

Place-Based Learning and Students' Motivation at the Second-Year Baccalaureate Level

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Abstract

Learning is the process of acquiring knowledge and skills, consciously or unconsciously. One of the central elements for successful learning is motivation, but the latter is affected by different factors, among which is the place where learning occurs. Therefore, the researcher conducted a mixed-methods approach to investigate the relationship between the learning environment and students' motivation at the second baccalaureate level. Ten students participated in the present study. They were given a task to perform outside the school for a week. Then, they were given a five-point Likert scale questionnaire to fill out. The SPSS software was used to analyze the quantitative data. After that, a semi-structured interview was used to get detailed information about learners' feelings, reactions, and attitudes toward place-based learning. The findings demonstrated that there was a positive and significant relationship between place-based learning and students' motivation types.

Keywords: Place-based learning and motivation.

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Learning is defined as a process that leads to a change in behavior resulting from experience and increases the potential for improved performance and future learning. It involves both the developmental process and the holistic context, including social and emotional experiences that influence learners' values and self-perception (Jackel, 2011). It also involves acquiring and modifying knowledge, skills, strategies, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors when learners are highly motivated (Thomas, 2020). In this context, motivation in education is one of the most critical factors teachers should target to improve learners' engagement in the learning process and achieve academic success (Williams, 2011). This is because learners need to always be motivated so that learning can be a continuous, consistent process. However, students' motivation in the learning process is affected by many factors, such as the learning environment, because the latter plays a crucial role in increasing or decreasing students' motivation (Mielle, 2016). Therefore, the primary purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between place-based learning and students' motivation in the learning process at the second-year baccalaureate level.

1. Research Questions

The present study addresses the following research questions :

- a) Is there a significant correlation between place-based learning and students' extrinsic motivation ?
- b) Is there a significant correlation between place-based learning and students' intrinsic motivation ?
- c) Is there a significant correlation between place-based learning and students' attitude motivation ?

2. Research Hypotheses

- a) There is a significant correlation between place-based learning and students' extrinsic motivation.
- b) There is a significant correlation between place-based learning and students' intrinsic motivation.
- c) There is a significant correlation between place-based learning and students' attitude motivation.

3. Defining Context

3.1. Place-Based Learning

Learning is "a process that leads to *change*, which occurs as a result of experience and increases the potential for improved performance and future learning" (Ambrose, Bridges, DiPietro, Lovett, & Norman, 2010, p. 3). The change in the learner can take place at the level of knowledge, attitude, or behavior when learners actively participate in creating knowledge. Place-based learning (PBL) is one of the modern teaching pedagogies that fosters students' involvement in discovering knowledge outside the classroom. It is a learning strategy that gives much importance to using the local community as an integrated context for learning to take place inside and outside the school. It is grounded in the local community's resources, issues, and values (Fragoulis, 2009). In this context, the environment plays a critical role in students' learning processes because it is used as an integrating context where students explore their local community (Cindy & Hmelo, 2004). It is also considered an educational strategy that makes the learning environment its central principle. It considers all aspects of the local environment, such as sociopolitical, cultural, and historical situations (Stegner, 2005). It is built on the idea that students should be engaged in their authentic learning environment (Clark, 2008). Therefore, place-based learning as a modern teaching strategy is investigated to determine the extent to which it affects students' motivation in the learning process.

3.2. Motivation

Pardee (1990) believes that motivation is the reason that drives an individual to do a specific behavior in a certain way or develop an inclination. It is also considered a significant psychological issue because it is seen as a driving force behind an individual's behavior (Oroujlo & Vahedi, 2011). In the learning process, when we think of how to motivate students to be productive and self-reliant, we indeed deal with motivation (Chafi, Elkhouzai, & Arhlan, 2014). According to Williams (2013), motivation is one of the most critical elements that educators should target to increase students' engagement in learning and achieve academic success. Learners have complex needs and desires (Bhushan, 2014). In other words, learners need to be continuously motivated so that learning can be a continuous, consistent process.

Motivation can be divided into different types, such as extrinsic motivation, intrinsic motivation, and attitude motivation, each of which plays an important role in having active learners who eagerly participate in the learning process. Self-determination theory introduces two types of motivation: extrinsic motivation and intrinsic motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Extrinsic motivation is a type of motivation that drives an individual to take a particular action depending on an outside factor (Vansteenkiste & Lens, 2006). It depends on outside factors, such as the teaching strategies, the learning environment, the teacher-student relationship, etc. Intrinsic motivation, on the other hand, is about the inside capabilities that drive a learner to perform specific tasks successfully. They are increased by interest, pleasure, curiosity, readiness, and competition (Cherry, 2016). Concerning attitude motivation, it is about the practice of motivating learners by affecting their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. In other words, learners can either hold positive or negative feelings towards the subject, depending on the level of their motivation. To clarify, learners who are highly motivated can construct positive attitudes towards the subject (Oroujlou & Vahedi, 2011). Therefore, based on the review of the literature, motivation types, such as extrinsic, intrinsic, and attitude motivation, play a key role in the learning process because students who are extrinsically and intrinsically motivated can be active learners in the classroom.

