Gathering Procedure

Once the necessary consent agreements or the Informed Consent Forms (See Appendix H, p. 317) are obtained, the researcher goes into actual gathering of data through semi-structured interviews, reflection exercises, sentence completion, and use of field notes.



To prepare the researcher and the participants for their actual encounter, or face-to-face meeting, participants are asked to do participants' profile questionnaire, semi-structured writing exercises, namely reflection writing and sentence completion. Data gathered from those exercises are used during the interview. With the permission of the participants, all interviews are audio-recorded. After the termination of the interview, the researcher listens to the audio-recording and makes notes, transcribing the interview to allow the voices of the participants to speak.

Data Analysis

Data analysis is guided by Corbin and Strauss, (2008). It examines the high academic self-concept and low academic outcome of the participants in order to find out what it is and how it works. It breaks apart the phenomenon under investigation into its various components, examines those components to identify their properties and dimensions. The knowledge of those components and their properties are used to make inferences about the phenomenon as a whole, (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

Steps in analysing data for concepts is based on (Corbin & Strauss, 2008) as well as on Charmaz, K. (2014) coding for gerunds. The reading of the materials started with the preliminary data given by the participants through their Sentence Completion and Reflective Writing and then after the interview with their Interview Transcript, (Sample Interview Transcript Appendix F, p. 309). Reading the materials from beginning to end is to enter vicariously into the life of participants, feel what they are experiencing and listen to what they are telling us, (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 163).



Second. Beginning or open coding, reflecting on data and writing memos involved a great deal of thinking. According to Corbin and Strauss (2008) thinking is the “heart and soul of doing qualitative analysis and the engine that drives the process and brings the researcher into the analytic process”, (p.163).

Third. I proceeded to the second interviewee, continuing to build upon the data analysis started with first interviewee; comparing data to previous data from Participant #1. In addition to making comparisons along conceptual lines, theoretically-based questions are also be asked leading to further data collection. Research is a continuous process of data collection, analysis, memo writing, leading to questions that lead to more data collection and in the process, the original question(s) is/are modified over and over again in light of what is being discovered during the analysis. This entire data collection and analysis process continues until variation (conceptual saturation) has been accounted for, (p.197). However, given the time available for me and the reason why some participants are apprehensive of joining due to their Thesis Writing, I decided to proceed to interview participants in succeeding days- One participant a day. This is a variation in what is prescribed by the book. But as Corbin and Strauss (2008) wrote: “Sometimes a researcher has to use common sense and not get caught up worrying about what is right or wrong way. . . trust oneself and the process. Stay within the general guidelines and use the procedures and techniques flexibly according to your abilities and realities of study” (p. 327).

Fourth. When themes and main issues have been established, i proceeded to the following: Explore context or (a) the micro conditions which are the immediate set of conditions faced by the participants on a day-to-day basis within their internal environment,



family and school environments that led to the more immediate conditions, (p. 230). I explored and elaborated in more depth the concept by specifically looking for the process. Process is an ongoing flow of action/interaction/emotions occurring in response to events, problems, or as part of reaching a goal that arise out of structural conditions and lead to outcomes or consequences, (p. 247).

Fifth. I attempted at Theory-building (Integrating Categories). Integration is the process of linking categories around a core category and refining and trimming the resulting theoretical construction, (p. 263). The purpose is to search for the missing piece to pull all of the research threads together to construct a plausible explanatory framework about the experience of the [participants]. . . The format to be used to bring its logical conclusions is memos, (p. 264).

Sixth. I moved from description to conceptualization to see how the other categories can be linked up to the core category. . . by retelling the story, this time using the major categories and sub-categories as foundation for the theoretical structure, (pp. 266-267).

Seventh. Refining the Theory to (a) check for gaps in the logic and rework those areas where there seems to be gaps, and (b) use all of the memos . . . written and sorted to fill in the information under each major category, (p. 270).

Validating the Scheme

Corbin and Strauss (2008) suggest the need to validate. However, Charmaz, K. (2014) suggests checking with data. I am considering the two views. This study is keeping it open for either validation with the participants or checking with data given the availability of the participants.



Before we can align ourselves with our highest truth, we need to look at all the untruths, distortions and serpentines that lie within us with blatant self-honesty.

-Sabrina Reber, How to Raise your Vibration

CHAPTER III

The Lived-Experience of Economically-Disadvantaged Filipino Learners in their Psycho-Social Contexts

Introduction

This chapter presents the main findings of the study and the relevant narrative data from the participants' Interview Statements, Reflective Writings and Sentence Completion. It re-tells the lived-experiences or stories of the participants from which, themes are derived. Themes are in turn organized according to: (1) experiences of the participants within their internal environment consisting of internal statements which form the basis for their self-constructed beliefs, feelings and eventual observable actions; (2) experiences in terms of actions, interactions, and emotions emerging within the context of their family; and (3) experiences or actions, interactions, and emotions that happen within school or classroom context. Organization of themes corresponds to the research sub-questions.

The poor condition of the family for the participants is their source of motivation to study. The sacrifices of the parents they have seen just to send them to school is their source of inspiration hoping that one day when they finish college they would be able to repay them for all their sacrifices. Resonating in the participants' narratives is their desire to help their family, support their siblings, and improve their living condition. It is their awareness of their being



economically disadvantaged that motivates them to study and finish college with the hope that education would be able to fulfil its promise of a better life. As JAM-122 expressed:

Ang hirap ng kalagayan ng aking pamilya ang siyang nag-papaala-ala saakin sa mga pangarap ko at kung bakit dapat kong abutin ito. Ang aking mga magulang ang aking gabay, ang dahilan kung bakit ako nag-aaral. . . Nauunawaan ko ang kalagayan namin kaya kahit mahirap ay nag-aaral ako ng mabuti.

Seeing their parents working hard just to provide for the needs of their family is the image that they see. Awareness and sensitivity to their sacrifices are their guide in pursuing their college education. It is the only way by which they can repay the parents for their sacrifice and hard work. Just the thought of failing already makes MBC-913 feels guilty towards the mother who works from early morning to late in the evening. MBC-913 expressed her desire to help and guilt in case she fails. Being the eldest in the family, she feels the responsibility of helping the family. When she thinks of the possibility of failing, she remembers her mother and her sacrifices for them. Echoing the same desire and sentiment to repay the mother through finishing college is CMF-716 who witnessed how her mother struggled through the pain of being left by her father and the mother's struggle to provide for the whole family continues. CMF-716 shares the pain and the anxiety of how the mother could provide for all the needs of the family. Being the eldest in the family, CMF-716 feels that she is expected to help thus the desire to finish college at all cost. As she said: *I realized na kailangan kong matapos ang aking pag-aaral kahit anong mangyari.*

Other participants seem to be in a more serious need to help her family. They are seen by the family as their only hope adding more pressure to strive hard, to push themselves to finish college. As CST-352 said: *Sinasabi nila na ako daw ang aahon sa pamilya ko. Sa apat na magkakapatid ako na lang ang nag-aaral. Kailangan ko talagang i-push ang sarili ko, gawin*



yung best ko na matulungan si nanay. Some participants who may not be as economically disadvantaged as others would like to have a better life just the same. While they feel that the family is doing fine, they still wish life could be better for them. The desire to provide for a better life is strengthened by the hope that they can make their family proud and happy. It would give them a sense of joy and fulfillment if it happens thus failure is to be avoided. For JPJ-918, he does not want to feel that he is a failure for them. In his words: “*Gusto kong ipagmalaki nila ako.*” In one case of a participant taking over the responsibility to provide for herself because of her parents’ powerlessness or probably resignation to poverty, FMM-811 has no choice but to fend for herself by working. But despite the absence of parental support, she still sees the family as her source of motivation to finish college and as she described her situation:

Dumating sa point ng aking buhay na para bang wala ng change. Naramdaman ko na walang wala na, wala nang natira sa akin. Yung pagod na ako kakaisip kung ano kaya ang kakainin ng pamilya ko bukas...Paulit-ulit na sitwasyon. Nakakasawa na kaya gusto kong magsumikap para sa ikababangon ng sarili at pamilya ko maging ang kinabukasan ko.

The foregoing accounts on reasons to finish college reflect the general motivation of the participants. Desire for a better life for themselves and their family provide them the strength and inspiration to strive for a college education. However, it may not be strong enough to push them towards high academic performance because they have low academic outcome except for a few with high academic outcome. We examine their narratives to provide an explanation for their low academic outcome which when viewed with their high perception of their academic competence, commitment, and involvement appears incongruent. Incongruence leads us to ask the questions: What is happening? Why is it happening? And how is it happening?



Sub-Question 1: What are the experiences (action/interaction/emotions) of a student with incongruent low academic outcome and high academic self-concept?

The findings are presented in the form of codes or themes. As the participants expressed their motivation to study for the sake of helping their families improve their living condition, and make them happy and proud, they also need to grapple with the challenges coming from within their own selves and their external environment. Some of the challenges are internal in nature, the many self-doubts and fears that seem to distract them from bringing pride and honor to their families and from fully developing their potential. With their self-doubts and fears, they appear like they are their own enemy.

Theme 1: Handicapping the Self

Handicapping the self refers to the participants' constructed-thoughts, feelings, and developed habits that impair and weaken them from pursuing academic goals and tasks that will help them in their academic development. Negative thoughts, feelings, and actions generally function as a self-handicapping mechanism. From among the twenty seven (27) participants, there is none who is more preoccupied with self-debilitating thoughts than AAR-466. She has this propensity to use negative phrases reflecting a very negative perception of the self and made worse by the many self-debilitating thoughts that she entertains. Debilitating thoughts hover like clouds in her mind. Thoughts like:

Iniisip ko parang hindi ko kaya. Hindi ako kasing galing nila. Parang kahit anong gawin ko hindi rin naman ako magiging tulad nila. Baka mali ang sagot ko. Parang nakakahiya. Lagi akong nag-iisip na baka mapahiya ako. Baka naman talaga hindi ko kaya yun. Baka hindi naman talaga ako magaling. Lagi kong binibitawan ang opportunities kasi baka mag-expect lang sila sa akin.



Those are her oft repeated statements that reflect her poor conception of self. She thinks, she can never be like others who are intelligent. There is a sense of inferiority, fear of committing mistakes, fear of failing to meet other people's expectations. AAR-466 is not alone, like her, KCG-172 shares the same self-doubts and fears when faced with what appears to her as difficult task. Consumed by fear, she could not think straight and feeling paralyzed by it. There are times when by simply looking at the material at hand, it brings her to a state of mental paralysis. Unable to think, all she could feel is her fear. The construction of beliefs that debilitate the self is not limited when one is faced with a task, but it also happens after doing a task and getting the results as in the case of KLF-510. Getting a low score, leads her to entertaining that thought that she is *bobo*. The negative thought further brings her to another negative emotion of pity for the self. From there, the putting-down of the self continues. There are times when the thought of being *bobo* and the sight of other classmates doing well make her motivated to do better. But her will and resolve seem not strong enough. As she said: *Minsan iniisip ko na bobo ako tapos iniisip ko na sige gagalingan ko na pero hindi ko rin naman nagagawa parang hanggang salita lang ako.*

Handicapping the self is deeply entrenched in their poor conception of self and lack of self-worth. CSA-143 is aware that as a student she is not diligent, no focus and always gets low grades but she appears okay with it because she has accepted the belief that she is not intelligent. Such belief makes her feel that even whether she studies or not, whether she exerts effort or not, it will just have the same result – a low score. For her studying would just be a waste of time since it will not make any difference. Expressing her certainty about exerting effort not making any difference, she said:



Kasi parang pag magsipag ako parang mapapahirapan ko lang yung sarili ko eh ganun din naman yung magiging result. . . mababa din yung grade. Kung matalino ang tingin ko sa sarili ko, magsisipag ako kasi alam kong makakaya ko siyang gawin.

Such belief also led her not to value her own ideas thinking others have better ideas. So she just keeps them to herself and just allow others to participate in class discussion. She feels she has nothing of worth to contribute and her classmates would just laugh at her. Over the years of remaining silent during discussion, CSA-143 got used to it. With those thoughts, she has strengthened her negative perception of herself and her lack of self-worth. Eventually, silence has become her comfort zone, free from any risks of exposing to others her perceived lack of competence. Along the same thread of surrendering herself to her perceived lack of self-worth is VPC-241. Reflective of that belief is: *Talagang ganun lang talaga makakaya ko, wala talaga, hindi ko talaga kaya.* She seems to have acquired her poor understanding of herself in comparison with others by saying:

Karamihan sa aking mga kamag-aaral ay mas ismarte kesa sa akin. Alam ko naman sa sarili ko na hindi naman ako ganun katalino pero sila may ibubuga talaga sila. Pansin ko magaling sila ako parang average lang...parang wala lang yung best ko.

She seems to have surrendered and resigned to the feeling that she cannot do any better anymore. There are attempts to strive harder but she admits to doing it only when she feels motivated. Results of her attempts were unsuccessful. She feels that she is not making any improvements at all leading her to be frustrated. As she said: *Parang walang pagbabago, walang improvement, nakakainis.* The common link between CSA-143 and VPC-241 is their resignation to the feeling that they are not as good as others, but they differ on one thing, CSA-



143 seems to be okay with it but VPC -241 seems frustrated with herself. ONW-174, like CSA-143, has a low perception of her academic self-concept and low academic outcome and both of them share the same poor conception of themselves. ONW-174 recognizes her lack of confidence which she feels important in achieving successful outcome. She realizes the importance of believing in oneself, something she knows she is lacking. She traces her lack of confidence to her low self-esteem. The negative valuation of her self-worth makes her feel inferior towards her classmates. ONW-174 together with VPC-241 acquired a negative perception of themselves in comparison with others. ONW-174, VPC-241 and CSA-143 all operate from the poor appreciation of their worth as a person rooted in their negative belief in themselves. Negative beliefs and feelings weaken them weaken any resolve in them to improve their academic performance.

Employing Defense Mechanisms

Others who have positive view about themselves and their competence has a different way of handicapping the self. It takes the form of **Employing Defense Mechanisms**, providing excuses, rationalizations for their lack of resolve to do better or improve their academic performance. They serve as their way of protecting themselves from the frustrations of not achieving what they expect in their academic outcome. For example, AJL-113 as per her own admission is a highly competitive student who wants to excel in academics. She, from her own account, wants to prove herself to the father and to her relatives in her father side that she is also intelligent like the rest of the family. She wants to prove her worth of being the daughter of an intelligent father.



Being separated from her family has made AJL-113 realize another need- the need for emotional support and encouragement. She acknowledges that part of the difficulty of living far from the family is having no one to rely on thus she started to channel her longing for her family to her friends in school. Fearing that she will be a threat to her friends, she learned to tame herself and her need to excel. Caught between two competing needs- need to achieve academically and the need to belong, AJL-113 chose the latter. She needs to feel that she belongs to a group and she needs to feel accepted. Her experience of being highly competitive made her classmate label her as “buwaya” for her excessive show of her competence and tendency to manipulate discussions. To avoid this, she learned to guard herself against this excessive show of competence so as not to be labeled negatively and to avoid being perceived as threat to others especially her friends. When she does not perform to the level that she would have wanted, she engages in what appears as an attempt to protect the self. And as she said:

My achievements meant so much to me only when many agreed that I deserved it. I just console myself by saying 'It's okay. You already know you are intelligent. You don't need to do anything to prove it. Leave the showing off to them. You're still the best.

Deep down AJL-113 and each student is the desire to excel in class. However, personal and situational conditions may deter individuals from achieving that desire and they have to deal with it one way or the other. Following the line of protecting the self from feeling the frustration from not being able to perform well by offering a plausible explanation for his low performance, is JAM-122 who sees that his being poor is his reason why he is striving to study hard. He also wants to make his family proud and he is using his brother who is good in academic as his role model and inspiration. However, it is also his being poor that weighs him down with his academic performance. He said that because he does not have money to buy



materials for his school projects, he failed to submit the class requirements and learned to delay doing them until he gets the money. It affected his school performance. He also has the feeling that his efforts are not enough to get the grade he expects so he learned not to exert effort as not to expect high grade. His decision not to exert effort is a way of buffering the self from the possible frustrations that may result from not getting what he is expecting. JAM-122 has this to say:

Naniniwala akong mas matalino ako kaysa sa iba. . . pero dahil naniniwala ako na hindi naman mahalaga ang grades o hindi naman nasusukat nito ang talino kaya minsan hindi ko inaabot na magkaroon ng mataas na grades o maging dean's lister. Minsan naniniwala ako na kaya ko, pero napipigilan ako dahil ayokong mabigo at umasa. Ayokong mapagod para sa wala. Kaya lagi akong nasa comfort zone ko kasi natatakot akong mabigo at umaasa.

For JAM-122, it seems his saying 'hindi naman sukatan ang grade' is his way of protecting his pride from the possibility of failing, from fear of trying hard for nothing at the end. We can imagine that everytime he gets low grades, he would console himself with the thought that grades are not actually true measure of one's intelligence. GST-113 for his defense mechanism would convince his own self with: *It is okay, I am not good at it anyway*. There is a variation though in GST-113. He seems to be resigned to his perception that he is not good at it. But just the same, it serves as a protection of the ego. When he accepts the idea that he is not good at the subject/course where he gets low scores, it becomes easier to accept although he would have wanted to perform well for it will help him strengthen his positive image in the eyes of his classmates. The use of defensive statements allowsthe participants to find comfort and shelter from frustratingly low academic outcome but it also weakens them from making attempts to strive harder for higher academic outcome.



Procrastinating is a way by which participants handicap themselves. This is another theme that weakens the self from achieving their academic goals or at least debilitates them from any resolve to improve their academic performance. Firmness of purpose is a trait that seems to be lacking among participants. In experiencing academic failures, they would often find themselves telling themselves or each other, *Okay lang, bawi na lang next time*. Those are the same words, they hear their friends and classmates tell them to encourage them or to encourage each other, but when asked if they are indeed able to bounce back, responses vary. Some say yes, some say no, others say sometimes. But even those who say yes are inconsistent with their resolve to perform better.

The story of *CSA-143* is a story of promising the self for more than a hundred times to study and improve her performance yet up until now she is still unable to be true to her promise to herself. Getting low grades are what trigger her to make promises to the self that she would study harder but as she admitted her resolve to study harder always depends on her ever-changing mood. She has lost count of how many times she made promises to the self as she said:

Siguro lagpas na sa 100 times na sinabi ko sa aking sarili itong “next time” na ito. Maraming beses ko ng sinabi yun sa aking sarili pero hindi natutuloy. Minsan natutuloy pero super minsan lang. ngayong college mga 3 beses lang talaga ako nag-aral ng mabuti.

CSA-143 points to distractions as the reasons for her procrastination. She would rather be with friends or eat out with them than being alone studying because for her. Being with friends gives her more sense of happiness. Sharing the feeling that every plan or resolution to study remains a plan in one's head and never see the light is *KLF-510*. She always promises herself to study



harder because she feels envious of those who are doing well in class. However, when opportunity comes, she would find herself going out with friends feeling that she has no control over her decision. She gives herself in the moment of wanting to be with friends and sets aside school works. She feels she is losing control of herself. Her major distraction is her desire to be with her *barkada* who at just one invite, she would find herself dropping everything, most especially school works just to be with them. She is aware that she is losing control of herself, surrendering control to her *barkada* because: *Ang saya saya ko pag kasama sila, feeling ko wala akong problema kahit andami.*

Like CSA-143, she feels happy being with friends. For her, it is a time of momentary relief from thinking about her many problems in life. Distractions she mentioned in another portion of the interview aside from friends are her cellphone and the internet. KLF-510 is very much aware that she is losing control and surrendering control to friends, cellphone and the internet but she appears not willing to regain control of herself. Distraction for JPJ-918 is watching TV. Although he believes that he can still do better only if he would do his best but the desire to focus his attention to studying competes with the desire to watch television. The latter wins with JPJ-918 setting aside school work to watch television. While he believes that he can still improve his academic performance if he puts his mind into it but he feels that his desire for a better academic performance is not as strong as his desire to watch TV. When he attempts to study, he finds himself doing other things particularly watching TV believing that school work can wait.

JPJ-918's believe that school assignment is easy and that *it can wait*. It leads him to put off school work. CMF-716 shared the same belief, but she said it in a different way: *iniisip ko*



may bukas pa naman. “School works can wait” or “There is still tomorrow” are negative beliefs that pave the way for their propensity to procrastinate. Keeping them is like believing time lost can still be regained only to find out that they have already wasted more than enough time and not much is left in their hands for them to focus on doing their school works. Feelings of guilt and regret creep in realizing that time has run out on them. As KCG-172 expressed:

Nanghihinayang ako sa sinayang ko na mga oras na may time naman para magreview, may time naman para gawin ko mga projects ko para mas maganda. Parang sayang na iniisip ko na madami pa namang oras pero pagdating na nung oras na yun nare-realize ko na ang konti na lang pala ng oras. Nakakainis.

One narrative traces the habit of procrastination to lack of financial resources. With no available money to buy for the necessary school materials, JA.M-122 has to wait until he or his family is able to borrow money. It is like meeting deadlines for school projects depends on money. Over the years, he learned to do his school projects when the family’s financial condition allows it and as he said:

Nasanay na akong gawin ang mga requirements one day bago magpasahan at hanggang ngayon ganun pa din ginagawa ko minsan. Noong high school, kakapusan sa pera ang isa sa mga dahilan minsan kung bakit delay ako sa pagawa ng project . . . kaya minsan kapag kapos kami ay nangungutang pa ako para makagawa ng project.

Common thread in their narratives is their awareness that they are putting off their school works for other things like being with friends, eating out with friends, watching TV, cellphone, surfing the internet and generally going with their emotions at any given moment, or the general feeling of “tinatamad,”. There is also the awareness that they need to change and the desire to improve their academic performance and study well. However, they all seem to be



lacking in their resolve. They are not determined enough to put into action their wish to change. Everything remains a wish, thinking that there is another day until time has run out on them.

On Lack of Study Habits and Study Skills

Procrastinating is aggravated by **Having No Study Habits and Study Skills**. In describing how they study, participants seem to agree that they only study when there are scheduled quizzes or examinations. Further descriptions of how they study give the impression that they do not have an organized way of studying and they do not have an objective way of evaluating whether they have studied enough. It is interesting that most of them rely on a “feeling” or going with the gut feel that they have understood what they are reviewing. The following are their descriptions of their study habits and study skills.

In the description of MAS-124, he made a distinction between “normal” days and days with exam or quiz, and the level of difficulty on which the amount of effort depends. On normal days he would not study but only during the days when there are quizzes or exams. He prepares for examination 2 days before the date of exam and would spend approximately 2 to 3 hours but on the eve of examination, he would maximize all the time left. He describes his way of studying as “pasada” basa-basa lang” and then relies on a feeling that he already knows what he is studying and giving him the signal that he is ready for the exam. The amount of review or reading depends on his evaluation of the possible test questions or level of difficulty of the test items. Quizzes are generally taken as easy while midterm and final exams are taken as difficult influencing the variation in the amount of effort expended.



The “basa-basa” until there is time is MAS-124’s idea of exerting his best effort and studying. He realizes that his effort is not enough because there are times that he does not get the outcome he expects considering the amount of “basa-basa” he exerted in preparation for an exam. With no organized and effective way of studying for examinations, he gets low scores and leaves him wondering why his effort was not enough. When *basa-basa* proved to be not enough to get high scores, he could not think of other ways by which to prepare for an examination because for him, *basa-basa* is his only method. Insisting he has done enough, MAS-124 believes that it is all he could do. Even if he believes that he needs to exert more effort on his studies, but he seems lost as to what else he could possibly do to improve effort. In his words: *Yun na yun.* MAS-122’s reliance on ‘gut-feel’ that he has already exerted enough effort made him insist that he does not know anymore how to improve his performance and he does not have other objective ways of evaluating his performance. Similar tendency is also what is at play in the account of JPJ-918 whose studying for an examination is through scanning his notes or *basa-basa* in the term of MAS-124. The signal that he has already mastered the material is when he feels a little edginess about it. But when come face to face with test items, he forgets it. He described his experience:

Tapos pagdating na sa exam, hala nakalimutan ko na, pero alam ko ito, nasa dulo lang ng dila ko, hind ko lang masabi. Anu ba ito? Ni-review ko naman ito. Tapos sasabihin ko sa sarili ko sabi na nga ba pag mag-re-review ako mas mabuti pang hindi na lang ako mag-review, dapat bago na lang mag-exam.

He concedes that he has no method in studying except his scanning and skimming notes and books and that he is not studying enough. He also realizes that he has no objective way of knowing whether he has mastered the material or not except for his gut-feel. However, he remained convinced that his *basa-basa* method is enough finding justification in his observation



that he gets higher scores or grades compared to many in class. Like JPJ-918, JAM-122 admits to having no study habit and would only study hours before an examination.

What the participants are describing as a study habit is not actually a study habit but the habit of studying only when there are examinations or quizzes. They realize that it is not working for them. Given the short time they spend preparing for exams, they are bound to get low scores and forgetting what they reviewed and studied. Forgetting what they have studied can also be traced to their tendency to discard information once they have used it. There is no attempt on their part to store and maintain information through continued use. They will only go back to the material if the situation warrants it but there is nothing to retrieve for there is nothing stored in memory. A student who does not have a study habit may also be described as “hindi masipag”. They are aware that their lack of study habit is a manifestation of their being lazy. A typical behavioral pattern for a student who is lazy is just to listen to the discussion, rely on what the mind can recall when examination comes, and try to beat the deadlines for submission of projects. As CSA-143 described:

Sa classroom kasi makikinig ako pero after nung discussion kung ano na lang yung maiwan sa utak ko hanggang midterm or final exam eh yun na yung alam ko. Hindi na ako mag-re-review at yung mga projects, madalas hangang may extension siya (for submission) yung araw na yun ko lang siya gagawin.

For students who do not have study habit, getting high scores is always met with disbelief and attributes it to luck. As CSA-143 calls it: “wow tsamba” When others seem to adopt the attitude of *Yun na yun*, without checking for the accuracy of stock knowledge, IHY-014 is different. She tries to check it with her notes for the details or asking her classmates. She is confident about the use of her stock knowledge. That confidence is coming from her positive



perception of her competence. Such confidence is not totally unfounded because she has high academic outcome. IHY-014's tendency to rely on stock knowledge was formed by encountering relatively easy examination. She said that there were times when she studied so hard for the test only to find out that the items in the exam are way below her expected level of difficulty. It gives her a feeling of regret for having wasted so much time studying when the exam is too easy.

Yung kapag nag-e-exam ka eh alam mo naman pala ito eh, bakit ka pa nag-review? Yung tipong ganun. Tapos minsan andun yung feeling na mag-re-review ka ng sobrang review tapos hindi naman pala yun ang lalabas sa exam. Minsan madali lang talaga eh. Yung tipong sayang yung review ko. Tapos sandali lang pala.

Learning the habit of relying on the use of stock knowledge for examinations seems to be influenced by the existing general behavior of the class. MCV-788 attributes her own tendency not to study for exam and simply rely on stock knowledge to the influence of her classmates. She claimed that she does not see her classmates prepare for exams and they seem not to care. She tries to study in the classroom but noticing that her classmates are simply enjoying the moment with their clowning around, chitchatting, teasing and joking, she could not help but join in. as she said:

Tapos ako po parang na impluwensyahan po nila ako..ay magrereview ako habang sila kulitan. Ay nakakaingit..iiwanan ko po yung pagrereview sasama po ako sa kanila. Parang pag exam po parehas po kami. Kaya mababa po ako.

The participants agree that stock knowledge is not enough and students should not rely on it but only those who are really intelligent. The use of stock knowledge depends on how deep and wide the stock is but for ordinary students, it still better to rely on old and tested way



of studying and reviewing for examinations. According to some of them, students who ran out of time for review or never had the time for review would rely on stock knowledge and will leave it to chance and 'bahala na si schema'. It may also be applicable depending on the type of examination most especially the multiple choice type where possible answers are provided and students have clues. It is not applicable in supply type of test like enumeration and identification. Such type of tests according to them is common in elementary and high school but not in college where they cannot depend and rely on the use of stock knowledge. For NOV-121, without review and study, knowledge will not increase and without review no information will be retrieved during examinations.

The following accounts give us a different picture. They give us a glimpse of how other students can be so motivated to study and be effective at it. The following are accounts from two participants with high academic self-concept that is consistent with high academic outcome. They do not rely on the use of stock knowledge nor do they review for short hours only. The following accounts from CST-352 and NOV-121 paint a different picture of students study habits and academic motivation. They sound more determined to succeed compared to the majority of the participants. Their accounts provide contrast and give us a possible explanation why they have high academic outcome compared to the low outcome of the majority. Expressing her determination to succeed, CST-352 narrated:

During tests or recitations, nag-e-exert talaga ako ng effort. Hindi ako natutulog para mag-review. Pag alam ko na mahina ako sa isang bagay hindi ko tinitigilan hanggang hindi ko nakukuha.

Her description that she does not sleep and does not stop until she gets it or understands it, is a far cry from the accounts of other participants who would study only a day or hours



before an examination. She was asked the question, what makes her different from the others. In comparison with others she believes that some are over-confident about their abilities and overly rely on what they think they already know. But for her, she has to go to the details of the lesson for her to understand it. She tries to reviews her lessons especially those that are difficult for her. She does not stop until she gets it. She has a target grade. She is aware that she is grade conscious and together with it is the awareness that she has to achieve a personal goal in her life. CST-352's account speaks of goal, of a target grade, of wanting to know more, of not leaving things to what she already knows and appears like focused on the attainment of a goal that she set for herself. Behind her focus and determination is a belief, a value, a lesson learned in life. When asked about the reason why she is determined, she said:

Sa mga naranasan ko po sa buhay, mga failures, success. Sinabi ko sa sarili ko na para maranasan ko yung success, dapat paghirapan, hindi lang basta basta umaasa sa iba, umaasa sa tulong ng iba. Dapat gumawa ako ng effort para makapag-tapos para hindi na umaasa sa mga kamag-anak namin.

CST-352 is obviously coming from significant experiences that have shaped her motivation and attitude towards studying influencing even the way she studies or reviews her lesson. The element of determination in her account is deeply rooted in her experiences that she now integrates into her unceasing desire to study to attain the goal. Similar account of tying the way she studies and the amount of effort that she needs to exert to a goal, a target grade is found in NOV-121. She narrated that she sets a target grade. It is her estimated grade that guides her in knowing the amount of effort that she needs to expend. The setting of goal or standard against which they evaluate their performance is what separates CST-352 and NOV-121 from many of the participants. In NOV-121's account, there appears to be a conscious estimation of effort



against the target grade setting her study habit and attitude into motion towards the goal. Asked how she does it, she explains:

Kumbaga pag nakita ko yung subject na to na parang dehado ako o parang hindi ko kaya, o parang iba ang pakiramdam ko sa subject na yun, mag-e-exert ako ng more effort. Halimbawa yung sa time, magbibigay ako dun ng mas malaking time kaysa dun sa iba na alam ko na naman na kaya kong gawin, ganon po.

NOV-121 is obviously applying meta-cognitive skills in when she studies her lesson. She said that she does not know how to explain it, but she is simply applying it in what she does. She gets to know that her calculation of effort is correct when she gets the results of an exam or quiz. NOV-121 appears to be setting a high standard for her to achieve thus she is not inclined to settle for anything less than her target. The goal for NOV-121 is not simply to get high score but to be on top, thus failing to get anything lower or less than what she expects will set her into self-evaluation and exertion of even greater effort. Giving a more detailed description of how she studies or prepares for an examination, she narrated:

Yung paulit-ulit na review, bago yung midterms, exam, or quiz, magkakaroon na ako ng reviewer, iba pa dun sa reviewer na nasa libro. Gagawa ako ng sarili kong reviewer na ako mismo yung nagsulat kasi pag ako yung nagsulat mas naaalala ko siya. Tapos kinabukasan, nagbibigay ako ng oras na i-review ulit, tapos dun sa mismong araw na ng quiz or exam, gumigising ako ng madaling araw para mag-aral ulit.

Continuous and repetitive review of lessons in preparation for an exam always leads NOV-121 to satisfying results. For NOV-121 and CST-352, they seem to have overcome any problem with poor memory and concentration as being experienced by many of the participants. Part of the participants' concern when they study are poor memory and lack of concentration and they reported to always forget what they learned. Such problem point to lack of study skills as well



as to what is already as absence of study habit. MLV-104 finds it hard to remember what she has learned. She is wishing that she had a photographic memory so she would get high scores. She feels envious of other classmates who do not have problem with their memory. Her perceived inability to get high scores in tests is attributed to her poor memory rendering her unable to remember what she tried to memorize. This is a problem that is shared by JAM-122 who admits to finding it difficult to memorize terms and definitions. He also has this feeling that his teachers/professors are making it hard for them when they ask the students to memorize. CSA-143 described her difficulty with memory and concentration as '*walang pumapasok sa isip.*' while VPC-241 used the phrase '*lumilipad ang isip*'. Clueless as to why she forgets what she studied. JKC-157 provided a possible explanation for their lack of focus and concentration. Delving deeper into her issue with lack of focus and concentration, she recognizes that she is distracted by too much thinking about her conflict with her sibling.

Walang pumapasok sa isip (CSA-143), *lumilipad ang isip kung saan* (VPC-241), and *nawawala sa isip* (JKC-157) are colorful descriptions reflecting the participants' problem with memory and concentration and to do things without thinking as if just going through the motion without awareness just like in the account of NAC-124 when she does her homework without thinking. NAC-124 expressed her agreement to an item in the ASCQ instrument that she does her homework without thinking. When participants thought they reviewed for an exam but got low scores always gives them the feeling of disappointment, seem at a loss as to how it happened. Their initial reaction is always that of disbelief and asking themselves with '*Bakit ganun, nag-review naman ako?*' Disbelief and feeling disappointed can be gleaned from LJT-



589 but disbelief would soon be changed into attributing it to physical exhaustion and lack of sleep.

In the participants' description of their study habit, it can be gleaned that it is limited to reviewing lessons only when there are quizzes, examinations or when they have to present their class report. When they do their review, it is done two days before or a day before the test. Using their words to describe the way they study, it is repetitive skimming and scanning' until they get a sense of understanding what they are reading. Others attempt to memorize or in their term, 'memorizing' and a few who do the memorization will memorize not that which in the text but what they understood from it. They report their difficulties with their memory, focus and concentration. When they take exams, some tend to rely on their stock knowledge, a reflection of their lack of study, guessing, and going by clues. When they receive low scores in a test after doing review, it is often received with disbelief knowing in their minds that they studied for the test. When they get high score, it is naturally welcomed with satisfaction. But others will be strengthened in their belief that skimming or scanning is enough. One reaction is 'wow I am lucky'.

Theme 2: Setting *Sapat lang*, *Sakto lang*, and *Chill-chill lang* Academic Performance as Goal

This theme uses the in-vivo code used by the participants in describing their academic behaviors which are all tending towards an average performance. In the course of the interview, participants would refer to words like 'sakto lang' (neither high nor low) 'sapat lang' 'tama lang' (just enough), and 'chill-chill' giving the impression that they are consciously and



deliberately operating on their average academic performance and some of them are equally aware that they are capable of performing better if only they would want it. The following accounts give us a hint and a glimpse into the reasons why they choose to be average and why they are content with it. In the Sentence completion of KLM-270, he wrote: *Bilang isang mag-aaral, ako ay nag-aal ng sapat lang dahil iniisip ko na makapasa sa kolehiyo ay ok na.*

The sentence of KLM-270 is giving the sense that he has a very general goal and that is simply to pass, to graduate. He is operating within the wide latitude of 'makapasa lang sa kolehiyo.' He was asked to describe what he meant by the term 'sapat lang' and he described it as: *Ang sapat lang ay yung makapasa, ma-maintain ko yung scholarship at yung maintaining average na kailangan sa Educ.* KLM-270 is referring to the Scholarship Program of the City Government whose average grade requirement a semester is 2.50. It is a scholarship program whose main objective is to provide financial assistance to the economically disadvantaged students of the city. While the maintaining grade of the College of Education is 2.25, so KLM-270 is in effect motivated to study and exert effort within the 2.25 to 2.50 range of academic performance. Sharing the same sentiment and motivation is CMF-716. While she is afraid to get low grade but for as long as she is able to maintain her scholarship, she is not bothered. As she said: *wala akong paki.*

KLM-270 like CMF-716 seem to care only for maintaining the minimum grade requirement of their scholarship program and are no longer motivated to study and exert effort beyond or above it. Underlying the lack of motivation to exert more effort is the desire to avoid making things difficult for themselves. They want to make it easy on them and getting a grade higher than 2.25 like 1.75 or 1.50 is simply just a bonus. KLM-270 settling for *sakto lang* seems



to be KLM-270's way of protecting himself from the possible frustration of not being able to meet high standard and expectations. *Sapat lang or sakto lang* is seemingly a comfortable position because as far as KLM-270 is concerned, it is also the same standard that his friends use. Behind it is his fear of raising his personal standard – a higher standard that he feels he might not attain, and the desire to be like his friends. In choosing to study for an average performance, there are three things that are working in the mind of KLM-270, not wanting to go through rigors of academic life, avoiding the frustration of not meeting the expectations for high academic performance, and patterning his standard after that of his friends. KLM-270, to this researcher, is a student who can still do more, so I asked him further why despite his potential, he seems to be contented with his aim of 'sapat lang,' he replied saying:

Kasi po nakita ko sa mga kamag-aaral ko noong high school na sapat lang ang kanilang ginagawa at hindi sila masyadong nahihirapan. Kaya ayun naging kapareho na din nila ako na petiks lang. pero kapag paborito ko yung subject, ay nag-babasa-basa naman po ako. Sa tingin ko ay may potensyal pa akong lumago sa pag-aaral ang kaso ay iniisip ko na ayos na lang na ganito ang ibinibigay ko dahil naaabot ko naman ang pamantayan ko sa marka at grado.

KLM-270 is claiming that part of his tendency to set a *sakto lang* performance is due to his observed behavior of his classmates that he described as *petiks* or being complacent. It gives us a sense that complacency is the default position of many in the class. He also offered another observation about his classmates. In his view, they try to work for what may be termed as a *foundational grade* during the first and second grading then when they see that it would be enough to carry them through an acceptable final grade, they would just go on a *petiks mode* or a state of being complacent and satisfied. Such *petiks mode* but calibrated to an expected grade seems to be imbibed by KLM-270. It is the result of his observing others and eventually



imitated it. The *petiks* mode is comfortable for him because it complements his standard academic performance. Even if he believes that he can do more than his average performance, he appears unmotivated to do so for as long as he is able to maintain the grade requirement for his scholarship which is 2.50. While he attributes his preference to an average performance or being ‘petiks’ to observed and learned behavior from his classmates, it is about the standard that he sets for himself that influences him greatly in studying for ‘sakto lang’ performance. The reference to the term *sakto langis* also found in MAS-124. Describing his behavior and motivation towards *sakto lang* level of academic performance, MAS-124 said:

Alam ko na hindi ako matalino, pero sila ang tingin ko mas mababa pa sila sa akin. Kaya pag sumakto na ako dun sa grade na hinahanap ko o dun sa expectation ko parang hindi na ako nag-e-effort pa. Karamihan pa sa kanila eh mas mababa pa dun eh. Kaya kapag umabot ka na sa ganun, mataas na yung tingin sa iyo.

The thread that connects MAS-124 to KLM-270 is their propensity to observe others in class, compare themselves and their academic performance with theirs. MAS-124 was asked to explain why he seems to have low need for achievement as seen through settling for *sakto lang* performance. He explained that exertion of effort depends on his perception of the level of difficulty of the task. When a task is difficult for him, attaining a *sakto* or *pasado* gives him a sense of satisfaction. When he begins to feel that a task is difficult for him, he no longer aspires for high grades like 1.75 or 2.0. He will settle for a grade of 2.50. A grade of 3.0 is not acceptable to him.

That reflects estimation of one’s competence in relation to what appears like a difficult task. In such a case, MAS-124 sets a *sakto lang* performance. What is important for him is that



his performance will not go lower than 2.50. Despite a relatively low grade, it still gives him a sense of satisfaction considering the task is difficult for him. Resonating the tendency of participants to imitate the academic behaviors of classmates and maintaining a grade within the 2.0 to 2.50 range is JPJ-918. He believes that like his classmates, he tries to do what everybody does and if their goal is to pass, he has the same goal. He feels he is no different from his classmates. He studies within the 2.0 to 2.50 grade range. The only thing he avoids is to have failing marks because it would make him feel guilty towards his parents who support him in his studies through their hard work. In explaining why he does not want to get a grade of 2.50 to 3.0, he said: *..parang hindi na tamang makakuha nun para sa akin na bilang mag-aaral, na parang hindi pinag-aaral ng magulang.*

KLM-270, MAS-124 JPJ-918 bring into their story, the element of influence of their classmates' behavior in setting and settling for an average level of academic performance. While the story of AJL-113 points to her being away from the influence of her parents specifically the father as the reason for her mediocre performance. She brings into the narratives of this theme the importance and role of family in the academic life of the students. She said she was excelling in academics when she was still with her parents but when she left home and studied here in Manila, things changed for her. AJL-113 needs control by the father to keep her motivated. It could also be coming from her need to be recognized by the father. However, her being separated from them is like leaving the motivation as well. She seems to have found no reason to strive hard because here in Manila, it does not really make any difference whether she does well in school or not.



Parang wala pong namemwersa sa akin na kailangan ko pong magpakita po ng maganda. Parang wala na po akong pagpapakitaan para maging proud po sila. Di katulad po noong nsa bahay na kahit mga grades lang po na ano simple lang po kailangang Ma! Ang taas ko! Proud din po...dito po wala. ke mataas, ke mababa, pareho lang po yung reaction.

AJL-113's account suggests that she needs her family to force her to study well, she needs her family so she could have people to whom she can show her achievements, she needs her family who will make her feel that they are proud of her. But now that she is in Manila and away from her family, she has lost her motivation to do well in school. Being separated from her family paved the way for loosening her grip on her motivation. She is okay with simply passing grades and like many others, what is more important is that she is not failing. She can still finish college and eventually help her family.

The foregoing accounts give us the idea of low standards of academic performance being adopted by the participants and their personal reasons. While many of them aware that their standard is objectively low for as long as their friends and classmate have the same outcome, it does not really matter. Others are okay with the *sakto lang* as long as they are able to meet the minimum grade requirement of the school. Another possible explanation as to why students are not strongly motivated to rise above the *sakto lang* performance is self-image that they want to protect from possible negative feedback once they fail to meet people's expectations. For some of them, the self is at stake. Example:

Yung expectations kasi, yun ang pinaka ugat kung bakit hindi ka nag-e-excel, yung expectation sayo na pag hindi mo nagawa, magtataka sila na bakit hindi mo nagawa, kailangan mong ma-meet expectations nila eh hindi naman sa lahat ng oras eh ma-mi-meet mo yun kaya nagkakaroon ka ng fear. Kaya dito na lang ako (being average), mas okay ditto na hindi ko man ma-meet eh okay lang kasi nga average ako at kung sakaling tumaas performance ko eh matutuwa sila.



CLJ-143 is implying that in being an average student, he has nothing to lose. He will not lose face when he gets low marks and neither will he hear negative comments from his classmates because that is expected of an average student. And when he gets high marks, which is unexpected of an average student, his classmates will be happy for him. He was asked what is at risk when people raise their expectation of the person. *Ikaw mismo*, he said. With that he means, the very self is at stake- his image before his classmates. Along the same line of protecting the self in not setting a higher goal is MLV-104. She expressed that she too wants higher outcome but she feels uncertain if she could do it so she stopped wishing for it and more so working for it. She wants certainty that she can deliver because she is afraid of embarrassing herself when she fails to achieve it. Expressing a similar fear why they do not want to raise their personal standard for their performance, MLV-104 said:

...alam ko naming di ko magagawa, kaya hindi ko na lang pinapangarap. Hindi ko sinusubukan dahil natatakot po ako na mapahiya ako sa sarili ko tapos parang mapahiya din ako sa iba.

Wanting certainty before making attempts to go beyond the average level of academic performance is what she is looking for. And that certainty, she will never find. Emerging from the data is the fear of raising people's expectations and being a disappointment not only to themselves but to others as well. Added dimension to this *sakto lang* standard for academic performance is the idea that students could be using a different standard depending on their perception of their competence in relation to a subject and to whether the subject is classified as major or minor. GST-113 implied in his account is that they have a different set of standard for their major and minor subject with the latter giving less importance thus a lower standard.



Asked about his own personal standard, he said that for Math subjects, he usually gets 1.25 to 1.75. But for minor subjects and the other subjects that he feels he is not good at, a grade of 2.75 is acceptable for him. Any grade but 3.00 is fine with him but in Math, he will not settle for anything lower than 1.75. When participants set 'sakto lang' 'sapat lang' 'chill-chill-lang' level of academic performance, they are actually settling for a mediocre academic performance. As ONW-174 puts it: *I am not the best in class but I am not the worst either.* That may be the participants' idea of what is 'sakto lang' or sapat lang.' It is like not wanting to be the bottom neither wanting to be on top of the class. MBC-913 has another term for sakto lang, and that is *chill-chill lang*. They refer and describe the same level of academic performance of the participants. In describing herself as a student, MBC-913 said:

Chill chill lang, ganung lang ako. Hindi naman yung full force na mag-aaral na halos kabisaduhin ko na yung libro. Parang yung tipong meron pa rin akong kasiyahan na ginagawa tapos me mga time din na seryoso naman. Normal lang. alam ko din naman na hindi ko kayang makasama sa top. Yung ang gusto ko lang kasi yung hindi ako ang nahuhuli. Ayoko ng ako ang pinakahuli at ayoko din na tinitingnan ako na nasa ibaba ako.

Echoing the same desire for avoiding the bottom of the class hierarchy is JAM-122. He said: *Ayaw ko kasing pinaka mababa ang score ko. . . pero hindi ko naman hinahabol na maka-perfect ako, makapasa lang ako, ayos na.* Finding oneself at the brink of being in the bottom is a wake-up call for them. It triggers their motivation to exert effort to avoid being in it. It is best described by JPJ-918 in this statement:

Kapag nararamdaman ko ng isa ako sa mga pinaka mababa, parang ma-ko-conscious na ako sa grade ko. Parang sinasabi ko sa sarili ko na 'uui hindi na dapat ganito, dapat taasan ko na'. Kaya naman sa susunod na quiz, ma-aaral na ako nun. Tapos kapag nataasan ko na ulit, e di nag-average na ulit ako, mas



mataas na ulit ako sa kanila eh di sakto. Nabawi ko na ulit yung self-confidence ko. Eh di yun okay na.

Theme 3: Adopting Situational or Selective Academic Motivation

Adopting situational or selective academic motivation is one's expenditure of effort and persistence in courses one is interested in and/or in courses where one thinks s/he is good at. The selection of courses to which one exerts effort is found in the following accounts and they seem to suggest that such selective behavior is influenced by a host of factors including the participants' perceived strength or ability, interest, innate or triggered by the teacher, perceived competence of the teacher. The opposite of those factors make them disengage from the course which involves lack of interest and the loss of motivation.

Pag nasa loob ako ng classroom minsan naiinis kasi parang ang tagal ng oras. Nag-re-refer siya doon sa mga subjects na parang boring o kaya yung mga subjects na ayaw ko. Hinihintay ko na lang na matapos agad kasi ayaw ko doon sa subject.

Feeling bored, annoyed and just waiting for the class to end are the overwhelming sentiments of AJL-113 when attending a class she does like. Or, the lesson becomes boring when she already knows what is being discussed. It makes her imagine telling the teacher to move on to the next lesson. MAS-124 has a more detailed description of the same experience of sitting in a class listening to a lecture that one already knows.

Paulit-ulit na lang yung sinasabi nung teacher eh alam ko na tapos inuulit-ulit pa. tinatamad na ako makinig. Parang hinihintay ko na lang siya na matapos siya sa lecture niya kasi alam ko na naman eh. Wala ng sense sa akin na makinig pa.



Weariness sets in not only when one already knows the lesson but also when the topic is too difficult for them to understand and the teacher is disorganized in his/her lesson presentation. It elicits the same feeling of just wanting for the lesson to end. Remaining in class is simply unbearable. Some of the students' way out of it is to excuse themselves from the class and would come back when they think that the teacher has moved to another topic. However, when a difficult lesson is interesting and the organized, and lively, MBC tries her best to keep engaged in the lesson. Opposite those preferences, she disengaged herself. As she said:

Pag maganda yung topic susubukan ko talaga pag maganda yung daloy ng lesson tapos masaya pa yung discussion. Pag ganun tina-try ko talaga. Pero pag ang lesson ay mahirap, magulo magturo yung teacher, nakakadagdag pa siya sa gulo nung topic. Ayoko na, bahala na kayo diyan.

Providing contrast to losing interest in difficult lessons is JAM-122 who is motivated by difficult tasks. He expressed his fascination for them for the new learnings they can provide. When he finds a lesson easy, it only means that he already knows many things about the topic thus his loss of interest. Difficult topics are challenging for him because they provide him with new knowledge and new information that he does not know yet. He is generally attracted towards lessons based on:

importance of the subject matter to my career, level of difficulty, capability or mastery of the teacher of the subject matter, and my own mastery of the subject matter or my existing knowledge on the subject matter.

