

PEELING OFF THE LAYERS: VIEWS ON BARE-WALLED CLASSROOM

Mary Apple M. Seva¹ and Maedel Joy V. Escote, PhD²

¹Faculty Member, Maparat Elementary School, DepEd-Division of Davao de Oro, Philippines

²Faculty, Graduate School, Assumption College of Nabunturan, Davao de Oro, Philippines

ABSTRACT

The goal of this research was to describe the experiences gained by the primary school teachers on the implementation of bare classroom walls policy in the Department of Education at West District of Compostela, Davao de Oro. Employing phenomenological approach among six participants, in-depth interview was conducted which answered the four fundamental questions. Essential themes were generated out from their responses to the research questions. The results uncovered the participants' perspectives, and from it five themes emerged: finding it good, seeing it with pros and cons, distracting to learning, with positive impact on learners, and good as visual aids. The participants also shared the advantages they encountered in bare classroom walls, from which emerged five themes: find ways in helping learners learn, make class engaging, use of real objects, less expenses, and lessen workload. Further, for the disadvantages they revealed -three essential themes: better to have creative walls, hard time instilling knowledge, and learners have nothing to read. Lastly, for the insights they cited four themes which emerged: be creative, find good strategies, be prepared as always, and hoping learners can learn. In view of the above, these results will undoubtedly guide future educational practices and research efforts, resulting in a more supportive and collaborative educational environment for the benefit of students, teachers, and administrators alike.

Keywords: *Bare-Walled Classroom, Perspectives, Advantages, Disadvantages, Insights, Phenomenological approach, Compostela West, Davao de Oro*

1. INTRODUCTION

The issue of empty classroom walls extends beyond aesthetics and encompasses significant concerns that impact both students' learning experiences and teachers' well-being. It is tied to an ongoing debate surrounding DepEd Order No. 21, which advocates for the removal of what it deems "unnecessary artwork, decorations, tarpaulin, and posters" from classroom walls. It is essential to recognize that the presence of plain and unstimulating classroom environments can lead to various adverse consequences. This may include reduced student engagement, hindrances to effective teaching by educators, and the creation of a cold and unwelcoming atmosphere within educational spaces. Furthermore, this shift towards minimalism may diminish opportunities for students to express themselves creatively and to reinforce their grasp of educational content. Striking a balance between aesthetically pleasing classrooms and maintaining their functionality for effective learning is a critical consideration in this discourse.

In the United States, classroom wall decorations play a vital role in enhancing the learning environment. However, Ogunniyi (2018) emphasizes that when classroom walls are left bare, it creates a range of negative effects on the educational experience, specifically affecting the students. The absence of visually engaging decorations in classrooms pose challenges for students, impeding their ability to maintain focus and motivation. The learning process may become less enjoyable, and students might encounter difficulties in connecting with the material being presented Wilson and Korn (2018).

Further, in Batangas, Philippines, classroom wall decorations hold significant importance in the educational landscape. However, Santos (2018) unearth a set of challenges that impact the educational experience with bare classroom walls as these contribute to a more challenging engagement with learning materials. In the absence of visual stimuli, students often become less enthusiastic about their studies, facing difficulties in maintaining focus, motivation, and comprehension.

In consonance, teachers adhered with the DepEd order and made the classroom walls bare. However, in Compostela West District teachers of primary classrooms often encounter various challenges when faced with bare classroom walls. These challenges included reduced learners' engagement and participation in class activities and lack of reference points since classroom walls are typically used to display alphabet charts, number lines, and other reference materials. The absence of these reference points made it more challenging for primary learners to practice writing and identifying letters and numbers independently.

The researcher had not read any local study specifically on the lived experiences of Primary teachers in adhering the DepEd Order No. 21, series of 2023 which mandated to make the classroom walls bare. With this in mind, it was significant to conduct a study related to the implementation of the program through the lens of the primary teachers as this would give valuable glimpse not just on the program, but including the challenges and coping mechanism employed by the teachers. This study highlighted how educators are coping with the challenges to provide quality education and met issues, especially in terms of teaching primary learners in the District, which could be a blueprint for future educational programs

1.1 Research Questions

The study explored the perceptions of primary teachers in dealing with concerns in bare-walled classroom as well as the challenges they experienced and the ways they utilized to cope with the difficulties. It was guided by the following questions;

1. What are the perceptions of the primary teachers on bare-walled classroom?
2. What are the advantages of the participants in teaching primary learners with bare-walled classroom?
3. What are the disadvantages in teaching primary learners with bare-walled classroom?
4. What are the insights gained of the participants in teaching primary learners with bare-walled classroom?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

-This section presents topics and literature related to the present concept under study; this is with the hope of giving the readers a clear view of the concept of the problems and challenges encountered by primary teachers in dealing with concerns while teaching primary learners with bare classroom walls. The findings of the different research similar to this study were presented to provide us a better understanding and a clear view on what is being emphasized in this qualitative study. These were taken from various sources like manuals, journals, websites, and other reading materials.

Classroom Wall Designs. Classroom wall designs play a crucial role in shaping the educational experiences of students. To begin with, research by Wilson and Korn (2018) underscores the significant psychological impact that classroom wall designs can have on students. They argue that the choice of colors, decorations, and visual stimuli significantly influences students' moods, motivation, and overall learning experience.

Perspectives of Primary Teachers in Dealing with Concerns While Teaching Primary Learners with Bare-Walled Classroom. The physical environment of a classroom plays a crucial role in shaping the learning experiences of primary school learners. Classroom aesthetics, including the presence or absence of wall decorations, can significantly impact the teaching and learning process. In the study by Johnson et al. (2018), titled "Enhancing Learning Environments: Redesigning Classrooms to Support Active Learning in Higher Education," the authors highlight the importance of creating stimulating classroom environments.

Advantages of Primary Teachers in Dealing with Concerns While Teaching Primary Learners with Bare-Walled Classroom. One common advantage of primary teachers is the integration of interactive technology into their lessons. According to Smith and Johnson (2018), primary teachers often use digital resources, such as interactive whiteboards and educational apps, to engage students. These technologies provide dynamic visual stimuli, compensating for the lack of permanent wall decorations and enhancing the learning experience.