4. Research Methodology

Research methodology is about the procedures relied on to identify, select, process, and analyze information about a topic (Kothari, 1990). The present research is based on a mixed-methods approach. It is both quantitative and qualitative. The main aim of using this method is to investigate quantitatively and qualitatively the relationship between place-based learning and students' motivation types. The sequential explanatory design is adopted in the current research. It is used to contextualize the quantitative findings, assess the validity of the quantitative findings, and add richer details to the conclusions.

4.1. Research Design

According to McMillan & Schumacher (2010:22), "the research design describes how the study is conducted, and the purpose of a research design is to indicate a plan that will generate evidence that will be able

to answer the research questions." The type of research design used in the current study is a quasi-experimental research design to establish cause-and-effect relationships between the variables under study.

4.2. Research Sample

To conduct the current study, the researcher relied on the convenience sampling technique to collect a group of ten participants studying at the second-year baccalaureate level at Kacem Amine High School. They were given a task to solve outside the school. The task was to determine the causes of some students dropping out of school at an early age in that area. The participants were asked to interview some former students who could not finish high school and present their outcomes in the classroom. The task was planned to be completed in one week. Then, they were asked to fill out a five-point Likert scale questionnaire.

4.3. Data Collection Instruments

The current study uses a five-point Likert scale questionnaire and a semi-structured interview as the main data collection instruments to find answers to the research questions. They are meant to collect data quantitatively and qualitatively on students' extrinsic motivation, intrinsic motivation, and attitude motivation when they are assigned an activity to perform outside the school. The questionnaire contains two sections. The first section is about the relationship between place-based learning and motivation types, and the second section is about the importance of place-based learning. Each section contains a set of items that students have to rate on a scale from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree". After calculating the total score of extrinsic motivation items, intrinsic motivation items, attitude motivation items, and place-based learning items, Pearson's correlation test is used to measure the correlation between motivation types and place-based learning. Concerning the semi-structured interview, it contained questions about students' feelings, attitudes, and reactions towards using place-based learning strategy in the learning process.

5. Questionnaire Findings

5.1. Place-Based Learning Relationship with Extrinsic Motivation

- H1: There is a significant correlation between place-based learning and students' extrinsic motivation.

Table 1: Correlations

	Pearson Correlation	1	,462 [*]
Place-Based-Learning	Sig. (2-tailed)		,040
	N	20	20
	Pearson Correlation	,462 [*]	1
Extrinsic-Motivation-Items -Total Score	Sig. (2-tailed)	,040	
	N	20	20

***. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).**

The correlations in Table 1 indicate that the p-value is .040 and the correlation coefficient is ($r = .462$). In other words, the findings reveal that there is a positive and statistically significant correlation between place-based learning and students' extrinsic motivation. Consequently, the alternative hypothesis H1, stating that there is a significant correlation between place-based learning and students' extrinsic motivation, is accepted.

5.2. Place-Based Learning Relationship with Intrinsic Motivation

- H1: There is a significant correlation between place-based learning and students' intrinsic motivation.

Table 2: Correlations

Place-Based-Learning	Pearson Correlation	1	,515*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,020
	N	20	20
Intrinsic-Motivation-Items -TotalScore	Pearson Correlation	,515*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,020	
	N	20	20

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The correlations in Table 2 show that there is a positive correlation between place-based learning and students' intrinsic motivation because the correlation coefficient is ($r = .515$). This correlation is statistically significant because the p-value is .020, which is less than .05. Therefore, the alternative hypothesis H1, stating that there is a significant correlation between place-based learning and students' intrinsic motivation, is accepted.

5.3. Place-Based Learning Relationship with Attitude Motivation

- H1: There is a significant correlation between place-based learning and students' attitude motivation.

Table 3: Correlations

Place-Based-Learning	Pearson Correlation	1	,462*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,040
	N	20	20
Attitude-Motivation-Items -TotalScore	Pearson Correlation	,462*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,040	
	N	20	20

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The correlations in Table 3 show that there is a positive correlation between place-based learning and students' attitude motivation because the correlation coefficient value is ($r = .462$). This correlation is statistically significant at the .040 level. Consequently, there is a positive and statistically significant correlation between place-based learning and attitude motivation.