Supporting the idea that one needs to see the importance of a topic or lesson to trigger one's interest and motivation is AJL-113. For her a lesson has a value if it has practical application, something she can use both in her personal and professional life. It is into those subjects or



lessons that she will exert effort. She claimed that she was taught by her father to choose and concentrate only on those lessons that has sense for her, lessons that have practical use. But for those lessons which she thinks have no value, she would simply ignore and disregard them even when she gets low marks justifying it the thought that she does not need it anyway. Similar dependency on perception of the lesson in triggering interest is evident in KLF-510. Her perception of the subject as interesting or not leads to engagement and the opposite is equally true. When she finds a lesson interesting, it helps her retain the information but when lesson is boring she easily forgets it. Her perception of a topic being interesting or not is tied to her perception of the competence of the teacher to make an interesting lesson presentation. Boring lesson makes her wish she were somewhere else doing what she loves to do – surfing the internet. It seems that for her, it is better to be home to surf the net instead of attending a boring class. When boredom sets in:

Iniistorbo ko yung seatmate ko, nakikipagdaldalan, minsan nagsusulat sa notebook, kahit ano basta hindi talaga ako nakikinig.

If boredom in class makes KLF-510 wish she were home surfing the internet, it makes KLM-270 feel sleepy. He is pointing to some negative observations on some of his teachers as unable to make the class interactive and to a more serious claim that some teachers are making their personal life stories the content of the lesson. Admitting that most of the time, he gets bored in class and simply waits for the lesson to end. From here, he begins to mentally disengage himself from class then eventually physical disengagement happens through feeling sleepy. Aside from that, disengagement is also the result of his impression that the teacher is not clear with his/her lesson presentation. He described:



Nahihirapan ako kapag ang aking guro ay malabo ang paliwanag at hindi makuha ang sinasabi. May mga salita kasi siyang ginagamit na malalim at hindi abot ng aking kaisipan o sadyang kulang lang ako sa bokabularyo.

He admitted that when he no longer understands the lesson he is frustrated with himself and starts to make sketches or make drawings in his notebook and at times falls into daydreaming. KLM-270 attributes his difficulty to understand to the inability of the teacher to bring the lesson to the level that he can understand because his teacher is using unfamiliar words. It can be viewed two ways, one, the student is really lacking in English vocabulary or the teacher is using high-sounding words beyond the level of the student. Either way, it results to the student's inability to process the meaning of the words resulting to KLM-270 disengaging the self from the lesson.

The next account on losing interest to engage in class is pointing to failure of the teacher to make the class interactive, absence of sense of humor, lack of enthusiasm, and boring voice of the teacher. In his words. Like many others, JPJ-918 shifts his attention from the lesson to chatting with a seatmate and admits to learning nothing for his mind is somewhere else. Along the same thread of failure to understand the lesson as cause of boredom is MCV-784 whose reaction to boredom is to make sketches or drawings and do her assignments in other subjects while pretending to be listening to the teacher. It is totally a different story when her teacher is able to motivate her. She engages in the class of a teacher who in her perception is *magaling*. She described the teacher who is successful at getting her attention:

Yung isang prof namin sa math. Kasi siya yung tipong mas tinututukan niya yung mga hindi makasabay sa lesson, yung mga mahihina. Tapos tatawagin ka nya para ipaliwanag bakit mababa score, ipapaliwananag ang hindi ko maintindhan sa lesson. Parang natututo ako at hindi kami lumalabas ng classroom na walang natutunan.



The competent teacher for MCV-784 is that teacher who makes them feel that their learning is his/her most important concern that s/he is more than willing to give them his/her personal attention to ensure that everyone in class understands the lesson most especially those with difficulties. There is a personal touch and affective component in the teacher that makes MCV-784 motivated. Contrast with the perception of KCG-172 that her teacher plays favoritism in class. She claims that some teachers tend to favor some students to the disadvantage of others in class. She claims that favoritism is seen through the teacher's action of giving more praise, attention and higher grades to the favored ones.

Perception on some teachers as being uncaring and appear to be only after delivering their lessons is another reason why students lose their interest. Such negative perception makes the students disengage themselves and withdraws any exertion of effort in the subject under that teacher. When students sense that a teacher is lacking in concern for them, they become dismissive of the teacher and become equally unconcerned about their own learning. They disengage themselves even when the teacher attempts to engage with them. She described the situation, what they think and feel:

Magtatanong siya kung may questions kami pero sa loob loob namin wala yan. Hindi siya nakaka-motivate, hindi siya nakaka-challenge. Hindi rin kami nag-re-review sa subject niya. Mataas namang magbigay yan ng grade, wala naman siyang pakialam eh. Madami kami na nag-iisip ng ganun sa kanya pag nagke-kwentuhan kami. Kaya napapansin ko na pag midterm o finals o quizzes, sa ibang subjects nag rereview kami pero sa kanya hindi.

From their perception of their teachers, students choose to which subject or under which teacher, they will study and under which they will not. There is something else in the data that



raises concern – the perception that the demotivating teacher is giving them high grades further strengthens their belief that they need not exert effort. Little or no effort on the part of the student and receiving high grade from a teacher who they perceive as *makapagturo lang, pareport ng pareport* and who seems not to care whether they learn or not is proving to be detrimental to their academic motivation. Similar attitude of not taking their boring teacher seriously is found in LJT-589 whose boredom and that of her classmates starts with hearing the voice of the teacher. With the boring sound of the teacher, it sets the dull mood combined with non-interactive approach of the teacher where students would rather doodle while pretending to be listening to the lecture. LJT-589 recognizes the role of the teacher in triggering her motivation because she has encountered a Math teacher who was able to successfully make her like the subject that she does not like. She described the teacher as fun, creative, and with sense of humor. While participants are generally setting a low standard for their academic performance, somehow they want to be challenged. They gauge the teacher's ability to challenge them by mere reading of the professor's image or self-presentation then validated through their daily encounters with the teacher through his/her competence to teach them and engage with them in class discussions. MAS-124 made a distinction between an easy and hard teacher. An easy teacher is someone who gives multiple type of test which they can easily answer even without thinking. That teacher for him is not challenging. While a hard teacher is someone who asked questions that require critical thinking, asks them many questions about the topic, and engage them in an interactive discussion that challenge them to prepare for it.

Emerging from the data is the participants' high dependence on the characteristics and competence of the teacher. A teacher must be able to motivate students through his or her



dedication to the profession. That is what AAR-466 believes as important elements in a teacher for her to be motivated to study. She admits that she is totally dependent on the teacher's ability to motivate her, to inspire her. She becomes diligent in her studies depending on her perception of the teacher's dedication and commitment to teach his/her students. She described two professors who are able to motivate her to study. One teacher makes her understand herself and her life while the other one is very competent in his/her subject matter. Such teacher's competence makes AAR-466 idolize the teacher, wishing she could be like that teacher. On the other hand, there are some professors who failed to motivate her. She described them as:

Yung isa naman parang ang tamad niya. Ang gagawin niya magbibigay siya ng projects para daw matabunan yung araw na hindi siya nagturo. Tinatamad ako sa ganun.

Choosing a subject she likes and exerting effort to it is dependent on the combined affective characteristics and appropriateness of activities given by the teacher as claimed by MAR-320. She exerts effort in the class of a teacher who is approachable, gives appropriate and relevant assignments, treats students with respect, and knows how to appreciate students' works. Encountering anything opposite of what she just described, MAR-320 exerts no effort thus her disengagement from the class. When she loses her interest together with her focus and attention, she focuses her attention on the teacher's being boring and lazy and all she could feel is her annoyance towards the teacher. Aside from finding the teacher boring and lazy, she also finds it annoying when teacher sits through the class. For her a teacher like that is ineffective. When it comes to behaviors of a teacher that motivate her, she needs to see optimism in the teacher, applies what he/she teaches in class in his/her real life, gives them information that they



do not know yet. Those are some attributes that makes the teacher interesting for her. In the class of a teacher who is annoying for her, she submits assignments and requirements for mere compliance and grade but her mind is no longer into real and authentic learning for everything she does is only for the sake of compliance.

KLM-270 is absolutely engaged in class when he feels he can easily understand a lesson and he likes the teacher. In situation like that, he feels he *is in the zone, very interested and energetic*. Full of confidence and energy, he actively participats in the the discussion and the thought of committing mistakes does not bother him because he has given valuable insights during the discussion. His *being in the zone* is dependent on the teacher and when something good happened to him. He feels he is in the zone when he thinks or feels that it is his lucky day. On other days when he feels *unlucky*, and he finds his teacher not to his liking and appears boring, he is not interested to engage in class.

Resonating in the account of GST-113 is his selective interest and motivation depending on his perceived strength or competence in the subject like Math. Feeling competent and confident in the subject, it sets him into motion of really doing well in it, but it is a different story for him when it comes to subjects that he feels he is not good at. He made a comparison between his perception of himself in Math and English:

Pag Math ang subject ang lakas ng loob ko na mag sagot ng mga tanong. Feeling ko kayang kaya ko. Pero pagdating sa English subject parang mahina loob ko na sumagot sa mga tanong. Kasi naiisip ko hindi ko kayang sagutin kaya ayun mababa grade.

With his awareness that he is good in Math, the more he tries to exert effort in it and to those subjects he feels he is not good at, he tends not to exert effort. He sees himself relying on stock



knowledge when examinations come in subjects he dislikes. He naturally gets good grades in Math subjects to which he exerts effort and he becomes even more motivated to study. There is also the practice of classifying subjects according to their being major or minor subjects. Students exert effort in major subjects while tending to give less importance and disregard minor subjects. Such orientation towards giving less importance to minor subjects makes them unconcerned with whatever is the outcome of their performance in those subjects. Considering that GST-113 feels that the only subjects he is good at are Math subjects, and he disregards the outcome in minor subjects. Not even low marks can affect him, justifying it with the thought that he is not good at it anyway.

FMM-816 paints a different picture when it comes to her academic motivation. While others tend to choose subject to which they exert effort, FMM-816, said that she considers all her subjects as important. She traced it to her being an honor student and consistently being in section one. She believes that she is trying all her best in all her subjects including Math which to her is the subject she does not like. But she knows it is important thus she had to force herself to study it and eventually she said she learned to like it. For FMM-816 to be able to focus her attention to her academic tasks and not to lose her interest in class, she said she tries to avoid distractions, takes down notes. And when she feels things are getting boring, she makes jokes to enliven the class discussion. She does not allow herself to lose her focus and interest. She also said that it is clear to her that her main objective each time she attends the class is to learn so takes every opportunity like participating in class especially when topics resonate her personal experience in life. Topics that are close to her and her experience make her even more motivated to engage in class. However, in lesson that she feels not connected, she forces herself



to understand and listen to others because she wants to learn from the experience of others. In that way she is able to keep her interest running. When listening is not enough for her to understand the lesson, she studies the topic on her own. She simply would not allow herself to let go of her motivation to learn.

When students study, they adopt different goals that they want to attain. They may study to acquire mastery or they study for the primary reason of learning. However, others study for the sake of showing others their competence, to show off, to avoid being perceived as incompetent, or they study for grade and not for the actual learning that they will get from it thus a performance approach to studying is set into motion. Some would avoid performance to escape from the possibility that they will be perceived negatively by others in class.

Adopting a particular goal orientation depends on the situation for MCV-784. When the subject is Math, being her major, she studies for mastery. She is motivated by the goal of learning and mastering the task but in other subjects that she is least interested, she studies for the sake of grades, a clear indication of performance approach. There is also a tendency in her to avoid performance because as she said:

I avoid performance. I don't want my classmates to perceive me as mayabang, show-off and it may raise my classmates' expectations.

AJL-113 for her part said she is adopting what may be considered as a simultaneous adoption of both the mastery and performance approach goals because she believes that it is only in her being able to master a lesson that she would be able to get the grade she wants and only



then would she be able to show off to others her competence. However, such simultaneous adoption of two goals still depends whether the topic is interesting for her or not.

Perception that a topic is interesting is beneficial in facilitating mastery or learning goal orientation of students and retention is very likely. It is the performance goal that poses a problem for the participants because the natural tendency is for them to completely forget about it after having made use of it. Revealing a motivation towards a performance approach goal orientation, NAC-124 seems motivated by the desire to *stand-out* which does not happen when she would just be remaining seated listening to a lecture. Thus she sees reporting as an opportunity for her to stand out, to show off her competence in delivering oral presentation. While NAC-124 expressed basically a preference for performance approach, SWS-797 like many others adopt two goals. SWS-797 believes that she generally studies her lesson to learn and not for the grade or performance goal but she admits to using performance goal on selected situations several times to receive positive feedback from the class and good grade from the teacher. She adopts performance goal in situation where she is the leader of a group which makes her feel that the group outcome and group grade depends on her and her leadership.

Those students adopting a mastery goal orientation are conscious of their need to master tasks that are of value to them and to their future career as teachers. CLJ-143 said that he studies for mastery because he knows that he needs the knowledge and skills contained in those lessons when he becomes a teacher in Filipino. His use of performance goal or motivation for grade is due to his need to show and prove to his parents that he is studying his lessons. For him grades are his best proof to show his parents, thus he is motivated to study for the sake of grades. He



does not study for mastery in topics or lessons which he thinks have no practical use for him, neither in his personal nor future professional life.

Echoing the same belief that they only need to study for mastery those lessons that have utility for them in their future life as a teacher is ILH-113 while grades for her as indications that she learned something from the lesson. She is conscious of her desire to learn something that she can apply in her future life as teacher thus she approaches her academic tasks with that frame of mind. She emphasized her need to see that she is learning through her grades. Thus for her, grades are just but reflections of her goals to learn. One clear case of a performance-avoid goal orientation is found in JAM-122 who said that he is using mastery or learning goal orientation but there are times that he uses the performance avoid goal.

...but sometimes I do it for performance but I avoid to say what I know for fear of hearing negative comments and being isolated by others.

Sub-Question 2: What are experiences (action/interaction/emotions) of the participants in their family that may be the foundation of their incongruent low academic outcome and high academic self-concept?

Theme 4: Confronting Domestic Situation

This theme gives us a closer look at what families are going through and the many challenges they face in their daily lives. Individual family members goes through his/her own difficulties, each one is facing her own struggle and living in one family under the same roof puts everybody in a family dynamics with which there is no escaping from influencing each other. The following are their stories, stories of family dynamics which SWS-797 puts in the most apt words:



...sa maaaring pinagdadaanan ng bawat miyembro, parang nakakalimutan ng bawat isa sa aming pamilya na maging considerate.

SWS-797 believes that what weighs her down and her motivation are the seemingly relentless problems and interpersonal conflicts in their family. She feels that with what each one of them is going through, they have become too insensitive to each other's feelings and needs. They have become selfish, thinking only for oneself and forgetting how they affect each other. There seems to be a cry for help with her wish: *Sana malutasan kasi ang hirap talaga.*

While her family remains her source of motivation to study, she admitted to be no longer the type of student who used to excel in class. She said she is no longer as determined as she used to be. She seems to see her father's condition as one of the most difficult concern of the family. Her father was diagnosed with depression, had to quit his job and regularly needs medication. The psychological condition of the father puts every member of the family to deal with it. She said that at a young age, she became her mother's emotional support, absorbing all her mother's pains and frustrations as a result of her father's depressive state. The father's depression and regular maintenance of medication to normalize his state of mind must have taken their toll on the other family members. In her words, SWS-797 described her family as devastated by the father's condition which got worse when he lost his job. During those times, SWS-797 was her mother's emotional crutch, absorbing all the emotional pains of the mother. She must have absorbed too much for her to handle that soon she lost her motivation to study and appears still unable to overcome it for until now she is no longer that student who excels in academics as she used to. She complains of having her own battles with her emotions that weigh her down. Lost in the world of her negative emotions, she feels like quitting school. She



feels that she can do much better but there is something that holds her back. She feels emotionally unstable and feels like at the brink of a breakdown.

In another example of what participants go through in life, CLJ-143 talked about his sick father, the mother being too tired from working daily to support the family, and a brother who seems not ready and unwilling to help the family and with whom he always gets into altercations all bring about a sad, gloomy family atmosphere for CLJ-143. With what the family is going through, they forgot how it is to laugh, how it feels to be happy. Escaping from it, he learns to go to his classmates' house, providing him a momentary place to study. Escaping from his sadness, he finds happiness in school in the company of his friends and classmates with whom he can be his natural self, playful and happy. School has provided him with a momentary place where he can experience being happy and where he can experience to laugh again. Being in school makes him feel like he is in a different world. He feels that his family is unable to provide him the emotional support he needs but despite that, he still sees the family as his source of motivation to finish his education. Expressing his motivation but at the same time a sense of losing it, he said:

I do this for them but I also need to feel that they care for me. I need to feel even just a little care from them...I need to hear them praise me but I don't. If only I could feel that, probably I would be more motivated to study.

In the two stories, the parents' health conditions, physical and mental health, as well as experiences of domestic conflicts as well as parents' and family member's failure to fulfill the emotional needs of the children pose threats to the motivation of children to study. Another problem that poses threat not only to motivation but to the stability of the whole family is a father's infidelity to the mother and he ends up hurting everybody in the family. The



intertwined-lives of family members affect all others creating an entangled, complicated family story. The motivation of AAR-466 is anchored on the father, the she idolized since she was a kid, a father she looks up to, admires, respects and whom she was trying to honor by trying to do well in school. But discovering that her father is not worth her respect and admiration, she lost her motivation to study. Her account is not only about infidelity but also a glimpse into domestic violence that confronts many families today.

If only there was peace and harmony in my family, I would not probably have been affected by their fights especially these days, fights are becoming very often. What I do not like most about is my father. He pokes/aims his gun at us. He is violent that is why when there are fights in the family, I am always on guard for my mother. I don't want anyone to get hurt.

She comes to class with the anxiety from thinking what could be happening home and dreading the thought that his father would pull the trigger. AAR-466 also talked about her unfulfilled emotional needs, and absence of emotional connection with her mother and siblings making her feel alone most especially when she has already lost her emotional bond with her father. She feels that she has no one to whom she can dedicate her achievements in school making her strivings meaningless.

...And now I am lost as to whom should I dedicate any effort to study. With my mother, I am not sure. I do not see her the way I used to see my father especially when I heard my mother telling her friend that she could not be proud of me whatever I do. I have brothers but I don't feel that they have this concern for me and if they have this interest to be proud of me.

Conflict between parents is also echoed by MLV-104 as her source of loss of motivation to study. She felt that when she was grade six, she felt competent about her ability but the feeling about herself changed when the family started to encounter problems. She keeps on thinking



about their family problems that distracted her from her motivation to do well in school. She comes to class with her mind thinking what could be happening home. She cannot help but be affected by the conflict between her parents, conflict that could sometimes be aggressive. The parents of AAR-466 and MLV-104 decided to remain living together and continue with their endless marital squabbles. But for parents of CMF-716, marital conflicts ended in separation. Coping with the reality that their father left them, a younger sister got pregnant, and two more siblings to think about with only their mother to support them with her salary as a teacher. The family situation puts so much pressure in CMF-716 that she can hardly bear with it. Unable to express her anger and frustrations, she would always threaten her mother that she would quit going to school but would also take it back when things cooled down. After their father left them, she is constantly thinking about one question only “What will happen to us now?” CMF-716 is aware that with her mother’s salary as a teacher, she is struggling to provide for all their daily needs. She was told by her mother that she is the only one that she could expect to help her provide for their family. Thus the pressure that seems to give her so much anxiety.

...I feel pressured. Sometimes I feel like “bibingo na ako sa init ng ulo ko.” Sometimes I don’t want to study anymore. Sometimes I don’t do the house chores, I am becoming lazy at home. Sometimes I feel like surrendering to pressure.

She wishes they were still a complete family. The thought of her father leaving them is constantly in her mind, making her feel sad, anxious, feeling uncertain about their future especially her younger siblings. During those times when she feels she was giving in to



pressure, she would always tell her mother that she would stop going to college and could instantly get irritated. That is probably her way of coping with the pressure.

Experiencing Financial Constraints

One obvious implication of financial constraints among the economically disadvantaged students is that poverty limits their educational options. The participants have to contend themselves with the Local University where tuition fee is very minimal aside from the City Government's offer of financial assistance to students. They cannot go to other colleges or universities for their families will definitely be unable to pay tuition fees aside from their daily allowance for transportation and meal allowance. They have no other choice but the local university where tuition fee is affordable and the location is accessible. Once they decide to take their chance with the local university, their options are further limited by the program offerings of the university. It is not surprising that we have participants who feel and think that had they had other options, they would have chosen to enroll in another college or university and they would have enrolled in the program of their interest. Once they enroll in the local university and have to contend with the program they are "forced" to choose, they still have to struggle with their families' financial constraints that are experienced in having no enough money for transportation, meals, school materials, books, school projects and activities. These constraints are additional burdens and further demotivate students. Such is the condition of economically disadvantaged students.

Of the 27 participants in the study 14 of them listed education program as not their first choice. Some of them were 'forced' into taking education. One of those who feel that he was just forced into taking education as a course is GST-113. He seems to feel that he would have



been happier had his family allowed him to take accountancy in another school for has already passed the entrance examination. His father told him to take education. He would have wanted to take accountancy for he thinks he is good at math but in the end he obeyed his father. There seems to be a tinge of regret but he said he is beginning to like education program and repeats the same sentiment that he would still prefers accountancy over education. While GST-113 seems to see his possibility of being happy as a teacher, CMF-716 feels differently. She wanted to take accountancy for it is her dream but she said she has to be practical in choosing to take education in a local college for her mother cannot afford to send her to a college of her preference. In her words: *Sinunod ko lang mama ko sa gusto niya, yun po ang realidad*. She is unable to give her 100% best in her studies because education is not her choice for a college course and this local university is not her choice for a school. She felt those are her mother's choice and decision for her. Feeling things are forced on her, she feels unable to give her best and to hold back whatever is still within her in terms of effort and motivation. Finding herself in the situation, she would only do things and exert effort on those academic tasks that she finds interesting for her. She said: *Kaya ngayon parang kung ano lang gusto kong gawin don ko lang inilalabas*.

She does not see herself being happy should she succeed at becoming a teacher. Although she is open to the possibility that eventually she would learn to love it because as she said: *Pero lahat naman natututunan kaya pwede rin siguro akong maging masaya*. Reflecting on the same topic of feeling forced into taking education program, KLM-270 said that he is doubting if becoming a teacher is what he really likes to do with his life. He is thinking that probably he chose to take



education program only because it was his only option at that time. Uncertain about wanting to be a teacher, he continued just the same until he reaches his second year when upon the results of the qualifying exam, he was assigned to BSE, Filipino program which is not into his liking. He would have preferred to major in History, a program which his school does not have. He is aware that during the early part of his college life, he was not motivated to study, not taking his subjects seriously especially Filipino subjects.

The accounts of GST-113, CMF-716, and KLM-270 mirror the limitation imposed by lack of financial capability into the students educational options. Constraints imposed do not end there, for the situation continues to pose other restrictions that seem to further weaken their motivation to study. Wishing they had money to buy books and other learning materials, JAM-122 describes their difficulties related to it. He thinks that studying would have been easier for him had his family had enough money to provide for his books and other school materials for his school projects. He admitted that their being poor is a source of his insecurity – that his family is always in need of money. He attributed some of his failures to submit school projects due to financial difficulties. He wishes his family were rich so his parents can provide for him and his siblings. He said that it has a big impact on him. There are times that he is entertaining the thought of leaving school to find work and to give way to an older brother who has better chances of finishing college. His family thinks of the same possibility because they are already finding it difficult to send all the children to school. While he is still in college and his family can still grapple with financial difficulties, he is using the family's condition as a source of his motivation. But in the event that his family can no longer make it, he said:

Kaya nga kung papipiliin kami kung sino ang dapat huminto kapag sobrang hindi na namin kaya, naiisip ko na ring magparaya.



For JAM-122, financial difficulties of the family not only put constraints on his capability to procure the necessary learning materials like books, but it also caused him to feel insecure, delays and at times inability to submit class requirements. Seeing others able to buy materials for their projects and assignments must have caused him to feel pity for oneself thus the feeling of insecurity. Limited financial resources that must be allocated to all the members of the family and to children's school expenses pose a threat to the family's ability to send all the children to school. He expressed his willingness to give way and make the sacrifice just for a brother to finish college.

Echoing the same sentiment, JPJ-918 and KLM-270 said: *Madali lang sanang mag-aral kung may pera upang ipambili ng mga kailangang libro, pang-research at sa mga bayarin.* Without books, they have no choice but to rely on photocopies, and when they have no money to pay for photocopying, they borrow other classmates' photocopied materials. Thus the wish they all share is - *kung may pera lang ako mabibili ko ang aking mga kailangan.*

For MAS-124, if only he had money, the only thing he wants to buy are books, so he could follow the lesson but the reality is he does not have money to buy books. More often than not, he is forced to rely on handouts given by the teacher. But even that poses a problem for him since handouts contain only bits and pieces of a teacher's lesson, MAS-122 still finds difficulties understanding the lesson. Wishing his family had enough money, he would also want to go out as a reward to him for his good grades. He admitted that sometimes he wants to go out, go malling or go out to relax and enjoy as a reward for doing good in school. But with



limited financial resources, his movements are limited at home even during vacation or school breaks.

Coping with poverty and the desire to send children to school but with limited financial capacity, some families send their children to relatives who could afford to pay for their schooling in exchange for domestic help and services that the child may provide them. This is the case of KCG-172 who was taken in by her relatives in exchange for the promise of sending her to school. She expressed her general view about living with relatives, she said:

It is not easy to live with relatives. It is probably the reason why I like going to school. As much as possible I don't want to stay home with my relatives. I want to stay in school with my friends and classmates.

She complained that when in class she always feels sleepy and tries to hide her yawning. Her physical condition is expected of someone whose daily life is about attending to the needs of her half-invalid grandfather from attending to his meals to his more personal needs even at the early hours of the morning. Thus she never gets to have one good sleep because it would always be interrupted by the knocking of her grandfather to attend to his needs. After attending to the needs of her grandfather in the wee hours of the morning, she has to be in her mother's small carinderia by 5:30 am to help her attend to the customers. At 6:30 am, she has to look after her younger siblings and help them prepare for school. It is only after attending to those responsibilities that she could go back to her grandfather's house so she could prepare herself for her 7:30am class.

After class, going back home means going back to her daily grind – going to her mother's carinderia to assist her until closing time at 9:00 or 9:30 pm. She goes to bed at 10 or



11:00pm but when she has to attend to her school assignments, she goes to bed at 2:00am. Then again in between, she has to attend to the needs of the grandfather. Lacking in sleep and physically exhausted, she comes to class daily. Her daily physically exhausting life makes her wish her family was rich so she does not have to go through the physically draining kind of life.

She expressed her sentiments about her life:

Kung ang pamilya ko lang sana ay mayroong kaya sa buhay at maayos hindi na sana nakakapagod ang mag-aral. Iyon ang nakakapagod sa pag-aaral. Parang hindi nakakapagod yung mag review o gumawa ng projects and nakakapagod ay iyong ginagawa mo kung bakit ka nag-aaral. Ang nakakapagod ay iyong gingawa mo bago ka pumasok, pagdating mo sa bahay, bago ka matulog. Yung mga yun ang nakakapagod. Kaya nga po hindi po ba pwede mag-aral na lang ako? Bakit kailangan ko pang magtinda, magtimpla ng gatas ng lolo ko sa madaling araw?

Similarly situated in having to do domestic chores is NAC-124 whose makes her feel like she is the one fending for herself for she receives neither financial nor emotional support from them. Receiving nothing but chores and the feeling that she is actually the one supporting the family instead, NAC-124 accepts her life situation with a tinge of resignation saying: *Iniisip ko na lang na part iyon ng kailangan kong gawin.* NAC-124 lives with her grandmother and from time to time, with a brother but either way, she is the one who has to do all the house chores leaving her physically exhausted and giving her no time to attend to her school works. She said she is already tired and feeling like she is the one doing everything for her family including taking care of her sister's child. She has the feeling that the family does not know how tired she is. For doing all the house chores, she receives nothing, neither emotional nor financial support, giving her the feeling that she is left alone to fend for herself. NAC-124 is able to



continue college through the financial assistance of the City Government. With a trace of feeling alone in her life, NAC-124 said that she is the one budgeting the financial assistance she receives from the City Government and that her family has no longer to think about it. It makes her feel that her family does not give her any support and that she is the one supporting her own self. Worse feeling is the thought that it is as if she is the one supporting them. She hinted at the family being unloving and lacking in their capacity to understand.

For some of the participants, domestic chores is part of their being the oldest among the siblings that they are expected to help in taking care of the younger siblings and helping the mother to do house chores as in the accounts of LJT-589 and MBC-913. In providing an explanation as to why she is unable to review her lessons at home, LJT-589 says: *Minsan busy sa bahay, utus-utusan, maglinis ng bahay, maghugas ng pinggan, maglalaba*. She feels okay with it for as she said, she has a very loving family and she does her responsibility out of love for her parents and younger brothers. But where siblings are all grown-ups, the youngest takes the bigger share of the responsibilities at home and becomes the *utusan* and she is expected nothing less than obedience as in the story of JKC-157. JKC-157 being the younger sibling to a sister, she feels that she is getting more work and being treated unfairly in the distribution of chores. She attributes her getting low scores on tests to her many duties at home. She also feels that there is an unequal distribution of work, she gets the big and heavy chunk of the works while her older sister gets the lighter ones. Physically exhausted, she sets aside school work to sleep and rest her tired body.

MBC-913, being the eldest in the family is expected to help in the daily chores like LJT-589. For MBC-913, there is an added responsibility because she has to help her mother in their



small business of *banana cue*. She feels overwhelmed by too many things to do at home that she feels lost as to which to prioritize but for most part she has to do house chores and assist the mother in their business leaving not much time for her school projects and assignments. She said she is overwhelmed by too many house chores and she no longer knows what to do first. Hinting at her need for a little understanding, emotional support and time to do her school works, MBC-913 said that she needs time to do her school works and wishes her situation would allow it. She has the feeling that her parents do not understand her life as a student who has to attend to the demands of school. Coming home late at times from school, she finds herself being reprimanded by parents who think that she went somewhere else with questions like: *'O bakit ngayon ka lang? Saan ka na naman nagpupunta? Bakit late ka?'* MBC-913 wishes that instead of scolding her, her parents should have been more caring by asking her: *Kumain ka na ba?* She feels that her parents are lacking with their emotional support for her with all their naggings. Expressing her wish: *tanungin man lang nila ako kung ano yung nararamdaman ko hindi yung puro talak ng talak.*

Theme 5: On Parenting Styles

Parenting is like walking a tightrope needing a great deal of balancing act. The balancing act that parents have to do in dealing with their children follows no hard and fast rule making it even more complex. Outcome of parenting depends as much on the parent as on the children and what they make of it. The following are stories of parenting styles and how they form the academic behavior and motivation of the children.



Harsh disciplinarian father and a loving supportive mother are how AJL-113 describes her parents. Her father was her first teacher and from him she learned not only her ABC's but some principles she is applying in approaching academic tasks. While the mother cannot be relied on when it comes to her academics but she is emotionally supportive of her academic achievements. It is her father who made a more lasting impact on her than the mother and what an impact it is.

Physical punishment for committing mistake is not the only harsh treatment she received from the father but verbal and emotional punishment as well. *'Bakit ganyan ka? Bobo! Tanga! Tinuruan ka naman, bakit di mo makuha?!'* Words whose meaning she understood only when she got older. Words whose meanings she kept in her heart until today as she said: *Mahirap pong makalimutan.* Like an obedient daughter she did as she was told, tried to learn everything her father wanted her to learn. And when she succeeded at doing what her father was trying to teach her, she would excitedly go to the father to show him her work expecting she would be praised but instead of hearing the father's praise and acknowledgment for a job well done, she heard 'okay' delivered cold as ice. Despite the father's harsh treatment and being emotionally distant, she continued trying to excel academically to the point of being competitive in class to gain her father's approval. But this motivation to perform well in academics changed and dwindled when she transferred to Manila for her high school. Coming to Manila to study was like freeing the self from the pressure of the father's expectation of her. That was the beginning of her wanting to be just like many other students – average. Sensing an environment where it does not make any difference whether one excels or not, AJL-113 chose not to excel. In an environment where neither excellence is praised nor mediocrity is punished, AJL-113 chose



mediocrity. She is comfortable with her mediocrity saying: *Okay naman po sa akin na nakakapasa kasi hindi naman ako bumabagsak. Makagraduate din ako, magkakatrabaho ako at makakatulong din naman ako eventually sa pamilya ko.*

AJL-113 recognizes that a great part of her and her beliefs is due to the father's influence. She learned to do things on her own, to discover things on her own without relying on others for help because that was how her father taught her. Something is missing, something is lacking though in the way she was brought up by the father, she realized. That something lacking is a father-daughter communication, an emotional bond between the two. AJL-113 believes that 'punishment is the best teacher' justifying her belief, she explained that because of it, she did not learn any vices and be loose in her behavior. Because of it she becomes '*maayos na tao*'. But something is missing - the emotional connection with the father, the need to feel the father's love for her. She learned the language of the hard discipline of the father but never experienced his language of love. Reflecting on the way her father disciplined her, she said:

Naging disiplinado nga ang kilos ko pero ngayon parang konting bagay lang takot na agad ako, nag-pu-pull back na agad ako na baka mali ang gagawin ko. Parang sobrang mali, although na train ka nga pero basag naman yung loob mo, yung loob mo na source ng lahat ng bagay, motivation mo, interest mo kaya parang wala rin pong sense.

Feeling somehow broken by the harsh discipline by the father and her longing for emotional connection, she now tries to search for it in her friends in school, taming her competitive spirit to excel academically for fear that her friends will be threatened by her, and for fear that she will have no one who will accept her, understand her, give her emotional support and



encouragement. While her friends are able to fulfill her emotional needs, she still pines for her family to whom she would like to dedicate her achievements.

The following story of MLV-104 is also about fear, punishment, rigid rules in the family but coupled with emotional support, rewards, and letting the children know that the parents are happy and proud of them doing well in school. Strict and rigid rules of MLV-104 gives her a choking feeling making her to keep her silence, not voicing out her feelings and opinions, feeling like she is still a baby, feeling controlled, no sense of freedom, and limiting her opportunities to experience life outside the confines of their home. *Nasasakal ka?* She was asked, and to which she replied: *Minsan po sobra na*. When her parents block her from going out with friends or joining school organizations, she forces herself into thinking and believing that:

Wala akong karapatang kwestyonin sila kasi magulang ko sila kaya tumatahimik na lang ako. Nararamdaman ko ding parang baby pa din ako na walang kakayanan na gawin yung gusto ko.

Somehow she understands her parent's strict and rigid rules. The family is from Bicol, and they seem to have the impression that the environment here in Manila is not safe for their daughters thus they keep them home. She understands her parents but *sana kahit man lang minsan minsan pagbigyan nila ako*. MLV-104 recognizes the beauty and the harm of strict parenting on her. The beauty of it is that she avoids vices and other what we may consider as bad behavior. Just the thought of being punished would make her avoid doing them. But the sad part is being afraid of the thought of punishment. There is also the feeling that she is missing many things things to experience in this life. She accepts the right of her parents to discipline her, and exercise control over her but not the excessive control. She explained: *Kasi nakikita ko naman*



sa iba kong classmates pag sobrang luwag naman, sumosobra naman sila na hindi na nag-aaral, walang takot sa magulang.

Her parents expect her to do well in school but she does not show them that she is studying hard at home for fear of raising their expectations of her and for fear of being compared with the sister. She said that she does not her parents to see her studying very hard for it. She is afraid to disappoint her parents when they see that she has low grades. She wants to surprise them with her good grades without them expecting much from her. It gives her a sense of satisfaction to know that she is able to make them happy and proud with her high grades. Her parents especially the mother knows how to appreciate her and her good performance by treating her like a VIP at home, not asking her to do anything. But it seems that there is more to it for MLV-104 when she gets good grades. She does not hear anything from them about her having a boyfriend. Good grades give her leverage for her to have a love life. Good grades are her proof that despite her having a boyfriend, she is not remiss in her academics. The sense of pride of the parents over their children's academic achievement will not escape their neighbors for it will be told by her mother.

Minsan narinig ko nanay ko na i-kini-kwento ako sa kapitbahay lalo na noong mag-first ako sa classroom namin kahit di naman tinatanong nung kausap niya. Na-realize ko na kahit papano pala ay natutuwa sila sa akin. di lang pala tungkol sa ate ko at sa achievements niya ang kinukwneto nila sa kapitbahay. Parang nakaka-proud sa sarili.

Her parents' style of parenting leaves her with a feeling of respect for them. Fear of punishment, high expectations, showing pride and emotional support seem to be working for MLV-104 to do well in school. The parenting style of instilling fear through rigid rules and punishment combined with show of emotional support and giving special treatment for doing well in school



seems to be working for MLV-104. She finds the motivation to study to please the parents who are able to successfully elicit respect and obedience from MLV-104. But what if a child is raised with so much unconditional love and acceptance whether she performs well in school or not?

Looking back at her kindergarten days, CSA-143 remembers the time when she had to memorize a poem with the help of her mother. With it is her memory of being hit by the mother with a back-scratcher for playing instead of focusing on the assigned task of memorizing a poem that she had to recite in her class. Her mother hit her so hard that the back-scratcher was broken in two. Hit hard, she focused on memorizing the poem. Not only was she able to memorize the poem, she also was able to deliver it very well to the delight of her teacher who told her mother about her good performance. CSA-143 remembers her mother being happy about it and that image made her want to always obey the mother so she could get good grades. CSA-143 describes her family as simple and happy. She thinks of her father as very responsible and her mother as loving. She said that her parents are competitive, hardworking and intelligent and they always want them the children, to be strong and outstanding. The mother she said always want her and her sister to be the best. And she understands her mother because according to her mothers only want what is best for their children. Her mother is the typical housewife who attends to the needs of the family, taking care of the children, supervising and monitoring them in their school works. The mother's close monitoring of the school activities of the children must have worked to the advantage of CSA-143. She always received honors and awards. CSA-143 said she didn't know the significance of awards and being top five for her but all she knew was the awards were making her parents proud. She felt it was very tiring.



Feeling tired and beginning to envy other children who just play and seemingly unmindful of their school lessons and assignments, CSA-143 began to feel annoyed, sick of doing her schoolworks and felt like telling her mother that is not what she wants. She reached high school and it was at that point when she noticed something changed. She is thinking that probably her mother thought that she could already handle things for herself. The mother she said no longer pushed her hard as she used to and yet still expecting a lot from her. But she has hanged as well. Seldom passing class requirements, seat works and quizzes, she stated to receive low and even failing marks to the dismay of the mother. Her mother's anger did not stop her from her downhill trajectory in so far as her academic performance is concerned for as she said that she already has the mindset that : *if something is hard and I did not get it on the first try, I would not try again. I would simply give up. I did not want to push myself any harder. I think I know my limits.* Despite the parents' trust and belief in her and constantly encouraging her, she simply stopped from making any attempts at bringing back her old self that is doing well in class. CSA-143 seems to point to a case of *too much, too soon* with her reason: *Maybe I became a screw that lost its tight grip because it had been forced on me and pushed hard too many times before.*

CSA-143 herself is not happy about it. She feels a tinge of guilt for not making her parents happy and proud anymore. She could feel her parents' disappointment with her especially the mother but CSA-143 feels secured in their love for her knowing that even if she is not performing in school according to their expectations, they still love her and accept her including her limitations. According to CSA-143, she made her parents get used to her less than satisfactory performance and she wanted them to know that she is not that academically good as what her mother believes. For CSA-143, when they got used to her receiving low grades, it is



no longer as disappointing as it was before. Somehow her parents got used to being disappointed with her while she got used to getting low grades and even got to feel comfortable with it. And so the scoldings stopped. She is no longer afraid to disappoint her mother with her low academic performance because as she said: *Kasi ipinararamdam naman nila sa akin na tanggap nila ako. Kahit ma-disappoint sila wala rin naman silang magagawa kasi malaki na ako eh.* She wanted to tell her mother that she is not good as what she thinks her to be.

Similar sentiment that she is not as good as what her mother wants to believe is in the account of KCG-172. She has the impression that her mother might have an exaggerated perception of her academic abilities and what is more frightening for her is that her mother tells their neighbors that she is intelligent. KCG-172 said that it was probably the reason why she grew up feeling confident about herself and thinking she was better or ahead compared to others. But she came to realize that she was not what her mother thought she was. She was wrong in thinking that she has better compared to others. With that realization she admitted:

Akala ko mas lamang ako kaysa sa aking mga kamag-aaral at kaibigan. Hindi pala. Ni hindi nga ako makapagsalita ng ingles eh. Siguro masipag mag-aral, yun ang angkop na salita para saakin.

Her reality check came when she met intelligent classmates. It was then that she realized that she was not that intelligent as what her mother told her. In explaining the reason why her mother had the belief that she was intelligent, she said that she was first honor in kinder. It gave her mother the idea that she was intelligent. Her family members also noticed that when she was a young, she can easily do errands for them without forgetting their instructions. They told her that she was unlike other kids who forget instructions when asked to do errands. She feels she



could have done better with her academics during her earlier days of schooling had her mother closely supervised and assisted her with her lessons. But she totally understands the mother who had to work for their family but just the same, she feels that parental monitoring was lacking. She said:

Siguro may kulang. Parang pagtutuok na turuan, hikayating pumasok sa school, gumawa ng assignments. Noong elementary ako siyempre yung mama ko nagtatrabaho. Tapos yung mga ate ko nag-aaral din, so hindi nabigyang pansin yung pag-aaral.

She remembered that the only time her mother helped her with an assignment was the time when she had to memorize her speech for kindergarten graduation. The mother whose main concern was to put food on the table for her children lost time to monitor and supervise her children's academic progress. With her mother busy working for the family, they learned to settle for: ***Kung ano makuha mo (grades) ah ok. Kung mataas eh di magaling. Kung mababa, okay pagbutihin mo na lang sa susunod.***

While she has already stopped believing that she is intelligent, her mother continues to believe that her daughter is intelligent and she continues to tell people that her daughter is. And now KCG-172 feels afraid that people would find out that she is not really that intelligent as what her mother tells them. Losing the mother's close supervision also resonates in the story of JAM-122 whose mother had time for him and his kuya in monitoring them in their school works but when the number of children grew, his mother lost time to closely supervise them with their lessons and assignments. JAM-122 attributes his and his older brother's being on top of their kinder class to their mother's close supervision but he cannot say the same when other siblings came. JAM-122 recalls his early years in school when her mother was closely supervising him do his school assignments but as he said it changed when the family got 4 more children.



Dahil hindi lang ako ang anak ng nanay ko, hindi na niya ako natutulungang gumawa ng project at assignment. Bukod pa doon ay ang kakulangan sa pananalapi kaya hindi ako nakakapagpasa ng mga projects at assignments. Dahil doon ay bumaba ang mga grades ko pero kahit na ganoon ay napanatili ko naman ang aking pagiging section 1.

JAM-122 said that his parents never reminds him to study well but he feels that it is what they want him to do and so he tries to do well making his family his inspiration and source of motivation. He said that in their neighborhood, a family is already lucky if their children are able to finish high school and only a few enters college. Sometimes, he hears her neighbors expressing to her mother that they are envious of her for having children who are intelligent. He knows that her mother is happy and proud and it gives him a sense of satisfaction knowing that her mother is happy and proud of him and his brother. It makes him even more motivated to do well in school.

JAM-122 describes their parenting style as not strict and not failing to support him. His parents allow him freedom because they trust him and believe in his competence. JAM-122 when asked about his parents' expectations of him when it comes to his academics, he said that he assumes that all his parents wanted is for him to pass and to graduate. He also assumes that getting high grades would just be a bonus for his parents an added reason for their happiness. JAM-122 recognizes the role of his family in the development of his academic commitment and involvement saying:

May mahalagang parte ang magulang, kapatid at mga taong nakapaligid sa akin para mabuo ko ang mataas na academic self-concept ko. Sila kasi ang nagsasabing kaya kong gawin ang mga bagay na sa tingin ko ay hindi kokaya.

MAS-124's account of his mother's pride in him finds similarity in the stories of KCG-172 and JAM-122 whose mothers take pride in having intelligent children like them but seem to



have no specific or clear expectations of them when it comes to their academic performance. MAS-124 recounts that he often hears his mother telling their neighbors of her being proud of him. In the eyes of the mother he is intelligent compared to his cousins. It made him acquire the belief that he is intelligent. However, in his effort not to disappoint his mother in her belief that her son is intelligent, MAS-124 learns to choose which examination results to show her and definitely what he would show are the good ones and would keep hidden the bad ones. His mother's belief in him and in his intelligence puts pressure on him to do well in school. He is afraid to disappoint the mother and afraid that he would embarrass the mother before their neighbors when he fails in school. However, despite the high expectation of the mother and his belief in his own intelligence, MAS-124 seems to be performing on an average level which he describes in his own words as *sakto lang* (meaning: average), so he was asked why he settles for average and to which he replied:

*Kasi feeling ko eh yun lang yung okay sa akin at okay naman yung nanay ko.
Nakikita ko rin naman na masaya siya.*

MAS-124 in seeing that his mother is already happy with his academic performance, no longer feels the need to make her even happier with a higher performance. It also gives him a sense of satisfaction that her mother makes him feel that she is proud of him and gives him special attention especially when he gets good grades. He was asked about the place of his father in his story, he said: *Si papa kasi trabaho eh. Masyadong busy.* But he recognizes the role of his family in motivating him to study especially the mother. His family is his reason for his academic commitment. He is even more motivated when he feels that his mother is giving him special treat and making him know that she is proud of the son. In his words: *Fulfilling.*



Except for the account of AJL-113, we seem to be seeing that the central figure in the academic life of the participants is their mother. From the accounts of MLV-104, CSA-143, KCG-172, JAM-122 and MAS-124, the mothers are inseparable in their narratives forming and shaping their academic life. In the next story, we find again a mother influencing the daughter's academic motivation. But just like in the stories of KCG-172 and JAM-122, the mother seems to have no high expectation of her daughter as CMF-716 described:

Basta makapasa lang.Kasi po si mama walang paki, basta makapasa lang.Palagay ko ang expectation ay wag lang bumagsak at makatapos ako. Parang feeling ko walang paki si mama kung bumagsak ako. Wala siyang paki sa grades ko.

Similarly situated in no parental expectations except 'no failing grades' is ONW-174 who is uncertain as to how her parents influenced her studies or academic performance. She seems to believe that her parents simply let her be for as long as she does not receive any failing grade. She noticed that since she started high school, her parents have paid less attention to her studies and now that she is in college, they do not even look at her grades. She offered to possible explanations. One is that her parents fully trust her or they are not expecting anything from her.because they have been used to her being an average student and as she said:....*they don't expect it to drop or to increase.*Sounding a bit conceding about her parents' influence on her, ONW-174 said that her parents' treatment and attitude towards her made her what she is today, an easy-going student who is satisfied with any grade except failing ones. She said that she appreciates her parents for not putting any pressure on her or scolding her for not studying but she somehow feels that she could have been a better student had they put pressure. ONW-



174 seems to have gotten used to being an average student and feeling secured in her comfort zone with the thought of her parents being okay with it as well. As she said:

My parents are fine with what I have now. I think they are fine with any grade as long as it is not failing. And so, that is what I have been doing all this time. I am not the best in class but I am also the the worst and that is a comfortable situation for me. I don't even want to have high grades because if my parents would see them, they might put unnecessary pressure on me and I don't like that.

Sometimes when parents express no expectations or when they appear to be uncertain and unaware of what is a high academic performance and what is an average to low performance, children tend to take an attitude towards academic tasks and performance that are to their preference or what seems to them as acceptable to them and their parents.

In the following account, we have parents who do not have high expectations of their child yet she is able to yield high outcome in terms of her academic performance. But what seems to be the running thread is the emotional connection between the father and daughter – an emotional connection that makes her thrive in her academics. The story of IHY-014 started with her perception that she was not close to her parents. It was her early successes in school that paved the way for that special bond between father and daughter. Looking back she narrated that she was not close to her parents because she felt she was not their *favorite child*. But she noticed that her parents' attitude towards her changed when she started to receive honors and awards. She believes that it was the reason why she and her father became close to each other.

Describing her parents' involvement in her school activities, she said that they are not the hands-on type. IHY-014 claims that she was not pressured by her parents with her grades or her class standing. What was important for the parents was that she studies and gets no failing



grades. She felt motivated to go to school even when she was sick. Her parents saw her determination to study so they tried to the best of their ability to support her in all her school activities. IHY-014 noticed that she and her father became closer when she reached high school and her father became even more supportive of her. She said that it was then that she realized that she important to her father and not only her older sister with whom she grew up feeling a bit of jealousy. She feels that her her improving performance and her good standing in the class ranking did not make her parents put pressure on her. With the way her parents treat her and the support they give her, she strengthened her resolve and motivation to do very well in school. Not only does she see her academic excellence as a way of pleasing her parents but she also sees her academic excellence and possible awards of making her father feel proud of their family before their relatives and neighbors. The desire to change the image of the family before the eyes of their relatives and neighbors has become an added dimension in her motivation. She said that she is the one pressuring herself because she is already tired of hearing negative things about their family from her neighbors. IHY-014 is aware of how proud her parents are of her and her achievements in school strengthening even more her resolve to do well. It gives her tremendous fulfillment in hearing her parents tell their neighbors about her and her achievements. When she feels tired and feels like losing motivation, she would think of her family and would try to encourage herself with :*Sige, ituloy ko pa ito, meron pa akong maibibigay, kaya ko pa ito.* And this is what she will do until she reaches her goal of graduating from college with academic awards to give honor and pride to her family, most especially to the father. The story of ILH-014 is a story of high academic performance despite no expectations and pressure from her family. The next one is a story of parents' very high expectation in their



daughter's academic performance yielding a high academic outcome. But the child does not know exactly how high that expectation is since she never hears the parents say they are happy and proud of her. This is the story of NOV-121 who says she cannot feel satisfied with her academic performance until she sees and hears her parents say that they are happy and proud of her. She cannot stop until she feels her parents love and support. NOV-121 opens up:

Marahil kung ako lamang ay emosyonal na nasusuportahan ng aking magulang, siguro mas magsisipag pa ako sa aking pag-aaral. Nais kong maramdaman sa kanila na proud sila sa akin sa aking pa-unti-unting achievements. Gusto kong marinig kahit yung simpleng 'ang galing ng anak ko.' Kahit minsan hindi nila nasabi yun.