Another strategy embraced by primary teachers is the use of bulletin boards and mobile displays to create temporary visual interest within the classroom. Kim and Turner (2019) They found that teachers design visually appealing bulletin boards and portable displays that can be changed regularly to align with different topics and seasons. These flexible elements help maintain a vibrant classroom atmosphere.

Disadvantages of Primary Teachers in Dealing with Concerns While Teaching Primary Learners with Bare-Walled Classroom. A study by Basit and Rahman (2021) examined the role of classroom environment in student engagement and learning. The research found that classrooms with vibrant and educational decor significantly improved student attention and participation. Bare walls, conversely, led to decreased motivation and engagement among primary learners. The absence of visual stimuli was noted to create a monotonous environment, negatively impacting students' enthusiasm for learning.

Insights of Primary Teachers in Dealing with Concerns While Teaching Primary Learners with Bare-Walled Classroom. Primary teachers often turn to temporary displays and resources as a mechanism to compensate for bare walls. Research by Smith and Turner (2019) in their study, "Enhancing Classroom Environments with Temporary Displays," highlights how teachers utilize easels, portable whiteboards, and even large poster boards to create dynamic, changeable displays in the classroom. These temporary elements enable teachers to adapt the environment to suit their instructional needs and keep students engaged.

Classroom Environment. Numerous studies emphasize the positive impact of a visually stimulating classroom environment on student learning outcomes. For instance, Johnson et al. (2018) in their research highlighted how a well-designed classroom, including visual elements, can enhance student engagement and academic achievement.

Visual Simulation. Existing research by Anderson and White (2018) underscored the crucial role of visual stimuli in enhancing students' attention, comprehension, and retention of information. Visual aids, such as posters, charts, and educational displays, not only reinforce instructional content but also make it more accessible and engaging for primary learners. Consequently, the absence of such stimuli in classrooms with bare walls can raise concerns about the effectiveness of teaching and learning.

Cognitive Development. Teaching in classrooms with bare walls presents challenges for educators and may impact students' cognitive development. Research conducted by Turner et al. (2020) highlight that bare walls can create a dull and uninspiring learning environment, potentially leading to reduced student engagement and cognitive growth. Educators may struggle to provide the visual supports necessary for reinforcing cognitive skills and fostering higher-order thinking.

Creativity and Imagination. Teaching in classrooms with bare walls presents distinct challenges for educators and may hinder the development of creativity and imagination in young learners. Research conducted by Turner et al. (2020) highlighted that bare walls can create a bland and uninspiring learning environment, potentially stifling students' creative thinking and imaginative play. Educators may struggle to provide the visual and thematic cues that support children's imaginative exploration.

Academic Performance. A stimulating classroom environment is essential for enhancing academic performance in primary learners. Research by Smith and Turner (2019) highlights that a well-designed classroom, including visual aids and educational displays, can positively influence student engagement and academic achievement. Visual stimuli serve as memory cues and provide context, making it easier for students to understand and retain information. Consequently, the absence of such elements in classrooms with bare walls may hinder students' academic performance.

Student Engagement. A stimulating classroom environment is essential for fostering student engagement in primary learners. Research by Davis and Turner (2020) emphasizes that a classroom rich in visual aids, educational displays, and interactive materials can enhance student interest and participation. Visual stimuli serve as catalysts for curiosity and active learning, making it easier for students to connect with the subject matter and become engaged in the learning process. Consequently, the absence of such elements in classrooms with bare walls may hinder students' engagement.

Parental Involvement. Parental involvement is a crucial element in primary education, significantly impacting students' academic performance and overall development. Research by Johnson and Smith (2018) and Brown and Jones (2017) sheds light on how classroom aesthetics can influence parental engagement.

Johnson and Smith (2018) conducted a study examining the impact of classroom aesthetics on parental involvement. They found that classrooms adorned with educational materials and student work displays often encouraged parents to visit the school, attend parent-teacher conferences, and engage in discussions about their child's progress.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

In the pursuit to explore the experiences of primary teachers in dealing with concerns while teaching primary learners with bare-walled classroom, this study used a qualitative phenomenological research design. Essentially, it facilitated a deeper understanding of a certain phenomenon being lived through as described by the participants (Creswell, 2014; Giorgi, 2012). The phenomenology claims that to understand human experiences, it requires immersive saturation of individual's thoughts and insights through employing interviews. Since these were the actual lives of the participants who have all experienced the phenomenon of dealing with bare classroom walls, it facilitates a culmination of interpretation of their experiences (Creswell, 2009). For instance, it involved the actual establishment of meanings from the views of their lenses, and it provided the researcher an avenue to picture out the situation of the participants from the phenomenon they lived based on their actual shared experiences (Giorgi, 2012).

3.2 Research Locale

The study was conducted in the elementary schools of Compostela West District, Davao de Oro Division. This included Maparat Elementary School and Aurora Elementary School.

In the Philippine Province of Davao de Oro, the Municipality of Compostela is a first-class municipality. It consists of the province's extensive plains. From Tagum City, one must travel through the national highways of Mawab, Nabunturan, and Montevista to reach this settlement. The municipality is politically subdivided into 16 barangays, namely: Poblacion, Aurora, Bagongon, Gabi, Lagab, Mangayon, Mapaca, Maparat, New Alegria, Ngan, Osmeña, Panansalan, San Jose, San Miguel, Siocon, and Tamia.

Maparat Elementary School is the largest public school in Compostela West District, Davao de Oro when it talks about population or enrollment. Due to a relocation project constructed near Maparat, the NHA housing project, which aids numerous residents of various Compostela barangays when typhoon Pablo strikes the municipality, the school's enrollment quickly increased. It has a total number of 43 teachers.

The second participating school is a neighboring school of Maparat which is Aurora Elementary School located at Aurora, Compostela, Davao de Oro. Aurora Elementary School is the second smallest school in Compostela West District having a total enrollment of 202 learners for the current school year with 8 teachers and supervised by a School Principal. It is 15 kilometers from Maparat and most people here are Ilonggos and Ilocanos.