6. Semi-Structured Interview Findings

This type of research method is conducted to collect qualitative data. The purpose of this research tool is to uncover other features that the quantitative research tools cannot unveil, add richer details to the findings,

and increase the validity and credibility of the quantitative results (El Ghouati, A, 2018). It is meant to collect data about the relationship between the dependent and independent variables. The sample consists of ten interviewees. The interview questions seek to get the respondents' views and feelings about the experience of performing a task outside of school.

The main questions addressed in the semi-structured interview are :

- a) How did you feel during the the task process ?
- b) Did the task make you involved in the learning process ? If yes, why ? If not, why ?
- c) Does doing the task in an open space help you get motivated in the learning process ? If yes, how ? If not, why not ?
- d) Did you enjoy doing the task outside the classroom ? If yes, how ? If not, why not ?
- e) In your opinion, do you think that performing a task outside the school is a motivating learning method ? If yes, how ? If not, why not ?
- f) How did you feel towards your classmates and your teacher while solving the task outside the school?

The findings of the semi-structured interview questions indicate that all the interviewees (N = 10, 100%) eagerly participated in performing the task because they were highly motivated to do such a task in an open space. Most of them demonstrated that they freely performed the task without any commands. In that, Driss, one of the interviewees, clarifies that " Doing a task outside the classroom revived my inner energy for participation," adding, "This activity positively changed my view towards learning." This is further confirmed by two other interviewees who claimed that solving problems outside the classroom motivated them to learn and be self-reliant. Besides, all the interviewees revealed that doing a task in an open space was an enjoyable experience for them where they could be the leaders of their learning, suggesting that teachers should rely on such kinds of activities to break the monotony in the classroom. The findings of the semi-structured interview are in line with the results of the quantitative data, claiming that there is a significant relationship between place-based learning and students' motivation types.

7. Discussion

Learning is a very complex process that requires teachers who are qualified enough to provide the necessary requirements for successful learning. The learning environment is one of the essential elements that can foster students' motivation and make them active learners. It is about the experiences students interact with outside the classroom to find answers to their research problems. It links the classroom to the outside world because students use the prior knowledge they receive in the classroom to solve problems in the environment where they live. The current study's findings indicate that there is a strong relationship between the learning environment and students' extrinsic motivation, intrinsic motivation, and attitude motivation. To explain, through the place-based learning strategy, students become responsible for their learning process. They no longer feel like passive learners because they participate in constructing knowledge themselves, depending on their prior knowledge. They feel free to put together a suitable plan that can help them solve the task effectively and change it when possible. They also practice scaffolding strategies by collaborating with each other to solve the problem successfully. All this increases their motivation for learning. The findings of the current study are supported by the literature, which considers that the learning environment plays a central role in the learning process. According to Clark (2008), place-based learning (PBL) is a learning strategy that gives much importance to using the local community as an integrated context for learning to occur inside and outside the school. In this context, the environment is crucial to developing students' motivation to learn. It is used as an integrating context where students get rid of spending most of their time learning inside the classroom (Miele, 2016). The findings of the studies conducted by Waxman, Shwu-Yong, & Yolanda (1997), Daniels (2010), Baeten, *Dochy*, & *Struyven* (2013), and Aldridge & Rowntree (2021) are in line with the findings of the present study. They found out that the learning environment greatly impacts students' motivation because it can either increase it or decrease it. In other words, students get demotivated in a suffocating environment where

they are passive learners. They suggest that educators should provide their students with a welcoming learning environment where they can develop their extrinsic motivation, self-esteem, and attitude toward learning. This can occur when teachers have the desire to involve students in the learning process by giving them tasks to perform outside the classroom.

To sum up, motivation in education is one of the essential factors that teachers should target to improve learners' engagement in the learning process. Without motivation, there will be no learning and no academic success because learners need to always be motivated so that learning can be a continuous, consistent process. The learning environment is one of the main elements affecting students' motivation in the learning process because it can either increase or decrease it. The findings of the present study indicate that place-based learning has a great impact on students' motivation types, namely extrinsic motivation, intrinsic motivation, and attitude motivation. This is due to the fact that students no longer feel like passive learners. They freely participate in constructing knowledge themselves outside the classroom by choosing and controlling their own learning strategies, which increases their motivation for learning. Therefore, it is recommended that teachers break the monotony of their classrooms by engaging learners in an authentic learning environment. In other words, they should provide their students with some outdoor activities for which they feel responsible. Such kinds of activities raise students' motivation and make them believe that the process of learning occurs even outside the school.

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