That is the voice of a daughter who tries to please the parents with her efforts to do well in school and the only thing she wants and longs for is for her parents to recognize her efforts, to hear them say they are proud of her. Hearing nothing she becomes emotionally distant and admitted that her studies are affected. She loses her motivation making her get low grades. *But seeing her low grades also makes her feel disappointed with herself and becomes afraid of the disappointment of her parents.* Fearing that her parents will find reason to get disappointed with her, she tries her best to do better next time. Her friends and classmates tell her that she is good and doing well in her academics, but she seem unable to believe them. For her, she is just like any other average student in class. She will only believe it when her parents validate it through saying the words she longs to hear, 'I am proud of you.' Validation from her classmates and teachers are not enough for her for the persons she needs to validate her worth and her competence are her parents. Despite her high academic performance, she still feels unfulfilled and unsatisfied. The longing for her parents' validation of her seems to lead her to wanting to be



on top of the class, or a position in class where no other is higher in her performance. But even she is unclear, unsure of what her standard is, all she knows is that she has a high standard and she seems to hint at her parents as her standard, that is when she sees that they are happy with her and her performance. She said that she will only feel satisfied once she hear her parents say they are proud of her and her academic performance. Never hearing any hint of her parents' approval and acknowledgment, she feels that no matter how much she tries, she will never be able to please her parents. She has the feeling that her parents are setting very high standard for her with: *wala yan, hindi pa yan, kulang pa yan, dapat taasan mo pa lalo*. Those are words that make her feel discouraged. She senses that her parents' way of motivating her attains the opposite. Despite her relative high academic performance, she feels: *Parang lagi na lang po na kulang, kulang, kulang*. With her parents' very high expectations of her yet unclear how high is high, she feels the pressure and the stress of the seemingly unreachable high standard.

Sub-Question 3: What are the experiences (action/interaction/emotions) of the participants in their school settings that may be the foundation of their incongruent low academic outcome and high academic self-concept?

Theme 6: Looking for Emotional Connectedness to Friends and Classmates

Feeling alone, afraid to be left behind by friends, feeling no one to turn to, feeling powerless without friends and being happy in school because of friends are the emotions running in the accounts of the participants. Longing for love and emotional support like a dry land thirsting for water, participants look for emotional connectedness with friends and classmates and a few, even to teachers.



Pakiramdam ko wala. Kaya ang nangyayari lagi kong sinasabi sa mga kaibigan ko na itinuturing ko sila ngamilya... meron ka ngang nanay pero hindi mo naman marinig na proud siya sa iyo may mga kapatid ako pero hindi ko naman maramdaman dahil wala naman sila.

Feeling alone in the family and longing for love, understanding, and praise from the mother, AAR-466 sets her sight on friends who make her feel she belongs and who give her emotional support and encouragement. With them she finds the family she longs for, friends who make her feel she belongs to them, friends who look up to her like an 'ate'. But she added that since she is able to find love and sense of belongingness in her friends, it resulted to her making her friends as standard reference of her behavior, including academic behavior. Finding emotional anchor in friends, she has become dependent on them, taking cues from them on what she needs to do. Her friends have also become for her the standard of her academic performance. Her sense of belongingness with her friends, has given her the motivation to do better in her studies. The tendency to imitate the behavior of friends with whom one has emotional bond is also found in the account of CLJ-143. He described his family atmosphere as sad, gloomy and no one hears any laughters. He feels that his family has forgotten how to laugh. With his sick father, over-worked mother and hard-to-relate-to older brother, he finds the atmosphere depressing. He described the school as a different world, a happy place where he can be his true happy-self. He described his friends and classmates as the ones who help him. Friends to whom he can confide his problems, he found them in school. His need for friends seems to influence any attempt to go beyond his average academic performance. Very much like AAR-466, he seems to be using his friends as his reference standard for his academic standard. He does not want to go above his current performance because he seems to think that those who are studying hard have no or very few friends. He does not want to feel alone when he pursues higher



academic goals. For him, his current level of academic performance enables him to be close to his friends. High level of academic performance is meaningless and useless for him if it would mean having no friends and being alone. That belief is contained in his rhetorical question: *Anongsilbi nun kung mag-isakalang?* He gives us a hint into his search for belongingness, for love, for friendship. In his mind it is more important to have friends than any desire for academic excellence when it would mean losing his friends because he has the impression that those who excel in class have no friends. In his desire not to be far from his friends, he said: *nakiki-bagay nalang ako kasi ma-a-attain naman naming yung goals namin kahit eto lang.* CLJ-143's search for emotional connectedness to people in school seems not limited to friends and classmates but includes as well a desire for emotional connection with his teachers. We find a hint of it in the following:

*Kasi sir yung ibang teacher wala silang intimate relationship dun sa estudyante.
Kasi yung iba turo lang ng turo, pasok lang ng pasok ng knowledge, walang pakialam sa estudyante sa pinag-dadaan niya.*

He expressed the belief that teachers should form an emotional connection with his/her students so that s/he can get the trust and confidence of the students. He believes that it is important for him to see in a teacher so that the teacher can get his attention. For him, it is not enough that a teacher is able to provide him information or knowledge but that s/he also has to help him develop his emotional aspect. MCV-784 grew up not knowing her father. She feels her family is not complete without him. Living with her mother and brother seems not enough to feel the void leading her to find her emotional connection to friends and classmates in school. Not only does she look for love and belongingness in friends but also a sense of being safe. MCV-784 wrote in her Sentence Completion that she feels safe in school and happy in the thought that she



is learning while being with her friends. Elaborating on the feeling of being safe in school, she narrated that when home, her mother is generally silent, does not talk much and easily gets mad at even the little things. She always finds herself at the losing end of her mother's anger leaving her crying. She could hardly bear the hurtful words of the mother. Crying her pain out and off her chest is all she could do. Emotionally hurt by the mother, feeling alone and no one to turn to, MCV-784 finds comfort in her friends. Being with them is:

Masaya. Masaya kasi may kaibiganka. Masaya kasi may mgakaibigakang concern sayo. Masaya kasi isinasama ka nila. Masaya kasi hindi ka nag-iisa. Masaya kasi lalo na pag may quiz or exam, sama-sama kaming nag-aaral.

With friends, she does not feel alone and lonely anymore. With friends, she feels the love and concern that she is unable to find in her family. The same thread of feeling safe and happy when in school is in the account of JKC-157. It is almost like an echo of MCV-784. It is the same longing to form an emotional bond with members of the family, a longing that is fulfilled by friends in school. She disclosed that she does not have a good relationship with her sister. They never talk and the sister was always at shouting at her. She finds it strange that even if they see each other in school, they don't talk, don't approach each other as if they don't know each other. The overwhelming feeling towards the sister is fear. With friends in school, she found what she was missing, friends to talk to, friend to whom she can share what she is going through, as she said:

Longing to be close to the sister, wanting to talk with her, open up to her about what she is experiencing remain unfulfilled and even the simplest gesture of approaching her in school is not possible for her. Related by blood but there is no emotional connection that exists between the two. But with her classmates she feels her emotional connection. She also mentioned that



in school no one will hurt her or deceive her. That has reference to her experience when she was a child. She was duped by a stranger who took from her her mother's earrings. It was a traumatic experience and it happened many years ago. But despite the many years that passed, her family especially the mother would always bring up the story whenever there is a chance, thus the impossibility of forgetting the traumatic experience, and the experience is told and retold by her mother when she gets angry with her.

For other participants, it is the brokenness of the self from having an *incomplete* family that seems to fuel their search for emotional connection. *I am from a broken family*, said CST-352. The term *broken* that she used describes not only the reality that her parents are separated but also to her feeling being broken, and feeling of being alone. This feeling of brokenness makes her long for the day when her family can get back together. But until that day comes, she is looking for love and sense of belongingness with her teachers and classmates. She wrote in her Reflective Writing that her parents separated when she was 4 years old. She has a brother living in the province with their father, while she lives here in Manila with the mother. She said that she grew up with the mother and no one else. CST-352 seems to feel that she has been conditioned to live all by herself with her mother working, no one was left in the house but she. She must have missed how it feels to have people around, to feel safe and secured in the company of family that she longs for it in friends. This feeling of being alone was pursued during the interview and she was asked what she is missing, what she feels is lacking in her life given the family situation. She said that:

Yung companion po kaya po gusto kolagi me kasama ako. Gusto kong maranasan yung love, love po ng ibang tao. Kasi hindi ko nararanasan sa pamilya ko kasi dalawa lang kami sa bahay.



Not finding love and companionship in the mother, she looks for them in school, in her teachers and classmates. In her brokenness, CST-352 still remains hopeful that one day, the family that she describes as broken will be whole again, saying that it is her primary reason why she wants to finish college so that she can be in a position to make it happen. Simple words or gestures of family members asking- ‘O kumainkana? Magbihiskamuna at kumainkana?’ when one comes home from school is enough to make him/her feel that s/he is loved. But even those are far from the experience of NAC-241. She needs to feel that her family cares for her, concerned about her or she is being given importance but those words and feelings are not part of NAC-241’s life with her family. She expressed that she is envious of others when shown love and concern by their families with simple acts like asking them if they have already had their meal or ask to change clothes and get ready for dinner is ready. She never experienced any of those. She admitted that it is the lack of love and sense of belongingness that she never experienced in the family are what she looks for in her classmates and teachers. She said that she considers her friends as her sisters and how she is when she is with friends is far different how she is when she is home. It is like living in two different worlds.

Her claim that she behaves differently when in school compared to when she is at home is a common thread that connects CIJ-143, JKC-157, CST-352, and AAR-466 and all these in search for love and belongingness with friends in school, something they do not find in their families. NAC-241 remembers a moving experience with her teacher when she was sharing a part of her life with her classmates and at one point, she could hardly hold back her tears. The teacher came to her and embraced her. In a simple embrace from her teacher, she felt the love of her mother who is long gone. Describing her feeling at that moment, she said:



Nung niyakap niya ako, parang naramdaman ko dun si mama. Umiyak ako kasi parang ipinaramdam niya sa akin yung concern niya.

For JAM-122, his search for emotional connection seems not to be emanating from the lack of love in the family but from an innate need for it. He has given hints to his need for acceptance, sense of belongingness that he is afraid to offend any of his classmates. There seems to be a strong need to be accepted by everybody. At one point in the interview, he admitted his fear of being left by friends, a fear he traces back to an experience when he was left by them. In his attempt to prevent it from happening, he is willing to do anything just to be liked and accepted and will avoid anything that may offend them. In the process, he wants to be everything to everybody, losing his own identity, forgetting his own feelings for the sake of keeping his friends close to him. He narrated that he feels totally at home when in the classroom. He does not feel any fear or anxiety. He feels he can talk with everybody whom he considers as his siblings. He said that a part of his motivation in coming to school is to be with his friends and classmates. It is for the sense of belongingness. Leading us to his motivation for his behavior to fulfill his need for belongingness, he talked about his fear: *Natatakot akong makasakit ng tao at maiwan*. It was pointed out to him that his desire to befriend everyone, to be accepted by everybody may be causing him to set aside his own feelings to avoid hurting others, and to be liked and accepted. He said:

Siguro po. Parang minsan iniisip ko kung ano ang sasabihin nila o mararamdaman nila kapag kumilos ako at gumawa ng isang bagay.

He is afraid that his friends will leave him. He has already experienced being left by friends and he knows the pain. To avoid it from happening again, he tries to please everybody sacrificing



his own feelings in the process. Everybody searches for love, for sense of belongingness and he is willing to give up his own feelings and his own needs for the sake of this need. Wanting to be close to everybody, JAM-122 has sacrificed even his need to perform well in class, his desire to further develop his academic potentials. Seeking peer approval just like JAM-122 is KLF-510 whose search for love and emotional connectedness to friends springs from her longing for a life of being with all the family members living together. She described her family as:

Watak-watak po kasi kami si mama nasa ibang bansa tapos yung iba kong kapatid nasa probinsiya hindi kasi samasama kaya ano parang feeling ko ang lungkot ko sabahay.

The feeling of void and longing is filled by the love of friends and when she is with them she momentarily forgets her problems and worries. Being happy with friends does not only make her forget her feelings of loneliness and longing for her mother and brothers but she also forgets her school works saying that she seems to have lost control of herself. Her friends can easily make her put down everything in just one invite. KLF-510 is beginning to sense that she is losing control of herself but does not know how to explain it. She may not be aware of it, but in her search for love, belongingness, and attention, she has surrendered her personal control to her friends in whom she found the love and attention she longs for. She has given the wheel to her friends for them to steer and to drive her to wherever they want to go and she seems to be enjoying the ride oblivious of her losing control of her own life's direction.



Theme 7: Attributing Motivation or Loss of It to Teachers. Personality and Professional Competence

A teacher or professor standing in front of a class is subjected to various interpretations in the minds of the participants. Voice, appearance, gestures, and most of all the ways s/he teaches are interpreted by the participants influencing their academic behaviors- thoughts, actions, and feelings that in turn influence the academic performance of his/her students. Intended or not, his/her behaviors manifested through personal attributes and professional competence are influencing his/her students. A teacher standing in front of a class becomes a light passing through the prism of the minds of the students.

AJL-113 is one of the participants who attributed the partial loss of her academic interest and motivation to her teachers/professors whom she finds uninteresting, boring, and from whom she would get nothing useful. She admitted that she has this habit of marking or labelling her teachers depending on their characteristics particularly the ones who are boring for her. She said that she would only listen to teachers if:

they look strict and intelligent, they are teaching an interesting subject, and they know what they are teaching.

AJL-113 said that grades are important to her but due to some teachers with opposite characteristics of what she already mentioned, she learned not to care about grades anymore saying that some teachers are *pulling one's morale down instead of pushing you to achievement*. In her mind she is cursing them. *I am throwing blasphemies at them*, she said. Her negative attitude towards some teachers could be partly explained by a negative experience with a teacher who she thought judged her unfairly. She was told by the teacher that she was the biggest dumb s/he has ever known for she could hardly multiply 12 by 15 mentally.



CST-352 finds teachers who are able to motivate her, to inspire her to do well in school but she also finds some who succeeded at discouraging her. She remembers to this day her elementary teacher who made her succeed in school with her encouraging words. She recalled that her grade 4 teacher, upon noticing that she can make it to the top of the class, further encouraged her with the words: *Kaya mo yan, wag kang mag-give-up*. CST-352 describes the teacher as approachable and when the students commit mistakes, the teacher would tell them ‘it is okay.’ She said that she works best under a teacher who is kind and always ready to show support and encouragement. With that kind of teacher, she is all the more encouraged to strive harder and do better with her academic performance. Opposite the kind and encouraging teacher is a strict teacher to who she reacts with fear. A strict teacher makes her feel nervous and afraid and she is unable to bring out the best in her.

Words they hear from their teachers seem not to be the only source of motivation or demotivation for them. They are also trying to make sense of their facial expressions which to them acquires meaning. They interpret not only what they hear directly from their teachers but also what they see through gestures. For example, CST-352 acquires a feeling that sometimes a teacher could be disappointed with her through the teacher’s actions or gestures like frowning. She is also able to get a sense whether a teacher is interested or disinterested in her. The sense that the teacher is disappointed with her, it gives her a sense of frustration and feeling disappointed with her own self. She only needs to see or hear positive feedback from her teacher. Any negative comment or what appears to her as a negative gesture is enough to make her feel discouraged.



JPJ-918 expresses his natural excitement in coming to class thinking that he would learn from the teacher but like many participants, he loses his motivation the moment he hears the voice of his teacher. He described that moment when he hears the voice of his teacher: *Pag nagsimula ng magsalita yung professor namin parang lilipad na yung isip ko*. The voice of the teacher makes his mind wander and when it happens he finds himself chatting with his seatmate. He said he does not want it to happen because it is clear for him that he wants to learn and he wants to have a positive outcome as reflected in his grades. JPJ-918 seems to attribute the low outcome to his professor but it is not only his performance that is affected but the others' as well. In his conversation with his classmates, the boring teacher is naturally their topic, as he said:

Kaya sasabihin ko wala naman itong itiuturo eh. Tapos sasabihin ng mga kaklase ko 'OO nga eh, ang boring niya kasi magturo eh parang wala tayong natututunan.

He would attempt to overcome his negative attitude towards studying as a result of his negative evaluation of the teacher but seeing his classmates not studying, he seems to lose his own motivation. When he encourages his classmates to study, his invitation would often be met with remarks from his classmates like: *...madali lang yan, hindi naman siya nagtuturo eh. Kaya ayun hindi na din ako mag-aaral*. JPJ-918 finds difficulties in his studies due to what he perceives as the seeming lack of competence of the teacher, and to a more serious claim of the lack of dedication and commitment of the teacher seen through not conducting classes. He believes that some teachers are not clear in their explanation of their lessons because the teachers themselves do not know the lesson. Aside from some teachers who seem lost with their lessons, there are also some according to JPJ-918 who do not teach sometimes. He said that there are some



teachers who just give handouts for them to read and study and then they will be given test or quiz. He thinks that it is part of the reason why they get low scores. But such practice, also gives him a distorted view that he is going to pass because the teacher is not attending to his/her class regularly. As he said:

Hindi siya nagtuturo tapos next meeting quiz? Anu yung i-ki-quiz? Hindi naman ito nagtuturo. Tapos papasok sa isip ko na papasa ako dito hindi naman ito nagtuturo eh.

Forming impressions about his teachers is not limited to how s/he teaches but it includes how the teacher appears to him as to whether the teacher is pleased or angry at him. JPJ-918 seems to form impressions out of simple gestures that a teacher makes when he greets him or her, the way a teacher reacts to his answer to a question during recitation. JPJ-918 admits though that he does not check whether his perception of the teacher's behavior or his interpretation of it is right or wrong. Expressing his frustration and dismay over those professors, JPJ-918 said that he and his classmates are annoyed, upset and angry. They feel that the teacher is wasting their time. They made the effort to come to class only to find that the teacher is not going to teach them. His feeling of dismay is not only related to the fact that they come to class to learn but also to the feeling that they are just wasting the money they paid for their tuition.

CLJ-143 attributes his motivation to a teacher's enthusiasm to teach. He said that it has an impact on his motivation when he sees that the teacher is enthusiastic combined with the teacher's ability to form an emotional connection with the class. He starts to feel a connection with the teacher when he feels in a teacher that s/he is genuinely focused on them and truly cares for their learning. Feeling connected as explained by CLJ-143 is important for him to



motivate himself to learn and part of that feeling connected to the teacher is his or her ability to share a part of his or her life story through which students can see themselves, with which they can relate and from which they can learn something applicable in their life. The opposite of feeling connected with the teacher is feeling disconnected which to him means:

Pag puro activities lang pinagagawa sa amin, hindi nagdi-discuss. Nagkakaroon na ako sa teacher ng impression na ay boring ito, hindi ako matututo dito, kaya okay lang siguro na kahit hindi na ako makinig dito sa teacher na ito the whole sem.

Like many other participants, CLJ-143 forms his impression of his teachers through what he calls as *aura* which to many is the personality exuded by the teacher. He said that there are *auras* that motivate in the same way that there are *auras* that demotivate them. From his reading of the teacher's aura, being cautious with his behavior trying to figure out what will work for him in a given situation. He made a comparison between two different perception of a teacher's *aura* and their effects on them:

May aura ang isang teacher na nakakapagbigay sa amin ng motivation na magsipag kami. Si (name of the professor) yung aura niya, yung dating niya sa amin yung tipong hindi talaga siya nanghuhula lang ng grade at dun kami nagbabase kaya nag-aaral kami. Merong mga teachers kasi na sa tingin namin nanghuhula lang ng grades. Hindi kami nagsipag pero mataas grade namin.

The motivation to persist in a difficult task seems to be linked with how participants perceived their teacher as reflected in the account of MBC-913. There is also a tendency to accept a low grade with a certain sense of fulfillment if it is from a teacher who is perceived as challenging and appeared committed to teaching the students. In her clarification on her behavior that she tends not to give up easily when faced with a difficult task, she said:



Opo, lalo na pag sa subject ni (name of the the professor). Sobrang saya ko na pag naka-3.0 ako. Pag mahirap talaga ang subject tapos convincing pa yung professor sa subject na yun parang ang saya magsipag. Pero kapag yung professor na di naman worth it, parang okay hindi ka naman nagtuturo ang baba mo pang magbigay ng grade. Pero pagang galing galing ng professor tapos ang baba ng grades ko. Gagawin ko talaga lahat ng best ko para ma-meet ko expectation nung teacher.

MBC-913 in her description of a teacher who is not *worth it*, said they are those who regularly come to class but do nothing but talk about their personal life stories. Some teachers hardly hold classes and they can count on their fingers the number of times they held classes. She also expressed her disappointments that some teachers simply provide them with handouts a day before the examination and test items are taken from the handout that the teacher did not even bother to discuss. To MBC-913, those teachers are *not worth it*. Those teachers are for her not worth her time and effort.

One recurring theme among the participants is their sensing of their teachers behaviors, whether verbal or non-verbal. NOV-121 acquires the feeling that there are times when her teachers appear as frustrated with her. She could sense it through the actions and the eyes of the teacher. Her other impressions of her teachers are based on gut feel, an intuition that she finds difficult to explain or describe but nevertheless leads her to forming impressions and interpretations. Her perception of the teacher's behaviors has positive and negative effects on her. She explained that sometimes their negative interpretation of a teacher's act or gesture can have positive effect. For example, a teacher's anger can force them to think but most of the time, it does not help, because it paralyzes them to think and they just keep silent.

NOV-121 said that she can easily detect a strict teacher the moment s/he enters the class. There is something in the teacher that seems to give them the idea that they need to behave. She



believes that the sense of authority is simply emanating from within the teacher. NOV-121 while she seems to believe that a strict teacher can better handle the students, they seem not to respond to the teacher even if they think that the teacher is good in teaching. They seem to have been paralyzed by fear of the strict teacher. However, NOV-121 also believe that a teacher who is not strict can be taken advantaged of by some students. She said:

...pero my disadvantage kasi ang tendency ng mga estudyante hindi na makikinig kasi iisipin nila mabait yung teacher, hahayaan niya lang kami kaya hindi rin po sila matututo.

In the account of MLV-104, giving her best in an academic task depends on whether he feels challenged by the professor highlighting what other participants are claiming that their motivation is linked with their perception of their teachers. She said that she is selective in her exertion of effort and that is under those teachers whom she perceives as challenging, not dependent on books, able to provide her with many perspectives not limited by the content of the textbook, and very competent to teach. She has a gauge of a good teacher and that is when she sees that everybody in class exerts effort to review in the class of the good teacher. If in their collective perception that the teacher is good, their class is motivated to study, and for MLV-104, seeing her classmates study in the course handled by that teacher is a signal for her to study and exert effort and that is her gauge that the teacher is good. She said that she can clearly see the difference between a good and a not-so-good teacher based on the behavior of their class. And as she described:

Kitang kita ang pagkakaiba pag ang teacher boring at ang teacher na challenging para sa ming lahat. Sa klase ng challenging na teacher, lahat kami nagtutulungan sa pag-aaral, lahat ng kaklase ko nag-aaral ng mabuti. Ang challenging na teacher hindi kami hayahay na makapasa lang, napipilitan



kaming mag-aral ng mabuti para ibigay naming talaga best namin sa subject ng teacher na challenging.

MLV-104 describes further their behavior and attitude towards a teacher. She is pointing to the teacher's personality that gives them an idea whether they easily make their way around the teacher or not. For AAR-466 points to the link between a teacher and her motivation said that when she sensed that the teacher is not dedicated to teaching them, she loses her motivation. Added to that observation is the impression that some of her teachers are disorganized in their lesson presentation and that adds to her difficulty to learn. She said she observed that some teachers are simply disorganized with their lesson presentations, clearly without direction and simply discusses what s/he sees in the book without making any connections with previous lessons. She feels that attending the class is just a waste of time. She thinks that sometimes a teacher is not fit to teach a particular subject due to lack of mastery and academic preparation. Expressing her regret over senseless use of time under some teachers, she said: *Nasasayang lang oras namin.*

In the case of ILH-113, there are two things that are at play in her motivation, the teacher and the course. In tracing her motivation she explained that she becomes even more motivated when the teacher is able to arouse her interest and motivation. She said that she can sense if the teacher is really interested in the students and their learning. When she perceives that the teacher has genuine concern for them, she is motivated to study. But under a teacher who appears to them as *walang paki*, ILH-113 loses her interest. She recalled a teacher who gave them a very long assignment only to find out that the teacher did not check, grade, and record their assignment. She felt she just wasted her time and effort. She felt that it is unfair to



them especially to those who did their assignments and more so to those who did their assignments very well. With that situation, she has this to say:

Dun po ko nadidiscourage mag-exert ng effort po kasi parang kahit walang gawa yung iba o di pumapasok yung iba nakakapasa pa din naman po.

In a clear indication of how perception on the teacher can influence effort, JAM-122 said that he makes an estimation of his effort depending on his reading of the teacher's standard. He tends to give more effort and submit projects or assignments that are well done to teachers who he perceives to have high standard.

...I estimate how much effort I would exert depending on the teacher... Sometimes if I know that the teacher has a high standard in checking our tasks, I am likely to give more effort in doing it. ..I will give my best in fulfilling that task.

While some participants seem to be paralyzed by a strict teacher, KLM-270 is looking for a teacher who is strict but added that s/he must also be good or competent in teaching with mastery of the subject combined with an affective element in the teacher that enables him to feel his/her genuine concern for the students. In describing impact on his motivation of such teacher, he said that they make him feel encouraged and they gain respect from him. He looks up to them. And under a teacher with opposite characteristics, the effect on him is: *tinatamad ako*. Similarly, JKC-157 is okay with having a strict professors. She sees them as part of college life. She said that they are more challenging compared to those who are not strict. Under a strict teacher or professor, they feel compelled to submit their requirements on time. Then she made the comparison of their behavior under a teacher who is strict and under the teacher who is not. She said that:

Sa mga hindi istrikto napapansin ko na kahit tulugan naming parang okay lang, kahit halata naman na nakakatulog na kami eh okay lang. Pero pagang teacher



istrikto mas challenging para sa akin, mas kailangan kong mag-isip, mas alert ako. Kailangan Makita ka nila na makasagot ng maayos. Kukunin talaga nung strict na teacher ang tamang sagot mula sa iyo.

JKC-157 recalled her experience with her kind high school teachers. She observed that her high school teachers when they get angry could be easily pacified by their students through *lambing*. With the students *lambing* the teacher's anger is already gone. She seems to imply that it may not be good in instilling control and discipline among students. Part of her observation on some of her teachers is their lack of organization and clear presentation of their lesson resulting to her difficulty to understand a lesson and partial loss of interest. She seems to evaluate their teaching methodologies.

There are some participants who feel that some of their teachers come to class not prepared for his/her lesson. MCV-784 said that she encountered a teacher who simply read to them and when students ask questions, the teacher will call other students to answer the questions. It made MCV-784 think that probably the teacher does not know the answer either so s/he relies on her students for answers. Her other observations of teachers' behaviors that kill her motivation are teachers who don't come to class but his/her student assistant, those who simply give activities. With those teachers, she and her classmates how they will be graded.

Another evaluative account of a teacher's classroom performance is found in IHY-014 who seems to outline her idea of an incompetent teacher – non-interactive, unable to make them think critically, delivers his/her lecture without checking whether students learn or not, fails to make them learn anything, asks students to do reporting without making any intervention, and unmindful of what is happening inside the classroom. Her initial excitement towards reporting



soon faded out when she realized that her teacher was simply relying on students' oral presentations. She viewed it as the teacher's *katamadan*. And with it, her motivation faded out as well.

Claiming Favoritism in Class and Unfair Grading System or “Duga” are parts of the participants claim about the lack of professional competence and absence of fairness in teachers and professors. One observation of the participants of their teachers' behavior is their seeming tendency to play favorites in the class. It does not escape them that some of their teachers seem to favor some to the disadvantage of others ranging from giving special attention to giving undeserved grades to the favored ones. In the accounts of the participants, it resulted to feeling jealous, insecure, feeling being treated unfairly, and losing their motivation to study in the course under the teacher playing favorites.

One situation seems to provide the context for forming impressions about whether a teacher plays favorites or not, is in the giving of grades. MAS-124 provides other details in his own account. He feels that teachers could be unfair sometimes and what gave him that impression was:

Yung sa subject na feeling ko mataas ang effort ko, nakita ko naman na mataas ang exam ko, tapos yung ibibigay na grade sa akin mababa, mababa dun sa expectation ko. Ini-expect ko 1.75 tapos ang ibibigay sa akin 2.25. Dun feeling ko unfair.

Such observation of a teacher being unfair with grades results to his feeling frustrated and losing his motivation. He starts to doubt the teacher and the grades. MAS-124 used the term *duga* which is coded in-vivo. He defines *duga* as *yung parang hinulaan lang*. *Duga* is when the



grades given to them have no objective basis and simply a guess on the part of the teacher. It affects his motivation. MAS-124 explained that when he encounters again the teacher in another semester or he will no longer be exerting as much effort and will no longer be as excited to come to his/her class as he used to. He would still pass the course requirements but it will be for mere compliance. Exerting effort for higher grades is no longer in his mind. The overwhelming feeling in him is the loss of his motivation. As he said: *Minsan tinatamad ka ng pumasok sa subject na yon. Parang nakakamatay ng motivation ng bata ang ganun.*

If in the story of MAS-124, he gets low grade after exerting effort giving him the feeling that the teacher simply guesses the grades, JPJ-918 has the same impression of guessing the grade but the difference is that, he gets higher grade than he would expect because he did not exert much effort. He said with amusement that he received higher grade than what he expected considering that he did not exert much effort. He attributed it to the teacher's *hula*. He included in his narration the experience of his friends in another section where one student who regularly attended class received the same grade as the one who barely attended their class. It led them to think about teachers guessing their grades and with it they seem to have lost their trust not only in the professor but in the grading system as well. He said: *Naisip namin na nanghuhula lang pala yung mga professor natin eh di hindi na lang ako mag-aaral pag ganun. Hula hula lang pala yung grade eh.*

JPJ-918 traced his impression that teachers can play favorites to his elementary days, specifically when he was in grade 3 and it gave him a negative feeling. He wrote in his reflective writing that he got the feeling that her teacher was not concerned about him and not interested in him. He believed that during that time, he was doing his best and he was doing



much better compared to another. But to him the teacher seemed to have favored the other making him feel unnoticed and disregarded. He said that all he wanted was for the teacher to recognize his effort and to be appreciated for his work and exertion of effort. For him, a simple gesture of a teacher that would make him feel appreciated is enough. Sentiments and observations of JPJ-918 resonate in the account of CLJ-143. He claimed to have experienced being at the losing end of a teacher's grade-guessing. Sounding like ranting, CLJ-143 recounted that the teacher showed them the class record and then he saw the many discrepancies in recording attendance, activities and test scores. And like many others, he started to disengage himself. His experience with that particular teacher gave him a twisted plan and a distorted view the next time he encounters the teacher in another class in another semester, he will no longer exert effort.

NOV-121 is wishing for her teachers to be fair, favoring no one. She feels that there are times when teachers are unfair and play favorites in the class. Whether it is in high school or college, there seems to be favoritism. She seems to accept favoritism for as long as it will not affect the grades of everybody in class. But for NOV-121, there is something else that seems to annoy her when the teacher plays favorite, and that is the closeness she sees between the teacher and the favored student. She seems to be uncomfortable seeing the familiarity and closeness between the teacher and the favored student. NOV-121 is hinting at the blurring of lines and professional distance. She believes that the teacher needs to keep his/her professional distance from the student. NOV-121 seems resigned to the idea that she will not be able to change the teacher. But even when she is able to accept it, it still irritates her.



For MLV-104, favoritism in class starts with the teacher knowing a student. She seems to believe that teachers only remember those whom they and tends to forget others. MLV-104 has this observation that once a teacher gets to know a student, the teacher seems to view that student as very good while those that s/he does not know seem to be given lesser grade than what they deserve. Her observation seems not to be unfounded because according to her, she and her classmates have basis in comparison. They compare each other's performance in recitation, quizzes, and examinations. The information from those referenes gives them the idea of who should get a higher grade. Thus when they see that the favored students got higher grades compared to those who should really get high grades on the basis of their comparison, they interpret it as favoritism and the teacher is being unfair. Such impression expectedly results to loss of their motivation just like what happens in all the previous accounts.

The foregoing accounts on favoritism seem to be centering on unfair, and biased grading by the professor. MBC-913 has added observation why some students are favored over the others. She seems very convinced that favoritism affects the grades of the favored ones. She has this observation that students who are usually asked by teachers to do something for them are the ones who are the object of teacher's favoritism. Those are the students seated in front, always asked by the teacher to do photocopies, and other things that the teacher may ask. When grades are given and they do the comparison, she noticed that those students get higher grades. She feels bad about it. She said:

Naiinis talaga ako. Kasi sa mga quiz pa lang kitang-kita ko na mas ahead pa ako tapos sa grades na, dun ako nanlulumo. Bakit siya mas mataas sa akin eh feeling ko naman mas magaling ako sa kanya eh hayahay lang naman siya. Kung



hayahay ako mas talagang hayahay na hayahay siya tas mas mataas pa siya sa akin.

For CST-352, her perception and that of her classmates that there is favoritism in class lead them to work harder to be noticed by the teacher as well. They tell themselves that they need to strive harder, to study harder so that they too will be noticed by the teacher. If CST-352 and her classmates try to be noticed by the teacher by trying a little harder to be noticed, ONW-174 tends to withdraw from participating in class. With a tinge of jealousy, she said:

Kung sino yung magaling siya ang yung parang tinatawag lagi. Dun ako naiinis, sila lang yung na-t-train. Sila lang yung gumagaling. Kami dun naka-nga-nga. Kung sino yung magaling, sila lagi, eh di sila na lang. makikinig na lang ako.

The classroom is one filled rich with stimuli from teachers and classmates who with their words, gestures, actions and even inactions influence the class to the extent that individuals allow themselves to be influenced by what they see and observe from others. Like what we read in the accounts of the participants evaluating their teachers' behavior, the following are the participants' description of what they see in their classmates that seem to influence them and their academic behavior including their motivation.

Theme 8: Comparing the Self . . . Using Downward-Upward Social Comparison

In the participants' evaluation of their academic motivation and general behavior inside the class, they seem to point out that a big part of it is what they see among their classmates. Part of their attribution for the loss of their motivation or at least a change in their academic behavior is due to the influence of what they observe in the behaviors of their classmates.



JPJ-918 says that when he was in elementary he was active in class but it changed when he reached second year high school. He observed that his classmates exerted effort but not as much effort as he exerted. It was then that he entertained that thought that he did not need to study how he used to when he was in elementary. He also observed that their teachers were giving them not only passing grades but at times higher than the effort the exerted. Those observations led him to form the belief that he might as well enjoy his youth like what his classmates do. As he recalled:

Eh di sa loob loob ko ini-enjoy lang nila yung kabataan nila eh di i-e-enjoy ko na din lang yung kabataan ko. Hindi na ako ganun nag-aaral kasi may nagsabi wala naman daw bumabagsak sa high school. Doon nagsimula yung pagbibigay ko ng less effort na nadala ko ngayong college.

Soon he realized that college life is not what he thought it to be because he experienced failing in a course. He expressed the belief that the reason why he failed a subject in his first semester in college was his high-school behavior and mentality that nobody fails. He realized that college is different from his high school experience. In college he said, if you fail your quizzes you fail, if you pass your quizzes you pass. He said that it is very different in high school where no matter how many quizzes you fail or even when you have more failing quiz scores compared to the ones you passed, a student still gets to pass and promoted to the next year level. Again, he repeated the same words again: *Minsan mataas pa.a*

Petiks lang is how KLM-270 describes the attitude and behavior of his classmates in high school, the same attitude that he picked up from them changing his own behavior and adapting theirs. KLM-270's account echoes the experience of JPJ-918. *Petiks lang* for KLM-270 is the behavior characterized by: *madalas maglaro at mag-review lang pag may exam*. The



behavior of his classmates as being *petiks lang* has become his own standard for his academic performance which in his own description is *sapat lang* even if he believes that he can still do better and more than the *sapat lang* goal. He explained:

Sapat lang pamantayan ko kasi nakita ko sa mga kamag-aaral ko noong high school na sapat lang ang kanilang ginagawa at hindi sila masyadong nahihirapan. Naging kapareho na rin nila ako na petiks lang.

However, it is a different behavior when it comes to subjects that he likes – History and Physics where he tries to read and study his lessons. Other than those subjects, he adapts the *petiks lang* attitude very much like many of his classmates. Describing further his observation of his high school classmates' lack of academic motivation, KLM-270 said that despite the *petiks* behavior of his classmates, they are still able to get high marks giving him the idea that he can also do the same. It gives him the belief that he can still pass even without exerting much effort just like what others do. He said all his friends have the same thinking. While his teachers keep on reminding them to study hard, he would find himself studying harder for a time then would go back to his old *petiks* mode.

NOV-121 reports that she is being affected by the lack of motivation of her classmates. She believes that she could have done better than her already high academic performance had her classmates been more motivated. She is realistic that the motivation of her classmates is beyond her control for it is theirs. But she wishes *Kung sila lang sana ay magpapakita ng kasipagan, siguro magiging mas masipag pa ako*. She admits to be affected by her classmates whom she feels are not motivated to study. She described a day in their classroom when nearing examination day:



May pagkakataon na na-a-apektuhan ako kasi yung iba hindi nag-aaral at sasabihin pa nila na 'oi madali lang yung exam, multiple choice' eh di parang pati ako napapaisip na 'ano ba yan mag-aaral pa ba ako?'

Like a mirror reflecting back to the person looking at it his/her own image, so does comparing the self to others. And whether what one sees is beautiful or not depends on the one looking at the mirror. Participants tend to compare themselves and their performance with others in the class. Through this comparison, they get a sense of self, an understanding of their competence. Similarly, KLM-270 wrote in his sentence completion: *Pakiramdam ko karamihan sa aking mga kamag-aaral ay mas ismarte kaysa sa akin*. Paling in his comparison of himself with others, he begins to lose his belief in his own self and competence. He has been doing this comparison since he was in high school. The same thread of feeling is found in MCV-784 who always compares her work with those of others. Seeing that others are more competent to do better, she gets frustrated with herself and wondering: *bakit ang pangit ng gawa ko? College na ako, bakit ang pangit ng gawa ko? Bakit nila nagagawa yun? Bakit ako hindi?* The comparison leaves her wondering why she cannot do her work as good as others and always leaving her feeling bad about herself. She uses as reference of comparison someone higher in her ability, an upward social comparison. Her use of classmates who have higher abilities than her sometimes leaves her with negative feelings about herself. She admitted to losing her self-confidence but it does not deter her from trying again. While for most part, the upward social comparison is frustrating and disappointing for her, it has also given her the motivation to try to improve her work.



MBC-913 by her own account had a very high perception of her ability. Coming from a relatively small elementary and high school where she performed well in comparison with her classmates. But that was until she met other classmates in college where she met smarter and more competitive classmates. Realizing that she was not as good as she thought she was, MBC-913 has to re-consider her perception of her ability. That realization happened as a result of comparing herself and her competence with her classmates now in college. She traced her exaggerated perception of herself and her competence to her relatively small elementary school where she used to be on top of the class. Looking back she said that the class atmosphere was not exactly competitive but nevertheless, gave her the feeling that she was good. Her experience in elementary and high school gave her the idea and the feeling that she is 'magaling' until she entered college and met classmates who changed the way she thinks of herself. Reflecting on the change in her perception of herself as a result of her comparison, MBC-913 said that meeting and seeing other students who are more intelligent, it changed her view of herself and somehow her self-confidence was affected. When she encounters difficult tasks, she just gives up. She also admits that she has already stopped comparing herself with those better performing classmates and instead use those who she thinks are worse performing relative to her. In a changing perception of self based on changing reference group, MBC-913 finds it amusingly strange that she would compare herself with those lower than her in the class hierarchy. She admits:

Ang mali sa akin eh competitive ako sa mas mababa at hindi dun sa mataas sa akin. Parang lagin kong ki-no-compare sarilli ko sa mas mababa. Dapat mas angatan ko sila. Parang ganun, ang mali ng pag-iisip ko.



Echoing the observation of MBC-913 that one's perception of self changes depending on which reference group or individual is used by the person, JAM-122 explained his belief that he was able to develop his high perception of his academic self-concept in the context of school. He believes that his exposure to the many classmates that he encountered became his reference in his ever changing understanding of himself. As he said: *Dahil siguro marami akong naging mga ka-klase na naging basehan ko kung bakit medyo mataas at minsan medyo mababa ang tingin ko sa aking sarili.*

The 'minsan mababa, minsan mataas' or the inconsistent concept of self is influenced by which reference group is used in the class but they can also use other sections as reference point. This is what happened with JAM-122 when he failed to get into top 10 when he graduated in elementary, he compared himself with those in the lower sections of the graduating class giving him the perception that he is still better compared to them. The idea that there are still many students lower in the hierarchy is like a cushion protecting the self from the frustration of being unable to be on top. Like JAM-122 who would feel good about himself knowing that there are others who are lower than his performance, JPJ-918 said:

Kung mababa naabot ko tapos may marami pang mas mababa kesa sa akin eh di mas mataas pa din ako sa marami. Kaya iisipin ko na siguro okay na itong effort na ibinigay ko. Hindi na ako nag-a-aim na mas matas pa kasi may mas mababa naman sa akin eh. Kaya okay na sa kin yung average, sapat na.

The thought that there are many more who are lower than him in the hierarchy seems to pacify any desire in JPJ-918 to aspire to be more than an average student. He said that he is okay with his low scores or low grades for as long as there are many others with lower performance. The only thing that he does not want to happen is to be in the bottom of the class hierarchy. He is



aware that a grade is 2.50 because when he compares it with his classmates' grades of 2.75 or 3.0 he gets the satisfaction, a sense of happiness raising his self-esteem. Comparing himself with others, he said:

Basta mas madami yung mas mababa sa akin okay nay un. Basta hindi ako yung pinakamababa nakakahiya naman kasi pag ako. Kahit alam kong mababa ang 2.50 na grade okay lang yun napasa ko naman. Tapos yung iba nga diyan 2.75 at 3.0 o eh di masayang masaya na ako nun. Tapos parang me nararamdaman ako na nagpapataas ng self esteem ko.

For JPJ-918 his use of downward comparison is like a shot in the arm for his self-esteem threatened by a low outcome or grade. Upward or downward comparison also serves an evaluative purpose to determine how much effort one needs to exert to maintain one's preferred position in the class hierarchy, one's perceived competence, or one's motivation to improve performance. As MAR-320 said:

Sometimes I compare myself with those who are higher but mostly with those lower in the class hierarchy. I do this because I want to see how far I am from the lowest among us or how far I am from the highest. That makes me do more, to do much better next time.

Fuelling her motivation to be on top of the class hierarchy, JKC-157 uses an upward social comparison. She admits that she is not the most intelligent in her class and many of her classmates are intelligent. She observes that there are times when some of them get higher test scores than she. For her standard and reference individual, she uses a classmate who to her description is the one who always studies her lesson, one who sounds always certain about her answers. Comparing herself with her, she sees their difference. She sees the things lacking in her. But despite feeling the other is better, she is not afraid of the comparison. She tries her best to overcome the difference by working harder. Sometimes she outperforms the other but she



tries to be low key so as not to be perceived as *mayabang*. Not wanting to pale in comparison, she uses it to motivate herself to improve her performance but at the same time not wanting to be perceived as *mayabang* by her classmates thus she learned to keep it to herself everytime she gets higher grades than her reference individual. Using the same upward comparison is KLF-510 who does not look for a reference individual or group lower in the class hierarchy saying:

Hindi ako tumitingin sa mas mababa pa sa akin kasi feeling ko kapag tumingin ako sa mas mababa pa sa akin eh mawawala motivation ko na magsikap. Ayokong isisping pumasa lang ng ganyan.

This is a stark contrast with MBC_913, JPJ-918 and JAM-122 who in their account of their use of downward comparison learned to feel good about themselves knowing that there are many who are lower than them and the thought renders them de-motivated to improve further their performance. Supporting KLF-510 in her idea that the use of downward comparison may be demotivating in her attempt to improve academic performance is AAR-466 who said:

Iniisip ko na masama kapag sa mas mababa ko ikukumpara sarili, kasi kahit naman ikumpara ko sarli ko sa mas mababa sa akin eh wala naman magiging epekto eh. Kaya dapat po sa mas mataas sa yo para mahila ka pataas.

IHY-014 may be using downward comparison from time to time just to feel that she is not alone in getting low grade but there are others with her. While she does a downward comparison, it does not give her as much satisfaction and fulfillment as an upward comparison. Though she feels she is not alone in getting low score IHY-014 still has the nagging feeling that it is still a low score. But for most part, she feels that she is the one being used as reference in an upward comparison by her classmates for her good academic performance. It makes her feel good about herself. IHY-014 finds excitement in making upward comparison in courses which



she finds difficult. Challenging, thrilling is how she puts it. She wants to see how she can go and for most of the time it works for her to improve her performance. A sense of fulfillment found by IHY-014 in the use of upward comparison resonates in the account of NOV-121 who, like IHY-014, has high academic self-concept that is supported by high academic outcome, also finds satisfaction in knowing that she can be as good as those reference individuals in the higher position in the hierarchy and sometimes she can be on top of the hierarchy. NOV-121 appears to be a student who is not satisfied with an average academic performance. She admitted that when she sees others with higher scores or grades she gets discouraged even when her classmates say that she is doing very well. She is simply not contented. She wants to achieve more, be on top of the hierarchy. While other participants are contented with their average performance basking in the thought that many have lower scores, NOV-121 finds no comfort. She admits to feel a little envious of those in the upper hierarchy and she uses that feeling to motivate herself to study harder. She said:

Dun sa mga highest ranking nakakaramdam ka minsan ng inggit sa kanila, inggit na nakakatulong sa iyo na maging katulad ka nila na maging best din. . . .Pag ikaw naman yung nagging mas mataas dun sa mga taong laging highest parang mas naiiba yung pakiramdam mo sa sarili mo na pwedeng tumaas ka din pala. Pero alam kong hindi pwedeng laging nasa itaas.

NOV-121 seems to have this endless quest to be on top of the hierarchy. She said that for as long as she sees there are still others on top of her, she has this feeling that she has not attained her standard. There is still the feeling of being unsatisfied. The seemingly endless search for the standard that will satisfy her is related to her wanting to be validated by her parents – a story which we have already presented earlier under the theme Parenting Style. The feeling that one is being lagged behind by classmates who are performing well is another motivating element in



the use of upward comparison as MAS-124 implies in his account of his use of comparison. He said:

Pakiramdam ko pag mas mataas ang grade ng mga kaklase ko eh nahuhuli ako kaya mas mag-aaral ako. Kapag kasi ganun na mas mataas sila parang feeling mo nahuhuli ka, napag-iivanan ka. Parang siyempre negative yun ang gusto mong gawing positive. Mag-e-effort ka pa na mag-aral pa ulit para pumantay ka sa kanila o mas mahigitan pa sila. Kung mataas standard nila siyempre itataas ko din po standard ko at yung expectation ko sa sarili ko.

The comparison happening in the minds of the participants influences not only how they feel about themselves, how they attempt to improve or remain in their current level of performance but also their idea of an academic standard that is acceptable to them.

Theme 9: Fearing Negative Evaluation . . . Thinking What Others Might Say or Think

Fearing Negative Evaluation refers to the anxiety or dread resulting from their imagined or anticipated negative comments that may result from failure to perform well during recitations or in any form of evaluative situations. The fear seems to be rooted in their early experiences in school. This preoccupation usually happens in evaluative situations like class recitations wherein they get to stand in class and express, articulate their ideas. For them, they get the feeling that they are being negatively judged by the classmates, thinking of negative things about them and what they say, and saying hurtful comments behind their back. The fear of what others might say or think is not limited to occasions when they make mistakes but also when they perform well in class that might lead to people raising their expectations of them and failing runs the risk of hearing negative comments. Fear of hearing negative comments is also linked to being labelled as *papansin* or *epal*.



Tracing her fear to her experience when she was in elementary school, NOV-121 recalled an experience when she was in elementary. She said she was not able to answer the teacher's question correctly then her classmates laughed at her. It was an embarrassing moment for her whose effect still remains.

CST-352 shared her embarrassing experience in class. She recalled her experience in a Math class. She refused to go to the board because she didn't know the answer but her teacher got mad at her. She felt she was humiliated by her teacher in front of her classmates. The experience gave her the feeling that she was *bobo* in Math. It made her wonder why she could not do it while others easily can do it. She was teased by her classmates and felt alone in the midst of the teasing. She believes that as a result of that humiliating experience she became afraid of hearing negative comments from her classmates. She said that the experience made her to become shy and afraid to be judged with her wrong answers. It made her conscious of what others might think or say.

The feeling that one is being judged and the anticipation of committing mistake are also in the mind of ILH-113. She admitted that she does not volunteer her answer during class discussion. She does not trust herself enough. She anticipates that her classmates will say something negative and her teacher will give hurtful comment about her answer or the teacher will get angry with her over her wrong answer. ILH-113 recalled having humiliated by her teacher after failing to read a Math symbol. As if it was not enough to cause embarrassment to her, the teacher pointblank that she should know the answer since she is majoring in Math. She



said that from then on, she avoids reciting in class for fear of being judged negatively. As she said: *Sa experience ko po parang hinusgahan ako ng prof at ng mga classmates ko kaya natatakot na po talaga ako.* She realizes that it is affecting her academic performance since class participation is a criteria in grading. Thus she attempts to overcome it. However attempts happen only when she feels certain about her answer. ILH-113 became very cautious in participating in class discussion.