3.3 Research Participants

There were six participants in this study, enough to saturate information gathered from the studied group. In determining the research participants of this qualitative-phenomenological study, Creswell (2013) suggests six to fifteen participants. Therefore, in this study, there were six participants for the In-Depth Interview (IDI).

Furthermore, the inclusion criteria for the selection of participants were the following: (a) the participants must be public-primary school teachers in the School Year 2023-2024 at Compostela West District, Davao de Oro (b) with a position/designation from Teacher I-IV to Master Teacher I-IV, and (c) and at least 3 years in service as public-school teacher.

3.4 Procedure

The researcher was involved in a series of undertakings in the process of data collection. The researcher made rigorous steps in the data collection procedure and engaged in a series of activities in the process of collecting data before arriving after the research study.

First, the researcher ensured that the study adhered to proper research protocols, thus submitted the research, and underwent review and was checked by the thesis adviser and the panel.

Second, the researcher asked the permission and consent of the Schools Division Superintendent of the Division Office of Davao de Oro, then before conducting the study, the paper underwent in the ethics review process in which the ethical aspect of this paper was examined. After attaining the protocol's ethical approval, the researcher ensured that the steps were properly followed and hold the accountability of all the procedures and activities associated with the protocol.

Then, the researcher asked the permission and consent from the Public-School District Supervisor, and School Principals, to conduct the study. The researcher prepared the materials and tools needed for the data gathering such as the interview guide, audio recorder, and field notes.

Third, participants were identified with the use of the purposive sampling method. Some of the participants were recruited and contacted through the help of gatekeepers. The gatekeepers were therefore asked to read and sign a confidentiality and non-disclosure agreement form. The researcher ensured that the selected participants met the criteria and had experienced in dealing with concerns while teaching primary learners with bare classroom walls. The research objectives and the entire methodology were explained to the selected participants. Also, the participants were sent with informed consent forms through e-mails and were asked to provide their e-signatures if they agree to the condition stipulated that their participation were voluntary and without coercion, in which they were willing to impart their knowledge as needed in the study.

Fourth, the individual in-depth interview was held through a virtual meeting or in-person at a specified time agreed upon by the participants after having read and signed the consent letters. The guide questions for the interview were validated before the conduct of this study. To meet the needs of this study, the researcher established a series of scheduled meetings with the participants following dates that were most convenient for them through. Participants of the study were sent with meeting links at a time most convenient to them for interviews. Their role and rights were thoroughly explained before the interview and compensation was provided for their inconvenience. All the proceedings were recorded to ensure validity and reliability significant in the conduct of the study.

Also, the researcher asked permission from the participants to have the interview recorded. Throughout the interview, their responses were noted down while at the same time being assisted by an audio recorder to compensate for any mishearing and was used as an aid for transcription and coding later.

Fifth, the recorded interviews were stored in a flash drive, secured with a password, to be ready for transcription. The drive was stored in a secure and locked storage place that was accessible to only the authorized person of the study, who was the researcher. It was also uploaded to Google Drive, which would not be viewable to the public, for additional security and backup. All the responses were transcribed verbatim to ensure a greater degree of accuracy during the data analysis. After the study was conducted, all the data were only stored and kept for three

years after which all will be destroyed and disposed to prevent unauthorized people from using and accessing the files.

Lastly, a thematic analysis was done. The responses of the participants were analyzed thoroughly based on the core ideas. The researcher was assisted by an analyst to ensure the correct analysis of the data.

3.5 Ethical Consideration

The measures that were undertaken in ensuring ethical considerations in this study was based on the principles of the Belmont Report in 1979. The researcher adhered to the fundamental principles of ethical consideration where respect for persons, beneficence, and justice were identified. Before conducting the study, the Ethical Review Committee (ERC) examined the ethical aspect of this paper. Thus, the researcher sought their approval before conducting this study. After attaining the protocol's ethical approval, the researcher ensured that the steps were properly followed and hold the accountability of all the procedures and activities associated with the protocol.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the findings to the research questions that explored the perceptions, advantages, disadvantages, and insights of the Primary School Teachers on the implementation of bare classroom walls policy in Department of Education, West District of Compostela, Davao de Oro. The research participants were selected through purposive sampling technique. There were six participants in this study which were enough to saturate information gathered from the studied group who were primary school teachers.

4.1 What are the perceptions of the primary teachers on bare-walled classroom?

This section presents the results to the first major research question; 'What are the perceptions of the primary teachers on bare classroom?' Three specific research questions were used to gather data and information for this major research question. The questions were intended to gather information on the understanding of the research participants regarding the experiences of primary school teachers on the implementation of bare classroom walls policy in Department of Education.

4.1.1 Perceptions on Bare-Walled Classroom

The themes in this section were coming from the specific research question 1.1 'What are your perceptions on bare-walled classroom?'. The responses generated two themes: finding it good and seeing it with pros and cons.

Finding it Good. This theme reflects a positive perspective towards minimalist classroom decor. Teachers express a sense of contentment and satisfaction with the simplicity of bare walls, finding that it fosters a conducive learning environment. This theme suggests that some educators believe in the efficacy of minimalist design for promoting focus, creativity, and cognitive engagement among students. Informant 1 pointed out:

For me, my perception of bare classroom walls is to focus the attention of the students on the teacher so that they will not look around, especially since their attention can easily be diverted by highly highlighted materials or very bright colors.

This was supported by informant 3, who also shared contended;

My perception about on the bare classroom walls is that it focuses between the learners and the teachers.

Informant 5 also shared;

The advantage of having a bare classroom is that it does not disturb the children. So, they can focus on me when I am teaching. They will not be looking around because there is nothing to distract them. Plus, it is clean and very cool.

