

**A CORRELATION STUDY OF SELECTED VARIABLES
OF THE LANGUAGE ACQUISITION OF THE FIRST
YEAR STUDENTS OF ATENEO DE DAVAO
HIGH SCHOOL**

Romulo C. Espina

Ateneo de Davao University

Ladies and gentlemen, good afternoon.

The study that I'm going to share with you today is a correlation study which I made as a requirement of the subject **Fundamentals of ESL Research** under Dr. Pascasio. When she asked me to present my findings of this study, I was hesitant. Besides the fact that I feel terrified speaking in a public gathering like this, it's just a correlation study. It's not even an in-depth one. But she convinced me that it's a study made outside MetroManila. That makes it important. Conventions organized by the Linguistic Society of the Philippines have been saturated with studies made in the National Capital Region; it's good to hear one made from far away places like Davao City, she added. So here I am. Besides, who wants to turn down one's professor?

Ateneo de Davao High School, like other so-called reputable schools, has been administering tests to its incoming freshman students in the areas of language (English), Mathematics, and Science. The entrance test is one of the instruments used to admit only the academically capable. In the beginning, Ateneo de Davao was a school for boys, but in the late 70's, it went co-ed to keep itself viable. Over the years, more and more students from other elementary schools have enrolled here. Along with this is the growing number of girls. Today, students coming from other schools have outnumbered those who consider themselves the blue-blooded Ateneans, and the girls have a slight edge over the boys in number.

In the early years, the school used the Otis Self-Administering Test of Mental Ability to screen incoming applicants. Later it adopted the Stanford Achievement Test, which it's still using.

Have the increase in the number of students coming from other grade schools and the growing population of girls affected the entrance test's ability to predict an applicant's capacity for freshman work? This is what this study wanted to find out. The hypotheses I wanted to test were the following:

There is no relationship between the entrance test scores and the final grades in English of

- a) the freshman students of Ateneo de Davao;
- b) the freshman students coming from Ateneo Grade School;

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- c) the freshman students coming from other elementary schools;
- d) the boys;
- e) the girls.

Forty percent of the first year population was used in this study comprising 255 students. The instruments used were the entrance test scores and the final grades the students obtained in English. The means and the standard deviations were computed to arrive at a description of the academic achievement of the students and the coefficient of correlation was computed to determine the relationship between the two variables.

What were my findings? Comparing the figures obtained by the Ateneans and the non-Ateneans in Table 1, you'll notice that the former performed better. There are more Ateneans belonging to the high average categories; they also have fewer low average and no disadvantaged. Between the boys and the girls, the latter did better. There are more girls in the high average and average categories, but less low average and disadvantaged. These data show that the Ateneans and the girls were more academically prepared than their counterparts.

Table 1—Scores

	All Students	Ateneans	Non-Ateneans	Girls	Boys
High/ above average	21.15%	30.7%	14.15%	28.2%	13.4%
Average	22.7	27	20.3	24.2	22
Low Average	53.3	41	61.5	46.1	59.8
Disadvantage	2.7	-	4	0.8	4.7

As regards achievement in grades (Table 2), again the Ateneans performed better. More of them are high and fair achievers, and only few are on the borderline and failing. The girls, too, did better. They have more high and fair achievers and less on the borderline and failures.

From these data we can say that the Ateneans and the girls are better performers than their counterparts, but the non-Ateneans have managed to narrow the gap.

Table 2—Grades

	All Students	Ateneans	Non-Ateneans	Girls	Boys
High Achievers	17.64%	22.4%	14%	25%	9.4%
Fair Achievers	43.14	45.8	41.2	50	36.2
Borderline	27.25	30.8	41.9	24.2	50.4
Mortality	2	0.9	2.7	0.8	3

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These observations are supported by the data in Tables 3 and 4. In scores, the Ateneans have a mean of 88.7 against 80.9 of the non-Ateneans. The former's SD also shows more clustering of scores, though the difference is not very significant. The girls also performed better, with 87.9 against 80.4 of the boys.

As regards grades, the Ateneans have a slight edge (82.9 vs. 81.35), but both groups have a similar composition of members, their SD being the same. The girls did better than the boys and are a little more homogeneous.

Table 3—Scores

	All Students	Ateneans	Non-Ateneans	Girls	Boys
Mean	84.19	88.7	80.9	87.9	80.4
SD	16.17	14.5	15.2	14.9	14.86

Table 4—Grades

	All Students	Ateneans	Non-Ateneans	Girls	Boys
Mean	81.98	82.9	81.35	83.5	80.4
SD	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.3	4.6

Table 5 shows a significant correlation between the scores and the grades. For the entire population, the correlation is significant ($r = .7$). The Ateneans and the non-Ateneans have an equal correlation of .9, which is very high. The boys and the girls have almost the same correlation (which is still high), with the latter enjoying a slight edge.

Table 5—Correlation-r

	All Students	Ateneans	Non-Ateneans	Girls	Boys
	0.7	0.992	0.991	0.7	0.67

Results of this study show that the entrance test used by Ateneo de Davao is a good predictor of success. The scores relate usefully to grades.

I have recognized some limitations in this study, so my recommendations are:

1. In order to have a better picture of how effective this entrance test is, a study should be made to include the other sub-tests of the exam, like Mathematics and Science. It should also include the social and economic profiles of the students. In my study I assumed that the students of Ateneo de Davao mostly come from the middle and upper middle class families of Davao City and its neighboring towns and provinces.
2. Another study should also be made to determine the performance of the students over a period of time, say four years.

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In conclusion, the entrance test of Ateneo de Davao High School is a valid screening instrument. The increase in the number of students coming from other grade schools did not have any negative effect on the school's standard, and making Ateneo a co-ed institution had a positive effect on the students' overall performance.