Sharing the same thread of experiencing humiliation in class resulting to fear of committing mistakes and generally withdrawing from class participation is CMF-716. She narrated that she was humiliated by her Math teacher when she was late in submitting a seatwork. She claimed that her teacher crumpled her paper and threw it back at her. Sensing the embarrassment, she cried hard in front of everybody. She said that her teacher apologized to her the following day but she felt the damage was done and the sorry will not erase the bad experience. She traced her being unparticipative in class to that experience. As she said:

When I recite in class, I have the feeling that my answer is wrong. Since elementary, I don't recite in class. I brought that behavior from an experience in elementary when I felt humiliated by my teacher. Since then I learned not to recite. I am thinking that I would just be humiliated again.

Following the same thread of fear of embarrassing the self led AAR-466 to remain silent during class discussion. But for CSA-143 while she shares the fear of many of being laughed at, added another element to her fear and that is the fear that she has nothing to contribute anything worth listening to. She thinks that she has nothing to contribute to the class discussion and that what she is going to say is *non-sense*. Fear of being laughed at, CSA-143 always chooses to



remain in her comfort zone – silence. Behind their fear of being embarrassed and laughed at is the maintenance or preservation of self-image in front of others. Not wanting to be perceived as “bobo” nor wanting to risk what seems to them as their positive image, many decided to withdraw from any situation that may expose themselves in the eyes of others. A self that is full of doubts and fears, makes them create negative scenarios in their mind, anticipating every bad thing that could possible happen, and every hurtful words that they might hear from their teachers and classmates. As KLF-510 said:

Sometimes I overthink things, anticipating what they might say or think. Sometimes I am wondering what they are thinking, perhaps they are thinking that I am “bobo”. I am thinking what they could possibly be thinking about me.

Part of what they anticipate is the possibility that their answer is wrong and that their classmates will laugh at them. Their mental picture of what is going to happen makes them even more fearful. They feel that they need to protect their self-image. As GST-113 said: *Nahihiya ako pag nagkamali. Baka mag-iba ang image ko sa kanila.* GST-113 is not different from MAS-124 who avoids difficult and challenging task which he thinks runs the risk of losing his face or his image before his classmates. Like GST-113, MAS-124 has the idea that when they make a mistake, they are going to lose face in front of his classmates and it will also affect how he views himself. Echoing the fear he shares with GST-113, MAS-124 said:

Pag hindi ko nasagot ng maayos o mali ang binigay ko na sagot parang bababa ang tingin ko sa aking sarili tapos pati na yung tingin ng iba sa akin. Baka mag-iba na tingin nila sa akin.

They are pointing us to one basic motivation, and that is the protection of the self and one’s image before others. They would rather keep their silence than run the risk of losing their



image with what they anticipate as wrong answer. The experience of fear has accompanying physiological reactions like rapid heart beat and stuttering. As if his ideas are drowned into his nervousness, KLM-270 loses what is on his mind. For JAM-122 that thought that his classmates are just waiting for him to commit mistakes then they would laugh out loud over his mistakes leads him to dread reciting in class. As much as possible, he avoids the opportunity. He said that he is not concerned about his classmates laughing at him but his feeling of being frustrated with himself that he avoids. He claimed that when reciting, whether his answer is right or wrong, it gives him the same nervousness, as if his mind could hardly keep up with his heart beat. After reciting, he feels restless.

JPJ-918 for his part describes how he copes with his fear by trying to lighten the mood by smiling while reciting. He said smiling is his way of dealing with the situation and the possible embarrassment from giving a wrong answer. With his smiling face, he wants the teacher to think that he is just joking so the teacher would not take his wrong answer seriously and the teacher would not get angry with him. There is this one class where his “smiling” happens very often and when he feels that his answer is wrong, he simply does not take the risk. Like others, he wants certainty. The fear of negative evaluation or in the case of JPJ-918 the fear that his professor might get angry with him with his wrong answer made him want certainty. It is only in feeling a certain degree of correctness of his answer that he would take the risk. While MAR-320 links her fear of negative evaluation with her losing self-confidence. She said that she avoids risk-taking during class recitations. She would rather keep silent than risk being embarrassed and laughed at because as she said:



Because embarrassment and making mistake in front of class is a big factor that really affects my self-confidence, the more mistakes, the little I feel for myself.

MAR-320, in not wanting to take the risk of committing mistakes, she would sometimes tell her seatmate the answer to the teacher's questions. And at times the seatmate to whom she gave the answer would naturally be given the points. It leaves her with the feeling "It could have been me and points should have been mine." She claimed that one reason why she learned not to take the risk is by observing her classmates. They were the ones who taught her that the best way to behave during recitation is to keep silent. She remembered being told by her seatmates after she committed a mistake and heard some comments from the teacher. Her classmates told her: *Dapat kasi tumahimik ka na lang.*

The narratives of the participants give us a hint to what is happening inside of them when they find themselves in an evaluative situation where the risk of committing mistakes is high. The fear of negative evaluation or the anticipation of the negative things others might say or think in case they commit mistakes is traced in their early experience of being humiliated by a teacher and being laughed at by the classmates. Since then, they carried the fear with them through college that render them handicap to a lesser or greater degree. The experience of fear is prominent in oral recitation where their sense of self and competence is at risk of being judged negatively. The participants report accompanying physiological reactions like heart beating faster than its normal beat rate leading to feeling restless and stutter. The fear clouds their minds that render them incapable of organizing their thoughts properly. In their fear, some remain silent and leave it to others to take the chance only to regret later not doing so for the answer is exactly what was in their minds. Reasons for remaining silent is the fear of being



embarrassed, fear of being laughed at, fear of being judged. Beneath the fear is the individual attempt to preserve a positive image or the preservation of the self that they would rather protect than expose it to risk of being judged negatively.

Like venom, fear of negative evaluation, preoccupation with what others might think or say, fear of embarrassment combined with equally venomous poor conception of self and lack of self-worth render the participants immobile, paralyzed, and unable to make any attempts to improve themselves and further develop their human potentials.

The next account is from the perspective of a student who is looking at those who are active in class. Seeing some of her classmates as being very active is irritating for ONW-174. She seems to see them as *pa-star* and *very competitive*. She described some of her classmates who she thinks are very competitive, always ready to answer the teacher's question. Their hands are up long before the teacher finishes his/her question. They are the ones who are usually seated in front of the class. ONW-174 labels them as *pa-star*. She seems to express the view that her classmates who are competitive tend to be a show-off, and that irritates her. Asked if she could blame them for their being competitive, she said:

Nasa ugali yata. Feeling ko may part sila na talagang gusto nilang sila yung pinaka magaling, ayaw nilang sila yung mababa, ayaw nilang average lang, gusto nilang nasa tuktok sila kasi dun sila nasanay. Nasa higher section daw kasi sila lagi. Nakakainis kasi papansin, tapos kahit hindi sila tinatanong ng teacher comment ng comment, nakakainis.

When asked further if it is bad for them to want to excel, ONW-174 said that it is not bad to excel and be competitive but some of them tend to exhibit irritating behaviors which to her are no longer appropriate. For her, it is irritating when classmates who excel in class tend to make



unsolicited comments while the teacher is speaking and dominate the class discussion or draw attention to their ability. She prefers to see students who excel but quiet with their achievements, unassuming, give chance to others during recitation, do not draw attention to themselves, and give assistance to others only when they are asked. ONW-174's negative attitude towards competition is rooted in her high school experience, in a science high school. She narrated that in the Science high school where she came, one could feel the tension from trying to outdo each other. It looked to her as if everybody wanted to be the first. She said she hated it, got tired of it, and gave up on it. She said she was fine being average and the only thing she avoided to happen was being in the bottom of the hierarchy. She claimed that many of those who were unable to compete stopped competing completely and just settled for being an average and avoided being in the bottom of the class hierarchy.

Avoiding to be perceived as *nagmamagaling* or in the light of ONW-174's perception of being *pa-star*, MBC-913 does not volunteer herself when there is an opportunity for fear that her classmates would interpret it as *nag-mamagaling*. She feels that they are not being supportive of each other and instead pulls each other down with their negative perception about students who are active, participative and volunteers for academic tasks. MBC-913 said:

Kung ang aking mga kamag-aaral lang sana ay supportive, mas magaling ako. Minsan talaga mga classmates ang humahatak sa iyo pababa lalo na pag sila din nahihirapan, gusto nila idadamay ka imbes na magtulungan. Imbes na mag-ayaan na mag-aral e nag-aayaan na hindi na lang mag-aral at mag-ayaan na lumabas. Kailangan din naman yun kasi nagbibigay kulay sa buhay mo pero kung sa panahon na kailangan namin galingan sana magtulungan kami at hindi yung naghahatakan pababa.

MBC-913 tends to believe that her classmates have a negative perception of those who are active, participative, and volunteers the self for academic tasks. She claimed that sometimes she



is afraid to volunteer herself to be a group leader especially when she is unsure about herself and her classmates' possible reaction to her being the leader. She anticipates that others would think of her as wanting to prove herself, to show off her ability. She related an experience where she was told to be *epal*, *mapapel* or someone who tries to be noticed, drawing attention to oneself to be perceived positively. With that experience, she started to be extra cautious and apprehensive when it comes to volunteering the self unless she wants to be called *epal*. Aside from the *epal* or *mapapel* label for those who take their academic tasks seriously and active in class, one also run the risk of being called *buwaya*. The term *buwaya* is found in the account of AJL-113 who for a time studied here in Manila for part of her basic education then went back to the province for the rest of it. She admits that studying in Manila gave her a great amount of self-confidence that made her to be competitive in class but it did not sit well with many of her classmates in the province. Feeling her superiority over them, her classmates started to label her as *buwaya*, a crocodile, a predatory animal. The use of the term by her classmates to describe her seems to reveal their perception of her as being greedy for academic recognition. She thinks that her classmates perceived her as threat to others in class.

MLV-104 seems to think that competition in the class is a student's way of getting ahead of others and that could be seen in one who deliberately withheld assistance for fear of being surpassed in his or her academic performance by the other as what she seems to imply in her account of an experience with a classmate. MLV-104 also expressed the belief that competition in class is a threat to friendship. It could cause conflict and misunderstanding between friends. She thinks that competition causes others to get low grades. She seems to think that they are not helping each other and they leave each to his/her own especially those who in their perception



do not really care about his/her performance. She expressed the general attitude of the class towards those students as:

Parang hinahayaan na lang nila. Sasabihin pang hayaan na lang yan di naman nag-aaral yan bakit pa natin tuturuan. Yun ang nangyayari sa loob ng classroom.

Between friendship and academic excellence through competition, she would choose friendship. She observed that when a classmate is on top of the hierarchy or at least superior over others in terms of academic performance, others in class seem to find it uncomfortable relating with him/her. They feel uneasy and afraid of approaching the classmate for fear of the possibility that s/he will have a negative impression of them like *ang bobo naman neto*. But with friendship, they encourage each other, support each other, and motivate each other to strive harder. She also pointed out that the class tends to think of their classmates who are doing very well in a negative light. For MCV-784, competition is not actually bad when it is not done all the time and it is combined with cooperation and assistance to the classmates who are unable to cope with the demands and difficulties of a lesson. She expressed the belief though that had there been classmates who are not into competing with others, their class would have been happier. She pointed to some classmates who are very competitive and seemingly unwilling to help others. For MLV-104, competition can actually motivate her to strive harder.

Sharing the view that competition can be positive to motivate students to do better in their academics, she emphasized that competition should not be done at the expense of others by putting them down. One realistic view of competition is found in NOV-121 who believes that it is a natural part of life inside a classroom and life in general. She uses the idea of competition to make herself better. She thinks that competition cannot be avoided in class or even among



friends. She is willing to set aside friendship in the context of academics. She is not afraid to compete and aware that it is part of the reality. She explained:

Hindi ako takot sa competition kasi part yun ng buhay eh. Kahit na sa reality pag nagtrabaho ka may competition. Hindi pwede yung parang hayahay ka sa buhay mo o kaya hayaan mo na lang na ganun.



While emotions can be felt in the present, remembered in the past, or anticipated in the future, there are a few – such as nostalgia, regret, disillusionment, ambition, hope, optimism and dread – that cannot be felt without bridging the present to either the past or in the future.

Jennifer Lois (2010, in Charmaz, K., 2014, p. 233)

CHAPTER IV

Analyzing and Synthesizing Context, Process, Outcomes and the Phenomenon of Sakto Lang Academic Performance

This chapter presents the analysis of the themes to find Context, Process, and Consequences. Analysis of data is presented following the design of Grounded Theory – to analyze for Context, Process, and Consequences. Data are analyzed in the light of related literature and interpretation of the researcher of the emerging themes. They are further analyzed and interpreted to identify the phenomenon around which the Grounded Theory is constructed.

Analyzing Data for Context

Context is the “set of conditions that give rise to problems or circumstances to which the participants respond by means of actions, interactions, and emotions” (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 229). This study classifies context into three based on the sub-problems namely, Internal Context or the mindset, Family Context, and Classroom Context. We shall present the problems found in each context forming the condition in which participants find themselves.



Problems in the Internal Context

Problem # 1: Poor self-construct (Negative self-concept and Low Valuation of One's Worth)

Iniisip ko parang hindi ko kaya. Hindi ako kasing galing nila. Parang kahit anong gawin ko hindi rin naman ako magiging tulad nila.. Lagi kong binibitawan ang opportunities kasi baka mag-expect lang sila sa akin. (AAR-466).

Negative internal statements contained in the data reflect a state of mind of a damaged view of self. They render her incapacitated to approach any academic task which to her may be beyond her ability. This is like surrendering even before the battle began. She is giving us a sense that she can never be anyone but her old 'defeated self.' Consumed by negative thought that she cannot do it, she passes up on opportunities through which she could possibly discover her potentials. Fear of not meeting other people's expectations is emanating from a poor conception of self. Each time she passes up on opportunity, she strengthens her negative belief about herself and in the process the more she loses her feelings of worth as a person. Williams (2015) sees this as the individual's attempt to avoid effort or responsibility for potential failure. In effect, in avoiding a task, there is no failure. There is nothing to explain to others, making it a comfortable position for her as opposed to trying then fail – a possibility she does not want to experience. It is a trap. The more she avoids taking on a task, the more she loses her self-worth. Poor self-constructs of students lead to further problems like poor adjustments to the demands of academic life. Poor self-constructs leads to constructing negative self-beliefs which in turn leads to impediments to performance. It is pattern that is found in the discussion on self-handicapping by Zuckerman, Kiefler, and Knee (1998). Comparing the high self-handicappers



with the low self-handicappers, their study found that the former tend to withdraw more and have more negative focus as what is happening in the participants. They focus on the possibilities of failing instead on focusing on the possibility of succeeding.

Poor self-constructs is deeply rooted in the problem with individuals' self-concept. It is widely acknowledged as playing an influential role in all learning situations and has been associated with better academic achievement, perseverance, coursework, and attitudes to learning, (Arnaiz & Guillen, 2012). Conceptually related is the concept of self-efficacy or one's perception of capability that becomes instrumental to the goals one pursues and to control one is able to exercise over the environment, (Pajares, 2002). Poor self-construct, lack of belief in one's competence all lead to self-handicapping then to poor academic adjustments. Zuckerman, Kiefer, and Knee (1998) described it as a vicious cycle. Self-handicapping, over time and poorer adjustment, results to higher self-handicapping.

The study on self-handicapping leads us to the role of poor study habits, (Zuckerman, et al., 1998). The common practice of the participants is to study few days before an exam, while some would study only hours before an examination. Added to this problem on poor study habit is their practice through what they call as *pasada, basa-basa* which can be thought of as simply reading the material repeatedly until they get a sense that they have mastered the material enough to make them pass the exam. They do not have study habit but what they have is the habit of studying only when the situation calls for it, quizzes, reports and assignments. The absence of regular study habit lead to their common complaint about poor memory, forgetting what one has studied, and going blank during examination. As one described the situation:



Sa panahong nakakakuha ako ng mababang marka, iniisip ko na nag-review naman ako, nagpuyat para magawa ito, pero bakit ganun hindi ako satisfied. Review ako sobra sobra, pero kinabukasan nakakalimutanko na. Siguro epekto na ng puyat at pagod.

Covington (in Acka, 2012) sees students attributing low test scores to poor memory, going blank during an exam, forgetting and we include here the attribution to lack of sleep, as reflective of self-handicapping mechanism to protect the self. Attributing failure to those minor inadequacies may be used to hide a major inadequacy like lack of ability which is more damaging to the self.

The poor study habit of the participants resulting to their low academic outcome is consistent with the findings of Abay, Mebrahtu, Adamu, and Hagos (2015). Participants had poor study habits and low academic self-concept and that academic achievement is significantly affected by the level of study habit and academic self-concept (Abay et.al, 2015). It is inconsistent with the characteristics of the nineteen (19) participants in this study who have high academic self-concept but low academic outcome, a combination that this study tries to find an explanation. It is consistent in the sense that the data in this study revealed that participants have poor study habits and low outcome yet they have high academic self-concept as measured by the Academic Self-Concept Questionnaire (Liu et.al, 2005). This inconsistency points to a possible exaggeration on the part of the participants to have high perception of their academic commitment and involvement.

Closely and intimately related to the problem of no or poor study habits of the participants is their poor memory and lack of concentration leading them to complain that they always forget what they learned or memorized. Lambert (1997) defines concentration as the ability to direct one's thinking in whatever direction one would intend. Lambert (1997) sees the



problem of poor concentration as deficiency in self-regulation and its improvement depends on learning the skill and as such it requires practice. Given Lambert's view, it gives us the idea that participants have never successfully regulated themselves, their thoughts, actions, and emotions towards the direction of achieving successful academic outcomes.

Kato (n.d.) proposed that there is really nothing wrong with concentration or memory but it could be due to underlying anxieties and occasional depression which are causing the problem. This finds resonance in the statement of JKC-157. On the question of why she seems to be lacking in focus or concentration, she said:

Kasi po madaming iniisip, kulang po talaga ako sa focus. . .Kasi siguro yung pagmamahal din (na hinahanap) at tsaka po yung nag-aaway din kami sa bahay. Minsan yun nga pag mag-kaaway po kami hindi na ako makapag concentrate kasi iniisip ko yung mga nangyari. Minsan hindi na ako makapag review, ganon tapos nawawala na ako. Pag ganun parang 'ay di bale nabasa ko na naman yan, nakita ko na, na skim ko na yung dapat basahin. Ganun minsan ang nagyayari sa akin.

The claim of the participants that they have poor memory and having no regular study habit may be viewed within the purview of ego defensive mechanism including self-handicapping strategies and poor self-regulatory skills. Park and Sperling (2012) found that academic procrastination was related to poor self-regulatory skills which in this case are reflected through the lack of regular study habits, and defensive behaviors including self-handicapping thoughts – thinking one is not intelligent and incapable, attributing low scores to poor memory. Those actions and beliefs are their way of protecting the self from the experience of failure where failure is attributed to lack of time to study or to poor memory. It would be more threatening to the self to exert effort then fail at the end than limiting the exertion of effort or none at all then fail at the end. In the case of the latter, it would be more acceptable to the



self, knowing that s/he failed due to lack of effort than to realize that despite best effort, s/he still failed.

This study offers another plausible explanation that aside from their problem with poor memory and concentration affecting low outcome in tests despite their claim of preparations for the test, it is their problem with language or the lack of proficiency with the English language with which most of their texts are written. Part of their problem is their wrong understanding of a word, a phrase, a sentence. Thus even if they studied or memorized some information, it would always result to poor outcome since they have not correctly understood a text. Some students appear confident when they report in class knowing that they have prepared well for it. But sometimes, reports fall apart because of their wrong interpretation of a word or phrase.

The next point that this study offers is that the problem with their poor memory and concentration is encouraged by years of rejecting rote learning and memorization by schools where it is seen as detrimental to authentic learning. I am expressing my bias towards memorization and rote learning and support those who advocate for the return of rote learning in the classrooms, not to put in peril our students' capacity for deep learning and higher order thinking skills but to lay the foundation for its development. Smith (2012) posits that memorizing facts can build the foundations for higher thinking and problem solving. Constant memorization or drill of a concept may not help students understand it but it may allow them to draw out on what they have memorized in order to succeed in more complex lessons. Memorization therefore produces a more efficient memory that takes it beyond its limitations of capacity and duration. Smith (2012) claims that there exists a considerable evidence suggesting that a memory full with facts learns better than one without. Supporting the argument is Johnson



(2010) who sees that the total emphasis on critical thinking has it all wrong. His view is that before students can think critically, they need to have something to think about in their brains. He concedes that knowledge without comprehension is of little use but comprehension requires knowledge and it takes time and effort to acquire. Citing the hierarchy in Bloom's Taxonomy, Johnson (2010) explains that the highest order of thinking occurs at the evaluating and creating levels which infers that thinkers must have knowledge, facts, data or information in their brains to combine into something new, or with which to judge relative importance or value and therefore effective knowledge acquisition has to come first.

Lipman (2013) in advocating to the return of rote learning said that it has been long discredited. But it is now recognized as one reason that children whose families come from India where memorization still holds very important are excelling in Spelling Bee Championship. Memorizing, Lipman (2013) added, also explains why children of Chinese families in the US are better at math. While American students struggle with complex math problems because they lack fluency in basic addition and subtraction and few were made to memorize their multiplication tables. Lipman (2013) cited the US Department of Education report concluding that schools need to embrace the dreaded drill and practice. Believing that memorization is underrated, Snider (2011) argued that it is not only useful but vital as well for all people to memorize. He offered its benefits: (1) it is a challenge and one in which those who succeed can take pride, (2) it is a good exercise for the brain, and (3) new insights are gained in the process of memorization (Snider, 2011). He also explained that the bad rap on rote repetition and memorization is due in part to memorization lending themselves too well to standardized testing



where it is much easier, faster and cheaper for teachers to determine whether a student knows what was taught than to ask them to explain the why of things (Snider, 2011).

The lack of critical thinking skills among today's young people are more the result of our over-reliance on multiple-choice tests rather than anything inherently evil about repetition or memorization. Exposure to multiple type of tests may also explain why they describe the way they study as *basa-basa lang*, *pasada lang*, *skimming*, and *scanning*. Long years of exposure to multiple type of tests did not only result to training their focus, memory and concentration but it also led to the development of poor study habits like *basa basa lang*, or *pasada lang*.

When they get low test scores, low grades, or negative feedback from teachers, it sets them into motion of defending themselves from the frustrating event through the use of defense mechanism like saying: "*It is okay, matalino pa din ako.*" "*Okay lang na mababa grade ko sa English, mahina naman talaga ako. Pero sa Math, mataas grade ko.*" Or in the statement: "*Hindi naman sukatan ng talino ang grade.*" Employing defense mechanism is linked to their self-handicapping behaviors. It takes the form of providing excuses, rationalizations for their lack of resolve to do better or improve their academic performance. Defense mechanism is to protect the self from the anxiety of confronting one's weaknesses and foibles (Whitbourne, 2011). The term is used in this study under handicapping the self because through its use, the individual weakens himself or herself from taking the risk of improving academic performance and instead offers plausible explanations to buffer the self from frustrating event or situation. Self-handicapping according to Yavuzer (2015) is paradoxical in nature. While it protects or reinforces self-esteem, it also damages performance (Yavuzer, 2015). In not being able to get the achievements which according to some participants are very



important, she will tell themselves that statement. It may appear positive but its effect is negative. It has a positive effect on the self since they would be able to maintain a self- image that they are intelligent despite failing to achieve what they really want but at the same time the very statement that made them protect themselves from feeling the frustration of not being able to achieve will be the very statement that will weaken the self from attempting to do better. Thus the paradoxical nature of self-handicapping statements, in this case, is a defense mechanism. Studies suggest a link between self-handicapping and self-esteem. Individuals with low self-esteem employ self-handicapping strategies more often than others for they have higher expectations of failure than those with high self-esteem. They will use handicapping strategies more often with the aim of justifying their potential failures, (Yavuzer, 2015). Emerging in the foregoing discussion on problem with poor self-construct and its related problems is leading us to the next problem.

Problem #2: Poor Self-Regulation...Losing Control of Self

Siguro lagpas na sa 100 times na sinabi ko sa aking sarili itong “next time” na ito. Maraming beses ko ng sinabi yun sa aking sarili pero hindi natutuloy. Minsan natutuloy pero super minsan lang. ngayong college mga 3 beses lang talaga ako nag-aral ng mabuti, (CSA, 143).

Common to the participants is the lack of ability to control or regulate their tendencies towards things that they like to do forgetting their promise to do better in their studies. They go where their emotions want to bring them. They will study when they feel like studying but will not study when they don't feel like doing it. This problem on poor self-regulation is reflective of



the lack of emotional maturity among the participants. Emotional maturity that enables them to regulate behaviour is an important element for academic success.

Poor self-regulation is evident in their procrastinating behavior conceptualized as a behavioral handicap (Ferrari and Tice, 2000). Procrastination is the avoidance of a task that we need to accomplish and it is also called as 'the thief of time.' Daley (2015) classifies procrastinators into three (3) types and they are: (1) delayers or those who have a hard time getting started on any task for all kinds of reasons, (2) perfectionists or those who bogged down in details, starting task but they cannot finish it because it is not perfect and not considered ready to be seen or judged, and (3) distractibles or those who always find something else to do that offers them immediate gratification rather than the satisfaction of completing task. Distractions often involve games, TV, computer, surfing the internet, going to the mall, and many others.

Procrastination- seen as an ego defensive behavior, acts to protect self-esteem from potential failure. Burka and Yuen (in Meyer, 2000) suggested that in every performance our perception of our ability and self-worth are at risk since performance is equated with ability which is equated with our self-worth. Thus failure at a task will be interpreted as lack of ability which in turn will be equated with negative perception of our self-worth. Individuals therefore develop fear of failure because of the emphasis placed on success in defining self-worth. To protect the self from that risk, people procrastinate making the equation between ability and self-worth unequal.



The general concept of procrastination when applied in academic setting is termed as academic procrastination. The target of procrastination is academic tasks resulting to poor academic achievement (Gendron, 2011). Academic procrastination is defined as the act of intentionally delaying or deferring work that must be completed (Schraw, et.al, 2007 in Gendron, 2011, p.5). Academic procrastination was found to be related to poor self-regulatory skills and defensive behaviors including self-handicapping strategies (Park & Sperling, 2012).

This is another theme that weakens the self from achieving their academic goals or at least weakens them from any resolve to improve their academic performance. Daley (2015) explained that in procrastinating, individuals are not only able to do a required task which for him is actually a feat, an achievement for it produced feelings of relief. But the procrastinator is also harboring the painful and troubling feelings mentioned even as she “enjoys” her texting, surfing the net or going out with friends instead of doing her academic tasks. Daley (2015) is suggesting that if people have something important hanging over their head, they cannot really enjoy anything. This fits perfectly in the account of KLF-510 who is going through the pain of longing to be with the whole family – her mother working abroad while her brothers are in the province and on top of that is discovering that the father she grew up with is not her biological father.

Procrastinators are also characterized by a wrong frame of mind or the “I-don’t-feel-like-doing-that-now, I-will-feel-more-like-it-later.” This characterizes the delayers-type of procrastination found in the account of CMF-716. For her, there is always a tomorrow. She also said that when indolence attacks, she could not do the task she needed to do. Daley (2015)



identified negative feelings that ensues procrastination. He enumerated guilt, anxiety, dissatisfaction, depression and self-loathing. In the following account from CMF-716, her procrastination led to feelings of dissatisfaction and guilt for not using time judiciously. Dissatisfaction with the self is evident in her statement “*Naiinis ako sa aking sarili...Naiinis ako dahil hindi ko pinagbuti ang pagaaral ko para maganda outcome*” while guilt is reflected in the use of “*Nanghihinayang ako sasinayang ko na mga oras.*” Procrastinators are most often aware of what they are doing but that rarely makes it easier to stop. We tell ourselves we will get to it tomorrow or after the holidays or after a particular stress is passed – in other words, “when we are more able to do the job.” Of course, this magical time never presents itself, and the struggle continues (Daley, 2015).

Problem #3: External Attribution for Lack of Academic Interest and Motivation

Madali lang sana mag-aral...Kung ang pamilya ko lang sana ay mayaman. (JAM-122)

JAM-122, expresses a wish that had they been rich, studying would have been easier for him. It is a sentiment and a wish shared by many. But at the same time, he is pointing to his family’s inability to provide him with necessary school materials as the reason why he finds it hard to study. The problem with an external attribution like financial difficulty of the family is that this is something that is not within his control. Therefore, changing one’s attitude towards studies and its necessary exertion of effort would mean that his family will have to have money first before he improves his losing motivation to study. Similar external attribution is found in AJL-113 whose losing academic interest is attributed to what she perceives as unfair grading system. Re-acquiring her interest requires that the teacher who gave her an unfair grade will



have to be fair. The problem for her is that the teacher is not under her control. In effect, they are saying that it is not their fault that they have low performance, but it is the fault of the system. Attributions refer to people's explicit and implicit understandings of the causes of events and of responsibility for the outcomes of events. F. Heider, the proponent of Attribution Theory believed that people have the ability to make causal inferences almost instantaneously in conjunction with their perception of the environment (Harvey and Webb, 1993). They can only take positive actions on things they have control over. When they lose the power for self-determination, they lose their power to motivate themselves. This is an idea that finds its link to Deci and Ryan (in Eccles & Wigfield, 2002, p.112) who argued that intrinsic motivation- an important element for academic motivation- can only be maintained when actors feel competent and self-determined.

What happens is that in subjects they feel they are good at, they are highly motivated to study. Conversely, in subjects they feel they have no competence, they generally feel unmotivated. This process gives us an idea on their selective academic interest and motivation as being tied to their perception of self. Other sources of selective academic interest or motivation are perception on the subject for its utility to them; perception on the teacher. Perception on one's competence, on the subject, and teacher sets into motion engagement or disengagement.

Some attributions are pointing to their perceived low ability. It is internal but the problem here is that ability is related with level of intelligence which is beyond their control. Thus a feeling of resignation towards subjects they feel they are not good at. CLJ-143 attributes



his loss of motivation to persist on a difficult task to his lack of intelligence. With his perception of his intelligence to successfully complete a task, he withdraws from doing the task because he does not have control over the level of his intelligence. While in the case of ability or skill and not having enough foundational knowledge, he may have relative control over them but it would require time and effort. And they are not available to CLJ-143 at the time he disengages from a difficult task.

What resonates in the explanation of Eccles and Wigfield (2002) on control theories assumption is that one should expect succeeding to the extent that one feels in control of one's successes and failures. In the case of CLJ-143's attribution to lack of intelligence, success is not expected, thus disengagement from the task. This leads us to understanding that acquired mastery of knowledge or skill gives learners a foundation for interest to pursue even in difficult tasks. The amount of acquired knowledge or skill not only facilitates interest but contributes to the development of positive self-constructs like self-concept, self-esteem, and self-efficacy which are all components of academic self-concept. Those self-constructs create in the minds of learners positive or even negative internal frames that constitute their psychological readiness in approaching or avoiding academic tasks, engaging or disengaging in class which will eventually dictate academic outcomes. In the words of Whitesell, Mitchell and Spicer (2009), they may be conceived of as a constellation of self-related emotions and cognitions that potentially influence school performance.

Academic motivation within the concept contained in the situational interest is the experience of KLM-270 who admitted that most of the time he gets bored in class and simply waits for the lesson to end. According to KLM-270, his interest to listen to a teacher's



discussion or to engage in any academic tasks may be triggered by an interactive and fun class atmosphere. Without those elements, he would get bored and feel sleepy. His interest appears to be dependent as well on the competence of the teacher to present his/her idea in a clear and easily understandable lesson presentation through the use of words KLM-270 is familiar with. Otherwise, he will find the lesson boring. He admitted that when he no longer understands the lesson he is frustrated with himself and starts to make sketches or make drawings in his notebook and at times falls into daydreaming.

JPJ-918 echoed a similar experience of an interest triggered by an existing situation in the classroom. If the teacher is boring, he starts to shift his attention from the teacher to something else. Like KLM-270, JPJ-918 disengages himself by chatting with a seatmate and admits to learning nothing for his mind is somewhere else. The problem with the loss of interest has detrimental implication for student learning because interest influences attention, goals, and levels of learning (Hidi & Renninger, 2006). The role of teachers in triggering the interest of learners cannot be overemphasized. However, accounts of the participants on the loss of their academic motivation appear to be connected with their teachers and how s/he is perceived by the students.

The following account seems to point to an emotional disengagement from a teacher due to her perceived favouritism in class. That emotional disengagement eventually led to loss of academic motivation in that particular subject. KCG-172 has the impression that her teacher is *playing favoritism* and that to her is affecting their grades. She said that the teacher seems to give more praises to some students. She starts to emotionally disengage herself from the teacher then eventually her motivational disengagement from the subject. With this, KCG-172



resorts to being silent. Keeping her silence, emotional detachment from the teacher, and not making any attempts to study are her response to the situation where there is perceived unfair treatment in class. She is not motivated anymore to exert effort thinking that whatever she does, and no matter how much she tries, it will just amount to nothing. Implied is the thought that she does not want to waste effort in something that will not benefit her. That is in consonance with the basic idea of motivation intensity theory that individuals try to avoid wasting resources and they spend effort only when expenditure of effort yields a return, a benefit (Gendolla, et.al, 2012).

We find the link on perception on the utility of exertion of on motivation to engage in Expectancy-Value Model (Eccles and Wigfield, 2002). This model posited that the subjective interest an individual has towards the subject has a value component or utility value. Utility value is determined by how well a task relates to current and future goals, such as career goals. Participants' engagement to subjects that may help them when they graduate acquires a positive value for them. In subjects where they find no utility, they simply disengages. AJL-113 said, "*...kung sa tingin ko ay wala namang kwenta, hayaan ko na lang.*" That echoes the valence or utility value of task in triggering interest (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002) and the assumption of Motivation Intensity Theory that expenditure of effort is expected only when it yields a return or benefits (Gendolla, et.al, 2012). JAM-122 enumerated some factors that are motivating him to exert effort – "*importance of the subject matter to my career, level of difficulty, capability or mastery of the teacher of the subject matter, and my own mastery of the subject matter or my existing knowledge on the subject matter.*"



We can also borrow ideas from the self-efficacy concept of Bandura in providing additional perspective into it. Self-efficacy refers to the perception of an individual toward an object or activity. It also refers to the faith, judgment, or feeling of an individual in carrying out the activity before its operation and completion to a certain level (Bandura in Zhao, et.al, 2013). The perception that the task is difficult combined with the lack of belief that they can successfully bring the task to a successful completion which in this case is the correct answer. Literature is making a distinction between individual interest and situational interest. The statement of GST-113 provides a clear distinction. He said:

Depende sa subject, pag math gusto ko talaga mag-excel pero kung hindi math, okay lang sa akin kahit hindi.

The first half of the statement points to individual interest while the second half of the statement is open to the application of situational interest. Interest theory researches have differentiated individual interest and situational interest (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002; McGrew, 2008). Individual interest is relatively stable or enduring predisposition, evaluative orientation, and tendency to persevere when working on certain specific content or task domains. The individual interest is evident in the account of GST-113 whose interest is anchored on his predisposition to take on academic tasks in Math, and as he said he is exerting effort and excelling in Math. In contrast, spur-of-the-moment interests, often triggered “in the moment,” are classified as situational interests (McGrew, 2008).

Academic interests and attitudes are defined as a student’s relatively stable or enduring predisposition, positive affective orientation, and tendency to persevere when working on



certain specific academic content or task domain (McGrew, 2008). Conversely, loss of academic interest is related with negative affect and the tendency to withdraw one's participation in a task. In this case, excusing oneself from a class as what is happening in GST-113 where he does not feel committed to exerting effort in subjects he feels he is not good at.

Perception of the self and sense of adequacy or inadequacy, perception of task as to its level of difficulty, and perception of the teacher are the emerging contributory factors in triggering the situational interest of learners. This is consistent with the summary of findings on interest. Interest is the outcome of an interaction between a person and a particular content. The potential for interest is in the person but the content and the environment define the direction of interest and contribute to its development. Thus, other individuals, the organization of the environment, and a person's own efforts, such as self-regulation, can support interest development. This means that interest is always content specific and not a predisposition that applies across all activities. Even those students who are highly motivated to achieve generally have interest(s) only for a discrete set of specific content areas (Hidi & Renninger, 2006, p.112).

Related behavior to selective engagement or disengagement is the application of selective goals, the mastery or learning, performance-avoid, and performance-approach. The situational or selective academic motivation among the participants is also manifested in adopting specific goal orientations, like mastering a task whose main goal is learning or mastery or a performance goal whose end is to get positive feedback or good grades. Pintrich (2000) posited that achievement goals can be strongly influenced by personal and individual characteristics and therefore may be more stable. While other goals are more of a function of contextual factors and are therefore malleable. The frame of thoughts of Pintrich (2000)



captures what is happening in the participants when they approach academic tasks. There are times when they are motivated by their perceived ability thus adopting a learning or mastery goal orientations. While at other times and in another context, they seem to be influenced by what they find in the context very much like what is happening in their academic interest previously discussed. In mastery goal, the goal of the learner is to truly understand the task at hand. Students operating on mastery-goal-orientation are interested in self-improvement and tend to compare their current level of achievement to their own prior achievement. While students operating on performance-goal orientation aim to demonstrate their ability compared to others. Performance-oriented individuals are interested in competition, demonstrate competence, outperform others, and tend to use others as point of reference (Yough and Anderman, 2009). The performance goal orientation is further divided into two: (1) a prove dimension or gaining favorable judgment and, (2) an avoid dimension or avoiding unfavorable judgments for performance goal orientation (Vandelwalle, 1997).

In what appears as prove dimension or performance-approach goal orientation, NAC-124 while she feels she is not good in most subjects would tend to approach doing class report. This is obviously a situation where one's performance is subjected to the observation of everyone in the class. So why would a student like NAC-124 be interested and motivated to approach performance in a highly evaluative situation like presenting a class report? NAC-124 said that she draws strength in reporting and that she likes doing it. In her statement, "*pag subject na parating nag-de-demo, doon ako nag-stand-out.*" This seems to give a clue as to her motivation why she would volunteer herself to take reporting assignments. Noting the term *stand-out* gives a sense that one is different from the others. She wants to stand-out instead of



being invisible by remaining seated during the class. We can assume that in her desire to stand-out, she would see to it that her classmates and teacher will notice her performance and that she will receive positive feedback by preparing very well for the class report. According to Darnon, Harackiewicz, Butera, Mugny and Quiamzade (2007) goals aiming at performing well relative to others are defined as performance goals, sometimes labelled as ego-involving and that these goals correspond to the desires to demonstrate abilities. It is also argued that performance approach goals can have positive effects in academic motivation because it promotes competence valuation and mobilize effort in the context that emphasize normative comparison (Darnon, et.al, 2007, p.814). While we cannot directly say that the context – classrooms and school – emphasize normative comparison but it is highly possible that NAC-124 is the one comparing herself with others in class thus the desire to stand-out, to be noticed. We can also view the desire to stand-out through approaching performance in view of her need to be noticed because she is not getting enough recognition from the family. That is supported by the data from NAC-124 who is longing to be recognized, encouraged, and need to feel their emotional support. She said:

Minsan pakiramdam ko walang concern ang pamilya ko sa akin. may mga oras na kailangan ko suporta nila pero imbes na suportahan nila ako, sinisisi pa nila ako. Naiinggit ako sa iba na pag-uwi sila ng bahay, tatanungin sila ng pamilya nila kung kung kumain na ba, o kaya sasabihan na magpalit ka na ng damit at kumain ka na, handa na ang hapunan. Wala akong ganun. Nakatira ako sa Lola ko, pag-umuwi ako ng bahay mula sa school at medyo late, pagagalitan ako ng Lola ko. Pakiramdam ko wala na lang akong nagawang tama.

Approaching performance where she would see to it that she would be noticed for her good performance in her report, may be a search of validation of her worth as a person. In response to a blog question “*Why do people want to be noticed,*” Eric Anthem wrote: to satisfy a deficiency



in their self-esteem. By others noticing them, they get some affirmation that they are worthy of being noticed – which is a matter of some uncertainty. The need to be noticed may have served some adaptive behavior by seeking situations where she can be noticed. In this case, her volunteering for a class report which in turn served other purpose because it can also have positive effect on academic motivation promoting competence valuation and mobilization of effort as claimed by Darnon, et al. (2007).

Whether one employs mastery goal orientation or performance approach or performance-avoid orientation seems to be dependent on some elements present in the individual and in the learning environment. For example, MCV-784 would aim for mastery or learning in Math, which is her major mastery goal orientation, is associated in deeper learning, higher interest within a subject (Buehler, 2014). However in other subjects, she would study for grades. But when it is a lesson in math she tries to acquire mastery. Considering that her major is Math, we can assume that her reasons for adopting mastery goal orientation in this particular situation are motivated by her interest in the subject and utility of the lessons for her when she becomes a Math teacher. Several studies have shown that mastery goals lead to adaptive outcomes such as effort, persistence after failure, and interest (Darnon, et al., 2007). Her lack of interest in other subjects led her to study simply for grade as her aim – a performance approach. Other theories term this motivation as extrinsic motivation.

MCV-784 is also motivated by performance avoid or the avoid dimension of performance goal orientation. She is afraid to show her competence or ability for fear of being perceived as a show-off and her own fear of raising her classmates' expectations of her. She said she avoids performance so as not to be perceived as *mayabang* or a *show off*. This is



consistent with the argument of Vandelwalle (1997) that performance approach need to be divided into performance approach and performance avoid since the desire to gain approval and demonstration of ability constitutes a different goal from the desire to avoid disapproval and demonstration of low ability. It implies that individuals may be deliberately not showing their competence for fear that they may gain the disapproval of others particularly when they are perceived as threat to others. Such orientation is evident in JAM-122 who avoids hearing negative comments from his classmates and afraid of gaining the disapproval of his classmates. He said that he studies for mastery and learning but sometimes he does it for performance. However, he is still afraid to say what he wants out of fear of hearing negative comments.

Darnon, et al. (2007) explained the distinction between performance-approach and performance-avoidance. Motivation can be oriented toward either the approach of desired positive outcomes that leads to a great investment in the situations that are likely to yield a positive evaluation or avoidance of negative evaluation whose goal is to avoid negative judgment. There we find the support for the reason why JAM-122 avoids performance. His avoidance of task as he said was his fear of being isolated by others. It reflects an underlying need on JAM-122 for emotional connection, a sense of belongingness. The need for sense of belongingness is evident in his statement when he said that he comes to class because he wants to be with his classmates, whom he considers as his siblings. He feels like he is just at home when he is with his classmates, he has no enemy and he feels happy. JAM-122 is bringing into the discussion the idea that in the adoption of performance avoid, one's need for relatedness or sense of belongingness comes into play. It is very evident from his statement above and his own admission that he feels the satisfaction of his need for relatedness with his friends and



classmates. His need for relatedness may be competing for his need for competence and from his own account, he tends to sacrifice his need for competence as in showing his ability for fear that he may get the disapproval of others thus need for relatedness is at risk. He would rather feel the love and acceptance of the group than his need to prove that he is competent.

Participants may also avoid performance for fear of committing mistake and appearing incompetent to others. As Pintrich (2000) explained, performance orientation-avoidance state is focused on avoiding inferiority, not looking stupid or dumb in comparison to others. MCV-784's statement mentioning that she avoids performance for fear of raising her classmates' expectations is consistent with the view that performance avoid goals are linked to fear of failure and low competence expectancy. Performance -avoid goals focus on individual's attention on the possibility of failing leads to maladaptive pattern or response and poor performance (Darnon, et.al, 2007).

Adoption of a specific goal orientation can act simultaneously in an individual. In the case of AJL-113, there is a desire to master a task. Her desire to master a task, or acquire knowledge and skills is inseparable from her desire to perform or show her competence to others with the underlying motive of showing off and proving she is more competent compared to others in class. Desire for a high grade is also an underlying motive in her adoption of simultaneous mastery and performance goals. Similar account of adopting both goals where one is inseparable from the other is found in ILH-113. She studies for mastery or deep learning because of the value of the content for her future profession. The grades serve as a feedback that she is learning. She said that she reviews a lesson and tries to learn from it what she can apply it in her future work. What is important to her is what she can learn from the lessons. This should



also be reflected in the scores on her quizzes and exams. This is consistent with Anderman (2015) noted that students can hold multiple goals simultaneously. This means that a student can be both mastery-approach oriented and performance-approach oriented whereby a student truly wants to learn and master the material but is also concerned with appearing more competent than others. Pintrich (2000) clarified though that there can't be some intra-individual stability over time and domains. This means that some individuals are generally mastery oriented and others may be more performance oriented across contexts and domains. In the case of AJL-113, interest plays a determining factor in maintaining her mastery orientation.

Supporting the idea of dominance of one orientation over the other is SWS-797 who is predominantly a mastery-oriented student whose main goal is to learn and in several occasions could be performance-oriented due to grades and positive feedback. She said that she uses performance goal for her major subjects. But generally, SWS-797 is oriented towards learning, acquiring knowledge and skills but admits to be performance-oriented which can be triggered in a highly evaluative situation like presenting a group report where she is the leader of the group. The feeling of being responsible for the group and its outcome may have triggered her to adopt performance goal since at stake is her sense of competence, image before the group and the whole class. So she had to study primarily for grade and good performance from which the group could potentially gain positive feedback and she would be given the credit for it since she is the leader. She could have adopted performance avoid for fear of possible failure but forced to good she adopted performance approach.

According to Darnon, et al. (2007), performance-approach and performance-avoid are both motivated by fear of failure corresponding to the feeling that competencies are under



threat. This is defined by Atkinson as the general motive to avoid failure (1957, p.814). But why did SWS-797 choose to approach performance and not to avoid it? We could only offer some assumptions in the light of existing theories. First, self-efficacy may have played a role in it. Self-efficacy is the perception of an individual toward an object or activity. It also refers to the faith, judgment or feeling of an individual in carrying out the activity before its operation and completion to a certain level (Bandura in Zhao, Yu, Shi, Yang, Chu, and Peng, 2013). Second, the desire to prove herself is greater than her fear of failure upon seeing the possibility of success. According to motivation intensity theory, effort is proportional to experienced task difficulty as long as success is possible and justified (Gendolla, et.al, 2012, p.420). SWS-797 may have seen that the task difficulty is manageable thus the possibility of success which in turn will provide her positive feedback from the group, the class and teacher. Third, SWS-797's possible estimation of the low difficulty of the task diminished whatever fear of failure led her to choosing performance-approach. Performance-approach goals appear most adaptive under conditions of low task difficulty or low fear of failure (Darnon, et.al, 2007, p.815).

Echoing a selective use of goal orientations, CLJ-143 studies his lessons for mastery, conscious of his need to learn for his future career as a teacher. His use of performance goal for the sake of grade is for him an evidence to show his parents that he is studying well. Giving an account for his situational goal orientations, he said that he masters a topic depending on its importance for him. Mastery for subjects he considers important for his future profession as a teacher, then performance approach for subjects or topics he is not interested for the sake of getting grade which he connects to pleasing the parents. CLJ-143's explanation for adopting performance and not mastery is that since he finds no utility in the content, he does not see the



need to expend his effort. He does not see the need for deep learning for it has no practical applicability. It is like saying spending effort would just be a waste of time. He also connected the grade to pleasing his family. Passing grades are for him like his way of assuring his parents that he is studying his lessons and they need not worry since he has no failing grades. However, considering that CLJ-143 has low academic outcome, we can assume that the grades that he is showing his parents are within the low range of grades which is subjectively high for him.

What is emerging from the accounts of the participants is that in adopting mastery, performance-approach or performance goal, individual and contextual influences affect the types of goals that students adopt in various learning environments (Yough and Anderman, 2009). This supports the emerging pattern in the participants' accounts on their individual and situational academic interests where context or environment partly dictates the maintenance and direction of the interest. The emerging patterns in situational interest bring into the discussion the importance of the need to manipulate classroom or any learning environment in the development and maintenance of academic interest of learners. Subramaniam (2009) highlighted research indications that situational interest can be enhanced through the manipulation or the modification of certain aspects of the learning environment and contextual factors such as teaching strategies, task presentation, and structuring of learning experiences. Situational interest, therefore, is a viable medium that can be harnessed by teachers to motivate the unmotivated and disengaged learners to learn.

The emerging patterns in goal orientations brings into the discussion the importance of the need to facilitate the development of more achievement-oriented goals whose foundation lies at the very core of the students, their self-constructs (self-concept, self-worth, and self-



efficacy) ability, knowledge, skills, and values that are all related in adopting a particular goal in school setting. Highlighting the association between educational outcomes and goal orientation, Yough and Anderman (2012) advance the idea that with the adoption of either mastery or performance goals, predictable outcomes follow since goals follow adaptive behavior influencing the results.

Problems in Family Context

Problem #4: Paradox of Poverty for Academic Motivation

Ang hirap ng kalagayan ng aking pamilya ang siyang nag-papaala-ala sa akin sa mga pangarap ko at kung bakit dapat kong abutin ito. Ang aking mga magulang ang aking gabay, ang dahilan kung bakit ako nag-aaral. . . Nauunawaan ko ang kalagayan namin kaya kahit mahirap ay nag-aaral ako ng mabuti...Minsan iniisip ko na tumigil na lang at magtrabaho...Dalawa kami nag-aaral ng kuya ko sa college. kaya nga kung papipiliin kami kung sino dapat huminto kapag sobrang hindi na naming kaya, naiisip ko na ring magparaya.