Seeing it with Pros and Cons. This theme encapsulates the multifaceted viewpoints of educators towards minimalist classroom decoration. Teachers who resonate with this theme demonstrate an appreciation for the potential benefits of bare walls in promoting a clean, uncluttered learning environment conducive to concentration and focus. Conversely, other teachers express reservations, citing concerns about the absence of visual aids that could stimulate student engagement and creativity. This theme underscores the complexity inherent in decision-making regarding classroom aesthetics, emphasizing the need for a balanced consideration of both advantages and drawbacks. Overall, it reflects the diverse perspectives and thoughtful deliberation among primary teachers regarding the implementation of minimalist design principles in educational settings. Informant 2 narrated;

Well, there are pros and cons on bare classroom. So as what the department on education implemented in this year's school year 2023 and 2024 that is when we started bare classroom walls policy, so my perception in this is that teachers just wanted to create an environment conducive to concentration for the learning of the pupils or the learners. So that is what the DepEd told us that we should focus in the learning and this will be achieved through bare classroom walls.

For her part, informant 4 shared;

My perception of bare classroom walls is that they have both advantages and disadvantages. Firstly, the advantage is that it reduces our expenses because, of course, we spend money on our classroom. Aside from the MOOE provided by the school, we teachers also dig into our own pockets for the beautification of our classroom because that is part of our responsibility. Now, the disadvantage I see, personally, is especially for lower grades because they might need more visual attractions. And personally, I also like it when classrooms have more decorations.

Further, informant 6 added;

From my observation here in the classroom, this is really a change, especially in the lower grade, in grade 3, it seems that there is still a need for the pupils to see something because some of them really do not know yet. There are really some who still do not know the letters, because I used to be in grade 1, so the learners would still get confused about what A or B is, it would not really sink into their minds, but for me, the pupils will really feel change because the room is very bare, they do not see anything.

4.1.2 Ways Classroom Wall Displays Affect Learning

This section presents the results to the specific research question 1.2 '**How does the classroom wall displays affect learning?**' The following themes served as results, which were: distractive to learning and with positive impact on learners.

Distractive to Learning. The results highlighted concerns among educators regarding the potential negative impact of excessive wall displays on student concentration and engagement. Teachers who align with this theme express apprehension that cluttered and visually busy classroom walls may overwhelm students, leading to distractions and reduced learning effectiveness. This theme underscores the importance of creating a balanced visual environment that supports rather than hinders learning processes. It reflects the critical reflections of primary teachers as they navigate decisions about classroom decor with the goal of optimizing learning outcomes. Informant 1 stated;

For me, wall displays affect learning for the learners because they get distracted by the displays, especially those that are very creative, like cartoon characters, so they cannot concentrate on the teacher.

Informant 2 also added;

As it is true that displays or visual aids in the classroom somehow help students learning but as an argument to individual who have studied about bare classroom walls displays affect learning ability on the pupils,

sometimes when the teachers are discussing other learners just focus on what they saw in their environment or they are just being distracted in what they saw on the walls, on the displays, because of its color or images just like that.

Likewise, informant 9 substantiated by saying;

The affect on learning of the bare classroom wall is that learners are not stimulated well during class discussions because they cannot see guides like numbers and alphabets.

With Positive Impact on Learners. This theme emphasizes the belief among educators that thoughtfully curated wall displays can enhance the learning experience. Teachers who resonate with this theme express confidence that strategically chosen visual aids, such as educational posters and student work showcases, can stimulate curiosity and reinforce lesson concepts. This theme underscores the notion that well-designed classroom displays have the potential to foster a stimulating and enriching environment conducive to active learning. It reflects the intentional efforts of primary teachers to leverage visual stimuli as tools for engagement and comprehension enhancement, informant 4 emphasized;

The displays in our classroom, for me, have a big impact on the children because I came from a public school, and that is what I have been accustomed to since my elementary days. I can see that there are a lot of decorations, and it made me more eager to make us read what she has put up.

This was supported by informant 6, who said;

It has also negative feedback from the pupils. Because usually, when they see something, they absorb learning faster because they have pictures to see every time they glance around, and the teacher can also immediately set an example.

In addition, informant 5 said;

Display can help pupils learn faster because they have something to watch and read during vacant time and if they need assistance.

4.1.3 Ways Primary Teachers Perceive the Role of Classroom Aesthetics in Creating an Inclusive and Stimulating Learning Environment.

This section presents the results to the specific research question 1.3 ‘**How do primary teachers perceive the role of classroom aesthetics in creating an inclusive and stimulating learning environment?**’ The themes which served as results were, good as visual aids and dependent on utilization of teachers.

Good as Visual Aids. This underscores the perception among educators that classroom aesthetics serve as effective visual aids in facilitating learning. Teachers who resonate with this theme emphasize the importance of utilizing the physical space to engage and inspire students through visually appealing displays. They believe that strategically incorporating educational posters, charts, and interactive materials can enhance comprehension and retention of lesson content. This theme highlights the proactive approach of primary teachers in leveraging classroom aesthetics as valuable tools to support student learning and create an inclusive and stimulating environment. Informant 4 expressed;

As a primary teacher, you really need to be creative. When you teach your pupils, you need to have visual aids that they can see. Your teaching is still effective, and your classroom looks good aesthetically, which makes it nice to look at. And the best visual aid is still us, the teachers.

This was supported by Informant 6 who uttered;

Of course, before we start our class, we need to be well-prepared with our lessons. So, as teachers, we really look for ways to make learning easy to absorb for the pupils. Of course, we provide examples that they can

see, especially now that we have technology, so they have something to see. That is why they can quickly grasp the lesson if they have more visuals.

Similarly, Informant 3 said;

Primary learners should have designs in their classrooms because these helps them learn faster.

Finally, Informant 2 said;

Primary teachers perceive the role of classroom aesthetic as it is being a conducive and focused on what the teachers really wanted to achieve or the goal and objective of teachers.

Dependent on Utilization of Teachers. This underscores that teachers believe that the effectiveness of bare classroom walls in creating an inclusive and stimulating learning environment heavily relies on their own creativity and resourcefulness in utilizing the space. They feel that student engagement is significantly influenced by how actively they involve students in decorating the classroom and using wall space for interactive and curriculum-related displays. Informant 5 expressed;

It depends also on the teacher who uses different techniques and methods in teaching. So, you just apply it anyway because you really know the weaknesses of the children, how to manage them, how to discipline them to motivate them about your topic or lesson for that time or day.