Economically-disadvantaged students are being pushed and pulled by the situation – pushed to finishing school and find a job to help their family but pulled back at the same time from it to find a job to help the family. Material want is what motivates them to study but at the same time it is the very same reason why they lose their motivation. Such is the paradoxical nature of poverty for them. Their family is unable to provide for their needs, from the most basic to school materials. They could hardly buy books and most of the time they rely on photocopies, worst is relying on the kindness of a classmate who has a photocopied material. For some, it is a source of their insecurity. I am now imagining at this point that in a push-pull situation, one would simply settle for what is the mid ground – mediocrity in academic performance.



Gulick (2012) cited one obvious and basic need of economically disadvantaged students – school supplies, books, and what he termed as extras or everything children would like to have, money for field trips, school pictures, and other school-related expenses. Within this basic needs are the experiences of the participants and how they are affected by such lack. JAM-122 described his difficulties related to lack of money to buy books and other materials needed for school. He identifies lack of money as one of his insecurities. Financial constraints add another challenge for the economically disadvantaged students for they are unable to buy necessary school supplies in doing their projects or assignments. JAM-122 said that studying would have been easier if he had the learning materials he needs. It gives us a sense that he feels confident about his academic abilities but his motivation to study seem to be affected by his family's incapacity to provide for his school-related needs. This made him entertain the thought of leaving school for the sake of his brother. He points to their poverty as the reason why studying is difficult for him and his siblings. But it is also their poverty that motivates him to study. It sounds paradoxical that the reason why he is motivated to study is the very same reason that demotivates him. This is probably one paradox that students from poor families have to grapple with much in the same way of the absurdity of having to work to support one's education. But it is the very same work that threatens his/her stay in school.

Problem #:5 Powerlessness for Self-Determination

Inaasahan ko na maging isang accountant someday. Iyon talaga pangarap ko. Pero magiging praktikal lang ako kasi hindi ko ma-afford sa ibang school kaya dito (local university) po ako at sinunod ko ang Mama ko na gusto niya (mag education) ako. Yun po ang realidad...Dahil hindi ko gusto ang pagiging teacher at ayaw kong maging guro, kung ano pa yung meron akong naiitago (potentials) parang hindi ko pa kayang ilabas. Kasi po hindi ko gusto yun until kung ano lang yung magustuhan kong gawin doon ko lang nailalabas.



This is one problem that is shared by almost everyone, a feeling that they have been forced to take education program in this local college. The choice of a school was not theirs. It was forced on them by the reality that they cannot afford to go to others schools of their choice. They simply cannot afford it. Forced into entering a local college, they were forced into taking a program that is not their preference. It was forced on them by their parents and by the reality that not all courses are found in this school. What is being revealed by the above narrative is that when one is forced into something, even when s/he obliges, s/he will not be able to give herself fully to it. It may be like simply going through the whole motion of it – devoid of interest, devoid of any emotion. Trapped into the situation, one is unable and unwilling to give her best into what is required. S/he will only exert effort when she finds something interesting in it, something to her liking. For as long as s/he feels that way, we can expect that the rest of his/her college life will be just like drifting through.

Self-Determination Theory posits that there are three basic needs – autonomy, competence, and relatedness. The psychological need satisfaction is an essential nutriment for individuals' optimal functioning and well-being and that individuals are attracted to situations in which need satisfaction may occur. Once needs are satisfied, they are likely to feel energized and to actively engaged in subsequent need fulfilling activities (Deci & Ryan, 2000 in Van Den Broeck, Vansteenkiste, De Witte, Soenens and Lens, 2010, p.983).

This is consistent with the propositions of control theories that one should expect to succeed to the extent that one feels in control of one's successes and failures (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002). Connell and Wigfield (1991, in Eccles & Wigfield, 2002, p.111) linked control beliefs to competence. They explained that children who believe they control their achievement



outcomes should feel more competent. The extent of how need for control and competence are fulfilled is influenced by family, peer, and school contexts; the amount of structure; degree of autonomy provided; and the level of involvement in the children's activities. They also posited that the ways in which these needs are fulfilled determine engagement in different activities which means that when needs are fulfilled, children will be fully engaged. When needs are not fulfilled, children will become disaffected and unmotivated.

We may view poverty as structural violence. Structural violence theorists define violence as the avoidable disparity between the potential ability to attainment of basic needs and their actual attainment of them. It claims that when agency is constrained to the extent that fundamental human needs cannot be attained, structural violence becomes a structural violation of human rights (Ho, 2007, p.1). Poverty creates a condition in which individuals' incapacitated potential to fulfill most basic human needs which in turn are affecting the development of their human potential.

Problem #6: A Dysfunctional Family

Ang hindi nakakatulong sa aking pag-aaral ay ang walang patid na dagsa ng problema at hindi pagkakaunawaan at pagkakaintindihan sa loob ng aming tahanan. Para sa akin, ngayon, parang nakakalimutan ng bawat isa sa aming pamilya na maging considerate sa maaaring pinagdadaanan ng bawat miyembro. SWS-797

The statement of SWS-797 captures what students in a dysfunctional are going through. It mirrors, a seemingly endless days of having to grapple with the conflicts in the family created by wrong decisions or inappropriate actions of a family members. Some of the problems found in the data are: separation of parents, infidelity of the father, domestic violence, emotional abuse and misunderstandings with a sibling. Those are on top of having to deal with the daily struggle



presented by financial or material want. The condition creates a family dynamics that tests one's capacity for understanding and sensitivity for the family to survive together. It may be too much for the children to handle. Parents grappling with their own personal issues, stressed out from the daily grind of working for their daily survival are unable to attend not only to their children's emotional need but also unable to monitor and supervise the children's academic performance. As one said: *If only there was peace and harmony in my family, I would probably not have been affected by their fights, especially these days when fights are becoming very often.* They come to school bringing with them their anxieties, worries, and uncertainties about the future of their family. As they sit inside their classroom, focus and attention is a struggle for they cannot help but think about what the family is going through. In most days, they give in to their worries unable to give themselves to the demands of academic life. We find its link to the Family Stress Model (Conger & Elder, 2000) suggesting that poor families due to financial hardship directly increased risk for emotional problems lack of warmth and support and consequently to family dysfunction.

Research on children of low socio-economic status shows they are subject to acute and chronic types of stress. But chronic stress is more common and exerts a more relentless influence on children's day-to-day lives. Children living in poverty experience stress that exerts a devastating, insidious influence on their physical, psychological, and cognitive functioning. Those areas affect brain development during the early stages in the development of the child and later on their academic success and social competence. Students subjected to such stress may lack crucial coping skills and experience significant behavioral and academic problems in school (Jensen, E. 2009).



For CLJ-143, the difficulties he is going through in the family made him love going to school which to him is giving him the feeling that he is in a different world. In school he finds friends who give him the emotional support and care he longs from his family whose members seem caught in their own concerns. CLJ-143 described his feelings when in school and how different it feels when he is home. CLJ-143 enumerated his problems as financial problem, conflict with sibling, a sick father who in all likelihood does not get enough medical attention considering their financial difficulty, a mother who is too tired from working for the family that is unable to provide him with emotional support that he needs. Poverty seems not only capable of limiting the material and financial resources of poor families but also the physical, psychological, and emotional resources that each one needs to share with one another.

Roff (n.d.) reiterated the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES, 2004) report that in order for children to succeed, they need a social emotional connection to a role model who needs to give children an indication that they are loved. Roff (n.d.) linked the NCES' report on studies supporting the observation that the lower the socio-economic status, the fewer resources people have at their disposal, have more stressful events creating risks of learning delays, behavioral and emotional problems, and that parents do not always participate in educationally positive activities. Like what he said previously, he channels that need for love and care to his friends. This is part of the reason why he likes going to school for in there, he can be happy, away from the gloomy atmosphere of his family. In this sense, his school is able to achieve one of its functions, and that is to provide a context where students' need for love and sense of belongingness is fulfilled. But this also highlights the risk when parents are unable to provide the emotional needs of their children because very likely they will search for love in



their friends. This may result to the strengthening of the emotional bond with friends and the strengthening of the hold and control of their friends over their children. As children go further away from their parents there goes as well their control over them.

From the participants' stories, we get the image of some students coming to class struggling with the heavy baggage of their parents' conflicts feeling hurt, betrayed, uncertain of the future, feeling unloved and uncared for. Those emotions threaten their academic motivation and lead them to look for alternative source of emotional support in their friends and classmates. They are left to deal with the emotional pain on their own for they could not rely on their parents who are the source of their pain. The participants' claim of losing motivation to study, feeling unloved and uncared for, experience of conflict with family members, keeping emotional distance from parents, feelings of uncertainty about the future are consistent with Conger and Elder's (2000) study on the impact of poverty on families. They propose the Family Stress Model which posited that financial hardship directly increased risk for emotional problems especially among parents. The risk includes personal unhappiness and irritability of the parents that are translated into hostile and angry with other family members including children, and threatened the perceived quality of family relationships for all family members. In the end, family conflict and turmoil increased the risk of adjustment problems in the development of children and adolescents. Fortunately for our participants, there still remains personal strength that keeps them in school and struggle with their waning motivation for the sake of the family. Also, their alternative source of emotional support and strength are their friends in school.



Ahmed (2005) highlighted the idea of the Family Stress Model. The model brings into the discussion the family's experience of poverty as contributing to the emotional distress-depression, and family dysfunction, of members resulting to problems in the relationship between and among family members. These in turn are linked to less effective parenting that may include insufficient monitoring of the children's activities, lack of control over the child's behavior, lack of warmth and support, inconsistency and displays of aggression or hostility by parents or by older siblings. Ahmed (2005) concluded that economic deprivation blocks the way of parents to perform their parental duties with full attention by creating a condition where parents are vulnerable to depression and stress. Ultimately causing dysfunction in the family where children are affected.

Problem #7: 'A Sense of Orphanhood' (Pope Francis, 2015)

The following statements mirrors a sense of orphanhood among the participants: *Watak-watak po kami. Si Mama nasa ibang bansa. Mga kapatid ko nasa probinsiya. Hindi kami magkakasama*, (KLF-510); *May Mama nga ako, hindi ko naman maramdaman na proud sya sa akin. may kapatid nga ako pero lagi namang wala*, AAA-466); MAS-124 when asked about his father said: *Wala eh, Ang tatay ko busy sa trabaho*, (MAS-124). *Broken family ko, yung father ko po wala na, yung mother ko ay patay na. dun po ako nakikitira sa lola ko, tapos nakikitira ako sa kuya ko, kaming dalawa lang po*. (NAC-124).

The words they used are powerful in creating an image of an individual feeling a 'sense of orphanhood' (Pope Francis, 2015). *Watak-watak kami, tatay ko wala na, nanay ko patay na*,



broken family are the words they used that helped us see clearly what is this sense of orphanhood. What the Pope said resonate in the story of the participants:

...the absent father figure in the life of little ones and young people causes gaps and wounds that may even be very serious. And, in effect, delinquency among children and adolescents can be largely attributed to this lack, to the shortage of examples and authoritative guidance in their everyday life, a shortage of closeness, a shortage of love from the father. And the feeling of orphanhood that so many young people live with is more profound than we think.

The participants may not be delinquents but nevertheless, there is a feeling of orphanhood in them, a feeling that they have a father but cannot be relied on – a father who betrays their trust, a father who chose to leave his family, or a father who failed to make them feel that they are loved, cared for and protected from harm. In the reflection of Pope Francis (2015) children are orphaned in the family because they have fathers who are absent in their lives. In this paper, we include the mothers who may be physically present but because of the need to work for the family, they are absent as well. Thus they have parents who are physically present in the house but emotionally absent in the lives of the children and in some cases, fathers who totally abandoned their family. When parents are present in the house, they do not fulfill their role as educators. The Pope is emphasizing the educative function of parenthood by setting good examples through words, principles, values, and those rules of life which the Pope compared to bread – bread that feeds and nourishes the development of the child and all his/her human potentials. Pope Francis observed that sometimes it seems that fathers do not know what their role in the family is or how to raise their children. In doubt, they abstain, retreat and neglect their responsibilities.



Pope Francis laments the orphanhood of children in their families because of the fathers who are clueless about how to be a father and we include the mothers who because of the need to work become equally absent in the lives of their children. In addressing this situation of children's orphanhood, Filipino families especially from the economically-disadvantaged group need to be assisted to build their capacity to respond to the problem of orphanhood of the children. The government needs to fulfill its function in providing capacity-building mechanisms through skills development and the generation of jobs and employment for poor families. Pope John Paul II (1980) in his *Familiaris Consortio* wrote that families in the so-called Third World often lack both the means necessary for survival, such as food, work, housing and medicine, and the most elementary freedoms creating anguish and uncertainty about the future.

Feeling alone, they look for emotional connectedness with friends and classmates and sometimes even to teachers. While we all need to feel a sense of emotional connection with others, needing too much of it creates dependency in us. In the case of the participants, their need for friends leads them to making their friends as standard of their academic performance, leads them to **patterning their academic behavior after friends'** tending towards uniformity. Such case leaves everything to chance, the chance of finding the right friends. The wrong ones could lead them to others behavioral problems. Too much dependency on people who gives us emotional support is like surrendering our own control over our actions and decisions. In the end, we surrender our control over our own life.



Echoes of the words of Pope Francis and Pope John Paul II find their way into the narratives of the participants when families are unable to provide a home that nurtures the full development of individual members due to family's lack of financial capability.

Problem # 8: *Basta Walang bagsak* Mentality of Parents

Palagay ko ang nais lang nila ay ang pumasa ako at maka-graduate. Kung makakuha man ako ng mataas na grade eh karagdagang kasiyahan na lang iyon para sa kanila. (JAM-122).

What is emerging from the data is the problem on minimal parental expectations characterized as “basta walang bagsak” mentality among parents captured in a mother’s statement to a child *Kung anu makuha mu, ahh ok. Kung mataas eh di magaling. Kung mababa, eh pagbutihin mu na lang sa susunod*, (in KCG-172). We analyze this problem on two points:

One. Level of education of parents. From the data on profile of the parents, only a few reached college. The participants listed their father’s occupation as utility worker, driver, vendor, welder, security worker. While mothers work as teacher, daycare worker, domestic helper and many have no regular source of income. We can glean from the profile the level of educational attainment of parents. We find the link of educational attainment of parents to children’s academic achievement in Lacour and Tissington (2011) who found the link between the two. The study pointed out that while parents’ educational attainment has significant effect on the academic achievement of children, it is the mother’s attainment that has more significant effect on them. Considering that the participants talk more about their mother in their narratives, more than the father, we assume that they are more exposed to the influence of the mother in their academic life. Given the profile of parents and the reality of them busy working, they may



have a low standard and expectations on their children thus the phrase “basta walang bagsak.” Through mother-child interaction, the mother’s minimal expectation may have been passed on the children forming their own belief that ‘Ang ayaw ko lang naman bagsak ako.’ Or basta pasado, okay na.’ It must be noted that what is minimal to one may be high to another because of the subjective nature of our interpretation of things.

Two. Type of neighborhood and **use of comparison**. Type of neighborhood gives another area for further analysis why they have minimal standard. In a neighborhood where many children and adolescents are out of school, *tambay*, their children being in school is already an advantage and raising the likelihood of their children finishing school. It already gives the parents a sense of fulfillment seeing that their children are unlike others in the neighborhood. As JAM-122 said in their neighborhood it is considered as *himala* when a son/daughter is able to finish college. It gives us an idea that it is possible that the minimal expectation is actually high for them due to a downward comparison, using *tambay* in the neighborhood as reference of the downward comparison. Thus even among parents, there exists the use of a downward comparison giving them the idea that their child is better off, more competent, more committed to education, and more involved in academics. It is a belief that is transmitted in their interaction with their children.

The American Psychological Association (APA) Task Force on Socio Economic Status (2007) in its assessment of SES along with the examination of the ecological aspects at the level of neighborhood, community and country level reported that from the socio-economic characteristics of neighborhoods (percentage of unemployed, poverty, college degree) one can predict the residents’ health, vulnerability to crimes and disorganization, and lack of access to



more pro-social role models. How does that finding relate to our present study particularly on the parents' tendency to set minimum parental expectations for their children that may influence the academic behavior and motivation of their children?

We put the APA Report (2007) on the impact of the characteristics of neighborhood and also in terms of their availability for the residents to use each other as points of comparison in many areas of their lives, including beliefs, dreams, expectations and standards for their children. Festinger (1954) through his Theory of Social Comparison posited that people make a comparison of their opinions and abilities with others in their social context. In this case, the parents' opinion of their children and their abilities or achievements as compared with the achievements or abilities of their neighbors' children. Similarly, Bandura (1991) believed that the setting of personal standard is formed in social referential comparison wherein people evaluate their performance in relationship to the attainment of others. In the same vein, Omrod(2010) claimed that the development of self-beliefs is influenced by comparison with others. Again, in this case, the parents' standard, expectations, and standards they used with their children are formed as a result of comparing their children with the children of other residents in the neighborhood.

The mother of JAM-122 sees that her child is far better off compared to other children in the neighborhood. Her child is in college and is doing well, unlike other children in the neighborhood who have never reached college, and in all likelihood doing menial jobs and worse a *tambay*. The mother hearing the compliments of her neighbors in having a child in college would naturally feel a sense of satisfaction and pride even when the child is performing within low academic outcome. Her child performing above the average level or getting awards



will just be a bonus for her. Thus setting the minimum academic standard for their children and that to her is relatively high for her child. The child in turn will then sense that his/her family does not have high academic expectation. This does not put any pressure on him to perform very well thus will be tending towards the goal of simply to graduate. Graduating in college is a great achievement for the family in comparison to others in the neighborhood.

The statement of JAM-122 “*Kung makakuha man ako ng mataas na grade eh karagdagang kasiyahan na lang iyon para sa kanila*” finds similarities in KCG-172’s “*Kung ano makuha mo (grades) ah ok. Kung mataas eh di magaling. Kung mababa, okay pagbutihin mo na lang sa susunod.*” Both statements are reflective of low academic expectations of their family that may have played a role in their low academic outcome. The role of expectations has been widely studied in the context of education but nevertheless equally applicable in the context of parent-child interaction. Rosenthal and Jacobsen (1968, in Center for Teaching Excellence, 2015) showed that teacher expectations influence performance positively, and negative expectations influence performance negatively. This phenomenon is called the Pygmalion Effect. In general, people behave according to the expectations of others on them. Applying the idea, parents’ low to minimum academic expectations and standards influence the academic behavior and motivation of the children for they tend to pattern them after the expectation and standard they acquire from the parents directly or indirectly.

Lowering expectations is absolutely not the answer. The key is to hold high expectations and provide students with appropriate support to reach the expectations (Gulick, 2012). Here we find one major obstacle in addressing the low academic outcome and achievements of children from the economically-disadvantaged group. Because they do not have strong positive support



system at home and with their families even when they want to provide all the necessary support system, they are caught in the web of poverty to set higher standards for their children. Poor families need the assistance of the government for their capacity-building to create a condition for their children where high expectations could be achieved with their family's support system. Lewin through his Field Theory believed that a holistic investigation of human behavior and learning must include the environment in which learning takes place, including the psychological environment of the learner and with whom he interacts (Cooper, 2012).

Hinting on the bi-directional effect of parental expectation between mother and child, MAS-124 said that he is afraid to disappoint the mother in her belief that he is intelligent. He also does not want her mother to lose her face before their neighbors if he fails in school. High parental expectation is relative because we have seen that standard for evaluation is influenced by referential comparison and using an objective measure. MAS-124 is not exactly performing according to high expectations. His academic performance is within the average to low level of academic performance. The concept of high in this case is relative when parent and child are using two different measures. For example, MAS-124 is aware that he is performing within what he termed as *sakto lang*, meaning average. This average performance may be perceived by the mother as already high. This is evident in the statement of MAS-124 when he was asked why he settles for the average, he said “*Kasi feeling ko eh yun lang yung okay sa akin at okay naman yung nanay ko. Nakikita ko rin naman na masaya siya.*”

The statement brings us back to the importance of setting expectations. But at the same time the need for parents to set clear goals and standards that both parents and children understand. When parents say that they have high expectations of their children, they need to be



able to describe and identify exactly what do they mean by high expectations in terms of observable and measurable outcomes so that the children will be properly guided and act according to the expectations.

In a situation where there is no clearly expressed expectation other than passing grades and perceived by the student as the parent's disinterestedness in his/her academic life, the student is left to set his/her own standard patterned after the expectation of the institutions, like school or the Local Government that provides scholarship program. CMF-716's perception is that her mother seems not to care and is simply expecting her to finish college. She sets her own standard based on the minimum requirement of the scholarship program of which she is a beneficiary.

Problem # 9: Being Overwhelmed by House Chores

Kung ang pamilya ko lang sana ay mayroong kaya sa buhay at maayos hindi na sana nakakapagod ang mag-aral. Iyon ang nakakapagod sa pag-aaaral. Parang hindi nakakapagod yung mag review o gumawa ng projects and nakakapagod ay iyong ginagawa mo kung bakit ka nag-aaral. Ang nakakapagod ay iyong gingawa mo bago ka pumasok, pagdating mo sa bahay, bago ka matulog. Yung mga yun ang nakakapagod. Kaya nga po hindi po ba pwede mag-aral na lang ako? Bakit kailangan ko pang magtinda, magtimpla ng gatas ng lolo ko sa madaling araw?

It describes a feeling of physical exhaustion, a sense of being physically drained from the grinds of daily chores that children from the economically disadvantaged families have to do before and after school. The narrative expresses a general feeling of being overwhelmed by too many chores depriving her of much needed rest for her physical and mental development. Convention on the Rights of Children (CRC) views the situation as a violation of the right of children to rest and leisure, which are important for children's development. Without sufficient rest, a student lacks the energy, motivation, physical and mental strength for active and



meaningful participation in the classroom. Children similarly situated experience problems with focus, memory and concentration a complaint many participants reported in the data. In families where both parents are working, the eldest in the family is expected to do the house chores aside from taking care of the younger siblings. Situation like this competes for time and attention of students that should have been devoted doing their review, school work and assignments. LJT-589 said that this is part of the reason why there are times when she is unable to study her lessons. She does all the chores and errands. LJT-589 accepts her responsibilities wholeheartedly because for her she does the work out of her love for her family. The only problem with this is that it interferes with her school work. This is similar to the situation of JKC-157. Although she shares the responsibilities with an older sister, most of the time she gets the bulk of work. JKC-157 attributes some of her low scores to situations when she was too tired to study and instead would just sleep after doing her chores.

House chores can be overwhelming for some that it leaves them wondering as to which they should prioritize, school work or house work. In most cases, they set aside school works for the more pressing needs at home and the urgings of the parents to do the chores.

Problems in School/Classroom Context

Problem # 10: Culture of *Petiks*, *Hayahay* and *Chill-chill lang* in the classroom

Kasi po nakita ko sa mga kamag-aaral ko noong high school na sapat lang ang kanilang ginagawa at hindi sila masyadong nahihirapan. Kaya ayun naging kapareho na din nila ako na petiks lang... Nakita ko sa mga classmates ko noong high school na petiks lang sila.

The existing problem in the classroom in the description is one of being *petiks*. Other participants use the term *hayahay*, *chill-chill lang* all describing a general condition of



complacency. Participants enter into a context of learners who are lacking in academic motivation. They observe their classmates' behavior, they see and observe its consequences and in seeing the consequences, they decide whether it is worth imitating or not. In their observed consequence, they see it is favourable to them, *hindi nahihirapan*. For students who are lacking in academic interest and motivation, *petiks* behaviour is an attractive possibility for them, thus they imitate. This situation also poses dangers for those who are with high academic motivation, in the long run, s/he will imitate the behaviour of being *petiks* and *hayahay*. Continuing with his/her high motivation in the class of *hayahay* is like going against the tide, paddling against the current of the river. It is just a matter of time before s/he becomes equally *hayahay*. Over years of exposure to the *petiks* and *hayahay* classroom or school, mediocrity becomes the norm thus a culture of *hayahay*. As Bandura (1991) argued, our behaviour is purposive and regulated by forethought. We form beliefs from what we think as desirable or not on the basis of what we see. From our observation on the actions of others and its ensuing consequences, we see possible behaviours.

The culture of *petiks* and *hayahay* in the classroom may also be seen as a micro representation of what James Fallows' (in Teodoro, 2009) termed as the damaged culture of the Filipinos or Jocano's (in De Leon, 2011) view as a reflection of "*pwede na yan*" mentality. The emerging tendencies of the many participants to be mediocre described as *sakto lang*, *chill-chill lang*, *sapat lang* and tendencies to avoid being at the bottom of the class but not wanting to go above the average level of academic performance is in stark contrast with Singaporean students who are among the top performing students along with students from Canada, Finland, Japan, and South Korea in the Program for International Student on Assessment (Mehta, 2014). In



explaining how Singaporean students pursue learning, Tan and Yates (2007) asserted that the influence of Confucian culture pervade the beliefs and values of Singapore. The Confucian culture encourages hard work and effort in the pursuit of learning so much so that students work by the motto “No pain, no gain.” The importance of education and diligence is stressed by parents and children. Therefore, the willingness to work hard especially in the academic is extremely important to students (Tan & Yates, 2007, p.471).

High perception of academic self-concept has to be concretized through studying extensively, inquiring carefully, pondering thoroughly, sifting clearly, and practicing earnestly in the tradition of Confucian Heritage that pervades the academic commitment of Singaporean students (Liu and Wang, 2005). Without those elements, perception remains a perception and as KLF-510 said, “*Hanggang sa isip lang. Hindi ko naman nagagawa.*” This is similar to the clarification made by Pajares (2002) on self-efficacy. Pajares (2002) clarified that it does not mean that individuals can accomplish tasks beyond their capabilities simply by believing that they can for competent functioning requires harmony between self-beliefs and possessed skills and knowledge. Applying the idea to explain the perception of high academic self- concept but is not actually supported by outcome, we say that it is not enough to simply believe or think that one has high academic competence, commitment, and involvement. It requires harmony with possessed skills, knowledge, grit, determination, and hard work. While Singaporean students study guided by ‘*No Pain. No Gain*’ our participants keep their chill-chill and *hayahay* attitude towards academics.



Problem #11: The Teacher's Negative *Aura*

May aura ang isang teacher na nakakapagbigay sa amin ng motivation na magsipag kami. Si (name of the professor) yung aura niya, yung dating niya sa amin yung tipong hindi talaga siya nanghuhula lang ng grade at dun kami nag-babase kaya nag-aaral kami., (CLJ-143).

The psychological climate in a classroom is created through the nuances in verbal and non-verbal communications in the teacher-students interactions. Through the power of a teacher's words, gestures and facial expressions, s/he can create a classroom climate that is either nurturing or debilitating to the potential of his/her students. For example, CST-352 acquires the feeling that her teacher is disappointed with her based on her reading of the facial expressions of her teacher resulting to feeling disappointed with herself. The teacher's facial expression seen by CST-352 as "*nakasimangot*" and seemingly "*walang gana sa iyo*" may be an erroneous cue on the part of the teacher. Nevertheless it was interpreted by CST-352 as the teacher being disappointed with her resulting to CST-352 feeling disappointed. Receiving negative feedback through the subjective interpretation of the teacher's facial expression is a big source of de-motivation for her because her fear of negative feedback and strong need for support and encouragement. Likewise, NOV-121 acquired information from the actions and the look in the eyes of a teacher. She knows whether the teacher is pleased when the class is able to answer the question or frustrated when the class fails to answer. The displeased look in the eyes of the teacher forces her to think harder for the correct answer but there are times when a teacher's look can be paralyzing.

CLJ-143 talked about *aura* or the special quality or feeling that seems emanate from a person, place, or thing (Merriam-Webster Dictionary). From his interpretation of the aura or



“*dating*” of his teacher, he feels motivated or de-motivated. The aura that CLJ-143 described may be the same thing that NOV-121 is referring to in this statement, “...*pagpasok pa lang niya sa room makikita mo na yung authority niya at tsaka yung disiplina na dapat maayos kayo.*”

From those accounts, they give us the idea that teachers, even when they are simply standing, exude something that is open for students’ interpretation that will influence their behavior. Khan (2007) explains that human beings have an aura irrespective of their behavior or character which may have positive or negative vibrations, strength and range depending upon conduct, mental state, thought pattern and character of the person. Given that explanation on aura, then CLJ-143 and NOV-121 are right in saying that a teacher radiates something from within him/her that influences their behavior. This unseen aura which can only be sensed or felt has the power to create a positive or negative psychological climate in the class depending on the aura of the teacher. Khan (2007) said that a positive aura cannot be created artificially since it is emanating from within the person from his/her thoughts and feelings and therefore cannot be manipulated. The foregoing discussion is leading us to the importance of psychological health or spiritual well-being of teachers in developing an aura that will positively influence the creation of a psychological climate that is consistent with a nurturing classroom environment. It implies that teachers’ development program aimed at enhancing their personality and professional competence must be integrated into the development of the inner self of teachers to address deeply personal issues and concerns that may be hampering them from exuding positive auras. Khan (2007) calls it a self healing and personal development. But it must be clarified that this personal development has to go beyond training teachers on how to walk, talk, dress, or put on make-up. It has to go and delve deeper into the more intimate and deeply personal issues and



struggles that confront teachers. Professional training and development will be useless when teachers are struggling with their own personal problems. What they bring into their classrooms are not what they learned from their professional trainings and seminars but an aura beset by struggles within the very self that is expected to be the tool for transmitting the intent of those teachers' trainings.

Call it aura or personality but its impact on students' behavior is undeniable. NOV-121 described how their interpretation of the aura or personality of the teacher motivates them to study or not. The teacher's verbal and non-verbal communications – then gestures, facial expressions, and all other observable bodily actions, including the aura that could only be sensed, become important elements in the creation of a nurturing environment for learners. Such understanding goes back to Blumer (1969) and Symbolic Interactionism which views people's actions and behaviors as guided by the meanings they derived from their interaction with others. These meanings are assigned to objects within the individual's world, with the self considered as an object. These meanings are handled in, and modified through an interpretative process used by the individual in dealing with the things that individual encounters. Similarly, Crossman (2013) asserted that people interpret one another's behavior and it is their interpretations that form social bond. It follows then that erroneous cues and interpretations may lead to the lack or absence of social bonds.

Within the frame of Social Interactionism the people interpret each other's behavior is the metaphor of the theatre to explain social life (Goffman, 1959). In the metaphor of a theatre, we can think of the classroom as a stage where we find the teacher as an actor. Goffman (1959) explained that roles are a complex mixture of expectations, concealment and control that



determine how the actors will act. Like actors, people also have an audience that they must convince of their roles. At some point, individuals are subject to the expectations attached to these roles as it is the audience who approves or rejects the actor's portrayal. Given the metaphor of a theatre, teachers need to be able to convince his/her audience (the students) of his portrayal of the role of the teacher through management of behavior on stage including all the nuances of the role. This brings us to the idea of self presentation or the behavior that convey some information about oneself or some image of oneself to other people (Baumeister and Hutton, 1987). Self-presentational behavior is any behavior intended to create, modify or maintain an impression of ourselves in the minds of others (Washington Faculty, 2013, p.2). Following the thoughts contained in the Self-Presentational Behavior (Washington Faculty, 2013), teacher-student social interaction is very role-governed. Each person has a role to play, and the interaction between the two proceeds smoothly when these roles are enacted effectively.

Downside of a Positive Aura. . .Being *Mabait na Teacher*

Ah, papasa ako dito, (JPJ-918).

Here is one kind of an interpretation on a positive element in a teacher's personality that results to a negative outcome. Some students, upon sensing that the teacher is kind immediately forms the impression that s/he is going to pass the subject. *Ahh papasa ako dito.* Kindness of a teacher is expected to create a nurturing environment but the opposite happens. This is giving is the idea that while a kind teacher may be successful at creating a non-threatening environment, s/he may be unsuccessful in creating an environment that nurtures academic motivation and character of determination on the part of students. Here we find what Lipman (2013) means



when she said that: “Strict is better than nice.” This does not mean though that teachers need to be strict, going to the extreme position is also detrimental to motivation of students. Thus teachers need to find a middle ground. As Quora (2013) said: “..being too strict makes the students uninterested or feel forced to learn, and being friendly makes the students easy-going and probably take the teacher for granted.”

Problem #12: Patterning Behavior after Friends or Majority in Class

Pag hindi ko nakikita mga kaklase ko na nag-re-review, iniisip ko na sige na nga di na rin ako magreview, papasa din lang naman tayo, (MLV-104).

The statement gives us two ideas to consider:

One. That the motivation of the individual is external. It is highly dependent on the level of motivation of others in the class. Such is the problem of many students reflecting not only lack of motivation but absence of self-regulation. We link this with Bursztyn and Jensen (2015). They believe that peer pressure refers not only to active efforts by peers to persuade others but also to passive effects such as not undertaking an action for fear of social sanctions, (Bursztyn & Jensen, 2015).

Two. That there exists in the minds of the students that they are going to pass even if they don't study. It is a belief that has been strengthened by a system that rewards mediocrity through criteria for promotion, lack of what is termed as academic rigor, inappropriate assessment, subjective grading, and the culture of *awa* or teachers being *maawain*. We are not saying that we have to be heartless but we need to find a way through which teachers can be kind and at the same time able to impose academic discipline among students.



The tendency to pattern their own academic behavior after the majority in class may also be motivated by the desire to protect themselves from being in the lowest in the hierarchy. It can also be traced to **Problem on Looking for Emotional Connectedness**

Pakiramdam ko wala. Kaya ang nangyayari lagi kong sinasabi sa mga kaibigan ko na itinuturing ko silang pamilya... meron ka ngang nanay pero hindi mo naman marinig na proud siya sa iyo . . . may mga kapatid ako pero hindi ko naman maramdaman dahil wala naman sila, (AAR-466).

The participants' search for emotional connectedness is rooted in the universal need for love and belongingness. Belongingness hypothesis argued that 'human beings have a pervasive drive to form and maintain at least a minimum quantity of lasting, positive and significant interpersonal relationships' (Baumeister & Leary, 1995, in Furrer & Skinner, 2003, p.149). Unfulfilled in the family, participants search for their satisfaction in other contexts like schools and classrooms. In AAR, what is emerging is that her over-dependence on her friends for emotional support has led her to making them as her reference for her behavior including academic behavior. This finds support in the Attachment Theory of John Bowlby (1969 in McLeod, 2009). Attachment is defined as a lasting psychological connectedness and is characterized by specific behaviors such as seeking proximity with the attached figure when upset or threatened.

While originally found in parent-child attachment, the idea encompasses all forms of human relationship including attachment to peers. In the case of AAR-466, her attachment or emotional connection to her friends made her want not only to be with them physically but also to be proximal to them in terms of academic performance. As posited by internal working models of attachment figures, they have been shown to function well throughout childhood and



adolescence in a variety of life domains including peer relations, school performance and the establishment of healthy relations with non-familial adults (Furrer & Skinner, 2003, p.148). In the light of the felt-absence of emotional connectedness of AAR-466 with the mother and all her family members, it led to what appears as unhealthy emotional dependence on peers. This resulted to her seemingly unable to stand on her own without her friends' emotional support and encouragement. It is consistent though with the claim that attachment functions in peer relations and school performance, since AAR-466's attachment with her friends led her to making her friends her reference in her academic behavior.

The data from AAR-466 and Attachment Theory also leads us to our human tendency to compare ourselves with others. It is an idea contained in the Social Comparison Theory of Leon Festinger (1954) who hypothesized that there exists in the human organism, a drive to evaluate his opinions and abilities; and when objective means of evaluating one's opinions and abilities are not readily available, people evaluate their opinions and abilities by comparison respectively with the opinions and abilities of others. Corcoran, et.al (2011) explained that comparison might cause a change in one's opinion or ability. Most likely the change will go to the direction of uniformity or assimilation. That is what is happening with AAR-466 as evidenced by her statement that for her, friends having become her source of cues for her behavior. They have become her standard for her academic performance and they are her source of motivation. As Furrer and Skinner wrote, the perceived availability of trusted others acts as a buffer, allowing people to show more resilience, vigor, and tenacity in the face of obstacles (2003, p.159).

Tendency towards uniformity in academic behavior fueled by one's search for emotional connection seems to be the same underlying thread in the account of CLJ-143. He reported to



being happy in school but unhappy at home due to the many problems his family is encountering with his sick father, overworked mother, conflict with sibling on top of their financial struggles. The school provides him a different atmosphere. It is a place where he experiences the happiness of being with friends who provide him with emotional support. He finds the significance of his friends and classmates in his life as very helpful.

This perception resonates in Steinberg, Dornbusch and Brown (1992, in Furrer & Skinner, 2003) who claimed that while it is true that parents play a critical role in students' long-term educational goal, peers are the most potent influence on students' day-to-day behaviors in school – how much they spend on homework, if they enjoy coming to school each day, and how they behave in classroom (Furrer & Skinner, 2003, p.150). CLJ-143's attempt for uniformity with his friends seems implied in his answer to the question as to why he does not want to work for above average academic performance. He said that his not wanting to study harder to achieve an above average performance might cause him to be separated from his friends. Since it would mean that he must devote more time for his studies and less time for his friends. Studying harder and possible academic achievements would mean nothing to him if it would mean being without friends. The phrase "*kahit eto lang*" in his answer reflects an awareness that he and his friends are performing though not that high. That leads us to the idea that finding emotional connection with friends and classmates could also influence the trajectory of their academic motivation depending on the motivation and behavior of friends with whom they feel attached and who they use as their reference for their behavior.

The search for relatedness is not confined to searching for it in friends and classmates but even with teachers. In CLJ-143's difficulty to understand a lesson, he seems to point to his



need to feel a certain degree of emotional attachment with the teacher; or at least he needs to feel the affective component in the teacher and in the way she presents her lesson. He said that some teachers only teach to teach and do not build “intimate relationships” with the students. For him, there is a need to feel emotionally connected to a teacher in order to facilitate his learning. Emotional attachment influences the behavior of the other, to be more focused to the cues and communication of the person with whom one feels attached. The emotional bond also creates a classroom climate that is more open and interactive, where one feels safe to open up, to share ideas and ask questions. This is consistent with Brekelmans, Brok, den Tartwijk and Wubbels (2005) who brought to the fore the significance of teacher’s behavior for the working climate in the classrooms. In the same vein, Zhu (2013) expressed the view on the centrality of student-teacher interactions as playing a major role in influencing the cognitive and affective development of students and added that it is also an important parameter for educational quality. The study posited that the preferences, be they of the teacher or students, of teacher interpersonal behavior are linked to their individual characteristics and styles.

The individual’s need for love of friends and sense of belongingness could lead to loss of control over one’s own behavior and surrendering it to the influence of friends. It could also lead to one trying to please everybody for fear of being rejected and in the process sacrifice one’s feelings and desire for academic achievement for the sake of being accepted. The story of JAM-122 is pointing to that direction. His need for sense of belongingness is not rooted in his family but in his natural need for it. It also be traced from a previous experience of being left by friends when he was in elementary. This left a deep impact on him that it has become a source of his motivation to do everything not to offend his friends and classmates. It becomes an



unhealthy search for acceptance and sense of belongingness when one aims for widespread acceptance.

As Chernoff (2013) said, seeking approval from others is perfectly fine up until the point where one is compromising his health and happiness in the process. It becomes a serious problem if one feels as though widespread positive approval from others is the very oxygen one needs to breathe. This is how JAM-122 feels – a feeling of belongingness when in class. Chernoff (2013) also said that it is perfectly fine until one became overly conscious about one's actions and words in order not to hurt anyone or be hurt by anyone. The search for acceptance and belongingness is perfectly fine until one begins to compromise his own feelings and intentionally avoids academic opportunities for his own development. Here we find the danger of emotional dependence on others where academic motivation and performance are compromised as a result of needing to be loved and to feel a sense of belongingness. What is coming to fore is the link between unfulfilled emotional needs whose explanation is found in Attachment Theory (Bowlby, 1969 in McLeod, 2009) and the use of friends and classmate for **referential comparison** whose explanation is found in the Social Comparison Theory (1954). This brings about a complex dynamics that plays an influential role in the academic behavior of the participants.

Average, *sakto lang*, *chill-chill lang* are the words they used to describe how they perceive themselves as students. What interested me is the seeming tendency towards mediocrity and even when they want to perform better than most of the class, they want it to be just a little higher than the majority but not wanting to go far from where the majority is. Like



water seeking its own level, most of them go and flow where the majority of the class are in terms of their academic performance. Like a herd, they go where everybody goes, do what most do, like what most like. Such herd mentality leads them to forming a culture of mediocrity in their academic performance. This herd mentality is a trap not to develop each other's uniqueness and individual talents fearing to be different and wanting to remain just like everybody. *Sapat lang, Sakto Lang, Chill-Chill lang* are in-vivo codes which all refer to how participants described their academic behaviors. Measured in terms of grades, the *sakto lang* ranges from 2.0 to 2.50. The term refers to an average or a mediocre academic performance.

Problem #13:Lack in Competence and Commitment of Some Teachers

Kaya sasabihin ko wala naman itong ituturo eh. Tapos sasabihin ng mga kaklase ko 'OO nga eh, ang boring niya kasi magturo eh parang wala tayong natututunan.

The participants have an existing idea that under some teachers, they are learning nothing. It is attributed to their perception that some teachers are not regularly teaching them, others are simply giving them handouts, asking them to present oral reports without any intervention. Some attribute it to teachers who are simply boring, and disorganized presentation of lessons. Those observations lead them to feeling bored and weary while inside the classroom setting them into motion of losing interest, disengaging psychologically and then disengaging physically – getting in and out of the room, chatting, doodling, doing assignments in others subjects under an interesting and motivating teachers. The problem of boredom being experienced by the students is believed to be a reaction to the lack of engagement that are due to the subject, the teacher or both. Shulman (1987) sees this problem as related to the pedagogical



content knowledge representing the blending of content and pedagogy adapted to the diverse interests and abilities of learners.

Students' perception of teachers as *tamad*, disorganized, not dedicated or committed to the profession creates a loose academic environment that make it open for students' tendency for mediocrity. Some educators are pointing to the lack of academic rigor as contributing to college students going adrift without clear sense of purpose and that it is the main culprit for lack of academic progress among college students (Arum, Roksa and Cho, in Jaschick, 2011). But here we find a situation where not only is there a lack of academic rigor but also a lack of commitment and dedication to the teaching profession which in the participants' description, *hindi nagtuturo*. Arum, et.al (in Jaschick, 2011) found a direct relationship between rigor and gains in learning. A learning environment lacking in academic discipline among teachers and students is making the students adrift, in the words of CLJ-143 *just going with the flow*.

Arum, et.al (in Jaschick, S., 2011) are advocating for the system to push the students to work harder and worry less about non-academic experiences. For the authors this should be viewed as a moral challenge to higher education. We add that the moral challenge posed by them is for everyone in the educational system involved in training and educating our students. The training into academic rigor needs to start early to form their behavior characterized by academic discipline. Educating our children should be seen as a collegial responsibility with which we see all teachers and school administrators as sharing the burden and responsibility as well as the joys and successes of the profession irrespective of grade or year level, irrespective of schools or types of school.



Problem #14: *Duga* in Grading and Favoritism in Class

Naisip namin na nanghuhula lang pala yung mga professor natin eh di hindi na lang ako mag-aaral pag ganun. Hula hula lang pala yung grade eh, (JPJ-918).

The term *duga* is used by the participants to express their distrust of the grading teachers of some teachers. In their minds it creates distrust of teachers damaging their motivation. They get the impression of *duga* when they compare the grades they receive with their perception of the effort they expended on the subject; compare it with the grades of others in class. When they perceive that the grade given to them does not compensate for their effort or that the grades of their reference individual is higher, they get the impression that the teacher is not fair. It also forms the impression that the teacher is playing favorites.

The narratives on favoritism in class and its effects on the students puts us right into the concept of instructional fairness that must govern teacher-student interactions. When assessing instructor fairness, Graduate Teaching at University of Nebraska-Lincoln (2015) suggests that students do not usually consider the intentions of the instructor, but rather his or her perception of the instructor's behavior or policies. It implies that more than a teacher's expressed intent to be fair, it is the students' perception of his/her being fair or not that will matter in the interaction between the two. Whitley, Perkins, Balogh, Spiegel, and Wittig (2000) added that one might expect students to be most concerned with outcome or procedural fairness because it affects their grades. But it is what students consider as violation of interactional fairness that is most severe as in the findings of Rodabaugh (1996). Students expect instructional fairness which includes the aspects of impartiality, respect, concern for students, integrity and propriety (Rodabaugh, 1996 in Whitley, et.al, 2000 & Graduate Teaching UNL, 2015). Linsin (2011)



described favoritism in the classroom as an insidious snake that wriggles unnoticed under the classroom door, poisoning morale from the inside out. When left unchecked, it will slither into every area of classroom management. Detrimental effects of favoritism are: (1) it creates class system; (2) it causes resentment; (3) it weakens self-confidence; (4) it further alienates difficult students; (5) it creates unhappy classroom; and (6) it undermines the teacher's influence. They all resonate in the accounts of the participants on their experience of favoritism in the class. In the same vein, when students perceive that they are treated fairly, students will interpret and understand it as the teacher cares about the success of each of them. Thus it is important for teachers to create opportunities for every student to experience success (UNICEF- Teachers Talking, 1999).

Closely linked to instructional fairness is the procedural fairness or the rules for grading and classroom administration, and outcome fairness or the distribution of scores and grades (Graduate Teaching UNL, 2015). The concept of fairness is contained in procedural justice or the perception that the processes used to arrive at outcomes are fair (Forrest and Miller, 2008). The authors cited four characteristics of procedural justice that are particularly applicable to teaching in college classrooms, namely consistency, impartiality, transparency, and voice or clearly defined processes when errors occur (Leventhal, 1980 in Forrest & Miller, 2008, p.4).

The following accounts on perceived lack or absence of consistency, impartiality, transparency in grading and inability to voice out complaints show how they impact on students and their academic motivation. One of the participants uses the term *duga* in reference to an outcome that is perceived as unfair, partial, and not transparent. In the words of MAS-124 “*duga ay yung parang hinulaan lang.*” It generally results to feelings of jealousy, insecurity,



being treated unfairly and a certain animosity towards the teacher. The biggest casualty is their motivation to study.

One related-issue to the participants' observation that some of their teachers do not regularly conduct lessons or hold classes is their grades. A teacher not coming to class regularly raises questions in the minds of MCV-784 and her classmates where will the teacher get the data on which to base their grades. But the teacher was able to produce grades for everyone and it raised issues on the credibility of the teacher and the acceptability of grades. Comparing grades between and among themselves, the class realized that the grades were not real measures of their performance not even of their attendance in class. Some, including MCV-784 received a grade more than what she expected, while others received less than what they expected. The teacher did not even have a record of his/her students' attendance for obvious reasons resulting to giving failing grade to those attending the class and passing grade to one who did not even attend a single class session. While MCV-784 received a high grade, she is aware that she does not deserve it. But aside from it, it made her wish that she meet the same teacher again so that she could receive high grade again even without exerting any effort.

We can imagine that those who are at the losing end of the teacher's irresponsibility would complain if they can, or would feel angry towards the teacher. In any case, it can be assumed that students will lose their motivation to study when they meet the same teacher in another subject or in another semester or school year. An example of how it feels to be at the losing end of the teacher's irresponsibility in grading his/her students is CLJ-143. He claimed that one of his worst experiences with a teacher was the time when he exerted his best effort in a subject only to receive a grade that he believed was based on guess of the teacher. The teacher



showed the class record, with those who are always absent having complete scores or ratings in the activities. CLJ-143 saw the situation as unfair to him considering that he has perfect attendance and passed the course requirements. Seeing others receiving higher grades is unacceptable to him. There is the feeling of resentment in him towards the teacher and there starts his emotional disengagement from the teacher and the subject. We are seeing here that social comparison is at work.

Another condition presented by the participants that raises serious concerns is on one of the cornerstones of the education, assessment and evaluation. Assessment refers to the collection of data to describe or better understand an issue while evaluation refers to the comparison of data to a standard for the purpose of judging worth or quality (Huitt, 2007). They are intended to help teachers improve student learning with the end goal of harnessing the full development of human potential for individual and social development. Thus when they are jeopardized through lack of commitment and dedication by teachers, they are putting at risk individual and social development. In highlighting the importance of assessment to the goal of improving student learning and its link to expectations and standards, Anoka-Ramsey Community College (2015) elucidated that assessment of student learning involves setting goals and standards for student learning and then systematically gathering and analyzing evidence to determine how well student performance matches those expectations and standard. When assessment of student learning are not taken seriously in classroom teaching, all goals and aims of education, statement of vision and mission prominently displayed in schools are nothing but a useless and meaningless display of words on the walls of schools. Time spent by stakeholders in formulating school aims and objectives becomes an exercise in futility.



Issue on assessment is a major point of interest in higher education that the Commission on Higher Education issued CMO 46, s.2012 or the Policy Standard to Enhance Quality Assurance (QA) in Philippine Higher Education Through an Outcomes-Based QA. It was issued to address research findings suggesting that the lack of critical pool of graduates with the necessary thinking, technical and behavioral competencies are among the factors constraining the launching of a national economy. The importance of assessment for teachers and school administrators is based on its overwhelming influence on what, how and how much students study (Gibbs and Simpson, 2004). As explained by Gibbs and Simpson (2004), quality assurance approach being undertaken in higher education is aimed at improving the quality of education and its focus is on learning outcomes and their assessments, to comply with criteria of quality. When classroom teachers lose sight of the purpose of assessment with the ever-increasing demand for quality graduates due to their failure to align learning outcomes, teaching strategies, and forms of assessment with the set-criteria, then we imperil the intent of CMO 46, s. 2012. That is to promote the country's human development, productivity, and global competitiveness and we are unable to help students help their families.

On the level of students' immediate experience on how they are being assessed by some teachers in their narratives, studies suggest that what influenced students most was not teaching but the assessment, particularly what they perceived to be being rewarded by assessment (Gibbs & Simpson, 2004, p.4). Juxtaposing that with the participants' observation that their grades are not real measure of performance and that some grades are given without basis, or given because of closeness or familiarity with the teacher, then they would get the idea that grades are not about their learning. But grades are rewards for closeness, being known by the teacher, worse, a



reward for simply being present in class or a reward given by the teacher for putting up with his/her absences. It is no surprise that the greatest casualty of the situation is the students' academic motivation and learning. Grades and feedback are important for students to help them actively self-assess to learn and direct their future studying (Brookhart 2001, in Gibbs & Simpson, 2004, p.4). However, given the narratives of the participants, grades received mean nothing and will not give them any idea for self-assessment that could guide them to direct their future studying. They will only lead them to be complacent and just wait for their passing grade.

Problem #15: A Threatening Classroom Environment

When I recite in class, I have the feeling that my answer is wrong. Since elementary, I don't recite in class. I brought that behavior from an experience in elementary when I felt humiliated by my teacher. Since then I learned not to recite. I am thinking that I would just be humiliated again, (CMF-716).

It is discussed in conjunction with **Fear of Negative Evaluation (FNE)** or the "apprehension about others' evaluation, distress over their negative evaluation, avoidance of evaluative situations, and the expectation that others would evaluate oneself negatively' (Watson & Friend, 1969 in Collins, Westra, Dozois & Stewart, 2005). Similarly, Weeks and Howell (2012) define fear of negative evaluation as 'pertaining to the sense of dread associated with being negatively evaluated.' Weeks, Heimberg, and Rodabaugh (2008, in Weeks & Howell, 2012) posited that fear of evaluation in general is important in social anxiety including both the positive and negative evaluation.

The fear of negative evaluation, thinking what the classmates or teachers/professors might say or think is another pervading theme among the participants. Most of their fear of negative evaluation is in the context of evaluative situation like class discussion and recitation.



FNE is partly traced to early experiences of experiencing humiliation and embarrassment in class and to their negative beliefs and feelings about themselves. Those experiences to a greater or lesser extent affected how they behave inside the classroom particularly that of being cautious in making mistakes. Michael (2012) considers it as a 'form of emotional abuse of students, specifically public humiliation or exposing a person to unwanted attention.' The author believes that such public humiliation encourages others to do the same. It is a traumatic experience for students to be humiliated in public because being shamed in a public space is a traumatic event by any standard.

Through emotional abuse with words and actions, the teachers create a psychologically unsafe classroom environment where there is always the possibility of hearing abusive words and being laughed at by the class together with the feeling that one is being judged. We get the sense of what Tanveer (2007) posited when he explained that negative evaluation may occur in any social evaluative situation and that it is a broad term that applies not only to the teacher's evaluation of the students but also to the perceived reactions of other students.

Teacher's behaviors inside the classroom be they nurturing or threatening is assumed to be guided by underlying beliefs. For Wilcox-Herzog and Ward (2004), experiences of learners within the context of teacher-child interactions are dependent on the teachers' formed cognitive beliefs about the nature of the learners and her role in their development. The teacher's beliefs act as screen through which behavior is enacted. A good education and common good in a democratic environment requires teachers to use their authority in teaching for the purpose of enhancing learning and empowering students (Gale in VanderStaay, Faxon, Meischen, Kolesnikov and Ruppel, 2009, p. 263). All forms of verbal and physical abuse of children are



unacceptable not only because of their harmful effects on the physical, socio-emotional, cognitive and even moral development but also because they are violations of the dignity of man which education aims to uphold and protect.

Michael (2012) identified the many harmful effects of emotional abuse of children and that include serious emotional and behavioral problems, depression, lack of emotional attachment or bond, low cognitive ability and educational achievement and poor social skills. Emotional abuse can also lead to lack of creativity, persistence and enthusiasm, extreme dependency, development of negative opinions of themselves and their abilities. For Malone (2014), teachers who choose to humiliate pupils are the real failures who need to be educated. While we agree with the message that some teachers in the narrative of the participants could be the real failures and that they need to be educated, we would also like to include that educating them would probably involve helping them to address their own emotional problems. Teachers themselves also need help. We cannot discount the possibility that their aggression is a symptom of their inability and helplessness to deal with their own life's many difficulties, thus they should also be helped by the system. Not all teachers degrade and humiliate because Malone (2014) also encountered many teachers who can make children behave and learn with just a simple look, demeanor and attitude that has a bit to do with fear but a whole lot more to do with commanding respect. Those are the type of teachers who inspire students.

They have become too cautious to the point of fearing to take risks in what they perceive as a difficult task. We examine their experiences of humiliation and what they claim as outcomes of those experiences. Fear of Negative Evaluation takes many forms and expressions. We are seeing through the narratives of the participants, the paralyzing effect of fear of negative



evaluation that pushes away the students from opportunities of growth and discovery of their potential presented by activities in the classroom. Because there is fear of committing mistakes and fear of being embarrassed, they might never discover their strength and potentials trapped in the web of their fear. As what Stanley (2015) said:

Fear stifles our thinking and actions. It creates indecisiveness that results in stagnation. I have known talented people who procrastinate indefinitely rather than risk failure. Lost opportunities cause erosion of confidence, and the downward spiral begins.

Imagine how long they must have been carrying that fear of negative evaluation, and the many lost opportunities they have accumulated over all those years. It is no wonder that the fear they feel is so strong that they seem unable and powerless to overcome it. While fear continues to gather its detrimental strength in their mind, self-confidence continues its downward trajectory. Van der Molen, Poppelaars, Van Hartingsveldt, Harrewijn, Moor and Westenberg (2014) brought into the literature on fear of negative evaluation the view that individuals show biased information processing when faced with social evaluation, like recitations or oral presentations. It means that individuals with high level of fear of negative evaluation anticipate rather than process social evaluative feedback as reflected in the delayed response time within which vigilance is heightened by the upcoming social-evaluative threat. Providing evidence to their claim is KLF-510 who said that she over-thinks things and anticipates what others may say or think about her. The same tendency to anticipate what others might think, say, or do when they recite in class is also expressed by JAM-122.

With fear of being perceived as *bobo* in being at the lowest of the class hierarchy working together with their fear of not being able to meet higher standard and expectations of



others they calibrate their behavior in relation to the general performance of the class using upward-downward comparison. The social comparison process involves people coming to know themselves by evaluating their own attitudes, abilities and beliefs in comparison with others. In most cases, we try to compare ourselves with those in our peer group or with whom we are similar. There are two kinds of social comparison. The Upward Social Comparison is when we compare ourselves with those who we believe are better than us and the Downward Social Comparison is when we compare ourselves to those who we believe are worse off than us (Kendra, n.d.). In the light of the downward or upward comparison, an individual acquires a sense of one's ability that is equated with a sense of self. Thus high academic self-concept is likely a result of a downward social comparison where the individual is higher in comparison.

Problem #16: Fear of Risk-Taking.....Wanting Certainty

Pag hindi ko nasagot ng maayos o mali ang binigay ko na sagot parang bababa ang tingin ko sa aking sarili tapos pati na yung tingin ng iba sa akin. Baka mag-iba na tingin nila sa akin, (MAS-124).

Underlying their fear of taking the risk of committing mistakes, is a desire to protect the self, to maintain a positive self-image. With the fear of negative evaluation from teacher and classmates, the students' courage to take risks is eliminated. The psychological climate created by fear threatens the development of human potential, because individuals will never take the risk of failing. Students not taking risks by deciding to remain silent or avoid learning opportunities because of fear of risk-taking are likened to what Albert Einstein said, "*A ship is always safe at the shore but that is not what it is built for.*"

Stories of early experiences of humiliation in class bring into our examination of fear of negative evaluation its link with self-concept and self-esteem. Self-concept is the person's belief



about himself/herself with which s/he views any life situation. Thus, when one has a poor or negative belief about the self, it will influence his/her valuation of his/her opinion and possibilities. Having a low valuation of their competence, they are paralyzed by the thought of committing mistakes. Negative belief about the self and low valuation of it makes them afraid of the evaluative situation, always expecting that they will not be able to rise up to its challenge.

The data is consistent with the study of Khanam and Moghal (2012) who found that self-esteem is a significant predictor of fear of negative evaluation and social anxiety and argued for the idea that positive self-esteem protects and facilitates positive social behavior and safeguards against the impact of negative influences aside from its general impact on the promotion of better health of individuals. The fear of negative evaluation also finds its way back into the participants' lived experience in their family. It highlights a common understanding that when students come into a classroom, they bring with them beliefs and feelings formed in the context of family interactions that influence their behavior inside the classroom such as fear of negative evaluation. Koydemir-Ozden and Demir (2009) indicated through their study that perceived parental strictness and supervision predicted fear of negative evaluation. Fear of negative evaluation fully mediated the relationship between parental strictness and supervision and shyness. Self-esteem and shyness was partially mediated by fear of negative evaluation. In general, the findings lend credence to the proposition that parental attitudes are important in the development of self-image and fear of rejection which result in the experience of shyness.

Its implication for classroom practice is that teachers need to create a nurturing environment for students to counter the effects of poor parental practices that led to the development of fear of negative evaluation, shyness, and low self-esteem of students. When



teachers embarrass and humiliate students exposing them to public humiliation and insulting laughter of the classmates, the more they strengthen students' fear of negative evaluation, low self-esteem and shyness. With low self-esteem, participants feel vulnerable to negative judgment when exposed in evaluative situation like oral recitations. Thus, their initial reaction is to protect the self or their image by inhibiting the self from any opportunity where they feel they would just be embarrassed or laughed at by the class. Protection of the self is evident in the account of some participants. In an environment where students feel afraid of negative evaluation, they need to protect their self-image. Non-participation or silence during class discussion and recitations is their protective mechanism for the self. At risk when they commit mistake in class is the image of themselves before others. Since everyone wants to project and maintain a positive image, they would rather remain silent especially when they feel that the probability that they are wrong is high. They are simply unwilling to take that risk. This is particularly true of individuals whose self-esteem or self-worth is dependent on others positive view of them. As Josephs, Larrick, Steele and Nisbett (1992) explain:

Risky decisions are potentially threatening to self-esteem because the chosen alternative will occasionally yield a less desirable outcome than would some other alternative. When a less desirable outcome does occur, it can sometimes lead people to doubt their judgment and ability, especially when the decision is an important one (Josephs, et.al, 1992, p.27).

The presence or absence of self-esteem in the individual will determine how s/he will cope with the threatening negative evaluation. Even after a decision has been made and it resulted to the unexpected outcome thus gaining negative feedback, self-esteem and resources of the self will come to play in coping with the threat. Josephs, et.al (1992) further explain that persons low in esteem-maintaining resources will have difficulty facing the threat posed by a



failed decision and may experience damage to self-esteem. Thus, people with few self-protective resources should be particularly likely to make choices that minimize the possibility of regret as a means of protecting their self-esteem. On the other hand, the risk-taking behavior of subjects high in self-esteem was relatively unaffected by negative feedback. Presumably, individuals high in self-esteem have abundant and easily accessible self-protective resources and can cope with threat more easily. Therefore, they may view a risky decision as an opportunity for a large payoff, rather than as a threat to self-esteem (Josephs, et.al, 1992, p.28). Imagine how long they must have been carrying that fear of negative evaluation, and the many lost opportunities they have accumulated over all those years. It is no wonder that the fear they feel is so strong that they seem unable and powerless to overcome it. While fear continues to gather its detrimental strength in their mind, self-confidence continues its downward trajectory.

Problem #17: Fear of Being Laughed at

The shared overwhelming feeling among the participants is the fear that their classmates will laugh at them and their mistakes making them paralyzed from participating in the class discussion. For them, they would rather remain silent than run the risk of embarrassing the self. The nagging, persisting feeling that they would be laughed at by their classmates when they commit mistakes is the dominating thread in the narratives of the participants and it is traced in their experiences in the classroom. The participants' fear of committing mistakes in front of the class and being laughed at by classmates is consistent with Tsui (1996 in Nataatmadja, Sixsmith and Dyson, 2007) who identified that one of the barriers to class participation among Asian



students is their fear of making mistakes and being ridiculed by classmates (Nataatmadja, et.al, 2007, p.75).

Beixi (2013) in her answer to the question “Why do people always laugh at other people’s mistakes?” posted at Quora offered the following possible reasons: diffusion of awkwardness, release of tension, expression of relief, communication of intent depending on the type of laughter, sound of triumph, lack of empathy, and regression or our inner child emerges. Whatever reason or intent of laughing especially when they are not clear to the person who is the object of laughing by others, it produces the feeling of being embarrassed or humiliated. When we take a closer look at ourselves as Filipinos, we find that we have our propensity to laugh at almost anything we find amusing. Joy and humor are identified as some of the strengths of the Filipino character. As Licuanan (n.d.) explains:

“Filipinos have a cheerful and fun-loving approach to life and its ups and downs. We have a pleasant disposition, a sense of humor, and a propensity for happiness that contribute not only to the Filipino’s charm but also to the indomitability of the Filipino spirit. Laughing at ourselves and our troubles is an important coping mechanism. Often playful, sometimes cynical, sometimes disrespectful, we laugh at those we love and at those we hate, and make jokes about our fortune, good and bad. . . The result is a certain emotional balance and optimism, a healthy disrespect for power and office, and the capacity to survive.”

However, just like any strength, it could also be a weakness, particularly when laughing seems inappropriate and insensitive to the feelings of others. That was what happened to the participants. They were already feeling hurt while others laughed together. She felt she was being humiliated. The class was thoughtlessly laughing while she was already feeling hurt. While laughter or any simple act of chuckling may function as a social glue to get closer to each other, it can also function as a form of excluding others (GMA News Online, 2012). That was



true in the case of MCV-784 who thought of her being a Visayan and her Visayan accent in a predominantly Tagalog-speaking class was the reason why her classmates were laughing at her. When there are questions, she just processes them in her mind but would never dare volunteer to express her ideas in class for fear that her classmates would laugh at her. However, she regained her confidence when she got close with some friends in class who made her feel it is okay to speak with her accent. This story gives us the idea that students feel comfortable in the class, trust their classmates, laughing at others' mistakes is no longer offensive as it used to. The class also got used to her way of speaking that it is no longer a laughing matter for them.

The key here is trust and sense of belongingness. It is the responsibility of the teacher to help the students develop trust between and among his/her students to create a classroom environment where laughing, chuckling, and teasing function as a social glue to get closer to each other and more a reflection of the Filipino character's propensity for happiness, pleasant disposition, sense of humor that are all-reflective of our fun-loving approach to life.

Getting a laugh at somebody else's expense is a form of bullying. Degeneres believes that one can be funny and be kind, and make people laugh without hurting somebody else's feelings (in Rickman, 2014). Because children can easily develop this propensity to laugh at others and potentially hurt their feelings, Rickman (2014) advises that parents, and let us include here teachers, need to teach children the difference between laughing with and laughing at others. The same idea may be applied to school settings where students laugh or make jokes about their classmates' mistakes, physical appearance, or anything about them. These make them feel that they are being laughed at must be considered as a form of bullying.



In the light of complaints and claims of emotional and sometimes physical abuse in the classrooms, Curwin (2015) advised teachers to discipline with dignity and expressed the belief that every student in school deserves the right to feel emotionally safe from embarrassment and humiliation by teachers, by other students, and by everyone in the community. When this safety is violated, not only does academic performance suffer, but also students might never be free of the hurt for the rest of their lives. In view of the perception that some teachers create a threatening classroom environment with their tendency to be emotionally abusive and at times could exhibit physical aggression, the Ethics of Care becomes timely, relevant and necessary, especially when we recall the observations of the participants that their teachers seem not to care for them and their learning. Shapiro and Stefkovich (2001) borrowing heavily from Noddings (1992) elucidated the Ethics of Care as it relates to education. Within that context, care is on top of the educational hierarchy in recognition of the nature of schools which is to care for our children. Students are at the center of the educational process and need to be nurtured and encouraged. Echoing the words of Noddings, “caring is the very bedrock of all successful education and contemporary schooling can be revitalized in its light (in Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2001, p.16).” Roland-Martin (1994) in advocating for an educational model from a feminist perspective, argued for the incorporation of the defining characteristics of women as wives and mothers into the ideal of education and curriculum. Roland-Martin (1994) placed special emphasis on women’s nurturance, care, compassion, connection, sensitivity to others, a willingness to put aside one’s own projects, a desire to fulfill and build, and maintain relationships that have to be integrated into our ideal. She clarified though that it does not mean we should fill up the curriculum with the 3 C’s of caring, concern and connection. But just as



rationality and autonomy are posited as goals of particular subjects as well as of the curriculum as a whole, so does nurturance and connection can be understood as overarching educational goals and also as the goals of particular subjects (Roland-Martin, 1994, p.209).

Attempts to integrate a culture of care, concern, and connection need to trickle down to the level of students so that all individuals in the class can create a nurturing environment. Such direction towards the idea of Roland-Martin (1994) is relevant in view of the narratives of the participants that their friends and classmates are not supportive of risk-taking behaviors but they are discouraging – a behavior that does not help facilitate risk-taking behavior and rather strengthen fear of it. This is contained in the account of MAR-320 who said that the reason why she learned to avoid risk is after observing the reaction of her classmates when she gave a wrong answer to a question in recitation. She remembered her classmates telling her, “*Sumagot ka pa kasi. Dapat tumahimik ka na lang.*” The classmates are expressing their own fear of negative evaluation and directly telling MAR-320 that the best way to deal with it is to remain silent, and not participate lest she wants to be judged negatively or receive discouraging remarks and negative reactions from classmates. Such is the situation created by fear of negative evaluation and it has another face, the fear of positive evaluation.

As posited by Weeks, et.al (2008 in Weeks & Howell, 2012), whether it is fear of positive or negative evaluation, they both serve distinct adaptive goals where individuals who perceive themselves lower than others would be motivated to avoid giving positive impression. That they would be viewed as a threat by other members of the group while also motivated to not appear socially undesirable as to be ostracized from the group – to avoid a downward shift in a social hierarchy. The concept of fear of positive evaluation is near to the



seemingly negative reaction of some in class to others who are assertive, competitive and active, and tend to volunteer for group tasks for they seem not to be the norm. Thus, any behavior opposite it seems to draw negative reactions from others in class.

Paraphrasing Nataatmadja, et.al (2007), culturally learned norms, rules and belief affect individuals' behavior – teachers and students, and their perception of what is proper classroom conduct. In a study of the behavior of Asian students, Asians believe that class participation is responding to questions as opposed to actively interacting with peers and asking their own questions; hesitant to comment on other student's ideas and prefer direct feedback from the instructor. Silence is the norm and talk is only desirable if there is something that needs to be conveyed, being quiet shows respect for the instructor, face saving by avoiding making mistakes in class and the need to preserve harmony (Nataatmadja, et.al, 2007, p.74-75).

Problem #18: Creeping Hidden Curriculum . . . A Threat to Student's Academic and Personal Development

Some disturbing statements made by the participants that are worth reflecting are:

*Papasa ako kahit hindi mag-aral masyado. Wala namang bumabagsak.
Mahihina daw kami pero ipinapasa naman kami.*

Over years of their schooling, there are negative and values that students developed. They may be considered as unintended outcomes of the curriculum. Through the lack of professional and ethical competence of **some** teachers, some students have acquired undesirable thoughts, feelings, and actions that threatens their academic development and the formation of the character of the person as envisioned by education. McLaren (2003) defines the hidden curriculum as unintended outcomes of the schooling process (p.212). Critical educators



recognize that schools shape students both through standardized learning situations and through other agendas, including rules of conduct, classroom organization, and the informal pedagogical procedures used by the teacher.

Coming to fore through the participants' narrative is the sneaky influence of the hidden curriculum in the behavior of the students. Through the lack of necessary personal attributes, professional/ethical competence of some teachers, participants are acquiring undesirable thoughts, feelings, and actions that threatens their academic development and the formation of the character of the person as envisioned by education. McLaren (2003) defines the hidden curriculum as unintended outcomes of the schooling process (p.212). Critical educators recognize that schools shape students both through standardized learning situations and through other agendas, including rules of conduct, classroom organization, and the informal pedagogical procedures used by the teacher. The unintended outcomes (participants' belief that *papasa ako kahit di mag-aral mabuti, hinuhulaan lang ang grade, walang bumabagsak*, negative emotions resulting from experience of embarrassment in class) are messages that get transmitted to the students by the total physical and instructional environment, governance structures, teacher expectations, and grading procedures. Through the tacit ways by which hidden curriculum facilitates the construction of knowledge and behavior among the students, negative beliefs, attitudes and behaviors of students are strengthened or positive beliefs, attitudes and behaviors are modified in the process. Such is the power of hidden curriculum that when left undetected threatens the intent of the written, official, and intended curriculum. The unintended outcomes (participants' belief that *papasa ako kahit di mag-aral mabuti, hinuhulaan lang ang grade, walang bumabagsak*, negative emotions resulting from experience of embarrassment in class)



are messages that get transmitted to the students by the total physical and instructional environment, governance structures, teacher expectations, and grading procedures. Through the tacit ways by which hidden curriculum facilitates the construction of knowledge and behavior among the students, negative beliefs, attitudes and behaviors of students are strengthened or positive beliefs, attitudes and behaviors are modified in the process. Such is the power of hidden curriculum that when left undetected threatens the intent of the written, official, and intended curriculum.

The hidden curriculum finds a powerful medium in the teacher and classmates in the classroom who through his/her verbal and non-verbal communications transmit the message, consciously or unconsciously. However, not all by-products of hidden curriculum are bad or negative because we have also seen in the narratives of the participants, that through the verbal and non-verbal communications of their teachers, they have acquired a sense of hope and belief in their potential to succeed in life. Through their teachers' encouraging and supportive words and gestures, they found the motivation and inspiration to strive harder. And we need to find more of them in our classrooms so that the true nature of education will be materialized in the lives of the students. As Freire (2005) said, "Education is a tool by which people could learn more about their capacity as human beings – to enhance the knowledge that they already have."

Our examination and reflection on the lived-experiences of the participants with their teachers and classmates and nuances in their interactions have brought us into many different areas of education with implications to curriculum and instruction. Through the narratives of the participants viewed through the lens of existing literature, one thing is made clear – whatever models of curriculum and instruction is developed and from whatever philosophical or



psychological orientations they are anchored, it must be based and weaved around the Ethics of Justice and Ethics of Care for the students and implemented within the context of Ethical Classroom. Justice is about fairness which implies we give our students what is due them and that is nothing but the best that education can offer them. Care is about concern and sensitivity to their needs and feelings. They become particularly important for students from economically-disadvantaged families who see education as their only means by which they can liberate themselves from the complex web of their poverty. Anything less than that is an injustice committed against them. The de-motivating elements due to lack or even absence of personal and professional traits among some teachers when viewed in relation to the personal goals of students to help their family is elevated to ethical and moral discussion. The perceived lack of or even total absence of commitment to the teaching profession of some teachers/professors pose a threat to the stated goal of the participants of helping their families alleviate their poor living conditions. The lives of the students and their poor families are intertwined with curriculum, instruction, teachers, school administrators, peers, classmates, and all available resources in the society. Denying poor students the opportunity to improve their poor condition in life through lack of competence and dedication to their learning and development can be viewed as a violation of the ethics of justice and ethics of care setting the condition for structural violence in the classrooms.

Having found the problems in the context, the next step is to find the major processes – the participants' response to the problems. This part answers sub-problem 4 of this paper which is stated as: What are the major processes involved in the development of incongruent low



academic outcome and high academic self-concept? What are the major processes contained in their experience?

Analyzing Data for Process

“Process is an ongoing flow of action, interaction and emotion occurring in responses to events, problems, or as part of reaching for a goal which then lead to outcomes or consequences,” (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 247). The conceptualization or description of the process is ‘determined by the content of the data and the researcher’s interpretation of these’ (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 98). Below is my conceptualization of the process based on the lived-experience of the participants as revealed through the data.

First: Losing Academic Interest and Motivation

Running thread in the stories of the participants is the feeling of boredom, weariness, and a general attitude of simply waiting for the class to end. Boring for one may mean that a subject becomes repetitive, very easy, or that the subject could hardly be understood. For most of them, it feels like they could hear the ticking clock. Psychological disengagement happens in the form of shifting their attention from the lesson to other things like imagining s/he is somewhere else doing more fun, productive, and interesting activities like surfing the net, eating out with friends or simply sleeping at home. When they can no longer bear with the feeling of weariness, they disengage physically by excusing themselves from the class. It looks like for some, going and out of the classroom is a behavioral pattern. They would return only when they sense that the teacher has already moved to a new lesson. Other forms of physical



disengagement take the form of chatting with seatmate, doodling, writing in their notebooks, and doing assignments in other subjects.

Academic procrastination seen through setting aside school assignments to watch TV or videos, exchange text messages with friends, go out with friends thinking *assignments can wait* or *may bukas pa naman* (There is still tomorrow.) are indications of low academic interest and motivation. They admit to having no study habit. But what they have is the habit of studying only when there are exams, quizzes, oral reports, and assignments. When there are exams, they study only a few days before an examination, and for some, hours before an exam.

For most of them, school is viewed as a place for escaping from their depressing family problems. There are days when coming to school is not to learn or study but to be with friends offering them a temporary breathing space where they can be happy and free from worrying about family-related issues and concerns. Attendance and submission of assignments and projects are for mere compliance. Exertion of effort is simply to avoid being in the bottom of the class hierarchy. They are generally passive during class discussion unless forced to do so or only when their interest is triggered.

Existing in the minds of many are thoughts like *Hindi ko kailangang mag-aral masyado. Basta pumasa okay na.* (i don't need to study hard. Passing is enough for me.) Those statements are part of their mindset revealing a low need for academic achievement. When one encounters learning difficulties, their initial reaction is: *Ayaw kong mahirapan. Dapat madali lang.* (I don't want to make it hard on me. Things should be easy.) The combination of approaching an easy task and avoiding a difficult one, when viewed in the context of school setting or even life in



general, poses a threat to the development of their human potential. Approaching easy tasks leads to their mediocrity. While withdrawing from difficult tasks holds them from achieving their greatness. Many believe that they are not performing according to their potential but they generally feel okay with it. They tell themselves “*Okay lang basta walang bagsak. Okay lang, may mas mababa pa sa akin. Ang mahalaga ay hindi ako ang pinaka mababa sa klase.*” (It is okay to get low grades as long as i don’t have failing marks. It is okay to have low grade as long as many have grades lower than mine.) With those internal statements, they are able to protect themselves from the frustrating feeling of having low grade. After all, their primary motivation is to finish college for the sake of their family who consider them as their only hope. The thought of failing and finding themselves at the bottom of the class, lead us to the next process.

Second: Fearing to Fail and Finding Oneself in the Bottom of the Class Hierarchy

They cannot allow themselves to fail for the sake of their family. In their awareness of the sacrifices of the family for them, they want to make them happy and proud by not failing. In their fear of being perceived as *bobo* and the lowest in the hierarchy, they try to avoid being in the bottom of the class hierarchy.

The participants’ primary motivation in avoiding failure is their family. As one said: *I realized na kailangan kong matapos ang aking pag-aaral kahit anong mangyari. Gusto kong matulungan ang aking Mama balang araw.* (I realized that I need to finish college no matter what. I want to help my mother.) Similar sentiment and motivation are shared by all of them. Failure must be avoided at all cost. While avoiding the bottom of the class is reflected through



Ang ayaw ko lang naman ay ako ang pinakamababa, nakakahiya naman. (The only thing that I avoid to happen is for me to be the lowest in class. I don't want it to happen. It is embarrassing.) Deep down, everybody wants to present a positive image of being competent or at least more competent compared to others. To determine their relative position in class, they engage in the next process.

Third: Comparing the Self and Academic Performance with Reference Individual or Group Through Upward-Downward Comparison

What they do is to compare themselves and their performance with other classmates using the upward and downward comparison to know their relative position in the class hierarchy. In comparing themselves using the upward comparison with a few in the class, they acquire a feeling that they cannot be like them or they do not want to be in their position because of fear of raising people's expectations and feel that they cannot maintain it. They also have the idea that being on top of the class may be lonely because the very few who are there have less friends. They also have the perception that those performing well are *epal*, *papansin*, (a show-off, wanting to be noticed) and *competitive* which do not sit well with the majority in class. In not reaching for the top of the hierarchy, they are afraid of losing their friends and like to avoid the possibility of hearing negative comments from others. Another motivation for not going above their current level of academic performance, is the fear that they would just disappoint themselves once they fail. They are not willing to take that risk.

While the downward comparison, gives them a feeling that they do not want to be perceived as *bobo* or *pinakamahina* (not smart, not intelligent) like those in the lower hierarchy. They avoid being labeled as the lowest or *pinakamahina*. For them, the most realistic



position to be in is to be with the majority of the class in terms of academic performance. Through the process of comparison, participants are able to determine their relative position in the class hierarchy.

Participants neither see themselves in those at the lower level of the class hierarchy nor in several others on top. Thus they settle for the individuals in the middle of the class hierarchy, the majority. It results to their tendency to go towards the direction of uniformity of academic performance with the majority in class. Imitating the academic behavior and attitude of the majority is a major consequence of this process, in the words of some participants, “*Pag nag-aral sila, mag-aaral din ako. Pareho-pareho lang kami. Kung ang goal nila makapasa, yun din ang gusto ko.*” (We are all the same, when they study, I will study as well. If their goal is to pass, I have the same goal.) Aggravating the problem in this process is that majority of the students are described as *petiks* or simply complacent resulting to a generally mediocre performance of the class.

Guided by their idea of their academic performance relative to the reference individual or group, they engage in the next process to maintain a comfortable position in the class. This is the position that they describe as *sapat lang and sakto lang*.

Fourth: Adopting Situational or Selective Academic Motivation

The participants, settling for *sakto lang* level of academic performance leads them to Adopting a Situational or Selective Academic Interest and Motivation – that is choosing what to study, when to study, how much effort to exert, to what subject one wants to focus attention, and which teacher/professor to take seriously. The primary motivation is not to fail or be the bottom of the class. They exert more effort and study harder when they know they are about to



fail. However, when they know that they are ahead of the reference individual or group in test scores or grades, the situation allows them to be complacent (*hayahay, chill-chill lang*). In effect, effort is calibrated based on their perception of their performance relative to others in class. Measured in terms of grades, it means working for and within the 2.0-2.50 grade. We may conceive of this selective motivation as *'studying when I want to and when I have to.'*

The adoption of selective motivation also applies to their perception of their competence and their teachers. For example, in subjects or topics they know they are good at, they are highly motivated and naturally feel confident about their competence exerting more effort. Expectedly, they get a relatively higher grade or test score. However, in subjects they feel they are not good at, they tend to lose interest and motivation getting low mark. General outcome in terms of grades may result to *sakto lang*, neither high nor low in their perception.

Their motivation to study or exert effort is also dependent on their reading of the teachers' personality attributes, or *aura*, professional competence including commitment to the profession. When they know that they cannot simply pass the subject/course without exerting effort, they are motivated to study but not as much in subjects under teachers/professors they feel they can easily get away even with little effort. Motivation to study also depends on their perception of the value of the topic or lesson for them and for their future career or personal life.

Selective motivation leads to the adoption of different goals depending on the situation. For example, if they know that the subject or topic has practical use for them, they are motivated to study for learning or mastery goal. But in other subjects, studying is simply for performance or grades, discarding what they learned after they have made use of it. In case of liking or disliking a teacher, their goal varies. They want to study for mastery/learning or



performance goal or a combination of both under the teacher/professor they like. But under the teacher or professor they do not like, studying is simply for compliance, for grades. It is basically performance oriented and sometimes they even avoid performance goals.

In general, the adoption of situational or selective academic motivation evens out gains in some subjects and losses in others resulting to mediocre academic performance which for the participants is *sakto lang, chill-chill lang*. To paraphrase what one said: *What is the point in trying to excel in academics when excellence or mediocrity does not make any difference?* That is a related view of one who said that *Sabi nila mahihina kami, pero ipinapasa naman kami.* (They say we are mediocre but they are passing us.) If those are the existing beliefs and interpretations of participants on their school climate, then *sakto lang* makes sense for them.

Results of their selective or situational exertion of academic effort will always be compared using the downward comparison. Thus the next step is:

Fifth: Using Downward Comparison

Every time participants receive feedback, or grades for their performance in exams, quizzes, projects or grades in a semester, they compare it with those of others in the class – those who receive lower scores or grades. And for as long as there are others who get lower grades or scores, they acquire a highly subjective sense of satisfaction strengthening further their tendency towards mediocre academic performance. As one said, *Mababa grade ko pero merong mas mababa pa ang grade kesa sa akin, so mataas pa rin ang grade na nakuha ko.* (My grade is low but there are many more others who get lower grades. So my grade is still high.) The use of this downward comparison is one detrimental process in their academic motivation and academic performance. It sets the downward trajectory of their academic performance.



It is motivated by fear of negative evaluation, of being perceived as *pinaka mahina sa klase* (lowest in the class) but at the same time, not wanting to go above their mediocre performance is motivated by fear of being perceived by their classmates as a show-off or wanting to be noticed. Tending towards uniformity in academic behavior is fueled by their search for emotional connectedness with their friends and classmates. Studying harder for them would mean loss of time and opportunity with their friends. In not wanting to raise their level of performance through exertion of more effort, they are motivated by fear of not meeting the high expectations of parents and friends once they perform well. They are unsure if they can maintain high performance considering that they are more strongly attracted to being in the comfort zone of their *sakto lang*. The foregoing leads us to ask: What are the consequences of those processes?

Analyzing Data for Consequences

The analysis of the ‘flow of action, interaction and emotion occurring in responses to events, problems, or as part of reaching for a goal’ is leading us to the following outcomes or consequences, (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). These are the consequences resulting from the process that are taken in response to problems being experienced by the participants in their context. Based on our analysis of data for Context and Process, we identify the following consequences:

1. Acquiring a False Sense of Self. Omrod (2010) explained that students’ beliefs about themselves are largely self-constructed and therefore may or may not be accurate ones. Omrod (2010) in his *Development of Self* cited studies showing students assessing themselves in the following manner: (1) fairly accurately, they are in a good position to choose age-



appropriate activities and work toward realistic goals; (2) slightly inflated self-assessment can be beneficial as well, because it encourages students to work toward challenging yet potentially reachable goals; (3) too inflated sense of self may give some students a sense of superiority over classmates; (4) underestimates lead students to avoid the many challenges that are apt to enhance their cognitive and social growth. Omrod (2010) identified the influencing factors to the development of a sense of self, namely: previous performance, behavior of others, group membership and achievements. According to Omrod (2010), the too inflated sense of self or belief about themselves is influenced by previous performance, behavior of others, group membership and achievements.

The setting of personal standard is formed in social referential comparison (Bandura, 1991) wherein people evaluate their performance in relation to the attainment of others. When adequacy is defined relationally, appraisal of one's performance require comparison among three major information sources, attained performance level, one's personal standard, and performance of others (Bandura, 1991, p.254). Here we find the link on Omrod's (2010) idea that the development of self-beliefs is influenced by comparison with others. Thus the participants' high perception of their academic self-concept emanating from their academic outcome is influenced by their perception of the academic outcome of their friends' and classmates with lower academic outcome thereby acquiring the perception that one has high competence, commitment, and involvement. What is emerging is the idea that perception of academic self-concept is relative and subjective on two points: (1) academic commitment and involvement is perceived in relation to a personal standard for grades, and (2) it is perceived in relation to the performance of others in class thus perception of academic self-concept is



relative depending on which group or individual is being used as point of comparison or reference.

What is emerging in the data of participants with the high academic self-concept that is not supported by high academic outcome but on the contrary is inconsistent given the low academic outcome is tending towards the concept of the Big-Fish-Little-Pond-Effect (BFLPE) by Seaton, Marsh, and Craven (2006). The BFLPE suggests that students attending high-ability classes and schools are likely to have lower academic self-concept compared to the equally-able counterparts educated in low and average ability environments. Conversely, students attending an average-to-low ability class or school environment are likely to have higher academic self-concept compared to their equally able counterparts attending high-ability classes and schools. Bringing this idea down to the experience of participants, it gives an added dimension in our attempt to understand the paradox of high academic self-concept and low academic outcome and underlying it is the social referential comparison of Bandura (1991) and the Theory of Social Comparison Processes of Festinger (1954).

2. Downward Trajectory of Academic Performance We see the detrimental effect of downward social comparison on low performers. They look for those at the bottom of the class to make them maintain their positive view about themselves. What happens in an academic setting like this is the downward spiralling of academic performance while students maintain their positive understanding of themselves.

3. Strengthening A Culture of *Hayahay, Petiks, Chill-Chill lang.* The emerging tendencies of the many participants to be mediocre described as *sakto lang*, *chill-chill lang*, *sapat lang* and tendencies to avoid being at the bottom of the class but not wanting to go above



the average level of academic performance is in stark contrast with Singaporean students who are among the top performing students along with students from Canada, Finland, Japan, and South Korea in the Program for International Student on Assessment (Mehta, 2014). In explaining how Singaporean students pursue learning, Tan and Yates (2007) asserted that the influence of Confucian culture pervade the beliefs and values of Singapore. The Confucian culture encourages hard work and effort in the pursuit of learning so much so that students work by the motto “No pain, no gain.” The importance of education and diligence is stressed by parents and children. Therefore, the willingness to work hard especially in the academic is extremely important to students (Tan & Yates, 2007, p.471).

High perception of academic self-concept has to be concretized through studying extensively, inquiring carefully, pondering thoroughly, sifting clearly, and practicing earnestly in the tradition of Confucian Heritage that pervades the academic commitment of Singaporean students (Liu and Wang, 2005). Without those elements, perception remains a perception and as KLF-510 said, “*Hanggang sa isip lang. Hindi ko naman nagagawa.*” (*It is only in my mind. But I am unable to do it.*) This is similar to the clarification made by Pajares (2002) on self-efficacy. Pajares (2002) explained that it does not mean that individuals can accomplish tasks beyond their capabilities simply by believing that they can for competent functioning requires harmony between self-beliefs and possessed skills and knowledge. Applying the idea to explain the perception of high academic self- concept but is not actually supported by outcome, we say that it is not enough to simply believe or think that one has high academic competence, commitment, and involvement. It requires harmony with possessed skills, knowledge, grit, determination, and hard work.



The argument of Deci and Ryan (in Eccles & Wigfield, 2002) offers another possible reason for the participants' tendency towards sakto lang level of academic performance. They argued that the basic needs for competence and self-determination play a role in more extrinsically motivated behavior. They gave as an example the case of a student who consciously and without any external pressure selects a specific major because it will help him earn a lot of money. This student is guided by his basic need for competence and self-determination. However, 'his choice of a major is based on reasons totally external to the major itself' (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002, p.113). That argument resonates in the experience of the participants who are motivated to study and to finish college because they want to help their family but their reason for choosing education program is totally extrinsic to the major itself. They have the feeling that they have been forced by personal circumstance to settle for education program in a local university. The situation eliminated in them the 'power for self-determination thus eliminating the power of motivation. Resonating from the argument is a problem with need for competence and self-determination (desire to finish college to help support the family) in choosing a course for reasons that are totally extrinsic to the course itself. The need for competence and self-determination are compromised within the context of pursuing a goal that is not inherent in the choice of means to achieve a sense and competence, and self-determination.

4. Loss of Grit/Determination

Ayaw kong mahirapan. Dapat madali lang. (I don't want to make it hard on me. Things should be easy.)

The lack of grit among the participants (high perception of academic self-concept but not supported by outcome) is one important point of comparison with those with high academic



self-concept. We are bringing it here to highlight its importance in the academic success of students. There is an observation that students of today compared to the kind of students of many years ago are lacking in grit and that they are growing soft (Perlis, 2013). Grit in the context of behavior is defined as firmness of character, indomitable spirit (Merriam-Webster Dictionary in Perlis, 2013). While Ducksworth (in Perlis, 2013), defines it as perseverance and passion for long-term goals. In both definitions, we find CST-352, IHY-014, and NOV-121 and the nuances in her behavior. Instead of saying *Ayaw kong mahirapan*. They would say: *kaya ko pa. kaya ka pa ito*. In moments of doubt, they use internal statement to motivate themselves. They do not stop studying a material until they mastered. CST-352 said that she does not sleep until she gets it.

Thus we say that this is one major significant difference between the two groups of participants. Perlis (2013) admits that the essence of grit remains elusive with its hundreds of correlates and its level depends on the expression of their interaction at any given point. But it remains that the constancy of tenacity is based on the degree to which one can access, ignite and control it. Given that, Perlis (2013) identified 5 characteristics of grit: (1) courage, (2) conscientiousness, (3) long-term goals and endurance, (4) resilience, and (5) excellence. The problem of the lack of grit may be found within the school and classroom context and the elements that seem to kill the development of grit, be it seen as firmness of character or as perseverance and passion for long-term goals.

The common belief of the participants that is worth looking into is the belief: *Papasa ako kahit hindi mag-aral ng mabuti. Wala namang bumabagsak. (I am going to pass even if i don't study well. Anyway no one is failing.)* I felt at the time I was analyzing the data that I have



to get the perspective of a teacher on this. So I asked a public school teacher on the possible reason why students have acquired such a belief. I am inserting here a reflection from a public school teacher whom I requested to make reflection on the practice of promoting everybody to the next grade/year level. This is not part of the plan in data gathering but I felt compelled to ask: *What is in the school culture that is nurturing such a belief?* It may provide the link between petiks mode among students and which leads us to consider that the petiks mode is the unintended effect of passing everybody despite poor academic performance of students where the only reason for passing the student is school attendance. Here is her reflection:

A Reflection of a Public School Teacher on Passing Students despite Poor Academic Performance

... Sa unang taon ay may ilang estudyante ako na naibagsak sapagkat hindi pumapasok sa klase at walang ginagawa o sinusumite na mga gawain. Pero nang mga sumunod na taon hanggang sa nakaraang taong panuruan, ay wala na akong naibagsak na estudyante maliban na lamang sa mga hindi talaga pumapasok.

Nahihirapan man po ako na kumbinsihin sila madalas na gumawa at magsumite ng mga gawain, ay mas nahihirapan akong ibagsak sila. Ito po ay sa kadahilanang kahit paano ay nakikita ko ang pagpupursigi nila na matuto at gawin ang mga gawain kahit nahihirapan sila.

Kapag nakikita ko po na hindi ko na kaya na ifollow-up sila ay pinapatawag ko ang magulang nila. Ipinagbibigay alam ko po ang mga gawain ng kanilang anak at humihingi po ako ng pakikipagtulungan. Minsan, hindi maiwasan ng magulang na magkwento ng mga nagaganap sa kanilang tahanan, ang kondisyon ng kanilang pamumuhay at ang gawain ng kanyang anak. Minsan, ito yung isinasa-alang alang ko kapag gawaan na ng mga marka.

Pero higit po sa lahat na hindi ko po makakalimutan ay yung advise mula po sa isa sa mga co-teachers ko. Ayon po sa kanya, kung ibabagsak namin ang estudyante ngayon ay maaaring tumigil na po ito sa pag-aaral. Isipin na lang po namin ano ang pwede mangyari sa kanya. Matuto itong magbisyo o mahinto sa pangangarap na sana mabago ang takbo ng buhay ng pamilya niya.

Mahirap man po ang Math para sa ilan sa kanila, kahit papano nakikita ko po na nagtitiyaga sila. Minsan nga lang po yung iba sapilitan pa para gumawa. Hindi man po nila mameet yung "standard" paminsan, ang iniisip ko na lang po, ay baka mahina talaga siya sa Math, baka naman sa ibang asignatura ay magaling siya. O kaya naman ay iniisip ko po na hindi pa sila handa para sa aming leksyon. Darating din po ang panahon na sasabihin nila na: "ay, ito pala yung tinuro ni Ma'am, ganito lang pala yun."

Minsan, sumasagi rin po sa isip ko yung sinasabi ng mga nasa mataas na posisyon sa paaralan, "ano ginawa mo bilang guro, bakit ito bagsak?" Yung grades ng mga bata, rating ko rin bilang guro nila. Hindi po ako lumiliban sa mga klase ko, kaya kahit paano alam ko po ang estado ng bawat estudyante na nasa loob ng aking silid-aralan.



Kaya kung kailangan nila ng tulong hinggil sa leksyon ay tinutulungan ko sila sa pamamagitan ng remedial class. Yung maglaan sila ng ilang minuto bago umuwi ay dadaan pa sa akin, effort na po iyon na maituturing ko, kaya wala po ako dahilan na ibagsak sila.

Hindi naman po ako nanghihinayang na naipasa ko sila, dahil alam ko po pagkakataon po iyon na maituturing. Meron po sa kanila na minsan lalapit, magmamano, magpapasalamat at babalitaan po ako sa estado nila sa bagong antas nila. (Teacher D.)

Passing students despite poor academic performance motivated by the desire of the teacher to keep her students from school so as to keep the student from many negative influences in the environment, motivated by her hope for the potential of the student, and avoiding the perception that a student's failure is the failure of the teacher to teach well, Teacher D. passes everyone in class. The heart of the teacher, afraid to lose her students to negative influences, may have created in the minds beliefs that are detrimental to academic motivation not only of those not regularly coming to class but also to those who are motivated. For example in the account of IHY-014, a highly motivated student with high performance, who upon seeing everybody is given a passing grade gets the impression *andali naman nito (This is so easy!)* resulting to her feeling *nakakatamad (feeling lazy)*. We can also understand why JPJ-918's initial reaction in sensing the teacher is *mabait* is: *Ah papasa ako dito. (S/he is going to pass me.)* The problem is not in the kind heart of the teacher, but in the interpretation of students that it will make them pass even with little or no effort. Thus, it creates an attitude of complacency in some learners while in others who are motivated a belief expressed by AJL-113 that I am paraphrasing here: *What is the point of doing well in an environment where neither excellence nor mediocrity makes any difference?*

5. 'Drifting Through College Without Clear Sense of Purpose'

Go with the flow sir..Bale eto yung teacher magpapa-pasa susundin ko lang magpapasa ako, teacher magdidiscuss makikinig lang ako tapos teacher magpapatest magsasagot lang ako..ayun yung meaning sakin ng maayos na



estudyante na hindi ka naman mariwara hindi ka naman rin masyadong nerd,
(CLJ-143).

Students who are contented to being an average student simply go with the flow; they do not have clear set-goals, no target, no high expectations, and the only expectation that they have is not to have any failing mark or not to be the lowest in class; being at the bottom is the only thing they would not want to happen. They will “go with the flow” will go where the majority of the classmates are, and that is being in the middle, and they will maintain that position. They will exert effort not to be at the bottom but will not attempt to be at the top.

Students’ perception of teachers as *tamad (lazy)*, disorganized, not dedicated or committed to the profession creates a loose academic environment that make it open for students’ tendency for mediocrity. Some educators are pointing to the ‘lack of academic rigor as contributing to college students going adrift without clear sense of purpose and that it is the main culprit for lack of academic progress among college students’ (Arum, Roksa and Cho, in Jaschick, 2011). But here we find a situation where not only is there a lack of academic rigor but also a lack of commitment and dedication to the teaching profession which in the participants’ description, *hindi nagtuturo (not reporting for class)*. Arum, et.al (in Jaschick, 2011) found a direct relationship between rigor and gains in learning claiming significant gains in situations where: students study by themselves for more hours a week; in classes reflecting high expectations; students of courses that require critical thinking, complex reasoning and writing skills. When we compare the findings of the study with those in this study, then we clearly see that we are going to a different direction, the direction of mediocrity. The learning environment is making the students adrift, in the words of CLJ-143 *just going with the flow*.



6. Failing to Discover One's Strength. . . Loss of Human Potential

In adopting petiks and hayahay, in not wanting to take risk, in their fear of committing mistakes, they are unable to discover their possibilities. They remain unclear of what they can still do. In effect, there is a general loss of human potential - a loss not only in their personal level of development but also in the larger sphere of social development. This is what CMO 46, s. 2012 is trying to address – the lack in the pool of human resource with the necessary knowledge and skills or competencies needed by the market. Underlying it is the belief that for the national economy to take off or for national development to happen, Higher Education Institutions must be able to ‘promote the country’s human development, productivity, and global competitiveness.’

We stop for a while in our search for the phenomenon reflect on the main problem of this paper and how we can link it with what is emerging from the data. We further examine points of comparison between and among participants. Those with high academic self-concept but low academic outcome and those with high academic self-concept that is consistent with their high academic outcome.

Linking Emerging Data and Incongruent Academic Self-Concept and Low Academic Outcome

What is emerging is the idea that perception of academic self-concept is relative and subjective on two points: (1) academic commitment and involvement is perceived in relation to a personal standard for grades, and (2) it is perceived in relation to the performance of others in class thus perception of academic self-concept is relative depending on which group or individual is being used as point of comparison or reference. Thus participants may have a false



sense, an inflated sense of their academic competence, commitment, and involvement when a low grade which participants use as gauge of their academic self-concept is compared using downward comparison.

This is tending towards the concept of the Big-Fish-Little-Pond-Effect (BFLPE) by Seaton, Marsh, and Craven (2006). The BFLPE suggests that students attending high-ability classes and schools are likely to have lower academic self-concept compared to the equally-able counterparts educated in low and average ability environments. Conversely, students attending an average-to-low ability class or school environment are likely to have higher academic self-concept compared to their equally able counterparts attending high-ability classes and schools. Bringing this idea down to the experience of participants, it gives an added dimension in our attempt to understand the paradox of high academic self-concept and low academic outcome. Underlying it is the social referential comparison of Bandura (1991) and the Theory of Social Comparison Processes of Festinger (1954). The social comparison process involves people coming to know themselves by evaluating their own attitudes, abilities and beliefs in comparison with others. In most cases, we try to compare ourselves with those in our peer group or with whom we are similar. There are two kinds of social comparison. The Upward Social Comparison is when we compare ourselves with those who we believe are better than us and the Downward Social Comparison is when we compare ourselves to those who we believe are worse off than us (Kendra, n.d.). In the light of the downward or upward comparison, an individual acquires a sense of one's ability that is equated with a sense of self. Thus high academic self-concept is likely a result of a downward social comparison where the individual is higher relative to those with lower performance.