Also, informant 1 unveiled;

Before the teacher starts their class, they should set rules to get the attention of their students, especially in a classroom that is near with noise.

4.2 What are the advantages in teaching primary learners with bare classroom walls?

This section presents the results to the second major research question ‘What are the advantages in teaching primary learners with bare classroom walls?’ Three specific research questions were used to collect data for this question highlighting the advantages that the participants experienced in teaching primary learners with bare classroom walls.

4.2.1 Ways Teachers Demonstrate Increased Effectiveness and Control in Managing Primary Learners in Classrooms with Minimal or No Visual Distractions on the Walls.

The themes derived from the responses of the research informants to the specific research question 2.1 **How do teachers demonstrate increased effectiveness and control in managing primary learners in classrooms with minimal or no visual distractions on the walls?’** are presented in this section. The themes were: find ways in helping learners learn and make class engaging.

Find Ways in Helping Learners Learn. Participants revealed that this reflects educators' proactive strategies to support student learning despite minimal visual distractions on the walls. Teachers who align with this theme demonstrate a commitment to finding alternative methods, such as hands-on activities, interactive technology, and creative instructional approaches, to engage learners effectively. They prioritize adaptability and innovation, utilizing various teaching tools and techniques to maintain student focus and participation in the absence of traditional wall displays. This theme highlights the resourcefulness and dedication of primary teachers in ensuring optimal learning experiences for their students, even within minimalist classroom environments. Informant 1 had this to say;

The bare classroom gives more attention to the students. For example, even if we do not have instructional materials, we can still be creative so that even if we are not very skilled in the arts, we will just find ways to give our

learners a better understanding of the lessons you teach, let us be creative especially with our instructional materials or visual aids so that they can understand even more).

This was also affirmed by informant 2 who stated;

It is really effective since the teachers only control on the things or images or the learnings that maybe imparted to the pupils since there are no other distractions other than what the teachers wanted to teach or to impart knowledge to these pupils. So, somehow it is effective because we know that learners have their different abilities or learning styles, so others may learn through lots of visual aids, and others can learn effectively without any distractions.

Informant 6 substantiated;

Teachers should use instructional materials like printed materials especially in the lower grades.

Make Class Engaging. As the result showed, these methods often involved interactive activities that fostered student participation and curiosity, such as hands-on experiments and group discussions. Teachers also utilized technology as a tool to enhance engagement, incorporating educational games and multimedia presentations to make learning more dynamic. Furthermore, the creation of a supportive and inclusive classroom environment emerged as a key element, where students felt encouraged to share ideas and explore topics freely, contributing to a more engaging learning experience overall. Informant 4 cited;

For me, as a teacher, you should not just rely on your materials in your classroom, even if your classroom is bare and you do not have any materials, because as a teacher, you should always be engaging with your learners because you are the best visual aid for your class, and of course, we should still be able to control and manage the children's learning).

Meanwhile, informant 5 revealed:

My experience is that it is very effective, no one disturbs their attention, they can focus on our lesson because there is nothing else to distract them around. There are many ways to motivate them or you can use a video connected to your lesson. So, they will be more interested. In the classroom, as long as there is a television, it can greatly help them.

In addition, informant 3 said:

Give more activities to the learners so that the class will become more engaging.

4.2.2 Tangible Ways Teachers Modify their Instructional Strategies to Better Engage Primary Learners in Classrooms with Intentionally Bare Walls

This section presents the results to the specific question 2.2 **'In what tangible ways do teachers modify their instructional strategies to better engage primary learners in classrooms with intentionally bare walls?'** After subjecting the responses to content analysis, the themes generated were the use of real objects and connect to real-life experiences.

Use of Real Objects. This underscored teachers' innovative approach to enhancing student engagement. Teachers leveraged tangible objects as powerful teaching tools, bringing concepts to life and making abstract ideas more concrete for primary learners. These real-world artifacts sparked curiosity and facilitated hands-on learning experiences, allowing students to explore topics in a more interactive and immersive manner. By incorporating real objects into their instructional strategies, teachers fostered deeper connections between curriculum content and students' lived experiences, ultimately enriching the learning process in the absence of visual distractions on the walls.

Informant 1 noted;

Through real objects, for example in Math. If their lesson is multiplication, to make it easier to understand, you have a real object, for example, a stone. So, for example, there are 40 stones, 40 stones then multiply by 5, so it is easier for them to understand if there is a real object. Another example is TV, so it is also easier for them to understand if there is a TV because they can view actions or search for topics and examples that they can see and understand more easily.

Also, informant 2 stressed;

Teachers can modify their instructional strategies through real objects, in that way learners could learn more effectively and efficiently. So their instructions must be suitable to the needs of the learners as well as the things that they need to impart to the learners. So I think they need to modify more on the different learning style of these pupils, not just on what they they saw on the walls.

Similarly, informant 3 shared;

Learners should be shown real life objects so that they can understand the lesson faster.

Further, informant 6 added;

In order for the students to participate, it is much better if they also have something tangible in your class, aside from having something visible, they also have something tangible, materials that you can use in your class, because they do not see anything around.

Connect to Real-Life Experiences. Teachers emphasize the importance of connecting lessons to real-life experiences to engage primary learners in classrooms with intentionally bare walls. By incorporating relatable and practical examples into their teaching, educators help students see the relevance of their learning, which fosters deeper engagement. Teachers also use storytelling and real-world scenarios to make abstract concepts more tangible and understandable for young students.

Informant 5 noted;

Okay, there are some ways for teachers to get the attention of the pupils, like relating them to their experiences, especially in our MTB lesson. They really understand because it is their own language. It can even get chaotic because they all have something to say about their experiences.

Also, informant 4 added;

Teachers can also use presentations which connect to the real-life experiences of the learners.

4.2.3 Concrete Professional and Personal Benefits Teachers Experience When Choosing a Minimalist Approach to Classroom Decoration and Design while Teaching Primary Learners.

This section presents the results to the specific question 2.3 ‘**What concrete professional and personal benefits do teachers experience when choosing a minimalist approach to classroom decoration and design while teaching primary learners?**’ After subjecting the responses to content analysis, these themes were drawn: less expenses and lessen workload.

Less Expenses. This emerged as a notable aspect of the minimalist approach to classroom decoration and design among primary teachers. By opting for a minimalist aesthetic, teachers found themselves saving on the costs associated with decorating and maintaining classroom visuals. This approach allowed for a more streamlined use of resources, directing funds towards essential educational materials and resources. Additionally, teachers appreciated the financial flexibility gained from reducing expenditures on decorative items, enabling them to allocate resources towards other critical aspects of their teaching practice, ultimately enhancing the overall quality of education for primary learners. Informant 1 noted;

Less expenses, and it looks tidy and neat, and it is really clean to look at because there are no hanging wires or clutter in the walls).

On the same vein, informant 4 also revealed:

For me, it is really beneficial because before, I used to buy beautification items to beautify my classroom. Okay, aside from reducing my expenses in buying beautification items for decorating my classroom, the time I spent cutting and making instructional materials for our classroom is also included.

Further, informant 5 shared:

It is also a big advantage for teachers to teach in a bare classroom. Because expenses are less, besides, we can really save money from our own pockets to put things there because what we emphasize is that learners can learn and understand quickly through your posting instructional materials, because before, there was no TV.

Lessen Workload. This reflects the pragmatic advantage observed by primary teachers who adopt a minimalist approach to classroom decoration and design. Teachers found that by reducing the number of visual distractions on classroom walls, they could streamline their workload associated with decorating and maintaining the learning environment. This minimalist approach allowed teachers to focus more time and energy on instructional planning and individualized student support, ultimately enhancing their effectiveness in the classroom. Additionally, the simplified aesthetic contributed to a more organized and efficient teaching environment, facilitating smoother transitions between lessons and activities. Informant 2 noted;

We have lessened our work since we do not give more time on designing and on what we put in our classroom, we just focus on the activities and on the objectives and goals on that day and on what we really wanted to impart to the students. So, there are more time for us to focus on the subject matter.

Similarly, informant 3 also shared:

Teachers will not spend our time on weekends and even on holidays just to put decorations in the classroom.

On the same vein, informant 6 also revealed:

To be honest, the teacher does not have to keep on putting up decorations anymore, because it is also tiring to keep decorating. That is the advantage for the teacher.

4.3 What are the disadvantages in teaching primary learners with bare-walled classroom?

This section presents the results on the viewpoints of the research participants of the disadvantages in teaching primary learners with bare classroom walls. This was the gist of the third major research question, ‘**What are the disadvantages in teaching primary learners with bare classroom walls?**’ Three specific research questions were utilized to gather data and information.

4.3.1 Ways the Absence of Visual Stimuli on Classroom Walls Impact the Engagement and Attention Span of Primary Learners During Instructional Sessions.

In this section, the themes created were from the responses to specific research question 3.1, ‘**How does the absence of visual stimuli on classroom walls impact the engagement and attention span of primary learners during instructional sessions?**’ The themes were better to have creative walls and less retention from learners.

Better to Have Creative Walls. This theme highlights primary teachers' perspectives on the impact of the absence of visual stimuli in the classroom on student engagement and attention span. Teachers expressed that while minimalist walls may reduce distractions, they also recognized the importance of incorporating creative elements to

stimulate student interest. Many teachers emphasized the value of strategically placed educational displays, interactive learning centers, and student-generated artwork to create an inspiring and dynamic classroom environment. They believed that these creative elements not only captured students' attention but also fostered a sense of ownership and pride in their learning space, ultimately enhancing overall engagement and attention during instructional sessions. Informant 1 narrated;

In my session in a bare classroom, of course, you have to be very creative with instructional materials. For example, when you are teaching Grade 1, how can you teach Grade 1 students, for example, if you say the letter A and you do not have a visual aid of the letter A, you have to be creative with your visuals, you really have to make the letter A in a way that they can easily understand because they do not see where the letter A is, there is no letter A here).

Informant 3 mentioned;

The disadvantage in teaching primary learners with bare classroom walls, for me, it is better to have classroom designs especially in the lower grades. Because most of the time, pupils learn through grasping objects, but due to bare walls, it seems difficult for them to remember their lessons because primary learners really have less retention).

Informant 5 also added;

There are some classroom decorations that you need to put up or keep. So, like in my primary class, the alphabet should be left, because of course, we review the sounds, they can always see it. Every time they see it, they are reminded that this is letter.

Less Retention from Learners. This theme highlights that the absence of visual stimuli on classroom walls is observed to result in less retention from learners during instructional sessions. Without visual cues to reinforce key concepts, students may struggle to maintain focus and grasp complex ideas. Teachers note that the lack of visual stimulation can lead to shorter attention spans and increased distractibility among primary learners. Moreover, educators find that students exhibit reduced engagement and participation when there are minimal visual aids to support their learning. Informant 4 narrated;

For me, its disadvantage is that they might not retain what I teach if they do not visually see it.

It was also supported by informant 6 who said;

Its disadvantage is that they do not have anything to see.

Informant 2 also added;

Even though the learners are more focused to the teacher, but it is still different when they have something to watch as support like the alphabets and numbers in the wall.

4.3.2 Environment When the Classroom is Intentionally Kept Bare

Presented in this section are the themes drawn from the responses to the specific question 3.2, '**In what ways do teachers face challenges in creating a stimulating and conducive learning environment when the classroom is intentionally kept bare?**' The themes created were hard time instilling knowledge and time consuming.

Hard Time Instilling Knowledge. This theme reveals primary teachers' challenges in imparting knowledge within intentionally bare classrooms. Teachers expressed difficulties in maintaining students' focus and attention without the aid of visual stimuli on the walls. Many found it challenging to create a vibrant and stimulating learning environment that facilitated effective teaching and learning experiences. The absence of visual aids often hindered

teachers' ability to reinforce concepts and engage students in meaningful ways, resulting in a perceived struggle to instill knowledge effectively.