In the same vein, Corcoran, Crusius, and Mussweiler (2011) explained that sometimes people do not seek accurate feedback about themselves but try to create and maintain positive self-image. In the process, they might purposefully engage in comparison with others whom one out-performs, or the downward social comparison. Discrepancy between high academic self-concept and low academic outcome can also be viewed in the light of developmental literature cited by Bong, Cho, Ahn, and Kim (2012) who suggested that among younger individuals, there is a tendency to generously evaluate themselves due to the following reasons: (1) lack of maturity, (2) lack of critical thinking and analytical reasoning, and (3) tendency to equate effort with ability. It resulted to respondents rating themselves to a degree that is not supported by their objective level of performance as shown by their Academic Outcome. This overestimation of their Academic Self-Concept resulted to negative relationship with Academic Outcome.

The paradox of high academic self-concept but low academic outcome and the idea of big-fish-little-pond-effect captured the pervading state of psychological readiness among our students. When put in the context of globalization and the challenges of ASEAN 2015, their mindset needs to be challenged to enable them to make the necessary changes. School systems that have low expectations of their students and low standards of promoting students to the next level of the educational ladder nurture and feed the “big fish” in a small pond. The challenge for schools now is to develop educational practices that will help learners develop a more realistic and objective interpretation of themselves to make them more adaptive to the demands of the environment outside the comforts of their average to low performing school environment. This is like students are living in a bubble which is bound to burst when the reality of competition for available jobs set in.



With what has emerged from our analysis – an incongruent academic self-concept and academic outcome among economically disadvantaged students, we realize the importance of what Marsh and Hau (in Yorke, 2013) wrote about the relevance of examining the academic self-concept of economically disadvantaged students. They believe that it has relevance for educational policy throughout the world and may have a role in finding educational inequalities being experienced by the economically-disadvantaged group, (Marsh & Hau in Yorke, 2013).

Areas for Comparison with the three (3) participants (ILH-014, CST-352, and NOV-121) with High Academic Self-Concept that is consistent with their High Academic Outcome. Common thread among the three participants are :Setting a Clear, Measurable Goal; Countering self-debilitating thoughts; Pressuring the self to achieve the goal ; Deeply held personal goals; Monitoring Performance; Regulating the Self; Using Negative Experience as Source of Motivation; Using Upward Comparison

The different set of behaviors found in the accounts of CST-352, NOV-121 and IHY-014 can be viewed and understood in the lens of Social Cognitive Theories of Self-regulation and Motivation. Self-Regulated Learning (SRL) refers to the self-directive processes and self-beliefs that enable learners to transform their mental abilities, such as verbal aptitude, into an academic performance. It is viewed as proactive processes that students use to acquire academic skill, such as setting goals, selecting and deploying strategies, and self-monitoring one's effectiveness, rather than as a reactive event that happens to students due to impersonal forces, (Zimmerman, 2008, p.166-167).Successful academic outcome through goal-setting by CST-



352, IHY-014 and NOV-121 finds its link in the importance of goal setting and its relevance for students. As Sasson (2015) wrote that by setting goals, students can: (1) improve their academic performance, (2) increase their motivation to achieve, (3) increase pride and satisfaction in performance, and (4) improve their self-confidence. Sasson (2015) added that by goal-setting and measuring their achievements, students are able to see what they have done and what they are capable of. Seeing the results gives the confidence and assurance that they need to believe they can achieve higher goals.

Given the emerging **Context, Process, and Consequences**, we ask the question: What is the phenomenon? Phenomenon is that which “stands for the topic, the event, the happening, the goal, or the major idea (category or theme) contained in the set of data,” (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 101). Our starting point is the question: **What is being revealed and being manifested to us through the data?**

As suggested by Corbin and Strauss (2008, p. 104) the first step is deciding upon a central category representing the main theme of the research. In this case, we need to find that which represents the incongruent academic self-concept and low academic outcome. In choosing the core category, I am guided by the important questions posed by Corbin and Strauss (2008):

1. Which of the themes has the greatest explanatory relevance?
2. Which has the highest potential for linking all of the other categories together?



Choosing the core category is one of the most confusing stage in this research. There are many themes whose relevance in the life of the participants is undeniably reflective of their ‘storied-lives.’ In my mind there are three competing themes, Adopting Selective Academic Interest and Motivation, Setting Sakto Lang Academic Performance, and Attributing Motivation or Loss of it to Teachers’ Personality and Professional Competence.

Guided by the data and gut-feel, I have chosen **SAKTO LANG** as the core category representing the main theme of this research. It is an in-vivo code frequently used by the participants together with other terms such as *hayahay*, *petiks*, *chill-chill lang*, and *sapat lang* which upon examination, all refer to a condition of complacency and mediocrity. Sakto Lang has the power to integrate into it the two other themes.

Synthesis

Sakto lang or sapat lang academic performance Sakto lang or sapat lang academic performance is a calibrated exertion of academic effort achieved through the use of upward and downward comparison of one’s academic performance with reference individual or group in the school or class. The downward comparison sets the condition for downward trajectory of performance and acts as a self-protective mechanism from low test scores or grades resulting to an inflated sense of academic self-concept. It is highly subjective and ever-changing depending on the performance of the reference individual or group.



We may conceive of it as self-protective mechanism from being perceived as the bottom in the class hierarchy. It also serves as a *comfort zone* that enables them to maintain a perception of a relatively higher position in the hierarchy compared to those with lower marks while at the same time not wanting to exert more effort than necessary to improve performance. Measured in terms of the grade that for them is acceptable, they place it as ranging from 2.0 to 2.50. The grade of 2.50 is the threshold and alarm for them that they need to exert more effort. Grades of 2.50 to 3.00 and more so a failing grade set into motion feelings of disappointment and guilt. While in instances where they get grades of 1.75 and below (1.50 or 1.25) provides them an opportunity to be complacent.

Sakto lang is a reaction to the existing set of problems found in their context. In the internal environment, the problems are poor self-constructs and its related-problems, low valuation of worth, poor self-regulation, negative internal statements, fear of not meeting people's expectations. self-handicapping behaviors (poor study habit, use of defense mechanism) external attribution for loss of academic interest.

Problems in the family context include: dysfunctional family, the paradox of poverty for academic motivation, a sense of powerlessness for self-determination, a sense of orphanhood, 'basta walang bagsak' mentality of parents, parents' use of downward comparison, being overwhelmed by domestic chores leading to physical draining.

In the context of a classroom, we find the following problems, a culture of *petiks*, *hayahay*, and *chill-chill lang*, the teacher's negative aura, patterning academic behavior after the majority, linked to their looking for emotional connectedness, perceived lack of competence and



commitment among some teachers, *duga* in grading, favoritism in class, a threatening classroom environment, fear of risk taking-wanting certainty, fear of being laughed at, and a creeping hidden curriculum that threatens academic motivation and development of students. The pervading belief is that *papasa ako kahit hindi mag-aral ng mabuti*. It is a belief that has been strengthened over years of schooling and at the same time linked to the *basta walang bagsak mentality* of parents.

In response to the existing condition in their internal, family, and classroom contexts, they respond through the following processes: First; Losing Academic Interest and Motivation; Second, Fearing to Fail and Finding Oneself in the Bottom of the Class Hierarchy; Third, Comparing the Self and Academic Performance with Reference Individual or Group Through the Upward-Downward Comparison; Fourth, Adopting Situational or Selective Academic Motivation; and Fifth, Using Downward Comparison.

The actions, interactions, and emotions in the process lead to the following consequences: Acquiring a false sense of self or an inflated sense of self, A Downward Trajectory of Academic Performance; Strengthening a Culture of Hayahay, Petiks, Chill-chill lang; and Failing to Discover One's Strength...A Loss of Human Potential.



The Paradigm

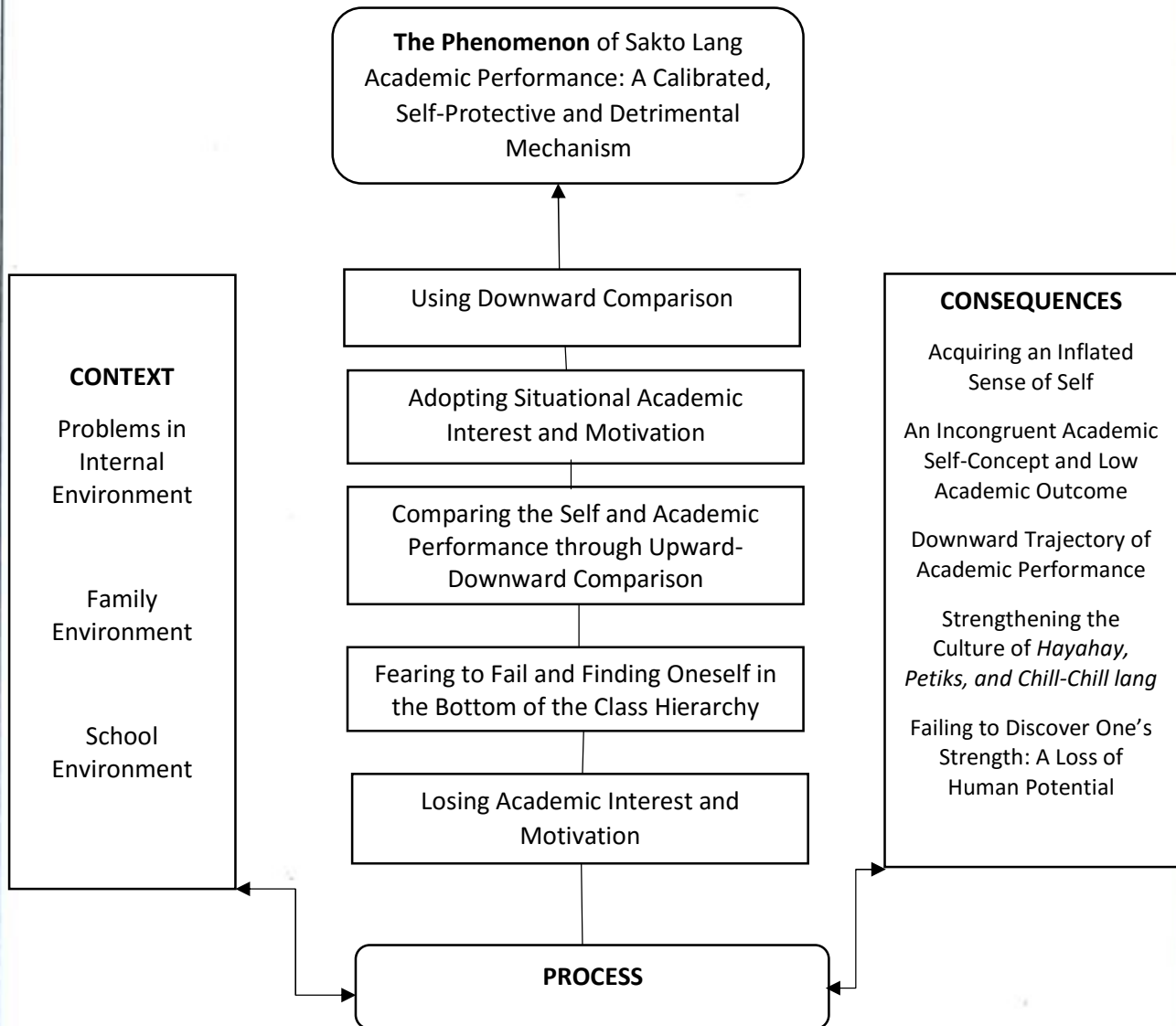


Illustration 2: The Paradigm Showing Context, Process, and Consequences of the Sakto Lang Phenomenon.

The paradigm shows the ongoing process (action/interaction/emotions) in response to existing condition in the environment of the participants which includes problems in the internal environment or the mind of the participants, the family environment, and classroom environment resulting to consequences. Change in the context is assumed to bring about change



in process and its outcomes or consequences. Theoretical imports serving as anchors of the study are: the Theory of Social Comparison Processes, (Festinger, L., 1954); Social Referential Comparison, (Bandura, A., 1991); A System of Triadic Reciprocal Relation, (Bandura, A., 1989); Social Cognitive Theory of Self- Regulation, (Bandura, A., 1981); Bioecological Systems Theory, (Bronfenbrenner, U., 1977, 1994); and Symbolic Interactionism, (Blumer, H., 1969).

We now move on to constructing a theory based on the phenomenon of sakto lang. Around this **Phenomenon of Sakto Lang**, an integrative story is woven to build a Grounded Theory to describe and explain the **Incongruent Academic Self-Concept and Low Academic Outcome** of the participants. The Integrative story as the final output of the study is presented in the next chapter. It answers the major question of this research: What theory describes and explains the incongruence between high academic self-concept and low academic performance?



The acts involved in theorizing foster seeing possibilities and establishing connections...The content cuts to the core of studied life and poses new questions about it.

(Charmaz, K. 2014, p. 244-245)

CHAPTER V

The Integrative Story of *Sakto Lang* Phenomenon

This chapter presents the final output of the study which is an attempt at theorizing about the phenomenon manifested by the data through analyzing for context, process, and consequences. It is presented in the form of an **Integrative Story** which is an attempt at bringing together all codes or themes that have emerged. Kathy Charmaz in an interview with Gibbs, G. (2015) described theorizing as a “creative leap.” Introducing a separate chapter for the Integrative Story is to highlight its significance and centrality in the whole process of doing Grounded Theory Research. This chapter provides answer to the Research Question: What theory describes and explains the incongruence between low academic outcome and high academic self-concept? The theorizing is in the Integrative Story which puts together codes/themes in findings and analysis of data.

The Integrative Story: An Attempt to Theorizing

The *sakto lang* (neither high nor low) or *sapat lang* (just enough) academic performance is a calibrated exertion of academic effort achieved through the use of upward and downward comparison of one’s academic performance with reference individual or group in the school or class. The downward comparison sets the condition for downward trajectory of performance and acts as a self-protective mechanism from low test scores or grades resulting to an inflated



sense of academic self-concept. It is highly subjective and ever-changing depending on the performance of the reference individual or group.

It is a story that invites us to look at the average to low academic performance of our students with a new pair of eyes. It is a story that gives us new perspective, a new way of understanding their mediocre academic performance. Here is their story:

The Phenomenon of Sakto Lang Academic Performance: A Calibrated, Self-Protective and Detrimental Mechanism in Response to Family and Classroom Condition

A Damaged Self

In the term of Dr. Yeban, it is *basag na sarili*. At the core of the story is the self – a damaged self- that has been broken by unfulfilled physical and socio-emotional needs and unmet expectations in life. Taken together, it creates a longing and brings damage to self which consumed by many negative thoughts and feelings. Encounters with significant persons in their lives – parents, friends, teachers, and classmates gave them life events they interpreted to form an image of themselves as a person and as a student leading them to form beliefs and feeling about who they are and who they are not, about what they can do and what they cannot do including what they can possibly be. But what has been formed is a **poor self-construct** creating a mindset filled with **doubts, fears, and worries**.

Existing in their minds are beliefs and feelings like *hindiko kaya (I can't do it)*, *baka mapahiy alang ako (I might just embarrass myself)*, *mahina naman talaga ako (I am really not good.)*, *natatakot akong hindi ma-meet expectations nila (I am afraid of not meeting their expectations)*, *baka mali ang sagot ko (I might be wrong with my answer)*, *pakiramdam ko wala ako ma-i-contribute sa discussion (I feel I have nothing to contribute.)*. Those are **negative**



internal statements mirroring their poor self-construct which in turn sets into motion their own **handicapping the self** which find their expressions in poor academic adjustment, **having no study habit, procrastinating, employing defense mechanism**. It is a vicious cycle of thinking poorly about themselves then to handicapping the self then to poor academic adjustment. *It is a trap and in it is a quicksand*. The more they give in to their negative internal statements, the more they handicap themselves, and the more they are unable to improve their academic performance. It looks like they are their own worst enemy in addressing their problem with having **low valuation of self-worth**.

What they are not saying in their stories is in handicapping themselves, it actually allows them to avoid effort and the responsibility for the possibility of failing once they try. It must be easier for them to say *I did not exert effort so I failed* than to say *I failed despite all the efforts I exerted*. The latter is going to be a big blow to an already damaged self and to whatever is left of their sense of self-worth. In effect, in handicapping themselves, they are actually protecting themselves and their self-esteem from the possibility of failing bringing further damage to the self. Trapped and unable to free themselves from the vicious cycle of it all some would say *Hindi naman sukatan ng talino ang grade (Grade is not the real measure of one's intelligence)*. *Okay lang mataas naman ako sa ibang subject (It's okay to have low grade anyway I have high grades in other subjects)*. While others will simply resign and embrace the thought of *mahina talaga ako (I am not really good)*. Either way, they are not motivated to try harder thinking it would just result to the same low outcome giving them the feeling *sayang lang pagod ko, mababa din naman magiging resulta (My effort would just be a waste because result will just be*



the same.). It is a **wrong frame of mind** and from there continues the **downward trajectory of their academic performance**.

The **absence of study habit** fuels the downward spiraling of their academic performance. What they have is the habit of studying only when there are quizzes, exams, or oral presentation and it is characterized by *basa-basa or pasada lang* (*skimming, scanning, reading through*) few days before or hours before an examination. When they get low test scores, it is normally attributed to **poor memory, lack of concentration, and physical exhaustion** from too much school works and house chores. For some, absence of study habit can be traced to their situation in the family. They are given too much work leaving them without time to study. They are left with no choice but set aside studying in favor of the chores in helping the family. It makes one wonders: *Hindi ba pwedeng mag-aral nalang ako?* (*Can I just simply be a student*) *Nakaka-pagod na.* (*It is wearing me out*). While in others, it is traced to their tendency to procrastinate thinking: *Makapag hihintay naman ang assignment* (*Assignment can wait*.) or *May bukas pa naman* (*There is still tomorrow*.). Having surrendered to procrastination, the ‘thief of time’ they find themselves guilty making promises to the self to do better, to study harder. But guilt is not enough to change a handicapping behavior for they would soon find themselves in the same habit of procrastinating.

They are aware of the impediment to their academic performance but they feel unable to control it. **Losing Control of Self** or **poor self-regulation** is a mirror of their lack of emotional maturity making them go to where their emotion wants to bring them. Like a leaf tossed in all directions, they set aside school works to give in to what they feel like doing in the moment – watching TV, videos, texting, surfing the internet, going out with friends or simply doing



nothing. They are aware of the many distractions in their lives but they seem happy to be distracted by them. Feeling guilty could sometimes make them promise themselves to study harder. But guilt seems not strong enough to fulfill the promise they have made countless times. It looks like they have surrendered their personal control over their actions and decisions to other people and things.

With their poor construction of the self which filled with negative internal statements and negative feelings, self-handicapping mechanisms and poor academic adjustments, it leads them to its logical and expected low academic outcomes. However, **in their minds** they have this sense of having high competence, commitment and involvement in their academic life. There seems to be cognitive imbalance- incongruence between their high perception of their academic self-concept and low academic outcome. How did it happen?

Living the Paradox of Poverty for Academic Motivation

Living in a family which is constantly struggling with financial difficulty is a source of motivation for the participants. Seeing their parents' sacrifices just to be able to send them to school is a source of inspiration. It is crystal clear for them- they are needed by the family to improve their lot in life. Some of them are viewed by the family as their **only hope for a better life**, as if **anchoring the future** of the whole family **on the success of their child**. However, the family which is the source of their motivation is also the source of their demotivation, revealing the **paradoxical nature of poverty** for their academic motivation.

Forced to enroll in a school for economically-disadvantaged and forced to take a program available to them, there is a sense of **powerlessness for self-determination**. They find



themselves enrolled in a program forced upon them by the situation which incapacitated them from exercising their freedom to choose the educational program of their interest and dreams. In the words of one: *I don't think I will be happy even if I become a teacher. This is not what I want but my mother's. What I want is to be an accountant.* Others remain hopeful that eventually they will learn to love the course and find happiness in it.

Poverty has changed the direction of their life and it has changed the level of their desire to help alleviate the condition of the family through graduating from college. It gives them a **feeling of being pushed and pulled by poverty** –pushed to finish school to help the family but at the same time pulled to stop and help the family by finding a job. It makes them uncertain until when his/her family could cope with the financial aspect of college education despite its being subsidized by the city government. For some, leaving school is more of a possibility for them than staying in it. Many receive financial support from the city government through scholarship program for those who maintain a grade of 2.50. It may appear as a **minimal expectation** but serves the purpose of providing financial assistance. It has become their reference standard for their academic performance. They are motivated to study to maintain the grade requirement so they can continue their education but when they know they are attaining it, they are no longer motivated to go above the minimum grade requirement. For them, meeting the minimum standard is what they term as *sakto lang or sapat lang*. Serving like a threshold, they will study only when they feel like going below it. In the words of one: *Ang mahalaga lang sa akin ay ang ma-maintain ko scholarship ko.* It is important for them to keep themselves in school.



Conflicts between parents over marital issues, interpersonal conflicts between and among family members on top of seemingly relentless financial difficulties weigh them down.

Domestic violence and experience of financial difficulties are sources of their worries making them unable to focus on their academic tasks. Experiences of parents' separation, not knowing the father, discovering the father has another family, or being separated from the mother are sources of their sense of being incomplete, a **sense of brokenness** as a person, a **longing for emotional connectedness**. Parents trapped in their own emotional issues and stresses of a hard life are unable to provide for the emotional needs of their children and cause them emotional pain with their uncaring attitude, and at times verbal abuse. A **sense of orphanhood** an artificial orphanhood is created where they have parents who are unable to provide for them, neither financial nor emotional support, making them feel alone. In the words of one: *May nanay nga ako hindi ko naman maramdaman*. Or in the words of one: *Tatay ko wala, nanay ko patay na. kasama ko lola ko at kapatid ko. Minsan kailangan ko suporta nila pero wala. Minsan pakiramdam ko ako pa sumusuporta sa kanila*. **Looking for emotional connectedness to friends and classmates** is part of their motivation in coming to school.

Being poor is their **source of insecurity**. The feeling one is unable to buy a simple necessity, such as books and other school materials for their projects and assignments, make them wish that their family were with enough money. Some of them attribute their being late in submitting projects and at times failure to submit projects due to financial constraints. Having not enough money also limits their need for leisure and recreation thus most of the time they simply stay home. As one said: *Hindi man lang makatanggap ng reward kahit mataas ang grade ko. Lagi na lang sa bahay kahit bakasyon*. It must be a blow to their sense of self in seeing



others are able to go where they want to go, buy things they want, go to places for vacation while they are unable to.

They respond to **parenting styles** vary depending on the students' perception. Strict parents with rigid control and exercise **physical and verbal abuse** as punishment are successful at making their child to be disciplined, avoid vices, and study their lessons, or in the case of one even excel in class. But at the same time, strict parents who exercise harsh discipline are also successful at bringing about in the child deep **emotional pain, sense of emotional longing, and a sense of brokenness** or as one puts it, *basag ang loob* making her always afraid of trying for **fear of making mistakes**. Their control becomes external thus when left on his/her own, s/he is unable to exercise control for herself/himself. Too much love and affection on the other hand does not guarantee their children would do well in school according to parents' wish and expectation. The belief and feeling for parents' unconditional love and support and not to study. The total absence of fear of parents is equally detrimental to academic motivation in some cases. They are not afraid to get low grades because they believe parents will understand them. Parents need to find the right mix of control and show of love and affection. But at the end, equally important to take into account is how they interpret the control or love of the parents for them.

Parental expectation of their children when it comes to their children's academic performance is stated as *basta walang bagsak* or *importante maka-graduate*. Such minimum parental expectations somehow resonate in the participants' goal but only a little higher with *basta hindi ako ang pinaka-mababa sa klase*. **Low expectations from parents** set into motion the participants' exertion of effort to ensure they will not fail. Through words and actions of the



parents, they get a sense of the minimal parental expectations that have become their own personal standard as well. In a poor neighborhood where many are out of school and *tambay*, their parents already feel a certain sense of accomplishment as a parent. And given their own educational attainment, it must have created a relative sense of superiority of their children compared to the children of neighbors who are *tambays* and jobless. Their parents are using their own **downward comparison**. In the description of one: *Sa aming lugar, himalang maituturing pag naka graduate ng college*. While it is important for the parents to see their children succeed in school with their close supervision and monitoring, they seem powerless for they have to work for their survival plus the possibility that they do not know how to do it given their educational attainment thus the **lack of parental involvement** and minimal expectations of their children. What matters is the thought of their children are in school, keeping alive their hope for a better life.

Finding the Damaged Self in a Culture of *Petiks, Hayahay, and Chill-Chill Lang*

With a damaged-self and minimal expectation by the family, students enter into the classrooms still bringing with them the hope of finishing their education for the sake of their family. Physically tired and emotionally drained from grappling with their problems in the family and with their own selves, they sit in classroom. Aware of their **losing their academic interest and motivation**, they feel the need to be encouraged, they need to feel the support of others, feelings and needs they find in the company of friends and classmates. There is something else that motivates them, their **need for emotional support**, need to hear words of encouragement, they need to feel loved and cared for. For many of them school has become a place where they can experience love and sense of belongingness in the company of their



friends and classmates. School is a place where they feel secured, appreciated, listened to and encouraged. They come to class not primarily for the learnings it can provide but for the momentary relief from the gloomy atmosphere at home. In a sense, school is able to attain one of its goals and that is to provide students opportunities to fulfill their **emotional needs and sense of belongingness**.

They find themselves in the classroom of a teacher who is motivating for them, finding the lesson interesting and fun. They find teachers whom they respect for their commitment and dedication to them. While in others, they find themselves just waiting for the lesson to end. Sitting in a **boring class** feels like they could almost hear the ticking of a clock sending them to feel sleepy and weary. Sensing the **teachers's aura** or **interpreting the teacher's personality and professional competence** is the start of their **selective academic interest and motivation**. As one said: *May ibang teacher na sa unang tingin mo pa lang alam mo na agad kung easy o hard siya*. From their reading of the teacher's *aura*, they calibrate their behavior in class. From self-presentation of the teacher through his/her personality, reading and interpreting the teacher continues with the teacher's presentation of lesson. Voice, enthusiasm, sense of humor, interactive, interesting and organized lesson presentation are what trigger their interest and keep them engaged in class. Opposite those elements lead them to disengage and lose their motivation.

They choose under whose teacher they will exert effort and under whom they will adopt a complacent attitude. It begins the action of **calibrating academic behavior** and **calibrating exertion of academic effort** depending on their reading of the teacher's personality and



professional competence. Perception on the teacher sets into motion **psychological engagement or disengagement** and then the **physical engagement or disengagement**.

Psychological disengagement happens when their mind starts to wander, entertaining other things they like to do – eating, surfing the internet, assignments in other class. When they can no longer take it, they shift their focus to doing other things while pretending to be listening to the teacher. They doodle in their notebooks or chat with their seatmates. Others physically disengage from the class by asking to be excused and would come back when they feel like it.

Their academic motivation is highly dependent on their perception on the teacher's personality and professional competence reflecting a predominantly external motivation thus the need to be triggered before they set into motion their behavior towards academic performance. While there are success stories of how good and competent teachers are able to encourage, inspire and motivate them to study and strive harder, there are some teachers who seem to be weighing them down and their motivation. With perception on some teachers' lack of competence to teach, lack of dedication and commitment to the profession, and even personalities they read as not to be taken seriously, they lose their interest.

A great part of their attribution for the loss of their interest and motivation is their observation that some of their teachers lack the dedication and commitment to the profession which lead them to think their teachers are uncaring and unconcerned about them and their learning. They call them as *walang paki*. Serious claims of teachers who do not regularly teach, *pa-report lang ng pa-report, nagbibigay lang ng handouts, puro kwento ng personal na buhay, panghuhula ng grades* filled their narratives. Realizing their time and effort are wasted by the



teacher, they regret to have such a teacher and regretting it even more when they think of the hard-earned money their parents paid for their tuition fee. For others, however, they look forward to encountering the same teacher again because it is already with certainty they are going to pass without exerting effort. Either way, it kills their motivation and whatever potential is there in the individual.

Other teacher-related issues which bring them down is the perception on some of their teachers playing favoritism in class and the sense grading has no objective basis but based on *hula*, in their words *duga*. Sense of **favoritism in class** is highlighted when students feel the teacher is generous with praise to some students during recitation, the favored ones are always called in class, asked for assistance, and given higher grades which the students feel as undeserved. Comparing how the teacher behaves towards them and towards the favored ones, they sense the difference and they are not at the receiving end of the teacher's favor and kinder treatment. Others are realistic that favoritism exists and they can deal with it for as long as grades are not affected. **Fair grading** is one of their measures of the teacher's **sense of justice or fairness**. But they also raised concern about grading which they label as *duga* (without basis, *unfair guess*). With unfair and unreliable grades unreflective of their students' performance, teachers lose their hold on their students while students lose their motivation to study under the unfair teacher.

Students react differently to a kind teacher. Some react positively with a kind and affective teacher. Kindness makes them want to please the teacher through their doing well in class. It makes them emotionally connected to them thus when they fail or get low score they have a feeling they have somehow disappointed the teacher. However, other students prefer to



have a kind teacher thinking they are going to pass even when they do not exert effort. It makes them rely on the kindness of the teacher. Here we find the **downside of being a kind teacher**. Strict teacher also draws different reaction from the students. A strict teacher can make them paralyzed, unable to think during recitations or class discussion making them unwilling and afraid to participate. Others are challenged and motivated by a strict teacher believing strict teacher is part of their college life. Majority of them accept a strict teacher who is competent, with sense of humor, with mastery of the subject, believable, fair, and who makes them feel his/her concern for the students. One interesting reaction to a terror professor is found in some students who do not necessarily take seriously all *terror professors* but only those whom they think is worthy of their respect.

While they feel their sense of belongingness with their friends and classmates there is still fear and distrust that social evaluative situations like classroom discussion and recitations trigger in them. Their tendency is not to participate, not to volunteer, not to recite due to **fear of being laughed at, fear of embarrassing themselves** when they commit mistakes. Added to those fears is the anticipation of the teacher's snotty and sarcastic remarks. During recitation they are always in anticipation of what their teacher and classmates might think or say after they commit mistakes. Those are the elements in the classroom that create for them **a threatening classroom environment** further strengthening their **fear of negative evaluation** which is deeply rooted in their poor self-construct, negative self-concept and low self-esteem. Not wanting to be embarrassed or be laughed at, they retreat in silence. **Silence** has become for many a **comfort zone**, free of committing mistakes. They will not take the risk. They want certainty. There are times when they know the answer, they would just tell their seatmate their



answer instead of raising their hand and volunteer their answer. Some traced their fear of being humiliated to their **early experience of humiliation** from their teachers, verbal abuse and even being hit by the teacher with a book and a rolled- newspaper. Others were laughed at by their classmates because of snide comment of a teacher. Quite a number of them traced their fear of negative evaluation to their natural shyness, lack of self-confidence and lack of self-esteem. Their behavior during evaluative situation in class highlights their broken and shackled self always retreating from opportunities to develop themselves and goes into the comfort zone of silence.

They are also guarded and overly careful to be highly participative in class for **fear of being labelled as *epal*, *papansin*, *buwaya*, and *competitive***. From the view of students looking at those who are active in class, those classmates are irritating and thinking only of themselves and want to be ahead of others in class. Such negative attitude towards being active and participative leads others to tame their performance unless they want to be branded as *epal* and run the risk of being avoided by many in class. For the sake of **wanting approval and acceptance** by the class, many of them **tend towards uniformity** of behavior and live by the norm to be unassuming, being not assertive, reciting only when called, agreeing to be a group leader only when one is directly told by the teacher. Others however are open to the idea of competition because as they say it is the reality outside school and they have to contend with it.

While the family exerts influence on their general motivation to study and finish college, it is their friends and classmates together with the teacher in the classroom who are wielding a greater influence on them on the extent of exertion of effort. They view the general academic behavior of their friends and classmates as *petiks*, *hayahay*, setting a detrimental condition for



students in the classroom. *Petiks* may mean a state of complacency, a happy go lucky attitude towards academic life. Many of them traced the change in their behavior in high school when they observed that their classmates were simply being *petiks*. It was then they realized they were exerting more effort compared to many. Not wanting to be different from them, they somehow lower down the exertion of effort tending towards a *sakto lang* for fear of finding themselves in the bottom of the class hierarchy but at the same time not wanting to exert more effort than what is necessary for what they consider as *sakto lang*. Many students bring with them the idea that no one fails or everybody is promoted to the next grade or year level. As mentioned by one, his reason why he is tending towards the same complacency is the widespread belief that *wala naming bumabagsak*. With that belief, they get the confidence they will not fail even if they don't study, thus the *petiks* attitude among the students.

Like water seeking its own level, almost everyone tends towards uniformity in academic behavior. With everybody not wanting to fail and find themselves in the bottom of the hierarchy, they calibrate their behavior in reference to those lower than them in terms of academic performance using **downward comparison**. But they do not also want to raise their personal standard for their performance for fear of not being able to attain it and other people's expectations thus they settle for what they think as **sakto lang** after all, it is their self-image they want to protect.. They feel okay with a low outcome for as long as there are others who are still lower thus setting a downward trajectory of their performance. It is at the same time their way of protecting their image before their classmates.

In the process of downward comparison, they acquire a false sense of self, **an inflated sense of their academic competence, commitment, and involvement**. Life inside the



classroom is like **living in a bubble**. The downward comparison further strengthens the culture of petiks, hayahay, chill-chill lang, sapat lang. In such an atmosphere, they lose their capacity for grit, for determination. It makes them **drift through college** without sense of purpose except **makapasa lang**.

In the end, this is a story about **failing to discover one's strength and possibilities**. It is a story of **loss of human potential**. The sakto lang academic performance is **about lowering down personal standard and expectations in life** emanating from a sense of **powerlessness for self-determination** created by their internal, family and school condition. It is about defending the self from the possibilities of failing which will further damage their already damaged self with all their unfulfilled physical, material, emotional needs and unmet expectations in life. Tired and frustrated from expecting in life, they learned to lower down their own expectations of themselves thus settling for the minimum, the *sakto lang*.

A Personal Reflection on the Story:

Reading and re-reading the story, I could hear echoes of the words of Paulo Freire. The **emancipation of human awareness** is the beginning of the liberation of man from anything and everything that oppresses him or her. These words are echoes of Paulo Freire's message from the *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1993). Here we find the general message of this paper - to bring to the learners' awareness they have, consciously or unconsciously, developed self-beliefs and feelings in their cognitive structures which have become their own prison cells where they are unable to explore the many possibilities offered by education. To continue holding on to beliefs and feelings tend to disable and handicap them is a personal oppression



and injustice they commit against the very self they wish to liberate from- the oppressive and dehumanizing conditions of their poverty.

The self in the phenomenon of high-academic-self-concept-low-academic-outcome in a public tertiary education institution being investigated in this study becomes simply a myth. The victims of the structural violence of poverty become their own oppressors. To overcome existing oppression and injustice committed by the self against the self, we find the words of Freire (1993):

To surmount the situation of oppression, people must first critically recognize its causes, so that through transforming action they can create a new situation, one which makes possible the pursuit of a fuller humanity.

The liberation of our learners start with liberating them from their oppressive statements in their minds: *I am not smart. I can never be like them. I am afraid to make mistakes. I am afraid of not meeting expectations. I feel I have nothing to contribute. I don't want to aspire and hope for something I know I can never achieve.* Part of the message of this paper, is to bring to awareness the existence in the minds of learners beliefs, feelings, and interpretation of life's experiences which handicap them or debilitates and undermines their attempts to discovering their human potentials. They have to be stripped of their false beliefs and feelings. While those negative self-beliefs may have been formed in their interactions in family and school settings, they are still free to make a positive and more hopeful interpretation and re-interpretation of themselves. As John Milton said "*The mind is its own place, and in itself can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven.*" With those words of John Milton, it is important for children to be taught to interpret life and everything it offers them to their advantage – good and bad, love and absence of it, success and failure. It will lead them to a stronger self and a more focused self



towards the direction of their personal growth and development. Then and only then can they make their own contribution in changing their family and society.

Our story does not have to end on a sad note because there are other students who are able to go above and beyond the limitations imposed by their condition pointing to the **triumph of the human spirit**. Their story is linked to their setting of **deeply held personal goals** of what they want to achieve in the future. It is linked to their capacity to use experiences of emotional pain from failed expectations and unfulfilled longings in the past as **source of strength and motivation in overcoming the challenges of their present** condition. It is their **dream for the future** that gives them the strength and determination to persevere despite the many limitations of life.

Reaction to the Story from Some Participants

This study does not end here for it would continue in the lives of the participants. Giving hope the story would end in the development of their human potential starting with the 'liberation of their human awareness' is in the (unedited) comments of some participants sent through our FB group.

From AJL-113

Gusto kong umiyak after basahin ang 15 pages document na ito. For a while, i was stuck on following all the highlighted words and they seem to cut deep inside me. it feels like i was reading my life story and it made me think about what i read at the last part "In the end, this is about a story of failing to discover one's strength and possibilities. It is a story of loss of human potential." Parang ang sakit na eto pla ung katotohanan. From this, i started wondering about what should have been my answer when sir asked me during the first interview. The question is "When will you realize your worth? Who do you expect to do it (for you)?" I actually cried tonight but i felt superlight. it's as if i drunk a dose for a long time disease.



I did not even think that ur paper could give me such a realization for my worth as a human being sir. Ang sarap s pkramdam n may isang study n mag papakita qng bkt gnto ang ngiging sitwasyon ng mga ktulad ko.

From NAC-124

Nung nbasa q po itong story, for me po sobrang nkakatama tlaga..unang-una, prang bumalik lhat ng mga pinagsisihan q in life... like ung tuwing may exam, im one of those people po na di po tlaga hilig ang mg-review pero when i met a companion o yung mga friends q po, na mo-motivate po tlaga po aqng mgreview.. i agree po na friends are one of which that motivates a person.. lalo na po ang family, my part po dun na prang feeling q po aq ung ngsabi nun or ng kwento kasi tagos po tlaga.. i admit na npapagod din po aq, yung tipong minsan gusto ko ring mranasan na my concern sa kin pero paguwi sa bahay prang aq pa yata ung laging kailangan.. oftentimes pa nga pong aq po ang ng-su-sustain ng needs nmin tapos prang wla pring sense.. ewan q po pero ang hirap po pag-galing sa broken family lalo na po ung wla na tlaga, as in broken na wlang mother and father.. kaya nga po sa skul, i choose to be happy and of course na-mo-motivate din aq when im with my friends.. another thing po is ung aura ng professor which nag-dudulot po sa kin na-ma-demotivate pg boring o puro report nlng ung prof.. mostly po kc i set standards s study q based din po sa prof..pag strict more effort, pg easy lng edi easy lang din...pero alam nio po, this story enlighten me to strive more not depending on others.. kasi na-realize q na wlang sense ang sarili q ksi lahat na-k-depends sa paligid q..

From MLV-104

Sobra akong natutuwa at saka naiiyak ako sir. Kasi habang binabasa ko to parang gusto kong iedit at lagyan ng title na this is my life as a student. Hahahaha. Naiiyak ako kasi narealize ko yung mga bagay na dapat matagal ko ng naintindihan. Kasi kung naintindihan ko na kung bakit ako ganito ako ngayon. Edi sana matagal ko ng nabago. Para na-improve ko n yung sarili ko ngayon at hindi ako nahihirapan sa pag-aaral ko ngayon.

With their comments, the study is not only able to abide by the Ethical Standard of ‘doing no harm’ to the participants but also able to attain another facet of it – ‘doing something good’ to them. Through the story, they are able to see themselves, understand something about their life and able to see their possibilities. It is now in their hands how they will end their story.



Schools need to seriously look at what aspects of their structure and culture support and compel students to do their best, to act their best, and what aspects undermine this spirit.

– Ron Berger, Johns Hopkins School of Education

CHAPTER VI

Conclusions and Recommendations

In the light of the study finding, analysis, interpretation and synthesis, this study brings to the fore of discussion on curriculum and instructions the following assertions for further reflection in the field. The study also offers some recommendations for possible applications for students, parents, teachers, school administrators and educational policy-makers.

The following conclusions are drawn:

Participants' perception or subjective interpretation of the school's policy on students' promotion and retention undermine efforts to produce quality graduates. The perception that no one fails and everybody is promoted to the next grade or year level conditioned students to believe that they need not study hard, only a little effort, they are going to pass. As they say: *Wala naming bumabagsak. Papasa ako kahit hindi ako magaral masyado.* Such mentality is pervasive that it created the culture of *petiks* or complacent attitude towards academic performance. It is detrimental not only to the government's direction towards launching the national economy based on competitive and productive manpower but also to individuals who are unable to harness their full human potential by imitating the *petiks* behavior of their classmates.



Participants' claims of demotivating and unchallenging personality and professional attributes and lack of dedication and commitment to the profession of some teachers/professors highlight the oft-repeated emphasis on the centrality of the teacher in triggering academic interest and motivation of the students. More powerful than the educational background and academic trainings of the teachers in influencing the students' academic motivation and academic outcome are the teachers' personality and professional competence that students perceive in their day-to-day interactions with them in the classroom. While teachers' academic credentials are important in measuring their readiness to teach, it is the perception on the nuances of the teachers' behavior inside the classroom that will matter to the students. Students need to see and need to feel the teachers' dedication and commitment to them and their learning. They need to see and feel that the teacher is fair and truly cares for them. It is what will establish the teacher's ability to wield influence on his/her students.

The economic-disadvantage of the family provides opposing motivational tendencies for the participants. On one end, participants are motivated to finish college to help the family but at the same time, family condition of dysfunction, interpersonal conflicts, and stress from financial difficulties, weigh them down. As to how they will deal with their family situations to maintain and sustain the desire to study is left to the student. The parents' generally low academic expectations of their children stated as *Basta walang bagsak* is another point to consider in understanding their low academic outcome.

The *broken self* of the participants is what they bring into the classroom affecting how they interpret academic tasks and other elements that they encounter. They are afraid to approach difficult tasks due not necessarily to their low ability but to poor conception of self



and negative feelings that strengthen their fears and self-doubts. It is the broken self that searches for emotional connectedness with friends and classmates for support and encouragement that leads them to uniformity in academic performance.

The tendency to use downward comparison gives them an inflated sense of their academic competence, commitment and involvement while giving them the perception that their relatively low academic outcome is high. Their lack of awareness of objective basis or disregard of it in measuring academic performance leads them to adopting social comparison where individual/s in class are used as their reference. It sets the downward trajectory for their academic performance. Feedback on students' academic performance in the form of marks/grades or any other information such as verbal description of their academic performance is a source of their understanding of their interpretation of who they are and what they are capable of. Erroneous grading, exaggerated or underestimated feedback, grading students without objective basis leads to inflated or deflated sense of self.

The participants' brokenness as a person shackled by poor interpretation of the self leads to negative beliefs and feelings, low need for achievement, and a generally fearful attitude towards risk-taking represent a loss of human potential in the students.

And finally, students need control from their parents and teachers but at the same time they also need to be shown tenderness and affection. Too much control and discipline from teacher and parents leads to emotional disengagement and negative feelings. While too little of them leads to students deciding for themselves what is in their convenience. Too much love and affection from parents and teachers leads them to be complacent in the thought that parents and



teachers will always understand them and give in to them and adjust to them. While too little or total absence of love leads them to long for love and belongingness.

Recommendations

1. Existing school-related beliefs and values among students be examined closely to identify elements in the environment that undermine efforts to improve the quality of education both in school and national level. Even when educational planners are able to develop a curriculum deemed to be most appropriate but for as long as there are beliefs such as *Wala namang bumabagsak. Pumapasa ako kahi thindi mag-aral masyado*. Then curriculum is bound to fail. Examination and eventual intervention should lead to cognitive re-structuring of the students as well as teachers and the re-structuring of the policies of the school which must be consistently applied to all – teachers, students and school administrators.
2. The conditioned *petiks* academic behavior among many students must be shaken-off their system by strict implementation of the school policy on promotion and retention and more accurate or objective feedback mechanism through marks/grades/comments from teachers.
3. There is a need to re-examine what constitutes academic performance. Inclusion of other criteria that are not necessarily measures of academic performance must be eliminated to provide students with more objective information on their academic competence, commitment and involvement.
4. Close monitoring and supervision of teachers' classroom performance anchored on the Ethic of Justice and Ethic of Care both for the students' and teachers' development. The



promotion and strengthening of the school culture based on Ethic of Justice and Ethic of Care is a necessary step towards relevant curriculum development.

5. Government Programs for providing assistance to economically disadvantaged families must include psychological and emotional health of parents. Life's stresses inflict harm on parents and incapacitate them from providing the emotional needs of their children which in turn influence the academic motivation and performance of their children. There is a need to provide for a more holistic approach to helping poor families re-build their lives.
6. There is a need for conscious, deliberate, and systematic integration of re-building the broken self of students into the curriculum. The teaching of General Psychology or Values Education must be taught using the lived-experiences of the students to make those subjects relevant, meaningful, and within their immediate experience. Those classes should be viewed as an opportunity for group counselling thus bringing counselling services into the classroom.
 - a. Teachers handling those subjects must be given the capacity or competence in the areas of Psychology, Counselling, Group Dynamics, Interpersonal Relation, and Issues and concerns confronting economically-disadvantaged families to equip teachers with the necessary skills, knowledge, and attitude to deal and process students' problems and concerns.
7. Direction for Future Research



- a. Further investigation of Hidden Curriculum whereby beliefs and values are transmitted through the verbal and non-verbal communications of teachers that undermine efforts towards improving quality education is warranted.
- b. Studies on self-constructs like self-concept, self-esteem, self-efficacy, and academic self-concept must be combined with qualitative method to determine their sources. Relying on results of perception based on self-constructs instruments alone may be misleading due to the highly subjective nature of perception.
- c. To study if the phenomenon of *sakto lang* is a reflection of negative element of culture known as *Pwede na mentality*.
- d. To investigate if the low need for academic achievement among many students from the economically-disadvantaged families is a reflection of the loss of hope after years of struggles with poverty.
- e. To investigate the unintended effects of mass promotion in the minds and behaviors of students.



Final Thoughts

Doing this grounded theory research was like jumping into the unknown, not knowing where the data would lead me. As grounded theorists warned, a study like this is full of ambiguities and uncertainties. A researcher they say must be able to grapple with it. True enough, I grappled and struggled with it bringing me to the point where I felt I already reached the limit of ability, my own saturation point. Through it all, I realized that one must have a goal higher than the self, an intent that goes beyond the idea of finishing a Ph.D. degree to be able to hold on to the study to be able to remain on course. Without it, one can easily give up especially at that point when one has to decide on the major processes, the core category or phenomenon, and constructing the frame for the integrative story in an attempt at theorizing.

While we recognize the influence of the environment in shaping our behavior, thoughts, feelings, and actions, we uphold the power of the individuals to make choices, to decide for oneself, to tend towards actions and decisions that will uphold his/her value as a person and will affirm all the human potentials within the self. Those are beliefs contained in Humanistic and Existential Psychology. As Existentialism would say: *He who has a why to live can bear with almost anyhow*. Given that, participants need to be strengthened in their values and beliefs anchored on the promotion of the development of the self – a self that will not be easily shaken by the challenges and difficulties of the environment. A self who is not afraid to take risks, a self who is willing to face the possibility of embarrassing the self when s/he makes a mistake, a self that is able to overcome the mediocrity in his/her environment, a self that is able to make a different path for himself, a path towards discovering his own strength and maximizing it for



his/her own personal excellence. In the end, the *self* has no control over other people in the environment, parents, siblings, teachers and classmates. The only thing s/he has control over, is his/her *self* and his/her attitude towards people and their actions.

This paper places the *self* at the center of curriculum and instruction. It is the *self* with its beliefs and values found in the internal environment that will set the frame on how the individual will accept, interpret and approach change in curriculum and instruction. Given the findings that they interpret their environment as *pumapasa naman ako kahit hindi magaral masyado*, it undermines efforts towards curriculum development. There is a need for cognitive re-structuring among our students and this will also involve organizational re-structuring in our schools. Schools need to examine, the negative beliefs among students that they have formed out of observing their teachers' behaviors and the implementation of school policies on grading, promotion and retention. Schools need to create an environment that will facilitate the fulfillment of the goals for which schools have been created and built and that is to bring men and women to their highest possibilities.

Another point that makes me think hard is the claim of students that they often forget what they learned, poor memory, no study habits, lack of proficiency with the English language and their tendency to simply look for cues in test items. Those are some problems of the students that need to be addressed before we give them a curriculum that targets the development of critical thinking and reasoning ability of students. For many years now, schools have stayed away from memorization believing that it is not authentic learning and does not help develop higher order thinking. We have stayed away from traditional methods of teaching English through memorizing parts of speech, vocabulary, conjugation, sentence patterns making



understanding as the new focus. However in the process, it weakened students' memory, focus and understanding of a concept. Is it not possible that we go back to some traditional methods of teaching not to weaken their capacity for critical thinking but to provide the foundation for it? How can we succeed at developing higher ordered thinking when they do not fully understand the language with which they build their knowledge and competence. Language is not only for communication but for thinking as well. We reach the end of our capacity for thinking when we can no longer find a word for what we would like to say or write. Students claim that they study their lesson and yet they still get low score, or forget what they learned. The problem is with language and memory. No matter how many hours they spend reviewing, studying, or reading, it will not automatically translate into learning when they have a problem understanding the text. Sometimes they feel they understand, but more often than not they have a different understanding of a text emanating from their wrong interpretation of a word or phrase. Judicious control, academic discipline and rigor from traditional methods and progressive methods that upholds creativity, freedom, and dignity of learners have to find their middle ground. There must be a way by which these two orientations can meet to bring about development in the individual learners.