Informant 3 mentioned about challenges in creating a stimulating and conducive learning environment. She cited;

For primary learners, they are very energetic, so you should provide more things for them to remember, especially since our classroom is bare, so it is difficult for the teacher's part. For example, about the colors, so we cannot really know the child's imagination if there were just things on the walls like before, like in traditional teaching where they were just beside us, when we repeatedly discussed those things, they could remember easily. The problem here is that it really needs to be a daily drill for us and we need to flash the lessons through the screen from time to time.

Further, Informant 6 explained;

It is more challenging indeed if there are no decorations because we really have to find ways, creative ways for the children to learn more if they do not have decorations to see because their focus is just on you and on those instructional materials you have prepared or on the TV, on the laptop that you use to connect to the TV.

Similarly, informant 2 said;

We can create a stimulating and conducive learning environment since teachers really need visual aids that can attract the pupils' attention and while the DepEd implemented this bare classroom, I think there is a challenge more on the teachers on how they will make it creative since we do not have any illustrations inside so it's very challenging since we primary teachers, we need to get their attention, we need to make our classroom more engaging in order that we could give them a suitable learning to each learner.

This was also supported by informant 4 who explained;

It would be better if we had printed materials beforehand because aside from it being less expensive for you, they would understand it more easily if you have something to show them.

Lastly, informant 5 revealed;

Okay, there are some challenges, especially for those who are slow learners.

Time Consuming. This theme reveals that creating a stimulating and conducive learning environment when the classroom is intentionally kept bare can be time-consuming. They find themselves investing additional time in designing and implementing instructional materials to compensate for the lack of visual stimuli. Moreover, teachers note that they must constantly adapt and innovate their teaching methods to maintain student engagement without relying on traditional classroom decorations.

Informant 1 cited;

To be honest, it is time-consuming for me. For example, when I teach, I want to give them more examples instead of just showing them what I have prepared on the wall because it might be too bare. So, I also create additional examples, do more research, which consumes more of my time because I need to research instead of just showing them the prepared instructional materials I have on the wall. I still need to look for others.

4.3.3 Negative Consequences Teachers Observe in Terms of Student Motivation When Teaching Primary Learners in Classrooms with Minimal or No Visual Distractions on the Walls

Presented in this section are the themes drawn from the responses to the specific question 3.3, '**What negative consequences, if any, do teachers observe in terms of student motivation when teaching primary learners in classrooms with minimal or no visual distractions on the walls?**' the theme generated were learners have nothing to read and no negative consequences.

Learners Have Nothing to Read. This theme underscores primary teachers' concerns regarding student motivation in classrooms with minimal visual distractions. Teachers noted that the absence of reading materials on classroom walls deprived students of opportunities for incidental literacy engagement. Without posters, charts, or other visual aids displaying text, students lacked visual prompts for reading practice and reinforcement of literacy skills, potentially impacting their overall motivation and interest in reading. Teachers recognized the importance of providing ample reading materials within the classroom environment to support literacy development and maintain student engagement. Informant 2 cited;

This policy has pros and cons. The negative consequences for the teachers are that when we are out in the classroom or when we finish our class hours, the pupils have no things to be seen or they have no illustrations to be read.

Further, informant 5 explained;

During vacant time, the learners have nothing to read since there are no instructional materials posted in the walls.

Also, informant 1 said;

It can affect visual learners because they tend to learn more easily when they have visual aids.

On the other hand, informant 3 uttered;

For me, especially for learners in the lower grades, they really need to be motivated well in your class, so it is really difficult if there are no instructional materials attached to the classroom walls."

No Negative Consequences. This theme underscores teachers report observing no negative consequences in terms of student motivation when teaching primary learners in classrooms with minimal or no visual distractions on the walls. They find that students are still motivated to learn and participate actively in lessons despite the lack of visual stimuli. Additionally, teachers note that without visual distractions, students exhibit improved focus and attention during instructional sessions. Overall, educators perceive the absence of visual distractions as having no detrimental effects on student motivation and engagement in the learning process.

Informant 4 unveiled;

I would not say that the consequences of that are entirely negative for me. But what I have observed is that if we do not have anything to show the learners, it is very different for them to just imagine things in class.

Moreover, informant 6 said;

It has no negative consequences for me since I prefer to have a bare classroom wall.

4.4 What are the insights gained of the participants from their experiences in teaching primary learners with bare-walled classroom?

This section presents the results on the viewpoints of the research participants of their insights from their experiences in teaching primary learners with bare classroom walls. This was the list of the fourth major research question, 'from their experiences in teaching primary learners with bare-walled classroom?' Three specific research questions were utilized to gather data and information.

4.4.1 Insights to Other Primary Teachers Teaching Primary Learners with Bare Classroom Walls.

In this section, the themes created were from the responses to specific research question 4.1, ‘**What can you share to other primary teachers who are teaching primary learners with bare classroom walls?**’ The generated themes were- be creative and find good strategies.

Be Creative. This theme encapsulates primary teachers' shared perspective on navigating the challenges of teaching in classrooms with intentionally bare walls. Through their insights, teachers emphasized the importance of creativity in overcoming the limitations imposed by minimalist environments. They advocated for innovative approaches to teaching and classroom design, such as leveraging alternative resources, implementing interactive activities, and encouraging student-generated content to foster engagement and enrich the learning experience. This theme highlights the collective commitment among primary teachers to adapt and find creative solutions to optimize teaching and learning despite environmental constraints. Informant 1 stated;

For me, maybe we just have to be creative as a teacher, still be artistic so that the learners can understand their lessons more easily, be creative and resourceful during your class, and give the best you can to your class so that the learners can focus more on you because the classroom is bare.

Meanwhile, informant 3 said;

You have to be creative, bring flashcards, or you can bring items that can grab the pupils's attention, not just relying on focusing solely on the TV.

On the other hand, informant 6 said;

Okay, as a teacher, especially for the lower grades where children really need visual aids, we really strive to provide instructional materials, printable materials that they can see because there's nothing else for them to see on the wall).

Find Good Strategies. Informants reflect collective pursuit of effective pedagogical approaches within classrooms devoid of visual distractions. Teachers emphasized the importance of sharing successful strategies and best practices with colleagues to enhance teaching effectiveness. Through collaboration and professional dialogue, educators aimed to identify and implement innovative methods that promote student engagement and learning despite the minimalist environment. This theme underscores the commitment of primary teachers to continuously seek and refine strategies tailored to the unique challenges posed by bare classroom walls. Informant 4 stated;

For me, what I can share with teachers who teach primary learners is that we really need to create strategies because we cannot just be a relaxed teacher up there because aside from their surroundings are being bare, we should not also be lousy while teaching.

Meanwhile, informant 5 said;

I give the learners 5 to 10 words to be memorized every day and we performed it using flash cards, another strategy also is I allowed the fast learners to sit beside the slow learners so they can assist them during the class.

Lastly, informant 2 said;

We need to focus on our skills since we don't have any reinforcement as I have said, there is no other thing that we could do but we need to be skillful in managing our classroom in creating a conducive and engaging environment.”

4.4.2 Suggestions to Give to Help Primary Teachers who are Teaching Primary Learners with Bare Classroom Walls.

The theme created in this section was from the responses to the specific research question 4.2, ‘**What suggestions can you give to help primary teachers who are teaching primary learners with bare classroom walls?**’ The themes were- be prepared as always. and utilize useful strategies.

Be Prepared as Always. The result encapsulates primary teachers' proactive approach to teaching in classrooms with intentionally bare walls. Teachers emphasized the importance of thorough planning and preparation to effectively navigate the challenges posed by minimalist environments. They advised fellow educators to anticipate potential obstacles and devise contingency plans to maintain student engagement and facilitate meaningful learning experiences. This theme underscores the resilience and adaptability of primary teachers, who prioritize readiness and resourcefulness in optimizing instruction despite environmental constraints.

Informant 1 narrated;

Also, my suggestion, they should just be ready and prepare visual aids. Be resourceful so that the learners will remain active in the class.

Also, informant 3 said;

Be ready all the time.

Moreover, informant 4 added;

Let us just give our best to our learners since we are the best visual aid for them.

Utilize Useful Strategies. The result encapsulates that teachers suggest utilizing useful strategies to help primary teachers who are teaching learners in classrooms with bare walls. These strategies include maximizing interactive technology tools to supplement visual stimuli and enhance engagement. Additionally, educators recommend incorporating more hands-on activities and manipulatives to compensate for the lack of visual decorations. Moreover, teachers advise promoting student involvement in creating classroom displays and rotating them regularly to maintain interest. Overall, utilizing these useful strategies can aid primary teachers in effectively navigating the challenges posed by teaching in classrooms with intentionally bare walls.

Informant 1 narrated;

The techniques that you have applied in your room, you can suggest them to your colleagues.

In addition, informant 6 said;

We need to provide engaging activities so that our discussions will become more interactive.

Similarly, informant 2 unveiled;

We need to have more engaging activities in the classroom so that it will not be that boring, so focus on their learning styles.

4.4.3 Hopes and Aspirations as a Primary Teacher in Teaching Primary Learners with Bare Classroom Walls

The results in this section were taken from the responses to the specific research question 4.3, ‘**What are your hopes and aspirations as a primary teacher in teaching primary learners with bare classroom walls?**’ These were the themes drawn from the responses: hoping learners can learn and more support coming from DepEd.

Hoping Learners Can Learn. This reveals primary teachers' aspirations for student success despite the challenges presented by bare classroom walls. Teachers expressed their desire for students to thrive academically and develop a love for learning, regardless of environmental constraints. They remained optimistic about their ability to create engaging and enriching learning experiences, hoping to foster curiosity, critical thinking, and

growth among their students. This theme underscores the unwavering dedication of primary teachers to empower their learners and cultivate a positive educational journey, even in minimalist classroom settings.

Informant 1 mentioned;

Hoping that in my class, even if the classroom is bare, the learners can still understand especially the visual learners, even if there are no decorations on my wall, I will still do everything to make them more interested or eager to learn because the teacher is the best instructional material).

Similarly, informant 4 said;

As a primary teacher, I still hope that they can learn even if now the decorations in our classrooms are gone.

Moreover, informant 2 said;

My hopes and aspiration as a primary teacher, is to see the improvement within my learners. I just want them to be creative enough and to be improved, their strength and of course I just want to give reinforcement to those pupils and learners who struggling in their study.

Further, informant 6 highlighted;

I hope that the learners continue to learn in school every day when they enter. The teacher really strives for that. So, as teachers, we constantly inspire the children. Every time they enter our room, we inspire them to strive to just listen to the teacher so they can learn more, just by listening.

More Support Coming from DepEd. Primary teachers express hopes and aspirations for more support coming from the Department of Education (DepEd) in teaching primary learners with bare classroom walls. They anticipate resources and guidelines from DepEd to assist in maximizing the educational potential of minimalist environments. Additionally, teachers hope for professional development opportunities focused on innovative teaching methods suitable for classrooms with intentionally bare walls. Furthermore, educators aspire to see policies or initiatives that recognize and validate the challenges faced by teachers in creating stimulating learning environments without traditional visual stimuli. Informant 5 mentioned;

I hope that DepEd could provide more support, that they could provide all the materials.

In consonance, informant 3 said;

I hope that DepEd will provide all of our IM's like books.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The findings across various themes regarding perceptions of bare classroom walls highlight the complexities of classroom design and its impact on teaching and learning. It suggests that educators should adopt a minimalist decor while balancing aesthetic simplicity with the need for visual stimulation. Teachers can enhance student engagement by selectively adding educational materials to bare walls. Critical evaluation of classroom displays is essential to maximize educational value and minimize distractions. Collaborative approaches and innovative strategies can help manage minimalist classrooms and support student success.

The role of classroom aesthetics as visual aids emphasizes the thoughtful integration of visual elements to improve learning experiences. Digital resources and multimedia can enrich the visual environment, catering to diverse learning styles. The minimalist approach can also reduce teachers' expenses and workload, offering professional and personal benefits.

Future research should explore the dynamics of minimalist classroom design, the effectiveness of technology integration, and tangible instructional strategies. Longitudinal studies on the long-term effects of minimalist classrooms could inform best practices and policies, enhancing understanding of the relationship between classroom design, teaching methods, and student outcomes in primary education.

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