This paper would also like to invite teachers and school administrators to bring the discussion on teachers' lack of professional competence, dedication and commitment to a discussion on structural violence and social injustice committed against students coming from the economically-disadvantaged families. We say education levels the playing field for all. We say it provides for social mobility. And many poor families see the education of their child as their way out of poverty. It resonates in this study where families have already put on the



shoulder of their children their only hope for a better life. However, with the participants' claims of some teachers as having no dedication and commitment to teach them, it puts to risk the fulfillment of an entire family's hope for a better life. With some teacher's lack of competence, dedication and commitment, students fail to acquire the necessary knowledge, skills, and values required of them by the society that could potentially render them jobless, unemployed, and unproductive.

Local colleges and universities need all the support and assistance they can possibly get from all government agencies and even non-governmental organizations in strengthening its capacity to be a partner in nation-building through empowering the marginalized students or from the economically-disadvantaged families. If we are searching for an economy that is inclusive of the poor, then this is one area that government needs to explore and further examine for its potential in making significant contribution to the launching of national economy through human resource development.

The whole research experience has led to many areas of curriculum and instruction and led me back to the courses I have taken in this University – The Philippine Normal University. I see this paper as a culmination of the lessons learned and given to me by the University through all the courses I attended and integration of my personal and professional experience as a teacher and as a person. This paper is an integration of the papers I was pursuing under the classes of Dr. Alejandro G. Ibanez, Dr. Antriman V. Orleans, and Dr. Danilo K. Villena.

Going through the process of interview, transcription, coding, analysis, writing the manuscript have tested my limits and strength of my belief in my capability to bring this paper



to completion. The whole process can saturate the researcher even before the researcher can saturate the data. That is part of the reason why I wrote at the beginning that one has to have a higher goal, bigger than the self, greater than the Ph.D. degree that one aspires to see the researcher through it all. One reason I found is the thought of the participants who let me know that joining my study was helping them learn something about themselves, that they are able to understand something. I just hope that their understanding will lead them to a significant change in their thoughts, feelings and actions. I hope that this study will lead them to get out of their comfort zone and liberate themselves from the trap of handicapping thoughts and feelings so that they can truly discover the richness of their human potential waiting to be tapped and nurtured through taking the risks. If it happens, then this study will find its true significance – when it is able to bring change in the lives of others.



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APPENDICES



Appendix A

Free or Shackled? Finding the Truth in the Nakedness of the Self: A Grounded Theory of High Academic Self-Concept and Low Academic Outcome of Education Students

INTERVIEW GUIDE QUESTIONS

Definition of Academic Self-Concept

- Students' perceived academic competence and their commitment to, and involvement and interest in school-work as indicated by their responses to the items in Academic Self-concept Questionnaire, (Liu, Wang & Parkins, 2005),
- Academic self-concept (ASC) is a sub-domain of general self-concept, indicates students' perceptions of their academic ability formed in conjunction with peers, teachers, and parents, (Yorke, L., 2013).

The present study integrates the two definitions and operationally defines Academic Self-Concept (ASC) as the students' perception of their academic competence, commitment, involvement and interest in school-work formed through interaction with peers, teachers, and parents measured by ASC Questionnaire by Liu, Wang and Parkins, (2005). ASC is formed in conjunction with peers, teachers, and parents, (Yorke, 2013).

Academic Outcome refers to the students' academic performance as measured by the computed General Weighted Average (GWA) in the last 4 semesters.

Based on the operational definition of the term Academic Self-Concept and Academic Outcome and guided by the Samples of Grounded Theory Interview Questions (Charmaz, 2014, pp. 66-67), the following are the Interview Questions Guide to be used in the study.

Initial Open-Ended Questions

1. The results of your ASC Questionnaire shows that you have a high perception of your academic competence, could you tell me about how you develop your high Academic Self-Concept.
 - a. What are your experiences that led to the development of high ASC?
2. Your GWA in the last 4 semesters indicate that you have a low academic performance, please help me understand that.
 - a. What are your experiences that led to attaining low GWA?
3. You have a high ASC but low GWA, can you help me understand that. Please describe the life of a student with high ASC but low GWA.
4. What contributed to your having high ASC but low GWA?



5. When, if at all, did you first notice or felt that you have high perception of your academic ability? When, if at all, did you first notice that you are not performing to the level of your high perception of your academic ability, competence, and commitment?
6. How would you describe the role of your peers, teachers, and classmates in your having high ASC but low GWA?
7. Who, if anyone, influenced the development of your high ASC? Tel me about how he/she/they influenced you?
8. What are thoughts, feelings, and actions that are related to your high ASC?
9. Who, if anyone, influenced your low academic performance? Tell me about how he/she/they influenced you?
10. What are the thoughts, feelings, and actions that are related to your low academic performance?
11. How about your family? What do you think about their role in all these? What can you say about their expectations of you?



Appendix B

Participant's Code: CLJ-143

Reflective Writing Theme 1

My Lived Experience In My Family and their Role in the Development of my Academic Self-concept : Stories, Images, Thoughts and Feelings From My Personal Encounters

Pagdating sa pamilya ko, hindi gaanong nakatutulong o wala silang masaydong role development sa aking academic self-concept. Pagdating sa paggawa ng mga assignment, activities atbp, ako lahat ang gumagawa o hindi kasi ako nagpapatulong. Madalas umaalis ako ng bahay at sa ibang bahay nag-aaral ay dahil iba ang atmosphere na nararamdaman ko sa bahay na nagiging dahilan para hindi ako makapag-concentrate sa mga dapat kong gawin. Marahil na rin siguro sa araw-araw na pag-aaway (salitaan lang) ng aking mga kapatid,at magulang o di kaya'y kapag nakakakuha ako ng mga matataas na marka ay hindi naman ako masyadong nakakatanggap ng puri mula sa kanila. Sa totoo lang, napakarebelde kong anak dahil gumagawa ako ng paraan para makaalis lang ng bahay, pumasok sa school kahit walang pasok at magsinungaling na may pupuntahan.Hindi na rin ako masyadong na-momotivate mag-aral o mag-review pag nasa bahay ako. Sa kabilang banda, nakatutulong naman sila dahil sila pa rin ang nagsisilbing pangunahing motibasyon ko sa pag-aaral. Nalulungkot lang ako dahil minsan nawawala ang gana ko sa pag-aaral kapag nasa bahay na ako at hindi ko alam kung bakit.

My Lived Experience In School and the Role of my Teachers, Professors, Classmates and Friends in the Development of my Academic Self-Concept: Stories, Images, Thoughts and Feelings From My Personal Encounters With My Teachers, Professors, Classmates, & Friends

Malaki ang ginagampanan ng aking mga professors, kaibigan, at classmates sa development ng academic self-concept. Unahin ko muna ang aking mga kaibigan at kaklase, nakatutulong sila sa akin dahil madalas sila ang nakakasama ko sa pang-araw-araw, nasasabihan ko ng aking mga problema, at nakakasama ko gumawa ng mga school activities, assignment atbp.

Pagdating sa academics, hindi nila ako naiimluwensyahan masyado, halimbawa na lamang, bago ang araw ng pagsusulit namin, nagliwaliw lang kami at hindi nagreview, kinabukasan ay nakakuha ako ng mataas, napapansin ko na hindi kami pare-pareho ng score kahit pare-parehas naman kami ng ginawa noong araw na iyon. Madalas mababa sila, madalas naman ay mataas sila. Sa madaling salita, hindi naaapektuhan ang academics ko kahit ano pang klase ng kaibigan mayroon ako at kahit ano pa ang ginagawa namin. Nakatutulong ang aking mga kaibigan sa pagdevelop ng aking academic self-concept dahil sila madalas ang nagmomotivate sa akin at nagbibigay sa akin ng sigla para mag-aral pa nang mabuti. Isa rin sa dahilan siguro kung bakit hindi ako nakakakuha na ng mababang marka ay ang pagpapaalala ko lagi sa kanila ng " mag-aral mabuti". Minsan kasi naiisip ko,"ako palagi ang nagpapaalala ng magsipag sa pag-aaral,



ano kaya sasabihin nila pag nakakuha ako ng mababang marka". Sa madaling salita, nakatutulong ito para mas lalo ko pang pagbutihan ang pag-aaral. Pagdating naman sa mga professors, isa sa mga karanasan ko na nagbigay sa akin ng dahilan para magsipag pa ay dahil sa maling ginawa ko noong pumasok ako sa kolehiyo, may isang tao na gumising sakin mula sa pagiging ill-prepared ko sa klase. Mula ng makakuha ako sa kanya ng gradong 3 at muntikan pa akong bumagsak. Simula noon ay naging isa na rin iyon sa mga dahilan kung bakit ayaw na ayaw kong makakuha kahit 3, minsan pa nga ay hindi ko tanggap ang 2.50 o 2.75. para sa akin maganda naman iyong motibasyon para mag-aral pa ako ng maayos. Nahuhubog ng aking mga propesor ang sarili kong konsepto pagdating sa academic sa paraang sila ang gumagabay sa akin kung tama ba o mali ang ginagawa ko pagdating sa mga activities at lectures sila rin ang nagbibigay sa akin ng bagong pananawa sa mga bagay-bagay.

According to the Philippine Business for Education (PBE), the poor performance of examinees in the Licensure Examination for Teachers is due to students entering the education program being ill-prepared. Do you see yourself being addressed by the statement? Why? Why not?

Hindi, para sa akin, hindi dahilan ang pagiging ill-prepared ng isang tao(educ students) para makakuha siya ng mababang marka o performance sa isang pagsusulit(Licensure examination for teachers). Alam naman natin na ang maaaring dahilan ng pagiging hindi handa ng isang mag-aaral sa kolehiyo ay dahil una, hindi ito ang gusto niyang kurso. Pangalawa, naninibago siya sa environment na kanyang gagalawan at pangatlo, maaaring hindi siya lubusang na-develop sa high school kaya hindi siya handa sa pagpasok sa kursong kinuha. Masasabi kong hindi ako sang-ayon sa sinabi ng PBE na ang poor performance ng mga examinees sa L.E.T ay dahil sa hindi pagiging handa ng mga education students nang sila ay pumasok sa kursong edukasyon. Mayroon tayong apat na taon para mahubog ang isang nanganagarap maging guro, kung pumasok man ang estudyante sa kursong edukasyon ng hindi handa ay may pagkakataon pa siya para hasain ang kanyang sarili para mag-fit sa kursong ito. Sa makatuwid, nasa paghubog o pagsanay ng mga guro nakasalalay ang pagpasa ng mga examinees sa L.E.T dahil sila ang magbibigay ng motibasyon at determinasyon sa mga taong ito para ipasa ang L.E.T. kahit hindi prepared ang bata sa kanyang kurso, kung ang apat na taon na mayroon siya ay nakapokus sa paglinang sa kanya bilang isang guro, ang L.E.T ay isa na lamang madaling pagsusulit para sa kanya.

Another reason cited by PBE is that teacher education students receive inadequate pre-service preparation in TEIs. Do you think and feel that your college is not preparing you enough to pass the licensure examination? Why? Why not?

Para sa akin, hindi ko pa masasabi dahil nasa kalahati pa lamang ako ng kursong edukasyon. Pero sa nakikita ko naman ay handang-handa at pinaghuhusayan ng aking college ang lahat para makapasa ang mga mag-aaral sa licensure examination. Nakikita ko naman na ginagawa nila ang lahat ng kanilang makakaya, napansin ko kasi na taon-taon ay maraming educ students ang pumapasa sa L.E.T.



Appendix C

SAMPLE SENTENCE COMPLETION WITH POSSIBLE FOLLOW QUESTIONS

Participant's Code JKC – 157

Date of Interview _____

Place of Interview _____

This instrument is to “get a glimpse” of your feelings and beliefs about yourself as a learner. Complete the incomplete sentences. You are free to complete the sentences the way you want to. There are no right or wrong answers.

1. Bilang isang mag-aaral, ako ay naniniwalang tungkulin kong makapagtapos para matugunan ko naman yung mga pangangailangan at kagustuhan ng pamilya ko.
 - Bakit naniniwala kang isang tungkulin mo ang makapagtapos ng pag-aaral?
 - Bakit tungkulin mo na matugunan pangangailangan ng iyong pamilya?
 - Kung matugunan mu man ito, ano ito para sa iyo?
 - Ano ang ma-a-achieve mu kung matugunan mu man ito?
 - Kung hingi mu matugunan ito, ano sa iyong palagay ang mangyayari?
 - Anu kaya mararamdaman mo? Iisipin?

2. Pakiramdam ko habang nasa loob ako ng klase masaya ako dahil kasama ko ang mga kaibigan ko na nakakaintindi sakin at hindi ako sasaktan at lolokohin at napagbubuksan ko ng aking mga saloobin.
 - Bakit masaya para sa iyo na kasama mga kaklase?
 - Ano nakukuha mo sa kanila? Sa kanila mo lang ba nararanasan ang ganung pakiramdam? Sa pamilya mo?
 - Nabanggit mo na hindi ka sasaktan at lolokohin ng iyong mga kaklase. Naranasan mo na bang saktan at lokohin? Ano ang kwento?

3. Sa mga panahong ako ay nakakakuha ng mababang marka, iniisip ko na kaya ko pang makakuha ng mas mataas na marka kaya lang may mga nangyayari o may mga naiisip ako na nakakahadlang sakin para makuha yun.
 - Iniisip mo na makakakuha ka pa ng mas mataas na marka sa susunod. Kapag dumatin na yung *susunod* na sinasabi mo, natutupad ba yung iniisip mo na mas mataas?
 - Nabanggit mo na may mga nangyayari kaya hindi natutupad. Anu-ano ito?
 - Ano naman ang iyong mga iniisip na humahadlang sa iyo para mas mapataas mo pa ang iyong mga marka?



- Ano ang nagtutulak sa iyo para isipin ang mga yaon?
4. Sa mga sandaling nakakakuha ako ng mababang marka, ang aking mga kamag-aaral ay nagtatanong sakin kung ano ba ang nangyayari sa akin na minsan ay hindi ko masagot dahil kahit ako hindi ko din maipaliwanag sa sarili ko.
 - Anu ba ang impresyon nila sa iyo at kailangan nilang magtanong?
 - Ano ang hindi mu maipaliwanag? Anu ano ang katanungan sa isip mo na parang walang sagot?
 - Ano ang sinasabi sa iyo ng iyong mga kaklase pag mababa marka mo?
 - Ikinukumpara mob a ang iyong marka sa iyong mga kamagaaral?
 - Ano ba nag grade na mababa para sa iyo? Ano ang mataas?
 5. Minsan may pakiramdam ako na ang aking guro ay mataas ang expectations sa akin at sa aming lahat.
 - Ano ang nagbigay sa iyo ng pakiramdam na mataas expectation sa iyo ng iyong guro?
 - Ano ang epekto sa iyo ng mataas na expectation?
 - Mas nanaisin 303 asa 303 asana wala na lang expectations?
 6. Nahihirapan ako kapag ang aking guro ay hindi ko maintindihan ang mga sinasabi.
 - Bakit kaya hindi mo maintindihan?
 - Ano ang ginagawa mo pag hindi mo maintindihan?
 - i. Hindi maintindihan
 - ii. Inaantok na po ako
 - iii. Hindi nap o ako nakakasuond
 - iv. Intindihin ko na lang po ng sarili ko
 - v. Naghahanap po ako ng paraan o ibang paraan para intindihin na lang
 7. Sa mga sandaling nakakakuha ako ng mataas na marka pakiramdam ko tumataas din ang tingin sakin ng mga kaklase ko.
 - Nakakakuha ng mataas na marka
 - Pakiramdam ko tumataas tingin sa kin ng kaklase
 - Dahil binabati nila po ako halimbawa “antaas mo naman”
 - **HINDI KO ALAM KUNG PAANO KO SILA SASAGUTIN**
 - Tinatanong ko rin sila kung ano ang nakuha nila
 - Pag mas mataas po nabababaan po ako sa nakuha ko minsan nakaka bitter
 - Pag mas mababa naman po sinasabi ko na okay nay an kaysa naman bumagsak ka, bumawi na lang po sila sa susunod



8. Marahil kung ako lamang ay naibibigay ang lahat ng makakaya ko marahil ay nagkaroon pa ako ng pagkakataon na mas mataas pa ang aking mga marka.
 - You wish you were able to give your best, so why do you not give your best?
 - Wishing I was able to give my best
 - Pag sinabi kong sa susunod kailangan mas mataas ako, kailangan sa susunod mas mataas ako
 - Babawiin ko sa susunod na mga exams kasi mababa ako sa previous exam
 - Nakaka asar para sa sarili dahil hindi nakakuha ng mataas
 - Itatatak sa sarili na kailangan sa susunod mas mataas ako
9. Pagkumuha na ako ng Licensure Examination for Teachers (LET) iniisip ko na kailangan kong makapasa. Kailangan kasi kailangan kong maging guro.
 - Kailangan, kailanganBakit kailangan mong maging guro?
10. Pag nagre-recite ako sa klase, pakiramdam ko lahat nakatingin sakin, inaabangan kung ano ang isasagot ko, kung mali ba ito o magiging tama.
 - Feeling my classmates are looking at me at wanting to know whether I commit mistake or not
 - Habang nagrerecite po ko hinahanap ko ang mga salita na dapat kong sabihin
 - Hagga't tama po ang sinasabi ko hindi ako titigil hanggang mapunto ko ang sagot
 - Kapag umaagree ang prof pakiramdam ko kailangan ko pang ituloy ang sinasabi ko
 - Pero kapag wala nap o akong masabi tumitigil nap o ako
11. Pagmahirap ang lesson ay nagtatanong ako sa iba hangga't makuha ko o di kaya ay humahanap ako ng ibang paraan na sarili ko para mainitindihan ko ang mga ito.
12. Madali lang sanang mag-aral kung walang pressure na kailangan tapusin ko na tong course ko na education. Na dapat dahil ito na ang sinimulan ko, ito na ang tapusin ko.
 - Bakit may pressure? Saan nanggaling ang pressure?
 - Ano ang epekto nito sa behavior mo, sa iniisip mo, nararamdaman, ginagawa?
 - Feeling pressured
 - Ginagawa kop o yung best ko ara maaccomplish po yung dapat gawin
 - Kapag to much pressure, tinitigil ko na po
 - Kainpag nakapagpahinga na ko binabalikan ko yung dapat kong gaw



13. Nais ko sana na ang aking mga guro ay hindi makadagdag sa mga paghihirap ng mga estudyante. na maintindihan na hindi lamang sila ang subject naming at marami pa kaming subject na inaaral din.
- Ano ang mga paghihirap na iyong pinagdadaanan?
 - Ano ang mga idinadagdag pa ng mga guro sa iyong paghihirap?
 - Ano epekto nito sa iyo?
 - Being overwhelmed by too many projects
14. Kung ang aking mga kamag-aaral lang sana ay hindi nagkukumparahan ng mga nakukuhang mga marka ay hindi na sana naming iniisip pa kung ano ang kalagayan naming sa loob ng klase.
- Nagkukumparahan ng grade ?
 - Paano sila magkumpara, ano ang kanilang ginagawa at sinasabi?
 - Ano epekto nito sa iyo?
 - Halimbawa, nakakuha ka ng mataas na marka, ano ang nangyayari pag nagkumparahan na?
 - E halimbawa naman, mababa nakuha mo marka, ano ang nangyayari pag nagkumparahan na?
 - Sensing the comparison
 - Mas gusto ko po na ako yung mas mataas
 - Pero ayaw ko naman sabihin nila na ang yabang ko naman
 - Pag mataas po ako masaya po ako pero sa sarili na lang
15. Kung ang pamilya ko lang sana ay bukas sa pagkakataon possible din akong makakuha ng mababang marka at naniniwala sa dahilan na sinabi ko att hindi sa dahilan na iniisip nila.
- May pressure mula sa iyong pamilya na makakuha ka ng mataas na marka. Ano ba ang marka na inaasahan nila mula sa iyo?
 - Ano naman ang marka na ayaw nila makita mula sa iyo?
 - Para sa iyong sarili, ano ang marka na sa palagay mo ay kaya mo at ito na din ang standard mo para sa iyong sarili?
 - Ano ang marka na mababa para sa iyo?
 - Ano ang mga sumusunod na mangyayari oras na ma-meet mo expectation ng family?
 - i. Meeting family expectations
 - Not meeting family expectations
16. Kumpara sa karamihan na aking kamag-aral, ako ay naniniwala na kaya naming lahat pumasa kung magtutulungan lang kami.
- Kaya niong pumasa. . . . pumasa meaning 3.0?



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- Kung magtutulungan lang kayo? ano ba ideya mo ng pagtutulungan?
 - Dahil hindi kayo nagtutulungan, ano ang nagyayari?
17. Ang aking karanasan sa isang guro na nagbigay sa akin ng mabuting pakiramdam sa aking sarili ay noong first year college ako na sinabihan nyang maganda ang essay na pinasa ko.
- Naalala mo ba ang kanyang eksakto na sinabi sa iyo?
 - Ano pa ng mga bagay na ginagawa o sinasabi ng guro ng nagbibigay sa iyo ng mabuting pakiramdam?
18. Ang aking karanasan sa isang guro na nagbigay sa akin ng negatibo ng pakiramdam sa aking sarili ay noong 4th year high school ako na palaging mababa ang grades ko sa kanya na dumating pa sa point na pinapautang nya ako ng grade.
- Ano ang nangyari at lagging mababa ang grade mo?
 - Pinauutang ng grade?
19. Natatakot ako na bumagsak kahit sa isang subject lang.
- Natatakot ka bumagsak dahil sa expectations ng family mo . . . ?
20. Masaya ako na hindi ako nagkamali sa course na pinili ko.
- Bakit pakiramdam mo hindi ka nagkamali ng course na pinili mo?



Appendix D

ACADEMIC SELF-CONCEPT QUESTIONNAIRE

(Liu, Wang & Parkins, 2005)

Academic Self-Concept Questionnaire is an instrument designed to measure your *perceived academic competence and commitment to, and involvement and interest in schoolwork as indicated by your responses to the items in the students' confidence and students' effort subscales*, (Liu, Wang, & Parkins, 2005). There is no right or wrong answer. Please encircle the number in the box that corresponds to your honest evaluation of yourself in relation to each item below.

4 – Strongly Agree (SA)

3 – Agree (A)

2 – Disagree (D)

1 – Strongly Disagree (SD)

No.	Statements	4 SA	3 A	2 D	1 SD
1	I can follow the lessons easily.				
2	I day dream a lot in class.				
3	I am able to help my classmates with their schoolwork.				
4	I often do my homework without thinking.				
5	If I work hard, I think I can pass the Licensure Examination for Teachers.				
6	I pay attention to the teachers during lessons.				
7	Most of my classmates are smarter than I am.				
8	I study hard for my tests.				
9	My teachers feel that I am poor in my work.				
10	I am usually interested in my schoolwork.				
11	I often forget what I have learned.				
12	I am willing to do my best to pass all the subjects.				
13	I often feel like quitting school.				
14	I am good in most of my school subjects.				
15	I am always waiting for the lessons to end.				
16	I always do poorly in tests.				
17	I do not give up easily when I am faced with a difficult question in my schoolwork.				
18	I am able to do better than my friends in most subjects.				
19	I am not willing to put in more effort in my schoolwork				

Students' Confidence sub-scale (1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 14, 16, 18), Students' Effort subscale items: (2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 13, 15, 17, 19)

MARAMING SALAMAT PO.

ASCQ Score _____ Verbal Interpretation _____



APPENDIX E

Permission to Use ASCQ from Dr. Woon-Chia Liu

LIU Woon Chia (TE, PS) <woonchia.liu@nie.edu.sg>

Apr 21 at 12:59 PM

To Reggie Maningas

CC Shallu SANSANWAL (TE)

Dear Glicerio

You have my permission to use the scale. All the best.

Regards,

Dr Liu



LIU Woon Chia (Assoc Prof) | Dean, Teacher Education |
Associate Professor, Psychological Studies Academic
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APPENDIX F

Sample Interview Transcript

CMF-716

TRANSCRIBE /WRITE THE INTERVIEW HERE

Date of Interview :

Place of Interview :

Initial Codes	Interview Statements to be Coded
Lacking in motivation to study - Lacking in earning materials - Allowing the self to be influenced by friends	RMM: let's start with your sentence completions, could you please read your first sentence
	CMF716: bilang isang mag aaral ako ay nag-aaral na mabuti para makapag tapos
	RMM:so, mag aaral ng mabuti, dun sa actuality nag aaral ka ba talag ng mabuti,
	CMF716:hindi naman sa nag aaral ng mabuti, me mga mga times din po na , na hindi ako nagaaral kase nga iba iba po ng reasons,
	RMM: ano ano yung reasons na pag kakataong hindi ka nag aaral?
	CMF716: minsan po yung tinatamad, or minsan po yung walang materials,yung minsan na impluwesiyahan, pag hindi po gumawa yan.. hindi na ren ako gagawa, mas ano po talaga pag walang materials , yun po talaga tinatamad po ako,
	RMM:gaano ka kadalas tamadin, at gaano kadalas yung kasipagan mo?
	CMF716:kase po , karamihan po sa mga professors, kailangan gawin yung dapat gawen..
	RMM:dun sa ano mo yung resulta ng academic self-concept... mataas yung perception mo ng commitment mo, involvement mo sa academic, kaya lang parang hindi sya na tatatranslate into out come, kase yung GWA mo for the last 4 semester ay 2.15.. so mababa ka, mataas yung perpection mo , involvement , commitment mo, pero mababa ang out come, panu natin sya mapapaliwanag?
	CMF716:dun naman po, kase po , yung ibang subject mo, madali lang po, pero meron din subject na hindi, so pag pinagsama yun.. talagang mababa ang score, kapag yung isang subject nahihirapan po ako, kahit madali yung ibang sa subject,



Employing a subjective standard of high and low performance	masayang masaya na ako dun,
Setting low academic standard for one's self	RMM: so, pag 2.25 or 2.5 okay ka na dun, and yet you were able to maintain yung mataas na perception mo sa commitment mo?
Feeling contented with mediocrity	CMF716:opo, pag nakakuha na ako ng ganon... sabi ko sarili ko, ay yung ginagawa ko pala , ganon, lang palang ang gagawen ko, kaya maintain ko na lang po yung ginagawa ko
	RMM:hindi ka na nag try na pataasen pa, ng 2.00 or 1.75
	CMF716:naisip ko po hindi na, kase hindi ko na po talaga kaya
	RMM: ah.. okay
	CMF716: pag nag exert na po ako nag review na po , at ganun pa den ang manyayare, ay wala na po akong magagawa
	RMM: so yung exertion mo ng effort, panu mo ba yun, e dedescribe yun?
	CMF716: kapag nahihirapan po ako sa isang subject, pag uwe ko po sa bahay, ma re re search po ako,. katulad po nung experience ko nung first year , basic mathematics po, inis na inis ako sa isa kung kaibigan,,, na basic lang yan.. nahihirapan ka pa? yung narinig ko yun... nainis po ko, oo nga basic pa lang nahirapan pa ako, ang ginawa ko po ay nag re search, mula dun sa topic hangang sa maliit po... ang saya ko dun, dahil masaya ang nakuha ko sa quiz
Exerting effort when challenged	RMM: so, sinasabi mo na, pag na challenge ka, mag exert ka ng effort ?
Wanting to prove the self	CMF716: opo , minsan lang yun, pero pag hindi ako na challenge , ay routine lang abg ginagawa ko
	RMM: so, ano ba yung challenging para sa iyo?
	CMF716:yung ano po, pag hindi po ako naka recite don.. pag nahirapan po ako sa quiz, bagsak po ako dun, tapos yung iba nakakakuha ng mataas sa quiz , tapos ako po ay mababa nakaka challenge po yun
	RMM: sentence number 3
	CMF716:sa mga panahong , nakakakuha ako ng mababang marka inaasahan ko na ako ay bibigyan ng bagsak na grado
Being challenged by the possibility of failing	CMF716 katulad po nun , kapag nakakakuha po ako ng , dalawang beses na po ako nakakakuha ko, yung principles of teaching 79 po yung nakuha ko , at 75 yung midterm sa general Psychology, midterm pa lang bagsak na ko, pano pa kaya sa
Avoiding being at the bottom of the class	



Being motivated to study by fear of failing • By fear of additional semester, additional expenses, additional burden to the family • By fear of losing the scholarship	final.. ganun po RMM: kung bagsak ka anu ang manyayari? CMF716: marami po, kung bagsak ako , uulitin ko po yun, another gastos, yung pinag aralan ko naman... tapos matatangal po ako sa BCE, eh talagang kailangan ko yung BCE , kaya mi ni maintain ko po talaga RMM: Yung family mo meron bang expectaion sa iyo? CMF716: opo, panganay po ako sa apat na magkakapatid, okay po sana ng first year, nung second year, nabuntis po yung second sister, 15 sya, 16 ako , tapos me 2 pa po akong kapatid, isang grade 1 at isang grade 4, ang hirap po kase , iniwan kame ni papa last summer, so ako na po yung inaasahan, kaya hindi na ako dapat gumawa ng kahit anu, kase hindi ako makakapag tapos, nakakainis sa bahay , pressure po, lalo na sa pangalawa kong kapatid. kapag nanyare po , narinig ko... grabe.. lalo na lang sinasabi ni mama ko, na inaasahan ako, ganito ,kase po teacher den sya... hirap den syang kumita.. kase po apat po kaming binubuhay nya... kaya lahat po ginagawa ko, malaki pong tulong sya.. kase po ang hindi ko alam , tinutulungan nya ako
Feeling pressured to help support the family	RMM: hindi ka nya alam na tinutulungan... what do you mean? CMF716: ano po malaking tulong po kase, RMM: malaking tulong yoong? CMF716:pag tulong nya sa akin sa hindi ko alam sa school RMM: ah.. yung mother CMF716: hindi ko nasaabi sa kanya.. na minsan na pre presure ako dahil hindi naman kame ganong ka close CMF716:araw araw po ako na pressure ako, pag araw araw kung nakikita ang kapatid kung buntis, super pressure..
Lacking an open-communication in the family	RMM: pag naramdaman mo yung super pressure na sinabi mo, ano ang kasunod nun, ano ang ginagawa mo, nararamdaman mo?
Looking for somebody who will listen	CMF716:pag super pressure na ganon, parang minsan, parang bibinggo na ako sa init ng ulo ko, minsan ayaw ko ng mag aral, yun po , ang sinasabi ko sa sarili ko, pag na pressure ako, hindi ko na ginagawa ang lahay, nagiging tamad ako sa bahay, yung bigat sa ulo na pinararamdam nila
Coming to class struggling with family concerns • Being weighed-down by family problems • Feeling pressured	RMM: so, parang sumusuko ka sa pressure



• Feeling irritated • Wanting to give-up schooling • Not doing house chores • Feeling over-burdened	CMF716: opo, sumusuko na po ako, sa madabing beses na, mula ng mabuntis yung kapatid, okay po nung una eh,, enjoy pa ako nung collage, hindi naman sinasabi ng mama ko , feeling ko lang na pi nu push akong mag aral na hindi ko na enjoy yung 2nd college.
Missing to enjoy life...feeling over-burdened	RMM: may expectations , in terms of grades..or wag lang bumagsak CMF716:expectations po sa wag bumagsak, at makatapos, parang feel ko walang paki sa mama ko kung bumagsak ako, wala siyang paki sa grades.. ganun
Sensing low or no academic expectations from the mother • No failing marks, just to graduate • She also senses that the mother has no interest in her grades	RMM:sentence number 4. CMF716:sa sandaling nakakakuha ako ng mababa ng grades ang aking kamag aral ay nag tataka. CMF716: napansin ko po na pag bakit ganyan grades, mga tatlo o apat ang mga nag tatanong kung bakit ako mababa, katulad po last second year second sem, yung sa math, kase binilugan ko po syun kase po puyat ako.. at mag rereport ako sa gen. sci.. tapos tinulugan ko po sya kase 7:30 ang klase,haba ng yung iba nag rereview. eh multiple choice, kaya bilog bilog lang , 6 out 10, 5 ang nakuha ko , tapos nakita nila yun, hala baket ganyan ang grades mo, nag tataka sila. RMM:nagtataka sila dahil? CMF716: mababa yung grades RMM: at mataas ang expectations sa iyo CMF716: opo, since first year po, nung pumasa ako sa inyo ng midterm, at napatayo po ako, dun na po nag umpisa ng expectation nila sa akin, na si chelea , lage mataas
Feeling pressured to live up to classmates' expectations of her • “Hindi pwedeng bumagsak”	RMM: anu yung pakiramdam mo na impression sa iyo ng kamag aral sa iyo ay mataas at mahusay ka? CMF716: nakakainis po.kase po, puwedeng hindi bumagsak, parati lang bang mataas... kaya pag nag tatanong sila eh.. ganyan talaga yun, kase hind ako ng review eh..



APPENDIX G

Sample Memos

Memo
July 5, 2015

Setting low standard . . . Perceiving a grade of 2.0-2.25 as high already

Observation with CLJ-143. . . .

When I told him that 2.0 is not high, he excitedly commented that it is high. Telling me “Sir, mataas na po iyan.” I explained to him that based on the school policy for retention, a student must have at least a minimum GWA of 2.25. Considering 2.25 as minimum GWA, a grade of 2.0 is still low. From here, CLJ-143 gave me the impression that students are following a relatively lower standard of what is high. This may influence their motivation to exert effort because they are going to evaluate their performance against this relatively low grade.

Students, on the basis of what they consider as high or low academic performance may calibrate the exertion of effort to meet the subjective academic standard. The calibration of academic effort means that when they know that they are not meeting the 2.0 or about to fall below the 2.0, they will exert effort to meet it but when they know that they are performing beyond or higher than the 2.0 they may deliberately lessen effort or allow a little complacency for after all the goal is the 2.0.

CLJ-143 may also be lacking awareness of a more objective academic standard against which to evaluate his own academic performance.

21 July 2015
Memo

A Possible Explanation on the seemingly Incongruent HIGH ASC-LOW GWA

I was just looking at the ASCQ of 5 possible participants for more theoretical sampling of some emerging concepts. I was particularly looking at their scores and verbal interpretations of ASCQ and GWA. The highest GWA among them is 1.90 while the lowest is 2.01. Then it suddenly occurred to me that as far as they are concerned there is no incongruence at all! They have high academic commitment and involvement and their GWA is also high (in so far as they are concerned, because those grades are already high for them. It reminded me of CLJ-143 during my interview with him. I told him that his GWA of 2.01 is considered low based on the scale I am using and which is actually based on the 2.25 minimum GWA required by the university for retention of students. So surprised to hear me say that his GWA is low, pointing to his grade and in a respectful protesting voice, he said: Sir! Mataas na yan! Now I need to know whether this assumption is true. I need to check this with other participants.



Memo
30 July 2015

Avoiding Achievement Situation

AJL-113 has the feeling that she is being judged by her classmates when she recites in class or when she gets high grades. It started when she was in elementary. She said she was always on top of the class and there her classmates got the idea that she was intelligent and everytime she is called in the recitation, her classmates expected her to give the right answer. When she gave a wrong answer, she would often hear negative comments from the class, comments like *What! She made a mistake but that was so simple. I got the feeling that for all the many questions I got right, they would say many things about some mistakes I committed. From then, I learned to guard myself during the recitation. I must admit I have the tendency to say too many things. I have the tendency to monopolize the discussion because I have too many things to say. I could sense my classmates telling themselves in silence "okay you can have it all." When I get that feeling, I deliberately lessen what I say and sometimes I no longer volunteer even if I know the answer,* (p.4, IT). This deliberate withdrawal of her participation in class is also coming from her understanding that being competitive is not good for her and for the class. It was because of her classmates' perception that she is competitive that she called her "buwaya" (p.5, IT). She learned to interpret that her being competitive is a threat to others, (p.4, IT). To avoid hearing negative comments and to be perceived as a threat, she learned to tame her competitive spirit and chose instead friendship and sense of belongingness with her classmates even when she knows that she can achieve more academically. What seems to be a natural inclination to compete and show her knowledge on the part of AJL-113 becomes unnatural to others.

We may get an indication of how others view those classmates who are active in class in RHY-174 who views them and labels them as "pa-star". To her the "pa-star" are the type of students who even when the teacher is not finish yet with her question and she has not finished writing down the question yet are already there with their hands up in the air ready to recite. These are the students who are seated in front of the class and are likely to be called by the teacher. *I have the feeling that that there is in them wanting to be the best. They can't lose. They do not want to be at the bottom of the class nor just be an average student. They want to be on top of the class hierarchy and they seem to justify it by citing that they were in higher section in highschool* (p.7).

We have two different perspectives on competition in class. One view is from a student who has a natural inclination to compete for she knows she has it. She feels confident about herself or probably too much of it. She probably has something to prove to herself and to her family. She probably is simply wanting to please the teacher and wanting to be recognized. But for whatever reason, she is competitive. The second view is from a classmate who feels irritated by what she perceived as a 'show-off'. The last view is what some students want to avoid in avoiding achievement situations.

To view people who are assertive, competitive as "mayabang" "irritating" "a turn-off" "aggressive" seems to be a cultural thing for some of us especially for those who have been brought up and trained not to speak unless spoken to or have been asked a question. Such training is brought into the class thus coloring their perception of their classmates who are assertive and vocal about their opinions and ideas. Are the students who are assertive of their ideas really "mayabang" and over-confident or we are just being too lacking in confidence or just being too shy to join the competition? Is this a case of pointing to



others as reason for our inability to compete? Have we been overwhelmed not by their being confident but by our being not confident of our own abilities?

To understand RHY-174, she is coming from a negative experience of competition in class. She came from a high school where according to her the competition for the top was so stiff that at times they were pulling each other down. She came from an experience where competition gave her a negative feeling about herself. While AJL-113 is coming from an experience where she has to meet her father's high expectations of her, and the need to prove herself through academic excellence. In the end, striving for academic excellence was lost to mediocrity and sense of belongingness to avoid others' negative perception of her and her being competitive.

I have already written on class competition in a previous memo that competition in class is not in itself bad. It is human nature and for some a motivation to excel. How to encourage it in class without students destroying each other or pulling each other down but instead a way of improving the self and overcoming human tendency for mediocrity is a challenge for teachers. How to make competition in class as beneficial not only to the self but to others in class as well should be part of their training. After all no one can escape the reality of competition in the outside world and schools cannot protect the students from that reality forever.

This competition in class and how it is experienced and perceived by the students may be a good problem for a thesis or dissertation.



Appendix H

Sample Template is from the World Health Organization. Adapted and modified to suit the needs of this research. Downloaded from http://www.who.int/rpc/research_ethics/informed_consent/en/

Informed Consent Form

Informed Consent Form for : Education Students of _____

Name of Researcher : Glicerio M. Maningas

Name of School Affiliation : Philippine Normal University, College of the Graduate School and Teacher Education Research

Names of Dissertation Advisers : Danilo K. Villena, PhD.
Adelaida C. Gines, PhD.

Title of the Study : Free or Shackled? Finding the Truth In The Nakedness of the Self: A Grounded Theory of High Academic Self-Concept and Low Academic Outcome of Education Students

Part I: Information Sheet

Introduction

I am Glicerio (Reggie) M. Maningas, a PhD, Curriculum and Instruction student of the Philippine Normal University, College of Graduate School and Teacher Education Research. I am inviting you to participate in a research study I am currently conducting for my dissertation. Involvement in the study is voluntary, so you may choose to participate or not. Rest assured that should you decide not to participate, it will not affect your grade in my class. You do not have to decide today whether or not you will participate. In the research. Before you decide, you can talk to anyone you feel comfortable with about this research.

This consent form may contain words that you do not understand. Please ask me to stop as we go through the information and I will take time to explain in detail. If you have questions later, you can ask them of me. I am now going to explain the study to you.

Purpose of the research

The purpose of my study is to describe and explain the behavior of my students with high academic self-concept but with low academic outcome through developing a theory. I hope that through building a theory based on the information that you and the other participants will give me, you and I can arrive at a better understanding so that both students and teachers can come up with ideas on how to better facilitate the teaching-learning process. I hope that this study will help me, you, other teachers and students in understanding how all of us can better help develop you to the fullest the potentials within each one of you.



Type of Research Intervention

This research will involve your participation in doing reflection papers and sentence completion on what you think and feel about yourself as a student, your family and school experiences. It will also mean your participation in an interview that may last from one and a half hour to two hours. At the end of the research, you may be required to attend a two-day focus group discussion. It will be like a 2-day live-in “recollection” to close this experience with you. It will be held at a venue most appropriate for seminars or recollections.

Participant Selection

You are being invited to take part in this research because of the results of the Survey Questionnaire that you were asked to accomplish in my previous study. Your experience as a student can contribute much to our understanding of the problem under investigation.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary. You have the right to refuse participation and it will not affect your grade in my class or any of your grade in other classes in this school. You are free to change your mind later and stop participating in this research even if you agreed earlier. You may withdraw your participation at any point or stage of this research. You may also request that the information you provided be not used in the research.

Procedures

- A. Brief introduction to the format of the research study.

I am requesting that you help me learn more about my students especially those with high self-constructed-beliefs and feelings about themselves as learners but not quite supported by their academic performance. Should you decide to participate, you will be asked to write reflections papers, do sentence completion, interview and focus group discussion.

- B. The type of questions that the participants are likely to be asked.

In writing Reflections Papers, you may be asked to write about the following topics:

1. My Lived Experience In My Family : Stories, Images, Thoughts and Feelings From My Personal Encounters
2. My Lived Experience In School: Stories, Images, Thoughts and Feelings From My Personal Encounters With My Teachers, Professors, Classmates, & Friends
3. A Reaction Paper on the observation of PBE that education students enter the program ill-prepared.

In Sentence Completion you will be asked to complete incomplete sentences like:

1. Bilang isang mag-aaral, ako ay
2. Pakiramdam ko
3. Sa mga panahong ako ay nakakakuha ng mababang marka, iniisip ko na
4. Sa mga sandaling nakakakuha ako ng mababang marka, ang aking mga kamag-aaral ay
5. Minsan may pakiramdam ako na ang aking guro ay



In the Interview

During the interview, I will sit down with you in a comfortable place, more likely at a room in the school that may be available for us. If you do not wish to answer any of the questions during the interview, you may say so and I will move on to the next question. No one else but me will be present unless you would like someone else to be there with you. The information recorded is confidential, and no one else except (still to be determined by the researcher) will have access to the information documented during your interview. The entire interview will be taped-recorded, but no one will be identified by name on tape. The tape will be kept in my locker room in the faculty room. The information is confidential and no one else except (still to be determined by the researcher) will have access to the tapes. They will be destroyed after we get your approval of the transcription of your interview.

In the Group Reflection (Similar to a Focus Group Discussion)

You will take part in a group reflection with 30 other education students with similar experience. I will guide the group reflection by presenting to the group the findings of the study. This will be this study's way of verifying the results of the study. It will be followed by my own reflection about the findings. Then you may confirm or deny the findings and offer your own reflection. This activity will end with the question "Where do we go from here?" to elicit Plan of Action to improve the self.

Duration

The gathering of information from the participants is tentatively set during Summer of 2015. During that time, I will meet you in school or wherever appropriate to interview you and do some follow-up interviews. Each interview will last for an hour and a half or at the most two. Follow-up interviews may only last for less than an hour depending on the need. The Group Reflection will be conducted at the end of the research and will be scheduled before the First Semester of 2015-2016 begins.

Risks

In doing the Reflective Writing, Sentence Completion, Interview and Group Reflection, you may be asked to share with me some very personal and confidential information, and you may feel uncomfortable talking about some of the topics. You do not have to answer any question or take part in the discussion/interview/survey if you don't wish to do so, and that is also fine. You do not have to give us any reason for not responding to any question, or for refusing to take part in the interview. The researcher sees no other risk involved in your participation in this study.

Benefits

On a personal level, the benefit that you may derive from your participation in this research is the opportunity to reflect on what is happening in your life as a student. Hopefully, it would give you the awareness, insight, and a better understanding of yourself as a student and from there make plans on how to improve your academic life. This may also benefit your classmates and teachers in acquiring a better understanding of the teaching-learning process as a result of finding the answer to the research question.



Reimbursements

I shall provide you with a result of your participation in this study through our Group Reflection at the end of this research. Expenses for transportation, food, lodging for the duration of the Group Reflection will be shouldered by the researcher. For the expenses that you may incur in going to the interview site and writing materials, the researcher will reimburse them. *(Note: This part was not materialized due to lack of time and availability of funds. Reflections are done through posting points for reflections for the participants.)*

Confidentiality

Your participation in this research draw attention and you may be asked questions by other people in this school. I will not be sharing information about you to anyone. The information that will be collected from this research project will be kept private. Any information about you will have a number-letter code on it instead of your name. Only the researcher will know what your number-letter code is and i will lock that information up in my locker in the faculty room. It will not be shared with or given to anyone except (still to be determined) who will help me in the transcription.

The following applies to focus groups:

During Group Reflection at the end of this research, I will ask you and others in the group NOT to talk to people outside of the group about what was shared, discussed, reflected on in the group. I shall ask you to consider everything sharing or reflection sacred that has to be respected. However, you should know that I cannot stop or prevent participants who were in the group from sharing things that should be confidential. *(Note: This part was not materialized due to lack of time and availability of funds. Reflections are done through posting points for reflections for the participants.)*

Sharing the Results

The researcher intends to share with you the results through a Group Reflection (similar to a *recollection or retreat*) that will be held at the end of the research. It will be a 2-day live-in Group Reflection to be held at an appropriate place for an activity like this. Transportation, food and lodging will be shouldered by the researcher. This is part of the intention of the researcher not only to do no harm to the participants but also to do something good to them. Findings of this study will be submitted to the Philippine Normal University in partial fulfilment for the degree PhD Curriculum and Instruction.

Right to Refuse or Withdraw

This is a reconfirmation that your participation in this research is voluntary and you have the right to withdraw at any point in this study. You do not have to take part in this research if you do not wish to do so. Choosing to participate or not will not in any way affect your grade in my class or in the class of other professors in the college. You will be given the opportunity at the end of each interview and during our Group Reflection to review your remarks, and you can ask to modify or remove portions of those, if you do not agree with my notes or if I did not understand you correctly.



Who to Contact

If you have any questions, you may ask them now or later. If you wish to ask questions later, you may contact any of the following:

Part II: Certificate of Consent

I have read the foregoing information, and it has been read to me. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about it and have been answered to my satisfaction. I consent voluntarily to be a participant in this study

Print Name of Participant

Signature of Participant

Date: Day/month/year

Statement by the researcher

I have accurately read out the information sheet to the potential participant, and to the best of my ability made sure that the participant understands that the following will be done:

1. that s/he will be asked to write reflection papers and do sentence completion
2. that s/he will be interviewed, and
3. that s/he will join the 2-day group reflection

I confirm that the participant was given an opportunity to ask questions about the study, and all the questions asked by the participant have been answered correctly and to the best of my ability. I confirm that the individual has not been coerced into giving consent, and the consent has been given freely and voluntarily.

A copy of this ICF has been provided to the participant.

Print Name of Researcher: Glicerio (Reggie) M. Maningas

Signature of Researcher: _____

Date _____
Day/month/year



Appendix I

Tables for Academic Self-Concept and Academic Outcome Interpretation

Table 1. Range of Scores and Verbal Interpretation of Academic Self-Concept for Use in the Selection of Participants

Range of Scores	Verbal Interpretation
3.50 – 4.00	Very High
2.50 – 3.49	High
1.50 – 2.49	Low
1.00 – 1.49	Very Low

Table 2. Range of General Weighted Average (GWA) and Verbal Interpretation for Use in the Selection of Participants

Range of Grades	Verbal Interpretation
1.44 – 1.00	Very High
1.84 – 1.45	High
2.25* – 1.85	Low
2.26 and above	Very Low

Note: 2.25 is the minimum grade average for retention as per University policy.



CURRICULUM VITAE

GLICERIO (Reggie) MONTEVERDE MANINGAS

reggiemm_1206@yahoo.com

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

Summer 2012-January 2016	Ph.D. Curriculum and Instruction (Cand.) Philippine Normal University
2002-2004	MA Education, EDAD Pamantasan Ng Lungsod Ng Maynila
1996-2001	Completed Academic Requirements MA Psychology (Industrial) University of Santo Tomas
1995-1996	18 units of Professional Education Manuel L. Quezon University
1991-1992	Novitiate Program of Scalabrini Congregation Istituto Cristoforo Colombo Piacenza, Italy
1989-1991	Introductory Course to Theology Maryhill School of Theology Course Taken Under the General Theology Program Guided by the Basic Norms laid by The Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education and the Episcopal Commission on Seminaries
1987-1989	Bachelor of Science in Psychology Manuel L. Quezon University
1986-1987	units in Psychology Colegio de San Juan de Letran
1983-1986	units in Philosophy St. Francis de Sales College Seminary



WORK EXPERIENCE

2001 to date	Associate Professor II College of Education Pamantasan Ng Lungsod Ng Pasig
1999-2001	Instructor College of Arts and Sciences University of the East
1996-1998	HS Teacher Paco Citizen Academy foundation
1993-1996	HS Teacher Marymount School

GOVERNMENT EXAMINATIONS TAKEN

- Licensure Examination for Teachers
 - Date of Examination : 8 August 1999
 - Place of Examination : Polytechnic University of the Philippines
 - Rating : 85.80
- Career Service Professional
 - Date of Examination : 23 June 1996
 - Place of Examination : Quirino Elementary School
 - Rating : 85.68

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Date of Birth : 21 December 1966
Place of Birth : Mauban, Quezon